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Book Reviews

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Performance and Literature in the commedia dell'arte. By **Robert Henke.**

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. Pp. xiv + 263 + illus. £45 Hb.

Music and Women of the commedia dell'arte in the Late Sixteenth Century. By **Anne MacNeil.** Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. Pp. viii + 360 + illus. \$85 Hb.

Das Spiel mit Gattungen bei Isabella Canali Andreini: Band 1, zum Verhältnis von Improvisation und Schriftkultur in der Commedia dell'arte, Band II, Lettere (1607) ('Studia Litteraria', 10). By **Britta Brandt.** Wilhelmsfeld: Gottfried Egert, 2002. Pp. viii + 284 and pp. xxxv + 267. €26 Pb.

La Mirtillo: a pastoral (Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 242). By **Isabella Andreini**, translated from the Italian, introduced and annotated by Julie D. Campbell. Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2002. Pp. xxvii + 105. \$26 Hb.

Improvisation in the Arts of the Middle Ages and Renaissance (Early Drama, Art and Music Monograph Series, 30). Edited by **Timothy J. McGee.** Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications (Western Michigan University), 2003. Pp. xii + 331 + illus. \$30 Hb; \$15 Pb.

Theater am Hof und für das Volk. Beiträge zur vergleichenden Theater- und Kulturgeschichte. Festschrift für Otto G Schindler zum 60. Geburtstag ('Maske und Kothurn', 48, 1–4). Edited by **Brigitte Marschall.** Vienna: Böhlau, 2002. Pp. 521 + illus. €78.20 Pb.

Reviewed by M. A. Katritzky, The Open University, Milton Keynes

While we may be no closer to agreeing on a universally acceptable definition of the commedia dell'arte, it continues to attract exceptional scholars from a wide range of academic and creative backgrounds. Substantial monographs by the American academics Robert Henke and Anne MacNeil, historians, respectively, of theatre and music, and the German Italianist Britta Brandt, focus successively narrower perspectives on surprisingly similar agendas. A major concern of all three is the relationship between improvised stage practice and published works, with respect to the performances and publications of the early comici dell'arte as a whole (Henke), certain early female comici and their associated writers and composers (MacNeil), and Isabella Andreini (Brandt). Inevitably, given the commedia dell'arte's multi-disciplinary international

secondary literature, there are omissions in all three bibliographies. The only mutual acknowledgement is from Brandt to the work of MacNeil. And where, for example, are references to Frances Barasch, Julie Campbell, Rosalind Kerr, Maria Luisa Doglio or Virginia Scott on female comici, Martha Farahat on the *commedia dell'arte* and music, Ernst Ferand on musical improvisation, Cesare Molinari's more recent work on the writings of the comici, Willem Schrickx on Martinelli in northern Europe, or, indeed, this reviewer on the 1589 Florentine *intermedi*? But such gripes are trivial. Henke, MacNeil and Brandt probe beyond the truism that the early comici's own improvised and scripted performances informed and reflected their own, and their associates', publications. They complement each other's fresh and valuable insights into the dynamic interactions between the expression of creativity on stage and on page, and all three are warmly recommended for academic libraries, specialists, and students of Italian theatre.

Henke's approach and structure are the most conventional and teacher-friendly. The book's eleven chapters contextualize specific early *commedia dell'arte* texts within the genre and its players and roles as a whole, suggesting a solid basis for a self-contained advanced undergraduate course. The first three chapters introduce the *commedia dell'arte* and improvisation to non-specialists, the rest analyse eight more or less chronologically arranged groups of texts. They are chosen from those by and relating to Venetian buffoni; the early all-male *commedia* troupes; the first female comici; *commedia* servants; *commedia* masters; Tristano Martinelli; Francesco Andreini and Flaminio Scala, and, lastly, Piermaria Cecchini, Nicolò Barbieri, Domenico Bruni and Giovan Battista Andreini. The provision of primary texts is excellent, and Henke packs some inspired insights into the analysis of a deftly compiled selection of extracts from familiar favourites, less well-known writings, and his own archival discoveries, some in both the original Italian and in English translation, others only in English.

In his quest to explore the *commedia dell'arte* as a meeting point for 'oral performance traditions and 'high' literature' (p. 107), Henke highlights some fascinating literary genres. He is especially good on memorial literature, the orations, testaments and last wills penned by the comici in memory of their dead colleagues. One genre noted only in passing, despite being the meeting point par excellence for early modern orality, performativity, literacy and print culture, is the mountebank's handbill. Nevertheless, the charlatans themselves comprehensively colonize the margins of Henke's text. The revelation that Tristano Martinelli practised as a piazza charlatan during the early part of his career is only the most startling of a whole series of intriguing references to their connections with the comici. The actresses are kept much more resolutely under control, firmly corralled into their own chapter, whose key texts are authored not by themselves, but by Adriano Valerini, Flaminio Scala and Giuseppe Pavoni. If their treatment seems a little cavalier, this allows a correspondingly fuller overview of the actors and their associated writings. Despite the nagging suggestion that a more complex and unconventional thesis is struggling to emerge, based on Henke's fundamental work on connections between the *commedia dell'arte*, mountebanks, and the ephemeral print trade, this engaging and worthwhile perspective on the *commedia dell'arte* offers plenty of food for thought.

