

The 37th Annual Mid-America Theatre Conference
Hyatt Regency, Minneapolis, MN
March 17-20, 2016

Variety
Theatre History Symposium—Call For Papers

As scholars and teachers, we pursue “variety” in cultural and theatrical performances to enrich our scholarly and creative work. After all, one quick look at a roster of recent (Off-)Broadway productions or newly published plays seems to offer a viewer or reader a plethora of choices in terms of topic, style, structure, genre, etc. In our classrooms, we often opt for breadth over depth as we relay theatre history by forwarding an array of key figures, places, dates, artistic movements, and texts. While learning about an ever-widening range of perspectives and artistic acts is surely a crucial part of our ongoing labor as scholars, artists, and teachers, we wonder about the stakes of our intellectual and pedagogical quests for “variety.”

Specifically, we ask, what power dynamics are at play within and emerge through terms such as “multiplicity,” “diversity,” and “heterogeneity”? How do these dynamics shape artistic practice and scholarship? What theatrical examples from the distant or more recent past point to tensions between notions of “variety” and “singularity” in theatre and performance studies? How might confronting the opportunities and limits of such terminology shape new methodologies and the ways performance and scholarship engage with issues of social justice on- and offstage?

Variety is, of course, not always welcomed. And it may act as a veneer that glosses over a set of limited choices instead of prompting a truly polyvalent network of voices, ideas, and actions. How have theatre scholars, artists, and their audiences confronted entrenched personal, artistic, and institutionalized prejudices? How do censored and absent archives limit the expression and inclusion of multiple voices and participants? In what ways do strong reactions to artistic innovations illuminate social, political, and economic struggles? Where has “variety” stood in for narrowly defined political or artistic agendas? At what cost?

The Theatre History Symposium invites proposals that forward clear, explicit arguments and are ideally varied in terms of research methods, theoretical genealogies, analytical strategies, and writing or presentation styles.

Please submit proposals via email in Word or PDF Format to thsmatc@gmail.com and include the following:

- Your **name, title** (graduate student, faculty rank, independent scholar), **academic affiliation** (if applicable), and a **brief biography**.
- Your **contact information** (particularly email).
- The **title and abstract** for your paper. Please limit abstracts to **250 words**.
- Any **audiovisual elements** requested for your presentation. We cannot guarantee audiovisual support but will take requests into account when scheduling. Late requests may not be honored.
- We also welcome proposals for full panels. Contact the co-chairs for more information.

Theatre History Symposium Co-Chairs: Joanne Zerdy, PhD
Independent Researcher

Michelle Granshaw, PhD
University of Pittsburgh

All proposals must be received by October 15, 2015

Robert A. Schanke Award

The Robert A. Schanke Research Award is given annually to an untenured faculty presenter of the Theatre History Symposium and carries a cash award of \$500 and publication in *Theatre History Studies*, the official journal of the Mid-America Theatre Conference. For consideration, submit your full, conference-length version of your paper to the co-chairs at the email address above by February 20, 2016.