

Introduction

MARIA M. DELGADO AND SIMON WILLIAMS

This encyclopedia of stage directors brings together entries on over one thousand directors from across the globe as a means of examining how directors work, what distinguishes their approach or style(s), and their contribution to stage practice in their own country – with many directors strongly identified with the nation in which they work – or in wider transnational or international contexts. Some are shaped by exile and migration, others engage with the politics of nation-building or with the debates that have influenced their nation or wider continents. Directing is never a neutral act but rather a process of engaging with the wider context in which theatre is made and experienced.¹ While some of the directors featured have worked within well-established national or international theatre traditions, others work out of folk or ritualistic practices, in theatre for development (TfD), community theatre, writing, or dance. Terms relating to stage directing are covered in this introduction but also feature through the different entries as the styles, methodologies, and trajectories of the different directors are discussed with cross-referencing of directors allowing for influences and encounters to be mapped and narrated.

Defining what directors do is never easy but what emerges through the encyclopedia is an understanding of directing as both a craft and a process that is multifarious in its emphases – or what Adam Ledger defines as ‘multimodal’.² It is one of the reasons that the role of the stage director has proved so difficult to define. This may be because they are present through the process of making work but largely invisible – unless themselves performing, when a production opens, or the subject of a piece about the rehearsal process as with Michael Frayn’s *Noises Off*, FEDERICO GARCÍA LORCA’s *Play without a Title*, or Jack Thorne’s *The Motive and the Cue*. ARIANE MNOUCHKINE once referred to herself as ‘like a midwife’, while categorising directing as ‘a minor art – because a play exists without a director. A painting doesn’t exist without a painter, and a play doesn’t exist without the writer’.³ PETER STEIN considered his function as a director as one that shifts depending on the requirements of the play,⁴ KONSTANTIN STANISLAVSKY saw his purpose as ‘to encourage the actor’s creative genius, to control and adjust it’,⁵ while PETER BROOK said ‘the director’s job is to call forth existing emotions in the actor and objectivize them’.⁶ ROGER PLANCHON and JONATHAN MILLER viewed directors as like museum

¹ See M. M. Delgado and D. Rebellato, ‘Introduction to the First Edition’ and ‘Introduction to the Second Edition’, in Delgado and Rebellato (eds.), *Contemporary European Theatre Directors*, 2nd edn (Abingdon, 2020).

² A. J. Ledger, *The Director and Directing: Craft, Process and Aesthetic in Contemporary Theatre* (London, 2019), p. 6.

³ ‘Ariane Mnouchkine’, in M. M. Delgado and P. Heritage (eds.), *In Contact with the Gods?: Directors Talk Theatre* (Manchester, 1996), pp. 187, 188.

⁴ M. M. Delgado and P. Heritage, ‘Introduction’, in Delgado and Heritage (eds.), *In Contact with the Gods?*, p. 7.

⁵ K. Stanislavsky, ‘Direction and Acting’ [1947], in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 14th edn, vol. XXII (1929), <https://tinyurl.com/2s3vn8d4>

⁶ S. A. Theriault, ‘The Development of Theatre: Peter Brook and the Human Connection’, *Inquiries* 1.12 (2009): 1, <https://tinyurl.com/mxdsuamx>

curators.⁷ GEORGE TABORI opted for the term *Spielmacher* (playmaker), refusing to refer to himself as a director (p. 658). LEV DODIN sees his directorial work intrinsically linked to his teaching practice.⁸ The Welsh actor Richard Burton in a 1967 interview with Kenneth Tynan once famously referred to directors as ‘not more than jumped up stage managers’.⁹ ROBERT LEPAGE, while warning any emerging director against becoming ‘a control freak’, simply refers to the director as ‘just the captain of the ship – the wind and the tides decide where it goes’.¹⁰ Lepage’s view may indeed be closest to a particular understanding of the director within the Euro-American theatre today, as a dominant artist who takes responsibility for the overriding architecture of an on-stage performance and for providing a spatial and temporal framework for the interpretation of the action of that performance.

Simon Shepherd writes of directing as ‘the process of organising a performance: both getting it on the stage and shaping its contents’.¹¹ ANNE BOGART, reflecting on her own practice, refracts this idea in a different manner:

[m]any young directors make the big mistake of assuming that directing is about being in control, telling others what to do, having ideas and getting what you ask for. I don’t believe that these abilities are the qualities that make a good director or exciting theatre. Directing is about feeling, about being in the room with other people: with actors, with designers, with an audience. It is about having a feel for time and space, about breathing, and responding fully to the situation at hand, being able to plunge and encourage a plunge into the unknown at the right moment.¹²

During the twentieth century, the responsibilities of the director were given various names. EDWARD GORDON CRAIG defined the role as that of stage manager – designing the action, the lighting, and sculpting the bodies on stage.¹³ This figure may also be referred to as the producer – a term Jonathan Miller deploys¹⁴ – but more commonly in the twenty-first century, the producer is responsible largely for the financial, administrative, and business aspects of the production, the director for all artistic matters. In the English-speaking theatre, the term ‘artistic director’ is commonly used for the head of a company – where the role of director and producer may overlap – while in Central and Eastern Europe the function of the director and producer may be united in the figure of the *Intendant*, the authoritative leader of the many subsidised theatres that comprise national theatre networks. Germans use the French term *regisseur* to designate the stage director, while the French themselves never use that term. Instead, they specify the director’s major function with the term *metteur en scène* (scene-setter), with references made in earlier centuries to the person responsible for directing a performance as the *metteur en jeu*.¹⁵ In the commercial theatre of the nineteenth and early twentieth-century, the leader of the company was normally an actor-manager, who was often responsible for both the artistic and business sides of the enterprise, not to mention usually playing the leading role – was with HENRY IRVING and MARGARITA XIRGU. Actors continue to move into directorial roles such

⁷ D. Bradby and D. Williams, *Directors’ Theatre*, 2nd edn, ed. by P. M. Boenisch (London, 2019), pp. 6, 1.

