

# ANNUAL REPORT



## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2018**

The 70<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of Members will be held at the Art Workers' Guild, 6 Queen Square, London, WC1N 3AR, on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2018 at 7.00 p.m.

**followed at 8.15 p.m. by**

## THE ANNUAL ADDRESS

**Lolita Chakrabarti**

**in conversation with Simon Sladen**

# The Society for Theatre Research

c/o the Theatres Trust, 22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2018

The 70<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of Members will be held at the Art Workers' Guild, 6 Queen Square, London, WC1N 3AR, on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2018 at 7.00 p.m.

### AGENDA

1	To approve the Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting
2	Matters Arising from the Minutes
3	To approve the Minutes of the Extraordinary General Meeting
4	Matters Arising from the Minutes
5	To receive the Annual Report for 2016-2017
6	To receive the Accounts for 2016-2017
7	Election of Officers and Committee Members:
	a To elect an Honorary Secretary for the coming year: Ms Diana Fraser is nominated by the Committee.
	b To elect an Honorary Treasurer for the coming year: Mr Geoff Davidson is nominated by the Committee.
	c To elect to full-time vacancies: The following three members now retire from the Committee in accordance with the Constitution: Professor Steve Nicholson, Dr Marion O'Connor, and Dr Michael Read. These three members are willing to offer themselves for re-election, and are so nominated by the Committee, for the term 2018-2022. There are also two vacant posts on the Committee, for which no nominations have been received.
8	Co-options: Approval is sought, in accordance with the Constitution, for the following Committee nominees to be co-opted by the Committee for the ensuing year:
	a A representative of the Theatre Collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum
	b The Co-ordinating Editor of <i>Theatre Notebook</i> or his representative
	c A representative of the Theatres Trust
	d A representative of the New Researchers Network
	e Dr Moira Goff
	f Dr Anselm Heinrich
9	Advisers
	a To appoint an Honorary Legal Adviser for the ensuing year: Mr Lee Hargreaves is nominated by the Committee
	b To appoint an Honorary Independent Examiner: Mr Paul Barron is nominated by the Committee
10	To receive the announcement of the Society' Research Awards for 2018.
11	To consider any resolutions that may be submitted.
12	To transact any other business.

Any resolutions should be sent to the Honorary Secretary of the STR either by email to [contact1@str.org](mailto:contact1@str.org) or in writing c/o the Theatres Trust, 22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL by Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2018

**At 8.15 p.m.**

**The Annual Address:**

**Lolita Chakrabarti in conversation with Simon Sladen**

# **The Society for Theatre Research**

## **MINUTES OF THE 69<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2017 at 7.00 p.m.**

**Mr Barry Sheppard, Acting Chair of the Society, in the Chair**

The Chair welcomed members to the 69<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Society and explained that he would be taking the Chair in the unavoidable absence of Timothy West CBE, the Society's President.

### **(1) Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting**

Professor Trevor Griffiths proposed that the Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting should be signed as a true record. This was seconded by Dr Marion O'Connor and carried unanimously, subject to the following amendment:

Item 4: For 'Accounts for 2013-2014' read 'Accounts for 2014-15'.

### **(2) Matters Arising from the Minutes**

There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

### **(3) Annual Report for 2015-2016**

This had been distributed to members in advance. The Chair reported on more recent events.

There had been sad news about two staunch supporters of the Society. Graeme Cruikshank, a Vice President of the Society, died in December 2016. He had been a stalwart not only of the Society but of the Stage Management Association, and other theatre-related organisations, giving unstintingly of his time to theatre causes. In February 2017 the Society was informed of the passing of John Grice, a past Honorary Treasurer and Membership Secretary, and a valued member of our community.

Professor Michael Gaunt: In December 2016 Professor Gaunt decided to relinquish the post of Chair of the Society's Committee. He was thanked for his sterling contribution to the Society: his warmth, courtesy, and chairing skills had been of a very high order and he steered the Committee through the early stages of a period of a strategic realignment as well as being one of the anchors of the Regency Theatre Conference. The Committee had elected Mr Barry Sheppard as Acting Chair in his stead and the search for a permanent replacement continued.

Professor Donald Roy: Professor Roy had decided to retire from the Committee and was thanked for his wise counsel over the years. The Society would continue to benefit from his advice as he had retained his membership of the Publications Sub-Committee.

Annual Lecture Programme: As recorded in the Annual Report, Ms Harriet Reed of the V&A had taken over the co-ordination of the Annual Lecture Programme and her programme since January had offered 'something for everyone': Dr Victoria Garlick speaking about the Broadhead Theatres in Manchester and their 'Quick, Clean, Smart and Bright' contribution to the entertainment of the working classes; Dame Monica Mason, former Director of the Royal Ballet 'in conversation' about her life and career with Ms Jane Pritchard, Curator of Dance at the V&A; Professor Steve Nicholson talking about the Censorship of British Drama, 1900 to 1968; and David Coates provided 'A Whistle-Stop Tour of Amateur Theatricals in Nineteenth Century Britain', running the gamut from private theatres in stately homes to performances in Mechanics' Institutes.

