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LOUIS PATRICK LEROUX and CHARLES R BATSON, Eds.

Cirque Global: Quebec's Expanding Circus Boundaries.

Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queens UP, 2016. 363 pp.

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In January 2017, Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey announced that it would be closing its tents after 146 years, marking the end of the elephant-infused "Greatest Show on Earth." Concurrently, another kind of circus is thriving, as reflected in the dominance of Quebec's acrobatics-focused circus industry across the globe. This shift highlights the triumph of Guy Laliberté, who studied P.T. Barnum's model, eliminated the animals, and transformed a band of fellow Quebecois street performers into Cirque du Soleil in 1984. His company, which sold for approximately 1.5 billion dollars in 2015, is a hybrid of American entrepreneurialism, the *nouveau cirque* aesthetic of 1960s France, and non-western circus influences from China to Russia. *Cirque Global*, the first collection of critical essays devoted to circus in Quebec, offers a timely look at a sea change in live variety entertainment.

Editors Louis Patrick Leroux and Charles R Batson have brought leading scholars in the field into dialogue with circus artists, coaches, and archivists, among others. These perspectives are woven together to create what Batson aptly describes as a "sharp analysis of the multiple tales of origin, transmission, and disruption marking Quebec's contemporary circus scenes" (xvii). In addition to Cirque du Soleil, lesser-known yet equally innovative companies such as Cirque Éloize, Les 7 doigts de la main, and Machine de Cirque receive critical attention.

The collection is divided into five sections, each containing three thematically related essays. Pascal Jacob opens the first section, "Quebec on Planet Circus," by placing Quebec's story into the broad context of contemporary circus influences dating back 250 years in England, France, Germany, America, and the former Soviet Union. Leroux follows with a lucid deconstruction of "cirque" as a cultural term and performance category that points to the multilingual exchange of circus cultures in Quebec, Canada, and the United States. Julie Boudreault's essay "Are Quebec Circuses of Foreign Origin?" rounds off this historical contextualization; her meticulous documentation of American circuses that toured Quebec between 1846 and 1967 is a highlight.

Erin Hurley's Marxist and affect-infused analysis of the "performance services" sold by Cirque du Soleil to more than forty million spectators to date sets the critical tone for the second section, "Cirque Brands." She persuasively argues that by buying a ticket to a Cirque du Soleil show in today's service economy, "one purchases a good time and a feeling of middle-brow cultural respectability" (75). Sylvain Lavoie's "The Last Man in Quebec" offers a quirky analysis of how the same company's brand has installed itself as a religion within the province, with Laliberté cast as its messiah. Susan Bennett's "Circus and Gentrification" analyzes Cirque du Soleil's architectural and economic impacts upon the urban geographies of Portland, Vancouver, and Los Angeles.

Cirque Global's third section delves into the dramaturgy and aesthetics of contemporary Quebecois companies. Charles Batson's essay on *Les 7 doigts de la main* offers a thorough introduction to the intimate aesthetic of one of the leading companies to emerge as a counterpoint to Cirque du Soleil's style. Hurley responds to similar issues of intimacy, authenticity, and, at times, lack thereof in her second contribution to the collection, "The Multiple Bodies of Cirque du Soleil." Her distinctions between the circus artist's "character body," "performer body," and "fleshy body" will be useful for others thinking through various *cirque*-like spectacles. Karen Fricker's analysis of the indigenous performing body in *Totem*, a Cirque du Soleil show directed by Robert Lepage, is a fascinating and even-handed piece of criticism.

The "Circus Problematized" section takes a hard look at industry, city, and politics as they relate to Quebecois circus. Isabell Mahy, a former business consultant turned associate professor, contributes a candid account of her mediation work with Cirque du Soleil's artists and administrators. Simon Harel's essay examines Cirque's failed attempt to erect a so-called "Las Vegas of the North" in Montreal's Pointe-Saint-Charles neighborhood. Tracy Zhang's "The Chinese Connection" adds a crucial, East Asian perspective to *Cirque Global*. The significant influence of Chinese acrobatics and performers upon Quebecois circus companies is just beginning to gain wider critical attention. Zhang's article provides valuable analysis of China's acrobatic diplomacy, international circus exchanges, and the frequently overlooked relationship between the performing arts of magic and circus.