⁸ P. Lichtenfels, ‘3. Lev Dodin: The Director and Cultural Memory’, in Delgado and Rebellato (eds.), *Contemporary European Theatre Directors*, pp. 85–102.

⁹ ‘Interview – Richard Burton by Kenneth Tynan’, *Acting in the 60s* (BBC: 1967), YouTube, Criterion Extras, www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hf5YyUwzV_4

¹⁰ Quoted in L. Barnett, ‘Interview: Portrait of the Artist Robert Lepage, Director’, *The Guardian*, 6 December 2010, www.theguardian.com/culture/2010/dec/06/robert-lepage-director

¹¹ S. Shepherd, *Direction: Readings in Theatre Practice* (Basingstoke, 2012), p. 9.

¹² A. Bogart, *A Director Prepares: Seven Essays on Art and Theatre* (London, 2001), p. 85.

¹³ E. G. Craig, *On the Art of Theatre* (London, 1980), pp. 147–55.

¹⁴ ‘Jonathan Miller’, in Delgado and Heritage (eds.), *In Contact with the Gods*, pp. 158–74.

¹⁵ Shepherd, *Direction*, p. 10. Shepherd covers the different terms for the role in some detail, see pp. 10–16.

as GEORGE ABYAD, ALFREDO CASTRO, and MICHAEL GRANDAGE. ‘Theatre-maker’ is also a term preferred by a generation of twenty-first-century directors, like MANUELA INFANTE, who favour a more fluid way of capturing the multidimensional skills involved in making work. Often, the responsibilities of administrator, coach, pedagogue, producer, and choreographer still fuse in the function of the director – as they did in the theatre of ancient Greece and medieval Europe.

In non-European theatres a strikingly large number of directors begin their careers as playwrights and continue as such even after they have taken up directing – including SABINA BERMAN, GUILLERMO CALDERÓN, and ANGELLA EMURWON. European theatre also boasts a number of conspicuous dramatists who have directed their own plays (as with Juan Mayorga and Florian Zeller) as well as those of other dramatists (examples here include Patrick Marber, Harold Pinter, and Alfredo Sanzol). Ethiopia’s MANYAZEWA ENDESHAW works across the interface of playwriting, translating, and directing; ROGER ASSAF across writing, acting, and directing; and JAVIER DAULTE is one of a significant number of Argentine dramatist-directors who develop both the plays and the production simultaneously through the rehearsal process. Cuban-American MARÍA IRENE FORNÉS similarly saw directing as a continuation of writing although her own plays were often highly developed before she began the production process. For *komedya* verse dramas in the Philippines, the directorial function is split between the *loa* (or declaimer), who welcomes the audience and at times acts as a mediator between the audience and the *apun-tadur* (also known as *dictator* perhaps in part because of the ‘controlling’ nature of the role). The latter merges the functions of playwright and director, using lines from *kom-edya* sources and then directing (through a form of prompting) the performers during the performance itself.¹⁶ Guyanese/Jamaican EUGENE WILLIAMS embraces intersecting roles as a dramaturg, director, and educator. For Brazil’s ABDIAS NASCIMENTO, there was no real separation between his roles as director, politician, and playwright – all three were rooted in an understanding of theatre as political action. Uganda’s ROSE MBOWA emerged from Tfd, and her work often fuses writing and directing although no scripts survive for a number of her key productions. Instead, it is the performative moment realised through engagement with an audience where meaning happens; the playtext, so often seen as the most visible trace of performance, has little significance beyond the performance itself.

Indeed, while we have mapped different configurations of the directorial role that emerge from forms of writing, the body as an instrument of virtuosity – trained and disciplined in the manner of a professional sports person – also defines the work of certain directors. Tanzania’s HABIBA ISSA works at the intersection of sport and theatre with acrobatics and circus at the core of her aesthetics. Dance offered Burundi’s JOSUÉ MUGISHA a means of making theatre that could evade censorship. Filipino director TIBO FERNANDEZ is known for his work with *pangalay*, a performance idiom from the provincial archipelago of Sulu, where performers use their hands and fingers to emulate the movements of the sea. WILLIAM KENTRIDGE’s directorial work, on the other hand, is intrinsically linked to his work as a visual artist, while ROBERT EDMOND JONES’s stagings cannot be disaggregated from his predominant role as a set, lighting, and costume designer. The journey to directing is often multidisciplinary and thus difficult to compartmentalise or essentialise.

¹⁶ See S. A. P. Tiatco, ‘The Philippine Komedya and the Recuperation of the Cosmopolitan: From Colonial Legacy to Cross-Cultural Encounter’, *Modern Drama* 57.1 (2014): 94–121, pp. 104–5.