The STR continued to be indebted to the New Researchers Network for managing the livestreaming of the annual lectures. This had undergone a technical change in order to keep up with changes in technology which allowed livestreaming to become simpler on platforms where it could reach wider audiences. Livestreaming now took place on YouTube where subscribers were notified when the Society was streaming. YouTube also allowed the STR to keep an archive of the recordings, which was previously unavailable. Work was ongoing to enhance the quality of the recordings, specifically looking at how to improve their audio quality.

The STR continued to be grateful to the management of the Swedenborg Hall, and to Ms Elspeth Dennison, the Steward of the Art Workers Guild, for their supportive approach to accommodating STR events.

Wickham Lecture 2017: This year's Wickham Lecture, named in honour of the Society's past President, was entitled 'Shakespeare's First Folio on Stage', and would take place at 5.30 p.m. on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> May 2017 in the University of Bristol's Wickham Theatre. The speaker would be Shakespearean scholar Professor Emma Smith from Hertford College, the University of Oxford.

Edward Gordon Craig Lecture: The date for the Edward Gordon Craig lecture for 2017, which the Society offered in association with the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, had yet to be finalised, but would be posted on the website as soon as definitive information became available.

Poel Workshops: This year's Poel Workshops had taken place on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of January 2017 at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama and the National Theatre respectively. The twelve successful applicants had benefitted from the expertise of eight workshop leaders: Ms Erica Whyman, Deputy Artistic Director of the RSC; Ms Jeannette Nelson, Head of Voice at the National Theatre; Ms Barbara Houseman, an Independent Voice Coach, notably at the Donmar, and with the Kenneth Branagh Company season at the Garrick Theatre; Ms Emily Jenkins, Text Practitioner, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre; Mr Daron Oram, Senior Voice Lecturer, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama; Mr Sam Yates, Theatre and Film Director; Mr Paapa Essiedu, Actor: Edmund in *King Lear* and the title role in *Hamlet* at the RSC; and Mr Ben Crystal, Actor, Founder of Passion in Practice. Their eminence as practitioners demonstrated why Poel alumni attested to the seminal value of the experience. Ms Emily Jenkins was thanked for organising this year's Workshops. She had stood down in January 2017, because of pressure of professional work, and was succeeded by Mr Richard Williams, Director of the Foundation Course at Drama Centre London.

Theatre Book Prize: The STR's annual Theatre Book Prize for books published in 2016 had been presented by Sir Richard Eyre on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2016 in the Grand Saloon at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane. An audience of theatre people, publishers, writers and academics, had joined Society members to hear this year's judges (Mr Aleks Sierz, Ms Catherine Haill of the Theatre Collections at the V&A, and actress Ms Nichola McAuliffe) make lively presentations about some of the highlights among the 78 books that were entered this year. The Prize had been awarded to *Stage Managing Chaos*, written by Jackie Harvey with the collaboration of Tim Kelleher. The book was an account of the exceptional circumstances in which the National Theatre mounted a production of Fernando Arrabal's *The Architect and the Emperor of Assyria* at the Old Vic. Sir Laurence Olivier, then running the National Theatre, had expressed some concerns about this production and had asked stage manager Jackie Harvey to keep the detailed diary of rehearsals which formed the core of the book. Judge Aleks Sierz described it as "really thrilling, the story of a slow car crash told with impressive clarity and enormous readability." The STR was very grateful to the Judges for their commitment throughout the year and especially to Mr Howard Loxton, Chairman of the Judges, for his continuing and exceptional commitment to the organisation and promotion of this event.

The Society's 2015-2016 Publication: *Shakespeare for Everyman: Ben Greet in Twentieth Century America* by Don-Jon Dugas, was only the second book ever published on the life and work of Sir Phillip Ben Greet, describing his tours in the United States. These extended beyond commercial venues to academic institutions, Mechanics Institutes, Lyceums and chautauquas – educational summer camps – to reach huge audiences. Dugas had shown how Greet's work, which used an 'Elizabethan manner' derived from the ideas of William Poel, to bring 'Shakespeare's plays as Shakespeare wrote them' to a popular audience, continued to influence the stage production and study of Shakespeare's plays to the present day. The Society was very grateful to both Dr Marion O'Connor as General Editor of the Society's publications and Leigh Forbes as designer of the volume for their contribution to the publication of this impressive work of scholarship.

*Theatre Notebook*: Under the leadership of Professor Trevor Griffiths as co-ordinating editor, editors Professor Gabriel Egan and Dr Sarah McCleave, and Mr Robin Cave, the Editorial Manager, *Theatre Notebook* continued to publish a rich and varied range of material, and to offer a platform for the work of independent scholars as well as those from academe. The team was thanked for its efforts and achievements.

The Society's new website: This was on track to be launched at the beginning of 2018. Confidence was expressed that, at that point, the Society would have a website that was fit both for purpose and for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. There would be a range of new functionalities which would not only be fascinating for members to explore but which would also help to take the Society's engagement with its community to a higher level, creating new and improved opportunities not just for communication but for dialogue and debate. Reaching this point had been a tremendous amount of work and thanks were expressed to all the Committee Members who had contributed to this initiative (and would in many cases continue to do so as editors of 'their' sections of the new site), but especially to Dr Kirsty Sedgman and Ms Kate Quartano Brown for their vision, commitment, intimate understanding of both the Society and the potential of the development, as well as for their ability to enthuse and inspire while getting the Society to this point.

