

# Editorial

CHRISTOPHER BALME

---

It is my pleasure to present the first number of *Theatre Research International* in 2005. This issue is the second of several under my editorship that will have a focus section. The first on 'postdramatic theatre' (29.1) has occasioned a great deal of interest (at least judging by the number of downloads from the journal's website) and this positive response suggests that the policy of publishing focus issues meets a genuine need. Focus issues will seek to explore a particular topic from a number of different perspectives. In keeping with the journal's international readership this invariably translates into articles from scholars working in different countries and scholarly traditions. A focus issue does not usually mean, however, that an entire issue will be given over to the topic. As the present number on the 'director in the theatre' indicates, three to four articles are usually sufficient to define (but certainly not exhaust) a topic. This means that some space in the journal will be reserved for articles submitted and reviewed in the normal fashion.

The present focus collects three keynote papers presented at the recent IFTR/FIRT annual conference held on 22–7 May 2004 in St Petersburg under the general topic 'The Director and the Theatre World'. These three papers are linked by their historical focus. It was one of the stated aims of the conference organizers to reconsider the role of the director at the turn of the twenty-first century, approximately one hundred years after his/her emergence a century earlier. In his article, Dennis Kennedy returns to the work of André Antoine, one of seminal figures in the traditional modernist 'emergence' narrative, and discusses his theatre in the context of what he terms the 'industrial model' of theatre production, thereby questioning the accepted division between modernist art theatre on the one hand and commercial theatre on the other. In her article Charlotte Canning also offers a revisionist reading of the emergence narrative by examining the largely forgotten collaboration of Edith Isaacs and Rosamond Gilder on *Theatre Arts*, the leading periodical in the United States advocating theatre reform in the modernist mould during the first half of the twentieth century. Personal history informs Herbert Blau's contribution in which a major post-war theatre director reviews his discovery and interrogation of Stanislavsky's legacy on directing and acting. He interweaves his own 'emotional memory' of the directing process with a discussion of the need to move ultimately from emotion to thought in the process of theatre making. The historical perspective on directing is further explored in Peter Marx's contribution to the performance analysis section. In contrast to most articles in this rubric, which have a contemporary focus, Marx looks at

an historical example, a 1926 *Hamlet* production by Leopold Jessner, one of the leading figures of theatre in the Weimar republic. Marx provides a kind of thick description of the various political and historical discourses informing this controversial production.

I would particularly like to thank the three keynote speakers and contributors for their willingness to revise their papers so quickly for publication.