

# Something Wonderful Right Away History

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The Funniest One in the Room Kim "Howard" Johnson 2008-04 Containing recollections from more than 80 of the comedic giant's closest friends and colleagues, this absorbing biography explores Del Close's old haunts, his sensational past, and the reality behind the tales he told so often. From traveling with a carnival and hanging out with a pre-Scientology L. Ron Hubbard to riding with the Merry Pranksters and using a coven of witches to help him kick a lifelong cocaine habit, Close led an incredibly rich life--one whose absurdity proved great fodder for improv theater. Astute and compassionate, Close influenced improvisational theater's greatest comedic talents of the last 50 years--Nichols and May, Lenny Bruce, Bill Murray, Chris Farley, Tina Fey--and coached the witty masterminds behind such comedic institutions as Second City, "Saturday Night Live," Groundlings, and the Upright Citizen's Brigade.

Life isn't everything Ash Carter 2019-11-12 An up close and personal portrait of a legendary filmmaker, theater director, and comedian, drawing on candid conversations with his closest friends in show business and the arts—from Dustin Hoffman and Meryl Streep to Natalie Portman and Lorne Michaels. The work of Mike Nichols pervades American cultural consciousness—from The

Graduate and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* to *Angels in America*, *The Birdcage*, *Working Girl*, and *Primary Colors*, not to mention his string of hit plays, including *Barefoot in the Park* and *The Odd Couple*. If that weren't enough, he was also one half of the timelessly funny duo Nichols & May, as well as a founding member of the original improv troupe. Over a career that spanned half a century, Mike Nichols changed Hollywood, Broadway, and comedy forever. Most fans, however, know very little of the person behind it all. Since he never wrote his memoirs, and seldom appeared on television, they have very little sense of his searching intellect or his devastating wit. They don't know that Nichols, the great American director, was born Mikail Igor Peschkowsky, in Berlin, and came to this country, speaking no English, to escape the Nazis. They don't know that Nichols was at one time a solitary psychology student, or that a childhood illness caused permanent, life-altering side effects. They don't know that he withdrew into a debilitating depression before he "finally got it right," in his words, by marrying Diane Sawyer. Here, for the first time, Ash Carter and Sam Kashner offer an intimate look behind the scenes of Nichols' life, as told by the stars, moguls, playwrights, producers, comics and crewmembers who stayed loyal to Nichols for years. *Life Isn't Everything* is a mosaic portrait of a brilliant and original director known for his uncommon charm, wit, vitality, and genius for friendship, this volume is also a snapshot of what it meant to be living, loving, and making art in the 20th century.

*Laughing on the Outside* Martin Knelman 2014-08-19 Funny and gentle, John Candy was loved by millions of movie fans for playing true-to-life characters. Whether as the irrepressible bon vivant in *Splash*, the misunderstood slob in *Uncle Buck*, or the generous lonely salesman in *Planes, Trains, and Automobiles*, John Candy struck a perfect balance between self-deprecating humor and irresistible, emotional warmth. But behind the scenes, beneath the booming laughter, award-winning journalist Martin Knelman in *Laughing on the Outside* paints a compassionate portrait of John Candy--a man blessed by comic genius and goodness of heart who was ultimately and sadly undermined by self-doubt and misguided ambition.

*The Improvisation Studies Reader* Ajay Heble 2014-08-07 Improvisation is a performance practice that animates and activates diverse energies of inspiration, critique, and invention. In recent years it has coalesced into an exciting and innovative new field of interdisciplinary scholarly inquiry, becoming a cornerstone of both practical and theoretical approaches to performance. *The Improvisation Studies Reader* draws together the works of key artists and thinkers from a range of disciplines, including theatre, music, literature, film, and dance. Divided by keywords into eight sections, this book bridges the gaps between these fields. The book includes case studies,

exercises, graphic scores and poems in order to produce a teaching and research resource that identifies central themes in improvisation studies. The sections include: Listening Trust/Risk Flow Dissonance Responsibility Liveness Surprise Hope Each section of the Reader is introduced by a newly commissioned think piece by a key figure in the field, which opens up research questions reflecting on the keyword in question. By placing key theoretical and classic texts in conversation with cutting-edge research and artists' statements, this book answers the urgent questions facing improvising artists and theorists in the mediatized Twenty-First Century.

