

# Introduction: Taking Time

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One of the challenges (dare I say frustrations?) of academic publishing is how glacially slow it seems when compared with the immediacy of Twitter feeds, Facebook pages, Wordpress blogs, Instagram updates, and related digital media platforms. Although the *TRIC/RTAC* editorial team does its best to move promising articles through the peer review process quickly and efficiently, the time between submission and publication is often twelve months (or longer), depending on reviewers' comments and authors' commitments, not to mention the idiosyncrasies of the publication schedule and related considerations. Why publish then? For me, one of the most important features of academic publishing is the way it allows ideas to grow over time—to become richer, deeper, sharper through the processes of peer review and revision. Like wine (or beer, depending on your tastes), thought often improves through fermentation. As an academic journal, our goal is not to pump out streams of information into the perpetually hungry mediasphere but rather to publish compelling, rigorously researched, and persuasively argued articles that advance the discipline of theatre and performance studies. And this takes time. Time, of course, is many things: ticking, relentless, linear, non-linear, looping, transformative, destructive, political, precious. In the interests of time, then, I hope that you will grant us some of yours and indulge in a few hours of reading (or more).

Time and temporality figure in diverse and exciting ways in each of the six articles featured in this issue, testifying not only to the scope and range of Canadian theatre and performance studies scholarship but also to the persistence of what some might term a “temporal turn.” Nicole Côté opens the issue with “Réflexions sur les représentations des relations hégémonie—minorités en littérature, illustrées de trois pièces de théâtre franco-canadiennes,” in which she investigates the politics of language as expressed through the ongoing (perpetual?) “linguistic minoritization” of the French language in western Canadian theatre. Here Côté pays close attention to the ways that francophone playwrights “represent the cultural/linguistic self-translation at work, reflecting identities torn between the need to forge a stable core and the adaptation necessary to survive as a minority within the hegemonic group” (11). Taking up themes that resonated through a number of the articles featured in our last issue (“Theatre and Immigration,” *TRIC/RTAC* 36.2), Côté persuasively shows how Franco-Canadian theatre reveals the vulnerability of the French language, while offering evidence of the malleability and resilience of minority communities as they innovate through “self-translation.”

In “Around the Backside: Productive Disbelief in *Burning Vision*,” Alana Fletcher offers a fresh reading of Marie Clements’s celebrated play *Burning Vision* (see, for example, *TRIC/RTAC* 31.2). Where other scholars have tended to focus on the play’s complex structure and “alternate conceptions of spatio-temporality,” Fletcher investigates the materiality of the play in relation to its fictional world(s), zooming in on moments when the collapse of time and space deliberately confuses, frustrates, or leads audiences astray. Through a

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phenomenological framework, Fletcher persuasively argues that “the refusal of the work’s materials to disappear behind its fiction [. . .] prompts a productive kind of disbelief, one that structurally underlines the work’s arguments about the fictitious or illusory nature of spatio-temporal boundaries and separations” (28).

Julia Henderson takes a different approach to time in “Challenging Age Binaries by Viewing *King Lear* in Temporal Depth,” in which she explores aging as staged in the Honest Fishmonger’s Equity Co-op’s 2012 production of *King Lear*. Deploying the “depth model of aging” developed by theatre and age studies scholar Anne Davis Basting, Henderson maintains that the production actively challenged negative depictions of aging as a process of slow and painful decline, stressing instead a more nuanced, positive approach to the later stages of life. In so doing, the production invited audiences to not just reflect on what an older actor might have appeared like at an early period of life but also to anticipate “the future ages [...] the young unknown actor might play, and the future roles he or she might take on” (58). Henderson’s article follows quickly on the heels of Núria Casado Gual’s recent (*TRIC/RTAC* 36.1) analysis of aging in the plays of Joanna McLelland Glass, demonstrating again the vitality and importance of this field of inquiry for Canadian theatre and performance studies.

From Henderson’s examination of aging in performance, we move to Stephen Low’s poetic rumination on “hyper-fast movement” and explosive temporality in the choreography of Edouard Lock. In “The Speed of Queer: La La La Human Steps and Perceptions of the Body in Edouard Lock’s Choreography,” Low analyzes Lock’s recent work, *Untitled*, arguing that his distinctive “aesthetic of speed” challenges normative views of the gendered body. This aesthetic, writes Low, is “simultaneously destructive, in that it undoes the stability and coherency of gender as ascertainable by the act of seeing the body, and generative, in that it offers modes of challenging gender norms that do not require medical technologies” (62). As such, Lock’s choreography presents another way for scholars and artists to think, act, and move queerly.

