The Palgrave Handbook of the History of Women on Stage
It has become a commonplace that women began performing on stage after the Restoration in 1660. This is, of course, an Anglo-centric view of the theatre and one that foregrounds a particular type of performance—that of the professional English playhouses. Nevertheless, it is a dominant narrative. If you type ‘first professional actresses’ into Google, you get a series of articles about Margaret Hughes, widely considered to have been ‘the first professional actress on the English stage’.

I must admit that until I began talking to Jan Sewell about this book, I hadn’t thought a great deal about whether women had performed in other contexts before this time, either in England or elsewhere. I vaguely knew that actresses from visiting European troupes had appeared on the English stage earlier in the 1600s and that they had been booed off the stage, but I wasn’t aware as to when they had been permitted on the stages of France, Spain and Italy. I certainly wasn’t aware of a tradition dating back as far as Ancient Greece and Rome, and I hadn’t thought in any detail about amateur, religious or private performances, or about performances elsewhere in the world.

This volume has the potential to change this often narrow focus and to illuminate an under-examined history of women performing in a range of places and settings. It is an impressive undertaking, offering a broad view that encompasses accounts of women performers in Europe, America, Japan, Russia, India and Africa. By taking a wide definition of ‘the stage’, it is able to explore a plethora of styles and performance venues.

As a former actress, now an academic, one of the most welcome things for me about this much needed and significant contribution to the history
of the theatre is the way in which it brings scholars and theatre practitioners together, drawing a variety of narratives, some rarely written about, into dialogue with one another. Here, we have a treasure trove of stories about some fascinating groups and individuals—some famous, some infamous and some uncelebrated. We have historical accounts and tales from the horse's mouth.

This is a timely volume, coming into being as the campaign group ERA (Equal Representation for Actresses) points out the gender imbalance on our stages, argues that actresses are undervalued and calls for 50:50 representation by 2020; as the first-ever company of women of colour perform in a Shakespeare play at Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre; and as Loughborough University announces the first major study of its kind into gender inequality in the theatre. At a time when women on stage are demanding equal recognition, this volume recognises and celebrates them in all their infinite variety.

Including chapters on performers of a range of ages, experiences, racial backgrounds, physicalities and sexualities, this volume acknowledges the varied and significant contribution of women to the stages of the world.

Stratford-upon-Avon, UK

Abigail Rokison-Woodall

October 2018
Preface

As with many of the most interesting, rewarding things in life, the genesis of this volume was almost completely accidental. While working as an Associate Editor on the RSC’s Complete Works of Shakespeare, I found myself becoming increasingly irritated by the convention of putting the women’s roles at the bottom of cast lists and did my best to remedy this whenever possible. I started to wonder about the origins of the practice though and decided to write a slim volume: The Cultural History of Cast Lists, subtitled Dramatis Personae Non Gratae. I checked out the dramatis personae of hundreds of individual plays, starting with ancient Greek and Roman play texts—as it happens, when cast lists were included in these early texts, they used what seems a more logical system of ‘cast in order of appearance’.

I decided that in order to get to the bottom of the problem, I needed to consult a history of women on stage that went right back to the beginnings of drama, only to discover that no such volume existed. There are any number of excellent books on individual actresses, as well as important collections and theoretical analyses of later performers and their work but even such estimable volumes as the Cambridge Companion to the Actress (2007), edited by Maggie B. Gale and John Stokes, starts its account with the appearance of professional actresses on the London stage in 1660 and hence was unable to answer my question. I mentioned this in passing to my editor at the time at Palgrave, Ben Doyle, who, with a real editor’s eye, instantly spotted what he termed ‘a gap in the market’. This volume is an optimistic, but inevitably inadequate, attempt to fill this gap.

We did our best to attract contributors from as many different countries and areas of research as possible, with limited success in some cases—China,
with its long and distinguished tradition of performance, is a notable and regrettable absence from this volume. Many other cultures are represented minimally by a single essay—the collection includes only one chapter from the whole continent of Africa, for example. As editors, we were caught up in the dilemma of an ambitious desire to cover as much material as possible against the practical limits of time and space of any book, however generously proportioned. We should perhaps make it clear though that it was never our intention to exclude men from the pool of contributors; the absence of male contributors is a sad reflection of the fact that what have become known as ‘actress studies’ are still seen as an academic niche area.