MacNeil ploughs her much narrower furrow with considerable panache. Her study is by no means largely based on secondary sources, as most inevitably are. Her weighty scholarly apparatus, which takes up nearly half the book, bears witness to the impressive extent to which she has researched the great female stars of the early *commedia dell'arte* directly from original sources, notably manuscripts in Mantuan and Florentine archives. As well as a substantial bibliography and index, this features a chronology of important dates, and transcriptions of forty-two Italian documents. Many are already known from secondary sources. But they also include unfamiliar extracts from a lengthy correspondence between Isabella Andreini and Erycius Puteanus concerning learned women, for which MacNeil provides English translations, and significant new archival discoveries, such as previously unpublished verses by Isabella Andreini.

For MacNeil, the central precept of the *commedia dell'arte* concerns its dual nature 'as an art that revivifies classical ideals and dares to represent heroic women on stage', and hence the way in which 'classicizing themes arise over and over again as Renaissance writers strive to define the authoritative voice in new ways to encompass the speech of women. Conceptions of Aristotelian *virtù*, Neoplatonic divine madness, and sibylline prophecy . . . form the foundation of nearly all descriptions of comediennes in performance' (p. 2, p. 34). She suggests that Isabella Andreini perfected an almost unique ability, for a woman of her time, to call on both a male and a female poetic voice, and that conscious transgending informed the rhetorical strategies of her performing style and off-stage image. Key events around which MacNeil anchors her investigation include the wedding intermedi of 1589 at the court of Florence, the 1598 performance of 'Il Pastor Fido' and 1608 performance of Ottavio Rinuccini's 'Arianna' at the court of Mantua, and Giovan Battista Andreini's play 'Lo schiavetto', published in 1612. Isabella Andreini, mother of Giovan Battista, performed her renowned madness scene in 1589 and may have been involved with the 1598 performance. Her daughter-in-law, Virginia Andreini, performed her equally celebrated 'Lament' in 1608, and for several years around this time developed the dialogues, and use of music as a code between actors and audience, in pre-publication performances of the title role in her husband's play. MacNeil's take on this conjugal collaboration contrasts refreshingly with Henke's more derivative account, and her neo-platonic evaluation of Isabella Andreini's 1589 'Pazzia', familiar from her groundbreaking article of 1995, puts it in a very different light from the 'buffoonish stand-up or revue-style performance' identified by Henke (p. 104). Her subtle and detailed analysis of the social and ideological significance of these performances for their performers and spectators deploys, and assumes, high levels of musicological and linguistic literacy. Those who persevere with this demanding and exhilarating read will not regret it.

Isabella Andreini makes a cameo appearance for Henke, and plays centre stage for MacNeil, and it is fitting that the considerable literary output of Europe's most celebrated actress is finally attracting serious international attention. The first volume of Brandt's publication sets all Andreini's major writings, the 'Rime', 'Lettere' and 'Fragmenti' as well as 'La Mirtilla', within the context of Andreini's stage and literary practice, and that of her husband Francesco Andreini. In essence Brandt's doctoral thesis of 1997, its

publication was delayed by preparation of the companion volume. This presents the text of Francesco Andreini's posthumous 1607 edition of his wife's 'Lettere', in the original Italian, with an introduction, copious annotations, and a brief German summary of each of the 151 'letters'. An essential read for anyone concerned with Andreini's output, literary or dramatic, but possibly not in one sitting. And there's good news for those whose preferred language is English. The first complete English translation of Isabella Andreini's play 'La Mirtilla' is provided, and generously annotated, by Campbell, whose introduction considers Andreini's sources, and rehabilitates this bestseller of the 1580s as one of the most significant pastoral comedies of its time.

Two volumes edited by Marschall and McGee include important new findings on the commedia dell'arte and improvisation. The commedia dell'arte established itself in the fertile artistic soil of the mid-sixteenth century, when European musical culture encouraged creativity through both improvisation and composition. My own researches into mystery plays have awakened me to the astonishing extent to which improvisation could permeate the dramatic strategies of pre-commedia stages. This awareness has been further heightened by McGee's volume, whose introductory chapter, by Domenico Pietropaolo, specifically focuses on improvisation and the commedia dell'arte. Substantial sections on music, dance and drama, this last including Clifford Davidson on 'Improvisation in medieval drama', remind us that improvisation and orality also underpinned a multiplicity of other performance spheres before and during the sixteenth century.

