

the project's process to further illuminate how the themes evolved into the final product.

In some cases it can be difficult to translate the magnitude of a site-specific work into a book format, especially one that encompasses several different disciplines and occurs in different spaces, without the project coming across as disjointed and incomplete. However, this publication provides an exemplary overview utilizing multiple media in the form of photos, a DVD, and critical writings. *Sighting/Citing/Siting* provides a great resource for academics, artists, community-based projects, students, and anyone interested in interdisciplinary collaboration that revolves around the creation and unfolding of new work within a determined environment that lies beyond the walls of a traditional theatrical space.

ANNA MIGLIARISI, ed.

Stanislavsky and Directing: Theory, Practice and Influence

Toronto: LEGAS, 2008. 345 pp.

LAURIN MANN

Stanislavsky and Directing: Theory, Practice and Influence developed from “the first Canadian gathering of international scholars entirely devoted to the work and influence of Constantin Stanislavsky” (11), a conference that took place at the University of Toronto’s Graduate Centre for Study of Drama in 2006. The text contains fourteen disparate journal-length articles, which editor Anna Migliarisi has grouped under the umbrella “Stanislavsky and Directing.” Like many books on Stanislavsky-based practice written in the past fifty years, the bulk of material in this text contributes to the ongoing dialogue on the meaning and use of Stanislavsky’s written texts and advocated practice, and/or that of his creative successors. Although many of the articles included in the book are by individuals currently living and working in Canada, only Migliarisi’s “Stanislavsky in Canada: A Critical Chronology” focuses on Stanislavsky’s influence on Canadian theatre.

Two of the articles deal overtly with Stanislavsky’s directing practices: Annelis Kuhlmann’s “The Director’s Work on Himself” and Brian Smith’s “In Search of the White-Hot Moment: Stanislavski and Directing.” Kuhlmann claims that much can be

inferred about Stanislavsky's directing methods by studying the methodological subtext of his books on acting and through an examination of his creative life as actor, director, and pedagogue. She references several sources on Stanislavsky available only in Russian, which whet the reader's appetite for more English translations both of Stanislavsky's writings and those of other Russian theatre scholars and practitioners. Utilizing Stanislavsky's *Creating a Role* and Toporkov's *Stanislavski in Rehearsal*, Brian Smith highlights eleven seminal elements of Stanislavsky's approach to working with actors.

Two more articles in *Stanislavsky and Directing* focus on Stanislavsky's direct influence on succeeding generations of theatre practitioners. Charles Marowitz's "Stanislavsky Vs Chekhov" is an entertaining and enlightening comparison between the theories and techniques of Stanislavsky and those of his one-time disciple, Michael Chekhov. Balanced and thought-provoking, Marowitz's study promotes Chekhov's approach as the better technique for the twenty-first century actor. Chris Salata's "Stanislavski, Grotowski, Richards: The Question of Transmission" studies various ways in which Stanislavsky and his theories influenced Grotowski and, through him, Thomas Richards.

Many of the articles in the book deal with aspects of Stanislavsky's legacy. Anna Migliarisi interviews American director, teacher, and producer Gene Lasko about his approach as a modern Stanislavskian director. Garrett Eisler explores Stanislavsky's concept of Public Solitude and the implications of this practice on the actor/audience relationship. In "Stanislavsky's Problematic Legacy and the Ethics of Theatre Practice," Leslie O'Dell and Richard Walshe Bowers examine the psychological underpinnings of Stanislavsky's approach to directing and teaching to illuminate what they consider to be ethically questionable practices that persist in Stanislavsky-based actor training and directing. In "Konstantin Stanislavski: A Theatre Director/Pedagogue and the Ideas of Collective Creation," Yana Meerzon connects Stanislavsky's use of improvisation through physical action in actor training (as well as some small excursions he made into collective creation) to the types of improvised collective creations popular in Canada and elsewhere in the late twentieth-century. This seems a bit of a stretch even to Meerzon, who cannot ignore Stanislavsky's privileging of the play text.

Three of the conference participants write about African theatre. In his Introduction to Migliarisi's book, Temple

Hauptfleisch speaks about South African actor/director Andre Huguenet, a “director in the Stanislavsky mode” who “dominated South African theatre for almost forty years” (16). This subject could have made an interesting article-length contribution to the collection. Unfortunately, Stephen E. Inegbe and Adebisi Ademakinwa appear to be trying almost in vain to find connections between Stanislavsky’s approach to theatre and the theatre of Nigeria, which, although seemingly realistic in terms of character, has roots in song, dance, ritual, and improvised production.

Two articles in the book deal specifically with the work of Stanislavsky’s descendents. In “Chekhov’s Psychological Gesture in the Directing Process,” Cynthia Ashperger describes how modern approaches to Chekhov’s psychological gesture, along with a psycho-physical rehearsal process, assist actors and directors in analyzing and developing unique characters, as well as in creating organic character relationships and unique styles of production. Jill Carter, in “Poisoned by the Same Dream: Respect for the Challenge that is Stanislavsky’s Legacy,” makes a passionate appeal for the value of Uta Hagen’s methods described in Hagen’s *A Challenge for the Actor*.

Migliarisi admits in the Preface to *Stanislavsky and Directing* that the title of the book is “a little misleading” (9), and she is correct. A reader looking for a text full of new insights into Stanislavsky’s directorial process will be disappointed. Also, the range of subjects covered by the fourteen articles is too wide for the book to have a clear focus. It reads more like what it was originally: the contents of an international conference on the broad topic “Stanislavsky.” Even for a book on that subject, however, it is uneven. Many of the articles make scant reference to Stanislavsky, and a number of internationally known experts on the director and his legacy (such as Sharon Marie Carnicke and Jean Benedetti) are absent. Nonetheless, *Stanislavsky and Directing* succeeds in doing several things. It conveys a sense of the energy, excitement, and camaraderie of the 2006 Stanislavsky conference in Toronto. In addition, in accordance with one of the goals set out in the Preface, it contributes “to the ongoing international dialogue on Stanislavsky” while stimulating the scholar’s desire for more information on Stanislavsky’s influence in Canada and elsewhere.

For this reviewer, this volume points up the wealth of interesting information available, and the need for more Canadian scholarship, in the area of performance. For instance, Marrie Mumford’s autobiographical account of her theatre training,

professional experiences, and development of aboriginal performance is fascinating. There should be hundreds of biographies and autobiographies of Canadian actors and directors available to the theatre-goers and students of the art in this country. In addition, one hopes that Anna Migliarisi's article in the volume—a chronology of Stanislavsky's influence on Canadian theatre—will be expanded. Her research has the potential to become a significant contribution to Canadian theatre and performance studies. Migliarisi's chapter reveals once again how little has been written to date on acting in Canada in comparison to studies available in other countries, and what glorious opportunities await those willing to make forays into this “profoundly rich area of research” (9).