"I really prize rage": 50 years of Queer American Theater with David Savran, Distinguished Professor of Theatre and Performance, Very Mowry Roberts Chair in American Theatre, Graduate Center, City University of New York.

Interview by Xavier Lemoine, New York City, CUNY, Theater Department, November 20, 2019.

Xavier Lemoine: Could you give your perspective on queer theater, looking back at theater productions, what important dates and productions in the development of queer theater and performance would you like to underline as significant moments?

David Savran: I need to preface my answer by talking about the fact that I came out in the early 1970s. In my early 20s, actually, after college. So it was a little late in a way. In any case, the summer of 1973 I spent in New York. I worked as a stage manager for Ronald Tavel who was one of the Theater of the Ridiculous people. And that summer, I got the chance to meet, besides Tavel and his brother Harvey who was directing, Harvey Fierstein who was in one of the productions. There was this theater festival taking place in New York, it wasn't specifically queer but many of the people were. That summer I got to meet Maria Irene Fornes and I also went to see Charles Ludlam's *Camille*,[1] which of course is one of the most historic productions. Beginning at that time, I realized that there were really interesting things happening in what I would *now* describe as queer theater but at the time I'm not even sure we had a way of talking about it, except these were gay people or lesbians making theater. Well, Theater of the Ridiculous had a…

XL Not even Gay theater would have come to mind?

DS: Not, really… not as category, back then. I remember, at that time, when I was coming out, I was somewhat phobic about a play like *Boys in the Band*[2] because *that* to me epitomized all of the things that I was afraid of being. That's why I'm not sure I would have used that category. Tennessee Williams it was different. Anyways, it did not seem to really exist for me as a category. And, then, in the mid-1970s when I was in graduate school, I was aware that stuff was happening… I was not in New York City. It just seemed extraneous; I would never *dream* of studying it. It just seemed to me like interesting entertainment.

XL: Not serious? Ridiculous?

DS: That's around the time that I also got to know the work of John Waters, *Pink Flamingos* and *Female Trouble*,[3] that I completely fell in love with. I *knew* that those were in their own way serious movies but, at the same time, I did not have the language to talk about them or any of this work for that matter. When I was in graduate school, you just didn't talk about sexual orientation of theater people for the most part, unless it was Oscar Wilde! But he was really the main example. I don't ever remember studying Tennessee Williams in graduate school.

Then from 1977 until 1988, I was teaching in Canada in a drama department. I would spend a lot of time in New York, I would come and spend most of my summers here. I saw things like *Cloud 9*, for example, which was mind-blowing. Actually, *Cloud 9* was one of the very first plays that struck me as serious enough to be taken as a kind of…, again I'm not even gonna say gay play, but that really made sexuality, what I call now queer sexuality, or let's say gay sexuality an issue. *Cloud 9* made a huge impression on me.

XL Do you remember the date of this production?

DS: This was right when it opened.[4] It was playing in Christopher Street in what was then called Theater de Lys, now the Lucille Lortell. I would guess this was about 1980. Also, Paula Vogel was a good friend of mine. I knew that Paula was writing plays and she was very out, but even Paula's plays at that time were not primarily about sexuality. I did see some interesting stuff, I remember going to see Spider woman Theater[5] in the early 1980s. I started becoming aware of interesting alternatives, what we'd now call queer theater. And I indeed was taking it very seriously. It was at the same time that I discovered the Wooster Group.[6] They're not queer but it was part of that circle. Just the fact that Ron Vawter, who was one of the members of the Wooster Group, was gay, that was really important because he always really put his sexuality out there.

In the 1980s, I really began to see a certain legitimation for what I call queer theater. Of course, this was also the time of AIDS, the height of the AIDS crisis. I remember the first AIDS plays were *The Normal Heart* and *As Is*.[7] I went to see *As Is*, actually I didn't see *Normal Heart* at that time. It was very tough for a million reasons that I'd rather not go into. There's no question that this really raised people's consciousness.

