Will Weigler PhD, is an award-winning community-based theatre director, playwright and producer based in Victoria, British Columbia. He is the author of several books including Strategies for Playbuilding: Helping Groups Translate Issues into Theatre (Heinemann, 2001); From the Heart: How 100 Canadians Created an Unconventional Theatre Performance about Reconciliation (VIDEA, 2015); Laughing Allowed! — A How-to Guide for Making a Physical Comedy Show to Build Neighbourhood Resilience [co-author] (Building Resilient Neighbourhoods, 2016); and, forthcoming in 2017, Web of Performance: An Ensemble Workbook for Youth [co-editor/co-author] (University of Victoria).

www.willweigler.com

As a little boy I struggled with math until my mom made me a set of flash cards. After a week of toil, the impossible became easy and my multiplication tables have served me ever since. Will Weigler is attempting no less a feat in the field of high impact theatrical staging in this succinct presentation of the structure of theatrical magic. Sir Tyrone Guthrie used to say, “Keep in your mind some image of magnificence.” With this book and its supplementary deck of teaching cards, Will offers direct access to creating just such images on stage. Beautifully observed and meticulously explained, community performers and trained professionals will treasure it.

Community Performance Director
Richard Owen Geer, PhD
Author of Story Bridge: From Alienation to Community Action

Have you ever seen a single moment at a play that you’ll never forget—something that made the whole audience gasp and gave you an unexpected insight? When author Will Weigler analyzed nearly 100 stories about these kinds of unforgettable moments in performance, he realized that even though the plays were very different, they all had one thing in common. After discovering just what it was that made them so astonishing, he turned the results of his research into a vocabulary of staging strategies that anyone can access to powerfully express the stories they want to tell through theatre.

Combining theory with application, The Alchemy of Astonishment is a valuable resource for scholars, educators, students, theatregoers, and theatre artists of every kind. For those who facilitate devised theatre with communities, this book and its supplementary deck of 55 teaching cards offer professional artists and the people with whom they work a shared language that will allow them to meet as partners in the creative co-authorship and staging of dynamic and compelling plays.

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