

# Editorial

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As we announced in our June issue, this *Early Theatre* issue is the last that will appear in print. From this point forward, we will be an online-only journal. This occasion is a momentous one in terms of how far the journal has come in its eighteen years of history.

Our first three years were difficult in production terms, working with the now-defunct McMaster University Press, but we gained a superb cover design out of the experience. The first issue (1998) began what became a yearly and now much anticipated event: the Issues in Review section, a series of short essays offering a close study of a particular trending topic. And we achieved our first special issue (2000), *The York Cycle Then and Now* (co-edited by Alexandra Johnston and Helen Ostovich), based on the 1998 performance and colloquium at the University of Toronto (Victoria). That special issue was reprinted to meet demand for classroom copies.

For our fourth issue (2001), we moved to join forces with the Centre for Renaissance and Reformation Studies and, with the assistance of its then director William Bowen, won our first Social Sciences and Humanities Research Board of Canada grant to support the journal, under the proviso that we move to two issues a year. We had already added a book review editor for volume 4 (Karen Bamford) and an associate editor (Gloria Betcher), who oversaw the uploading of the digital archive for the *REED Newsletter*, *Early Theatre's* predecessor, and for the gradual online life of *Early Theatre on Iter*, soon to be followed by other online distributors disseminating our work. We now have a desirable string of such distributors (called 'aggregators' in the business), including our latest partnerships for worldwide circulation: JSTOR and Project Muse.

Since volume 5 (2002), we have printed Book Reviews in the June issue, and Issues in Review in the December issue. As our readers may remember, Gloria also edited volume 6 (2003) as a special issue in two parts entitled *Performance, Politics, and Culture in the Southwest of Britain, 1350–1642*. By volume 9 (2006), Roberta Barker had taken over the job of book review editor and continued this work up to volume 13 (2010), when Peter Kirwan accepted the position. Luckily, Roberta has continued to stay on as a board member. We also featured another important special issue guest-edited by Mary Polito and Amy Scott in 14.2 (2015), *Circles and Circuits: Drama and*

*Politics in the Midlands*, followed swiftly by Peter Parolin's special issue in 15.1 (2012), *Access and Contestation: Women's Performance in Early Modern England, Italy, France, and Spain*.

We have been through many publisher changes over the years, but have felt most settled with the growing Toronto-based company Becker Associates. Thanks to Adam Becker, the physical quality of the print journal improved, alongside the impressive quality of content we've been able to maintain, as this issue (among many) demonstrates.

We have notable new work in medieval drama streaming in, thanks perhaps to the energy of our new board members Theresa Coletti and Jill Stevenson. This final paper issue includes a study of the acoustics of pageant wagons in York by Mariana Lopez, and a critical reading of N-Town's apocryphal 'Marriage of Mary and Joseph' by Frank Napolitano. Early modern drama continues to be a strong focus of this journal: this issue includes an argument about Middleton's incorporation of court masque into his plays for London's commercial theatres by Caroline Baird, and a striking bibliographical history of the appearance of dramatis personae lists in manuscript plays by Matteo Pangallo. Riki Miyoshi's note addresses the longstanding uncertainty about whether the prologue and epilogue of Killigrew's *The Parson's Wedding* originated with the 1664 performance or emerged with the play's staging in 1672.

Our imminent shift to solely online publication and distribution, beginning with 2016's volume 19, will allow us to continue the tradition of producing a high-quality journal while adding several features. We will be able to include more colour images, which in print have become too costly to publish. We will gain further distribution worldwide through our aggregators and the new digital cross-reference system (Digital Object Indicators, or DOIs) that we now employ. The impact of our contributors' work will become more extensive than ever before. That fact is especially exciting when we look at 18.2's Issues in Review on 'Early Modern Women Theatre Makers', with essays by a splendid team of theatre academics and practitioners, contributed to and coordinated by Elizabeth Schafer.

Finally, the editors offer their congratulations to the winners of the essay prizes for volumes 16 and 17 (see p. 9), Stephen K. Wright, Andrew Albin, and Maura Giles-Watson, and to the runners-up for standing out among such stiff competition: Louise Rayment, Eleanor Lowe, and Brett Hirsch. We also express gratitude to our team of judges for making tough decisions and for writing the commendations that accompany the prizes.

And now, a formal good-bye to paper — and hello to more trees!

THE EDITORS