

Christian DuComb

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EDUCATION

Brown University, Providence, RI

Ph.D. Candidate, Theatre and Performance Studies

Expected date of completion: Spring 2011

Graduate Advisor: Rebecca Schneider

Haverford College, Haverford, PA

Bachelor of Arts, English: Spring 2001

Magna cum Laude, Departmental Honors in English, admitted to the Phi Beta Kappa Society

Undergraduate Thesis: "Structure, Significance, and Landscape in Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*"

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS

Passed on October 17, 2008

- I. The Public Sphere, Carnival, and the Uses of Urban Public Space.** The first part of this reading area engaged theories of the public sphere to ask what constituted a "public" in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Part Two examined theories of carnival alongside several historical and anthropological studies of carnival practices in the Atlantic world. The widely held view of carnival as a space of inverted distinctions and blurred boundaries set the stage for a consideration, in Part Three, of the uses of public space in the modern city, where the political discourse of the public sphere and the masking, mimicry, and misrule of carnival overlap.
- II. The Philadelphia Mummers Parade: An Atlantic History.** This reading area traced a performance genealogy of Philadelphia's Mummers, a loosely organized group of some 15,000 people – overwhelmingly white, male, and working class – who "strut" up South Broad Street in a raucous parade every New Year's Day. It included both sources on U.S. theatre history, with an emphasis on stage practices that have influenced the Mummers, and an examination of the history of parades, celebrations, protests, and violence on U.S. city streets, with a focus on Philadelphia. A selection of theoretical readings connected these histories to larger currents of cultural circulation in the Atlantic world.
- III. Indian Theatre: History, Theory, Practice.** This reading area undertook a broad survey of Indian theatre from classical Sanskrit drama to performance in the postcolonial present. A body of readings from postcolonial theory and performance studies complemented several histories of Indian theatre; plays, dramaturgy, and criticism from both the classical and kutiyattam traditions of Sanskrit theatre performance; studies of some of India's regional theatre forms, with a focus on Kerala and Uttar Pradesh; and plays, histories, and criticism from the modern theatre, both before and after Independence.
- IV. Comprehensive Theatre History Examination.** This exam tested knowledge of world theatre history from the ancient to contemporary periods.

SELECTED FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

Student Essay Contest Winner (cash prize and publication of the winning essay), *TDR: The Drama Review*, 2006

Graduate Fellowship (funding for first year of academic work towards Ph.D.), Brown University, 2005-6

Thomas J. Watson Fellowship (funding for one year of independent study and travel outside the U.S.), Thomas J. Watson Foundation, 2001-2

Kaye Prize in Theatre Arts (cash prize), Haverford College, 2001

PUBLICATIONS

“The Politics of Fetal Display.” In *The Anatomy of Body Worlds: Critical Essays on the Plastinated Cadavers of Gunther von Hagens*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2009. 176-88.

“Present-Day Kutiyattam: G. Venu’s Radical and Reactionary Sanskrit Theatre.” *TDR: The Drama Review* 51, No. 3 (Fall 2007): 98-117.

SELECTED ACADEMIC CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

“Resounding Towers: Heather Woodbury’s *Tale of 2 Cities*.” Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) Conference. Denver, Summer 2008.

“The Staging of Atrocity in Pig Iron Theatre Company’s *Anodyne*.” Photographic Proofs: A Conference of the Yale Photographic Memory Workshop. Yale University, Spring 2008.

“*Body Worlds 2* and the Politics of Fetal Display.” Performance Studies International (PSi) Conference. New York University, Fall 2007.

“Cakewalking Frogs, Festive Surveillance, and the Philadelphia Mummers Parade.” Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) Conference. New Orleans, Summer 2007.

“Present-Day Kutiyattam: G. Venu’s Radical and Reactionary Sanskrit Theatre.” Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) Conference. Chicago, Summer 2006.

SELECTED UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Fellow, Brown University – Spring 2009

Course: *Twentieth Century Theatre History in Global Perspective*

Independently deliver lectures, lead discussions, and evaluate student presentations in a theatre history course for 16 first-year MFA acting and directing students in the Brown University-Trinity Repertory Company Consortium. Redesigned syllabus to focus on plays in production at Brown and Trinity this semester and to incorporate a unit on Asian theatre into the course for the first time.

Teaching Fellow, Brown University – Fall 2008, Spring 2008, and Fall 2007

Course: *Persuasive Communication*

Co-Instructor: Barbara Tannenbaum

Independently taught sections of 15-20 students, and regularly delivered lectures to a full class of 30-40 students, on communication skills, public speaking techniques, and the critique of public discourse. Provided written and oral feedback for all student assignments, including papers and outlines, speeches and presentations, and mock interviews and debates.

