

She refrains from being prescriptive in her advice, instead encouraging practitioners to use what they will of the tools she provides.

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QUEER THEATRE IN CANADA. Edited by Rosalind Kerr. *Critical Perspectives on Canadian Theatre in English*, vol. 7. Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press, 2007; pp. xix + 282. \$30.00 paper.

Rosalind Kerr's *Queer Theatre in Canada* explores the queering of the English Canadian stage. Bringing together a variety of Canadian perspectives on the topic, Kerr's text aims "to put together important pieces of the puzzle" (vii) that have contributed to and now comprise contemporary Canadian queer theatre in English. The *Critical Perspectives on Canadian Theatre in English* series, to which this volume belongs, was established in 2005 by general editor Ric Knowles to recognize the burgeoning field of English Canadian theatre studies. While some volumes in the series focus on individual artists such as Judith Thompson and George Walker, most others focus on larger areas of study such as Aboriginal, feminist, and African Canadian theatre. Intended to "carve out both familiar and new areas of work" in English Canadian theatre, the volumes in the series reprint important scholarly essays and "attempt to fill in . . . significant gaps by highlighting work from and about marginalized communities" (iv). Considering that no full-length study of English Canadian queer theatre currently exists, Kerr's *Queer Theatre in Canada* fits nicely within the series's parameters and fills a decided gap in Canadian theatre scholarship.

Featuring twenty-one essays from major Canadian theatre artists and scholars, the anthology takes a critical and remarkably comprehensive look at the past and present state of Canadian queer theatre. Kerr (who is also the editor of *Lesbian Plays: Coming of Age in Canada*) begins with a critical introduction in which she succinctly explains and identifies the "points of intersection between gay and lesbian theatre and queer theory" (viii). With engaging and accessible writing, she effectively situates this work within the larger field of queer theory, then draws attention to the ways this theory impacts each essay,

creating an overall sense of cohesion and illuminating their common themes.

Like other volumes in the series, *Queer Theatre in Canada* features no thematic chapters or formal divisions of its contents; rather, the essays are organized chronologically, according to the date of each piece's original publication. Twelve of the twenty-one essays were originally published between 1972 and 2005; the remaining nine were commissioned by Kerr specifically for this volume in an attempt to fill historical gaps and offer perspectives not recognized in previous queer scholarship. As a result, the chronological organization of the text proves somewhat misleading, for many of the later essays, although written more recently, explore historical, rather than current, queer performances.

The text begins with two essays that reflect foundational moments in the development of English Canadian queer theatre. Neil Carson's 1972 article, "Sexuality and Identity in *Fortune and Men's Eyes*," examines the play by John Herbert that many consider to be the first Canadian play to explicitly address homosexuality. Directly following Carson's article, Robert Wallace's "Homo Creation: Toward a Poetics of Gay Male Theatre" (originally published in French in 1988 and translated into English in 1994) further articulates early conceptions of a queer Canadian theatrical sensibility and, in conjunction with Carson's article, effectively lays the groundwork for the subsequent essays.

The rest of the book approaches queer theatre from a variety of theoretical and practical angles. Reid Gilbert analyzes the staging of the gay male body in works by Robert LePage, Terrence McNally, and David Drake, illustrating the continued debate surrounding theatrical portrayals of sex and gender, while Susan Bennett offers a compelling account of the critical response to Canadian productions of *Angels in America*. While several plays discussed here—such as *Angels in America*—are not of Canadian origin, the authors analyze these texts through a distinctly Canadian lens, considering Canadian productions and connecting issues raised by the texts to a Canadian conception of queerness. Other essays, such as Susan Billingham's insightful reading of Tomson Highway's *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing*, focus specifically on Canadian playwrights' work. Still other articles explore broader performance-based events: from Darrin Hagen's observations on homophobia and masculinity in World Wrestling Federation wrestling events to Judith Anderson's consideration of drag performance in Canadian Pride parades, these essays capture the diverse nature of Canadian queer performance.

