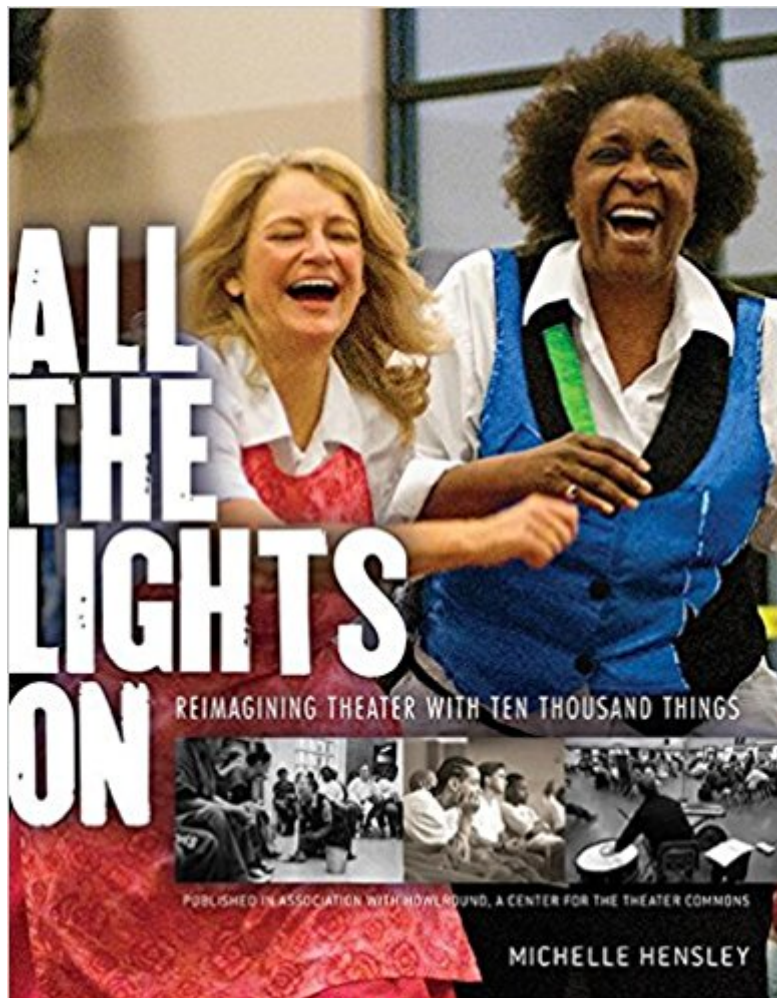




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# All The Lights On: Reimagining Theater With Ten Thousand Things



## Synopsis

Michelle Hensley, founder of Ten Thousand Things Theater in Minneapolis, shares more than twenty years of her company's nationally unique work bringing professional theater to those in prisons, homeless shelters, adult education centers, and rural areas, as well as the general public. More than a chronological history, *All the Lights On* is also about the radiant power of theater. In this articulate and compelling book, Hensley distills what nontraditional audiences, along with the conditions her artists must perform under to reach them, have taught her about Brecht, the Greeks, Shakespeare, musicals, and the essence of what is necessary to make vibrant and essential theater. Her experiences lead her to conclude that theater artists become better and the art form itself much richer when everyone is included in the audience. In Ten Thousand Things productions, people from very different economic classes sit next to each other in the round and often experience unexpected connections with each other. Hensley writes in the introduction, "Not only do we have a chance to experience the multiple viewpoints of many characters in the play, but with all the lights on, we are able to consider the differing viewpoints of the other audience members seated around the circle. It all serves to increase, just a little, the radiance of our world."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

An exciting account of the development of the 10,000 Things theater, which is doing so much to bring theater to audiences who never get the chance to experience it. I had the good fortune to see it in action recently in Minneapolis, and the live experience lived up to the descriptions in the book. This is theater at its finest and most inspiring!

I've been a big fan of Ten Thousand Things for many years, and so I really enjoyed Michelle's story. That theater is amazing! If you're ever in the Twin Cities, make it a priority to see one of their shows. There's nothing else like it.

Instructional. Inspirational. Authentic. Grounded. Just the boost I'd been needing.

Hensley's "All the Lights On" tells the story of founding a theater company that takes high-quality theater to non-traditional (and many times first time) audiences including prisons, ESL groups, and homeless shelters. Hensley shares the tribulations and triumphs of leading her actors into unique situations without the typical trappings of a theater like an elevated stage and fancy lighting. I recommend this for theater professionals and students who are interested exploring theater when it travels to its audience. Hensley made some brave choices and it is inspiring to follow her journey creating Ten Thousand Things.

This is an amazing book. Nearly as wonderful as being in a room with Michelle, this book is a clear, beautiful exposition of building a method and an organization in harmony with its own values and in service of a gorgeous method of sharing theater with a broad audiences.

Michelle is a true visionary, and this book is a MUST READ! Illuminates so many new possibilities for the ways theater can bring joy and healing to the world.

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