

Critical Stages/Scènes critiques

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Aural/Oral Dramaturgies

Guest Editors: Duška Radosavljević and Flora Pirolo

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Recent decades have seen an increased interest of theatre-makers in speech and sound as a starting point for making theatre and performance. This trend could be traced back to verbatim theatre of the early 2000s, evolving out of the political theatre experiments of Anna Deavere Smith in the United States, Tricycle in London, Teatr.doc in Moscow and eventually capturing the imagination of dance companies such as DV8. Canadian Robert Lepage's thematic interest in voice was also explicitly explored in his nine-hour ensemble piece *Lipsynch* (2008). In 2015, Simon McBurney of Complicite made two productions in which the central medium of storytelling was (amplified) sound: *Beware of Pity* and *The Encounter*. Forms of theatre often qualified as immersive, such as the work of Lundahl & Seitl, Silvia Mercuriali and, selectively, Rimini Protokoll is often work that uses sound as an integral part of its dramaturgy.

In the UK a form of theatre known as 'gig theatre' has evolved over the years mostly on the festival circuit such as Latitude and Edinburgh Fringe, eventually entering mainstream theatre (Kate Tempest at the Royal Court) and the West End (Arinze Kene's *Misty* 2018). That the use of rock iconography on the theatre stage is not a UK-specific phenomenon can also be detected in the works of Aris Biniaris, Oliver Frljic, Lola Arias and Yury Butusov in their respective cultural contexts, while in the United States the work of Lin Manuel Miranda used hip hop to challenge and change the form of the Broadway musical. For this special issue, we perceive these parallel trends as a paradigm shift.

In addition to the various moves towards the sonic mentioned above, Covid-19 has brought about an increased focus on born-digital theatre and performance, much of which utilises the aural dimension. In amongst numerous, yet uncatalogued others, Stacy Makishi's *The Promise* at the Yard Online and Yannick Trapman-O'Brien's *Telelibrary* used telephone technology to create performances during the lockdown and Toronto-based Dopolavoro Teatrale's Daniele Bartolini set up an entire festival of telephone performances Theatre-on-Call in April 2020.

This investigation takes place at an interdisciplinary intersection between theatre and performance, dramaturgy, media studies, and theoretical and practical studies of sound and voice, and is also informed by insights from musicology, museology, anthropology and digital humanities.

As editors of this special issue, we believe that the increased focus on sound as an integral dramaturgical element in (digital and non-digital) theatre and performance-making methodologies also

requires a reconsideration of relevant research methodologies deployed in studying these works. As part of our own research shared on www.auralia.space we have pioneered a number of new methods, including academic dialogic improvisation, the format of ‘oral introductions’ to academic books and the Zoom-generated ‘making-of documentary’. Additionally as part of this special issue we would like to continue exploring the process of methodological and presentational innovation in academic publishing.

We therefore invite proposals of ‘academic artefacts’ combining or substituting the medium of the written word with the affordances of the digital domain – audio-visual recordings, coded submissions, and/or other formal experiments in response to the following topics:

- Dramaturgies of speech and sound
- Orature, cyberture and their decolonising potential
- Musicality of performance
- Digital performance ethnography
- The aesthetics and politics of amplification
- Storytelling in the live and in the digital sphere
- Gigs, theatre, gig theatre and spaces in between
- Beyond verbatim theatre
- Dramaturgical and compositional thinking
- Aural and oral creative processes
- Aural and oral research methodologies
- Listenership, spectatorship and digital tele-spectatorship

Length of submission: **4500** words max, **45** minutes of footage max, or equivalent (combined).

All submissions will be peer reviewed.

Please send **300-word** abstracts to auraliaspace@gmail.com, indicating the format that your submission will take and why this is the best way to tackle the chosen topic, and include 50-word biogs of all authors collaborating on the submission.

Please note the narrow timeframe:

Abstracts: **30 November 2020**

First drafts due: **28 February 2021**

Final submissions due: **30 October 2021**

Publication: **December 2021**

BIOS

Duška Radosavljević is a Reader in Contemporary Theatre and Performance at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. Her scholarly work focuses on dramaturgy, writing for performance, and theatre-making. Duška is the author of the award-winning *Theatre-Making: Interplay Between Text and Performance in the 21st Century* and editor of *The Contemporary Ensemble* (2013) and *Theatre Criticism: Changing Landscapes* (2016).

Flora Pirolo is a researcher, music journalist, DJ, broadcaster and writer. Her work looks at archives of experimental European performance and music scenes from the 1980s to the present. Her most recent large project is the artist book *Sixty Sorriso & Altre Storie* (2017). She is currently co-editing a volume of non-Anglophone disco scenes entitled *Disco Heterotopias*.