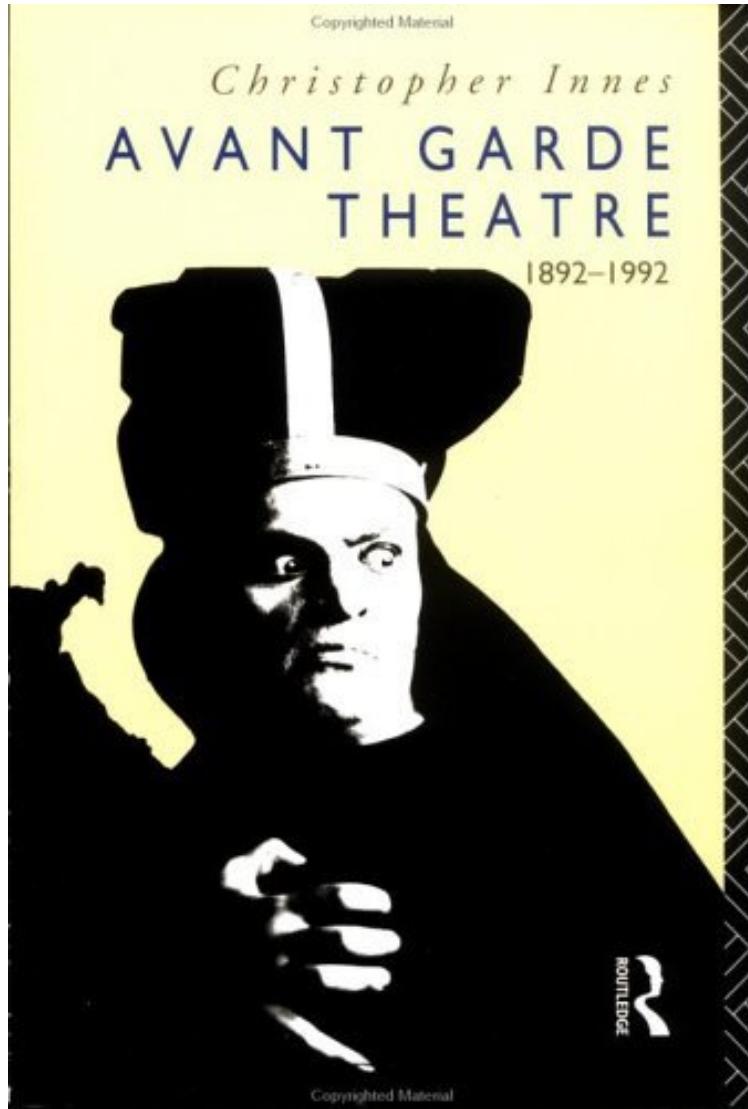


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Avant Garde Theatre: 1892ndash;1992

Christopher Innes

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Examining the development of avant garde theatre from its inception in the 1890s right up to the present day, Christopher Innes exposes a central paradox of modern theatre; that the motivating force of theatrical experimentation is primitivism. What links the work of Strindberg, Artaud, Brook and Mnouchkine is an idealisation of the elemental and a desire to find ritual in archaic traditions. This widespread primitivism is the key to understanding both the political and aesthetic aspects of modern theatre and provides fresh insights into contemporary social trends. The original text, first published in 1981 as *Holy Theatre*, has been fully revised and up-dated to take account of the most recent theoretical developments in anthropology, critical theory and psychotherapy. New sections on Heiner Muller, Robert Wilson, Eugenio Barba, Ariane Mnouchkine and Sam Shepard have been added. As a result, the book now deals with all the major avant garde theatre practitioners, in Europe and North America. *Avant Garde Theatre* will be essential reading for anyone attempting to understand contemporary drama.

Christopher Innes's encyclopedic *Avant Garde Theatre, 1892-1992*, creates order out of theories, movements, cults, groups, and writers from the canonical, like Strindberg and Pirandello, to the most anthropological of experimenters like Eugenio Barba. It is difficult to imagine the need for any other survey of the topic, though Innes is no mere cartographer. With his customary intelligence and clarity, Innes identifies the principles that unify as well as those that distinguish avant gardism from modernism or postmodernism, avoiding the latter terms as far as possible. This, as I see it, may be the book's most important contribution to scholarship.—The American Book Innes has produced a brilliant, sensitive, articulate statement. It deserves serious study by all of those whose practice and commitment is toward an understanding and expression of this century's theatre. From the reviews of the first edition:—About the AuthorChristopher Innes is Professor of English at York University, Ontario.