

Introduction

Ric Knowles

Since the 1990s there has been an exponential increase in the numbers and types of festivals around the world. Events that used merely to be events have been ‘festivalized’: structured, marketed, and promoted in ways that stress brand identities, urban centres as tourist destinations, and the corporate attractiveness of ‘creative cities’, all participating in the ‘eventification’ of cultures and economies that are no longer based on material objects and products, but on activities. Cities that used merely to be cities have been rebranded as ‘festival cities’, and festivals themselves have been repurposed and ‘eventified’ in a dazzling number of ways for a wide range of social, cultural, economic, and promotional purposes.¹

This *Companion* considers the relatively small slice of the large global festival pie that includes or features theatre, dance, and live art, and it focuses on theatre and multi-arts festivals that are in some sense, at least, international. For reasons of space, excluded from extended consideration are non-professional theatre and theatre for young audiences; European Cities of Culture, Cultural Olympiads, and similar ‘mega-events’; festivals focusing on work produced within a single nation-state; events based on single or specialized performing arts disciplines such as opera, puppetry, circus, clown, and street theatre; online festivals; extended seasons of repertory theatre such as the many Shakespeare festivals in North America or Ontario’s Shaw Festival; and series, such as the Next Wave Festival at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, that call themselves festivals but present work sequentially over a period of several months and do not involve theatre companies being in the same place at the same time. Also excluded, for the most part, are ‘cultural’ festivals – festivals, often of the heritage or folkloric variety, that celebrate diasporic cultures within multicultural societies in ways that are best regarded as preservationist and lay claim to varying kinds and degrees of static ‘authenticity’. But the exclusion of cultural festivals applies primarily to Western diasporic contexts rather than Indigenous nations on all continents, where the differences between

ceremony and theatre are less clear. This, of course, raises questions about definitional fields around the concept of the festival itself.

For the purposes of this book, international theatre festivals consist of organized events that, over a limited period of usually a few days to a few weeks, offer a concentrated series of performances from different countries or nations for local and visiting audiences. They are a type of cultural performance that embeds other performances within itself, in the process transforming them cumulatively into a kind of meta-performance. Sitting comfortably within this definition, however, are a wide variety of festivals that serve an equally wide assortment of purposes for very different audiences, participants, and stakeholders.

The 'founding' festivals of the twentieth century, at Edinburgh and Avignon in 1947, initially served to shore up Western civilization and (high) culture in the wake of the devastations of the Second World War.² Subsequently they have become progenitors and participants in a global circuit of 'élite', festivals that circulate high-end performance products within a non-local, globalized marketplace for which, in many cases, they were created. These festivals, in turn, have become keystone events for many urban centres hoping to brand themselves as 'festival cities' or 'creative cities', destination magnets equally for tourist dollars and for corporations capitalizing on 'creative class' cachet within the post-industrial 'experience economy'.³

Edinburgh and Adelaide also gave rise early on to their respective 'Fringe' and 'Off' festivals, originally intended as local, popular-cultural alternatives to the élite festivals' 'high culture'. These have since given birth to a vast global network of over 250 free-market fringe festivals where theatre companies, comedians, and others from around the world hope to lure presenters and promoters (often from other festivals) to launch their works' world tours.⁴

Perhaps in reaction to both the élite and fringe festival circuits, a cluster of what Keren Zaiontz in these pages calls 'second-wave' festivals developed mostly since the late 1990s that are artist-run and tend to be curated strategically to juxtapose specific artists and often interdisciplinary, experimental, or community-based works rather than programmed cafeteria-style from the touring marketplace. Often smaller in scale and occurring in smaller urban centres than the élite festivals, these include such events as the Fusebox Festival in Austin, Texas; the Time-Based Arts Festival in Portland, Oregon; the PuSh International Performing Arts Festival in Vancouver, British Columbia; the ANTI Contemporary Arts Festival in

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Kuopio, Finland; Metropolis, in Copenhagen, Denmark; and the member festivals of the FiT (Festivals in Transition) network in Europe.

