alt theatre
cultural diversity and the stage
Volume 14, No. 3 *$8*

IN THIS ISSUE

Sébastien Heins photographs Stratford actors of colour

Jill Carter, **Virginie Magnat**, & **Mariel Belanger** braid their voices together

Diana Manole explores the postmarginal

REVIEWS

Hayley Malouin talks to **Hannah Moscovitch** about *Bunny*

Alexa Elser logs on to *Diversities in Actor Training*

Upcoming in *alt.theatre* 15.1

INTERVIEW

Rachel Offer interviews filmmaker **Mona Zaidi** about her award-winning short, *Richard III: Unto the Kingdom of Perpetual Night*, and the politics of adaptation.

MONOLOGUE

Scholar and drag king **Heather Ladd** channels eighteenth-century performer **Charlotte Charke** in a cabaret performance.

Contents 14.3

alt.theatre
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Vol. 14 No. 3

alt.theatre: cultural diversity and the stage is Canada's only professional journal examining intersections between politics, cultural plurality, social activism, and the stage.

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Contributors
14.3

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Photo by Jill Janvier.

Series:
Curator of the *Return to Place* Series: Page 28

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Photo from personal archive..

Article:
We Came Singing: Page 28

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Photo by Vii Tanner.

Book Review:
Diversities in Actor Training: Page 41

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Photo by Salvatore Antonio.

Article:
Owning Success: Page 9

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Photo by Alice Xue.

Editorial:
Page 8

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Virginie Magnat is associate professor of Performance at UBC. Her monograph *Grotowski, Women, and Contemporary Performance: Meetings with Remarkable Women* (Routledge 2014) and its companion documentary film series (Routledge Performance Archive) are based on four years of embodied research funded by two SSHRC grants. Her forthcoming book, *The Performative Power of Vocality* (contracted by Routledge), explores vocality as a vital source of creativity and embodied knowledge and is also based on SSHRC-funded research.

Photo by Robert Ornellas.

Article:
We Came Singing: Page 28

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Diana Manole (PhD) is a Romanian-Canadian scholar, lecturer, and print dramaturg, a Pushcart prize-nominated English-language poet, and an award-winning playwright and literary translator. She has published extensively in Canada, the US, and the UK on postcolonial and postcommunist theatre, exilic theatre, and intercultural performance. Her article "Accented Actors: From Stage to Stages via a Convenience Store" (*Theatre Research in Canada*, 2015) was the first scholarly investigation of actors' immigrant accents in theatre and performance.

Photo from personal archive..

Dispatch:
Multilayered Diversity as Creative Asset: Page 33

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Photo by Hayley Malouin.

Theatre Review:
Bunny: Page 37

Editorial 14.3

The Stories We Tell

BY MICHELLE MACARTHUR

It felt like not a day went by this summer when Robert Lepage wasn't making headline news. In June, the initial excitement surrounding his directorial debut at the Stratford Festival with his production of *Coriolanus* was swiftly drowned out by protests around another Lepage premiere, his show *SLĀV* at the Montreal International Jazz Festival. Billed as "a theatrical odyssey based on slave songs" and featuring white singer Betty Bonifassi as the lead performer, *SLĀV* quickly garnered criticism for, in *Montreal Gazette* reviewer's T'Cha Donlevy's frank assessment, "its flawed premise: that white people are altogether, ahem, entitled to put on a musical theatre revue about black slavery." The outrage over *SLĀV*, which led the Jazz Fest to eventually cancel the show before the end of its run, foregrounded decades-old criticisms of Lepage's work and his proclivity for cultural appropriation. These concerns were only amplified when, hot on the tails of the *SLĀV* cancellation, attention shifted to Lepage's plans to co-produce a show about Canada's Indigenous history in collaboration with French director Ariane Mnouchkine and her company Théâtre du Soleil. Exploring issues such as residential schools and missing and murdered women, *Kanata* featured no Indigenous performers and engaged in minimal consultation with Indigenous groups during the creative process. After much public protest and failed talks between Lepage and Mnouchkine and Indigenous activists, some of *Kanata*'s North American co-producers pulled out, leading the creative team to halt work on the production, citing inadequate financial support.[1]

The outcry in reaction to both *Kanata* and *SLĀV* was far and wide, with many critics drawing attention to the politics of storytelling and representation. In response to Kanata, several Indigenous activists and arts and culture workers and their allies penned an open letter in *Le Devoir* on July 14th challenging the production and prompting the meeting with Lepage and Mnouchkine two days later. "Elle [Mnouchkine] aime nos histoires, mais n'aime pas nos voix. Il nous semble que c'est une répétition de l'histoire et de tels agissements nous laissent un certain sentiment de déjà-vu," the collective wrote. Aly Ndiaye, an historian and hiphop artist also known as Webster, was called in as a consultant on *SLĀV* to share his knowledge of slavery in Quebec. Though initially hopeful about the production's intentions, he was ultimately disappointed by the lack of black performers hired in the project: "Now that a piece about a traumatic experience lived by blacks in America is taking centre stage, what are whites doing in most of the roles? …Therein lies the entire problem: a blatant lack of sensitivity and, because they have the power to do it, the appropriation of the narrative of a community—the telling of our story as they see fit."

The summer of Lepage headlines has had a sustained impact on our editorial and administrative team as we reflect upon *alt.theatre*'s role in these conversations and where our founding principle of activism comes into play. While it was important to us to take advantage of the immediacy of digital communication to share our response to *SLĀV* on our website and social media platforms, as a print publication we also have the opportunity to produce more in-depth meditations on these issues in order to move the conversation beyond the headlines. Moreover, our administrative office's location in Lepage's home province of Quebec gives us perspective on the unique cultural contexts that inform his work. Some media reports got there as well—Webster's op-ed for CBC is one example that foregrounds "the great lack of diversity in Quebec's media and cultural space." This issue has also been highlighted in *alt.theatre*'s pages. In 11.4, for example, Nikki Shaffeeullah wrote a nuanced editorial about a recent instance of blackface on the Quebec stage, elucidating the cultural context while arguing that rather than immediately jumping to judgement, English Canadians should instead prioritize engaging "in anti-racist criticism that may also implicate ourselves and our own actions." In the coming months, as we continue to interrogate the questions emerging from Lepage's work, these broader contexts need further consideration—as do the voices that are participating in the conversation in the first place.

Indeed, the question of storytelling, a central component of our art, is complex, especially for those of us committed to diversity, equity, and social justice. Who has the right to tell or retell a story? What does allyship look like when it comes to storytelling?

This last question has been top of mind since I joined *alt.theatre* in 2016. Then and now I have been conscious of the power and privilege afforded to me by aspects of my identity and have tried to use the concept of allyship to guide my role as editor-in-chief. I have learned that allyship as editorship can take different forms, such as prioritizing listening and learning over speaking (as that translates to the editorial and writing process) and finding ways to use the power afforded by the role to support others with less power. Allyship as editorship is a work in progress for me, and through this learning process I have been fortunate to collaborate with a stellar editorial and administrative team, as well as artists and writers from across the country whose work I deeply admire.

While I have come to the difficult decision that it is time for me to move on from this position, I am excited to continue working with *alt.theatre* as an editorial board member, and I am even more excited to pass the torch along to our new team: editor-in-chief Aaron Franks, who has been an associate editor over the past two years and whose approach to his work is informed by the multiple roles he juggles as artist, academic, policy advisor, and activist, and associate editor Katherine Zien, a professor at McGill University whose research and teaching focus on theatre and performance in the Americas and particularly race, colonialism, and gender therein. I know I am leaving *alt.theatre* in very capable hands and I can't wait to read their first issue. Thank you, readers, for allowing me the privilege to curate this space for two-and-a-half years and for believing in *alt.theatre*'s mission to provide a forum for artists, activists, academics, and others interested in furthering Canadian discourse around cultural diversity and the arts.

Note

1. Since the completion of this editorial, the Théâtre du Soleil has subsequently announced plans to stage *Kanata* after all, under the title of *Kanata–Épisode I—La Controverse*.

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OWNING SUCCESS

PHOTO ESSAY BY SÉBASTIEN HEINS

INTRO

A good friend, colleague, and fellow mixed-race actor, Leah Doz (Stratford, 2012), once told me about a moment in one of her acting classes in Toronto. A white female actor had insinuated that diverse actors were stealing principal roles and, in doing so, were taking away the opportunities she deserved.

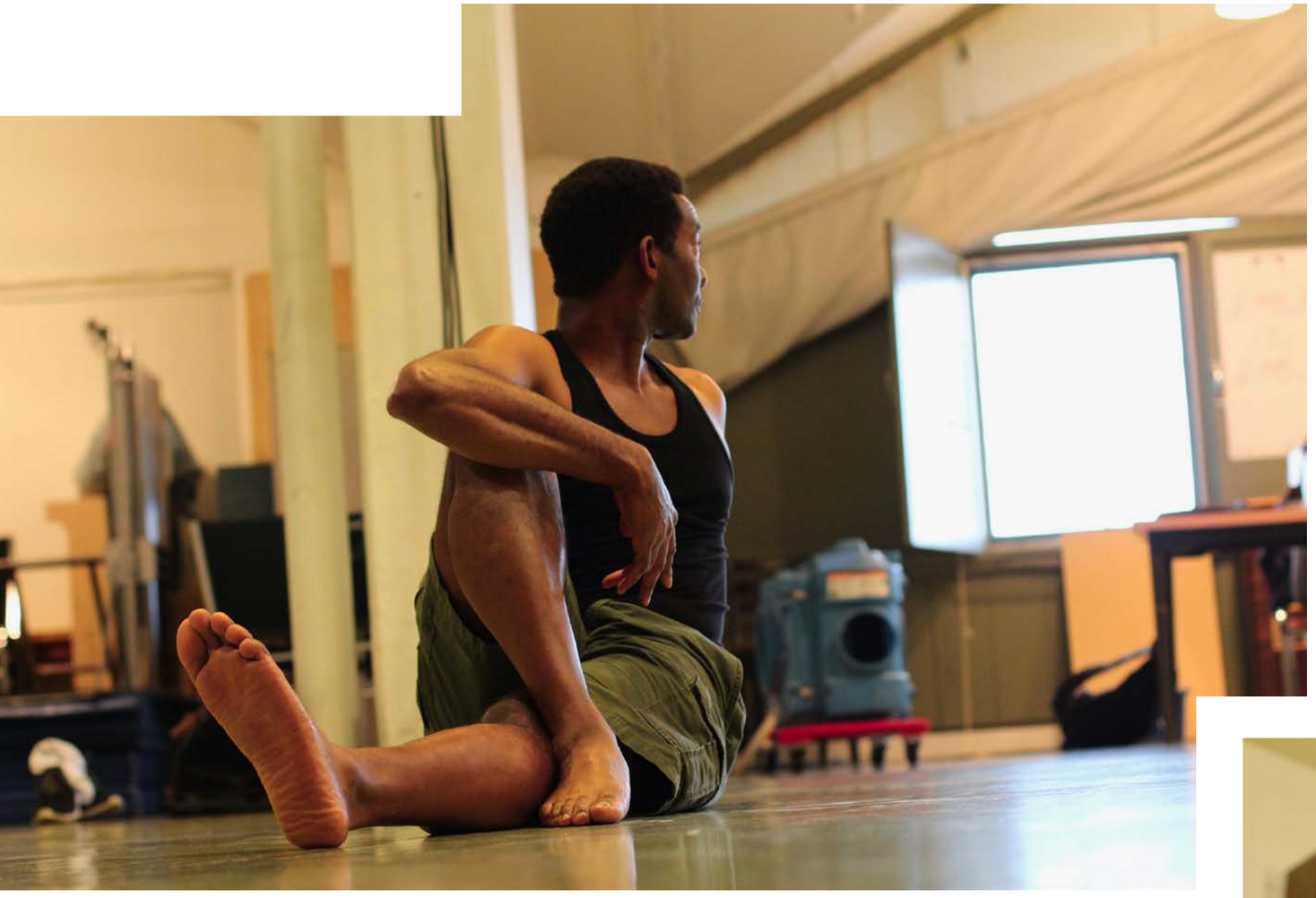
After the initial bewilderment of that story wore off, I started to wonder: Is that what people in our profession think of people of colour who are working? I don't think people of colour work because of their ethnicity. I think they work because they work.

