Editorial: A Final Reflection on Performance as Research

William W. Lewis — Purdue University

Niki Tulk — Emerson College

Sarah Johnson — Indiana University

Amanda Rose Villareal — California State University Fullerton

Erin Kaplan — California State University Sacramento

We were a group of eager, curious and determined doctoral students at the University of Colorado Boulder, in Theatre and Performance Studies. We were then and are now active writers, directors, devisors, dramaturgs, actors, and pedagogues. We debated the importance of engaging in rigorous scholarship (i.e. research) while continuing to practice, questioning why it was that there seemed a boundary between them—a barrier that, to us, made no sense. In some part this is why we all landed in Boulder, a place that would foster a sense of synergy between the two. We also wanted to invite others into this conversation and expand it to include as many disciplines, as many scholars and practitioners as possible—from all over the world. It seemed to us that there was a need for more academic "containers" in which to explore the way that practice and scholarship invigorated and informed each other, while working to push our collective fields further.

Perhaps we were overly ambitious, but we decided to do something about the problem as we saw it and determined to rebrand and relaunch a journal gone dormant in our Theatre department. We would push back against those who declared that practice was not the work of "serious" academics devoted to scholarship. More importantly, however, we aimed to include them. In PAR we could combine the twin spheres of research and practice into a form that was at once symbiotic and synergetic. This in turn—we hoped—would invite new ways of thinking, making and writing about process. In the spirit of our dearly beloved professor of performance studies Dr. Amma Ghartey Tagoe-Kootin, we imagined a vast and nuanced playing space where the voices of hybrid scholar/artists, or scholartists, were celebrated—not only as valid, but as necessary.

From 2014 through 2016, we bootstrapped the fledgling journal with student group funding and support from the university libraries. This did not prove completely straightforward, as to obtain the funding for our initial launch, our group was not allowed to use the term "research" in its title. In a cunning counter move, we named ourselves the Performance as Resource Student Collective—the inside joke being that a student group could focus on the fine and intricate art of underwater basket weaving, but not research. A brilliant strategy, as it meant that we could research happily away with little scrutiny— after all, what could be further from that suspicious activity of research than underwater basket weaving?

During those two years, we collectively decided on a journal name, scope, platform, and design. We drew up formal documents regarding editorial duties, structures, timelines, and training protocols. We learnt as we went; the practice *was* the research.

We arrived at the journal title after a long meeting one afternoon in the dance studio. We had exhausted every possible word that could come after the prefix of PAR–paranoid, paranormal, parboiled? The journal title popped up as a side note, when one of the group wanted to *partake* in—a drink? Whatever it was, the idea worked. *PARtake:* it invites, promises, includes. The word implied abundance, choice, nourishment. It was, in short, the perfect invite to our future audience. And much better than Code Name: Underwater Basket Weaving.

Once the formalities were complete, we set out to craft an initial call for papers, with the goal of honoring those whose work had been often considered "less rigorous" within US academic circles. We championed the inclusion of artwork, video-based explorations, and performance reviews—again, projects that lived somewhat outside the traditional boxes we had encountered so far. Included in our initial call was an emphasis on ensuring writers understood that we would work *with* them, and that the core of their idea was the most important piece—and that as writers ourselves, we sought a more expansive range regarding what might be considered "academic" or scholarly prose. In this first call we asked for abstracts as a way of offering a more welcoming entry into the publication process for any who may have felt intimidated, or even excluded, from academic scholarship with its means and methods of gatekeeping. We were blown away when we received over twenty-five abstracts. They ran the gamut of topics from feminist methods for collaborative directing, advances in choreographic notation using machine vision, ethnographic approaches to adapting horror narratives, and an oddly exciting investigation into the non-human performance of psychedelic mushrooms. Sadly, that last one never materialized as a full essay.

The editing was intense. Research once more became practice as we explored how to lean into the voices and projects that came from as far afield as Australia, Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America. Many writers were not just challenged by, and challenging, the ways their content could be reimagined "on the page," but found themselves navigating English as a second, or even fourth, language. We worked alongside authors to bring each

article to the truest version of itself. As we did so, we deepened our own understanding of the dynamic and ever-unfolding nature of Performance-as-Research.

In the essays that follow we have laid out a trajectory through some of our most memorable ideas, methods, and interventions discovered throughout the editorial process. We are including them in order of their first appearance over the past nine issues, as they tell a history of the ways we continued to evolve our own thinking about the field of PAR. We begin with our first editorial, as it set the stage (so to speak) for *PARtake's* performance of knowledge creation and collaboration—one that would continue to flourish for the next nine years.

Volume 1, Issue 1 - Fall 2016

Editorial: Why Performance as Research?
By William W. Lewis and Niki Tulk

In our inaugural editorial, we began this journey of *PARtake* with the offered image of a campfire around which all those invested in PAR—or those just mildly intrigued—could gather, warm their hands and share stories. These stories would address two primary questions: "How do you articulate and define Performance as Research?" and "How can Performance as Research open up possibilities for novel ways of understanding the synergy between artistic practice and theoretical inquiry?" The (many) first contributions offered an understanding of PAR by focusing on the fluid spaces that emerge in the place of more rigid mappings, that might come with more traditional forms research outputs. New forms of articulating process and analysis would spring forth in the writing, helping to support the validity and necessity of working in different ways. This editorial served as an invitation for what would become a growing and thriving collection of voices and perspectives, each one envisioning the future of the field as one led by scholartists from across the globe.

Performative Schizoid Method: Performance as Research
By Connie Svabo

Borrowed Plumes is "a *performative schizoid method experiment* in the sense that I tried to enact a new researcher position and positioning by wearing an artist's dress, wearing borrowed plumes, imagining myself making art," writes Connie Svabo in her detailed and inventive exploration into desire—also performance and/as play—as productive force. Grounded in Deleuze and Guattari's *schizoanalysis,* with its irreverent challenge to rational, traditional academic processes of meaning-making, alongside cultural geographer and political scientist Nigel Thrift's injunction for scholars to "engage both in and with creative and artistic practice, and to do so in a manner that is restless and willfully immature," Svabo finds herself unexpectedly entranced by birds. This is unexpected; she states that she has never cared for birds, thought about them, or found them significant or intriguing. The bird motif—perhaps the essence of *Bird*—has stolen into her psyche, opened as it is now that Svabo has embarked on "research that is allowed to lead to uncontrollable outcomes—where materials may emerge in eventful and surprising ways."

Her *Becoming Iris* project involved four different pieces, created using found and accessible materials, audio recording, performance and film—all of which result in "situations of unplanned production" in which Svabo tests out the idea that, when involved in open-ended schizo-inspired modes of engagement, a form of meaning emerges that shifts the trajectory of rational, linear approaches so that new concepts and understandings can erupt through the cracks. This process expands the ways "research" can be understood as a deep, generative form of play-as-meaning-making.

And so Svabo dives off the cliff into a *performative schizoid method experiment*— in the sense, she explains, "that I tried to enact a new researcher position and positioning by wearing an artist's dress, wearing borrowed plumes, imagining myself making art. I took time to carry out the somewhat strange and purposeless activity of going to the designated landscape garden, alone, with a borrowed dress and a camera … I also did desk research." She wanders this path with wonder and humor, as she stumbles on the fable of the crow who disguises himself with peacock feathers. She finds that it is "not an uplifting fable. It is not a story of postmodern, poststructuralist fluid or performative identities … [it is] a fable warning us not to pretend." Then in the self-reflexive playfulness that infuses this article, she issues this warning to herself (and us): "Do not pretend to be a peacock,

when in fact you are a jackdaw. Do not pretend to be an artist, when in fact you are an academic researcher." The challenge Svabo leaves us with is to relax our approach to scholarly inquiry, and embrace—at the very least, entertain—the concept that there is no certainty, everything is always becoming, and that it is important to make space in the well-worn pathways of rationalist and goal-oriented academic practice for invention, dreaming and play. In short, performance.