Also, through Paula [Vogel],[8] I became much more aware of what was going in terms of lesbian writing and performance. Although I don't think I saw Split Britches until after I'd left Canada it was probably late 1980s or like around 1990. I didn't go to WOW Café but I *did* know of it. I went to see some Ludlam work then. I really loved the work of Ethyl Eichelberger. And all of this I thought was really serious stuff, maybe serious isn't the right word, but legitimate and important theater activity. I didn't really have anything to do with it. I was teaching and I wasn't anticipating writing about it.

XL: When did you start writing about it?

DS: Everything changed in 1988 when I moved to Brown. I was very lucky. I got to Brown just at the moment when queer theory was starting to explode. I remember reading Eve Sedgwick's *Between Men*,[9] it was about 1988, which I really liked, and having interesting discussions about that. And then, a year or two later, both *Gender Trouble* and *Epistemology of the Closet*,[10] which of course are the two books that put queer theory on the map. I was lucky to be at Brown, a place where this was really happening, not only among faculty but among students and various other networks. Also I think a really important part of this was *Angels in America* because it was the first *great* play. A play that won the Pulitzer Prize, that was explicitly out. And *everybody* agreed that it was a great play and a really serious play. He used Walter Benjamin so it was a really theoretical intervention. For me, it's this coincidence of *Angels in America* and queer theory in the early 1990s that suddenly made a place for all of this. For *me*, and I'm sure for others besides me. It was really around that time, probably 1991 that I started teaching gay and lesbian theater as a discipline.

XL: How did that come about?

SD: The first time I did it Paula was teaching at Brown then and we co-taught. I don't remember exactly what the syllabus was. We probably went back to Oscar Wilde and Radclyffe Hall. We were both in the English Department, so fiction was not out of bounds. So yes, *The Well of Loneliness* which Paula knew really well. I don't remember exactly where the course started and we tried to split it pretty equally between men and women. That was when I had gotten the manuscript copy of Part I of *Angels in America*. This was a probably good year before it was produced on Broadway. I gave it to my class. As I said, that play more than anything else really legitimized that as a field—as a field of practice and as a field of study. With *Epistemology of the Closet* and *Gender Trouble* and all this other stuff there was a lot of happening then a lot of really ex-

citing stuff, and in cinema as well. In an English Department, I was somewhat more open, I was thinking more across forms. Starting around 1994, pretty much every year I taught a class that I called "Unnatural Acts." Part of this is because some students did not want courses on their transcript with the words lesbian and gay in the title. The subtitle was something like "lesbian and gay theater" but that didn't appear on the transcript. In this way there was a certain deniability.

XL: Almost like a coded language that you found in the plays…

DS: Yes. Also, I had finished *Communist, Cowboys and Queers* around 1991.[11] That was very much informed by this nascent queer theory. So for me the 1990s was very much a gay decade, a queer decade. It was *the* queer decade, actually, the decade of Queer Nation, queer nationalism, then queer this and queer that, in theater and cinema and everything. So it was very exciting. I had a lot of support at Brown and a lot of student interest. So it was a very exciting enterprise. I was coming into New York quite a bit and seeing a lot. There was nothing that I saw, of course, that had the impact of *Angels*. I remember *Love, Valour and Compassion*,[12] thinking "okay, that's all right." I'm not a huge Terrence McNally fan. Or Lanford Wilson, but I was also getting really interested in Holly Hughes and Split Britches.[13]

XL: Among all those artists you mentioned do you see any major esthetic lines or moments that could cohere into this idea of a queer theater?

DS: The thing about queer theory is that it happened to hit when deconstruction became the way to go. What was exciting was that queer, unlike gay or lesbian, could be understood as a deconstructionist

trope. So there were theoretical possibilities there and real ones. This gave work, I'm thinking of some of Holly Hughes's early work, which on the one hand was straightforward, sort of first person narrative but *not*. I just felt that there was a lot of things happening, queer performance was some of the most innovative work in US theater.

XL: Can you detail those innovations?

DS: As I said, the deconstructionist angle. This is very much what was described as post-gay and lesbian. It's very much about unsettling and problematizing sexual and gender identity and the relationship between the two of them. At the time, that struck me as really radical stuff to be doing.

