

influential practitioners have approached performance space and the objects and materials within it, all in the context of their different ideas about what theatre should be and how it should be made.

Baugh's approach provides simultaneously an historic account of the scenographic ideas and innovations of these key figures and also an analysis and exposition of scenography as a coherent conceptual approach to performance. While broadly in chronological order, chapters address themes such as 'The Scene as Machine' and 'The Century of Light', and throughout Baugh traces recurring concepts and tropes. The book thus serves as both an introduction to the scenographic practices of key practitioners and as a thesis on scenography as a subject of study; its value is as a reference work, a scholarly exposition on scenography, and a teaching textbook.

For readers familiar with the first edition, the new chapter on 'Scenography as Dramaturgy of Performance' is worthwhile, but there are relatively few changes elsewhere. For new readers, though, Baugh is strongest on the early- and mid-twentieth-century modernists, and offers an approachable account of scenography from the late nineteenth century to the present, as well as a way of locating key scenographic ideas in their historical and conceptual context. The scholarly literature on scenography has expanded and deepened since the first edition of this book in 2005, but it remains an important contribution to the field, not for its novelty but for its synoptic scope.

NICK HUNT

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Marc Silberman, Steve Giles and Tom Kuhn, ed.

Brecht on Theatre, Third Edition

London: Bloomsbury, 2014. 344 p. £18.99.

ISBN: 978-1-4081-4545-6.

Tom Kuhn, Steve Giles, and Marc Silberman, ed.

Brecht on Performance:

Messingkauf and Modelbooks

London: Bloomsbury, 2014. 312 p. £21.99.

ISBN: 978-1-4081-5455-7.

Brecht on Theatre has long introduced countless readers to the theatre theories of Bertolt Brecht. Originally compiled and edited by John Willett in 1964, the volume was innovative and comprehensive in its time: essays only recently published in German were suddenly available in English, offering insights into the development of ideas stretching from 1918 to days before Brecht's death in 1956. However, Brecht scholarship and the needs of an interested public have changed greatly over the intervening fifty years, and the new edition, curiously named 'third' when in fact

there has been no textual revision since first publication, addresses several important issues.

First, there is simply the amount of new material that has come to light over the years. The latest standard German edition runs to six physical books, or five numerical volumes, of Brecht's 'writings' and these have been scoured for relevant texts. There are more than forty essays and fragments that appear in English for the first time, many of which either address the aesthetics of Brecht's theatre or comment on issues central to theatre practice. Readers may identify a small group of omissions from Willett's original edition, but many of these essays now appear (expanded on occasion) in more appropriate places, such as *Brecht on Film and Radio* (2001) or the new *Brecht on Performance*.

Second, the retained essays have been judiciously retranslated and their titles have been returned to more literal renditions, so that, for example, Willett's 'The Literarization of the Theatre' reverts to the more accurate 'Notes on *The Threepenny Opera*'. The most important translation issue concerns the treatment of Brecht's special terms for theatre, such as *Verfremdung*, mistranslated as 'alienation' by Willett. The editors retain the German here, anglicizing the neologism *Gestus* as 'gestus' and turn *Haltung* into 'attitude', *Fabel* into 'plot'. I have my reservations about the last two, as they simplify more complex nuances in German. However, the new translations as a whole are eminently readable and sensibly updated.

Third, the volume has great intellectual coherence. Rather than imitating Willett's adherence to chronology, the editors acknowledge the principle while diverging on occasion to group thematically related terms and thus allow a clearer overview of Brecht's evolving thoughts. Each of the three sections – dividing Brecht's life into phases around his exile from Germany – is comprehensively introduced.

Brecht on Performance is a companion volume and has two parts. The first is an overhaul of what Willett previously called the *Messingkauf Dialogues*. 'Buying Brass' – the more literal translation of *Messingkauf* – assembles more of the fragmentary material and includes Brecht's 'Practice Pieces for Actors', revealing that the 'dialogues' were only one, albeit major, element in the overall project.

The editing of the fragments is exemplary. While Willett tried to make the fragments appear more organic by welding them together at times, Steve Giles has retained the work's status as unfinished. He has collected the texts Brecht attributed to four nights of dialogue without eliding them into a continuous whole, and kept the unattributed pieces in sub-sections of their own. The second part includes writings and images from three of Brecht's 'modelbooks', as well as essays from the Berliner Ensemble's docu-

mentation *Theatre Work* and the 'Katzgraben' Notes. Taken together, the extracts presented here form a rich collection that includes significant work from when Brecht returned to theatre-making in 1948.

