

BROADSIDE

37/3 Summer 2010

Newsletter of the Theatre Library Association



L-R: *The Petrified Prince* costumes, Lucille Lortel dress, *Shanghai Moon*, and *Die Mommie Die!* Costumes; Lortel Awards, May 2, 2010

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BROADSIDE PUBLICATION GUIDELINES

BROADSIDE is the principal medium through which the Theatre Library Association communicates news, activities, policies, and procedures. Collectively, past issues also provide historical information about the organization and the profession of performing arts librarianship. *BROADSIDE* has no ambition to serve as a scholarly journal. Scholarly and other articles or monographs may be considered for TLA's other principal publication, *Performing Arts Resources*.

In addition, *BROADSIDE* serves as a means for the exchange among members of information that advances the mission of the organization. Examples of this include short news items about recent activities of both individual and institutional members; short reviews of relevant books and other resources; news of relevant exhibits, conferences, and other developments in performing arts librarianship, collections, and scholarship.

In keeping with the aims of a newsletter, and to help the Editor and the TLA Publications Committee to maintain fair and consistent editorial policies, the Publications Committee has developed the following guidelines.

PHOTO CREDITS:

Cover and page 8, L-R: The Petrified Prince costumes; Lucille Lortel dress, *Shanghai Moon*, and *Die Mommie Die!* Lortel Awards, May 2, 2010; photo courtesy of Ryan Donaldson.

Page 4, Kenneth Schlesinger in South Africa; Elizabeth Adkins, photographer.

Page 8, L-R: Ryan Donaldson, Archivist for the Durst Organization; June Reich, Archivist for BAM and Sesame Workshop; Tiffany Nixon, Archivist for Roundabout Theatre Company; photo courtesy of Ryan Donaldson.

Page 9, Frederic Woodbridge Wilson; image taken from <http://arcadia.org/wilson/fww-sketch.html>

Page 12, Gary Sinise and Terry Kinney in *The Indian Wants the Bronx*, Steppenwolf Theatre, 1976; Lisa Howe-Ebright, photographer.

1. Priority in the publication of articles will be given to the Association's officers, members of the Board, and chairs of committees. These articles provide the most important means by which the leadership of the Association communicates recent Board decisions, upcoming TLA-sponsored events, appeals for member involvement, etc.
2. TLA members in good standing are encouraged to submit news items that are in keeping with the statement above. All submissions are subject to editing for length, clarity, and factual confirmation.
3. Letters to the Editor are encouraged, but must be limited to 200 words, due to space considerations.
4. Reviews of books or other resources are an excellent way for members to contribute to TLA and the profession. Reviews should be limited to 500 words and should include a concise summary of the resource, a comparison of it to similar resources, and a brief evaluation. Suggestions and unsolicited reviews should be sent to the Book Review Editor.
5. The copyright of all articles published in *BROADSIDE* will be owned by TLA. Permission to republish an article may be requested from the Editor.
6. Ideas for articles – other than brief news items, book reviews, or submissions from officers and committee chairs – should be submitted to the Editor in advance in order to allow sufficient time to plan layout, provide constructive suggestions, and occasionally seek guidance from the Publications Committee. Articles should relate to performing arts libraries, library resources, or related topics in performing arts scholarship, rather than to general performing arts topics.

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SUBSCRIBE TLA-L your name

MISSION STATEMENT

Founded in 1937, the Theatre Library Association supports librarians and archivists affiliated with theatre, dance, performance studies, popular entertainment, motion picture and broadcasting collections. TLA promotes professional best practices in acquisition, organization, access and preservation of performing arts resources in libraries, archives, museums, private collections, and the digital environment. By producing publications, conferences, panels, and public events, TLA fosters creative and ethical use of performing arts materials to enhance research, live performance, and scholarly communication.



JOIN US!

Membership

(Annual dues: \$30 personal, \$40 institutional; \$20 student/non-salaried members. In order to defray the rising costs of international postage, members with non-U.S. mailing addresses are now required to pay a \$10 surcharge.) includes *Performing Arts Resources*, published occasionally. For availability and prices of past issues of *PAR* and *BROADSIDE*, contact info@tla-online.org



Kenneth Schlesinger in South Africa

TLA's Board conducted its spring meeting at Hunter College. As a first for the organization, we managed to *Skype* in three Board members from Austin, Seattle, and Charleston, SC. We not only achieved our quorum but this has already proven an effective solution to facilitate participation from national members with restricted travel funds.

Publications

The Board commended Rob Melton for his effective leadership of this active Committee. Our

Author's Agreement has been successfully implemented with PAR 27 on *Documenting: Costume Design*, which we hope you'll receive by the time you read this. Nancy Friedland has done a splendid job compiling this comprehensive volume with 34 contributors, featuring a special insert with color illustrations.

Another strong feature is that we have several PAR issues in the pipeline. Stephen Johnson has already begun to receive proposals for his PAR 28: *A Tyranny of Documents: The Performance*

Historian as Film Noir Detective. And the Board accepted John Calhoun's Proposal for PAR 30 on *Documenting: Scenic Design*. We are beginning to brainstorm on our upcoming 75th Anniversary volume.

Conference Planning

Susan Brady announced an exciting roster for the TLA Plenary, *Harnessing the Powers of Performance: Documentation Strategies for Theater and Dance*. It is slated for the CORD/ASTR/TLA Conference in Seattle

on November 20, featuring scholars from Bucknell, Johns Hopkins and University of Maryland. We're in the process of organizing an intriguing tour of historic theatres in downtown Seattle, which—as you know—has the *bluest skies you've ever seen* . . .

Board member Brook Stowe is putting finishing touches on his panel, *Dress Me Up with Your Research*, for the ALA Conference in Washington, D.C. Set and costume designers from the nation's capitol will share their research experiences of mounting historically-based productions.

Steve Kuehler and his committee updated us on Symposium III on Shakespearean Interpretation, running the gamut from the traditional, to the exploded, to off the charts [we call this *Rush Up Your Shakespeare*!]. Public Theater Artistic Director Oskar Eustis has signed on to Keynote and Diane Paulus of ART will discuss her *Shakespeare Exploded!* Festival. You won't want to miss this. Please mark your calendars for April 22, 2011.

I'll be traveling to Munich this summer to attend SIBMAS' 2010 Conference, *Performing Arts Collections: Uniting Past and Future* [expect a photo of me from Germany!]. TLA is currently in discussions with SIBMAS about co-presenting their 2012 Conference at the Harry Ransom Center in Austin. A current theme being explored is the relationship of theatre companies with research institutions.

Archives Initiative

Speaking of which, Vice President Susan Brady is presently involved in an initiative with ASTR to work with theatre companies on organizing their archives. They are seeking funding from the National Endowment for the Arts to undertake a nationwide survey of holdings, then identify specialists to work with regional companies. TLA is fully committed to supporting this important program, long overdue and sorely needed.

Book Awards

As you're aware, several years ago we restructured our annual Book Awards to give more emphasis to the winning authors. With this in mind, the Board supported Book Awards Chair Brook Stowe's proposal to reinstate the Special Jury Prizes [honorable mentions]. We would like to broaden the field of outstanding books that we recognize and have more scholars involved in this celebration.

Awards and Scholarships

We're pleased to announce that this year's *Distinguished Service Award* will go to Kevin Winkler, former TLA President and longtime Emcee of the Book Awards. Kevin recently left the Library for the Performing Arts to accept a promotion as Deputy Director of Public Service at New York Public Library. We believe this is the optimal year to acknowledge Kevin's ongoing contributions to the performing arts research field as a scholar, teacher and practitioner.

