

Theatrical Invention and Reinvention

Ian Brown

The fourth issue of the *International Journal of Scottish Theatre* takes as its theme, *Theatrical Invention and Reinvention*. Each of the articles included in this issue in one way or another considers the invention and reinvention of aspects or perceptions of Scottish theatre. This issue has a further theme, however, the celebration of Dr Roger Savage, newly retired from the Department of English Literature of Edinburgh University. It is a mark of the esteem in which Roger Savage is held that this issue is only the first of two dedicated in his honour. There has been such a response from his colleagues and former students wishing to offer articles to honour his name for the usual *IJOST* double-blind review process that a second issue is required.

Roger Savage has taught at Edinburgh University since 1966, retiring last summer. His enthusiasm as a teacher, his learned scholarship and his concern for accuracy of thought and expression have marked him out as a mentor for many of the scholars and practitioners of the present generation. All contributing to this issue have worked with him in one way or another as colleagues, and some have been his students. All have owed him much. The range of material and approaches adopted in these articles may be seen as token of the range and scope of Roger Savage's interests in theatre, as scholar, director, playwright or Board member (for example of the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company from 1977 until 1985). Missing from the range of Dr Savage's learned interests at present is any article on opera. It may be anticipated that this lacuna will be filled in the next issue, when a number of other contributions in honour of Dr Savage, covering just as wide a range of scholarly and theatrical interests as this issue, will be published.

In this issue, Randall Stevenson challenges a number of assumptions often made about supposed watersheds in theatre in both Scotland and England in the last sixty years. Out of this challenge, he raises stimulating and even uncomfortable questions about the quality of our knowledge of the influences at work between English and Scottish theatre and about what is meant by the term 'British' theatre. Sarah Carpenter draws together in an illuminating and lively article scholarly study of the past with dynamic discussion of the modern phenomenon of guising (in America now often known as *Trick or Treat*). She relates it to its mediaeval roots in Scotland and considers its modes of survival into modern times. Ronnie Jack addresses the reinvention of Barrie's *Peter Pan* as a silent film, reminding us of the immediate impact of that remarkable play and offering a new insight into its author's ambitions for its early filmic presentation. Ian Brown analyses the highly influential New Writing policies of Clive Perry and Stephen MacDonald at the Royal Lyceum Theatre in the seventies, in so doing providing some detailed analyses of the nature of their policies, interrogating some established assertions and exploring definitions of New Writing. Owen Dudley Edwards in this issue's forum article offers an idiosyncratic overview of Scottish Theatre as presented in the Edinburgh Festivals of 2001, offering stimulating pen-pictures and examining the ways in which the presentation of Scottish Theatre in a sense invents and reinvents it afresh.

In the preparation of this issue, some changes took place with regard to the editing of *IJOST*. These arose from the natural development of a new journal and offer a consolidation for the way ahead. Barbara Bell who had a particular role in the foundation of the journal has stood down as Assistant Editor. We are grateful to her for all she did in helping formulate the original conception and assisting in its launch. Bill Findlay has become Deputy Editor, recognition of the very important role he has in ensuring the rigour of the editing, his dynamic participation in the development of editorial policy and his active advice on the presentation of articles selected through the review process. Ksenija Horvat, who has been central to the management of the review and publishing process,

moves from the post of Editorial Assistant, a title that understated her key role, to that of Assistant Editor, a title that more truly reflects her genuine importance to the current operation of *IJOST*

Finally, I remind readers and potential contributors that we anticipate that, after Volume 3 Number 1 in June 2002, dedicated again to Roger Savage, the December issue of 2002 will be dedicated to the work of John McGrath. It will, as announced in my last editorial, be linked to the major conference into John McGrath's life and work, *Plugged into History*, being held at the Royal Holloway, University of London, on 19 and 20 April 2002. *IJOST* is pleased to be able to offer its pages to help assist the wider dissemination of selected papers from that conference at the earliest opportunity

It would be inappropriate, therefore, not to note with sadness the passing of John McGrath. His contribution not only to Scottish theatre, but theatre worldwide was often controversial, always demanding and wonderfully stimulating. It is a source of great pride to *IJOST*, as it was a source of personal pleasure to him, that our June 2001 issue, the last before he died, contained a contribution he co-authored with Ksenija Horvat, updating his production and bibliographic record. At the time we published this article we knew him to be in worsening health. It is a comfort, minute, but real, that he saw this record of the range, scope and importance of his contribution to world theatre before the curtain finally fell.

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