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FROM THE EDITOR

What is your intervention? I expect this question is familiar to many readers. Perhaps it's one you direct to your graduate students. Perhaps it's a question you ask yourself, or your peers. Perhaps you've been trained to have an answer ready should anyone pose such a question at a conference, book launch, workshop, or other social gathering. Certainly the word "intervention" enjoys considerable currency in theatre and performance studies circles, thanks in no small part to the titles of such books as Baz Kershaw's *The Politics of Performance: Radical Theatre as Cultural Intervention*, David Román's *Acts of Intervention*, and Alan Filewod's *Committing Theatre: Theatre Radicalism and Political Intervention in Canada*, not to mention Bryan Reynolds and Elaine Aston's important Performance Interventions series with Palgrave Macmillan, and the ongoing *Interventions* online forum hosted by *Contemporary Theatre Review*.[1] Theatre and performance scholars thus appear to be highly attuned to interventions . . . but let's return to the first question.

What is your intervention? The form of the question is peculiar in that it refers to intervention less as an act of doing (it's not *How are you intervening?*) than as a finished product, something complete, finite. But is this what we mean when we ask, *What is your intervention?* What does it mean to make an intervention anyway? The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines "intervention" as "[t]he action of intervening, 'stepping in,' or interfering in any affair so as to direct its course or issue."[2] When we make a scholarly intervention, then, it's as though we are stepping into a rushing stream and placing rocks or sticks in its path to redirect the flow. We are trying to guide a conversation—to move it in a new direction, ideally with the goal of challenging past biases or shedding light on overlooked or ignored lives, narratives, events, or experiences. Sometimes making an intervention can feel more like stepping into traffic and hoping the cars rushing by won't hit you. This might lead us to ask how many potential acts of intervention have been stymied by heavy currents or the relentless rush of traffic. Surely there are many factors that influence which interventions "succeed" and which do not—access to publication venues being one of them, access to employment another. If, as some observers suggest, theatre and performance studies is at risk of losing an entire generation of scholars due to the precarity of academic employment, what other kinds of intervention are needed?

I ask these questions with the full awareness that my job as *Theatre Survey* Editor is defined by acts of intervention. These include determining whether to send an article for review on the basis of the intervention it poses; selecting readers who I feel are "appropriate" assessors of the article's merits; working with authors postreview to incorporate changes and shape their argument so their individual interventions are clear, and so forth. Of course, there is little I can do to guarantee that these acts will redirect the course of the discipline; much of that power resides

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with readers and their own practices of reading and *especially* citation (as the conversations arising from hashtag campaigns like #CiteBlackWomen have shown).[3] However, I am simultaneously thrilled and humbled by the responsibility that comes with stepping into the stream of academic publishing as an editor. I welcome you to accompany me.

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The articles in this issue of *Theatre Survey* perform multiple, diverse acts of intervention in terms of content, theoretical engagement, and methodological exploration. In "Empathy with the Devil: Movement, Kinesthesia, and Affect in *The Castle of Perseverance*," Clare Wright challenges earlier assumptions that medieval morality plays enticed audiences with their portrayal of unruly, disruptive, sinful behavior to such an extent that they undid the plays' moral intent. Instead, she asserts, a morality play like *The Castle of Perseverance* "used the body's unconscious response to devilish movement as a means for spectators to learn about themselves, via a simulated fall into temptation." In other words, exposing audiences to bad behavior and stimulating a kind of kinesthetic empathy with devils and other sinful creatures served to inoculate audiences *against* vice. Wright's fresh, theoretically grounded reading of *The Castle* draws productively on the work of dance scholar Susan Leigh Foster, remaining attentive to the networks of kinesthetic experience that shaped medieval theatregoers' emotions and experiences. The article is a model of academic intervention.

Chelsea Phillips undertakes an equally stimulating intervention in "Bodies in Play: Maternity, Repertory, and the Rival *Romeo and Juliet*s, 1748–1751." Here, Phillips revisits *The London Stage*, a well-mined source for scholarship on eighteenth-century theatre, and examines what gaps in the onstage appearances of London's leading actresses reveal about their reproductive labor offstage and, correspondingly, their assertion of agency in negotiations with management. Poring over the performance calendars for three seasons at Drury Lane and Covent Garden, Phillips comes to the surprising conclusion that the availability of female performers—or rather, their *unavailabilit*y due to pregnancy and childbirth—fueled the company rivalries that culminated in the famous 1750 "Battle of the Romeos," a twelve-night showdown between the two companies. Whereas previous studies of the battle have tended to focus on male players—managers, playwrights, actors—Phillips turns to the female players, not just the Juliets but those who could *not* play Juliet because they had obligations elsewhere. Her discovery invites theatre historians to look differently at performance calendars, so that they too might "resurrect the performing bodies that shaped and embodied the archival fragments left to us."