I am an actor working at the Stratford Festival, a sophisticated organization that attracts half a million patrons annually to see Shakespeare, musicals, contemporary, and classical theatre. It's a very special place to work, with a unique set of challenges to overcome, including its location, scheduling, and the demands of a repertory company. But above all, Stratford is a place of commitment, collaboration, and consistency, for all who work here.

In response to Leah's story and to the assertion that people of colour only get work because, well, they are of colour, I decided to collaborate with *alt.theatre* to develop a photo and interview series showcasing diverse Stratford actors at the top of their game. They generously donated their time and energy to talk to me about their craft, rituals, and what makes them tick. Tagging along with them was a joy, like snapping pictures of Qasim Khan as he bounded from his car to the gym through the rain, or watching Déjah Dixon-Green cook up some shrimp as part of her morning meal prep.

My aim is not to educate readers as to how hard we work, but to empower artists of colour who are looking to build their careers, elevate their skillset, and/or experiment with practical tips from individuals who have made excellence a habit. I'm here to say that the successes of actors of colour in 2018 are hard-won achievements. This is not something to be ashamed of, or to feel guilty about. In fact, I hope we can continue to work harder, work smarter, and take better care of ourselves.

Without further ado.



worked all your notes, you hit all the spots, you did all the stuff that you actually wanted to do. You get to the end, and you know what you'll hear in the applause? Lukewarm. Because nobody cares. Nobody knows about that stuff, and nobody cares about that stuff. You have to strive for connection: the best connection you can have in the moment with your partner, with the audience, with the conductor, and the orchestra. There are so many levels that you have to establish a connection with, a rhythm, a feel, a peace, so when things do go sideways, we're all so connected that everyone's going through it with you. So you drop some lines or you make a mistake, or something bad happens—they feel it with you, so you get up and laugh at yourself, they laugh with you, because everyone was there at the same time. And if something goes so sideways that it's painful and ugly, they're in pain with you when it happens.

© Sébastien Heins (Photos by Sébastien Heins). Daren Hebert. Page 10: Daren attends dance call for *The Music Man*. This page: L: Daren in his dressing room; R: Daren and his daughter, Ori.

DAREN HERBERT

You have to strive for connection: the best connection you can have in the moment with your partner, with the audience, with the conductor, and the orchestra.

Daren's Wife, Joanne, on Passing on Work

JOANNE: Actors will often be surprised when they learn that Daren has passed on work, but if it doesn't connect with his soul, or if it doesn't fit with his family life, he'll pass on it. He has a rubric. People are, like, "What? You pass on work?" Like you're supposed to take whatever is given to you. Daren is, like, "I'm worth something. And so I want to be able to choose something that's gonna feed my soul." Can you imagine, if he's gonna be here on a contract where he hates every single day? I don't want to be married to that person either!

DAREN: No! I'd probably be divorced before the end of the season! So I'm like, "Why do that to myself, my wife, my daughter? It's gonna cost too much."

A Quote

"Give thanks."

Speaking Up about Sexual Abuse

I'm 42 and this must have happened when I was maybe 9 or 10, and I've never named them. But then I have to know that there's a possibility, a high likelihood, that he's done it to many others in between that time, and I haven't done anything to change it by outing him or naming him. It's a weird feeling. It's a weird place to be. At the same time, I can almost feel the backlash: "Why are you doing this now? You're ruining people's lives!" In that way, I have an understanding [now]. When [an allegation] comes out, I'm more inclined to believe the victim. Before that, I probably wouldn't have paid attention. I said, "Oh, if they're saying it now, who knows the likelihood? Bill Cosby? Really?" But now I'm like, "No. I know why you wouldn't tell. I know why because I'm in the same boat."

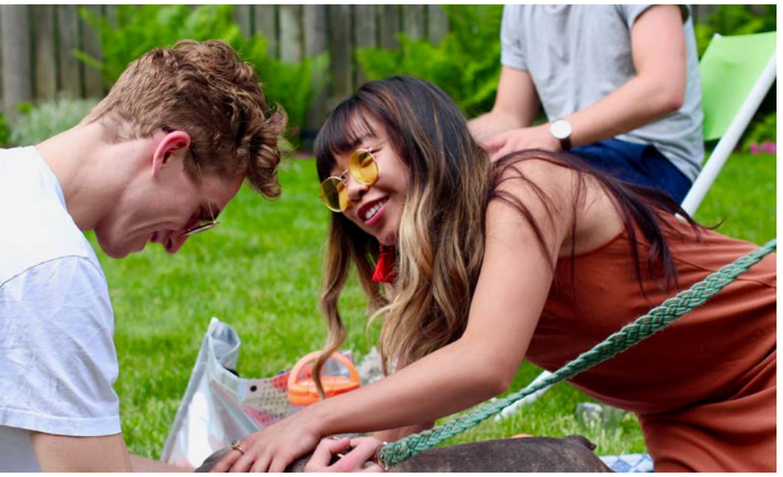
What Twenty-Year-Old Daren Needed to Hear

I probably would have told the twenty-year-old, "Get a move on. What are you doing?" I was still in Bermuda (*JOANNE: Working at a hospital*). No plans for my future at university. I was making decent money, but I wasn't on a life/career path.

"Get a move on. Bruh. Pick something and just go, but you have to get out of here. You have to get off this rock. Don't keep doing what you're doing just because the money's good."

Acting Advice

Never strive for perfection. Always strive for connection. When we're doing what we do—whether it be musicals, straight plays, anything in the art form—perfection is not anything you can attain, and it's not even worth it. Let's say you did do a perfect performance by your standards. You



KIMMY TRUONG

© Sébastien Heins (Photos by Sébastien Heins). Kimmy Truong. Top: Kimmy with friend and fellow performer Colton Curtis; bottom: Kimmy in her dressing room before *The Rocky Horror Show*. Next page: Kimmy at a friend's home.

Push boundaries, because—here's the secret—once you do that you find there were none in the first place.

"Touch Your Life"

Colton, Bali, Eric and I, we call it "touching life." Because we get so absorbed, especially in theatre, that it completely envelops us: "This is our life. This is Stratford." And then you don't know when to let go. You go to bed, you wake up, and you do it again. Why do we call it "touching life"? Because it's literally doing that. "Should we go to the beach? Yeah, let's touch life." So we'll get in the car and watch the sunset at Grand Bend.

Who's Successful?

Dad. Why? Escaped Vietnam on a boat. Started two businesses from scratch by himself. Four kids: lawyer, dental surgeon, eye surgeon, me—boo (*Laughs*). And is so happy, and has this wonderful life.

Dad comes from the North, forced into war, tried to escape with a bunch of his friends on a tiny boat, they all died around him, came to Canada, met my mother after being in a refugee camp. I'm from the West Coast; they met there. Worked from nothing, had a really hard time, couldn't speak a word of English, and worked his way through the restaurant and food industry, now owns two restaurants, livin' his life. [*SH: Woah. What did you do today?* (*Laughs*)]. I literally did nothing (*Laughs*). I made bacon (*Laughs*).

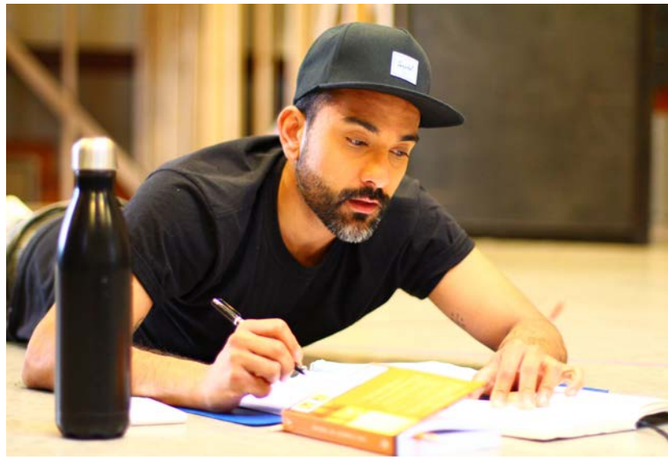
Bombing Her First Stratford Audition

I've never been insecure in a dance call in my life, but that dance call—when they say, "I'm going to dance circles around you," these women were circling me, like doing jetés, circling me. And I was standing in the middle, frozen. I couldn't do a plié, I couldn't do anything, so lost. And he was teaching the combo, and I couldn't absorb it. I was so embarrassed, because that was what they brought me in for.

Words to Live By

Push boundaries because—here's the secret—once you do that you find there were none in the first place.

The more fun in life I have, the more I can bring into rehearsal. Some people don't like living outside of the work, which benefits it, but I really need to live in order to come back to work. [. . .] When I'm in a contract, it's very different than when I'm not. I need to release, touch life, and then go into work.



QASIM KHAN

I hope that younger actors can just focus on ... honing their craft, rather than looking at their life under a microscope.

© Sébastien Heins (Photos by Sébastien Heins). Qasim Khan. Top: Qasim hits the gym early in the morning; bottom: Qasim applies makeup before *The Comedy of Errors*.
Next page: Qasim reviews rehearsal notes.

Bad Advice

To "act like a straight guy" on stage: put your hands down your pants and fix your balls. This was legitimate direction from one of the most respected actresses/directors of our time. And she literally meant for me and other actors to constantly put our hands down our pants to adjust our junk during scenes. I never used this really sophisticated technique in the real world. I remember thinking: "No one does this to this magnitude in real life. This is horrible advice." (*Laughs*).

Qasim's Morning Ritual

I wake up and have a protein shake, and then I take a pre-workout drink, and then go to the gym for about an hour and a bit, and then I come back, have another protein shake, breakfast, then I hit GO on my coffee machine, then I watch an episode of *RuPaul's Drag Race* or any sitcom I can get my hands on, and give myself an hour to get ready before I leave the house, and leave the house half an hour before I start rehearsal.

A Quote

I don't know who said it, "The shortest distance between two people is laughter." And I think that's true, and I think that is something I try to carry with me through my day, every day. If I'm experiencing friction with someone, I'm like, "The easiest thing to do is to get two people to laugh together," and then everyone can be normal with each other.

One to Watch

I'd like to give a shout out to Bilal Baig, who wrote *Acha Bacha*, and encourage people to keep tabs on his work in Toronto.

The Ones Who Came Before

[It's important to] know how other people who have played this part have interpreted certain things, so watching the archival videos here have been really useful, and so has talking to Ian [Ian Watson, Stratford Text Coach]. (*SH: Did you watch the '89 version [of* Comedy of Errors*]?*) Yeah, the DVD kept skipping, but I watched most of it, and then I watched the other two. I did watch the Globe's production that they filmed, I saw a bit of the RSC one too. I looked at stuff like production photos, and I read reviews from previous productions and stuff like that just to see what other people have done, and what people who have been coming to this theatre for decades, what they've seen already, just to know where I'm fitting into the mix here. So I guess that's context for the sandbox [that I'm basing my performance in].