The Evolution of the Director

Given the present-day facility with which theatre artists from different national and ethnic traditions can collaborate and see each other's work, methods of preparing for performance not only through rehearsal but also through workshops, laboratories, improvisational practices, and video, screen, and immersive technologies have generated modes of creating work that prioritise process as much as – and in some cases more than – product. The preparatory and rehearsal process which forms such a significant part of the director's role has increasingly been the focus of study in dissecting and exploring the craft of directing.¹⁷ For some directors in the encyclopedia, their name (or that of the company with which they work) is a 'brand' under which the work is packaged and sold to audiences. In the totality of the product, or brand, the director's artistic responsibility is bound up with the work of the choreographer, the playwright, the scenic designers, sound designers, lighting designers, or the dramaturg, who, in German-speaking countries, conducts in-depth research into the piece that is being prepared. In the contemporary global theatre, directors are becoming prized more for their capacity to collaborate with their artistic colleagues as equals, rather than their ability to be the sole individual who controls the logistics and strategies of performance. This is reflected in a significant number of entries in the encyclopedia – directors whose signature is forged with a regular creative team or company: ROLF and HEIDI ABDERHALDEN and Mapa Teatro, Alexander Devriendt and ONTROEREND GOED, and MIGUEL RUBIO ZAPATA and Grupo Cultural Yuyachkani.¹⁸ In some cases, the company is the more powerful label, as with RIMINI PROTOKOLL, Gob Squad, and Drama Box, but it is often the case that the director remains the figure associated with creative agency in the company (as with Mnouchkine and Théâtre du Soleil, JOAN LITTLEWOOD and Theatre Workshop, and Marco Laya and La Re-sentida). This may explain why, despite the seminal role played by companies in the development of a directorial aesthetic (as with BRECHT and BE, Stanislavsky and MAT, and ENRIQUE BUENAVENTURA and the Teatro Experimental de Cali (TEC)), it is the single *auteur* who is largely perceived as the determinant of the production.

Performances that involve multiple people invariably will require individuals who arrange and shape the event, yet the pre-eminence of the stage director in Europe is a historically determined phenomenon. Hence, in the ancient Greek theatre, performances in the Theatre of Dionysus were dependent on the *choregos*, a wealthy Athenian citizen whose duties included financing productions, while staging was probably the responsibility of the playwright, and training the chorus and actors was assigned to experts in music and formal speech.¹⁹ In medieval Europe, the presentation of religious drama was financed by the professional guilds of the city, while staging was fixed by tradition and the conventions of the Christian church.²⁰

While actor-managers like LOPE DE RUEDA recognised the importance of stage craft and management in the preparation of works for an audience, the seeds of the modern director in Europe can, arguably, first be identified in the work of the French playwright MOLIÈRE and the English actor DAVID GARRICK, both of whom realised that the most effective

¹⁷ See, for example, G. McAuley, *Not Magic but Work: An Ethnographic Account of a Rehearsal Process* (Manchester, 2012) and S. Letzler Cole, *Directors in Rehearsal: A Hidden World* (New York and London, 1992).

¹⁸ See pp. 9–10 for a further discussion of directors who have created companies with whom they regularly make work.

¹⁹ On staging for ancient Greek theatre, see O. Taplin, *Greek Theatre in Action* (London, 2002).

²⁰ W. Tydeman (ed.), *The Medieval European Stage, 500–1550 (Theatre in Europe: A Documentary History)* (Cambridge, 2001).

theatrical performances could be generated by a well-rehearsed ensemble of actors who performed as colleagues rather than as soloists. The development of complex scenery operated by stage machinery in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries led audiences to delight in stage spectacles that involved large numbers of performers, which necessitated directors who were skilled at creating stage spectacles, such as CHARLES KEAN, GEORG II DUKE OF SAXE-MEININGEN, and, in the early twentieth century, MAX REINHARDT. But perhaps the greatest need for a single figure as director became clear in the late-nineteenth century with the advent of playwrights such as Ibsen, Chekhov, and PIRANDELLO, all of whose enigmatic plays could encourage a wide range of interpretation; the director's function became the unification of a cast, members of which could potentially diverge in their understanding of the play. Also, at the turn of the nineteenth into the twentieth century, the artistic world both expanded and fragmented, adopting a wide range of styles, each one of which claimed to represent aspects of a progressively secularising society dealing with the consequences of industrialisation and a devastating World War that erased confidence in the benefits of new technologies and had far-reaching consequences beyond Europe's imperial powers.

This cultural and social disruption led to a wide range of dramatic styles and theatrical modes with which individual directors were often associated. Realism – both a technique to bring a greater verisimilitude to the stage in the depiction of character and environment and a philosophical stance²¹ – was fundamental to most theatrical production until late in the nineteenth century. Naturalism, which was an intensification of realism and was initially associated with ANDRÉ ANTOINE, OTTO BRAHM, and some of the work of Stanislavsky, observed the impact of environment, heredity, and the dynamics of the mind within contemporary life; in many of their productions the creation of an illusion of everyday life was paramount. Antoine's work heavily influenced models of an art theatre that circulated across Europe in the early twentieth century and shaped the ethos and approach to stage detail among directors well beyond France, as the very different practices of FERNANDO DÍAZ DE MENDOZA and GREGORIO MARTÍNEZ SIERRA in Spain illustrate. ZHANG MIN, SUN WEISHI, and ZHU XIANGCHENG all introduced Stanislavsky's ideas to China across different genres and traditions. Through dialogue with Italian and Polish practitioners, Bogdan Jerković enriched experimental theatre in the former Yugoslavia. Symbolism, in contrast to naturalism, explored human life in a numinous or quasi-metaphysical context, as in the work of AURÉLIEN LUGNÉ-POE, ADRIÀ GUAL, and, later, WIELAND WAGNER and, arguably, ROBERT WILSON. Expressionism, which reflected the turmoil of political and social change during and after WWI, rejected realism for a stripped-down stage and often violently figurative productions, by directors such as LEOPOLD JESSNER, ERWIN PISCATOR, and Robert Edmond Jones. Inter- and cross-cultural exchanges across all these movements show how innovations (or 'sciences of directing' as Gabriela Giannachi and Mary Luckhurst term them²²) introduced by directors have spread across the world.

