

NTQ Book Reviews

edited by Alison Jeffers

doi:10.1017/S0266464X16000099

Len Platt, Tobias Becker, and David Linton, ed.

Popular Musical Theatre in London and Berlin, 1890–1939

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

227 p. £64.99.

ISBN: 978-1-107-05100-3.

Popular Musical Theatre in London and Berlin, 1890–1939 feels like a long-gestated work of dedicated scholarship. The book is meticulously edited and brings together the work of international scholars in a field of enquiry that has been in desperate need of re-invention and re-conceptualization. Having said this, a number of the contributors have already been re-shaping the field, but here their work is collected together, and the sum total is more than the whole in terms of what the volume offers existing theatre, performance, and music histories.

With a useful introduction which genuinely sets up and connects the intellectual and historiographic interventions of the book, the volume is divided into three sections: the mechanics of transfer and translation; Atlantic traffic; and representation in transition – cultural transfer/stage others. There are some real gems – Tobias Becker on *The Arcadians* and *Filmzauber*, Peter Bailey on *Hello, Ragtime!*, David Linton and Len Platt on *Dover Street to Dixie*, and Kerstin Lange on the Argentine tango on the European stage.

Where the essays are strongest they achieve a lot more than critically documenting events and recurrent themes, and provide thoughtful cultural readings of works that have often been relegated to the sidelines in terms of investigations of popular cultural practices in the early decades of the twentieth century. The sense of a cultural movement that facilitated easy and lucrative transfers from one part of Europe to another, the momentum of which was prematurely collapsed by the 1914–1918 war never to truly recover, runs through the volume as a whole. While there are a number of recent volumes which frequently claim to be looking at theatre and performance, such volumes often return to the play text and texts in production as theatre history, rather than looking at the perhaps more challenging interconnected areas of process, the growing importance of the performance industry, and class and audience reception. In contrast, this is a long-awaited collection, the importance of which will sustain much further study and enquiry in the coming years.

MAGGIE B. GALE

doi:10.1017/S0266464X16000105

Kathleen M. Gough

Kinship and Performance in the Black and Green Atlantic: Haptic Allegories

Abingdon; New York: Routledge, 2014. 208 p.

£75.24.

ISBN: 978-0-415-82400-2.

Kathleen Gough's startlingly original monograph was inspired by Ireland's 2004 constitutional amendment, directed at African mothers of Irish-born children, which recast citizenship in terms of inherited (racial) bloodlines, repudiating entitlement by virtue of place of birth. Gough exposes the stubborn intertwining of apparently incommensurable lives, and the images in which they are both archived and circulated, around the Black and Green Atlantic. The key co-ordinates of her rigorous critical method include Joseph Roach's notion of 'surrogacy', Richard Schechner's 'paradigmatic "strips of behaviour"', and Rebecca Schneider's critique of the return of acts of performance of the archive's gendered omissions. She deploys her resources expertly to expand notions of kinship, and to critique the erasure and uneasy return of images of women as historical actors.

Each chapter begins with an intense dramaturgical allegory of its central concerns, deftly foregrounding imagined encounters between women whose actual lives protest the distortion or suppression of their subjectivity – even their existence – in the received 'real' of five historical flashpoints central to her project. Like David Lloyd's *Irish Times: Temporalities of Modernity* (2008), Gough revisits the past 'as a repertoire of redeemable possibilities' (Lloyd, p. 17), as her commitment to inter-medial dialogue confronts modernist historiography's elision of women's agency across cultural practices from historical narrative to theatrical representation.

Her focus on 'the complex interplay of historiography and theatricality in Black and Green Atlantic performance' accumulates a compelling critical intensity as her argument develops, returning, finally to 'the Irish citizenship referendum in 2004 and the theatrical response in 2005 [which] carry in and alongside them issues addressed in all of the historical flashpoints' around which this remarkable book revolves. As she concludes her investigation, she applies her innovative account of 'kinship' to recent Irish plays, recuperating women's relational histories – African and Irish women, haunted by slave mothers