

## Abstracts

### **Elise M. Dietrich, “*Quarto de Despejo no Palco: Staging Authenticity in Representations of Brazilian Poverty*”**

Carolina Maria de Jesus (1915-1977) is best known as the author of *Quarto de Despejo* (1960), a diary written on scraps of paper scavenged from the garbage while its author resided in a Brazilian favela. This article explores how the 1961 eponymous theatrical adaptation of this diary recreated her favela experiences for the stage in unusual ways. In the name of verisimilitude, the play’s producers organized cast visits to the favela and dressed the set with both Carolina’s belongings and discarded objects donated by the public. Using MacCannell’s continuum of the “staged authenticity” of tourist experiences as a framework, I demonstrate how the play’s producers incorporated people and objects from the favela into their theatrical production to provide their audience with a carefully assembled “authentic” glimpse of the other, arguing that *Quarto’s* audience engaged in an early form of poverty tourism by visiting a recreated place outside of their normal environment.

### **Aiala Levy, “Theaters and the Popular-Elite Divide in São Paulo, Brazil, 1895-1922”**

At the turn of the twentieth century, the city of São Paulo rapidly transformed into an industrial metropolis. As its population grew, so did the number and variety of theaters. This article compares two government-sponsored auditoriums, the Municipal and Colombo Theaters, to explain how theaters helped urban residents rethink the structure of their changing society. Inaugurated within a few years of each other—the Colombo in 1908, the Municipal in 1911—both theaters were founded with the support of the municipality and with the aim of morally and aesthetically educating São Paulo’s diversifying population. Yet, by 1922, the two theaters served distinct functions and distinct publics; while contemporaries frequently used the term “elite” to describe the Municipal’s performances and audience, the Colombo was increasingly characterized as “popular.” Through an examination of each theater’s architecture, urban setting, managerial practices, and repertoire, the essay analyzes how Paulistanos defined and deployed these labels. The article argues that Paulistanos’ juxtaposition of the Colombo’s “popular” with the Municipal’s “elite” relied on the conflation of genre and spectator, that is, the collapsing of aesthetic and social hierarchies and the simplification of both hierarchies to binaries. The article thus builds on the scholarship of cultural hierarchy to demonstrate how it functioned as a *social* hierarchy and how, through theaters, Paulistanos erected and adjusted both. Theaters, the essay ultimately proposes, cannot be ignored by scholars seeking to elucidate the history of social difference in Latin America.

### **Robert H. Moser, Alberto Tibaji, and George Contini, “*Always (K)new: Recombining Identities and Queering Narratives through a Transcultural Theatre Project*”**

The play *Always (K)new*, performed in Athens, Georgia, in December 2017, was conceived and developed by a collaborative group of scholars, students, and animation artists from the University of Georgia in the U.S., the Universidade Federal de São João del-Rei in Brazil, and Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in Colombia. Initially inspired by Silvero Pereira’s solo performances of *BR-Trans*, this unique theatrical and pedagogical project was characterized by a fundamentally transcultural approach in which personal narratives of self-identified LGBTQ individuals were collected simultaneously in Athens, São João del-Rei, and Bogotá, then reconfigured through a collective process that involved translating, transcribing, recombining, and retelling these narratives through three distinct, but often intersecting, linguistic and

cultural contexts. Through multiple theoretical lenses including performance studies, queer pedagogy, and Arfuch's notion of permeable "biographical space," this essay explores how the project's recombinatorial approach contributed to a queering of the narrative that, in turn, tests the limits of representation and authorship (Who can represent who? Who can pass as what?). Involving students and faculty from the converging fields of theatre studies, literature, and the visual arts, and incorporating oral history, movement, song, and short animation, *Always (K) new* also presents an intriguing case of a devised play that defies easy categorization. Similarly, by allowing its development and performance to mirror the fluidity of gender and sexuality represented in the stories collected, the play echoes the often messy and unpredictable nature of not only sexual orientation and gender identity, but also the transcultural identities that can emerge in a frequently shifting global landscape.

**Israel Pechstein, "Melodrama, Camp, and Sexuality in Nelson Rodrigues's *O Beijo no Asfalto*"**

While Nelson Rodrigues was known to incorporate melodramatic techniques in his plays, his specific bending of melodrama's norms has yet to be fully explored. In his 1960 *O beijo no Asfalto*, the theme of sexuality together with the play's melodramatic plot can be read through a camp perspective that offers more constructive readings of homosexuality than those present in previous criticism of the text. Through an analysis of Aprígio and his son-in-law and protagonist, Arandir, this essay points to the strengths of a camp reading of an already perverted melodrama by showing the sexual ambiguities that arise in the play: Aprígio's masking and dramatic revelation of his homosexuality and Arandir's conflicted views of the gay kiss that gives name to the play.

