

theatre practices give expression to unpalatable truths and articulate responses to various inequalities and injustices are variously signalled, from Panti Bliss's addressing of homophobia in *The Noble Call* to the work of women theatre makers, Garry Hynes, Olwen Fouéré, Phyllis Ryan, Siobhán McKenna, Christina Reid, Marie Jones, Deirdre Kinahan, Marina Carr, and the #WakingtheFeminists activities in relation to gender disparities in the sector.

Loneragan's analysis is not Abbey or Gate Theatre-centric. He identifies the critical importance of Galway's An Tabhdhearc and the Pike Theatre in Dublin during key cultural moments. Rather than write something that is overwhelmingly playwright-led, Lonergan strenuously acknowledges the importance of theatre companies like Charabanc, Fishamble, Rough Magic, Druid, and Field Day.

Chapters are not organized chronologically; the section on religion and secularism reaches back into the 1940s (*The Righteous are Bold*), then on to the 1960s (*An Triail*), the 1970s (*The Sanctuary Lamp*), the 1980s (*Pentecost*), and the 1990s (*Eclipsed*), with the chapter ending with ANU's *Laundry* (2011), in which Lonergan traces how the Catholic Church is challenged and indicted, with deliberations on the general agreeableness of the state to do its bidding.

The telling use of archive materials, the clarity of expression, the precision of the writing, the ability to summarize, condense, and point out multiple connections are this book's outstanding achievements. Hugely informative and uniquely knowledgeable, this publication is a culmination of the extraordinary breadth of Lonergan's field-defining interventions into the debates on Irish theatre. This book is a rewarding and extraordinary addition to the field, and by every measure, a landmark publication.

EAMONN JORDAN

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Eugenio Barba and Nicola Savarese
The Five Continents of Theatre: Facts and Legends about the Material Culture of the Actor

Leiden and Boston: Brill Sense, 2019. 411 p.
£44.00.
ISBN: 978-90-04-39292-2

Occasionally a book comes along that is immediately recognized as special in the way it looks, feels, and reads. These kind of books pulsate with a quality that resonates with readers. *The Five Continents of Theatre* is one of these books that communicates on various levels. The 'continents' refer to what the authors call the 'when, where, how, for whom, and why we do theatre'. As such the subject is the material circumstances that

shape the actor's work understood both as an activity that occurs in performance spaces but also as a form of labour/employment with its own characteristics.

In many ways, the book is a companion to the authors' seminal publication *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology: the Secret Art of the Performer* (1991, 2005). In terms of scope, it extends the analysis beyond a discussion that is internal to the performer's experience. If the *Dictionary* deals with the actor's 'body-mind techniques', *The Five Continents* focuses on the socio-material context that conditions those strategies, in the process shedding light on what the authors call 'auxiliary techniques'.

The book's emphasis on the 'material culture of the actor' includes: the different circumstances that generate performances (e.g. popular feasts, annual festivals); the economic and organizational aspects of production (e.g. contracts, touring); the information provided to the public (e.g. posters, adverts); the spaces of performance and of spectators; sets, lighting, sound, costumes, and props; the relationship between actor and spectator; and the means of transport that enable actors and spectators to travel.

The book consists of five chapters that deal with the continents, and a sixth, entitled 'Theatre and History', which contains some of the material that did not find a place elsewhere but was too compelling to omit, including fragments on death and funerals, public punishment, and fires.

A foreword by Tatiana Chemi contextualizes the book and situates it within the publishers' series that it inaugurates ('Arts, Creativities, and Learning Environments in Global Perspectives'), while Savarese's introduction lucidly sets out the volume's premise and objectives. The text of the book is loosely structured around a playful dialogue (ongoing in the opening section of every chapter) between the two protagonists of Flaubert's unfinished satirical work *Bouvard et Pécuchet*. In their quest for knowledge in *The Five Continents*, the two gardeners converse on festivals and female temple dancers, actors' small homes, recipes and pleasure, actors and spectators, and why we do theatre. All very revealing and down to (material) earth, which is appropriate considering their gardening background.

In terms of format, the volume resembles a catalogue in that most of the text is dedicated to captions that accompany the large number of images (over 1,300 according to Chemi). Indeed, this is a beautifully produced book, coffee-table book size, and lavishly laid out with hundreds of illustrations, figures, and photographs (the great majority in colour) depicting subjects related to theatre, dance, visual arts, and popular culture the world over. As such, the book draws attention to the actor's 'material culture' by means of a visual materiality which indexes the contexts

actors operate in, be that in and outside the theatre.

