

NTQ Book Reviews

edited by Bella Merlin

DOI: 10.1017/S0266464X03210277

Pantelis Michelakis

Achilles in Greek Tragedy

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

218 p. £40.00.

ISBN: 0-521-81843-5.

Pantelis Michelakis makes no secret of the innate difficulty in writing a major study of Achilles in Greek tragedy – which is, to put it baldly, that there is only one surviving tragedy in which he appears as a character. In that, Euripides' posthumously performed *Iphigenia at Aulis*, his belated appearance – almost like an understudy who has spent the evening sulking in his dressing room before turning up onstage for the curtain-call – shows him less as the role-model for Alexander the Great or the glittering fighting machine of *Troilus and Cressida* than a would-be hero who finds himself used by Agamemnon and stoned by his own Myrmidons.

Michelakis handles the problem that he has set himself with academic aplomb and ingenuity. The trawl through Achilles' significance in external sources from Pindar to Plutarch is exhaustive. He draws attention to the number of non-extant plays where Achilles featured as a character and balances this neatly against a number of surviving tragedies (Sophocles' *Ajax* and *Philoctetes*, Euripides' *Andromache*, *Hecuba*, *Electra*, and the whether-or-not Euripides' *Rhesus*), where his physical absence is more than compensated for by the significance of his reputation, his armour, his son Neoptolemus, and even his ghost.

This last point raises the reservation that this would have been an opportunity to consider in detail the curious difference in *Hecuba* between the ghost of Polydorus, an *eidolon*, and the ghost of Achilles – referred to for the most part as *phantasma*, a word commonly used for an apparition in a dream. Why does Euripides make this distinction? What is the relationship between these two dead figures? Is Achilles here simply the spook's spook?

The chapter on *Iphigenia at Aulis* is, not surprisingly, the most rewarding, dealing as it can with less speculative material. Michelakis's reference to the missing third posthumous play as *Agesilaus*, rather than the commonly accepted *Alcmeon in Corinth*, is something of a puzzle, as is the organization of dramatic reference to begin with the small remains of Aeschylus' *Myrmidons* and end with the tiniest fragments of what is assumed to

be a satyr play. What the author does admirably is bring together a mass of material and make a coherent and compelling whole out of what might in less thorough hands have turned into something of an aimless jumble.

J. MICHAEL WALTON

DOI: 10.1017/S0266464X03220273

Nicholas Grene

Shakespeare's Serial History Plays

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

278 p. £40.00.

ISBN: 0-521-77341-5.

Until recently, the generic organization of the 1623 First Folio of Shakespeare dominated reception of Shakespeare's history plays, for by placing them in the order of the kings' reigns rather than the order in which they were written, the Folio made it appear that Shakespeare had presented in one grand sweep the essentials of English history. Thus, as Nicholas Grene points out, E. M. W. Tillyard's *Shakespeare's History Plays* treated the two tetralogies as a single narrative about 'God's curse on England for Henry IV's usurpation'.

Overreacting to Tillyardism, scholars such as Graham Holderness have overstated the non-sequentiality of Shakespeare's history plays; but Grene takes as his critical starting point 'the fact of their seriality' to explore the possibilities that this opens up, especially for the dramatic use of retrospection, prolepsis, prophecy, and plain reinvention of the past. Deftly rejecting Tillyard's conservatism while retaining aspects of his method, Grene shows that the plays were actually performed in sequences in the 1590s and explores what follows from this knowledge.

We need not fall for Harold Bloom's romantic notion of character, Grene argues, to see that in working the chroniclers' serial narration of events into dramatic form Shakespeare spotted new technical possibilities for the portrayal of human personality, such as showing individuals' responses to the personal and political crises occurring in their youth and recurring in their prime and old age. He takes as particular examples of this Humphrey of Gloucester, Richard of York, Henry VI, Queen Margaret, and Richard III; but he might also have noted that one feels a good deal less for George of Clarence's demise in an evening performance of *Richard III* if one has just spent the afternoon watching his murderous deeds in *Henry VI Part Three*.

Greene returns several times to a recent opportunity for having this experience with the Royal Shakespeare Company's *This England* sequential presentation of both tetralogies (with through-casting) in 2000 and 2001, and indeed his central thesis about the effects of seriality rests on a tripos of prose sources, original performance, and recent productions of the history plays. For this reason, the book will deservedly find a wide audience across the English/Drama subject area, offering cogent textual and performance criticism as well as theorized rejection of recent disintegrationist responses to the history plays.