A Wish for Young Actors

In a weird way, I've had to give context to my existence. In Canadian theatre, we're obsessed with identity. Identity keeps popping up in all of our plays [old and new]. For some theatres, it's not enough to just be an actor of colour. People want to know the whole makeup underneath you, and the narrative of your existence in this country and how you feel about it. Not that I've invented it, but I've had to piece together a version of my life for myself, not as a sales or a pitchy thing, but for when those conversations come up, to have something to contribute. But I think there are more and more people [of colour] who have a similar kind of thing where they weren't raised with super traditional things around them, where they don't really have a connection to their parents' traditions or anything like that. I hope that younger actors can just focus on acting and honing their craft, rather than looking at their life under a microscope and having to classify and organize experiences to share with people. Unless they want to!

On Pre-rejection

Don't pre-reject yourself. You must let others reject you. If you think you can do something, try! Rejection is other people's job. Quite literally, most of the time, it actually is somebody else's job. They are paid to reject you. (*SH: Let them earn their living.*) Exactly, their job is to scan through your stuff and toss it in the garbage.

Who Is "Successful"?

Viola Davis. She is an emblem of success for me. I feel like she does it for the right reasons. She works for a non-profit [the "Hunger Is" campaign] that deals with poverty, particularly hunger in young people, and in doing so, speaks about her experiences with hunger, which I think takes incredible courage.

Leaning In

I left Toronto and moved back home to Guelph for a little bit, and I was auditioning so much, so I was kind of going back and forth to auditions, and an audition meant something totally different [after I moved]. Then it was like, "Get on the 6 a.m. train." And I started to lean in. Lean into the process of auditioning. I gave it my all. Every single one of them. Not with the expectation, "Oh my God, I didn't book it, I'm so sad," even though I'd worked hard at it. I'd given up the prospect that just because you work hard at something means you get it. [Leaning in] made it more deliberate. From an identity point of view, acting's the thing I'm doing. One of these has got to bite.

Agents and Agency

I remember endowing my agent with a fair bit of power to control my career, and now I realize that that simply is not the case. It's not a bad thing, it's just not true. Agents have some power and an important role in an actor's life. But you also have a great deal of power and control. And [it's important] not to ask more of your agent than you are willing to put in yourself as well. So, make sure you're working for yourself as much as your agent is working for you. You can write letters, you can visualize, you can create connections, you can do more than you think you can. And you'll have to.

New Protagonists

So, my perception on acting isn't about career anymore. It's about asserting my personhood in a totally different way. I can do it through acting. Through taking protagonist roles. Taking roles that I hadn't considered before and occupying them. (*SH: You didn't think they were for you?*) No. A good example of that would be the world of classical text. Many times I've thought, "Is that for me? Is that about me? What's the value? What's the point of doing it?" And now I genuinely look for more windows. You see yourself in a different way, playing [these] characters.

Making Moves

People are like, "Aw, I'm never gonna work at this place." Did you scope out your community theatre? Do you watch other people's plays? A lot of the time I think when people say they want to be actors, what I think they mean is, "I want attention." (*Laughs*).

(*SH: Did you write a letter to Stratford?*) I did.

Don't pre-reject yourself. You must let others reject you. If you think you can do something, try! Rejection is other people's job.

BERYL BAIN

[I want] something that requires something of me … something that costs something.

ANDRÉ SILLS

© Sébastien Heins (Photos by Sébastien Heins). André Sills. Page 18: André in his dressing room before *The Tempest*; bottom: André and his mentee Jordin Hall. This page: André breaks down a scene from *Coriolanus* with assistant director Mikaela Davies.

Treasure Hunting Coriolanus

For Coriolanus, starting off, it was trying to understand his language, understand the words he uses and making sense of that, because if I can break down the thoughts and make them clear to myself then I can make them clear to everyone else. Once I have the other [actors] in the room, then it's listening intently to what they're saying to see where I'm getting the trigger words from, and what it is that they're saying that leads me to the next moment. It's like treasure hunting. You're looking through the script for your clues, your hints, who this person is and who these people around you are, and with all that together, trying to figure out what the play is and what it's trying to say. It's a lot of combing through the text. "What exactly is he saying there? Why is he saying that? Didn't he just say in the scene prior that he didn't want to do that, but now he's saying that he can do that? Okay, so there's a moment when he's unsure and then a moment when he decides on something."

Getting the Role of Sam in *Master Harold and the Boys*

I had a conversation with Jackie Maxwell [former artistic director of the Shaw Festival]. She was talking to me about the season coming up, and them announcing *Master Harold and the Boys*, that Philip Akin was directing, and she's like, "I'm interested in you possibly doing *Master Harold and the Boys*." And I said, "That's amazing, but before you say anything else, I want to play Sam." And she said, "Oh …Why?" And I broke down what I wanted as an actor. I said, "These contracts are really long and I want to have a part that I can get lost in. That I can be fully distracted by for the entire season, as opposed to doing a part that I can do perfectly healthy, sick on my death bed, or drunk, and give the exact same performance. I want to be able to go out one night, have a drink and be like, "I should go home, because I have this big thing that's gonna cost a lot of me tomorrow, so I should go home and rest. [I want] something that requires something of me … something that costs something." And left that with her (*laughs*) … and I ended up playing Sam.

André's Morning

It usually starts off with either my four-year-old waking me up saying, "Daddy, Daddy, I want to go pee," and then him going pee, and then him coming back upstairs and making so much noise it wakes up his sister, and just that alone slowly peels me from my bed. I go into her room, pick her up, and take them both downstairs, put on the TV, put some kiddy thing on Netflix for about twenty minutes while I go into the kitchen, hit the button for the coffee machine and then sit down for (*laughs*) that twenty minutes until everyone's kind of awake, and then I can start rolling into doing a little bit more. But yeah, it highly revolves around them (*laughs*).

Nerding Out

I do like watching action movies. Most recently I've finished watching the first season of *The Punisher*. I guess in preparation for Coriolanus, seeing this guy who is fighting was helpful—he's a guy on a mission.

© Sébastien Heins (Photos by Sébastien Heins). Jessica B. Hill. Top: Jessica gets into makeup before *The Comedy of Errors*; bottom: Jessica travels between rehearsal halls. Next page: Jessica in costume as Antipholus of Syracuse.

JESSICA B. HILL

On Being Mixed Race

That whole quest for not caring what people think or trying to fit in, it's very tied into being mixed race and trying to fit into both sides and appease and please. It took me a while to let that go, even though my parents were wonderful for that. There were a lot of things they championed in me that I'm so grateful for because I don't think I've had it as rough as others. We made a point when I was quite young to never straighten my hair. Until now, I have never even thought to, or wanted to. It was just the thought of, "Who am I trying to please? Who is this for?"

Her Natural Hair Booster

Bb Curl at Sephora. It's a conditioner, a curler, a hair product, and some sort of moisturizer. I had a gift certificate so I only paid twenty dollars.

Seedlings, Classical Music, and Life Drawing

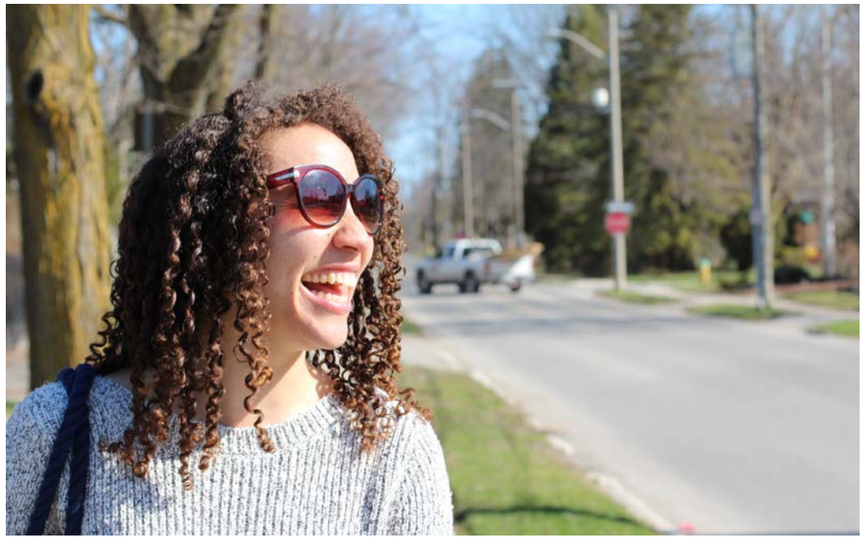
I have a few things I love to do that I don't tend to have the time or mental space for these days. But gardening is one of [the things I do have time and space for]. Especially when the seedlings come in. I used to play the piano, I played twelve years of piano when I was growing up. I play classical sheet music. I really like to draw. There's figure drawing at the Stratford Gallery on Wednesday nights.

The Book She Gifts the Most

The Four Agreements by Don Miguel Ruiz.

Advice for a Fifteen-Year-Old Jessica

Stop worrying so much about what other people think of you. Be true to yourself and the rest will follow. I was at an all-girl's school, I was quite a shy kid, and I was a nerd, like, I loved studying, and I was taking a lot of flak for it and taking it really personally. I would have said, "It's okay, keep doing you, kid."



DÉJAH DIXON-GREEN

Déjah's Practical Acting Process

I read the script over and over again. I first try to just read it for the story at least five times. I do my questions: what other people say about me, what I say about other people, what I say about myself. And then I write down all the facts from the script that I know for sure about my character, and then I write down any questions I have. Somewhere in that, I also look for any words I don't know, or any words that might have another meaning. Then I write down what my drive is for the play, then I look for the life objective, then the objective for the story, and then break it down into the scenes. After all that, I'll start reading it again, focusing more specifically on my character. And by that time, I'm very close to being off book. I also sometimes do a character outline, like, "What's the age of my character, what's their favourite meal …?" I think it's called the five Ps: the Psychology, Profession, Political Views, Philosophy, and Practical Outline. Then I'm up on my feet exploring, using tools. I'm a very physical person and very movement-driven, so getting up on my feet in a room with the text is the best way I can learn it. I love going through the elements. The Laban technique. Or animal work, that really helps as well. (*SH: Do you have a line-memorizing technique?*) There's an app called LineLearner that's the best thing in the world.

Recommended Reading

Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*.

Déjah's Morning Ritual

Right now, I guess I wake up, stay in my bed for about ten minutes (*laughs*), I take a shower, put my clothes on (obviously), and then I do my meal prepping for the day. I usually make a smoothie for breakfast or I eat breakfast. I usually drink a glass of lemon water. And then, when I'm not lazy, I usually make these concoctions out of ginger, honey, lemon, turmeric, and apple cider vinegar and take a shot of that because those are apparently great for your system. And then I'll usually make some coffee or just buy it on the way from Revel or the Green Room.