Although contributors to Marschall's volume were invited to write on any topic relating to court or popular theatre, the commedia dell'arte is something of a leitmotif. Over half of its twenty-nine chapters touch on it in one way or another. Some of these are tangential, their primary concern being carnival, musical theatre, court festival, or, as in my own contribution, quacks. Of authors substantially concerned with the commedia dell'arte or its derivatives, writings of the comici are addressed by Sergio Monaldini (Carlo Cantù/'Buffetto': 'Cicalamento in canzonette ridicolose'), and iconographic issues by Harald Zielske (Jacques Callot: 'Les trois Pantalons'), Helmut Asper (eighteenth-century porcelain figurines) and Rainer Puchert (eighteenth-century glass paintings). Andrea Sommer-Mathis (Truffaldino), Bärbel Rudin (Heinrich Rademin/'Arlequin'), Margret Dietrich ('Hanswurst') and Francesco Cotticelli (Domenico Antonio di Fiore/'Pulcinella') focus on specific actors and roles. Modern derivations of the commedia are explored by Cristina Grazioli (Massimo Bontempelli: 'Siepe a nordovest'), Ulf Birbaumer (Dario Fo: 'Mamma! I sanculotti!') and Rainer Maria Köppl ('The Marx Brothers: 'A Night at the Opera').

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The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare. Edited by **Margreta de Grazia** and **Stanley Wells**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Pp. xx + 328 + illus. £40 Hb; £14.95 Pb.

The Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Tragedy. Edited by **Claire McEachern**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. Pp. xiii + 274 + illus. £40 Hb; £14.95 Pb.

The Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Comedy. Edited by Alexander Legatt. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. Pp. xviii + 237 + illus. £40 Hb; £14.95 Pb.

Reviewed by Ewan Fernie, Royal Holloway, University of London

Margreta de Grazia and Stanley Wells preface *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare* by stating its 'broadly historical or cultural approach'. Ernst Honingman's incisive analysis of Shakespeare's life opens the batting. Barbara Mowatt revealingly describes the crisis in editing Shakespeare which has been prompted by new insights into the collaborative nature of dramatic production and serious doubts about the time-honoured classification of the manuscripts into 'foul-papers', 'prompt-books' and scribal copies. A different example of the wide-ranging contexts provided by this book is Ania Loomba's demonstration that, although early modern England had begun to invoke difference to justify imperialism and xenophobia, 'the hardening of racial categories was accompanied by proliferating images of hybridity and crossover' (p. 163). One moment in Anne Barton's otherwise fine essay suggests that extra-textual considerations are not always the best way of achieving an enhanced appreciation of Shakespeare's art. Having brilliantly described early modern London and the Elizabethan and Jacobean courts, Barton is forced to concede that the works of the Bard are relatively unconcerned with them. But the contextual approach generally pays good dividends here, never more topically when Dennis Kennedy's 'Shakespeare worldwide' brings the dramatist into the orbit of debates on globalisation. Interestingly enough, the inherent vitality of Shakespeare's work emerges most clearly in the essays on theatrical and filmic productions provided by Russell Jackson and Peter Holland.

The Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Tragedy begins with essays on sources and language, on tragedy in Shakespeare's career, and on tragedy printed and performed. It then proceeds to more general thematic and contextual considerations. Huston Diehl's essay on the recently neglected subject of religion and Shakespearean tragedy is particularly suggestive, as is Michael Hattaway on the analogies between actorly and political authority. Catherine Belsey intriguingly argues that Shakespeare's tragedies probe and interrogate the origins of 400 years of 'family values'. Again, the emphasis is historical, although Coppélia Kahn's proposal that, at the end of *Timon*, 'The quasi-maternal, rhythmic embrace of the sea suggests regression towards a primal state preceding the separation of self from world, a surrogate for human bonds [...] never established in life' stands out for critical sensitivity (p. 222).

The Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Comedy opens with a number of essays on Shakespeare and comic tradition and then is organized around a number of 'recurring issues'. These themes have less contextual resonance than those featured in the collection on tragedy and there is a more old-fashioned feel to this nonetheless similarly impressive volume. An exception is Lynne Magnusson's infusion of foolish logic-chopping in the comedies with a Habermasian 'ideal of rational community based on dialogic persuasion and intersubjective assent' (p. 169). Edward Berry's troubled investigation of the way in which these plays routinely mock and humiliate precisely the marginalized 'others' which current criticism has championed is also outstanding.

In *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare*, R. S. White observes that critical tempers have cooled since the 'culture wars'. There is a certain hiatus in present Shakespeare criticism, and White's contemplation of 'an infinitude of 'new readings' stretching to the crack of doom' is pretty weary (p. 293). In *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Tragedy*, R. A. Foakes wonders if a new formal theory will emerge. Be that as it may, the sheer creative energy of Shakespeare's plays is not quite satisfactorily conveyed by the discipline that is intelligently and professionally represented by these three books.

Theatre Research International, 29.1 DOI:10.1017/S0307883303231278

The Convict Theatres of Early Australia: 1788–1840. By **Robert Jordan**. Sydney: Currency House, 2002. Pp xiii + 370 + illus. AUS \$49.95 Hb.
Reviewed by *Elizabeth Webby, University of Sydney*

After many years of patiently combing through every possible source of information, Robert Jordan has been able to replace speculative and fragmentary accounts of Australian convict theatre with a coherent narrative based on documentary evidence. While gaps remain in the story, some of which may eventually be filled, it is hard to imagine any future scholar changing Jordan's outline in any radical way.

