

Theatre Criticism for Young Audiences: New Directions

 critical-stages.org/20/theatre-criticism-for-young-audiences-new-directions/

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Call for Papers & Essays

Guest Editors: **Anette Therese Pettersen, Diana Damian-Martin** and **Rui Pina Coelho**

Theatre and performance can act as places of inclusion and exclusion for children and young people, whilst they are also vehicles for play, inquiry and agency. This special issue of *Critical Stages/Scènes critiques* (#22, 2020) explores criticism about theatre and performance for children and young audiences, as well as criticism by children and young audiences.

Children's theatre and performance is an area of practice that continues to grow, manifest through increasing institutional presence of artistic works, educational projects, outreach, community and socially-engaged projects and interventions. Despite national discrepancies in how this area of work is resourced and developed, the presence of theatre and performance in schools, organisations, independent projects and interdisciplinary, creative practices has created multiple relations to changing concepts of agency, age and participation in a range of spaces- from the institutional (schools, theatres, community spaces, assemblies) to the social (public spaces). Similarly, there has been increasing visibility and focus on activist movements shaped by youth leadership (Greta Thunberg, Autumn Peltier, Mary Copeny), in which performance operates as a critical paradigm and mode of intervention.

There are performances for children, and those by children; performances that are welcoming to younger audiences, and educational and civic projects that give children varying degrees of agency. However, the dominant paradigm in theatre and performance continues to be driven by age categories and by ideas about appropriateness or intent, despite or because of its proximity to questions of representation or those of social justice and equality. Institutions have specific ways of engaging with children and young people, whilst criticism about work is often authored by adults.

Do children and young people's theatre and performance invite, require or facilitate a different type of criticism? What is specific to the experience of adults writing about young people and children's theatre?

Adding to this *praxis*, we could consider a number of pressing questions that widen the discussion, and bring into focus the complex ethics of writing and of intergenerational dialogue:

- What quality does the experience of an adult critic have if the performance was not intended for them?

- What does transgenerational and inclusive criticism look like?
- What practices of criticism—in an expansive sense—already engage with these questions and where?
- What equitable relations might criticism invite between adults and children?
- What formats of criticism are suited for performances for children and youth, and who are its readers and authors?
- How do young people and children challenge, expand and reshape criticism?

This Special Topic of *Critical Stages/Scènes critiques* (#22, 2020) will examine the specificity of theatre and performance criticism for and by children and young audiences.

Contributions might consider, but are not limited to, the following themes:

- Formats for criticism by children and young people
- Singularity of theatre criticism for young audiences
- Theatre for young audiences: artistic experience, educational paradigms
- Transgenerational criticism
- Anti-colonialism, anti-racism and social justice in theatre criticism by and for young audiences
- Criticism and the educational turn
- Children's theatre and critical dialogue
- Agency, power and criticism by and for children and young audiences
- Inclusion and theatre and performance criticism
- Critical challenges in children and young audiences' theatre and performance
- Play as criticism, criticism as play

We invite critics, scholars and researchers from around the world of all ages to contribute to a Special Topic of the journal dedicated to the praxis of theatre and performance criticism for children and young audiences. We welcome and strongly encourage interdisciplinary contributions.

Length: Maximum 3.500 words

Language: English or French

Deadline for proposals (300 words): July 19, 2020

Submissions in the form of completed articles should be sent by early September 2020

Revisions will be due by **early November 2020**

Publication date: December 2020

Style: MLA (8th edition) – Find the Guide online [here](#). Alternatively, see [here](#).

For any questions or support with your contribution, please email Critics on Criticism section editor **Diana Damian Martin** on diana.damian@cssd.ac.uk

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Diana Damian Martin is a writer, critic and researcher and section editor of Critics on Criticism for Critical Stages. Diana works as Senior Lecturer in Performance Arts at The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.

Submission Guidelines

Permissions: *Critical Stages/Scènes critiques* publishes writings that have not been previously published in English or French. Permission to reprint articles is granted with the requirement to include "First published in *Critical Stages/Scènes critiques*," along with other citation information and the web address of the journal.

Photos: Photos (JPEG) and other types of illustrations are encouraged. The position of the photo should be designated in the article. All necessary permissions for images should be provided. These can be in the form of an e-mail from the company, or documentation that you have procured the images from an official website. Note: If the performance the author attended is other than the opening night, please include mention of the actual date in the text itself. General information regarding the production, however, should match the date recorded in national and international databases.

Photo Captions: Each photo of a performance needs a caption including title of the performance, names of playwright, director, company, venue, the date of the première, and photo credits. Names of actors (clockwise from top left) can also be added.

Author Information: Author's name, photo, e-mail address, and professional affiliation, and short profile should be given with your submission, separately from the article file. Only the article title should appear at the head of the article file.

Quick Style Sheet for *Critical Stages/Scènes critiques* for English and French language texts is available [here](#).