Introduction

Thinking light

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This is a book about light, about the work of lighting designers and about what light does in and for performance. To think about light in performance is also, inherently, to think about the experience of space and time, and the ways in which performances are assembled from their materials and for their audiences. Performance lighting, as explored here, is a phenomenon that expands beyond the boundaries within which it has previously been considered, connected to a wide range of practices from theatre and dance, to live and installation art and architectural and environmental encounters. Beyond – and through – thinking *about* light in performance, this book also sets out to think *with* light, exploring the ways in which the particularities of light – as a component of performance, a distinctively ephemeral material, and a mode of encounter – offer up new ways of understanding performance, art, materials and environments more deeply.

This volume collates, evaluates and develops current practice and research in performance lighting that encompasses the experiential, creative and meaning-making capacities of light. Recent years have seen an expanded cultural awareness of light as a material alongside recognition of the value of light and lighting practices in performance and associated literature. Where once publications about theatrical light focused largely on discussions of the craft and technical skill involved in mounting a lighting design for performance, there is now a growing critical understanding of the affective, dramaturgical and material contribution(s) of light to performance and the value of light as an area of research.[1] This expansion of research into the nature of light in performance is conversant with similar expansion in the wider area of scenography and

performance design. In structuring this volume around the combined voices of academics, academic/practitioners and professional lighting designers, this project forms a provocation to institute scholarly framing for new conceptions of light in and beyond performance. In doing so, this book exemplifies an intertwining of theory and practice that evidences an ambition for light which we hope will have significance in and beyond the educational field to encompass professionals working with light and practitioners and thinkers across the cultural sector. The volume is arranged according to three critical analytical frameworks: experience, creativity and meaning. Each of these provides a mode of further understanding light attendant to its material operation in creative contexts. Significantly, though each of these frameworks invites detailed possibilities for analysis, they are interconnected and the overlaps between them provide rich and fruitful insights about the nature and substance of light in performance. The approaches here demonstrate that light is significantly more complex as a material than has been acknowledged in previous writings in the field of performance and reveal ways in which light works as an aesthetic and dramaturgical meaning-making component of performance as well as an affective multisensory experience that can be harnessed in a rich variety of ways and creative contexts.

In this introductory essay, we scope the territory of the field, taking a contemporary snapshot of thinking in the area, providing a guide to the organization of the volume, and highlighting some of the key theoretical themes by drawing on specific examples. As such, this opening chapter aims to provide both a series of ideas through which to conceptualize the key concerns captured in our framing of ideas of light in, and beyond, contemporary performance and an introduction to the contributions that follow. In lighting terms, then, this introduction provides a 'general cover' and establishes the main areas of focus and key lighting, and the subsequent chapters can be seen as each providing 'specials', directing attention to specific ideas.[2]

Light and environment

Theatrical applications of light are increasingly evident beyond the stage and light is increasingly seen as a transformative material in environmental and cultural sectors, and as an integral aspect of the wider 'experience economy'.[3] Bille and Sørensen, for instance, discuss the ways in which light can manifest social relationships, noting that 'the materiality of light has the ability to alter human experiences of space, and to define sensations of intimacy and exclusion' (2007, p.174). In the fields of cultural geography and architecture, analyses of the cultural and social significance of light and dark include the

work of Schivelbusch (1988) and Edensor (2017); studies on light in the built environment (Isenstadt et al., 2015); and writing on environmental light and psychology (Laganier and van der Pol, 2011; Aardse and Alben, 2016; and Kries and Kugler, 2013).

Drawing on traditions of spectacular firework displays and *son et lumière* events, there is a growing popularity of public cultural events that are centred around light. Bringing communities together, light festivals and displays have enabled greater attentiveness to the social power of light, as well as its aesthetic form. Lyon's famous annual *Fête des lumières* evolved from the community practice of placing candles in domestic windows into an annual festival and permanent interventions that transform the city. Lyon's status as a 'city of light'[4] has inspired similar light festivals in many cities including Amsterdam, Berlin, Durham and Helsinki. Moreover, many cities use light to transform the experience of the urban environment year-round, such as in *A Symphony of Lights,* a daily light show in Hong Kong's Victoria Harbour.

An interesting example of theatrical light operating beyond the theatre, and in public and social settings, can be seen in Fuel Theatre's *The Litten Trees* (see Plates 1, 2 and 3). Eight lighting designers were commissioned in March 2021 to light up a tree that had been local to them during the coronavirus pandemic while theatres had been closed. While this was a national project, it operated at a fundamentally local level; the installations were not widely advertised, for fear of social gathering, but were instead intended to be encountered in local communities, happened upon by chance, as an interruption, or a kind of 'gift', to lift the spirit (Fuel, 2021, n.p.). For the designers involved, the scale of this work, lighting solitary trees or clusters, is likely to have been much smaller than the kinds of complexities demanded in their previous work for live performance, without the full team of collaborators and the many moving parts involved in a stage production. Yet, the gesture of this project, these eight invitations to encounter an element of a local landscape in a new or unexpected way, illustrates the three key areas that we focus on in this volume: experience, creativity and meaning. *The Litten Trees,* both literally and metaphorically, provided light in darkness and aimed to generate feelings of community and shared experience amid the isolation of the pandemic, 'artfully navigating complex social rules to deliver something unique, creative, beautiful and surprising to people all across the country' (Daw, 2021, p.11). This was not only achieved in the physical encounter with light but also in the digital experience, multiplying the modes through which audiences were invited to both experience and contemplate the work and its metaphorical resonances. *The Litten Trees* presented the work of lighting designers as offers to experience, creating conditions in which the familiar might be seen anew. In doing so, these installations used light to sculpt the appearances of the trees in a way that moved beyond the visual image,

allowing for a more complex experience of encounter. Fittingly, for that most ephemeral of performance materials, the installations remained in situ for only a short period of time, emphasizing light as a distinctly temporal art form.

Operating at a relatively small scale, this contemporary light work exemplifies the ways in which this volume thinks with and about light. The three themes under which this volume is organized – experience, creativity and meaning – are each reflected in this example, which also, crucially, acknowledges the fundamental ways in which these areas are interconnected and interwoven. In creating an experience beyond the everyday, light in *The Litten Trees* offered a physical transformation of the locale and a remote, digital mode of engagement. As a distributed creative project, involving a number of different lighting designers, *The Litten Trees* highlighted both the active power of light and the creativity of the people who make it. In terms of meaning, the installations also offered a metaphorical exploration of light in the dark, an invitation for the audience to rethink their world in the time of the pandemic and find new relationships in/to their habitual environments. These solo pieces positioned light as an active agent, a performer and also offered a sense of the power of light as an individual, as well as a collaborative, art form. Significantly, the project also recognized the important creative labour of lighting designers, especially in the context of the artistic and financial constraints as a result of closed theatres and a global pandemic.

