

and exported an array of Victorian adaptations in order to profit from the lucrative international market's thirst for 'British' products.

Poore's writing is fluent and engaging and will appeal to students and scholars of Victorian Studies, Cultural Studies, Theatre History, and Media Studies. Encompassing a diverse range of performances, the book acts as a framework not only for accessing the past but exploring it critically. His extension of Raymond Williams's structure of feeling in the forms of 'Self Help' and 'Hard Times' helps to convey his argument surrounding the significance of the RSC's *Nicholas Nickleby*, while his notions 'World on Stage', 'Studio Psychodrama' and 'Biodrama' provide useful lenses through which to assess the rise of the individual and the impact of Thatcher's Conservative government.

Post-colonial and feminist theory help provide an illuminating reading of Shared Experience's Brontë trilogy, with Poore also highlighting how Arts Council funding requirements and academic syllabuses influenced the company's work. However, in a monograph that references an exhaustive number of productions, it appears somewhat of an oversight to omit Terry Deary's hugely popular *Horrible Histories* book-cum-stageplay-cum-children's-TV-series *The Vile Victorians* from the discussions of the heritage and education industries.

SIMON SLADEN

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David Krasner

A History of Modern Drama: Volume I

Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012. 401 p. £90.00.

ISBN: 978-1-4051-5757-5.

David Krasner's book is the first volume in an ambitious project to write a history of modern drama, placing authors within their artistic, cultural and philosophical context. A useful introduction sets out the key stages of modernism: its rejection of classicism, its embodiment of the 'trauma of alienation', and its refraction into 'three modernisms: romanticism, realism, and avant garde'. The book then continues with a survey from Ibsen to Beckett, largely focused on European and American playwrights, and informed by detailed readings of individual plays in relation to well-known critics in the field. It links the authors to movements in the visual arts and literature and brings in ideas from Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and a range of other philosophers to contextualize their work.

Its scope therefore makes it an excellent teaching resource, even though it spends too much time on Ibsen, Strindberg, and Chekhov at the outset, leaving some later playwrights rather superficially covered in comparison. Indeed, as

the book progresses and the chapters cover figures such as Ionesco, Sartre, and Genet, it loses continuity and risks becoming a series of discrete entries rather than a coherent synthesis.

Where the book is less successful overall is in fulfilling Krasner's wish to offer a 'theory' of modern drama. Krasner's strategy to use chapter headings such as 'distorted modernism' or 'eros and thanatos' does not disguise the fact that this is a linear treatment of individual authors and the conceptual framework one would expect from an overarching theory is not apparent. His approach to the texts is often thematic rather than theoretical, and his dense writing style, veering between different registers, often evokes the texts rather than theorizing their structure and poetics.

More important perhaps is the relative lack of focus on the plays *as performance*; this does not simply mean production history, but dramaturgical features such as the construction of dialogue or the implications of the use of stage directions. Students will want to know more than they find here about Ibsen's shift from poetry to prose, or the links between Chekhov and Stanislavsky. This is a detailed and wide-ranging book but it is more concerned with content than form, with ethics than aesthetics, and doesn't see the dramatic text often enough as a blueprint for live and embodied performance onstage.

WILLIAM MCEVOY

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Stanca Scholz-Cionca and Andreas Regelsberger, ed.

Japanese Theatre Transcultural:

German and Italian Intertwinings

München: Iudicium Verlag, 2011. 230 p. £22.07.

ISBN: 978-3-86205-026-0.

The essays in this volume (plus three additional, commissioned papers) were originally presented at a symposium in Trier, Germany, that aimed to expand scholarship about 'the contradictory dynamics of intercultural exchange and its impact on the performing arts' by focusing on Japanese/German and Japanese/Italian exchanges and encounters.

Oddly, only a few of the authors attempt to tackle the aesthetic or geopolitical implications of the tripartite Axis during the Second World War. One who makes the attempt is James R. Brandon, a kabuki expert who discovered the script of a play about Mussolini while researching *Kabuki's Forgotten War* (2009), a monumental volume that explores wartime, propagandistic kabuki. Though written and performed as kabuki, *Mussolini* was authored by Osanai Kaoru (1881–1928), one of the seminal artists of *shingeki* (modern, western-style drama) who was deeply influenced by Brecht. The contradictions between what we know of Osanai's modernizing, left-leaning efforts and

this proto-fascist hagiography make the translation and accompanying notes truly eye-opening.

