

force and flow, and mind. Illustrated by many of his own detailed, expressive drawings, a context is offered for analyzing and understanding posture, alignment, movement patterns, and habits. Each area is examined in detail, and accompanied by excellent practical exercises to heighten awareness and understanding.

Illustrated by Da Vinci's drawings, the second half of the book offers an anatomical basis for understanding expression and the body. Theoretical background is excellently supported throughout by awareness exercises to illustrate anatomical and physical information. Like many movement practitioners, Schwiebert has developed this body of work through selecting elements from a variety of existing movement and somatic practices; the selected principles are sound, the underpinning is profound.

The book makes fascinating and valuable reading for the movement teacher as well as for the student of movement, performance, or dance searching for a deeper underpinning to their practice. It is particularly relevant for the post-graduate student wanting a practical approach to movement practice as research. As the author acknowledges, there is only so much physical understanding you can gain from reading a book. However he also recognizes that the reader will actually experience the physical sensation while understanding a concept, premise, or principle. The author's calm and passionate voice is very present in the book; he is in the room as we follow the exercises, he anticipates our response and asks perfectly timed questions, taking us through complex principles of movement theory translated into accessible language and exercises. Reading this book is a movement session in itself!

NIAMH DOWLING

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Michael Y. Bennett, ed.

Refiguring Oscar Wilde's *Salome*

Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2011. 306 p.

£53.40.

ISBN: 978-90-420-3432-7.

This, somewhat surprisingly, is the first collection of essays solely on Wilde's 'anomalous' non-comedy, *Salome*. The volume sets out to explore the play 'in depth' and to 'fully consider *Salome* as a part or an anomaly of Wilde's oeuvre'. The essays are paired (with one triple grouping) thematically in 'common scholarly conversations surrounding *Salome* and Wilde's work, as a whole', and this – fulfilling the aim of the 'Rodopi Dialogue' series – enables an organized, but polyvocal reading of the book itself, and more importantly, re-engagement with the play.

The fifteen essays, from established and emergent scholars, range over a cornucopia of subjects:

language, gender identity, Wilde's Irish identity, necrophilia and enchantment, tragedy, and Wilde as a symbolist, modernist, or post-modernist. It engages with the play in its many, often intertextual and intermedial manifestations – drama, dance, literature, opera, and film. Far from producing confusion, this scholarly eclecticism produces some fruitful and exciting juxtapositions. Some are internal to the essays ('*Salome* and Judith Butler', '*Salome* and Robert Graves's *The White Goddess*', 'Death and Tragedy in Thomas Hardy's *The Return of the Native* and *Salome*', Billy Wilder's *Sunset Boulevard* and Covent Garden's 2008 production of the Strauss opera, and perhaps more predictably, but no less effectively, '*Salome* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*'). Others are external: essays on '*Salome* and Romanticism' sit side by side with essays on '*Salome* and the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s', and a detailed analysis of Headlong's 'raw and alarming' production of the play in 2010.

In the introduction, Michael Y. Bennett defends his choice of illustration for the cover of the infamous photograph of the opera singer Alice Guszalewicz as *Salome* – thought for a long time to be of Wilde himself posing in the role – because it 'in a sense . . . best sums up the controversies and issues of the past fifty years surrounding Wilde's *Salome*' – ambiguity, liminality, opera/play, hetero/homosexual and perverse desire, the gaze – which Bennett wishes to revisit and develop through the book as a whole.

Perhaps best read in conjunction with the more linear 1996 Cambridge 'Plays in Production' stage history of *Salome* by John Tydeman and Stephen Price (who contributes the essay to this volume on *Salome* and *Sunset Boulevard*), this book opens up the play as, and for, performance. The range of essays in the volume serves both to locate the play in its original intellectual, aesthetic and theatrical context, and to suggest the complex possibilities of twentieth and twenty-first century readings and performances of the text without imposing an erroneously singular or homogenous overview on this elusive play.

VIV GARDNER

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Oliver Double

Britain Had Talent: a History of Variety Theatre

Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2012. 288 p. £17.99.

ISBN: 978-0-230-28460-9.

This lively and eclectic historical account of variety theatre hums with enthusiasm and replicates the playfulness of the studied form. Oliver Double bounds precisely across the interlocking narratives that nest beneath this theatrical tradition and, like a diligently planned variety bill, keeps his wide-ranging and ambitious discussion