The (dramaturgical) power of light

Practitioners often attest to the power of light in ways that speak to its experiential or dramaturgical capacities. Canadian theatre-maker Robert Lepage, for instance, states that theatre and opera are fundamentally a 'celebration of light' and that 'the idea of theatre is first of all to bring people in a dark room and do [*sic*] the festival of light' (quoted in Delgado and Heritage, 1996, p.157). American director and designer Robert Wilson, whose work is often lauded for its use of light (Abulafia, 2016, pp.126–37; Crisafulli, 2013, pp.166–74; Di Benedetto, 2010, pp.35–62), has frequently emphasized the dramatic power of light, describing it as 'the most important actor on the stage' (quoted in Holmberg, 1996, p.128). The use of the word 'actor' in Wilson's statement is significant because it implies that light is an active force in performance, one that may dynamically and creatively contribute to the dramaturgical progression of the performance in question. There remains a great deal to be said, however, about the kind of 'actor' that light may be, and about precisely how it contributes to performance. As the German theatre

director Dieter Dorn articulates, part of the potency of designed light lies in the ways in which it is marked as distinct:

> in everyday contexts, light serves to make existing things visible. On stage, however, it creates a new reality. 'Created' light helps us to thrust forward into spaces that establish and nurture their own reality, helps us to thrust forward into dimensions that are different from the ones we experience every day. (1999, p.10)

Dorn's comparison points to the ontological particularity of light in performance. His evocative description of light working to thrust us forward into new realities certainly attests to the power of light, but it is perhaps his description of stage light as 'created' that most succinctly accounts for the artistic role of light in performance. In general, light in performance is light that has been specifically introduced for that performance. Light that has been produced (or manipulated) artificially can be retracted as easily as it can be applied, and it can shift from one moment to the next in a way that is markedly different from our implicit understandings of the cycle of light and dark. This in part explains the power and particularity of theatrical light and why any performance staged in an interior space has to account for its agency.

While this distinction is important in thinking about the creative properties of light in performance, conceptual and aesthetic experiences of light in other contexts also profoundly impact our understanding of light as a material in and of performance. Technology allows us to create artificial brightness, prolonging the hours of visibility in our homes, offices and social spaces. Arnold Aronson argues that a consequence of this is that darkness has been banished from modern Western cities, meaning that the social and cultural context of theatrical lighting has utterly changed since the time of Adolphe Appia's still influential writings about passive and living light (Aronson, 2005, p.33). Neither is this a new phenomenon: a century ago Edward Gordon Craig observed: 'It is quite unnecessary, all this glare in theatres, because there is a glare in the streets at night and a glare in our houses too. And, leaving these, we have to be met by a greater glare or we grow depressed' (1925, p.144). Edensor notes that the re-emergence of urban darkness, in part due to economic limitations, might be 'conceived as an enriching and a re-enchantment of the temporal and spatial experience of the city at night' (2015b, p.436). Edensor's essential argument here is that, in public spaces, light and dark do not present a clear oppositional binary and that the experience of each is infused with strong cultural and social practices. As Edensor affirms, both light and dark offer myriad possibilities for affective experience. The use of light that permeates social and cultural life can transform rhythms of light and dark, suspending darkness or extending the light, allowing extremes of light and dark to coexist,

and enfolding experiences of light and dark. In performance, darkness can appear and reappear multiple times, at irregular intervals, and the quality of light can shift in almost infinite ways. The uncanny interplay of light and dark marks the reality of the stage as fundamentally different from our own. This is what Dorn means by spaces that 'establish and nurture their own reality' (quoted earlier), and the instability of changeable light in an artificially managed space is at least part of the active role of light in performance. The artificiality and createdness of performance light mark it as both an aesthetic and an artistic phenomenon that works on its audiences in significant ways. This book presents these capacities of light as significant meaning-making interlocutors in performance, operating on multiple dramaturgical and affective levels.

AQ: The words 'Above' and 'below' have been changed to appropriate words, as the topic of discussion may not necessarily come exactly below or above them once the book is published. Please check all instances if appropriate words are used.

The distinct dramaturgical power of light has been long recognized by designers, directors and playwrights. In the late nineteenth century, Adolphe Appia created lighting scores for Wagner's operas and Ibsen's plays that were highly influential in advocating for a radical new potential of light as both an essential and an integral element of performance. In the twentieth century, directors such as Max Reinhardt seized on light as a key expressive material in their productions, while Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night*, for instance, is an example of a play that is framed through a dramaturgy of light where, through the structure of the play, light telescopes towards darkness, both literally and metaphorically. Richard Palmer notes the importance of script analysis in lighting design, advocating for the ability of light to create a kind of dramaturgical score, 'which shows how changes in the lighting over time will interact with scene shifts and actor movement to establish tempo and mood and to enhance the themes of the production' (1985, p.152). As we explore through this volume, light works in complex, multiple and overlapping ways, operating as both a component of performance and a material condition of performance, shaping how a work might be understood as well as how it might be experienced or felt.

Light fulfils a strange role in the theatre. As soon as light appears on stage it takes on multiple, symbolic meanings. It becomes, as the Austrian playwright Peter Handke observes, 'brightness that pretends to be another brightness [. . .] light that pretends to be another light' (Handke, 2002, p.30). Traditionally light's main role in the realistic theatre of illusion was to replicate the conditions of the natural world – most frequently pretending to be sunlight or the light reflected from the moon or recreating artificial light for interior spaces by 'cheating' onstage visible light sources with hidden stage lighting that is pretending to be 'another brightness'. Elsewhere, reflecting on the dramaturgical potential of light in dance and theatre, Jean Rosenthal writes that light 'provides important shortcuts to comprehension' and that in drama the 'most important role of lighting is to expose the nature of the struggle, to set the atmosphere for its development, and to underscore its resolution'

(1972, p.60). In this way, Moran argues that the lighting designer plays a key dramaturgical role as the 'guardian of the story' (2017, p.110), shaping the way in which an audience sees a performance. For Moran, and in much writing about light in performance, this is an explicitly visual operation, acknowledging the power of light to direct attention and to signal meaning. This is a kind of dramaturgy of recognition that aligns with semiotic analyses of light – such as Abulafia's *The Art of Light on Stage* – that advocate for the power of light as a readable language of the theatre and one with significant responsibility for the way in which an entire performance is understood.

