Colbert's book is a text that is sweeping in its disciplinary reach and expansive in its deployment of research methods but, at the same time, focused on its particular case studies: W. E. B. Du Bois's *The Star of Ethiopia*, Zora Neale Hurston's *Color Struck*, Langston Hughes's *Tambourines to Glory*, Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*, August Wilson's *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, Baldwin's *Blues*, and Suzan-Lori Parks's *Topdog/Underdog*.

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A Pathognomy of Performance. By **Simon Bayly**. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. Pp. 246 + 22 illus. £55/$80 Hb.

Reviewed by James Hudson, University of Lincoln, jahudson@lincoln.ac.uk

In this feat of imaginative risk-taking and rigorous scholarship, Simon Bayly enlists the word 'pathognomy', an archaic term rather than a neologism, to stage 'an encounter between two vocations: theatre and philosophy' (p. 1). The anachronistic frisson generated by dusting off the antique practice of tracking evanescent manifestations of affect, encounter and event indicated by voice and facial expression and placing it in dialogue with philosophers like Badiou, Rancière and Levinas does more than titivate this interrogation into the ethics and aesthetics of performance; it is an unusually sophisticated combination as effective as it is surprising.

Under the umbrella of this unconventional thesis, the book places an assemblage of heterogeneous ideas in conversation with each other. Within this dialogic and relational architecture strands and ideas recur, so that meditations on the notion of performance as an indefinite 'point of suspension' immanently poised over the threat of 'fiasco' and 'disaster' are usefully redeployed in proximity to Alain Badiou's 'event', and again later echoed in a discussion on the peculiar properties of reverberation that swung London's Millennium Bridge like a child with a skipping rope. Bayly is capable of great imaginative leaps and fond of unlikely juxtapositions, showcasing formidable erudition in a profusion of tangential associations and recondite allusions that, while learned, seems to border on the compulsive. The sourcing of material extends far beyond the perimeters of theatre and performance and into the realms of biology, neuroscience and astrophysics. When used – as it mainly is – as the evidentiary bedrock to supply critical perspective to consideration of an 'ethics of experiment', the result is undeniably industry-standard thinking; when Bayly writes things like 'in the theory of quantum chromodynamics, contemporary physics also provides a further loose analogy to assist in understanding Spinoza's terms' (p. 104), the effect of the illustration is to steepen the incline of the intellectual terrain rather than render it more easily traversed.

Nonetheless, the book is not so uncompromising as to resist taking the occasional puckish detour into such subjects as child actors, bodybuilding, campanology and David Duchovny's pout, with Bayly even seeming to channel arch etiquette-satirist J. P. Donleavy when observing that 'particular actors are renowned in the profession for their salivatory habits of performance, which fellow performers must literally face up to' (p. 178). Indeed it is here, in the gutsy exploration of corporeality, laughing, sneezing, screaming,

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that Bayly most capably thrives, where a theoretical cosmology incorporating Derrida, Deleuze, Levinas and Lingis is put to work in rehabilitating a contemporary somatics of performance. What this book offers on the study of the fleeting and transcendent is ultimately highly substantial, as well as provocative and wholly scholarly, though like the brief instances of vanishing expression it meditates on, it can prove just as elusive.

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Liverpool Playhouse: A Theatre & Its City. By **Ros Merkin**. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011. Pp. 224. £25 Hb.

Reviewed by Chris High, independent researcher, c.high@ntlworld.com

From the Liverpool Playhouse Theatre's opening as the Repertory in 1911, changing to its current title in 1916, through to the latest run of Roger McGough's adaptation of *Tartuffe* in September of this year, Ros Merkin employs all of her vast knowledge and exemplary research skills in conveying not only the high points but also the dark days of one of the north-west's premier venues. She does this with such clarity that it is almost as though those quoted past and present are actually being interviewed solely for this volume.

And there is no shortage of stars whose hopes and fears are represented, which is of little surprise given the abundance of talent that has emerged from the theatre in its time – a list too long to write here, resulting in the recording of a changing shape of theatre across the age. This is best illustrated, quite literally, by the myriad of fine-quality photographs, diagrams, sketches and biographies which illuminate almost every page. These materials support the many achievements of this famous building and its many ensembles, writers, directors and producers and further emphasize the Playhouse's place in Liverpool's cultural heritage.

If there is one problem with the work, however, it lies in the fact the impact the theatre has had on its audiences is a little understated, for its influence has indeed been immense. True, those who have been inspired to act, write or indeed hold any of the positions a successful theatre demands in order to run for a hundred years feature extensively. However, those who pay to watch what is being performed seem to have been almost entirely overlooked, which is a great shame, given that without an audience even the greatest production is rendered superfluous.

This said, however, *Liverpool Playhouse: A Theatre & Its City* remains a fine and important work that should be enjoyed by experts and enthusiasts alike.

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Playwright, Space and Place in Early Modern Performance: Shakespeare and Company. By **Tim Fitzpatrick**. Farnham: Ashgate, 2011. Pp. xiv + 314. £65 Hb.

Reviewed by Laurence Publicover, University of Leeds, L.Publicover@leeds.ac.uk

Opposing the notion that early modern plays and playwrights are 'spatially insensitive', Tim Fitzpatrick's carefully researched and powerfully argued book sets out to demonstrate 'that there was a set of shared conventions about how the doors and other

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