This is a truly marvellous book – a ready-made classic – about the lived and living world of theatre. It will appeal to students, scholars, and practitioners of theatre, but also to anyone interested in history, society, and visual culture.

FRANK CAMILLERI

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Annie McKean and Kate Massey-Chase, ed.

Playing for Time Theatre Company:

Perspectives from the Prison

Bristol: Intellect, 2019, 249 p. £70.00.

ISBN: 978-1-7832-0951-4.

This year is my thirtieth as a prison theatre practitioner, and one of the many things I soon learned is that the English prison system is systemically mercurial and never more than a hair's breadth away from some organizational review or structural reform. It is remarkable, then, when a theatre company manages to stage one full-scale text-based production, let alone the eleven that Playing for Time mounted in HMP Winchester between 2003 and 2014. Ultimately, the company was a victim of one of the many reorganizations that are a characteristic of the system. The body of research and reflective writing that is collected in this volume is an engaging and informative valedictory testimony to the company's work.

Playing for Time theatre company grew out of a partnership between the University of Winchester and HMP Winchester. *Perspectives from the Prison* is an edited volume of twelve reflective essays and articles from a range of contributors who have directly experienced the work of the company: a director, a playwright, a historian, a forensic psychologist, a student volunteer, and a former prisoner/participant. These authoritative voices combine to offer a near 360-degree view of Playing for Time's work and speak not only of the practice but also of its value to the prisoners, the practitioners, the student volunteers, and the prison establishment. It is this combination of perspectives on the practice of a single company's activity in one prison over a ten-year period that marks this book out as a unique addition to the prison theatre reader's bookshelf.

In her introduction, McKean states that she intended to ensure that 'the prisoner experience is at the heart of this book', and it is evident that a similar philosophy informed the approach of the company. The book lives up to McKean's initial promise, and the editors have ensured that each of the contributors suitably privileges the voice of the participants. It is to their credit that one chapter is dedicated to a detailed contemporaneous account of prisoner Scott's experience as a cast member in *Our Country's Good*.

Perspectives from the Prison is the first publication focused on UK prison theatre practice to be published in over a decade, making it a more than welcome addition to the field. Much has changed since the mid-noughties, and there has been a considerable shift in how theatre is appreciated and its value understood by the prison system. Playing for Time's work was closely aligned with educational outcomes and McKean and Massey-Chase give time to articulating a case for the practice within the discourse of desistance (the study of how and why people desist from crime).

While their arguments will not be new to anyone familiar with the sector, the longevity of their residency in HMP Winchester and the research collected in this volume do offer some fresh insights into what it is possible to create in a secure environment, should the winds be fair. *Perspectives from the Prison* provides a welcome glimpse into the work of Playing for Time theatre company, offering real insights into their practice as theatre-makers. I do not doubt that this book would be of interest to researchers and students interested in the theatre in the criminal justice sector, or those with a particular interest in community and applied theatre.

SIMON RUDING

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Maaïke Bleeker, Adrian Kear, Joe Kelleher, and Heike Roms, ed.

Thinking through Theatre and Performance

London: Methuen Drama, 2019. 321 p. £67.50.

ISBN 978-1-4725-7961-4.

What does it mean to say that theatre can ask something – anything – of itself? This is the question posed by the editors of *Thinking through Theatre and Performance*: one that implies theatre – and possibly performance – has an agency all of its own, irrespective of anything humans can, or cannot, do. Also it's one that can appear at any time and place, just like the weather or global ecologies. But 'theatre' is a notoriously flexible term, ranging across many definitions and classifications, leaving it wide open to interpretation. So perhaps it's apt to claim it as a kind of moveable feast or a shape-shifting phenomenon, flourishing wherever it appears.

Designed as a textbook for students, the study is divided into four parts ('Watching', 'Performing', 'Traces', 'Interventions'), each being given four or five chapters. Space is precious, so I will briefly deconstruct the detail of just three contributors to understand what the thinking of theatre might be all about.

Louise Owen asks 'How Does Theatre Represent Economic Systems?' She chooses Alexander Zeldin's play *Beyond Caring* (2014–16) as an