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About us

The *Scottish Journal of Performance* is an open access refereed journal which aims to promote and stimulate discussion, development and dissemination of original research, focusing both on performance in Scotland (contemporary and historical) and / or wider aspects of performance presented by scholars and reflective practitioners based at Scottish academic institutions.

Published bi-annually and run by doctoral students, the *Scottish Journal of Performance* welcomes submissions from both established and early career researchers and operates a peer review system ensuring presentation of quality research in performance.

Performance in this context encompasses a wide range of arts and entertainment and takes as central themes dance, drama, film, music and television. *The Scottish Journal of Performance* takes as a key focus the creation and execution of performance in various contexts, encouraging the adoption of a wide range of range of research methods and approaches.

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Editorial

KIRSTY KAY & BEDE WILLIAMS

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Volume 3, Issue 1 of the *Scottish Journal of Performance* presents new stories through performance, stories that undo grand narratives and reflect on the process while doing so. The desire for storytelling seems to have been programmed into human beings from birth, helping us navigate our way through the material and cultural worlds we find ourselves inheriting. But in our desire to tell simple, linear tales, we often miss out on the vagaries of human experience, and forget to allow people to tell their own stories. We hope this issue goes some way to reflect the messy realities of life and the universe as explored through artistic performance.

In the first article of this issue, *Towards a queer theatre for very young audiences in Scotland and the United States*, Lindsay Amer looks at two performances of queer theatre for children to argue the need for queer themes in performances for the very young. Amer positions all children as queer, standing as they do in opposition to the normativity of adulthood, where 'the idea of the child is the adult's projected nostalgia, not a reflection of the child itself'.

Amer shows how this power imbalance between adults and children is explicated in theatre for young audiences, with theatre performances for young people pedagogical rather than aesthetic in tone; highlighting how children are viewed as future adult theatregoers rather than aesthetic consumers of culture in their own right.

From this theoretical standpoint, Amer explores theatre productions for young audiences in Scotland and the United States that have reflected queer realities, and uses her article to call for an artistic culture that places queerness as a representative identity from childhood, thus allowing children to express their own queerness.

Niccole Carner also attempts to undo some of the (hi)stories projected on to a group of people and their lived realities in her article *Re-constructing heritage: the National Theatre of Scotland's Calum's Road*. Reviewing a production by the NTS from 2011 that tells the story of a man who over ten years attempts to build a road by hand on the isle of Raasay in order to improve living conditions on the island and convince residents not to migrate to the mainland. In the telling of one man's fight against modernisation, globalisation, and the impact of gentrification, the play in fact paints Calum in a heroic light, combining folkloric motifs with artistic representations of the land and Gaelic language to bring to light the realities of life often forgotten in mainstream national narratives.

Carner uses a close reading of the play's production to unpick notions of national identity in post-devolution Scotland, finding the need for a performative nationalising process within the National Theatre. She finds that the process of telling alternative, less-known stories of individual lives can be a form of heritage in itself, turning the audience into an active nation creating their own future by engaging in forms of creative remembrance.

In *Calton Hill Constellations*, artist and choreographer Siriol Joyner and writer and mythogeographer Phil Smith report from their performance created for Artlink Edinburgh, combining description, history and storytelling in response to locations around Edinburgh in performances for sighted, partially sighted and blind audiences.

Responding to their physical and emotional experiences with Calton Hill's Old City Observatory, Joyner and Smith build on their own research to create a site-specific performance that guides partially sighted people to explore the manifold potential histories of the observatory space where interactions of perception and landscape are pushed to their limits.

The past year has seen planetary exploration reach new heights, and with so much scientific discovery for those left on earth to contemplate, attempts to present contemporary science to the general public has become ever more important.

As part of the UN International Year of Light, astronomer Dr Anne-Marie Weijmans, composer Eddie McGuire, conductor Bede Williams and artist Tim Fitzpatrick collaborated on the project *Shine*. Combining their disciplines, they bridged art and science to create an installation that could convey how galaxies form and evolve over time to the general public in an understandable way, distilling the concepts from Weijmans's research into sound and visual performance pieces.

Instigating new pathways for the public to discover and explore recent space discovery, *Shine* attempts a bold cooperation between artists and scientists that highlights the exciting creative potential of interdisciplinary collaboration, particularly when dealing with a topic of endless discoveries.

This issue also includes a variety of other pieces that reflect on the wealth of contemporary arts and arts scholarship occurring in and about Scotland. Ben Fletcher-Watson interviews theatre practitioner Tony Reekie, who recently stood down after twenty years as director of Imagine,

Scotland's national art-form development organisation for theatre for young audiences. In the interview, he reflects on his time in this role and the changes he has witnessed in children's theatre and the arts scene in Scotland.

Also presented are abstracts from *Thresholds and permeability in performance*, a recent postgraduate symposium which again points towards the exciting postgraduate work on performance currently taking place that disrupts and questions normative structures of social understanding.

This issue also contains reviews on different aspects and mediums of performance studies. Lucy Coatman reviews *Studying musical theatre: theory and practice*, by Millie Taylor and Dominic Symonds; Ali De Souza reviews *The actor training reader* by Mark Evans; Michael Downes reviews *Conducting for a new era*, by Edwin Roxburgh; Ben Fletcher-Watson reviews *Theatre for youth third space: performance, democracy and community cultural development*, by Stephani Etheridge Woodson; Bethany Whiteside reviews *Moving sites: investigating site-specific dance performance*, edited by Victoria Hunter; Drew Hammond reviews the CD *Dichroic light*, by Matthew Whiteside; and Cara Berger reviews a performance of *Hinterland*, by NVA.

We would like to thank the University of St Andrews, the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Anglia Ruskin University, the editorial team, advisory board, our peer reviewers, funders, and especially our authors.

KIRSTY KAY & BEDE WILLIAMS
Co-editors, *Scottish Journal of Performance*

Towards a queer theatre for very young audiences in Scotland and the United States

LINDSAY AMER

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White in Performance.
Image courtesy of Catherine Wheels Theatre Company, copyright Douglas McBride.

Queer performance practice and production has emerged over the past four decades as an increasingly visible if contentious modality, particularly in relation to theatre for children and teenagers. Kathryn Bond Stockton and Matthew Reason's respective theories of the queer child and the impossibility of theatre for young audiences underpin arguments for the importance of queer themes within performance for young people. This paper looks specifically at Catherine Wheels Theatre Company's production of White (2010) where colour invades a completely white world in a metaphor for diversity, and Emily Freeman's play And Then Came Tango (2012) for elementary school

audiences about a controversial same-sex penguin couple at New York's Central Park Zoo. It is proposed that these plays may serve as examples of queer theatre pioneering progressive narratives specifically for young people. By contrasting the cultural contexts in which these plays have been performed, this paper contends that queer themes must be effectively depicted in cultural content for young people in order to destabilise global stigmas of LGBTQ+ people.

Keywords: TYA, White, queer theatre, And Then Came Tango

The queer child and theatre for young audiences (TYA)

Kathryn Bond Stockton establishes her theory of the queer child in *The queer child: or growing sideways in the twentieth century* (2009). According to Stockton, 'if you scratch a child, you will find a queer, in the sense of someone "gay" or just plain strange' (2009, p.1). To Stockton, all children are queer. All children are queer specifically in relation to the normatively positioned adult as a socio-cultural construct. She explores this constructed idea of the child as 'the act of adults looking back' (2009, p.5). The idea of the child is the adult's projected nostalgia, not a reflection of the child itself. Stockton comes to this theory through the field of queer studies, where,

"Queer" can refer to: the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, of anyone's sexuality aren't made (or cannot be made) to signify monolithically (Sedgwick, 1993, p.8).

Stockton draws on ideas of queer temporality, in particular

childhood studies and animal studies, but her approach deviates from typical sociological, therapeutic and legal case studies common in these fields (Nelson, 2011). Instead, Stockton traces the queer child through twentieth-century fictional texts beginning with 'a Henry James novella from the 1890s, titled *The Pupil*, to a queer turn by Johnny Depp as Willy Wonka in Tim Burton's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (2005)' (Stockton, 2009) although it is important to note that Stockton's argument purposefully does not take a chronological approach. Her methodology reveals the queerness of the child through adults' fictionalisation of children where these fictions reveal gaps between the reality of the child and the adult projection of the child.

Stockton follows a pattern of queer theorists turning their attention toward children (see for example Bruhm and Hurley 2004). Gabrielle Owen's review of *The queer child* places it in the context of Bruhm and Hurley's text as the particular essays and theorists 'represent moments over the past twenty years when queer theory, however briefly, has turned to children as a site for inquiry, a powerful location for questions of identity, sexuality, language, and culture' (2011, p.101). *The queer child* itself is, according to Owen, 'the first of its kind', in its extended scrutiny of the child's place within queer theory (2011, p.101).

This paper pairs Stockton's theory with the work of scholar and theatre practitioner Matthew Reason to explore the possibility of addressing queer themes in two productions for young audiences: Catherine Wheels's *White* and Emily Freeman's *And Then Came Tango*.

Reason examines the inherent problems in theatre for young audiences (TYA), noting that it is a theatre largely created by adults for children. For Reason, 'the impossibility of theatre for children requires us to acknowledge the unequal power relationship between adult and child, with

children in our society largely constructed as powerless and vulnerable' (2012, p.25). Young people, particularly when it comes to theatre, have little control over what cultural content they are exposed to, leading to a power imbalance where 'theatre for children is a product made *for* children but is made and consumed in a manner that is far from equal or democratic' (2012, p.17). His argument stems from the history linking TYA and education. Matt Omasta, commenting on Reason's work, describes how this historical relationship has 'led many adults to assess TYA primarily in terms of its pedagogical rather than aesthetic merits' (2013, p.188), leading to a general lack of artistry in TYA. This pervading mediocrity stems from adults considering 'children to be *future* audience members, [while] Reason urges us to regard them as *present* ones' (2013, p.188). Failure to do this leads to theatre that does not intend to impact the present child, instead focusing on pure entertainment value rather than truly considering and respecting the young audience. This lack of respect for the present child may cause young people to associate negative connotations of theatre that persist into adulthood.

Reason draws upon extensive qualitative research working with elementary school-age children to prove that young people deserve respect and that their artistic content should reflect that. Because 'there exists little field-based, qualitative research which illuminates what the actual theatre experience means *as theatre* to young audiences' (Reason, 2010, p.45), he constructs his own qualitative assessment of the child's experience as a spectator. His research focuses on children's memories and recollections of theatrical experiences through storytelling, anecdotal collection and observation of visual arts workshops. He uses a drawing workshop, which

...[seeks] to uncover a rich and detailed description of how young children respond to, remember and engage with theatre...[by]

adopt[ing] a methodology that would be engaging, reassuring, and appropriate for their levels of understanding, their interests and their particular skills and abilities (Reason, 2010, p.47).

Reason attempts to use his tailored research to observe how to make what he describes as ‘the impossibility of theatre for children’ possible, by proving the young audience’s aesthetic complexity.

Reason builds his observation of the impossibility of theatre for children from similar theories in other forms of cultural content including Jacqueline Rose’s ideas on the impossibility of children’s fiction, and Steven Klein’s broader theories of the impossibility of culture for children where ‘children’s culture has always been primarily a matter of culture produced for and urged upon children’ (Reason, 2010, p.18). Reason’s observations closely echo those of Stockton, although neither engages directly with the other’s text. His arguments marry easily to Stockton’s queer child theory where the adult / child dichotomy is a problematic hierarchy within theatre and cultural texts created by adults for young people.

Reason’s observations strengthen Stockton’s queer child and bridge the gap between theory and theatrical practice. Coupling Reason’s observations of TYA with Stockton’s queer child reinforces the adult’s projection of an idealised childhood that is in turn presented back to children. Importantly, Reason pulls Stockton’s queer child out of the realm of the two-dimensional fiction of her methodology and into the three-dimensional live-ness of TYA. The theory of the queer child can now be understood as more than Stockton’s critical practice. Through Reason’s methodology of observing the child spectator, Stockton’s theory can be applied to these real children who are queer. It becomes clear through this combination that the queer child lacks

reflective representation within their cultural products, inclusive of theatre, television, film, and fiction / novels to varying degrees. It is also possible to conclude that theatre for young audiences rarely explores the queer child's experience because TYA is constructed by the idealising and normative adult's ideas of what the queer child wants and needs. This content instead reflects the adult's projected idea of who the queer child is in their desexualising, normative innocence. This sanitising of the queer child in TYA and, more generally, children's culture leads to normative and reductive storytelling. Often, Annie Giannini observes, 'when homosexuality is represented in theatre for young audiences, it is treated as a calamity, discretely packaged in plays intended to teach lessons about tolerance' (2010, p.106). The nuanced queer child's absence from cultural content for young audiences reveals the general lack of progressive content available to young people, including an absence of queer narratives, the myth that girls are more likely to watch male protagonists than boys are to watch female protagonists, and the increasingly predominant gender gap within child marketing strategies.

This normative content is the theatre Reason references when he speaks of the 'impossibility of theatre for children' where TYA does not respect the child's capacity to understand complex aesthetics, and does not acknowledge the child's queerness. But the child's queerness does not go completely unacknowledged; there is nuance here that can be explored through Stockton's methodology. She uses cultural texts to reveal the queer child and while most of the texts she uses are primarily fictional adult depictions of children within cultural texts *for adults*, she does engage one text where adults depict children in a film meant *for children*: Tim Burton's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (2005).

Stockton reads Burton's film in the conclusion of *The queer*

child as ‘the manufactured white child’s dream of the factory (he might run) that manufactures dreams’ (Stockton, 2009, p.57). Stockton positions the film as a success story for the ambitious child, specifically the ambitious queer child. Here, we might be seeing the queer child at work in a film made for children, by adults. The film clearly depicts Stockton’s archetypes where Johnny Depp’s Wonka is the ‘grown queer child’ who interacts with the unassuming ‘innocent child’, Charlie (Stockton, 2009, p.238). Wonka’s queerness is reflected in his factory and his love for chocolate where the ‘mystery of manufacturing [is] akin to the mystery of sex itself’. (Stockton, 2009, p.238). The metaphor deepens in flashbacks to Wonka’s childhood, fictionalised by Burton and August. Growing up with a dentist father, Wonka must hide his love for chocolate, his mouth confined by a muzzle-like set of corrective headgear and braces. His father finds his precious chocolates and ‘throws the “evil candy” into the fireplace where he burns it; so candy is the sign of the boy’s forbidden pleasure(s)’ (Stockton, 2009, p.243). Stockton positions Wonka, both as child and as adult, as a representation of the queer child with his love of forbidden and luxurious chocolate as a metaphor for that queerness. The insular world of chocolate and sweets Wonka has created, represents the queerness that has both isolated him from the world and endeared him to it. His queered love of chocolate is also what has made him a successful capitalist manufacturer. His successful position emphasises the possibility for the downtrodden queer child to rise above their strangeness, channel it into something they love, isolate themselves, and only then can they become successful adults. Charlie as the potential heir to Wonka’s factory, can bring the business out of isolation because he is the epitome of the innocent.

While *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* succeeds in representing queerness to children, it only succeeds in this through metaphor, through a character who is only revealed as a queer child through his queerness as an adult, and

perpetuates that the queer child must isolate their queerness. It can be posited that the queer child, in instances when they are represented in cultural texts for children / by adults, is only depicted through acceptable representations of queerness, again reinforcing that Reason's impossibility of TYA extends to other areas of cultural content for children. These acceptable representations of queerness include metaphor (like chocolate in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*), the queerness of adults (like Depp's Wonka) in lieu of representing queer kids, and in reductive messaging, all aiding in sanitising the queer child's predicament.

This filtered queerness is most recognisable in Disney movies and the notion of Disneyfication. Disney movies notoriously 'Disney-fy' stories to make them more palatable for young audiences. Henry A Giroux claims, 'this is a media apparatus in which the past is filtered through an appeal to cultural homogeneity and historical purity, which erases complex issues, cultural differences, and social struggles', and pushes 'the belief that happiness is synonymous to living in the suburbs with an intact white middle-class family' (1994, p.66), that is also most likely, confined to heterosexual nuclear family structures. When creators sneak queerness into cultural content for children, particularly mainstream media, it tends to be sanitised. Here, Reason returns with the expansion of the impossibility of TYA to children's films.

Interestingly, there does seem to be one medium that has resisted this sanitisation; children's picture books and literature for young adults. Curiously, Stockton's queer child appears to be more easily reflected in this medium, simply judging by the amount of existing content. Queer children's picture books have only recently begun to move beyond didactic narratives written solely to educate about difference, to reflect young people's realities, but there are

long lists of examples from the classic *Heather has two mommies* (1989) to *10,000 dresses* (2008), and *Morris Micklewhite and the tangerine dress* (2014). Michelle Ann Abate and Kenneth Kidd's *Over the rainbow: queer children's and young adult literature* (2011) curates essays on the history of queerness in children's literature, beginning with the classical canon, moving into a post-Stonewall world where queer themes become more overt, and finally into the experience of the readers and writers of queer children's literature. Despite the long history of queerness in children's literature outlined by Abate and Kidd in the English canon, these queer children's books have faced their fair share of backlash, making it on banned books lists (in both the US and the UK since the 1980s), and battling public opposition, but they remain in distribution and on many school curriculums. Theatre's attempt to depict the same content has been a comparatively recent endeavour, yet it has come across similar, if not more vigilant, controversy.

Toward a younger audience

Theatre for young audiences targeting elementary and middle school age groups has not begun regularly to depict queer tellings of LGBTQ+ stories. The problem with plays for young audiences and portraits of LGBTQ+ characters is not that they subscribe to a heteronormative discourse. The problem is that they barely exist, or that they are not widely known, nor produced. Reason's impossibility of TYA can be taken literally in this case. Within TYA, Manon van de Water has noted that 'representation of LGBTQ issues and characters in Theatre for Young Audiences is glaringly absent, erasing and negating non-heteronormative sexual orientations of children and youth' (2012, p.81). This paper discusses two plays (of the few which tackle this subject matter), which are slowly gaining recognition and may perhaps blaze a trail for a new queer narrative for young

people. These are the Scottish Theatre for the Very Young (TVY) production *White*, and Emily Freeman's unpublished play for elementary school audiences *And Then Came Tango*.

White is an original play for ages 2-4 created by the Scottish children's theatre company Catherine Wheels in 2010 and later produced in New York City at the New Victory Theatre in 2011 and in 2015. Children's theatre scholar Ben Fletcher-Watson has claimed that '*White* may be the most successful non-commercial theatre for early years (TEY) production to date, in terms of audience figures' (2014, p.38) having been performed more than 1000 times globally since its première at the 2010 Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

This highly visual story uses clowning and physical storytelling to introduce its young audiences to Cotton and Wrinkle, two friends who live together taking care of their birdhouses in their completely whitewashed world, 'but high up in the trees, all is not white. Colour appears. First red...then yellow...then blue' (Catherine Wheels, n.p.). At first, Wrinkle and Cotton are wary of the emergence of colour in their formerly monochromatic world, but they eventually become fond of the new colours and embrace the full colour wheel into their simple lives.

Wrinkle and Cotton speak to each other in simple sentences: 'Good morning, Wrinkle' (Manley and Cameron, 2010). They go about their routine in their white world, dusting and cleaning the birdhouses. If they find anything colourful, they must 'put it in the bin', a metal bin close to the audience. They eat breakfast, sweep the floor and clean the birdhouses until white eggs begin to fall from the sky. It is clear that it is Wrinkle and Cotton's job to take care of these eggs. One by one, Wrinkle and Cotton catch them and they are deemed either 'boy', or 'girl', except for the one pair of 'twins', and one egg they deem is just 'egg' (Manley and Cameron, 2010).

But a final surprise egg falls; this egg is red. They have never encountered a coloured egg before; it is important to note that they do not assign a gender to this particular egg. Wrinkle forces Cotton to 'put it in the bin', along with the rest of the colourful objects they've encountered. But overnight Cotton sneaks out of their white tent, takes the red egg out of the bin, and places it in a birdhouse. The next morning, Cotton finds that the red egg has made the inside of that birdhouse completely red. They begin to find more colours around their white world: their comb turns yellow, their duster turns green, and the bobble on Wrinkle's hat turns pink. They slowly find that the other birdhouses have turned different colours. They finally open the bin which explodes with colourful confetti, and they end the play with the simple phrase, 'Welcome colour!' (Manley and Cameron, 2010).

While the child audience may not grasp the full extent of the theatrical metaphor pointing to the LGBTQ+ community, the subtle and implicit reference to a queer narrative remains powerful. The audience might not make the connection from the colours which are introduced, to the rainbow, and in turn to the rainbow flag as a symbol for the LGBTQ+ movement, but they might understand the metaphor for queerness and difference, when colour is introduced to a monochromatic world. Here, white represents heteronormativity, and colour can be said to be queer.

The play explores queerness overtly when Wrinkle and Cotton first catch the white eggs falling from the sky. They immediately assign binary genders to the first two eggs. However, the egg after the twin eggs does not get an assigned gender. They take a moment to contemplate the egg then they deem that it is just 'egg'. Here, Manley plays with the audience's preconceived notions of accepted binary genders. Just as 'person' is the non-binary vocabulary to replace either 'man' or 'woman'; 'egg', in this world, is the non-binary vocabulary to replace 'boy' and 'girl'. This egg

becomes an introduction to a non-binary gender category in the world of *White*. Later in the play, when the red egg falls, it does not receive a gender assignment at all, whether 'boy', 'girl', or 'egg' (Manley, 2010). This allows us perhaps to read the colourful egg as defying the gender binary entirely in its unassigned ambiguous nature; this is a *queer* red egg. This simple use of gender assignment might clue parents explicitly into the queer connotation and allow them to facilitate discussions with their children about the LGBTQ+ connections to the themes of the play. *White's* queer narrative resonates with even very young audiences, introducing seemingly inappropriate topics through simple metaphor, and activating Stockton's queer child through more than metaphor.

