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Working in the Wings: New Perspectives on Theatre History and Labor (Theater in the Americas)

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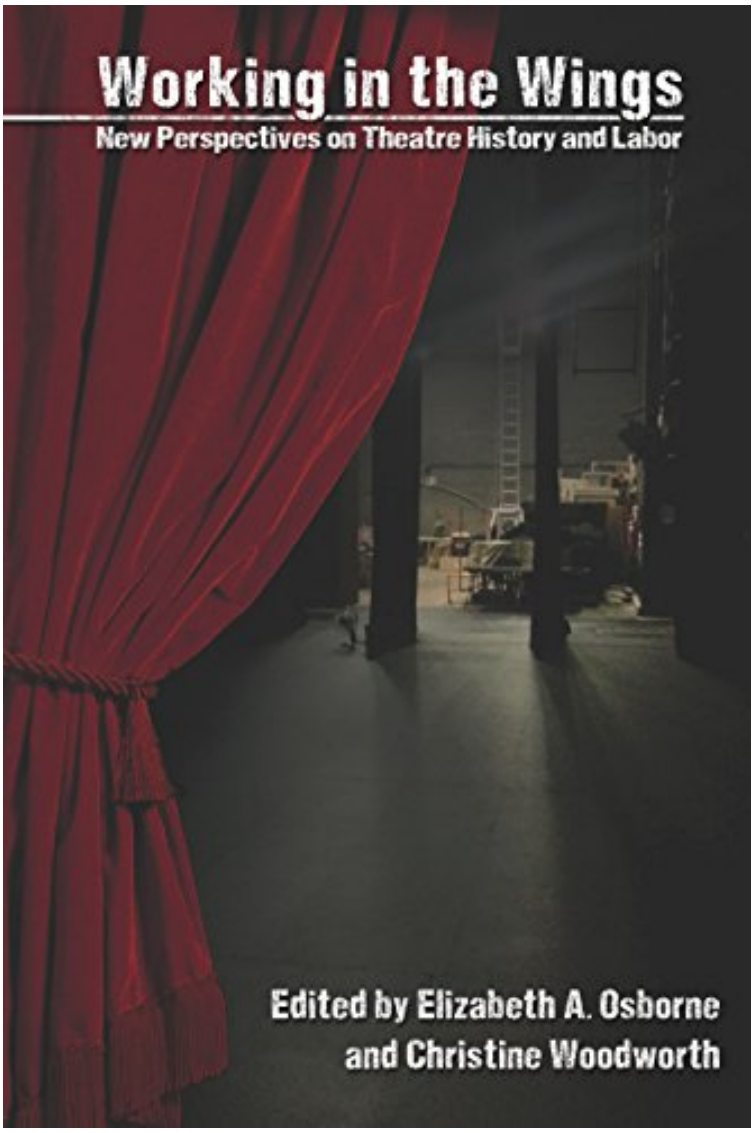

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From Southern Illinois University Press : Working in the Wings: New Perspectives on Theatre History and Labor (Theater in the Americas) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Working in the Wings: New Perspectives on Theatre History and Labor (Theater in the Americas):

Theatre has long been an art form of subterfuge and concealment. Working in the Wings: New Perspectives on Theatre History and Labor, edited by Elizabeth A. Osborne and Christine Woodworth, brings attention to what goes on behind the scenes, challenging, and revising our understanding of work, theatre, and history.Essays consider a range of historic moments and geographic locationsmdash;from African Americansrsquo; performance of the cakewalk in Floridarsquo;s resort hotels during the Gilded Age to the UAW Union Theatre and striking automobile workers in postndash;World War II Detroit, to the struggle in the latter part of the twentieth century to finish an adaptation of Moby Dick for the stage before the memory of creator Rinde Eckert failed. Contributors incorporate methodologies and theories from fields as diverse as theatre history, work studies, legal studies, economics, and literature and draw on traditional archival materials, including performance texts and architectural structures, as well as less tangible material traces of stagecraft.Working in the Wings looks at the ways in which workers' identities are shaped, influenced, and dictated by what they do; the traces left behind by workers whose contributions have been overwritten; the intersections between the sometimes repetitive and sometimes destructive process of creation and the end resultmdash;the play or performance; and the ways in which theatre affects the popular imagination. This collected volume draws attention to the significance of work in the theatre, encouraging a fresh examination of this important subject in the history of the theatre and beyond.

ldquo;The decline of industrial labor unions, the turmoil among public workersrsquo; associations, the economic collapse of 2007ndash;8, the marketing of lsquo;right to workrsquo; as a positive benefit, and the increased salary discrepancy between workers and executives have all coalesced to ignite a reconsideration of lsquo;workrsquo; across labor sites and academic disciplines. Working in the Wings injects theatre and performance into this discourse by foregrounding the work of backstage laborers and assessing how theatre work contributes to cultural myths in the public imagination. Working in the Wings is not only a timely book; it is an important one.rdquo;mdash;Barry B. Witham, professor emeritus, University of Washington