However, to focus solely on representational or semiotic capacities of light would be to reduce the meaning-making qualities of light to its pictorial qualities. Light might represent or reproduce certain settings, seasons or times, but it is never simply an image that transmits information. As lighting designer Lucy Carter notes, audiences attending to an unfolding performance are 'looking for more than just the story', and are receptive also to psychological suggestion, wider references, and the sensation of seeing and feeling 'things shifting so fast and telling more than one story' (quoted in Moran, 2017, p.115). Such questions of phenomenological experience are especially pertinent to light because of its distinct (im)materiality and its imbrication with perception and experience, and because of the particular ways in which light reveals making sense of performance to be a richly complex and embodied process. Gernot Böhme persuasively argues that the phenomenology of light troubles the notion that we cannot see light in itself, noting that to attend phenomenologically to light is to attend to colour, space and specific qualities of light, as a substance that can be encountered, through 'glowing, brilliance, flickering, shadow, and much more' (2014, p.64). Contributions in this volume take this argument forward, explicitly positioning the phenomenology of light as a distinctly bodily experience, comprising spatial, kinaesthetic and felt affects. We contend that light is especially interesting as a vital phenomenon of performance, a substance that emerges at the confluence of affective, sensual and symbolic apprehension, and one that is inextricably enmeshed with all other materials of performance.

Light in research and practice

Lighting designers have long been the custodians of the aesthetics and status of light in performance. This has rendered lighting something of an oral tradition, propelled by practical and technical experimentation that has been handed down from one generation of designers to the next. Innovations in the use of light in performance have been documented since Renaissance Italy,

when 'architect/designers' explained their practical and aesthetic solutions for lighting the stage (Bergman, 1977; Palmer, 2013). Examples from the last century or so include Loïe Fuller's live performance experimentation with light, fabric and the body from the 1890s; Josef Svoboda's spatial experiments with light and projection to create 'psycho-plastic space' from the 1960s (Burian, 1971, p.126), and Wilson's considerations of light as an actor (see Holmberg, 1996, p.128). More recently, in universities, there have also been experimentations focused on the creative possibilities of light and projection, which have then been translated from the academy to the international stage. Palmer and Popat's research with projection designers KMA, for example (Popat and Palmer, 2007 and 2008) began with light-focused investigations in a black box studio and later evolved into material for public performance (e.g. DV8 Physical Theatre's *To Be Straight With You*, 2008–9).[5] This collaboration reflects a shift in the field, which has begun to initiate an exchange of insights between lighting designers and researchers. Also significant here is the synthesis between teaching and practice, with a number of important practitioners developing their work and thinking about light through regular teaching, including Kathy Perkins and Fereshteh Rostampour (United States), Kimmo Karjunen (Finland), Flaviana Sampaio (Brazil), and Nick Moran (United Kingdom). The reciprocal relationship between the academy and professional lighting design has a long tradition that is also reflected throughout this volume. Nick Hunt and Hansjörg Schmidt's chapter exemplifies a laboratory approach, with light emerging from practice into research, Jennifer Tipton's chapter acknowledges the rich connections between her teaching and creative practices, and Psyche Chui's creative work in pedagogical settings enables intercultural experimentation with new forms. It is also significant to note how many of the academic contributors to this volume, in addition to the editors, are also practising lighting designers. This book exemplifies these new connections, building, in particular, from fora where research and practice have been shared – namely, the Performing Light Symposium at the University of Leeds in January 2017, and Scandlight[6] in Malmö in June 2018.[7] These meetings have instigated new conversations about the role and nature of light in performance, beginning to push the boundaries of knowledge and experimentation in the field that this book expands and develops.

The prevalence of technical and instructional textbooks on theatrical light speaks to the complexity and skill involved in the craft of lighting design. Many of the books that for a long time dominated the field of stage lighting publication (e.g. Bentham, 1968; Pilbrow, 1970) focus almost exclusively on the technical and practical decisions required in realizing light on stage as well as the ways in which designers might best use the technology that facilitates that work. While these texts serve to show that the skills of lighting designers have been understood – at least in some corners of the field – for some time, a historical

over-emphasis on the technical process of the mechanics of the discipline has left less space for consideration of the affective, aesthetic and creative role of light in performance. It is only in recent years that performance light has begun to receive more sustained scholarly interest. The recent expansion of study in this field, which this volume celebrates and extends, has brought new attention, new questions and new insights about the nature and value of performance light. Salient discoveries from this contemporary flourishing of light research include the profound ways in which the evolution of lighting practice has impacted on, and co-evolved with, wider theatrical developments and dramaturgy (Baugh, 2013; Palmer, 2013; Gröndahl, 2014); the depth of work and thinking that lighting professionals engage in (Hunt and Melrose, 2005; Moran, 2017; Zezulka, 2019); the complexities of images created with light, and the ways in which these might be read or understood in the context of performance (Crisafulli, 2013; Abulafia, 2016); and the imbrication of experiential and meaning-making processes in the phenomenological encounter with light (Aragay and Escoda, 2012; Zerdy and Schweitzer, 2016; Graham, 2018). Productively, each of these insights raises further questions and extends the understanding of light itself, inviting new ways of analysing performance and related creative practices.

The language used in existing lighting literature[8] reveals the evolution of attitudes towards lighting design, designers and their practice. The fact that many of these books prioritize procedure over creative process is indicative of the difficulty that many practitioners have in articulating both their process and the impact that light can make to a production, dramaturgically as well as affectively.

