

## Call for Papers: “Queer and Trans Readings of the Theatrical Past”

A Special Section of *Theatre History Studies*

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Elizabeth Freeman writes in *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (2010) of the epistemology of nonbinary and transgender people in history: “Trans studies has a history problem, albeit one that scholars from all branches of the field are busy working to address.” She contends that scholars need to argue that trans lives and scholarship existed prior to the coinage of trans terminology.<sup>1</sup> This special section of *Theatre History Studies* invites submissions that engage with what Freeman identifies as a historical “problem” in projects exploring queer and trans identities within and around the frame of theatre and performance, as well as disciplines/genres that have a performative connection, highlighting folks (real and perhaps imagined) who might more clearly be understood through contemporary queer and trans theory.<sup>2</sup>

In her foundational texts, *A Problem Like Maria: Gender and Sexuality in the American Musical* (2002) and *Changed for the Good: A Feminist History of the Broadway Musical* (2011), Stacy Wolf examines theatre history in relation to gender and sexuality by performing a queer spectatorship of canonical and commercial musicals, examining their female protagonists and the stars who played them. Forwarding this discourse, La Donna Forsgren in “*The Wiz* Redux; or, Why Queer Black Feminist Spectatorship and Politically Engaged Popular Entertainment Continue to Matter” (2019), examines *The Wiz* as a “resistant reader,” wherein she relies on a lens of a “queer black feminist spectator” to reinterpret the well-known musical.<sup>3</sup> And Jack Isaac Pryor creates the term “time slips” to express those “moments”—often nonlinear—when both spectators and creators are able to rewrite past (and future) histories of racial and gendered violence through queer and trans performance practice in *Time Slips: Queer Temporalities, Contemporary Performance, and the Hole of History* (2017).<sup>4</sup>

For this special section, we seek interlocutors invested in centering voices, who, in their time, may have desired a language to describe the specificities of queer genders and sexualities, but lacked access to a lexicon. Building on these exemplary works of feminist, queer, and trans scholarship and responding to Freeman’s critical call, we recognize the need to reflect on the marginalization and omission of histories of queer, nonbinary, and trans identities in theatre and performance archives and discourses. In the historical index, queerness and/or trans identities have been rendered invisible for many reasons including logics of their respective time period, the discrimination and violence historically directed at queer and trans people, and erasure of evidence and/or exclusion of language. Given this, we invite essays that attend to questions such as:

- How can we as theatre and/or performance historiographers and historians, draw attention to these identities, histories, and narratives?
- How can we make new and generative readings and what challenges arise in those readings?
- Whose histories need reclaiming?
- What historically dominant ideologies and institutions forcibly extracted and diminished language for and legibility of queer and trans subjects?

- How does this work draw attention to minoritarian subjects and people of the past and present, while simultaneously acknowledging the marginalization of historical and contemporary queer and trans people and events?

The co-editors welcome articles of 5,000-7,000 words, as well as pieces in alternate formats/lengths that engage with the themes of this special section. Submissions may include slippages, nonlinear, non-traditional, and non-white supremacist projects that embrace alternative research and writing delivery pathways.

Please send all manuscripts and inquiries to **specialsectionTHS@gmail.com**. **Submissions are due by January 1, 2024.**

*Theatre History Studies* is the official journal of the Mid-America Theatre Conference and is published by the University of Alabama Press. Since 1981, *Theatre History Studies* has provided critical, analytical, and descriptive articles on all aspects of theatre history. The journal is devoted to disseminating the highest quality scholarly endeavors in order to promote understanding and discovery of world theatre history. Essays for the general section should be between 6,000-8,000 words and use endnotes rather than footnotes. Submissions in alternate formats will be considered on an individual basis. Illustrations are encouraged. Manuscripts should be prepared in conformity with the guidelines in the Chicago Manual of Style and the University of Alabama Press style sheet located on the MATC website ([here](#)).

*Theatre History Studies* accepts submissions for its general section on the full range of topics in theatre history on a **rolling deadline**. Please send manuscripts for the general section to: Jocelyn L. Buckner, Editor, at [ths.editor@matc.us](mailto:ths.editor@matc.us).

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<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Freeman. *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories*. Perverse Modernities. Durham [NC]: Duke University Press, 2010. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Freeman, 5.

<sup>3</sup> La Donna L. Forsgren. "The Wiz Redux; Or, Why Queer Black Feminist Spectatorship and Politically Engaged Popular Entertainment Continue to Matter." *Theatre Survey* 60, no. 3 (2019): 326.

<sup>4</sup> Jack Isaac Pryor. *Time Slips: Queer Temporalities, Contemporary Performance, and the Hole of History*. Performance Works. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2017: 9.