Following from this, I proposed a new *Brooks McNamara Performing*

Arts Librarian Scholarship to honor and support emerging members of our profession. The Board feels a strong responsibility to recruit, mentor and foster future members of our illustrious calling. We had considerable discussion about creating networking opportunities for our newest members and facilitating appropriate professional development. Nancy Friedland generously volunteered to chair the Scholarship Committee. We look forward to honoring our first recipient in 2011.

At any rate, you can begin to sense the breadth and depth of activity of Theatre Library Association and its committed members in publications, conference planning, and recognition of excellence. It's a particularly exciting time to be leading this energetic organization. But—beyond our noteworthy programs and offerings—the greatest strength of TLA is you: our members.

Happy Summer,

Kenneth Schlesinger
President

Roundabout Theatre Company Archives

Building the Roundabout's Archives

Approaching its 45th season, Roundabout Theatre Company has a great story to tell. With such a long history—beginning with the now-legendary basement theatre in the Chelsea grocery store on West 23rd Street to its current role managing four theatre houses in and around the Times Square corridor, including legendary Studio 54—it might come as a surprise to learn that the company archives were begun only one short year ago.

While the company understood the need to form an archive to house its ever-growing production and institutional history, its role as a large not-for-profit theatre company, often with four productions running concurrently, forced it to focus on staging upcoming productions rather than maintaining materials generated from past productions. Managing such high-volume seasons left little time for mobilizing an archive but the company had strong internal advocates—Julia C. Levy, Executive Director, External Affairs, and Julie D'Andrea, former Director of Institutional Giving—who worked to solidify earmarked funds to initiate a permanent archive.

Their vision was realized in 2008 when the Leon Levy Foundation, a strong proponent of funding initiatives at arts institutions, recognized the need for preserving Roundabout's history and provided the company with

the much-needed seed money to initiate the archive. Consultants were brought in to prepare collection assessments and provide the company with a suggested phasing plan to begin the long task of building the archives. I was hired in December 2008 as the company archivist and, working as a lone arranger, have had the pleasure each day of maintaining—and making further acquisitions toward—the Roundabout Theatre Company Archives.

While much of the early documentation is lost to company moves and regularly scheduled purges, significant documentation is intact. Production materials including playbills, photographs, window cards, scripts, contracts, budgets, and artistic correspondence are in place representing productions dating back to the mid-1960s. The archives are far from having a solid chronology of materials but efforts are continually made to recover materials in the hands of past designers, photographers, artistic collaborators, and private collectors.

Housing the Roundabout Archives

Roundabout's archives are located in the basement of a midtown office building. The space consists of one main room with five smaller adjoined rooms. Historically the space was used for scenic building and storage, with the smaller rooms dedicated to rehearsal costumes and small props storage. With a space already carved out in

the administrative building, the room was re-appropriated and outfitted to house the archives. After a major cleaning effort and the installation of shelving and an archives-compliant HVAC system, Roundabout's archives were up and running by mid-2009. A dedicated archives server was installed in the company's IT server room and a commercial-grade flatbed scanner and two computers were installed. Surveyed materials housed in offices, theatre spaces, and off-site storage sites were brought to the basement archives, thus creating the core collection.

The Core Collection

The core collection consists of approximately 600 linear feet (growing rapidly daily) of materials, including historic theatre renovation documentation on three major theatres, extensive production files (budgets, performance reports, contracts), institutional files (Board Minutes, staff meetings, etc.), correspondence files, marketing materials, costumes, play reading workshop materials, and development files (annual galas, fundraising events). A large collection of media—both audio and video—exists in older formats that in time will be migrated for full digital access. Included in the media collection are artist interviews, opening night photos, press footage, etc. Due to the nature of the space—a basement facility with a less-than-ideal environment—measures

were taken to stabilize the temperature and decrease humidity. An air-conditioning unit was researched, purchased and installed to maintain a consistent 68 degrees with relative humidity at 43 percent. Humidity and water leaks were a problem prior to the room being outfitted for the archives, but work was done to seal off waterways and move shelving and thus far water problems have been a non-issue. All materials in the core collection are stored in size- and material-appropriate Hollinger boxes on density shelving through the archives. Our non-archives costume stock is housed on racks in a separate room with humidity maintained and monitored. Archival costumes are removed from circulation and photographed, cataloged, and tissue-wrapped in flat 38x24x6 polypropylene boxes.

The archives consultants identified materials in need of restoration (mainly production posters and photographs), but thankfully much of the materials in the collection are in good condition making minor tears easy to repair. To date, all identified backlog materials have been accounted for and are on schedule for processing, cataloging, and scanning projects on an on-going basis.

It is relevant to note that much of the core collection is considered “active,” as the production files contain materials reviewed and consulted on a regular basis. Access to these materials is granted to staff on request, with access forms utilized to loan and track the materials. As the

archives move into a more public phase, codes, restrictions, and forms for external access will be initiated. Also at that time, it is hoped that the archives space will be reevaluated both in terms of long-term sustainability and spatial limitations.

Digital Records and Using Collective Access as a Cataloging Tool

In order to manage the collection in the digital realm, the archives consulted with Seth Kaufman, a database engineer whose open-source software, Collective Access (www.collectiveaccess.org), is effectively used by many institutions to manage their special collections. Applying Collective Access, with individualized templates aimed at Roundabout’s varied collection, we are in the process of cataloging at folder level every detail of the collection, including objects that often fall outside the range of traditional cataloging packages such as multimedia and textiles. In the future, a front end will be designed and significant portions of the archives will go live.

What’s Next For Roundabout’s Archives

As already stated, the archives is yet to be fully processed/cataloged, making access by outside researchers a distant goal; in the meantime, the collection serves as a significant resource for the company’s staff and artistic collaborators who look to the many aspects of past productions for inspiration and reference. The collection is open to staff Monday through Friday during the hours of

10-6 and by special appointment. The archives plans to mount small exhibitions showcasing costumes, photographs, and other theatre ephemera over the course of the next few years and is presently conducting oral history interviews with many key artists and employees whose work greatly shaped the history of the company.

Much gratitude is given to the Leon Levy Foundation whose support, enthusiasm, and care has enabled the running of the Roundabout Theatre Company Archives and has helped shape the spirit of its collection.

**Tiffany Nixon, Archivist
Roundabout Theatre Company
Archives**

Lortel Awards - 25th Anniversary Archives Exhibit

The 25th annual Lortel Awards took place on May 2, 2010 at the Manhattan music venue, Terminal 5. In order to celebrate this milestone year, a small exhibit was mounted to showcase past productions, designers, and the countless Off Broadway companies which have received awards throughout the years. By all accounts, the exhibit was a success and brought much-needed attention to the need for proactive measures in the collection and preservation of Off Broadway ephemera.



L-R: Detail of exhibit. *The Petrified Prince* costumes, Lucille Lortel dress, *Shanghai Moon*, and *Die Mommie Die!* costumes. Lortel Awards, May 2, 2010

Tiffany Nixon (Archivist for Roundabout Theatre), Ryan Donaldson (Archivist for the Durst Organization) and June Reich (Archivist at Brooklyn Academy of Music and Sesame Workshop) curated the exhibit salon style, and included costumes, window cards, playbills, and photographs in the display. All materials were borrowed from the respective Off Broadway companies and a generous loan of six dress forms from the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts (thanks to curator Barbara Cohen-Stratynier) ensured that the borrowed costumes were well displayed.