In many of these sources, it is evident that lighting has traditionally been relegated to a 'support' function, making the lighting designer's role merely facilitative. Even if this is not quite so explicitly stated, the structures and systems within which a lighting designer is expected to work necessarily dictate light's relegation in the majority of Western approaches to theatrical practice. In *A Syllabus of Stage Lighting,* McCandless writes, 'Once the artistic approach has been decided upon, then the practical problem of designing the visual effects [. . .] can proceed' (1941, p.4). Though he does later concede that lighting design is a form of 'artistic expression', he repeatedly maintains that the main purpose of lighting is 'to convince an audience without its being aware of it as lighting, per se' (McCandless, 1941, p.78). Interestingly, a former student and life-long friend of McCandless, the pioneering lighting designer Jean Rosenthal referred to McCandless as 'the granddaddy of us all' because of his work in establishing a method for organizing lighting ideas. At the same time, however, she notes that, though he was 'simply enamoured of light', McCandless 'could not communicate about it', nor did he know 'how to apply it dramatically' (Rosenthal, 1972, p.16). An outlier in the field of lighting

textbooks, Richard Palmer's *The Lighting Art* (1985 and 1994) gives thorough consideration to the aesthetics of stage lighting, rooted in an understanding of the play text and the ways in which light might contribute to the dramatic experience.

The oft-repeated maxim that lighting is at its best when unnoticed is, thankfully, part of a (slowly) dying attitude towards light. Theatre critic Lyn Gardner notes that lighting 'no longer seems an afterthought, but is integral to the whole look and feel of the production' (2009, n.p.) and can become 'its own character in the unfolding drama' (Gardner, 2009, n.p.). Journalist and writer Mark Fisher notes that descriptions of light in popular criticism as 'atmospheric' or 'evocative' are essentially meaningless without a fuller contextualization about the nature of the atmosphere in question, or the emotions or associations evoked (2015, p.179). Another critic, Matt Trueman, has also commented on the dramaturgical significance of light, noting that light animates and punctuates performance, while at the same time observing that lighting design is 'all too easy to overlook' and also 'bloody hard to write about' (2016, n.p.). However, not all critics are comfortable discussing light: it was only after serving as a judge for the Knight of Illumination (KOI) awards in 2018 that 'Britain's longest serving theatre critic', Michael Billington, 'realised that lighting can fulfil different functions in different art-forms' and appreciated 'the sheer diversity of possibilities within theatrical lighting' (2018, n.p.). This revelation exposes a historical bias in UK theatre towards the literary and a negation of how all of the elements of theatre coalesce to make meaning in performance. For Billington, direct engagement with professional lighting designers (following a lighting masterclass for critics instigated by the Association of Lighting Designers[9]) and the focused seeing that being a KOI judge required of him enabled him to see performance with a new sensibility, even after fifty years of nightly theatre visits. Though this sensibility may have felt new to Billington following this experience, light will still have been a material condition of the theatre that he had engaged with to that point but had almost entirely ignored in making sense of these performances for readers of his newspaper columns. As lighting designer and contributor to this volume, Jennifer Tipton puts it: '99.9 percent of an audience is not aware of the lighting, but 100 percent is affected by it' (quoted in Robertson, 1984, n.p.). Moran notes the 'intimidating' (2017, p.22) nature of specialist technical knowledge that is seen to be needed to understand what light is doing in performance. This preoccupation with the technical in a way that prioritizes its perceived impenetrability over light's dramaturgical and affective potential does a disservice to both the profession and the material.

Beyond the immediate field of light there has been a deep and exciting expansion of ways of thinking about scenography 'as a mode of encounter and exchange founded on spatial and material relations between bodies, objects

and environments' (McKinney and Palmer, 2017). This critical expansion has been referred to as a recent 'scenographic turn' in academic thinking that is highlighted in the editors' introduction to the first issue of the *Theatre and Performance Design* journal – a publication that itself provides:

> an assertion that scenography, as a way of reading performance that takes account of the interrelationship of all its constituent elements, is formally instated as a significant contributor to the production of knowledge, not only in performance studies but across a range of closely related fields. (Collins and Aronson, 2015, p.1)

The chapters in this volume contribute to this perceived 'turn' by expanding current conversations around the role and value of light in performance (Baugh, 2013; Crisafulli, 2013; Palmer, 2013; Abulafia, 2016; Zerdy and Schweitzer, 2016; Moran, 2017; Graham, 2018; Zezulka, 2019). This brings light into wider conversations across the disciplines of theatre and performance studies in which scenography is no longer dismissed as craft-focused, stage decoration (e.g. Parker and Smith, 1963; Reid, 1996) but has become recognized in its own right as a vital, central aspect of understanding and making performance. This recognition has coincided with a growing awareness of and interest in aspects of performance studies that have placed greater emphasis on the non-written elements of theatre and on the phenomenological, the kinaesthetic and associated areas such as audience reception.

In performance, light 'is interwoven with space, time, material and affect' and is 'the material that binds together all other scenographic elements' (Zezulka, 2019, p.16). This makes it an extremely potent force that is both creative (Palmer, 2013) and scenographic (Graham, 2016). As cultural anthropologist Tim Ingold reminds us, even 'though we do not see light, we do see in light' (2005, p.97), drawing attention not only to the necessity for light on stage for basic illumination but also to how light affects and is affected by other production elements, as well as its potential power to affect audience perception, to direct attention and to become a discrete dramaturgical force in its own right. Yet, even in publications that focus primarily on scenography (e.g. Howard, 2002; Lotker and Gough, 2013) surprisingly little attention has been paid to the role of light as a fundamental scenographic material that conditions an audience's reception of performance. Light is barely mentioned in Howard's seminal *What is Scenography?* (2002), and while the 2013 special edition of *Performance Research*, 'On Scenography', purports to address the 'many faces' of scenography (Lotker and Gough, 2013, p.3) and advocates a 'spatial dramaturgy' (Lotker and Gough, 2013, pp.4–5), there is not a single contribution in the volume that addresses light in the theatre. More recent research (e.g. McKinney and Palmer, 2017; Hann, 2019; and, since

2015, *Theatre and Performance Design*) has productively extended critical conversations about scenographic practice and addressed key aspects of scenographic relationality, affectivity and materiality that are directly relevant to considerations of light. There remains a need for further consideration of light in the kind of depth that our contributors are able to do in this volume because light conditions the experience of all other elements in performance and has not yet been fully explored in these terms.

Contemporary performance lighting

This volume seeks to extend the depth of the field by taking light seriously, as a substance of the theatre, as an integral practice of performance-making, and as a distinct and meaningful mode of encounter. While each of the following chapters represents a unique perspective on the practice of light, the collection builds on much recent scholarship in performance studies by following an approach grounded in phenomenological and material analysis. The materiality of light is difficult to qualify and often eludes direct description. Edensor (2015a) maintains that light 'transcends the cognitive and moves into the nonrepresentational, the realm of the affective and sensual' (p.139), highlighting the visceral and often inexpressible impact of light in performance. Light is, paradoxically, an immaterial material; its materiality is obtained by proxy, by coming into contact with an object in space. Light's materiality is inherently bound to the spatial and temporal conditions in which it is employed.

