

Essential Playwrights to Know

*---- denotes the winner of the Pulitzer Prize

^---- denotes a recent HSPVA production

Email rorjamesleech@gmail.com for help finding monologues and plays!!

Classical

Playwright	Essential Works	Years
Sophocles	<i>Antigone</i> <i>Oedipus Rex</i>	???-- 406
William Shakespeare	<i>Hamlet</i> <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> [^] <i>Macbeth</i> <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> <i>Othello</i> <i>Julius Caesar</i> (and a million more)	1564-1616 Most famous playwright of all time
Moliere	<i>Don Juan</i> <i>The Miser</i>	1645-1673
Georg Buchner	<i>Woyzeck</i>	1813-1837
Henrik Ibsen	<i>A Doll's House</i> <i>Hedda Gabler</i>	1828-1906
Oscar Wilde	<i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> <i>An Ideal Husband</i> [^]	1854-1900
Anton Chekhov	<i>Three Sisters</i> [^] <i>The Seagull</i> <i>The Cherry Orchard</i>	1860-1904
Frank Wedekind	<i>Spring's Awakening: A Child's Tragedy</i>	1864-1918
Federico Garcia Lorca	<i>Yerma</i> [^] <i>Blood Wedding</i> <i>House of Bernarda Alba</i>	1898-1936
Bertolt Brecht	<i>The Threepenny Opera</i> <i>Life of Galileo</i> <i>Mother courage</i>	1898-1956 Theatre innovator

Playwright	Essential Works	Genre
AMERICAN CLASSICS		
Edward Albee	<i>Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*</i> <i>The Goat or Who Is Sylvia</i>	American Classic
Lorraine Hansberry	<i>A Raisin in the Sun*</i>	American Classic
William Inge	<i>Picnic*^</i> <i>Come back, little Sheba!</i>	American Classic
Arthur Miller	<i>The Crucible^</i> <i>Death of a Salesman*</i> <i>A View from the bridge</i>	American Classic
Eugene O'Neill	<i>A Long Day's Journey Into Night*</i> <i>The Iceman Cometh</i>	American Classic
Neil Simon	<i>The Odd Couple</i> <i>Lost in Yonkers</i>	
Thornton Wilder	<i>Our Town*</i> <i>The Skin of our Teeth^</i>	American Classic
Tennessee Williams	<i>A Streetcar Named Desire*</i> <i>Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*^</i>	American Classic
August Wilson	<i>Fences*</i> <i>The Piano Lesson</i>	American Classic Writer of Colour (Diverse)
THEATRE OF THE ABSURD		
Jean Anouilh	<i>Becket</i> <i>Antigone (adaptation)</i>	
Samuel Beckett	<i>Waiting for Godot</i> <i>Happy Days</i>	
Antonin Artaud	<i>Jet of Blood</i>	'Theatre of Cruelty'
Dario Fo	<i>Accidental Death of an Anarchist^</i> <i>The Open Couple</i>	Italian Playwright

Eugene Ionesco	<i>The Lesson</i> ^ <i>The Bald Soprano</i> ^ <i>Exit the King</i> <i>Rhinoceros</i>	
Tom Stoppard	<i>Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead</i> <i>The Coast of Utopia</i>	
Jean Paul Sartre	<i>No Exit</i> <i>The Flies</i> <i>Dirty Hands</i> <i>The Respectful Prostitute</i>	
Harold Pinter	<i>No Man's Land</i> <i>Betrayal</i> <i>The Homecoming</i> <i>The Birthday Party</i>	
1960's-1990's		
Caryl Churchill	<i>Top Girls</i> <i>Cloud 9</i>	Feminist surrealism
Constance Congdon	<i>Tales of the Lost Formicans</i> ^ <i>Casanova</i>	
Harvey Fierstein	<i>The Torch Song Trilogy</i> <i>Casa Valentina</i>	Gay themes
John Guare	<i>Six Degrees of Separation</i> *^ <i>House of Blue Leaves</i>	
David Harrower	<i>Blackbird</i>	New Voices
Tony Kushner	<i>Angels in America</i> *	Modern Classic Gay themes
Tracy Letts	<i>August: Osage County</i> * <i>Killer Joe</i> <i>Bug</i>	
Charles L. Mee	<i>Bobrauchenbergamerica</i> ^ <i>Big Love</i> ^	Surrealism
David Lindsey Abire	<i>Rabbit Hole</i> * <i>Fuddy Meers</i> ^	
Kenneth Lonergan	<i>This Is Our Youth</i>	Naturalistic

