

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