

EDITORIAL

By John O'Toole and Penny Bundy (Australia)

Youth and Age: Applied Theatre Grows Up

2000–2010 – the lifespan of this journal, and of this century too. For applied theatre, the busy, often productive, sometimes confusing and occasionally brilliant decade of the 'noughties' is over. Quite a few books about applied theatre have been published, as well as several journals, and there are university and college courses everywhere. By now we have pondered the lessons of the twentieth century, when what we call applied theatre emerged, along with multiple differently named manifestations of drama in social and educational contexts ... or we should have pondered them, because we are well and truly embarked on the twenty-first century.

The Applied Theatre Researcher can add a tiny historical detail to the pondering process. Helen Nicholson, among the keenest and most conscientious chroniclers of the field, recently noted the general vagueness that accompanies all accounts of the derivation of the term, suggesting that it was not a term coined by a particular individual to describe a very precise set of practices, but that the term emerged haphazardly and spread like a rhizome to fill a gap in the lexicon (2011: 241). That's an elegant simile, and her speculation is quite right, as our little part in the process will confirm. The term 'applied theatre' did emerge in the early 1990s, in several places simultaneously, in that osmosis of shared ideas we are very good at as a community: 'process drama' and 'teaching artist' are two similar widely used contemporary coinages that sprang up in several places during the same period just when the concept was needed – a bit like those children's rhymes and jokes that pop up and are collected at the far ends of the earth within 24 hours.

We played our part in this diffused genesis: a group of Griffith University drama lecturers were sitting in a Gold Coast waterfront cafe some time in 1991, speculating – as we all do – on the changing, broadening scene in drama and theatre. We were trying to find a new term (as we endlessly do, too) to bring together the common and converging elements of drama education, fringe and experimental theatre, theatre for development and contemporary rehearsal processes. There was an element of tension in this discussion, as we were considering the changes necessary for our tertiary education offerings; and one of our number, Mike Foster, had an abiding and deep distrust of all things educational, especially those labelled as such. He it was who suddenly came up with the suggestion 'How about "applied theatre"?' There was a rare moment of agreement among us as we embraced the term, not too critically.

Over the next three or four years, we started to put together plans for a degree course, and we also founded the Griffith Centre for Applied Theatre Research, with Philip Taylor as its first Director – it was, of course, Philip who started this journal. Meanwhile, we stumbled across the visionary work of Manchester's already identically named centre, whose work shared many of our own emerging definitions and principles (though it was much more single-mindedly focused on doing social good than we were, and much more proactive in its projects). We also began to hear the phrase, equally independently, from other colleagues in Canada and Africa. The rhizome effect was certainly taking root.

However, the application of theatre to social situations, issues and problems, and outside theatre buildings, pre-dates the last decade of the last century by far. At one end of the globe, sixteenth and seventeenth century British schoolmasters and their students enthusiastically and very publicly applied drama to their studies, using both English and Latin to produce what was possibly the first secular – and mockingly satirical – play in English (*Ralph Roister Doister*), and even formed some highly successful professional youth theatres, sufficiently successful for a noted playwright to intimate in his play *Hamlet*

some indignation and concern at their public popularity:

*There is, sir an eyrie of children, little eyasses, that cry out on the top of question, and are most tyrannically clapped for it ... these are now the fashion and ... berattle the common stages.*¹

(Not to mention their threat to the livelihood of grown-up playwrights!)

Much earlier still – five hundred years at least – at the other end of the globe, we discovered recently with delight, the doctoral examinations for wannabe mandarins in Vietnam included in-role writing and probably also formal oral and poetic presentation in role (candidates had to discuss matters of state and formulate policy, assuming the personage of the Emperor himself). (Howland, 2009: 102–7)

What, I wonder, would have been the content of this journal then ... and then? Back in the archives of our 1100 Centenary edition, we might look for that epoch-defining manifesto from 1071 on 'Drama at Van Mieu-Quoc Tu Giam: Producing the Sons of the Nation Through Role- Play' and the brilliant series of case studies of reflective practice in our editions of the next three decades – all in verse – by the candidates and their teachers. In our 1601 edition, perhaps we'd find a brace of papers – one written by the Head of Drama at Westminster School: 'the legacy of *Ralph Roister Doister*', enumerating the multiple instrumental efficacies of drama in schools especially for encouraging literacy; the other by Shakespeare (or more likely Robert Greene), decrying the dilution and betrayal of the art form of theatre in the cause of education. And what a long-running debate that one turned out to be, almost monopolising our pages for years until we had to turn to the rather more immediate threat to our very existence from those confounded Puritans who denounced all drama in their own academic Black Paper as 'a gin of the devil'.²