White establishes a queer discourse with the vibrant colours in the normative white world, until the characters question these positions through the presence of a colourful egg that Cotton cannot bear to leave in the bin. While the themes of diversity and acceptance are implicit rather than explicit, as the mode of storytelling for TVY tends to necessitate, children interact with otherwise complex adult themes through a simple gesture of colour, boiling down a complex issue to a direct physical metaphor that children can understand.

Queerness rarely, if ever, reveals itself explicitly in cultural texts for young audiences. When this queerness does surface outside of metaphor or veiling of any sort, it meets controversy and censorship exemplified in the cancellations of plays with explicit, not implicit or filtered 'acceptable', queerness. *And Then Came Tango* is a play for young audiences by Emily Freeman based on the true story of Roy and Silo, two male chinstrap penguins, who formed a same-sex pair bond and raised an abandoned egg together in New York City's Central Park Zoo in 1999.

And Then Came Tango has had two scheduled school tours to local elementary schools cancelled. The school boards and parents who championed these cancellations raised concerns because of the play's 'gay themes'. In Texas, 10 scheduled performances of *And Then Came Tango* were cancelled at Austin elementary schools, 'with some officials questioning the age-appropriateness of the subject matter' (*Huffington Post*, 2012). Jonathan Saenz, the President of conservative group Texas Values praised the school board's decision to cancel the tour claiming that Texas 'define[s] marriage very clearly...so if you have a play that tries to push and promote a different marriage definition, which is clearly illegal, it leads students to ask questions about it, and it leads to the discussion of sex' (*Huffington Post*, 2012). Importantly, Saenz made these remarks on the cancellation before the United States Supreme Court ruled in 2015 to federally legalise same-sex marriage (*Obergefell v. Hodges*). This ruling marked a global shift, beginning to lift stigma of lesbian and gay familial structures through legal recognition and legitimisation. As of April 2016, there are now 23 countries which have legalised same-sex marriage, including the United States (2015), England (2013), and Scotland (2014). Perhaps now, opinions have shifted and *Tango* may not have been cancelled post-2015. Nonetheless, Saenz's conflation of showing depictions of queerness to children with necessitating a discussion of gay sex reveals itself as a consistent fear voiced by those who protest against these cultural texts. This particular cancellation received media coverage from both the online pop culture blog Gawker, and The Huffington Post.

The second cancellation erupted in Fresno, California in February 2015, just months before the Supreme Court ruling, where a hearing took place before the Sierra Charter Foothill School Board because they were scheduled to host a performance of *Tango*. When the Fresno State Theatre Troupe sent the play's synopsis to the school:

...the administration wretched [sic] over what they perceived as a 'gay theme.' They immediately made attendance voluntary and sent out 'warnings' to all their parents. This effort was not enough for many in the community who demanded that the ability to opt out was not enough. They insisted that the school needed to cancel the production all together or they would boycott it for the day (Watson, 2015).

Rob Watson, a gay father whose son attends the school, wrote a public letter to the Sierra Charter Foothill School Community criticising the play's censorship, citing his love for his sons, his husband, and standing up for all the families *Tango* represents. He writes:

That is our story, and it is reflected in the factual story of the penguins in the play. The penguin real life story occurred in 1999 at the Central Park Zoo, and they met with the same intolerant attitude that your community is exhibiting. Homophobic people rose up and demanded that the penguin family be broken apart. They felt what had happened naturally was somehow 'sending the wrong message.' The *Tango* story is about love. My family's story is about love... theatre arts are meant to illustrate, illuminate and shake their audience from pre-conceived notions and feelings. This play was brought to you not so you can judge and censor it, or the families like mine that it represents, but so you can watch and grow from finding out about us (Watson, 2015).

Because *Tango* depicts overt queerness that falls outside the acceptable queerness otherwise aimed at young audiences, as exemplified in Stockton's reading of *Willy Wonka*, it has faced these instances of controversy in its touring productions.

Those productions of *Tango* that have not toured to local

elementary schools have not received the same critical treatment as its school tours. I directed a production of *Tango* as a part of the New York International Fringe Festival in the summer of 2014 that met no controversy. These productions did not meet resistance perhaps because they are not usurping what Foucault defines as heterotopic relational spaces, where 'we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another' (1986, p.3). According to Foucault, a space is defined by the relations of those who occupy it. Because heterosexuality pervades culture as the assumed norm, particularly considering a room of adults and children where adults' perception of children is that of the innocent, these spaces are heterotopic. When considering a heterotopic theatrical space, one must also consider the consumerist element of choice when an adult brings their child to the theatre and pays for their ticket. It can be argued that an adult who brings a child to a play like *Tango* and is fully aware of its queer content, acknowledges the queerness of the theatrical space they are entering, thereby acquiescing and contributing to that space's relational queerness, breaking down the heterotopia. Instead of the play 'invading' a normative space, such as in a school, with queerness, this theatrical, not educational, space where *Tango* might be performed is already established as queer from the adult's prior knowledge of the subject matter and the queer child is invited to come and inhabit that queered space. But the necessity of the adult's prior knowledge of and acceptance of the play's content precludes the ticket buying process and therefore the child's ability to attend the play and participate in a queered space. When an adult learns of queer content and rejects that content as inappropriate for young people, the adult exercises their imbalance of power which Reason articulates, as the young person cannot be exposed to content they are unaware of and are not introduced to by an adult. These young people who do not have the individual agency to enter queer theatrical spaces may be more easily and directly accessed through school tours and

performances because the consumerist ticket-buying element no longer puts the parent in charge of the young person's exposure to cultural content. So how do we inject the child's queerness into their cultural content and actually ensure that young people will see these queer stories without worrying about administrators and parents cancelling productions and censoring material?

Looking forward

We must reengage with Stockton and Reason's theories to adequately answer this question. The field of theatre for young audiences and its gatekeepers perhaps need to embrace the idea of the queer child and eradicate the pervasive idea that the 'innocent child' needs to be protected. This shift in ideology around young people could lead to more progressive work, like *White*, and more productions and exposure to complex and necessary themes, like those in *Tango*. Momentum is slowly building behind the advocacy for queer narratives and characters for young people, riding the coattails of the gay rights movement's recent successes and shifting perceptions of LGBTQ+ people and issues in popular culture.

Artists are beginning to create and develop queer content for young people across multiple mediums. In the field of live performance, Glasgow-based live artist Eilidh MacAskill has been commissioned by Imagineate¹, to develop her 2015 project, *Gendersaurus Rex*, 'a new research project looking into gender, feminism, sexuality, queerness and difference, and how these areas intersect with the field of live performance for children' (MacAskill, 2015, n.p.). The project is still in its research phase, but it will likely culminate in a performance for young audiences that engages these topics. The YouTube Channel, *Olly n' Pop*, created and produced by performer Olly Pike, creates easily

accessible videos for young people discussing LGBTQ+ topics. And Rebecca Sugar's show *Steven Universe* on Cartoon Network breaks boundaries in its queer content, depicting one of its main characters in an overt lesbian relationship.

Content like this is laying the important groundwork to expose young people to queer topics. Queer artistic content and progressive storytelling can have immense cultural impact with a potential to break apart pervading stigmas about LGBTQ+ people, particularly when considering children. When queer stories begin to be told and treated with the same level of normalcy with which heterosexual stories are treated, then queerness itself will then be perceived as the everyday, mundane way of life that it truly is, rather than as the inflammatory, inappropriate calamity it is still treated as today. This new queer normalcy might even force another reclamation of the word 'queer'. This new queerness may shift our theorising from the binary of queer versus normative, to a wider understanding of queerness as a spectrum of difference, where there is no normative and we are all understood to be a little bit queer, or a little bit strange, like the queer child, simply because we are all different from one another. Within this new queer normalcy, young people can grow into adulthood within the perception of a queer totality, move to ultimately eradicate hetero-assumptive behaviour, and build a global queer relational space.

Notes

1. Emerging from the Scottish International Children's Festival in 2000, Imagine is now the national art-form development agency for children and young people's theatre in Scotland. It organises the annual Imagine Festival of performing arts for children and young people in Edinburgh, and provides professional advocacy, creative

development and commissioning, as well as creative learning programmes in schools.

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Re-constructing heritage: the National Theatre of Scotland's *Calum's Road*

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David Harrower's adaptation of Roger Hutchinson's novel, Calum's Road (2011, 2013) tells the real-life story of Calum MacLeod, and his quest to build a road from Arnish to South Arnish on the island of Raasay in the Inner Hebrides. Calum is representative of the everyday hero that can be found throughout Scottish texts and stories—one that remains true to himself, and fights for the cause he believes in, no matter how small it may seem to the government, or the people around him. The play highlights a dying age, and yet emphasizes the importance of merging the past with the ever changing present and is ultimately a celebration of failure. This article explores the role of heritage and heroism within Harrower's play and, by extension, contemporary Scotland, by examining the relationship between struggle and failure, as well as the mutual responsibility within the national community to work to create a new image of the Scottish nation.

Keywords: heritage, landscape, hero, Calum MacLeod, Raasay, National Theatre of Scotland

Introduction

The play *Calum's Road*, adapted by playwright David Harrower from the non-fiction book of the same name by Roger Hutchinson, opened in Glasgow at the Bridge in

September 2011. The initial tour lasted three months, culminating in a production at the Raasay Community Hall in November 2011. The show was revived and toured to different Scottish cities in 2013 for a shorter six-week tour. For the purposes of this article, I am referencing the text used for the second tour. The script refers to each actor by their first name only, and their name is in all caps, whereas the character names are depicted in sentence case. Harrower has adapted many other works, including plays such as Buchner's *Woyzeck*, Chekhov's *Ivanov* and Schiller's *Mary Stuart*, the latter of which was produced by the National Theatre of Scotland (NTS) in collaboration with the Royal Lyceum Theatre and the Citizens' Theatre. He has also adapted novels for the stage, including John Wyndham's *The Chrysalids*. Within these works he takes well-known stories from the stage and gives them a modern, and often uniquely Scottish twist. In *Calum's Road*, Harrower adapts a legendary story that is already Scottish, and thus he allows the story to speak for itself without too many theatrical additions or unconventional staging techniques. He builds upon his adaptation experience, and utilizes the fragmented story-telling technique found within the 2008 NTS and Edinburgh Theatre Festival co-production of *365*. However, unlike *365*, Harrower manages to connect the fragments and create a coherent story that touches on themes of Scottish national identity as embodied by one man from the Hebrides. The story of Calum MacLeod's life examines government roadblocks, the rapidly declining population of the islands, and the waning popularity of Gaelic, and on a cursory look may seem to lack the intensity or even drama of his famed *Blackbird* or *Knives in Hens*, plays remembered for their moments of violence and serious subject matter as much as anything else. However, the drama within *Calum's Road*, which follows the source text closely, is held within Calum's passion for his island, and his determination to save his culture. Calum's heroism is not the bloody-bladed heroism of the conquering warrior, and the seeming gentleness of Harrower's adaptation highlights the slow and subtle alterations occurring to Raasay from an

island focused on community and belonging, to one of isolation and disconnect. I assert that the purpose of the 2013 NTS production was not to merely share a story about a famous islander, but also to re-ignite an interest in the multifaceted nature of Scottish heritage through a connection to material environments and contemporary lore.

The Calum MacLeod of Harrower's play is painted as a hero among men. He built a 1¾ mile long and 10-foot-wide road, alone, by hand, over a period of approximately 10 years. The road was built for the simple purpose of improving travel across his island of Raasay, in the Inner Hebrides, with hope that the improved living conditions would encourage people to remain living on the island. The director, Gerry Mulgrew, described Calum's story as one of epic proportions and one of ironic failures: 'The story is full of ironies, of course, and Calum himself seems somewhat reminiscent of Don Quixote taking on the world, but there is no denying the sheer chutzpah of the man who was crofter, fisherman, knitter, lighthouse keeper, writer and solo road engineer' (Raasay Community Association, 2011, n.p.). Mulgrew's statement encapsulates the essence of Calum's journey—it was one fraught with failure and disappointment, but ultimately was the story of a hero, and it is through his heroism and ultimate defeat that audiences across Scotland were re-introduced to a new type of heritage, one that has been brushed aside in favour of romanticised visions of island life.

Post-devolution theatre

Since the establishment of a devolved Scottish Parliament in 1999, arts organizations have made it a greater imperative to present accurate representations of Scottish life on stage. Before devolution, many Scottish plays toyed with realism

by utilising location-specific dialects, such as the gritty Glaswegian as compared to the softer lowland dialect common in Edinburgh (Hutchinson, 1996, p.225). Working-class and political theatre became popular in the 1970s and pushed the envelope with the tours of theatre group 7:84¹ (Smith, 1996, p.277). All of these changes in stage portrayals of Scottish life paved the way for the stage depictions of a devolved Scotland. Gaelic plays even found a short renaissance, as Gaelic theatre thrived in the early 1980s (Smith, 1996, p.286). Shortly after the referendum leading to devolution passed in 1997, David Harrower, along with fellow playwright David Greig, wrote an article in *The Scotsman* arguing for art that challenges the vision of contemporary Scotland; 'To redefine ourselves we need to understand ourselves, exchange ideas and aspirations, confront enduring myths, expose injustices, and explore our past' (Reid, 2012, p.82). The emphasis in Greig and Harrower's op-ed is on redefining the Scottish nation in a way that is actively chosen by the people. *Calum's Road* specifically 'brings to mind the community-oriented performances of 7:84 and reflects the competing and often fusing discourse of the age of globalization' (Śledzińska, 2013, p.131). The theatre must be in dialogue with the people in terms of fresh ideas and goals of the nation as Scotland continues to be established as a politically independent entity. The theatre itself is not a solo agent of change, but can be the locus for conversation and visions of complex national identities, especially those removed from the global eye. Plays like *Calum's Road*, though seemingly innocent, seek to explore the history of a nation that is so fraught with tension.

Calum's Road serves as an ideal example of how theatre can work to represent those often excluded from the national image created and propagated by the elites. The audience is introduced to real life in the Western Isles, from rides on the ferries to the use of Gaelic and the eating of cormorant sandwiches. Life is not depicted as romantic and exciting,

but instead hard and tedious. In this way the play ‘confronts enduring myths’ of the rural life, and seeks to clarify the role of Raasay in relation to mainland Scotland (Reid, 2012, p.82). The kailyard² approach of sentimentalising rural life is an easy way to depict a certain subset of Scots that to city dwellers is quaint, charming and an escape from the trials of city life. However, this type of depiction does nothing to celebrate the various cultures that actually exist across Scotland, but instead ‘evidence a destructive false consciousness, a neurotic and infantilised national psyche’ (Reid, 2012, p.7).

In lieu of romanticising the existence of Calum MacLeod, the NTS chose to depict the realistic life of one man, and to challenge visions of the Highlands and Western Isles. ‘Through the questioning of old national iconographies and long-established discourses, the National Theatre of Scotland is making a crucial and largely innovative step in the (still very recent) process of internalisation of the long-mythologized Highland “Other”’ (Śledzińska, 2013, p.135). Projections used throughout the show help to shatter this false consciousness by depicting the actual island. The audience is given a picture of the brutality of the island as well as its beauty. These images help to emphasise the amount of work that living on the islands takes. The projected images of Calum’s Road on Raasay used in the NTS production are especially important, for it shows the sharp incline and winding curves as the road disappears over a hill. By grounding the play within the physical world the projections help to dispel the sentimental and quaint view of island life. The very story of Calum and his road works to ‘exchange ideas and aspirations’ (Reid, 2012, p.7) as the audience learns some Gaelic and sees Calum fight for what many mainlanders take for granted. Giving the perspective of an islander who loves his home produces sympathy for Calum’s plight and respect for his work.

Building a Scottish tragic hero

David Harrower utilises multiple narrators to create a chorus-type commentary on Calum's actions. The narrators are unreliable, in the sense that not all of them agree on the specific details surrounding Calum's building of his road. In one way the absence of consistent facts allows for the physical road to take priority over the many extant stories surrounding the building of the road. The production emphasized preserving the memory of the road, and the manual labour it still represents. The symbiotic relationship depicted between the vernacular surrounding the building process and the physical road emphasises a key element in the formation of contemporary, nationally conscious societies. The constant presence of the physical road throughout the play helps to maintain the identity of Raasay, evidencing Claval's assertion that '[i]n order to keep alive the vernacular forms of identities, people try to preserve the material environments of the past, giving newfound importance to the role of heritage' (2012, p.87). Calum's physical road serves as a constant reminder of the life and legacy of Calum MacLeod. The preserved material environment is the backdrop of Harrower's play, which allows for the exploration of the narrative surrounding its construction. By building the road, and improving transportation across Raasay, the Calum MacLeod of the play hopes to rekindle a connection to the island amongst his fellow islanders. Throughout the play the act of preservation, both in terms of the maintenance of the material road and the re-construction of Calum's narrative, connect to an associated melancholy, for it represents a breaking-up of an older culture through the use of a homogenous national identity.

Harrower's narrators toy with the inconsistencies of the remembered past, by emphasising the lack of concrete details surrounding the building of the road. The timeline for construction is never solidified, though it took 10–15 years depending on the start date, anywhere from 1963–

artistic director of the NTS, emphasised the direction of the NTS was 'more about future work rather than about heritage' (Reinelt, 2008, p.236). Though *Calum's Road* celebrates a hero of the past, it is constantly looking forward to how his legacy impacts the lives of people today throughout Scotland. National theatres in Europe often act as an avatar for the nation-state, the assembled audience represent the nation as a whole and it is that assemblage that often is the most important. Loren Kruger (2008, p.39) suggests it is the 'national assembly, rather than the linguistic or cultural consistency of the repertoire, [that] is the essential point of theatrical nationhood'. This builds on the fact that cultural national narratives often blur history and folklore (Wilmer, 2008, p.17). Each audience member watching the play lays a stone in the foundation of the future of the NTS and works to create a more realistic vision of the national image created and propagated by the people it actually represents.

Calum's Road, as it was produced in 2013 by the NTS, seeks to connect the experiences of Raasay (and by extension the Western Isles) within the world of the Scottish mainland. This connection is done primarily through the use of Gaelic throughout the show and the connection of Gaelic to young people like Alex. The character of Alex, a young man who once met Calum as a child, serves as a surrogate of the audience. His curiosity about Calum guides him throughout Raasay, and ignites his passion for re-connecting to his heritage. Only a little over 1 percent of the population of Scotland speaks Gaelic, as of the 2011 census (National Records of Scotland, 2015, *Gaelic Language*). The last census in 2011 indicated that Gaelic's decline has started to slow, and though Gaelic is not yet gaining ground, the loss is not as rapid as it once was. The first full staging of the play coincided with the 2011 census, which later indicated an increased interest in learning Gaelic with younger generations (National Records of Scotland, 2015, *Gaelic Language*). Though neither Harrower nor the NTS have

addressed the connections with the census, the inclusion of a young man, Alex, with an interest in Gaelic language and culture aligns with the beginnings of a Gaelic resurgence, and highlights a connection between the cultures of the Islands and the mainland. However, with only 1 percent of the population speaking Gaelic, one must question whether a single play can really make a difference in inspiring that interest, or is Gaelic doomed to be a dying language spoken in only the remotest regions of the nation?

The literal building of Calum's road thematises the construction of a nation throughout the play. On one level the road is literally built, on stage with acting blocks and a bit of the audience's imagination, but on another level the road represents the slow work done toward building a nation. Calum first digs out the road, then adds gravel and finally the road is tarmacked. The construction of the road is a process and each step overlays the next, and even though we cannot see the cutout soil and the markings in the turf done by Calum's shovel it is through his foundation that the final road is able to be produced. The layering of the road is mirrored in the way the audience is taught about the road's construction through formal layers within the script. These moments are identified as Calum's Road 1, Calum's Road 2, etc., and introduce the audience to the mythology and specific challenges Calum faced while building the road, and simultaneously introduce a different virtue of Calum, the hero. These formal layers emphasise Calum's connection to the land and to his own construction process. His alterations to that land come in small chunks, and little by little he changes the landscape through his building process.

Calum's inherent connection to and knowledge of his island paints him as a lad o'pairts whose seemingly banal observances set him apart from the common man. In 'Calum's Road 1', Calum references Thomas Aitken's *Road making and maintenance: a practical treatise for engineers*,

*surveyors and others*⁴ (Harrower, 2013, p.8). The manual becomes key to the building of the road, for at times Calum follows the advice religiously and at other times completely rejects the advice in favor of more practical means. In 'Calum's Road 1', the audience learns how Calum laid out the plan for the road and see the first time Calum rejects the advice of the manual. The text suggested that most practical route should immediately be obvious upon viewing, but fails to take into account the layout of the land. The guide does not consider the hilly and steep terrain of the islands, for often the entire view of the landscape is obstructed by a hill or crest. Calum weighs this advice and chooses to go with a more pragmatic method. Ceit Kearney, as Julia, and Lewis Howden, as a narrator, describe Calum's methodology;

JULIA. To begin his road my father deviated slightly from Aitken's advice. He scared the sheep. And noted how, as the sheep scattered and fled, they unfailingly took the shortest route between two points.

LEWIS. With this ascertained, Calum marked and pegged the full length of the road, day after day, his postbag over his shoulder, using a trowel, two miles of reel, and hundreds of silver fish hooks.

By using the sheep, Calum is able to really adhere to the formation of the land. By trusting his own eyes, Calum may overlook a small hillock or a grade that was invisible to the naked eye but difficult to traverse. The sheep are familiar with the stretch of the path, and since sheep are naturally lazy creatures they take the path of least resistance. Calum is contending with the geological fabric of the island, and by respecting the natural shape of the land he is able to craft a road that is less of a new addition to an ancient island, and more of a re-shaping of a natural track. He is only one man, yet he is receiving assistance from the land and its fauna in order to build this road. He is a hero for his efforts, but we as the audience clearly see that he is not enough to build the

nation. Calum is a hero larger than life at this moment, for he is so fully connected to the land that he can anticipate its needs better than a professional builder, but he alone cannot keep Raasay's heritage alive and thriving.

