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Journal of Global Theatre History

Theatrescapes

Global Media and Translocal Publics (1850-1950)

Editors

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Editorial

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The decades between 1850 and 1950 are characterized by the emergence of new technologies and communication media, as well as the development of infrastructure for transnational travel and trade. Theatre benefited from and contributed to this transnational interconnectedness in all its artistic and business dimensions. Not only were new theatres built in almost every corner of the world, but genres, plays and performers travelled globally and led to the emergence of new theatrical public spheres and forms of spectatorship.

This special issue of the Journal of Global Theatre History proposes that we could usefully borrow Arjun Appadurai's well-known notion of -scapes (mediascapes, econoscapes, ideoscapes, etc.) that he uses for describing the dimensions of global flows in contemporary globalization. By adding another *scape*, namely 'theatrescapes', we can describe the dynamics and flows of theatrical expansion in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Indubitably, theatre and its infrastructures interacted intensely and strategically with the new global media of the time: the (illustrated) press, advertisements, photography, cinema, radio. The dislocation of people engendered by migration created new theatre publics that might be termed 'translocal' audiences: geographically separated from their homes, immigrants longed for cultural entertainment familiar to them; European spectators in India or China, for instance, remained mentally or imaginatively aligned with their home countries, whereas local publics needed to accustom themselves to the new medium of theatre. At the same time, the increasing interconnectedness and knowledge about the world evoked a major interest in foreign peoples and their forms of cultural entertainment.

This second number of GTHJ grew out of a conference of the same title that took place in 2014 funded by the Fritz Thyssen Foundation and collects a selection of papers discussed there. The contributors interrogate various facets of the intersections of global media and translocal publics as a consequence of migration, and discuss their impact on theatre and vice versa between 1850 and 1950. The following questions form the shared agenda of the papers:

- 1) Interaction between theatre and global media: How did performers, entrepreneurs, and directors employ global media, and by what means did media and modern marketing facilitate the global dissemination of theatrical forms and formats?
- 2) Translocal publics: What can we learn about the emergence of theatrical public spheres in situations of cross-cultural contact?
- 3) The press and globalized theatrical reading publics: How did the (international) press and theatre mutually condition one another and impact on their respective audiences?

- 4) Networked stages: What can we say about the transregional and even transnational interconnections and collaborations of theatre entrepreneurs, producers and agents?
- 5) New urban centres as theatrical contact zones: What role did urban life play in the context of *theatrescapes*?
- 6) Theatre-building as a (inter) cultural act: What role did theatre architecture play in the framework of theatre and the early phase of (cultural) globalization?

In her paper "Sarah Bernhardt in Brazil (1886-1893)", Monize Oliveira Moura follows the routes and itineraries of the popular French actress in the late nineteenth century. Bernhardt's theatrical trade routes led from Europe to the Americas and back and fostered the intensification between French and Brazilian theatre culture in particular. Moura highlights Bernhardt's impact on local audiences and their theatrical taste in Brazil and thus demonstrates how theatre could become global by touring stars.

Catherine Vance Yeh links Peking Opera, Kabuki and the famous tour of the Denishawn company in her essay "Experimenting with Dance Drama: Peking Opera Modernity, Kabuki Theater Reform and the Denishawn's Tour of the Far East". Focusing on the first two decades of the twentieth century, she sheds light on the transformation of Peking opera by focusing on the three main areas of contact, namely Paris, Japan and the U.S. By doing so, on a macro level Yeh advocates a reconsideration of artistic modernity understood as a global rather than as a mere European phenomenon.

The circus jockey Rosita de la Plata, born in Buenos Aires, is the protagonist of Johanna Dupré's paper "Die erste Jockey-Reiterin der Welt, aus Süd-Amerika': Rosita de la Plata, Global Imaginaries and the Media". Based on hitherto under-researched and rich source material Dupré discusses how subtle public relations strategies fostered the international career of circus jockey Rosita de la Plata, and how they contributed to and shaped her public image and artist persona.

German Shakespeare actor Daniel Bandmann and his truly international touring activities are showcased and discussed in Lisa J. Warrington's paper "Herr Daniel Bandmann and Shakespeare vs. the World". In her examination of Bandmann's acting in the role of Hamlet (as a German performing in English) and his controversies with theatre critics, she foregrounds the challenges of language and translation as an important factor that was part and parcel of theatrical globalization in the late nineteenth century.

Nic Leonhardt, Munich, December 2016

NB: *Theatrescapes* is also the name of a digital research tool that we have developed in the context of the Centre for Global Theatre History. It helps us to map the worldwide emergence of theatrical venues as well as follow the traces and routes of performers in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Check it out and help us increase our knowledge of global theatre. <http://www.theatrescapes.gwi.uni-muenchen.de/>