In "Epistolary Liveness: Narrative Presence and the Victorian Actress in Letters," Lauren Eriks Cline likewise urges theatre and performance scholars to look anew at familiar sources—in her case theatrical memoirs and novels featuring scenes of theatregoing. Taking up Thomas Postlewait's 1989 call for scholars to consider how nineteenth-century theatrical autobiographies functioned as epistolary fiction, Eriks Cline proposes an "intergeneric" way of reading across a range of performance texts, including Wilkie Collins's *No Name* (1862) and

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Fanny Kemble's *Records of a Girlhood* (1878). Through this analysis, she elegantly bridges previous work in literary studies on epistolarity and narrative with theatre and performance studies theories of liveness, demonstrating how "epistolarity afforded distinct opportunities for representing the spatiotemporal liveness of performance." Intriguingly, Eriks Cline finds a strong relationship between epistolary narrative and representations of performing women, which simultaneously foregrounded their "bodily vulnerability and financial precarity" and the "physical force of [their] presence."

Max Shulman investigates a different kind of bodily vulnerability in "Anatomy of an Addict: Junie McCree and the Vaudeville Dope Fiend," as he traces the development of the "dope fiend" character in early twentieth-century vaudeville. Advancing scholarship on Progressive Era theatre, Shulman shows how performer Junie McCree tapped into contemporary conversations about addiction as well as his own ethnographic encounters with opium smokers to offer a comical yet deeply sympathetic representation of the addict figure. Like the many other stereotypical characters that populated the US vaudeville stage, from the blackface minstrel and stage Irishman to the "Dutch" act and tramp, McCree's dope-fiend character offers searing insight into US social and cultural anxieties at the turn of the twentieth century, especially fears about race suicide and the deterioration of the virile self-made (white) man. In showcasing the complexity of McCree's creation, which not only invited laughs but "gave external form to the internal disorder of addiction," Shulman stages an intervention into the history of vaudeville and the history of addiction.

Rounding out the issue is Esther Fernández's interview with Victoria Teijeiro and Isabel Rodes on the state of inclusive theatre in contemporary Spain and their theatre work with persons with disability. In future, I hope to include similar "notes from the field" in these pages, profiling ongoing performance projects, ethnographic research, and archival finds—moments when scholars catch first inklings of a much larger intervention and decide to step into the stream.

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On a separate note, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the departing members of our editorial board, Roberta Barker, Maaike Bleeker, Lionel Pilkington, Jisha Menon, and Dassia Posner, and to welcome its five new members, Shane Boyle, Amy Cook, Tavia Nyong'o, Miguel Escobar Varela, and Margaret Werry. I am likewise pleased to welcome Shannon Hughes as Editorial Assistant.

ENDNOTES

1. Baz Kershaw, *The Politics of Performance: Radical Theatre as Cultural Intervention* (London: Routledge, 1992); David Román, *Acts of Intervention: Performance, Gay Culture, and AIDS* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998); Alan Filewod, *Committing Theatre: Theatre Radicalism and Political Intervention in Canada* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1998). Key titles in Reynolds and Aston's Performance Interventions series (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan) include Lynette Goddard, *Staging Black Feminisms: Identity Politics, Performance* (2007); Jen Harvie, *Fair*

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Play—Art, Performance and Neoliberalism (2013), and Elaine Aston and Geraldine Harris, *A Good Night Out for the Girls: Popular Feminisms in Contemporary Theatre and Performance* (2013). *Contemporary Theatre Review*'s "Interventions" forum can be found at *www.contemporarytheatrereview.org/interventions/*.

2. *OED Online*, s.v. "intervention, n." Oxford University Press, December 2018; *www.oed.com.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/view/Entry/98431?redirectedFrom=intervention*, accessed 11 January 2019.

3. The "Cite Black Women" movement launched in November 2017, led by anthropologist Christen A. Smith. Although the campaign began with supporters wearing T-shirts with the phrase "Cite Black Women," it soon migrated to social media, with the #CiteBlackWomen and #CiteBlackWomenSunday hashtags. For more see the Cite Black Women Collective, *www.citeblackwomencollective.org/*, accessed 13 January 2019; Sophie Inge, "'Cite Black Women' Campaign Gains Momentum," *Times Higher Education,* 22 January 2018, *www.timeshighereducation.com/news/cite-black-women-campaign-gains-momentum*, accessed 13 January 2019.

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