GABRIEL EGAN

DOI: 10.1017/S0266464X03230279

Catherine M. S. Alexander and Stanley Wells, ed.
Shakespeare and Sexuality
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
207 p. £ 37.50 (hbk), £12.95 (pbk).
ISBN: 0-521-80031-5 (hbk), 0-521-80475-2 (pbk).

All except one of these ten essays have been published before (most in *Shakespeare Survey*). Ann Thompson, in summarizing recent critical sources, insists that the construction of sexuality is verbal. These 'swerves and . . . frictions of language' are deftly analyzed here by William C. Carroll, particularly the 'rhetoric of negation' associated with virginity. Lloyd Davis studies Juliet and Romeo's 'frustration with the language of others and of the past', finding a new reciprocity of speaking, especially in the way the sonnet is shared between them – 're-voiced as dialogue'.

For Mary Bly, *Romeo and Juliet's* lyricism is 'intoxicated by carnality' and she traces its influence on contemporary dramatists' bawdy. Linguistic invention is also the subject of Catherine Belsey's contribution, in particular the Petrarchan lover's oxymoron signal 'that the Renaissance took full account of the element of danger in desire'. For Michael Hattaway, Shakespeare's misogyny 'may well manifest a fear of female emancipation'. He concludes pessimistically that 'all sexuality [is] shameful'.

Margreta de Grazia claims that the homoeroticism of the Sonnets is a red herring, since 'nothing threatens patriarchal and hierarchic social formation more than a promiscuous womb'. John Russell Brown explores the various modes of sexuality and their representation, proposing, in addition, that the boy actor allowed the audience imaginative freedom to conjure the female body according to its own inclinations. In a racy essay, Celia R. Daileader considers sexuality in cinematic Shakespeare, contrasting the 'classic' nudity of Zeffirelli's *Romeo* with the pornographic techniques of Parker's *Othello*. Gwyneth Paltrow's nipples were seen eight times in *Shakespeare in Love*, while, 'disappointingly, Joseph Fiennes

displayed nothing but chest and back. Hetero males: eight. Females: zero'!

PETER J. SMITH

DOI: 10.1017/S0266464X03240276

Dana E. Aspinall, ed.
The Taming of the Shrew: Critical Essays
New York: Routledge, 2002. 387 p. £65.00.
ISBN: 0-8153-3515-6.

As might be expected from a book of essays on what is arguably Shakespeare's most provocative study of sexual politics, the main focus of the readings presented here is gender. The collection is divided into three parts: a survey of the play's critical history from the book's editor, a collection of reprinted critical essays, and a section on the play in performance, on stage, and in film and television. Aspinall's introductory essay is a useful overview of the play's early textual and stage history, although the scholarship is not cutting-edge: Joseph Quincy Adams's edition of Henry Herbert's records, cited by Aspinall, has been superseded by N. W. Bawcutt's (Oxford, 1996). Also, the introduction rather skimps on the twentieth century, giving it just two pages.

Of course, the rest of the book fleshes out the twentieth-century responses; but there is still a gap, since almost every essay reproduced in this anthology is post-1980. Although it would have been interesting to see a range of decades represented, it might be objected that this is not the remit of the series which, as the general editor makes clear, seeks to provide 'new essays' on a particular Shakespeare play or poem – although the essays here are not 'new' in the sense of 'specially commissioned', but were gathered from other publications. Thus it is difficult to know towards whom this book is directed: since it is available only in hardback, it will not be bought by students; and at this price most scholars may prefer to access the essays as they originally appeared in their respective journals.

JOAN FITZPATRICK

DOI: 10.1017/S0266464X03260279

Dunbar Ogden
The Staging of Drama in the Medieval Church
Newark: Delaware Press, 2002. 251 p. £33.00.
ISBN: 0-87413-709-8.

Congratulations are due both to Ogden and his publishers for producing this handsome volume. The clear illustrations, careful double-column layout, and generous font size match the clarity, enthusiasm, and liveliness of Ogden's writing. This will be an invaluable book for undergraduates and researchers alike. Ogden's aim is to 'set forth staging principles and document practices in a

kind of theatrical performance engendered from European life during a period of roughly seven hundred years'. His work advances that undertaken by Karl Young in the 1930s, and Ogden takes care to question many of the Darwinian assumptions of theatrical development made by the former.

