

That Rogers's book appears in Iowa's Studies in Theatre History and Culture series is significant. This is a book of theatre historiography that examines some of the foundational concepts of musical theatre in the United States. It is worth noting, however, that this book's subtitle also promises Rogers will analyze "the politics of bursting into song and dance." *The Song Is You* is a historiographical text to be sure, but for Rogers the work of writing history is also the work of exploring how audiences identify with musical theatre performances and how musicals ask us to imitate, desire, and possess the bodies of others, especially those whose experiences we perceive as different from our own. These are political questions, and *The Song Is You* is a necessary and exciting exploration of these politics, filled with insights and provocations that promise to push the field in important new directions.

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In Concert: Performing Musical Persona

By Philip Auslander. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2021; pp. x + 293, 22 illustrations. \$90 cloth, \$39.95 paper, \$39.95 e-book.

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In Concert: Performing Musical Persona is a book about musicians, not a book about music. In other words: the objects of analysis in this book are performers, not their performances. Such an approach, Philip Auslander makes clear, is animated by a few concerns: first, that he is far more interested in *how* musicians perform rather than *what* music is performed, and second, that there are many musicologists who are well-prepared to focused on musical sound and its role in musical performance. (He identifies Nicholas Cook as a prime example of this, though there are many others Auslander cites who do this work beautifully: Susan Fast, Jairo Moreno, Simon Frith, Christopher Small, and Sheila Whiteley, among others.) For those familiar with Auslander's work, his interest in music as primarily something that musicians do will not be surprising; his earlier work, including *Performing Glam Rock: Gender and Theatricality in Popular Music* (2006), similarly takes up musicians and their work through the lens of performance theory. Fortunately, some of the theoretical paradigms that make the earlier text so productive appear throughout this contemporary publication—a retrospective of his work—including his interest in parsing performers' multiple levels of identity (the so-called real person, the performance persona, and the character that surfaces in specific performances) and the way discursive frames inform audiences' interactions with musical performances.

In Concert comprises work that Auslander published between 2003 and 2015 and has revised for inclusion in this collection. The overarching questions that frame this book are those that Auslander has been asking for decades now: Why

does so much work in performance studies ignore music, and why does so much work in musicology ignore elements of performance? In this book, and his work more broadly, Auslander attempts to provide a bridge between these seemingly disparate disciplines by paying attention to musicians as performers. By forgoing an attention to musical sound, Auslander spends his time explicating the nuances of performance, persona, presentation of self, and the coproduction of meaning with and through audiences. Accordingly, this book provides a generative entry point for thinking about musicians as performers and musical performance as an art form mediated by a variety of frames, including genre and broader discursive contexts. For individuals squarely situated in traditionally conservative networks of performance studies or musicology, this book is likely well worth reading. It has the potential to open up space for scholarship to grow across historically distinct forms of performance.

This book is split into three parts. “Preliminaries” includes chapters that exemplify Auslander’s thinking about musicians’ performance of identity and persona, the importance of visual elements in musical performance, and the ways instrumentalists fit into his broader theory of persona. “The Interactionist Turn,” the second part, is heavily informed by Erving Goffman’s theory of self-presentation. Auslander’s emphasis here on musical performance as an interaction between musicians and audiences is particularly useful. And, finally, “Contexts of Performance” comprises three case studies: one on Beatlemania in the mid-1960s, one on the nostalgia for midcentury rock and roll that surfaced in the United States during the 1970s, and, lastly, a look at Lady Gaga and Nicki Minaj—two contemporary artists who, Auslander argues, use different approaches to persona to navigate a hypermediated cultural environment. Ultimately, Auslander claims, Minaj challenges the idea of a coherent identity through multiple performance personas, and Gaga constructs “a chameleonlike presence that never resolves into a stable image” (220). These case studies—which conclude the book and put his prior theoretical chapters into action—are particularly exciting, showing the rich analytical approach enabled by sustained attention to persona, genre, identity, and the meanings they frame and evoke. Early in the book, Auslander argues that “visual and behavioral dimensions of musical performance . . . are essential to both the production and the reception of musical sound” (49); in these final chapters, he elucidates how this works in practice as a means through which musicians build, engage, and satiate audiences.

As I have noted above, Auslander does not hide the fact that his attention is on musicians as performers rather than music as performance. Nevertheless, I desire more sustained attention to musical sound and the way music itself informs the very performances that Auslander describes in this book. I’m also left wondering: How does this book replicate the issues that Auslander identifies in so much work in performance studies? In his first chapter, a “manifesto” entitled “Performance Analysis and Popular Music,” Auslander writes “I am interested primarily in finding ways of discussing what musicians do *as performers*—the meanings they create through their performances and the means they use to create them” (24). I am sympathetic to this approach, but want to know how musical sound participates in this meaning-making process. As Auslander makes clear in his critique of performance studies scholarship that doesn’t take music seriously, a sustained attention to music

and its meanings would make this work stronger. The precise detail and care that he shows for visual elements makes me long for his take on the sonic elements of the performance equation.

In the final chapter of this book, Auslander writes that “it is quite clear that in the quarter century since I first started formulating these ideas there has been a significant shift” (213). He’s right and, at times, sections of this book seem slightly antiquated. But this is not a detriment, it is precisely the point: Auslander takes us through a rich archive of his thinking about musical performance, persona, and practices of production/consumption to show us not only how his thinking has progressed in the rapidly changing social context of the early twenty-first century but also how our broader collective thinking about music, identity, mediation, and performance has developed. Auslander is an important thinker whose thorough and detailed work has productively challenged performance studies, popular music studies, and related disciplines.

Ultimately, this book is an important publication in the field of performance studies and strikes me as particularly valuable for thinkers who desire a better understanding of shifts in performance discourse since the mid-1990s, or those who want to glean more productively precisely how musicians as performers function in contemporary culture.

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The Cambridge Companion to the Circus

Edited by Gillian Arrighi and Jim Davis. Cambridge Companions to Theatre and Performance. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021; pp. xxxiv + 292, 13 illustrations. \$99.99 cloth, \$29.99 paper, \$24.00 e-book.

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Like the circus, edited collections are meant to allure, tantalize, and engage. Similarly, they promise as much variety as the limitations of space and time can allow. The *compères* of *The Cambridge Companion to the Circus*, editors Gillian Arrighi and Jim Davis, attempt to display the variegated concerns, methods, and approaches that constitute the still inchoate and multidisciplinary field of circus studies. In the process, they argue for an expansive definition of the term “circus,” a form that has evolved in a wide variety of contexts, included an array of performance traditions, and is itself defined by a search for innovation.

The circus formed via a reciprocal exchange among multiple cultures. The collection skillfully conveys this premise through essays that cover several national contexts, including Argentina, Australia, the Czech Republic, England, France, India, China, and the United States. At the same time, because there are sixteen individual chapters, the collection employs an approach that is deliberately diffuse.