For many in the West these first, fringe, and second-wave festivals are the most familiar, but they are far from the only kinds of festival peppering the globe in the twenty-first century. Some, such as the Arab Theatre Festival which circulates annually among urban centres in the Arab world, virtually exclude considerations of the festival circuit and marketplace and attempt to negotiate and shore up a coherent Arab identity and theatrical practice that is resistant to Western theatrical hegemony. Similarly, PANAFEST (the Pan-African Historical Theatre Festival), on Ghana's Cape Coast (best known for its historic role in the transatlantic slave trade), is dedicated to celebrating African civilizations and exploring ways of improving life for Africans around the world. Other festivals, such as the Lusophone festival circuit encompassing Portugal, Brazil, Cape Verde, and Mozambique, examined by Christina S. McMahon in her book *Recasting Transnationalism through Performance*, are used to negotiate complex post-colonial power relationships among countries that share a (colonial) language. Still others, such as Teatro La Candelaria's FESTA (Festival Alternativo de Bogotá) in Colombia, which occurs at the same time as Bogotá's élite Festival Iberoamericano, exist performatively to initiate political conversation and critique within the complex of countries, cultures, and peoples lumped together by the Global North as Latin America. The George Town Festival in Penang, Malaysia, serves its sponsors as a site at which to promote the national government's 'one Malaysia' policy, uniting its various ethnic and cultural minorities under one flag, but it also serves those communities as public space in which their differences can be made visible and negotiated. And the NIB (Nepal, India, Bangladesh) festival works to explore histories and identities across nation-states on the Indian subcontinent. Finally, Indigenous festivals, such as Vancouver's Talking Stick and Toronto's Living Ritual festivals, the Laura Aboriginal Dance Festival on Australia's Cape York Peninsula, and Taipei's Global Indigenous People's Performing Arts Festival exist to negotiate performance forms and forge solidarities within a trans-Indigenous world.

The audiences for these and other festivals vary as much as the participants, ranging from cultural tourists, theatre and arts professionals, artists, academics, and aficionados to immigrant communities in diaspora looking for contact with the culture of the homeland. For many, the festival is experienced as what Alessandro Falassi in 1987 called a 'time out of time', a unique temporality that is set apart from people's quotidian lives for

experiences that are somehow liminal, uplifting, out-of-body, or set apart. Scholarship on festivals that is not primarily concerned with their economic, management, or policy dimensions is largely concerned with whether the time-out-of-time experience is genuinely transformative (of individual subjectivities, communities, or places), or is fundamentally cathartic, releasing unruly carnivalesque energies in order to enable the efficient restoration of a renewed social order. But most agree with Erika Fischer-Lichte that ‘festivals create communities’ (*Routledge* 44), however temporarily. And in doing so they are able to serve as sites of interaction (among artists, among audience members, and between artists and audiences) that may involve intercultural negotiation, exchange, and solidarities, and may invoke what Margaret Werry has called ‘the cosmopolitan imagination’, referring to the new cosmopolitanisms of the early 2000s: ‘the imperfect, contested, perspectival worldings attempted by subjects enmeshed in the vastly asymmetric flows and processes of globalization’ (unpublished response to ‘Festivals’ panel, American Society for Theatre Research, November 2016).

Most scholarship on festivals, including most chapters in this volume, begin with the post-war festivals of the second half of the twentieth century, but festivals have existed for a very long time. Indeed, as I argue in my chapter in this volume (Chapter 4), from long before recorded Western history to the present the Indigenous peoples of the world have engaged in ceremonies and communal performance activities that could not without diminishment be called ‘theatre’, but might, from a Western perspective, be called festivals. In most Western theatre histories, the standard starting point, for both theatre and festivals, however, is ancient Greece in the fifth century BCE. ‘Once upon a time’, as Frédéric Maurin says, ‘theatre and festivals were born simultaneously’ (8). But like all ‘once upon a times’, this appears to be a myth. There is plenty of evidence that the festivals dedicated to the Greek god Dionysus where dramas are often said to have been first performed between 534 and 326 BCE were anticipated by and modelled on annual festivals in Egypt that re-enacted the myth of Osiris 1500 years before (see Zarrilli 59), and that the bedrock, not only of Western theatre history but of Western civilization, is not Greece, as is often said, but Africa.

It is for this reason that this *Companion*, while written largely from the perspective of Western scholarship and deliberately focusing on recent, twenty-first-century developments within the festival landscape, attempts to move beyond a purely Euro-American focus, incorporating work on Asia, Africa, and the pan-American, Arab, and Indigenous worlds. The book is

organized, in Part I, to provide historical and theoretical contexts and tools for the study of festivals, and, in Part II, to map, without pretending to provide comprehensive coverage, representative festivals from around the world within their local, national, continental, and cultural contexts.

