

PAPERS 1 Vocality and sound

Chair – Katerina Moraitis
WED 1445-1600 | RR4

Numb and standing – voice on stage and the phenomenology of interruption

Eduardo Abrantes

One of the most common forms of stage-fright is glossophobia, the inability to speak before a live audience. This is surely any actor's greatest fear, and a fear that any performer must overcome.

In his 1848 essay *The Crisis and a Crisis in the Life of an Actress*, Kierkegaard discusses the change of pressure and weight felt by an actor off- and on-stage. In a successful performance the growing tension off-stage should translate into elevating lightness and grace on.

Similarly, if we consider the acoustic flow of a performance in a proscenium theatre, we find unwanted noise usually comes from backstage or audience. The proscenium arch itself is a sound gate, from which sounds are projected and reverberated towards the audience. In acoustic terms, the fourth wall has always been broken.

What are the aesthetic consequences of an interruption in acoustic flow?

Voice, space, concrete: notes from a car park

Jill Dowse

In our visual, logocentric culture, how do we get to that which might be sounded and that which might be heard? How do we counter our visual prejudices?

In Aarhus, Denmark, Dowse created a site-specific performance which included an inspiring encounter with a car park. Returning to the UK, she found a multi-storey with which to pursue her fixation. The result was *Car Park Show No.1*.

When working with a site, how might we ventriloquise it? Approached intimately, is the car park really silent? What are the dramaturgical implications for theatre practitioners seeking to engage with the full use of the voice – and in particular the use of non-verbal sound and vocal musicalities in creating performance?

Between sound and silence – reflections on the acoustic resonance and implicit ethicality of human voice

Alice Lagaay

There has been a surge in philosophical inquiry into vocality: the physical, performative resonance of language (distinct from the semantic content of a given utterance). This performative quality is often conceived as something that defies semiotic capture. It is assigned the kind of original ethicality of the call-and-response pre-linguistic voice.

While much current voice theory is focussed on the outer, resonant, phenomenally-actualised, positive voice, the idea that there is something intrinsically ethical about the very sound of a human voice would seem to (re)inject a degree of interiority to the phenomenon. This brings us to reflect upon the silent, negative – yet still resonant – inner voice, and to ponder on its theatrical or musical characteristic. Whilst there is something essentially silent about the noise-dimension of human voice, is there something uncannily rhythmical (and thus sensual) about the inner voice – in its very non-sounding yet ultimately commanding moral authority? This paper explores this chiasmic structure and its relevance for contemporary performance.