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FROM THE EDITOR

As the cover for this issue illustrates, sometimes things take place so quickly that we barely have a chance to put our shoes on. The ongoing financial crisis has been extremely harsh in most parts of the country. The economic instability that became so acute four years ago is still affecting our education budgets and constricting our curricular prospects. We have been accustomed to doing a lot with scarce resources for decades, but the present circumstances are bringing to the picture questions that truly challenge our professional mission. While our students increase their personal debt in order to confront the contingencies of a slowed hiring environment, many universities are raising undergraduate and graduate tuition fees. While we encourage specialization and methodological specificity, more institutions seem to be leaning toward joint appointments and multidisciplinary jobs. And while the function of the classroom is being redefined by the impact of online pedagogy, the number of students in our courses is constantly growing. We are still here, of course, but the meaning of that "here" has been—to say the least—radically altered. In order to reenvision ourselves, we have to mobilize once more the core tools of theatrical self-fashioning: flexibility, collaboration, and inventive accessorizing.

The four articles in this issue emphasize the diverse labors of adjustment and adaptation that are a necessary component of most performative practices. In "The *Liedertheater* of Wenzel & Mensching: A Creative Use of the Agitprop Tradition in the GDR," David Robb explores one of the fundamental conundrums political theatre confronts: What happens when your side wins? In Wenzel & Mensching's case, a rich tradition of dramatic resistance against capitalism inherited from the years of the Weimar Republic had to be recalibrated within the boundaries of Communist East Germany. Tracing a detailed genealogy of the genres deployed by both artists—proletarian revues, cabaret songs, even commedia dell'arte—Robb exposes their intricate efforts to remain critical and relevant inside a revolutionary state.

In "*The Dazzling Hour:* An Italian Comedy Adapted for the American Stage," Daniela Cavallaro excavates the cultural translations José Ferrer and Ketti Frings attempted when they brought Anna Bonacci's popular play *L'ora della fantasia* to the United States. This relatively unknown production at La Jolla included Olivia de Havilland as the main female protagonist, and all the persons involved expected nothing less than a hit. But audiences and reviewers felt otherwise. With the rigorous patience of a detective, Cavallaro discloses how Ferrer and Frings tamed down the original political and sexual edges of the Italian play. By eliminating a substantial number of minor characters and references to the church, the adapters drastically departed from Bonacci's emphasis on how communal pressures can inflect the private negotiations of marriage.

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The next article moves us to the early nineteenth century, when many of Shakespeare's works were staged as assemblages of several overlapping versions that reflected actors' and directors' choices vis-à-vis the Bard's texts. *Richard III* was a particularly disturbing play to produce: although audiences loved to watch David Garrick impersonating the malicious monarch, it was also embarrassing to admit that his cruel dealings were part of British history. When we join Richard—and we all have been fascinated by him—we compromise our moral standards. Nicoletta Caputo helps us follow Thomas Bridgman's and William Charles Macready's attempts to balance their respect for Shakespeare's words with the extremely successful cuts and interpolations Colley Cibber had introduced in the late 1690s. Caputo proves that, to the extent Cibber's *Richard III* provided a strong vehicle for actors, its embodiment consistently overruled its archive.

At first sight it would appear that the final article is quite different from the three previous ones, but many of our readers will recognize in it some of the topics that torture and inspire us when we meet to reconsider and revisit the requirements of our curriculum. Steve Tillis's "Conceptualizing Space: The Geographic Dimension of World Theatre" manages to summarize some of the controversies and complexities provoked by current mappings of theatrical activity. Displaying the myriad available vectors through which ethnicities, nationalisms, and genres intersect performance, the article offers a launchpad for our own ruminations on the territorial—and frequently deterritorialized—categories still prevalent in many of our field's textbooks. The problems orchestrated here are far from being solved: the purpose of the article is to foster a wider debate, not replace it.

Keeping the focus on the analysis of space, in our "Critical Stages" section Patrick Anderson allows us to eavesdrop on an exciting exchange between Daphne Brooks and Roshanak Kheshti. For our authors, music is imbued with both explicit and occluded implications of gender, race, and economic inequality. But music also has the capacity to reconfigure our relations and to inscribe its own parameters of desire and political representation, actualizing unexpected sources of empowerment for subaltern subjectivities and counterpublics.

For *Re: Sources*, Beth Kattelman asked Doug Reside to navigate the digital archives produced by Jonathan Larson for his musical *RENT*, now hosted at the Library of Congress. Reside reminds us that hardware and software storage demands the same curatorial care manuscripts and other artifacts require. As with any source of information available to scholars, computerized information can be ephemeral and fragile. In our process of adapting to new media, electronic literacy is gradually becoming one of the fundamental skills of professional research.

"What Are You Rescuing?" is the title for this issue's installment of a section that has become a forum for the provisional unpacking of contemporary events and predicaments. *Theatre Survey* invited Odai Johnson to share with our readers the survival narrative that recently unfolded at the University of Washington in Seattle. Facing its potential demise, the School of Drama shook off its initial perplexity and engaged in a fast-paced and effective campaign to create coalitions with other departments across campus in order to organize a

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Center for Performance Studies. Although this story is not a consolation for the sad circumstances or the severe cuts experienced by theatre departments in other universities—Albany, Cornell, and the UC system come to mind—Johnson's account enables us to ponder alternative ways of coping with the shifting sands of our Usonian academic landscape.

Wenzel & Mensching fought for every inch of their critical agency. Ferrer and Frings were unable to accept the axiological densities of Bonacci's play and decided to domesticate it. Rewriting *Richard III*, Thomas Bridgman and William Charles Macready created conflicted versions that either failed to attract interest or were ignored. It is easier to discard old maps than to elucidate satisfying new ones. The invisibility of sound relocates the materiality of the body. The potentially evanescent nature of floppy disks is adding some unexpected ghosts to our repertoire. One survival story in Seattle tempers its pain with humor. What all these articles and interventions share is an investment in revisiting past transfers, goals, and ideas in order to keep them flowing into the present moment. Every piece of this issue addresses the need to adapt our aims to new audiences, new conjunctures, new technologies, and new contexts.

This is my first issue as Senior Editor of *Theatre Survey*, and the journal is dealing with several transitions of its own. I would like to express my gratitude to and admiration for my predecessor, Catherine Cole. If our journal is now on its way to expanding from two to three issues in the near future, it is because Catherine Cole engineered a daring electronic and conceptual transformation that overhauled our submission, reviewing, and publication process. Her legacy will be felt for many years to come. We worked very much as a team, and I want to keep that approach with our new associate editor, Esther Kim Lee. Last but not least, I want to thank David Marshall, Dean of Humanities and Fine Arts at the University of California, Santa Barbara. His generous support—and the enthusiastic energy of my own Department of Theater and Dance—are deeply welcomed in the midst of our turbulent financial waters. Because of funding from my campus, I have been able to recruit the magnificent critical talents of Rose Elfman as my graduate assistant. Our show is ready to go on.

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