

- 4 Daphne P. Lei, 'Interruption, Intervention, Interculturalism: Robert Wilson's HIT Production in Taiwan', *Theatre Journal*, 63, 4 (December 2011), pp. 571–86.
- 5 'Dialogue: Erika Fischer-Lichte and Rustom Bharucha', *Textures: Online Platform for Interweaving Performance Cultures*, 6 August 2011, at www.textures-platform.com/?p=1667&page=3, accessed 22 November 2020.
- 6 See Rustom Bharucha, *The Politics of Cultural Practice: Thinking through Theatre in an Age of Globalization* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- 7 Ric Knowles, *Theatre & Interculturalism* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 21.
- 8 Charlotte McIvor and Justine Nakase, 'Annotated Bibliography', in Daphne P. Lei and Charlotte McIvor, eds., *The Methuen Drama Handbook of Interculturalism and Performance* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), pp. 221–51, here p. 239.
- 9 See, for example, Mary Jo Meg Gentes's review in *Asian Folklore Studies*, 54, 1 (1995), pp. 133–4.

New Books

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Beyond Broadway: The Pleasure and Promise of Musical Theatre across America.
By Stacy Wolf. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019. Pp. 382. \$99 Hb; \$29.95 Pb.
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In January 2020, I did something common. I sat in the darkened auditorium at the high school where I work and waited for the all-school musical to begin. Throughout the performance of *Urinetown*, I bore witness to the joys and talents of my students and the largely unpaid labour of my colleagues who directed, choreographed, designed and musical-directed the show; all work that transpires *after* school. What I witnessed that night may have felt unique, but it was hardly so. Amateur musical theatre performances such as this happen nearly every weekend throughout the year in all parts of the United States. This is precisely the subject of Stacy Wolf's *Beyond Broadway: The Pleasure and Promise of Musical Theatre across America*.

When people think of musical theatre in the United States, they inevitably think of the glitz and glamour of Broadway, but musical theatre is thriving across the US, in particular in amateur productions at schools, community theatres, summer camps and the like. Wolf examines the role of musical theatre in US culture, with a specific focus on the participatory experience of creating and watching live musicals. To do this, Wolf travelled across the United States, conducting over three hundred interviews along the way. Wolf visited elementary schools, a middle-school performance festival, after-school programmes, high schools, summer camps, state park outdoor theatres, community theatres and dinner theatres. As Wolf argues, musical theatre in the US is thriving and much of the reasoning extends far beyond Broadway and regional theatres.

Beyond Broadway questions why local musical theatre productions proliferate in the United States, why so many people engross themselves in making an amateur musical when it requires such an extreme level of commitment and collaboration, and, perhaps most importantly, why local audiences attend these productions en masse. While amateur and educational theatre is often disregarded by scholarship, Wolf makes a critical intervention by arguing for the significance of local musical theatre productions. Specifically, the book reveals how amateur theatre is made, which is perhaps its most innovative feature. Wolf unmask the labour, repetition and pleasure that go into making a show. The creative energy surrounding these productions is filled with fun and seriousness. Through a combination of labour and leisure,

amateur artists reveal how they engage with the craft out of love. It is not a job and most, if not all, artists are unpaid. Even so, they work hard at something that gives them pleasure and the chance to have fun. Moreover, audiences largely show up, but seldom do they know everything that goes into the process. Since tickets are inexpensive or free, audiences can see the latest hits from Broadway such as *In the Heights* and *Next to Normal* at just a fraction of the cost and without having to travel to New York City. That is, local productions are accessible and, according to Wolf, are happening in all parts of the country, nearly every week of the year.

While Wolf's storytelling is engaging throughout, I was particularly drawn into the accounts of the people who make the musicals. Each chapter follows different on- and offstage talent as they rehearse and perform the musical-theatre canon. For instance, chapter 2 focuses on Marilyn, a so-called 'backstage diva' who produces and directs pay-to-play musicals throughout the year for youth in Marin County, California. Wolf demystifies this real-life Mama Rose and offers valuable insight into the joy and labour that go into creating musicals with young people.

Beyond Broadway will be of value to a variety of theatre and performance studies scholars, especially those interested in amateur and educational theatre as well as those interested in how local artists and audiences engage with musical theatre. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has put a stop to live performance (not to mention my theatre-going plans), Wolf has given me a road map to musical theatre across the United States that will come in handy one day. And, as I finally watch an amateur production of *Into the Woods*, I will have a new-found appreciation for the labour and pleasure that made it possible.

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Intercultural Aesthetics in Traditional Chinese Theatre: From 1978 to the Present.

By Wei Feng. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020. Pp. xv + 277. £59.99/\$84.99 Hb.

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Intercultural studies of traditional Chinese theatre, or *xiqu*, remain marginal and thus inadequately discussed in Western academia. Chinese studies in this field, though abundant, tend to ignore the Western discourse. In this sense, this book is foregrounded by its meticulous research within both Chinese and Western sociopolitical and theoretical contexts.

The book engages in dialogue with new interculturalism embraced by theorists such as Erika Fischer-Lichte, Rustom Bharucha, Ric Knowles and Charlotte McIvor, and contemporary Chinese *xiqu* studies initiated by scholars like Li Ruru, Wang An-ch'i and Chen Fang. Feng positions this within the framework of Bakhtin's dialogism, James O. Young's cultural appropriation and Toby Nellhaus's concept of 'agents'. Its major contribution lies in a polemic against earlier hegemonic intercultural theories built upon Western appropriation of the East and for 'the plurality of theatrical interculturalism in historical and modern China' (p. 234). The author also reconsiders the significance of multidimensional 'dialogue' and complements the impact of 'agents' embodied by multi-background artists in intercultural theatrical practices.

The publication investigates nuances of theatrical aesthetics – from playwriting, acting and scenography to the stage–audience/spectator relationship – in the larger landscape of *xiqu*'s modernity, cultural heritage and identity, power dynamics and intercultural ethics. Four typologies of intercultural dialogue evolve from the argument, including the single egoistic voice of Chinese tradition, the one-sided dominance of the Western voice, organic deconstructive hybridity and dialogic performative fusion. They are scattered in six Chinese *jingju*, *sixianxi* and *chuanju* adaptations of five Western plays (*King Lear*, *Waiting for Godot*,