The Staging of Drama in the Medieval Church considers the evidence of issues such as staging space, patterns of movement, costumes, and acting, alongside the text and music of liturgical drama. Ogden's emphasis upon theatricality and contextuality pays rich dividends. There are, however, a few quibbles. It is surprising that Ogden makes no mention of the archaeological research of Roberta Gilchrist. I can't help but think that her study of nunneries would have advanced Ogden's hypotheses about performance and religious space. It is also disappointing to see Ogden refer to Hrotswitha's texts as non-performative and not to refer to the work of Peter Dronke and others in this area. But overall this is an imaginative and impressive book. There is much source material drawn together here for the first time. The artistry of the production and the flair of the writing and documentation are welcome in this field.

KATIE NORMINGTON

DOI: 10.1017/S0266464X03270275

Linda Mackenney

The Activities of Popular Dramatists and Drama Groups in Scotland, 1900–1952

Lewiston: Edward Mellen Press, 2001. 320 p.

\$119.95.

ISBN: 0-77347-905-8.

In recent years, there have been a number of publications which reappraise the work of popular dramatists or independent theatre groups, who aimed to take theatre in the first half of the twentieth century to non-traditional theatre audiences. Linda Mackenney's *The Activities of Popular Dramatists and Drama Groups in Scotland, 1900–1952* is one such example. Mackenney provides a detailed study of the interface between the work of the playwright Joe Corrie and the production structures which controlled amateur and semi-professional theatre work in Scotland during the first half of the twentieth century.

Careful to detail fully Corrie's own history and the political and ideological contexts of his work, Mackenney provides a critique of plays such as *In Time o' Strife* and assesses the way in which the predominant naturalism of the text is integrated with elements which borrow from more popular theatre forms such as melodrama and the comic sketch format of music-hall acts. Mackenney proposes that although Corrie did not make use of the agit-prop format utilized by many political theatre groups in the 1930s and 1940s, his plays

consistently focus on dramatic expressions of the Scottish working-class experience. She suggests that we validate this focus on the working-class experience as a political strategy.

The book also details the working practices of the various amateur and semi-professional theatre groups of the period which she splits, rather precariously, into three categories: the mining community drama groups, the political or socialist groups, and the 'politicized' theatre groups, 'which comprise those community groups sufficiently motivated by the events of the 1930s to present plays concerning the burning issues of the day'.

The contexts for the work of many of these groups were the performance festivals held by the Scottish Community Drama Association through the mid 1920s to the late 1930s. Such festivals hosted the work of playwrights such as Avrom Greenbaum, founder of the Glasgow Jewish Institute Players, whose popular *The Bread of Affliction* centred on the events of the pogroms. By the late 1930s, the SCDA had become more concerned with competition and formalizing what they considered to be stylistically and ideologically appropriate work. Thus, many of the more political theatre groups and playwrights had to find other outlets for their work in a cultural economy which was moving away from such formalized promoting of community and popular theatre by the 1950s.

Mackenney's book is detailed, although the theoretical framing is weak; this is, in effect, a documentation project which will prove useful for students and enthusiasts, as it brings together a great deal of material hitherto inaccessible.

MAGGIE B. GALE

DOI: 10.1017/S0266464X03280271

John McGrath (*Nadine Holdsworth, ed.*)

Naked Thoughts that Rove About: Wrestling with Theatre, 1959–2001

London: Nick Hern Books, 2002. 270 p. £14.99.

ISBN: 1-85459-239-4.

This book, completed just before John McGrath's death, brings together over forty years of his thoughts on theatre and culture in general – and, in particular, on the genesis, practice, and future prospects for the kind of rough, popular, politically engaged theatre to which he devoted so much of his artistic career. Reading the collection, one is struck by two things: firstly, by the undeniable passion with which McGrath conducted his life, and out of which he formed this theatre; and secondly, by an increasingly clear-eyed (yet still fundamentally idealistic) assessment of the sheer difficulty of maintaining and sustaining his work in a harsh, antipathetic political climate.