Although these modes and styles originated well over one hundred years ago, they are still abundantly visible in twenty-first-century theatre. So too is the epic theatre developed primarily by Bertolt Brecht in the 1930s, a largely political theatre that encouraged the development of both objectivity in judgement and commitment to progressive social causes in the audience. The circulation of Brecht's ideas and traces of Brechtian staging can be detected (among others) in the work of UTPAL DUTT in India, CARLOS GIMÉNEZ in Argentina and Venezuela, VIRGILIO VALERO in Ecuador, TSEGGAI ESAIAS in Eritrea, and CLARE

²¹ See D. Miller, 'Realism', in N. Fulsås and T. Rem (eds.), *Ibsen in Context* (Cambridge, 2021), pp. 37–45.

²² G. Giannachi and M. Luckhurst, 'Introduction', in Giannachi and Luckhurst (eds.), *On Directing: Interviews with Directors* (London, 1999), p. xiii.

STOPFORD in South Africa. In Russia, VSEVOLOD MEYERHOLD employed theatre to spread the revolutionary ethos and message of the Soviet government, by using the spare scenery of constructivism and the science of biomechanics to represent the mechanised world of modern times. Meyerhold's ideas, like those of Brecht, also had a profound influence on cinematic language as evidenced in the work of directors SERGEI EISENSTEIN and Jean-Luc Godard. Furthermore, at a time when the Soviet government sought to erase Meyerhold's presence from Russian theatre, his ideas were disseminated through the practices of directors like JERZY JAROCKI and Mata Milošević – the latter was taught by Yury Lvovich Rakitin, who had been a student of Meyerhold's. The focus on process that Stanislavsky promoted is echoed in numerous directors in the book – from KATIE MITCHELL to RUBÉN SZUCHMACHER – whose writings on directing have provided useful dissections into the directorial process within the precise contexts (political, ideological, cultural) in which they have forged their work.

The rationality assumed as the basis of most theatrical performance in the pre-WWII theatre was radically challenged by ANTONIN ARTAUD, who advocated a Theatre of Cruelty in which the performance would work upon the spectators as if it were a 'plague' and, in so doing, reveal to them their primordial origins. His theories, which predated and influenced absurdism, had a considerable impact on the theatre of the 1960s in Europe and beyond – as exemplified in the work of Argentine directors VÍCTOR GARCÍA and JORGE LAVELLI, North American CHARLES MAROWITZ, and Brazilian JOSÉ CELSO MARTINEZ CORRÊA. It later resonated through voices of protest, often of an unprecedented violence and radicalism, heard in theatres from student performances through to the main stages of regional, national, and commercial theatres. Artaud's disruptive ethos had some influence on the theatre of JERZY GROTOWSKI and Peter Brook and continues to influence a directorial aesthetic that assaults the audience with the primacy of movement replacing verbal logic.

Approaches to Directing

The generic variety of the Euro-American theatre repertoire has generated a corresponding variety of directorial approaches. In the first half of the twentieth century, when the ideas of Stanislavsky were widespread, the director was conceptualised as one who assures what they might define as a 'truthful' illusion of life upon the stage.²³ However, performances frequently avoid imitating with exactitude the sights, sounds, and rhythms of everyday life, and directors such as ROMEO CASTELLUCCI, LOLA ARIAS, Mohamed El Khatib, and JÉRÔME SAVARY have often been singled out for their work in this area, giving stage space to animals, children, and experiences often erased from the theatrical frame. Verse tragedy, an important component of the Western dramatic tradition, has often been the site of the most prominent experiments in directors' theatre – with the process of translation offering the opportunity to render the verse into more colloquial speech patterns and a more fluid movement register. The work of CALIXTO BIEITO, SIMON STONE, and IVO VAN HOFVE has been the site of adventurous reimaginings of the classics, realised through an axis of translation, adaptation, and staging. A newer generation, like Pinar Karabulut and Eline Arbo, are forging new directions with such refashionings, drawing on idioms and registers that speak very directly to their contemporaries. Even if translation, however, does not feature as a component of

²³ The work of directors who promoted models of Method Acting is particularly significant here although Jonathan Pitches and Stefan Aquilina's edited collection *Stanislavsky in the World: The System and Its Transformations across Continents* (London and New York, 2017) shows the expansive and varied appropriation of the system by directors across the globe.

the process of re-presenting the text across a different linguistic register, directors such as YANA ROSS, PETER SELLARS, and DEBORAH WARNER have shown the potentiality they have, in their original language, to disrupt and unsettle more conventional readings.