Volume 1, Issue 2 - Spring 2017

Forum on the Art of Participation: A Curated Collection of Reflections, Explorations, and Instructions
By Astrid Breel, Hannah Newman, and Robbie Wilson

As part of a special issue on the theme of Participation and PAR, "Reflections on the Forum on the Art of Participation" is a collection of short essays and activities recounting the work taking part during a two-day forum at the University of Kent in May 2016. Offering insights on both PAR's practical application and theoretical exploration, the collection reflects a multitude of lenses utilized during the forum, with an overall emphasis on themes of agency, ethics, and navigating the blurry line between artists and audience in participatory work. Each piece suggests practical tools, while deeply questioning how to approach the concept of participation in/as performance. The contributors' commitment to non-hierarchical knowledge-sharing is embedded within the structure of the collection through an interactive Twine supplement. By offering the reader the option of participating in *how* the contributions unfold, the authors make a statement about the power relationship/s between the reader/audience and the maker/producer of any original "product," highlighting the complexity with which, in participatory works, both are intertwined.

The "Reflective Participant," "(Remember)ing" and "(Remember)ance": A (Syn)aesthetic Approach to the Documentation of Audience Experience
By Joanna Bucknall

Bucknall tackles the challenge of theorizing performer/spectator interactions within immersive theatre practices. While all immersive theatre arguably centers audience experience inside a performance, there is no agreed-upon, clear definition of *precisely* what "immersive" means. The author notes that much of what has been called "immersive" in contemporary theatre is, in essence, an invitation to "engage in shallow play." Shallow play, she explains, is where the spectator is permitted to play *with* performers, but constrained by the "games, tasks, and rules" defined *by* the performers. With no agreed-upon definition of immersive theatre, it is challenging to navigate the analysis and documentation of the plethora of audience/performer interactions and—centrally for this author—the *reception* to a performance. Bucknall endeavors to "present a (syn)aesthetic approach" to close that gap. Offering a "reflective participant" as a central stakeholder in immersive performance, the author looks to "affective recall" or "hypermnesis"—they conceptualize these terms as including feeling, emotion, and soma—as foundational to theorizing a "*reflective hypermnesis*," or, the "*critical act* for capturing and disseminating the *experience* of immersive dramaturgies." Using parentheticals to distinguish between the "*act* (remember)ing" from "remembering," Bucknall focuses her analysis on the embodied and critical act of "what it means to remember," and then offers that as a method of analytical research.

The author notes that in spite of immersive theatre's popularity over the last decade, little research or theorizing has been done to address the material experiences of immersive theatre for participating audiences. Feedback in the form of online reviews and post-show discussion is generally dismissed as being pedestrian, uninformed, and "amateur." For Bucknall, this opinion is short-sighted, as it ignores what can be gained through audience members' embodied and material (remember)ing of a performance. While spectators' knowledge may not necessarily be theoretical or conceptual, it is *experiential,* and for Bucknall, can therefore exist as a potent site of "reflective hypermnesis."

The author applies this theoretical approach to their own experiences as a spectator, noting that their positionality as a "*seasoned* immersive *performance-goer*" makes them a "*specialist,*" because their embodied knowledge of immersive performance lives in, and is researched by, that particular body. While the "primary experience" of performance disappears due to the ephemerality of that performance, the (remember)ing of experience

is reactivated in the body. This happened through tools such as automatic writing and music which, when combined, "trigger[ed] a hypermnesic state" wherein Bucknall's "original lived experience" was activated. Arguing that these lived experiences can be "recalled" and "reactivated," through both short and long-term memory, the author claims that hypermesis offers the "potential to capture the perceptual act of sense/*sens*-making that these dramaturgies induce in their audiences." Bucknall ultimately concludes that reflection-in-action is a powerful research methodology, in and of itself.

A Review of Taylor Mac's 24-Decade History of Popular Music Marathon
By Sean F Edgecomb.

In Edgecomb's—a preeminent scholar on all things Taylor Mac—performance review of *Taylor Mac's 24-Decade History of Popular Music Marathon* he documents and analyzes the immense performance phenomena of Mac's magnum opus by approaching the work through both theory and context. The review uses Derrida's notion of "l'avenir" to demonstrate how Mac performatively queered time by breaking down the veil between the past and the present, while embodying the role of what the French theorist deemed the "unexpected visitor." The review also contextualizes the work within Mac's larger body of performance and the political moment of the 2016 US election. The performative writing situates the reader in Edgecomb's audience/participant perspective. It documents powerful performance moments in detail—it also describes the emotional whiplash of both entering liminal community space and exiting that space, in the face of volatile socio-political upheaval in the United States. The review ties together the content of Mac's performance with contextual experience and argues that Mac's embodiment of the "unexpected visitor" helps guide the audience's experience—both during, and after, the performance.

Volume 2, Issue 1 - Spring 2018

Writing the Collaborative Process: Measure (Still) for Measure, Shakespeare, and Rape Culture
By Nora J. Williams

The essay details the innovative processes by which the author disrupts and challenges the "cannon," through devising an original reinterpretation of Shakespeare and Middleton's "problem play," *Measure for Measure*. William's uses the original text as a jumping-off point to "facilitate conversations about rape culture and instigate policy changes in educational institution[s]." The choice of *Measure* as the reference text is a complex one. The play is very much about rape and the slippery nature of consent when hierarchical power structures are at play, however, the outcome of the original *Measure* is one which is an anathema to our contemporary understanding of affirmative consent, pleasure, and power. The author points to the line in the original text, after Isabella is told that she must have sex with Angelo to save her brother's life. At this moment, Isabella looks at the audience and says, "To whom should I complain?/Did I tell this/ Who would believe me?" In spite of the over 600 years since this line was written, Williams points to our current reality, noting that we can imagine "countless other women speaking the same words in the present."

Williams' article investigates how, from 2015 to 2016, the author facilitated "non-hierarchical art" workshops. In these workshops, participants analyzed and then manipulated the original text in conversation with dialogues, papers, text messages, and other informal writings to then devise their own original piece, *Measure (Still)*. The article engages with experimental theatre, dramaturgy, theatre history, intersectional feminist theory, and adaptation studies to create a text that "puts power back in the hands of female practitioners." It simultaneously recuperates *and* dismantles the "cannon," stripping Shakespeare of his authority and relocating it to survivors of sexual assault and "women," writ large.

Williams takes readers through the process of creating *Measure (Still)*, while also asserting that there is no *definitive* text to this adaptation. Just as the first iteration of *Measure (Still)* decenters the original seventeenth-century text, this new adaptation "aims at its own disappearance," as each group of participants will create their own unique version of the story. This process compels participants and audience members to ask themselves: *Who* is the protagonist of this story? Who *should* be the protagonist? Whose story gets to be told, and whose is silenced? Williams outlines how cuts were made from the original text, in what ways characters were reimagined, and how language was shifted

from the seventeenth century to the present. Additionally, she demonstrates how and where elements of contemporary history and culture were incorporated into the new work. Ultimately, Williams argues that "the personal is not only political but is also essential to the academic." In this way, *Measure (Still)* exists as documentation of, and testament to, personal process, politics, theory, and practice.

