

tore «politicamente molto ingenuo», secondo la sua biografa Valery Prenston-Dunlop e un conservatore estremamente curioso. In realtà nel 1925 Laban non era più il capofila di un movimento di rivolta contro la società borghese del suo tempo e diffidente rispetto all'ottimismo tecnologico legato all'industrializzazione d'inizio secolo. Laban aveva già cominciato a lavorare nei teatri istituzionali, spesso dirigendo i corpi di ballo accademici. Soltanto qualche anno dopo, in opposizione a Mary Wigman ai congressi internazionali, si fece promotore di una campagna di apertura verso la danza classica e a favore di un fronte comune dei danzatori tedeschi classici e moderni. Levinson sarà ad Essen nel Giugno del 28 e assisterà a questa enorme Kermesse di migliaia di danzatori secondo Levinson «all'assalto dei teatri lirici»²⁹. Gli aspetti contestatari che avevano caratterizzato la danza di Laban dall'inizio del secolo alla fine della Repubblica di Weimar hanno subito una parziale normalizzazione e stanno per essere integrati al progetto politico del Terzo Reich. Da quel momento, e fino al 1936, Laban prenderà incarichi sempre più centrali, fino a divenire nel 1934 supremo responsabile della danza in Germania sottostando alle leggi razziali ed accettando, contrariamente a Joos, che decide dal 33 di fuggire in Inghilterra, di licenziare danzatori e collaboratori ebrei. Le sue battaglie per dare un ruolo centrale alla danza in seno alla società, sosterranno, certamente suo malgrado, la politica culturale del Terzo Reich.

André Levinson, figura quasi cecoviana, transfugo dalla Russia dopo la rivoluzione d'Ottobre, fedele alla tradizione aristocratica del Balletto imperiale è in parte responsabile dell'opzione scolastica e tradizionale adottata alla fine degli anni '20 dall'Opéra e forse in qualche modo anche del «ritardo» della danza contemporanea francese rispetto a quella tedesca o statunitense. Levinson è certamente prevenuto rispetto a Laban, ma il suo pregiudizio non è motivato solo dalla difesa di una tradizione. Dietro l'accanimento di Levinson c'è soprattutto la paura della pulsione utopica che nutrive la nuova danza. Oltre al fatto di averci fornito una collezione di visioni estremamente lungimiranti della danza del suo tempo, Levinson, a suo modo, si dimostra perfettamente cosciente della posta in gioco, sociale, politica, culturale, dell'elaborazione di un corpo danzante.

²⁹ Levinson, *La danse d'aujourd'hui*, cit., p. 489.

SUMMARIES

Teatro Tascabile di Bergamo, *Dossier, the Road to India*, edited by Mirella Schino and Stefania Menchini.

A theatre which is also an «Academy of scenic forms»; an Italian theatre group, founded in the early 70s, which links these practices that are characteristic of independent Western theatres, with a high level of professional work on the traditions of Indian classical theatre. For the first time, their story is recounted in the form of episodes, where the fascination for a «distant» theatrical knowledge is translated into action, travels, apprenticeship, relations and cultural exchange, in the light of the practical necessities imposed by theatrical art and craftsmanship. Through the stories told by the eight actors and their director Renzo Vescovi, Teatro Tascabile's India becomes a familiar «hemisphere», a crossing of paths which, in contrast to the resigned attitude towards the pervading discontent in the theatre, asserts a positive response.

Cristina Wistari Formaggia, *Gambuh: an archetype for the Balinese Scenic Arts*

Gambuh is at the roots of Balinese dance-theatre. It is also one of the oldest forms of living spectacle in the world, after Japanese Noh theatre. Cristina Wistari performs and researches Gambuh. In this article she defines the various aspects of the ancient tradition which were recently brought to light in a book in Indonesian that she has edited. The author sums up the sources, characters, stories, language, origins, and esoteric dimensions of this theatrical form. She describes the performance, the movements of the actor-dancers, the scenic space, and analyses the music and instruments.

Ornella Calvarese *Russia in the 1910s. Prince Volkonsky and the biorhythmic anthropology of the actor*

The article introduces the reader to the little-known figure of Prince Sergei Mikhailovic Volkonsky (1860-1937). It is thanks to him that in the

1910s the expressive system of the French pedagogue and musician François Delsarte and the eurhythmics created by Emile Jaques Dalcroze were diffused in Russia. Up to recent years, the work of the aristocratic pedagogue, who created his own personal synthesis of the two practices, influenced Russian theatrical pedagogy and Soviet teaching in music, theatre and film. It is to him that we owe a veritable «new anthropology of the actor» that is here defined as «biorhythm».