Some directors have been particularly associated with certain genres. Farce, an extreme form of physical comedy, calls for inventiveness and ingenuity in blocking from the director and the capacity to coax roars of laughter from the audience with actors who are skilled in dead-pan performance. With *La Cubana*, JORDI MILÁN has fine-tuned an agile form of populist farce that has rendered him one of Spain's most successful stage directors. The artificiality of social life, as the primary satirical objective of the ubiquitous comedy of manners, has attracted resourceful directors capable of understanding the postures and attitudes of social life in the relevant age and ensuring a consistently ironic ambiance on stage; HERBERT FRITSCH's attention to frenzied energetic pacing, the clean concentration on class and social inequalities of WILLIAM GASKILL, and PETER HALL's attention to linguistic intricacies have all shaped their approaches to directing the work of Molière, Farquhar, and Wilde.

It is, however, common for directors to work across genres, so those who have trained and made their careers in spoken drama may also frequently work in genres where they are not always the final authority in the presentation of the drama. With musicals and operettas, which combine spoken dialogue with extensive passages of song and dance, directors such as HAROLD PRINCE, Daniel Fish, and Rebecca Frecknall still maintain a primary role in the composition of the performance event, but in opera, where music is overwhelmingly the prime language of the action, articulated by rigorously trained voices, musical considerations generally outweigh theatrical ones, though the challenge of opera now attracts many major directors, with BARRIE KOSKY speaking of the conductor as 'a true partner in the orchestra pit'.²⁴ Since Wieland Wagner's revolutionary productions of his grandfather's music dramas at Bayreuth in the 1950s and 1960s, opera has become the site of much experimentation, which has discovered complex meanings and radical themes in many works previously considered devoid of dramatic substance. PATRICE CHÉREAU's contentious *Ring* cycle (1976), dispensing with the mythological in favour of an industrialised setting – a hydro-electric dam standing in for the Rhine – further consolidated an idea of the director as provocateur, shaking up social conventions and norms in presenting a work as if for the first time and forging a relationship between conductor (here Pierre Boulez) and director that has offered a model for operatic collaborations (as with that of DAVID POUNTNEY and Mark Elder, and Peter Sellars and Simon Rattle).

Dance and dramatic action are more frequently combined, especially in modern dance, which has shed the formality of ballet and which uses the body as a means of expressing the inner struggles of character and the external conflicts of drama. *Tanztheater* constantly employs the body as an agent in the development of the drama; such theatre tends to be the realm of the choreographer more than the stage director although PINA BAUSCH, CRYSTAL PITE, and the Belgian company Peeping Tom have shown how porous these boundaries can be.

The modern and contemporary global theatre offers a multitudinous array of genres within which directors can work and ample opportunities to develop and move away from traditions that have regularised national theatre styles for several centuries. Standard practice for

²⁴ Quoted in N. Lebrecht, 'Barrie Kosky: I Have the World's Best Janacek Conductor', *Slipped Disc*, 15 February 2022, <https://tinyurl.com/vkdmwnfk>

directors in the Euro-American theatre in the course of the twentieth century has assumed that directors exercise ultimate control over everything that happens on stage – although ensemble companies, long-standing director–designer collaborations, and devised work have challenged such assumptions. Directors are often responsible for casting the play, which involves selecting actors they think appropriate for the roles – although casting directors have increasingly been involved in working with them on this; they will conduct rehearsals, often with an assistant director, in which they will establish the blocking or staging of the piece; in conversations with the actors, they will determine the characterisation of the roles; and they will also pay close attention to the combined movement of the actors, possibly hiring a choreographer or movement director to coach the actors and compose their movements.

The director therefore is arguably less an embodiment of authority than one whose role is that of ‘uniting’ a creative team. The idea of the director as the figure attributed with the ‘concept’ or ‘direction’ of the production was articulated by Roger Planchon in 1961 in his categorisation of the director as ‘writer’ of the stage production. His term for stage direction as *écriture scénique* (scenic writing) postulated an understanding of the director as a figure who marshals ‘all the resources of the stage in a wholly visual conception that was, perhaps for the first time, not dependent on the work of the playwright’.²⁵ *Écriture scénique* saw the director as *auteur*, unsettling (at least in certain national contexts) the playwright as the ‘agent’ of the meaning that the director was supposedly transposing to the stage. The term *Regietheater*, or ‘director’s theatre’, builds on this idea, alluding to a particular concept-driven directorial approach where the directorial intervention is highly visible – a process of ‘writing’ or indeed some would argue ‘re-writing’ the piece through the production, just as Chéreau had done in his 1976 *Ring* cycle discussed on p. 140. Director’s theatre is contrasted with a methodology that argues for the ‘invisibility’ of the director. RICHARD EYRE, the former Director of the UK’s National Theatre, defines this approach as ‘a demand that the production illuminate the play or the film rather than itself’.²⁶ London-based theatre critic Michael Billington expands on this when he writes that the task of the director is to ‘realise the author’s intentions with the best performers available’.²⁷ Intentions, however, are notoriously difficult to pin down, especially when ‘the author’ may be dead or have left contradictory thoughts on the piece. The visibility of the director’s *écriture scénique* has proved unsettling in certain cultures because it has made visible the ideological and material conditions in which theatre is made and engaged with, namely as a site for interrogation and debate, a place for challenging established understandings of texts, or asking questions about how texts circulate and gain canonic status. Romeo Castellucci observes that ‘the director has become a figure who creates problems instead of trying to solve them’,²⁸ and stage productions have generated and continue to generate polemical debates on what constitutes text in theatre and which ‘deviances’ and ‘liberties’ are considered acceptable or not.²⁹

²⁵ Delgado and Rebellato, ‘Introduction to the First Edition’, in Delgado and Rebellato (eds.), *Contemporary European Theatre Directors*, p. 2. On *écriture scénique* see D. Bradby, *Modern French Drama 1940–1990* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 101–28, 132–41.

