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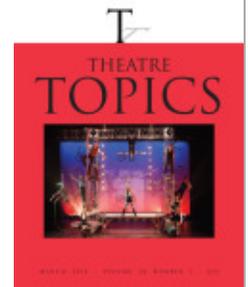
*Digital Costume Design and Collaboration: Applications in
Academia, Theatre, and Film* by Rafael Jaen (review)

La Beene

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areas of theatre for which my own training did not prepare me. A newcomer to these forms could do worse than Odom's précis, and I found his suggestion of key playwrights from these regions especially valuable. I would not (and nor would Odom) suggest that these chapters serve as anything more than a springboard to further, more substantive sources. His final section—three class exercises—seems like an afterthought. I would have liked to see such exercises fleshed out and perhaps incorporated more organically into the main chapters themselves.

Although I am more incredulous than Odom about theatre's global interconnectedness and would have liked a bit more historical range and specificity, I can recommend *World Theories of Theatre* for use in masters- and upper-level undergraduate courses. Additionally, I hope his work inspires teachers to incorporate more and more diverse theatrical perspectives from artists working in “most of the world.”

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Digital Costume Design and Collaboration: Applications in Academia, Theatre, and Film. By Rafael Jaen. New York: Routledge/Focal Press, 2017; pp. 208.

Designing in an increasingly digital world with tech-savvy students presents a new set of challenges to an old art form. Students obtain and disseminate information and communicate primarily by digital means. Adapting theatre classes to a digital world is not difficult, but finding a text to suit the needs of a costume design course that still addresses some of the more elementary but critical skills needed of costume designers has not existed. Many costume-design faculty use Liz Covey and Rosemary Ingham's incredible resource, *The Costume Designers Handbook*, in their classes. Other foundational texts might be Rebecca Cunningham's *The Magic Garment* and Melissa Merz's *The Art and Practice of Costume Design*. However, none address the growing need to digitize research, paperwork, and designs not only for practical reasons, but as a way to attract and retain the interest of students. In *Digital Costume Design and Collaboration* Rafael Jaen addresses many of the same practical approaches to design as these textbooks, but he reveals how to use the digital world to organize, present, and share design basics.

Jaen organizes his book into three parts. In the first, “Foundations,” he lays out design principles with the essential “nuts and bolts” of each story and character, as well as where to start researching and how to create a concept. He includes additional aids to young designers engaged in the process, such as how to talk to actors, the importance of a dramaturg, and how to have a conversation with a director. Jaen shifts from this traditional introduction to design by outlining how to compile the initial research, notes, and measurements, and how to show information digitally in Google (docs, slides, and sheets), Pinterest, and Dropbox. Importantly, he explains in detail how to use each format and share it with others. This form of communication may be the most important part

of the digitization of a costume designer's work, and Jaen is convincing in his argument to adopt it.

In chapter 2, “Preparing Your Digital Costume Bible and Design Studio,” he discusses some of the most practical parts of design: the paperwork. Jaen thoroughly explains a costume plot, piece list, and how to budget for a production, but again argues in favor of creating, storing, and tracking all of this digitally. Especially impressive is the suggestion to take photos of each actor during fittings, and to organize these into a shareable file that is accessible to everyone on the production team from virtually anywhere. No more forgetting measurements when you are out shopping—it is right on your smartphone! Want to share how a fitting went with the director? Send her the file link! Google docs also updates immediately so there are no lost files, and files shared among multiple participants are always the most current. Jaen also discusses what equipment and software a designer would need to work digitally. This book successfully explains the ease of using such platforms for almost any designer, but particularly for those who may be nervous about changing old habits.

In part 2, “Applications,” Jaen presents five chapters focused on the practical skills from researching to rendering to archiving. The primary tool he introduces here is Photoshop, and for designers new to the world of Photoshop, he presents an incredibly easy path for using this multifaceted tool. He sticks to the basics—layers, brushes, color swatching, and creating fabric, and then goes through them step by step. Jaen's instructions are very clear when discussing basic applications. This is particularly helpful for student and faculty designers who are not familiar with using digital rendering applications, or who are intimidated by the idea of using such a tool. He also provides links to his YouTube channel, which presents the same instructions visually—an important asset for many learners.

The final part of the book, “Digital Design Practice,” presents testimonials from experts about using digital platforms for design. Jaen interviews theatrical directors, designers, and educators about their experiences working in the industry and their individual approaches to their art. The responses are varied and often much less complicated than expected; many stress listening and the value of being able to communicate—important lessons for student designers. Jaen's interview with costume designer Wendi Zea provides advice on how to use digital platforms for exploring new methods of communicating. I found one of her practices particularly useful: after obtaining the set designer's permission, she inserts digital renderings of her costumes into a digital rendition of the set so as to allow the director to obtain a complete view of the show.

