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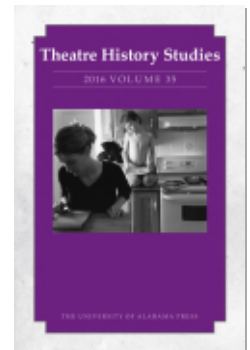
Introduction

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Introduction

—SARA FREEMAN

With this issue, I begin editing *Theatre History Studies*, and I am honored to follow in the steps of Ron Engle, Robert Schanke, Rhona Justice-Malloy, and Liz Mullenix. Because *Theatre History Studies* is an annual publication, my goal is to make each year's offering a substantial collection of historical, historiographical, and dramaturgical-historical pieces about the practice of theatre, the impact and meaning of theatre and theatrical representation in culture, and the role of performance in historical events.

To that end, each issue under my editorship will feature a selection of probing essays drawn from the general submissions we receive from scholars around the world, and there will also be a curated special section that allows for editorial shaping and commissioning around topics of current attention or emerging interest in the field of theatre studies. The contents will also feature the Schanke Award-winning paper from the previous year's Mid-America Theatre Conference (MATC), published as it was presented.

The Schanke Award, endowed by this journal's second editor, Robert A. Schanke, recognizes the outstanding essay by an untenured faculty presenter at the MATC conference. The 2015 award-winning paper, by Chandra Owenby Hopkins, investigates and documents the mode of "theatrical installation" employed by the Atlanta-based Alliance Theatre for their 2014 staging of former poet laureate Natasha Trethewey's collection of poems *Native Guard*. Hopkins positions the production as an intervention in theatrical form around race and the history of the Civil War that suggests ways of "reshaping interactions in the contemporary southern United States."

Hopkins's essay is also joined by an article-length version of Irma Mayorga's powerful keynote address from the 2015 conference, "En Ser Inspirado | *On Being Inspired*." When delivered in Kansas City, Mayorga's speech lit the room on fire. The authority and intimacy of Mayorga's argument about how not to ignore or neglect Latino/a theatre in the United States and her history of the inception of the Latina/o Theatre Commons demand attention from theatre scholars.

Moving back to the start, this issue begins with two essays that look closely at moments in German theatre, recovering, as Hopkins and Mayorga do, genealogies of cultural ideas about artistic forms and recording the work of theatrical "first responders" to huge social and political changes. Rebecca Rovit's microhistory about the immediate reinstatement of theatre production in Berlin "from the rubble" of the war with a 1945–1946 season recovers figures like Fritz Wisten and Gunther Weisenborn for the same type of serious consideration afforded Brecht and his company's work a decade later. Scott Venters does close reconstructions of two mass spectacle performances—the Nazi-tinged *Olympic Youth* performed at the opening of the 1936 Olympic Games and an 1817 commemoration day event supporting German nationalism staged by the gymnastic students of Friedrich Jahn—to uncover the functioning of a commemorative body in German cultural performance.

Both Rovit's essay and the one by Brian E. G. Cook go deep into a particular archive of materials. Cook's discussion of Cherub Theatre company's paradoxical position in British theatre from the 1970s to the 1990s harnesses both first-person narratives and seemingly impersonal institutional documents held in official and personal collections to highlight what range of concepts might matter to scholars looking to chart the artistic success, influence, or historical importance of theatrical production. Steve Tillis's article dilates out even farther around the notion of canonization and importance, arguing for scholars and teachers to take a "long view" of theatre history. Tillis especially shows how durational histories that include world theatrical forms, not just Western aesthetic traditions, reveal different patterns and turning points in theatre history. From the microhistory to the long view, these four essays all affirm that the work of theatre history research is to go deeper and to see more specifically how historical developments and theatrical forms related to one another.

The central curated section, "Rethinking the Maternal," presents a strong focus on dramatic literature. Collaborating with Sheila Rabillard and Karen Bamford, two Canadian scholars of drama, on this special section has been a great pleasure. I presented at the conference they hosted on the topic at Mt. Allison University, New Brunswick, in 2008 and am pleased to see this selection of essays coalesce for publication. Their introduction and the assembled essays

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create a compelling case that motherhood is an aspect of human experience that presents formal and symbolic difficulties for theatrical representation and, importantly, that modes of engaging with motherhood in theatrical meaning-making have been until recently under-researched in histories of dramatic literature and histories of stage production.

Elaine Aston's germinal article "A Critical Step to the Side Performing the Loss of Mother" came out in *Theatre Research International* in 2007. Jozefina Komporalý's *Staging Motherhood: British Women Playwrights 1956 to the Present* came out the same year. In 2013, Palgrave published Bailey McDaniel's *(Re)constructing Maternal Performance in Twentieth Century American Drama*. Rabilard and Bamford's special section joins these scholarly currents, providing the types of histories that emerge from analyses of the action and imagery of play-scripts, revealing how works that perform motherhood contain potent documentations of culture and gender.

We study theatre history for both the big ideas and the revealing details. This range of articles has both, urging us to document, rethink, and breathe in (*inspire*) the potentials and material impacts of theatrical form and production.