XL. Do you see some kind of esthetic innovations along the lines of Butch/fem esthetics?

DS: It was interesting because Judith Butler, as I recall, did not cite Sue Ellen Case in *Gender Trouble* when she was talking about Butch/femme.[14] But that re-legitimation at the same time with the deconstruction of Butch/femme was very important. It was taking on butch/femme very explicitly as gender performance. This is also the time when Performance Studies is beginning to explode. There was an amazing synergy in the 1990s that made queer theater, which again became more and more identifiable as a class of work… there were gay plays but there was also gay performance. So much queer performance! And it wasn't all white, that's the other thing. There were a lot of important voices, if you think of Cherríe Moraga. The collection *This Bridge Call My Back*[15] from the 1980s, Gloria Anzaldúa and a lot of African American activists and just countless great figures. So it was *not* just a middle-class white thing.

XL: Would you say, by then, that there was a queer canon forming?

Yes, at that time, then in the mid-1990s, I could go back to *The Boys in the Band* and fall in love with it and realize actually what a fine play it is. Then that became part of the canon and I could put some Tennessee Williams in there as well and obviously Oscar Wilde. It was a little bit more complicated to put together a lesbian canon at that time. Radclyffe Hall did not write plays, there were a few plays here and there, but there wasn't much pre-1970s and 1980s. In my class most of the lesbian stuff I taught was not theater.

In terms of gay male stuff you could always go back to Mae West. To some extent that settlement has not significantly changed. If I were to put together a queer theater and performance class now obviously, I would add a lot more recent stuff but I think in terms of the basic genealogy it would be pretty much the same.

XL: Do you believe the term queer canon is the most appropriate? There's been a lot of debates around the limits of the canon and of queer? Do you think canon is still a useful term? Does it signal the death of queer theater (as De Certeau claims for folklore in *La culture au pluriel*)?

DS: Well, the fact is we have canons. As an educator, I have to put together a syllabus and that's very much related to canon making. Yes, there are canons and people look back to what came before. The way for example, even something like *The Inheritance*[16] is obviously looking back both to *Howard's Ends* and to *Angels in American* and to *Love, Valour, and Compassion*. Like it or not, there are canons. Canons are always up for debate and they are always changing. There's a lot at stake in putting together a canon because inevitably things are excluded. It's vexed, I would almost describe it as neces-

sary evil, but I don't feel apologetic about the fact of the canon. I'm very willing to debate the questions of canonicity with anyone.

XL: Do you think it's a relevant way to deal with issues like memory and history?

DS: I do, very much so. I mean we're talking about the memories of a lot of people being involved here. It's the memories of the people who put these things together, the writers, the performers, the audience members. I feel that a lot of queer theater has been, I was going to say from the beginning, but let's say from *Angels in America*, has been very intent on questions of memorialization and of remembering the past.

XL: Actually, you're right from the beginning! William M. Hoffman in *Gay Plays: The First Collection*,[17] goes all the way back to Marlowe's *Edward II* and the list of male-male passions through history to the point that history is used as validation of queer love and almost a trope not unlike the "coming out" in gay and lesbian plays.

DS: Yes, it's also very important to think about playwrights who for various reasons have not made it into the canon. Playwrights, for example, like Robert Patrick. He is not really remembered.

XL: Why not?

DS: I don't know his work well enough. I think I have a book or two of his on my bookshelf. I knew his work slightly, but I was not really that well acquainted with it. I think we were really fortunate that TCG[18] published that collection of Ludlam plays, otherwise they

would have been lost. There have been some happy accidents. I could go back and think about a lot of work that has been forgotten in the process of making the canon. And it's important to go back and realize what has not been canonized.

XL: Is there a specificity of the theater canon? Is there a difference with a literary canon?

DS: The thing about a literary canon is that we're talking about works that are read. The difference with theater is that, yes, we generally talk about plays that can be read, but there's also the question of performance. There is a lot of work that is still read but that people would never perform. And, then, in some cases, it's the opposite, plays that keep being performed but they are not going to be studied in universities.

XL: This makes me think about the debate initiated by Richard Schechner and, then, famously discussed by Conquergood on the prevalence of print over performance?[19]

DS: To some extent, yes because we're still talking about plays. Another thing that is enormously important is that these be able to circulate. Historically, performance has circulated as text, it's only within the past… really since the 1990s that there's been a lot of video documentation of performance, and video documentation has its own limitations as well, because video is a different art it has different rules, even documentation of a live performance.