This project has been nearly five years in the making, and I would like to take this opportunity of offering my appreciation and gratitude to the many friends and colleagues who made this ambitious volume possible, in particular my co-editor, Clare Smout, who encouraged me from the start and who has worked so diligently over the last three years to make the book the best it could possibly be, and my original co-editor Abigail Rokison-Woodall, who had to step down but was instrumental in the initial planning and organisation and has kindly written the Foreword to this volume; both Abigail and Clare have backgrounds in theatre as well as academia and were enthusiastic promoters of the importance of including practitioners as well as scholars among the contributors. We would also like to thank our wonderfully supportive editors at Palgrave, Vicky Peters and Vicky Bates, and most especially our thirty-six brilliant authors whose participation was an act of amazing faith and who have delivered such an extraordinary, eclectic collection of essays which we hope readers will find fascinating and engaging and enjoy reading.

Stratford-upon-Avon, UK

November 2018

Jan Sewell
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Cheryl Black is Chancellor’s Professor and Curators’ Distinguished Professor Emerita at the University of Missouri. She is a Fellow of the College of Fellows of the American Theatre and an Executive Board Member of the International Susan Glaspell Society. She is the author of The Women of Provincetown, 1915–1922 and co-editor of Experiments in Democracy: Interracial and Multicultural Exchanges in American Theatre, 1912–1945 and Modern American Drama: Playwriting in the 1990s. She has contributed essays to Theatre Survey, Theatre History Studies, New England Theatre Journal, the Journal of American Drama and Theatre, Theatre Annual, the Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism, and a number of edited collections.

Jo Broadwood was a co-founder of Women and Theatre, Birmingham, in the 1980s. Since then, she has worked as a facilitator and designer of interventions supporting social change and conflict transformation; this work has included senior roles in the youth sector and as a local government adviser,
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Catherine Clifford is Assistant Professor of English at Graceland University, where she teaches courses on ‘British’ literatures, Shakespeare, and Gender and Sexuality studies. Her Christopher Marlowe chronology was published in *Christopher Marlowe in Context* (2013), and her chapter on Shakespeare and Fletcher’s *All is True* and Whitehall Palace in *Performances at Court in Shakespeare’s Era* (2019). She is co-founder of Summer Shakespeare at Graceland, a Shakespeare festival and repertory training programme in Lamoni, Iowa.

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Janice Connolly is a founder member and Artistic Director of Women & Theatre (womenandtheatre.co.uk). In 2018, she was awarded a BEM for Services to Community Theatre. Her freelance acting career includes TV roles in *Coronation Street* and Peter Kay’s *Phoenix Nights*, stage parts in *Tartuffe* and *Anita & Me* (Birmingham REP), *A Taste of Honey* (New Vic Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent) and pantomimes with Lily Savage at Manchester
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**Anne Duncan** is Associate Professor in the Department of Classics and Religious Studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She is the author of *Performance and Identity in the Classical World* (2006) and articles on Greek and Roman performance issues. She is currently at work on two projects: a monograph called *Command Performance: Tyranny and Theater in the Ancient World* and a textbook on Roman spectacle.


**Bernardine Evaristo** is the author of nine books of fiction and verse fiction that explore aspects of the African diaspora: past, present, real and imagined. Her numerous other writings include short stories, essays, poetry, literary
criticism, writing for the stage and BBC radio. In 2019 she was joint winner (with Margaret Atwood) of the Man Booker Prize for her novel, *Girl, Woman, Other*. A literary critic, editor and activist, she has also founded several literature inclusion projects. She has judged and won many awards for her writing. She is Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and its Vice Chair, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, a Fellow of the English Association and Professor of Creative Writing at Brunel University London. She was appointed an MBE in the Queen’s Birthday Honours’ List in 2009.