The portrayal of Calum's struggle with the natural environment of mud, roots and rocks likens him to a warrior and battle-worn hero. He fights these natural elements while he is trying to preserve the landscape. His campaign to build a road creates a tension between the past and the future, as well as between the ease of staying and leaving. Julia describes her father's challenge: 'And more mud and hundred year old trees and deep buried roots. It was a fight my father had. A battle. A *campaign*. Buried roots and rocks and rocks. Thousands of years of Lewiston and Torridonian rocks. Nothing to him. Nothing stood in his way. No-one. He would not let them' (Harrower, 2013, p.3). Julia uses language of war to describe her father's actions, he has to *fight* the terrain and to tame it to his will, and Calum is clearly the warrior hero before our eyes. It is an uphill *battle*, as he hacks away at old trees and moves rocks from place to place. The land that he loves so much has become his enemy. It is preventing people from staying on the island, so he has to choose sides for this battle and the land lost to the people.

Calum not only battles the landscape, but also battles the infrastructure on the island and the oppressive past that it represents. In the scene 'Calum's Road 3', Calum goes about the task of destroying a wall that separated the crofting grazing lands from the private hunting grounds of the last landlord of Raasay, George Rainy. Calum MacLeod and the majority of the farmers on Raasay are crofters. The last laird of the island, John MacLeod, emigrated and left the Raasay estate in 1843. Due to extreme levels of debt, the estate was sold to an English merchant, George Rainy (MacLeod, 2003, p.95). Rainy spent a good deal of money on the estate, and

much of that went directly to the people, but his commitment to the island could not make up for the fact that during his tenure over 330 people were forced to leave Raasay for Skye or the mainland⁵ (MacLeod, 2003, p.100). Rainy continued to try and reduce the population, and banned the tenants from allowing cottars⁶ on their land and banned marriages without his permission. When marriages occurred without Rainy's permission the couple's property was destroyed, and sometimes their livestock taken, and anyone who sheltered the couple could suffer the same (MacLeod, 2003, pp.100–101). The play explains about Rainy, calling him the infamous Raasay landlord, and describing his wall that was six-feet-high and ran 'across the narrowest stretch of the island and was where Rainy herded the entire population of South Raasay so he could hunt and shoot and graze his animals in peace' (Harrower, 2013, p.49). The taking down of Rainy's wall is emblematic of Calum's heroic struggle. The wall must be removed, at least in part, for the road to be completed. Calum is assisted by the Crown when it comes to destroying his island, for the Department of Agriculture supplies him with a compressor, explosives, a driller and blaster so he can 'create aggregate and gravel for the road's foundations and surfacing' (Harrower, 2013, p.49). The same government that refuses to invest time, money or manpower to build the road between Arnish and South Arnish is all too willing to supply tools '[t]o blow up those parts of Raasay which Calum required blowing up' (Harrower, 2013, p.49). Calum decides that he would not simply blow up the wall, for in some way that seemed too easy to defeat such a large presence in the island's history, 'Instead he dismantled it by hand, stone by stone. To this day no one knows how he celebrated the toppling of Rainy's wall' (Harrower, 2013, p.49).

The layering of the road is then reinforced through the format of the play. The scenes are episodic, and take place in both the past and the present. Each major scene, such as the actual building of the road, the memory of a blizzard, Iain

and Alex's visit to the croft, and the personal history of the MacLeods gives the audience only part of the story, and with each revisit the audience is given a little more information. Some scenes simply continue where they left off, but others repeat and expand upon the original information given. All of the different storylines layer onto of one another and eventually work toward the conclusion, where each storyline finally comes together to create the full narrative. The set reinforces this layering technique by being made up of many differently sized blocks that could be shifted and re-arranged much like the turf around the road. The smaller blocks are used as props, thrown into Calum's wheelbarrow or used to create stairs.

The music throughout the play parallels Calum's task of single-handedly building a road. A single musician, Alasdair Macrae, played all the music live, and was situated on the side of the stage during the action of the play. For most of the musical numbers Macrae would utilise live-looping to create a fuller sound, and to give the impression of more musicians when it was him alone. To do this, Macrae would record live a short section of a song, playing his guitar or singing, and then loop this short section whilst recording another layer on top. Each layer featured a different texture, or vocal harmony. By utilising live looping Macrae was able to build the music, just as Calum built his road, layer by layer, and all alone. The work would have been easier with a band, for each person could play their own part and the song would be complete from beginning until the end. Macrae had to work harder than if he was one player with a band. He needed to be proficient on the guitar, with his vocals (and all the given harmonies), and needed to time his playing perfectly in order to produce the complex sound. The process of building the song with each performance reflected back clearly to the repetitive labour Calum endured.

Concluding remarks

Though the design of the 2013 NTS production celebrates the ingenuity and dedication of a single man, it does not end on this sentimental note about the life and accomplishments of Calum MacLeod. The final scene is a call to action for the audience to do as Calum did. It started with one man, but ultimately the island and the road needed a community. Scene 42 'It ends' catalogues all of the troubles and strife that have kept the Scottish nation down for hundreds of years and declares them over, and calls the community to come together to force that change. The narrators mirror the opening, and tell of a man who fought for his island, but this time they emphasize that the work must be done by someone new. As the play ends we are told, 'Let's hear your song', as Calum's heroic lineage is passed on, not to his daughter, but to each and every audience member. The final scene emphasises the dualism of community and isolation. *Calum's Road* celebrates his isolation by connecting it back to a shared experience. The play may be about one man and one road, but his experience is much like those of many people who have worked hard and have been defeated. There is a futility to Calum's building project, as his road ultimately only serves three people, but it is still a road worth having. The NTS emphasises that the problems on the local level are the problems of the nation, and that the two are always connected—by people, by experiences, and by a certain level of shared cultural heritage.

Notes

1. The theatre company 7:84 specifically worked to level the audience through their highly political, pro-Scottish tours of *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil* (1973).

2. Kailyard addresses the 'prodigious array of *Kitsch* symbols, slogans, ornaments, banners, sayings and sentiments (not a few of them "pithy") which have for so long resolutely defended the name of "Scotland" to the world' (Nairn, 1977, p.162). These images tend to represent a romanticised and nostalgic vision of Scotland, while failing to take into account the often grim realities of Scottish life.

3. In Paula Śledzińska's 'Revisiting the Other: National Theatre of Scotland and the Mythologization of the Highlands and Islands' she cites Peter Womak's assertion that the Highlands, and by extension the Islands, are simply accepted as 'Romantic' locations without debate.

4. President of the Road Surveyors' Association of Scotland (Harrower, 2013, p.8).

5. Though most of these clearances are recorded as mutually agreed upon, or were undertaken with fair compensation, the clearances mark the start of Rainy's unfair level of control over the people of Raasay.

6. Sometimes spelled 'cotters', these were peasant farmers who would rent small farm space to grow crops and lived in small cottages. These were different from crofters who owned their own houses, but only rented crofting land.

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About the author

NICCOLE CARNER is a PhD candidate in Theatre and Drama at the University of Wisconsin-Madison . Her primary research area concerns modern Scottish national theatre. Her research focuses on new plays and performances produced by the National Theatre of Scotland and their link to national identity and the 'theatre without walls'. Niccole is also an ardent director, producer, dramaturg and actor.

PRACTITIONER REPORT:

Calton Hill Constellations

SIRIOL JOYNER & PHIL SMITH

DOI: 10.14439/sjop.2016.0301.04

Publication date: 29 June 2016



Calton Hill Constellations - site specific twilight performance
Photo: Artlink

Artist and choreographer Siriol Joyner (Aberystwyth, Cymru) and writer and mythogeographer Phil Smith (Exeter, England) worked together with overlaps and collisions of place, dance, description, objects and narratives as part of a series of Opening Line events by Artlink. They combined description, history and storytelling in response to locations around Edinburgh in performances for sighted, partially sighted and blind audiences.

Working for three days in Cramond, Siriol and Phil explored an edge-place, drawing both on research about it and on

their physical and emotional encounters with it. Playing at the edges of overlapping senses and spaces, they explored the meeting place of sacred and non-sacred space; searching for what is there and what is changing there; for what can be told, performed, what can be felt and touched; reaching for what eludes, listening and waiting for what might emerge.

They next took a group on an exploratory journey around the grounds of the Old City Observatory on Edinburgh's Calton Hill. This descriptive performance, designed for sighted, non-sighted and blind audiences, responded to the historic and evocative site of Calton Hill by overlapping and colliding place, dance, description, objects and narratives. Phil and Siriol invited the group to experience the site in different ways, challenging our perception of the space through a series of actions, moments and stories.

This is their report on the two events.

Keywords: dome, hill, takeover, lentils, gloaming, monument, authentic, rocket

In bare terms that hide too much, *Calton Hill Constellations* was a two-hour performance journey into a partly ruined Observatory, running with rats. It was created for a visually impaired audience, as part of a bigger experiment by Artlink Edinburgh and the Lothians in creating description performances. In our two attempts, tentative and brazen (our first around the waterside at Cramond in 2013), we pushed what 'description' might mean, tangling the spoken with touching, leading, holding, carrying, re-speaking, journeying, moving, cooking, eating, playing and dropping in and out of different speech registers: telling stories, extemporising, describing our associations rather than what we see, lecturing, chatting.



Calton Hill Constellations - site specific twilight performance
Photo: Artlink

An automated voice with a Belfast accent informs us that we have crossed a line. We are not as we should be. The Observatory is a shocking ruin and should be left alone. A woman calls out to us over a wall: 'You shouldn't be in there'. 'It's alright, we're artists, it's probably just the rats'. Silence and a shift. No more questions. The authorities have not been informed. We are not where we should be. Our subversion suits this place. Some telescopes are still here. We are on a meridian line. We practice authentic movement, riff off the stuff and tap into some of that fairy boy sap that keeps spouting up. Did you notice the giant upturned telescope? Did you hear me slap the National Monument? One day we walked up a different way: not the civilised route but the way of strewn condoms and thorns.

In both of our pieces we trapped ourselves in snake-like routes that ate their tails. On our return the starting points were changed. Darkness had fallen. At Cramond, a fish that

the audience had handled and carried was cooked. On Calton Hill, above the spot where the audience physically modelled orbits (re-working a moment from Béla Tarr's *Werckmeister Harmonies*), rockets were fired into the night. There was something conservative about this coming back. The body of the route, segmented into its stopping points—our structure laid out in paper fragments on the floor of a flat in Easter Road—weighted by the baggage of tours that it traduces.



Calton Hill Constellations - site specific twilight performance
Photo: Artlink

We carry extraordinary baggage—in a few days we created around 20 segments of action and information—then we tried to ease its tense patterns with interruptions of communality; ordinary and extraordinary. Under the spidery rusted metal frame of an observatory dome, so lost and hollowed that it constitutes part of an informal pathway around the Observatory complex, we all stand with our hands on each others' heads. The dome is our collective skull, our dream dome; we overprescribe what all the bony domes can hold.

Dome, skull, palate, diaphragm, instep.

Instep, diaphragm, palate, skull, dome.

The touch of Henderson's Globe on our hands. The Hill.
They defeat our description.

We fail to make enough space, failing better than if we had succeeded in making an invitation open enough to make dreaming comfortable. It is a place of failure, of inaccurate measurements, of interrupted attempts and incomplete projects. Of ill-fated, improvised technologies.



*Calton Hill Constellations - site specific twilight performance
Photo: Artlink*

We make revealing mistakes. To avoid taking everyone down steep stone steps we break the rule of never retracing our footsteps and drag a large stone to make a single step back down to our way in. The drop is too deep.

Kirsty has borrowed prisms from Camera Obscura for us. I hand them out. So smooth and heavy. Bath towels are a canvas upon which we play the spectrum.

Speaking in the quoted 'character' of Charles Piazzzi Smyth was too rude, or not rude enough; we interrupted ourselves. We did not explain why Phil was wrapped in the towels (Smyth wrapped himself in flannel to prevent his body heat affecting the instruments). We opened the doors to reveal the shapely and massive white column at the centre of the dark temple, and how the rock shifted and rendered lifetimes of measurements irretrievably randomised.

Four
fathoms
make a
column.

I guide four of you to make it and we feel the gist of its weight and space. We are not allowed into the building to show you how it really feels, but we shine our torches on the treacherous white stone.

It is a difficult separation. The proximity of the telescopes is palpable; the space is tabooed and creates a mischief in me.

We do not explain or debunk everything; we over-explain some things and leave fancies hanging. We are not easy in evenness, we keep disrupting ourselves. At one moment there is a sentimental magic in everyone coming forward to the wall of the central building to climb and touch the voluptuous globe, stars and a comet tail carved onto the planetary monument to Henderson, Astronomer Royal; the next, we tenderly lead you to lie face down in the gravel. An echo of the echoes of ceremonies some astronomers

imagined restoring, by measuring pyramids.



Calton Hill Constellations - site specific twilight performance
Photo: Artlink

The performance ‘falls apart’ around the fire and the audience take over; telling their own stories. Some are ‘too long’. We know exactly what we are doing and where we are doing it and part of our exactitude is improvisation, giving up, failing and having to be happy by being on the cusp of happy / not happy. Our responsibility not to let down those who come and place their trust in us, and our responsibility to fail to attain the monolithic in a successful description; we are jesting with huge (for a body) stone structures.

We are not ourselves. ‘You must be taxidermists!’ Mouse, Moose, Rat, Dog, Cat, Hare, Elephant, Guinea Pig. What rhythms are already in a place?



Calton Hill Constellations - site specific twilight performance
Photo: Artlink

In Cramond, Siriol had a direct personal connection having visited the site years before and the fish swam directly from her memories. Phil connected through a childhood memory of driving home in the dark, looking at large brightly lit houses and wanting to knock on their doors. This became a shared folly for us: 'give us your money! What's for pudding? Will you adopt us?' We are liars and fantasists. Not entirely ourselves.

On Calton Hill we mythologised ourselves more; we began by waving branches along a route up to the Observatory as the audience arrived. We stood to the side of a tree covered in yellow rags, playing off the fire ceremonies held on the hill, we made our own movement with the hill and then recruited the audience into a forest that had gone from here. Yellow becomes a signpost, signal. Hello conductor.

The uncivilised trees. Something happened to me at one of the trees. Something aligned through my gesture. A vertical slotting. Hello conductor.

Yellow must be a signpost, signal. Hello conductor.

Siriol sculpted audience members into planets, using the traffic markings on the tarmac; making silently explicit that we all 'stand for' something else that is unstable, shifting in gravitational pulls, then jerking out of each narrative that we start.



*Calton Hill Constellations - site specific twilight performance
Photo: Artlink*

Tell them about your dream, Phil, that terrifying image of the giant screen swinging in front of the National Monument. That apocalyptic scene that was real on the next day: snow, sun, rain and the four winds. I had dreamed overnight of a huge rectangular screen swooping wildly through a panelled room; nothing swung it, for it moved by the force of its own representations. When I saw the incomplete and abject National Monument in the sun next morning, tourists framing themselves between its pillars and conducting their images with selfie sticks, I knew what power it was I saw.

I slap my hand on you, monument. I slap you and take the

cold, to steal it back and be warmed by a person who is now also a tree.

Around the neo-classical pseudo-temple in the middle of the complex we adapt the 'authentic movement' that we have used to interrogate our corporeal relationship to the Observatory's spaces. But rather than one observe the other as witness and holder of the space (first the mover and then the witness describing what they felt / saw; weirdly traduced in those obsessive selfies around the National Monument), we take both roles, moving while wired with microphones, reflecting as we move, out of earshot of the audience. Our comments are re-spoken for the audience by the two sound artists who are recording the event. We are getting beyond ourselves. The visually impaired audience, braced in the cold, hear the space doubly narrated as our feelings and associations are triggered by the falling away of the ground, the embraceable pillars, the possible voids, the forest that has returned as limestone 'trunks'.

One 'authentic movement' we did in preparation was at the most ruined of the domes. Phil moved around its remains, shifting against, on, balancing, lying, resting, pushing, drawn simplistically to its circle, testing inside and out and edginess. Siriol holding the space; witness, watcher, memory. The solid ground becomes dark and soft underfoot, falling away precipitously to the bottom of the forbidding perimeter wall of the complex. Irrecoverably ruined now, only a low circular wall remains. The temple of the four winds and I watch. Phil moves about on the slope. We the observatories, witness his endless spiralling exploration of that grass edge. I want to watch more, to watch Phil move more, more movement as exploration, more dancing as feeling. Inside is like being on a stage; a plane across which things might turn.



*Calton Hill Constellations - site specific twilight performance
Photo: Artlink*

We chose a fire, heat, light, gathering. 'It burns, it gets more complicated'. Or rather, we sifted. For sure, temperature changes and shifts in the ground had been important here, measurements twisted by repetition, telling stories. Lights in the dark, seeing best in darkness, burning and radiating, gathered around an orrery that had lost its mechanical centre, its eye piece, its lenses, its metal casing. We 'stopped' our performance and swung it around this brick sun, because at our Wednesday preliminary sharing, when the temperature hovered around freezing, we wondered about having hot soup to warm the shivering audience.

One of the participants pointed out how appropriate lentils would be; seeds taking their name from the lenses they seem like. So we stood around the fire in the centre of the ruined dome and drank hot lenses, eyes and observatories inside and outside, warm and cold. The stories that people told to each other here, sometimes in small groups, sometimes addressing the whole group, changed the dynamics; from the two of us struggling in the failing light

with this complex of complexity and recalcitrant stone, it became something more like a slithery and incriminating group work.



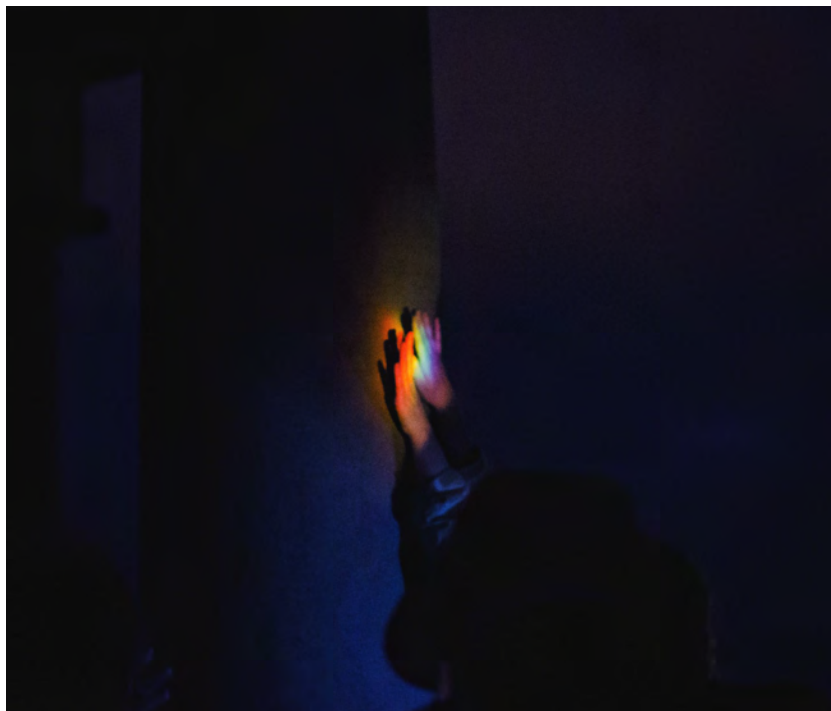
Calton Hill Constellations - site specific twilight performance
Photo: Artlink

A gallery staff member nursed the brazier he had lit earlier, Kirsty opened the lentil soup she had cooked; the audience's tales spilled about. Disconcertingly, they all had beginnings, middles and ends; now the tasks we had carefully if quickly planned were standing about, separately, alongside unplanned conversations; the meaning of the whole thing was loose. The support that Artlink and the Collective Gallery had given us was forefronted as a part of, maybe the best meaning of, the event; the audience took that and made it personal. Abutting the moments when we had been most performatively adventurous, when I asked our audience to lie in the gravel and feel the smoothness of pillars, when I had attempted Piazzzi Smyth's voice, when the symbolism had become too complex and unravelled, against this we were now assembled around a sad-looking brick stump, a structure formed fragile in orbits of conversation, shaped by attractions to the conversing of other orbits. This clunky, un-aesthetic social moment, standing round eating and

chatting, drew in the myth we were trying to set in motion without knowing what it was in advance. F. is showing me the app on her smartphone that speaks the names of planets and stars at which the phone is pointed. A clear voice speaks 'Uranus' into the darkness over and over.

The excessive fireworks display at the end—handed over to the person who offered to do the job (it was now their thing)—and the hole in the ground we found under a tawdry sheet of hardboard, where the huge thermometer had been kept, smashed by a paranoid sailor; we never mentioned that.

The Observatory eventually swamped us in its darkness and we could not light enough; soon its ruins will be tidied and it will become brighter and harder.



Calton Hill Constellations - site specific twilight performance
Photo: Artlink

About the authors

SIRIOL JOYNER is a choreographer from Aberystwyth. A current focus for her practice is the relationship between movement and language and the notion of translation: its possibilities and impossibilities. She is creating movement, text and object works that employ a principle of hybridity and assemblage. She has been collaborating with Puerto Rican dance artist Nibia Pastrana Santiago to develop a movement practice entitled *Dŵr Viva*, their work was shared in Abercych in 2013 and shown at the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Juan PR in 2015. Siriol is also engaged in long-term choreographic research with the Irish choreographer Ruairi Donovan under the name *CELTIC RADICAL* which explores cultural identity, language and place in both Wales and Ireland. Working site-specifically and outdoors is an expanding aspect of her practice, which she is developing by working alongside artists such as Phil Smith, Jennifer Monson and Simon Whitehead and the bio-artist Ariana Jordao. Siriol is part of the team who curate Maynard, a resource for dance and movement arts in rural West Wales.