The Flâneuse in the Virtual City: Exploring "Lost Angeles"
By Zena Bibler

Bibler confronts the idea of urban wandering, not only as a set of physical practices in the real world, but through a fascinating exploration of mirrored spaces developed in the virtual realm of video games. In a riff on de Certeau's *flâneur*, Bibler investigates the concept of the *flâneuse* that emerges when both the player and viewers of those playing develop a "sense of embodiment" within virtual spaces. The primary object of study is Lee Tausman's "Lost Angeles," a mixed media artwork that questions the "real" mappings of geographical space and embodiment, when compared to the virtual wanderings of avatars within Los Santos—the digital rendering of Los Angeles in the game *Grand Theft Auto 5*. Bibler repurposes the feminist concept of the flâneuse—a female urban wanderer who accesses spaces through intertwining of the imagination and the body—to analyze how players and viewers connect kinesthetically to these avatars and virtual environments. By doing so, she proposes, through a PAR lens, how it might be possible to take an embodied approach to analyzing the relationship between virtual and actual space, by activating our own kinesthetic memory.

Volume 2, Issue 2 - Spring 2019

PAR and Embodiment: Dance, Corporeality, and the Body in Research
By Donna Mejia

In our first guest edited special issue, Mejia's editorial explains how Performance as Research engages with corporeality and embodiment, challenging us to reconsider the very foundations of how we situate the body within academic discourse. This methodology

emerges not as a simple cataloging of movement, but rather as what Mejia terms "meaningful patterned movement, as "defined by the practitioner," where the body itself becomes a crucial contributor to analytical frameworks. In the process of developing the issue, Mejia worked with the editorial team to ensure that the content worked to deliberately disrupt Eurocentric conventions about how the body is defined and discussed. Through this lens, "the body was welcomed as a contributor to the analytical frame" and not just a "blank slate" for "unexamined assumptions could be imposed. In this manner dance and embodiment as performance must extend beyond the traditional stage space to encompass boundaries such as sacred rituals, therapeutic practices, and instruments of cultural preservation or resistance. Mejia's approach demands a toggle between and exterior observing of the body as an instrument toward an immersion into the body to understand dance and movement as forms of perception and analysis. Mejia's framing offers possibilities for decolonial practice by challenging researchers to examine their own positionality and potential ethnocentricity. The result is not simply a new way of looking, but rather an intervention that demands equal portions of "bravery and curiosity" to truly ascertain what the body offers to evolving notions of PAR within academic conversations.

The State of Dancingness: Staying with Leaving
By Jo Pollitt

Responding to the impulse of Cixous' "State of Drawingness," this article experiments with "excavating and speaking from inside the rendering of making a new work, and what it *is* to be in the middle of *writing as dancing."* Pollit examines writing as a process that echoes the sensorial and creative process of solo dance improvisation— responding with purpose and craft to generate content, either through movement or the written word. She considers how writing *about* dance can complement or even expand kinesthetic communication, both regarding form and content. "The perpetual unfixity in solo improvised dance performance ideally allows the work to be given away, to be owned by the viewer as a collection of kinesthetic responses, theatrical images, and energetic states," Pollitt writes. Similarly, this article demonstrates different forms of writing that engage with "unfixity." In lines appearing similar to stanzas of poetry, the author utilizes a range of stylistic choices. The reader then sees, in the completed draft, ideas that have

become unfixed and struck-through, text formatted to reflect fluctuations in time and rhythm. These written gestures call attention to writing as embodiment, or perhaps to a practice of kinesthetically-engaged reading. Pollitt's article challenges a concept championed by the silos of higher education more generally, and by specific disciplines particularly—that writing to communicate must look like "*this.*" Inherent in this concept are the circumscribed notions regarding which fields are most legitimate or valuable, and that work is valid only to the extent of its capacity to be translated into (a certain form of) writing. In short, Pollitt posits that the embodied journey of writing can reflect PAR methodologies, rather than merely speaking to them—WRITING || CAN || FEEL.

Sewing Pain: Using Costume to Bring The Clinical Body Forward
By Flavia Malva

Following the theme of questioning PAR and embodiment, Malva discusses the role of the costume as a vehicle for the telling of stories on stage. Malva details the delicate process of developing costuming for *Anticorpos*, a 2017 production from O Teatrão, a Portuguese theatre company. As part of her work with the company, Malva was tasked with discovering how pain, memory, surgery, and scars can be "translated" into costume design and how the "second skin" of that costume brings forward the embodied history of the performers, thus mediating the relationship between artists and audience.

Malva looks primarily at the needs and desires of O Teatrão's Artistic Director, Isabel Craveiro, who had "endured a lengthy process of bodily transformation as a consequence of several surgeries." Malva then guides readers through the scenographic process. They focus on facilitating the performance of "the clinical body, the social body, the body for sale and the spiritual body." Working as a collaborator in the development of Craveiro's piece, Malva sought to incorporate the performer's "verbal and sensual" experience of four years of surgeries into the costume design. The shape, texture, materials, and movement of the costuming became performative elements in the work. At times, the costuming would free Craveiro, and at other times it constrained her movement— sometimes in such that her body became a "canvas" and a "mutual playground" upon which the collaborative artists together could render the story of that particular body.

The thirteen photographs and illustrations within the article invite the reader to imagine both the piece and its process of creation. As we see the "second skin" of the costume both in pieces and in development, Malva guides readers, who may not have a background in scenography and design, through the transformative process. She notes that in performing the piece, Craveiro "created a new narrative for her new self" and that in sharing her pain, scars, and surgeries with spectators, she "gave way for another body to take its place." The article is full of detailed descriptions of the performance, with a particular focus on the corporeality of the costumes' "second-skin" and their complex relationship with the performer's lived experience. The costumes themselves serve as a reminder of the performer's desires, her past, present, and future; they also serve as a canvas upon which to project images, light, and the audience's own (imagined) desires.

Undressing and dressing in front of the audience adds another level of vulnerability to the performance. Here, spectators view "the erotic materiality of her body." This "separation of costume and body," Malva argues, "brings back the actor from the grasp of the story being told onstage." Finally, Malva notes that in the process of rehearsal and performance, costumes become stretched, torn, and irrevocably changed—much like Craveiro's body itself. For Malva, costuming becomes a process, and for Craveiro they facilitate a "game of show and tell," wherein the performer inhabits multiple bodies, while prompting spectators to contemplate their own.

Volume 3, Issue 2 - Spring 2020

Revisiting the Rusty Ring: Ecofeminism Today?
By Annette Arlander

In revisiting her previous performances, Arlander invites readers into the artist's journey of finding new meaning in the problematizing of past works using critical artistic praxis. She re-analyzes an original work (2009), through a lens of increased knowledge gained through an additional nine years of life—acknowledging that originally she "had no thoughts of ecofeminism." She notes that, in looking back, "I can see the ethical problems in my attitude," while simultaneously noting the value of her performance as a case study.

