

tems, forces, and complex socio-political and embodied relationships and experiences’.

Early chapters show how architecture (for example, Lina Bo Bardi’s theatres in Brazil) can be responsive to social, political, and cultural agendas and capable of operating dialectically and dramaturgically. But alongside suggestions that architecture and performance might be analogous and overlapping, the book also reflects tension between them: dynamical difference and dialogue between spaces, structures, and bodies might tip over into metaphorical or actual violation of site and performer (as in Cliff McLucas’s scenography for Brith Gof).

Elsewhere, artistic projects that blend architecture and performance, such as Alex Schweder’s *In Orbit*, show how playing with and in spatial structures is a way to investigate and rehearse new ways of being together. The final section on pedagogies offers some very useful insights and examples into how architectural practices and thinking might enhance, extend, and challenge theatre and performance teaching and vice versa.

In the area of theatre and performance, this book will be a valuable addition and complement to existing publications on theatre architecture, site-specific performance, and scenography, but it deserves to be considered far more widely. As several contributors point out, all postdramatic, participatory and socially engaged kinds of performance in different ways place a renewed emphasis on the political, structural, and compositional dimensions of performance, and an architectural outlook has much to offer all scholars and teachers who concern themselves with the ways that performance operates in and through space.

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Carolyn Williams, ed.

The Cambridge Companion to English Melodrama

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

324p. £18.99.

ISBN: 978-1-107-47959-3.

Books on melodrama are like buses, they all come at once. This addition to the ‘Companion’ series brings together scholarship from both sides of the Atlantic and is a welcome celebration of a form that resists erasure, embracing changes of mode and media in its enduring appeal to readers, audiences, and scholarship. Students at all levels will find background, context, and insights into melodramatic technique, cultural discourse, gender, and politics. Chapters on acting, and particularly the vital element of music, act as an excellent introduction to another important publication in the field, *The Melodramatic Moment: Music and*

Theatrical Culture 1790–1820, ed. Katharine Hambridge and Jonathan Hicks (University of Chicago Press, 2018). The broader, European view of melodrama in this latter publication cuts more deeply into theatrical modes from the perspective of the musicologist while reaching beyond to the politics of cultures (then and now) to where melodrama, and those who write about it, enjoy a ‘lively dialogue among disciplines’.

The Cambridge Companion to English Melodrama offers a gentler introduction to such debates and is notable for including the latest works by established leaders in their fields, while also making room for different perspectives and new research voices. Part One offers anyone interested in melodrama, in all its shape-changing manifestations, stimulating engagements with the histories of this popular and often political expression of resistance as played out in the novel and on the stage. While backdrops of gothic castles, nautical adventures, and the domestic are returned to again and again, as Jim Davis reminds us: ‘While melodrama may have been fashioned to stimulate generic response, we should be wary of assuming the existence of a generic audience.’

Music and acting are the foundations for Part Two, ‘Melodramatic Technique’, and Hayley Jayne Bradley’s chapter ‘Stagecraft, Spectacle, and Sensation’ offers new insights into the technical innovations that ensured melodrama’s ongoing stage appeal. Part Three includes incisive chapters on gender, class, empire, and, in Sarah Meer’s timely and neatly argued chapter, ‘Melodrama and Race’, the representation of race as differently worked out in novel and stage production.

Part Four explores ‘Extensions to Melodrama’ in film and that most powerful and enduring entertainment, the musical. Sharon Aronofsky Weltman convincingly picks up the contemporary meeting place of hit musicals such as *Phantom of the Opera* and *Les Misérables* as expressions of ‘melodrama’s tension between escapism and cultural critique’ that continues to fill theatres today.

This useful companion combines mature scholarship in the field with new perspectives on the ever-changing but always appealing engagement that is melodrama.

GILLI BUSH-BAILEY

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Molly Mullen

Applied Theatre: Economies

London: Methuen Drama, 2018. 265 p. £67.50.

ISBN: 978-1-350-00170-1.

At a global sociopolitical moment in which neo-liberalism is being questioned, Molly Mullen’s *Applied Theatre: Economies* offers insights into the intersection of applied theatre and resources. The