**Clare L. E. Foster** writes, directs and teaches theatre and film. Educated at Cambridge, Harvard, and UCLA film school, she was a film-maker based in Los Angeles and is currently a British Academy Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Cambridge. She recently founded the ‘Re-’ Interdisciplinary Network (http://www.crassh.cam.ac.uk/programmes/re-interdisciplinary-network). Her interdisciplinary Cambridge Ph.D. about British performance traditions of Greek plays won the Hare Prize. Recent work includes ‘Recognition Capital’ (forthcoming); ’Wilde and the Emergence of Literary Drama’ in *Oscar Wilde and the Classics* (2018); and 'Afterword: Repetition as Recognition' in *On Repetition: Writing, Performance, Art* (2016).

**Emma Frankland** is an award-winning performance and theatre artist working in the UK and internationally. She studied at the University of Hull and at Central School of Speech & Drama. Her work focuses on honesty, action and a playfully destructive DIY aesthetic, often using materials with different transformative properties—such as water, clay, earth, salt and ink—to create strong visual imagery which is messy, intense and celebratory. Recent work has focused on the ‘None of Us is Yet a Robot’ project, published as *None of Us is Yet a Robot—Five Performances on Gender Identity and the Politics of Transition* (2019).

**Anna Furse** was an award-winning theatre director and writer before becoming a full-time academic. As Professor of Theatre and Performance at Goldsmiths, University of London, she co-directs the Centre of the Body. Her academic research has delved into eating disorders, (sub)fertility and reproduction, anatomy, hysterias and the medical gaze. She is a frequent international conference speaker and workshop leader, whose publications include book chapters, plays and an edited anthology *Theatre in Pieces: Poetics, Politics and Interdisciplinary Collaboration*. Her texts on hysteria, *Performance Nerves*, are due to be published in 2019.

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Tracy Irish is an experienced teacher who has worked with a wide range of schools and theatre companies in the UK and internationally. She works regularly as a practitioner with the Royal Shakespeare Company and as a visiting lecturer at the Universities of Birmingham and Warwick. Her research interests focus on the value of theatre in the development of cultural intelligence in an increasingly intercultural world. Her practice employs theatre-based approaches, combined with complex texts, to develop communication skills and social cognition in young people.

Amy Jephta is from Cape Town and works variously as a film-maker, playwright, screenwriter and director. A former lecturer at the University of Cape Town’s Drama Department, she now serves as chairperson for

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**Mary Luckhurst** is Professor of Theatre and Performance and Head of the School of Arts at Bristol University. She has been awarded a number of distinguished professorial fellowships, including the universities of CUNY, Melbourne, Sydney and Oxford. Her many books include Caryl Churchill (2015), Playing the Real: Interviews with Actors (2010), Theatre and Human Rights (2015) and Theatre and Ghosts (2014). She is currently working on a book on contemporary actresses and celebrity.

**Susan Marshall** is a British costume designer and design historian based in Italy. She lectures on ‘20th Century Fashion’ at Milan Polytechnic in the Fashion Institute of Technology (New York) Department and is currently undertaking a Ph.D. in Theatre and Performance at Goldsmiths, University of London, exploring the pivotal role of scenographic costume in performance. She has worked with Donatella Massimilla and the actors of the San Vittore Globe Theatre since the summer of 2015, creating a ‘dressing up box’ with costume elements that can be mixed and matched in different ways in the tradition of travelling theatre. After many years’ experience working in universities, schools and small theatre companies, she has developed a creative and poetic approach to designing on a limited budget.
Jane Milling is Associate Professor at the University of Exeter, UK. Her interest in popular and participatory involvement in making theatre and its role in political and civic life has led to articles on Restoration popular performers and women dramatists, including an edition of Susanna Centlivre’s *Basset Table* (2009). Her recent work in the modern period looks at the twentieth-century amateur theatre movement, with Nicholson and Holdsworth, *The Ecologies of Amateur Theatre* (2018).

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Sue Parrish has been Artistic Director of Sphinx Theatre Company since 1990. The company was founded in 1973 as the Women’s Theatre Group. She is a co-founder of the Women’s Playhouse Trust formed in 1980. She is a long-term feminist campaigner, associated with organisations such as the Conference of Women Theatre Directors and Administrators. She gained a B.A. (Hons) in English Literature from University College London and is an Associate of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Sara Reimers gained her Ph.D. in ‘Shakespeare, Gender and Casting’ from the Department of Drama, Theatre and Dance at Royal Holloway, University of London, where she subsequently worked as a Senior Teaching Fellow. She is also a director and dramaturg working on the London fringe and regularly collaborates with Lazarus Theatre Company.