Several other essays explore new territory. Marumoto Takashi tackles the stereotype that both Germans and Japanese lack a sense of humour. Using the German designations of 'E theatre' (E for *ernst*, meaning 'serious') and 'U theatre' (U for *Unterhaltung*, meaning 'entertainment'), Professor Marumoto examines playwriting, translations, government subsidies, and audience reactions in both cultures. Niino Morihiro analyzes contemporary Japanese playwright Sakate Yōji's social criticism, concluding that, like his mentor Kara Jūrō, Sakate has assimilated and transformed Brechtian concepts to a Japanese context. He maintains that Europe–Japan exchange has been primarily one-way, from Europe to Japan. That conclusion might surprise scholars accustomed to the discourses of Orientalism and accusations of cultural plunder by the West.

The best of these essays refreshingly explore intercultural transfer without resorting to that trope. Among the papers that offer new perspectives is Katja Centonze's analysis of how Japanese concepts of space and the body impact contemporary Italian dance. Readers familiar with Peter Eckersall's work will appreciate his ongoing, insightful analysis of Heiner Müller's influence in Japan. Additional essays consider topics such as Brecht's *Judith of Shimoda*, director Ninagawa Yukio's productions of Greek tragedy, Japanese inflections in contemporary Italian opera, the 'ethics of transmission' in Italian noh training, Japanese and Italian masks, early twentieth-century Japanese performances in Europe, and a European director's experiences in Japan. While not every essay digs as deeply as I would like, those that do make this slim volume a valuable addition to the literature.

CAROL FISHER SORGENFREI

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Clare Cochrane

**Twentieth-Century British Theatre:
Industry, Art, and Empire**

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

353 p. £55.

ISBN: 978-0-521-46488-8.

This ambitious volume attempts the challenging task of presenting the reader with an account of the past century of theatre industry and practice. Its epic style provides a narrative account of the structural history of theatre making in the United Kingdom over the past hundred years, with specific reference to the relationship between nation, politics, and theatre and a keen emphasis on theatre produced away from the central metropolis of London. Cochrane also reflects upon Britain's colonial heritage, beginning her

study at a time when imperial power was at its height, and developing her analysis to explore the decline of Empire and the impact of the theatrical responses to the cultural landscape of Britain in these later years.

The book is divided into three topographies – 1900, 1950, and 2000. Cochrane begins by offering a survey of regional theatre at the turn of the last century. Her topics include debating the social function of art, delving into the profit/not for profit argument, discussing the specifics of the acting profession, and offering an analysis of amateur theatre making. As she moves on to 1950 she introduces topics such as immigration, the construction of the National Theatre and RSC, structures of power and inequality and their effect on theatrical demographics, and the development and domination of television. Finally, in the topography for 2000, she offers us a view of electronic spaces and virtual theatrical environments and the significance of Britain's relationship with the EU. The conclusion again asserts the need to recognize theatre making away from London and to reflect upon theatre produced within local communities.

This book offers the reader a meticulously researched and lovingly compiled account of theatre over a century. Its focus on regional work introduces a fascinating discussion on the politics of nationalism, economics, and inequality. The development of theatrical institutions is a dominant theme in this text, and Cochrane's description of the hegemonic power relations within these organizations is absorbing.

The structure of the book feels at times a little unbalanced, with the 2000 section totalling only 32 pages, compared with over 100 on the 1900s. The book also offers a somewhat partial view of theatre over this period. There is, for example, little or no mention of major dramatists or practitioners working at these times. However, because of this omission, the book is able to focus on the mechanics of production and the detail of life for those who make their living from the theatre in an enlightening and highly evocative way.

CATHERINE REES

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Rosemary Malague

An Actress Prepares: Women and 'The Method'
London; New York: Routledge, 2012. 254 p.

£19.99.

ISBN: 978-0-415-68157-5.

Vigorously and persuasively positioning 'feminist consideration of Method actor training' as 'not passé', but 'past due', Malague's book not only robustly highlights the gendered techniques and assumptions underlying the training, but dis-