A quick glance through this journal's eleven years to see how it reflects the changes that have happened within the very much briefer period of our real existence shows an important and very welcome development. The next generation has arrived. In our first edition, the articles were weighted heavily towards papers by established, mature and mostly quite senior writers and practitioners – establishing the *gravitas* of a new journal in a new discipline is paramount, as editor Philip Taylor well knew. Younger researchers made a growing impact from volume 3 onwards. This year, our youngest ever contributor, still in her teens, has fully earned her place, and almost all our papers are by what in Australia are often called 'early career researchers' – though they mostly also have had considerable and very active careers in the practice of drama. Coming from very different continents, countries and cultures, these contributors demonstrate some admirable characteristics in common:

- They are confident in their field and can articulate both a clear definition of the field and the often interwoven and overlapping definitions within it.
- They have done their homework maturely, consulting and absorbing the literature, and respecting and utilising both the work that has gone before and the traditions within which they are working.
- As an essential complement to this, they are not over-awed by either the traditions or the weight of the literature, as some of us too often have been, and they have spotted the gaps, failures and inconsistencies and contradictions in what is 'known'. These are the things they are energetically and imaginatively targeting – welcoming the problematics, seeking to fill the gaps, address the failures and inconsistencies, and resolving the contradictions by looking laterally as well as logically.
- Finally, they are both critical and self-critical – not with assumed humility, but with a robust and sophisticated honesty.

The first article is one of two in this issue by the same writer, dealing with very different aspects and paradigms within the same project. Andrea Baldwin is part of a major multidisciplinary initiative using theatre and local art forms, health education, psychology and sociology, and local indigenous cultural understanding to facilitate and improve HIV-AIDS awareness in Papua New Guinea. This is a field that has been well known to applied theatre workers for nearly two decades, and Dr Baldwin takes us meticulously and respectfully through the minefield of problematic cultural, educational and aesthetic factors that the team is navigating.

In our second article, Erika Piazzoli turns a critical blowtorch on her own use of process drama in additional language teaching immersion courses, and provides multiple insights for the many other drama teachers enthusiastically and belatedly taking up this obvious area of applied theatre potential.

Eighteen-year-old Hallie Greenberg was the founder several years ago of after-school theatre programs for adolescents like herself in New York, called 'Performing Arts from the Heart'. Demonstrating that arts from the heart do not need to exclude the head, in the third article she uses a surefooted mix of quantitative and qualitative methodology to study her group's programs and test out some of the now classic claims made in *Champions of Change* (1999) and *Critical Links* (2002) that theatre gives agency to young people of low-income backgrounds.

The idea of theatre as an agency for change in young people gets another thorough and critical workout from Chan Yuk-lan Phoebe in our fourth article, chronicling the vicissitudes as well as the successes of a theatre-in-education project she ran in Hong Kong – thoroughly grounded in the literature, it is one of the most honest and realistic, and least self-serving, accounts of such projects among the many we have read over the years.

Returning to Life Drama, the Papua New Guinea HIV awareness project, Andrea Baldwin changes tack completely to wrestle with the aesthetic and intellectual tensions – to say nothing of the cultural ones – involved in trying simultaneously to convey two emotionally contradictory messages through theatre. It is an unusual challenge, as she asserts (though perhaps it is not as unusual in TIE as she thinks), and she and her team have faced it by recognising the tensions and trying to address them.

The final article stands in contrast to all those that precede it: an actor with years of practical community theatre experience over many years, and what is by now an applied theatre traditionalist's love and appreciation of Brecht and Boal, documents with a neophyte's enthusiasm his own discovery of these two giants, and his subsequent experiments in applying theatre in tertiary teaching and health education contexts.