The essay and accompanying video engage with theories of ecofeminism and new materialism; they trace the former movement's journey from culturally appropriative practices to its current more anti-racist, de-colonialist tenets, and consider the decolonizing of human relationships and interactions with nature. Arlander reflects upon both her 2009 performance and the 2018 reprisal. Modeling curiosity and humility in creative praxis, she describes dismay at "the naïveté in my attempts at performing landscape" while continuing to "recognize my striving to articulate a bonding to place, situatedness, and dependence as facts of life, rather than something to idealize." The word naïveté is an interesting choice, calling to mind errors made from surface-only knowledge and also "natural" or "innocent." Arlander's revisiting of her early work ends with a call to action: to live in and alongside nature "more wisely and sensitively than I was doing at the time." Arlander performs the continuing circular and durational movements of the original piece; her revisiting of the original's aesthetic, affective, and ethical values and messages creates one more cycle, demonstrating a durational commitment to PAR as not only a research methodology, but an epistemological approach and praxis.

Mapping Loss as Performative Research in Ralph Lemon's "Come Home Charley Patton"
By Kajasa Henry

Henry documents and analyzes choreographer Ralph Lemon's choreographic process using the theoretical image of maps and geography to conceptualize PAR methodologies. Lemon's choreography creates what Henry terms an "archive of loss." The article highlights the PAR process Lemon engages with, as he traveled along the route of the Freedom Riders, staging what he later termed "counter-memorials" at sites of importance, loss, and tragedy. Henry claims that:

> By placing the black male body as foundational to his research in *Come home Charley Patton*, Lemon creates and animates a complex archive of pain that relies on his interaction with sites of loss using his dancing body, which is also, importantly, a "black" and male body."

In addition to exploring the PAR methodologies Lemon used, Henry traces aesthetic elements throughout Lemon's body of work. The article uplifts the analysis of

both process and performance, using theoretical frameworks of memory, loss, grief, and ritual in/as performance. Henry uses theories of mourning and melancholia to document and analyze Lemon's search for "affective and aesthetic language" to "map loss" both in process and on stage: "His intent: to uncover the physical and symbolic remains of a genealogy of violence and memory embedded in the southern landscape and negotiate his relationship to this space and its history."

Volume 3, Issue 2 - Spring 2021

Pedagogies of/and Performance-As-Research: Mobilizing PAR in Pedagogical Contexts
By Emily Rollie

In this editorial introducing *PARtake*'s special issue on Pedagogy and PAR, Rollie highlights a dialogic approach, described as "reciprocal research," that "activates and amplifies" the work of PAR practitioners. It is in this dialogic understanding, Rollie emphasizes the "of/and" relationship that pedagogies bring to performance-as-research. By introducing the works in the issue Rollie highlights how the authors in various ways question the ways PAR informs pedagogy and in turn how pedagogy leads to an effective mode of PAR. In a nod to Paula Freire the highlights multiple ways that PAR disrupts "normative" frameworks of teaching by moving beyond the banking model toward a more processual, perspectival, and participatory notion of knowledge creation. Often it is through embodied experience and collective learning that PAR generates what might be termed an epistemological intervention in pedagogical methodology. This intervention manifests in multiple ways: through collaborative knowledge creation, somatic understanding, and interdisciplinary dialogue that develops when diverse fields of inquiry intersect. PAR's relationship to pedagogy also allows heightened possibilities for decolonial and anti-racist educational practices, challenging the very basis for how knowledge is produced and disseminated in academic spaces. This approach represents not simply a new method, but rather a potentially necessary repositioning where knowledge formed through the material process of performance exists in generative partnership with traditional analytical modes.

Towards a Model for Teaching PAR in the Undergraduate Classroom
By Oona Hatton

Taking inspiration from Robin Nelson's elements of a "justifiable" PAR practice, Hatton outlines her artistic and pedagogical experiments with Performance-as-Research and community-engaged creative processes that span multiple courses at San Jose State University. She examines projects through which students' perceptions of theatrical coursework were reframed to see performance as "a continuation of our research as well as the opportunity to share what we had learned." By reframing students' perceptions through embodied, creative, durational processes rather than through readings and lectures, Hatton models the use of PAR not only as a research methodology, but also as a pedagogical strategy.

Hatton argues that to establish an effective PAR practice in the classroom, faculty must not only understand our "institutional habitats," but make use of the specific contexts and institutional machinery within which we work. Three years later, the continued shifting of the higher education landscape has increased pressure for many faculty, administrators, and departments in the arts and humanities to defend or legitimize their continued existence within university campuses and systems. As Hatton states, "writing is central to this legitimizing process, and it is therefore vital that sufficient time and care are provided for students to reflect on their work," arguing further that "the final reflection—and not the performance that precedes it–should serve as the course's culminating experience." As university expectations of theatre departments and courses change, especially those courses taken for general education credits, faculty can look to Hatton's model as a strategy for creating meaningful and engaging writing projects in performance courses that build upon the embodied performance work in those courses, rather than disconnecting from that work. Hatton models a pedagogical praxis grounded in deepening students' understanding of the epistemological nature of performance and the many ways in which performance can be used to understand and communicate about our world.

Hatton's article highlights the process, or *model,* that she establishes in facilitating PAR-rooted structures of generating and analyzing artistic work. This model, written in a format that clearly highlights student learning outcomes, and a process which hinged on

Hatton's class's community-engaged work within the prison system, is practical and applicable, maintaining relevance three years after its original publication.

Theatre Island and Urban Scenographies of Learning: A Performative Paradigm for Transversal Pedagogy
By Shauna Janssen

Janssen focuses on concepts of "transversal pedagogy" and "urban scenography," by detailing how the international field school held on Copenhagen's Theatre Island utilized site-specific, collaborative learning to increase critical engagement with deindustrialized landscapes and urban change. In a unique approach to scenographic practices, Janssen shows how performance as research might work beyond the more traditional confines of studio practice. It is through their explanation of the "scenographic turn" that outdoor locations allow a reorienting of place and space as objects of knowledge creation. Janssen combines theoretical concepts from performance studies, scenography, and urban planning, while also including explorations of her student projects. These projects demonstrate a pedagogical model that positions embodiment at the forefront and in conversation with space, through performative mappings. The article offers a nuanced method of leading students to engage, through collaboration and embodied learning, with their own research questions. Janssen's pedagogy is interdisciplinary, encouraging new ways of examining the impact of urban sites on academic knowledge production.

Performance Review of Zoom Shakespeare: The Show Must Go Online and "Read for the Globe"
By Valerie Clayman Pye

Clayman Pye explores one of the earliest performance interventions during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns. The review archives the virtual performance platform and community of *The Show Must Go Online,* and the fundraising initiative they participated in: "Read for the Globe." Clayman Pye's review offers an overview of the types of Zoom-based performances streamed on *The Show Must Go Online* YouTube channel, along with the digital community-making by repeat audience members, who called themselves "groundlings." She offers insight into language developed by virtual

audience members in the chat—phrases popular enough to catalyze a bingo card for phrases appearing in the chat during the live stream. Central to this conversation was the term "poig," a ubiquitous phrase, short for "poignant." This review captures the unique cultural moment of performance interventions for structural and community needs in theatre— including also fundraising for floundering theatre companies, performance opportunities for artists, and virtual community gatherings during COVID-19 isolation.

Volume 4, Issue 1 - Fall 2021

'Beware The Word': Butoh, Ethnotheatre, and The Limits of Speech
By Jacquelyn Marie Shannon

Shannon found herself haunted by the injunction of Chicago-based Butoh artist Adam Rose: "Beware those who force Dance to Speech. Beware the Word." As both dancer and scholar, Shannon articulates at the article's outset how her orientation to Butoh has "always been a dance of struggle with and through and against language as much as it has been with and through and against the body." It is precisely this space of tension and ambiguity that excites Shannon's research, and it is in this spirit that she decides to take Rose's warning—in fact, reframe and reclaim his warning—as a "call … to witness" the dance, indeed the struggle, at deeper levels of awareness and curiosity. What happens, she asks, when "we force Butoh dance into speech?"