In On the Joke Shawn Levy 2022-04-05 A hilarious and moving account of the trailblazing women of stand-up comedy who broke down walls so they could stand before the mic—perfect for fans of *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* and *Hacks* Today, women are ascendant in stand-up comedy, even preeminent. They make headlines, fill arenas, spawn blockbuster movies. But before Amy Schumer slayed, Tiffany Haddish killed, and Ali Wong drew roars, the very idea of a female comedian seemed, to most of America, like a punch line. And it took a special sort of woman—indeed, a parade of them—to break and remake the mold. *In on the Joke* is the story of a group of unforgettable women who knocked down the doors of stand-up comedy so other women could get a shot. It spans decades, from Moms Mabley's rise in Black vaudeville between the world wars, to the roadhouse ribaldry of Belle Barth and Rusty Warren in the 1950s and '60s, to Elaine May's co-invention of improv comedy, to Joan Rivers's and Phyllis Diller's ferocious ascent to mainstream stardom. These women refused to be defined by type and tradition, facing down indifference, puzzlement, nay-saying, and unvarnished hostility. They were discouraged by agents, managers, audiences, critics, fellow performers—even their families. And yet they persevered against the tired notion that women couldn't be funny, making space not only for themselves, but for the women who followed them. Meticulously researched and irresistibly drawn, Shawn Levy's group portrait forms a new pantheon of comedy excellence. *In on the Joke* shows how women broke into the boys' club, offered new ideas of womanhood, and had some laughs along the way.

Satire & The State Matt Fotis 2020-03-31 *Satire & The State* focuses on performance-based satire, most often seen in sketch comedy, from 1960 to the present, and explores how sketch comedy has shaped the way Americans view the president and themselves. Numerous sketch comedy portrayals of presidents that have seeped into the American consciousness – Chevy Chase's Gerald Ford, Dana Carvey's George H.W. Bush, and Will Ferrell's George W. Bush all worked to shape the actual politician's public persona. The book analyzes these sketches and many others, illustrating how comedy is at the heart of the health and function of American democracy. At its best, satire

aimed at the presidency can work as a populist check on executive power, becoming one of the most important weapons for everyday Americans against tyranny and political corruption. At its worst, satire can reflect and promote racism, misogyny, and homophobia in America. Written for students of Theatre, Performance, Political Science, and Media Studies courses, as well as readers with an interest in political comedy, *Satire & The State* offers a deeper understanding of the relationship between comedy and the presidency, and the ways in which satire becomes a window into the culture, principles, and beliefs of a country.

*Shocked But Connected* Michael Roemer 2012-09-16 In *Shocked But Connected*, distinguished filmmaker Michael Roemer reflects on the nature of comedy and laughter. Incorporating the work of both the great thinkers and great comedians of our age, Roemer investigates what makes us laugh and what distinguishes comedy from all other art forms.

*Irony and Outrage* Dannagal Goldthwaite Young 2020 This text explores the aesthetics, underlying logics, and histories of two seemingly distinct genres - liberal political satire and conservative opinion talk - making the case that they should be thought of as the logical extensions of the psychology of the left and right, respectively.

*The Seventh Stream* Philip H. Ennis 1992-12 A cultural and social study of the origins and evolution of "rocknroll". Philip Ennis presents a major social and cultural study of the origins and evolution of "rocknroll." With masterful command of general trends and telling details, he describes the artistic, economic, and political context that nurtured this radically new popular music. This "seventh stream," which drew from existing forms of pop music, began as a youth movement of rebellion and remains a worldwide banner of youth in search of alternatives. "Rocknroll" emerged, he shows persuasively, from the successive meeting and melding of the other six "streams"—pop, black pop, country pop, jazz, folk, and gospel. He chronicles how these were shaped by struggles over musical property rights, and by the new technologies of radio and phonograph record. The most decisive clash was between the New York based music publishers and the radio broadcasters. Their decades long contest resulted in many cultural changes. The basic unit shifted from sheet music to the phonograph record. The radio disc jockey in small, independent radio stations became the new focal point for all the popular musics. New venues, audiences, and talent appeared throughout the nation. The appearance of "rocknroll" marked a significant cultural moment, argues Ennis. This "seventh stream" was part of an explosive efflorescence in all the American arts after World War II. Its early stars—Little Richard, Chuck Berry, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Elvis Presley—built a pantheon of performers with deep

roots in all the other streams.

Writing the 10-Minute Play Glenn Alterman 2013-03-01 Paperback Original  
Comedy at the Edge Richard Zoglin 2009-02-03 Surveys the stand-up comedy of the 1970s, citing the contributions of celebrity comics, from George Carlin and Richard Pryor to Robin Williams and Andy Kaufman, in an account that also evaluates the roles played by such clubs as Catch a Rising Star, the Improv, and the Comedy Store.

