NEW DIRECTIONS IN THEATRE

General Editor JULIAN HILTON

Performance

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Performance

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Contents

<i>General Editor's Preface</i>	vi
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	vii
<i>Preface: Shakespeare, Sonnet 15</i>	viii
1 All in War with Time: To Perform or not to Perform?	1
2 This Huge Stage: A New Poetics?	11
3 I Engraft You New: Learning to Perform	40
4 Naught but Shows: Towards a New Poetics of Performance (i)	63
5 Their Brave State: Movement and Sound	91
6 Cheered and Checked: Performers and Audiences	127
7 Out of Memory: Towards a New Poetics of Performance (ii)	146
<i>Notes</i>	159
<i>Select Bibliography</i>	164
<i>Index</i>	167

General Editor's Preface

In the past ten years, Theatre Studies has experienced remarkable international growth, students seeing in its marriage of the practical and the intellectual a creative and rewarding discipline. Some countries are now opening school and degree programmes in Theatre Studies for the first time; others are having to accommodate to the fact that a popular subject attracting large numbers of highly motivated students has to be given greater attention than hitherto. The professional theatre itself is changing, as graduates of degree and diploma programmes make their way through the 'fringe' into established theatre companies, film and television.

Two changes in attitudes have occurred as a result: first, that the relationship between teachers and practitioners has significantly improved, not least because many more people now have experience of both; secondly, that the widespread academic suspicion about theatre as a subject for study has at least been squarely faced, if not fully discredited. Yet there is still much to be done to translate the practical and educational achievements of the past decade into coherent theory, and this series is intended as a contribution to that task. Its contributors are chosen for their combination of professional and didactic skills, and are drawn from a wide range of countries, languages and styles in order to give some impression of the subject in its international perspective.

This series offers no single programme or ideology; yet all its authors have in common the sense of being in a period of transition and debate out of which the theory and practice of theatre cannot but emerge in a new form.

University of East Anglia

JULIAN HILTON

Acknowledgements

My debts in writing this book are considerable. The University of East Anglia granted me study leave to write part of it, and the ideas it contains I can scarcely call my own in any proprietorial sense since they have developed over nine years of teaching with friends and students. As always, the help of the Shakespeare Bibliothek at the University of Munich, and Dr Ingeborg Boltz in particular, have greatly assisted my research. Nicholas Brooke, Heinz Fischer, Elinor Shaffer, Tony Frost, Tony Gash and Ralph Yarrow all shaped my thinking, as have generations of students too many to thank individually. I hope they will regard this as a product of an ensemble I have been proud to belong to. To Malcolm Bolton I owe a great debt in introducing me to the art of word-processing, which has changed my life. Sarah Mahaffy has helped at every stage.

In the course of writing this book two valued friends died, Dr Anton Büchner and Frau Marie Schwertler. Anton Büchner gave me the inestimable benefit of his personal experience of over nine decades of theatre-going, reminding me that fashions in theatre criticism change as fast as fashions in the theatre itself. Marie Schwertler spent fifty years in circus and variety performing throughout Europe and North Africa as Little Peppi. She endured social ostracisation, political persecution and chronic ill health in her long career, yet never lost faith in performance. I admire and miss them both.

J. H.

Preface:

Shakespeare, Sonnet 15

When I consider everything that grows
Holds in perfection but a little moment,
That this huge stage presenteth naught but shows
Whereon the stars in secret influence comment;
When I perceive that men as plants increase,
Cheered and checked even by the selfsame sky,
Vaunt in their youthful sap, at height decrease,
And wear their brave state out of memory;
Then the conceit of this inconstant stay
Sets you most rich in youth before my sight,
Where wasteful Time debateth with Decay,
To change your day of youth to sullied night;
And, all in war with Time for love of you,
As he takes from you, I engraft you new.