A performance by convicts of *Farquhar's The Recruiting Officer* in 1789 is, as the first play to be staged, the standard opening of any history of Australian theatre, an event also romanticized in fiction and drama. Before Jordan, much less attention had been paid to what followed, even though the reproduction in English newspapers in 1797 and 1800 of Sydney playbills, and the survival of two actual bills from 1800, provided considerably more information about repertoire, actors, prices and the structure of the playhouse. Partly, Jordan implies, this has been because of scholars' reluctance to accept that convicts, generally perceived as lower-class illiterate thugs, could have had anything to do with legitimate theatre. His discussion of theatre in eighteenth-century England, however, demonstrates that skilled workers and tradesmen were regularly to be found in the pit as well as the gallery. As his research shows, many of the convicts involved in theatrical performances in Australia came from just these classes. Besides raising the possibility of a theatre in Sydney as early as 1794, Jordan suggests that the theatre associated with the convict baker Robert Sidaway may have been in fairly continuous operation from 1796 until 1804 or even 1807. His chapters on this theatre, its actors and audiences, are based on extensive biographical research into convicts associated with it, which is presented in a seventy-page appendix.

The remaining chapters provide briefer but equally compelling accounts of the convict theatres operating for various shorter periods at penal stations at Norfolk Island, Emu Plains and Port Macquarie, as well as an overview of theatrical events in Sydney up to 1830. Again, Jordan's intensive research has added greatly to knowledge of these theatres, the discovery of an account book recording ticket sales for the Norfolk Island theatre in 1805–6 providing especially valuable evidence as to audiences. As he notes in his conclusion, the most striking feature of these early convict theatres is the number and the persistence of attempts, now fully revealed to us for the first time.

A Triptych from the Russian Theatre: An Artistic Biography of the Komissarzhevskys. By Victor Borovsky. London: C. Hurst & Co, 2001. Pp. xxi + 485 + illus. £29.95 Hb.

Reviewed by Bella Merlin, University of Birmingham

This is a fascinating tome covering the pioneering professional careers and colourful personal lives of three of Russia's most influential dramatic practitioners. The shortest section of the 'Triptych' begins with the tenor Fyodor Petrovich Komissarzhesky (1832–1905), who altered the shape of Russian opera significantly, not only by legitimizing its Russian-ness at a time when the Italian school dominated the scene, but also by favouring 'emotional truth' over lyrical singing in performance. Juxtaposed against his professional successes are his romantic liaisons, including an excruciating divorce from the mother of Vera (the second subject of the tryptych) and his bigamous marriage to the mother of Fyodor junior (the final subject of the tryptych). (This theme is shown to be curiously repeated in his children's lives.) Vera Fyodorovna Komissarzhevskaya (1864–1910) forms the second instalment of the book. Famed for her portrayal of Nina Zarechnaya in the 1897 premiere of *The Seagull*, Vera's influence – both in terms of her understanding of Chekhov's theatre and her international impact on acting processes – is presented by Borovsky with articulate insight. The final – and by far the most extensive section of the triptych – is that devoted to Vera's half-brother: Fyodor Fyodorovich Komissarzhesky (1882–1954). Fyodor junior's immense success as a director of Chekhov's plays in 1920s Britain is analysed by Borovsky in tremendous detail. So too is the director's revolutionary approach to Shakespeare in London and Stratford throughout the 1930s. Referring to personal correspondence from 'Komis', his (final) wife, Ernestine Stodelle-Komisarjevsky, and actors including John Giegud and Anthony Quale, Borovsky paints a vibrant picture of the explosive reactions provoked by Komis's contribution to twentieth-century British theatre. Borovsky's 'artistic biography' presents a very clear sense of the personalities of the three practitioners, including fascinating accounts of the varying relationships each of them had with Konstantin Stanislavsky, and accompanied by an array of wonderful photographic illustrations. Where the book falls down is in its sudden philosophical outbursts, where Borovsky's own opinions crash into the overall structure of the book in heart-felt but sometimes naïve treatises. However, he has consciously called it 'an artistic biography', yet these personal interventions plus his occasional breaking of chronology lead readers into a style which they may not expect of a more conventional biography. That said, this is an impressive piece of work, invaluable to academics in the field as well as the general reader seeking insights into this extraordinary theatrical dynasty.

A Concise History of Polish Theater from the Eleventh to the Twentieth Centuries. By Kazimierz Braun. Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 2003. Pp. xxviii + 476 + illus. \$139.95 Hb.