New Researchers' Network (NRN): Ms Ella Hawkins and Ms Rachael Nicholas were welcomed as Co-Chairs of the New Researchers' Network. It was noted that the NRN played a vital role in trying to support the changing needs of the upcoming theatre research community, particularly focusing on the practical aspects of being a researcher, which often go unaddressed. This year the NRN had held a day-long session on career development for theatre researchers called 'What Next? Life after the PhD', inviting a range of speakers from different career paths and stages to talk through their career journeys. This had been a great success and it was intended to repeat the event annually. In addition, the NRN's fourth annual symposium this summer would centre on the theme of 'Marking Time' within performance, research and in life. Papers would explore key issues such as how time is represented in contemporary and/or historical performance, (how an awareness of time's passing had an impact upon research methodologies and the extent to which the real and imagined relationship with the past had an impact upon contemporary culture). The NRN was also planning a workshop looking specifically at publishing to be held this winter. The work of the NRN, supported by the STR, was becoming ever more important as careers in theatre research became ever more precarious and uncertain post-PhD, and the NRN hoped to continue supporting new theatre researchers, by looking at new ways that they could offer this support.

The Society's 70th Birthday: It would be the Society's 70th Birthday in 2018, and although it was intended to hold over a more major programme of commemorative events for a greater milestone, the 75th Birthday in 2023, the 70th anniversary would not go unremarked, and plans would be publicised as soon as they were finalised.

*Library:* After a long search, the Society had found a replacement for the New Cavendish Club of fond memory as a London venue for STR members. *Library*, on St Martins Lane opposite the Coliseum, had given the Society a corporate membership (giving members nearly all the rights of its individual membership). The arrangement took effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2017.

All those members, Officers, and Committee members who give so much of their time and energy to keeping the Society running were thanked for their efforts, and it was noted that without them there would be no STR.

#### **(4) Accounts for 2015-2016**

It was noted that, despite the best efforts of the Committee, the accounts were late this year as a result of problems associated with the handover between Treasurers in the Spring of 2016. The process required the accounts to be agreed by the Committee and signed off by an Independent Examiner in time to come to members for approval at the AGM. It was regrettably the case that the Committee had not been able to meet that timetable this year. It was still necessary to complete the process as quickly as possible for the accounts to be sent to the Charity Commission in time for the end of July 2017. It was suggested that there were two ways in which this could be achieved. The first would be to call an Extraordinary General Meeting as soon as the accounts were finalised. This would be a one item only agenda, which would involve the mailing of the Financial Statement to the full membership and the hire of a room in which to hold the meeting with associated expense. The second possibility was for those members present to appoint a small committee from amongst themselves, of some three people, to scrutinise and approve the accounts on behalf of those present. The advantages of this proposal were minimal expense and ease of assembly and it came with the endorsement of the Committee. This recommendation was proposed by Dr Janice Norwood and seconded by Mr Howard Loxton. Dissent

was expressed by Mr Neil Watson on the basis that the proposed process was possibly not legally valid. It was suggested that advice should therefore be sought from the Society's Legal Adviser as to its validity both in principle and as to the specifics of the proposed methodology. The adoption was proposed by Dr Marion O'Connor, seconded by Mrs Eileen Cottis and carried overwhelmingly by a show of hands, only three of those present dissenting.

[Post-meeting Update: It was subsequently accepted that the proposed process was flawed and that the calling of an Extraordinary General Meeting was the only appropriate way to proceed.]

## **(5) Election of Officers and Committee Members**

(a) The election of two Honorary Secretaries for the year 2017-2018: Dr Jenny Bloodworth had relinquished the post and sincere thanks was expressed to her for her efficiency and hard work over the last several years in a role which was key to enabling the Committee to work effectively. The Committee nominated Ms Diana Fraser, currently Supervising Stage Manager at Drama Centre London, and Dr Chris Abbott, Emeritus Reader at King's College London, to take up the post on a joint basis. It was noted that as these were Committee nominees, no seconder was needed. Ms Fraser and Dr Abbott were jointly elected unopposed to the Honorary Secretaryship of the Society.

It was further noted that Dr Abbott had also generously agreed to take on the roles of Membership Secretary and Secretary to the Publications Sub-Committee and he was thanked for this commitment.

(b) Honorary Treasurer: It was noted that Dr Kirsty Sedgman had resigned as Honorary Treasurer and Membership Secretary with effect from 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017. As acknowledged by the references to her work in the Annual Report and this addendum, she had made a great deal of progress across the breadth of her responsibilities over a comparatively brief period in office and the Society was very grateful to her, not least for her generosity in agreeing to extended periods of handover to her successors. For the post of Honorary Treasurer of the Society the Committee nominated both Dr Sedgman and Mr Geoff Davidson, to facilitate an efficient handover. Mr Davidson was a previous member of the Committee and of its Finance Sub-Committee, and former Editorial Manager of *Theatre Notebook*. Dr Sedgman and Mr Davidson were jointly elected unopposed to the Honorary Treasurership of the Society (the former to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017).

(c) To elect to full-time vacancies: It was noted that Mrs Jennie Bisset, Mr Ian Herbert; Dr Pieter van der Merwe now retired from the Committee on the expiry of their tenure. All three were willing to offer themselves for re-election, and were so nominated by the Committee for the term 2017-2021. All three were re-elected unopposed to the Committee for the term 2017-2021. The Committee also nominated Ms Harriet Reed, currently a committee-appointed member until May 2017, to be a full member of the Committee for the term 2017-2021. Ms Reed was elected unopposed to the Committee for the term 2017-2021.