Included in the materials were three lovely costumes designed by Judith Dolan for the 1995 production of *The Petrified Prince* at the Public Theater (costumes courtesy of Luke McDonough/The Public Theater); two outstanding costumes designed by Michael Bottari and Ronald Case for the productions *Die Mommie Die!* (2008) and *Shanghai Moon* (2003) (costumes courtesy of Michael Bottari and Ronald Case); and a dress suit worn by Lucille Lortel (circa 1990) (costume courtesy of the Lortel Foundation). Other Off Broadway ephemera on display featured productions and awards from Second Stage, Manhattan Theatre Club, Tectonic Theatre Project, Roundabout Theatre Company, Classic Stage Company, and many others.

**Tiffany Nixon, Archivist
Roundabout Theatre Company Archives**



**L-R: Ryan Donaldson, Archivist for the Durst Organization;
June Reich, Archivist for BAM and Sesame Workshop; Tiffany
Nixon, Archivist for Roundabout Theatre Company**

Fredric Woodbridge Wilson, Curator of the Harvard Theatre Collection



Fredric Woodbridge Wilson, Curator of the Harvard Theatre Collection, died on May 15th of pancreatic cancer. He was 62 and lived in Watertown, Mass.

In thirteen years at Harvard, Mr. Wilson curated more than forty exhibitions, on such diverse aspects of theater as Paul Robeson's famous production of *Othello*, early 20th century American musical theater, the crossover between 19th century museums and theaters, and the artwork of Al Hirschfeld. Many of his exhibitions explored his favorite corner of theatrical history: 19th century British theater, including British Theatrical Caricatures, British Pantomime, British Toy Theater, and Gilbert and Sullivan Operas, a subject on which he was widely considered an expert. His last (and largest) exhibition, which

opened in April 2009, was a centenary celebration of Serge Diaghilev's Ballets Russes.

Several of his exhibitions traveled to other institutions. His Hirschfeld was shown at the Morgan Library and Museum in New York and at the McNay Museum in San Antonio, and his centenary exhibition on the Harvard Theatre Collection was also shown at the Grolier Club in New York.

Mr. Wilson was born at Point Pleasant, New Jersey, on September 8, 1947. He was raised on the New Jersey Shore, where he had a home until 2008. His father, Fred W. Wilson, Jr., was a school teacher, and his mother, Ruth Chapman Wilson, was a homemaker. His early interests were music, science and mathematics. An ambitious science hobbyist, in his freshman year of high school he won a nationwide contest to design a two-stage model rocket, sponsored by the National Association of Rocketry and Estes Industries, the largest industry sponsor of model rocketry.

He attended Lehigh University, initially as a physics major but ultimately as its first-ever music major, graduating in 1969. At Lehigh he developed a deep interest in choral music, having served as assistant conductor and then as a manager of the university's esteemed glee club. Upon graduation, he returned to his own high school to become its choral director. He spent the next ten years conducting choirs at Wall

High School and at several local colleges. While in graduate school in musicology at New York University, he began conducting choirs in New York, including the Washington Square Chorus, the choir of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, and several early music groups. Over a period of twelve years he conducted more than 500 choral performances, most of unaccompanied music from all periods.

Mr. Wilson was also fascinated by computer programming, having been one of the earliest purchasers of an IBM personal computer — whose cost in 1981 was exactly equal to his accumulated pension from ten years of school teaching. Self-taught in assembly language and C+, he developed computer applications for arts and humanities, especially a suite of text processing utility programs called "DataKit," which was widely distributed in academic and library circles in the 1980s. For several years he was president of the Northeast Association for Computers in the Humanities, based in New York.

While conducting choirs, Mr. Wilson had also been working as an editor and arranger for several music publishers, and published more than 50 arrangements of choral and early music. In 1981 he and a friend, Timothy Broege, a New Jersey-based composer, formed an independent publishing company called Allaire Music Publications. In 1982, he was awarded four first-place

awards for excellence in editing early music by the American Choral Directors Association and the Music Publishers Association.

In 1981, Mr. Wilson was appointed to the staff of the Pierpont Morgan Library, now the Morgan Library and Museum, after having become a familiar presence there as a researcher in music and opera. He was the Curator of the Morgan's renowned Gilbert and Sullivan Collection, the largest archive and collection in the world related to the Savoy Operas, a collection that also included music, poetry, journalism, and artwork of the Victorian period. At the Morgan Library, Mr. Wilson curated several exhibitions, most importantly a show in 1989 on the Gilbert and Sullivan Operas that was one of the library's largest-ever exhibitions.

Mr. Wilson left the Morgan Library in 1996 to become the Curator of the Harvard Theatre Collection, the world's oldest collection of theatrical material and still one of the largest, founded in 1901. He was the sixth curator of the collection, responsible for all acquisitions for the collection from the fields of theatre, dance, musical theatre, opera, and all forms of popular entertainment from magic to circus to minstrel shows. A week after being invited to Harvard, he received the news that he had been awarded a fellowship by the Guggenheim Foundation for his research in the history of theatrical publishing.

Mr. Wilson's publications included books and articles on Gilbert and

Sullivan, on the Renaissance composer Jacob Handl, the Ballets Russes, and most recently on the British theatrical photographer Angus McBean, which was published in the spring of 2009 by David R. Godine. He had made a special study of the history of theater and theaters in Boston, and over the past decade he led many walking tours of the city's historical theater sites.

In addition to producing exhibitions and exhibition checklists, he lectured widely and organized a number of academic conferences. In 1989 he organized a conference on nineteenth-century British musical theatre, co-sponsored by the Morgan Library and New York University. At Harvard he organized major symposia on the choreographer George Balanchine in 2004 and, in the spring of 2009, on Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. In 1999, 2002, and 2005, he convened roundtable meetings of the curators of the principal institutional theatre collections, all held at Harvard. In the 1970s he organized two festivals for chamber choirs performing a cappella repertoire.

Mr. Wilson was a familiar figure at Boston arts performances, having attended more than 150 performances in many seasons. He was a subscriber to many of the city's major music, opera, ballet, and theatre organizations, and attended most Harvard student productions and plays as well as operas and concerts presented by other universities and conservatories. He was an active member of the Society of Printers, the Harvard Musical Association, the Old Cambridge Shakespeare

Association, the Signet Society at Harvard, and the Senior Common Room of Lowell House, and a proprietor of the Boston Athenaeum. He had served on the board of directors of the Dance Heritage Coalition, the Theatre Library Association, and the Music Publishers Association, among other organizations.

He is survived by a sister, Elaine Chapman Mazzara, a brother-in-law, Walter Mazzara, of Brick, New Jersey, and two nieces. Arrangements are private.

Nena Couch
Curator and Professor
The Jerome Lawrence and
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THE BROADSIDE NEWS NETWORK

Please send news items relating to new collections, exhibits, staff transitions, etc. at your institution, or news of TLA members' professional activities and publications, to your regional reporter:

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California: Los Angeles

"Inside the Hollywood Fan Magazine," an exhibit at the Doheny Memorial Library at the University of Southern California, charts the development of the fan magazine from the golden years when *Motion Picture Story Magazine* and *Photoplay* first appeared in 1911 to its transition into provocative headlines and sensationalism in the 1960s and afterward. The fan magazine has often been viewed as a publicity tool, an arbiter of good and bad taste, a source of knowledge, and a gateway to the fabled land of Hollywood. The opening reception with exhibition

contributor and author Anthony Slide was held on April 29; film critic and USC lecturer Leonard Maltin provided opening remarks. In addition to contributions from Mr. Slide, the exhibition showcases items from more than ten USC Libraries collections. The exhibit closes on July 30. A virtual exhibit, featuring two dozen fan magazine covers, can be visited here:

http://www.usc.edu/libraries/about/programs_exhibitions/hollywood/swf/hollywood-fan-magazine.swf

UCLA University Librarian Gary E. Strong, who appointed a task force last fall to examine the future of the UCLA Arts Library, has determined for the time being to keep the Arts Library open in its present space. "It is clear that we will need more time to examine this complex, multifaceted subject further and to gather input from constituencies including administrators, faculty, students, and donors," Strong wrote to colleagues. "The UCLA Library's primary objective in undertaking this review and assessment is to provide participants in UCLA's acclaimed programs in the visual and performing arts with the world-class collections, services, and facilities they need."

