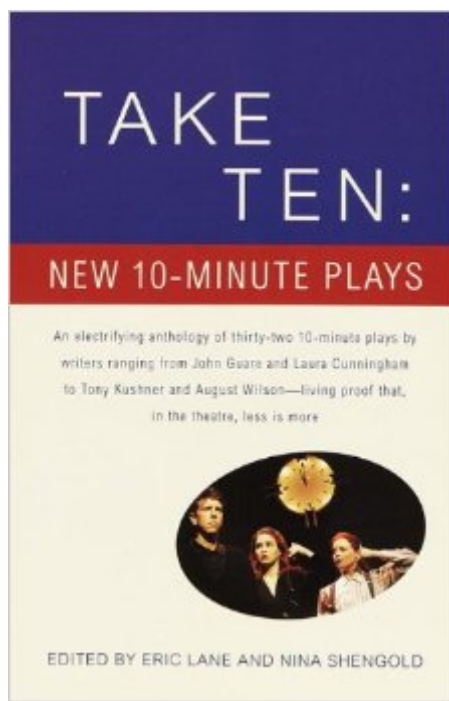


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Take Ten: New 10-Minute Plays



Synopsis

A ten-minute play is a streak of theatrical lightning. It doesn't last long, but its power can stand your hair on end. This splendid anthology contains enough wattage to light up a small city. For in its pages, thirty-two of our finest playwrights hone their skills on a form that has been called the haiku of the American stage. The plays that Nina Shengold and Eric Lane have collected in this volume range from monologues to an eight-character farce. Eminently producible, ideally suited for the classroom and audition, *Take Ten* is a marvelous resource for teachers and students of drama, as well as a stimulating read for lovers of the theatre. Contributors include: John Augustine, Cathy Celesia, Laura Cunningham, Joe Pintauro, Mary Sue Price, Megan Terry, Jose Rivera, Romulus Linney, David Mamet, Jane Martin, David Ives, and many others.

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Customer Reviews

"Take Ten: New 10-Minute Plays," edited by Eric Lane and Nina Shengold, is an excellent collection of theater pieces. The editors celebrate the 10-minute play as a unique and powerful sub-genre of drama; in their introduction, they note that the 10-minute play made its "official debut" as a genre at the Actors Theatre of Louisville's 1977 Humana Festival of New American Plays. This anthology contains 32 plays by a diverse group of authors. Included are some of the most important names in the American theater: Tony Kushner, Christopher Durang, David Mamet, August Wilson, etc. There are also many names that are new to me. The plays cover many different themes: love and heartbreak (both of the gay and straight varieties), violence, crime, sports, phone sex, death, racial politics, etc. There are many different tones and stylistic approaches: tragic, whimsical, surreal,

raunchy, etc. The plays include one-character monologues, 2-character pieces, and multi-character pieces. There are many highlights to this excellent collection. My favorite pieces included the following: David Ives' "The Philadelphia," a witty Twilight Zone-ish comedy; Mary Miller's charming "Ferris Wheel"; Jose Rivera's "Gas," which takes place on the U.S. homefront during the Persian Gulf War; Frederick Stroppel's "Judgment Call," an ironic look into the world of baseball umpires; and Diana Son's "R.A.W. ('Cause I'm a Woman)," a sort of Asian counterpart to Ntozake Shange's "For colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf." These are just a few of the many fine pieces in this collection. I highly recommend "Take Ten" to those with an interest in playwriting, in multicultural studies, or in provocative and experimental literature in general.

I am part of a group who puts on shows every four months. This book has been a constant source of successful shows. There is a good selection of plays - all of which offer good roles for the actors as well as good entertainment for the audience. I've also used it with University level drama students, assigning them to adapt the plays to their own particular environment and found great success. The plays are good.

This is by far the best scene book I own. All the pieces are unusual and interesting, powerful and captivating. Popular playwrights such as David Ives and Christopher Durang are included and many of the scenes are appropriate for various age groups. My speech team recently won with two of the pieces, Anything for You and The Man Who Couldn't Dance. Both excellent pieces. My only complaint was that the scenes are often longer than 10 minutes, despite the title of the book.

I absolutely LOVED this delightful collection of plays. I think they would be funny to watch, and wonderful to act out. It was quite a collection, varying from plain silly to deep and touching. It would also be very good for student productions, as a night of ten minute theater. All in all, it is a hilarious, deeply entertaining read, recommended for anyone with interest in the theater.

Short plays are great, they have to get to the point quickly and if they aren't any good, well, they'll be over soon enough. This collection has a decent variety. About 30 short plays, dating from the early 80's to the mid-to late 90's. Some of them are monologues, some are funny skits, some are serious, multi-character mini-plays, some are post-modern and *experimental*, some are conventional. (For what it's worth, they're all by Americans as far as I can tell, so it's not that varied.) There were some I liked quite a bit (in no order): Flop Cop - Laura Cunningham - Police

officer confronts playwright. Clever farce. R.A.W. Cause I'm a Woman - Diana Son - Four characters doing inter-weaved monologues about their experiences as Asian women. The Janitor - August Wilson - Short impromptu speech by a custodian in an empty auditorium. Wilson's poetic vernacular. The Philadelphia - David Ives - Two guys meeting up for lunch in restaurant. Funny, surreal skit. A Sermon - David Mamet - Somewhat incoherent, raging sermon by crazy, foul mouthed character. (Very Mamet) Mrs Sorken - Christopher Durang - Humorous, discursive monologue by classic Durang wacko. There were some I had mixed feelings about, like Shasta Rue by Jane Martin. Interesting character, great vernacular writing, funny lines... But, I found it kind of hard to follow. Good enough that I am going to look into her other work though. And, finally, there were some I didn't like at all, e.g., Reverse Transcription by Tony Kushner. I've always thought of him as a sophisticated and stylish writer, but also as a pretentious and empty one and this piece reminded me why. All in all a very good collection. Recommended for theater buffs or people who are curious about late 20th century American theater.

Take Ten: New 10-Minute Plays is a wonderful book. A great collection of for the most part easily staged plays that were all neither too long or too short. The large assortment makes for a tough decision on a favorite, and several stick out in my mind. I highly recommend this book, it is thoroughly enjoyable.

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