## **(6) Co-options**

The Committee sought approval, in accordance with the Constitution, for the following persons to be co-opted to the Committee for the coming year:

a representative of the Theatre Collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum;

the co-ordinating editor of *Theatre Notebook* or his representative;

a representative of the Theatres Trust;

a representative of the New Researchers' Network;

Dr Moira Goff;

Dr Anselm Heinrich

These co-options were approved unopposed for the coming year.

## **(7) Advisers**

(a) Mr Lee Greaves of Harbottle and Lewis had confirmed that he was prepared to continue as the Society's Honorary Legal Adviser. His reappointment to this post was approved unopposed. He was thanked for the guidance he had given The Chair and the Committee.

(b) For the last few years The Independent Examination of the STR's annual accounts had been carried out by Colchester Community Voluntary Services. This followed the period of the late John Grice's tenure of the post of Treasurer; he was a resident of Colchester. As Mr Geoff Davidson also lived near Colchester it was proposed that this arrangement should continue. This proposal was approved unopposed.

### **(8) Subscription Rates for 2017-2018**

The Committee had recommended revised rates for the 2017-2018 subscription year. This recommendation, with an accompanying explanation, appeared on the inside back cover of the Annual Report. It was noted that thanks to some income bonuses and disciplined expenditure, there had been a lengthy period of unchanged subscription rates. Reserve funds were now, however, running low, and the proposed increase would help replenish them. Dissent was expressed by Mr Neil Watson on the basis that it was not reasonable to take such a decision until the Accounts had been formally approved. The Chair pointed out that such a delay would make it difficult to implement the increase for the coming subscription year and Dr Janice Norwood and Miss Sue Solomon (former and present Committee members respectively) expressed the view that this long mooted decision needed to be taken now in mitigation of constantly rising production costs. The committee's recommendation was proposed by Dr Pieter van der Merwe and seconded by Mrs Eileen Cottis and passed overwhelmingly by a show of hands, only the dissenter and two others present opposing. The subscription rates for 2017-2018 were therefore approved for implementation in line with the Committee's original recommendation.

### **(9) Research Awards for 2017**

This year the Research Awards Sub-Committee considered twenty-six applications, mostly of good quality, and made fifteen awards from the Society's Research Fund. It was possible to offer so many awards partly because a number of candidates asked for comparatively small sums. Many thanks to the members of the Research Awards Sub-Committee, its chair Professor Steve Nicholson, and to Ms Kate Quartano Brown for her impeccable administration of the Awards.

(a) The Anthony Denning Award of the Society for Theatre Research to ROBERT WHELAN, who was present at the AGM, an independent researcher and author of *The Other National Theatre*, towards the online publication of his database of Drury Lane performances between 1862 and 1879.

(b) The Kathleen Barker Award of the Society for Theatre Research to HANNAH MANKTELOW, a postgraduate student from Nottingham, for travel and digital photography of playbills relating to the performance of Shakespeare's plays outside London between 1769 and 2016.

(c) The Stephen Joseph Award of the Society for Theatre Research to Professor JERRI DABOO of the University of Exeter for travel costs for a monograph on staging British Asian culture, entitled 'Bollywood and Bhangra'.

(d) A Research Award to JAMES ARMSTRONG, a US postgraduate student, for visits to British theatre archives for research into Regency acting styles and Romantic Drama through evidence from the Toy Theatre.

(e) A Research Award to Dr NELL DARBY, who was present at the AGM, towards a visit to the Billy Rose Collection in New York for research into a book on the madness of Ilda Orme.

(f) A Research Award to HELEN GUSH, who was present at the AGM, a postgraduate student and Assistant Curator at the V&A, for image reproduction rights for work on the World Theatre Season 1964-75.

(g) A Research Award to TOMKE KOSSEN-VEENHUIS, a postgraduate student from Edinburgh, to attend and give a paper on music and dance collaborations at a conference at the University of Leeds.

(h) A Research Award to DR EVELYN O'MALLEY of the University of Exeter to visit the Max Reinhardt Archive in the USA for her research into his outdoor performances, notably 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' in Headington.

(i) A Research Award to DR CHRIS O'ROURKE of the University of Lincoln for travel and BFI charges for his research on gender, sexuality and performance in Britain, 1869-1939.

(j) A Research Award to DR NAOMI PAXTON, who was present at the AGM, also of the University of Lincoln, towards image rights for her forthcoming book 'Stage Rights! Actresses, Activism and Politics 1908 to 1958', to be published by the Manchester University Press.

(k) A Research Award to DR TERRY ROBINSON, an Assistant Professor from Toronto, for travel to the Huntington Library for research into acting and physical expression in the late Georgian era.

(l) A Research Award to DR KARINA SMITH for research into British and Caribbean popular theatre in the 1980s.

(m) A Research Award to Professor ALEXIS WEEDON for travel to archives for research into Clemence Dane.

(n) A Research Award to ALISON YOUNG, who was present at the AGM, an independent scholar, towards research into members of her own music-hall performing family, to be published online and in the Music Hall Society journal *Call Boy*.

(o) A Research Award to MOLLY ZIEGLER, a postgraduate student from Glasgow, for travel to archives for research into 'Madness on the early modern stage'.