²⁶ R. Eyre, *Utopia and Other Places: Memoir of a Young Director* (London, 2003), p. 111.

²⁷ Quoted in C. Higgins, ‘Katie Mitchell, British Theatre’s Queen in Exile’, *The Guardian*, 14 January 2016, www.theguardian.com/stage/2016/jan/14/british-theatre-queen-exile-katie-mitchell

²⁸ A. Read, ‘14. Romeo Castellucci: The Director on this Earth’, in Delgado and Rebellato (eds.), *Contemporary European Theatre Directors*, p. 329.

²⁹ See for example, L. R. Bayley, ‘Eurotrash Revisited: The Academic Version’, *The Art Music Lounge*, 23 February 2019, <https://tinyurl.com/jwsxjruX> and D. Alberge, ‘David Hare: Classic British Drama Is “Being Infected” by Radical European Staging’, *The Guardian*, 29 January 2017, <https://tinyurl.com/3kf8encu>

The Evolving Role of the Director

The director's role has, in the latter half of the twentieth century, arguably undergone significant changes that have challenged the model of a single figure – often male – who organises and orchestrates the production. The social and political changes that followed the protests in France in 1968 reverberated across the globe, with directors initiating different models of cultivating work that destabilised social and cultural hierarchies. *Création collective* (collective creation) proved particularly pervasive here, offering a way of making work rooted in a devising process that recognised the work of the cast, writer, director, and designer as inextricably linked – with the writing of both the play and the production happening through the development process. Collective creation questioned the power of individual specialisms, opting instead for an approach that recognised that alternative modes of organising society necessitated alternative modes of making theatre.³⁰ In the UK, from the 1960s through to the early twenty-first century, several groups pursued invigorating modes of collective creation, none more so than WELFARE STATE INTERNATIONAL, whose infectious celebratory work took place not in conventional theatre, but throughout whichever community the company was acclaiming. Collective creation's influence was particularly pervasive in Latin America, where, interlinked with the Third Cinema,³¹ it offered a process of thinking through what a theatre embedded in the experiences of the communities that made up the locality constituted. Teatro La Candelaria (founded in 1966), like Cuatrotablas and Grupo Cultural Yuyachkani (both founded in 1971), embedded *creación colectiva* in Latin America, forging new models for making work stemming from local folklore, narratives, and customs. Neo-colonialism came under the scalpel as companies sought to make work that looked outside either the European and North American canons or auteurist models of directing.

Directors too have often questioned whose stories are told in theatre and why. Jenny Sealey has promoted a model of artistic access, empowering deaf and disabled actors with Graeae, the UK company of which she has been AD since 1997. CHELA DE FERRARI's work with Teatro La Plaza (the company she established in Peru in 2003) is both a community forged theatre but one with international visibility – as indicated by her *Hamlet* (2019), realised with actors with Down's syndrome who provide an interrogation of how you function in a world that sidelines and prejudges you. BRUCE GLADWIN's work with the company Back to Back in Australia too provides a vision of theatre's potentiality to challenge social and cultural perceptions. The director is here part of an ensemble approach to theatre-making – part-dramaturg, part-writer, part-facilitator – where the on-stage agency of the actors is paramount.

A process of devising has been seminal to the ethos of companies with hugely different aesthetics, like Els Joglars, La Fura dels Baus, and Vinge/Müller. Some directors are inextricably interwoven with companies they have established to develop and direct stage work – MÁRCIO MEIRELLES and Bando de Teatro Olodum, SALVADOR TÁVORA and La Cuadra de Sevilla, FELIX BARRETT and Punchdrunk, JAMIE LLOYD and the Jamie Lloyd Company. With some directors, the companies have effectively died with them, as with the Peter Hall Company and to an extent Cricot 2, the latter making no new work after TADEUSZ KANTOR's death in 1990 but continuing to tour *The Dead Class* and *Today Is My Birthday* until 1992. With others, the company has ended (as with Buenos Aires's El

³⁰ T. Shank, 'Collective Creation', *TDR: The Drama Review* 16.2 (1972): 3–31.

³¹ On the Third Cinema and its challenge to established modes of film-making grounded in neo-colonialism, see F. Solanas and O. Getino, 'Toward a Third Cinema', *Cinéaste* 4.3 (1970–71): 1–10.

Periférico de Objetos) while the directors DANIEL VERONESE, EMILIO GARCÍA WEHBI, and Ana Alvarado have gone on to develop trajectories independently. In some cases, the companies have continued under other ADs as with Barcelona's Teatre Lliure and Lima's Cuatrotablas.