This editorial began by reflecting on the age of the journal and the ways in which we have grown up over the years of its existence (and beyond). Readers will notice another change. We are no longer offering translation of the editorial, abstracts and biographies into French and Spanish as we have done in the past. Instead, we have offered authors the opportunity to provide their biographies and abstracts in their mother tongue if they choose to do so. The decision to offer authors the opportunity to publish their biographies and abstracts in their mother tongue was decided at a meeting of available International Editorial Board members who attended the International Drama in Education Research Institute (IDIERI '09) in Sydney in 2009. At that time, we had hoped that this would be in addition to the French and Spanish translations (the two other official IDEA languages). Unfortunately, as IDEA is no longer able to manage its contribution to the translation costs, we are unable to provide the French and Spanish translations. Chan Yuk-Lan has provided Chinese copy. Erika Piazzoli has provided Italian copy. No other author chose to offer copy in an alternative language for this issue.

Notes

- 1 Shakespeare, William (c1601). *Hamlet* – Act 2 Scene 2. Various published.
- 2 Attributed to Edmund Grindal, Archbishop of York, c.1580.

References

- Deasy, R. (Ed.) (2002). *Critical links: learning in the arts and student academic and social development*. Washington, DC: Arts Education Partnership and the President's Committee on Arts and the Humanities.
- Fiske, E. (Ed.) (1999). *Champions of change: How the arts benefit student achievement*. Washington, DC: Arts Education Partnership and the President's Committee on Arts and the Humanities.
- Howland, C. (2009). *Hanoi of a thousand years*. Hanoi: Thê' Giói Publishers.
- Nicholson, H. (2011). Applied drama/theatre/performance. In S. Schonmann (Ed.), *Key concepts in theatre/drama education*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

ABSTRACTS

Article 1

LIFE DRAMA PAPUA NEW GUINEA: CONTEXTUALISING PRACTICE

By Andrea Baldwin (Australia)

Abstract

This article presents the Life Drama project as a case study in how theoretical and contextual factors may inform the development of an applied theatre initiative. Life Drama is a workshop-based, participatory form of applied theatre and performance being developed in Papua New Guinea. At this time, the aim of Life Drama is to address the gap between 'awareness' and behaviour change in relation to sexual health, particularly HIV. The paper situates Life Drama within three fields of theory and practice – applied theatre, theatre for development and HIV education – and critically reflects on the ways in which this program is attempting to meet key challenges identified in the literatures of these fields.

Author's Biography

Andrea Baldwin is a clinical and organisational psychologist, an applied theatre practitioner and a researcher. She holds a PhD in Psychology, a Master of Arts in Drama and a Graduate Certificate in Health Management. Her major professional and research interests lie in the fields of community cultural development and promotion of health and well-being, particularly across cultures and among young people. Dr Baldwin has a strong interest in issues of meaningful and appropriate evaluation of arts-based projects. She is currently a Senior Research Fellow in the Creative Industries Faculty, Queensland University of Technology, and Project Manager for the Life Drama project.

Article 2

PROCESS DRAMA AND ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE TEACHING: REFLECTIONS ON THE DANTE ALIGHIERI IMMERSION WEEKENDS

By Erika C. Piazzoli (Australia)

Abstract

This article considers process drama as a medium for teaching additional languages (AL). The Immersion Weekend is an intensive workshop of Italian organised by the Dante Alighieri Society. Traditionally, it featured a themed workshop where students created and performed theatre sketches. In 2008 and in 2009, I was asked to redesign the format of this event, using process drama to train the ten teaching staff and facilitate the workshop with 50 students. In this article, I reflect on the experience of training, designing and facilitating the dramas. I analyse the strengths and weaknesses of each workshop and reflect on three key features of AL process drama: the importance of an educational focus with intercultural potential, the value of a visual pre-text and process vs product-oriented language. In describing these issues, I reflect on the needs of AL teachers new to process

drama, in terms of teacher training and support. My reflections point to the importance of the artistry of drama teaching in order to embrace the medium.