Using ethnotheatre methods—which for Shannon conflates with verbatim theatre in the mode of Anna Deveare Smith—Shannon unpacks how an ethnotheatre project might unfold as Butoh research, thereby exploring how this sort of methodology might employ language as a tool both to "foreground its limits, [and] how it might salvage and serve up meaning from the symptoms of its failures." In doing so, Shannon offers an exciting contribution to the subject of dance and its relationship with written and spoken language. How, for example, can scholartists speak from the dancing body, rather than about it? Are there ways to document embodied practice without reducing or narrowing content—and even more ambitious, can language open up new ways of moving and experiencing

movement? Can performance as research expand and deepen our experience of dancing *and* writing?

Shannon begins her imagined ethnotheatrical project with a question: "What happens when Butoh artists encounter moments of impossibility at the boundaries of speech?" Shannon posits working from interviews, then developing those interviews into a scripted performance—one that is nevertheless a performance where: "the words, the space between words, and the body, moving and resisting movement, would be translated verbatim by the voices *and* bodies of performers." Using the body to generate the words, then expressing the words in multi-dimensional, multi-modal forms (including design elements) as method of inquiry, rather than an aimed-for product, would, in Shannon's thesis, be a step towards "a means of evidencing, symptomatically, this powerful, moving, unspeakable "spirit" of Butoh as, along, with and across its various trembling but transformative thresholds."

The "A" in STEAM: PAR as Fifth-Space for Research and Learning in the Arts and Sciences
By Vivian Appler and Kenya Gadsen

Authors Appler and Gadsden argue that in the "fifth space" that is created when PAR methodologies are utilized in K-12 arts integrative processes, "ideas can grow together in ways that possess novel cognitive potential and that hold revolutionary social implications" (11-12). The authors examine ways in which embodied and engaging approaches to query and the generation of knowledge can support young students in forming new perceptions of our world. They illustrate their argument with examples focused on women's representation in physics and Hawaiian language revitalization efforts to decolonize scientific fields and processes, prior to examining their own project, "That which We Call A Rose."

The project describes engaging participants through devising, witnessing performance, and scientific inquiry. It offers resource guides and lesson plans to be implemented by teachers in K12 classrooms, and further online resources designed to increase accessibility. The lesson plans, developed to reinforce the importance of both theatrical processes and scientific inquiry, provide supplemental learning to in-person

events which engaged students in the process of theatre-making as they explored concepts related to planetary nomenclature, scientific characteristics of celestial bodies, and the diverse meanings and mythos pertaining to elements of our solar system. Throughout describing this multi-phase arts and science integrative project, the authors examine how utilizing performance also embedded social-emotional learning, identity representation, and accessibility into the scientific learning outcomes, making an argument for PAR implementation for holistic education across curricula. The project, in its many phases, illustrates that PAR-based pedagogy can not only effectively support learning in common core subjects, but also "make visible the covert institutional and societal euro-and androcentric systems" woven into US common core curriculum.

Not Writing New Rules, Merely Rat-ifying: Musical Theatre Goes Digital in Ratatouille: A Performance Review of Ratatouille: The TikTok Musical
By Lusie Cuskey

Cuskey reviewed and documented the wildly popular Ratatouille TikTok musical, in response to a call for performance reviews of digitally generated and distributed theatrical performances in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns. Performance reviews in *PARtake* operate as spaces to both document PAR from the audience perspective and analyze performance using PAR as a theoretical lens. Cuskey accomplished both goals, documenting the narrative and context of the TikTok musical and thinking about the modality of generation and distribution in the context of collaborative creativity. With limited coverage of this musical in academic publishing, this performance review takes on even greater significance. It remains one of only three performance reviews, one book chapter, and three articles about the musical—with two of those articles housed in publications on copyright and fandom studies.

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What to Perform When You're Expecting: Pregnancy in the Rehearsal Room and the Academy
By Elizabeth Ricardo

In many ways Ricardo's article is, as she describes, "a confessional." Ricardo steps into the spotlight, points to her swollen, pregnant belly and demands readers to *see it,* really see it—center stage, as something that the Academy and the theatre industry would rather not see; it is a physical "site" that is at once profoundly cultural, economic and deeply personal. Ricardo addresses the concept of pregnancy as illness, as an obstacle to productivity, and as the topic that we would perhaps rather not have to address. "The lived experience of pregnancy," Ricardo explains, "is inescapably political and frequently interpolates women into perpetuating their own othering, essentialization, and objectification."

The experience of mothering, and the dual labors of both gestation and fulfilling the expectations of a tenure track career mean that, for Ricardo, "nesting wasn't only about decorating the nursery, it was about padding my CV and securing my place as a creative entity" that would also secure her economic future. The enculturation in a capitalist economy of maximum productivity—and the uncapped nature of this in academic contexts—meant that "pregnancy equaled illness, and illness was mostly a problem because it reduced my productivity." She tracks her own part in perpetuating this, noting how often she "unintentionally reproduced ideologies that frame pregnancy as illness and prioritize productivity over wellness," and always because looming in the background was a fear of the practical repercussions of failing to publish, perform and successfully direct a theatre program.

Pregnancy becomes a set of performances in the twin contexts of professional theatre and the Academy. Ricardo notes how she internalized the maxim "Actors don't get sick," and notes that she was "continuing to reproduce ableist ideology, if only in policing myself, and myself alone." Referring to Marion Young's work, Ricardo writes about the ways that her unborn child was implicated in performance on stage. "The audience saw my sensations, *my* pregnancy," she writes. "A layer of distance from the material that had once existed now evaporated in this conflation of experience. I couldn't help but wonder if I was encroaching on some ethical gray areas. Barrett [Ricardo's child] was being interpolated into the performance. In fact, he was absolutely an actor, and I was capitalizing on his presence."

In an article that moves readers along with engaging narrative, grounded in the work of Iris Marion Young, Sara Cohen Shabot and others, Ricardo brings to life the day-to-day, lived experience of performance-as-research, when that performance takes place on multiple stages: theatrical, academic, and the dynamic, gestating body. As Ricardo writes in her conclusion: "Pregnancy and the performance of pregnancy … become a kind of microcosm of the ways in which our Selves and our bodies are always already interpolated by the dehumanizing systems on which our lives inescapably depend." And in this authoethnographic analysis, Ricardo deftly opens up to us one woman's experience of patriarchy, and performance, in action.

Doki Doki Literature Club: Cute Girls, Violence, and Your Computer
By Peter Spearman

In *Doki Doki* we are guided through a harrowing experience of a videogame designed to violate the relationship of player to story. The article takes a performance studies approach in analyzing a game that presents itself as a Japanese-coded dating simulation, but "quickly sheds its mask, revealing a surreal horror visual novel where the AI becomes self-aware, cannibalizes game files, and accesses personal information about the player on their computer." Spearman outlines the experience of the game, problematizes the game in its socio-cultural context, and perhaps, most compelling for the mission of *PARtake*, explores "the player's computer as a meta-site of performance." Diana Taylor's conception of "scenario" as a model to understand the disturbing relationship between narrative and player in the game reveals complicated relationships between the contexts: technology and user, game and player, character and audience. In an effective use of PAR methodology, Spearman references not only the game as the analytical subject but the player, utilizing player testimonials including the author's own experience as playing *Doki Doki Literature Club*.

