

THE ARTS

top picks

- Seattle International Film Festival (p160)
- Richard Hugo House (p158)
- Annex Theater (p159)
- Intiman Theater Company (p159)
- Northwest Film Forum (p160)

THE ARTS

There's a good range of cultural diversions available in Seattle at any given moment. Author readings, dance, opera, ballet, theater and film are all going strong here. Ranked the most literate city in the nation in 2005, Seattle is a book-loving town. It's home to a number of big-name writers, and the plethora of bookstores and coffee shops here help to fuel its book culture. There's a literary event of one kind or another happening practically every night of the week.

Film is also big news in Seattle these days. The Seattle International Film Festival (p160) is among the most influential festivals in the country, and a thriving independent film scene has sprung up in a handful of underground venues, including the Alibi Room (p141).

Live theater runs the gamut from big productions, such as Ibsen at the Intiman Theater (opposite), to staged readings of obscure texts in cobbled-together venues or coffee shops.

The Seattle Symphony (p161) has become nationally known and widely respected, primarily through its excellent recordings.

Some of the city's more interesting cultural events, whether film, music, theater or a combination, occur in makeshift venues, galleries, warehouses and the like. To find a current listing, check the [Stranger](http://www.thestranger.com) (www.thestranger.com) or [Seattle Weekly](http://www.seattleweekly.com) (www.seattleweekly.com).

TICKETS & RESERVATIONS

Tickets for big events are available through [TicketMaster](http://www.ticketmaster.com) (% 206-628-0888, 206-292-2787; www.ticketmaster.com) online, by phone or at ticket centers located around Seattle; check online for locations. (At research time, Fred Meyer grocery stores were a good bet.) Ticket centers are open 8am to 9pm Monday to Saturday and 10am to 6pm Sunday. But if you can buy tickets at the door and there's no risk of the show being sold out, do so: it'll save you the service fee TicketMaster tacks on (usually \$6 to \$10).

[TicketWest](http://www.ticketwest.com) (% 800-992-8499, 800-632-8499; www.ticketwest.rdn.com) is a regional ticketing service, with outlets at Rudy's Barbershops and QFC grocery stores.

[Brown Paper Tickets](http://www.brownpapertickets.com) (% 800-838-3006; www.brownpapertickets.com) handles sales for a number of smaller and quirkier venues, from theater to live music. The company keeps service fees low, donates a percentage of sales to charities, and runs an environmentally friendly office.

READINGS

Maybe it's because of the rain, or maybe it's all that good coffee, but Seattleites read voraciously – whether it's the latest literary novel, an underground comic or a home-stapled zine. A lot of authors live here and there are some important literary landmarks worth checking out. Not the least of them is Blue Moon Tavern (p146), which was the retreat of choice for the great poet Theodore Roethke,

who taught at the nearby University of Washington. It may not feel entirely literary these days, but don't let the subtle scent of pee and cheap beer distract you from appreciating its bookish past.

The Elliott Bay Book Company (p113) is a mandatory stop on any major author's book tour. Several other bookstores host readings on a regular basis; see the Shopping chapter (p107).

For detailed event schedules and to find offbeat happenings at nonmajor venues, check listings in the *Stranger* or the *Seattle Weekly* or look for events calendars posted in bookstores around town. Most readings and open-mic events are free.

BORDERS BOOKS & MUSIC [Map p50](#)

% 206-622-4599; 1501 4th Ave
Borders stages readings by touring authors, plus occasional live music and children's events, mostly during the day.

RICHARD HUGO HOUSE [Map p79](#)

% 206-322-7030; www.hugohouse.org; 1634 11th Ave; h house noon-6pm Mon-Fri & noon-5pm Sat, zine archive 4-8pm Wed, 1-5pm Thu & Sat
Established in honor of famed Northwest poet Richard Hugo (see the box opposite), and the nexus of Seattle's literary community, the Hugo House hosts readings, classes and workshops, as well as offering various events around town. Writers-in-residence keep office hours at this 1902 house (a former mortuary), during which