Abstract

Questo articolo prende in considerazione il *process drama* per l'insegnamento delle lingue straniere (LS). Il Weekend d'Immersione è un laboratorio intensivo di Italiano (LS) organizzato dalla Società Dante Alighieri di Brisbane. In passato questo evento prevedeva un laboratorio a tema, dove gli studenti creavano e recitavano delle scene teatrali. Nel 2008 e nel 2009 mi è stato chiesto di ri-creare questo evento, usando la pedagogia teatrale *process drama* per formare 10 insegnanti e facilitare il laboratorio con 50 studenti. In questo articolo rifletto sull'esperienza di formazione, programmazione e gestione dei laboratori. Analizzo le caratteristiche dei due laboratori, riflettendo su tre punti fondamentali del *process drama* applicato alla glottodidattica: l'importanza di un obiettivo didattico interculturale, i vantaggi di un canovaccio (pre-testo) visivo e la differenza fra lingua-processo e lingua-prodotto. Nell'affrontare queste problematiche, considero i bisogni di formazione di docenti interessati al *process drama* nell'ambito della glottodidattica. Le mie riflessioni sottolineano l'importanza dell'arte di insegnare teatro per poter acquisire questa pedagogia.

Author's Biography

Erika C. Piazzoli is a PhD candidate at Griffith University. Her research focuses on the aesthetic dimension of process drama for additional languages. Erika is originally from Italy and works at Griffith University teaching drama (School of Education and Professional Studies) and Italian (School of Languages and Linguistics).

Biografia

Erika C. Piazzoli

è iscritta ad un dottorato di ricerca alla *Griffith University*; l'argomento della sua tesi è il Teatro Didattico ed in particolare la dimensione estetica nella pedagogia teatrale *process drama* per l'insegnamento delle lingue straniere. Erika è di nazionalità italiana e lavora presso la *Griffith University* dove insegna arte drammatica (Facoltà di Teatro Didattico) e Italiano LS (Facoltà di Lingue).

Article 3

SOCIAL AND ACADEMIC BENEFITS OF AFTER-SCHOOL THEATRE PROGRAMMING FOR LOW-INCOME ADOLESCENTS

By Hallie Greenberg (United States)

Abstract

This study investigated the hypothesis that involvement in after-school theatre programming can be associated with low-income adolescents' social and academic growth. During the 2008–09 school year, 26 students at a middle school participated in an after-school theatre program, attending nineteen weekly rehearsals in preparation for four public performances at the end of the year. A second group of students with a similar baseline of self-reported social and academic confidence served as a control. At the beginning and the end of the school year, students completed a survey, reacting to 26 positively worded statements on a 1.0–5.0 Likert scale. Students completing the theatre program ($n=17$) had a mean score increase of .447 after treatment, compared with an increase of .109 among the control group ($n=26$). Results from this small sample appeared to be statistically significant ($p < .01$). Data from qualitative interviews confirmed results from the quantitative study and helped to illustrate specific benefits such as the development of teamwork and public speaking skills.

Author's Biography

Hallie Greenberg is an 18-year-old trying to make a difference in the world. In 2005, she founded Performing Arts from the Heart, an organisation whose mission is to provide after-school theatre programs to low-income adolescents. For the past five years, she has led the group's operations, fundraising and strategic planning. During the 2008–09 school year, she designed and conducted a study on the academic and social effects of participation in the after-school theatre program. Hallie is currently studying Sociology and Education at Bard College in New York State.

Article 4

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION, AESTHETIC DISTANCE AND CHANGE: REFLECTIONS ON *FIFTY SQUARE FEET*, A THEATRE-IN-EDUCATION PROGRAMME ON URBAN POVERTY

by Chan Yuk-lan Phoebe (Hong Kong)

Abstract

Drawing on her reflections of a Theatre-in-Education (TIE) programme devised and performed for teenagers in Hong Kong on global citizenship education, the author discusses how her TIE team attempted to use audience participation and aesthetic distance to bring about change in young audiences raised in a mainstream culture that sees development as narrowly defined in terms of economic growth. The article documents the process of devising, implementing and evaluating the TIE work, and critically reflects on the artistic choices made at different stages of the work by constantly referring back to its educational goals. Throughout the process, the author and her team considered and experimented with various kinds of audience participation forms to achieve the optimum balance between engagement and distancing to facilitate learners' understanding of poverty issues, arouse social awareness and empower young people to become informed citizens with agency for change.