Contributors were asked to locate their work historically and theoretically. They were also asked relationally to consider international theatre and combined arts festivals in the twenty-first century as sites of tension between the local and global and sites of (unequal) negotiation between cultures and cultural forms; to analyse the impact of globalization, urban promotional discourses such as ‘creative city’ theory and city branding on the ways in which intercultural negotiations are framed and practiced at festivals understood to be intercultural ‘contact zones’; and to investigate ways in which festivals in some instances are being newly reconfigured to better enable cross-cultural understanding both in increasingly intercultural ‘global cities’ and in smaller centres.

Keren Zaiontz’s chapter, ‘From Post-War to “Second-Wave”: International Performing Arts Festivals’, leads off Part I, and charts a shift in twentieth- to twenty-first-century festivals from what she sees as the restorative nationalism of the post-war festivals to the modelling of new social relationships and artistic processes in so-called second-wave festivals in Europe and the Americas. Treating festivals of both types as ‘pre-figurative performances’ that model in their own organizational structures what they hope to achieve, she also perceives, perhaps also pre-figuratively, a shift away from the traditional festival’s ‘time-out-of-time’ to a modelling of socially engaged, activist, and often participatory intervention that exceeds the boundaries of festival time and space. Zaiontz also serves the volume by framing it within accounts of the role of the ‘creative industries’ within neo-liberal economies; of the new, entrepreneurial ‘creative economy’ within creative city discourse; of ‘flexible-format’ productions adaptable to diverse festival and other contexts; of a new inter-imbrication of festival performance, democratic assembly, urban-planning, and neighbourhood development; and of an inspirational relationship between festivals and large-scale social movements such as the Arab Spring and the Occupy Movement.

Chapter 2, Alexandra Portmann’s ‘International Festivals, the Practice of Co-production, and the Challenges for Documentation in a Digital Age’, provides the reader-as-researcher with a very different context. Portmann makes the case that the increasing practice of festivals operating as nodes in a network of co-commissioners and co-producers of new work, the increasing prevalence and prominence of mobile, post-national artists

who create for international festival circuits rather than national audiences, and the new role of digital technology in the marketing and archiving of festivals have together posed new methodological challenges for festival researchers. She argues that an approach, not through individual festivals and their print archives, but through artists and dynamic festival networks, enabled by techniques drawn from Digital Humanities scholarship and theorized by actor-network theory and other new-materialist approaches, would make visible the newly dominant conditions of production (including labour) and provide a more solid basis than currently exists for research on international festivals.

Chapter 3 in Part I, Marjana Johansson's 'City Festivals and Festival Cities', aims to provide a conceptual framework for understanding the relationships between festivals and urban space. In the course of doing so, she explicates such concepts as 'the experience economy', 'experiences-capes', and 'place branding' in ways that are helpful for coming to an understanding of the complex social, cultural, artistic, and economic roles of festivals within the historical and (especially) contemporary urban environment, and in particular what she calls the tensions between revelry and governance. The bulk of her chapter explores the ways in which the festival is both produced by and productive of urban space, the ways in which festivals can transgress or reinforce social stratifications inscribed in urban landscapes, and the ways in which they can destabilize or reinforce dominant identities and disrupt or reify established structures.

The first three contributions to Part I focus primarily on European festivals, the scholarship on which dominates a field that considers them to be foundational. My contribution, on 'Indigenous Festivals', bridges the book's two parts. Like the chapters in Part II, it surveys, selectively, festivals from its sample group, which, however, exist as part of a trans-Indigenous network rather than a geographical region. My chapter concludes Part I, however, because it raises the question of how scholars of theatre and performance festivals might differently understand international festivals if they were to read them through a festival origin story that is not the traditional European one. It briefly considers ceremonies and events that precede European colonization in Australia and Turtle Island and that might, from a Western perspective, be considered to be festivals, before turning to contemporary Indigenous cultural and performance festivals in various parts of the contemporary world that participate in the performative resurgence of Indigenous cultures globally.