Impromptu Man Jonathan D. Moreno 2014-09-22 "Impromptu Man captures the remarkable impact of a singular genius, J.L. Moreno, whose creations—the best-known being psychodrama—have shaped our culture in myriad ways, many unrecognized. The record will be set straight for all time by this can't-put-down biography, a tribute by Jonathan D. Moreno to his father's masterly legacy." —DANIEL GOLEMAN, author of Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ J.L. Moreno (1889-1974), the father of psychodrama, was an early critic of Sigmund Freud, wrote landmark works of Viennese expressionism, founded an experimental theater where he discovered Peter Lorre, influenced Martin Buber, and became one of the most important psychiatrists and social scientists of his time. A mystic, theater impresario and inventor in his youth, Moreno immigrated to America in 1926, where he trained famous actors, introduced group therapy, and was a forerunner of humanistic psychology. As a social reformer, he reorganized schools and prisons, and designed New Deal planned communities for workers and farmers. Moreno's methods have been adopted by improvisational theater groups, military organizations, educators, business leaders, and trial lawyers. His studies of social networks laid the groundwork for social media like Twitter and Facebook. Featuring interviews with Clay Shirky, Gloria Steinem, and Werner Erhard, among others, original documentary research, and the author's own perspective growing up as the son of an innovative genius, Impromptu Man is both the study of a great and largely unsung figure of the last century and an epic history, taking readers from the creative chaos of early twentieth-century Vienna to the wired world of Silicon Valley. Jonathan D. Moreno, called the "most interesting bioethicist of our time" by the American Journal of Bioethics, is a professor at the University of Pennsylvania and a Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress.

Theatrical Improvisation J. Leep 2008-07-01 Theatrical Improvisation provides an in-depth analysis of short form, long form, and sketch-based improv - tracing the development of each form and the principles that define and connect the styles of performance. Brimming with original interviews from leaders in the field such as Ron West, Charna Halpern, John Sweeny and Margaret Edwartowski, Theatrical Improvisation presents straightforward improvisational theory, history, and trends. Includes easy-to-follow resources

on teaching improvisation, with assessment tools, exercises, games, and classroom assignments to enable instructors to incorporate and assess improv in the classroom. Leep offers a practical, essential, and engaging guide for anyone who wants to better understand the art, teach, or perform improvisation.

**Making It Up Together** Leslie A. Tilley 2020-04-03 Most studies of musical improvisation focus on individual musicians. But that is not the whole story. From jazz to flamenco, Shona mbira to Javanese gamelan, improvised practices thrive on group creativity, relying on the close interaction of multiple simultaneously improvising performers. In *Making It Up Together*, Leslie A. Tilley explores the practice of collective musical improvisation cross-culturally, making a case for placing collectivity at the center of improvisation discourse and advocating ethnographically informed music analysis as a powerful tool for investigating improvisational processes. Through two contrasting Balinese case studies—of the reyong gong chime's melodic norot practice and the interlocking drumming tradition kendang arja—Tilley proposes and tests analytical frameworks for examining collectively improvised performance. At the micro-level, Tilley's analyses offer insight into the note-by-note decisions of improvising performers; at the macro-level, they illuminate larger musical, discursive, structural, and cultural factors shaping those decisions. This multi-tiered inquiry reveals that unpacking how performers play and imagine as a collective is crucial to understanding improvisation and demonstrates how music analysis can elucidate these complex musical and interactional relationships. Highlighting connections with diverse genres from various music cultures, Tilley's examinations of collective improvisation also suggest rich potential for cross-genre exploration. The surrounding discussions point to larger theories of communication and interaction, creativity and cognition that will be of interest to a range of readers—from ethnomusicologists and music theorists to cognitive psychologists, jazz studies scholars, and improvising performers. Setting new parameters for the study of improvisation, *Making It Up Together* opens up fresh possibilities for understanding the creative process, in music and beyond.

**Encyclopedia of Creativity** 2011-05-20 The first edition of the successful *Encyclopedia of Creativity* served to establish the study of creativity is a field in itself. Now completely updated and revised in its second edition, coverage encompasses the definition of creativity, the development and expression of creativity across the lifespan, the environmental conditions that encourage or discourage creativity, creativity within specific disciplines like music, dance, film, art, literature, etc., the relationship of creativity and mental health, intelligence, and learning styles, and the process of being creative. This reference also appeals to a lay audience with articles specifically on the

application of creativity to business settings. Available online via ScienceDirect and in limited print release. Named a 2012 Outstanding Academic Title by the American Library Association's Choice publication Serves as a compendium of reviews of a number of domain-specific areas, such as acting, dance, expressive arts, film, food, music, religion, science, sports, theater, and writing. Creativity and education are examined in articles about thought processes, such as developmental trends in creative abilities and potentials, the enhancement of creativity, intelligence, knowledge, play, prodigies, programs and courses, talent and teaching creativity. Cognitive aspects of creativity can be investigated in articles about altered and transitional states, analogies, attention, cognitive style, divergent thinking, flow and optimal experience, metacognition, metaphors, problem-finding, problem-solving, and remote associates. Covers business and organizational creativity in articles about advertising with art, creative visuals, business/management, creativity coaching, creativity exercises, entrepreneurship, group dynamics, innovation, leadership, organizational culture, organizational development, teams, and training, among others. Explicitly examines the complex interrelationship between society and creativity in articles about awards, conformity and conventionality, the creative sector and class of society, cultural diversity, the dark side of creativity, East vs. West, networking, social psychology, war, zeitgeist, and others. Personal and interpersonal creativity is discussed in articles relating to collaboration, family, life stages, mentors, networking, personal creativity and self-actualization. Focuses on scientific information about creativity, there are also articles that discuss brain and neuropsychology, concepts of creativity, definitions of creativity, expertise, longitudinal studies, researching art, artists and art audiences, research methods, phenomenology research and qualitative research. Online version contains an additional 26 biographies of famously creative people