Teaching Assistant, Brown University – Spring 2007

Course: *The Development of Twentieth Century Theatre in the West*

Supervising Instructor: John Emigh

Delivered periodic lectures to a class of 25 students, followed by class discussion. Assisted student preparation for oral and written assignments, and graded students' mid-term essays and exams.

Visiting Artist, Haverford College – Winter 2007

Course: *Devising Collaborative Performance*

Co-Instructors: Alison D'Amato, Paige McGinley, and Alena Smith

Designed and taught a 2-day workshop to 15 students with the other members of Dead Genius Productions. This intensive introduction to Dead Genius's working methods combined training in dramatic and choreographic improvisation with exercises in transforming student writing into performance. The workshop culminated in the collaborative creation and presentation of short performances by small groups of students.

Teaching Assistant, Brown University – Fall 2006

Course: *Introduction to World Theatre*

Supervising Instructor: Rebecca Schneider

Served as the lead instructor for multi-session units on the classical theatre and dramatic theory of India and Japan, delivering lectures and leading discussion in a class of 15 students. Assisted student preparation for group presentations and individual written assignments. Graded 30 reading response papers per week, as well as the mid-term and final exams.

ACADEMIC SERVICE

Performance Studies Focus Group (PSFG) of the Associate for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE)

Treasurer, 2008-10; Member at Large, 2007-8

As Treasurer, oversee the finances of PSFG. As Member-at-Large, organized the reception for the 2008 PSFG pre-conference. In both capacities, serve on the selection committee that chooses PSFG-sponsored panels for the annual ATHE conference.

Department of Theatre, Speech, and Dance, Brown University

Graduate Student Representative to the Faculty, 2007-8

Attended monthly faculty meetings to represent graduate student suggestions and concerns. Facilitated periodic graduate student roundtables and annual meeting of all graduate students and faculty.

Office of the Dean, Haverford College

Member of the Thomas J. Watson Fellowship Nominating Committee, 2003-5

PRODUCTION EXPERIENCE

Acting

It or Her A one-man show exploring patterns, paranoia, and double identity. Devised by Dead Genius Productions and presented by the Haverford College Humanities Center, 2007; the Brown University Theatre Department, 2006; and the Philadelphia Live Arts Festival, 2006.

A Theatrical Rendering of the Modern Life of Karen Bollaert A one-act play which plumbs the depths of a young, single woman who sells gravel for a living. Devised by Dead Genius Productions and resented at two venues in Philadelphia in 2005: the nEW Festival and Spirit Wind Performance Space.

Substitution Chart A dance theatre duet on love, loss, and the struggle to communicate. Devised by Dead Genius Productions and presented by the Philadelphia Live Arts Festival, 2004.

Across A site-specific, processional performance in Old City Philadelphia inspired by Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. Devised by Big House Plays and Spectacles and presented by the Philadelphia Fringe Festival, 2000.

Directing

The Blind (Assistant Director): by Maurice Maeterlinck, directed by Rebecca Schneider. Produced with a student cast by the Brown University Department of Theatre, Speech, and Dance, 2007.

Apple of Discord (Director): A postmodern retelling of the mythological beauty contest between Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite. Devised by Dead Genius Productions and presented by the University of Pennsylvania Classics Department, 2005, and the Philadelphia Fringe Festival, 2004.

Dramaturgy

Cipher A new play by Cory Hinkle, directed by Donya Washington, and produced with a student cast by the Brown University New Plays Festival, 2005.

Accumulation Process A structured improvisation for 7 musicians and 7 dancers. Devised by The Wayward Wind and presented at Spirit Wind Performance Space, Philadelphia, 2005.

ARTS ADMINISTRATION EXPERIENCE

Trinity Repertory Company, Providence, RI

Post-Show Discussion Leader, 2006-7

Headlong Dance Theater, Philadelphia, PA

Company Manager, 2003-5

Responsibilities included marketing, publicity, fundraising, grant writing, tour booking, coordinating Headlong's educational programs, and general office management.

Big House Plays and Spectacles, Philadelphia, PA

Co-Producer, Last Monday Performance Series, 2002-4

Curated and co-produced a monthly dinner and performance series for an average audience of 100 people. Each month featured 4-5 short, work-in-progress readings and performances by local theatre and dance troupes, musicians, writers, and performance artists.

Philadelphia Fringe Festival, Philadelphia, PA

External Relations Assistant, 2002-3

The Wilma Theatre, Philadelphia, PA

Script Reader, Fall 2002

American Conservatory Theater (A.C.T.), San Francisco, CA

Literary Assistant, Summer 2000

Prepared synopses and commentary on new plays for A.C.T.'s new plays database and conducted production research for A.C.T.'s 2000-1 season.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE)
Performance Studies International (PSi)

LANGUAGE COMPETENCIES

Reading proficiency in Spanish
Basic French

References available upon request