XL: Is the canon an archival gesture as well?

DS: Absolutely! Canons and archives are very closely related. It's a selective process, these are things we remember to remember, and we choose to remember. There are a lot of things that sort of disappear, with actually very little trace. This is more likely to happen with live performance. You take Ethyl Eichelberger for example; I don't think any of his work was ever published. I have no idea where his archives are and what happened to his estate. I thought he was an amazing person in his own way, rather different, but almost as fabulous as Ludlam but he doesn't have plays, not much has been published or not much has been published about him. As far as I know. And there are a number of other figures who are…, think of David Greenspan, who is an important writer, it took a long time but a lot of his plays have been published. So publication is very important. It's a question of how things circulate.

XL: Would you include Jack Smith in this canon (in connection with Eichelberger, Ludlam)?

DS: Yes, the important early work on the theater of the ridiculous included Jack Smith. I never saw Jack Smith's work, I didn't really know that much about him to be honest until I saw Ron Vawter's piece the *Jack Smith/Roy Cohn*.[20] So, it was that piece that really made me aware of what Jack Smith had done. He is another figure that did not leave behind primarily a body of texts. So he is much more difficult to deal with. That doesn't excuse us, but it does challenge us.

XL: I'm really interested in what you've just said about seeing *Jack Smith/Roy Cohn* and that it connected you to a previous performer and made that performance exist…

DS: I think that Ron's work on that piece was very much an archival project. That's something that he first learned from Liz LeCompte and

the Wooster Group. Actually, even now, still now, *Pink Chair*,[21] this is archival performance or performance based on archives. So it's very lucky that Ron Vawter happened to do that piece.

XL: The Wooster Group is not queer, as you said, but their work, by being postmodern, is part of something queer…

DS: They are *deconstructionist*! It's the logic of their work, which is something I think of as distinctively queer. Whether there was homoeroticism or not was in a way irrelevant.

XL: What about their use of gay references and lesbian themes, as in *Vieux Carré* and *Town Hall Affair*?[22] Is there's an elemental connection to queerness in their dramaturgy?

DS: I would agree. I think that there was an element of that in a lot of the really interesting experimental work at that period. Even with Mabou Mimes, Ruth Maleczech was not lesbian but there were various people who were involved in Mabou Mime who were queer. But again there was something about the work itself and its deconstructionist strategies and its way of unsettling boundaries and norms that I think was identified, then, and still is, as queer. This is one of the reasons why the work of the late 1980s and 1990s is so valuable to us. I'm not convinced that we've advanced a lot since then.

XL: I was going to ask you about now, the 2000s. You mentioned a little bit the 1960s, and then the 1990s mostly?

DS: I don't see a huge amount of work that I would identify as queer performance, when I do, it very often involves older stuff or older people, like Charles Busch, Split Britches. Let's see, I think some of

the most innovative work now is around trans stuff, which in some respects is even more difficult to classify, because it's not just gender, it's a lot more complicated than that. Trans is a deconstructive trope as queer is. It's not something in which I'm personally fascinated for the most part. I don't feel I have a personal stake the way I very much do with queer stuff.

XL: So you would make a distinction between queer and trans?

DS: I would tend to think of them separately. Part of it is because it seems to me that this development of trans performance is… I don't think that we can talk about what Charles Ludlam was doing was trans, drag is not trans. Drag was a different kind of practice, a different vocabulary and a different way of thinking. I think that trans is very much its own thing. It has a name. I very much respect how people label themselves. It's important to do so. So that someone like Becca Blackwell who is very involved in trans performance, it may be queer*ish*, but it's trans performance.

XL: What about the blurring of the lines between trans and queer, as in balls?

DS: Yes, but again I tend to honor people's chosen self-definition and the terms people use to describe themselves. *Paris Is Burning*[23] was about drag, *well* a few people considered themselves trans in the documentary. I think it's important to honor what people choose rather than just going back and applying labels retrospectively. So, yes there was that trans element in *Paris Is Burning*, in the early 1990s, right?