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Driving a Driverless Train: Are We All Extras Now? Theatre and AI
By Kristof van Baarle, Sozita Goudouna, Eero Laine, Sarah Lucie, Rumen Rachev, and
Aneta Stojnić

This innovative, collaboratively authored essay develops contact points between concepts of contemporary automation, artificial intelligence, and theatrical performance through the lens of "extras"—both on stage and in contemporary labor contexts. By considering non-conventional forms of performance, the article encourages readers to broaden their understanding regarding what constitutes objects of study within a PAR context. The crux of the paper draws parallels between 19th century theatrical supernumeraries, academics facing advances in intelligent technologies, and workers displaced by automation. The initial framing—how human "stand-ins" perform as train conductors on Paris trains driven by autonomous technologies—asks the reader to rethink their own relationship to an increasingly precarious sense of unrecognized labor in our technologically evolving world. By creating a parallel between these faux conductors to the "extras" often employed in early 19th century theatre works, they highlight a kind of "aesthetic labor" that is increasingly becoming the background of our automated world. These extras are valued more for their aesthetic presence than any active mode of agency. This presents a shift, where the work of humans simply becomes a performance of "theatrical intermediaries" between automated systems and consumers of the products of performance. The authors' acknowledgment of their own position as academics embedded within this new system of automation and performance aesthetics adds a layer of crucial self-reflection. It demonstrates how when researchers incorporate their own experiences and labor into their analysis, they are doing the rich work of PAR. What we found most compelling is how their deft entry into a mode of collaboration as PAR itself unmasks a precarious place of what they call exhaustion—one that many of us in academia are encountering. The work we do is often only a performance of meeting the surveillance metrics established by automated systems of academic "excellence" intended to establish a mechanism for control, relegating faculty to "stand-ins" within the mechanisms of institutional governance. To push back against this regime, the authors argue for a new mode of collective knowledge production where we metaphorically unionize by engaging

in collaborative research, negating any of the framing of us as simply lone scholars or solo conductors on an autonomous train.

Reflections from the Editorial Team

Niki Tulk
Founding Co-Editor

As a new doctoral student at the theatre department's welcome BBQ, I remember standing awkwardly at the outer reaches of the Cool Kid Grad School Circle—listening to the banter between the established cohort, wishing that I didn't hate parties so much and could think of something to ease the stress for myself. Like small talk. Hah—who was I kidding. But—the sun on the Rockies behind me was stunning, and the sky beyond the veranda vast.

Then I heard someone chatting about a new journal idea. My ears pricked up. I knew the speaker—Will Lewis, who had taken me for dinner when I visited CU to check out the program. Journal? Editing? That was something I could talk about! I listened as the idea was thrown around, casual over drinks and then submerged by something witty and more engaging than academic writing. But I now had a reason to be here, a laser-focus mission. In my neurodivergent unsubtle way, I made straight for Will the moment he left the circle for a drink. "I heard you talking about a journal. I can do this! I am a good editor! Can I be part of it?" Thankfully being direct with Will is always a winner, and from that day forth we were firm and enthusiastic collaborators on getting this thing off the ground.

This "thing" needed much more than Will and me—and what a wonderful, brilliant group of folk gathered very quickly to make this journal happen … and keep happening. As we all pitched in, one of the true joys across the years has been collaborating across the research and skill areas that we each brought to the table. There have been so many vibrant discussions, arguments, laughter—the camaraderie of a troupe of budding scholars, with a hearty dose of Beginners Mind. Together, we have explored creating a space for what we all felt passionate about: the widest possible range of voices and practices, sharing a virtual campfire. In doing this, our hope was to smash down arbitrary walls between scholars,

artists and disciplines. And in the light of the ever-creeping, neo-liberal tide threatening to decimate higher education in this country, this hope is as pertinent as ever.

I believe we did this, one article at a time. I learnt that there is a vast range of PAR work being done across the globe, and also that many authors struggle to express what they are doing in a way that clearly positions the work in other, concurrent conversations, while achieving enough specificity in language to showcase their own projects to the full. So much of what we do as artists is, by its nature, challenging to "reduce" into words; so much of the work we make is spiralic, or emerging in ways that belie a traditional linear, academic trajectory of Literature/Methods/Results.

I learnt that the abstracts were truly just beginnings, and that a further PAR aspect was working as an editor/colleague alongside authors, coaching and helping them find the shape and expression that best suited the project. There was far more close editing than I had thought there would be—many authors chose to not follow through on their abstracts, and the one that got away for me was one that promised mycelium networks as performative. Ah, well.

Reflecting on nearly a decade of this journal, I treasure the ways we have all grown as scholars, editors and makers—and as colleagues. I am deeply proud of the work our troupe has done—moments of frantically herding cats aside—and that we have introduced projects and people to each other, across continents and silos.

I am particularly, profoundly grateful for the work of Will Lewis. From the outset, he and I have held this "thing" together through many challenges and (especially) joys. He has been at the coalface of every organizational challenge and allowed me to indulge my obsession with ensuring em-dashes are used correctly. Among many other things. I will miss our collaboration. And I will, clearly, never have the chance to learn the mysterious hidden art of underwater basket weaving. But some things, you just have to let go.

Erin Kaplan
Associate Editor and Book Review Editor

I was invited to be part of PARtake in 2016 as the journal was editing its first issue. I was admittedly overwhelmed—I had just transferred doctoral programs, moved cross-

country, and had a brand-new baby—but the idea of the journal and of working with people who I already so-admired was too good to pass up. I remember sitting at a folding table in one of the CU Boulder acting studios passing printed copies of journal articles around the room and collectively and collaboratively editing them and feeling like I was on the ground floor of something truly special, unique, and significant.

I took the liberty of writing a book review for that first journal issue for the simple reason of really wanting a copy of that rather expensive book. A few years and four issues later the journal had grown and become much less of a slap-dash graduate student hail-mary and has evolved into a well-respected and oft-cited contribution to our field. It was then that I was offered the role of Book Review Editor. The opportunity to stay on top of new texts in the field and reading other scholar's summaries and thoughts on them was truly a gift. When the pandemic hit, however, everything changed. Publishing houses were no longer offering physical books for reviews and instead sending links to "digital access copies" for potential readers.

Numerous people reached out to me, asking to review this book or that. Authors would contact me regularly hoping their new monograph or edited collection could be added to our "List of Books for Review." One by one, however, as the pandemic ebbed, vaccines were rolled out, and life began to slowly return to normal, publishers embraced *their* new normal. No books would be offered to reviewers and the idea of doing free labor in exchange for a "digital access copy" was no longer of interest to many who would otherwise have been eager for the opportunity to write for us, as I had been in that first issue. Graduate students, contingent and early-career faculty—people who were already overworked, under-compensated, and still reeling from the trauma of isolation—were not even offered the free book we could once provide. Slowly but surely our issues had fewer and fewer book reviews. In some instances, authors would send me physical copies of *their own books* to send to reviewers in the hopes that they might entice writers to consider reviewing them. It is a sad state of affairs when valuable contributions to our field cannot be read, reviewed, discussed, and disseminated simply because the publishers are frankly, too cheap to put a copy in the mail for an eager graduate student who wants a free book and a publication credit.

