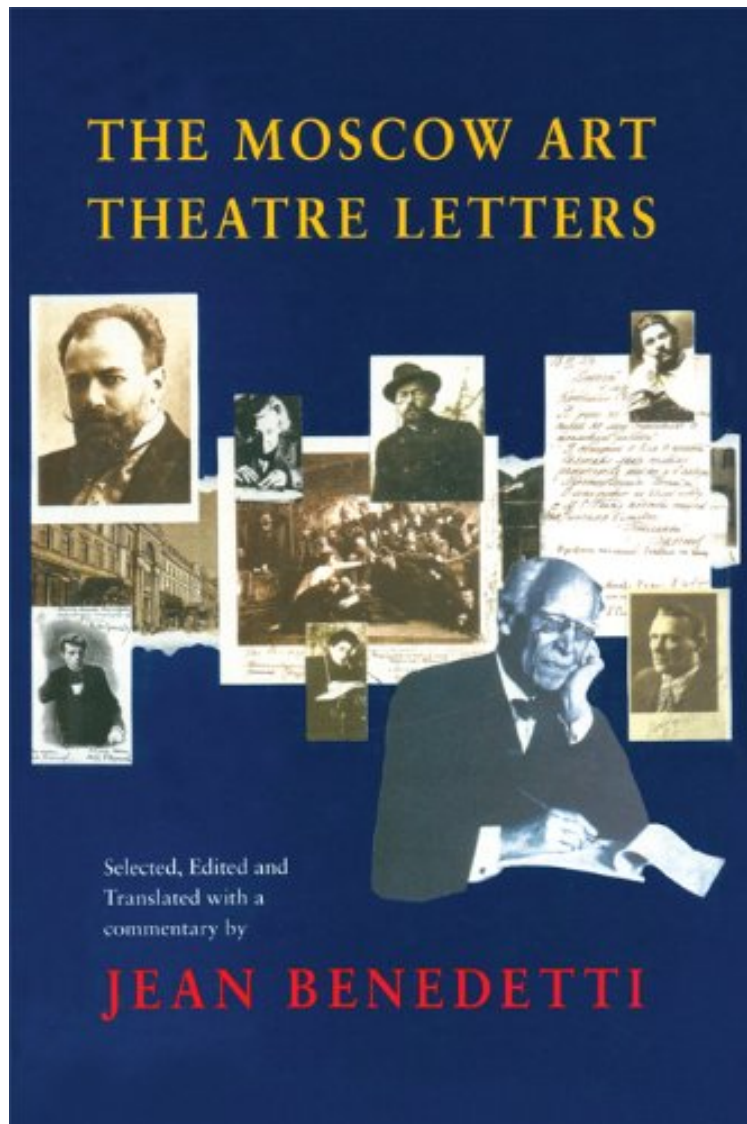


## The Moscow Art Theatre Letters

*From Routledge*

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**From Routledge : The Moscow Art Theatre Letters** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Moscow Art Theatre Letters:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Early days of the Moscow Arts theatreBy Angus HepburnA revealing insight into the early relationship between Nemirovich-Danchenko, Stanislavski and Chekhov. Such a great shame Nemirovich-Danchenko didn't write books on his approach to acting.

Moscow Art Theatre Letters tells the real story of the Moscow Art Theatre, from its origin at the turn of the century

through its first forty years. Jean Benedetti presents the historical record first-hand in this collection of the letters of the main protagonists. Many are available in English for the first time--all will come as a revelation to Western readers.

From Publishers Weekly The image of the Moscow Art Theatre as a troupe of selfless, united idealists--an illusion promoted by co-founder Konstantin Stanislavski in *My Life in Art*--is forever shattered by this frenetic collection of letters by the Theatre's members. Stanislavski, "a hopeless mess" in the opinion of actress Olga Knipper, Chekhov's wife, was regarded by the company as a muddle-headed dreamer full of impossible schemes like his Method of acting. Stanislavski's explosive, bitter behind-the-scenes feud with co-director Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko nearly destroyed the theater. Turbulent clashes among actors, writers and directors and a desperate struggle to keep solvent marked the years before Stalin's fatal patronage, which squeezed the life and art out of the Art Theatre. Benedetti, biographer of Stanislavski, has done an excellent job of piecing together a gripping offstage drama. Photos. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Benedetti, the author of *Stanislavski* (LJ 1/89), offers a selection of newly translated letters (some never published before) written by participants in the glory years of the influential Art Theatre, from its revolutionary beginnings at the turn of the century through its eventual taming by Stalin in the 1930s. Letters composed by the Art Theatre's many legendary collaborators, including Konstantin Stanislavski, Anton Chekhov, Maxim Gorky, and Gordon Craig are clearly and vividly rendered into contemporary English. Using brief explanatory bridges between letters, Benedetti crafts these dialogs into an absorbing documentary history. Interspersed throughout the text are exchanges between the Art Theatre's cofounders, Stanislavski and Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko, whose disputes over artistic and business matters never quite overcame their respect and affection for one another. Students of modern drama will find considerable food for thought in this rendering of a theater company's progress from birth to maturity.- Anne Sharp, *Ypsilanti Dist. Lib., Mich.* Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. "The fragmentary history of the Moscow Art theatre in English is aided by this collection, containing previously untranslated correspondence."-"Choice "Benedetti, biographer of Stanislavski, has done an excellent job of piecing together a gripping offstage drama."-"Publishers Weekly "This extraordinary cache of letters only recently came to light in various Russian and international archives. Sixteen pages of black and white photos evoke dramatic moments in the history of this famed and influential theatre company."-"Playbill "Letters composed by the Art Theatre's many legendary collaborators . . . are clearly and vividly rendered into contemporary English. . . . an absorbing documentary history. . . . Students of modern drama will find considerable food for thought in this rendering of a theater company's progress from birth to maturity."-Anne Sharp, *Library Journal* "It's the perfect form for a theatre book. The protagonists shout, weep, bellow, protest undying affection, plot behind each other's backs, and proclaim repeatedly that this absolutely, finally the end. It's as good as a play."-"The Globe and Mail