

## Editorial

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*Early Theatre* has always sought to encourage new thinking about old plays and performances. The contents of this issue certainly forward this project, with all of the articles calling attention to topics critics have too long overlooked. The Croxton *Play of the Sacrament* fascinates because of its staged miracles, but Cameron Hunt McNabb's article focuses on the verbal elements of this most spectacle-packed of medieval plays. She thus demonstrates that the sound of the play is central to its representation of the miracles both of religious conversion and of transubstantiation. On a related topic, Hristomir A. Stanev argues that Ben Jonson's concerns with language in his plays and poetry, and even his antipathy for public stages, connect to early modern anxieties about what happens when speech turns into noise and when noise causes speech or hearing to fail. Both pieces show that analysis of the aural qualities of medieval and early modern performances yields surprising insights.

Other authors in this issue listen for voices that have been ignored. Maya Mathur hears the speeches of allegorically named commoners in Preston's Tudor interlude *Cambises* as arguments in support of a variety of complex relationships between monarch and subjects, and even perhaps justifications for the regicide of a tyrant. She thus talks back to a range of readings that, by focusing mostly on noble characters and counsellors, have seen the play as a text advocating the view that those suffering under a bad king have recourse only to patience and prayer. Mathew Martin similarly challenges conventional wisdom to suggest that careful attention to variants in the 1597 octavo edition of *Tamburlaine the Great* forces us to see that Marlowe's title character (and the play we think we know) may be surprisingly undisciplined and concerned with the material realm in key scenes. Characterizing the 1597 text as 'inferior' has made impossible, or at least inaudible, such interpretations of *Tamburlaine*. Finally, Matthieu Chapman insists that we have overlooked the fact that black people of African descent performed in early modern court entertainments and quite possibly appeared in plays for London's commercial theatres. We have thus too long failed to notice evidence of the presence of black bodies, and perhaps even black voices, in the stage

directions that call for blackamoor musicians in Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*.

The Issues in Review section compiled and edited by Grace Ioppolo describes a project that will foster even more fresh and surprising arguments. The ten-volume *Collected Works of Thomas Heywood* (forthcoming from Oxford University Press) will include six volumes of plays, making a number of texts available for the first time in modern editions appropriate for use by undergraduate students and theatre professionals as well as by scholars. In brief essays, Ioppolo hints at how Heywood might have been involved in the production of his plays, William Proctor Williams considers the possibility that *If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody* appeared in several editions based on a text 'stolen' from the playhouse through stenography, and William Long discusses an existing scribal manuscript of *Dick of Devonshire* as a record of a playhouse manuscript marked up by the company for performance. All of these pieces exemplify the sort of work that will surely emerge in the next few years as scholars have an opportunity to engage with Heywood's corpus in this new edition.

We like to think that the late Lawrence Clopper would be as excited about this project as we are. As a longtime member of our editorial board — as well as an accomplished REED editor and scholar of medieval drama — Clopper witnessed how the dissemination of archival records and play-text editions could generate new questions and insights about early English cultures of performance. His own contributions to and support of such projects continue to be invaluable, as Alexandra Johnston's short essay in memory of her longtime friend and colleague describes.

As we completed copy-editing and proofreading for this issue, the editors also undertook the project of migrating the web submission system for *Early Theatre* to the Open Journal Software platform. This transition has given us an opportunity to reimagine our communication processes with authors, reviewers, subscribers, and readers. We hope that all potential authors who have been inspired by what they read here will consider sending their work to *Early Theatre* at [www.earlytheatre.org](http://www.earlytheatre.org) — and will find our new submission module a pleasure to use. All readers should look to that new site one year from now, in December 2015, for announcements of prizes for best critical and historical essays that have appeared in the pages of this journal in 2013 and 2014.

THE EDITORS