Jami Rogers trained at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA) and holds an M.A. and a Ph.D. from the Shakespeare Institute, the University of Birmingham. Previously, she worked for PBS and at WGBH-TV/Boston on PBS’s television series *Masterpiece Theatre*. She created the British Black and Asian Shakespeare Performance Database as part of the AHRC-funded Multicultural Shakespeare project at the University of Warwick. She is currently an Honorary Fellow at the University of Warwick and sits on the boards of both The Act for Change Project and The Diversity School. Her monograph *British Black and Asian Shakespeareans, 1966–2018: Integrating Shakespeare* will be published in 2020.
Margaret Rose is Associate Professor at the University of Milan, where she teaches British Theatre Studies and Performance. She has published in the areas of contemporary British Theatre, Theatre Translation Studies and Shakespeare rewritings. She is co-editor of *Shakespeare, Forever Young* (2017) and *Shakespeare, our Personal Trainer* (2018). She is also a dramatist whose recent plays explore Shakespeare and the natural world in garden and villa settings: *Shakespeare in a Herb Garden* (2015), *Shakespeare and Harlequin, Ltd.* (2016), *A Walk in Shakespeare’s Garden* (2017).


Elizabeth Schafer is Professor of Drama and Theatre Studies at Royal Holloway, University of London. She has written performance histories of *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Twelfth Night* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. She has published extensively on the work of women theatre directors; the early history of the Royal Ballet; Australian theatre; and the life and work of Lilian Baylis. She edited *The City Wit* for Richard Brome online and is editing *The City Wit* and *The Northern Lass* for the edition of complete Brome. In 2013, she ran ‘The Mariam Project’ to mark the 400th anniversary of the publication of Elizabeth Cary’s *The Tragedy of Mariam*. For 2016, to mark the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare’s death, she developed a ‘new’ play by Shakespeare entitled *Margaret of Anjou*. Most recently she has written *Theatre & Christianity* for Palgrave Macmillan’s *Theatre &…* series.

Jenny Sealey has been Artistic Director of Graeae, the UK’s leading disabled-led theatre company, since 1997. She has pioneered a new theatrical language and aesthetics of artistic access experimenting with bilingual BSL and English, pre-recorded BSL, creative captioning, and in ear/live audio description methods. She has directed a wealth of extant and new plays on a diversity of stages and sites. She works nationally and internationally to share and continue to innovate the accessible ethos within performance and use this to form a global cohort of D/deaf and disabled artists to challenge and change the perception of possibility and drive the cultural shift for an equal playing field.
Jan Sewell teaches Humanities at the Open University. She was Associate Editor of *The RSC Complete Works of Shakespeare* (2007) and the individual editions of Shakespeare’s plays for the RSC for which she also wrote stage histories (2008–2012); she co-edited *William Shakespeare and Others: Collaborative Plays* (2013) and *The Plays of Shakespeare’s Company* (forthcoming). She is currently working on a cultural history of cast lists—*Dramatis Personae non Gratae*.

Clare Smout is a Teaching Fellow at the University of Birmingham. She also teaches Shakespeare and Early Modern Writing at Staffordshire University and for the University of Cambridge’s Institute of Continuing Education. Her current research focuses on sibling relationships in Early Modern drama. Academic publications include journal articles and theatre reviews, plus a chapter on Mariah Gale for the *Routledge Companion to Actors’ Theatre*. As a director and dramaturg specialising in new writing, she worked for the Stephen Joseph Theatre, Harrogate Theatre, Eastern Angles, OTTC and many other new writing groups. She recently adapted and directed *King Lear* for performance by primary students in Hong Kong.

Rose Whyman is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Drama and Theatre Arts at the University of Birmingham. Her current research is into actor training and Russian theatre history and publications include *The Stanislavsky System of Acting: Legacy and Influence in Modern Performance* (2008); *Anton Chekhov* (2010); and *Stanislavski: The Basics* (2013). She is currently working on a book entitled *Performance in Revolutionary Russia: The Art and Science of Biomechanics* and also an article focusing on the Russian and Soviet actress, Serafima Birman.

