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Acknowledgments

In 1998 I approached Ted Zapel, editor at Meriwether Publishing, with a proposal for a book. Although he decided that the volume did not fit the current needs of the Meriwether program, he suggested that I might consider compiling a collection of scenes and monologs for actors. I liked his suggestions, and over a period of some months, we discussed and refined the concept. *Outstanding Stage Monologs and Scenes from the '90s* was the result of those discussions. For his original suggestion and for his help in developing the concepts that lie behind this book, I am extremely grateful.

There was a considerable amount of labor that went into *Outstanding Stage Monologs and Scenes from the '90s*, and a lot of that work was made easier for me by my secretary, Kim Bickers. Kim helped me locate plays, she photocopied the selections that I made, and she sent out the permissions requests and recorded the responses. When we did not hear from someone, or she had to track them down because they were no longer at a given address, or when we had to negotiate terms — all of the indispensable minutiae that go into such a project over an extended period of time — she made sure that everything was taken care of, spending countless hours on the telephone or Internet and faxing back and forth. I truly appreciate this invaluable help.

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Goodwins, the Johnsons, and the Corums,
and in memory of my mother, Mary Wilder Hasse, and my
brother, Bill, as always, with all my love and thanks.*

Introduction

Actors need to be able to use proven examples of good dramatic material to practice their craft. That is clearly the primary concept underlying the creation of any scene book. The selections that I made in designing *Outstanding Stage Monologs and Scenes from the '90s* obviously mirror this fact (witness the names of some of those included: Harold Pinter, Edward Albee, Thornton Wilder, Tom Stoppard, Mario Fratti, A. J. Gurney, Brian Friel, Marsha Norman, Israel Horovitz). Besides these established and famous playwrights, the list of authors includes young, up-and-coming dramatists as well, writers whose early works will produce the foundation for significant careers.

As might be expected, I have included scenes and monologs for one male actor, one female actor, two male actors, two female actors, and combinations of male and female actors. In addition, though, the forty-three pieces by thirty-nine dramatists that I chose for this volume reflect actors' desires for new and fresh scenes and monologs, pieces that are up-to-date and exciting to perform — thus, the '90s. And the decade of the '90s serves as an important and rich launching point. During this period, several trends became evident. Small theatre groups are proliferating, more women are writing plays, ethnic and racial groups are exerting a growing influence on what is produced on stage, young authors are turning to drama as a medium for expression, and drama is truly an international art form. These trends are represented in this volume.

In choosing to include only scenes, monologs, and short dramas written in or first produced in the 1990s, I could capture the closing out of the millennium. I could encompass many of the changes taking place in the theatre that serve as a summary of the twentieth century. These changes involve the elements mentioned above, of course, but they also mean a wider variety of backgrounds represented than ever before, and the impact of a sub-genre that is coming into its own with the emergence of the ten-minute play. Ten-minute plays are now afforded their rightful place beside full-length and one-act plays in the theatre since national festivals have been devoted to this format in Kentucky, Delaware, and several other states. This allows new and expanded opportunities for actors to utilize meaningful, interesting, and pertinent matter in auditions, readings, practices, performances, and the like. This particular element is what lies behind my decision to incorporate five complete ten-minute plays in this volume. Given the international nature of the theatre and recognizing that influences are no

longer limited by national borders, I have also included a few selections from abroad — from Cameroon, Canada, England, Ireland, France, and Germany.

Finally, as a quick glance at the table of contents will show, this volume was structured to make it easy to find pieces for class use or auditions; the sections are divided according to gender, and within each section the order of the selections is from shortest to longest.

I hope that the practitioners of the thespian arts who use the selections contained in *Outstanding Stage Monologs and Scenes from the '90s* enjoy using them as much as I enjoyed collecting them.

Steven H. Gale
Frankfort, Kentucky
January 2000

NOTE: The numerals running vertically down the left margin of each page of dialog are for the convenience of the director. With these, he/she may easily direct attention to a specific passage.