Indeed, this diversity is the book's greatest strength. The voices of both queer theatre schol-

ars, such as Peter Dickinson and Robert Wallace, and working artists, such as Buddies in Bad Times Theatre founder Sky Gilbert and queer performer Darrin Hagen, are represented, bridging the gap that often separates theatrical theory and practice. Similarly, Kerr recognizes the significant contributions of transgender and lesbian artists. In fact, three of the articles commissioned for this volume focus on lesbian and queer feminist performances. The essays are also geographically diverse, addressing queer theatre in Toronto, as well as in Manitoba, Alberta, British Columbia, and Quebec. While the inclusion of Québécois artists may seem incongruent with the series's title, Kerr justifies her choice by acknowledging "the enormous impact that Quebec queer theatre has had on English Canadian scholars and practitioners" (viii). Amid this diversity, however, there is a near-absence of queer voices from racial or ethnic minorities. Although Kerr briefly acknowledges this omission, the general lack of nonwhite perspectives is problematic and indicates an area requiring further study.

A worthy addition to the *Critical Perspectives* series, *Queer Theatre in Canada* is a rich sourcebook for both research and pedagogy. Perhaps best suited for courses in queer theatre or Canadian theatre history, the book also offers useful supplemental material for general theatre-history curricula in which Canadian perspectives are often overlooked. Ultimately, Kerr's text marks a significant step in the scholarship of both English Canadian and queer theatre, filling a gap and affirming the dynamic, vibrant existence of English Canadian queer theatre.

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SELENIDAD: SELENA, LATINOS, AND THE PERFORMANCE OF MEMORY. By Deborah Paredez. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009; pp. 288. \$79.95 cloth, \$22.95 paper.

A DVD-recording of Selena performing to a disco beat in a sparkling, skin-tight purple pantsuit; passages scrawled on a memorial wall in Corpus Christi, Texas; a queer tribute to Selena with an intergenerational Latina/o audience: each scene reveals how and why Selena matters. Selena Quintanilla Pérez was a superstar in Tejano music—a US-based, predominantly Spanish-language musical genre dominated by men. Although Selena "reinvented" (11) the genre and conquered the Latina/o music market with her fabulous voice, fashions, and dancing body, English-language audiences had only begun to hear (of) her when she was murdered in 1995 at the age of 23 by the president of her fan club. Lati-

nas/os, especially Mexican Americans from Texas (Tejanas/os), deeply mourned her loss, while the mainstream media puzzled over this outpouring of grief. Selena's death marked a new era for Latinas/os in the US imagination: identified as a largely untapped US market, Latinas/os and their communal mourning were deemed commercial, if derisively "excessive" (15). In this impressive book, Deborah Paredez coins the term "Selenidad" to chronicle and analyze the many ways that Latinas/os have creatively and critically used the memory of Selena to negotiate their contradictory status as invisible and hypervisible subjects of the United States.

Selenidad is not about Selena, but rather about "what it means to remember her" (xi). The book's introduction historicizes the process of her canonization as a Latina icon by framing Selena's legacy for the uninitiated, identifying the 1990s as a critical cultural moment for Latina/o visibility in the United States, and outlining the book's key concepts. Chapter 1, "Soundtracks of Selenidad: 'Disco Medley' and 'Como la Flor'" explores Selena's landmark performance one month before her murder, during Tejano Night at the 1995 rodeo in Houston. The recorded concert exemplifies Selena's performance style—an intricate fusion of working-class, Tejano, and pop sensibilities. Here, Paredez masterfully analyzes the performance of two songs: the sorrowful "Como la Flor" shows Selena self-consciously letting us in on the act with a playful pause and smile, while "Disco Medley" emphasizes the disco beat. Paredez argues that Selena's style and her use of disco diversify and queer the heteronormative traditions of Tejana/o and rodeo culture. By dancing solo between stage and audience, growling gay anthems popularized by black female singers, channeling sorrow through the Latin American music style known as cumbia, and strategically addressing the audience in both Spanish and English, Selena's fabulously unruly body sustains her legacy and firmly anchors Selenidad.

Chapters 2 and 3 address Selenidad in relation to national belonging. The exemplary essay "Colonial Past, Tejano Present: Civic Maintenance at Selena's Memorial" examines Selena's memorial in Corpus Christi as a site of civic renegotiation between the city's Latina/o and Anglo American communities. Highlighting the "racial and political economic tensions" (94) at work in the erection and maintenance of Selena's hometown monument, Paredez investigates Corpus Christi's segregated history and its investment in a fabricated Spanish-cowboy past. By leaving informal messages of grief and celebration on and near the memorial, the city's Latinas/os become "misbehaving spectator[s]" (94) whose demands to be seen reclaim the memorial and mark their (long-effaced) civic presence.

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