Association for Theatre in Higher Education
Performance Studies Focus Group

**DISCIPLINE OR PERFORM:**
**PERFORMANCE STUDIES IN ITS GLOBAL CONTEXTS**

Pre-Conference Organizers
Joshua Abrams
Jennifer Parker-Starbuck

Performance Studies Focus Group Officers
Henry Bial, University of New Mexico—Chair/Focus Group Representative (2002-2004)
Josh Abrams, CUNY Graduate Center—ATHE Co-Conference Planner (2004-2005)
Sian Harwood—Secretary (2002-2003)

Members at Large:
Gwendolyn Alker, New York University
Cindy Brizzell, Yale University/Siena College
Michelle Duncan, Cornell University
Gary Maciag, Siena College
Dalia Basiouny, CUNY
Sarah Standing, CUNY
Lesley Delmenico, Northwestern University
Performance Studies has been a debated and contested term that has been employed in many different contexts and with many different meanings. Whether coming from theatre, philosophy, ethnography, art history, or any one of a number of varied disciplines and backgrounds, contemporary life has undergone a turn to “performance.” This pre-conference will engage a variety of scholars, practitioners, and students to explore ideas that intersect within the term Performance Studies.

The pre-conference will begin and end with roundtable sessions featuring invited participants, who will lead a discussion interrogating several of the current areas of debate within the field. The opening roundtable will address the relation of Performance Studies to a variety of other fields and disciplines, including Philosophy, Visual Culture, Music, and Dance. The concluding round table will focus on the place of Performance Studies in relation to Theatre Studies, and the place of PS within ATHE. We will then break down into smaller “working groups,” that will address a variety of individual topics in the field with the goal of each creating a presentation to share with the other working groups at the end of the pre-conference.
10:00am-11:00am  **Registration**  
*Martin E. Segal Theatre Center Lobby*

11:00am-11:10am  **Welcome**  
*Martin E. Segal Theatre Center*  
Joshua Abrams  
Jennifer Parker-Starbuck

11:10am-11:15am  **PSi#10, Singapore**  
*Martin E. Segal Theatre Center*  
Paul Rae, University of Middlesex, UK

11:15am-1:15pm  **Opening Roundtable**  
*Martin E. Segal Theatre Center*  
**Chair:**  
**Participants:** Philip Auslander, Georgia Institute of Technology  
Una Chaudhuri, New York University  
Laurie Beth Clark, University of Wisconsin, Madison  
Jon Erickson, Ohio State University  
Susan Manning, Northwestern University  
Martin Puchner, Columbia University

1:15pm-2:00pm  **Lunch** (on your own)
Room C201:
Discipline or Methodology: Performance Studies in the Curricular Context
Facilitator: Michael Peterson University of Wisconsin, Madison
Participants: Gayle Austin Georgia State University
Sara Jane Bailes New York University
Peter Civetta Cornell University
Elinor Fuchs Yale University
Thomas King James Madison University
Milton Loayza CUNY Graduate Center
Constance Old Metropolitan Museum of Art
Ian Watson Rutgers University
Margaret Werry Pennsylvania State University

The focus of this group is on performance studies pedagogy. At issue is not so much what PS “is” (either as epistemology or institution) but what it “does” in the classroom and the curriculum (this doing obviously has both epistemological and institutional dimensions). Focus Group members teach (with) PS in many ways and many contexts. For example, I teach both a graduate seminar, “Theatre and Performance Studies” (in which both disciplinarity and that vexed “and” are central) and a new first-year undergraduate course, “Introduction to Performance Studies” (based on the familiar if not always spoken presumption that PS can understand any and everything). What is PS good for in our various settings? What does our teaching reveal about our understanding of performance?

Room C202:
Internationalism and Performance Studies
Facilitators: Jessica Chalmers Notre Dame University
Jon McKenzie Dartmouth University
Participants: John Emigh Brown University
Elise Legon CUNY Graduate Center
Paul Rae University of Middlesex
Jung-Soon Shim Soongsil University
P.A. Skantze Independent Scholar

This working group will address tensions exposed during recent PSi conferences held outside the U.S. In Aberystwyth, Wales (1999, “Here Be Dragons”) Mainz, Germany (2000, “On Translation”), and Christchurch, New Zealand (“Field Station, New Zealand: Environment/Performance,” 2003) there was intense discussion about how to nurture and sustain a truly international organization. Above all, frustrations were focused on the central role of U.S. departments—in particular NYU. Taking it as given that fostering an international organization/discipline is a positive if problematic goal, the group will begin to assemble a list of recommendations on how to create a workable global academic culture.
“Why is this Conference different from all other Conferences?” This working group will reflect on the particular experience of the recent PSi9 “Field Station” Conference in Christchurch, New Zealand as a launching pad for reimagining the role of conferences in shaping the field of Performance Studies. The organizers of the New Zealand Conference created a model of academic conference very different from the traditional paper presentations. Our goal will be to construct a model (or models) of “conference” interaction that builds upon the unique characteristics of PS.