Encyclopedia of Humor Studies Salvatore Attardo 2014-02-25 The Encyclopedia of Humor: A Social History explores the concept of humor in history and modern society in the United States and internationally. This work's scope encompasses the humor of children, adults, and even nonhuman primates throughout the ages, from crude jokes and simple slapstick to sophisticated word play and ironic parody and satire. As an academic social history, it includes the perspectives of a wide range of disciplines, including sociology, child development, social psychology, life style history, communication, and entertainment media. Readers will develop an understanding of the importance of humor as it has developed globally throughout history and appreciate its effects on child and adult development, especially in the areas of health, creativity, social development, and imagination. This two-volume set is available in both print and electronic

formats. Features & Benefits: The General Editor also serves as Editor-in-Chief of HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research for The International Society for Humor Studies. The book's 335 articles are organized in A-to-Z fashion in two volumes (approximately 1,000 pages). This work is enhanced by an introduction by the General Editor, a Foreword, a list of the articles and contributors, and a Reader's Guide that groups related entries thematically. A Chronology of Humor, a Resource Guide, and a detailed Index are included. Each entry concludes with References/Further Readings and cross references to related entries. The Index, Reader's Guide themes, and cross references between and among related entries combine to provide robust search-and-browse features in the electronic version. This two-volume, A-to-Z set provides a general, non-technical resource for students and researchers in such diverse fields as communication and media studies, sociology and anthropology, social and cognitive psychology, history, literature and linguistics, and popular culture and folklore.

The Comedy Improv Handbook Matt Fotis 2015-10-14 The Comedy Improv Handbook: A Comprehensive Guide to University Improvisational Comedy in Theatre and Performance is a one-stop resource for both improv teachers and students, covering improv history, theory, maxims, exercises, games, and structures. You will learn the necessary skills and techniques needed to become a successful improviser, developing a basic understanding of the history of improvisation and its major influences, structures, and theories. This book also addresses issues associated with being a college improviser – like auditions, rehearsals, performances, and the dynamics of improv groups. Long Form Improvisation and American Comedy M. Fotis 2014-02-11 Long form scenic improv began with the Harold. The comic philosophy of this form started an era of comedy marked by support, trust, and collaboration. This book tells of the Harold, beginning with the development of improv theatre, through the tensions and evolutions that led to its creation at iO, and to its use in contemporary filmmaking.

The American Stage Ron Engle 1993-05-06 This book focuses on the economic and social forces which shaped American theatre throughout its history. Alone or as a collection, these essays, written by leading theatre historians and critics of the American theatre, will stimulate discussions concerning the traditionally held views of America's theatrical heritage.

Show and Tell John Lahr 2002 "What a talented, wonderful, and complete writer."--Mel Brooks "By far the best thing about my stuff I've ever read."--Arthur Miller "These are wonderful portraits."--Edna O'Brien "The high-water mark of theatrical reportage. Exhilarating! Smart! Lahr gives as much thunderous pleasure as the great entertainers he writes about."--Richard Avedon "There's never been an American critic like John Lahr. His writing

exalts, honors, and dignifies the profession and, more importantly, the art."--  
Tony Kushner