XL: Yes, and the fact that Butler addressed this in *Bodies that Matter*,[24] leading to questions framed as intersectional…

DS: Yes, the thing is, intersectionality has been going on for decades. In the 1970s, we called it… it's changed designations but the kind of analysis that was going on for example, especially putting together questions of sexuality and race that goes back to the seminal text *This Bridge Called My Back*, it was about 1980. So I don't think that intersectionality is at *all* a new idea. I actually don't like that word because I think it's trying to put old wine in a new bottle, as they say, and I see no reason why we need a new bottle for that.

XL: Following up on these tensions between past and present representations, I'd like to turn to Stonewall 50, but first, do you personally remember Stonewall?

DS: I do not remember Stonewall. I was in college then. I was much more interested in smoking marijuana and hanging out with my friends than in having sex. Gay stuff just seemed… at that time my *not* coming out was because I did *not* want to be gay so I did not notice Stonewall. Because queers were queer!

XL So when did you become aware of the existence of Stonewall?

DS: When I got to Cornell in 1974. Ithaca was a very lively lesbian and gay community. Both Paula and I became very much part of that. That's when I became aware of Gay Liberation. People talked about Stonewall, but it was not discussed the way it is now. I remember even in the 1990s when I was teaching "Unnatural Acts" and doing John D'Emilio[25] and one of the reasons I was teaching that is to tell students that, yes, Stonewall was important but there was stuff that was happening before Stonewall that was also really, really, really important. Yes, Stonewall mattered but it was one of many things.

XL: Do you think it's still pertinent to commemorate Stonewall?

DS: Sure, it's an opportunity to party. I'm serious when I say that, it's always useful to have these occasions and these days we need to remember to celebrate. Yesterday in class I was talking about 1989, but that's different because when the wall came down that really did change the world whereas Stonewall, *sorry*, did not.

XL: Do you think Stonewall's significance is overemphasized?

DS: I'm getting a lot of this information from some of my students although this is something I've also been aware of. In the 1990s, when the gay marriage debates were raging, I found myself very much on Michael Warner's side, in other words, the question was: why are we interested in this oppressive bourgeois institution? I don't particularly want to be part of it. I felt very strongly about that. At the same time, I recognized that there were certain legal and economic benefits for people who are not middle-class white men like me. Gay marriage, it's great that that possibility exists but it's not something that I ever want for myself. Part of this was also because of my coming of age, in terms of feminism in the 1970s and 1980s and it was drummed into me that marriage was really a bourgeois oppressive institution. Part of me still sees it that way. As I said, but at the same time I understand the importance of it. For me, one very important term that I guess has been around for 15 years or so is homonormativity and the way certain kinds of queer people and queer sexualities are normalized and others are not. This is very much like making canons, there are things that are accepted and things that remain outside. I have a lot of issues with homonormativity.

XL: Would you go so far as to say that gay marriage ended queerness?

DS: (*laughter*) One can certainly make that argument, I'm not sure that I would. Another thing that I've become more and more con-

scious of is that when we're talking about homonormativity or gay marriage we're basically talking about Western Europe and the United States or North America. Once you get to Eastern Europe or even parts of Southern Europe it's a completely different scene. When you go a little bit further into the Middle East, or into Africa, or in South America, these questions of gender and sexuality work very different. It's a lot more dangerous in most of those places. I find that there's something a little too cozy and comfortable about white or European or Western homonormativy. It's very distinctive to Western Europe and North America.

XL: This brings us back to Stonewall and its international influence, as something that is important in queer history.

DS: Yes, in Germany it's very big, they call it Christopher Street. But Germany for a long time has been at the forefront of sexual liberation, dare I say. Certainly, if you're talking about Weimar Germany but also in the late 19th century with Magnus Hirschfeld and sexology, for all its problems, still.

XL: What do you think about the celebration of Stonewall 50 this year?

DS: I wasn't in New York, I was in Berlin while that was happening. I was following what was happening and I was glad that I wasn't here to be honest. It just struck me as being very selective in who and what was being celebrated. A student was telling me that she'd seen an exhibit I think at the New York Public Library about Stonewall 50 and basically the narrative this exhibit constructed was from Stonewall to Gay marriage. End of story! That narrative is not *my* story; it's not the story of *most* queer people, actually. Most people did not enjoy those kinds of privileges. I think that's a really problematic genealogy.

