

which brought together academics and practitioners, and this starting point is reflected in the composition of the book through the way it brings together a diverse range of voices and perspectives, appropriately conveying the sense of scholars and artists engaged in ongoing debate about a developing form.

In his succinct, clear introduction, Roesner stresses that the book does 'not seek to define Composed Theatre ontologically or phenomenologically' (p. 10), presenting the term instead as a 'frame or lens' (p. 11). Despite their use of the adjectival term 'composed' in the title, the editors argue that this form of theatre is defined more by process than by product, and thus focus on the collaborative act of composing rather than on analysis of that which has been composed. The book is divided into four sections. Part One maps key historical and methodological influences on the field, contrasting the precision and organization of Bauhaus to the chaos of Dada and exploring the contributions made by seminal artists such as John Cage, Mauricio Kagel and Dieter Schnebel. A 'dialogue' with Lehmann's notion of the postdramatic is introduced here and continues throughout the book. Roland Quitt, for example, argues that the compositional mode of theatre today simultaneously provides and withholds codes of interpretation: 'the discrete elements that it employs function in two ways at the same time: on the one hand they try to achieve a "scenic rhythm"; on the other a "scenic assemblage"' (p. 76). Another perspective is offered in Part Two, which consists of detailed descriptions of and reflections on their working processes by the artists themselves. Here, Jörg Laue suggests that the replacing the adjective *postdramatic* with the verb *devising* 'indicates a kind of temporal shift between the genres, a progression' (p. 135). The practitioners represented in Part Two constitute an impressive list, including Heiner Goebbels, Michael Hirsch, Jörg Laue, George Rodosthenous and Nicholas Till. Their engaging accounts illuminate the theoretical arguments of Part One and extend the book's relevance and interest to anyone concerned with the messy, fascinating processes of collaborative creation. The 'portraits' of practitioners in Part Three bring into focus the key role of the performer as a creative contributor and highlight the presence of the personal within composed theatre, from the 'biographical origins' of Ruedi Häusermann's inspiration to Daniel Ott's interest in working with the personalities of his musicians. Part Four contains an intriguing selection of excerpts of discussions from the symposia and a concluding discourse analysis by Roesner in which he draws out and interrogates key principles and themes of this fascinating form of theatre-making. It is a style of performance of which I have had little direct experience but the book made me want to hear and see more.

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L'acteur et l'intermédialité: Les nouveaux enjeux pour l'interprète et la scène à l'ère technologique. By Izabella Pluta. Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 2011. Pp. 395 + 58 illus. €35 Pb

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Izabella Pluta's first monograph is built around the deceptively straightforward image of a performer onstage; or, better, the interpreter and the image projected from the stage

(p. 11). Indeed, simple as it seems the perspective already entails a wealth of conflicting notions and fundamental questions that are only further exacerbated when taking into account the second part of the book's title – intermediality – and today's technological era. For who exactly is meant by 'the interpreter'? and what are we precisely to understand by 'projected images' in a mediatized context? The inherent complexity of the matter leaves little room for simplistic solutions, and it is therefore all to the author's credit that she addresses her subject not by recycling existing categories but rather from a *relational* angle.

Pluta pointedly plays on the multiple connotations of the term 'interpreter' to stage the transformative *process* as the true star of the show through four thematic sections: a historicizing introduction retracing the interrelation of theatre actor and technology; a conceptual part presenting a range of possible pluri-medial relations sprung from the beautifully phrased 'spectacle vivant à composante technologique' (p. 13); an analytical part where selected cases are addressed along a 'permutational' approach integrating actor, *dispositif* and projected image; and a final part addressing the critical reception of the 'intermediality-vogue' in both the theatre and theatre studies. Primarily pedagogical in intent, such an approach effectively attempts to extract the heuristic potential of what to many still stands as experimental practice.

To achieve this, Pluta matches so sound a structure with a lucid argument conducted in a very fluid French, and the result is predominantly productive. However, by being above all spectator-centred and driven by a distinct desire for exhaustiveness, *L'acteur et l'intermédialité* struggles at times to remain focused on its prime object of study – i.e. the actor. Regrettably so, for the author clearly is an expert on all things intermedial, as witnessed by her extensive use of English, French, German and Polish sources to substantiate her claims. Having virtually read every publication on the matter in these languages, her enthusiasm often gets in the way of the study's heuristic targets. Put differently, after the almost four hundred pages of Pluta's book we have been provided with a panorama of contemporary intermedial theatre practice and its implications for the spectator, yet have learnt surprisingly little about the actor's own experience. Granted, in the chapter 'L'acteur entre les médias' the author does address the embodied cognition of the intermedial 'interpreter', but paradoxically only from the very specific perspective of immersive virtual reality environments.

To be certain, *L'acteur et l'intermédialité* stands as a considerable conceptual achievement, and Izabella Pluta's depiction of the intermedial actor as *reciprocal* agent (p. 122) and 'mediaphoric body' (p. 125), for one, in itself already justifies the book's heuristic objectives. Perhaps its relevance will accordingly prove greater for theoreticians than for actors reflecting on their practice. Still, as a pedagogical tool with ambitions ranging wider than the anecdotal, this was a deceptively courageous choice to make.

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