Festivals that emerged in the aftermath of WWII operated as important spaces for work to circulate, bringing directors from different continents into ever closer contact with each other's work. Avignon (France), founded in 1947; EIF (Edinburgh, Scotland) also in 1947; Shiraz (Iran, 1967–77); BITEF (the former Yugoslavia, founded in 1967); Journées Théâtrales de Carthage (founded in 1983); Iberoamerican Theatre Festival in Bogotá (Colombia, founded in 1988); Santiago a mil (first launched as Festival Teatro a Mil in 1994); and Kampala International Theatre Festival (founded in 2014) have served as sites for professional development for directors, for conversations and encounters across what might be deemed differing political arenas. They also protect directors from the censorship they might face in their own nations: NÚRIA ESPERT has mentioned that her own international career was launched when Víctor García's production of *The Maids* was invited to Belgrade as part of BITEF by offering a layer of protection against the censorship then in operation in Francoist Spain.³² Nevertheless, directors whose work is considered by authoritarian governments to be subversive continue to be punished, as was the case with YURY LYUBIMOV, who was stripped of his Soviet citizenship in 1984 and spent the following four years in exile from the USSR; the twenty-first century has seen the Russian director KIRILL SEREBRENNIKOV spend several years under house arrest, although he was allowed to direct productions outside Russia remotely and now lives in Germany. JULIANO MER-KHAMIS was assassinated by a masked gunman in 2011 in Jenin, Palestine, where he had established the Freedom Theatre as a space for exploring theatre's potentiality in a refugee camp. In this volume, directors are shown to function across different cultural contexts as figures who challenge the status quo and disturb established understandings of what theatre is, should be, and can be.

What emerges strongly is an understanding of how directors have shaped each other's work and not simply through encountering stagings in performance: through writings – Deborah Warner, for example, has referred to the importance of Brook's *The Empty Space* in her understanding of theatre;³³ through translating their work – Zhang Min translating *An Actor Prepares* into Mandarin; or through training or working with them – Patrice Chéreau and LLUÍS PASQUAL both assisted GIORGIO STREHLER; ZAKI TULAYMAT studied with FIRMIN GÉMIER; Lev Dodin mentored Alan Lyddiard at Newcastle upon Tyne's Northern Stage; WŁODZIMIERZ STANIEWSKI worked with Grotowski; and ZBIGNIEW MARIAN ZIEMBIŃSKI introduced Grotowski's ideas to Brazil. The movement of directorial innovations has been complex, multi-layered, and global. KAWAKAMI OTOJIRŌ, whose modernising *shinpa* merged *kabuki* and modern dialogue, introduced electric lighting, a more naturalistic idiom of performance, and naturalistic makeup after seeing theatre in Paris in 1893. NODA HIDEKI's highly physicalised style has clear roots in his training with SIMON MCBURNEY. McBurney acknowledges the distinctive qualities of Ugandan director STEPHEN RWANGYZEI's practice.³⁴ McBurney, like ALBERT BOADELLA, PEDRO SALAZAR, and James Macdonald, trained with Jacques Lecoq.

³² Interview with Maria Delgado, 2015.

³³ D. Warner, 'My Culture Fix', *The Times*, 3 July 2021, www.thetimes.co.uk/article/my-culture-fix-deborah-warner-5x3shgfd3

³⁴ S. Knapper, '11. Simon McBurney: Shifting under/Soaring over the Boundaries of Europe', in Delgado and Rebellato (eds.), *Contemporary European Theatre Directors*, p. 271.

SUZUKI TADASHI has collaborated with a range of directors on theatre initiatives promoting international collaborations (including SITI, founded with Anne Bogart in 1992 and the International Theatre Olympic committee in 1993 with THEODOROS TERZOPOULOS, Robert Wilson, HEINER MÜLLER, and Yury Lyubimov). Lola Arias has co-directed with Rimini Protokoll's Stefan Kaegi. Moscow's GITIS, for example, has been a training ground for directors from beyond Russia, including CHEN YONG and Sun Weishi (China), RIMAS TUMINAS (Lithuania), FAWAZ AS-SAJIR (Syria), Jerzy Jaroeki (Poland), ALEJANDRO GONZÁLEZ PUCHE (Colombia), and JULIA OGNANOVA (Bulgaria).

What this volume also demonstrates is that training for directors has shifted through many shapes and forms and is strongly aligned to different cultural understandings of theatre. Drama schools are just one of many sites for training, and directors have taken multifarious journeys to this role – through architecture, anthropology, engineering, medicine, and music. Tekena Gasper Mark, writing on understandings of the director in traditional African theatre, observes that 'it is the Chief Priest, choreographer, drummer or a senior member of the group or troupe that performs the role of the director'. Referencing the 'directorial indices of African traditional performances drawing from the Alarinjo Traditional Yorùbá Travelling Theatre in Nigeria, and the Nji-Owu Performance of Opobo, Rivers State, in Nigeria', Gasper Mark posits the need for a more nuanced understanding of what directing means.³⁵ Stage directing in West African nations, as with many other artistic professions, was recognised during the post-independence cultural movements between the 1950s and 1970s. These years resulted in the establishment of university drama departments, where understandings of directorial practices that had been forged in Europe gradually merged with theatre forms that already had currency in the local and/or national context – as with the traditional Yorùbá performance promoted by Huber Ogunde in 1940s Nigeria.³⁶

These cross-cultural currents demonstrate the intricate ways in which directing methods and approaches are forged and practised. A prominent number of directors in the volume have developed their skills and techniques through community theatres – as per JANET BADJAN-YOUNG in The Gambia and JANET PILLAI in Malaysia. University theatres are prominent training grounds for directors in a number of countries, including the Philippines and Zimbabwe. In other nations, like Malta, amateur theatres have been pre-eminent sites for theatrical innovation and influential training sites for directors.³⁷

Challenges to the role of the director and the power they hold have perhaps been more conspicuous since the 1980s. Power inequalities in cultural appropriations that fail to recognise colonial inequalities or contextual resonances were evident in the discourse that Peter Brook's *Mahabharata* (1985) generated in the mid-1980s and 1990s.³⁸ Gender inequalities, identified in a canon forged of largely male directors, are an issue that this volume addresses

³⁵ T. Gasper Mark, 'The Art of Directing in Africa', *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences* 7.24 (2017): 67–74, pp. 72, 74.