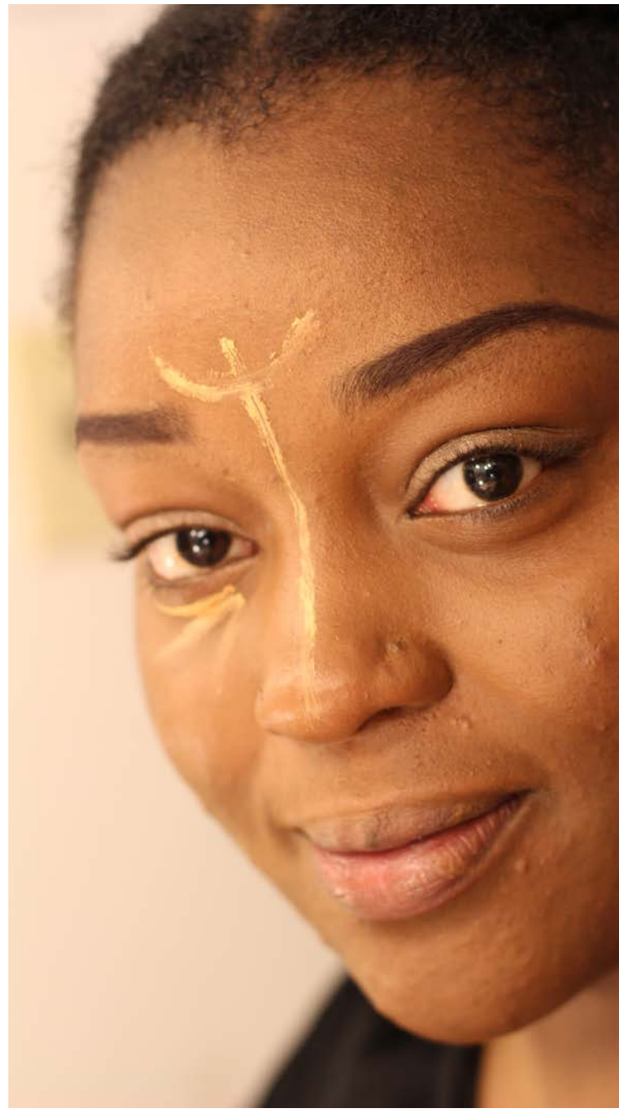
A Great Podcast

The Read (with Kid Fury and Chrissle).

That One Quote

"Dream big. Work hard. Never give up." It's so simple, but it's all you need. "Dream big. Work hard. Never give up."

I'm a very physical person and very movement-driven, so getting up on my feet in a room with the text is the best way I can learn it.



© Sébastien Heins (Photos by Sébastien Heins). Matthew G. Brown. Top: Matt in costume as Tom Robinson; bottom: Matt supports the actor covering him in the understudy run of *An Ideal Husband*. Next page: Matt relaxes at home with the game *Nier Automata*.

"I Don't See Colour"

The "I don't see colour": I think that's bad advice. It's not about not seeing colour. It's about accepting people's differences and who they are, and then accepting them regardless of their colour. Looking at them as a human being first, rather than being like, "I don't see what makes you who you are." Because of course you do. You have to. Everybody does, right? Now does that mean I need to treat you differently or think of you differently or make assumptions about who you might be because of your colour? No. You shouldn't do that. See and appreciate the things about me that I am first and foremost.

The Bar of Success

Denzel Washington and Hugh Jackman. And the reason why I picked both of them is because I feel like they are excellent actors who have the career that they want and can move between mediums successfully.

Matt's Favourite Flicks

Malcolm X and *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World*.

The Gym

I was a younger actor, in my early twenties, and I was auditioning for a lot of things that said the role required "MUSCLES", a.k.a. "Must be muscular." I was like, "I'm okay . . . but I don't have that." But then I decided, "Maybe it's just time for me to invest and work on that." And I just took to it, and enjoyed working out and being in the gym and trying different things and exploring failure and then recovering and rebounding.

Fighting Games and Failure

"Life is a cruel teacher because she gives you the test first, the lesson after."

Playing a fighting video game, in order to get good, is all about failure. You spend a lot of time losing, you spend a lot of time looking at the screen that's telling you that you lost, and you see your character getting beat and slapped around. Eventually you're going to get to a point where you start to get good enough to understand the game, and understand the things that you need to do, and you see the work that you have to put in to get better. And subconsciously, as a kid, that was a lesson I was being taught by playing so many fighting video games, and it's now a mantra that I try to keep in my own life: to not fear failure, even when you really need the win.

MATTHEW G. BROWN

The "I don't see colour": I think that's bad advice. It's not about not seeing colour. It's about accepting people's differences and who they are, and then accepting them regardless of their colour.

A tip from me, Sébastien:

I was born a night owl, but waking up early has been a game changer for my productivity and self-care regimen. When I get up early, I have the time and energy to exercise, journal, meditate, work on my lines, and plan personal projects (most of the time, of course). Here are a few golden tips from my friend and trainer Sheldon Persad, co-owner of Personal Best Health & Performance Inc., for getting up early:

The key to feeling good in the morning is having a good night's sleep.

The keys to having a good night's sleep are:

1. **Going to bed and waking up at the same time (within thirty minutes each end) on a consistent basis.**
2. **No eating too late at night.**
3. **Waking up to no alarm clock, or instead use soft music.**
4. **No pushing the snooze button. When you are up, get up and stay up.**
5. **Be careful with modulators (like coffee). Use them sparingly, not on a regular basis.**
6. **Avoid sleeping pills at all cost.**
7. **Try to avoid staying up late two nights in a row.**
8. **Watch the sugar consumption.**

© Sébastien Heins (Photo by Salvatore Antonio). Sébastien Heins.

OUTRO

I would like to acknowledge Timothy Ferriss' *Tools of Titans* as a major inspiration for the questions I asked. It's been a pleasure highlighting the working lives and inner thoughts of these individuals. To conclude, Leah Doz has this advice, which she uses herself: "Create. Create now. Speak from the root of your own experience. Don't wait for anyone to give you that opportunity."

© Dan Odenbach (Photo by Dan Odenbach). James Luna (centre) with tule mat lodge builders at the Summer Indigenous Art Intensive, UBC Okanagan campus.

Tribute to James Luna

BY MARIEL BELANGER

James Luna was a man who wanted people to see truth and do something about it. His performances made space for uncomfortable truths, ones spoken in whispered tones best forgotten. Truths of how a people are treated on their own land by others who had lost their truth. In his photo series "Half Indian/Half Mexican" (1991–2011),[1] James whispered back in six photos to the absurd reality of blood quantum and mixed ancestry. He whispered back in "The Artifact Piece" (1987 & 1991),[2] lying there forever-trapped in a frame, never allowed to be more than a historical oddity. His artwork reminds us that we need to talk about these truths. He gave his life to carry the message and it was a heavy burden to bear.

It was a blessing to be mentored by James at the University of British Columbia Okanagan Campus for two Summer Indigenous Intensives. This photo shows how he spent his time chatting with all who gathered that special day to learn Interior Plateau village structures with Shawn Brigman. He witnessed my work transform and contributed to refining my truth. Thank you, Mr. Luna, for these reminders, for helping me speak to these truths too.

Notes

1. http://www.jamesluna.red/half-indian-half-mexican/
2. http://www.jamesluna.red/artifact/

We Came Singing

The Braided Voices of

JILL CARTER, VIRGINIE MAGNAT, AND MARIEL BELANGER

Honoring Cultural Diversity through Collective Vocal Practice *is a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) -funded project developed in close consultation with an Indigenous Advisory Committee composed of seven Indigenous artist-scholars and Elders / Traditional Knowledge Keepers, as well as two Indigenous and two non-Indigenous graduate students and a non-Indigenous artist-scholar. Together*[1] *we have been exploring resonance as a practice of ritual engagement activated by the Indigenous ethical principles of relationality, reciprocity, respect, and responsibility. In 2016–17, we co-facilitated three gatherings / singing circles hosted in two Okanagan traditional winter homes and at the University of British Columbia First Nations Longhouse in Vancouver; two open workshops at Simon Fraser University and UBC's Okanagan Campus; two performative presentations for the International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and for the Canadian Association for Theatre Research / L'Association canadienne de la recherche théâtrale conference held in Toronto; as well as a three-day retreat / closed meeting in the Okanagan.*

ABOUT SINGING

Jill Carter: Singing for me is an elusive, frustrating, and at times incomprehensible art. As a young woman, I pursued vocal training, and for several years, my body would go into revolt the moment I hit B-natural during warm up. First, it checked out, and I would lose consciousness. Then, it would *threaten* to check out while I grasped the side of a table or chair, shaking and rocking and finally dissolving into sobs. Then, I turned cold. Then, I turned hot. Still, I sang on, locked in a love-hate relationship with my voice, my breath, my vibrating body …

I don't remember the songs of my people after I have left a circle, and I have finally accepted without (or *with less*) guilt, shame, and apology the idea that perhaps this is because this is not my task in life: I am not a singer. Or am I? What is it really—to "sing?"

When I tell a story with my heart pounding in my throat, as my being resonates, stretching the strands of my DNA to their limits—reaching to a listener, feeling desperately for an answering vibration—is that singing? When I sing out a greeting or hear my blood singing in my ears, am I not singing then?

I have learned through the years that singing, while certainly confessional, is as much response as it is call. It requires an opening of self—a signal of invitation, a promise to accept what is received.

Virginie Magnat: As a European performance practitioner and educator, I have been (re)learning traditional songs in Occitan, the critically endangered language of my Mediterranean cultural legacy. According to Polish theatre director Jerzy Grotowski, when a competent performer actively and attentively embodies a traditional song, it can become a vehicle that reconnects them to those who first sang the song. What keeps a traditional song alive is the particular vibratory quality linked to the precision of the song's structure, a form of acoustic energy channelled by repetitions and subtle variations, enabling this song to reach us across hundreds of years. If ancestral embodied knowledge is encoded in traditional songs, and if the power of these songs hinges upon the embodied experience of singing them, then trusting that the body can remember how to sing, as if traces of this ancient knowledge had been preserved in the body memory, can become a way of recovering that knowledge and reclaiming cultural continuity (Magnat).

If vocal music traditions—whose resilience crucially depends on oral transmission—epitomize the value of intangible cultural heritage (as defined by UNESCO), can sharing songs from different traditions contribute to the "survivance" of oral cultures? Can collective cultural practice support expressions of cultural sovereignty and self-determination while promoting inclusivity, diversity, and solidarity as the core values of a healthy multicultural society? Can engaging in non-colonial forms of collective vocal practice help Indigenous, Settler, and Immigrant communities to develop mutually beneficial relationships based on a shared respect for the natural environment and a shared commitment to collective health and well-being, intercultural understanding, and social justice? Can collective experiences of the value of cultural diversity lead to positive change in Canada in the post-TRC era? Can the contested term reconciliation be envisioned as a call to active participation in anti-/de-/non-colonial forms of cultural practice, a form of collective testimony or utopian performative with a potential for transformation?

I have learned through the years that singing, while certainly confessional, is as much response as it is call. It requires an opening of self—a signal of invitation, a promise to accept what is received.

© Dr. Manulani Aluli-Meyer
(Photos by Dr. Manulani Aluli-Meyer).
Top: Okanagan Retreat, Kelowna.
Bottom: Joseph Naytowhow's drum.

ABOUT SONG AS INVITATION

Jill Carter: The late and greatly mourned Dr. Carolyn Kenny (Choctaw) tells a story she learned from her adoptive (Haida Gwaii) family. In this story, as the creation is beginning to unfold, fear has seized human beings, and so they have devised a stunted life lived in stasis and darkness. Their bodies seized by fear are tiny, refusing to grow into the creatures we were created to be. Isolating themselves from the outside world, they live together crammed inside a giant clamshell until Raven sings them out into the world and into their humanity (see Kenny et al. 1).

I do not know what it is to live in a world without fear. But I am learning what it is to come singing despite (and, perhaps, to *spite*) my own terror. I am learning what it is to stretch my being to its utmost to reach through the darkness of my interior "clamshell" toward another who may be standing in the light. I am learning, too, what it is to open myself to the songs outside myself, to be shifted by the currents of resonance sent by another's intentional breath (see Meyer, in Kenny et al. 23), to await invitation, to accept welcome, and to be transformed by the possibilities contained within these offerings.

In circle, I re-member myself. But to enter the circle, I remember, Indigenous protocols globally have required us to pause in a liminal space, never touching that place where water kisses land, never venturing into the clearing beyond the dense forest, never stepping off the tarmac until we have sent out the call announcing our presence and intentions and until we have received a response—an invitation to step into the territory of another. Across Turtle Island, we came to each other singing. Across Turtle Island, we received each other in song. Today, our nations' circles and the circles within those circles continue to receive, to grow, to radiate outwards.

