Theatre Survey 54:1 (January 2013)
© American Society for Theatre Research 2013
doi:10.1017/S0040557412000622

FROM THE EDITOR

The past two editors of *Theatre Survey*, Catherine Cole and Leo Cabranes-Grant, issued calls to internationalize the journal by extending "geographic coverage to performance cultures of the world that have heretofore received little treatment" while staying committed to "all areas of theatre history, including more familiar terrain."[1] As I begin my editorship of the journal, I take their dual agenda to heart and reaffirm my own commitment to a strategic expansion of the journal. This special issue presents articles that explore the intersections between Asia and theatre historiography. In the call for papers, I sought essays that would interrogate how Asia as a multilayered concept has been framed and manifested in theatre history. Although this is the first issue of *Theatre Survey* to focus on Asia, it is not necessarily on Asian theatre. Rather, it is intended to question how Asia and theatre as concepts have functioned dialectically throughout theatre history. Asia is an invented geopolitical marker that covers an absurdly large area extending from Japan to Afghanistan. More imagined than real, Asia as an episteme has had a profound impact on theatre history and historiography.

The five articles presented in the following pages demonstrate the different historical moments when Asia was conceptualized by theatre practitioners and scholars. Susan Anderson's "Representations of India on Jacobean Popular Stages" examines how India was imagined in two of the lord mayor's shows written by Thomas Middleton. Anderson argues that the images and spectacles represented in the shows provided the framework for British colonialism by exacerbating the public's confusion of "India." In "'The Brightest Sun, The Darkest Shadow': Ideology and the Study of Chinese Theatre in the West during the Cold War," Siyuan Liu analyzes the historiography of Chinese theatre during the Cold War by critiquing Western scholars' ideological biases and evidentiary fallacies. Liu's careful reading reveals that most of the scholars who had access to Chinese theatre at the time documented what they wanted to see and believe. He tells a cautionary tale of how theatre historians can fall into the trap of using another culture to further their own political agenda. In "'What Country, Friends, Is This?': Touring Shakespeares, Agency, and Efficacy in Theatre Historiography," Alexander C. Y. Huang takes on the global phenomenon of "Asian Shakespeares," which he defines as Shakespearean productions that use Asian theatrical styles or manufacture a sense of Asianness through the Bard. Huang focuses on recent productions in Britain to articulate how Asian Shakespeares and their various forms of circulation around the globe should be assessed in theatre history.

The final two articles examine contemporary avant-garde performances that deconstruct geographical and cultural boundaries and complicate representations of Asia and Asianness. Steve Luber's essay, "The Theatre of a Two-Headed Calf: Simulacral Performance and the Deconstruction of Orientalism," investigates

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0040557412000622 Published online by Cambridge University Press

two shows produced by the Theatre of a Two-Headed Calf, a New York City–based theatre company. Luber argues that the company uses what he calls "simulacral performance" to cite (rather than borrow) elements of *kabuki* as an attempt to avoid the familiar pitfalls of appropriation and orientalism that have plagued intercultural theatre. According to Luber, the complex web of referentiality challenges notions of authenticity and opens up the possibility for new frameworks and potentialities. Christine Mok's article, "Memoirs of a *Kisaeng:* Choreographing Performance Historiography," examines how audience participation shaped the interpretation of a performance piece cocreated by an African American choreographer and a Korean choreographer when it toured to different cities in the United States and Asia. Mok interprets the performance from the perspectives of Asian American studies and transnational studies. The performance described in Mok's article exemplifies how Asia as a concept continues to elude stable signification onstage in the twenty-first century.

In "Critical Stages," Patrick Anderson delivers an engaging discussion on how Asian American performance can be articulated as a field of study with political urgency and intellectual prospect. The conversation between Joshua Takano Chambers-Letson and Elizabeth W. Son reveals the vast potential of the growing field. Both are concerned with intersections of politics, aesthetics, law, and history in ways that recontexualize performance studies in a multifaceted geopolitical landscape. They answer Anderson's questions with frank and eloquent ruminations about how they select their research projects and position themselves as scholars.

• • •

The journal is expanding in more than one way, and I am thrilled to present the first triannual issue of *Theatre Survey*. Cambridge University Press has increased the number of pages per volume to allow more articles to be published each year. Opportunities exists for diverse ways to present current scholarship in our field in the journal, and I extend an invitation to readers to make suggestions on how *Theatre Survey* can grow in a vibrant and dynamic way befitting the twenty-first century. Needless to say, more article submissions are welcomed, and I hope to see increased traffic on the journal Web site in both submission and peer review. Those familiar with the journal should notice that this issue features only one special section—"Critical Stages," edited by Patrick Anderson—instead of the usual three. Starting with this issue, one special section will be featured in each issue in order to showcase it more fully and to accommodate the increased speed of the triannual publication cycle. The editors of the special sections—which recently have included Beth A. Kattelman ("*Re:* Sources") and Kim Solga ("What Are You Reading?)—will have more time and page space to address topics of interest to the readers. I look forward to working with the editors to make the special sections highly anticipated pieces in the journal in the years to come.

Words are not enough to express the gratitude I feel to the outgoing editor, Leo Cabranes-Grant, for his patience, his sense of humor, and the quick thinking he demonstrated while training me to step into the editorship role. He deserves full credit for the smooth transition from the biannual to a triannual cycle, and I am the

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0040557412000622 Published online by Cambridge University Press

direct beneficiary of his vision and leadership. This issue also marks the last "Critical Stages" edited by Patrick Anderson, and I thank him for fostering innovative ways to document conversations between scholars and for asking difficult and timely questions. Editing this journal requires finely tuned teamwork, and I am fortunate to have a capable and reliable team to guide me. There are four editorial board members whose terms ended at the end of 2012: Lowell Fiet, Elizabeth Gunner, Sonja Kuftinec, and Daphne Lei. On behalf of the team, I thank them for their service to the journal and the field. The incoming board members are Henry Bial, Gay Gibson Cima, Haiping Yan, and Ted Ziter. I welcome them to the board and look forward to working with them as we move toward a more expanded *Theatre Survey*.

ENDNOTE

1. Catherine M. Cole, "From the Editor," *Theatre Survey* 50.2 (November 2009): 185–8, at 185.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0040557412000622 Published online by Cambridge University Press