Editorial

This June 2016 issue of *Early Theatre* is the first to appear in electronic format only. Distributing the journal solely online means that we are again able to publish content that includes high-quality colour images, a feature that had become financially impossible as part of our previous print distribution model. This *Early Theatre* issue is also the first to be made available immediately upon publication through our new partnership with Project Muse. Dissemination through this database — in addition to other channels such as ITER, EBSCO, and JSTOR — makes our authors' work more accessible than ever before to readers worldwide. *Early Theatre*'s continued participation in Cross-Ref's digital referencing system also provides our authors with persistent, reliable links to their peer-reviewed scholarly work in the form of Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs). DOI citations by other scholars direct more traffic to our contributors' work by leading straight to articles on the *Early Theatre* site (and hence avoiding problems with broken URL links). Recent evidence of the international impact achieved by our contributors includes this year's honourable mention Renaissance Society of America RSA-TCP Article Prize in Digital Renaissance Research awarded to Misha Teramura for his essay 'The Admiral's "Vayvode" of 1598'. Readers will find this outstanding piece in *Early Theatre* 18.1, June 2015 (http://dx.doi.org/10.12745/et.18.1.1168).

This current issue begins with Emma Maggie Solberg's witty interrogation of the term 'mystery' in its theatrical sense. Ever since the Victorian scholar (and forger) J.P. Collier asserted this term's illegitimacy, the notion of 'mystery' plays has seemed bankrupt, yet for the field of medieval studies, Solberg shows, 'mystery' offers more critical utility than scholarly consensus has tended to allow. Brett Hirsch similarly challenges received notions, investigating how Jews were portrayed on stage in early modern English drama. Paying particular attention to Robert Wilson's *The Three Ladies of London,* Hirsch asks how Elizabethans would have recognized Wilson's character Gerontus as a Jew and, by extension, what Gerontus can teach us about traditions of portraying Jewishness that continue in later plays.

Articles by John Warrick and David Nicol take up the religious and political subtexts of two secular history plays. Warrick's analysis of Shakespeare's *1 Henry VI* reveals traces of Christ's crucifixion, harrowing of hell, and resurrection as depicted in late medieval drama. Talbot's secular martyrdom reads quite

differently, he shows, once we recognize its imbrication with Catholic devotional practices that had been subject to attack and reform in Elizabethan England. Nicol's essay suggests that like Shakespeare's *2 Henry VI,* the anonymously authored lost play *The Peaceable King, or the Lord Mendall* centres on tensions between peace-loving monarchs and their rebellious subjects; its revival in 1623 may have been an attempt to stage the gap between James I's pacific foreign policy and the views of his more bellicose subjects.

Two articles focused on early Shakespearean comedy and tragedy round out the issue. Boldly 'outing' the 'generic skeleton' in 'Petruchio's closet', Philip Collington's essay on *Taming of the Shrew* reveals this play's participation in a subgenre of 'braggart courtship' that hearkens back to Plautus and continues in sixteenth-century English plays by Udall, Lyly, and Peele. Collington's reading of Petruchio raises new questions not only about this braggart soldier-lover but also about the range of comic cultural resonances made possible by his marriage to another well-known character type, the shrew. Lovers also form the central focus of Rachel Prusko's essay on youth, privacy, and the language of 'teen-speak' in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet.* Defined by passion, secrecy, and guarded interiority, Romeo and Juliet present an uncannily familiar, almost modern picture of adolescence, Prusko contends; private spaces and private languages made possible through the play's early modern staging practices, however, troubled the ways that Shakespeare's own contemporaries understood the subjectivity of young people.

This issue's book reviews include coverage of two major new resources for book and theatre historians: Anne Lancashire and David J. Parkinson's long-awaited REED volumes on Civic London until 1558, and a two-volume edition of early modern dramatic paratexts edited by Sonia Massai and the late Thomas L. Berger. The latter work is a fitting testament to Tom Berger's illustrious career as a critic and editor of early modern drama, and we are pleased to honour his memory. The other works reviewed in this issue represent a wide range of approaches to early performance cultures, covering topics as diverse as medieval staging conventions, the politics of the court masque, manuscript cultures of extracting, and the figure of the stage clown.

Finally, we welcome two new members of the board: Paul Budra and David Dean.

THE EDITORS