California: Simi Valley

All 208 episodes of television's "General Electric Theater" (1954-1962), hosted by then-actor Ronald Reagan, most believed to be damaged or lost, were recently uncovered in the General Electric/NBC Universal Archives. They have been restored to broadcast

quality for use in the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley. They were delivered by GE's CEO Jeff Immelt to former First Lady Nancy Reagan on June 16 as part of the two-year celebration of the late President's 100th birthday. GE is also donating money for the construction of a new General Electric Theater that will focus on Reagan's career in radio, television and film.

Connecticut: Fairfield

Marti LoMonaco, TLA member and Immediate Past President, recently published a fascinating article on Mormon outdoor pageants, based primarily on her research in Nauvoo, Illinois. The article is in the 2009 edition (vol. 17) of *Theatre Symposium*, the journal of the Southeast Theatre Conference.

Connecticut: Storrs

The Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry, located on the University of Connecticut's Depot Campus in Storrs, currently has on exhibit "Punch and Judy: Handpuppets, Politics, and Humor," which traces the development of the handpuppet tradition through its many forms: English (Punch and Judy), French (Guignol), German (Kasperl), and several American exponents including Charles Ludlam and Edward Gorey. (On a related note, Frank Ballard, the namesake of the museum, passed away on June 4 after a long battle with Parkinson's Disease.)

At UConn's main campus, the Homer Babbidge Library is displaying "Epic Shadows," an extensive collection of shadow puppets from the Andhra Pradesh region of India, which documents the popular tradition of itinerant puppeteers who performed episodes from Hindu epics in shamanist ritual performances. More information on both exhibits is at <http://www.bimp.uconn.edu/exhibits.html>

District of Columbia: Washington

Although grounds for its own facility have not yet been broken, the new National Museum of African American History and Culture (part of the Smithsonian Institution) has opened an exhibit celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Apollo Theatre in Harlem. Titled "Ain't Nothing Like the Real Thing: How the Apollo Theater Shaped American Entertainment," the exhibition explores the Apollo's seminal impact on American popular culture. The exhibit uses graphic images, film, costumes, music scores, playbills, instruments and artist interviews to recreate the experience of those individuals who visited the iconic building on 125th Street in Manhattan over its 75-year history. The exhibit is on display in the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History through August 29.

Illinois: Chicago

The Chicago Public Library has received a generous grant from the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation to digitize over 2000 of its pre-1922 historic



Gary Sinise and Terry Kinney in *The Indian Wants the Bronx*, Steppenwolf Theatre, 1976

Chicago theater playbills. The digitized playbills will be made available for research through ContentDM on CPL's website (<http://www.chipublib.org/>). Highlights include playbills for productions starring Edwin Booth, Joseph Jefferson and Sarah Bernhardt. The project will be completed in 2011.

Also at CPL: The exhibit "Capturing Chicago Theater: 35 Years of Theater Photography by Lisa How-Ebright (1974-2009)" features photographs of productions from the Goodman, Steppenwolf, Northlight, and Columbia College theaters among others. The exhibit is mounted in the Special Collections Exhibit Hall on the 9th floor of the Harold Washington Library Center, 400 South State Street. The exhibit will be up through October 3. For more information: <http://www.chipublib.org/eventsprog/programs/exhibits.php>

New York: New York

The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center is currently mounting two exhibits of

interest to TLA members. Through August 21 in the Vincent Astor Gallery, "The Peregrinations and Pettifoggery of W.C. Fields" highlights the life and work of one of America's great cultural figures. The exhibit is organized by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and draws heavily on posters, photographs, correspondence, and family memorabilia held by the Academy's Margaret Herrick Library in Beverly Hills. The exhibit is accompanied by Tuesday afternoon screenings of Fields' films. For details, see <http://www.nypl.org/events/exhibitions/peregrinations-pettifoggery-w-c-fields>

On the third floor, in the Katharine Cornell-Guthrie McClintic Special Collections Reading Room of the Jerome Robbins Dance Division, is the exhibit "Celebrating Anna Sokolow," the great American choreographer who was born 100 years ago. The exhibit features an installation inspired by Sokolow's major works by Robin Meems, with assistance by Melissa Birnbaum. This exhibit will be on display through July 24. <http://www.nypl.org/events/exhibitions/celebrating-anna-sokolow>

New York: Rochester

The Rare Books and Special Collections Department of the Rush Rhees Library at the University of Rochester is currently exhibiting "Claude Bragdon and the Beautiful Necessity," a selection of papers, drawings, and designs by the modernist architect who was also known for his Song & Light

Festivals and his role in theater's New Stagecraft. Drawn from the Department's comprehensive Bragdon Family Papers, the exhibition includes Bragdon's graphic designs, architectural drawings, plans for and ephemera from Song & Light festivals, and theater designs. It will be open to the public until October 16. For more information, including details of the exhibition catalog, see <http://www.lib.rochester.edu/index.cfm?page=2273#649>

Texas: Austin

Thomas F. Staley, director of the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin for 22 years, will retire on August 31, 2011. During his tenure, the Ransom Center substantially expanded its literary and artistic holdings. Theatrical collections

acquired under his direction included the archives of Robert DeNiro, Tom Stoppard, David Mamet, David Hare, Arnold Wesker, and many others. Staley also spearheaded the Center's 2003 multimillion dollar renovation, which included a newly constructed public space for galleries, an auditorium, and a reading room.

Texas: Dallas

The National Film Preservation Foundation has provided funding to the G. William Jones Collection of the Hamon Arts Library at Southern Methodist University for restoration and preservation of the 1957 film *Carib Gold*, starring Ethel Waters, Cicely Tyson and Geoffrey Holder in a predominantly African-American cast. The story of shrimp fisherman confronting sunken treasure, the film was shot on location in Florida and represents a

"valuable record of old Key West."

Vermont: Shelburne

Shelburne Museum presents "Circus Day in America" through October 24. Featuring objects from the collections of the museum and the John and Mable Ringling Circus Museum, the exhibit recreates the Golden Age of the Circus in America (1870-1950) through posters and other memorabilia. Music, sound effects, and scent stations let the visitor experience the sounds and smells of a day at the circus. For more information, see <http://shelburnemuseum.org/exhibitions/circus-posters/>

—*This issue's BNN items have been contributed by Stephen Kuehler, Rob Melton, Catherine Ritchie, and Sarah Zimmerman.*

Hold the Date for TLA's Symposium III: "Holding Up the Mirror: Authenticity and Adaptation in Shakespeare Today"

Join your TLA colleagues on April 22, 2011 for a fascinating day of presentations by the leaders of four of America's most celebrated theatre organizations: Oskar Eustis (The Public Theater), Ralph Alan Cohen and Colleen Kelly (American Shakespeare Center), Jeffrey Horowitz (Theatre for a New Audience), and Diane Paulus (American Repertory Theater)

All these artists are renowned for the originality of their approaches to staging Shakespeare's works. But whether they seek to recreate historical performance conditions or adapt Shakespeare's plays in terms of contemporary culture and politics, these theatre practitioners all make use of the kind of documents and artifacts held in libraries and archives. Using performance excerpts, both live and on film, our presenters will show how theatre libraries and special collections can enrich the continuing vitality of Shakespeare on the 21st century stage.