Digital Costume Design and Collaboration is a valuable addition to the books used for teaching young designers. It takes the processes and functions of practical design into the digital world with easy-to-follow guides and instructions. It is particularly useful for programs with a limited offering of costume-design courses that have students who want to use digital platforms for storing and sharing information or who already do. It will not serve to accentuate courses specifically

designed to teach digital design as a stand-alone course; all of the tools and platforms addressed are purposefully kept at a basic level. But it will also serve veteran designers who would like to move into a digital world, but find themselves a bit intimidated or even simply not knowing where to start. I plan on incorporating the text into my costume-design courses, even though I will still teach hand-rendering methods as well. However, the move from paper to digital, digital research and organization, and design presentations as recommended by *Digital Costume Design and Collaboration* makes sense, and will be a natural progression for most of our students.

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Rhythm in Acting and Performance: Embodied Approaches and Understandings. By Eilon Morris. London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2017; pp. 296.

To start, Eilon Morris informs the reader that they will not find a simple definition or universal concept of *rhythm* in this book. Instead, through a well-balanced dose of theory and practice as research from his years in rehearsal and training rooms as a theatre practitioner, percussionist, educator, and scholar, Morris adeptly unpacks the complex relationship with rhythm in training and performance. With risk of sounding overly effusive, as an acting instructor this is a book I have been wanting for years. Its value comes from Morris's approach. While he may at times seem to prize an empirical rather than the rational interaction with rhythm, he does accept that analyzing rhythm for performance requires deconstruction of its use in performance both from embodied and logical experiences: "this book offers up a collection of ways in which rhythm is approached and worked with. This includes some of the ideas, metaphors and associations attributed to rhythm, as well as the practical means by which performers have looked to develop rhythmic qualities in their work" (24).

"Part One—Establishing a Pulse" contains chapters 1–2. The first one begins with an etymology of *rhythm* from the ancient Greeks, and incorporates the term's use by many European and Russian artists. Chapter 2 delves into the history of foundational studies in rhythm, especially from the twentieth century onward. Morris calls for an awareness of the Western lens in analysis of rhythm; yet, it is difficult to deny that influence and background in the featured practitioners. Both chapters serve as an introduction and at times feel ambitious and sporadic, jumping from rhythm in movement, to writing, to emotional inspiration, but they relay the density of the topic and its myriad of performance aspects.

"Part Two—Stanislavski on Rhythm" consists of a single chapter focused on Constantin Stanislavski's work, especially his focus on physical action. Here, Morris attempts to untangle the various ways that Stanislavski, and those who continued his work, defined tempo and rhythm. This chapter marks the inclusion of exercises to demonstrate ideas in practice; they continue through the fifth part, supporting

Morris's belief in the embodied approach to understanding rhythm. While including exercises in the book is vital to his pedagogical focus, they will be most useful for those familiar with rhythm work. For example, even being trained myself in a Grotowski-based approach, I am still unsure that I could recreate the *plastique* exercise (159) from his description, but others are more clearly fleshed-out and articulated.

Parts 3–5 focus more concretely on current modes of working with rhythm in rehearsal and training rooms throughout Europe, Australia, and the United States. Morris pays particular attention to the ways in which these modes blend into one another, and how readers currently engaged in an explorative practice of rhythm, time, dynamism, and so on can approach practical work from complementary perspectives. "Part Three—Structure and Spontaneity" contains four chapters, each framing a conversation around a particular practitioner's work: Suzanne Bing, Vsevolod Meyerhold, John Britton, and Anne Bogart and Tina Landau, respectively. Overall, this part examines the connections between "notions of risk-taking and liveness" with structure in both ensemble and individual sense of rhythm (135). A short introduction before each chapter situates the relationship to the overarching theme of the part. Morris's detailed attention to structure and guidance through this multifarious conversation is admirable. I appreciate the inclusion of important female practitioners' voices, especially Bing's, whose work tends to lose focus to her artistic partner Jacques Copeau.

"Part Four—The Ecstatic Performer" frames the conversation through the lenses of the works of various practitioners, with an additional chapter that considers work done in scientific and anthropological studies of rhythm's effects on the psychological state. Chapters 9–11 discuss the work of Jerzy Grotowski, Nicolás Núñez, and Morris's own work, respectively. The latter two's past experiences with Grotowski's work resonates strongly with "the unification of perception and action" focus of this part (196). "Part Five—A Plurality of Voices" concentrates on voice and language in performance. Chapters 12–15 contained therein discuss the perspective of many voice experts, including Judith Adams, Karen Christopher, Bruce Myers, Kate Papi, Chris Coe, and Frankie Armstrong. Each successive pair receives a focused chapter, including conversations in script work, breath, and musicality, respectively. As a movement-focused artist I read this section with rapt attention and curiosity and look forward to deepening my understanding through further investigation of the included artists' works.

As I read on I began to understand the differences among parts 3–5 as concerning: physical body and space (3), consciousness and visceral relationships with rhythm (4), and vocal and textual focus (5). However, in some ways these categories all fuse and the work defies simple categorization; even Morris's elusive categories of structure and spontaneity and ecstatic performer find elements leaking from one practitioner to another. Overall, a strong physical/movement emphasis pervades this study, as it is Morris's background and focus. Artists working in a physical approach to acting and training are undeniably at the heart of this conversation. He