

REAL THEATRE

Theatre is often said to offer unique insights into the nature of reality, but this obscures the reality of theatre itself. In *Real Theatre*, Paul Rae takes a joined-up approach to the realities of theatre to explain why performances take the forms they do, and what effects they have. Drawing on examples ranging from *Phantom of the Opera* and Danny Boyle's *Frankenstein*, to the performances of the Wooster Group and arthouse director Tsai Ming-liang, he shows how apparently discrete theatrical events emerge from dynamic and often unpredictable social, technical and institutional assemblages. These events then enter a process of cultural circulation that, as Rae explains, takes many forms: fleeting conversations, the mercurial careers of theatrical characters and the composite personae of actors, and high-profile products like Hollywood movie *Birdman*. The result is a real theatre that speaks of and to the idiosyncratic and cumulative experience of every theatre participant.

PAUL RAE is Associate Professor in Theatre Studies at the University of Melbourne. He is the author of *Theatre and Human Rights* (2009). He has published widely on contemporary theatre and on Asia-Pacific performance cultures, and from 2015–18 was Senior Editor of the journal *Theatre Research International*.

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REAL THEATRE

Essays in Experience

PAUL RAE

University of Melbourne



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For my father

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All the world is not a stage – certainly the theater isn't entirely.

Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis*

Experiences are lived similarities.

Walter Benjamin, 'Experience'

'So', Tortsov summed up, 'let Paul try to confuse you and you try to understand what he is talking about. If the pair of you only fulfil these two tasks, I shall be content'.

Konstantin Stanislavski, *An Actor's Work on a Role*

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