### **(10) The New Scholar's Prize for 2017**

The judging panel (Professor Griffiths, Professor Siobhan Keenan, and Professor Jane Milling) awarded the 2017 New Scholars Prize to Dr Tanya Dean, a Lecturer in Drama in the School of Creative Arts and Technologies in Ulster University, for her essay 'Experience the Best of British Theatre; NT Live Broadcasts as Performances of Archival Process'.

### **(11) Resolutions**

It was noted that no resolutions had been submitted.

### **(12) Other Business**

*The Bridge That Carries Us Safe Over*: Miss Solomon drew the attention of those present to a Society event which would take place at the Bridewell Hall, London, EC4Y 8EQ on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2017 to celebrate the 200th Anniversary of the opening of the original Waterloo Bridge. Part of the programme would be a performance of the Richard Brinsley Peake's comedy *The Bridge That Carries Us Safe Over*, first performed on 18<sup>th</sup> June 1817.

The Chair thanked members for their attendance and support; the Meeting was then declared closed.

## **The Society for Theatre Research**

### **MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING**

**Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2017 at 7.00 p.m.**

**Simon Sladen, Chair of the Society, in the Chair**

The Chair welcomed members to the Extraordinary General Meeting of the Society.

**(1)** It was noted that, as more than 10 Members were present in addition to Committee Members and Officers, the meeting was quorate. The Chair explained that the sole purpose of the meeting was to present to the membership the finalised accounts for the Society's financial year 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016. These had been incomplete at the time of the May 2017 Annual General Meeting (AGM). They had, however, been finalised with professional assistance, and sent to the Charity Commission in time for the submission deadline.

**(2)** It was further noted that the accounts had been posted on the Society's website and all Members informed of their availability there and of the convening of this meeting. [Further hard copies were distributed to all Members present by the Chair]

**(3)** The Chair explained that:

Page 1 was the Accountant's Report, and independent examination of the Accounts undertaken for the Trustees which had been received and signed off by them.

Page 2 was the Statement of Financial Activities for the year to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016. In relation to this it was noted that the excess of Expenditure over Income was entirely attributable to expenditure on the Regency Theatre Conference, provision for which had been made by putting aside surpluses from the previous three years. The real deficit of £1,424 was shown at the foot of the Unrestricted Funds column. This too was due to the deficit on the Regency Theatre Conference, without which there would have been a break-even situation. This anticipated deficit justified the subscription increase agreed at the last AGM for future implementation. Otherwise financial activity was as usual and as anticipated.

Page 3 was the Balance Sheet.

Page 4 was the Statement of Accounting Policies and the Notes to the Accounts. In relation to the latter the wording of the Note about Reserves had been changed, to up-date and clarify the nature and whereabouts of the Society's Reserves.

**(4)** Members voted to receive the accounts. As there were no questions, the Chair thanked members for their attendance and support; the Meeting was then declared closed.

# **The Society for Theatre Research**

70TH ANNUAL REPORT  
1<sup>st</sup> OCTOBER 2016 – 30<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2017

PRESIDENT: Mr Timothy West, CBE

VICE-PRESIDENTS: Mrs Eileen Cottis, Mr Derek Forbes,  
Dr Neville Hunnings, Mr Barry Sheppard

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE 2016 – 2017

CHAIR: Mr Simon Sladen

VICE-CHAIRMEN: Dr Marion O'Connor, Professor Trevor Griffiths

JOINT HONORARY SECRETARY: Dr Christopher Abbott and Ms Diane Fraser

HONORARY TREASURER: Mr Geoffrey Davidson and Dr Kirsty Sedgman (the latter until 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017)

HONORARY LEGAL ADVISER: Mr Lee Greaves

MINUTES CLERK: Mr Peter Close

## COMMITTEE

Professor Christopher Baugh

Mrs Jennie Bisset

Ms Kate Quartano Brown

Professor Richard Foulkes

Mr Mark Fox

Mr Ian Herbert

Mr Howard Loxton

Professor Steve Nicholson

Dr Michael Read

Ms Harriet Reed

Miss Sue Solomon

Dr Pieter van der Merwe MBE

## CO-OPTED:

A representative of the Theatre Collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum

A representative of the Editors of Theatre Notebook

A representative of the Theatres Trust

Dr Moira Goff

Dr Anselm Heinrich

One Vacancy

At the 69<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Society on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2017 the retiring members of the Committee, Mrs Jennie Bisset, Mr Ian Herbert, and Dr Pieter van der Merwe, offered themselves for re-election, and were re-elected unopposed to the Committee for the term 2017-2021. Ms Harriet Reed, a Committee-appointed Member until May 2017, was elected unopposed as a full Member, also for the term 2017-2021.

Dr Christopher Abbott and Ms Diana Fraser were jointly elected unopposed to the Honorary Secretaryship of the Society for the year 2017-2018. Mr Geoffrey Davidson and Dr Kirsty Sedgman were jointly elected unopposed to the Honorary Treasurership of the Society, the former for the year 2017-2018 and the latter until 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

Mr Simon Sladen, Senior Curator of Modern and Contemporary Performance at the V&A, was elected Chair of the Society in May 2017. We are grateful to Mr Barry Sheppard for leading the Society as Acting Chair between December 2016 and Mr Sladen's election.