These tensions and paradoxes mean that light is not only a component of scenography, which might be productively thought of in relation to the relationality, affectivity, materiality (McKinney and Palmer, 2017) and temporality (Nibbelink, 2019) of performance materials that have been revealed by the 'scenographic turn' (Collins and Aronson, 2015), but also a distinct phenomenon that serves to enrich understandings of the nature of affectivity and ephemerality in performance. What is at stake in this volume, then, is not only a greater expansion of the ways in which light operates as a significant and consequential element of and for performance, but also an examination of what the analysis of light might offer to performance studies widely. In the sections that follow, we attend to this provocation through three overlapping concepts that frame deeper engagement with light: experience, creativity and meaning. In this volume, experience refers to both bodily encounters with light and the ways in which experiences are inflected and shaped by light as a material. The second core principle we examine here relates to creativity: the agency of lighting designers and the active dramaturgical contributions that underpin lighting designers' creative practice. The final critical framing we put forward

in this volume is meaning, by which we mean the ways in which light shapes and generates meaning-making processes in performance. We are proposing these three core principles as distinct yet overlapping lenses for the analysis of light in performance, and these allow for an expanded understanding that is attendant to the affective, dramaturgical and material potential of light as a medium for and of performance. Individually, these areas – reflected in the sections into which this book is organized – provide a means of thinking through the operation of light in performance, and in combination, they provide a framework for the holistic study of light as a creative material in performance.

Pan Pan Theatre's touring production of Samuel Beckett's *All That Fall* (2011–18), an image of which graces our cover, is an example of the ways in which this framework might operate. Written as a radio play, *All That Fall* presents a score of light in a context where previously none was defined, creating 'an intermedial reimagining, highlighting a tension between light and darkness' (Johnson and Heron, 2020, p.48). Interestingly, this same production is used by Alston and Welton (2017) as an example that draws on the power of darkness in performance, and by Yaron Shyldkrot in this volume in relation to the 'hazy vision' (p.XX) afforded by the intermingling of crafted brightness and darkness. Alston and Welton characterize the darkness in this piece as 'thick and pervasive', noting that the intermittent glowing of the light provides an 'affective counterpoint' to the darkness, resulting in a sensual entanglement of 'enigma and foreboding' (2017, pp.2–3). That this production is equally pertinent to a study of darkness as it is to one of light demonstrates that the phenomena of light and dark in performance are interdependent and indivisible.

All That Fall places its audience within a shared environment, described by the artists as a 'theatrically tuned listening chamber'; the performance creates a sense that the whole space is somehow responding to the sounds of the voices from the text. This production collapses the audience and performance space together; the audience sits on rocking chairs scattered throughout the space while the theatrical materials of light and sound permeate the room and (human) actors are present only sonically. Within this environment, light enfolds the audience completely; it skims across the carpet under our feet, light bulbs hang and glimmer above our heads and a solid wall of light in front of us commands attention. The darkness, when it comes, feels equally encompassing.

Experience

Fundamental to this volume is a focus on the experience of light, comprising phenomenological accounts of light in performance as well as analyses of the

affective impact of light in a range of performance contexts. This focus serves to advance conceptions of light beyond the procedural or semiotic accounts that have dominated the field heretofore. This centrality of experience significantly advances understanding of light as a material of performance, and through this core theme contributors consider the ways in which light influences the experience of performers and audience members alike.

Returning to the example of Pan Pan's *All That Fall* through the lens of experience, it is worth noting that this production creates a realm in which light becomes a significant material in the encounter, but one that relates to the content more obliquely than might be the case in other theatrical examples. The multiple overlapping scores of light, sound, space and voice emerge as a kind of synaesthetic experience, in which light and dark seem to extend as bodily presences in the space. Within this encounter, the light occasions a continuum of sensual experience, from the inviting glow of a barely shining bulb to the wall of lanterns – visible on our cover image – blazing directly into the audience's eyes at key moments in the performance, to the seemingly tactile presence of the encroaching darkness. Thinking through the experience of this production, and more specifically, the ways in which light is experienced in this production reveals a complex sensory dramaturgy, in which this 'tuned' space for active listening becomes a site of synaesthetic engagement where the whole body of the spectator is invited to participate. The shifts in light, and the patterns and shapes of light that emerge throughout the work, clearly mark the substance of light as a kind of creative actor in the piece; light is a force that interacts with all other performance elements and that shapes the vignettes in the story visually, rhythmically and kinaesthetically.

The shifting flow of light in *All That Fall* produces a bodily engagement with light, layered over the content of the text. The bodily engagement extends from the visual experience of watching the configurations of light change, to the physical sensation of moving from light to dark and to light again. The brightness of the light ranges from a soft glow to an uncomfortable glare, and this forms part of a distinctly bodily reaction to the work. The sensation of light here incorporates an awareness of the lanterns, and the means by which light is produced, but remains principally an environmental encounter that multiplies rather than clarifies the textual interpretation. This multiplicity in the process of encounter in *All That Fall* is central to this volume's foregrounding of bodily experience as a key mode of light analysis more widely.

Artist Olafur Eliasson has embraced the theatrical potential of light to work directly on the body in many of his works. In *The Weather Project* (London 2003), for example, visitors to Tate Modern stepped into the vast space of the Turbine Hall to face a dazzling sun. The theatrical illusion of the sun was created by a semicircle of mono-frequency lamps reflected in a mirrored ceiling. The narrow wavelengths of light restricted the audience's sense of colour and

the quality of light was enhanced by fog which was introduced to the air and appeared to make the light tangible. This installation, in which the technical components deliberately revealed themselves in close-up, created a playful theatrical atmosphere through light, which directly affected how audiences behaved in the space. Bodies rested, sat down on the bare concrete floor, and enjoyed the experience of being bathed in the unusual yellow light. At one level the light created a nostalgic space of contemplation but other participants felt that the light gave them permission to relax in a public space. Some lay down looking at their reflection and played games, making connections with other strangers in the mirrored ceiling, and in groups worked together to create patterns or used their bodies to spell out rude words. The particular quality of light, made more tangible through the haze and the mirrored ceiling, worked to create a social space of play in which everyday behaviour might be altered. The experience of light therefore both foregrounded our own bodily relationship to the sun and the fundamental role that weather plays in shaping our society and every aspect of our lives.