As one might expect, McGrath's attitude to the depredations of Thatcherite funding policies is

conveyed through passionate invective. Rather less expected is the analysis of the internal politics of socialist theatre (and particularly of the tensions between an ideal of democratic practice and the practical work of the company). It is McGrath's ability to identify both the external and the internal pressures to which his work was subjected that prevents this collection from becoming a one-sided justification of his life. It is an honest record – at some points partisan, but unapologetically so. McGrath's clear commitment to an ideal of democratic socialism is as clear in the final extracts as it is (at least in embryonic form) in the early essays. And it is against this clear, unwavering commitment that we judge both his writing and his work.

This is, of course, an important collection. It records the work of the man who, amongst other things, helped to kick-start modern Scottish theatre. It provides a valuable set of contextualizing documents against which to assess not only McGrath's work but changes in theatre, politics, and culture over the past forty years. It is not the final history of the period; others will have their own arguments to place against McGrath's. However, it is an unvarnished record of the time from a man well placed to gauge the changing nature of that time.

DAVID PATTIE

DOI: 10.1017/S0266464X03290278

Clive Barker and Maggie B. Gale, ed.

British Theatre Between the Wars, 1918–1939

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

260 p. £45.00.

ISBN: 0-521-62407-X.

Each generation reconstructs the periods of those which have preceded it, and nowhere is this more apparent than in works of historical survey. In part, this is because it is always notoriously difficult to analyze one's own time, and later analysts can often see more clearly themes and issues that were once hidden or obscured, either consciously or unconsciously; and in part it arises from an urge to grace current cultural readings back from the present to the past.

That these two considerations are virtually impossible to separate is well illustrated by this admirable collection of essays on British theatre between the wars. We might expect issues of class and politics to be frequently touched upon – and in particular the effect on these of the sense of moving from the end of one conflict to the beginning of another that is arguably the single most important factor shaping these years. However, the other dominant concern, voiced in one form or other in virtually every one of the nine chapters, is with matters of gender and sexuality. That this has happened in such a clearly unprogrammed way is evidence of both the considerations with which I started.

This is an eclectic collection of essays, well worth recommending to students working in the area, but one that is anxious not to revisit over-familiar territory. Witness Clive Barker's explanation in his stylishly constructed final piece on 'The Ghosts of War' that G. B. Shaw's plays 'have been well chronicled elsewhere', and that they 'create something of a problem', as 'they are too wide to be covered and too important to be left out'. The result is a series of chapters offering a series of fascinating insights into the period, and theatre that was shaped by it.

This is a work that will stimulate debate and further research: for example, James Ross Moore's chapter on musicals and revue both charts the interrelated development of the two genres and also quite consciously suggests that there is much more work to be done in this area, perhaps by the author himself. Such is the need for this research that there is, significantly, not a single contemporary reference in his notes.

While it is not possible here to dwell on individual essays (save to say that the range of topics covered is impressive and the quality of the work consistently good), my personal favourite is Mick Wallis's chapter on the invention of modern pageantry. To start reading a chapter on something that I thought would be inordinately dull and then to find myself becoming increasingly fascinated by the scholarship and analysis which is brought to bear upon the subject, resulted in an impatience to see the outcome of the completed project. This is characteristic of the entire collection. Every chapter is a site on which much has already been uncovered and gives promise of the rewards of further investigation.

JOHN BULL

DOI: 10.1017/S0266464X03300272

Ciane Fernandes

Pina Bausch and the Wuppertal Dance Theater: the Aesthetics of Repetition and Transformation

New Studies in Aesthetics, Volume 34.

New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2001. 168 p.

\$47.95.

ISBN: 0-8204-5251-3.

It is hard to imagine that anyone could write a whole book on the use of repetition in Pina Bausch's work, but this is exactly what Fernandes has done. With a foreword by Rose Lee Goldberg and a preface by Susanne Schlicher, the book interestingly merges verbal descriptions of specific Bausch works and reminiscences of former dancers with aesthetic and theoretical explorations. Goldberg's foreword is, in effect, a review of the book, praising Fernandes to the heights. Schlicher's preface is more measured in its succinct summary – 'She investigates the many emotional, aesthetic, and performance-related im-

plications and functions of repetition in the works of Pina Bausch' – and continues by commenting on Fernandes's work from a specifically German viewpoint. Schlicher also comments on Fernandes being both a performer and an academic, and thus the particular view that she is able to bring to Bausch's work.

