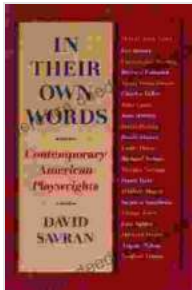


In Their Own Words: Contemporary American Playwrights



In Their Own Words: Contemporary American Playwrights by David Savran

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Contemporary American theater is a vibrant and ever-evolving landscape, with new playwrights emerging all the time to share their unique voices and perspectives with the world. In this article, we'll take a closer look at the lives and work of some of the most influential contemporary American playwrights, including Tony Kushner, August Wilson, Lynn Nottage, and Suzan-Lori Parks.

Tony Kushner

Tony Kushner is one of the most celebrated and influential playwrights of his generation. He is best known for his Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Angels in America*, which premiered in 1991 and went on to become one of the most important plays of the 20th century. Kushner's work is often characterized by its political and social themes, as well as its lyrical language and complex characters.

Kushner was born in New York City in 1956. He graduated from Columbia University and the Yale School of Drama. After graduating from Yale, Kushner worked as a playwright-in-residence at the New York Shakespeare Festival. In 1985, he founded the Tectonic Theater Project, a New York City-based theater company dedicated to producing new work.

Kushner's first play, *A Bright Room Called Day*, was produced in 1985. His second play, *Angels in America*, was produced in 1991 and won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama the following year. *Angels in America* is a two-part epic that tells the story of a group of friends and lovers living in New York City during the AIDS crisis. The play is widely considered to be one of the most important plays of the 20th century.

Kushner has also written several other plays, including *Slavs!* (1994), *Homebody/Kabul* (2001), and *The Intelligent Homosexual's Guide to Capitalism and Socialism with a Key to the Scriptures* (2009). He has also written several screenplays, including *Munich* (2005) and *Lincoln* (2012).

Kushner is a recipient of numerous awards, including the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, the Tony Award for Best Play, and the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Play. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

August Wilson

August Wilson was one of the most important American playwrights of the 20th century. He is best known for his cycle of ten plays, *The Pittsburgh Cycle*, which tells the story of the African-American experience in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, from the early 1900s to the 1990s. Wilson's work

is often characterized by its realism, its poetic language, and its exploration of social and political themes.

Wilson was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1945. He dropped out of high school at the age of 15 and worked a variety of jobs before becoming a full-time playwright. In 1968, Wilson's first play, *Jitney*, was produced at the Black Horizon Theater in Pittsburgh. *Jitney* was a critical and commercial success, and it helped to establish Wilson as a major playwright.

Wilson's cycle of ten plays, *The Pittsburgh Cycle*, premiered between 1982 and 2005. Each play in the cycle tells the story of a different decade in the African-American experience in Pittsburgh. The plays are often performed together as a single, epic work.

Wilson's work has been widely praised for its realism, its poetic language, and its exploration of social and political themes. He is a recipient of numerous awards, including the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, the Tony Award for Best Play, and the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Play. Wilson was also inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Wilson died in 2005 at the age of 60. He is considered to be one of the most important American playwrights of the 20th century.

Lynn Nottage

Lynn Nottage is a Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright whose work often explores the lives of marginalized people. She is best known for her plays *Ruined* (2009), which tells the story of a group of women in the Democratic

Republic of the Congo who are forced to work as sex slaves, and *Sweat* (2017), which tells the story of a group of factory workers in Reading, Pennsylvania, who are struggling to make ends meet.

Nottage was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1964. She graduated from Brown University and the Yale School of Drama. After graduating from Yale, Nottage worked as a playwright-in-residence at the New York Shakespeare Festival. In 1995, she founded the Po' Boy Productions, a theater company dedicated to producing new work by African-American playwrights.

Nottage's first play, *Poof!*, was produced in 1992. Her second play, *Las Meninas*, was produced in 1994 and won the Obie Award for Best New American Play. *Ruined*, her third play, was produced in 2009 and won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama the following year. *Sweat*, her fourth play, was produced in 2017 and won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama the following year.

Nottage has also written several other plays, including *Intimate Apparel* (2004), *By the Way, Meet Vera Stark* (2007), and *Mlima's Tale* (2018). She has also written several screenplays, including *The Secret Life of Bees* (2008) and *Loving* (2016).

Nottage is a recipient of numerous awards, including the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, the Tony Award for Best Play, and the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Play. She is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Suzan-Lori Parks

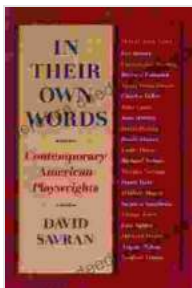
Suzan-Lori Parks is a Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright whose work is often characterized by its experimental form and its use of language. She is best

known for her play *Topdog/Underdog* (2001), which tells the story of two brothers, Lincoln and Booth, who are struggling to come to terms with their past.

Parks was born in Fort Knox, Kentucky, in 1963. She graduated from Mount Holyoke College and the Yale School of Drama. After graduating from Yale, Parks worked as a playwright-in-residence at the New York Shakespeare Festival. In 1994, she founded the Suzan-Lori Parks Theater Company, a New York City-based theater company dedicated to producing new work by emerging playwrights.

Parks' first play, *The America Play*, was produced in 1999. Her second play, *Topdog/Underdog*, was produced in 2001 and won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama the following year. *Topdog/Underdog* is a two-part play that tells the story of two brothers, Lincoln and Booth, who are struggling to come to terms with their past.

Parks has also written several other plays, including *Imperceptible Mutabilities in the Third Kingdom* (1999), *The Red Letter Plays* (2006), and *Father Comes Home from the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)* (2014). She has also written several screenplays, including *Girl 6* (1996) and *Their Eyes Were*



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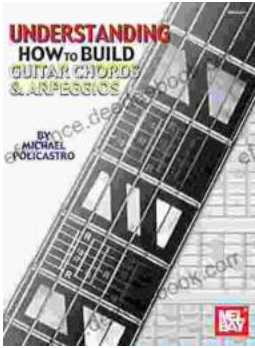
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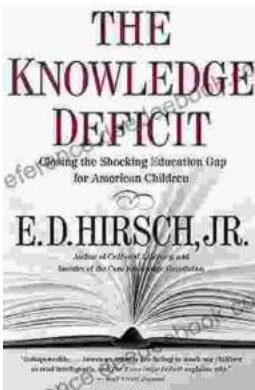
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