All That Fall and *The Weather Project* reveal complexities in the analysis of light, demonstrating how vital experience is in the analysis of light. This is an area that is only beginning to be understood. These two examples (and many more in this volume) illustrate the significance of the experiential encounter and the ways in which light is felt by audiences. This volume argues for the consideration of the experience of light as a vital part of an analytical framework for performance light. In this way, attending to the spatial relationships between spectators and light sources, observed relationships between performers and light, between light and materials all form key considerations in a performance analysis that is alert to the possibilities of material performance.

The experience of light, and darkness, is attended to in this volume in a number of exciting ways. Scott Palmer's chapter explores how multiple qualities of light and dark may shape the audience's experience of performance, drawing on a range of examples including installation and 'immersive' relational performances. Similarly, David Shearing and Yaron Shyldkrot both explore bodily immersion in light, examining the kinaesthetic operation of light and the framing of perception and new perspectives that light may afford. Shearing reflects on qualities of light in his own performance-making practice, and Shyldkrot interrogates notions of visual obfuscation in his own and others' performance work. Lucy Carter's chapter draws on her experience in contemporary dance to posit a framework for lighting design that connects to experiential and choreographic scores of performance. Moving further beyond the theatre, Jesper Kongshaug's chapter examines the impact of light in public spaces – including his detailed design work in Copenhagen's Tivoli Gardens. Kongshaug's theatrical understanding of the

potential of light to affect experience is supported by significant empirical evidence to demonstrate how this has directly influenced public behaviour.

Creativity

In establishing light as a component of performance, both the creative, performative capacities of light, as well as the creative practices of lighting designers, need to be explored. This section of the book advocates for the role of the lighting designer as integral to collaborative performance practices while also providing scholarly analyses of work and working practices in the field.

Creative and dramaturgical agency may occasionally be attributed to light as a scenographic element, but authorial agency is rarely granted to lighting designers themselves. This is partially due to the fact that, as Hann argues, 'set designers have historically cemented their status as lead designers through the holistic qualities of scenography' (2019, p.49). Often, light is described in a way that is separate from the authorial agency and creative contribution of the lighting designer. This can be seen in some theatre criticism, in which a particular property or quality of light, or light's effect on a production, might be described in varying levels of detail, but the lighting designer (that is, the person responsible for creating that effect/affect) is not mentioned. For instance, in a recent review of *The Animal Kingdom* at London's Hampstead Theatre, theatre critic Claire Armitstead writes about 'the fizz of the electric lighting' (2022, n.p.), without naming lighting designer Holly Ellis.[10] Sometimes, the lighting is described as a thing that belongs to and is somehow separate from the lighting designer, rather than something they have actively created. In Susannah Clapp's review of *The Sun, the Moon, and the Stars* (Theatre Royal Stratford East, London, June 2021), she describes how the central character is 'trapped in Peter McKintosh's fine box design – hard-edged, made golden and finally starry by Oliver Fenwick's lighting' (2021, n.p.) While it is the light that initiates this transformation of the space, the designer"s contribution is minimized in this construction. Where light – and therefore the lighting designer – is afforded a much more active and dramaturgical role, its potential is brought to the fore. The shift towards a view of light as a material 'thing', what Graham, borrowing from Harman, articulates as an 'object oriented ontology' (2018, p.123) of light, can be seen throughout this volume, while this section focuses explicitly on the creative practice of lighting artists.

As Peter Mumford advocates elsewhere, 'contemporary dance has led the way in the development of lighting as a visual language' (quoted in Palmer, 2013, p.250). Dance practices have proved a fertile ground for the

development of the creative potential of performance lighting, as evidenced in Loïe Fuller's experiments in the late nineteenth century and reflected in this volume in chapters by Jennifer Tipton, Lucy Carter and Katharine Williams.[11] One key reason why dance has led the way has been the recognition that light is central to the performance experience and consequently a significant and integral part of devising processes and rehearsals. A recent volume by Finnish lighting designers, practitioners and artists (Humalisto, Karjunen, et al., 2019) has also advocated the benefits to creative processes when lighting designers are integral to collaborative processes of performance-making and the critical importance of playful experimentation and creative 'flow' (after Csikszentmihalyi (1990)) that emerges as a result.

There are long-standing structural hierarchies in theatre practice that lighting practitioners must work within and against. Pilbrow, for instance, often advocates for the role of light to go beyond a merely functional role, though there are some passages in his influential book, *Stage Lighting Design: The Art, the Craft, the Life,* that demonstrate some still-prevailing attitudes towards light. For instance, he maintains that 'lighting supports the storytelling process' (Pilbrow, 2010, p.9) but also that it is 'clearly no part of [the lighting designer's] job to do anything but enhance the appearance of the set and costumes' (Pilbrow, 2010, p.36). This deference to the director and what is sometimes, reductively, referred to as their 'vision' is an attitude that lingers from the early days of lighting design as a profession. Moran (2007, p.78; 2018a, p.84) advises that 'when the lighting designer and the director significantly disagree, the lighting designer has only two real choices – do what the director asks or quit'. While he acknowledges that persuasion may be possible, this attitude only serves to perpetuate these existing hierarchies. Interestingly, Moran follows this, in both editions of *Performance Lighting Design* (2007 and 2018a), with the provocation that 'there is no reason other than tradition why the designers cannot lead the interpretation of the text onto the stage' (p.78 and p.84, respectively). Moran describes designers who would undertake this role as 'a vanguard for a new practice that will refresh live performance for a much more visually orientated generation' (2007, p.78; 2018a, p.84). The fact that this is posited as a 'new practice' in both editions of this book, eleven years apart, speaks volumes about the industry's entrenched hierarchies and resistance to change. It is worth noting, however, that while this deference to the figure of the director still features prominently in many design textbooks, a more collaborative approach is clearly advocated for in a number of texts on directing. Anne Bogart, for instance, tells the story of an occasion where, following a design meeting: 'To my horror, the designers and the crew built exactly what I described' (2014, p.49). Through this anecdote, Bogart is implicitly allowing space for a much more lateral power structure that recognizes 'designers require the freedom to experiment and search'

(Bogart, 2014, p.84). This volume advocates for greater attentiveness to the potency of design that will allow for a more nuanced approach to collaboration in theatre-making and therefore co-creation in relation to light.

