Directors/Directing

Insightful, in-depth and evocative, this is a collection of conversations with nine of the most innovative theatre directors of our time in Europe and North America:

- Eugenio Barba
- Lev Dodin
- Declan Donnellan
- Elizabeth LeCompte
- Robert Lepage
- Simon McBurney
- Katie Mitchell
- Peter Sellars
- Max Stafford-Clark

All these directors have developed their own, highly individual theatre language across a wide range of practices from opera, dance, epic spectacle or hybrid and multi-media performances, to verbatim theatre or small-scale interventionist theatre, and have been influential, nationally and internationally, in a variety of ways. The length, depth and scope of the discussions distinguishes this collection from others, each director providing a fascinating insight into his/her particular working processes. The book reveals the complex world of directors and their creative relationships with actors, in rehearsal and performance, and with playwrights. Each conversation is framed by an introduction to the work of the director, a detailed chronology of productions and an indicative bibliography to inspire further reading and research.

Maria Shevtsova is Professor of Drama and Theatre Arts and Director of Graduate Studies at Goldsmiths, University of London.

Christopher Innes is Professor of English at York University, Ontario, and holds the Canada Research Chair in Performance and Culture.
Directors/Directing
Conversations on Theatre

Maria Shevtsova
and
Christopher Innes
Contents

List of illustrations  page vi
Acknowledgements  vii

Introduction  1
1 Eugenio Barba [b. 1936]  8
2 Lev Dodin [b. 1944]  37
3 Declan Donnellan [b. 1953]  66
4 Elizabeth LeCompte [b. 1944]  92
5 Robert Lepage [b. 1957]  120
6 Simon McBurney [b. 1957]  151
7 Katie Mitchell [b. 1964]  177
8 Peter Sellars [b. 1957]  206
9 Max Stafford-Clark [b. 1941]  236

Index  266
Illustrations

1 Ur-Hamlet [2006]. Directed by Eugenio Barba. Photograph by Torgeir Wethal. page 28
2 King Lear [2006]. Directed by Lev Dodin. Sergey Kuryshov as Gloucester and Vladimir Seleznyov as Edmund. Photograph by Viktor Vasilyev. 52
3 Cymbeline [2007]. Directed by Declan Donnellan. Photograph by Keith Pattison. 79
4 Poor Theater [2004]. Directed by Elizabeth LeCompte. Pictured [l–r]: Sheena See, Kate Valk, Geoff Abbas (on video monitor), Ari Fliakos, Reid Farrington (on video monitor), Scott Shepherd. Photograph by Paula Court. 102
5 Lipsynch [2007]. Directed by Robert Lepage. Photograph by Eric Labbé. 121
6 Mnemonic [1999]. Directed by Simon McBurney. Photograph by Sebastian Hoppe. 152
7 Iphigenia at Aulis [2004]. Directed by Katie Mitchell. Photograph by Ivan Kyncl. 192
8 The Story of a Soldier [1999]. Directed by Peter Sellars. Photograph by Kevin Higa. 208
9 Macbeth [2003]. Directed by Max Stafford-Clark. Photograph by John Haynes. 242
Acknowledgements

We warmly thank all the directors – Eugenio Barba, Lev Dodin, Declan Donnellan, Elizabeth LeCompte, Robert Lepage, Simon McBurney, Katie Mitchell, Peter Sellars, Max Stafford-Clark – for finding the time and energy in their incredibly busy lives to have with us the conversations published in this book. Chasing them was not always easy, but they always responded to our pursuit with generosity and humour, giving us insights into the wellsprings of their creativity. In every case they devoted hours to talking with us and followed up by answering our queries in a process that spanned months. We are greatly indebted to them.

We are also indebted to the following people for their invaluable help: Julia Varley and Rina Skeel of Odin Teatret; Dina Dodina and Anna Ogibina of the Maly Drama Theatre-Théâtre de l’Europe of St Petersburg, and Aleksandr Chepurov of the St Petersburg Academy of Theatre Arts; Nick Ormerod and Jacqui Honess-Martin of Cheek by Jowl; Cynthia Hedstrom, Katie Valk and Clay Hapaz of The Wooster Group; Eve-Alexandra St Laurent of Ex Machina; Marieke Sander and Chip Horne of Theatre de Complicite; Alena Melichar for providing the photo by her late husband, Ivan Kyncl, of Iphigenia at Aulis, directed by Katie Mitchell; John Bradfield from Out of Joint; Julia Carnahan for her help with arranging the interview with Peter Sellars, and for providing the photos of his production. Thank you Sherine Dahy, Anna Porubcansky, Annabel Rutherford, Rachel Shapiro and Sasha Shevtsova.

We wish to thank all the photographers for granting permission to publish their work: figure 1 courtesy of Torgeir Wethal © Odin Teatret;
Acknowledgements

figure 2 courtesy of Viktor Vasiliyev; figure 3 courtesy of Keith Pattison; figure 4 courtesy of Paula Court © Paula Court; figure 5 courtesy of Eric Mahoudeau; figure 6 courtesy of Sebastian Hoppe; figure 7 courtesy of Alena Melichar; figure 8 courtesy of Kevin Higa; figure 9 courtesy of John Haynes.