



Playwrights and Power: The Making of the Dramatists Guild

Thomas J. Walsh

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In this new and insightful history of the Dramatists Guild of America, historian Thomas J. Walsh reveals for the first time the people, the passion, and the pocketbook issues that led to the creation of what many call the strongest writers organization in the world.

Based on extensive research, Walsh delves into the evolution of playwrights' authorship rights in America, including: George Henry Boker's efforts in the mid-nineteenth century to extend copyright protection for dramatic writing to include royalties for productions; Bronson Howard's creation of the Dramatist Club to combat the powerful Theatrical Trusts of the late-nineteenth century; Arthur Train and the creation of the Authors League to defend an author's ownership of his or her copyright; and George Middleton and Arthur Richman's effort to organize the American playwrights of the 1920s (including such authors as Eugene O'Neill and Rachel Crothers) together to protect their right over the production of their work with adoption of the first Minimum Basic Agreement between playwrights and theatrical managers.

In this illuminating and detailed history, Walsh concentrates his study on the contracts, characters, and conflicts that produced the that produced the founding of the Dramatists Guild and its growth and challenges through the end of the twentieth century. His work is an exciting new look at what has been called "the playwrights' century" in America and how the Dramatists Guild encouraged, supported, and fought for its member authors.

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