The chapters in Part II of this collection are intended at once to provide selective coverage of the global festival circuit largely using case studies

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from the various regions under consideration. Authors were asked to update work on the festival phenomenon, considering festivals within the context of a newly globalized culture as at once participating in 'place myth' marketing and serving as international and intercultural 'contact zones' for negotiation, exchange, and the constitution of migratory and diasporic identities. Part II begins with a reflection on the histories of European festivals that echoes Keren Zaiontz opening chapter in Part I, although it starts further back in time. Erika Fischer-Lichte's 'European Festivals' charts a trajectory from the Festival of Dionysus in ancient Greece through Wagner's Bayreuth and Hofmannsthal's Salzburg and the post-Second World War European festivals, to the 2017 edition of Theater der Welt in Hamburg, Germany, asking whether an international theatre festival can still be a site for community-building and transformation. Her chapter focuses on Theater der Welt's and its predecessors' representations of cultural difference. The 2017 iteration of the triennial festival, in its negotiation of local community engagement with adaptable 'global aesthetics', sounds not unlike Zaiontz's 'second wave'.

Subsequent chapters focus primarily on contemporary festivals from specific nations or regions. In Chapter 6, Jen Harvie presents an extended case study of the massive Edinburgh Festival Fringe, the world's largest arts festival and the leading model for fringes everywhere. Harvie weighs the benefits against the significant risks of the Fringe's free-market, open-access policy, which, while providing a showcase for countless under-recognized artists from around the world, also normalizes, disseminates, and legitimizes, as she argues, an exploitative, unregulated 'neoliberal capitalist market ideology'. Her chapter ends with productive recommendations towards constructing 'a better fringe' anywhere: investment in infrastructure and in artists' mental health, regulation of working conditions, redress of conditions that lead to unequal access for under-represented communities of artists and audiences, and a fortified and globally disseminated overall ethos that privileges collaboration over competition.

In Chapter 7, Carol Martin also focuses on a single festival, New York Public Theatre's 'second-wave' Under the Radar festival, timed to coincide with the annual meeting of the Association of Performing Arts Professionals and four other New York festivals, thereby serving the profession as a kind of global avant-garde performing arts marketplace. Martin discusses the festival as at once transnational and also intensely part of its own historic home in Astor Place and its legendary Greenwich Village neighbourhood. A contradictory site of inclusions and exclusions, dedicated to a

progressive politics and experimental aesthetics but nevertheless participating in an inequitable neo-liberal global economy, Under the Radar is quintessentially of New York City.

Sarah Thomasson moves the volume in Chapter 8 from a narrow focus on a single festival to discuss a national network, 'The Australian Festival Network', which, she argues, functions as that country's de facto national theatre, a decentralized, or 'devolved' site for the production, critique, and exploration of cultural and national identities, Australian and otherwise. She examines two shows featuring foundational national myths that toured within this network, one of which also represented Australia at international festivals abroad. Both productions, Thomasson argues, reflect Australia's national 'unsettlement', particularly around relations between Aboriginal and settler communities, stories, and histories.

Khalid Amine also deals with a festival network, if a more loosely connected one, and with the formation of what is in his case a transnational Arab identity. In Chapter 9 he looks at 'Theatre Festivals in Post-Arab Spring Countries' as 'players in a turbulent public sphere in the countries of Middle East and North Africa', where theatre festivals have always been at the heart of political struggle (and where political struggle has always had festive and performative dimensions). Amine surveys four major festivals in the Arab world today: the Cairo International Festival for Contemporary and Experimental Theatre ('a largely dissident festival funded by a mainly authoritarian state'), Journées théâtrales de Carthage ('culture for all', with a special focus on Africa), the Arab Theatre Festival (strengthening intercultural ties within the Arab World), and Performing Tangiers (performing 'the interpenetration between place, space, and memory'). He concludes that theatre festivals in the Arab world are both instrumentalized to control dissent *and* 'scenes whereupon revolutionary praxis and detour are mapped'.

In Chapter 10, Julia Goldstein examines a different intraculturalism within East Africa, one hosted and facilitated by the small Kampala International Theatre Festival in Uganda, seeing it as an important site of global exchange which, because of its smaller size and lower international profile is more conducive to community-building and cultural exchange than are many larger festivals. 'It is a space', she argues, 'where cultural and political work is carried out, simultaneously cultivating local, regional, and global identities and strategic affiliations.' The festival draws on transnational relationships – including the support of the US-based Sundance Foundation – to kick-start the rejuvenation of Ugandan and East

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African non-commercial theatre and its cultural, social, and political role in the country and the region, nurturing young artists, promoting exchange, cultivating post-colonial East African regionalism and connectedness across linguistic and cultural differences, and exposing artists and audiences to high-calibre local, regional, international, and transnational work.

