This volume joins a growing number of books dedicated to the study of contemporary women's theatre and to the work of women directors in particular. Manfull's narrative is woven out of the voices of thirteen directors: Sarah Pia Anderson, Annabel Arden, Julia Bardsley, Annie Castledine, Garry Hynes, Jenny Killick, Brigid Larmour, Phyllida Lloyd, Sue Sutton Mayo, Nancy Meckler, Katie Mitchell, Lynne Parker, and Di Trevis. The stated intention is to focus on the 'craft' of these directors rather than their biographies - although the book does include some delightful behind-the-scenes anecdotes. One of the most memorable of these is from Sue Sutton Mayo, who tells of writing to Trevor Nunn to tell him she just had to get out of domesticity and back into theatre: Nunn gave her a job on the Nicholas Nickleby tour which she juggled with organizing care for her two young children.

To unravel the 'craft' of directing, Manfull organizes her study into three parts: Part One focuses on routes through to directing, working with designers, and approaches to text; Part Two looks at workshop and rehearsal processes and at production contexts; and Part Three examines the material conditions for the directors, their attitudes towards feminism, and their inspirations and aspirations. The 'meat' of the volume comes in Part Two which has most to say about the work of the directors. There is no single methodology which these women share, and all have different approaches, although some common features do emerge - most notably the emphasis on collaboration. Processes are illustrated through reference to specific productions. Annabel Arden and Annie Castledine both, for example, detail their co-directed production of Marguerite Duras's India Song for Theatre Clwyd.

This is where the study both inspires and frustrates. The 'hands-on-detail' of the working processes and the production commentaries are all too brief. I wanted to know much more about the particular exercises which the directors used in their workshopping and would have liked more in-depth study of particular productions (possibly developing key productions, like India Song, into case-study examples of directing-in-practice). Moreover, the eclecticism of the volume is both a strength (there is much pleasure to be found in reading about the diversity of the work discussed) and a weakness, since no clear 'direction' emerges.

The women in the study were selected on the basis of who responded to the author's request for an interview rather than to a particular brief. That said, this is a book capable of inspiring young would-be-directors (of either sex); but it is not so much a narrative about 'craft' as a story about the passion and commitment which each of these women directors brings to her work.

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