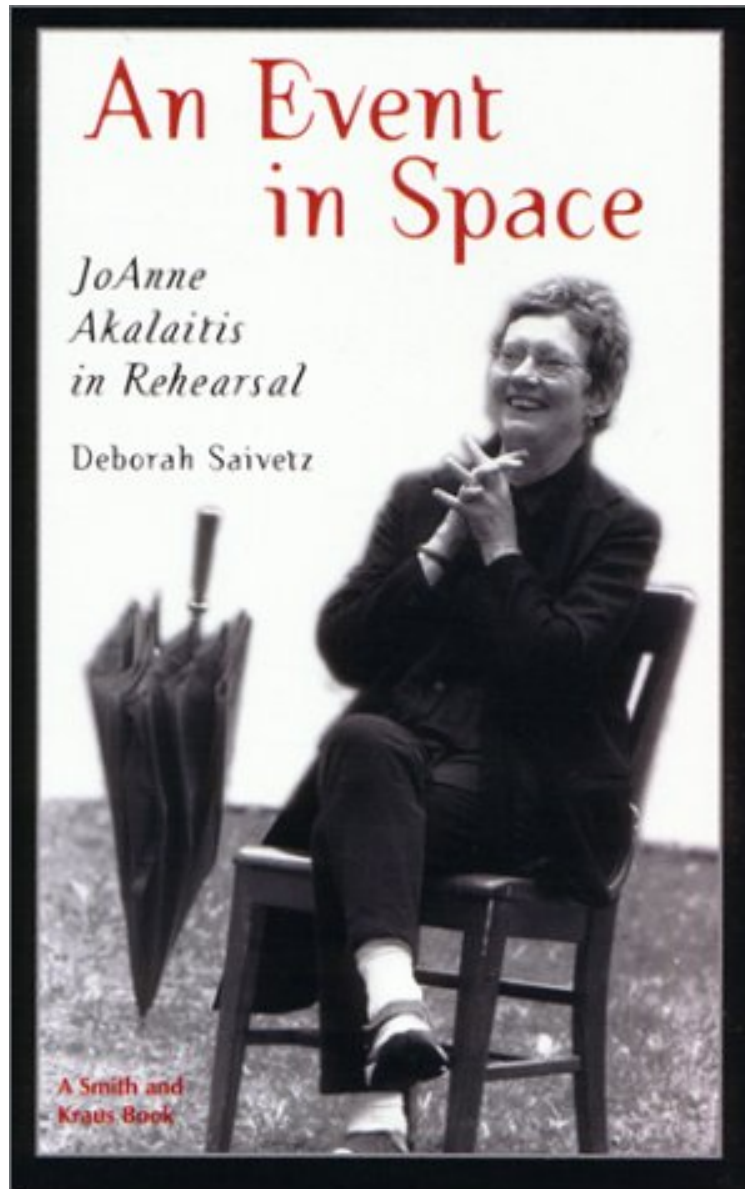


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Deborah Saivetz

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Deborah Saivetz : An Event in Space: Joanne Akalaitis in Rehearsal (Career Development Series) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised An Event in Space: Joanne

Akalaitis in Rehearsal (Career Development Series):

Other than a handful of essays in anthologies and an occasional mention in introductory college textbooks, little has been published on Akalaitis. She is one of America's foremost independent theatre directors, yet no book-length study exists on either the director herself or on the Mabou Mines. Akalaitis's systematic approach to working with actors, however has yet to be explored or elaborated upon in print. This book may provide a valuable introduction to the work of this important artist, locating it within the historical context of the American avant-garde theater movement of the past three decades. Moreover, by balancing step-by-step descriptions of Akalaitis's rehearsal exercises and directing techniques with critical analysis, the book speaks not only to theater practitioners but also many theater scholars and audience members curious about a director whose work has often been misunderstood.

From Library Journal Akalaitis, an Obie winner and chair of the theater department at Bard College, is a controversial stage director who elicits strong positive and negative responses, probably a sign that she is doing something right. Saivetz, a director herself, examines Akalaitis's origins as cofounder of the experimental New York company Mabou Mines, arguing that Akalaitis was influenced, as an actor and director, by avant-gardists such as Jerzy Grotowski, Jean Genet, Samuel Beckett, and others. She then reviews Akalaitis's basic rehearsal exercises, which are used in collaboration with her actors to develop productions, and demonstrates Akalaitis's working methods by delving into two major productions, both of which Saivetz worked on. The last chapter is an unsatisfactory examination of why Akalaitis was fired from her position as artistic director of the New York Shakespeare Festival. Unfortunately, Saivetz does not fully examine the conflict between art and commerce that both drove the decision and explains Akalaitis's controversial career. The book ends with several interviews about Akalaitis and her work. Overall, this work is well documented but puzzlingly thin. For theater professionals only. Thomas E. Luddy, Salem State Coll., MA Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. About the Author Deborah Saivetz most recently participated as a translator and performer in Mexico Teatro's site-specific theater piece Quijote: Visiones Intinerantes. Her directorial work includes her original adaptation of Donald Barthelme's novel *The King* for the Next Stage Ensemble of the New Jersey Shakespeare Festival; Elizabeth Egloff's *The Nose* for the Drama League of New York's Directors Project; an adaptation of John Cheever's *O City of Broken Dreams* for New York's Alchemy Courthouse Theater; and Wallace Shawn's *Marie and Bruce* for the Parallax Theater Company in Chicago.