These two volumes represent an excellent extension of Brecht's writings in English. The editors draw on contemporary scholarship, apply high editorial standards, and offer a readability that opens up Brecht's theories and practices for a new generation.

DAVID BARNETT

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James Thompson

Humanitarian Performance from Disaster Tragedies to Spectacles of War

London: Seagull Books, 2014. 205 p. £22.05. ISBN: 978-0-8574-2109-8.

This is a historic and contemporary critique of the humanitarian project through the critical perspective of performance studies. It starts with a story of the author's intrigue in searching for the evidence of a bold humanitarian architectural project to build new houses in post-tsunami Sri Lanka. Designed by a successful global architect, Libeskind (responsible for the design of the Ground Zero site and Jewish Museum in Berlin) and launched in a fanfare of grandstanding publicity, the goal was part of a rebuilding Sri Lanka humanitarian mission. Unfortunately the plans never eventuated. Thompson goes to Sri Lanka, map and plans in hand, only to discover an empty quarry and puzzled local residents. The story beautifully captures the complexities of the humanitarian industry, its competing rationale to portray each cause as more worthy than the other. The greater the suffering, the more potential there is to garner donations and political support. Suffering, trauma, and pain become commodities in the competition for attention. Or as Hoffman and Weiss in the book offer: 'Humanitarianism is a performance.'

Thompson is clear about not diminishing the need for support and international responses to crisis, nor in this book is he concerned with actual performances and cultural events, but rather the ways in which a 'troubling mix of iconic images, compassion economics, celebrity concern, and the staging of misery congeal into a peculiar drama of humanitarian aid'. This therefore is a book that layers performance insights on historical and contemporary examples of humanitarian responses exploring the deficits, contradictions, and morality of when and how actions fail, misfire, and are misappropriated.

The book falls into two parts, 'Humanitarian Performance' and 'Humanitarian Performance Events'. In the first part Thompson deals with setting up the parameters of his argument, pro-

viding an incisive and interdisciplinary context to the discourse, and shaping the complexities of how his argument defines and redefines the 'show business' of the humanitarian industry. The second part of the book seeks to apply these arguments to three case studies: Kosovo, Darfur, and the Asian Tsunami. In doing so, Thompson goes into considerable detail about each of the political contexts and the nature and complexities of the humanitarian response. The mapping of his arguments on to specific sites offers the opportunity to test, extend, and deepen the debate.

Humanitarian Performance manages to provoke, critique, and encourage new perspectives on a worthwhile but complex industry. While readers might miss the direct reference to performance acts in sites of conflict and the insightful personal encounters so prevalent in Thompson's previous publications, the book nevertheless challenges the ways in which it is all too easy to regard the humanitarian enterprise as being above reproach. This is a dangerous position. As Thompson notes, 'We must acknowledge that many are aware of the need to perform and seek to play, but success, being heard, is disproportionately a reward for the powerful.'

MICHAEL BALFOUR

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Hans-Thies Lehmann

Tragödie und Dramatisches Theater

Berlin: Alexander Verlag, 2013. 734 p. €68. ISBN: 978-3-89581-308-5.

In his substantial new book Lehmann argues for something of a 'performative turn' when discussing tragedy. His aim is to reclaim the theatrical dimension as the central aspect of tragedy, arguing that all too often theories and histories of tragedy have been written without performance in mind, locating tragedy in an entirely literary discourse. This text-based approach, however, neglects the fact that tragedy cannot be thought of without performance – and it is this aspect in particular which links *Tragödie und Dramatisches Theater* to Lehmann's hugely influential *Post-dramatic Theatre* (2004). Lehmann argues that there can be no 'tragic experience without a theatrical experience' but that this tragic experience is not necessarily linked to dramatic theatre.

In this book Lehmann concentrates not on ancient Greek tragedy but on tragedy since the Renaissance. He does not discuss tragedy as a 'genre', but rather identifies a core tragic motif and then systematically distinguishes the different forms of theatre in which this motif appears. As the core tragic motif Lehmann defines a 'development of transgression'. At the centre of this first lengthy part of his study (which comprises three substantial parts in a volume of over