Mike Nichols Mark Harris 2021-02-02 A National Book Critics Circle finalist • One of People's top 10 books of 2021 • An instant New York Times bestseller • Named a best book of the year by NPR and Time A magnificent biography of one of the most protean creative forces in American entertainment history, a life of dazzling highs and vertiginous plunges—some of the worst largely unknown until now—by the acclaimed author of *Pictures at a Revolution* and *Five Came Back* Mike Nichols burst onto the scene as a wunderkind: while still in his twenties, he was half of a hit improv duo with Elaine May that was the talk of the country. Next he directed four consecutive hit plays, won back-to-back Tonys, ushered in a new era of Hollywood moviemaking with *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, and followed it with *The Graduate*, which won him an Oscar and became the third-highest-grossing movie ever. At thirty-five, he lived in a three-story Central Park West penthouse, drove a Rolls-Royce, collected Arabian horses, and counted Jacqueline Kennedy, Elizabeth Taylor, Leonard Bernstein, and Richard Avedon as friends. Where he arrived is even more astonishing given where he had begun: born Igor Peschkowsky to a Jewish couple in Berlin in 1931, he was sent along with his younger brother to America on a ship in 1939. The young immigrant boy caught very few breaks. He was bullied and ostracized--an allergic reaction had rendered him permanently hairless--and his father died when he was just twelve, leaving his mother alone and overwhelmed. The gulf between these two sets of facts explains a great deal about Nichols's transformation from lonely outsider to the center of more than one cultural universe--the acute powers of observation that first made him famous; the nourishment he drew from his creative partnerships, most enduringly with May; his unquenchable drive; his hunger for security and status; and the depressions and self-medications that brought him to terrible lows. It would take decades for him to come to grips with his demons. In an incomparable portrait that follows Nichols from Berlin to New York to Chicago to Hollywood, Mark Harris explores, with brilliantly vivid detail and insight, the life, work, struggle, and passion of an artist and man in constant motion. Among the 250 people Harris interviewed: Elaine May, Meryl Streep, Stephen Sondheim, Robert Redford, Glenn Close, Tom Hanks, Candice Bergen, Emma Thompson, Annette Bening, Natalie Portman, Julia Roberts, Lorne Michaels, and Gloria Steinem. Mark Harris gives an intimate and evenhanded accounting of success and failure alike; the portrait is not always flattering, but its ultimate impact is to present the full story of one of the most richly interesting, complicated, and consequential figures the worlds of theater and motion pictures have ever seen. It is a triumph of the biographer's

art.

**Performance Activism** Dan Friedman 2021-12-02 This is the first book length study of performance activism. While Performance Studies recognizes the universality of human performance in daily life, what is specifically under investigation here is performance as an activity intentionally entered into as a means of engaging social issues and conflicts, that is, as an ensemble activity by which we re-construct/transform social reality. **Performance Activism: Precursors and Contemporary Pioneers** provides a global overview of the growing interface of performance with education, therapy, conflict resolution, civic engagement, community development and social justice activism. It combines an historical study of the processes by which, over the course of the 20th Century, performance has been loosened from the institutional constraints of the theatre with a mosaic-like overview of the diverse work/play of contemporary performance activists around the world. **Performance Activism** will be of interest to theatre and cultural historians, performance practitioners and researchers, psychologists and sociologists, educators and youth workers, community organizers and political activists.

**Ensemble** Mark Larson 2019-08-13 This definitive history brings Chicago's celebrated theater and comedy scenes to life with stories from some of its biggest stars spanning sixty-five years. Chicago is a bona fide theater town, bursting with vitality that thrills local fans and produces generation after generation of world-renowned actors, directors, playwrights, and designers. Now Mark Larson shares the rich theatrical history of Chicago through first-person accounts from the people who made it. Drawing from more than three hundred interviews, Larson weaves a narrative that expresses the spirit of Chicago's ensemble ethos: the voices of celebrities such as Julia Louis-Dreyfus, Ed Asner, George Wendt, Michael Shannon, and Tracy Letts comingle with stories from designers, composers, and others who have played a crucial role in making Chicago theater so powerful, influential, and unique. Among many other topics, this book explores the early days of the fabled Compass Players and the legendary Second City in the '50s and '60s; the rise of acclaimed ensembles like Steppenwolf in the '70s; the explosion of storefront and neighborhood companies in the '80s; and the enduring global influence of the city as the center of improv training and performance.

**Improvisation Hypermedia and the Arts since 1945** Roger Dean 2013-11-05 First Published in 1997. Routledge is an imprint of Taylor & Francis, an informa company.

**ReFocus: The Films of Elaine May** Alexandra Heller-Nicholas 2019-06-24 Spanning from obscurity to notoriety, the films of director, screenwriter, actor and comic Elaine May have recently experienced a long-overdue renaissance. Although she made only four films - *A New Leaf* (1971), *The Heartbreak Kid*

(1972), Mikey and Nicky (1976) and Ishtar (1987) - and never reached the level of acclaim of her frequent collaborator Mike Nichols, May's work is as enigmatic, sophisticated and unceasingly fascinating as her own complicated, reluctant star persona. This collection focuses both on the films she has directed, and also emphasises her work with other high profile collaborators such as John Cassavetes, Warren Beatty and Otto Preminger.

Telling Stories Michael Roemer 1995 Asks important questions about the very nature of stories and examines why we read stories rather than just learning the endings.