Polly Wright was a founder member of the feminist company Women and Theatre and lectured at Birmingham University for 13 years. She has written and presented on the use of the arts in health and education including an international webinar for the Royal Society of Public Health in 2017. She set up the Hearth Centre (*www.thehearthcentre.org.uk*) in 2003 and was shortlisted for a MIND media mental health award for her play *Revolving Door* on suicide prevention. She has written ten plays which have been performed professionally and has published six short stories.

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This volume chronicles and celebrates the courage, determination and achievements, despite the multiple obstacles put in their way, of women on stage across the ages and around the globe. Our intention is not to provide a comprehensive history of the topic—such an ambition would be doomed from the start—but rather to provide testimony to the work of women performers at different times and in different spaces and places—a kaleidoscope or collage, a series of snapshots of women performers and their work. Our hope is that not only will the individual chapters prove of interest in themselves but their juxtapositions will prove illuminating and fruitful. We are proud to be bringing together both academics and practitioners—distinguished scholars plus younger colleagues already producing cutting-edge research at the start of their journeys, experienced practitioners looking back on their careers and the new generation looking ahead to the future.

Aristotle argues in the *Poetics* (4) that mimesis (μιμησία), meaning mimicry, representation or play-acting, is an instinct that comes naturally to human beings from childhood and, furthermore, that it is this ability that enables us to develop and begin to learn about the world. Although he was
writing at a time when the stage was seen as a male preserve, Aristotle here
uses the word *anthropos* (ἄνθρωπος), signifying ‘human-being’, rather than
the gender-specific alternative *aner* (ἄνηρ). It is the contention of this book
that *mimesis* does indeed come as naturally to women as to men and that,
despite cultural and social convention, and any number of prohibitions and
exhortations to the contrary, women have contrived to exercise their tal-
ents and perform in the greatest possible variety of places and contexts at all
times.

There are, of course, many books already available on the subject of
women on stage, notably Rosamond Gilder’s ambitious but now dated
1931 study *Enter the Actress*, which covers ancient Greece to the eighteenth
century, and Sandra Richards’ more recent and more specific *The Rise of the
English Actress* (1993), as well as books on individual periods such as Julia
Swindells and David Taylor’s excellent *Oxford Handbook to Georgian Theatre*
(2014). From the late 1960s onwards, feminist theatre scholars have pro-
duced important collections such as Sue-Ellen Case’s *Feminism and Theatre*
(1988), as well as theoretical analyses such as Elaine Aston’s exploration of
the feminist concept of ‘women hidden from history’ in *An Introduction
to Feminism and Theatre* (1995, 35). In *The Routledge Reader in Gender
and Performance* (1998), Lizbeth Goodman and Jane de Gay explore what
Katherine Cockin (1998, 21) calls the ‘dynamics of history-making and
-forgetting’. Tracy C. Davis’s seminal study, *Actresses as Working Women*
(1991), examines the place of women working in a profession dominated
by men, while others have reclaimed the lost histories of women performers
such as the work of the Actresses’ Franchise League, founded in 1908, or
the Pioneer Players, formed in 1911; there have also been numerous biog-
raphies of distinguished individual performers. Most recently, the excellent
2007 *Cambridge Companion to the Actress*, edited by Maggie B. Gale and
John Stokes, provides stimulating investigations into actresses in Europe
and North America from 1660 onwards, while the 2005 collection of essays
edited by Peter Parolin and Pamela Allen Brown *Women Players in England,
1500–1660: Beyond the All-Male Stage*, investigates the period immedi-
ately before that, challenging us to reconsider our traditional assumptions about
the extent of female performance in England before 1660.

None of these authors, however, have been ambitious or crazy enough to
attempt the chronological and geographical scope of the present volume,
which stretches from ancient Greece to present-day Australasia via the
United States, Soviet Russia, Europe, India, South Africa and Japan. While
we would have loved to make it even more wide-ranging (China, with its
distinguished performance history is a regrettable absence), it proved an
over-ambitious aspiration to find authors across six continents interested in contributing chapters in English to a book to be printed only in Anglophone countries. In addition, there are inevitably more chapters chronicling the ‘modern’ era—the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries—thanks in part to the increasing variety and sophistication of technology and the infinitely greater quantity and quality of archive material for researchers to work with, but in part also to the fact that these centuries saw opportunities for women around the world expanding personally, professionally, politically and legally.