XL: There were also a number of counter Stonewall events, with slogans like the first Gay Pride was a riot.

DS: What I remember the first time as an out gay man when I got to know New York was that summer of 1973. I got to know the gay scene through Ronald Tavel, Harvey Fierstein, Irene Fornes, and Ludlam… homonormativity was *unthinkable* at that time, absolutely unthinkable. I didn't think that all of this was always great, but still I thought there were incredibly exciting things happening and I felt personally excited by all the possibilities and the opportunities.

XL: You mentioned Fierstein, his play *Bella Bella* is showing now,[26] did it take you back to the 1970s, did it make you feel that queer theater gained historical depth?

DS: Interestingly, I remember teaching *Torch Song* back in the 1990s and teaching it as this very conservative piece. *Bella Bella* is more old-fashioned liberationist in its politics. I really appreciated Harvey's memorialization of Bella Abzug and of that time. That was the 1970s after all. I do not wanna say that was the golden age because it was not the case, but still there were a lot of possibilities and a lot of things happening and there was a lot of hope.

XL Do you think that there's no hope now?

DS: I think that hope comes in short supply.

XL: Does the queer canon, looking back to the past, prevent a utopian perspective?

DS: I used to be very much a believer in the utopian stuff, utopian figurations, utopian tropes, utopian! I find it much more difficult these days. It's very much the result of the concrete political changes not only in the United States, but in many other parts of the world as well. And these changes make me very nervous about the future. It's not that I think utopia is no longer a possibility, but there are more pressing issues right now than utopia. Back in the 1990s, I was: "No! Revolution not Reform". I'm a child of the 1960s! Now I don't really believe in revolution and I only believe in reform.

XL: Do you see change happening on the stage?

DS: *The Inheritance* struck me as pretty homonormativizing and reformist kind of work.

XL What about *Booty Candy* or *Strange Loop*?[27]

DS: Yes, although *Strange Loop* is also a very dark piece (*laughter*). I do think that right now it's a golden age of African American theater and performance. Generally, what's happening there is a lot more interesting. Even something like *Fairview*,[28] I mean "even" (*laughter*), which is a Pulitzer Prize winning play, offers possibilities that I otherwise don't find in bourgeois white theater.

XL: I was thinking that Abdoh[29] was against bourgeois convention as well…

DS: I never saw his work. When Charles Busch started, I remember seeing him in the 1980s in the East Village and it was anything but Bourgeois.

XL: What about Taylor Mac's 24-hour music performance[30] and the way it addresses the past?

DS: Taylor Mac is very consciously keeping alive the Ludlam tradition; he is the keeper of the flame actually, which I admire. I like Taylor Mac a lot but he's not the second coming of Jesus Christ, I don't think he is a savior. Last December Taylor Mac and Justin Bond did a joint concert at the Town Hall that I went to as a sort of Christmas thing. I think Justin Bond is a much more interesting performer, a better singer. Justin doesn't have all the costumes and that's a very clear difference to me. Taylor Mac is basically doing sort of old fashion drag show, new fashioned old fashion. What Justin does is very differently trans. To be honest, these days, I find Justin more interesting than Taylor because I always know what Taylor is going to do, and I don't with Justin. The last show I saw was Justin's Karen Carpenter evening that I thought was fabulous.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, I went wild for *Kiki and Herb*.[31] I think they were absolute genius. One of the reasons is that they have something that Taylor Mac doesn't have, *rage*. When Justin is really cooking there is a *rage* behind her work that for me is just overwhelming. I felt that in *A Strange Loop*. There was a lot of rage in that piece (laughter). That to me is what makes really exciting theater. I didn't see any rage in *The Inheritance* or it's not that palpable. I think there is some in *Angels in America* if we want to go back. And this is something I really prize, rage.

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1 Ludlam, Charles. *Camille*. 1973. In *The Complete Plays by Charles Ludlam*. Steven Samuels and Everett Quinton, eds. Harper and Row, 1989, pp. 221-51.

2 Crowley, Mart. *The Boys in the Band*. 1968. Samuel French, 2018.

3 Waters, John. *Female Trouble*. Dreamland Productions, 1974. Waters, John. *Pink Flamingos.* Dreamland Productions, 1972.