The Third Coast Thomas L. Dyja 2013-04-18 Winner of the Chicago Tribune's 2013 Heartland Prize A critically acclaimed history of Chicago at mid-century, featuring many of the incredible personalities that shaped American culture Before air travel overtook trains, nearly every coast-to-coast journey included a stop in Chicago, and this flow of people and commodities made it the crucible for American culture and innovation. In luminous prose, Chicago native Thomas Dyja re-creates the story of the city in its postwar prime and explains its profound impact on modern America—from Chess Records to Playboy, McDonald's to the University of Chicago. Populated with an incredible cast of characters, including Mahalia Jackson, Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Chuck Berry, Sun Ra, Simone de Beauvoir, Nelson Algren, Gwendolyn Brooks, Studs Turkel, and Mayor Richard J. Daley, The Third Coast recalls the prominence of the Windy City in all its grandeur.

The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy and Improvisation in the Arts

Alessandro Bertinetto 2021-07-22 Over the last few decades, the notion of improvisation has enriched and dynamized research on traditional philosophies of music, theatre, dance, poetry, and even visual art. This Handbook offers readers an authoritative collection of accessible articles on the philosophy of improvisation, synthesizing and explaining various subjects and issues from the growing wave of journal articles and monographs in the field. Its 48 chapters, written specifically for this volume by an international team of scholars, are accessible for students and researchers alike. The volume is organized into four main sections: I Art and Improvisation: Theoretical Perspectives II Art and Improvisation: Aesthetical, Ethical, and Political Perspectives III Improvisation in Musical Practices IV Improvisation in the Visual, Narrative, Dramatic, and Interactive Arts Key Features: Treats improvisation not only as a stylistic feature, but also as an aesthetic property of artworks and performances as well as a core element of artistic creativity. Spells out multiple aspects of the concept of improvisation, emphasizing its relevance in understanding the nature of art. Covers improvisation in a wide spectrum of artistic domains, including unexpected ones such as literature, visual arts, games, and cooking. Addresses key questions, such as: - How can

improvisation be defined and what is its role in different art forms? - Can improvisation be perceived as such, and how can it be aesthetically evaluated? - What is the relationship between improvisation and notions such as action, composition, expressivity, and authenticity? - What is the ethical and political significance of improvisation?

Excelsior, You Fathead! Eugene B. Bergmann 2004-11-01 (Applause Books). Jean Shepherd (1921-1999), master humorist, is best known for his creation A Christmas Story , the popular movie about the child who wants a BB gun for Christmas and nearly shoots his eye out. What else did Shepherd do? He is considered by many to be the Mark Twain and James Thurber of his day. For many thousands of fans, for decades, "Shep" talked on the radio late at night, keeping them up way past their bedtimes. He entertained without a script, improvising like a jazz musician, on any and every subject you can imagine. He invented and remains the master of talk radio. Shepherd perpetrated one of the great literary hoaxes of all time, promoting a nonexistent book and author, and then brought the book into existence. He wrote 23 short stories for Playboy , four times winning their humor of the year award, and also interviewed the Beatles for the magazine. He authored several popular books of humor and satire, created several television series and acted in several plays. He is the model for the character played by Jason Robards in the play and movie A Thousand Clowns , as well as the inspiration for the Shel Silverstein song made famous by Johnny Cash, "A Boy Named Sue." Readers will learn the significance of innumerable Shepherd words and phrases, such as "Excelsior, you fathead," and observe his constant confrontations with the America he loved. They will get to know and understand this multitalented genius by peeking behind the wall he built for himself a wall to hide a different and less agreeable persona. Through interviews with his friends, co-workers and creative associates, such as musician David Amram, cartoonist and playwright Jules Feiffer, publisher and broadcaster Paul Krassner, and author Norman Mailer, the book explains a complex and unique genius of our time. "Shepherd pretty much invented talk radio ... What I got of him was a wonder at the world one man could create. I am as awed now by his achievement as I was then." Richard Corliss, Time magazine online

Revel with a Cause Stephen E. Kercher 2010-06-15 We live in a time much like the postwar era. A time of arch political conservatism and vast social conformity. A time in which our nation's leaders question and challenge the patriotism of those who oppose their policies. But before there was Jon Stewart, Al Franken, or Bill Maher, there were Mort Sahl, Stan Freberg, and Lenny Bruce—liberal satirists who, through their wry and scabrous comedic routines, waged war against the political ironies, contradictions, and hypocrisies of their times. Revel with a Cause is their story. Stephen Kercher

here provides the first comprehensive look at the satiric humor that flourished in the United States during the 1950s and early 1960s. Focusing on an impressive range of comedy—not just standup comedians of the day but also satirical publications like MAD magazine, improvisational theater groups such as Second City, the motion picture *Dr. Strangelove*, and TV shows like *That Was the Week That Was*—Kercher reminds us that the postwar era saw varieties of comic expression that were more challenging and nonconformist than we commonly remember. His history of these comedic luminaries shows that for a sizeable audience of educated, middle-class Americans who shared such liberal views, the period's satire was a crucial mode of cultural dissent. For such individuals, satire was a vehicle through which concerns over the suppression of civil liberties, Cold War foreign policies, blind social conformity, and our heated racial crisis could be productively addressed. A vibrant and probing look at some of the most influential comedy of mid-twentieth-century America, *Revel with a Cause* belongs on the short list of essential books for anyone interested in the relationship between American politics and popular culture.