The Symposium will take place in New York City. Registration will begin later this summer. Watch the TLA listserv and future issues of *BROADSIDE* for more information as plans take shape. If you'd like to volunteer to help with arrangements and with coordinating the Symposium, contact Steve Kuehler, Chair of the Symposium Planning Committee, at skuehler@comcast.net

2010 Freedley and Wall Memorial Book Award Winners & Finalists

Each year, the Theatre Library Association honors two exceptional scholarly publications published the previous year, one with the **George Freedley Memorial Award** and one with the **Richard Wall Memorial Award** (formerly the Theatre Library Association Award).

The **George Freedley Memorial Award** was established in 1968 in honor of the first Curator of the New York Public Library's Theatre Collection and first President of the Theatre Library Association. The Award is presented annually to one English-language book of exceptional scholarship published or distributed in the United States during the previous calendar year that examines some aspect of live theatre or performance.

The **Richard Wall Memorial Award**, established in 1973, honors one English-language book of exceptional scholarship in the field of recorded performance published or distributed in the United States during the previous calendar year. Formerly known as the Theatre Library Association Award, the prize was renamed in 2010 to honor the memory of the late Richard Wall, longtime TLA member and Book Awards Chair.

In addition to the Award winners, the 2010 Freedley and Wall juries designated one additional title in each category as a **Special Jury Prize** winner. A cash award accompanies both the Winning and Special Jury Prize selections in both categories.

For the 2010 Freedley and Wall Awards, more than 150 academic and commercial publishers were invited to participate, with nearly 350 titles nominated by TLA members and publishers.

The **42nd Annual Theatre Library Association Book Awards** will be held at Lincoln Center in New York City on **Friday, October 8, 2010 at 6:00pm** in the Bruno Walter Auditorium of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts (enter at Amsterdam Avenue and 65th Street). Doors open at 5:30. A champagne reception will follow. Please visit us on the web at: <http://www.tla-online.org/awards/bookawards.html>

Following is the listing of the 2010 Freedley and Wall Award and Special Jury Prize winners and finalists.

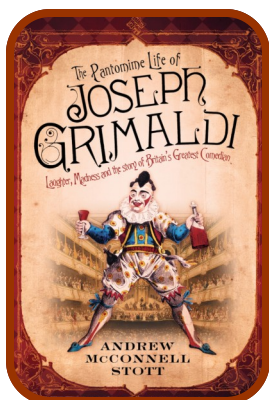
Brook Stowe, Book Awards Chair

2010 George Freedley Memorial Award Jurors

Rob Melton, University of California, San Diego
Susan Peters, University of Texas
Don B. Wilmeth, Brown University

2010 Richard Wall Memorial Award Jurors

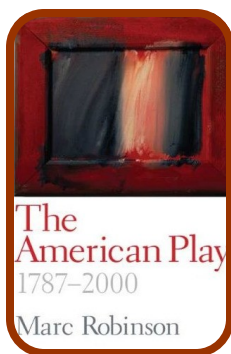
John Calhoun, New York Public Library
Charlotte Cabbage, Northwestern University
Catherine Ritchie, Dallas Public Library



Winner: 2010 George Freedley Memorial Award

The Pantomime Life of Joseph Grimaldi: Laughter, Madness and the Story of Britain's Greatest Comedian
(Canongate)
by Andrew McConnell Stott

As iconic a presence to late-18th and early 19th century audiences as Charles Chaplin was to those of the early 20th, Joseph Grimaldi was the most celebrated of English clowns. Freedley juror Don B. Wilmeth took special note of author Stott's degree of "detail devoted to the Georgian theatre as an institution in London," insight which provided a "wonderful context for Grimaldi's considerable contributions over such a short lifetime." In addition to Stott's scholarship, juror Rob Melton appreciated the physical characteristics of the book itself, noting particularly the "high quality of the paper, font (and) layout." Melton predicted that Stott's volume will be "one of those fairly rare books that will find readers in both academic and public libraries."



Special Jury Prize Winner

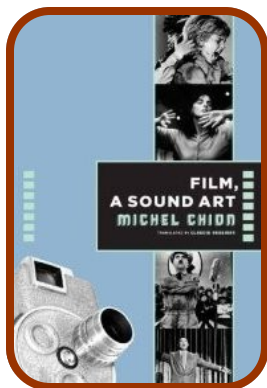
The American Play: 1787-2000
(Yale University Press)
by Marc Robinson

Freedley juror Don B. Wilmeth hailed Robinson's sweeping study as "far more than an overview of American play texts of the past 200-plus years," citing the work as "the most original and revolutionary assessment of American plays and their context in our generation."

2010 George Freedley Memorial Award Finalists (listed alphabetically by Author; all titles published 2009)

The Freedley jurors found the following titles to be of particular stand-out note in their category.

- Bigsby, Christopher. *Arthur Miller* (Harvard University Press)
- Butler, Martin. *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture* (Cambridge University Press)
- Koegel, John. *Music in German Immigrant Theater: New York City 1840-1940* (University of Rochester Press)
- Nathans, Heather S. *Slavery and Sentiment on the American Stage, 1787-1861: Lifting the Veil of Black* (Cambridge University Press)
- Rogerson, Margaret. *The York Mysteries, 1951-2006* (University of Toronto Press)
- Savran, David. *Highbrow/Lowdown: Theater, Jazz, and the Making of the New Middle Class* (University of Michigan Press)
- Schweitzer, Marlis. *When Broadway Was the Runway: Theater, Fashion, and American Culture* (University of Pennsylvania Press)
- Stern, Tiffany. *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* (Cambridge University Press)

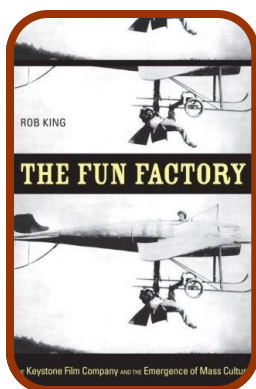


Winner: 2010 Richard Wall Memorial Award

Film, A Sound Art
(Columbia University Press)
by Michel Chion; Translated by Claudia Gorbman

Spanning the full history of sound's relationship to cinema, encompassing even the "deaf films" of the silent era, French scholar Chion's masterful study became available in English in 2009 through Claudia Gorbman's translation. Wall juror John Calhoun noted that Chion "provides the reader with a fresh way of seeing (and hearing) movies, and does so with cinephilic passion." Fellow juror Charlotte Cabbage pointed out that Chion's "multi-level analyses include all aspects of sound within movies and incorporate

film theory, the effects of technology, auteur techniques and styles and audience response." Juror Calhoun added that the preservation of Chion's "eloquent prose style" in English is "a tribute to translator Claudia Gorbman."



Special Jury Prize Winner

The Fun Factory: The Keystone Film Company and the Emergence of Mass Culture
(University of California Press)
by Rob King

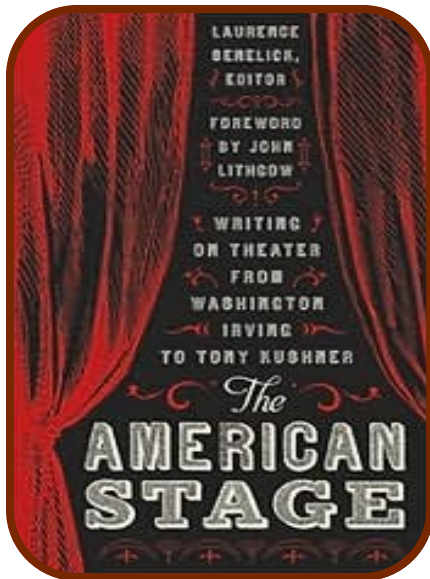
Wall juror Charlotte Cabbage called King's work "an in-depth and convincing analysis of the ways the Keystone Film Company reflected major social changes of its era," noting in particular the author's "scholarly responses to popular entertainment of the time period."

