

EVOLUTION, COGNITION, AND PERFORMANCE

Culture and cognition work together dynamically every time a spectator interprets meaning during a performance. In this study Bruce McConachie examines the biocultural basis of all performance, from its origins, and the cognitive processes that facilitate it, to what keeps us coming back for more. To effect this major reorientation, McConachie works within the scientific paradigm of enaction, which explains all human activities, including performances, as the interactions of mental, bodily, and ecological networks. He goes on to use our biocultural proclivity for altruism, as revealed in performance, to explore our species' gradual ethical progress on such matters as the changing norms of religious sacrifice, slavery, and LGBT rights. Along the way, the book engages with a wide range of performances, including Richard Pryor's stand-up, the film *Titanic*, aerialist performances, American football, and the stage and film versions of *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

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*This book is dedicated to
All of the friends, students, and colleagues
who have helped me to travel this road,
Especially my graduate students at the University of Pittsburgh and
The Members of the ASTR Working Group
in Cognitive Science, Theatre, Dance, and Performance*

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