Virginie Magnat: Our collaboration hinges upon the conviction that cultural practice is a vital way of being and knowing. Through the collective practice of tuning to the voices of the ancestors,

our ritual engagement with resonance connects the living past and the living present to create an acoustic ecology for the healing of community, place, and land. We are exploring the possible affective impacts of weaving our voices together when employing the arts-based inquiry form of literary *métissage* in relationship to the traditions of Indigenous knowledge and song, so that braiding voices can become a way of honouring Indigenous research methodologies.

ABOUT OUR CATR CONFERENCE PERFORMATIVE EXPERIMENT

Jill Carter: The membership of the Canadian Association for Theatre Research (CATR) / *L'Association canadienne de la recherche théâtrale* (ACRT) gathered in Tkaronto/Gichi Kiiwenging in the spring of 2017, lending us the opportunity to invite visitors to, stewards of, and settler-denizens within the traditional territories of the Erie, Petun, Neutral, Wendat, Seneca and Michi Saagig Anishinaabeg into our work.

The work to which we have committed ourselves with the singing circles, facilitated by Dr. Virginie Magnat, concerns itself with the shared duty of all two-leggeds on these lands to listen, to learn, to remember and to reciprocate—*con* verse. It concerns itself with the re-imagination of right relationships and the invitation to articulate newly acquired understandings and commitments. It envisions a way forward, which begins with a Speech Act—a declaration of desire to enter into an ongoing relationship with each other and the biotas that sustain us all and that renders the articulation of desire into an ongoing practice in quotidian life. Without such a practice, treaty (nation-to-nation and human-to-nonhuman-world) violations will continue to escalate, as humanness erodes and the natural world revolts, refusing to sustain the monsters into which we risk making ourselves and each other (see TRC 121-26; see also Crowshoe, in TRC 123).

Virginie Magnat: Indigenous scholar Dr. Dwayne Donald defines literary *métissage* as "an ethical praxis of relationality" and states that the key challenge currently facing Indigenous peoples is "the assertion of difference in response to the homogenizing power of coloniality, neoliberalism, and globalization" since such a focus on difference "seems in direct contradiction to Indigenous philosophical emphasis on wholism and ecological relationality." This compels him to ask, "How can we be simultaneously different and related?" (xvi-xvii). This challenge is particularly relevant to research striving to contribute to on-going reconciliation processes in Canadian society.

© Dr. Manulani Aluli-Meyer (Photo by Dr. Manulani Aluli-Meyer). Okanagan Retreat, En'owkin Centre, Penticton, with our special guests Dr. Graham Smith, Dr. Shawn Wilson, and Dr. Gregory Younging.

Jill Carter: And so, we came singing. We rejected the urge to arrange bodies in a circle—to obligate our witnesses to enter (however willingly) this circle without ceremony, without protocol, without invitation. Instead, we applied the first fruits of our research, utilizing ancestral mechanisms to inscribe a healing circle with the resonance produced by our own instruments. Within this vocally inscribed circle, we intended to re-place our guests in mindful relationship to the biota we share; to each other; and to the difficult work with which we are all charged in this historical moment. As we (five representative members of an ever-expanding circle of song) sought to curate a space of invitation into relationship with that larger circle and with the work accomplished by our colleagues within that space, I found myself returning to a poem that Mariel Belanger had shared.

Virginie Magnat: We first experimented with *métissage* when Indigenous artist-scholars Dr. Vicki Kelly and Dr. Jill Carter, Indigenous graduate students Corinne Derickson and Mariel Belanger, and myself braided our voices, sounds, songs, and words through a performative presentation at the 2017 CATR conference in Toronto. We nonverbally invited everyone in the audience to stand up with us to honour the seven directions announced through songs accompanied by drumming and flute playing. This collaborative experiment was informed by Dr. Carter's investigation of dramaturgical structure devised as an insurgent research encounter that pushes back against settler-hunger/passive consumption and gently transforms the comfortable voyeur into active witness. The acoustic ecology we created for this experiment also benefitted from the guidance of Dr. Kelly, who has used *métissage* extensively in her own research. This includes collaborating with the authors of *Life Writing and Literary Métissage as an Ethos for Our Times* (2009), who acknowledge her as a mentor.

Through the collective practice of tuning to the voices of the ancestors, our ritual engagement with resonance connects the living past and the living present to create an acoustic ecology for the healing of community, place, and land.

Seven Directions Strand for "Singing Circles"

Seven Directions Piece (*Vicki and Corinne nonverbally invite audience to rise*)

Mariel	Call (poem / stanza by stanza)
Vicki	Flute
Jill	Response—directional teaching (always ending with "listen")
Corinne	Four Directions[2] traditional song in *nsyilxcən* (Syilx/Okanagan)
Virginie	Traditional songs in Occitan (southern France)

I

Mariel Belanger:

I am in a box

That surrounds me

And makes me stumble

When I walk

Jill Carter: *Waabinong:* The East is the place of new beginnings: the journey of life begins in the eastern quadrant of the circle; the sun rises before us, and we face its light, seeking vision and giving thanks for this gift of life—the return of the birds, the warming earth, the flowering trees. It is springtime—*Ziigwaan*. And everything is quickening inside and around us. *Asema*—tobacco—is the medicine of the east—offered in gratitude for These things.

LISTEN…

II

Mariel Belanger:

Tripping on my history

While trying to keep pace

With present mystery

Jill Carter: *Zhawaanong:* Here in the south, we are in *Niibin*—the summer of our lives. The world is bursting with the sweetness of life. We are taught that it is here and now that we must take care of the spirit the growing body houses. We must cultivate that spirit, so the harvest will be rich and sweet as youth fades, and the hot blood cools. Grandmother Cedar is the medicine of this wild, wandering season. She cleanses and protects.

LISTEN…

III

Mariel Belanger:

In a fit of anxiety

I throw the box

To the land

Oh Creator, Oh god, … oh someone

Help me understand

Jill Carter: *Epangishmok:* Facing westwind, we are in *Takwaakin*—the autumn of our lives. A time of preparation; a time to ready ourselves for the conclusion of our journey in this life. Sage is the medicine associated with this season; its sweet smoke cleanses us, soothes heated thoughts, calms fears, and ensures that we continue to travel on with clear sight and good thoughts.

LISTEN…

IV

Mariel Belanger:

Where do I belong?

The white indian holding

Her granny's song

Jill Carter: *Kiiwedinong:* The North is the place of wisdom. As the earth rests under her snow blanket, so we rest in the winter of our lives. This is the time of story. The time of ceremony. The time of spirits. The sweetness of the sweetgrass braid carries us momentarily back to the summer of our lives, reminding us that life continues; all times are one… *Biidaaban:* Dawn is breaking. The future rushes in. Rest. Remember.

LISTEN…

V

Mariel Belanger:

Oh God, Oh Creator

Why rip me in half?

Why do I suffer

While other's laugh?

Jill Carter: They told me, Look up to the sky! You will never lose your way. And you will always know when to plant or to pray; when to feast or to fast; when to hunt or to tell story. Follow the path of souls. Feel the big-bellied grandmother pulling on your womb! Look up, they told me. "We are such things as stars are made of…"

LISTEN…

VI

Mariel Belanger:

The song in me implores

Protect your mother earth

She needs your care

But my soul yearns for more

And begs to explore

Jill Carter: Look down, they told me. You are the youngest child of Aki—the earth. When your mother is sick, take care of her.

LISTEN…

VII

Mariel Belanger:

The future

Wings spread

Waiting to soar

Jill Carter: You stand at the centre of the circle. Wherever you find yourself—that is the centre. Look ever outwards from this place where your spirit begins its journey. And know this: Like a stone cast upon the waters, your every impulse affects change in the world.

For good or for ill?

That is your responsibility—the burden you must carry.

LISTEN…

You stand at the centre of the circle. Wherever you find yourself—that is the centre. Look ever outwards from this place where your spirit begins its journey. And know this: Like a stone cast upon the waters, your every impulse affects change in the world.

Notes

1. The members of the Indigenous Advisory Committee are Syilx Elder Delphine Derickson, Cree Elder Winston Wuttunee, and Nêhiyo Itâpsinowin Knowledge Keeper Joseph Naytowhow, three distinguished singers, musicians, storytellers, and educators; Indigenous Music Therapy specialist Dr. Carolyn Kenny (Antioch University); arts-based Indigenous education scholar and musician Dr. Vicki Kelly (Simon Fraser University); scholar-practitioner of Indigenous Epistemologies and Indigenous Education Dr. Manulani Aluli-Meyer (University of Hawaii); Indigenous Performance Studies artist-scholar Dr. Jill Carter (University of Toronto); Syilx interdisciplinary artists and MFA students Corinne Derickson and Mariel Belanger (UBC); Ethnomusicology and Theatre Studies PhD students Julia Ulehla and Claire Fogal (UBC); and Performance Studies scholar-practitioner Dr. Virginie Magnat (UBC), who directs this SSHRC-funded project.

2. Corinne Derickson's "Four Directions" song includes South, East, North and West, as well as three additional directions to honour all above and all below and the centre inside us.

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Multilayered Diversity as Creative Asset:

Modern Times Stage Company's "Subject and Creation" Laboratory

The interaction of cultures has stirred intense debates among theatre scholars and practitioners over the last couple of decades, particularly around the appropriation/ appreciation dichotomy involving Western vs. non-Western artists, mainstream vs. alternative theatre, or imperial vs. [post]colonial cultures. In response, Modern Times Stage Company organized two events in Toronto in 2017: Postmarginal: Cultural Diversity as Theatrical Practice, a professional development workshop, and Beyond Representation, a public symposium co-chaired by professors Natalie Alvarez and Ric Knowles.

As the organizers noted, they started with "the simple assumption that diversity is a Good Thing [and] the very basis of the creative process" (Alvarez et al.). The "post" in "postmarginal" was meant to move the discussion beyond the margins vs. centre debate and to focus on cultural diversity as a source and form of theatre practice, not as theoretical investigation. As such, it challenged Euro-American as well as Canadian mainstream theatrical traditions—and to some degree collective prejudices—by exploring effective rehearsal strategies when working in culturally diverse groups. In 2018, Modern Times Stage continued this project with Montreal's symposium Postmarginal: La différence au cœur de la pratique théâtrale, along with a Laboratory led by Johanna Nutter and Nicholas Michon; and Toronto's Subject and Creation: A Theatre Laboratory on the Aesthetics of Diversity, offered by the company's co-artistic director Soheil Parsa.

As a Romanian Canadian scholar and artist, I am interested in theoretically and creatively exploring how intercultural and particularly exilic experiences inform and enrich both national and global theatres. At the 2017 Postmarginal Symposium, I presented the paper "Saying Your Name in Different Languages: Resignifying Multilingualism in Accented Canadian Theatre,"[1] analyzing the treatment of multilingualism and untranslated non-dominant languages in *My Name Is Dakhel Faraj*, written and directed by Syrian-born Nada Humsi for the Kitchener-Waterloo Arab-Canadian Theatre (KW-ACT) in Arabic, English, and American Sign Language (ASL). One of my main research aims is to analyze intercultural theatre as a border space, "an area of spiralling repetition and replay, of both inputs and feedback, of both interlace and interface, an area of 'double ends joined,' of rebirth and metamorphosis" (McLuhan 247). Attending the Modern Times Stage Laboratory in May 2018 thus gave me the opportunity to take my research beyond analysis of a play or a show by observing various stages of an intercultural creative process and subsequently investigating the participants' insights into the workshop experience through an online survey.