Amanda Rose Villareal
Managing Editor and Co-Editor

As a PhD candidate, I was invited first to serve as an editorial assistant with *PARtake,* and then to step into the role of Managing Editor. As a first-generation graduate student and a new initiate to the cultures and processes of both academia and publishing, I learned much from participating in the editorial process. Seeing the writing of researchers whom I admired evolve from draft to published article helped me to realize that writing is not an act of ease at which I alone was struggling, but a collaborative process through which ideas flourish, fertilized by the eyes and opinions of a team of readers, reviewers, and editors. Serving as copy editor, I corrected the grammar and citational practices of advanced scholars, which gave me permission to forgive myself for my own oversights and errors in writing, rather than to dwell on them.

I remember sitting in a coffee shop on the hill in Boulder, Colorado, with co-editor Niki Tulk, saturated in caffeine and theory as we discussed the practices explored in two recent submissions that centered on seemingly disparate topics, and the ways we saw these two works conversing with one another. We were compiling the reviewers' notes on all recent submissions. Experienced academics and scholars—reviewers A and B, I'll call them—disagreed with one another regarding the value of each of the two pieces, but Niki and I could see the probing and insightful conversation emerging between their commentary and the two authors' individual works. In the end, we sent both pieces back to the authors, asking for extensive revisions, but we had a clear vision for how these pieces could be incorporated into a future issue, and we communicated this to the authors. Months later, the two pieces were resubmitted, strengthened individually and better positioned to converse with one another effectively. Having been a part of the "behind the scenes" conversation regarding the value these pieces posed, prepared me to receive both rejections and "revise-and-resubmit"s, with a more even-keeled perspective as I began submitting my own early scholarship to other journals. The experience taught me the value of a thorough and well-crafted peer review. While these roles—author, peer reviewer, editor—may never end up collaborating again in shared space, my time working with *PARtake* shaped my perspective of the type of partnerships that these relationships have the capacity to be, when

those doing this labor embrace a collaborative, rather than combative, perspective on the work.

As the pandemic hit, our collective capacity to do this collaborative and unpaid labor dwindled as a community; it became difficult if not impossible to secure peer reviewers for every article, and as peer reviewers were accosted with new changes to which they needed to adapt, some needed to abandon half-written reviews to focus instead on their own work at their own campuses. Our timelines stretched, much to our chagrin, and the university became less willing to fiscally support the publication of the journal: a microcosm, perhaps, for the conditions that continue to shape the experiences of theatre and performance studies departments today. So I think back to the in-person collaboration of editing this journal—with Niki on the Hill, or with an entire team sharing and discussing articles—as well as the digital yet rich research conversations that emerged between our editorial team, peer reviewers, and authors. And I wonder what new innovations researchers in our field will form to continue these collaborative and idea-expanding processes outside of the arena of more traditional academic publication.

Sarah Johnson
Associate Editor and Performance Review Editor

My strongest memory of the early days of *PARtake* is sitting on the wooden floor of a dance studio in Boulder, surrounded by mirrors, laptops, notebooks and pencils. We were a group of graduate students inspired by the dusty copies of a defunct journal, the efforts of our graduate student predecessors. We said the words that I think all scholars do at some point: We could do that! Sitting in a circle on the hard studio floor, we threw out possible journal names. We were circling around Performance as Research and trying to think of the most interesting use of the PAR acronym. When someone (I truly don't remember who) said *PARtake*, we started ruminating on the other readings of that world. Who was partaking? Of what? It felt like an invitation, or perhaps a demand. We could do this. We could partake.

I found myself drawn to editing work dedicated to deep description and performative writing. When we started receiving more performance reviews as submissions, we quickly realized that identifying a single editor for that section of the

journal might lend it some cohesion. I gladly took on the role of Performance Review Editor when Will and Niki asked. I took inspiration from *TDR's* Critical Acts section and generated a call for performance reviews that explicitly focused on a blending of both the archiving of performance and analyzing it through a PAR lens. The performance itself might be generated by PAR methods, or not—it felt more important to me that the writers of these reviews be audience *members,* not creators. As a dramaturg, my professional experience of serving as an outside eye informed this desire. There is usefulness in a witness providing detailed descriptions of their experience. The feedback I found myself giving to writers was often: "more sensory-based descriptive details," "reinsert yourself into your description as audience," and "make your argument about the performance clearer." These three notes often brought cohesion to the performance review section as a whole— archiving the experience with deep description, considering yourself as the audience through a PAR lens, and analyzing through argument.

Looking back on the journal as a whole, and at my particular sphere of Performance Reviews, has reminded me of the impressive work our authors have done uplifting and considering performance in deep and powerful ways. Over the last nine years, our authors have consistently showed us how to partake of performance.

William W. Lewis

Founding Co-Editor and Managing Editor

It was my first year in the PhD program at Boulder, I found myself a bit adrift and somewhat out of place. For the majority of my adult life I had considered myself an artist, though to be honest, most of my "career" had been spent working in a bar or restaurant. Being thrown into the academic sphere wasn't exactly what felt foreign, however—I had worked past that during my time at Hunter College. What felt out of place, was at the time it seemed I was the only one in the program who was a first-generation college student. I think back to the moment I realized this, and for some reason, that seemingly "outsider" status gave me the courage to resist the pressure to fit the stereotypical mold of academic scholar. This also gave me the energy to continue arguing for increased synergies between practice and theory—something I am still passionate about, although now I tend to

approach the proposition from the perspective of being a scholar and educator first. It is interesting how time changes us.

Boulder was a great place for someone passionate about praxis: the blending of theory and practice for research and pedagogical purposes. We were actively encouraged to continue our various practices, but also guided to take what we were learning in the classroom and in our outside research into our artistic endeavors. We were gifted a both/and perspective that the department liked to call an "On-Stage Studies" approach. This philosophy was unique at the time and should be celebrated in more programs. That year I came upon old copies of the journal by the same name, previously published through the department in collaboration with Colorado Shakespeare Festival. *On-Stage Studies* ended in 2001, after approximately twenty years of publication. Its focus was on the practical aspects of Shakespearean performance and production, through a scholarly lens. The few faculty who were around when it was thriving explained that, for many years, faculty and students worked together to produce the journal. It ultimately lost steam, however, as the festival went through lean times, and then the journal ended, as fewer students and faculty focused on Shakespearean research and practice.

Having just begun learning more about scholarship and methodologies for practice-based-research, I saw an avenue for us to bring the journal back to life. This time, we would honor the traditional both/and approach, while incorporating a broader, global viewpoint of performance studies and PAR. My own impetus was to prove to all those who had said previously that you had to pick one side of the line, that there was another—dare I say, better—way.

Over the next six months, I reached out to colleagues and mentors across the country and the world to learn more about PAR. I learned it was a thriving methodology engaged most succinctly in Australia and Europe. But why not the US? The summer of 2015 I participated as an observer in the weeklong working sessions of the Performance as Research working group at the International Federation of Theatre Research conference, in Stockholm. I thank Bruce Barton and Annette Arlander for their graceful words of wisdom and the glimpse they offered into their own practice. I learned that PAR was a vibrant and rigorous methodology that could, and should, be integrated much more widely into higher ed.

Over this time, I researched what it took to launch and run an online journal, and what it would take to bridge the so-called practice/research divide. In a manner similar to PAR, you learn best from just doing it. With the encouragement from faculty, and the support from our first advisory board, it was time to enlist my peers in the exciting but grueling work of launching and running an open access publication.