Thinking about the creative role of light in *All That Fall* also extends to the work of the artists who created it. In this, it is perhaps especially important to note that this production, like the company itself, was driven by the artistic partnership of company founders and co-artistic directors Aedín Cosgrove and Gavin Quinn.[12] Though not entirely unique to Pan Pan, this model of artistic directorship being shared by a designer (Cosgrove) and a director (Quinn) speaks to both an ambition and care for the role of design materials in the work produced, and it seems impossible to comment on the synaesthetic experience for the audience without also noting the collaborative process of its creation.

This volume extends conversations on the creativity of lighting designers and the creative practice of light through chapters that examine design practice in depth – such as those by Jennifer Tipton and Michael Breiner. Katharine Williams' chapter explores lighting design as a feminist practice, drawing specifically on their collaboration with RashDash. Meanwhile, in a discipline that has been dominated by Western practices, Psyche Chui's chapter makes a valuable contribution by exploring her intercultural practice, drawing on aesthetics from Chinese opera. Kelli Zezulka's chapter provides rich insight into the usually hidden labour of lighting design processes. Her research explores the way collaboration unfolds in technical rehearsals, using detailed linguistic analysis to examine the ways in which lighting designers, directors and programmers communicate in the moment of creation. Taken in combination, all of the chapters in this section speak to the value of light as a creative medium, acknowledging the role of light and lighting designers in the making of performance and the potential of light's qualities (colour, intensity, movement, rhythm, directionality, texture, shadow and so on) in the visual, temporal and experiential composition of performance.

Meaning

Theatre and performance offer a privileged space for the construction and exploration of meaning, and so, in these contexts, light operates in a complex system of meaning-making. This volume proposes to examine light's relationship to the production of meaning in relation to both the qualities of light as a creative material and the manifold operation of light as a material of encounter. Elsewhere, meaning in light has been considered principally in relation to a semiotic coding of the readable stage (see, e.g. Abulafia,

2016; Fischer-Lichte, 1992). While we acknowledge the value of that work, this volume positions meaning-making processes in relation to the generative capacities of material light in the moment of encounter. The ongoing expansion of research on light has begun to suggest significant ways in which light might both condition and shape our understanding of the world around us. As Zerdy and Schweitzer argue, 'in approaching a performance of light, we must contend with light's conditioning of our experience' (2016, p.6). Greater attentiveness to the layering of meaning-making in performance in general (as in, e.g. Lehmann, 2006) and scenography in particular (McKinney and Butterworth, 2009; McKinney and Palmer, 2017; Hann, 2019) points to complex polysemic modes of thinking and being occasioned through performance. Explorations in this volume contribute to these expanded understandings by considering closely what is occasioned by light in performance and related practices. The affective and dynamic meaning-making potential of light is borne out in the ways that light enables unique modes of encounter and generates both substantive events in performance and material conditions in which performance is experienced.

In Pan Pan's *All That Fall*, the process of meaning-making in light exceeds an indexical relationship to imagined storytelling details to comprise a generative encounter in which meaning can be produced. Light, in this performance, becomes a generative material; in sensory terms, in pushing the piece beyond representation, and the ways that it plays with theatrical convention, the light here generates meanings and terms of encounter that are at the core of the meaning-making encounter with the work. Here, light is an integral dramaturgical material; it is a leading element in the way this performance is composed to *make sense* (in intertwined cognitive and embodied ways) for its audience. Light affords a particular kind of engagement with the performance, expanding possibilities of meaning-making through its operation as a distinct language of performance that is continually and productively in relationship with all other elements.

As may be evident from the image on our cover, this production presents a distinct and spectacular image of light and space. For Abulafia, the signification of this kind of image lies in the 'sensation of light itself' (2016, p.111). In his account, the principal qualities of signification through the sensation of light are 'spectacularity' – the aesthetic pleasure derived from light itself and a sense of the virtuosity of its craft – and 'hypermediacy' – the explicit and active presence of technology in our reading of an image (Abulafia, 2016, p.111). Yet, neither of these seem to *fully* account for the signification of light in this case, nor for the meaning-making capacities of performance light more generally. Certainly, the ebb and flow of light is a source of aesthetic pleasure in this production, and the exposure of the lanterns and bulbs in the space would seem to indicate an explicit engagement with technology.

Furthermore, as Abulafia correctly points out, light, when used as a material in itself, can display a performative autonomy, creating elements of performance independent of the text, and multiple meanings that need to be negotiated through performance (Abulafia, 2016, p.112). This example shows that, in addition to spectacularity and hypermediacy, there is a third important quality in experiencing light itself, that of the phenomenal encounter. As we have already discussed, this phenomenal encounter relates to the bodily and affective experience of light and dark but, significantly, the distinct material encounter with light also becomes a site for the generation of meaning.

The meaning-making capacities of light are thus deeply entwined with its materiality. In *All That Fall*, light does not serve to cast light onto something else but is instead the subject of its own illumination. Significantly, for our purposes, the shifting flow of light does not illustrate or support discrete meanings defined elsewhere in the production, nor does it 'suggest a figurative or real-world alignment' (Johnson and Heron, 2020, p.49). This does not, however, suggest an absence of meaning; rather – and excitingly – this production points to the manifold production and operation of meaning in performance. Meaning, here, is something that emerges productively and substantively in the multiplicity of performance languages, including a distinct offering from light. Light swells and fades in tandem with the sound but without corresponding exactly; light seems to exist separately, following a distinct rhythm or logic. Shapes or structures of light sometimes emerge as we hear the central character encounter a new person or event on her journey, but changes in light also begin to occur before or after these moments. This sense, of co-existence rather than correspondence, creates a sense of a multilayered sensual experience, one that is evocative without being representational. In the slippages that begin to seep in between the aural and visual chapters of the action, light seems to suggest itself as a proxy for the material bodies of the characters, and then to resist this elision. In resisting, the light performs not only as a commentary on the action but also as a body in the space, one whose impactful presence shapes the ways in which the audience understands the work.

Accordingly, the consideration of meaning-making in light offers an expanded view of performance aesthetics, positioning the operation of light as a dynamic and consequential language of performance. Through this focus on meaning, this volume is able to consider the material, cultural and ethical operation of light in a range of performance contexts. This framing extends ideas of light in the field of performance, examining the dramaturgical, meaning-making capacity of light as a material and its capacity to influence and generate meaning within performance.