PHIL SMITH (Crab Man, Mytho) is a performance-maker, writer and ambulatory researcher, specialising in creating performances related to walking, site-specificity, mythogeographies and counter-tourism. He is a core member of site-based arts collective Wrights & Sites, presently working on a new publication: *Architect Walkers*. He has recently performed with Jane Mason in *Life Forces*, and is developing *common dance for threatened subjectivities* with Melanie Kloetzel. He is also a Site Artist for Tracing the Pathway's 'Groundwork' project in Milton Keynes. He teaches site-specific performance at Plymouth University. Phil's publications include *A Footbook of Zombie Walking* and *Walking's New Movement* (2015), *On Walking* and *Enchanted Things* (2014), *Counter-Tourism: The Handbook* (2012) and *Mythogeography* (2010). He is an Associate Professor (Reader) at Plymouth University.

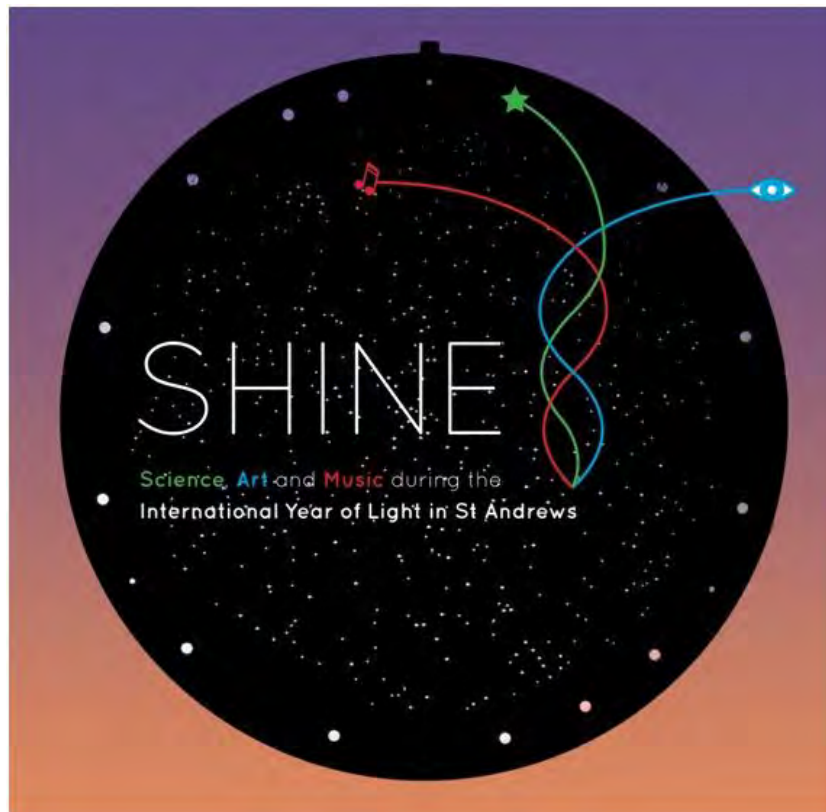
PRACTITIONER REPORT:

SHINE

BEDE WILLIAMS, ANNE-MARIE WEIJMANS, EDDIE
MCGUIRE & TIM FITZPATRICK

DOI: 10.14439/sjop.2016.0301.05

Publication date: 29 June 2016



On 7 November 2015 in the Byre Theatre, St Andrews, astronomer Dr Anne-Marie Weijmans, composer Eddie McGuire, conductor Bede Williams and artist Tim Fitzpatrick collaborated on the project *Shine*. The project was held as part of the International Year of Light, an initiative of the UN General Assembly:

In proclaiming an International Year focusing on the topic of light science and its applications, the UN has recognized the importance of raising global awareness about how light-based technologies promote sustainable development and provide solutions to global challenges in energy, education, agriculture and health. Light plays a vital role in our daily lives and is an imperative cross-cutting discipline of science in the 21st century. It has revolutionized medicine, opened up international communication via the Internet, and continues to be central to linking cultural, economic and political aspects of the global society.¹

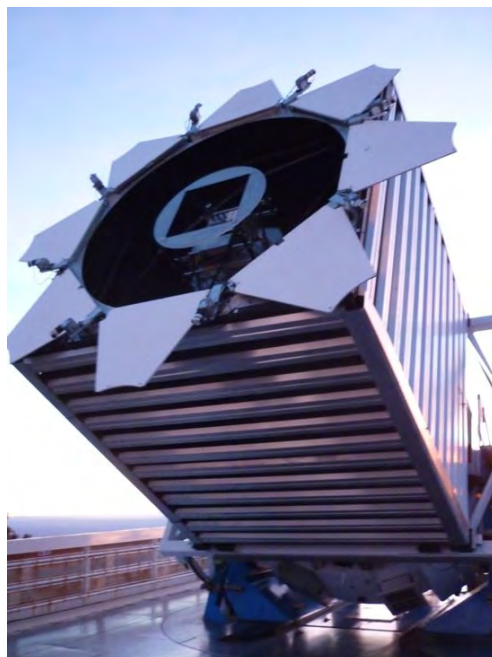
Shine was an interdisciplinary exploration of the *Mapping Nearby Galaxies at Apache Point Observatory* (MaNGA) survey², for which Anne-Marie Weijmans is the lead observer. The MaNGA survey focuses on mapping the internal structures of nearby galaxies. *Shine* aimed to raise awareness of the MaNGA survey and its use of *spectroscopy* to study galaxies. *Shine* strove to explain some of the scientific concepts behind the MaNGA survey to a wide audience, to show how with spectroscopy we can unravel light and use its emission spectra to find out which elements are present in galaxies, and how these elements are distributed. This helps us to paint a picture of the ways galaxies form and evolve over time.

More than 350 visitors passed through the Byre Theatre on the day, about half of them first-time science festival visitors. By bringing together science, art and music the authors hoped that audiences attracted to one specific discipline would inadvertently experience another. Before the project commenced, the *Shine* team considered the commonly held view of science and new music being two areas the general public may find challenging, and that the art installation, with its visual immediacy, may be best placed to play the role of Hermes. By using the MaNGA observing plate³ as a centrepiece the art installation spoke directly of the MaNGA

survey and spectroscopy. The music then took concepts of the MaNGA survey and distilled them into sound.

Astronomer Anne-Marie explained her research for the project as follows:

Galaxies are located millions, if not billions of light years away from Earth. The only way that we can learn about what is going on in these systems, is by studying their light. We catch their light in our telescopes, lead their light on to spectrographs, and unravel their light into spectra. Different elements in the stars and gas in galaxies give rise to different absorption and emission lines, and by studying these lines we therefore learn about the contents of these galaxies. Movements of stars and gas in galaxies introduce small Doppler shifts to these lines, and so we learn about the dynamical state of galaxies: are they quietly rotating around the centre of the galaxy, or are they perturbed, maybe because of a recent merger? And the movements of stars and gas also give away the presence of an otherwise invisible dark matter halo.



*Sloan Telescope used in MaNGA survey.
Image courtesy of Anne-Marie Weijmans*

MaNGA is a spectroscopic survey of galaxies, which uses the 2.5-metre Sloan Telescope in New Mexico, USA. MaNGA uses hexagonal fibre bundles to collect the light of galaxies, and record their spectra. MaNGA is part of the fourth generation of Sloan Digital Sky Surveys (SDSS-IV), with previous generations having imaged the northern sky and measured the cosmic expansion rate, amongst others. So far, MaNGA has observed more than 1,400 galaxies, and over its six-year survey period will record the spectra of 10,000 galaxies, the biggest galaxy survey of its kind.

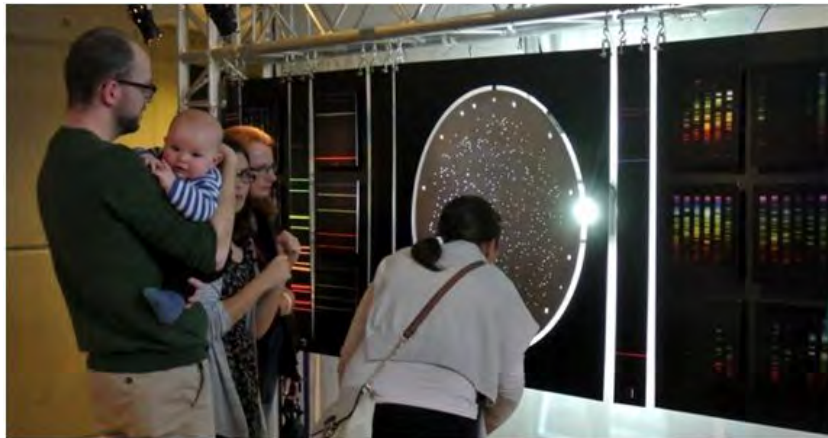
Tim Fitzpatrick's artistic response to the project is called *Code for Everything*. Engaging directly with spectroscopy, he wrote:

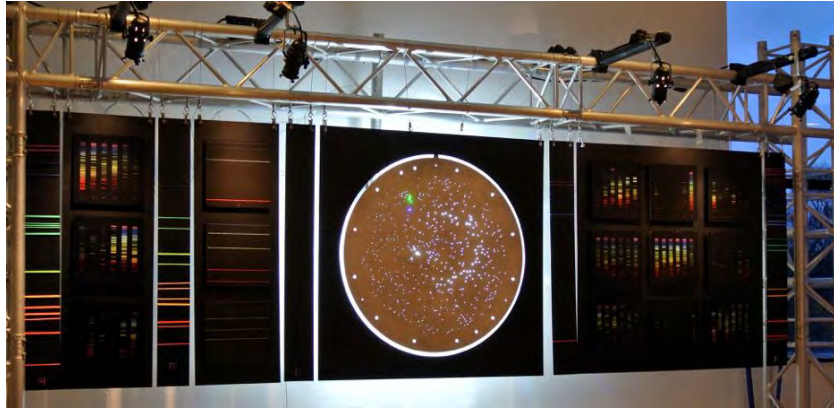
An important part of Anne-Marie's work is as the lead observer with MaNGA—mapping nearby galaxies at Apache Point Observatory in New Mexico. The work involves studying the very particular properties of light from stars and galaxies, and the detail gathered from the studies—spectroscopy—tells us a great deal about those stars' or galaxies' composition and characteristics.

Fundamental to spectroscopy is the fact that each of the elements that make up our universe have their own characteristic spectral lines, or emission lines: distinct wavelengths of light that are a product of the behaviour of the elements' atoms. So when the spectrum of a star or galaxy is analysed, we are able to find the characteristic spectral lines of individual elements that may be present and these can tell us so much about the composition and characteristics of that star or galaxy. With these colour-coded 'fingerprints' we have the tools to identify the atomic and molecular components of stars: reading the light of the universe as contained in a beautiful series of codes.

In the making of *Shine* I became fascinated by the existence of these coded spectral lines. Behind the seemingly random distribution of lines of colour in the individual spectra are the codes of colour that describe our Universe: the four pure lines of Hydrogen, the explosive riot of Europium, the starkness of the single green line of Thallium to the reassuring uniformity of Oxygen. An unmistakable code of light for all that we know; code for past, present and future, code to infinite horizons and code for everything.

The pictures below are of Tim Fitzpatrick's *Code for Everything* installation for *Shine*:





In addition to the art installation there were science demonstrations, as shown in the following pictures:



Make your own spectrograph! In this demo visitors could make their own spectrographs using old CDs as gratings to unravel the light. Visitors could then test their spectrographs by aiming them at special gas lamps, and compare the emission line spectra they saw with our printed versions. Images courtesy of T. Fitzpatrick.



Visitors could listen to radio emission, of which a tiny fraction was generated in the Big Bang and recorded in the cosmic microwave background (top). Visitors were also challenged to make a spectrogram of their own voice, and learn how sound could be made visible. (bottom).

Images courtesy of T. Fitzpatrick.



Overview picture of the foyer of the Byre Theatre, where many of our science demos were located. Image courtesy of T. Fitzpatrick.

After audience members had moved around the art installation and science demonstrations, they entered the main auditorium of the Byre Theatre and listened to a public lecture from Dr Tom Brown of the School of Physics and Astronomy, titled ‘Waves and Particles—Light’s Confusing Nature’:

In this lecture we will look briefly at the history of understanding light and see how its behaviour has been understood by both waves and particles. More recently the advent of the quantum universe in the early twentieth century has caused us to think of light being simultaneously (and somewhat confusingly) both a wave and a particle. In fact this wave / particle behaviour has given rise to many of the twentieth century’s innovations from the low-power LED lights that are gradually being used more and more in your home, to the way the information you look up on the internet is carried around the world.

After Tom’s lecture, the St Andrews New Music Ensemble performed Matthew Hindson’s *Light is both a particle and a wave*. Eddie McGuire then introduced his new work, *Symphonies of Galaxies*. His unscripted presentation is presented here verbatim.

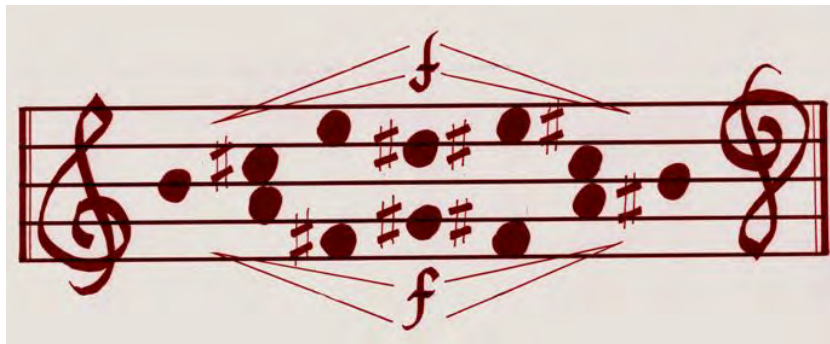
Well, the title of the piece is *Symphonies of Galaxies*, and I'm using that word 'symphonies' just to tell you that everything is sounding together, and a bit like Stravinsky who uses the word in his *Symphonies of Wind Instruments*. So I'm bringing together all the imaginary sounds of the galaxies into a piece of music. All that music can do is give you a hint of the ideas involved; you can't really paint a picture directly of reality using music. I'm just going to spark your imagination, that's all I can do. By letting you hear some beautiful sounds then you can imagine: you've got to do the work of imagining that universe out there. So we're all part of something much bigger. In fact this project is part of something that the United Nations sparked off; the general assembly of the United Nations voted in 2013 to make this year, 2015, the year of light, so the piece of music you're going to hear is a bit of a celebration of that. We hear about the universe accelerating in its expansion, if you wait patiently until the end of the piece you'll hear the music becoming more excited and faster, symbolising that expansion. And that's what music can do: symbolise things, and spark off some ideas.

The piece is a celebration of the work that Anne-Marie and her colleagues are doing at the University of St Andrews in which they are mapping ten thousand nearby galaxies. It's not like your local neighbourhood or local streets: these are galaxies out there. Amazingly the light from those galaxies takes millions of years to reach us here.

I was also thinking during the earlier lecture [by Dr Tom Brown] that I was feeling a bit sad for poor Albert Einstein: he didn't get a Nobel Prize for his greatest work—the Theory of Relativity⁴. I think we should dedicate the piece and this performance to him, I hope he is listening—maybe he's listening in some type of time warp. We'll

dedicate this performance and piece to him instead of getting the Nobel Prize, I hope he's happy with that. But it's actually one hundred years since he launched his general theory of relativity, and that has led to the insight that we can say that the Universe is expanding⁵, and as the previous speaker said, that the colours of the light tell us how fast the galaxies are receding. And I tried to copy that, I tried to give a hint of that in my piece of music: the piece accelerates to the end, it gets more excitable. You'll hear in the piece that it is quite a romantic expression, because it's the human element, the researchers that are doing all this work—it's Albert Einstein, it's Newton, it's Anne-Marie and her colleagues who are looking into the universe and finding out much more about it.

The piece has a bit of a parallel with the new techniques that they've invented. They've fabricated bundles of fibres that can look at not just one spot in a galaxy and expand it—they can look at the entire galaxy by multiple fibres that are fitted into a hexagonal shape to receive the information through all the different wavelengths of light that you heard about in the previous talk. The theme that you'll hear at the very beginning is a theme that starts on one note and expands into a hexagonal shape:



It starts on one note, expands to two notes, expands wider, comes together again and comes back to one note at the end. You can turn it upside down and see the same thing again, and that matches the bundle of fibres that are reaching out to those distant galaxies to collect the light and tell us if they are going away or are they coming towards us. I was alarmed to hear that there is a galaxy heading straight for us, and it's going to crash right into us; but don't worry—it's not for about ten billion years, so it's not for quite some time. But what I also learnt was that these galaxies are held in place by dark matter. So there's a lot to be found out from this research, and it's that kind of thing that I symbolise in the music. In the third movement you will hear it starts with one note and expands, and it goes in that manner into the very shape of a galaxy, this is my rough sketch that I did when I woke up one night and had the idea to make the third movement into the shape of a galaxy:

30 bars $\frac{3}{4}$ 1=60 approx.
Klangfarbenmelodie

3. 'Dark Matter Echoes'
BASIC DIAGRAM:
(GALAXY SIDE VIEW)
black hole at centre
(incl. some tone clusters)

from 'Symphonies of Galaxies'
- Eddie McGuire - 2005

muted trumpet
Flute, Horn, etc.
(+ VC, pizz.)
add staccato single notes
(bright stars)

Trumpet
horn
trombone

Flute
pizz.

(build up interval in q^4)

BASIC DURATION:
(octaves displaced) (octaves replaced): notes drop out in reverse order

F G \sharp C D \flat A \sharp E \flat B etc. \sharp C \sharp E \flat A \flat B D C E \flat G F

BEARS | 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

Starting with one note, getting wider and wider and denser and denser, until it has all twelve notes. Luckily there are twelve instruments in the orchestra, and twelve notes in the note row I'm using (there are only twelve semitones that people use), so all the notes are heard at the middle point, the densest point of this musical galaxy. Then it fades out again, gets less and less and comes together on one note. So it's a bit like looking side on at a massive spiral galaxy; the third movement is a painting in sound of a spiral galaxy.

All through the piece follows the hexagonal kind of pattern, it's a symmetrical pattern that goes up a tone, up a minor third, down a tone and reverses that; the same is a reflection in the bass—it's harmonies and melody going in the opposite direction. So that was my thinking on constructing the piece—getting the little bits of melody in the piece to match the ideas. Another idea is that sometimes the sound is a bit diffuse: a lot of tremolos and sounds cover up the melody. That's because a lot of research is being done into how to look through the veils of dust that covers, say, the centre of our galaxy—you can't really see it with your own eyes because it's totally covered with dust, no Hoover could Hoover it up. What you can do is look at different wavelengths of light, you saw in the diagram from the previous speaker.

Towards the right side of the diagram was very sharp radiation that is gamma rays, X-rays—these can cut through dust. If you look at them you'll find out a lot of information about the centre of our galaxy, which is presumed to be the massive pulling power of a black hole. So that's the ideas I'm trying to get across in the piece, we're looking through that dust, and you'll hear the dustiness in the music, but you'll also hear little

explosions of bright chords, dense chords, colliding sounds, and little bits of melody that break through into the light.

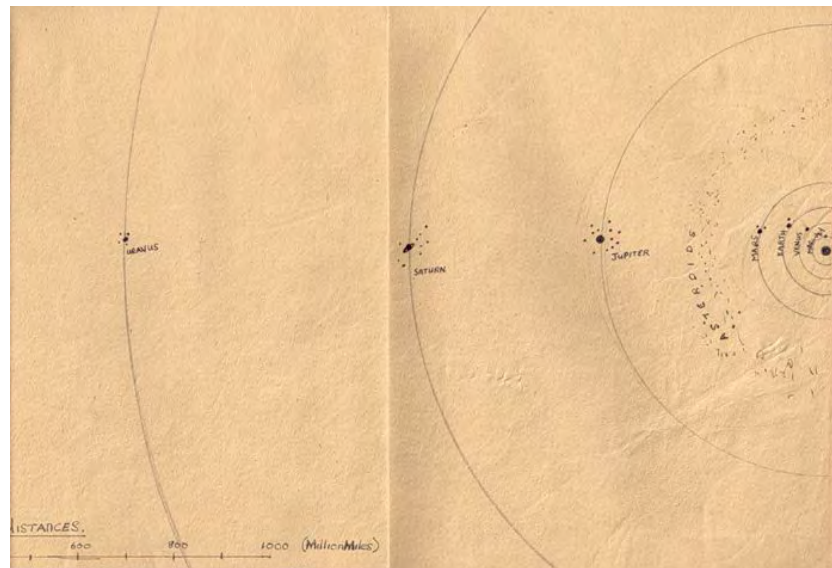
There are four movements; it starts with 'Dust veiled starlight'. The second part is about the idea of the galaxies coming towards us; it's about the galaxies dancing together. If you look at some of the computer simulations of galaxies colliding it creates very beautiful [images], probably horrific if you're in the centre of it. But galaxies colliding are almost dancing with each other. So the second movement is a bit of a waltz, you can imagine galaxies waltzing together as they merge; they almost create Celtic knot work when they're doing that, Celtic spirals. So 'Embrace, Waltz and Merge' is the name of the second movement. The third movement is the one I mentioned before, in which I paint a picture of a galaxy starting at zero and expanding into a dense centre point. And then the fourth movement is what I mentioned earlier: that the universe is accelerating. Of course one day, we might all come to a rest in entropy, a kind of silent universe, but in the meantime the Universe is expanding and the pace of that increases. It starts off as a jig, six beats in the bar. Later you'll hear the instruments in an energetic moment of seven beats in the bar, and then it becomes eight beats in the bar—a kind of reel dance, but it ends up with nine beats in the bar in a slip jig. So the last movement is a bit of a dance movement going through this kind of expansion and getting faster.

I was also intrigued, thinking back that when I was six, seven, eight and nine years old I was very fascinated by galaxies. I brought some of my notebooks in which I actually mention galaxies, and how far away they are, and how many billions of stars they had. I wrote out the full length of all the zeros there:

ASTRONOMY 14. 3. 57.

