

Editorial: Performance and the Everyday

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Where do the limits of performance and everyday life intersect? How do performance and life make sense of one another? The articles in this issue focus on the most basic and definitive categories of live performance: music, dance, theatre, performer, director, choreographer and, of course, audience. Taken as a whole, the seemingly disparate articles of this issue offer provocative approaches to understanding how practitioners create performance out of their experiences, and where audiences can connect their own experiences to what they see onstage. In doing so the authors collectively redefine the active relationship of a performance with its audience, and the powerful potential of that relationship.

The issue opens with Joanne Zerdy's exploration of the National Theatre of Scotland's (NTS) much-discussed production of *Black Watch*. Through the regiment's past the production lays bare the tangled local and global intersections from family to geopolitics that produce the Black Watch in Iraq. The NTS performs that 'production' of the Black Watch, and in doing so shows us how to make theatre out of lived experience. The conditions of production – both actual and theatrical – are what Zerdy examines. As the actual regiment has been deployed historically around the world, so too has the *Black Watch* theatrical tour travelled in some of the regiment's footsteps. The article teases out the intersections of transnational military and cultural production through the Black Watch and *Black Watch*. This process reveals the connections between large-scale categories like nation and the smaller-scale ones of everyday life.

Everyday life is not the overt focus of Kanzaki Mai and Jennifer Wise's comparison of Canadian director Robert Lepage's work to the aesthetics of Japanese rock gardens. The two authors offer an innovative analytical lexicon for understanding Lepage's work through the application of Zen ideas and principles of the categories of scale, metaphor and fragmentation to the director's *mise en scène*. The productions documented here allow the audience a significant role. As Mai and Wise document, and Lepage himself puts it, because so much is left to the imagination, audiences for these works have the 'opportunity to invent'. The director's invitation requires the audience not to imagine themselves as passive consumers of the spectacle, but instead to draw upon their own experiences and bring their own creative selves to bear on the invention of the production.

Dennis Eluyefa offers a very different point of view in his article. The other authors in this issue write from the typical academic journal author perspective of critic or observer. Eluyefa mines his own experiences, refracted through scholarly methods and practices,

to analyse his failed efforts to establish himself as a performer in two different English churches. Motivated by his experiences in Nigeria and Hungary, where he expressed his faith through his performance practices, his attempts to duplicate those experiences in England are thwarted by legacies of colonialism and the circulation of power in daily life. This form of autoethnography gives us direct access to how performance emerges out of a constellation of forces – political, historical, aesthetic, spiritual, physical and emotional – even when the performance ultimately never occurs. While his sources are as varied as his personal journal, ethnomusicology and contemporary theorists, including Michel Foucault and Iris Marion Young, Eluyefa reminds us that performance begins long before the audience is present. In this case it is the performer's everyday life that is the locus for invention and the source for critiquing what might have been.

It is hard to think of a twentieth-century European theatre practitioner who has had a greater impact on Western theatre than Konstantin Stanislavski. While historical studies are rarely the focus of an article in this journal, a re-examination of Stanislavski's work has important implications for many parts of the contemporary theatre world. Again in this issue the everyday surfaces, but this time as it might be brought into the rehearsal room. Stefan Aquilina argues, using Michel de Certeau's work, that the everyday became a category that Stanislavski and his fellow practitioners employed to navigate political oppression while also connecting the practitioners to one another and their audiences. The templates Stanislavski used in 1932–3 could provide practitioners today with additional ways to speak back to power and work with their audiences to achieve the better world first imagined in rehearsal.

If Lepage works from the Zen garden and the NTS from national regimental history, the Czech Dutch choreographer Jiří Kylián works from a grid. While such spaces might seem light years apart, Akiko Yuzurihara demonstrates that Kylián's manipulation of the traditional spatial structures of classical ballet yield unexpected possibilities. This is nowhere more apparent than in *Kaguyahime*, his adaptation of the venerable Japanese story *Taketori Monogatari* (*The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter*). Through a reinvention of ballet's spatial composition techniques, Kylián engages audience members in the story of *Taketori Monogatari* while almost completely abandoning its plot. This highly abstract dance has concrete impact by invoking offstage worlds, including that of the spectators, who are invited to imbricate their world with the fictional and abstract ones invented onstage. As readers, we are invited to think beyond the page in front of us to the non-literary world of space, time and movement.

Theatre specifically, and live performance in general, is often posited as the realm of transformation. This issue of *Theatre Research International* offers examples of how the most ordinary, quotidian things – putting on a kilt, looking at a garden, joining a church, comparing yourself to a goose, or walking slowly along a diagonal line – can become innovative, inspiring, and even liberatory. Through performance, spectators can make coherent and intelligible events, places and experiences that might otherwise be opaque and baffling. The everyday matters, these authors aver, because it is through the everyday that we can imagine a very different, and better, everyday to come.