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THEATRE REVIVALS FOR THE ANTHROPOCENE

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Theatre Revivals for the Anthropocene

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Abstract: This Element argues that the climate emergency requires a new approach to the study of theatre history – a suggestion that is developed through an analysis of the practice of theatrical revival during the Anthropocene era. Staging old plays in new ways can make visible ecological or environmental features that might have previously gone unnoticed: features which, in some cases, might not have been consciously included by the original authors or makers of a work, but which will be detectable to audiences nevertheless. These links are explored through case studies from the contemporary Irish theatre – including revivals of plays by Shakespeare, Lady Gregory, and Samuel Beckett, as performed by such major Irish companies as Rough Magic, Druid Theatre, and Company SJ. The Element ultimately shows how theatre can contribute to debates about the Anthropocene, and offers new pathways for theatre practice and criticism.

Keywords: ecology, theatre revivals, Anthropocene, Ireland, theatre history

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