The star to earth is 26,444,000,000,000 miles
6,000,000 times the size of the sun
is 1,000,000 times bigger than earth.
The nine planets in the solar system,
mercury, venus, earth, mars, jupiter,
saturn, uranus, neptune, pluto. ⑤. Jupiter is
planet, and is 1,312 times the size of
saturn is 860 times bigger than earth.
is 50 times the size of the moon. ⑧. Pluto
smaller than earth. ⑨. Venus is nearly
the same as earth. ⑩. Mercury is a little bigger
than earth. ⑪. Mercury, venus and pluto
have moons. ⑫. Mars has 2 moons. ⑬. Jupiter
⑭. Saturn has 10 moons, and has about
rocks flying round it, forming three
rings. Venus has 5 moons, and is 8 times the
size of earth. ⑮. The diameter of the earth
is 7,926 miles. ⑯. The diameter of the sun is
880,000 miles. ⑰. In 2,000,000 years light travels
72,512,000 miles. ⑱. The farthest stars in
the universe are about 1,273,942,732,036,000,000 miles
away. The diameter of Mira is 660,000,000 miles.
The diameter of the solar system is 11,900,000,000 miles. ⑳. Light

And I actually drew a map of the solar system; the date is
26 May 1961.



So I was fascinated by galaxies at that time. I haven't done anything since then, but it's great to come back to it, remember my childhood fascination and try and construct a piece of music which is both listenable and explanatory, pointing out some of the salient facts of the MaNGA project—mapping of the nearby galaxies at the University of St Andrews. I hope it elucidates and informs, is a tribute to the MaNGA project, and let's dedicate it to poor Albert Einstein, who didn't get a Nobel Prize for his Theory of Relativity.

The International Year of Light may have come to an end, but the authors feel that this collaboration between science, art and music has only just started. Tim continues to explore emission line spectra, and has started to plan a short movie that will link his art with Eddie's music. Anne-Marie and Bede are continuing their efforts in linking music and astronomy, with recent Open Nights at the University's Observatory already being enhanced with musical performances inspired by the night sky. The School of Physics and Astronomy at the University of St Andrews has gained a new set of scientific demonstrations suitable for school visits and science fairs. And there has already been a performance of Eddie's Symphonies of Galaxies at an

astronomy assembly in Chile attended by an audience of 800.

Such events will ensure that the legacy of *Shine* will continue far beyond the International Year of Light, and create new opportunities for future communication and collaboration between scientists, artists and musicians.



Live music at St Andrews Observatory Open Night in March 2015.

Notes

1.<<http://www.light2015.org/Home/About.html>>

2.<<http://www.sdss.org/surveys/manga/>>

3.An observing plate is an aluminum plate mounted underneath a telescope, and has accurately drilled holes in it to allow the light of selected galaxies to travel to the spectrographs. The plates are plugged manually during the day, and observers mount the plates during the night to get observed. On a clear night, 2–3 MaNGA plates can be observed, each yielding spectra for 17 galaxies.

4.Albert Einstein did receive a Nobel Prize in Physics in 1921 for his discovery of the photo-electric effect, but not for formulating the theories of special and general relativity.

5. Although at first Albert Einstein did introduce a cosmological constant in his equations to prevent the possibility of an expanding Universe, as in those days a dynamic Universe was unheard of. When later in the 1930s astronomer Edwin Hubble demonstrated that the Universe was not static but instead expanding, Einstein removed this constant, calling it 'his greatest blunder'. The constant did get introduced again at the end of the twentieth century, after the discovery of dark energy and the accelerated expansion of the Universe.

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About the authors

BEDE WILLIAMS trained as a trumpeter and conductor. For the University of St Andrews Music Centre he directs the New Music Ensemble and teaches chamber music, conducting and performance. He has given the premiere performance of over 60 new works by emerging and established composers. He has a long association with the music of Eddie McGuire, the composer of the specially commissioned piece for *SHINE*.

DR ANNE-MARIE WEIJMANS is a lecturer and Leverhulme Early Career Fellow in the School of Physics and Astronomy at the University of St Andrews. She obtained her PhD in astronomy from Leiden University in the Netherlands, and worked for four years as a Dunlap Fellow at the University of Toronto in Canada, before moving to St Andrews. Her research concentrates on the internal structures of nearby galaxies, as she studies their stars and dark matter haloes. She is the lead observer for the MaNGA galaxy survey. In her spare time, Anne-Marie plays the oboe in the University of St Andrews Chamber Orchestra.

TIM FITZPATRICK is the creative director of the Fife-based community arts project 'The Red Field'. Tim originally trained in photography but over the last 15 years his work has increasingly developed into site specific work often involving combinations of distinctive public spaces, light, music, film, performance and underlying narratives. Recently Tim has created new work as an invited artist for the Pittenweem Arts Festival and has collaborated with composer Michael Nyman and artist Goldie for the Fragments Project—a response to the discovery of a fragment of a twelfth-century manuscript in the Scottish Borders.

EDDIE MCGUIRE was born in Glasgow and studied with James Iliff (RAM 1966-70) and with Ingvar Lidholm in Stockholm. He received a British Composers Award (2003), Creative Scotland Award (2004) and has been featured composer at several international festivals. The BBCSSO Proms performance of *Calgacus* was selected for BBC Music Magazine's CD *The Very Best of the BBC Orchestras* (1997). Commissions and broadcasts have included those from St Magnus Festival, Edinburgh International Festival, Lorient Festival, Glasgow Festival Strings, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra and BBC National Orchestra of Wales. Notable successes are his three-act ballet *Peter Pan* (Scottish Ballet; Hong Kong Ballet), opera *The Loving of Etain* (with librettist Marianne Carey) and concertos for guitar, trombone, violin, viola and bass. He writes for and plays with The Whistlebinkies and Chinese group Harmony Ensemble. Recent works include *Let the Games Begin* for Glasgow Chamber Choir, *Cowal Colours* for Hoot and *Dialogue* for Philip Sawyer and Andrea Kuypers. In 2015 his *Symphonies of Galaxies* was premiered at University of St Andrews by its New Music Ensemble—a collaborative venture with its Department of Astronomy and Physics. 2016 sees the premiere of *Botanic Gardens for Grimoire* (four players at two pianos). Both CD collections of his music (on Delphian Records) have achieved 'Editor's Choice' in Gramophone Magazine—*Eddie McGuire: Music for Flute, Guitar and Piano* (2006) and *Entangled Fortunes* (2015, performed by Red Note ensemble).

INTERVIEW:

Tony Reekie: Children's Theatre in Scotland

BEN FLETCHER-WATSON

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In 2015, Tony Reekie stood down as Director of Imagine, Scotland's national art-form development organisation for theatre for young audiences. Tony had programmed the annual Imagine Festival of performing arts for children and young people since 2000, bringing companies from around the world to Edinburgh each May to share their work. Prior to joining Imagine in 1996, Tony worked with a host of well-known Scottish theatre companies, including 7:84, TAG and Visible Fictions.

In this interview, he reflects on the changes he's observed within children's theatre over the past two decades. He discusses taboos, funding, art for babies, nationhood and theatre as a political act, presenting Scotland as a site of distinctive practices and aesthetic modalities.

Ben Fletcher-Watson: You've talked in the past about theatre for children being the 'Cinderella sector'. Within Scotland, it's become more respected, whereas in England, perhaps the Theatre in Education movement has coloured people's perceptions of theatre for children. Do you still think of it as the Cinderella sector or are there new trends appearing?

Tony Reekie: From my point of view, children's theatre started off in Scotland around about 1990. We had TAG at

that point, companies like Comunicado occasionally making shows for children, and then we had people just making shows so they could get their Equity card.

But when Visible Fictions first came on the scene and made *Bill's New Frock* [1993], it was a change in terms of the way that people approached that kind of work, from Contemporary Arts Practice. And of course they had no relationship either with the past in Scotland or with England, because none of them had any connection with Theatre in Education at all. It was heavily influenced by the City of Culture in Glasgow, by the work of Robert Lepage, by the work of the Wooster Group—by adult work.

Everything around that time was also influenced by the first time that the International Children's Festival happened, which was 1990 again. You watched some of this adult work and you were going, 'This is astonishing,' light years away from the kind of kitchen-sink dramas that people were making and touring at that time in Scotland. And suddenly there was this event happening in Edinburgh in a field, where people were going, 'This is not dissimilar to that, in terms of approach and imagination and thought and all these other things. But it's smaller! And it's for kids, for some bloody weird reason!' [laughs]

So the movement has always in a lot of ways been about the possibilities of stretching the work—within the context of being a storytelling culture.

In a sense the new trends like theatre for very young audiences have allowed those artists to go places that probably they would have liked to have gone with slightly older audiences—they think, 'We can be much more abstract about what we want to present, or what we want to talk about, or what we want to say, or what we want to show. We

don't have to get worried about having an arc in terms of narrative storyline. It can be about an emotion. It can be about an idea. It can be about a colour.' It's much more in keeping with a European model of work, which in a sense goes across all ages.

As we get older, we still get into the mindset of thinking, 'Now we must have narrative. Now we must have story. Now we must have classical drama structure.' I think people have really been able to start playing about with that.

You've actually got artists coming to the fore in work for very young audiences who wouldn't necessarily have come to the fore in more traditional work for older children, because they're not a writer or a director. They're a musician. They're a choreographer. They're a designer, or a visual artist. So that has meant that the work is, and can be, a lot richer and broader.

BFW: Do you think children are a natural audience from birth, or is the purpose of children's theatre to show them how to be an audience?

TR: Oh God, no! Certainly, I always hope not. It's slightly trite, but it's always worth remembering: Martin Drury, who originally ran the Ark in Dublin, made a classic statement when someone talked about 'the audience of tomorrow'—he said, 'An eight-year-old is an eight-year-old. He's not a quarter of a 32-year-old. When you make a piece of work for that eight-year-old, he's as old as he's ever going to get. At some point, he will be nine, but at that moment, he's eight, with all the richness and experience of being eight, and what that is.'

There's almost a sense of saying, 'Stop. Stop thinking about

the audience in terms of age ranges. Stop thinking about them in terms of how they are going to relate to it.' You've really got to think about your art. Why do you want to make a piece of art? What's the thing that gets you up in the morning? What makes you think, 'I've got to communicate this with an audience, and this is the audience I want to communicate it with'?

But first of all, you've got to think, 'This is what I want to communicate'. *Then* find your audience. Then communicate it and see what happens. Don't get too hung up on details. Some people's whole creative process starts off thinking, 'What's the age range for this?' It's only when you start to think about it that you go, 'What a stupid fucking question that is. Why would you start off thinking that way?' When you make a piece for adults, it's the one thing you don't ever think about. But if I'm reaching 50 now, that's a very different experience from someone who's in their late 80s, and also very different from someone who's 19, but we're all adults.

I can understand things obviously becoming much more complicated when you're talking about an audience of six-months old and an audience of five-years-old—that's a very different thing, because cognitively they're very different. We understand that. But actually, it still goes back to saying, 'Concentrate on your art. If it connects with six-month-olds, that's who you've made that piece of art for. Stop getting too hung up about it.'

I'm interested in the way that the art form has developed, how that practice then feeds back into the sector, and starts to become part of work for older audiences, and how that spreads out.

BFW: I'm interested in how you first came across theatre for

the very young.

TR: I came across it first at what was then the Scottish International Children's Festival, and I believe it was the 1994 or 1995 festival.

A French performer, Laurent Dupont, did a piece called *Robinson Crusoe*. He also wanted to do another open-stage piece, and he said, 'I want to do this piece for 18-month-old children'. People just thought he was absolutely barking, because at that time at the Children's Festival, for the under-fives, there was basically a crèche. That was the approach then.

The Children's Festival used to be in Inverleith Park, so he did it in a space where it was basically open to the public, like an open-air space. It was almost the opposite of doing something really intimate—there must have been about 15,000 people in the park at that time. And in the corner of the park in this tent, he did this performance, where people were just walking in and walking out.

I was there. I wasn't actually part of the Festival at that point, but they made sure that the core of the audience were toddlers. In time-honoured fashion, the only thing he said at the beginning was, 'Just let the children do whatever they want. Try not to prompt them. Try not to guide them. Let them guide you. Let them do what they want to do.' And he did this piece which was as astonishing a theatrical experience as any I've ever been part of, partly because it was almost the first time for me.

It was classic—them engaging with it, not engaging with it, being part of it, being astonished by it, being slightly bored by it, moving away from it. There were four children who

basically spent most of the time actually onstage with him, wandering about the place. There was a point where he fell asleep, and they stopped. They were all in different places, not really communicating with each other. They all stopped, at roughly the same time, at the point where he fell asleep. And one by one, they moved closer to him, started to get him to wake up, some of them started to stroke him, and it was an extraordinary experience.

People were coming out afterwards saying, 'That's possibly one of the most relaxing things I've been part of in my life.' The children reacted in the way that we now know young children react to these pieces, and as soon as it was finished, they were onto the next thing, as they do. But it was astonishing, and at the same time, there was an element of 'What the hell was that?'

What happened then was that we slipped back to that way of being—crèche, don't do work for under-threes, why the hell would you bother doing work for under-fives, all that kind of stuff. It sort of got lost. We knew there was something happening out there somewhere, but it took a long time to get back to that place where we started to look at it anew. But it was a fabulous, fabulous introduction to it.

BFW: What was your own perception of it when you first saw it?

TR: In the beginning, my reaction going into it was, 'I don't understand this. I don't see what they get from this. I don't see how this is theatre. Is this art? I don't understand.' That seemed to be the prevailing mood with just about everybody. People were saying, 'Nonsense! Nonsense!'

As I watched it, because he's such a skilled performer—and

still performing—I realised that something was happening which you could quite happily take on an artistic level, but also on a performative level, and on an emotional level. One of the things that I learnt from it was: ‘This is a piece which is aimed at human beings—very, very young human beings can interact with this in a really relaxed way, but I’m not excluded from that process, not being a very, very young person. It’s something that I can be a part of as well’.

So that performance worked on a level where it was personal to each individual who was there, but also social in that way that theatre, when it works really well, can be.

It was good to get a really good experience which absolutely challenged my assumptions head-on, because I think if I’d seen pieces that were not as strong and not as realised, it might have been easier to dismiss it.

BFW: Moving forward to today, what’s your perception of Theatre for Early Years, now that it’s become more of an international movement?

TR: I suppose you can look at it in the same way as you look at any of the forms, in the sense that there are some people that I think are really good at it, and there are some people bugging about in sand. Because it’s become a movement, in a sense, people jump on the bandwagon, often for very good reasons, sometimes for reasons that it’s a place that they can work—not that that’s a bad reason!

But across a lot of the performing arts for a young audience, in a very broad sense, when it’s good, it’s as good as performing arts get, I believe; when it’s bad, there’s really nothing quite like it. Unfortunately it’s a place that people can have sometimes quite a long-standing career not really

ever having the skills or talent to make really decent work, and so they spend a lot of their career making really terrible work.

The danger all the time about work for the very young is that people can always quote it in the instrumental: 'This is doing them good. Therefore, we can put any old shit up there, because they're not going to tell us.' It's a fascinating area, because it's still going through that process of finding itself in lots and lots of ways, particularly in this country.

BFW: Do you think it's possible to talk about a Scottish way of making art for children?

TR: Yes. Somebody asked me, 'Why is Scottish children's performance so popular?' and I said, 'Because there's a glitterball in just about any performance.' Any opportunity anybody has to put a glitterball into a piece in Scotland, you'll see it.

At their heart, they're quite camp, and there is a slight whimsy about the work, which I think makes it global. It gives it a sense that actually anybody can watch this and get something from it, when it's working really well.

White [Catherine Wheels, 2010] has all those elements. Apart from being a really tight piece of theatre, it also has elements of whimsy. If you look at the elements which you almost should take for granted—it's really well-designed; it's really well-performed; it's really tightly directed; the music is really spot-on—all the different elements work, but that doesn't explain why people come away with a smile on their face. It's because there's a feeling of whimsy and a slight daftness. There's always that slight Scottish ability to take something seriously up to a point, and then just pull away at

that.

Now that's not the case with all Scottish work, but if you look at the work of people like Shona Reppe, there's a beautiful, meticulous quality to it, and also an endearing, Ealing Comedies quality.

BFW: People certainly use phrases like 'less serious' or 'humorous'. It doesn't take itself as seriously as Theatre in Education, for example.

TR: It doesn't, and that makes it accessible. It makes it accessible to audiences. It also makes it accessible to adults who come along sometimes, who do not go to theatre. As someone said to me after watching an Andy Cannon [of Wee Stories] piece, 'I thought that was going to be shit!' [laughs] They had thought, 'Oh Christ, have we got to go to the theatre?' And then Andy Cannon just blasts himself at you for an hour.

The people who are engaged with children's work, who like doing the work, who are in the community, they're feeding off each other. They're not all coming from the same place artistically, but there's a kind of broad approach which allows things to happen.

Look at something like *Fleeto* [Tumult in the Clouds, 2011]—you couldn't call that 'not serious', being about teen gang violence, but at the same time, there was a playfulness about its execution which stopped it being unwatchable. So whether it's lyrical, whether it's about us being poetic, whether it's about us being storytellers, there's something cultural which slightly undercuts the seriousness, or pulls away at the edges of it.

A point that's really important to make is that it's not about being Scottish. It's about being based in this community. The work of Andy Manley, for example—Andy's a citizen of this country, but he's not Scottish. Like Lu Kemp, Matt Addicott, lots and lots of people who again embrace that approach, and make it what it is.

And—this'll probably piss people off—there's a nostalgia to it. I never think that's a bad thing, because you always have to recognize that there are old people there all the time. Take great children's theatre, like *The Red Balloon*, [Visible Fictions, 1997] or *Martha* [Catherine Wheels, 2000]—you knew it was working because the children were really involved in the story and the adults were a complete mess. Something tugs at your heart at a level that's sometimes quite difficult to describe. I think it goes through a lot of our really good work, like *The Man Who Planted Trees* [Puppet State, 2006].

BFW: Do you see children's theatre as having a wider purpose beyond the aesthetic, be it educational or social or political?

TR: The performing arts always have a wider purpose. Any piece of art must always have a wider purpose. What theatre does is both personal and social. It's about the individual and the community, in a way that no other art form is, or can ever aspire to be: film doesn't do it, visual art doesn't do it.

Performance, where people gather collectively to share, is a deeply political act. It's just weird, if you think about it, why it's taken us so long to make sure that every single member of society is allowed to have that experience.

I think a lot of that has got to do with validation. As adults, we

can validate. We put on a piece of work and people respond to it—people review it, people tell us how nice we are in the bar afterwards, but with children, that validation just gets less and less and less, in the terms that we want it to be validated as adults.

Suzanne Osten from Unga Klara used to say that the really difficult thing for people working in children's theatre is that you don't get the validation of adults a lot of the time. It's not about them. The younger audience respond and relate to it in a completely different way. Once it's finished, they really don't care who you are. They don't care about letting you know what their experience of it was, unless you're prompting them a lot of the time.

But to be able to have that discourse with any human being, I think is fundamental to what we as human beings do. Therefore, why would you exclude anyone from that process?

It's difficult in terms of people's egos. You're not getting that thing that sometimes we need. I'm not a performer, and my ego could not stand the fragile nature of it. I think the best ones are the ones that learn to deal with it in different ways, and get enough out of that experience. Artists have got to be enjoying being in that moment. In the end, it can't just be about the fact that they can get a grant for doing this. I think those people, in the end, go a bit by the wayside. It's the ones that get enough from that lack of normal response, or those signifiers that are not as obvious, who are able to carry on.

BFW: How do you think children's theatre is currently perceived by other artists?

TR: I think there are some elements which just ignore it. I

think the older or higher up the scale they get, the more they ignore it.

They'll connect with something they understand. People love *White* and part of the reason is that it's a classic play structure. People were taking folk on university courses from different parts of the world to see it, because it's a classic play structure in miniature.

I think certain artists say, 'I don't want to do it.' That's entirely valid. It's like expecting some director to think, 'I'm going to do a dance piece next.' If you're not passionate about doing that, if you're not passionate about engaging with a certain audience, you don't have to do it. But at the same time, that doesn't negate other people who are doing it.

Again, if I go back to 1994, I knew it [*Robinson Crusoe*] worked. I watched it work. I was part of that audience where that worked. So as a producer and a director of a festival, it's my job then to be open enough to keep on looking and seeing and reflecting and whenever I can, presenting it.

BFW: What do you think is the political attitude to children's theatre in Scotland? For example, *Starcatchers* have chosen to connect with Holyrood via Early Years rather than Culture. Do you think that's different from how it works in England?

TR: Yes, although I'd imagine England's catching up with that. Rhona [Matheson] from *Starcatchers* was smart about the way that she connected. Whereas I'd been banging on to Creative Scotland that this stuff's important and we need more of this stuff. We do a tenth of the work that similar populations are doing for their young people. I was banging on and banging on, and you see people going, 'Just fuck off.'

You've got good shows happening. What's your problem?' The problem was that *White's* off round the world most of the time. There are no children seeing this work here.

What Rhona did, and other organisations like Licketyspit, was to go straight to the government—'We're just going to have to start to pile in with the strategies they've got, because they have got strategies for very young children. And so what we're going to feed into that and start having conversations with them.' Smart as hell! Really, really, really smart.

Their battle, of course, all the time, is saying, 'It is about the art form. You can't just make it instrumental. It's not just going to fit a social work agenda or an education agenda. It's got to always be much broader than that. It's got to be potentially a lot messier than that, which is going to make you uncomfortable.'

But that's the job of art. It's not about teaching people the times-table; it's got to be what art is about, which is about being difficult. It's about being confrontational. It's about all those bloody things which actually sometimes don't make us very comfortable. That shouldn't be any different when it's happening for young children—why should it be different? There's no reason why they can't be having a really interesting time in all different ways for them, while we can actually be confronted with something as adults. That's an interesting dynamic to have, but it's not going to make you comfortable.

Going back, though, there's just not enough of it. It's not happening across the country in the way that it should be, and because you don't have that depth and breadth, it's difficult sometimes. If there's just a pocket here and a pocket there, there's nothing really happening. It's not looking at

the needs of our community. It's not looking at the needs of children. It's not looking at anybody's needs. There are approaches, like in Bologna, where nursery staff and teachers are really empowered by the theatre experience, where the parents who are then in contact with them are empowered by that kind of experience, to have real effects which then have social, educational, health impacts, and it's all part and parcel of them. It's really important, but we're in danger all the time, at levels where bureaucracies step in, of making it tokenistic and instrumental. It's always a danger.