2010 Richard Wall Memorial Award Finalists (listed alphabetically by Author; all titles published 2009)

The Wall jurors found the following titles to be of particular stand-out note in their category.

- Bernstein, Matthew H. *Screening a Lynching: The Leo Frank Case on Film and Television* (University of Georgia Press)
- Hilderbrand, Lucas. *Inherent Vice: Bootleg Histories of Videotape and Copyright* (Duke University Press)
- Keating, Patrick. *Hollywood Lighting from the Silent Era to Film Noir* (Columbia University Press)
- Mayer, David. *Stagestruck Filmmaker: D.W. Griffith and the American Theatre* (University of Iowa Press)
- McGee, Kristin A. *Some Liked it Hot: Jazz Women in Film and Television, 1928-1959* (Wesleyan University Press)
- Nystrom, Derek. *Hard Hats, Rednecks, and Macho Men: Class in 1970s American Cinema* (Oxford University Press)
- Tropiano, Stephen. *Obscene, Indecent, Immoral, and Offensive: 100+ Years of Censored, Banned and Controversial Films* (Limelight Editions)
- Vieira, Mark A. *Irving Thalberg: Boy Wonder to Producer Prince* (University of California Press)

Senelick, Laurence, ed. *The American Stage: Writing on the Theater from Washington Irving to Tony Kushner*. New York: Library of America, 2010. 850pp. ISBN 978-1598530698.



The venerable Library of America has been unusually attentive to American theatre in recent years, issuing complete or near-complete collections of plays by Eugene O'Neill, Thornton Wilder, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, and George S. Kaufman (and his collaborators). These most welcome volumes, affordable and handsomely bound, provide access to many of the greatest American plays without taking up too much shelf space for libraries, both institutional and personal. The latest addition is not a collection of plays but a treasure trove of essays. *The American Stage*, astutely edited by Laurence Senelick, is an elegant collection of short and long essays by 78 writers (some

represented by more than one essay) from all walks of American literary culture, ranging from the subtitled figures of Washington Irving in the early 19th century to Tony Kushner in the 21st.

Senelick has masterfully merged the most well-known essays on the stage in America with a collection of little-known meditations on stage art by such significant writers as Alexis de Tocqueville, Edgar Allan Poe, Walt Whitman, Mark Twain, Henry James, Ezra Pound, Willa Cather, and Langston Hughes, to

The significance of most "contributors" featured is obvious, but among the most pleasing aspects of this entertaining and engrossing collection is that Senelick includes a broad spectrum of popular culture within his definition of theatre. As such, there are essays on minstrel shows, burlesque, vaudeville, musical theatre, street theatre, and media, and plays of all stripes, from *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Abie's Irish Rose*, and *Hello, Dolly!* to *Our Town*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and *A Touch of*

The quality and writing styles vary across the volume, but most are engaging and frequently provocative in surprising ways...

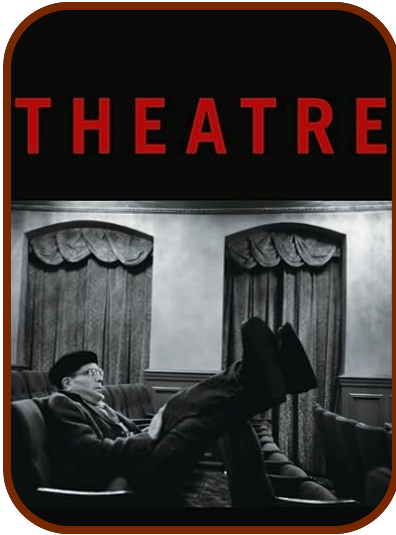
name a few. (Curiously, most tried their hand at dramatic writing at some point, but without much success). Major drama critics, among them William Winter, Stark Young, Alexander Woollcott, Dorothy Parker, George Jean Nathan, Brooks Atkinson, Eric Bentley, Walter Kerr, John Lahr, John Simon, and Frank Rich, are amply represented, as well as playwrights including Thornton Wilder, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, Edward Albee, Lorraine Hansberry, Ed Bullins, Wendy Wasserstein, and David Mamet. Eugene O'Neill is not represented by an essay, but is present in selections by George Jean Nathan and Gore Vidal writing about his work. Other theatre practitioners featured include an array of directors (Elia Kazan, Harold Clurman, and Anne Bogart), along with designers (Lee Simonson), and actors (Olive Logan, William Gillette, Fred Allen, and Charles Ludlam).

the Poet, not to mention profiles of notable figures and explorations of topics including race and sexuality. The quality and writing styles vary across the volume, but most are engaging and frequently provocative in surprising ways; some evoke the era in which they were written and others, like Thornton Wilder's "Some Thoughts on Playwriting" or Arthur Miller's "The American Theater," provide timeless wisdom on the art of theatre.

The American Stage, which is enhanced by a detailed index and brief, well-written introductions to each writer, is a collection to be cherished. Its nearly 900 pages will provide endless pleasure for theatre lovers at all levels.

James Fisher
University of North Carolina-
Greensboro

Mamet, David. *Theatre*. New York: Faber & Faber, Inc., 2010. 157 pp. ISBN 978-0865479289.



In his latest collection of short essays, playwright David Mamet puts forth a compelling case for what can be best described as a free market theatre. He regards arts subsidies, subscription audiences, most direction, rehearsals, and actors training as toxic to theatre as a vital enterprise whose lifeblood is a paying audience that derives enjoyment from the dramatic experience and is thus motivated to support it at the box office.

Stanislavski and his method apostles come in for a particularly forceful kick in the pants. Mamet describes the Russian theatre guru as a failed actor (apparently photographs of him onstage make this evident to those in the know) whose frustrated love for the dramatic arts bears fruit in his volumes on acting that Mamet

describes as “unimplementable, and thus useful for the actor”. Stanislavski’s major achievement, according to Mamet, is his promotion of the plays of Anton Chekhov.

Mamet feels that the essence of the acting profession lies in the old Spencer Tracy adage about showing up on time, knowing your lines, and not bumping into the furniture. As for expressing a character’s emotional life, don’t

He [Mamet] regards arts subsidies, subscription audiences, most direction, rehearsals, and actors training as toxic to theatre...

bother, because “the character is only a few words of speech delineated on the page”. Diction and a basic understanding of stage action are the actor’s only necessary skills.

Rehearsal and direction are even bigger wastes of time for the most part. Actors who know how to be seen and heard when they’re supposed to be seen and heard can figure that out for themselves. Directors (and set designers for that matter) serve mainly to place themselves between the actor and the text because those who cannot act or write obstruct.

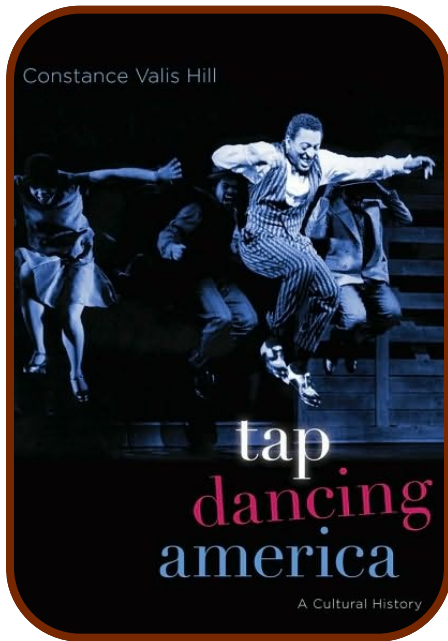
Audiences that don’t specifically decide to come to a particular play are dismissed as inauthentic, as the attraction to a production and the anticipation in attending are lost in subscription-based enterprises. As for theatre subsidized by anything but box office receipts, the necessity for audience enjoyment is removed, making the interaction (in Mamet’s eyes) at best corrupt. The essays are brief and readable.

