

Editorial

In the wake of Peggy Phelan's influential work on the ontology of performance - identifying performance as that which 'cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations' (146) - theatre and performance studies scholars have encouraged us to revisit, revise and contest how 'ephemerality' relates to performance, asking: what remains? What haunts? What lasts? In short, what does performance leave behind? These remnants are theatre and performance's legacies. Whether we hold them in our hands, within our bodies or inside our memories, these legacies influence the production of our histories, the genesis of our performances and the theorisation of our field.

In a way, the concept of performance legacies disrupts what it is to study or create histories. It seems that of late the label 'historian' has developed a somewhat pejorative connotation in the world of theatre/performing arts scholarship – at times carrying undertones anywhere from 'outdated' to 'irrelevant'. Conversely, it seems that some who do identify as 'historians' see themselves as a vanguard of sorts, defending the benefits of interpreting the theatre and performances of the past. In reflecting upon this issue, 'Performance Legacies,' we are happy to have highlighted the idea that all inquiries involve a wrestling with the past; creating perceptions of what has come before is implicit in all of our investigations. But whether an 'historian' or not, we are all engaged with creating a narrative of the past. In every reference to what has come before, a history is being written. The challenge of the performing arts scholar is to reconcile the tangible and intangible legacies with what we have to say today.

In his 'Theses on the Philosophy of History,' Walter Benjamin considers a painting of an angel, Paul Klee's *Angelus Novus*. Benjamin uses this painting as a metaphor for history. In the painting Benjamin imagines that:

His [the angel's] face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet [...] a storm is blowing

from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.
(249)

If the storm propelling the angel of history is progress, than the trumpery at his feet is our legacy. When we engage with that legacy, we are writing a history of it, whether explicitly or implicitly.

As you will see, the theme of this issue has brought forth a breadth of submissions which expand the ontological understand of performance legacy: ranging from the archival legacy's influence on performance to performative experimentation with legacy. The issue begins with a personal story from Sean Aita, an Associate Professor at the Arts University of Bournemouth, of how his life and research have been influenced by legacy. Aita ponders over whether performance's legacies remain only for those who can perceive it and, when under investigation, if what is perceivable reveals itself to be a rich palimpsest of histories. *Platform* would like to thank Associate Professor Aita for these musings which provide wonderful food for thought on the topic of this issue.

In the first article, 'Storied Space: Epistemology and Place in the Theatre Museum' Ella Parry-Davies examines how the dramatization of museum space intersects with performance legacies. With particular reference to the practice of documentation through performance of Suzanne Lacy's *Silver Action* and non zero one's *this is where we got to when you came in*, Parry-Davies interrogates the relationship between the culturally inscribed, carefully curated space of the performance museum and the material it presents. Foregrounding how these works have playfully deconstructed notions of 'authentic' knowledge, Parry-Davies demonstrates how the performance museum can provoke a creative engagement with performance legacies.

Next, Harriet Curtis' article 'Performance Legacies in Print and Practice: *High Performance Magazine*, 1978-1983,' examines the legacy and history of the Los-Angeles based

performance art magazine. Curtis conducts a historical inquiry that presents the magazine as both material permanence and transient archive. Drawing on its cultural context, disciplinary relationships and theoretical implication, Curtis pays particular attention to two projects, an exhibition and performance platform, making the case for the magazine as presenting a continuous revision performance art history and a publicly engaged historical record.

Penny Newell's article, 'Merz Merz Merz Merz: Performing the Remains of Mr. Kurt Schwitters,' is indeed just that: a performance. Newell problematises the narrative approach inherent in the discourse surrounding the collage-based Merz artworks of Kurt Schwitters. As the sources of this investigation become more and more layered, Newell's writing morphs into a collage of its own. This interrogation of the archive touches upon the essence of Schwitters's collages through the scholarly use of collage or *meRz* as a method of REseArCH.

Cristina Delgado-García's 'Dematerialised Political and Theatrical Legacies: Rethinking the Roots and Influences of Tim Crouch's Work' presents a re-assessment of the role of conceptual art in the work of Tim Crouch. Delgado-García emphasizes both the significance of Crouch's dramaturgical roots in a revisited theatrical ontology and materiality, and the politicised nature of conceptual art, both ideologically and aesthetically. Drawing on three works by the author: *Shopping for Shoes* (2003), *My Arm* (2003), and *ENGLAND* (2007), Delgado-García inflects a different relationship between Crouch's work and the term 'dematerialisation'.

Lastly, in 'Dynasty, Memory, and Terry: Curating the 1896 *Cymbeline*,' Sophie Duncan explores the creation and dissemination of performance legacies in Shakespeare. Focussing on Ellen Terry's seminal performance of the role of Princess Imogen in Henry Irving's 1896 production of *Cymbeline*, Duncan considers the multiple methods through which legacy is initially generated and then curated by subsequent stakeholders. Duncan's argument demonstrates the importance of a play's performance legacies to contemporary performances of Shakespeare.

This issue departs from a post graduate conference

funded by Royal Holloway, University of London, 'Performance Legacies,' which took place in the university's Handa Noh Theatre on 25 March 2013. The conference saw new scholars present on many facets of performance legacies, from the knowledge based in oral tradition to experimenting with the past by performing the archival remains. We would like to thank Royal Holloway, where this journal is based, and its staff for their backing of this conference and for their continued support of *Platform*. Developing, reviewing, writing for and publishing a print journal is an invaluable method of learning for postgraduates and early career researchers, the funding of which demonstrates Royal Holloway's commitment to providing opportunities for new research and the development of research skills.

We would also like to thank the peer and academic reviewers for their time and thoughtful feedback. Their support has provided assistance to the research of all who have submitted to this issue and this issue would not be possible without them. We would also like to thank Palgrave Macmillan, Manchester University Press and Methuen Drama for book review copies. We would also like to thank the authors of the articles and book reviews of 'Performance Legacies.' Their hard work speaks for itself.

Will Shüler, Editor

Diana Damian-Martin and Sara Reimers, Guest Editors

Works Cited

- Benjamin, Walter. 'Theses on the Philosophy of History.' *Illuminations*. 1955. Trans. Harry Zorn. 1970. London: Pimlico, 1999.
- Phelan, Peggy. *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*. New York: Routledge, 1993.