First Salzmänn Dossier edited by Carla Di Donato

Alexandre De Salzmänn is a paradoxical protagonist of the theatre at the beginning of the 20th century. He never appears as a protagonist and yet he is always seen to be involved in important events (such as the first years of the founding of the Jaques Dalcroze Institute at Hellerau), where he actually seems to play a hidden but leading role. The aim of the dossier is to throw light on this character through a documented chronology, and to publish the translation of his paper on Chinese theatre which was highly praised by René Daumal.

Yu Weijie, *Nuoxi: the ancient Chinese religious theatre that still survives*

Besides the «major» theatrical genres of traditional Chinese Opera, there still exists a theatrical genre of ancient shamanic and religious origin called *nuoxi*. *Nuoxi* is a general term which indicates a ritual theatre, the oldest form of Chinese theatre that has influenced traditional theatre (*xiqu*), especially that of the different regional varieties (*difangxi*). Today, not only is *nuoxi* still represented but it seems to have recently developed in many rural areas of China. Its performative characteristics make it seem very different to other traditional theatre genres.

Nancy Guy, *Mei Lanfang's American tour (1929-39)*

29th December 1929 a troupe of about 20 actors, musicians and artistic consultants of Peking Opera, headed by Mei Lanfang, the most famous actor in China, who enjoyed international repute, set out from Shanghai for a very successful tour in the US. The article examines the importance of the contribution of the Chinese organizers, in particular that of Qi Rushan, a Chinese theatre historian who was also Mei Lanfang's librettist. These people are to be seen as «cultural mediators» who on the one hand, had to present the artists of Peking Opera as the exponents of an ancient Chinese civilization, and on the other hand had to reconcile this intent with the requests and desires of a foreign public unused to this form of art.

Nicola Savarese, *Towards a Eurasian Theatre*

Opening speech delivered at the conference *Theatre East and West, Revisited*. In honour of Leonard Pronko (Pomona College, California – Department of Theatre and Dance, 4-6 April 2002). The author describes the different perspectives for the study of Asian theatre: Oriental, Asian, East-West and Eurasian theatres. These different definitions are not conflicting and do not represent «schools of thought» but are expressions emanating from different historical situations of study and research. The author goes beyond the West/Orient viewpoint, and proposes that of a «Eurasian theatre»: a domain of theatrical knowledge in which the great traditions of Asia: Noh, Kabuki, Peking Opera and dances of India and Bali are linked to the traditions of European and Western theatre, delineating a common territory for the profession of the actor and determining a new «science of the theatre».

E. Barba, *Grandparents and Orphans*

The author proposes an original article on the history of theatre in the twentieth century which assumes, perhaps ironically, the aspect of a 'family history'. At its core, are Stanislavsky and Meyerhold, and their proficiency in composing books that could cross cultural and geographical distances, avoiding orthodoxies, but also managing not to dispel the ambiguous heritage of an unrepeatable experience. The article presents a fragment of that 'subterranean history of the theatre' that the author has been working on for many years, a history that does not fall back on theoretical models, and which, for its protagonists, represents an intense mixture of emotions, wounds, encounters, involuntary transmissions, and conscious acquisitions of learning skills.

Gaia Trotta, *Italian «Danses macabres» and theatre of memory*

The increasing importance of the role played by the Confraternities, in a historical period which dates from the end of the fourteenth century to the whole of the sixteenth century, comprises the widespread practice of itinerant preaching, and the development of a heritage of signs and symbols which derives from a common European repertory. All this appears very clearly in the configuration of the message transmitted by the «Danse Macabre» which from a purely graphic representation is transformed into a performance with theatrical connotations.

Marina Longo, *Tommaso Francini, engineer, scenographer, Florentine «honorable homme» at the French court (1598-1651)*

The author traces the career of Tommaso Francini, and traces his work in France from the performances of automatons in the caves of the Castle of St. Germain en Layè to the stagings of the *Ballets de Cour* at the court of Louis XIII. The lucky French career of the Florentine engineer who was a pupil of Buontalenti confirms the theory of the European affirmation of the Italian model of the «spectacle à machines» (with elaborate scenic changes effected mainly through the solution of periaktoi or rotating wings), as the development of a philosophical culture and an ideology of power linked to the courts of the Ancien Regime.