His conclusions are buttressed by years of theatrical practice and survival of the Neighborhood Playhouse’s reading list. His case against drama as an intellectual or academic pursuit is strongest when comparing enjoyment-based popular entertainment with its drier, institutionally-based counterparts. The ruminations of a master dramatist on theatrical technique are bound to be fascinating and valuable reading, and even more so when the

master in question spends the better portion of his volume denigrating the value of writing such ruminations.

**John Frank
Los Angeles Public Library**

Hill, Constance Valis. *Tap Dancing America: A Cultural History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. 441 pp. ISBN 978-0195390827.



A sterling presentation of this long-awaited study, *Tap Dancing America* provides a chronological analysis of a truly American art form. Its strength grows from a preface centered on a personal approach to the research and the writing, which proves the epitome of what tap dancing was, is, and will be—a highly personal expression aching to connect with whoever is within earshot and sight.

For *Tap Dancing America*, Constance Valis Hill draws from her own experiences as an acclaimed jazz tap dancer, choreographer, teacher, and performance scholar and builds upon her previous book,

Brotherhood in Rhythm (Oxford University Press, 2000), which won the Deems Taylor Award. Placing the 60-year dancing career of Fayard and Harold Nicholas within the context of “what is ‘classical’ about the Nicholas Brothers’ dancing,” Hill traces the history of jazz dancing from its roots in Irish jigs and West African gioube through minstrel shows to early Broadway theater. “It is first necessary to inquire about the nature of classical dance,” she writes. Hill’s meticulous care in placing tap dancing within the broader and deeper aesthetic of American dance is carried over to

in early accounts of jiggling competitions forces a consideration of gender in the evolution of tap dance...” (3)

By book’s end, the reader will come away with an understanding of tap dance in the way one would expect from a similar study on American painting, opera or jazz. Hill writes with authority, yet in a voice that welcomes readers at all levels of knowledge. Her forte is thrusting the reader into the midst of a buck dance challenge, into a hundred years’ worth of tap’s musical styles and steps, and into

By book’s end, the reader will come away with an understanding of tap dance in the way one would expect from a similar study on American painting, opera or jazz.

Tap Dancing America, which also begins with an overview that seeks to distinguish this study from previously held notions of the foundations from which tap dancing has evolved. Hill draws our attention to issues often skirted by other tap dance scholars:

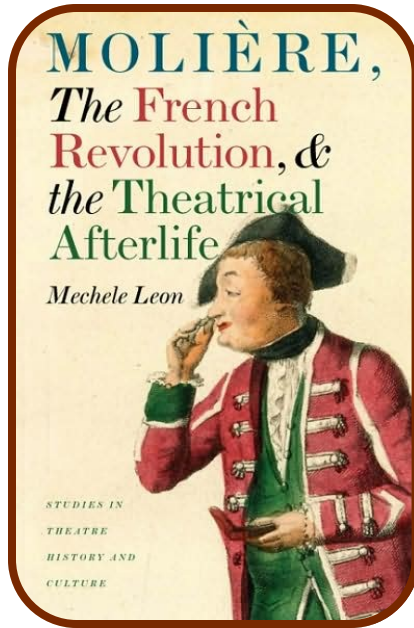
“The conceptualization of tap dance as an Afro-Irish fusion, fueled by the competitive interplay of a challenge in a battle for virtuosity and authority, puts into focus issues of race and ethnicity; it inevitably takes on the history of race, racism, and race relations in America. In addition, class was historically an issue in tap dance. Considered mostly a popular entertainment seen on the vaudeville and variety stage and in the movies, tap dance has been placed in the category of ‘low’ art unworthy of the concert stage. Moreover, the absence of women

the verve of women tap dancing into American cognizance.

Just as *Brotherhood in Rhythm* brought long-overdue attention to the accomplishments and contributions of the Nicholas Brothers (who seemed always to be given less media attention than white dancers), *Tap Dancing America* will bring the conversation around to tap, and perhaps even bring another generation into the tradition Savion Glover most recently has spotlighted.

Rita Kohn
Freelance Writer

Leon, Mechele. *Molière, the French Revolution, and the Theatrical Afterlife*. (Studies in Theatre History and Culture). Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2009. 184 pp. ISBN: 978-1-58729-821-9.



Many, if not most, writers and artists are affected by perceptions of their “political correctness” (or lack thereof) during their lifetimes. For prerevolutionary French dramatists, the very survival of their works and reputations—their “theatrical afterlife” in Mechele Leon’s words—was threatened by the radical reevaluation of the entire French cultural legacy by the revolutionaries of 1789. Whatever his personal political views may have been, much of the comedy of Molière’s plays was derived from his depiction of class structures in both his plots and characters, and he was an equal opportunity satirist: the

lower classes were as often his target satire as was the aristocracy. Furthermore, Molière’s close relationship with Louis XIV—so valuable in his lifetime—could have been seen as a liability by the republicans, especially after legislation in early 1791 struck down the exclusive license to perform his plays long held by the Comédie-Française, enabling all classes of French society to see them performed.

theatrical figures in national theatre history.” Both are accomplished brilliantly in this well-researched, accessible, and affordably priced study. Recommended for collections supporting graduate-level study and research in French theater, literature, and political and social history.

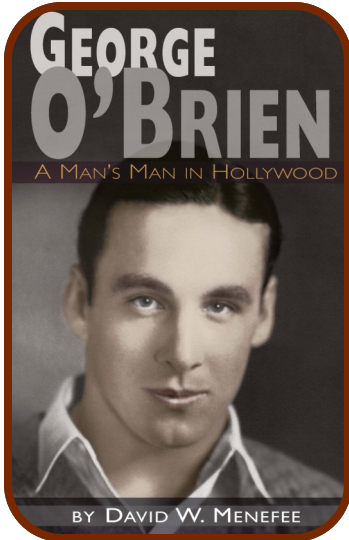
For prerevolutionary French dramatists, the very survival of their works and reputations—their “theatrical afterlife” in Mechele Leon’s words—was threatened by the radical reevaluation of the entire French cultural legacy by the revolutionaries of 1789.

For these and other reasons, Leon (Professor of Theatre and Film, University of Kansas) argues that Molière’s reputation was very much at risk during the last decade of the 18th century. Making considerable use of archival and other contemporary sources, she first documents a thorough accounting of all productions of Molière’s plays in the years 1791-99, then explores how his reputation was saved and even enhanced through various strategies, including the extensive rewriting of the ending of *Tartuffe* and parts of other plays, the revision of the historical narrative (if not the facts) of his career, and finally the exhumation and patriotic reburial of (what was thought to be) his body in 1792.

Although her immediate project is to show how the Father of French Comedy was revalorized 120 years after his death in a particularly extreme period of social turmoil, Leon’s larger aim is “to contribute to the understanding of the role of

Rob Melton
University of California,
San Diego

Menefee, David W. *George O'Brien: A Man's Man in Hollywood*. Georgia: Bear Manor Media, 2010. 436 pp. ISBN 9781593934736.



