

globally circulated feminisms with more localized practices which nevertheless have a real global significance in the work of, say, Shappi Khorsandi and Andi Osho, provide appropriate contexts for mapping theory and practice together in a manner both useful and necessary.

Aston and Harris's analyses take on board questions of identity, class, and aging as well as looking at how an idea such as Naomi Zack's 'intersectionality' might help us to read contemporary performance practices. *A Good Night Out for the Girls*, is much more about connecting materials than looking for what divides them, and this is what lies at the heart of the narrative drive which critically brings together the different kinds of theatre and performance explored.

With a view to unpacking possibilities and practices of popular feminism in performance, the authors provide a useful summary of different theoretical positions and their relation to specific historical moments. But this is not a book held hostage by theory; rather, the authors use it to work alongside their own analyses generated in part by the need to understand the complexities of experience as much as to provide 'readings' themselves.

There is no question that the hostility towards feminism fed by a media-promoted divisionist trust over the last twenty years or so has given way to a renewed interest in feminism, albeit within a very different cultural moment and from a new generation of women. With this in mind, *A Good Night Out for the Girls* will be an essential read to those enthused by the ways in which radical politics insinuate themselves into popular forms and *vice versa*, as well as those interested in what women actually *do* in theatre – in the West End, on Broadway, or in a small London club.

MAGGIE B. GALE

doi:10.1017/S0266464X15000743

Tom Maguire

Performing Story on the Contemporary Stage

Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. 201 p.

£55.

ISBN: 978-1-137-35640-6.

The 'narrative turn' in theatre has allowed the 'storytelling movement' to burst its banks on to the stage. Tom Maguire's book skilfully reveals how this has seeded a new mode of contemporary performance. For me as a 'traditional' storyteller in applied settings, his analysis of performance strategies was nothing short of revelatory. In particular, he illuminates techniques of narrative scenography which I believe most storytellers use largely unconsciously. He offers us 'deixis', the use of the performance space to suggest features of the narrative space; 'metaxis', or how the character's and the performer's bodies collapse

into each other in the storyteller's gesture; the 'tour'; and the 'map'. Characterization, identity, autobiography, monologism, and dialogism, social and political uses of storytelling, receive similarly insightful treatment. Thus this book develops a vocabulary which theatre and storytelling practitioners can share.

Maguire's methodology is to examine two or three performances to explore performance practices within each of these themes. Storytellers locating themselves within the storytelling 'movement' might not recognize his diverse case studies as storytelling (most being scripted performances in which performers adopt characters). He rejects any clear demarcation between storytelling and contemporary theatre practices, joining Mike Wilson in regarding naturalistic acting as a historical anomaly.

Rather, his case studies, from Bobby Baker to Franca Rame, Peggy Shaw to David Hare, represent 'the return of the storytellers' to the contemporary stage. He does, however, identify the defining characteristics of storytelling performance: the emphasis on narration, the use of epic and post-epic modes of performance, and perhaps most importantly, the intensity of the reciprocal relationship between teller and audience.

In all this exploration of performers' intentions, he never loses sight of the listeners' active role in creating the story, or indeed of the storyteller's dependence on their accepting this metonymic role. In this relationship, in which the audience is being directly addressed by the performer, lies what Maguire identifies as the unique interdependence of a storytelling event: the way the performer uses her own body to do no more than imply the bodies of her characters, asking the audience to fill in the gaps using their own experience and knowledge. Maguire assesses the potential of this dialogic relationship to bring about moments of socially valuable connection, with the sympathetic rigour which he brings to the rest of his journey through twenty-first-century performance storytelling.

CATH HEINEMEYER

doi:10.1017/S0266464X15000743755

Graham Ley

Ancient Greek and Contemporary Performance: Collected Essays

Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2014. 284 p.

£70.00.

ISBN: 978-0-8598-9891-1.