Whereas the 2017 Laboratory experimented with rehearsal strategies, this year one of its main objectives was to explore how the artists' diverse cultural backgrounds and performance traditions could enrich Canada's theatre vocabulary. To this end, it employed a "postmarginal" perspective, which I could summarize as "intercultural collaboration is a good thing." Consistent with his life-long artistic vision, Parsa also reminded participants that theatre is not "literature on stage" and words are only one of several elements constituting a theatrical performance. He selected Hamlet's "To be or not to be?" monologue as the workshop's script. In his view, this provided participants with a common denominator because "everybody knows it," and artistic freedom, as it "goes beyond gender. You can be anyone."[2] He further explained that excerpting the monologue from Shakespeare's play allows us to identify another explanation of the human anxiety and suffering it conveys by setting it in a different context—"very personal OR political OR a combination of both." In this way, the Laboratory aimed to challenge Canadian theatre's somewhat still dominant naturalism, in the spirit of Hans-Thies Lehmann's perspective of postdramatic theatre as "a visual, not text oriented dramaturgy" (146).

The range of participants' ethnic diversity framed the group as a possible synecdoche of the Canadian people, including Indigenous peoples, francophones, African Canadians, and first-generation Canadians originating from different countries, as well as two foreign guests. It also reflected increasing globalization and hybridization not only at the collective level but also at the individual level, with some of the artists, like Toronto-based actor Azeem Nanthoo, acknowledging several cultural allegiances and influences: "My identity is composed of multiple parts, being of South Asian descent, born in Canada, growing up in Kenya and having lived in the U.S. and the U.K. prior to returning here." This, too, emphasized the often taken-for-granted privilege to live and work with people from all over the world, especially in larger Canadian cities. As Ecuador-born theatre, film, and television actor Melanie Santos noted, "Toronto is a mosaic of cultures, ideas, beliefs and people who, when allowed to, can make wonderful magic together."

Although this belief was shared by all participants, it did not imply denying the prolonged existence of subaltern and dominant cultures, to use Gayatri Spivak's terminology, including Canada's imperial past and its still unresolved legacies. Originally from Mashteuiatsh, Lac-St-Jean, and currently based in Montreal, multidisciplinary body-voice artist Soleil Launière related to Hamlet's monologue from the perspective of her Indigenous Innu heritage: "Our culture is all around us, yet, a lot of it has been forgotten. Most of our elders are still recovering from residential schools' traumas and some of us struggle searching for a place to belong. Like Hamlet, we ask ourselves those simple questions: am I or am I not?"

The discovery and self-discovery process started with table readings in English, French, Arabic, and Spanish to establish the specific contexts in which participants resituated Shakespeare's monologue. Parsa also asked them to intentionally connect it to elements specific to their cultural backgrounds. Soon after, however, he encouraged them to trust their "instinct" and allow their heritage and individual experiences to surface organically and inform the artistic creation. In my view, the moment when Maxime D. Pomerleau left her wheelchair to join the others in a physical exercise reaffirmed theatre as a medium where we can both explore and overcome personal challenges. For me, it was one of the numerous astonishing moments during the workshop, when art and life crossed paths and supported each other.

The Laboratory mainly consisted of practical exercises, which explored,

This page and page 33: © Soheil Parsa (Photos by Soheil Parsa).

The moment when Maxime D. Pomerleau left her wheelchair to join the others in a physical exercise reaffirmed theatre as a medium where we can both explore and overcome personal challenges. For me, it was one of the numerous astonishing moments during the workshop, when art and life crossed paths and supported each other.

in words from the lab's poster, "the phenomenology of difference" on an individual level and through the interaction between the group members. The second part of the workshop focused on staging "To be or not to be?" as short performances, envisioned and directed by each of the participants with their colleagues as performers who were also invited to release their own creativity and improvise. This led to numerous culturally specific actions during the re-enactments of the monologue, such as Ahmed Moneka's prayer in Arabic, as well as to group discussions about cultural differences, such as the gender and the mythologies of the sun and the moon in various countries.

Parsa also empowered participants to engage their own and others' intersectional identities while preserving their individuality, challenging theatre's tendency to tokenize identities. Joella Crichton is a Toronto-born actor passionate about her Caribbean heritage, nine times crowned Queen of Caribana, the city's popular annual summer festival celebrating Caribbean culture. In theatre, however, she has often found herself feeling ignored as an artist and individual: "As a Black woman, if they cast me, they think it's enough. They never ask me about myself and my background." This kind of skin-deep and ineffective, but tentatively celebratory, version of politically correct multiculturalism has often been challenged as a systemic problem in Canada, and not only in theatre. African Canadian writer Jael Richardson compares tokenism with inclusion in the Canadian publishing industry and notices trends that I find similar to those in theatre. According to her, tokenism is often "driven by an outside source, like a competitor or a funding body. As a result, it tends to be driven by a desire to check off boxes or cover a 'trend' or 'popular issue 'without acknowledging personal bias and without reflecting on problematic structural or systemic issues." Whereas Crichton testified to an actor's experience, Richardson points out that noting only one's diversity in promoting literary events "devalues the writer's skill and insight." By contrast, the Laboratory, focusing on participants' personal cultural legacies and artistic personalities, circumvented both the superficial acknowledgement of minority traits and the essentialist gesture of framing an individual as "the voice of an entire group" (Richardson).

Laboratory participants also described instances of oppression and discrimination from their home countries. To me, the very juxtaposition of the stories shared by two of the artists served as a political allegory of creation prevailing despite politics. Sepehr Reybod is an emerging Iranian Canadian actor based in Toronto. For him, Hamlet's monologue connected to his father's inner conflict during the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) when he had to choose between shame versus action, that is, between fleeing to protect his life versus defending his country. Shortly after, we listened to a story from the other side of the border and from another time. Ahmed Moneka was born in Baghdad, of African descent, and prides himself on being the first-ever Black television presenter in Iraq, challenging that country's own racial stereotypes. An actor and musician, he cheerfully recalled how he found, or rather invented, his own multicultural community in Toronto through music, first drumming at community events, now in a multicultural folk band, Moskitto Bar, with French accordionist Tangi Ropars and Ukranian cimbalom player Yura Rafalui. As often happens, individuals can work together and appreciate each other despite conflicts and even wars inflicted by governments and politicians.

The Laboratory extended the concept of diversity beyond politics, cultural background, and skin colour to include representatives of disabled-identified communities and sexual minorities. Even though Montreal-based multidisciplinary artist Maxime D. Pomerleau does not focus her work on this aspect of her identity, she appreciated Parsa's personal invitation to join the Laboratory "to add another aspect of diversity—physical disability." Pomerleau also noticed and valued his strategy to use the participants' individual mise-en-scènes of "To be or not to be?" to represent their specificities without making differences the focus. Launière expressed a similar opinion: "The importance of the Toronto workshop was that it brought people together for who they were not only for their ethnic background, but their entire identities. We are diverse not only by our nationalities." For Santos, the workshop's emphasis on *otherness* was an occasion to investigate her double-layered exilic experience: "Many might think that being queer in Toronto is no longer a 'novelty' or cause for someone to feel alienated, however, when you mix this with the immigrant experience, it can be daunting."[3] When intersectionality

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complements diversity in theatre practice, it allows for a holistic perspective of marginalized communities as naturally complex and internally varied. This happens in several other geopolitical regions, not only in Canada. As actor, playwright, and translator Simon Casanova pointed out, the participants from Mexico (Milton and Salinas), Ecuador (Santos), and Cuba (where Casanova was born) performed "To be or not to be?" in Spanish with specific national differences but understood each other. During the workshop, we all effectively communicated in various kinds of accented English. Launière even sang in an invented language because, in her words, "No matter the language we use, invented or not, the message will go through if the intention is right."

All participants mentioned that they valued the benefits of diversity even before attending the Laboratory, with Launière echoing Postmarginal's mandate: "I think working together in a multicultural setting should be the norm. The world is diverse." Yet, they also acknowledged that the workshop was an enriching opportunity. For instance, the culturally mixed visions of Hamlet helped Christian Alboran, a Mexican interdisciplinary artist, and Soykan Karayol, a Turkish Canadian recent graduate of Sheridan College, to rediscover the creative potential of intercultural collaboration and the importance of human values beyond differences.

The Laboratory provided artistic freedom, mutual respect, an active appreciation of everybody's uniqueness, and a creative environment. "To be or not to be?" became the question about who we really are, not about how we are stereotyped by colonial, racist, homophobic, and shallow perspectives. Hamlet's unpretentious humanity, Parsa's inclusive approach and engaging workshop strategies, and the shared passion for theatre merged the participants into a group of people working hard to further explore and enrich their theatre vocabulary and the implicit performance language we all use in Canada. As an observer and researcher, I perceived Modern Times Stage's multilingual and intercultural Laboratory as a spiritual, though embodied, experience of diversity as theatre practice. It reminded me of an old truth: we are better together. We just have to trust it.

"To be or not to be?" became the question about who we really are, not about how we are stereotyped by colonial, racist, homophobic, and shallow perspectives.

Notes

1. This paper has since been published as "Resignifying Multilingualism in Canadian Accented Theatre," in *Performing Exile: Foreign Bodies*, edited by Judith Rudakoff (Bristol, UK: Intellect Books, 2017).
2. Unless otherwise noted, all comments by the Laboratory participants are taken from recordings and an email survey, both done by the author.
3. Personal email, 18 June 2018.

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Theatre Review

BUNNY[1]

BY HAYLEY MALOUIN, FEATURING HANNAH MOSCOVITCH

Written by **Hannah Moscovitch**
Directed by **Sarah Garton Stanley**
Featuring **Gabriella Albino, Maev Beaty, Rachel Cairns, Matthew Edison, Cyrus Lane, Jesse LaVercombe, Tony Ofori**
February 21 – April 1, 2018
Tarragon Theatre, Toronto, Ontario

"Honestly, I have a branding issue," Hannah Moscovitch tells me. With show programs and press releases full of juicily quotable lines—like "a young woman discovers the power of her allure" and "a young working-class wife who has a lot to learn about love, sex, and birth control"—it's easy to forget that Moscovitch's work breaks with traditional characterizations of women far more than it establishes them. "I tend to like pieces that allow me to expose characters in extreme events and that reveal psychology—or that transition psychologically as a result of exposure to extreme events," she says over the phone from a café in Brooklyn. "That happens to cross a bunch of boundaries."

When we spoke in the winter, Moscovitch was in New York, where *Old Stock: A Refugee Love Story*, which she co-created with Christian Barry and Ben Caplan, was in previews at 59E59 Theaters. (It ran there until April 22nd, garnering six Drama Desk Award nominations, including one for Moscovitch for outstanding book of a musical, which she ultimately lost to Tina Fey). At the same time, Toronto was experiencing a distinct (and distinctly feminist) Moscovitch-ian moment. Earlier in 2018, Tarragon Theatre had a successful run of the highly acclaimed *Bunny*, originally commissioned by the Stratford Festival for its 2016 season, and Crow's Theatre presented *What a Young Wife Ought to Know*, originally produced in 2015 by Neptune Theatre and 2b theatre company in Halifax. And there is no end in sight for Toronto's love affair with Moscovitch: in spring 2019, *Old Stock* will come to the Tarragon Theatre. The city's theatre scene is abuzz with profuse praise for her uncompromisingly and complexly feminist work—and rightly so.

"I always feel concerned when I have a female lead, about it being programmed, if only because there's a certain amount of unconscious bias on the part of male artistic directors and male critics."

