

object' in immersive performance and museum display. Like the well-stocked prop shop described in Chapter Six, the book's strength is in its assemblage of diverse materials for further investigation and use.

KATE DORNEY

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Stephen Greer

Queer Exceptions: Solo Performance in Neoliberal Times

Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019.

264 p. £80.00

ISBN: 978-1-5261-1369-6.

Rising to the promise that the title holds out, this excellent book will be of value to all scholars with an interest in contemporary performance practices. It gives deep and well-informed insight into not only the creation and presentation of solo performance work but the economic realities within which it is embedded. This is important to Greer because it shows not only how solo performance operates on stage but also the ways in which solo performers need to be 'entrepreneurial individuals motivated by risk and characterized by a willingness to subsidize their own labour'.

Creative workers in general represent the new post-industrial worker, fluid and flexible enough to respond to rapid change, living precariously, and undervaluing their labour on the promise of future success. Key to this reading is the art festival where most solo performers often first air their work and where they become exposed to a broader audience. Greer walks us through a number of prominent international arts festivals detailing the different ways in which self-employed artists must exploit their labour in order to succeed, instancing Edinburgh Fringe Society's sample budgets which build in an assumed loss for the artists as just one example.

However, this book is not a manifesto for change so much as a way of showing a deep understanding of the many and complex ways in which art and artists interact with – and are acted upon by – the logics of neoliberal economics. Following a 'queer scavenger methodology' throughout the book much of the theorizing here is based on ideas of exceptionality drawn from Giorgio Agamben and, more consistently, Roberto Esposito.

The examples which follow these foundational ideas in the early chapters are organized around Greer's 'figural logic', which sees a very wide range of solo performers being grouped under the headings of The Martyr, The Pariah, The Killjoy, The Stranger, The Misfit, and The Optimist. This typology allows the writer to bring together a number of performers in surprising and poten-

tially very fruitful ways. The Killjoy, for example, sees the work of Bridget Christie who would likely be better known as a stand-up performer, being considered alongside Ursula Martinez, known for her live art practice, and a performance of Gary Owen's 2015 play *Iphigenia in Splott* among others.

Greer's palette is broad and wide-ranging, though this not in any way at the expense of detail – far from it. This brilliant addition to scholarly considerations of contemporary theatre practices is deeply rooted in an insider's understanding of the logistics, economics, and sheer hard work that underpins solo performance.

ALISON JEFFERS

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Laura MacDonald and William A. Everett, ed.

The Palgrave Handbook of Musical Theatre Producers

New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019. xviii, 559 p.

£175.50.

ISBN: 978-1-137-44029-7.

This collection is a vital contribution to musical theatre studies. Covering the entirety of the musical theatre era, the essays look at the many different ways that producers – be they individuals, theatre companies, or conglomerates – produce. The editors identify the lack of research, especially from musical theatre scholars, into producers and their work, and this compilation attempts to address that deficiency.

The variety of the topics covered is immense, including, among other areas, marketing, show development, international reach, and finance. However, the overarching subject matter provides a unity to the essays. An early chapter, by Kathryn Edney, discusses how Max Bialystock from Mel Brooks's *The Producers* became the archetypal Broadway producer and in many ways the essays that follow work to unpick that model. The book is separated into five sections: the overture, three acts, and the curtain call. These run chronologically from 'To the 1940s' to 'Since the 1970s'. With these taken consecutively the book provides a comprehensive history of the musical theatre. However, each essay tackles its individual subject area with enough temporal context that they are just as rewarding when read non-sequentially.

The first part of the book includes a richly detailed historical account of the life and work of George Edwardes, who stakes a claim to the introduction of allocated seating in the theatre. Such origin stories about systems and techniques that have become standardized in the theatre fill these pages. As the producers discussed become more familiar, so the work increasingly challenges and critiques. The chapters on Hal Prince and Cameron Mackintosh, written by Paul R. Laird

and Jessica Sternfeld respectively, both manage to examine the methods of these men in a novel way: the former highlights the importance of Ruth Mitchell within Prince's operation; and the latter defines Mackintosh's commitment to over-seeing every aspect of his productions. Importantly, the book travels beyond Broadway and London to explore work across the US, Europe, and Asia: and the chapters about the Takarazuka Revue in Japan and Korean musicals in the 1960s demonstrate that musical theatre has flourished away from the Great White Way for some time.

More critical analysis of the output of the producers featured would have been welcome, as some essays felt too entrenched in biography, but the sheer number of subjects that the book covers makes it an invaluable and timely resource for scholars of musical theatre.

GUS GOWLAND

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Anna Teresa Scheer

Christoph Schlingensiefel: Staging Chaos, Performing Politics, and Theatrical Phantasmagoria

London: Bloomsbury, 2018. 296 p. £75.00.

ISBN: 978-1-350-00105-3.

Methuen Drama (now a subsidiary of Bloomsbury) has a long history of publishing individual playscripts and collections of English-language plays and plays in translation, providing an invaluable resource for text-based traditions of theatre-making. The more recent series 'Methuen Drama Engage' widens its scope to consider performance genres where the text is less central, and in which the historical and critical context is as important as the work itself.

Such is the case with this outstanding volume by Anna Teresa Scheer on the complex and controversial artist Christoph Schlingensiefel, whose political artworks spanned reality television, 'trash' film, public spectacle, episodic theatre, and large-scale opera. As Scheer notes in her introduction,

despite the ambitious scope and widespread influence of Schlingensiefel's work with German-speaking contexts, a number of challenges have prevented his output from being more widely known: its quality of responsiveness to particular cultural and political issues; the lack of translation from German of materials remaining from his projects; and, indeed, the question of what exactly it is that would be translated, for, unlike a playtext, there is no single object that consolidates any of his projects. Instead they comprise a chaotic and deliberately disorienting interplay of provocative images, immersive actions, plans and deviations from that plan, accumulating into a multi-sensory 'phantasmagoria', as Scheer puts it in her title.

To document such hybrid actions, a hybrid approach is needed. Scheer's analyses combine thick descriptions of the live events with in-depth accounts of relevant contexts within German politics and culture. She focuses on six works (or pairings of work) from across Schlingensiefel's career, including his mock-historical film re-enactment of the last days of Adolf Hitler; the *It's a Knockout*-style gameshow with which he began his long relationship with the Berlin Völkshaus; his staging of *Hamlet* (2001) for the Zürich Schauspielhaus, notorious for its casting of real neo-Nazis as the 'Mousetrap' players; and, curiously, an unrealized intervention for the German Reichstag, commissioned (and then withdrawn) by Deutsche Bank.

As a reader who did not live through these times or experience Schlingensiefel's work firsthand, I feel fortunate to have such an expert guide: Scheer's writing draws apparently effortlessly from diverse sources to construct a highly readable and engrossing narrative. While the attempt to theorize *about* Schlingensiefel is minimal, instead I felt as if I were thinking *with* him, which is testament to Scheer's skilful writing. In our present climate of clickbait sensationalism, fake news, anti-migrant politics, and resurgent nationalism, Schlingensiefel's ambitious and uncompromising example has much to offer.

THERON SCHMIDT

Corrigenda

We apologise that the credits for the production shots on page 41 of Alex Mangold's article 'Failure, Trauma, and the Theatre of Negativity' in our February issue (NTQ 137) were missed in the final proofing. The respective captions should have read: 'Körper directed by Sasha Waltz; Sasha Waltz, Hans Peter Kuhn. Photo: Bernd Uhlig. *Void Story* directed by Tim Etchells; Cathy Naden, Terry O'Connor. Photo: Hugo Glendinning.'