This working group will focus on the question: What are the canonical theoretical texts of performance studies? (If time permits, we can also talk about other kinds of texts and writing, but I think we should start with theory.)

To frame the question in practical terms: What would you consider to be the essential readings/authors/topics/ideas/definitions/genres if you were either teaching a course or assembling an anthology meant to introduce the field? What is your perspective on the materials in the anthology Performance: Critical Concepts? Who or what is missing? What is there that shouldn’t be? How about the way it’s organized? The narrative of the introduction?

After we’ve arrived at a sense of the PS canon, we can talk about how it came into being. What is the relationship between the theoretical canon and the way that PS has been institutionalized? What impact has the fact that two departments in American universities played such important roles in the institutionalization of PS?
had on our sense of the field’s shape and definition? Have certain individuals had a significant impact? How are these phenomena reflected in the canonical reading list? Another issue to consider is the evolution of PS. Has it been through definable phases and has the theoretical canon changed over time? Have certain ideas/authors/texts that were once considered essential gone out of fashion? Have others replaced them?

**Room C205:**

**Performance Studies and Performance History**

Facilitator: Susan Manning Northwestern University  
Participants:  
Jonathan Bollen University of New England, Australia  
Winifred Harrington New York University  
Roxanne Heinze CUNY Graduate Center  
Vanessa Luke University of Michigan  
Lars Parker-Myers CUNY Graduate Center  
Jacqueline Shea Murphy University of California, Riverside  
Teresa Smalec New York University  
Constance Zaytoun CUNY Graduate Center  

What does it mean to take a performance studies approach to performance history? How can archival and ethnographic methods come together in writing performance history? How can we write a synthetic history of diverse genres of theatrical performance? How can we write the histories of theatrical performance and cultural performance in tandem? Participants should come prepared with a brief opening statement on their experience with performance history/performance studies.

4:30pm-7:00pm  
**On the Scent**  
*(scheduled performance)*  
*See individual registration packet for personal schedule information*

Have you ever been taken unawares by something in the air—transported to another place and time by an intangible but achingly familiar scent? *On the Scent* explores the elusive connections between smell and memory. The performance takes place in a home (in this case Marvin Carlson’s apartment) through which audience members are invited on intimate, aromatic journeys. Scents mingle and intertwine in the livingroom, kitchen and bedroom as three distinctly different performances exude their own haunting, darkly humorous and seductive essences through the house. *On the Scent* features live performances by Helen Paris and Leslie Hill and Lois Weaver.

5:30pm-7:00pm  
**Reception**, co-sponsored by Routledge Theatre Program, Suite 3111

8:00pm-8:30pm  
**Showcase**  
*(scheduled performance)*  
Co-sponsored by the Martin E. Segal Theatre Center  
*See individual registration packet for personal schedule information*

This performance presents the story of a businessman in his hotel room preparing to attend a conference. As if stranded, he uses the time spent in
his room trying to reconcile his thoughts in the room with what exists outside of it. Talking to his shadow, the businessman's recent past unfolds with deep nostalgia. *Showcase* is a New York City Players Production and was initially created to coincide with the Association of Presenters and Promoters Conference held at the Hilton Hotel, January 2003, in New York City. The production was made possible with support from the DNA Project at Arts International. Written and Directed by Richard Maxwell. Producing Director Barbara Hogue. With Jim Fletcher and Gary Wilmes.

8:00pm-10:30pm  *On the Scent*  (scheduled performance)
See individual registration packet for personal schedule information

9:30pm-10:00pm  *Showcase*  (scheduled performance)
Co-sponsored by the Martin E. Segal Theatre Center
See individual registration packet for personal schedule information

THURSDAY, JULY 31st
City University of New York Graduate Center
365 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10016

9:00am-10:15am  *Working Group Reports*
*Baisley Powell Elebash Recital Hall*

10:30am-12:30pm  *Concluding Roundtable*
*Baisley Powell Elebash Recital Hall*

Chair:  
Participants:  
Marvin Carlson, CUNY Graduate Center
John Emigh, Brown University
Bonnie Marranca, *PAJ*
Jon McKenzie, Dartmouth College
Joseph Roach, Yale University
David Savran, CUNY Graduate Center
Rebecca Schneider, Brown University
Jacqueline Shea Murphy, UC Riverside
Richard Schechner, New York University

1:00pm  *ATHE Conference begins*
*Marriott Marquis*

6:00pm-7:00pm  *On the Scent*  (scheduled performance)
See individual registration packet for personal schedule information

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aromatic journeys. Scents mingle and intertwine in the livingroom, kitchen and bedroom as three distinctly different performances exude their own haunting, darkly humorous and seductive essences through the house. *On the Scent* features live performances by Helen Paris and Leslie Hill and Lois Weaver.

8:00pm-10:30pm  **On the Scent**  (scheduled performance)

*See individual registration packet for personal schedule information*