Reviewed by Paul Allain, University of Kent

Braun impressively covers a range of periods and theatres, dividing Poland's troubled history into six sections. With unbridled enthusiasm, an ex-pat's patriotism, and the

insider knowledge his successful career as a director has given him, he races from early aspirations to establish Poland's National Theatre, through the 123 years when Poland did not exist as a nation, through Solidarity and Martial Law, to the current spectres of commercialization and entertainment. His list of directors and actors ranges across experimental and repertory theatres with a notably fulsome introduction to director Osterwa, much needed considering the often overlooked influence he and his Reduta Theatre had on Grotowski. Most of the actors here are lesser known outside Poland and the descriptive accounts of their acting styles and facial features quickly pall. But several of the directors covered, like Kantor, Grotowski and Staniewski, have made a significant impact at home and abroad and by placing them in a detailed historical framework, Braun usefully adds to this field. Inevitably this context is often simplistic and overly relies on the unfamiliar idea of the two great Reforms of Theatre – puzzling terminology until I realized that this reputedly widely utilized framework is Braun's own, described in two previous books. Several other limitations disappoint, not least Braun's overt biases and aesthetic orthodoxy, betrayed by an uninflected use of terms such as master, the spirit, and the soul – such Polish Romanticism now seems distinctly old-fashioned. The price surely makes this destined only for libraries, but as a reference work the shortcomings include no index of groups – one could not, for instance, look up Gardzienice Theatre Association – relying instead on a people and, less usefully, a play index. Many companies, like Akademia Ruchu, are referred to by their names in English translation, even though most are widely known by their Polish titles – confusing for non-Polish speakers. The 'Hall of Fame' presents fifty grainy black-and-white photographs of a quality that harks back to the Communist publishing which Braun would decry. But with an invaluable bibliography and clear text, Braun provides an attractive history, even if a lack of editing makes frequent small grammatical errors, quirky 'Polishisms', some repetition and inconsistencies, and too much writerly ornamentation. He does not need Daniel Gerould's preface or Clive Barker's afterword for validation. Polish theatre's achievement is that it has withstood most adversities, a simple fact which Braun did not need to reiterate and could have relied on more.

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The Showmakers: Great Directors of the American Musical Theatre. By
Lawrence Thelen. New York: Routledge, 2002. Pp. x + 254 + illus. \$19.95 Pb.
 Reviewed by *Judith Sebesta, University of Arizona*

'The one thing the director cannot do in musical theatre is *one thing*.' (p. 19). Director and lyricist Martin Charnin's insightful comment summarizes this interesting look at the varied experiences, practices, and philosophies that have shaped the careers of twelve of America's most influential contemporary directors of musical theatre. *The Showmakers* includes personal interviews held during the 1990s between the author and a dozen influential musical theatre directors, including Martin Charnin, Graciela Daniele, James Lapine, Arthur Laurents, Richard Maltby Jr, Des McAnuff, Mike Ockrent, Tom O'Horgan, Harold Prince, Jerome Robbins (his last), George C. Wolfe and Jerry Zaks.

Thelen begins with an overview of the twelve interviews, a 'synthesis of the directors' philosophies' (p. 2). His observations range from the rather startling fact that half of the directors consider casting to be their most important job, to the more predictable observation that feeling passionate about one's work is important to everyone interviewed. In the interviews that follow, the author has made a concerted effort to let the words of the directors speak for themselves, consciously avoiding his own speculation on their work.

Each chapter includes a brief biographical sketch of the director interviewed, then moves through the same series of topics, including influences, the difference between directing musicals and plays, approaching revivals, casting, rehearsal process, and training the director. While it is not surprising to see the names George Abbott, Harold Prince and Elia Kazan recurring as influences, it is amusing to learn that Busby Berkeley's work affected both Mike Ockrent and Tom O'Horgan, who clearly exercise different approaches to directing musicals in spite of their shared influence. Also particularly fascinating are Graciela Daniele's discussion of being a woman director; *Annie* director and lyricist Martin Charnin's unique perspective on casting and working with children; Des McAnuff's insistence that revivals be referred to as 'classical musicals' because the former term 'sounds too much like something that happened at an accident scene' (p. 127); and George C. Wolfe's discussion of what he perceives as the unfortunate bifurcation between black and white musical theatre.

Because each interview moves through the same general topics, the information becomes redundant and monotonous in places. Furthermore, the text's focus on mainstream musical theatre reflects a bias against academic theatre. In the years since Thelen completed his interviews, directors like Julie Taymor and Tina Landau have proven that the academic/avant-garde has a place in the Broadway musical. Nevertheless, *The Showmakers* is a largely engaging read, and a useful resource for anyone interested in musical theatre history, direction of musicals, or directing in general.

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Black Theatre: Ritual Performance in the African Diaspora. Edited by Paul Carter Harrison, Victor Leo Walker II, and Gus Edwards. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003. Pp. ix + 418. \$74.50 Hb; \$27.95 Pb.