	<i>Lobby Hero</i>	Young characters
Suzan Lori Parks	<i>Topdog/ Underdog*</i> <i>In the Blood</i> [^]	Diverse Raw
David Mamet	<i>Glengarry, Glen Ross</i> <i>American Buffalo</i>	
Martin McDonagh	<i>The Pillowman</i> <i>The Cripple of Inishmaan</i>	Dark Comedy
John Patrick Shanley	<i>Doubt*</i> <i>A Dreamer Examines His Pillow</i> <i>Prodigal Son</i>	Crusty Old White Dude
Peter Schaffer	<i>Amadeus</i> <i>Equus</i>	
Ntozake Shange	<i>For Coloured Girls Who Have Considered Suicide when the rainbow is enuf</i>	Diverse
Sam Shepard	<i>Buried Child*</i> <i>Fool for Love</i>	New American Voices
Jose Rivera	<i>Marisol</i> [^]	Surrealism
CURRENT CLASSICS		
Tarell Alvin McCraney	<i>Choir Boy</i> <i>Marcus, or the secret of Sweet</i>	Diverse Writer of colour
Annie Baker	<i>The Flick*</i> <i>John</i> <i>Circle Mirror Transformation</i>	Diverse
Sarah DeLappe	<i>The Wolves</i>	Female characters
Ike Holter	<i>Sender</i> <i>Hit the Wall</i> <i>Exit Strategy</i>	Diverse Writer of colour
Branden Jacob Jenkins	<i>An Octoroon</i> <i>Appropriate</i>	
Young Jean Lee	<i>Straight White Men</i> <i>The Shipment</i>	
Rajiv Joseph	<i>Gruesome Playground Injuries</i>	

	<i>All this Intimacy</i> <i>Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo</i>	
Sarah Ruhl	<i>In the next room or the vibrator</i> <i>play</i> <i>Clean House</i>	
Lynn Nottage	<i>Ruined</i> <i>Sweat*</i>	Diverse Writer of colour
John Logan	<i>Red</i> <i>Peter and Alice</i>	
Paula Vogel	<i>How I Learned to Drive</i> <i>Indecent</i>	
Lesser Known Modern Playwrights		
Mike Bartlett	<i>Cock</i> <i>Earthquakes in London</i>	
Bekah Brunstetter	<i>The Cake</i> <i>Oregon Trail</i>	
Kirsten Greenidge	<i>Baltimore</i> [^] <i>Milk Like Sugar</i>	
Noah Haidle	<i>Smokefall</i> [^] <i>Mr. Marmalade</i>	Surrealism
Katori Hall	<i>The Mountaintop</i>	
Robert Icke	<i>1984</i> <i>Oresteia</i>	Reinventor of classics Artistic Director of the Almeida theatre
Naomi Iizuka	<i>Aloha Say The Pretty Girls</i> <i>Good Kids</i>	Surrealism
Anna Jordan	<i>Chicken Soup</i> <i>Yen</i>	
Duncan Macmillan	<i>People, Places and Things</i> <i>1984</i> <i>Lungs</i>	
Nina Raine	<i>Tribes</i>	

	<i>Consent</i>	
Marco Ramirez	<i>The Royale</i>	
Simon Stephens	<i>The Curious Incident of the Dog In The Nighttime Heisenberg</i>	
Jack Thorne	<i>Let the Right One In Harry Potter and the Cursed Child This is England</i>	
Martin Zimmerman	<i>On The Exhale Seven Spots on the Sun</i>	

PLEASE NOTE: There is a REASON Neil LaBute is not on this list

MUSICAL THEATRE ESSENTIAL COMPOSERS

Composer(s)	Musicals	Genre
GOLDEN AGE 1940s-1960s		
Richard Adler and Jerry Ross	<i>The Pajama Game</i> [^] <i>Damn Yankees</i>	
Harold Arlin	<i>The Wizard of Oz</i>	
Leonard Bernstein	<i>West Side Story (music)</i> <i>On The Town</i> <i>Candide</i> <i>Peter Pan</i>	
Irving Berlin	<i>Annie Get Your Gun</i> <i>Top Hat</i> <i>Holiday Inn</i>	
George Gershwin	<i>Porgy and Bess</i> <i>An American in Paris</i>	
Jerry Herman	<i>Hello Dolly</i> <i>Mame</i> <i>La Cage Aux Follies</i>	
Frank Loesser	<i>Guys and Dolls</i>	

