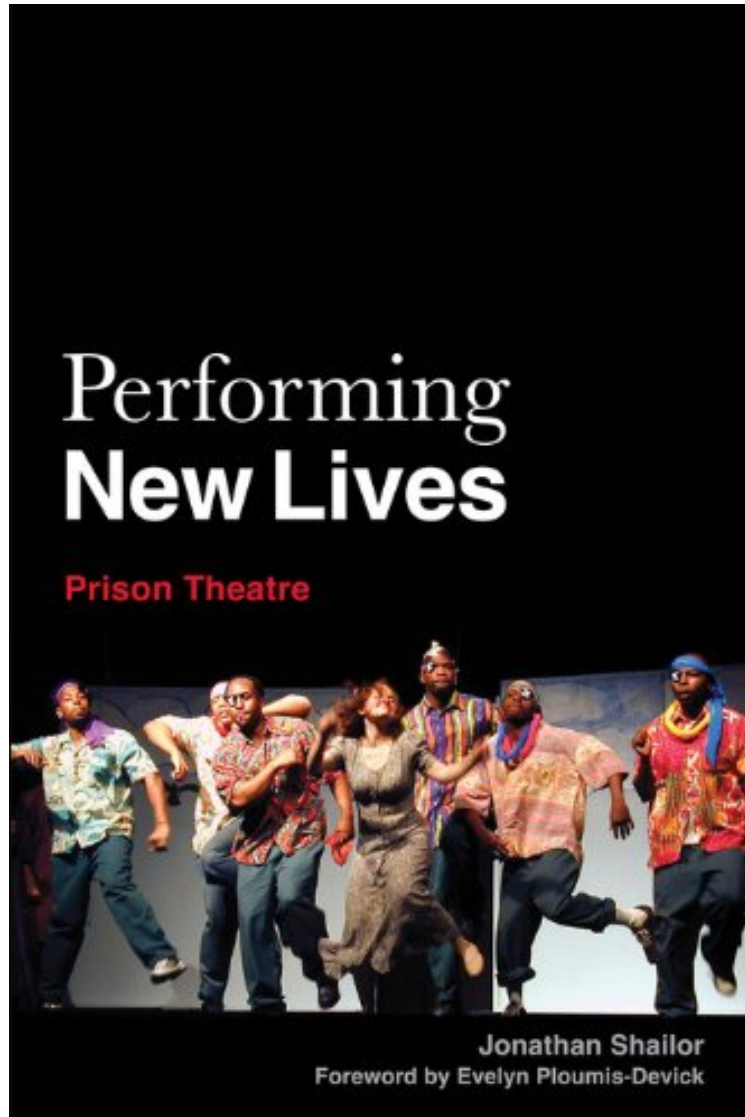


Performing New Lives: Prison Theatre

Jonathan Shailor

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Jonathan Shailor : Performing New Lives: Prison Theatre before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Performing New Lives: Prison Theatre:

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Performing New Lives draws together some of the most original and innovative programs in contemporary prison theatre. Leading prison theatre directors and practitioners discuss the prison theatre experience first-hand, and offer

valuable insights into its role, function, and implementation. A wide range of prison theatre initiatives are discussed, from long-running, high-profile programs such as Curt Tofteland's "Shakespeare Behind Bars" in LaGrange, Kentucky, to fledgling efforts like Jodi Jinks' "ArtsAloud" project in Austin, Texas. The book offers unique insights into the many dimensions of the prison theatre experience, including: negotiating the rules and restrictions of the prison environment; establishing trust, teaching performance skills and managing crises; building relationships and dealing with conflicts; and negotiating public performances and public perceptions. Excerpts of interviews with inmates, and a conversation between practitioners in the final chapter, reveal the impact that prison theatre programs have on the performers themselves, as well as audience members, and the wider community. Exploring prison theatre processes and theory with insights into how it works in practice, and how to replicate it, this book is essential reading for drama therapists, theatre artists, and prison educators, as well as academics.

(...) this is a thought-provoking collection that effectively rehearses some of the arguments for prison theatre in a straightforward, accessible and engaging manner - eloquently describing not only the practice, but also its rationale. -- Research in Drama Education (...) an engrossing collection... These inspiring narratives invite us behind bars in some of the most challenging environments for theatre workers, where creative solutions to obstacles to the work are constantly sought. -- Griffith University I picked up this book with mild interest. I quickly became gripped. It is directed at anyone interested in the role of the performing arts in criminal justice but I think it may have something valuable to say to many others working with people who, because of difficult circumstances, most often troubled beginnings, are struggling against the odds to make their way through life. -- Human Givens Journal When Jonathan Shailor started producing Shakespeare's plays in prisons in Wisconsin, the media lit up with debates about whether our imprisoned neighbours had the right to act, to play, and to explore new lives and roles by inhabiting the words and worlds of the stage's great authors. In this stunning collection of essays, some of the nation's leading prison educators and activists offer startling, ennobling, and definitive answers to those questions: Yes prisoners can and should act, Yes they need to play just like the rest of us, and Yes they benefit tremendously from exploring new modes of being by studying and then embodying the words of great playwrights... Performing New Lives offers remarkable case studies of how theatre-in-prison can reduce recidivism and violence by raising consciousness - all while having a great time on the stage. -- Stephen John Hartnett, Chair, Department of Communication, U.C. Denver, and editor of Challenging the Prison-Industrial Complex (...) this is a thought-provoking collection that effectively rehearses some of the arguments for prison theatre in a straightforward, accessible and engaging manner - eloquently describing not only the practice, but also its rationale. (Research in Drama Education)(...) an engrossing collection... These inspiring narratives invite us behind bars in some of the most challenging environments for theatre workers, where creative solutions to obstacles to the work are constantly sought. (Griffith University)I picked up this book with mild interest. I quickly became gripped. It is directed at anyone interested in the role of the performing arts in criminal justice but I think it may have something valuable to say to many others working with people who, because of difficult circumstances, most often troubled beginnings, are struggling against the odds to make their way through life. (Human Givens Journal)When Jonathan Shailor started producing Shakespeare's plays in prisons in Wisconsin, the media lit up with debates about whether our imprisoned neighbours had the right to act, to play, and to explore new lives and roles by inhabiting the words and worlds of the stage's great authors. In this stunning collection of essays, some of the nation's leading prison educators and activists offer startling, ennobling, and definitive answers to those questions: Yes prisoners can and should act, Yes they need to play just like the rest of us, and Yes they benefit tremendously from exploring new modes of being by studying and then embodying the words of great playwrights... Performing New Lives offers remarkable case studies of how theatre-in-prison can reduce recidivism and violence by raising consciousness - all while having a great time on the stage. (Stephen John Hartnett, Chair, Department of Communication, U.C. Denver, and editor of Challenging the Prison-Industrial Complex)About the AuthorJonathan Shailor is a Professor of Communication at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside. nbsp;He has been facilitating the "theatre of empowerment" in prisons, schools and other settings for over 15 years, and is the founder and director of The Shakespeare Prison Project, which originated at Racine Correctional Institution in 2004. nbsp;Inmates who participate in the project engage in a nine-month process of training, rehearsal and reflection that culminates in multiple performances of a Shakespeare play before prison and public audiences. Jonathan resides in Kenosha, Wisconsin.