**Lisa Shaw, "Afro-Brazilian Women and Gendered Performance in the *Teatro de Revista* in the Long 1920s"**

This article focuses on two Afro-Brazilian women, Rosa Negra and Déo Costa, who performed in the first Brazilian popular theatrical companies that consciously identified as Afro-descendant, the Companhia Negra de Revistas (1926-27) and the Ba-ta-clan Preta (1926-27). It draws on press coverage and the reception of performances by these women, situating them within the wider context of representations of Afro-Brazilian female subjectivity on the popular stage in Brazil since the turn of the century and in relation to transnational Afro-descendant performers such as Josephine Baker and Florence Mills, who enjoyed considerable success in the USA and abroad. In addition to press sources, this article analyses a small number of extant revue scripts, including song lyrics and stage directions, to illuminate the engagement of these theatrical companies, and their black female performers, with transnational performance trends and modernist aesthetics in the long 1920s. Furthermore, it seeks to illustrate the assertive cosmopolitanism strategically adopted by these women. It addresses the following questions: How do we interpret the fact that these women felt obliged to position themselves in relation to a global or imported blackness? And how did they interpret and internalize the politics of their situation and self-presentation? Furthermore, what can these Brazilian examples contribute to discussions of the global political consequences of a transnationalized black performance culture in the inter-war period? This article illustrates how, in addition to participating in and contributing to the performative celebration of modern, racialized womanhood, Rosa Negra and Déo Costa also put this new vision of black female subjectivity into practice in their everyday lives, defiantly challenging social, gender, and class hierarchies, debating the issue of intellectual property, in Costa's case, and race relations, in the case of Rosa Negra. It argues that they demonstrate an astute awareness of intersectionality *avant la lettre*.

**Marcos Steuernagel, “*Domínio Público: Performing the Brazilian Conservative Turn*”**

On 29 March 2018, four performers opened one of the most anticipated productions of the 2018 Festival de Curitiba, the largest theatre festival in Brazil. *Domínio Público* had been commissioned by curators Márcio Abreu and Guilherme Weber, from four artists who had been at the center of controversial events throughout 2017. Wagner Schwarz’s *La bête* had been the target of vigorous attacks and accusations of pedophilia, after a video in which a child escorted by her mother touching the naked performer during a presentation at the São Paulo Modern Art Museum was widely disseminated online. Renata Carvalho had her play *O evangelho segundo Jesus, rainha do céu* censored and attacked in several cities across Brazil for performing Jesus Christ as a trans woman. Maikon K had been arrested by the police for nudity during a performance of his piece *DNA de Dan*. Elisabete Finger, the mother of the child who was allowed to touch Schwarz in the infamous video, and a choreographer and performance artist in her own right, delivers the final monologue. *Domínio Público* thus serves as a focal point to analyze the current conservative turn. Right-wing groups such as the Movimento Brasil Livre (MBL) have been instrumental in mobilizing protests, specifically targeting advances made in the fields of gender politics, human rights, and culture. In this essay I argue that these mobilizations operate by foreclosing the possibility of politics and replacing it with a constant state of policing, by attacking not only specific modes of knowing and being, but difference itself.

**Sarah J. Townsend, “The Siren’s Song; or, When an Amazonian Iara Sang Opera (in Italian) on a Belle Époque Stage”**

On May 4, 1895, an unusual opera debuted at the Theatro da Paz in the Brazilian city of Belém. Based on the Amazonian myth of the Iara, a water nymph who lures men to their death with promises of eternal love and riches, *Jara* was composed by the local musician José Cândido da Gama Malcher, who adapted the libretto from a poem by the Italian explorer and ethnographer Ermanno Stradelli. Like most operas staged at the Theatro da Paz, it was sung in Italian and performed by a mostly Italian cast—though its protagonist appears to have been Russian and it was notable for its incorporation of words from the indigenous *nheenghatu* language. This essay approaches *Jara* and its original staging as emblematic of the Amazon’s integration into international commodity circuits during the rubber boom of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although her origins are disputed, it was around this time when the Iara was embraced among intellectuals and writers; during the same period, the wealth of the rubber boom helped fuel the importation of opera to the two economic capitals of Manaus and Belém. To begin, I trace the literary precursors to Gama Malcher’s opera, arguing that Iara’s status as an embodiment of the Amazonian aura hinges on an auditory illusion that makes her voice appear to sing out of a timeless indigenous past. The ingenuity of *Jara*, I go on to show, is to transform the myth into a dramatization of the power of the operatic voice. But opera is not *only* a vocal art, and in my discussion of the performance, I show how an attention to its theatrical elements reveals that like the figure of the Iara, opera is tied to the very mechanisms of international capital from which it promises an escape.