## ACTIVITIES OF THE SOCIETY

### Annual Lecture Programme and other events

As always the 2016-2017 Annual Lecture Programme had offered 'something for everyone' with a truly wide ranging programme including Professor Jim Davis, 'Visualising the Low Comedian' over the Victorian period; Dr Lynette Goddard, 'Contemporary Black British Playwrights: Margins to Mainstream'; Professor Trevor Griffiths, 'A Stranger Pyramus than e'er played here', Transformations and Translations in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (the 2016 Christmas Lecture); Dr Victoria Garlick speaking about the Broadhead Theatres in Manchester and their 'Quick, Clean, Smart and Bright' contribution to the entertainment of the working classes; Dame Monica Mason, former Director of the Royal Ballet 'in conversation' about her life and career with Ms Jane Pritchard, Curator of Dance at the V&A; Professor Steve Nicholson talking about 'The Censorship of British Drama, 1960 to 1968'; and Mr David Coates providing 'A Whistle-Stop Tour of Amateur Theatricals in Nineteenth Century Britain', running the gamut from private theatres in stately homes to performances in Mechanics' Institutes. At the AGM in May 2017 Dame Sian Phillips had been 'in conversation' with Mr Howard Loxton about her career on stage and screen.

The Wickham Lecture took place on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> May 2017 at the University of Bristol with Bristol's Professor Martin White as Chair. Shakespearean scholar Professor Emma Smith from Hertford College, the University of Oxford, spoke about 'Shakespeare's First Folio on Stage'.

The Gordon Craig Memorial Lecture, arranged with the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama (RCSSD), took place in the V&A Lecture Theatre on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2017 at 6.00 p.m. The lecture, entitled *The Stage Beyond the Image*, was given by theatre designer Lizzie Clachan 'in conversation' with the RCSSD's Ms Joanna Parker, reflecting on her practice across theatre, opera and devised performance.

On Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2017, the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the original Waterloo Bridge by the Prince Regent and the Duke of Wellington was marked by the performance of a double bill about the Bridge which STR Committee Member Miss Sue Solomon devised and directed for the Society at the Bridewell Hall. The first part consisted of her dramatisation of a description of night life on the Bridge by the nineteenth century journalist James Greenwood and the second a production of Richard Brinsley Peake's first recorded play, *The Bridge That Carries us Safe Over*, which was originally performed at the Lyceum Theatre on the day of the Bridge opening.

The STR continues to be indebted to the New Researchers Network (NRN) for its continued commitment to managing the livestreaming of the lectures, and building an audience. YouTube was now being used to livestream the talks so that the talks were now archived on the NRN YouTube account, there was an archive record of the talks, and that people who were interested in the Society could subscribe to the NRN YouTube account and be notified when the livestreaming was taking place. Having a YouTube account with subscribers also gave the NRN the opportunity to create further video content in the future in order to showcase its other activities and to promote membership. Grateful thanks were also due to Ms Harriet Reed as Co-ordinator of the Annual Lecture Programme for her flair and hard work in putting together a stimulating Programme, and to the management of the Swedenborg Hall, and to Ms Elspeth Dennison, the Steward of the Art Workers Guild, for their supportive approach to accommodating STR events.

### New Researchers' Network

The NRN continued to provide irreplaceable support for the next generation of scholars. It had held a day-long session on career development for post-doctoral researchers entitled 'What next? Life after the PhD' which had attracted a stimulating group of speakers and had so successfully addressed the needs of its target audience that it was intended to make it an annual event. The NRN had also held its 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Symposium, 'Marking Time', at the University of Roehampton on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2017 which explored the theme of Marking Time within performance, research and our lives. Conversations about how best to convert participants in NRN activities into STR members were ongoing. Sincere thanks are extended to the NRN Committee, and especially to Ms Rachael Nicholas for her work in supporting livestreaming of the Society's Annual Lecture Series and for her Committee attendance on behalf of the NRN.

### **New Scholars Prize**

The judging panel (Professor Trevor Griffiths, Professor Siobhan Keenan, and Professor Jane Milling) had awarded the 2017 Prize to Dr Tanya Dean for her essay "Experience the Best of British Theatre; NT Live Broadcasts as Performances of Archival Process". Dr Dean, a Lecturer in Drama in the School of Creative Arts and Technologies in Ulster University, had recently completed her Doctor of Fine Arts with Yale School of Drama. Her dissertation focussed on the relationship between European theatre and the evolution of the fairy tale as a literary form.

### **Poel Workshops**

The 2017 Poel Workshops had taken place earlier than usual to fit the date the National Theatre could make available (at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2017, followed by the National Theatre on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2017). Workshop leaders included regular contributors Ms Barbara Houseman (an Independent Voice Coach, notably at the Donmar, and with the Kenneth Branagh Company season at the Garrick); Emily Jenkins, Text Practitioner, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre; Ms Jeannette Nelson (Head of Voice at the National Theatre), and Mr Daron Oram (Senior Voice Lecturer, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama), and the year's leaders Ben Crystal (Actor, Founder of Passion in Practice), Mr Paapa Essiedu (who had played Edmund in King Lear and Hamlet in 2016 for the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC)), Ms Erica Whyman OBE (Deputy Artistic Director of the Royal Shakespeare Company), and Sam Yates, Theatre and Film Director. More than 50 applications were received, from which a group of 12 (6 female and 6 male) was selected. Ms Emily Jenkins had subsequently relinquished the post of Poel Co-ordinator and thanks were due to her for her outstanding leadership of the Workshops. She had been succeeded in this role by Mr Richard Williams, a course leader at Drama Centre London.