Niki was the first to excitedly join, and how appropriate, as she was already a PAR practitioner, even if she didn't call it that, and thankfully she was an amazingly supportive editor and partner. Without Niki, I am sure the journal would not have been as successful as it became. In that first year we worked much more as a committee, with Niki and I primarily leading the organization, but with assistance from many members from across various graduate programs on CU's campus. We also were fortunate to find supportive scholartists willing to serve as peer reviewers (Figure 1).
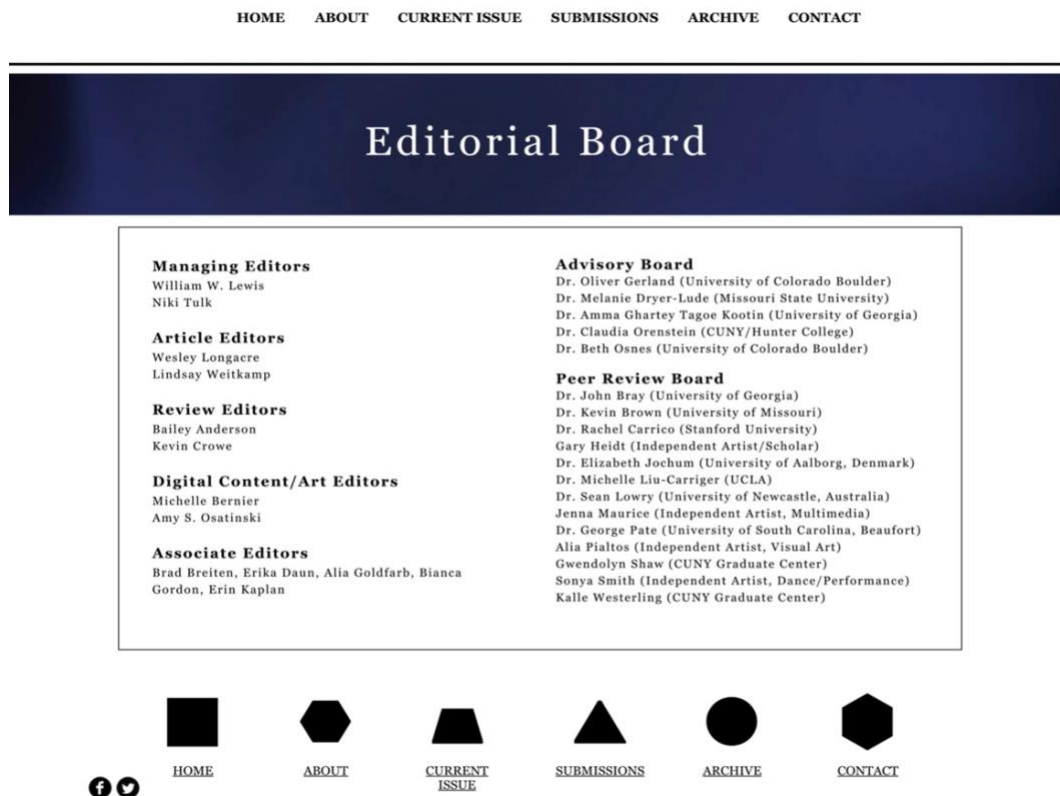

Figure 1. First year founding editorial team.

The first year was truly a collaborative team effort, spreading out across the country. What we learned was that when you work together and are passionate about something, great things will occur. After our first issue, some members of the original team completed their degrees or decided, that once the excitement of the first-year launch wore off, that they would rather spend time on other things—like writing their dissertations. It really is fortunate that we were able to bring the group together in the first place, and I believe it happened because of the generous both/and ethos—and community spirit—fostered by the CU's Theatre and Dance program.

In the following years, the core team settled into our primary roles. I served as the managing editor while also working as co-editor with Niki. I excelled at the large picture organizational elements and when editing worked best in broad strokes of theory and argument, while Niki had a unique ability to drill down into the minute details of sentence structure and flow. For the first five issues we tag-teamed editing articles, with additional secondary editorial review from others on the team. During this time, Sarah and Erin took on more formal roles as associate editors, and then section editors for review material. Amanda Rose took over as Managing Editor shortly after Sarah and I completed our degrees and left Boulder in 2018. We had somehow managed to convince the department to make that position a paid Graduate Assistantship with a dedicated faculty mentor.

During the next two years the journal grew, and we began inviting special guest editors while also going through the difficult process of transferring online platforms from Bepress to Open Journal Systems (OJS). By the time of that transition, the journal had published nearly forty articles and reviews and had over fifteen thousand individual pdf downloads. Amanda Rose must be commended for assisting with this almost seamless transition, while still learning the ins and outs of keeping the infrastructure running—again, doing all this while working on a dissertation. By the Spring of 2020, the core editorial team had moved on to faculty positions, spread out across the country. We were working on our fifth issue, and then the pandemic hit. Lucky for the journal, we were ready to publish. The pandemic, however, marked a turning point in the field.

The COVID-19 pandemic catalyzed a period of reflection and realignment amongst many in higher education—one that had been building for a long time. In the two years that followed, *PARtake*'s editorial team found it increasingly difficult to maintain

consistent timelines. As we were working to establish our own careers, it was becoming clear that many in similar positions were reprioritizing in their own lives. Like many journals in our field, we increasingly saw fewer numbers of submissions and trying to enlist peer reviewers who could commit to the necessary work of constructive commentary and advice felt like pulling teeth. We had a handful of reviewers we could consistently count on, but it didn't seem fair or ethical to ask them to take on more. We also transitioned to our most recent Managing Editor, Sam Collier, who marked the first member of the editorial team without direct in-person connection to the founding members. Over the past four issues, Sam learned how to manage the journal, while also dealing with increasingly difficult parameters. Their department mentor, who had been the link between those who started the journal and the new group of students, also left CU for a different position. At this point the department was also managing a flux of administrative changes, and we learned, starting in 2024, that funding for a Graduate Assistant would no longer be available. With all this change, we started conversations regarding the complex procedures of possibly winding down the journal.

After nearly one-hundred published articles and reviews from scholar-artists in over twenty countries, nearly fifty-thousand individual pdf downloads, and over ninety citations of the work published, we made the difficult decision to sign off with this final issue—and to do so by celebrating all the work put into the journal.

I personally want to thank Niki for her steadfast and eagle eye on doing everything possible to make each article shine, while supporting the author during the journey. Niki also has been the proverbial yin to my yang, always keeping it light and offering the personal touch of keeping an eye out for the mental and physical health of the team while I often barreled through necessities and logistics. As for the rest of the team--Sarah, Amanda Rose, Erin, Sam—they each have brought a clear vision, sense of dedicated hard work, and level of integrity to supporting the journal. Thank you for your work and humanity. Working with each of them over the years, I have learned how lucky I have been, personally and professionally, to get to collaborate with such an amazingly brilliant, talented, and compassionate group of people. Those of you reading this, if you ever get the chance to work with them, don't hesitate.

Early on, Niki came up with the image of a group of scholar artists sitting around a campfire, engaging in a rigorous yet uplifting conversation about the joys of combining performance and research. All the people who have contributed to the success of the journal are part of that campfire. They have told their stories, offered their wisdom, and in many ways, poured their souls into the community conversation. With each additional voice, the fire grew stronger and allowed its warmth to encourage others to build bridges and cross between lines. The conversation will continue. For all of you who have been part of that conversation WE THANK YOU as well. The journal has always been a place to partake in the genuine joys of community. At this point, where we have decided to let the journal end, we hope that original flame stays warm and continues to kindle new and even hotter fires across our collaborative networks. Who knows, maybe one day another ambitious and energetic group of graduate students will feel the need to bring that embers back to life in a similar way that *PARtake* was reborn: from the spirit of those who came before us.