One can't help but envision George O'Brien as anything less than a hero in life as well as on screen when reading David W. Menefee's richly detailed biography. This touching tribute pays homage to an actor popular with directors and audiences alike, best known today as the leading man in F.W. Murnau's masterpiece, *Sunrise*. O'Brien successfully transitioned from silent films to talkies, starring in various Westerns before enlisting in the Navy to serve during WWII.

O'Brien's early years take us to his birthplace of San Francisco. Menefee meticulously recreates the events leading to the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire, where the O'Brien family's courageous survival during and after the catastrophe left indelible impressions upon George. We also get a glimpse of O'Brien's

early love for the outdoors and his natural physical prowess, skills that would serve him well in his future Hollywood career, first as a stunt double for Rudolph Valentino and later as a leading man for such Westerns as *Robber's Roost* (1932) and *Smoke Lightning* (1933).

Film historians will appreciate Menefee's chapters portraying O'Brien's inauspicious beginnings as an assistant cameraman, stuntman, and an extra/bit player for Fox Studios. His big break finally came when he was picked

during WWII, and his various decorations for bravery for outstanding Navy military service.

Menefee has a tendency to gloss over his hero's flaws, flaws that may have played a major role in troubles affecting O'Brien's personal life. Surprisingly, there are scarce clues in Menefee's detailed account of what marital problems may have led to O'Brien's eventual divorce from actress Marguerite Churchill in 1948. Despite this omission, he succeeds in conveying O'Brien's particular brand of bravery and

This touching tribute pays homage to an actor popular with directors and audiences alike...

by John Ford for the lead in *Iron Horse* (1924), the director's first box office sensation which launched O'Brien to overnight stardom. O'Brien's work with Howard Hawks in *Fig Leaves* (1926), his fateful casting by Murnau in *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* (1927), and the grueling production of Michael Curtiz's *Noah's Ark* (1928) are also well covered.

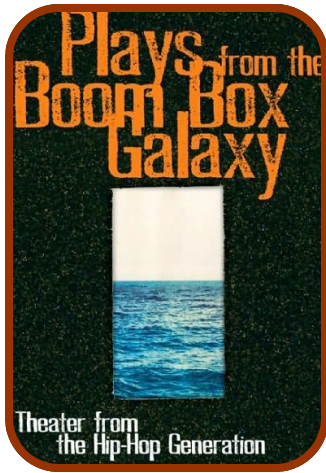
Researchers will marvel at Menefee's ability to seamlessly interweave absorbing narratives of the lives of those who crossed paths with O'Brien or helped him along his way to stardom, including Tom Mix, Wallace Reid, Richard Dix, and Lou Tellegen as well as his leading ladies, Olive Borden and Janet Gaynor. Menefee also explores other lesser-known aspects of O'Brien's life, such as his devotion to physical culture, his training as a boxer while serving

endless sense of tenacity as the sort of everyday heroism that made O'Brien such a remarkable person for so many fans over the years.

Other key features for researchers are the extensive filmography, along with rare photos, newspaper advertisements, and lobby cards for each of O'Brien's films; a comprehensive bibliography; and a portrait gallery that includes daring portraits of the actor by photographer Max Munn Autry. This book will prove a rich resource for film historians interested in the silent era and the development of the Western genre.

**Cynthia Tobar
Mina Rees Library
CUNY Graduate Center**

Euell, Kim, ed. (with Robert Alexander). *Plays from the Boom Box Galaxy: Theater from the Hip-Hop Generation*. New York: Theatre Communications Group, 2009. 400 pp. ISBN 978-1559362924.



"Welcome to the spoken world / The living word" (267) begins the "Invocation" to Marc Bamuthi Joseph's "Word Becomes Flesh: Performed Letters from Father to Unborn Son," one of the nine performance texts included in this collection. Hip-hop theatrical performances are "spoken worlds" and "living words," contingent upon the virtuosic solo and ensemble performers that collectively author these pieces, as well as the musicians and DJs that bring the beats to life with them. Thus, an anthology of hip-hop performance scripts cannot help but be somewhat partial and fragmented.

Much like reading the book of a musical without a sense of the musical score, something is lacking. As Aya de León notes in

the preface to her "Thieves in the Temple: A Spoken-Word, Hip-Hop Theater Performance Piece," "Text is not sufficient to communicate the richness of the final story." (307) While that is true to a degree for play texts of any style, the inability of the written word to capture the musicality and movement of hip-hop performance is keenly felt when reading this collection. All

performance piece, notes on specific staging choices, and, at times, some theoretical or historical underpinnings to the work.

Stylistically, the plays are varied, ranging from solo performance pieces to large-scale productions complete with ensembles of dancers. Linking the nine texts

Much like reading the book of a musical without a sense of the musical score, something is lacking.

that aside, however, *Plays from the Boom Box Galaxy* is a richly valuable collection of an increasingly prolific, uniquely American (yet rootedly diasporic) style of theatre.

Euell opens her collection with an introduction that offers a brief history of the cultural context of early hip-hop music, tracing its influences on both African-American and contemporary hip-hop theatre. Euell does not offer a fixed definition of hip-hop theatre, but employs the motif of pastiche to sample a variety of definitions from other artists and scholars. The nine performance texts that she has selected for inclusion are united by their connection to African diaspora, elements of hip-hop culture (including the use of "the Beat"), the thematic thread of fractured families, and the age range of the artists who grew up in the era of hip-hop. The nine texts are divided into three categories: Ruminations on Identity, Cautionary Tales, and Transformations. Prior to each script, an "Author's Statement" serves as a preface, offering background on the creation of the

are the poeticized nature of the language and explorations of identity formation, specifically in regards to race, gender, stereotypes and history. Brief biographical information on the authors follows each text and demonstrates the breadth of their careers and the relevancy of their work at this time.

Plays from the Boom Box Galaxy serves as an integral artifact of a contemporary theatrical genre. More importantly, however, it serves to encourage the reader to witness firsthand the profound impact of hip-hop theatre in performance. While the poetry on the page is stunning, the suggestion of how that poetry is embodied on stage should inspire each reader to seek out a live performance.

Christine Woodworth
University of North Carolina-
Greensboro



June 2010

26

TLA@ALA Program: “Dress Me Up With Your Research”
American Library Association
Annual Conference
Washington, D.C.
1:30-3:30pm
Room Location TBA

Set and costume designers from Washington DC-area theaters share their experiences in the research process of mounting period or time-shifted productions, including re-creating specific locales and/or time periods onstage. The panel will discuss the process of research and the resources involved in realizing past and/or imaginary worlds and the

July 2010

26-30

The 28th Congress of the International Association of Libraries and Museums of the Performing Arts (SIBMAS)
Connecting Points: Performing Arts Collections Uniting Past and Future
Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde (Ethnological Museum)
Maximilianstraße
Munich, Germany

October 2010

8

Board Meeting
Lincoln Center Seminar Room [3rd floor]

TLA Annual Business Meeting and Book Awards
Bruno Walter Auditorium of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts
5:30pm

November 2010

18-21

CORD/ASTR/TLA Conference
Embodying Power: Work Over Time
Renaissance Seattle Hotel
Seattle, Washington

TLA Plenary: “Harnessing the Power of Performance: Documentation Strategies for Theater and Dance”

Throughout history, capturing performance through various media has been challenging. Performance historians have based their work on archeological artifacts, paper records, oral history and memory, audio recordings, and film documentation of dance and theater performances. Each method—in itself ephemeral—presents challenges due in part to limitations inherent in its physical characteristics: images fade, paper crumbles, and memory fails.

This session will address and assess past, current, and future methodologies for harnessing the power of performance—and the extent to which these approaches and strategies support or impede research.