

## Editorial: Farewell

CHARLOTTE M. CANNING

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This editorial is a bittersweet one for me. I am incredibly proud of the six articles in this issue. They are provocative and compelling, and offer new knowledge of performance. Taken together, along with the other articles in this year's volume, they offer us innovative and exciting understandings of how live performance travels and matters, and what it means. This issue also is perhaps one of the most global I have ever edited – the authors look at performance in Africa, Asia, Europe and South America – demonstrating that as a field we are increasingly aware of the limitations of the national study. Each article illustrates the pleasures, risks and rewards when different cultures intersect through the medium of live performance.

Despite my excitement about the excellence of this issue, this is a difficult editorial to write because it is my last. It is hard to believe that three years have gone by since I started my term as Senior Editor. But as I hand it off, I am proud of the state of the journal. Subscriptions continue to grow and the breadth of work we publish has grown with them. *Theatre Research International* provides valuable support to the fields of live performance and I am proud to have played a role in extending and challenging our field. I know that this process will continue: the journal will be in excellent hands as Paul Rae assumes the role of Senior Editor. He has been a terrific colleague throughout my term as editor and I am eager to read the articles he will present. I know that he will be as well supported as I was by my Associate Editor, and I welcome Fintan Walsh to the *TRI* editorial community.

Given that this issue can be said to be about journeys – both personal and professional – it is perhaps fitting that the first article, “‘What I Came to Say’: Raymond Williams, the Sociology of Culture and the Politics of (Performance) Scholarship’, had its initial incarnation as a keynote for the 2014 International Federation for Theatre Research (IFTR) world congress at the University of Warwick. Former president Janelle Reinelt gave this keynote address and she uses the opportunity to review and challenge our field. The World Congress was the ideal site for Reinelt to challenge how we understand the intersection of performance and politics. She returns to one of her own early scholarly influences, cultural theorist Raymond Williams, to look at the assumptions about theatre as a social and political practice that have influenced performance scholarship. She does this in order to interrogate more recent turns in scholarship on performance and politics, including works by a wide range of performance scholars as diverse as Nicholas Ridout, Alan Read, Sonja Kuflinec, Rustom Bharucha and Noboku Anan, to name only a few. Reinelt finds much that is productive in the works she explores but she is deeply concerned about what she constructs as a movement towards a focus on individual liberation over more collaborative, connected social action. She calls for the field to remain, as she puts

it, 'accountable to a larger vision of collective organization and struggle, imaginative in its transgressions but ordered or at least strategic in its actions'. This complex and provocative essay will doubtless be discussed and debated in our field for many years to come.

The next article illustrates the complications involved when performers seek to create work from their political circumstances. Katrin Sieg's 'Towards a Civic Contract of Performance: Pitfalls of Decolonizing the Exhibitionary Complex at Brett Bailey's *Exhibit B*' could also serve as an example of the kind of work Reinelt calls for as Sieg illustrates the complexity of balancing collective action with individual agency. In 2010 white South African theatre artist Brett Bailey and his company Third World Bunfight presented a performance installation, *Exhibit A*, that offered an abridged version of German colonial history in twelve live tableaux. Two years later the piece was renamed *Exhibit B*, and included tableaux on Belgium, France and Great Britain. The piece has toured widely, primarily in Europe, and, as Sieg documents, has been met with an extreme range of critical and audience reactions. The material could not be more difficult, and its presentation raises the question addressed in other articles in this issue: how do you represent horrific violence, especially violence that is ignored, accommodated or supported because it is aimed at those whose identities are different from the ones of those in power? Sieg explores how *Exhibit B* positions its spectators, as she writes, 'as witnesses urged to respond to an emergency'. The installation piece is not without significant challenges, but not necessarily the ones that the protesters who shut down the show in some locations imagined. The show reminds spectators that they are attending it during one of the worst refugee crises to ever hit Europe, and one with its historic root in European colonialism. As people flee North Africa and the Middle East, Europe has to contend not only with the thousands upon thousands seeking asylum, but also with the past and present political policies that brought them there. Bailey and Third World Bunfight ensure that spectators hear directly from the recently arrived and that those voices are positioned as the key ones to listen to in the current moment.

The question of whose voices dominate public conversations and whose should be the subject of the next article. Maggie Inchley delves into the complicated and difficult territory of the representation of rape in a global, neo-liberal context. In 'Theatre as Advocacy: Asking for It and the Audibility of Women in *Nirbhaya*, the Fearless One' she explores the global reception of the production of Yaël Farber's play *Nirbhaya* as a way to understand the possibilities for ethical witnessing and responding. The play takes up the December 2012 rape of Jyoti Singh Pandey in Delhi, India. Inchley uses her own responses as a spectator, the production's international tour, and a careful analysis of its funders to ask how such an event might avoid reinscribing the political tropes that created the circumstances of women's oppression. Inchley points out that the human rights of safety or freedom from violence are being reconfigured as commodities, and that the US, among other nations, positions the need for these rights as one of economic necessity. This article cautions us to question how women's voices reach a global audience and what is silenced in the process.