*Music and the Road* Gordon E. Slethaug 2017-12-02 Brian Wilson and The Beach Boys, Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, and Paul Simon—these familiar figures have written road music for half a century and continue to remain highly-regarded artists. But there is so much more to say about road music. This book fills a glaring hole in scholarship about the road and music. In a collection of 13 essays, *Music and the Road* explores the origins of road music in the blues, country-western, and rock 'n' roll; the themes of adventure, freedom, mobility, camaraderie, and love, and much more in this music; the mystique and reality of touring as an important part of getting away from home, creating community among performers, and building audiences across the country from the 1930s to the present; and the contribution of music to popular road films such as *Bonnie and Clyde*, *Easy Rider*, *Thelma and Louise*, and *On the Road*.

*Group Genius* Keith Sawyer 2008-03-04 "A fascinating account of human experience at its best." --Mihály Csíkszentmihályi, author of *Flow* Creativity has long been thought to be an individual gift, best pursued alone; schools, organizations, and whole industries are built on this idea. But what if the most common beliefs about how creativity works are wrong? *Group Genius* tears down some of the most popular myths about creativity, revealing that creativity is always collaborative—even when you're alone. Sharing the results of his own acclaimed research on jazz groups, theater ensembles, and conversation analysis, Keith Sawyer shows us how to be more creative in collaborative group settings, how to change organizational dynamics for the better, and how

to tap into our own reserves of creativity.

A Guide to the History of Illinois John Hoffmann 1991 A guide to the literature and sources of Illinois history. It includes descriptions of both primary and secondary sources. The first part of the book consists of bibliographical essays that focus on particular periods and topics in Illinois history. The second part includes 12 reports on the principal archival and manuscript repositories for documentation in the field of Illinois history. A final chapter surveys Illinois-related collections in the Library of Congress and the National Archives.

Reference & Research Book News John Hoffmann's volume is the first comprehensive guide to the literature and sources of Illinois history. It includes full and careful descriptions of both primary and secondary sources. The first part of the book consists of bibliographical essays that focus on particular periods and topics in Illinois history. Eight chapters are devoted to specific areas, from 1673 to the present, while six chapters are thematic in nature, covering, for instance, the religious and educational history of the state, the voluminous literature on Chicago, and the subject of Abraham Lincoln in Illinois. These essays are preceded by introductory remarks on historical surveys, reference books, and periodicals in the field, studies of such topics as the medical and legal history of the state, and publications relating to maps and newspapers of Illinois. This long overdue guide will bring together the vast accumulation of primary and secondary materials that defines Illinois history. The nature and scope of this guide is unmatched by any previous work. The second part includes twelve reports on the principal archival and manuscript repositories for documentation in the field of Illinois history. This section provides detailed information on specific collections within the context of related sources on particular periods and topics. A final chapter surveys Illinois-related collections in the Library of Congress and the National Archives. As part of the series Reference Guides to State History and Research, this book provides a valuable resource for researchers, students, genealogists, and the interested public, and is an appropriate selection for reference collections in American, regional, or Illinois history.

Mike Nichols Kyle Stevens 2015-08-03 With iconic movies like *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, *The Graduate*, and *Carnal Knowledge*, Mike Nichols was the most prominent American director during the cultural upheavals of the 1960s. *Mike Nichols: Sex, Language, and the Reinvention of Psychological Realism* argues that he overhauled the style of psychological realism, and, in doing so, continues to shape the legacies of Hollywood cinema. It also reveals that misreadings of his films were central to foundational debates at the emergence of Cinema Studies as a discipline, inviting new reflections on critical dogma. Focusing on Nichols' classic movies, as well as later films such as *Silkwood*, *The Birdcage*, and *Angels in America*, Kyle Stevens demonstrates that

Nichols' realism lies not in the plausibility of his characters but in their inherent mystery. By attending to the puzzling words and silences, breaths and laughter, that comprise these characters, Stevens uncovers new insights into the subversive potential of a range of cinematic elements, and reveals how Nichols' satirical oeuvre, and Hollywood itself, participated in several of the nation's most urgent social, political, and philosophical advances.