Reviewed by Nadine George-Graves, University of California San Diego

This book is a powerful examination of ritual-based performance traditions practised throughout the African diaspora. It belongs on the shelf of anyone studying black performance. By juxtaposing old and new articles, the editors provide perspectives on the subject that are at once global, historical, recuperative, revisionist and provocative. Based in 1960s/1970s ideology, the editors' desire to contribute to the reclamation of African traditions so as to reaffirm a positive African matrix for the study of black theatre. They succeed on many levels with this collection of compelling articles. Topics include detailed examinations of specific African traditions, theology and ideology salient to the study of black theatre; black influences on mainstream American culture; a critique the Eurocentric/Afrocentric binary; questions of identity and authenticity;

the interrogation of myth; the search for healing; the renunciation of stereotype; post-colonialism; post-modernity; the transformative, conjuring power of performance; the important role of dramaturgy; liberation theory; and, the vital uses of ritual and spirituality.

The editors have strong ideological positions about what constitutes black theatre and, unfortunately, leave very little room for debate, as illustrated in the prescriptive chapter introductions. For example, Harrison declares that an all-black cast of a European classic has no place in Black Theatre (p. 4). Also, he states that, 'Black Theatre must generate a transformative, ritual style of work informed by the expressive strategies located in the continuum of African memory throughout the Diaspora' (pp. 4–5) and provides a barometer for judging black experience. (p. 248) Edwards claims that authentic black expression exists only when based in 'our culture' (p. 313). Rules like these ring throughout the text and threaten to exclude as inauthentic black theatre whose work is influenced by sources other than Africa (for example, the Classical Theater of Harlem). Inclusion of a broader range of work by, for, about, and near black people would not dilute the understanding of the long tradition of black performance, rather, it would further enrich it by attending to the diversity of black experiences. Yet, despite the editors' narrowly focused definition of what constitutes black theatre, this text is a valuable contribution to current critical, historical and theoretical debate about this rich and varied field.

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How Theatre Educates: Convergences and Counterpoints with Artists, Scholars and Advocates. Edited by **Kathleen Gallagher** and **David Booth**. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, Inc., 2003. Pp. xii + 282. \$50.00 Hb; \$27.95 Pb.
Reviewed by Melissa Dana Gibson, California State University, Fresno

In his introduction David Booth asserts that effective teachers 'recognize the symbiotic relationship of the artist and the teacher, of the art form and the learning process' (p. 21). Few would disagree, yet this symbiosis is more often realized in production than in scholarship. Gallagher and Booth try to redress this imbalance by embracing many different responses to the question, how does theatre educate? As a result, this is one of the most eclectic anthologies you are likely to read, containing scholarly essays, speeches, interviews, songs and a play. Generally the book focuses on Canadian elementary and secondary education, but several contributions move into university and professional theatre concerns. Thus the volume constructs a diverse community of theatre artists and educators that is open to varying pedagogies in its form and content.

Most conventional (and to my perhaps conventional mind, most successful) are the case studies. In 'The monologue project: drama as a form of witnessing', Belarie Zatzman reports on a project instructing students to write a monologue about their relationship to the Shoah. In 'Negotiating drama practices: struggles in racialized relations of theatre production and theatre research', Janice Hladki looks at the tensions of negotiating race and identity among performers working on a collective theatre piece. In 'Theatre for young audiences and grown-up theatre: two solitudes', Maja Ardal relates the antipodal

fortunes of the same play when presented at a children's theatre and at an adult theatre. Commenting that the more successful adult theatre production 'became a "theatre" and not an "educational" experience', (p. 196), she concludes, 'I no longer feel that it is of value to have theatres with stages that exist exclusively for children' (p. 197). It is to the credit of this volume that the following essay by Larry Swartz argues just the opposite.

This book takes seriously its commitment to advocacy. At its best, as in the essays above, this amounts to passionate arguments. It also leads, however, to a preponderance of personal narratives. The story of a person's first theatre experience or a teaching epiphany can be an effective way of reaching an audience, but the returns on this rhetorical strategy diminish by the third or fourth tale of discovering the magic of theatre. Anyone reading this book could probably tell a similar story.

Because its contents are so varied, the collection of essays would probably have benefited from a heavier editorial hand to point up its 'convergences and counterpoints'. That said, there is a little of everything in this lively volume for those interested in educational theatre.

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Between Two Fires: Gypsy Performance and Romani Memory from Pushkin to Postsocialism. By **Alaina Lemon.** Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2000. Pp. ix + 308 + illus. \$18.95 Pb.

Reviewed by Ioana Szeman, Northwestern University

This is a ground-breaking work that engages with race and performance in the post-Soviet space. The Roma, pejoratively called Gypsies, have often served as metaphors for Western theories engaging with nomadism as means of resistance. Romantic images of Gypsies as natural performers, timeless, free and unspoiled by civilization have become hallmarks of Russian literature and have persisted through Russian imperialism, Soviet internationalism and post-communism. Today in Russia the flipside of this stereotype, that of Gypsies as tricksters and liars, is prevalent, as racism against Roma is on the rise. Presented as outside society, Roma are said to lack ethnic, geographic and historic unity, a transposition of theatrical tropes into the everyday, and to need Russian culture as a medium of expression. Roma have little access to media technologies and debates where they could frame their own representation. The challenge, according to Lemon, is to show that Roma too, belong places and to discourage 'letting any particular people stand as a trope for resistance' (p. 235). Coming from anthropology, this work speaks across disciplines. Lemon connects and differentiates between staged performances and performative aspects of everyday life by focusing on framing. Drawing from extensive fieldwork and contextual analyses of linguistic exchanges in Russian and Romani, the work moves 'from realms of theatricality, from representation in literature and media, to more diffuse performances and performative moments in everyday interaction, to track how ideologies about performance reproduce social, and especially racial, categories' (p. 27). Lemon demonstrates that Roma in Russia consider themselves attached to the

national territory, despite the fact that other locals see such claims as insincere and showing the 'shifty' character of Gypsies.