### **Publications**

The 2016-2017 subscription volume, Dr Matthew Morrison's *The Soho Theatre 1968-81*, is a detailed study of one of the most successful theatres of the last 50 years, and essential reading for anyone interested in the growth of fringe and alternative theatre in London during the 1960s and 1970s. It benefits from some fine illustrations, including fourteen photographs by Mr Nobby Clark. We are very grateful to both Dr Marion O'Connor as General Editor, and Ms Leigh Forbes as designer of the volume, for this contribution which maintained the outstanding quality of the Society's publications.

### **Theatre Book Prize**

The STR's annual Theatre Book Prize for books published in 2016 was presented by Sir Richard Eyre on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 in the Grand Saloon at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane. The Prize was awarded to Stage Managing Chaos, written by Jackie Harvey with the collaboration of Tim Kelleher, an account of the exceptional circumstances in which the National Theatre mounted a production of Fernando Arrabal's *The Architect and the Emperor of Assyria* at the Old Vic, based on the

contemporaneous diaries kept Ms Harvey, its stage manager. The judges were theatre critic Dr Aleks Sierz, Ms Catherine Haill of the Theatre Collections at the V&A, and actress Ms Nichola McAuliffe. Thanks were due again to Mr Howard Loxton, Chairman of the Judges, for his outstanding commitment to the organisation and promotion of this event on behalf of the Society.

## **Theatre Notebook**

Professor Trevor Griffiths continues as co-ordinating editor of *Theatre Notebook*, with editors Dr Gabriel Egan and Dr Sarah McCleave. We are very grateful to them, and also to Mr Robin Cave, the Editorial Manager, for their commitment and hard work in continuing not only to publishing fascinating material across the full spectrum of British theatre, but also to offering a platform for the work of independent scholars as well as those from academe.

## **Research**

The Research Awards Sub-Committee had considered 26 applications this year (down from 31 last year) and had made 15 awards from the Society's Research Fund. It had been possible to offer so many awards partly because a number of candidates asked for comparatively small sums. The Awards had been distributed as follows:

The Anthony Denning Award of the Society for Theatre Research to ROBERT WHELAN, who was present at the AGM, an independent researcher and author of *The Other National Theatre*, towards the online publication of his database of Drury Lane performances between 1862 and 1879.

The Kathleen Barker Award of the Society for Theatre Research to HANNAH MANKTELOW, a postgraduate student from Nottingham, for travel and digital photography of playbills relating to the performance of Shakespeare's plays outside London between 1769 and 2016.

The Stephen Joseph Award of the Society for Theatre Research to Professor JERRI DABOO of the University of Exeter for travel costs for a monograph on staging British Asian culture, entitled 'Bollywood and Bhangra'.

A Research Award to JAMES ARMSTRONG, a US postgraduate student, for visits to British theatre archives for research into Regency acting styles and Romantic Drama through evidence from the Toy Theatre.

A Research Award to Dr NELL DARBY, towards a visit to the Billy Rose Collection in New York for research into a book on the madness of Ilda Orme.

A Research Award to HELEN GUSH, a postgraduate student and Assistant Curator at the V&A, for image reproduction rights for work on the World Theatre Season. 1964-75.

A Research Award to TOMKE KOSSEN-VEENHUIS, a postgraduate student from Edinburgh, to attend and give a paper on music and dance collaborations at a conference at the University of Leeds.

A Research Award to DR EVELYN O'MALLEY of the University of Exeter to visit the Max Reinhardt Archive in the USA for her research into his outdoor performances, notably 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' in Headington.

A Research Award to DR CHRIS O'ROURKE of the University of Lincoln for travel and BFI charges for his research on gender, sexuality and performance in Britain, 1869-1939.

A Research Award to DR NAOMI PAXTON, also of the University of Lincoln, towards image rights for her forthcoming book 'Stage Rights! Actresses, Activism and Politics 1908 to 1958', to be published by the Manchester University Press.

A Research Award to DR TERRY ROBINSON, an Assistant Professor from Toronto, for travel to the Huntington Library for research into acting and physical expression in the late Georgian era.

A Research Award to DR KARINA SMITH for research into British and Caribbean popular theatre in the 1980s.

A Research Award to Professor ALEXIS WEEDON for travel to archives for research into Clemence Dane.

A Research Award to ALISON YOUNG, an independent scholar, towards research into members of her own music-hall performing family, to be published online and in the Call Boy.

A Research Award to MOLLY ZIEGLER, a postgraduate student from Glasgow, for travel to archives for research into 'Madness on the early modern stage'.

The total amount awarded this year was £4,135.

The year also saw the distribution of the Paul Iles Bequest of £10,000 to the Society to be used for research into the history of theatre in Australia, a reflection of the love he had for that country and of the happy years he had spent there. The Bequest had been distributed to the following recipients:

RUTH BERESON and JUSTIN MACDONELL (Queensland, Australia) for 'A New Moon Over Queensland' to support research towards a monograph and journal articles concerning this rural theatre company.

