



**Russian Dramatic Theory from Pushkin to the
Symbolists: An Anthology (University of Texas
Press Slavic Series ; No. 5)**

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Although younger than most European theatrical traditions, the Russian professional theater has generated an exciting body of criticism and theory which until recently has remained unknown or nearly inaccessible in the West. This anthology presents a selection of important Russian writing on the aesthetics of drama and the theater from 1828 to 1914.

The focus of these essays, most published here for the first time in English, is on the so-called Crisis in the Theater of 1904 to 1914, a lively debate between the symbolists and the naturalists that evoked brilliant polemic writing from Meyerhold, Bely, Bryusov, and others. Along with Chekhov's amusing critique of Sarah Bernhardt ("monstrously facile!") and Ivanov's abstruse analysis of the essence of tragedy, the essays form a running commentary on the development of the Russian theater: Pushkin on his predecessors, Gogol on his own work, Belinsky on Gogol, Sleptsov on Ostrovsky and Leskov, Bely on Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* ("enervated people, trying to forget the terror of life"), the symbolists on one another.

Each selection is printed in its entirety, with extensive notes, and a lengthy introduction places all the pieces within their historical and cultural contexts to comprise a brief history of Russian dramatic theory before the revolution. This volume is essential reading for all who wish to extend their knowledge of the Russian contribution to theatrical history, theory, and criticism.

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