These previously published essays, in a thematically bound volume, provide a new impetus and an opportunity to understand larger issues in contemporary theatrical debates on theories of culture, performance, and contemporary diasporic theatre. In Chapter One, Ley explores a semantic

analysis of the terms 'act' and 'actor' from the historical works of Herodotus and Homer's poems, leading in Chapter Two to a questioning of J. L. Austin's concept of performatives. Here, Ley explains the creation of the actor in European drama before his exploration of monody (solo song) and choral poetry, with evidence from Athenian festival performances leading to identifying interdependence of actors and chorus.

Next, Ley probes *orchestra* as acting area in performance of Greek tragedy, using a schematic diagram with blocking notation and the prompt copy to analyze published Greek scripts or texts through the concepts of performing and performance studies such as playing space, blocking and rehearsals. He then returns to the issues pertaining to performance theory and its status in academic debates around modernism, post-modernism, and the avant-garde. This highlights his dissatisfaction with contemporary theatrical criticism. Here, he questions Schechner's contradictory, confusing, and confused notions of rituals in the contexts of his performance theory. Moving beyond both sides of the Atlantic, he provides his exploration of the concepts of mimesis (as in Aristotle's *Poetics*), *anukarana* (as in Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*) and monomane (as in Zeami's treatise) and its relation to playwright, director, and actors. Along with his re-examination of the concepts of modernism in relation to theatre, this reorients Ley's readers with his discursive arguments on modernism, theories of performance, and dramaturgy.

Finally, Ley lists choices, problems, and strategies used in documenting a history of British South Asian theatre which is part of a project at the University of Exeter. He explores the diversity and funding of arts in Britain, excavating archival material from Tara Arts and Tamasha. Such diggings bring out shortfalls in policy and practitioners' ability to shape their work according to policy. The issue of diversity and regional theatre, along with the diasporic culture, become more complex where Ley has used Bhabha and Brah's concepts of diasporic space as having implications for criticism and documentation.

These essays mark the changes from ancient Greek tragedies, to mediated performance, to the concept of actor training and the discourse of diasporic theatrical practices in England that have taken place over thirty years. They provide a sense of direction in contemporary debates which is very useful, though leaving, inevitably, many unanswered questions and provocations which will continue to prove useful to theatre and performance scholars across the world.

MRUNAL CHAVDA

doi:10.1017/S0266464X15000767

Clark Lunberry

Sites of Performance: Of Time and Memory

London: Anthem Press, 2014. 206 p. £60.00.

ISBN: 978-1-78308-287-2.

Lunberry's book is a meditation on how time as concept and as bodily experience constitutes theatrical space. In the first section, he reflects on decay and deterioration in Beckett and Proust, the role of stagehands in sustaining the tragedy of Deborah Warner's 2003 Broadway production of *Medea*, and the anti-theatricality of *Coriolanus* and Artaud (suggested by their rejection of prompters). According to Lunberry, by stripping away the trappings of theatre Beckett forces us out of the theatre building into alternative spaces, to which Lunberry turns in the second section of his book.

Here he muses on Artaud's writing as a kind of performance, the simultaneous inscription and erasure of language in Ann Hamilton's installation art, the persistent return of language in the apparently wordless experiments of James Turrell and John Cage, and the interplay of disappearance and memory in two performances (one aborted, one accomplished) of the music of Morton Feldman.

Many of Lunberry's observations about theatrical space, time, and memory have been made more convincingly elsewhere by the likes of Marvin Carlson, Peggy Phelan, Alice Rayner, Nicholas Ridout, and Rebecca Schneider, none of whom appears in Lunberry's alarmingly scant bibliography. Many of his observations about Beckett, Proust, and Cage have been made more convincingly elsewhere by Herbert Blau, Lunberry's late teacher, who does feature prominently in the pages of this book (and to whom Lunberry openly acknowledges a debt).

Lunberry is at his best when analyzing his own experiences of and reactions to performance events, in particular the abandoned 1996 performance of Morton Feldman's six-hour *String Quartet II* (1983). His self-critique is honest, astute, and at times amusing. But his failure to fuse his lyrical meditations with rigorous argumentation and to engage meaningfully with relevant scholarship makes his book of limited interest (or use) to those working in theatre and performance studies. Perhaps surprisingly, the book will likely be of more interest to those in literary studies who have yet to consider the various sites in which performance might take place.

DAVID CALDER