Moscovitch says her female-led works haven't always been so well regarded, however. "When I first wrote *What a Young Wife Ought to Know* we did get a lot of questions about its relevance," she says. "It's such a 'vagina piece.' I always feel concerned when I have a female lead, about it being programmed, if only because there's a certain amount of unconscious bias on the part of male artistic directors and male critics—which is almost all the artistic directors and all the critics [in Toronto]."

Make no mistake: Moscovitch is thrilled that *Bunny* and *Young Wife*, both written ahead of what she calls a recent "powerful wave of feminism," are making appearances on the Toronto theatre scene in the current moment. To be sure, both plays offer valuable and multifaceted insight into sexuality, sexual relationships, and female experiences—topics particularly germane in the wake of the recent leadership shakedown in the Distillery District. At the risk of reasserting or overstating the influence of certain Toronto theatre empire-builders, one wonders how to even broach the topic of systemic bias without mentioning them.

Moscovitch is no stranger to these biases. Current moment aside, she reveals that her plays with male leads have been programmed far more than her female-led pieces. "Maybe that's because the plays are stronger, or maybe that's because people are sexist. I can tell you what my guess is."

Moscovitch's guess may be more on the nose than not. A 2015 study on achieving equity in Canadian theatre shows that, while women form 50 percent of the Playwright's Guild of Canada's membership, they constitute less than 25 percent of plays produced across the country, with women of colour making up an even smaller percentage (MacArthur). Distressingly, these rates of representation are regressing over time, not improving as they have done in previous studies of a similar calibre. This, as Moscovitch says, is "one of the ways in which unconscious bias works." In a male-majority landscape, the work of female playwrights like Moscovitch is seen as risky to program—this despite the fact that women outnumber men as audience members (and ticket-buyers).

So why the sudden uptick in productions of Moscovitch's work? "I think it just happens to be fashionable right now. I'd say 'vagina piece' three years ago was pejorative, and now it's crossed over into being mainstream." Marketing tactics have not quite caught up, however, and the promotion of *Bunny* and *Young Wife*'s female protagonists gives Moscovitch pause. Given the dearth of work by female playwrights being produced in Canada, marketing choices play a key role in colouring an audience's reception of female-led work. *Bunny*'s protagonist Sorrel—who, in a fractured moment of clandestine indecision, recounts her sexual history in a third-person narrative from the tip of a canoe—possesses layers of emotional intelligence and depth coloured rather flatly by certain promotional language. "Lines like 'She discovers the power of her own allure' come out and I'm like, that's not quite right. Actually, no, she doesn't discover the *power* of it; she discovers how much she *likes sex*—which is different than the power of your allure. That makes you the object."

While Moscovitch accepts this as part of the overall landscape of marketing theatre ("Sometimes marketers are savvy, as opposed to cynical, hoping to get people in the door knowing that once they're in they'll probably love it"), her point—that we need to be conscious of how plays that foreground women's experiences are described—still stands. This observation feels of particular importance in relation to *Bunny*, which—because protagonist Sorrel confides so regularly in the audience through direct address (a recurring motif for Moscovitch)—is all-encompassing in its description and detailing of female experiences and desires.

© Tarragon Theatre. (Photos by Cylla von Tiedemann). This page, left: the cast of *Bunny*; bottom right: Rachel Cairns and Maev Beaty in *Bunny*; page 37: Maev Beaty in *Bunny*.

Moscovitch's choice to have Sorrel speak directly to her audience is apt. Through her cagey yet forthcoming confessions, Sorrel navigates both her own desire and the profound shame she internalizes. Her use of third-person keeps her audience at arm's length, even as she divulges sexual encounter after sexual encounter. The resulting tension and fear—experienced by a person slung between gulfs of intense desire and intense self-loathing—is at the heart of *Bunny*. "You can always attack a woman with her sexuality. You can shame women using their sexuality," Moscovitch says. She continues: "It's so part of our culture, it's so in us, to shame women."

It's in our literature too; both Moscovitch and the character of Sorrel are fans of Victorian novels, particularly those of Jane Austen, George Eliot, and the Brontë sisters. The script for *Bunny* even begins with a quote from Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*: "See how the tide is carrying us out—away from all those unnatural bonds that we have been trying to make faster around us—and trying in vain." The line is from a scene towards the end of the novel, when protagonist Maggie rows out into the river with her forbidden admirer Stephen Guest. It's a fitting quote to set up the story of *Bunny*, which begins and ends with a boat scene very similar to the one in *The Mill on the Floss*, and which Moscovitch admits to taking right out of Eliot's novel. Like Maggie, who is desperately trying to deny her love for Stephen, Sorrel is trying to suppress her own desires. Also like Maggie, Sorrel is operating to a great degree from a place of fear: fear of her desires, of her surroundings, and of shame. "Those sorts of novels are run on that," says Moscovitch. "Their motor is "*Will this woman be a disgrace, and shamed, or will she pick the right man?*" The sum totality of her value will be determined by the choices she makes in her sex life. That's a literary tradition and Victorian novels are a huge part of our inheritance."

The glaring difference between Eliot's Maggie and Moscovitch's Sorrel is that whereas Maggie ultimately drowns at the novel's end, Sorrel lives, returning to the shore and not to the arms of a sexual partner, but to the arms of a dear friend (whose name, as it happens, is also Maggie).

"I'd say 'vagina piece' three years ago was pejorative, and now it's crossed over into being mainstream."

The importance of *Bunny*'s Maggie cannot be overstated. As Sorrel's one female friend (indeed, her only friend), Maggie effectively saves Sorrel from her own self-loathing and the fear of her own desires. Maybe that's not quite right: Maggie doesn't save Sorrel; rather, she enables Sorrel to save herself. Unlike the girls Sorrel knew in high school, who made her a pariah for engaging in sexual acts without the justifying guise of love or drunkenness, Maggie (already a fun-loving but emotionally intelligent single mother by the time she meets Sorrel in university) both demands and celebrates honesty in friendship. In return, she provides unwavering acceptance—an acceptance Sorrel herself takes years (and the duration of the play) to learn to receive. In the final, quiet moments of the play, almost awkwardly peaceful after the preceding onslaught of visceral sexual encounters, Maggie says to Sorrel those life- and love-giving words: "There's nothing wrong with you."

This reconciliation between middle-aged female friends is a far cry from the wedding- or-death conclusions of Eliot and Austen. Not that Moscovitch aims to rebuke these novels. On the contrary: "I wanted to find my way back to adoring those novels, but really had to think hard about them." Moscovitch achieves this, in part, by reading her beloved Victorians through more twentieth century fare, in the form of James Joyce. The Eliot quote that serves as introduction for *Bunny* is accompanied by one from Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*: "I will tell you what I will do and what I will not do. I will not serve that in which I no longer believe, whether it calls itself my home, my fatherland, or my church; and I will try to express myself in some mode of life or art as freely as I can and as wholly as I can, using for my defense the only arms I allow myself to use—silence, exile, and cunning." Like Sorrel and Eliot's Maggie, Joyce's Stephen Dedalus is a person trying to rid himself of shame by seeking to break, escape, or change the societal systems of control that bind him. "In that novel [Stephen is] so bound by Catholicism, which is all about sexual shame," remarks Moscovitch.

By evoking Eliot and Joyce, Moscovitch places Sorrel in the company of other complex, intelligent protagonists, ones who can not only resist structures of societal control but are also capable of seeing these structures as constructs. In so doing, Moscovitch also invites us—her reader, her audience—to engage with the structure of her own work. In an exchange between Sorrel and her lover, called simply the Professor, he shames her for her love of Victorian novels because "the only thing women do in them is choose between two men." "I wanted to give those lines to the Professor. I wanted to complicate [what he says] as an idea by giving them to him," Moscovitch says. "I always wanted it to be more complicated, mitigated. Because there's

© Tarragon Theatre. (Photo by Cylla von Tiedemann). Maev Beaty in *Bunny*.

also a dismissal of women authors in what he says." Indeed, this complexity plays out on a structural level in Moscovitch's weaving together of Victorian novelistic conventions and Joycean fragmentation, a move that both calls attention to this dramaturgical double helix and calls into question societally held assumptions about female novelists. "I use [the Victorians'] structure. There's an adoration in taking their structure."

Adoration, yes. But there is something further at stake. By only reading the *content* of Moscovitch's play, we run the risk of ignoring or omitting certain structural elements that enable her (and us) to read Victorian novels from a place of feminist reparations or generosity—and that enable us to read Moscovitch not in opposition to but alongside her Victorian predecessors. Here, then, is perhaps where Moscovitch and *Bunny*'s feminist vision comes into full view. Sorrel's revelation in the final moments of the play (that "she's not a Victorian, for fuck's sake, she's not a heroine") is not so much a spurning of these Victorian heroines as it is a forgiveness of them—and an ultimate judgment on those societal structures of shame that hinder historical and contemporary female thinkers.

Thus, by weaving together the social realism of Eliot and the societal resistance of Joyce, Moscovitch succeeds in paving a path back to a love of Victorian novels. "I really think those authors fight against the constraints of their time the best way they can, working within them," Moscovitch says. "Which is what I try to do too."

It seems, then, that Moscovitch is in good company with the Victorians. "If you're going be an iconoclast, if you're going be a rebel, one of the places you can draw strength from is other women who are doing the same," Moscovitch says. "That's what women's movements are. That's what #MeToo is. If you're going to do something brave, and hard, and new, you need help with that from other women. And that is what *Bunny* is about—at least for me." #MeToo, Hannah.

This interview has been edited and condensed.

Note

1. A shorter version of this review originally appeared on alttheatre.ca on 19 March 2018.

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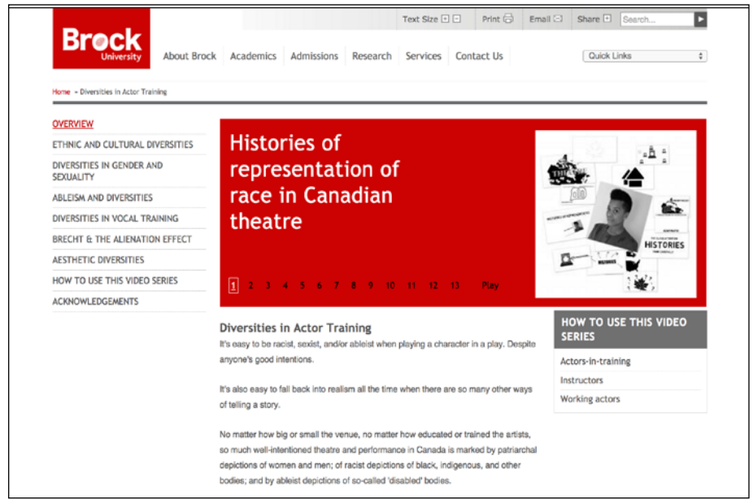
Book Review

DIVERSITIES IN ACTOR TRAINING = DIVERSITIES IN CANADIAN THEATRE?

https://brocku.ca/diversities-in-actor-training

BY ALEXA ELSER



In recent years, studies such "Achieving Equity in Canadian Theatre: A Report with Best Practice Recommendations" by Michelle MacArthur and "Equity in the Academy: A Survey of Theatre Productions at Canadian Post-Secondary Institutions" by Nicholas Hanson and myself have disseminated quantitative data exposing some of the inequities seen in both professional and post-secondary theatre contexts, and, moreover, have recommended how to rectify the lack of diversity in the statistics. Though these studies focus primarily on data regarding gender equity, these researchers widely agree that more needs to be done to address the disparity of *all* diversities and strongly suggest changing how future generations of theatre artists are trained and educated as a key strategy to foster a more diverse and equitable environment in professional Canadian theatre.