BFW: What is your perception of the role of parents and teachers? Apart from their obvious role of taking their children to the theatre, what else do they do?

TR: I think they're generally part of the experience. You've always got to think about that for all ages—none of these children have chosen to be there. There's not a member of our audience at the Imagine festival who has chosen to come to that performance. Which is weird, if you think about it, from a theatre point-of-view. Instead of coming to see this lovely show, if they had any choice in the matter, they would go and do something else, I promise you! The very young have no power in that sense. They are just taken to sets of experiences.

My feeling all the time as a programmer is that when I enter the environment of a production, whatever it is, I want to be part of that audience: I don't particularly care that it's for ten and up, or for five and up, or for six months and up. I'm 48 now, so in a sense, none of these pieces are really for me, but because people like me are always going to be part of that audience, I feel I *should* be part of that audience.

Great pieces of theatre work on lots of different levels. You watch Peter Pan when you're seven and it's a swashbuckling

tale. You watch it in your 20s and you go, ‘God, that’s deeply weird and troubled—her dad becomes the baddie who wants her to become his mummy. That’s really, really, really weird.’

We don’t have to have the same experience, but we should have *some* experience from it. If I’m just a vessel to bring this human being to this show, and at the end, I’m still a vessel, and that had no connection with me whatsoever, I would question how well the piece is working. We go to it as a community, and whether that community is a nursery school with teachers, or whether it’s a family with parents (in whatever way you look at a family), it has to be there for us as a community, to work fully.

We had a dance-theatre piece at the festival a long time ago, called *Romanzo d’Infanzia* [Compagnia Abbondanza / Bertoni, 2001], with two Italian performers who played a brother and sister, and a mother and father. It’s beautiful the way it starts off: the parents were not so great, they weren’t so bad, they were just parents. Eventually the boy plays about with matches, sets fire to a chair, gets beaten—always just two people onstage—gets sent away to a school, writes to his sister who then rescues him, and at the end they run away. They just run away. And they send the parents a letter, which says, ‘We were going to come back, but actually, you were kind of rubbish, so we’re not going to bother. We’ll send you a postcard. We might decide to come back one day, but just to let you know...’ And the final scene is the two parents wondering where they got it wrong, and they’re reading this letter, and they just unfold it and unfold it and unfold it, and then this tiny little black-and-white film of two children just running down a beach finishes.

The director from a theatre company in Denmark came out and said, ‘That was as astonishing a piece of theatre as I have ever seen’. The Education Officer at the Scottish Arts Council came out and said, ‘You should lose your job for that.’

That is an irresponsible piece of programming.'

At its heart, it made parents and all adults really uncomfortable, because they lost power. The parents in the show were rubbish, they made mistakes, they got things wrong, they were just parents. It was lovely. You watched this beautiful piece of theatre and it stirred you up and made you feel bad about yourself, sometimes, but the sheer wonderfulness of it carried you through.

But also, the reaction of the kids: they just loved it. And the idea that they ran away in the end—why wouldn't they run away?

BFW: There are so many books with that conceit as a main driver of the story.

TR: But put it onstage, make it real, make it up close and personal, and people get really upset about it.

The adults always should be a part of it, but that doesn't mean that they should actually enjoy being a part of it all the time, in that straightforward way. It doesn't mean that it shouldn't be quite challenging for them. Again, that should apply to any kind of theatre, no matter how young that audience is.

BFW: In terms of adult reactions, I was recently reading a Scottish Arts Council report from the 2008 festival when you programmed *Glouglou* [Théâtre de Quartier, 2004]. The reviewer said that the breastfeeding scene was 'disconcerting'—in a show aimed at two- to five-year-olds. I also remember seeing *Goodbye Mister Muffin* [Teater Refleksion and De Røde Heste, 2006] and hearing a couple of teachers saying that death wasn't a topic suitable for

young children, who were all clamouring excitedly and enjoying it. Do you think there are any taboos in work for children, and should there be any?

TR: I've always believed that if you present a situation or provide a solution in which the audience is utterly powerless, then I really question what would be the point in doing that. But breastfeeding? Get over yourself. Death happens to us all, and children have to deal with it all the time. That's nothing to do with being powerless. That's being sad. That's all right.

So it comes back to that old performance saying: 'It isn't what you do, it's the way that you do it.' It's how much you respect the people you're wanting to communicate with. If you respect them, then there's an opportunity to have a dialogue. If you want to just tell them something, as when the Theatre in Education movement got into a place where they didn't want to have a discussion, then you're just making a point, and that's when I have a problem with it.

It comes back to that thing: why do we do theatre? Why do we create these exchanges? Because as the Russian director said, if I'm not confronted by something, if I don't take something new from it, then I'm not sure it's a piece of theatre. If it just affirms everything I am, then I don't know quite what the point of it is. If it's just making us feel cosy, then what's the point?

About the author

DR BEN FLETCHER-WATSON holds a PhD in drama from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and the University of St Andrews, supported by an ESRC CASE Studentship. His research interests include theatre for early years, relaxed performance and mobile / wearable technologies in theatre. He has published articles in journals including *Youth Theatre Journal* and *Research in Drama Education*. He serves on the Executive of the Theatre and Performance Research Association (TaPRA) and is an ASSITEJ Next Generation Artist.

Thresholds and permeability in performance

SYMPOSIUM ABSTRACTS:

BEN FLETCHER-WATSON & ADELINA ONG; ADAM RUSH; ROSIE FIELDING; KELLI ZEZULKA; KATHERINE GRAHAM; JONATHAN VENN; SILVIA DUMITRIU; YARON SHYLDKROT; ACATIA FINBOW; JENNIFER WILLETT; SARAH SLATOR; BRIDIE MOORE, LAURA MURPHY & MOE SHOJI; LAURA MILBURN; EVE SMITH; KIRSTY SURGEY

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Thresholds and permeability in performance

Saturday 6th February 2016

Humanities Research Institute, University of Sheffield

Funded by the Theatre and Performance Research Association (TaPRA)

Thresholds and permeability in performance was an event organised and hosted by PhD students Ben Fletcher-Watson (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland) and Adelina Ong (Royal Central School of Speech and Drama), with Cath Badham (University of Sheffield). Funded by the Theatre and Performance Research Association as a Postgraduate and Early Career Researcher Symposium, the day was intended to provide a collegiate, supportive atmosphere for postgraduate scholars to share and discuss their research. The event focused on the liminal spaces in between performance, with many areas of study represented, including live art, theatre, musicals, dance, livecasting and multimedia work. While theatre has often been presented in

binary terms—actor / audience, reality / illusion, national / regional, canon / avant-garde—it can be productive to consider the blurred boundaries within and beyond performance.

The following abstracts represent a glimpse into contemporary research from around the UK. This was structured around five panels focusing on ‘Between Nations and Nationhood’, ‘Uncovering the Intangible in Stage Lighting’, ‘Reality and Unreality in Contemporary Performance’, ‘Corporeal Documents’ and ‘Personal-Public-Performed’. Presenters spoke about a wide range of subjects, from female impersonation in Shakespeare (Rosie Fielding) to performance throughout the life of an artwork (Acatia Finbow), and the ‘private passions’ of collector of theatre ephemera Roy Waters (Eve Smith).

Additionally, one session offered a pair of performance lectures, firstly using emotion mapping as entry into characterisation, emotional connectivity and authenticity on stage (Sarah Slator) and then occupying merging performance and reflection by saying ‘no’ (Bridie Moore, Laura Murphy and Moe Shoji). We would like to thank all of our presenters, chairs and delegates for attending the symposium.

BEN FLETCHER-WATSON & ADELINA ONG

ADAM RUSH

No place like home: intertextual thresholds and the national mythmaking qualities of *The Wizard of Oz*

The twenty-first century musical is undoubtedly an intertextual landscape formed from fragments of past popular culture. From the recycling of mainstream films to

the nostalgic use of popular music, musical theatre is an art form littered with familiar and popular works that ultimately extend the cultural myths fashioned within certain texts beyond their original source. This paper focuses on the 2003 hit musical *Wicked* as a dominant site for the appropriation and continuation of the cultural myths perpetuated within the iconic American film *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), and the countless other intermedial texts which surround it. Though there are direct references to the 1939 film within the musical, this paper traces and analyses the broader thematic and conceptual similarities between such texts in the most part. In particular, it considers how the comforting conceptualisation of 'home' resonates throughout the Oz canon to argue that the dialectic relationship between any source and its adaptation is considerably more nuanced than the direct referencing of specific texts. In drawing upon Benedict Anderson's conception of an 'imagined community' and Will Wright's claim that myths are the 'social concepts and attitudes determined by the history and institutions of a society', this paper considers how the notion of 'finding' and 'returning' home is central to both the formation of Oz, as a fantasy universe, and a national ideology which resonates across America through and between texts.

ADAM RUSH is a PhD candidate and Associate Lecturer at the University of Lincoln. His doctoral research explores the intertextual character of the twenty-first century musical and its role within popular culture. Adam recently produced and co-directed *The Addams Family* at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and won the University of Lincoln's 'Three Minute Thesis (3MT)' competition in May 2015.

ROSIE FIELDING

Performing the onnagata in Japanese / British Shakespeare

There has been a growing trend in cross-cast, switched gender or single-sex productions of Shakespeare in recent years, a theme which has been particularly evident in Japan and Britain. In this paper I will investigate the methods of female impersonation used in Shakespearean performance in both countries, and consider how the attempt to 're-connect' with the early-modern tradition of the boy player has led British artists to draw on theatrical genres from other cultures, most notably the onnagata in kabuki.

A large number of contemporary British artists have cited the onnagata as an inspiration for their cross-cast performances, both in terms of a historical precedent and as a stylistic inspiration, and have therefore built upon the onnagata's techniques to create a hybrid acting style that interrogates the performance of gender and fixed ideas of nation. The integration of performance methods from other theatrical forms reveals much about the way early-modern theatre is represented and understood in contemporary performance, and is particularly revealing of the sense of a lost connection with tradition and the past within British theatre. I argue that the artists engaging in this form of collaborative and experimental theatre have been attempting to investigate the similarities and differences between Japanese and British theatres, and have aimed to produce new and hybrid performer and audience identities. Studies on Japanese Shakespeare have tended to only look at the influence British artists have had on Japan, and so it is crucial to also look at this relationship from the other direction.

ROSIE FIELDING is a PhD student at the Shakespeare Institute (University of Birmingham), researching hybridity in Japanese and

UK Shakespeare performances. Her BA was in Japanese Studies at the University of Manchester, and her research is funded by the Midlands3Cities Doctoral Training Partnership and the AHRC.

KELLI ZEZULKA

Communicating the intangible

In his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Wittgenstein maintains that ‘the limits of my language mean the limits of my world’. Does the same hold true for the worlds we create on stage? For example, the principal artistic medium of a lighting designer is an intangible substance, visible only when it interacts with an object in space. Furthermore, the principal work of a lighting designer can only be done in situ, that is, in the actual performance space. In communicating about their work, lighting designers, therefore, are dependent upon the use and comprehension of two distinct languages—the ‘artistic’ language of ideas and intentions and the ‘technical’ language of processes and logistics. This ability to ‘code-switch’, often intersententially, is an important skill of the lighting designer, but can also be problematic. My presentation will explore the challenges lighting designers in particular face in translating artistic intention to technical processes, and how they (and, by extension, directors, electricians and lighting programmers) develop the vocabulary needed to articulate and respond to these, using theories of translation and translanguaging.

KELLI ZEZULKA is a theatre and opera lighting designer and a PhD candidate at University of Leeds. She is an executive member of the Association of Lighting Designers (ALD) and editor of its bi-monthly magazine, *Focus*. Her research interests include language and lighting, lighting design education and creative collaboration.

KATHERINE GRAHAM

Thresholds of possibility: dancing at the borders of light

The artificially manipulated light of performance lies at an intersection of multiple temporal, perceptual, and dramaturgical processes. Light is at once the means of visual perception and a means of *manipulating* perception; it facilitates vision, yet can radically alter the appearance of a given object, environment, or person. The dynamic mediation of performance through light prompts, perhaps, a connection between the site and *sight* of 'crossing-over'. The notion of crossing-over implies a threshold, but also a transformation; a passage into, or a disclosure of, the unknown. In performances this threshold is made manifest, visually and spatially, through the ebb and flow of light.

This paper traces immaterial spatial boundaries of light as thresholds of possibility. Exploring liminal structures of light, I argue that Victor Turner's concept of liminality as a 'fertile nothingness' ('Are There Universals of Performance?': 12) is articulated visually through the appearance and disappearance of light-spaces in performance. In exploring the transformative potentiality of light I will focus on *Piece No. 43*, the latest work by the Russell Maliphant Company, which emerges from twenty years of collaboration between Maliphant and the lighting designer, Michael Hulls. Within this dance-work, space is continually reconfigured by light, as stark, sculptural boxes of light emerge, dissolve, and reappear elsewhere. This spatial instability, generated through the emergence of light-spaces, becomes a performance material in its own right, providing both prompt and possibility for the dancers' progression through space.

KATHERINE GRAHAM is a PhD candidate at the University of Leeds. Her research explores the agency of light in performance through

Heideggerian concepts of being and disclosure. She has also worked extensively as a lighting designer; most recently *No's Knife* (Lincoln Centre, New York) and *Blind Man's Song* (Jacksons Lane).

JONATHAN VENN

Unstable spaces, meanings of madness, and auditory hallucination: uncertain voices in *The Eradication of Schizophrenia in Western Lapland*

Madness is often attributed its own private space; following Anna Harpin, our cultural idioms place madness as, 'an inherently geographical encounter' (2014: 187). Spaces of madness are often conceptualized through hallucination, whereby the 'hallucinatory' is laid bare and represented, lived experience transposed into material space. This troubling space of madness exoticises the experience even as it renders it knowable. We need to shift away from spaces of representation, attempting to ascribe particular meanings and definitions to hallucination. This paper will look at how alternative engagements of hallucination can breach these thresholds of representation and redundant topologies of space.

The ambitious staging of Ridiculusmus' *The Eradication of Schizophrenia in Western Lapland* plays upon the notion of meaning making through hallucination. The stage (and the audience) is divided into two, by a long paper partition; two scenes play concurrently, one of a family drama, the other of a psychiatric session. Following the interval, the audience switch sides, and watch the alternative scene. I wish to suggest that, through the accumulation of staging, subject matter, and use of bodies, the play discovers a non-representational attitude to madness. The space, in its latticing of perspectives and delusions, evades easy answers, and encourages the toleration of uncertainty. This resistance to simplistic representations leads to a nuanced approach to question of family and madness, that situates

madness in a familial structure, without resorting to easy causations.

JONATHAN VENN previously completed a BA in Politics and Philosophy at Cardiff University and an MA in Writing for Stage and Broadcast Media at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. During his MA, he became interested in the representation of mental health, and how this informs modes of resistance and conceptions of agency. He is currently at Exeter University, in his second year of an AHRC-funded PhD in Drama, looking at how theatre can provide a site of resistance to hegemonic understandings of madness.

SILVIA DUMITRIU

Theatricality and sovereignty in Forced Entertainment's work

'The sovereign survivor in the postmodern culture is compelled to transgress' (Jenks, 2003, p.110). The freedom of the postdramatic performer is limited by his ability to subtract himself from the available discursive order, and constitute himself as a reflection of the system and ecologies generating notions of value; as such, postdramatic is contemporary with visionary discourses, which assert that 'man must reassume his position between dreams and events' (Artaud, 1971, p.71). A general economy dealing with the idea of scarce resources and the binary of consumption and production is reframed by Bataille's insistence that the system 'is a plenitude of energy, constantly recharged' (Jenks, 2003, p.102), where excess and waste constitute a dynamic of possibilities no longer limited by exchange value. A theatrical act that deals with the waste and surplus involves a reconsidering of life beyond utility, a questioning of the excess, luxury and creativity; the socio-historical process is reconsidered from the point of view of the sovereign subject as 'the possibility for a mingling of the most sacred and the unspeakable profane in their transgression of the restricted economy of utility' (Gallop,

1981, p.11). Considering the role of this concept of sovereignty as the basis for a breakdown of hierarchies and a rethinking of the limit, I will attempt to illuminate the rethinking of theatricalised experience in relation with excess. The rethinking of the theatrical limit, the exposing of the stage apparatus producing appearances and rearticulating surfaces, the desire for presence and the failed attempt to bring back the plenitude evoked by the traditional stage, constitute in Forced Entertainment's work a meditation on the politicised notion of failure. As 'sovereignty and power have been amalgamated from the beginning' (Habermas, 1984, p.95), failure is a radical strategy for undoing the political desiderates at work in the given discourse of society which privileges performativity, unveils its play and exposes the circumstantial elements it subtends.

Silvia Dumitriu is a PhD student at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama researching new theatrical structures in postdramatic theatre. She has extensive experience as a theatre director in Romania, and has written two plays, a Commedia dell'Arte for the twentieth century and a tragical farce. She has also translated more than 10 plays from French and English into Romanian.

YARON SHYLDKROT

Looking on darkness: theatre in the dark on the threshold of documentation

Documentation is a key element for both practice and research. Pictures, DVDs, audio recordings, sketches, personal and academic writing are only some of the tools for capturing and presenting artistic work. Although Peggy Phelan's famous assertion that performance 'cannot be saved, recorded, documented' (1993, p.46) provoked a rich discussion about the ontology and ephemerality of performance, documentation still proves itself to be a necessity in the current theatre climate. In response, many

artists and scholars still default to video recording and images. Yet, what happens when there is nothing to see?

In this presentation I examine the limitations and boundaries of documenting theatre in the dark. In a world that relies heavily on sight and where 'seeing is believing', theatre in the dark brings forward experiences of not-seeing / seeing-nothing that cannot be effectively visually captured. When plunging audiences into darkness a strong sense of uncertainty and disorientation arises that disrupts the perception of reality and entails different modes of engagement with the performance (and the world). It therefore requires other modes of documentation.

Informed by own work as a practitioner-researcher creating work in the dark, and examining different experiences created by other practitioners and companies (Sound&Fury, David Rosenberg, Lundahl & Seidl), I wish to explore the translation of the uncertain experience in and through the document. To do so, I will outline the disruption of perception accruing when being in total darkness, discuss the paradoxical need to share the un-photographed and explore alternative attempts for documenting theatre in the dark. Eventually I wish to utilise this apparent practical and methodological problem to rethink the different functions a document may fulfil or offer to other practices such as dance, immersive and participatory theatre as well as Practice-based PhDs.

YARON SHYLDKROT is a practitioner-researcher in the early stages of a Practice-as-Research PhD at the University of Surrey, exploring dramaturgies of uncertainty in pitch-black theatre. He holds an MA in Advanced Theatre Practice from the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. As a performance maker, he co-founded Fye and Foul, a theatre company exploring unique sonic experiences.

ACATIA FINBOW

**The Permeability of the performance document:
Rebecca Horn's *Body Sculptures* at Tate Modern**

The contemporary art museum exhibition is a complex site. Superficially a neutral space of contemplation, it is imbued with social, political, and historical contexts and is a place of interpretation, dissemination and encounter, where the permeability of objective truth can be exposed and manipulated. When live art, in its various forms, enters the space of exhibition, it crosses a threshold into the institution's influence, to be shaped by the acts of curation and display. It comes to occupy a space between the immaterial and the permanent, between the event and the object, and puts the museum visitor in a unique viewing position, which intimately merges experiences of the performance in the past, present, and future.

This paper will focus on the display of Rebecca Horn's performance-focused 'Body Sculptures' at Tate Modern, in the Making Traces collection display. Addressing the display of documents rather than live performance in the museum, this paper will explore not just the residue of the performance within the documents, but how the act of performance permeates the materials on display and allows the museum visitor to experience performance as part of the wider life of the artwork. It will argue that performance does not just happen in the transient moment of the live event, leaving the documents as mere traces or echoes, but exists in different ways throughout the extended life of the artwork, from initial creative inception to eventual museum display.

ACATIA FINBOW is a collaborative doctoral student at Tate and University of Exeter, where she is part of the AHRC-funded Performance at Tate research project. Her thesis focuses on the value of the performance document in the contemporary art museum, considering the variety of documents held in Tate's archive and collection.

JENNIFER WILLETT

Multimedia, livecasting and interactivity: where digital meets live

This paper examines the impact of interactive, digital and live documentation taking place in performance settings. As the relationship between the *recorded* and *live* becomes more complex through the proliferation and ubiquity, the question of what can and cannot practically be documented increases. For humans there can be lapses of memory when recalling a performance event and often the fragmented and multi-perspective nature of the performance is lost in the historical documentation, potentially resulting in *being* in the space becoming the primary method of documenting. The audience *members'* bodies can be understood as part of the archive and part of the process resulting in untrained body(ies) in the space which hold the capacity for a new form of documentation.

Within my practice I am working with an emerging ensemble to generate fragments of task-based performance. This closed laboratory environment is periodically opened through the use of participatory work demonstrations, livecasting and online platforms. Audience members are invited to interact with the laboratory, as well as, the digital and physical documentation, (re)activating and bringing the documentation back in to the now of the (re)enacted laboratory.

As I explore methods of bringing untrained body(ies) into the laboratory, both through a virtual and physical presence, I persist in exploring how training, research and documentation can consider the body(ies) as archive and the body(ies) of the archive. Therefore, this paper will consider the significance of bringing the documentation into the now of the laboratory.

JENNIFER WILLETT is a final year Practice-as-Research PhD student and Graduate teacher in the School of Arts and Media at the University of Salford. Her specialism is contemporary theatre with research interests that include the formation of emerging performance ensembles. More specifically, her work examines the relationship between the individual and the collective in emerging performance ensembles.

SARAH SLATOR

Emotion, the Individual, the Actor and the Character: is incitement of the performer's subjective physiological experience of emotion a vehicle for characterisation?