The collection concludes with three essays and an epilogue that examine the inner workings of Quebec's circus ecosystem. Deborah Leslie and Norma M. Rantisi's essay discusses funding, one of the core differences between US and Canadian circus models. Companies like Cirque du Soleil have benefited from significant government funding; in return, these companies contribute financial support to the National Circus School of Montreal (NCS). The NCS's role in education and training is documented in Sylvain Lafortune, Jon Burt, and Patrice Aubertin's essay, which explores the ongoing research and development conducted by teams of instructors, former industry professionals, and visiting researchers at the school. The final essay of the collection is Jennifer Beth Spiegel's ground breaking analysis of the social circus scene in Montreal and its direct contributions to the 2012 student-led protests against the provincial government's proposed tuition increase. Her work reminds readers that fire-breathing, clowning, and freakish acts are often performances of social and political defiance, created by and for marginalized communities. The final section also features a bilingual glossary by NCS library manager Anna-Karyna Barlati. This listing of circus terms—from "Acrobatic Chair (Chaise acrobatique)" to "Unicycle (Monocycle)"—provides a common language for scholars building upon the work shared here.

Cirque Global is a nuanced treatment of the Quebecois circus phenomenon that lays the groundwork for future scholarship needed to celebrate the multiplicity of circus traditions whose presence is growing in Quebec. Australia, Finland, and Italy, for example, are just a few countries whose styles, performers, and companies are part of the Quebecois circus scene, but are not discussed in great depth in this collection. The influence of the circus traditions and markets of India, Korea, the Middle East, and other non-western players in Quebec is also in need of further exploration. Contributors to *Cirque Global* are neither starry-eyed fans nor callous critics incapable of acknowledging the wonder of virtuosic live performance. They have all immersed themselves in the province's circus culture and asked difficult questions of it. Their answers constitute a cutting-edge text that promises to serve a wide readership of those who wish to think critically about circus beyond Barnum & Bailey.

DAVID FANCY, ET AL.

Diversities in Actor Training.

Brock University, 2016, <https://brocku.ca/diversities-in-actor-training>

EMILY A ROLLIE

Issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion—particularly in regard to acting and casting—have garnered significant attention recently in professional and academic theatre circles alike. Just as the musical *Hamilton* brought diversity into the Broadway spotlight, asking audiences to consider “who tells your story,” discussions of the changing face of theatre and the import of including more diverse perspectives within our educational institutions and training practices are gaining momentum. That, coupled with an increasingly globalized and technologically connected society, makes *Diversities in Actor Training*, an online resource edited by David Fancy and hosted by Brock University, a timely and necessary intervention.

Funded by a grant from the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities, *Diversities in Actor Training* provides a dynamic online tool for theatre teachers, practitioners, and students, specifically those interested in the ways actors' bodies are read by audiences on the public stage. As Fancy notes, “*how* people are depicted in the theatre makes a significant impact,” and if certain bodies are depicted as “lesser than” others, “we’re just promoting stereotypes our societies have inherited from long histories of injustice and exclusion.” The site offers historical and contemporary perspectives on these issues from leaders in Canadian theatre scholarship and practice such as Nina Lee Aquino, Conrad Alexandrowicz, Diana Belshaw, Paul De Jong, Michael Greyeyes, Naila Keleta-Mae, Laura Levin, Daniel Mroz, and Alex Tigchelaar. The videos contributed by these artists and scholars extend and animate the conversation begun in the fall 2014 issue of *Canadian Theatre Review*, “Actor Training in a Changing Landscape.”

The “Overview,” the first page encountered by users, is written in accessible, conversational prose, a strategy that invites users of all backgrounds to the conversation. Fancy concisely outlines the project's intention, situating it within current cultural discourses about