



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO
DIPARTIMENTO DI BENI CULTURALI
E AMBIENTALI



UNIVERSITÀ DELLA CALABRIA
DIPARTIMENTO
DI STUDI UMANISTICI



Università
Ca' Foscari
Venezia
Dipartimento di Filosofia
e Beni Culturali

V EASTAP CONFERENCE

Milan, 23-24-25-26 May 2022

Organized by Alberto Bentoglio, Claudio Longhi and Daniele Vianello

CALL FOR PAPERS

Theatrical Mind: Authorship, Staging and Beyond

A “principle of order” – more or less recognisable and established – has always been applied in the creation of theatrical events, to intervene with and bring into focus the various planning, organisational and artistic problems that affect the various elements of a performance. Naturally, in each case, this “principle of order” relates with the other operative figures involved in the overall orchestration of the theatrical experience (actors, dancers, musicians and performers, playwrights, scenographers, costumers...). It is therefore unnecessary to look as far as the significant changes seen in the early or late 1800s (depending on differing schools of thought) to recognise the clear central role of the fact that the entire history of Western theatre (European and beyond) is characterised by the underlying theme of a “directing function”, one that takes many forms and is often difficult to identify, eluding set definitions, that aims to conceive and moderate the creation of a

performance (in the broadest sense of the term, taking in dance, opera, figure theatre, etc.), coordinating, when possible, the various elements involved on a deeper level, creating an architecture of thought. Drawing on an enlightened theory by Ferdinando Tavani, one could speak, in this sense, of a «theatrical mind» (a term that the scholar used directly in English); a notion that not only identifies with individual and specific cases but rather expresses «a whole whose action is not reduced to the sum of the behaviours of its aggregates», thus embodying a form of process that has existed throughout the eras and is intimately linked to the panorama of authorship and to the ways of seeing and articulating theatre in its multiple forms over the course of history. This is a particular approach to «material theatre» that brings together pragmatism and imagination, adapting «to changing conditions, [...] correcting the state of things through imperceptible successive changes»; in other words, proceeding by trial, error and discovery. There are many variations that have developed from the “theatrical mind” matrix:

- the most “canonical” form of the concept of theatrical directing as established and institutionalised from the 19th century onwards, up to the radical re-examination of the same – subjected to the violent forces exerted by the expanding concept of performance, by the advent of new technology or changes in philosophical and social-anthropological thought – in the wake of “the golden era” of the twentieth century.
- the experiences commonly defined as preceding the identification of a founding moment for the birth of theatrical directing, which include a multitude of cases (from the liturgies of the *chorodidaskalos* of Attic theatre to the creators, commissioners and coregi of Baroque theatre, from the work of the Latin *dominus gregis* to the “concertare” of Goldoni and the Commedia dell’Arte, right up to the emergence of directing in Europe and Italy).
- the chapter of the great “theatrical utopias”, of «“theories” not expressed, but capable of inspiring action» (to once again return to the words of Taviani) or of «imaginary theatre», often created in close harmony with the space (according to the fortuitous reflections of Manfredo Tafuri); from Appia to the *Total Theatre* of Gropius and

Piscator, via Craig and Artaud (to name but a few), the history of theatre is a rich catalogue of opportunities and inventions that have often found their greatest expression “on paper” or in the struggle between «souls and forms», rather than in a tangible sense (Tavani himself spoke of «theatre-in-book-form»).

- the expansive universe of creative practices concerning among others the boundaries of “textual compositions” and “stage writing”, calling into question the idea of a “collective theatrical mind” and therefore including a number of creative methods aimed at rethinking theatrical language and writing. In this sense, a significant role is played by the potential of the «theatrical imagination», i.e., of a school of thought closely related to the theatre that, in its dynamic nature – starting with (but not restricted to) writing – guides the practice of directing, touching on other aspects of performance according to the particular case (for example the way in which dramaturgy often consider their staging, particularly through the inclusion of stage directions, or Giorgio Strehler’s obsessive attention to lighting, or even the conviction of Luca Ronconi according to which both a classic script or a telephone directory can provide suitable material for a play and can therefore be read, “analysed” and adapted for the stage in an equal manner).

Why dedicate an international convention to such a theme? As is well known, Europe (and more in general, the entire world) is going through a “global” metamorphosis set in motion by the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic and the ongoing health emergency. The historical events currently taking place have radically affected every aspect of our lives, leading to a rethinking of the aspects of European identity and redefining the cornerstones of our way of socialising and of creating relationships with the rest of the world. What has emerged from the long and difficult months of the various periods of lockdown is a more measured awareness of the importance of community, and of the importance of values on which communities are founded. This “absolute” metamorphosis has therefore been accompanied by a transformation of the theatrical experience; the theatre is, in fact, a reflection of the reality that surrounds it, and in which a representation of its present is captured. In light of the current “change in paradigm”, examining the theme of the “theatrical



mind” – with all that this notion implies – therefore means venturing into the labyrinth of possibilities from the history of theatre (and beyond) to examine the «play between stimuli and responses» that is often at the base of «new and unexpected artistic solutions», thus creating a dialogue between the past, the present and the future.

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HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION FOR PARTICIPATION

Send your application by **1 December**, to the Conference organisers, to the email address:
eastapconference.milan2022@gmail.com

Maximum duration of speeches: 20 minutes, followed by a 10-minute discussion.

In the application, please indicate:

- First name, last name, institution (if present)
- An abstract of maximum 300 words in English and in the language in which the communication will be presented (if different), in Word, Times New Roman 12 pt.
- The chosen theme or themes
- A curriculum of a maximum of 150 words in length
- Technical requirements for the presentation

The selection of panels/papers will be made by the Organizing Committee and Scientific Committee. The decisions will be made public by **January 15th**.

Languages admitted: English, French, Italian.

Enrolments for the Conference are open until **15 February** via the website
<https://www.eastap.com/registration/>

Enrolment will also grant free access, via certification, to the performative and cultural events in the Strehler Festival 2022 programme. The full calendar of initiatives and artists in the Strehler Festival will be available from the Autumn on the website
<https://www.piccoloteatro.org/en/>



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Enrolment costs for the Conference

Standard EASTAP members: 70 Euros

Student EASTAP members: 35 Euros

Preliminary enrolment in EASTAP is obligatory. This is a necessary condition for enrolment in the Conference.

Enrolment with EASTAP can be carried out on the same website as enrolment in the Conference <https://www.eastap.com/registration/>

Any questions regarding **enrolment in the Association and the Conference** may be addressed to registration@eastap.com

Any questions regarding **Call and Conference organisation** can be addressed exclusively to eastapconference.milan2022@gmail.com

Further information and updates will be available from November onwards on the online sites of EASTAP (<http://eastap.com>) and Piccolo Teatro di Milano (<https://www.piccoloteatro.org/en/>) in a specific section dedicated to the V EASTAP Conference.