

Nordic Theatre Studies

Nordic Theatre Studies is an annual journal for scholars writing on all aspects of Nordic theatre and for Nordic theatre scholars writing on any aspect of theatre.

The journal uses peer review with an external board of referees. *Nordic Theatre Studies* is published by Föreningen Nordiska Teaterforskare (Association of Nordic Theatre Scholars).

Furthermore, the editors invite contributions on themes deemed pertinent for a scholarly discourse in the Nordic milieu. See the last page of this issue concerning the framework for forthcoming volumes. There is also an open section for articles on other aspects of theatre research.

Manuscripts should be submitted in English. Contributions to *Nordic Theatre Studies* should be submitted as an attachment (Word) to an e-mail. The length of the article should be 35 000 characters approx., including punctuation marks, blanks, notes and references.

Editorial rules are available from the Editor in Chief and will be sent automatically to all authors whose articles are to be published.

The editors reserve the right to reject any manuscript, whether it is a commissioned piece of work or a spontaneously submitted contribution.

A manuscript sent to *Nordic Theatre Studies* must not be submitted to another publication at the same time. *Nordic Theatre Studies* does not publish translations of articles published elsewhere.

Article submissions should be sent to the Editor in Chief, Anneli Saro, e-mail: anneli.saro@ut.ee

Books for review should be sent to Magnus Tor Torbergsson, Iceland Academy of the Arts, Solvholsgata 13 / 101 Reykjavik / Iceland.

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COVER

The photo is from the Big Stage course arranged in collaboration with the Finnish Theatre Academy, Tampere University and the University of Industrial Arts at the Tampere Workers' Theatre in spring 2009. MA students from the various disciplines of theatre making participated in a ten day, intensive workshop experimenting with stage machinery. The workshops advanced from simple experiments with an empty space to experimenting with all the technological machinery available to today's theatre. The course has been repeated with the same concept every 2-3 years, always with 70-80 students and a dozen teachers working from 9 am to 9 pm. Photo: Kimmo Karjunen.

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Introduction: Theatre and Technology

ULLA KALLENBACH AND ANNELI SARO

This issue of *Nordic Theatre Studies* aims to bring to the forefront a topic, which has often been relegated to the backstage of the theatre. Since the earliest theatrical endeavours, technology has been an integral part of the performance. Ranging from the spectacular – like the *mechane* (crane) and the *Deus ex machina* – to the invisible – such as the inbuilt acoustic enhancements of the ancient masks – technology, from the onset, permeated the entire theatrical experience. Yet, it has been the *techné* – the craft or art – of the actor, which has received principal attention. Nonetheless, the craft of the actor is heavily dependent on the technology of sound, lighting, scenery and so forth.

Technology is never mere mechanics. As Christopher Baugh writes, “[t]echnologies may have meanings in and of themselves, and are not simple servants to the mechanistic needs of scenic representation. They are an expression of a relationship with the world and reflect complex human values and beliefs.”¹ Accordingly, technology (in- and outside the theatre) is also heavily interrelated with the dramaturgy of performance. This in turn raises the question of how technology shapes the performance and audience experience.

In recent years, technology has become an exceedingly pressing issue, both on- and off stage. Film technology has become an integral part of the theatrical performance, the digital technology of online services has enhanced and extended the scope of both the performance itself and of theatre companies. Furthermore, mobile technology, as well as social media, have altered the ways in which

audiences can engage with theatre. Even the future and past converge, as novel technologies of virtual simulations allows for new insights into historical theatre. Such developments raise principal questions related to the ontology, aesthetics and ethics of theatre. What happens when the performance is no longer confined to the locus of the stage, but may even be globally dispersed? Or when the crux of performance is no longer actual but virtual reality?

Willmar Sauter considers this extensive technological development and its conflation with theatre the most challenging task for current theatre research. He has pointed out that, “[i]n order to deal with this new phenomenon of simultaneous, interactive, albeit dislocated communication between stage and auditorium, theatre scholars will have to revise their theoretical concepts about what constitutes a theatrical performance and respond to the technologically revised position of the audience as a constitutive component of the theatrical event”.² The present volume seeks to tackle some of the above-mentioned topics and presents a collection of articles that all question the *logia* – the logic – of technology.

Ellen Gjervan casts a historical view on the use of technology for political ends. Comparing the political strategies of the court masques of the early 1600s and the illegitimate mute genres of the late Georgian London theatre, Gjervan explores how the spectacle and illusion of technology may both consolidate and subvert power.

Laura Gröndahl, in her article, gives first a historical overview of lighting technologies and sceno-

graphic practices of indoor theatre. Questioning the influence of stage lighting on the processes of scenic design and the functioning of performance space, Gröndahl also sheds light on the metaphorical connotations of light as a basic component of the visual *mise-en-scène*, putting into perspective the important position of technology in-between practical and metaphorical aspects. Finally, she examines the contributions of projection technology and multimedia theatre, suggesting that stage lighting has developed from a supporting technical tool into a sovereign artistic agency.

In the following article, Elena Pérez investigates performance works at the convergence of digital media and contemporary performance. She explores how digital technology has led to a so-called expansion of the theatrical space, asking both exactly what such an expansion means and how it has affected spectatorship. In a discussion of three forms of performance – multimedia theatre, telematic and pervasive performance – Pérez demonstrates how the expansion of space implies a more participatory stance in the role of the audience.

Drawing on recent interdisciplinary research projects, Matthew Delbridge and Riku Roihankopi discuss how the technology of Performance Capture allows for new ways of interacting in and with performances. Performance Capture is understood here as motion sensing technological means that record all performative aspects of a live performance and translate them directly from physical space to screen. The authors discuss intermedial strategies of psychophysical interaction with virtual technology and analyse their exercises with the aim of revising manners of performing and directing particular to technological stagings.

Susanna Virkki's article focuses on technology as an intermediate of the on- and the off-stage in an analysis of theatre photography. Through a history of Finnish theatre photography she discusses how technological advances have influenced theatre photography. She also considers the fluctuating status of theatre photography as works of art, commercials and documents of performance.

The last two articles of the number belong to the open section. Ulla Kallenbach, in her article, concentrates on a turning point of cultural history ana-

lysing Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* (1879) in the context of the redefinition of imagination that took place in the transition from idealism and romanticism to modernism and realism. In the context of theatre and technology, it is also significant that the defeat of idealism took place at a time of growing industrialization and of major technological and scientific advances.

The last article, written by Steve Wilmer, bridges the current number with the following one entitled *Theatre and the Nomadic Subject*. Wilmer gives a deep insight into the artistic life of Lithuanian-born artist George Maciunas, known also as a founder of the Fluxus movement at the beginning of the 1960s. The essay tackles the nature of the Fluxus movement as nomadic based on Rosi Braidotti's notion of the nomadic subject. Fluxus, as a promoter of a lifestyle ignoring state or lingual borders and artworks without limits, can be seen as a predecessor of contemporary globalized artistic practices.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

- 1 Christopher Baugh, *Theatre, Performance and Technology: The Development and Transformation of Scenography*, Palgrave Macmillan, London 2013, p. 8.
- 2 Willmar Sauter, "Back to the future of theatre studies" in *Theatre Research International*, vol. 35, issue 3, 2010, p. 298.