Enquiry into the division of consciousness when on stage has prompted personal consideration of the performer as a trinity formed of Self as Individual, Self as Actor and Self as Character. Whilst own concern has previously focused on development of Self as Actor and Self as Character, discourse in cognitive psychology, in particular Cognitive Dissonance, spurred interest in utilisation of Self as Individual as a short-cut into embodiment of role.

Through staging an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, self-awareness and use of subjective, topographical analysis of emotion-generated sensations in the body were explored as entry into characterisation and emotional connectivity and authenticity on stage. Use of the technique as a method of expediting process was also considered.

Inspired in response to existing psychological research by Nummenmaa et al. (2014) and developing consideration of the phenomenological performer, individuals incited emotion in response to external object stimuli and developed personal coloured emotion maps with self-allocated adjectives to describe the felt sensations. The methodology of this approach in rehearsal is discussed and contextualised within the context of past and current

psychological and theatrical practice.

Subjective evaluation by myself as practitioner and the performers with whom I worked, identifies further potential for use of emotion mapping and suggests its effectiveness as a 'safe' method for repeatable generation of emotional connectivity through self-stimulation of the physiological responses identified.

SARAH SLATOR is an emerging theatre director and researcher interested in how treatment of the holistic performer might offer greater authenticity in acting. Having recently completing Masters study at the Guildford School of Acting, she is now working professionally within the theatre industry.

BRIDIE MOORE, LAURA MURPHY & MOE SHOJI

Between thinking and making, yes and no

In 2008 Terry O'Connor started work on *Say the word*, an exploration into forms and agreements at the edge of collaboration. The project developed into an AHRC Fellowship at Roehampton University (2009-15) and continues as a body of practice outside her work with Forced Entertainment. Words sent by fifteen different artists became starting points for essays into extreme or marginal forms for collaborative exchange. These 'starter words' began to resemble incomplete orders, something like instructions, something like invitations, nothing like these as well. The practice has become an unfinished and unfinishable game. The project attempts to think about the permeable borders between conversation and creative work, about areas of command and performance within theatre collaboration. It follows Brian Eno's suggestion of 'seed' art, unfinished chains of thought, deliberately invoking contestable zones of authorship, ownership and participation through playful iterative outcomes.

Recent work on the word 'no', (sent by artist Sophie Calle), begun at the University of Sheffield with Terry O'Connor and PhD students Moe Shoji, Laura Murphy and Bridie Moore, will be cited and performed in a fifteen minute performative lecture, occupying a territory between performance and reflection.

Bridie Moore: Following Kathleen Woodward (1991), to reject our mirror image as we age produces a disconnection between the visible manifestation and the subjective experience of identity.

Laura Murphy: addressing the colonization of the female body in western society, through exploration and reflection of experiences living, as a woman, in the world at present.

Moe Shoji: Exploring culturally specific implications in naysaying, between projected and self-identified identity.

BRIDIE MOORE is a PhD candidate at the University of Sheffield researching performances of age and ageing through practice. She focuses on questions of performativity, exploring notions of age as culturally constructed. In 2012 she formed Passages Theatre, a group of performers over the age of 50, who have produced two shows: *The Mirror Stage* and *A Blueprint for Ageing*.

LAURA MURPHY is a performance artist, aerialist, theatre maker and doctoral researcher at the University of Sheffield. Her research investigates aerial performance as socially critical, and the relationship between circus and live art. Her recent work *My Brain is a Radio* investigated anxiety disorder, and utilized aerial rope and ground based improvisation.

MOE SHOJI is a PhD candidate in Theatre and Performance Studies at the University of Sheffield. Her research topic is 'Paratext in Contemporary Theatre Practice', in which she argues that traditionally

marginal aspects of theatrical performance (i.e. paratexts) are becoming increasingly important in meaning-making processes in contemporary theatre performance.

LAURA MILBURN

Noël Coward: on and off stage

'I wonder why it is that my plays are such traps for directors, as my lyrics are for singers. Nobody seems capable of leaving well enough alone and allowing the words to take care of themselves. Neither my lyrics nor my dialogue need decoration; all they do require are clarity, diction and intention and the minimum of gesture and business.' Following his advice, by the 1930s, Coward was an icon—sophisticated and adored by high society; a man at the peak of his career. Coward's comic play *Present Laughter* is considered to be semi-autobiographical, with Coward playing Garry Essendine—a successful, self-obsessed actor. He claimed he wrote the play with the 'sensible object of providing me with a bravura part'; it being 'a potent mix of self-exposure and self-celebration.' Looking at Coward's multi-faceted career, one has the opportunity to appreciate the diversity of it.

LAURA MILBURN is an MMus candidate at the University of Sheffield. She is researching several of Noël Coward's musicals under the supervision of Dr Dominic McHugh.

EVE SMITH

Roy Waters and the archival tourist: bringing the private passions of the theatre collector to the threshold of public communication

The private collection of theatrical ephemera is replete with personal stories, memories, and traces of both the past theatrical event and the life of the individual who gathered and preserved the collected materials. When the private collection crosses over into the public archive, these private

stories reach the threshold of public communication, some for the very first time. As the first researcher to work on the private theatre collection of Roy Waters in its new home in the college archives of Royal Holloway, University of London, this paper introduces the private passions of a hitherto uninterrogated collector of theatrical ephemera to a public audience. In the making public of these personal histories, the archival researcher is, to coin Laura Engel's evocative term, an 'archival tourist', navigating their way through the archive; an archive in which antithetical notions of public and private, past and present, and the living and the dead degenerate and disintegrate, slip and seep. In the context of the private theatre collection and the public theatre archive the border or boundary that separates and defines the two spaces becomes diaphanous, permeable and unstable. Arlette Farge suggests that: 'We cannot bring back to life those whom we find cast ashore in the archives. But this is not a reason to make them suffer a second death.' In excavating the life of the theatre collector, the archival tourist is a living body through which private passions and personal and theatrical histories can be revived, publicised, and performed, told and re-told.

EVE SMITH holds a CDA with the Victoria and Albert Museum and Royal Holloway, University of London. Her research investigates the private passions of the collector of theatrical ephemera and examines approaches to the private theatre collection in the context of the public archive.

KIRSTY SURGEY

Washing your dirty linen in public: The ethics of placing personal history on a public stage

Using personal history in a public performance alters the story. The story that was once private is now public. It becomes something different. Family history can give an individual a sense of belonging and a way to engage with a wider historical narrative. Yet this connection is necessarily

shared. It is shared with other family members, with the subject of the story, as well as with other players in the narrative. This brings into question the ownership of the story and if this is uncertain then the ethical responsibility of the performance maker is complicated. Moreover, if the stories and histories that an individual wishes to share are unpleasant or reveal skeletons that other family members wish to remain hidden, does the performance maker have a greater responsibility to protect the reputation of the individual or to telling the truth as it is known? In Carran Waterfield's solo piece *The House*, her exploration of performance for the welfare state challenges the audience's understanding of what is private, personal or public. Waterfield uses theatre as a device to expose her history by shifting it into the public arena. In this paper, I will consider the ethical questions that arise when moving stories across this boundary from private to public.

KIRSTY SURGEY is a WRoCAH-funded practice-based PhD student at the University of Sheffield. Her research investigates how performance can be used to explore the relationship between public and private history. She has previously presented papers at conferences at Royal Holloway University of London and the University of Kent.

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The Theatre and Performance Research Association was founded in 2005. <http://www.tapra.org>

Book review: *Studying musical theatre: theory and practice*, by Millie Taylor and Dominic Symonds

LUCY COATMAN

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***Studying musical theatre: theory and practice*, by Millie Taylor and Dominic Symonds. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014; ISBN: 9781137270948 (£19.99)**

Studying musical theatre: theory and practice aims to look at musical theatre from critical theory perspectives, and it does so extremely successfully. Musical theatre is a genre often dismissed for not being ‘serious’ enough, even by those within the music and theatre worlds. This book critiques this popular conception. In fact, the approach which Taylor and Symonds take presents an often unthought-of angle to look at musical theatre. Many often believe that musical theatre is a light form of escapism which never approaches important cultural topics, despite the existence of politically charged musicals with interests in social justice, such as *RENT*. Even comedic musicals such as *The Book of Mormon* are easily able to dispel this kind of belief. If one is not able to purchase a ticket for an expensive West End show, one merely has to read this book to dismiss such a stereotype.

Published 10 years after Ian Bradley’s *You’ve got to have a dream* (2004), this book discusses this theatrical genre from a similar point of view, but with a wider scope of topics. Thus, *Studying musical theatre* is accessible both to musical theatre fans and to those who are interested to see how theories such as feminism can be applied to this popular, yet

often misunderstood, cultural form.

Beginning with narrative theory, Taylor and Symonds allow the reader to explore different tropes, such as the all-important 'I Want' song trope, or the character stereotypes attached to different vocal ranges. This provides grounding for the rest of the theories discussed in the text. From narrative theory it covers orientalism, capitalism, sexuality and politics, with one musical as evidence for each topic. Overall, this makes for an easier read, as the text does not jump around between lots of different musicals in regards to one theory. Further, information boxes with the plot and history of the musical being discussed make the text more accessible to people who do not know the production, and provides a useful contextual background. There are additional information boxes providing clear and concise explanations of the theories being discussed. Additionally, there are more boxes clarifying musical terms such as cadences or leitmotif, making the book accessible to those without formal musical training. It is these aspects which make *Studying musical theatre* so successful in engaging a wide audience.

What is particularly interesting is the exploration of the impact cultural context has on a production. The use of *Cabaret* as an example is particularly effective in that despite it addressing a specific time in history, it is still able to speak to our prejudices today. Additionally, the historicity of musicals such as *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Moulin Rouge* juxtaposed against contemporary culture is particularly interesting. This is still seen in musical theatre today, such as in the 2015 production of *Mozart! das Musical*, which contrasts the story of an eighteenth-century man with contemporary musical sounds and costumes. It perhaps would have been significant to note how different productions of the same musical actually change approaches to characters and songs (such as the recent

Broadway production of *Gigi*, which closed the age gap between the title character and Gaston, making it more palatable to a twenty-first century audience).

The importance of history as a whole is well articulated in this book, bringing to light topics such as hysteria and its relation to *La Traviata*, the development of musical theatre through forms and tropes, and its emergence from opera and operetta. Some readers may have found a specific section on the development of the forms useful; they come across easily to the reader, nonetheless.

It is not just theories which are addressed. There is a particularly interesting discussion on vocal performance, and the importance of the integration of vocals, emotion, and the score itself. Many musicals today have moved away from the legit voice sound to a belt vocal technique, providing a high intensity impact on the listener. In approaching this side of musical theatre, Taylor and Symonds are able to provide a well-rounded overview of the genre.

Furthermore, illustrations are also effectively used, with photos of various productions, set designs and staves. These all help to further bring the text to life, and allow the reader to further use their imagination when engaging with the text.

Studying musical theatre aims to 'explore the musical stage from a broad range of theoretical perspectives', and the book achieves exactly this, dismissing the light-hearted and fluffy stereotypes which the genre is usually given. This book's contribution to the theories addressed by the genre is therefore extremely valuable.

About the review author

LUCY COATMAN is a student of Theology and vocal scholar of the University of St. Andrews. Her passion and research interest is German musical theatre, and her dissertation shall focus on theological themes in Kunze and Levay's *Elisabeth das Musical*. In addition to this, Lucy has performed in leading roles in musicals and operetta such as *The Sound of Music*, *Hairspray* and *Iolanthe* as well as most recently performing with Austrian musical star Oliver Arno in Vienna.

Book review: *The actor training reader*, edited by Mark Evans

ALI DE SOUZA

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The actor training reader, edited by Mark Evans. London: Routledge, 2015; ISBN: 9780415824026 (£28.99)

There is a lot written about the art of acting. Every year a slew of new publications endeavour to untangle the esoteric intricacies of what makes great acting, and students and teachers of acting pore over these for the definitive answer to this most elusive enigma. In pondering this question we must consider how we train the actor. Why do we need to train actors? Is there an end point to training? How do you marry the mind and the body, and how do you, the actor, transform from actor-self to character-self? What is technique? How do you move from a correct, but bloodless performance to an inspired one? Is there such a thing as talent and can it be taught? Do we educate actors or train them, or both? In *The actor training reader*, Mark Evans has cleverly compiled a wide range of key texts from an eclectic group of authors who all, in their own ways, interrogate these conundrums and explore the practices involved in training the actor.

The book is a self-confessed companion volume to Alison Hodge's highly acclaimed collection *Actor training* (2010), and it builds on that exploration both in its admirable structure and in the breadth of practitioners that are included. There are 34 practitioners ranging from Antonin Artaud (d. 1948) to Ruth Zaporah (b. 1936); these include the well-known, such as Konstantin Stanislavsky and Sanford

Meisner, and newer theorists such as Anne Bogart and Tina Landau, and, along with the likes of Kirstin Linklater, Jacques Lecoq and Yoshi Oida they contribute to 47 chapters. It is the structure of this book that makes this such a useful and provocative reader however. Rather than ordering the extracts chronologically or according to skill sets for example, Evans commissioned four contemporary practitioners of actor training to introduce broad, stimulating topics by way of an essay.

After an inspiring prologue by Jacques Copeau and Stanislavsky, Professor of Theatre at Rutgers University Ian Watson opens the section on 'Purpose', that is, why we need to train actors, by exploring conflicts inherent in the expansive and the specialised in training. He also deliberates the five components of the 'full training cycle' the last of which—the Training of Others—corroborates what I have always personally considered; that my job as a trainer of actors is in itself a form of training.

In the next section, Jonathan Pitches, Professor of Theatre at the University of Leeds' School of Performance and Cultural Industries gives insight into the complex world of technique and Cartesian dualism before handing the subject over to others such as Jerzy Grotowski and Yevgeny Vakhtangov. Bella Merlin, Professor of Acting and author of many invaluable books such as *The complete Stanislavsky toolkit* (2007), introduces the third section, which covers the complexities of creating a character. In her essay, she combs selected passages by experts such as Stella Adler and Bertolt Brecht to establish the significance of their thoughts in light of today's actor-in-training. The final section, 'Presence', is presented by Dick McCaw, co-founder of the Actors Touring Company in 1978 and senior lecturer at Royal Holloway, University of London. McCaw considers extracts by practitioners such as Peter Brook, Philippe Gaulier and Joan Littlewood, as he tries to unpick what

makes one actor more or less watchable than another, and as a result he explores the concepts of play, physicality and communion. The book concludes with an astute Epilogue by Oida, and an invitation by Evans to ‘take it with you into class’, a request I will be honouring .

Each commissioned essay provides an arc that encompasses the diverse debates offered by the selected practitioners. Moreover, they conclude with a series of four or five provocations, questions designed to prompt you, the reader, into contemplating the value of these diverse insights to the challenges faced by the twenty-first-century actor-in-training. For example, Watson asks, ‘is the ideal technique strictly prescriptive, or is it rather a personal variation of one or more techniques that is individual for each actor?’ McCaw states that he ‘once saw Phelim McDermot explore what Michael Chekhov calls “Radiation”—he became more present before our eyes. How does he do this?’ To this end the book pitches the writings of our most influential authorities on theatre and acting into the minds of anyone involved or interested in contemporary actor training. This adds to the *reader’s* significance and makes it more than a collection of noteworthy theories and belief-systems .

Each carefully chosen extract concludes with a short biography of the contributor, links to practitioners who follow a similar philosophy, and suggested further reading, all of which add to the book’s appeal as a significant reference source material. Most extracts are in the practitioners own words but a few, like Littlewood, who wrote very little about her practice, are composed from the experiences of people she worked with.

As a trainer of actors I found *The actor training reader* stimulating, comprehensive and insightful. Like actor-training itself it is frustrating and inspirational,

contradictory and reassuring. It is an excellent way to reconnect with the essence of established thought on actor training, and to whet the appetite to investigate those emergent practitioners about whom one might wish to know more. It will appeal to actors-in-training and to trainers of actors, and to directors, actors, teachers and researchers. The *reader* may not supply the conclusive answer to the best way to train the actor, but it certainly asks many valuable questions and gives ample food for thought.

About the review author

ALI DE SOUZA gained an MA in Psychology at the University of Dundee and trained as an actor at Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. He also gained an MFA in Screen Practice and Directing at Queen Margaret University. Ali has worked extensively as an actor and director in theatre and film for over twenty-five years with many companies including theatre babel, Brunton Theatre, Byre Theatre, Dundee Rep, Manchester Library, Perth Rep, TAG, Traverse and Visible Fictions. He has a particular passion for Shakespeare, comedy, the Greeks, and acting for screen and radio. He taught acting and directing at QMU for six years, where he was Programme Leader for the BA Acting and Performance course. He joined the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in 2009.

Book review: *Conducting for a new era*, by Edwin Roxburgh

MICHAEL DOWNES

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***Conducting for a new era*, by Edwin Roxburgh. Woodbridge: The
Boydell Press, 2014; ISBN: 9781843838029 (£25.00)**

It is rather poignant to read this book in the days following the death of Pierre Boulez, since he emerges from its pages as doubly crucial to the new concept of conducting that Edwin Roxburgh so meticulously dissects. While the rhythmic complexity and delicate timbral balance of Boulez's work as a composer (including the seminal *Le Marteau sans maître*, extracts from which feature on the DVD that accompanies the book) demanded new levels of precision and clarity in their direction, the distinctive style that he developed as a conductor was undoubtedly the biggest influence on the gestural vocabulary of his fellow interpreters of the postwar avant-garde canon—Messiaen, Stockhausen, Berio, Birtwistle—on which Roxburgh focuses. Boulez's trademark abandonment of the baton—a choice that Roxburgh defends as essential for much modern repertoire, notwithstanding the baton's usefulness for acquiring basic conducting technique—is the visual signifier of an approach that changed the art of conducting as fundamentally as Berlioz and Wagner had a century earlier. Moreover, the backwards expansion of Boulez's repertoire into the nineteenth century in later life exemplifies another of the themes that runs through this book, the mutually informative relationship between contemporary and earlier music: Roxburgh cites examples from Rossini and Tchaikovsky as well as more expected figures and (perhaps

surprisingly in a study necessarily so concerned with rhythmic precision) quotes Mahler's *aperçu* that a metronome mark may be valid only for the first bar.

The starting point of Roxburgh's investigation, however, is not Boulez but Stravinsky, in particular *The Rite of Spring*. The irregular metres and constantly changing time signatures of that controversial masterpiece made entirely new demands on conductors: unlike in more conventional repertoire, where vagueness of gesture does not necessarily endanger the integrity of the music, here a single error can potentially cause the performance to collapse. The need for careful planning of beating patterns and for an exact and consistent approach to the angle and height of the beats is emphasised by Roxburgh as part of a thorough consideration of rhythm. Not surprisingly, this is the most extensive section of the first part of the book, which is devoted to the technical demands of the contemporary repertoire, but other topics are not neglected: there are interesting accounts, for example, of the approaches needed for music that contains aleatoric elements, that combines live performance with tape or 'live' electronics, that requires the conductor to follow a click-track, or that invites instrumentalists to use unconventional or 'extended' techniques. All these discussions are informed by Roxburgh's own practical experience as a conductor, with helpful advice on personal preparation, marking up scores and rehearsal planning as well as analysis of the new approaches to gesture that contemporary music often requires the conductor to evolve. The range of music that is referenced (and generously illustrated with music examples) is a particular strength of this part of the book, with insightful accounts of very recent music by composers such as Thomas Adès, Julian Anderson and Tristan Murail as well as iconic works by Ligeti, Lutosławski and Carter.

The second part of the book is devoted to insights drawn

from a series of interviews with Roxburgh's professional colleagues. Particularly illuminating comments include those from the conductor Lionel Friend, the singer Jane Manning and the violinist Nona Liddell, though it is slightly frustrating that these are not developed into longer discussions, an approach that the arrangement of the section into topics precludes. The final section consists of a series of case studies of ensemble works chosen in part because they embody particular technical or aesthetic issues with which a conductor often has to grapple: the balance between an improvisatory approach and strict control in *Le Marteau sans maître*; the role of a conductor in a piece originally intended to be performed without one and the coordination of vertical relationships between apparently independent entries in Stockhausen's *Zeitmaße*; the task of beating at an extremely fast tempo (crotchet = 252!), the understanding of instrumental colour and the extent to which the music's external referents should be taken into account in performance in Messiaen's *Couleurs de la cité céleste*. The last question is also relevant in *Silbury Air*, which is inspired by a mysterious prehistoric mound in Wiltshire, but a much greater concern is Birtwistle's 'pulse labyrinth', the intricate grid through which he seeks to achieve precise control of the relationships between the music's different tempi. So demanding was this for the conductor that Birtwistle created a revised version in 2003, twenty-four years after the original, in which more conventional notation was used; Roxburgh's discussion includes an interesting comparison between the two versions and argues the importance for the conductor of close study of the first, even though only the revision is now permitted to be performed.

The case studies are extremely detailed and require a score for full comprehension: the number of musicians who will have the opportunity to conduct these works and thus to draw full benefit from Roxburgh's discussions is very small, but a much greater number will be able to gain from

applying his rigour in other repertoire. Such is the meticulousness with which Roxburgh clearly prepares scores that it is slightly surprising to find errors of both fact (it is Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony and not the Fifth as stated here that contains a 5/4 movement; Adès's Shakespearean opera is not *A Midsummer Night's Dream* but *The Tempest*) and spelling ('principle' is used when 'principal' is meant, 'dependant' is substituted for 'dependent') in his book. Despite these minor cavils, however, *Conducting for a new era* makes a significant contribution to the understanding both of the art of conducting and of contemporary music. Although some of the discussion is perhaps unavoidably heavy-going, Roxburgh's outstanding knowledge of and clear commitment to the music of his contemporaries and the thoughtful integrity of his musicianship are ultimately inspiring.