³⁶ The role of the universities in cultural infrastructure and activities is covered in R. W. July, *An African Voice: The Role of the Humanities in African Independence* (Durham, North Carolina, 1987). See also O. Ewenzor (ed.), *The Short Century: Liberation and Independence Movements in Africa, 1945–1994* (London and New York, 2001). With thanks to 'Funmi Adewole for drawing our attention to histories of directing in West Africa.

³⁷ V. A. Cremona and M. Galea, 'The Amateur Theatre in Malta', *Amfiteater: Journal of Performing Arts Theory* 8.1 (2020): 183–208, <https://tinyurl.com/p6xzyv43>

³⁸ R. Bharucha, *Peter Brook and the Mahabharata: A View from India* (London, 1991).

with entries on women directors whose contributions have too often been marginalised or omitted from published histories of national theatre cultures, from GLENDA DICKERSON to Margarita Xirgu, for complex reasons related to power inequalities and/or exile. The abuses that directors have perpetrated in the name of ‘art’ have also been exposed – perhaps most conspicuously through the #MeToo movement – and the volume does include entries on several directors who have been accused or convicted of abuse or misconduct and this is acknowledged in the entry. The directorial function has come under scrutiny in the twenty-first century with rehearsal room guidance and workplace protocols taking an ever more prominent role in shaping what is permitted (and more importantly *not* permitted) in the process of making work. As evolving technologies, screen cultures, virtual and augmented realities, and the legacy of streaming during the Covid-19 pandemic expand audience understandings of what constitutes live performance, the possibilities of the director’s role continue to evolve.

Directors featured in the volume work across children’s theatre, mediatised landscapes, site-specific contexts, and durational performances as well as dramatic works, opera, music theatre, and devised productions in purpose-built venues. In selecting who to feature, we have been guided by certain criteria: what differences have they made, either to practices of directing in their own country or further afield, to understandings of what theatre can do, to how texts are refashioned through performance, or to ways of working with actors and designers. As editors, we have worked with an advisory board who have recommended figures for inclusion, with attention paid both to established directors and to those whose contributions to directing – for a series of complex political, social, and cultural reasons – might not have been recognised at the time in which they were working or have not previously been covered in English-language publications. Where the director is subsumed by the company’s brand, the company rather than the director is listed, although the index facilitates identification of directors working in this capacity.

The cultural particularities of a country in respect of naming conventions are respected throughout. Spain and Spanish-America frequently utilise two surnames, with the mother’s surname routinely following the father’s. We have listed both surnames where appropriate, unless these were not used in any public documentation, but have also signalled the surname by which the director is habitually known.

We have used the capitalisation guidance deployed in the relevant European languages. Capital letters do not exist in Japanese or Chinese, but we have followed *The Chicago Manual of Style* guidance in romanised versions of these languages where they would habitually be used in English. Transliteration is provided for names and production titles where the language uses a non-Roman alphabet. Transliteration of the names of Taiwanese directors is based on the Wade–Giles system for Mandarin Chinese used in Taiwan. For Arabic, we have followed the transliteration guidance provided by the *Journal for Interdisciplinary Middle Eastern Studies* (JIMES) where possible. Tribal affiliations are provided for New Zealand directors, where applicable, before their place and date of birth. The full date and place of birth (and place and date of death where appropriate) have been included for each director where these details are available. Directors or companies who have entries featured in the volume are presented in SMALL CAPS when first mentioned in another entry or in the introduction. For widely performed Western plays, titles are usually given only in English. Titles are predominantly presented in the original language for other works. Where there are different spellings of a director’s name (as with Stanislavsky/Staniislavski), the more habitual spelling is used. In case a director’s name is commonly and consistently spelled different from the regular transliteration (as with

Khoo Jahye, instead of Gu Ja-hye), both names are noted. For women performers we have referred to them as actors or actresses depending on preference. Translations to English of quotations are the authors' own unless otherwise noted. A glossary of abbreviations and acronyms is provided for key institutions and terms that recur through the volume. Significant bibliographic items and referenced works are provided in some entries, with a further bibliography of key works on directing at the end of the volume. There is an index of directors. For photographs presented in the volume we use the captions provided by the photographer or agency where possible.

Whether the prominence of companies or sites like SHE SHE POP, Back to Back, Forced Entertainment, or The Centre for the Less Good Idea might dislodge the primacy of the director remains to be seen. DECLAN DONNELLAN may have observed that 'there shouldn't have to be a director, but you're almost a necessary evil',³⁹ but directors remain a prominent and highly visible reference point for the production and marketing of theatre in the twenty-first century.⁴⁰ We hope this introduction allows for a broader understanding of how they function in different cultures and the impact they have made across the performing arts and in the wider cultural and social sphere.

³⁹ 'Declan Donnellan and Nick Ormerod', in Delgado and Heritage (eds.), *In Contact with the Gods*, p. 91.

⁴⁰ With thanks to Adam Ledger for his insightful comments on an earlier draft of this introduction.