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FROM THE EDITOR

A few brief words, then, about this issue. The journal is happy to welcome two new colleagues: Marlis Schweitzer as Associate Editor and Erika T. Lin as Book Review Editor. I know that, like me, they are keen to hear from readers who have ideas about what they would like to see covered in the journal, and, particularly, from readers who have something they would like to contribute. I would especially like to encourage you to think about contributions that might follow up on two directions recently initiated, one in the pages of the journal and the other at the 2016 Annual Conference of the American Society for Theatre Research, the association of which this is the official journal.

The previous *Theatre Survey* considered some relations between theatre and Marxism. It included an implicit invitation to think both within and beyond the intellectual and political traditions of Marxist thought, and it would be exciting and productive if a further conversation within and beyond these traditions could develop here. I am thinking, above all, of the challenge to rethink core assumptions of what has often been called the "Western" philosophical tradition, in light of the experiences, political struggles, and cultural and intellectual production of the "South," as Andrés Henao Castro suggested we might in his contribution to the previous issue. I am also thinking of Maurya Wickstrom's engagement, in her contribution to that issue, with the Black Radical tradition, and how colleagues might find vital political and theoretical inspiration from this living body of work that matters, now, so much.

The 2016 ASTR conference in Minneapolis was dedicated by its cochairs Joshua Abrams and Jennifer Parker-Starbuck, to the theme of TRANS, and I am very keen to see this crucial opening of the field to the rich potentials of the thought and experience named by this term lead to new work within the pages of this journal. If this in any way describes the work you are doing in relation to theatre and performance, then consider *Theatre Survey* as a site in which your thought and writing might find a home and a conversation.

In thinking about both these broad areas of possible study and conversation, there will no doubt be frequent occasions to reflect upon some of the questions addressed, both obliquely and more directly, by the contributions to the issue in front of you. What are we to do with or make of the *absences* that shape our understanding of the past, whether those absences loom so much larger than the fragments that remain (as in Odai Johnson's writing about an actress in Roman Britain "of whom a little is known"); mark a struggle over what could even come into being (as in Hillary Miller's reconstruction of the affective politics of Julie Bovasso's "unproduced" work); or involve the bringing into view of actual, real, live spectators in place of imaginary audiences and publics (as in Matthew Franks's examination of the role of letter-writing "citizen" patrons of British and Irish repertory theatres).

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This is not simply a question of whether or not to practice the art of *rigatino* —described in the pages of this journal in 2004 by Tracy Davis, and cited here by Hillary Miller—by which restorers simultaneously replace lost or damaged paint marks and alert future researchers and restorers, through their "fine hatch marks," to the fact that they have done so.[1]

It is also a question of theory—a question about deciding what counts, what matters, and what has been done in the past to get us to the time and place in which the things that seem to matter now seem to do so, well, obviously, as a matter of course. In fact, the *rigatino* question is both practical and theoretical, and a politically engaged practice of sensitive "restoration" might be one way of describing much of the most interesting current work in theatre and performance studies.

And this is not, of course, just a question for a coterie of picture restorers such as ourselves, but something that we know shapes the experiences of the real, live spectators of the kind Matthew Franks documents. Which is why some of the art practiced in these pages involves efforts to use copious textual evidence (from the writings of Gotthold Lessing, in the case of Natalya Baldyga's essay here, or from a range of seventeenth-century performance theorists, if I may dare call them that, in the case of Bram van Oostveldt and Stijn Bussels's contribution) as a way of getting at what sort of realness and liveness historical spectators might have been looking for at the theatre, of all places.

This is not simply to try to conjure the affects of nameless historical individuals into our presence, or to convince ourselves that "they" felt it the way "we" feel it now, but rather to get at something that social and political historians, as well as theatre historians, would find of interest and significance: how political bodies come into being, into relation, into conflict, and into pleasure and pain with one another. Which might be a modest contribution some of us could make to understanding the history of our peculiar present.

ENDNOTE

1. Tracy C. Davis, "The Context Problem," *Theatre Survey* 45.2 (2004): 203–9, quote at 203.

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