In this book, Katherine Graham's chapter examines the scenographic action of light, and the multiple ways that this can co-compose meaning

in performance. Lighting designer Paule Constable explores the ways in which she uses light as a storytelling tool in her practice. She argues for the importance of rigour in the lighting design process, examining how light articulates and shapes meaning in performance, and how she approaches this with a collaborative sensibility and an awareness of how light intersects with other aspects of theatre practice. Constable's reflections on her practice connect the materiality of light (its 'muscularity' and 'smell' (p.XXX, this volume)) to dramaturgy and storytelling.

Elsewhere in this section, Nick Hunt and Hansjörg Schmidt connect the materiality of light to a sited encounter with practices of seeing. Their chapter reflects on their interactive light installation, *Traces,* which asks its audience to explore their own engagement with light, manipulating reflective panels to catch light, and in so doing, to catch their own contingent experience of seeing and playing with light. Christopher Baugh's chapter theorizes perceptions of light more broadly, arguing that the perception of light is 'socially and culturally constructed' (p.XXX, this volume). Through this understanding that light is contingent on both physiological and sociological factors, it becomes possible to view the action of manipulated light in performance in terms of its wider significance. Each of these chapters, and indeed in the chapters elsewhere in this volume, makes clear that light constructs transformative possibilities that are indivisible from the meanings and structures of the performances, thus verifying, and extending, Crisafulli's assertion that light is 'structural, constructive, poetic, and dramaturgic' (2013, p.18).

Focusing on light

This volume is the first to bring together international practitioners and academics of performance light and, in so doing, aims to celebrate the depth and diversity of making and thinking with light today. Where other accounts of the evolution of stage lighting have tended to focus on the work of specific (almost exclusively male) practitioners – namely, usually, Adolphe Appia, Edward Gordon Craig, Josef Svoboda and Robert Wilson – in aiming to focus on light and lighting practices, this volume has been able to take a wider view. Here, we have included a variety of voices, including scholars, practitioners and scholar–practitioners, writing about light in and beyond performance from international perspectives, thus moving away from the notion of the single artist and towards a more diverse engagement with the stuff and substance of light itself. Significantly, contributors in this book reflect on light not only from different perspectives but also in different ways, enabling us to interrogate the multiple ways in which light is used as a creative material.

What emerges, cumulatively, is a picture of light that is never static, but is shifting, heterogenous and contingent. Light is thus shown to be a material that is more intricately embedded in aesthetic, dramaturgical and expressive processes than has previously been accounted for in subject literature.

The multiplicity of voices included here also addresses the significant difficulties in articulating an ephemeral material and its temporal qualities on the stage in written form. Issues associated with the documentation of the contribution of light to performance have also impacted on theatre scholarship (see Palmer, 2013, pp.xiv–xv). Historical research has to rely upon contemporary writings, reviews and artists' impressions. Sketches, paintings and engravings were often designed to represent spectacular moments on stage as a way of publicizing the event to a prospective audience. They are often impressionistic rather than an accurate documentation of a moment on stage (e.g. see Figure 1 on p.XX and Plate 31). Despite their importance to our understanding of past performance, it is important to be equally cautious of graphic illustration and photographs as of written sources in providing definitive evidence of how stage lighting may have appeared at a particular moment in history. Acknowledging the problematics associated with attempting to analyse light when it has not been experienced at first hand in performance is also important in understanding the context of research in this field. In this book, light is documented in several ways including recollection; evocation of detail; exploration of creative decisions in the process; examination of wider social, cultural, or philosophical connections; and by reference to illustrative images. This is in part because, as Moran points out, light is 'context-dependent' and does not leave artefacts after performance in the ways that set and costume might (2017, p.26), nor is it reproducible after the event in the ways that even other ephemeral materials, like sound, might be. Through presenting this range of approaches to articulating light, we hope this book contributes to yet further expansion of analysis in the field and that the inclusion of new voices here paves the way for further diversification of the field of light research.

The analysis of light here is framed by the key themes outlined earlier: experience, creativity and meaning. These themes are reflected in the three main sections of the book, in each of which contributions have been grouped in ways that initiate or expand conversations around these integral ideas. It is important to note, however, that these are not rigid divisions, and these principles are in evidence throughout the book. Scott Palmer's chapter, for instance, examines felt encounters with light in ways that attend to experience, but also points to the creative capacities of light, in its ability to forge new connections. Jesper Kongshaug's chapter positions valuable material about the measurable ways in which light shapes experience and directly affects behaviour but also speaks to creative processes through which the detail of technical care is translated into an aesthetic experience. David Shearing and

Lucy Carter's chapters each speak across themes of experience, creativity and meaning in their entwining of aesthetic, ethical and dramaturgical thinking. Yaron Shyldkrot's contribution directly addresses the experiential, processual and uncertain modes of experiencing extreme levels of light or dark, and his analysis also contributes to understandings of the meaning-making potential of encounters with light and darkness.

Through a linguistic ethnographic approach, Kelli Zezulka's chapter explicates the hidden mechanisms of collaboration and underlying structures of agency, power and hierarchy that characterize technical rehearsals, contributing to an understanding of how lighting designers and programmers work and bringing to light the 'unseen work' (Essin, 2015) that is integral to theatre production, which is fundamental to how light is created on stage and connects to wider ideas of experience-making and authorship. Both Katharine Williams and Psyche Chui connect their artistic practice with light to wider meaning-making contexts – for Williams, through the lens of feminist practice and, for Chui, from her unique positionality as a lighting designer working across cultural and artistic traditions from both East and West.

In different sections of the book, both Paule Constable and Michael Breiner speak about the thinking that underpins their design work, advocating for a clear framework that connects the materiality of light with its dramaturgical role. Katherine Graham's chapter explores the meaning-making possibilities of the aesthetic encounter with light, in ways that are reflective of the experiential qualities of such encounters. Chapters from Christopher Baugh and Nick Hunt and Hansjörg Schmidt note the contingency of perception and are positioned here in relation to the ways that performance invites its audience to construct meanings, but this material also connects with wider ideas of experience and creativity discussed elsewhere in the volume.

This cross-pollination emphasizes the richness of field, as well as the depths of each of the themes that we have posited as integral to the analysis of light. As a result, each of the chapters that follow can be read independently, but this book can also be read thematically – with each of the contributions in a single section in productive conversation with each other, and with the volume as a whole. The insights about light that emerge in this book extend conversations about the significance of light in new directions, asking deeper questions of its position in artistic practice, illustrating the myriad possibilities of light as a material and the infinite possibilities it holds for performance practice.