Chapter One considers the work of Bausch in the light of the pioneering work of Rudolf Laban, Mary Wigman, and Kurt Jooss; and, applying the philosophical thinking of Lacan and Langer, begins the analysis of Bausch's use of repetition. Fernandes sets out how she has organized this analysis into two categories of repetition – 'formal' (e.g., the exact repetition of a movement) and 'reconstructive' (such as the reconstruction of a dancer's past experience) – and how her analytical process is derived from her training in Laban movement analysis. She confines her discussion to works from 1974 until 1993, focusing on four works in particular: *Kontakthof* (1978), *Arein* (1979), *1980 – a Piece by Pina Bausch* (1980), and *On the Mountain a Cry Was Heard* (1984).

Chapter Two, which concerns Bausch's creative process, is perhaps the most readable. It draws specifically on the testament of Bausch's dancers, describing how the choreographer works in rehearsal. Fernandes considers how Bausch draws material out of her dancers by, for example, asking them to respond to specific questions (reconstructive repetition) and how Bausch manipulates this material into her dance works (formal repetition). She also draws attention to the repetitive nature of dance training and how many choreographers use repetition as a structuring device.

In Chapter Three, Fernandes begins to analyze specific works. She writes quite detailed descriptions of movement, which are sometimes vividly clear; but at other times one longs for the clarity of Labanotation so that a point might be made more effectively. Occasionally, her language is painfully 'politically correct'. None the less, the chapter explains clearly how a gesture created spontaneously becomes re-presented as it is altered by repetition and changes of presentation.

Chapter Four considers the cycles of repetition within dance (technique classes, rehearsals and performances, etc.) and, furthermore, how Bausch frequently establishes a cycle within relationships: that of tender gesture turning to aggression and then frustration. Fernandes also considers Bausch's use of words in her pieces, citing a scene from *Arien* as a pertinent example of verbal repetition and the distortion of meaning.

The fifth chapter discusses the use of repetition as a choreographic structuring device and particularly Bausch's alternation and juxtaposition of events and scenes. Fernandes illustrates how Bausch's repetition is both the means and the substance of her work. The sixth chapter looks at Bausch's 're-dancing' of opera and fairy tales in

order to cast on them a new light, citing *Bluebeard* as her specific example. She continues by highlighting the repetitive nature of Bausch's presentation of the opera in its contrasting moments of permanence and change. There is no conclusion, although the very brief final chapter may be viewed as such, each chapter presumably being considered complete in itself.

The book is interesting but hard-going, particularly so – I suspect – if the reader's knowledge of Bausch's work is limited. Anyone reading this before seeing Bausch's work would gain little idea of the theatricality or size of her works, since, by its very nature, such detailed analysis inevitably focuses on the minutiae rather than the bigger picture. It will be useful reading for dance students and scholars but perhaps not for a general audience.

CLARE LIDBURY

DOI: 10.1017/S0266464X03310279

James Inverne

The Impresarios

London: Oberon, 2000. 232 p. £16.99.

ISBN: 1-84002-135-7.

In a brief foreword, actor Michael Pennington defines impresarios as heroic 'undertakers of exploits', organizers of public entertainments who date back at least as far as Philip Henslowe. More soberly, journalist James Inverne distinguishes between 'impresarios' – who stage shows which have already been created – and 'producers', who create shows from scratch, sourcing the play, director, cast, theatre, and publicity. Today, of course, the two roles often overlap, and British producers also bestride the subsidized and commercial sectors – Cameron Mackintosh's 1985 production of Trevor Nunn's RSC *Les Misérables* being the classic case.

After surveying the risky world of the contemporary producer in six adrenaline-packed pages, Inverne moves on to interview big names such as Bill Kenwright, Thelma Holt, Duncan Weldon, Michael White, Michael Codron, and Cameron Mackintosh. Added to this, he talks to a producer who also directs, Peter Hall; a choreographer, Matthew Bourne; opera impresarios such as Raymond Gubbay, Glyndebourne's George Christie, and Edinburgh's Brian McMaster; plus legends such as Harvey Goldsmith and lesser known talents including Alan Sievwright. Andrew Lloyd Webber and the ballet-loving Hochhausers join the roll-call, and the book ends with a survey of comparatively new arrivals such as Sonia Friedman, Sally Greene, and Richard Jordan.