Explaining Creativity R. Keith Sawyer 2006-01-19 Explaining Creativity is an accessible introduction to the latest scientific research on creativity. In the last 50 years, psychologists, anthropologists, and sociologists have increasingly studied creativity, and we now know more about creativity than at any point in history. Explaining Creativity considers not only arts like painting and writing, but also science, stage performance, and business innovation. Until about a decade ago, creativity researchers tended to focus on highly valued activities like fine art painting and Nobel prize winning science. Sawyer brings this research up to date by including movies, music videos, cartoons, videogames, hypertext fiction, and computer technology. For example, this is the first book on creativity to include studies of performance and improvisation. Sawyer draws on the latest research findings to show the importance of collaboration and context in all of these creative activities. Today's science of creativity is interdisciplinary; in addition to psychological studies of creativity, Explaining Creativity includes research by anthropologists on creativity in non-Western cultures, and research by sociologists about the situations, contexts, and networks of creative activity. Explaining Creativity brings these approaches together within the sociocultural approach to creativity pioneered by Howard Becker, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Howard Gardner. The sociocultural approach moves beyond the individual to consider the social and cultural contexts of creativity, emphasizing the role of collaboration and context in the creative process.

The Improv Handbook Tom Salinsky 2017-10-19 The Improv Handbook is the most comprehensive, smart, helpful and inspiring guide to improv available today. Applicable to comedians, actors, public speakers and anyone who needs to think on their toes, it features a range of games, interviews, descriptions and exercises that illuminate and illustrate the exciting world of improvised performance. First published in 2008, this second edition features a new foreword by comedian Mike McShane, as well as new exercises on endings, managing blind offers and master-servant games, plus new and expanded interviews with Keith Johnstone, Neil Mullarkey, Jeffrey Sweet and Paul Rogan. The Improv Handbook is a one-stop guide to the exciting world of improvisation. Whether you're a beginner, an expert, or would just love to try it if you weren't too scared, The Improv Handbook will guide you every step of

the way.

Joy Ride John Lahr 2015-09-10 'John Lahr manages to write better about the theatre than anybody in the English language,' says Richard Eyre. Joy Ride, which includes the best of his New Yorker profiles and reviews, makes his expertise and his exhilaration palpable. From modern greats, like Arthur Miller, Harold Pinter, David Mamet, Tony Kushner and August Wilson, through the work of directors like Nicholas Hytner and Ingmar Bergman, to Shakespeare himself, the depth of Lahr's understanding is plain to see and extraordinary to read. He brings the reader up close and personal to the artists and their art. Whether you are a regular theatre-goer, or just starting out, Lahr's book delights as both a celebration and a guide.

The Second City Unscripted Mike Thomas 2012-06-30 Descriptions of Chicago's Second City comedy theater group as told to the author by troupe members and historical information collected by the author.

Nichols and May Robert E. Kapsis 2020-10-15 In the late 1950s, Mike Nichols (1931–2014) and Elaine May (b. 1932) soared to superstar status as a sketch comedy duo in live shows and television. After their 1962 breakup, both went on to long and distinguished careers in other areas of show business—mostly separately, but sporadically together again. In Nichols and May: Interviews, twenty-seven interviews and profiles ranging over more than five decades tell their stories in their own words. Nichols quickly became an A-list stage and film director, while May, like many women in her field, often found herself thwarted in her attempts to make her distinctive voice heard in projects she could control herself. Yet, in recent years, Nichols's work as a filmmaker has been perhaps unfairly devalued, while May's accomplishments, particularly as a screenwriter and director, have become more appreciated, leading to her present widespread acceptance as a groundbreaking female artist and a creative genius of and for our time. Nichols gave numerous interviews during his career, and editor Robert E. Kapsis culled hundreds of potential selections to include in this volume the most revealing and those that focus on his filmmaking career. May, however, was a reluctant interview subject at best. She often subverted the whole interview process, producing instead a hilarious parody or even a comedy sketch—with or without the cooperation of the sometimes-oblivious interviewer. With its contrasting selection of interviews conventional and oddball, this volume is an important contribution to the study of the careers of Nichols and May.

The Value of Names and Other Plays Jeffrey Sweet 2008-05-14 Spanning a quarter of a century, this collection of plays demonstrates author Jeffrey Sweet's eye for the drama of human relationships. Sweet works with sensitivity and irony to confront both personal politics and the impact of historical change. These nine works, taken together, present a playwright who extends the

struggles of his small circles of characters to his audience and humanity in general. The title work, first mounted in 1982, is a comedy-drama about the aftermath of the blacklist whose continued relevance makes it a frequently produced play today. The family drama *Porch* suggests larger social changes through the interaction of a small-town shopkeeper and his defiant daughter. The lauded *American Enterprise*, set in the Chicago of the robber barons, is a song-filled true story about a millionaire whose stubborn idealism leads to disaster. *Stay Till Morning* is a rueful comedy about sex and accommodation in the Florida Keys. The three plays that grew out of his fascination with the effects of World War II—*Berlin '45*, *Court-Martial at Fort Devens*, and *The Action Against Sol Schumann*—dramatize the ways in which that conflict transformed private fates. Each script is accompanied by an extended introduction from the playwright as well as complete performance notes.