The two previous issues of this volume had an article that reflected on how the exploration of globalization and transnationalism's past is crucial to any attempt to understand how theatre deals with these phenomena today. Christopher Balme's March 2015 article 'The Bandmann Circuit: Theatrical Networks in the First Age of Globalization' demonstrated how opportunities to tour globally transformed how European theatre operated. In "'From the Land of the White Elephant through the Gay Cities of Europe and America": Re-routing the World Tour of the Boosra Mahin Siamese Theatre Troupe (1900)' from July 2015, Nic Leonhardt argued that the routes individual performances take are not just about the synchronic crossing of geographical boundaries. Transnationalism, she demonstrated, is also about how performance moves diachronically across those borders. Tara Rodman continues the conversation and extends it in 'A More Humane Mikado: Re-envisioning the Nation through Occupation-Era Productions of *The Mikado* in Japan'. She looks at how three productions of the same piece in a single country (only two of which were offered to audiences) never literally crossed any geographical boundaries, but depended on synchronic and diachronic movement across those borders just the same. *The Mikado*, a show much contested in the twentieth century, became a way for Occupied Japan in the immediate post-Second World War years to seize the means through which they were represented both to themselves and to the occupiers. It also became a vehicle for the theatre community to propose a way forward for performance in Japan, away from the intense nationalism of the 1930s and the Second World War and towards the kind of cosmopolitanism that many in the theatre community have espoused since the 1920s. The idea that meaning is contextual has never been clearer as Rodman tracks the transformation of *The Mikado* from a work of imperialism to one of resistance.

The relationship between meaning and context takes on an entirely new dimension in 'Torture and Disappearance in Chilean Theatre from Dictatorship to Transitional Justice' by Milena Grass, Andrés Kalawski and Nancy Nicholls. The authors explore five plays, by Chilean authors, that have been produced in Chile and grapple with the dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet. The plays were variously written and produced across the dictatorship (1973–90) and since, as the nation has grappled with how to redress and remember the horrific crimes of those seventeen years. Staging torture and disappearance, however, is no easy matter. As the three authors demonstrate, theatre artists had to reach far outside the realist genre both to evade censorship and to represent the seemingly unrepresentable. What is remarkable about the work Grass, Kalawski and Nicholls explore is that the artists discussed here do not simply offer thoughtful responses to Chilean reality. Just as the horrors of the Dictatorship – surveillance, forced emigration, torture and disappearances – reinvented what daily life was in Chile, artists had to reconceive what theatre was and how it worked in relation to these quotidian horrors.

Loren Kruger's article extends the work that Grass and her colleagues developed by connecting the theatrical work produced during the Chilean dictatorship with the work from another horrifically repressive state. In 'Dispossession and Solidarity in Athol Fugard and Juan Radrigán' Kruger compares two playwrights, each a key figure in their respective nation's history of dissent and resistance, Athol Fugard of South Africa and Juan

Radrigán of Chile. Kruger narrows in on the work each playwright did in the 1970s and 1980s when their countries had repressive, tyrannical governments. Those governments were fully tolerated, even supported, by governments who claimed to be committed to democracy and human rights, including the US and Great Britain. By focusing on how the plays dramatize and perform ideas about labour and the dispossessed, the article demonstrates how neo-liberalism – so expertly developed in Chile, with its embrace of free markets and concomitant austerity demands for the impoverished – enacts violence, physical and otherwise, silencing the majority of those who live within its bounds. The methodology is less comparative than it is transnational, repositioning the global South as the connection between these playwrights, rather than the more typical oscillation between the playwrights' nationalities. Like Reinelt, Kruger examines what political action means in a theatrical context, and how theatre can invoke the collective.

To conclude this editorial I want to thank those who make *TRI* a reality. Without the excellent work of the team at Cambridge University Press's journals division this journal would not reach you. They model professional excellence and make editing the journal purely a scholarly labour; I have never had to worry about any of the complexities of publishing with CUP as a partner. Similarly, an editor needs not just a great press, but an equally great editorial board. Without the colleagues whose expertise I relied on throughout my term this journal could not have happened. *TRI* is fortunate to have such excellent scholars make up its board. Authors are, of course, the people without whom there would literally be no journal. I am grateful for each and every submission to *TRI*, whether or not they end up in print, because each one keeps the discourse around live performance vibrant and timely.

Finally, I want to extend my deepest thanks to the one group who must remain anonymous – peer reviewers. I have been the beneficiary over the past three years of insightful readers' reports. Without our colleagues' willingness to take on this uncredited work, *TRI* would not be able to achieve excellence. Providing rigorous feedback to authors we do not know is one of the most important things we do in the academy, yet it cannot be credited. With every article you read in these pages you are also reading the invisible editorial intervention of someone the journal cannot name. Anyone who has ever produced a reader's report or benefited from one should know that the profession rests on this labour and I want to express my enormous gratitude for that work. As I move from my role as editor to one of reader, I am excited to see what the future of *Theatre Research International* holds in store for the study of live performance.