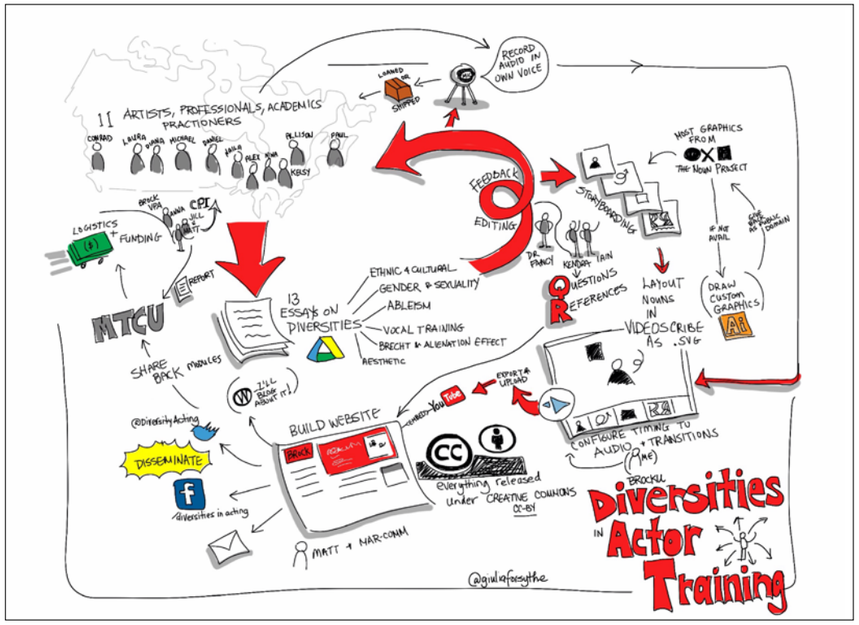
Changing how future generations of theatre artists are trained and educated is a key strategy to foster a more diverse and equitable environment in professional Canadian theatre.

Editor-in-chief Dr. David Fancy and his team of researchers and practitioners from across Canada have initiated this shift by creating the *Diversities in Actor Training* website, a free, accessible, and informative database that can be a useful tool for any instructor, student, or practising artist. Funded by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities and hosted by Brock University, the website was created in response to the recommendation noted above. As Fancy states on the overview page of the website,

> Why acting training? Because the actor is frequently the ground-zero of meaning-making in theatre and performance…this video series focuses on how unjust ways of storytelling can be dealt with in part by approaching acting training with an awareness of diversities. We pluralize the term 'diversities' because there are so many types of difference. (Fancy)

The website layout itself is designed in an organized manner, making it easy to navigate the content through clear, concise sub-headings, and a well-structured chronology of materials. The *Diversities in Actor Training* series consists of thirteen video essays written and narrated by eleven Canadian theatre scholars, instructors, and working professionals, each video exploring a topic of their personal expertise and research interest. There are six categories of diversities explored through the video essay series: Ethnic and Cultural Diversities, Diversities in Gender and Sexuality, Ableism and Diversity, Diversities in Vocal Training, Brecht & the Alienation Effect, and Aesthetic Diversities. The videos themselves are composed of original drawings by Giulia Forsythe or contributed by The Noun Project, an organization that provides access to millions of visual icons to "simplify communication, across borders and around the world" (*The Noun Project*). Although the animation of the infographics is quite simplistic, the neutrality of the design punctuates the key points of each video essay and gives the content utmost prominence.

Every video is accompanied by a series of questions posed to the viewer that could be used to provoke meaningful discussion within a group of students or artists, as essay questions in a classroom



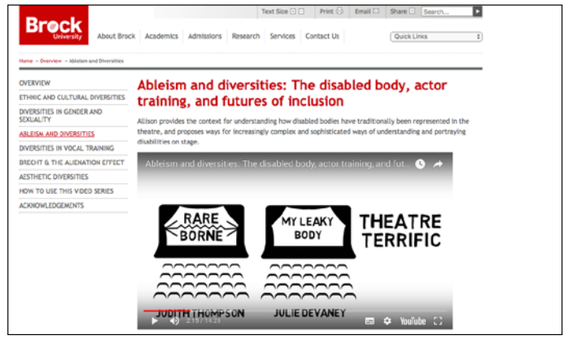
setting, or even to inspire self-reflection. Where applicable, the website creators have made an effort to provide links to most of the web-accessible resources cited by the authors. There is also a strong sense of cohesiveness throughout, as the authors frequently cross-reference other videos in the series if they briefly mention a topic that is discussed at-length in another video. The design and mechanics of the site were established in such a user-friendly way that it enhances the accessibility of the content and punctuates the important information necessary for its audience to understand.

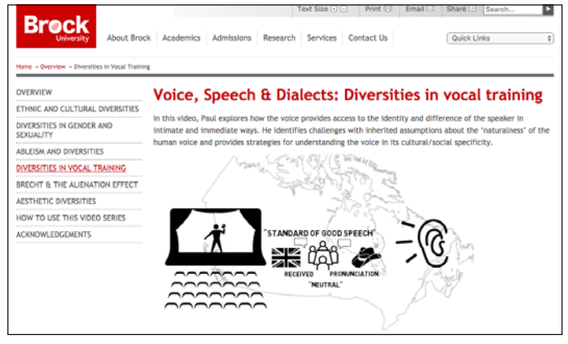
The material housed in the site explores diversity from both theoretical and practical perspectives, and its applications mirror those respective categories, either inciting meaningful and provocative conversations about diversities or containing information and even some "how-to" guidelines of exercises that could be directly implemented in a studio classroom setting (though many of the videos could easily be used to both ends). Important parallels can also be drawn between some of the videos, a highlight being Naila Keleta-Mae and Kelsy Vivash's theory-focused contributions. Both Keleta-Mae's "Ethnic and Cultural Diversities I" and Vivash's "Diversities in Gender and Sexuality I" offer a look at the historical under-representation of those who do not identify with theatre that "has traditionally been a male-centered, white European, middle and upper middle-class project" (Kelata-Mae, "Ethnic and Cultural Diversities I"). In part, these two videos function as a concise review of "Theatre History 101," a nearly universal course requirement of most theatre training programs; but most significantly, this theatre history refresher is filtered through the lens of diversity, a key shift in perspective that is imperative to educating future artists and practitioners. As Keleta-Mae summarizes, she and Vivash are asking us to consider "'Herstory', [a term] to draw attention to the stories of women, who are often omitted in dominant historical narrative […or] 'histories' to draw attention to the fact that there are a plethora of perspectives that the telling of one single story omits." Keleta-Mae and Vivash go on to contextualize how historical inequities have played out in contemporary theatre practises in the second parts of their respective discussions. These topics are presented early in the series and establish the tone for the remainder of the videos; they bring up important ideas to keep in mind, asking us to continually question whose stories are being told on our stages and in our classrooms. Whose stories are being omitted? How do we move forward with this shift in perspective to include all diversities in Canadian theatre?

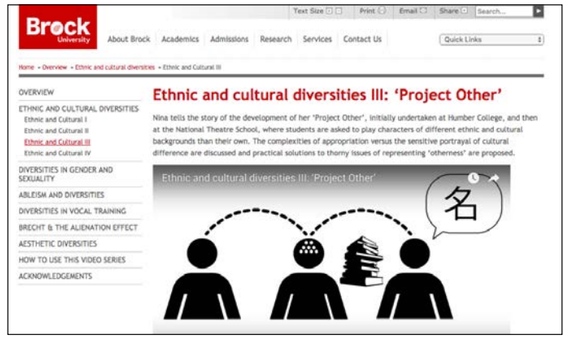
As far as practice is concerned, authors Nina Lee Aquino and Paul Dejong offer insights from their experiences as artists and educators of how to introduce perspectives of "otherness" through diverse training in a studio environment. In "Ethnic and Cultural Diversities III: 'Project Other,'" Lee Aquino, artistic director of Toronto's Factory Theatre, describes an exercise she conducted with acting classes at the National Theatre School and Humber College. In the exercise, she introduced culturally diverse works to the majority white student body and had students authentically portray characters of different backgrounds from their own. They were required to complete in-depth research and dialect work for these characters, which culminated in a public staged reading of excerpts. Lee Aquino comments that "this was an exercise in deeper understanding of 'the other' and of themselves, it ended being…it kind of opened their minds in terms of like…'I could be attracted to works that are specific that are not about me'… and understanding as a performer what it takes to find that authentic voice, to understand and respect difference, and to honour that." Lee Aquino is not proposing that theatre training institutions having white students performing diverse works is the solution (if the student population is diverse, *by all means*, program more diverse plays), she is simply suggesting that this exercise will plant seeds of appreciation and respect for voices that are different from our own. Nearly every artistic director, director, and playwright began their career by training in post-secondary institutions, and if they had all learnt this pivotal lesson in "otherness," maybe the lack of diversity in the statistics we see today would not be so glaring.

In "Voice, Speech, & Dialects: Diversities in Vocal Training," Humber College faculty member Paul Dejong reflects that "the issue of diversity is perhaps felt most keenly in the voice studio, as it is the voice which reveals in the most intimate and immediate of ways the identity and difference of the speaker." He argues that the North American tradition of seeking the free and natural voice may not be suitable when tackling the complexities of vocal diversities. As opposed to "throwing out cultural and other kinds of difference in an attempt to find the universal," Dejong offers exercises that challenge students to fully embrace and dive into their "'otherness', the very things that [make] their voice and speech unique and [connect] them with the world around them." Exercises such as these could undoubtedly be adapted and taught by any theatre educator willing to expand their practice in diversities training.

There are many extraordinarily positive things to comment on in the *Diversities in Actor Training* series, however it is also useful noting where improvement can be made and future initiatives directed. It is important to point out that ten out of the eleven authors of this video essay series are Ontario-based scholars and practitioners. This is likely due to the fact the project is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities and hosted by Brock University, and those closely affiliated with these institutions were contacted for contributions. But if this exploration of diversities is Ontario-centric, does it still accurately represent diversities in other parts of this vast country? How might diversities differ and how might training need to be adapted for the demographic of the Maritime provinces? For the Western provinces? The Territories? With our complex history of colonialism in mind, may there be great value in exploring training in diversities that specifically focus on the importance of Indigenous peoples' stories in the Canadian theatre landscape? Finally, as Canada is a bilingual country with hundreds of other languages spoken across the country every day, is there merit in touching on linguistic diversities and how they factor into Canadian theatre contexts?







Regardless of any shortcomings of the website, it has completed its mission in stimulating thought and bringing up questions that can lead to meaningful discussion and further research. Whether the site offers new information that challenges your current perceptions or is simply a refreshing review that bolsters your knowledge, *Diversities in Actor Training* presents a balanced blend of theory and practice that any theatre artist, instructor, or student could benefit from. Implementation of this curricula could range from a semester of lecture series and studio work in post-secondary institutions to a two-week workshop for practising artists hosted by regional theatre organizations—or even if you take just over three hours of your time to watch through the video series, the simple act of immersion in these resources could act as a catalyst for conversation and change. As the "How to Use This Video Series" page eloquently summarizes:

> The materials in this series can be used to provoke questions about the performance culture around you, to allow you to extend further the inquiry at the heart of your work, to confirm some of your suspicions, or to help keep you coming back to why you got into this business in the first place… Whatever you do, don't be satisfied with the status quo: the future of the art form depends on your voice.

In 2018, never has it been more important as theatre artists, academics, and advocates to keenly observe the socio-political climate that surrounds us, listen carefully and critically, learn as much as possible, and let that inform the way we create, produce, perform, and educate. The *Diversities in Actor Training* website is a wonderful step in this never-ending process of trying to change what has traditionally been.

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