The author emphasizes that state policies have affected Romani groups differently even within one country. This is exemplified in the Romani Theater case study, where Lemon analyses racial hierarchies and the politics of representation. Roma from the Russka group are the main performers at the Theater, while the directors are mostly Russian and very few performers come from the Vlax Roma group, who migrated to Russia later than the Russka. One of the few public places Roma have access to, the Romani Theater was founded in 1931, part of the Soviet agenda of civilizing the Roma. Lemon argues that visibility is not necessarily empowering, as the Theater has limited 'the ways Roma could represent themselves, because only those features placed on either side of the proscenium were accorded visibility, framed as authentically Gypsy' (p. 234) and anxieties about authenticity haunt Romani performers even offstage. Lemon's theoretical sophistication and political awareness, besides the obvious focus on performance, make this work appealing to performance/theatre studies readers.

Theatre Research International, 29.1 DOI:10.1017/S0307883303301270

The Dramatic Art of Athol Fugard: From South Africa to the World. By **Albert Wertheim**. Bloomington; Indiana University Press, 2000. Pp. xv + 273 + illus. \$45 Hb; \$17.95 Pb.

Reviewed by Jeanne Collieran, John Carroll University

It is difficult to over estimate the importance of Athol Fugard's drama to South African theatre, or to over value the commitment Fugard made, in his own words, 'to bear witness as truthfully as [he] could' to the events that shaped South Africa during the past half-century. His theatre forced South Africans to confront the deforming effects of legalized racism on both victim and perpetrator; in this, it anticipated some of what has come to light in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Admiration for Fugard's theatre, however, goes beyond its social utility. Fugard is a consummate theatrical craftsman. He is also, in his own appellation, a 'storyteller', one whose point of departure may be South Africa but whose tales resonate across cultures. It is this view of Fugard and his work that Albert Wertheim takes as his subject in this meticulously documented study. Not only does Wertheim consider Fugard's work in its South African context – a context he understands and communicates thoroughly – but he also places the drama alongside the best of Greek theatre and the modern masters from O'Neill to Pinter. Accordingly, Wertheim's study is most valuable for its close reading of Fugard's plays, which detail with great sensitivity the varying structures, literary echoes, and moments when Fugard's characters are unmasked in painful self-recognition. Most impressive is Wertheim's attention to the insistent metatheatricality that runs throughout Fugard's canon, with its insights into the challenges of reading past racialized identities and rehearsing new ones, formed in empathetic exchange. Reading *The Dramatic Art of Athol Fugard*, then, is an immersion into a rich and deeply appreciative view of Fugard's theatre; it is not, as Wertheim warns from the outset, a study primarily interested in the plays' politics. Wertheim,

following Fugard's lead, sees the plays as more concerned with the larger issues of seeking emotional truth, reconciling human relationships, and maintaining creativity. For those of us who cannot separate the political implications generated by plays that rely so heavily on historical specifics, Wertheim's study may be frustrating in places. But in the end, debates over differing analytical starting points recede in light of a conversation enriched by respect and plurality. The enviable grace with which Albert Wertheim balances his high regard for Fugard with his respectful treatment of different critical perspectives makes this book a remarkable study and a rich resource.

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Puppet Theater in Contemporary Indonesia: New Approaches to Performance

Events. Edited by **Jan Mrazek**. Michigan: Centers for South and Southeast Asian, University of Michigan, 2002. Pp. vii + 376 + illus. \$70 Hb; \$35 Pb.

Reviewed by Ian Jarvis Brown, Bandung, Indonesia

The cover of Mrazek's book shows a photograph of an innovative leather shadow puppet character of the *wayang kulit purwa* genre in Java, in the form of American pop icon, Batwoman. Like its cover, this collection of two dozen essays resembles a *gado-gado*, juxtaposing diverse elements, and approaching its topic from a diversity of post-colonial perspectives. Almost all the writers are studied practitioners or performers of *wayang*, including music performance of the gamelan orchestra; five are Indonesian. Thus, the text refreshingly focuses on performative values rather than overly theoretical or pedagogic evaluations.

To start with, Mrazek provides some rudiments of *wayang* (pp. i–vii). He succinctly frames the scope of the work by describing 'Some Themes in the Essays', 'Time(s): Changing Performances in a Changing World', 'Performance, Language, Writing', 'Performance, Politics, the Entertainment Business', 'Performance and local Identity', 'Performance and Ritual', 'Performance and the Mass Media', and 'Ways of Watching *Wayang*'. Mrazek's own, perceptive scholarship of *wayang* secures a significant place through his introduction and two chapters.