	<i>How To Succeed... *</i>	
Cole Porter	<i>Anything Goes</i> <i>Kiss Me Kate</i>	
Rogers and Hammerstein	<i>Oklahoma</i> <i>Carousel</i> <i>South Pacific*</i> <i>King and I</i> <i>Cinderella</i>	Classical
Rogers and Hart	<i>Pal Joey</i> <i>Babes in Arms</i>	
Charles Strouse	<i>Bye Bye Birdy</i> <i>Annie</i>	
Meredith Wilson	<i>The Music Man</i>	
1970's-2000's		
Ahrens and Flaherty	<i>Ragtime</i> ^ <i>Seussical</i> <i>Once on this Island</i>	
Michael Bennett	<i>A Chorus Line*</i>	
Alain Boublil and Claude Michel Schonberg	<i>Les Miserables</i> <i>Miss Saigon</i> <i>Martin Guare</i>	Pop Opera
Kander and Ebb	<i>Chicago</i> ^ <i>Cabaret</i> ^ <i>Kiss of the Spider Woman</i>	
William Finn	<i>The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee</i> <i>A New Brain</i> <i>Falsettos</i>	
Jonathan Larson	<i>Rent</i> *^ <i>tick,tick...boom!</i>	Rock
Andrew Lloyd Webber	<i>The Phantom of the Opera</i> <i>Cats</i> <i>Joseph and the...</i> <i>Jesus Christ Superstar</i> <i>Evita</i>	

Galt Macdermot	<i>Hair</i> [^]	Rock
Tim Rice (lyrics)	<i>Joseph and the amazing...</i> <i>Jesus Christ Superstar</i> <i>Evita</i> <i>The Lion King</i> <i>Aida</i>	
Jason Robert Brown	<i>The Last 5 Years</i> <i>Parade</i> <i>Songs for a new World</i> <i>The Bridges of Madison County</i>	
Stephen Schwartz	<i>Pippin</i> <i>Wicked</i> <i>Godspell</i> [^] <i>Pocahontas</i>	
Lucy Simon	<i>The Secret Garden</i> <i>Doctor Zhivago</i>	
Stephen Sondheim	<i>Sweeney Todd</i> <i>Sunday in the Park With</i> <i>George</i> [*] <i>Into The Woods</i> <i>Assassins</i> <i>Gypsy</i> <i>Company</i>	The greatest musical theatre composer of all time
Frank Wildhorn	<i>Jekyll and Hyde</i> <i>The Civil War</i> <i>Bonnie and Clyde</i>	
MODERN COMPOSERS, 2000-now		
Scott Frankel	<i>Grey Gardens</i> <i>War Paint</i>	
Michael Friedman	<i>Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson</i> <i>The Fortress of Solitude</i>	
Marc Shaiman	<i>Hairspray</i> [^] <i>Catch Me if You Can</i>	
Adam Guettel	<i>The Light in the Piazza</i>	
Tom Kitt	<i>Next to Normal</i> [*] <i>If/Then</i>	

Robert Lopez	<i>Avenue Q[^]</i> <i>The Book of Mormon</i> <i>Frozen</i>	
Dave Malloy	<i>Natasha, Pierre, and The Great Comet of 1812</i> <i>Ghost Quartet</i>	
Lin Manuel Miranda	<i>Hamilton*</i> <i>In The Heights</i> <i>Bring It On</i>	Rap musicals
Alan Menkin	<i>Little Shop of Horrors</i> <i>Newsies</i> <i>Beauty and the Beast</i> <i>Aladdin</i>	
Tim Minchin	<i>Matilda</i> <i>Groundhog Day</i>	
Laurence O'Keefe	<i>Legally Blonde</i> <i>Batboy: The Musical</i> <i>Heathers</i>	
Pasek and Paul	<i>Dear Evan Hansen</i> <i>Dogfight</i> <i>A Christmas Story</i> <i>Edges</i> <i>James and the Giant Peach</i> <i>The Greatest Showman</i>	
Duncan Sheik	<i>Spring Awakening</i>	
Jennine Tesori	<i>Caroline or Change</i> <i>Violet</i> <i>Thoroughly Modern Millie</i> <i>Fun Home</i> <i>Shrek</i>	
David Yazbeck	<i>The Full Monty</i> <i>Dirty Rotten Scoundrels</i> <i>The Band's Visit</i>	