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Editorial

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KIRSTY KAY & BEDE WILLIAMS

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Volume 3, Issue 1 of the *Scottish Journal of Performance* presents new stories through performance, stories that undo grand narratives and reflect on the process while doing so. The desire for storytelling seems to have been programmed into human beings from birth, helping us navigate our way through the material and cultural worlds we find ourselves inheriting. But in our desire to tell simple, linear tales, we often miss out on the vagaries of human experience, and forget to allow people to tell their own stories. We hope this issue goes some way to reflect the messy realities of life and the universe as explored through artistic performance.

In the first article of this issue, *Towards a queer theatre for very young audiences in Scotland and the United States*, Lindsay Amer looks at two performances of queer theatre for children to argue the need for queer themes in performances for the very young. Amer positions all children as queer, standing as they do in opposition to the normativity of adulthood, where 'the idea of the child is the adult's projected nostalgia, not a reflection of the child itself'.

Amer shows how this power imbalance between adults and children is explicated in theatre for young audiences, with theatre performances for young people pedagogical rather than aesthetic in tone; highlighting how children are viewed as future adult theatregoers rather than aesthetic consumers of culture in their own right.

From this theoretical standpoint, Amer explores theatre productions for young audiences in Scotland and the United States that have reflected queer realities, and uses her article to call for an artistic culture that places queerness as a representative identity from childhood, thus allowing children to express their own queerness.

Niccole Carner also attempts to undo some of the (hi)stories projected on to a group of people and their lived realities in her article *Re-constructing heritage: the National Theatre of Scotland's Calum's Road*. Reviewing a production by the NTS from 2011 that tells the story of a man who over ten years attempts to build a road by hand on the isle of Raasay in order to improve living conditions on the island and convince residents not to migrate to the mainland. In the telling of one man's fight against modernisation, globalisation, and the impact of gentrification, the play in fact paints Calum in a heroic light, combining folkloric motifs with artistic representations of the land and Gaelic language to bring to light the realities of life often forgotten in mainstream national narratives.

Carner uses a close reading of the play's production to unpick notions of national identity in post-devolution Scotland, finding the need for a performative nationalising process within the National Theatre. She finds that the process of telling alternative, less-known stories of individual lives can be a form of heritage in itself, turning the audience into an active nation creating their own future by engaging in forms of creative remembrance.

In *Calton Hill Constellations*, artist and choreographer Siriol Joyner and writer and mythogeographer Phil Smith report from their performance created for Artlink Edinburgh, combining description, history and storytelling in response to locations around Edinburgh in performances for sighted, partially sighted and blind audiences.

Responding to their physical and emotional experiences with Calton Hill's Old City Observatory, Joyner and Smith build on their own research to create a site-specific performance that guides partially sighted people to explore the manifold potential histories of the observatory space where interactions of perception and landscape are pushed to their limits.

The past year has seen planetary exploration reach new heights, and with so much scientific discovery for those left on earth to contemplate, attempts to present contemporary science to the general public has become ever more important.

As part of the UN International Year of Light, astronomer Dr Anne-Marie Weijmans, composer Eddie McGuire, conductor Bede Williams and artist Tim Fitzpatrick collaborated on the project *Shine*. Combining their disciplines, they bridged art and science to create an installation that could convey how galaxies form and evolve over time to the general public in an understandable way, distilling the concepts from Weijmans's research into sound and visual performance pieces.

Instigating new pathways for the public to discover and explore recent space discovery, *Shine* attempts a bold cooperation between artists and scientists that highlights the exciting creative potential of interdisciplinary collaboration, particularly when dealing with a topic of endless discoveries.

This issue also includes a variety of other pieces that reflect on the wealth of contemporary arts and arts scholarship occurring in and about Scotland. Ben Fletcher-Watson interviews theatre practitioner Tony Reekie, who recently stood down after twenty years as director of Imagine,

Scotland's national art-form development organisation for theatre for young audiences. In the interview, he reflects on his time in this role and the changes he has witnessed in children's theatre and the arts scene in Scotland.

Also presented are abstracts from *Thresholds and permeability in performance*, a recent postgraduate symposium which again points towards the exciting postgraduate work on performance currently taking place that disrupts and questions normative structures of social understanding.

This issue also contains reviews on different aspects and mediums of performance studies. Lucy Coatman reviews *Studying musical theatre: theory and practice*, by Millie Taylor and Dominic Symonds; Ali De Souza reviews *The actor training reader* by Mark Evans; Michael Downes reviews *Conducting for a new era*, by Edwin Roxburgh; Ben Fletcher-Watson reviews *Theatre for youth third space: performance, democracy and community cultural development*, by Stephani Etheridge Woodson; Bethany Whiteside reviews *Moving sites: investigating site-specific dance performance*, edited by Victoria Hunter; Drew Hammond reviews the CD *Dichroic light*, by Matthew Whiteside; and Cara Berger reviews a performance of *Hinterland*, by NVA.

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Co-editors, *Scottish Journal of Performance*