The book’s chronological organisation was chosen for simplicity and ease of access; it also has the advantage of bringing together parallel or contrasting experiences in different parts of the world (as in Parts V and VII, discussing the early twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, respectively) or of focusing tightly on a set of specific interactions (as in Part VI, which includes interlocking chapters on the feminist movement in late twentieth-century British Theatre). Chronology, however, in this context is not an exact science: there are connections and overlaps between the Japanese and Greek chapters despite the section break that divides them, while several of the practitioners of the late twentieth century are still famously active today.

Furthermore, the volume’s organisational structure was never intended to invite a teleological interpretation of women’s progress in the performing arts, what Maggie Gale and Viv Gardner (2004, 5) have called ‘a “rise” from absence to presence, from mute to “motormouth”, from prostitute to artist’. Although it is possible to chart an increasingly high profile for women performers around the world and across the centuries—a movement in from the margins towards centre-stage—this movement takes place at different speeds and at different times in different places and it is often a matter of one step forward and two steps back. For instance, despite the welcome fact that female practitioners are now frequently to be found holding prestigious positions in the academic world, respected for their insights, knowledge and technical skills, nevertheless social media responses to women in the public eye show that in the wider world they are still frequently regarded with hostility and contempt, even in the so-called progressive West; female performers’ continued lack of parity with men in terms of power and remuneration—not to mention the #MeToo movement—indicates that progress is perhaps slower and more superficial than many hoped.

The chapters that follow are immensely varied in focus, content and location; yet reading contributions from different periods across the globe reveals certain recurrent patterns. Religion of all kinds is a frequent factor in the early stages of drama in many societies, both positively in terms of giving women initial opportunities to perform through involvement in ritual celebrations
Jan Sewell and Clare Smout

(often in a single-sex context) and negatively in providing moral justifications for subsequently excluding them from drama as it became more mainstream, public and secular in content. Women performers at different times and in very different places found themselves facing similar problems, not least the ever-underlying assumption that female performers were almost certainly ‘women of easy virtue’, if not actual prostitutes. Frequently they were excluded from the ‘legitimate’ drama entirely; at other times they were included only to provide glamour or sex-appeal. What is notable is the way that so many found (and continue to find) similar solutions to these problems, despite the widely differing socio-historical, religious and political contexts in which they worked. Apart from a few high-profile moments of rivalry, there seems to be a solid pattern of co-operation and support between female performers and a tradition of mentoring younger colleagues. The life of an actor is almost always a struggle; that of a female performer even more so. Repeatedly the women that survived in this profession have been multi-skilled, not only in terms of the range of their artistic talents and expertise, but also in combining organisational and managerial skills. Many have written their own material, frequently in the form of one-woman shows, and many have been entrepreneurs, establishing and running their own companies.

Often, however, the strategies women adopted meant operating at the margins, frequently in spheres scarcely recognised as ‘stages’ by male critics, so that, having been excluded from the major roles and major theatres, they were often rendered further invisible by being excluded from criticism and the historical record. Increasingly twenty-first-century scholarship and criticism is attempting to restore this imbalance, redefining what is meant by ‘stage’ and performance. This volume has excluded women working ‘on stage’ in the worlds of ballet, opera and most other musical contexts, but we have tried to extend the definition of ‘on stage’ in other ways to include such areas as Elizabeth I’s participation in tiltyard ceremonies and Anna of Denmark’s involvement in court masques, the performance art practised by 1960s–1990s America and twenty-first-century trans actors, even the wall paintings of ancient Rome.

It is not only the concepts of ‘history’ and ‘stage’ which are challenged by this volume; the definition of ‘women’ itself raises questions. Chapter 4, on ancient Rome, queries the post-Christian concept of gender as binary, arguing that gender was seen by Greeks and Romans as a spectrum, while the closing chapter analyses the contribution made by trans women to the world’s drama, their fight for equality with cis women and their demand for personal acknowledgement and authentic representation on stage.

Finally, terminology: ‘actor or actress?’—a common dilemma. We have generally opted for ‘women performers’, but left individual contributors