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Rousseau on Stage: Playwright, Musician, Spectator. Edited by Maria Gullstam and Michael O'Dea

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Rousseau on Stage: Playwright, Musician, Spectator. Ed. by MARIA GULLSTAM and MICHAEL O'DEA. Oxford: Voltaire Foundation. 2017. xxx+310 pp. £75. ISBN 978-0-7294-1199-8.

R06019 This volume aims to demonstrate Jean-Jacques Rousseau's love for the theatre by addressing 'Rousseau as theorist of theatre and opera' (p. 23), 'Rousseau as playwright' (p. 117) and 'Rousseau's operatic and theatrical posterity' (p. 177) in eleven essays. *Rousseau on Stage* is a handsome book with thirteen illustrations, and its contributors include some well-known Rousseau scholars, such as Jacqueline Waeber and David Marshall. While the book is directed at an audience of anglo-phone postgraduate students and scholars of French theatre, literature, and music, the footnoted translations make the material accessible to readers with little to no knowledge of French. The 'theatre and music chronology' prefacing the book provides an extensive overview of Rousseau's relationship to theatre.

Rousseau on Stage would appeal most to readers seeking to learn different perspectives on the *Lettre à d'Alembert sur les spectacles* (1758) and *Pygmalion* (1762), for the majority of the essays in the book analyse these two texts to some degree. The opening two essays, by Felicity Baker ('The Anthropological Foresight of the *Lettre sur les spectacles*') and Patrick Primavesi ('The Dramaturgy of Rousseau's *Lettre à d'Alembert* and its Importance for Modern Theatre'), cover the *Lettre*, and many of the other essays spend substantial time on this text. The same is true of *Pygmalion*; two essays are ostensibly devoted to it, but it emerges as a key subject in several other articles.

The editors, Maria Gullstam and Michael O'Dea, stress the importance of re-evaluating these two texts in their co-written introductory chapter, which in fact resembles an essay in its scope and detail. The editors argue that their project emphasizes the 'positive influence' of the *Lettre à d'Alembert* 'on modern theatre history' (p. 13). *Pygmalion* holds a special place in theatre history as one of the first melodramas.

The stand-out essays in this volume offer new research and fresh perspectives on Rousseau and theatre. In 'Rousseau and his Early Comedies: The Concept of the Comic', Marie-Emmanuelle Plagnol-Diéval writes about three forgotten comedies by Rousseau: *Les Prisonniers de guerre* (1743-44), *L'Engagement téméraire* (1747), and *Arlequin amoureux malgré lui* (1747). David Charlton's essay, '*Le Devin du village* and the Evolution of *opéra-comique*', traces the influence of Rousseau's most successful stage work, *Le Devin du village* (1752), on other comic operas through in-depth musical analysis. The final essay, by Magnus Tessing Schneider, 'The Judgement of Rousseau: *Paride ed Elena* by Gluck and Calzabigi (Vienna, 1770)', explores a unique and comparative topic. While Jørgen Langdalen's essay, 'The Voice of Nature in Rousseau's Theatre: Reconstructing a Dramaturgy', covers familiar material, it should be applauded for clearly connecting examples to an argument, something that not all of the contributions to this project succeed in accomplishing.

The book concludes with summaries of each of the essays. It would have been

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helpful for readers to have biographies of the contributors along with (or perhaps instead of) this information, because it might help explain some of the authors' focuses. While the audience for this book is presumably French scholars and post-graduates at ease in English, the bibliography contains only scant references to anglophone scholarship on Rousseau, theatre, and other related topics such as anthropology; a book such as *Rousseau on Stage* would have had the potential to serve as an authoritative reference to English-language resources on Rousseau and the theatre of his time. One exception to this oversight is Willmar Sauter's essay, 'A Theatrophobic Dramatist: J.-J. Rousseau's Position in Theatre Historiography on Today's Stage', which touches on anglophone scholarship as part of its survey of Rousseau's treatment in British, German, and Scandinavian historiographies.

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Below you should find the contact details (postal and email addresses) that are on file. If the information is not there, please write it in if you are sending the proof back to the editor, or else email it to the assistant editor John Waś (johnoxuk@gmail.com). The details should be correct and valid at least until July 2019. (Note that sometimes an item has to be postponed to a later issue if the volume in preparation proves to be over-long: please advise of any change of contact details up till the actual publication of your contribution.)

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