Moving south, Loren Kruger examines in Chapter 11 the prestigious National Arts Festival in Grahamstown,⁵ South Africa and its Fringe through the lenses of ‘culture, economics, and race’. Kruger begins with the festival’s troubled histories and legacies from colonialism to apartheid, before moving through its cautious and somewhat reluctant transition to more diverse ‘post-*anti*-apartheid’ and then to fully post-apartheid economic and other difficult realities in the twenty-first century. The chapter ends with a comparison of the 2007 festival – the last under a white director, who combined the roles of artistic and managing director – with 2014’s fortieth-anniversary festival, for which the roles of CEO and artistic director were separate, marking the full professionalization of the organization and its ongoing attempts to balance ‘art for art’s sake’ against difficult social and economic issues, as well as the pointedly local with the national and transnational.

Hayana Kim’s contribution accepts in Chapter 12 the impossible task of representing for this volume the vast continent of Asia and its extensive festival landscape. Setting aside some of the élite Asian festivals best known in the West as tourist destinations or sources or hosts of internationally touring shows, Kim chooses two exceptional festivals as her case studies: the first, BeSeTo, an inter-Asian collaboration among BEijing, SEoul, and TOkyo, the capital cities of China, South Korea, and Japan, respectively; and the second, the Gwangju Musical Arts Festival in Gwangju, Korea, a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Creative City that in a 1980 uprising played a key role in the rejection of totalitarianism and advancement of democracy in the country. Both festivals, Kim argues, intervene in what she considers to be the neglected intercultural realm of the Sinosphere in the wake of double colonization, first by Western imperial powers, and then by the Japanese after the Meiji Restoration, who looked to Europe rather than Asia for their model of modernization. Focusing on work from within the participating countries rather than the global circuit, these festivals negotiate and redress difficult and contested histories, memories, and identities within the region, and cultivate Asian theatrical aesthetics based on Asian historical and cultural specificities without placing them in relation to Western models.

Emily Sahakian also writes about a limited transnationalism, this time in the context of France and its former colonies. In Chapter 13 she considers ‘Festivals in the Francophone World as Sites of Cultural Struggle’, considering the representation of France’s former colonies in Africa and the Caribbean at France’s iconic Avignon Festival, at the International Festival of Francophonies in Limousin, at a series of francophone festivals organized in New York by the Ubu Repertory Theatre, and at the Festival de Fort-de-France in Martinique. At each of these, in varying and unequal ways, she argues, transnational identities and affiliations are constructed alongside aesthetic judgements within neo-liberal structures and marketplaces shaped and conditioned by colonial histories and relations that have denied to its colonies independent access to France’s own presumptive ‘republican universalism’.

Jean Graham-Jones in Chapter 14 offers a comprehensive history and overview of international theatre festivals in Latin America and then focuses on two case studies: Festival Santiago a Mil and Festival Internacional de Buenos Aires, in the capital cities of Chile and Argentina, respectively. Graham-Jones points in her analysis to tensions between the international and local components of these festivals, to challenges around the branding of each festival as they negotiate artistic missions against neo-liberal funding models, and she proposes modes of co-operation among festivals that might productively privilege local and national rather than European standards and models.

As Graham-Jones notes, there are festivals of Latin American theatre elsewhere in the world. One of the most intriguing of these, however, focuses not on Latin America as such, but on the hemispheric reach of Latinx and Indigenous theatre throughout the Americas. In the final chapter of this *Companion*, Natalie Alvarez considers the small-scale international Panamerican ROUTES | RUTAS panamericanas, alternating annually with the locally based CAMINOS festival, both produced by Toronto’s Aluna Theatre in partnership with the Indigenous Native Earth Performing Arts, not as a marketplace, but as a ‘theatrical commons grounded in a heterogeneous and intercultural Americas’. Mapping the roots of, and routes taken by, performances and participants at the RUTAS festival, Alvarez articulates the crucial role that the festival plays in directing and redirecting transnational flows of knowledge and artistic production in the Americas and establishing a genealogy of performance traditions that flows South–North, beyond an Anglo-European tradition.

A volume such as this will always have its gaps, omissions, and blind spots. There is little here, for example, about festivals on the Indian