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Béatrice Picon-Vallin. *Le Théâtre du Soleil: The First Twenty-Five Years.* Judith G. Miller, trans. London and New York: Routledge, 2021. Pp. xi + 453.

The Théâtre du soleil is an extraordinary company which, over its fifty-plus years of collective work, has insisted on the inextricable importance of formal innovation and political engagement. The arrival of Béatrice Picon-Vallin's absorbing and exhaustive book in translation, with a valuable additional chapter on the more recent work of the company, is extremely welcome. The book combines clear threads with striking levels of detail, drawn from interviews with key figures, vivid accounts of performances, and access to company's archives (now in the Bibliothèque nationale). This detailed history is necessarily foregrounded over engagement with critical writing on the company and its work.

The book begins with a prologue on the now mythical story of the establishment of the company and its home, La Cartoucherie. This prologue is followed by seven chapters grouping productions around "création collective," engagement with Shakespeare, Asian epics, Greek classics, and new collaborations. The volume ends with two epilogues, one on audience interaction and the Théâtre du soleil as utopian space, and a second (added for this translated volume) on recent developments including the company's 'nomadic school,' its work through Burmese form terukkuttu, and its controversial collaboration with Robert Lepage in 2019.

After a lucid mapping of the genealogy and keystone influences of the company, PiconVallin sets out the ways in which the Théâtre du Soleil works collectively in dialogue with the works and forms of others as an international and collective micro-society of equals in Ariane Mnouchkine's quest (following Vitez) to create an "elite theatre for everyone." The company's spatial, institutional, and creative structures reflect the company's values and dynamic practices as "a dialectical moment between displacement and stratification, between renovation and memory" (56). The book thus addresses successfully both evolutions and revolutions in the company's practices—from different modes of creation (moving between collective practices, radical adaptations, and more author-led processes), the filming of plays (constructed reflexively to assert formal differences between film and stage production), and international collaborations.

In this wide-ranging and detailed documentation of the company's rich history and ongoing work, Picon-Vallin foregrounds the social and political engagement that remain at the very heart of their organizational principles, innovations in dramatic form, internationalism, and choice of material. Mnouchkine's sustained insistence on the importance of theatre in encouraging the witnessing of recent and contemporary events and of presenting emphatically international histories runs through the book.

Béatrice Picon-Vallin's book presents an astonishing level of detail which, through the energy and engagement of her writing, is neither overwhelming nor stultifying. The volume is strengthened further by the glorious color images of rehearsal and production (many by the peerless Martine Franck), extensive appendices include a chronology of performances, awards, program credits and posters, and this impeccable translation delivered by Judith G. Miller and her team.

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