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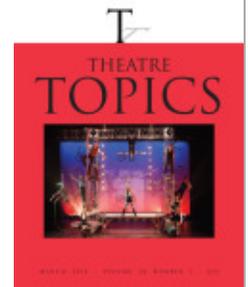
Rhythm in Acting and Performance: Embodied Approaches and Understandings by Eilon Morris (review)

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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

commendably chose artists who deeply attend to the whole actor and whose work integrates body, voice, mind, and emotions with equal concentration. This book is filled with discussions of awareness, listening, impulse, discovery, energy, and more; Morris asserts early in the book that rhythm is but one ingredient in the larger recipe of performance.

Rhythm in Acting and Performance is most appropriate for those at the graduate level and for working artists, instructors, and scholars who want to further their exploration of performance and the richness of its many facets. It will be a great addition to the conversations of acting instructors and artists in performance, but also for scholars looking to enrich the engagement of students in discussions of performance analysis.

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Playwriting: A Writers' and Artists' Companion. By Fraser Grace and Clare Bayley. *Writers' and Artists' Companions* series. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015; pp. 352.

Playwriting: A Writers' and Artists' Companion by Fraser Grace and Clare Bayley is a readable and mostly comprehensive introduction to writing for the stage for new playwrights (or students of playwriting as yet too unsure to claim the title). The book is divided into three parts: "Playwriting: The View from Above"; "Tips and Tales: Guest Contributions"; and "Write On: The View from the Ground." Between these three parts the authors offer advice for both effective writing and maintaining a career. For readers with some basic theatre training Grace and Bayley do not chart unknown territory, but they do present a detailed map of the current playwriting landscape. For true beginners this book would be an extremely helpful companion on their journey.

In part 1 the authors begin with personal reflections that introduce readers to them and provide some optimistic pep talk. This moves quickly into "Reflections on the History of Playwriting," which is divided into several sections: antiquity to roughly the end of the eighteenth century, and the nineteenth century onward. This is not the place to look for interesting historiographic work; Grace and Bayley outline the standard hegemonic story of Western theatre history. Grace justifies the choice early on by describing the project as a "pocked and pocket guide to the history of theatre in the English language" (15). Given that he spends considerable time with the Greeks and Romans, Grace's claim (and implicit justification) that the focus rests on the English-language is rendered a little suspect. Bayley further dilutes the claim, first by summarily dismissing English-language theatre of the nineteenth century by claiming that it was "not a distinguished time for theatre on either side of the Atlantic," and then introducing Chekhov, Artaud, and Brecht (43). As uninspiring as the historical reflections may be, they do address the role of the playwright in Western theatre. This section ends with some preliminary reflections on how to begin writing, which are divided into reflections

on source, scale, space, and genre. Here, the book makes its usefulness apparent, as it offers an update to some older playwriting texts. Information is offered on devising, as well as a useful overview of site-specific and immersive theatre.

In part 2, "Tips and Tales: Guest Contributions," established playwrights offer advice and encouragement. Each of these playwrights, including David Henry Hwang, Lynn Nottage, and Tom Stoppard, has a short biography of their work and a page or two of reflections. Some of these relate to the changing conditions in the field or offer practical advice on script writing, but most are motivational in nature. The fact that some of the contributors seem to contradict one another—for example, Dennis Kelly's playful jab at playwriting programs undermines several other contributors—is a benefit to the book. Neither of the authors are attempting to teach a "Grace method" or "Bayley method"; their more generous approach to the many genres and forms a new playwright can adopt is aided by the guest contributor's varied responses and diverse opinions. A fledgling playwright will have to navigate this section while determining what is truly useful to her/him, but the process itself will become an invaluable part of her/his emerging identity.

Finally, part 3, "Write On: The View from the Ground," presents more of the nitty-gritty of playwriting. Its longest chapter is on research and planning, for good reason. Grace and Bayley emphasize the importance of rigorous research regardless of form, but that is about as far as the authors go in prescribing methodology. Instead, they offer several tools and thoughts on researching scripts, dividing plays into acts and scenes, and redrafting. Interspersed throughout are shaded boxes for "Top Tips" and "Exercises." The latter do not occur frequently enough to operate as a workbook for a single play, but they offer useful training for key moments of drafting. The remainder of part 3 is devoted to "The Industry" and "Rehearsal and Production." Grace and Bayley remain cognizant of playwriting in relation to a broader industry throughout their book, but here they fully explore the field as a professional career. As in part 1, there are updates to older playwriting texts, in this case including Facebook groups to join and how to deal with the rise of the amateur online critic.

Grace and Bayley are both working playwrights based in the United Kingdom. Unsurprisingly given the authors' credentials, the book's prose is usually stylistically engaging and always lucid, surely a benefit to the intended audience. There are sections in which the method of coauthoring by dividing the book into chunks is less effective. Certain chapters, such as "Research and Planning," in which Grace and Bayley switch writing every two or three pages can be jarring, and some information gets repeated without comment, such as in Bayley's "Rehearsal Room Etiquette," which appears right after Grace's "Rights in Rehearsal." It should also be noted that *Playwriting* has a uniquely British focus throughout that manifests in various ways, from the British emphasis in the historical overview to the theatre-writing organizations the authors suggest that young playwrights join, and even in which playwrights get