Sarah Di Bella, *Heading pragmatically towards theory: Luigi Riccoboni's letters to Lodovico Antonio Muratori.*

The letters of the actor and dramaturg Luigi Riccoboni, addressed to Muratori between 1725 and 1747 document the particular dialectic between the actor's pragmatic approach to the world of research and literary production, and the priest's reforming idealism. A story emerges, of exchange of ideas between the two men, punctuated by silences. These interchanges and silences will play a determining role in the process of intellectual emancipation of Riccoboni as theoretician.

Annibale Ruccello, *An Unpublished letter.* With a note by Teresa Megale.

Annibale Ruccello (1956-1986) was one of the protagonists of the «New Neapolitan dramaturgy», in Italy in the 80s. The unpublished letter from Ruccello to Gastone Venturilli shows an intense relationship between two persons working on the history of popular traditions, who were united by their passion for the theatre. The document also reveals Ruccello's early position with regard to direction, production and theatrical organization. Besides the letter, we are publishing the programme of the *Cantata dei Pastori* (The Shepherds' Cantata), a performance that was inspired by the pastoral of the same name, written by the seventeenth century Neapolitan author, Andrea Perrucci. The song and its numerous variations were examined by the actor-director in the book *Il Sole e la Maschera* (The Sun and the Mask) and compared to the prevalence of oriental cults in the maritime towns of the Western Mediterranean.

Claudio Meldolesi, *On the Artist Dramaturg*

The praxis of dramaturg seems to be unrelated to that of actors because it is not indispensable to the outcome of the performance. It generally con-

tributes to the latter in ways that are usually invisible. And yet, when it was practised artistically, its «foreignness» with regard to the world of the stage assumed a dialectical value for the directors themselves. The historical and problematic surveys of this short article aim to define the basic conditions in which to reconsider these delicate collaborative procedures, which already from Brecht's time were available to non-German theatres.

Adelina Suber, *The art of dramaturg and translator in Germany: the exemplary case of Ludwig Tieck*

Ludwig Tieck's employment as dramaturg at the Dresden Theatre, after he had already translated *Don Quixote* and was in the process of completing the important translation of Shakespeare's works, as well as the frequent references to the regenerative power of translation by Goethe and the philosophers of the Jena circle, indicate a possible link between the «poetic» work of the dramaturg and the practice and philosophy of translation, and the unaccidental appearance in Germany of this new type of theatre professional.

Sandro Carocci, *Secret Theatre*

In this note the author, a specialist in Medieval history, refers to a theatrical and festive episode which he was asked to participate in as a member of a commission which was to judge the stagings for the May Day celebrations in Assisi, a public celebration in a medieval setting. This secret theatre represents a unique event, which is intensely experienced by the actors but almost unknown to the public, in which a whole city participates but is watched only by three spectators. Some of the most extreme choices of the present theatre appear within today's town celebrations. They are not planned, but are due to the inner reasons of the festive organization of a «popular» and «traditional» type of celebration. An opportunity to reflect, from an unusual point of view, on the most secret values of the theatre and on the usefulness of «waste» for the cultural and economic life of a community.

Valentina Venturini, *Alessandro d'Amico talks about the Actors' Museum in Genua and the Salvini family*

Alessandro d'Amico talks about the Actors' Museum which was founded by Luigi Squarzina, Ivo Chiesa and himself in Genua in 1966, and the Salvini race of actors. Then he focuses on Tommaso Salvini craftsmanship as an actor and talks about the historical phenomenon of the «grand'attore», the detailed and painstaking work which underlay the building of a character that was always «to be studied in his physical, psychological,

ethnical, historical 'reality'». D'Amico highlights the actor's incessant and hard work on the dramatic texts and attaches much importance to the discovery and introduction of Shakespeare to the Italian stage in the second half of the 19th century.

Natascia Di Baldi, *A handbook on the art of the prompter*

The art of the prompter is a theatre profession, a stage service which audiences directly experienced only at the end of the 19th century, that is when it was about to be eliminated in opposition to a declining theatre based on tradition. The prompter is an emblematic figure through which we can approach the study of the entertainment industry and the complex and subtle skills it required on the companies part. In her article, the author gives notice of one of the rarest complete treatises on the art of the prompter.

Claudia Palazzolo, *Rudolph Laban in Paris. A review by André Levinson*

In September 1925 Laban danced for the first time in Paris, at the Exposition of Decorative Arts, in a half empty theatre. Among the few people who witnessed this event there was André Levinson, a dance critic. His complex review of the event is here used in order to reconstruct Laban's performance, its context, the controversy it stirred up and the relations between French and German dance culture.