stature, even if diminished, from the days of Mei. Of particular interest is the chapter on Qi or 'Presence’ in the actor. Here is an observer’s account of all the principles and elements that come into action to sustain the presence of the Chinese actor which can be universally applied.

Riley’s accounts constantly juxtapose earlier western interpretations of Chinese performance from Eurocentric standpoints, redressing these with her ‘insider’s’ account of a Chinese sensibility in operation. This book opens a new door, and is a thorough investigation which explores a culture’s theatre in its socio-political context which necessarily feeds its living functions. It is accessible to both the generalist and, with its detailed notations of movements, to the student of theatre.
canonically grey areas of the drama syllabus, while the epilogue, 'Notes on Butch', may entice many of us to sign up for Diane Torr’s 'Drag King for a Day' workshop.

ELAINE ASTON

Oliver Double
Stand-Up! On Being a Comedian

Groucho Marx, asked to explain the difference between the sense of humour of a normal person and a comedian, replied: 'A normal person will laugh at a man dressed as a little old lady careering down a hill smashing into a brick wall. For a comedian to laugh it must be a real old lady.' Judging Oliver Double’s book with this particular 'Marxist' slant - 'Are we offered the truth behind the image as seen through the unique perspective of the comedian?' – the answer has to be a qualified ‘Yes’.

As a stand-up himself, Double paints a vivid picture of the day-to-night world of comedians. In a relaxed, conversational style he describes the post-gig blues or highs, the appalling venues, the rubbish television at three in the morning, the strange elation when it's another comic who dies post-gig blues or highs, the appalling venues, the rubbish television at three in the morning, the strange elation when it's another comic who dies

STEVE NALLON


The Open Page is an annual collaborative project between various women involved in the international network of the Magdalena Project (Wales). Published through Denmark’s Odin Teatret, The Open Page 3: Theatre, Women, Politics - gathers articles which 'give an image of the very different way in which politics affect women's work in theatre', and includes articles as varied as Roberta Gandolli's academic piece on 'Edy Craig and the Suffrage Theatre' to more personal articles such as Lieve Delanoy's 'Returning to Andahuaylas' and Sally Rodwell's 'A Week in Wellington'.

Indeed, it is not only the range of cultural backrounds but also the range of approaches to 'writing out' experiences which make this publication so interesting - it is refreshing to read of women's theatre work without the often debilitating harness of theoretical rhetoric. Thus Malika Boussouf, in 'Woman, Theatre, Politics, in Algeria', has no need to expound theory: the concrete nature of her own experiences speaks far more than theory ever could. Similarly, the direct nature of the polemics in Pol Pelletier's 'From Politics to Spirituality' and Rachel Rosenthal's 'Earth First' needs no political/theoretical framework.

The editors have obviously attempted to keep a sense of the tone of each piece in its original language and sometimes this makes for difficult but ultimately rewarding reading. All in all, this publication is to be recommended to anyone interested in international theatre and performance as well as to those with a more specific interest in women, gender, and theatre.

CELIA WADE

Helga Noice and Tony Noice
The Nature of Expertise in Professional Acting: a Cognitive View

This volume contains, in adapted form, research published in a number of psychological journals through the 1990s. Although presented primarily for the psychologist reader, the material is also of interest to performance researchers. The Noices' interest in the skills that characterize the 'expertise' of the professional actor derives from well-established psychological studies of differences between experts and novices in other domains, particularly in areas of problem-solving and representation.

The three main strands of their research to date, as documented in the volume, have focused on: 'elaboration' - a comparative investigation of the textual elaborations generated by 'expert' actors and 'novices' during the process of