The essays are consistently well-researched, and the copious endnotes found in most essays are exceptional, often revealing more than the essays themselves, and at times providing invaluable scholastic substance of colonial perspectives, Western and Indonesian. However, the black-and-white illustrations lack tonal clarity, and their thumbnail size often inadequately document their subjects. While farsighted Western scholars, occupy a major place in Mrazek's domain of *wayang*, too little space is proffered for the ambit of Indonesian visionaries. Western readers unfamiliar with this performance genre may find themselves at a disadvantage to those familiar with *wayang*. In his concluding chapter Mrazek says, 'if you want to know *wayang*, stop reading further... and go beyond reading to *wayang* performances as they take place in Indonesia' (p. 372). If unable to watch *wayang* in Indonesia, at least watch a video of an outdoor performance if attempting to read Mrazek's important book.

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The Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre and Performance. Edited by **Dennis Kennedy**. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. 2 volumes; vol. 1 pp. li + 776; vol. 2 pp. vi + 782. £175/\$250 Hb.
Reviewed by Martin Banham, University of Leeds

After a long absence from the field of theatre reference, Oxford is back with Dennis Kennedy's two-volume encyclopedia. In reviewing this major work it would be either coy or dishonest of me not to declare an interest – that of a fellow editor of a work of reference. From the start this allows me to express my admiration for Kennedy's achievement (and to send him my best wishes for a speedy recovery from the weight of these labours!). In addition to offering a thorough range of entries on individuals, places, ideas and forms of performance, the Oxford Encyclopedia is truly international in its coverage, but offers a subtle solution to the danger of 'oversimplified' (Kennedy's term) entries on national theatres by replacing them, in the case of Europe, North and South America, with entries on 'cities or regions that are theatrical centres'. Thus we get no entry for France, but a major essay on Paris; none for Britain and Ireland, but essays on London, Dublin, Edinburgh and others (though nothing for Wales); nothing on the United States or Canada but entries on eight cities from Montréal to San Francisco. Beyond these parts of the world, national entries, or major regional entries (anglophone, francophone and lusophone Africa, for instance), do occur, but here again major theatrical centres – such as Sydney, Shanghai, Jakarta, Johannesburg – have their own entries. Specific cultural theatres (for instance Kannada, Maori, Tibetan, Yoruba) are also given individual entries. It goes without saying that the general range of entries is splendidly comprehensive, though it is always interesting (at least for reference editors, who do it instead of having a healthy life) to see, as King Lear says 'who's in, who's out', comparing one's own decisions with another editor's. Ten entries from *The Cambridge Guide to Theatre* starting arbitrarily from Martin Sperr, give us Sprechstimme, John Spurling, Luigi Squarzina, Sri Lanka, Stage Food, Stage Lighting, Stage Society (Incorporated), Stainless Stephen and Clarkson Stanfield. From the same starting point with Sperr, *Oxford* give us Spiderwoman Theatre, Spectacle, Split Britches, Sport, Sprechstimme, Luigi Squarzina, Sri Lanka, Srimpi and Sriranga. I draw no important conclusion from this, but am fascinated by the endless challenge of organizing the definitive work of reference. Incidentally, Lighting does, of course, have a major and informative entry in the *Oxford Encyclopedia*, though it seems a little remiss – in a publication based in Britain – not to have included in the supporting bibliography work by Bentham, Pilbrow and Reid.

The supporting apparatus of a work of reference is important, and in this respect *Oxford* scores heavily. At the beginning of the first volume there is an extensive and accessibly organized 'Thematic Table of Contents' with all the entries in the encyclopedia listed under major and minor topic headings (e.g. under 'Concepts and theories' there are sub-lists for 'Origins', 'Dramatic concepts and terms', 'Social theories and issues', 'Acting, directing, design', 'Genres and synchronic forms', 'Critical concepts and methods'). This helpful device allows the reader to follow through a particular line of enquiry with ease and efficiency. At the end of the second volume there is a helpful

and illuminating 'Timeline' – parallel charts between 'Historical/Cultural Events' and 'Theatre and Performance Events', from BC c. 3000 to 2001 AD (though for some odd reason I haven't fathomed the charts swop sides on alternate pages: I bet it was the computer wot dun it). There is then a strong list of 'Further reading' and – a splendid initiative – a 'Selective index of dramatic titles'. This solves that irritating problem when you know that someone wrote *After Darwin* but you can't remember whether it was Timberlake Wertenbaker or Tom Stoppard. I can see that becoming a well visited site. The encyclopedia is informatively illustrated throughout.

At its very substantial price the *Oxford Encyclopedia* seems mainly aimed at libraries, though one suspects that it looks forward to an electronic life. Dennis Kennedy and his distinguished contributors have brought Oxford seriously back into the game (and remind us to honour Phyllis Hartnoll's formative work).