Amid much familiar material, this clearly written account has its little gems: Peter Hall's fascination with Binkie Beaumont; the Scouser Bill Kenwright taking *Blood Brothers* to frosty New

York; Matthew Bourne surviving *Swan Lake* fever; Thelma Holt getting feisty as a woman in a man's world; Raymond Gubbay feuding with the critics; Cameron Mackintosh grumbling about American Equity; Michael Codron talking about 'dirty plays'; and Michael White bemoaning the early closure of the lipstick lesbian extravaganza, *Voyeurz*.

It is good to read about contemporary commercial theatre, and students will find useful information among the anecdotes; but the book cannot escape its origins for the coffee-table, with photographs (by John Timbers) but no index. Mainly an account of personalities, the book fails to situate them in a coherent history of theatre in the past decades, and is disappointing on the economics of success and failure. None the less, academics will find the appendix, which lists a selection of the interviewees' major productions, quite useful.

ALEKS SIERZ

DOI: 10.1017/S0266464X03320275

Stacy Wolf

A Problem Like Maria: Gender and Sexuality in the American Musical (Triangulations)

Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2002.

289 p. £18.70

ISBN: 0-472-067772-9.

Performers, or so modern theorists suggest, are constructs – sometimes created by the context of performers' work, sometimes by their own created 'persona', and sometimes by their audience. Stacy Wolf's *A Problem like Maria* is not concerned with the constructs and intentions of producers or even performers, but instead with the 'host of narrative, character, and musical pleasures for lesbian spectators'; and she concentrates on four iconic Broadway performers: Mary Martin, Ethel Merman, Julie Andrews, and Barbra Streisand.

Although the idea is fascinating, and the book certainly to be welcomed, there are niggling irritations. Wolf is not as sure on the form and history of the American musical as she is on the theory. For example, she confuses Moss Hart with Lorenz Hart, and the 'eleven o'clock song' isn't necessarily the last number in the show, but the climactic one. There is also the occasional sense that Wolf feels the need to validate her means of analysis: indeed, it is certainly arguable that lesbians have been enjoying the particular joys of the female musical star since Marilyn Miller in *Sally* during the 1920s. But to have to justify the academic practice of 'perverse presentism' is perhaps unnecessary.

Linked to this point of retrospective study is the problem that Wolf's focus is on Broadway performances which she never saw; instead, she relies on representations that 'can evoke a sense of a live performance'. This is of course problematic. While there are well-known television recordings of Julie Andrews in *Camelot* and *My Fair Lady*, and Barbra Streisand's Fanny Brice was immortalised in *Funny Girl*, Martin and Merman prove more difficult. None the less, there are fascinating snippets beyond performance issues in the chapters on Martin and Merman which in themselves make the book worth reading.

However, the basic issue that Wolf examines in the Martin chapter is somewhat obvious: that is, Martin's special association with the role of Peter Pan, and how it underlined her identity as 'non-heteronormative'. The Merman chapter offers some tasty titbits: seemingly Merman once panicked about what she could eat at a Passover Seder hosted by the composer of *Gypsy*, only to bring her own ham sandwich. This may seem an odd issue to highlight, yet half the chapter on Merman is as much concerned with her perceived Jewishness (we are frequently told in the book that Merman wasn't Jewish) as it is with her identity as a butch lesbian. This discussion is in some ways more interesting than the image of Merman as a lesbian.

The Streisand chapter is compelling, because Streisand never stops performing. She is the ultimate construct, because her acting style is the process of putting a performance together. Wolf presents Streisand's (non-)acting from her own distinct perspective when she says, of the second act of *Funny Girl*, that 'for lesbian spectators, Streisand's distanced acting looks like a refusal to act desperately needy for a man'. To some extent, Wolf is on firmer ground with Julie Andrews as the *femme* lesbian, partly due to the availability of Andrews's recorded performances. Wolf is right to stress in her analysis of Andrews's splendid performance as Cinderella that she creates 'an almost Brechtian distance that makes her look like she loves it and knows it's ridiculous at the same time'.

Wolf's book is a little too long for its subject, but the subject has been a little too long neglected. A wider range of musicals and performers who have potential lesbian perspectives might have leavened the sometimes overly repetitive assertions. None the less, this is a welcome and unexpected way of looking at a subject that is too often taken at face value.

STEVE NALLON

Correction

The introduction to Alan Plater's 'Learning the Facts of Life: Forty Years as a TV Dramatist' in NTQ 75 stated that the article originated as an inaugural lecture at the University of Bath. This should have read University of Bournemouth. Our apologies to all concerned.