

Editorial

FREDDIE ROKEM

In closing the first volume of three issues as editor of *TRI* it is too early to even to begin reflecting on where today's research of theatre and performance is headed. The number of journals in the field is steadily increasing, the number of books and edited volumes of essays is also growing quickly, and there is such great variety *in* the field that it is simply impossible to get a full view *of* the field. It is only possible to say a few words about this and the previous issues of *TRI* that I have been editing.

After placing the focus in *TRI* 32, 2 on topics and discussions connected to feminist research, this issue is much more eclectic, just like the field itself, even if I hope some threads can be found.

It begins with Marvin Carlson's general overview of the directing career, more than half a century long, of Peter Zadek. It is still possible to see new productions directed by the generation of directors that emerged during the first decade after the Second World War, like Peter Brook, Ingmar Bergman and George Tabori, to mention just three prominent and internationally very visible theatrical giants. But we are no doubt approaching the end of the post-war era of 'art-theatre', and even if Zadek has been less visible internationally than Brook, Bergman and Tabori, he has been important for the post-war German theatre and he is not yet very well known in the English-speaking world.

Helen Freshwater presents a lesser-known and less canonical theatrical style, the London Grand Guignol and its strategies to overcome censorial restrictions. The major issues are how this form of theatre communicates with its various audiences – the censors, the newspaper critics and the fans – and what forms of resistance and encouragement it has elicited. Zahava Caspi writes about a related issue, the reception of the Israeli playwright Hanoach Levin, in particular based on his complex rhetorical strategies. Levin is no doubt the kind of master hailed by W. H. Auden in his poem *Musée des Beaux Arts*, where the poet reflects on Pieter Brueghel's painting *Fall of Icarus*:

About suffering they were never wrong,
The Old Masters; how well, they understood
Its human position; how it takes place
While someone else is eating or opening a window or just walking dully along . . .

Levin's brutal honesty in all matters of human suffering has no doubt complicated his reception.

Even if Caspi's contribution is technically about Asian theatre, the last three articles in this issue bring us to the much more clearly non-European traditions of Far Eastern theatre. It is fascinating to observe how the indigenous theatrical and intellectual traditions of Thailand, Korea and Japan, represented by the articles of Catherine Diamond, Yoo Kim and Carol Fisher Sorgenfrei, respectively, interact with the Western analytical traditions and understandings of the theatre. It is in many cases a complex and even troubled interaction. The article by Min Tian published in *TRI* 32, 2, 'Gordon Craig, Mei Lanfang and the Chinese Theatre', examined the difficulties of intercultural communication from a historical perspective. The articles in this issue relating to this topic present examples and issues from a more contemporary perspective, beginning with the epic structure of contemporary Thai epic performance traditions (Diamond), the work of a Korean politically engaged dramatist (Yoo Kim) and, on a more theoretical level, the interaction between Western and Japanese terminology in dealing with certain key issues that are directly relevant to Japanese theatre and performance.

Hopefully these articles will open up a more comprehensive discussion. In coming issues, additional articles will discuss and exemplify various forms of intercultural theatrical communication, and if there is anyone among the readers of *TRI* who wishes to react or respond – with short comments or article-length analysis or presentations – welcome!