Abstract

作者透過一個為青少年而編作，有關世界公民教育的教育劇場（TIE，有譯作「教習劇場」），反思和討論她與創作團隊如何藉由調控觀眾參與的模式、觀眾與作品的距離，以達致為青少年帶來轉變的效果。本文闡述、分析作者與其團隊在編作與實行該作品期間，在不同階段所作的藝術決定，透過不斷檢視這些決定與作品之教育目標之配合，考慮如何在投入與疏離之間取得平衡，從而為於「經濟發展就是社會發展唯一標準」的社會氛圍下成長的青少年，帶來對貧窮議題的認識，社會意識的提昇，並使能成為更具識見與能力感的公民。

Author's Biography

Chan Yuk-lan Phoebe is Lecturer/Programme Coordinator at the Hong Kong Art School, where she convenes a Master of Drama Education Programme co-organised with Griffith University, Australia. She has an MA (Drama in Education) from the University of Central England, and is currently undertaking PhD study with Griffith University. She has worked extensively with theatre companies, schools, community groups and NGOs in stage performance, applied theatre and Theatre-in-Education, teacher education in the use of drama as pedagogy, and research, as well as editing, translating and authoring publications. She is the co-editor of *Planting Trees of Drama with Global Vision in Local Knowledge: IDEA 2007 Dialogues*.

Biography

陳玉蘭是香港藝術學院的講師/課程統籌，負責策劃與執教該院與澳洲格理菲斯大學合辦的「戲劇教育碩士課程」。她於伯明翰英格蘭中部大學修畢「戲劇教育碩士」，現於格理菲斯大學攻讀博士學位。陳氏的工作範疇廣泛，與不同表演、社區或教育團體合作，參與舞台創作、應用劇場、教育劇場、教師發展、研究、翻譯、出版等不同項目。她是《IDEA 2007 戲劇性對話：認識自己，放眼世界》的聯合編輯。

陳玉蘭

香港藝術學院

Article 5

DANCING DISEASES: AN APPLIED THEATRE RESPONSE TO THE CHALLENGE OF CONVEYING EMOTIONALLY CONTRADICTIONARY MESSAGES IN HIV EDUCATION

by Andrea Baldwin (Australia)

Abstract

Health educators face an unusual challenge in relation to HIV: the need to convey two emotionally contradictory messages. On the one hand, there is currently no cure for HIV, which eventually leads to death (emotionally negative message). On the other hand, people with HIV can live long, healthy and productive lives (emotionally positive message). In developing countries where HIV prevalence is high, it is imperative that both messages are conveyed effectively. This article reports on a specific form, *Dancing Diseases*, implemented as one component of the Life Drama pilot study on Karkar Island, Papua New Guinea. Life Drama is an applied theatre and performance approach to HIV education. The article discusses *Dancing Diseases* as an example of applied theatre and performance practice, reflects on the participant group's engagement with the form, and offers some ways in which the form could be refined and used in other health education contexts.

Author's Biography

Andrea Baldwin is a clinical and organisational psychologist, an applied theatre practitioner and a researcher. She holds a PhD in Psychology, a Master of Arts in Drama and a Graduate Certificate in Health Management. Her major professional and research interests lie in the fields of community cultural development and promotion of health and well-being, particularly across cultures and among young people. Dr Baldwin has a strong interest in issues of meaningful and appropriate evaluation of arts-based projects. She is currently a Senior Research Fellow in the Creative Industries Faculty, Queensland University of Technology and Project Manager for the Life Drama project.

Article 6

TEACHING AND LIVE PERFORMANCE: APPLIED THEATRE IN UNIVERSITIES AND SCHOOLS

By John Jacobs (Australia)

Abstract

This article compares the classroom process of school teachers and university lecturers to the activity of theatrical performance. In doing so, it probes the potential of live performance as an educational instrument. It concludes by tracing some of the history of applications of theatre to education, from the time of Brecht to the present day.

Author's Biography

John Jacobs is an actor, director and lecturer in performing arts at Deakin University. As a film actor, he recently played Father Neville in Annika Glac's feature *Belladonna*, currently screening around Australia and in the United States. His main research interests are Shakespeare and Brecht, and he has had several articles published in the journal *Double Dialogues*. He is currently working (with RMIT University senior lecturer in education Richard Johnson) on employing Augusto Boal's Forum Theatre to create a 'simulated' classroom: a make-believe, unthreatening space in which education students can anticipate and explore the problems they face on teaching rounds and in schools.