In “Les visages du théâtre communautaire francophone à Edmonton entre les années 1970 et 1990 : une confusion des genres?” Sathya Rao and Leary Gagné offer a rich overview of two decades in the history of Edmonton’s francophone community theatre. Challenging tendencies to focus exclusively on the movements and innovations of theatre professionals, their history recognizes how community theatre companies also worked to support the identity of the francophone community. As such, Rao and Gagné contribute to the increased efforts of scholars like Robin Whittaker to acknowledge the overlooked contributions of amateur (or non-professional) theatre artists to Canada’s larger theatre history.

Lindsay Thistle follows with “Investigating *Afghanistan*: Situating the CBC Radio Drama in the Context and Politics of Canada and the War on Terror,” in which she traces the under-examined history of the long-running CBC radio series about Canadian soldiers serving in Afghanistan. At a time when few Canadian stage plays focused on Canada’s involvement in the “War on Terror,” *Afghanistan*’s creators offered listeners a vivid, albeit fictionalized, account of the lived experiences of Canadian soldiers fighting on the front lines. Through close readings of the series and interviews with its creators, Thistle concludes that “*Afghanistan* was inescapably politicized through its relationship with national institutions, its interest in realistic and true-to-life stories, its focus on everyday soldiers, its casting choices and its

inclusion of post-traumatic stress disorder” (92). As one of the first scholarly articles to discuss *Afghanada*, this piece breaks important new ground.

Two dynamic Forum sections and several compelling Book Reviews close out the issue. The first Forum, “Jonctions linguistiques et culturelles dans le théâtre canadien / Linguistic and Cultural Junctures in Canadian Theatre,” features four micro-essays that examine different models of exchange between artists and scholars working in English and French, continuing a conversation begun as a bilingual panel at the 2015 Canadian Association for Theatre Research in Canada conference held at the University of Ottawa. The second Forum, “Performance of Labour,” edited by Cassandra Silver and Myrto Koumarios, reflects on the state of labour relations at North American academic institutions. Their authors ask timely, difficult questions about the larger problems that many of our readers—graduate students, sessional instructors, tenure track and tenured faculty, administrators, and others—encounter on a daily basis: these include questions about the precarity of labor for new PhDs and long-time sessional instructors; about the challenges of balancing research and teaching with heavy administrative commitments; and about the political potential of thinking and acting collectively.



I'll conclude with a bit of important housekeeping. First, I'd like to offer congratulations to Roberta Barker for receiving the Richard Plant Award from the Canadian Association for Theatre Research for her article, “The Gallant Invalid: The Stage Consumptive and the Making of a Canadian Myth,” which appeared in *TRIC/RTAC* 35.1. Congratulations as well to Sylvain Schryburt for receiving an honourable mention for the Jean-Cléo Godin Award from the Canadian Association for Theatre Research for his article, “Esquisse d'une sociologie des réseaux festivaliers. Le cas du Festival Transamérique de Montréal,” published in *TRIC/RTAC* 35.3.

Second, I'd like to thank Executive Editor Barry Freeman for leading the complete overhaul of our journal's website. If you haven't yet had a chance to visit our new home at <http://www.trictac.ca>, I encourage you to take a look at your earliest convenience and reset your browsers. The new site was designed by Louis Duarte and developed by Cameron Clark at PhantomOwl Digital, and benefited from additional input from Robin Whittaker, Louise Ladouceur, and Sonya Malaborza. The site will continue to evolve in the coming weeks and months so let us know if you have any questions or encounter any difficulty finding your way around.

Third, I'd like to extend a welcome to Peter Dickinson, who joins our Editorial Board, and to Patrick Finn, who joins our Management Board. Welcome also to Associate Editor Kim Solga, who will be officially taking over as editor this June. Kim and I have already begun the transition process and I know that she will bring a fresh and exciting perspective to this journal and continue to advance the profile of Canadian theatre and performance studies, both nationally and internationally.

Finally, since this is the last general issue of my editorship, I'd like to briefly acknowledge the wonderful support I've received over the past three years from the *TRIC/RTAC* editorial

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team (Barry Freeman, Louise Ladouceur, Erin Hurley, Michelle MacArthur, Kelsy Vivash, Shelley Liebembuk, Sonya Malaborza, my predecessor Glen Nichols, and my successor Kim Solga), the Editorial Board, and the Management Board. I'd like to extend a special thanks to the authors and guest editors I've worked with during this period. It has been a privilege working closely with you and helping to bring your research to the wider world. Thanks as well to the nameless peer reviewers who took time to push our authors and our discipline further. And finally, thank you to our readers for reading our journal in print and online. We wouldn't be here without you.

With sincere thanks for your time,

Marlis Schweitzer  
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