

International Symposium
The Politics of Being on Stage

University of Music and Theatre/
Hochschule für Musik und Theater „Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy“
Leipzig, Germany
11 – 14 March, 2010

The symposium is focused on the central issue of contemporary theatre and performance studies and training—that is, the issue of the actor/performer and the question of his or her performative negotiation of the normative structures defining what it means to be on stage in a specific site and in a specific historical moment. Actor/Performer-training schools as well as rehearsal practices imbue the performers not only with aesthetic values, but also with specific notions of understanding of time, space, and bodies. Whether or not explicit or self-reflexive, these long-term collective artistic processes engage, with the help of the actor, in questions of what it means to be a human being; what it means to be on stage, to perform; what it means to remember; and what it means to be „present“ (and for whom).

One of the aims of this symposium is to discuss the entanglement of the actors/performers in a variety of normalizing practices in order to explore, with the help of specific examples, their ability to transform or rupture these practices in a performance. The focus of this symposium calls for, among other things, a critical reflection on the relationship between theatre discourse and theatre practice as much as on a rethinking of the traditional dualisms of *techné* and *physis* on the one hand and *techné* and *epistémé* on the other hand.

The organizer of the symposium would like to pose a series of questions that they would like the select group of international scholars to address in their presentations:

- How do aesthetics and politics intersect on the performer's body discursively and in non-discursive practices? What are the bodily regimes inherent in performer training and performance practices?
- How do different performer training schools or rehearsal practices transmit, rupture or expose normative notions of time, space and bodies in artistic practices, scientific discourse and/or in everyday life?
- In what ways is the ontology of the actor (his or her modes of being on stage, the inherent concept of what it means to perform) interrelated with dominant aesthetic discourses as well as with aspects of cultural memory and collective history/identity?
- How have specific performances of actors become politicized in the past? What appropriating strategies can be discerned in the discourses engulfing performance practices? What are the methodological issues at stake historiographically?
- What historical examples might shed light on the intersection of actor training or rehearsal practices with a specific body politic and its strategies of performing and disseminating abstract notions of nation, community, history and culture via bodily practices?

Concept:

Prof. Dr. Anja Klöck
Hochschule für Musik und Theater Leipzig, Germany
e-mail: kloeck[at]hmt-leipzig.de

Contact:

Projekt „Systemische Körper?“ (DFG)
Joe Paul Kienast, M.A.
Dittrichring 21
04105 Leipzig, Germany
e-mail: j.kienast[at]hmt-leipzig.de | phone: +49 (0)341 2144 928 | fax: +49 (0)341 2144 902