About the review author

MICHAEL DOWNES is Director of Music at the University of St Andrews and Artistic Director of the Byre Theatre. He is a reviewer for the *Times Literary Supplement* and has lectured on music and opera for organisations including the Royal Opera House and Glyndebourne. He conducts the St Andrews Chamber Orchestra, which brings together the best players from the University community: recent performances have included Beethoven's final three symphonies and the world premiere of Sally Beamish's *North Sea Edge*, commissioned to mark the University's 600th anniversary. In 2009 he founded Byre Opera, whom he has subsequently conducted in annual productions including Britten's *Rape of Lucretia* and *Albert Herring*, Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* and Handel's *Acis and Galatea*. He also conducts the town-gown St Andrews Chorus, now the largest choral society in Scotland with over 175 singers. He was one of the founding artistic directors, with Sonia Stevenson, of St Andrews Voices, a new festival of vocal music which was launched in October 2012.

Book review: *Theatre for youth third space: performance, democracy, and community cultural development*, by Stephani Etheridge Woodson

BEN FLETCHER-WATSON

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Theatre for youth third space: performance, democracy, and community cultural development, by Stephani Etheridge Woodson. Bristol: Intellect, 2015; ISBN: 9781783205318 (£35.00)

Throughout the twentieth century, theatre for young audiences (TYA) was often presented as the manifestation of a series of parallel binaries—audiences versus learners, entertainment versus education, aesthetics versus instrumentalism, fairytales versus ‘issues’. On the one hand, children and young people were invited to enjoy colourful, exciting but familiar stories that aimed to entertain and captivate, presented down at their level; on the other, theatre’s ability to explore multiple meanings and realities was harnessed as a vehicle for pedagogic delivery, raising awareness of pertinent issues and giving children an opportunity to consider other ways of being, often through participation. Discrete practices developed on both sides of the divide, from puppet theatres in Eastern Europe to the Theatre in Education movement in the UK. However, even today it remains rare for TYA practitioners to work within alternative modalities, such as children as co-creators of theatre, or even creative artists in their own right. Theatre by, with and for the young tends to retain or even entrench hierarchical power structures that elevate adults above children: as teachers, leaders or mentors. *Theatre for youth third space* is Stephani Etheridge Woodson’s formidable

riposte to this attitude.

'Third space' is the term Etheridge Woodson adopts to describe a model of children and young people as artists, citizens and civic actors. While UK readers may shrink from the faintly Blairite resonances of 'third space', it provides a useful break with the established binaries within TYA, a constant reminder of the sheer novelty of democratic processes for young people in the arts. Third space, in this conception, is neither applied theatre nor teaching artistry, but instead a non-hierarchical theatrical collaboration between children and adults seeking mutual transformation. For Etheridge Woodson, 'ensemble theatre and performance uniquely engage the web of relations and therefore the space of being human' (p.181). Throughout the text, the author also reminds us that third space is concerned with the community rather than the individual, and seeks societal change rather than individual growth. This shift adds strength to her argument, as she avoids woolly claims of the intrinsic benefits of TYA (for mental health, for example) in favour of a nuanced understanding of the ideological constructs that can complicate our engagement with culture, especially relating to the young.

The text is divided into three sections, moving from a philosophical overview to practical applications of Etheridge Woodson's techniques. The first chapter, 'Field building, or, the twenty principles of TFY third space', is a densely allusive tapestry of theory from performance studies, political science, civil rights, applied theatre and economics, among others. The usual touchstones of contemporary humanities research are well-represented—Habermas, de Certeau, Bourdieu, Csikszentmihalyi—but the author also brings in lesser-known authors. Perhaps most fascinatingly, she develops the work of social activist Arlene Goldbard to embed her concept of 'community cultural development' within the active, participatory and

emancipatory practices of TFY third space.

Chapter 2 wrestles with the central issue of the ethics of facilitation: how can an adult leader of a group of children redirect their own status, knowledge, skill and experience to guarantee healthy and democratic working? Hannah Arendt and Raymond Williams provide context to Etheridge Woodson's discussions of power, hegemony and diversity, but the book's unique contribution emerges when she begins to outline the specific practices—from icebreaker games to Anne Bogart's 'Viewpoints'—that she uses to build community within groups of young people. Recent texts such as *The reflexive teaching artist* (Dawson and Kelin, 2014) and *Theatre and learning* (Babayants and Fitzsimmons Frey, 2015) have presented testimonies from socially-engaged artists about the risks inherent within artistic/educational practice, from failing to respond to the group's specific needs to withdrawing support at the wrong moment, but these confessions are rarely accompanied by concrete proposals for solving such issues. Here, a variety of approaches are presented in detail, as well as shown in combination to form a programme of work.

The final section moves further in this direction to provide 'practical advice on how to plan residencies, approach institutional partners, create trajectories towards true collaboration, and build budgets' (p.163). At this point, the text takes for granted the reader's familiarity with the K-12 curriculum in the United States, the vagaries of US arts funding and a commitment to rigorous data collection which may not reflect the realities of working with children outside the USA. For example, several pages are given over to a well-planned template for a project proposal, undoubtedly useful for American artists wishing to apply to federal or state bodies, but bearing only a limited resemblance to Arts Council England, Creative Scotland or Creative Europe models of application.

Nonetheless, the plethora of activities, questionnaires and strategies in these pages is remarkable, and at least some of them will be of value to practitioners from many backgrounds. In particular, the section addressing evaluation is concise but invaluable in its synthesis of current research into the analysis and documentation of arts experiences. Rightly, Etheridge Woodson notes that, 'belief and enthusiasm in our work is not enough' (p.232); if TYA is to develop into a truly potent tool for community engagement and social change, the adoption of protocols such as these will be key.

This volume will be of interest to practitioners, scholars and socially-engaged artists from around the world, especially in its detailed mapping of a theoretical foundation for socially engaged theatre practice with young people that 'labors to make a difference' (p.14). The book is not straightforwardly accessible, particularly in the first chapter, but even here repays close reading. For me, Etheridge Woodson's bold decision to site children as artists with sophisticated creative abilities, rather than proto-creatives or artists-in-training, is a powerful statement in itself, but the book moves beyond preaching to the converted to provide a robust, measured and stimulating description of contemporary practice pushing the boundaries of TYA.

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About the review author

DR BEN FLETCHER-WATSON holds a PhD in drama from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and the University of St Andrews, supported by an ESRC CASE Studentship. His research interests include theatre for early years, relaxed performance and mobile / wearable technologies in theatre. He has published articles in journals including *Youth Theatre Journal* and *Research in Drama Education*. He serves on the Executive of the Theatre and Performance Research Association (TaPRA) and is an ASSITEJ Next Generation Artist.

Book review: *Moving sites: investigating site-specific dance performance*, edited by Victoria Hunter

BETHANY WHITESIDE

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***Moving sites: investigating site-specific dance performance*, edited by Victoria Hunter. Abingdon: Routledge, 2015; ISBN 9780415713252 (£32.99)**

In the Introduction of *Moving sites: investigating site-specific dance performance*, editor Victoria Hunter, in the context of this exciting and long-awaited anthology, defines the genre as

...a well-established contemporary dance form possessing a discernable set of characteristics, practices and conventions. The genre is also considered as a distinct form of dance practice that, through its engagement with everyday rural and urban environments presents opportunities to explore space, place and environment through corporeal means (p.2).

This broad approach is reflected in the varying approaches and directions taken by the 23 authors (some in collaboration) over 25 chapters and curated into a hefty publication. The book is split into five sections (each comprised of five chapters), labelled as follows:

- Approaching the site: experiencing space and place

- Experiencing site: locating the experience
- Engaging with the built environment and urban practice
- Environmental and rural practice
- Sharing the site: community, impact and affect

To demonstrate the breadth and depth of the collection, across four of the five sections above (the first three and the latter one), foci of chapters include Derek McCormack's concern with air and atmosphere and moving bodies and Camilla Damkjaer's theorising of performing 'Homemade Circus' in academic environments. Further examples include Melanie Kloetzel's reflection of the performance work *The Sanitisers* (2011) in the Calgary Skywalk System in the context of spectator reception, and Cheryl Stock's recounting of the artistic collaborative processes involved in the performance of *Naik Naik* (2013) in Melaka, Malaysia. One of the strongest sections of the book with a focus that resonates as particularly topical is that entitled 'Environmental and rural practice' concerned broadly with 'environmental dance' (Sarco-Thomas, p.354). Chapters here include Malaika Sarco-Thomas's concern with 'intersubjective understandings and kinaesthetic imaginings' (p.343) framed by the ecologies of Félix Guattari in inspiring empathy with the environment and Nigel Stewart's application of epistemes to understanding corporeal responses to participating in site-specific dance. Both chapters and the section as a whole highlight the rapidly changing and ever evolving nature of site-specific dance in reflecting greater ecological concerns.

Hunter stresses the value in creating

space for a range of 'voices' to appear in a number of ways from the subjective and (often) autobiographical registers of artist-practitioners for whom experiences of body-site and self are

interwoven to the analytical and objective chapters presented by academics and theoreticians (p.4).

This is particularly important when noting the propensity for the same key theorists (including performance theorists Valerie Briginshaw and Valerie Preston-Dunlop and philosophers [broadly speaking] Henri Lefebvre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, Michel de Certeau) to be drawn upon and cited throughout the text. Although this repetition serves to highlight (to the student reader in particular) those landmark sources and theories that have influenced the development of site-specific dance scholarship, it also reveals a need to continue pushing the boundaries of exploration. This body of work exemplifies the latter action. Chapters that contribute original intradisciplinary theories and concepts include Hunter's 'model of influence', framing the relationship between the creative and choreographic process and the location of performance, and Sandra Reeve's proposal of 'ecological movement dynamics' to site-specific dance performance. Site-specific dance performance may have grown from—and continue to be closely entwined with—interdisciplinarity but this anthology illustrates a cementing of intradisciplinary identity through a formalist approach as entwining scholarship and practice grow. As Hunter highlights, although 'there is evidence of artistic research and development being conducted by practitioners... the knowledge often remains tacit and contained within the field of professional practice' (p.3). The interweaving of chapters written by academics and practitioners is particularly effective and a number of chapters are co-authored by authors adopting differing roles or sharing both roles (for example, Fiona Wilkie's chapter 'Sited conversation' is informed by conversations with practitioners Carolyn Deby and Stephen Hodge of companies sirencrossing and Wrights & Sites respectively).

However, although a key aim of the book is to 'consider how particular theoretical ideas might contribute to the development of a broader, more fluid understanding of site-specific dance performance' (p.12), some chapters' connections to site-specific dance are rather tenuous. In particular, Jen Southern and Chris Speed's chapter on apps, while interesting, would appear better placed in an anthology that looked more broadly at the concept of human movement, rather than one that featured the term 'dance'. Southern and Speed consider how the Combo Net app, originally devised for an arts context, was used by one family 'to enhance their sense of connectedness whilst at a distance, mediating absences and presences in a highly mobile familial group' (p.131). Certainly attention is paid to 'movement patterns' and temporal presence, but greater attention is centered on social interaction from afar through digital means. A second example of a chapter that does not 'fit' particularly well is Jean Johnson-Jones's account of the Nama Stap Dance performed by the Nama in Namaqualand, situated in north-west South Africa. While of valued significance from an anthropological perspective, it is difficult to see how this chapter overtly links to a focus on the site-specific.

Unsurprisingly, with such a rich and diverse collection of chapters, some works will prove to be of more significance than others to the individual reader. However, with the balance of histories and trajectories presented (most notably Hunter's tracing of the development of site-specific dance performance in the Introduction), the drawing upon of key architectural, dance, ecological, philosophical and spatial theorists, and the sheer range of foci adopted by individual authors, this is a work that overall has to appeal to both student and scholar. *Moving sites: investigating site-specific dance performance* is a weighty tome of an anthology that the genre has been deservedly waiting for, and one that should prove a pivotal source in continued debates and discussions revolving around the performance

of performance outwith 'traditional' places and spaces.

About the review author

BETHANY WHITESIDE is completing an ESRC CASE Studentship, supported by Capacity Building Cluster 'Capitalising on Creativity' grant NRES 187-24-001 in the sociology of participatory dance. In 2014, she was a Visiting Research Scholar at Temple University Dance Department, funded by the ESRC as an Overseas Institutional Visit and was a founding Co-editor of the *Scottish Journal of Performance*.

CD review: *Dichroic light: music for soloists, chamber ensembles and electronic*, by Matthew Whiteside

DREW HAMMOND

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***Dichroic light*, by Matthew Whiteside. IMBT Music, 2015; Barcode:888295263849 (£14.89)**

The title, *Dichroic light*, implies a filtering of the concrete and the whole into an ethereal, alternate, damaged reality. And there you have it: many of these tracks live up to that title. The sonorous personalities of wood, reed and string emerge at times aggrandized, and alternately feeble and limp, and at other times still, simple and complete. The music falls broadly under the rubric of 'live electronics', and I think by and large captures the worthier aspects of the field. What we have here utilises the ineffable complexities of human performance, explicitly transmuted by the acousmatic veil of audio processing, to enable, at its best, something indeed worth hearing. Apart from a few things that belie a fully formed artistic statement, this debut collection forms a strong resumé for Matthew Whiteside, a young composer not many years out of formal education. There is an emerging confidence here, and while some things fail to captivate, the brighter spots light the path to a promising future. Matthew casts a wide collaborative net, working with the new music ensemble, Red Note, as well as a number of soloists, and two string quartets. It must be said that success here can be put down to their efforts as well, with some commanding performances from the players. The work with soloists deserves particular attention, as it tends to outshine some of the ensemble tracks.

Starting us off, 'Ulation' is one of the highlights of this collection. Emma Lloyd's steady, swooping performance on the viola is threaded between soft, sine wave-heavy drones, and bright, resonant, glitch-y textures. The formal shapes and varied surface texture play on listener expectations and make for an enveloping six minutes. Emma returns in track three on the viola d'amore, which establishes a more contemplative character. In this 'Solo for viola d'amore and electronics' Matthew demonstrates for us an encouraging subtlety and restraint in his processing of the audio. The resonance of the cello becomes the focal point in the three-movement centrepiece that lends its name to the album. Abby Hayward plays well, and presumably sings well on the third movement. This one to my mind has its limitations, notwithstanding some exceptional moments. The opening can't but bring to mind Gérard Grisey's 1975 exploration of the overtone series, 'Partiels', transposed to E flat, which I take to be a nod by Matthew to his stately predecessor. The work is taken in a much different direction from here, however, and we get a glimpse of the composer's ability to carve out delicious, sinuous melodic phrases, although I am not convinced that all of the elongated reverb really adds much to the effect. The third movement, while well done, runs the risk of edging into Hans Zimmer-esque cinematic exoticism (think of Russell Crowe wandering through wheat fields in Roman body armour). My reservations can be mostly set aside for 'Three Pieces for Bass Clarinet and Electronics' with the impressive clarinettist, Joanna Nicholson. The first piece affects a delicate rippling that captivates from the start, but the real treat is the third piece, which unites the bass clarinet's extended timbral vocabulary with well-judged layering and delay. This is one I'll go back to.

The ensemble tracks—excellently played by Red Note, The Robinson Panoramic Quartet, and the Aurea Quartet—seem at times like clippings from another book. The exception is 'Quartet No. 3', which works the string quartet with

electronics into earnest, eager and expressive textures. But by the time we get to it, I'm already thinking back to those delicately sculpted moments that show Matthew's flair for working with the expressive freedom and flexibility of the solo performer.

About the review author

DREW HAMMOND is a composer and musician based in Glasgow, Scotland. Born in Central Kentucky, he studied music at Guilford College in North Carolina and spent a large chunk of the 1990s touring in bands. Around the turn of the century, he moved to Glasgow, Scotland to study composition with Bill Sweeney. Since then he has gained a PhD in composition and has taught numerous music subjects at the University of Glasgow and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. He writes music for a variety of instrumental and electronic forces.

Performance review: *Hinterland*, by NVA

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NVA's Hinterland
Photo: Alan McAteer, courtesy of NVA

The tagline 'A Future Reclaimed' signals in advance that NVA's *Hinterland*, a performance in the ruins of St Peter's Seminary at Kilmahew, seeks to cultivate our ability to imagine the future by linking it to remainders of the past. The train ride from Glasgow to Helensburgh—from which spectators are taken by minibus to the site—already provides ample opportunities for ruin gazing. Clydebank, a town synonymous with Scotland's decimated shipbuilding industry, a spat of uninhabited brutalist houses near Dalmuir, the carcasses of disused fishing boats scattered along the banks of the Clyde and, of course, the seminary itself prompt a reflection on the strange temporality of ruins and what role they might play for us in the present and the

future. In their introduction to the recent 'On Ruins' edition of *Performance Research*, Carl Lavery and Richard Gough argue that ruins disturb the modernist ideal of linear and sequential time. Ruins insist on the presentness of the past, while also calling attention to the ruination of the present since 'the ruin [...] is something that is already ruined in advance, an object that unfolds itself in the tense of the future anterior, the time of the will have been' (2015, 4). In performance, as in ruin gazing, we become aware of the slippage of the present moment into the past. In turn, we realise that the present contains its future ruination; that we, the spectators, are in the process of being ruined. This ontological affinity between ruins and performance is also at the heart of *Hinterland*.

The performance marked both the opening of Scotland's Festival of Architecture and the final opportunity to see St Peter's Seminary in its current state ahead of a large-scale regeneration of the building spearheaded by NVA. Famed for their site-specific public artworks, often encompassing light, sound and performative elements, NVA are committed to an 'ideal of a lively democracy' (NVA, n.d.). With the support of Heritage Lottery Fund, Creative Scotland, Historic Environment Scotland and Argyll and Bute Council, St Peter's Seminary will become a permanent home where this mission statement might be enacted through a programme of creative events from 2018 onwards, following partial restoration of the building. The choice of site is not incidental; located at a distance from Scotland's creative hubs in the central belt in a forest a little north of Cardross, a village with a population of just over 2,000 inhabitants, the seminary is a refuge from the everyday bustle of Scotland's larger cities. Its relative inaccessibility and peripherality lend it an air of otherworldliness where new and unprecedented visions of the future can be invented.



NVA's *Hinterland*
Photo: Alasdair Smith, courtesy of NVA

The original building (designed by Andy MacMillan and Isi Metzstein) is often viewed as one of the most brilliant examples of modernist architecture in Scotland. It exemplifies modernism's obsession with 'unidirectional time' that flows towards 'newness and completeness' as David Archibald and Johnny Rodger analyse (2015, p.111). Built in 1966 as an educational institution for Roman Catholic priests, it was abandoned just fourteen years later, in 1980, and the building is now derelict. NVA's intention is not to restore the building to its former glory but to embrace its ruination. This acknowledges that in the contemporary, postmodern period futurity can no longer be premised on an erasure of the past as it was in modernism. Rather, in order to imagine a future, we must now start with a messier approach towards temporal processes.

Consequently, *Hinterland* is preoccupied with time, decay and regeneration. Throughout the performance, which takes spectators on a designated walking route through the building and the surrounding woodlands, temporalities collide. The beginning, where a foot trail through the woods is accompanied by a soundscape composed of the clanging

of tools on metal and stone, fragments of choral song and faint footsteps, is an example. By calling forth the ghosts of the labourers who constructed the seminary, trainee priests who may have sung there and the illicit wanderings of ruin explorers who flocked to the site after official activities in the building ceased, a nodal point between the past and the present is created. Simultaneously, these sounds point towards a speculative future where builders and audiences will populate the site once again, conjuring spectres of a time to come.

NVA responds to the multifarious temporalities of the site by creating a plethora of images that seem impossibly dense, in which myriad temporal layers co-exist at once. This is most apparent in the focal image, located in the former altar room at the centre of the building. A large metal structure, operated by performers in welding helmets, has been hung from the ceiling. Part-pendulum, part-censer, the construct swings hypnotically above a flooded floor space that mirrors precisely the scene above it, giving the impression of a bottomless pit while choral music (composed by Rory Boyle, recorded by the St Salvator's Chapel Choir of the University of St Andrews) erupts at irregular intervals.



NVA's Hinterland
Photo: Alasdair Smith, courtesy of NVA

Spectators encounter this scene three times, from three different angles. Each time the mood changes. The solemn image morphs into an ecstatic one when the side-on living quarters above are illuminated in flashes of purple, blue and green. The final encounter exposes the performance's mechanics: what appeared as an altar is revealed to be a lighting desk. This Dante-esque dramaturgy—in which the spectator ascends from the underworld to knowledge—mimics religious creed but does not reproduce it. It instils a sense of hope and elation through an acceptance of material existence, rather than through transcendence of it.

Hinterland, which NVA has called a manifesto more than a performance, argues for the value of ruins and ruination. In the encounter with the ruin the human is humbled as we come to understand ourselves as transient creatures whose future is always being eroded. At the same time, as *Hinterland* succeeds in showing, it is precisely this erosion that opens up the possibility of new futures, even of the very idea of a future to be regained.

In the current turn towards ruins in contemporary theatre scholarship, seen in the mounting number of publications and conferences that address both site-specific performances in ruins and ruination as a function of performance, this piece cannot be overlooked as an important and provocative example of ruin performance.¹ *Hinterland* and NVA's plans for St Peter's Seminary are a timely meditation on how we might begin to make futures and what both ruins and performance can contribute to this.

Notes

1. Growing interest in ruins can be seen through the publication of the special edition 'On Ruins' by *Performance Research* already cited, the recent call for papers on 'Tragedy and the dramaturgy of ruins' issued by the Directing and Dramaturgy Working Group of The Theatre and Performance Research Association (TaPRA) as well as a forthcoming book by Simon Murray on performances in ruins as part of Deirdre Heddon and Sally Mackey's series *Performing Landscapes* (Palgrave).

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About the review author

CARA BERGER teaches Theatre Studies at the University of Glasgow. She has a background as a theatre-maker and has completed a practice-as-research PhD (2014) that draws on *écriture féminine* to frame postdramatic theatre aesthetics in relation to feminist politics. Her research focuses on postdramatic theatre, feminism and critical theory in the first place. She is also increasingly interested how these fields might resonate with pressing questions of ecology, matter and ways of living in a more-than-human world. She has recently published articles on these subjects in *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism*, *Performance Research* and *Platform*.