PATRICIA ALESSI and JEREMY MARTENS (Fremantle, Australia) The Crown Theatre in Fremantle's Prison to support both a short account of this facility for prisoners, and a reimagining of it as an emerging venue for performance activity.

JANE WOOLLARD (La Trobe, Melbourne, Australia) Life and career of Eliza Winstanley whose repertoire from 1834-1864 spanned popular entertainment and canonical works. She was also briefly a theatre manager in Australia.

CHRIS HAY (NIDA, Australia) AETT, NIDA and theatre in Australian national life 1949-1968 'A Vigorous and Significant Force' to support archival research for a book recounting the genesis and development of the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust (AETT) and the theatrical organisations it instigated, including the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA).

HELEN GILBERT (Royal Holloway, London) Postcolonial Australian Theatre in the age of the Anthropocene to support research in Australia which will feed into one chapter of Helen Gilbert's in-progress monograph on contemporary indigenous performing arts as they speak to global challenges of our times.

JIM TAYLOR (Lyon, France) Loudon Sainthill, towards research at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and British Library Colindale exploring how the surrealism and ambivalence characteristic of Sainthill's work influenced English theatre-goers and critics during a period of Cold War anxiety and imperial crisis.

LOUISE WINGROVE (Independent, Reading) Peggy Pryde in Britain and Australia International Pryde. The award would go towards research in Australian archives investigating the appeal, and constructed persona of variety actress Peggy Pryde, and comparing her British and Australian repertoires.

Our thanks are due to the members of the Research Awards Sub-Committee, its Chair Dr Steve Nicholson, and Ms Kate Quartano Brown for all their hard work in administering these processes.

### **Other Activities of the Society**

STR Archive: The Society's paper Archive, supplemented by sound recordings of some STR lectures previously in safekeeping with the National Theatre, had been brought together in the care of the

Department of Theatre and Performance at the V&A, and significant progress had been made with cataloguing the material preparatory to optimising its potential as a scholarly resource. A structure had been agreed for adding both newly generated material and further historic material as it became available, the latter through the Society's Honorary Archivist, Miss Francesca Franchi. Our grateful thanks are due to Miss Franchi and Mrs Cottis for the Society, and Ms Harriet Reed of the V&A and Ms Sabrina Offord (the V&A Department of Theatre and Performance's Archivist and Conservation Manager), for their hard work in creating such a solid foundation for future development.

Associated Organisations: The Society continues to maintain links with: the International Federation for Theatre Research; the Theatres Trust; the American Society for Theatre Research (ASTR); V&A Theatre Collections; Association of Performing Arts Collections (APAC); the Theatre and Performance Research Association; the Garrick Club; and the University of Bristol Theatre Collection. We are devising a strategy for working more closely with them to build closer and more effective working relationships and create new synergies in our work across the sector.

### **Administration**

The Society's postal address is: c/o The Theatres Trust, 22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL.

### **Finance**

The issues with the Accounts for the 2015-2016 financial year have been resolved and the Accounts have been submitted to the Charity Commission. The detail of this resolution is given in the Minutes of the Extraordinary General Meeting of Tuesday 12th December 2017 which appears on page 9 of the papers for this Meeting. We are very grateful to Dr Kirsty Sedgman and Mr Geoff Davidson, our Joint Honorary Treasurers for the year, for all their hard work in consultation with Mr Barry Sheppard in maintaining accurate financial records in this transitional phase of the restructuring of the operational management of the Society.

As is evident from the Accounts which form a part of this Report, the Society remains solvent and in a position to maintain ongoing initiatives at their current levels of activity, and also to see the new website through to implementation. However, we cannot afford to stand still: the demands on our resources are increasing, and the Society is committed to establishing a new framework for financial planning, and to exploring the potential to generate more income. We want to enhance the funding of established activities in response to evidenced increasing demand for them, and to be in a position to seize the opportunities for new initiatives and fruitful collaborations as they arise.

### **Membership**

As Membership Secretary Dr Sedgman had, as previously reported, overseen a significant increase in the number of younger and student members, and stabilisation in other categories, pursuing contacts with former members, following up expressions of interest arising from the Society's and the NRN's events and activities, and maintaining effective membership communications. She had generously agreed to carry on in the role, in the context of her increasing professional commitments elsewhere, while its scope was re-defined in the context of the Society's evolving organisational landscape. She had also undertaken the huge task of cleaning the membership database in preparation for its integration into the new website. For all this we are extremely grateful.

### **Website Development**

Although the development was behind schedule, this was not a major problem as it had no financial implications, and it was essential to take as much time as necessary to get this crucial development right. The project was being delivered within budget. The crucial issue of the Society's visual identity and branding on and beyond the website had been resolved, the website's structure had been agreed, and an editorial team was now in place to take responsibility for populating it with content (including images), and keeping it up to date. The Society was confident that it had made the right choice in

appointing website developer Me&Him as Mr Paul Ingle, the partner leading on the project, had proved to be an empathetic collaborator. We are grateful to Dr Kirsty Sedgman whose guidance in the early stages was invaluable, and to Ms Kate Quartano Brown, our indispensable point of liaison with the designer as the website nears completion.

### **Acknowledgements**

As in previous years the Society acknowledges with gratitude the work of its officers and Committee, and the invaluable advice of the Honorary Legal Adviser.