[4] Opening date: May 18, 1981. Closing date: September 4, 1983. Source: http://www.iobdb.com/production/614. Accessed August 4, 2023. It premiered at Dartington College of Arts, Devon, UK on February 14, 1979.

[5] This feminist theater group was founded in 1976 by Muriel Miguel and a diverse group of women.

[6] The Wooster Group is one of the longest-running experimental theater groups in New York City founded in 1975 by Elizabeth LeCompte. Savran's first important book was about their early work. See, *Breaking the Rules: The Wooster Group*. Theatre Communications Group, 1986.

[7] Kramer, Larry. *The Normal Heart*. Plume, 1985. Hoffman, William M. *As Is*. 1985. In Don Shewey, ed. *Out Front: Contemporary Gay and Lesbian Plays*. Grove P, 1988, pp. 493-551.

[8] Paula Vogel is Pulitzer Prize winning playwright and University Professor.

[9] Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. Columbia UP, 1985.

[10] Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge, 1990. Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *Epistemology of the Closet*. U of California P, 1990.

[11] Savran, David. *Communists, Cowboys and Queers: The Politics of Masculinity in the Work of Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams*. University of Minnesota P, 1992.

[12] McNally, Terrence. *Love! Valour! Compassion!*, *A Perfect Ganesh*. Plume, 1995.

[13] Split Britches is a highly influential lesbian/feminist theater group formed by Lois Weaver, Peggy Shaw and Deborah Margolin. Many of their early work was produced at the WOW Café, a small collectively-run women's theater. See the collection of their work: Case, Sue-Ellen, ed. *Split Britches: Lesbian Practice/ Feminist Performance*. Routledge, 1996. Holly Hughes also performed her early work at the WOW Café and became a highly featured lesbian performer as she was part of the NEA 4 who went all the way to the Supreme Court to fight for their right to public funding despite their radical and often queer art.

[14] Sue-Ellen Case worked on this issue and had published an important article on it: Case, Sue-Ellen. "Toward a Butch-Femme Aesthetic". In *Making a Spectacle: Feminist Essays on Contemporary Women's Theatre*. Lynda Hart, ed. U of Michigan P, 1989, pp. 282-99. An earlier version was published in *Discourse* 11:1, 1988-89.

[15] Anzaldúa, Gloria and Cherríe Moraga, eds. *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. Fourth Edition. 2015. State U of New York P, 1981.

[16] Lopez, Matthew. *The Inheritance*. Faber & Faber, 2018.

[17] Hoffman, William M., ed. *Gay Plays: The First Collection*. Avon, 1979.

[18] Theater Communications Group. Actually, it is Harper and Row that published the Complete Plays.

[19] The texts alluded to here are: Conquergood, Dwight. "Performance Studies: Interventions and Radical Research." *The Drama Review*, vol. 46, n° 2, 2002, pp. 145-56. Schechner, Richard. Performance: *Between Theater and Anthropology*. U of Pennsylvania P, 1985. Schechner, Richard. *Public Domain: Essays on Theatre*. Avon Books, 1969.

[20] Vawter, Ron. *Roy Cohn/Jack Smith*. In Holly Hughes and David Roman, eds. *O Solo Homo: The New Queer Performance*. Grove P, 1998, pp. 441-76.

[21] Premiered in July 2017 at Bard SummerScape, LUMA Theater, the Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York. Rehearsed and performed then in Los Angeles (2018), New York (2019), Paris (2019), Berlin (2023). All new performances often entail substantial changes, hence the necessity to mention all performances as they can amount to rather different experiences.

[22] *Vieux Carré* premiered at Théâtre National in Strasbourg, France (2009) and then performed at Centre Pompidou (2019), Royal Lyceum Theater in Edinburgh, Scotland (2010), REDCAT in Los Angeles, CA (2010), the Baryshnikov Arts Center, NYC (2010), deSingel International Arts Campus in Antwerp, Belgium (2011), National Théâtre Bourgogne in Dijon, France (2011), Holland Festival in Amsterdam, The Netherlands (2011), Nationaltheatret Hovedscenen in Oslo, Norway (2011), Théâtre National de Toulouse-Midi-Pyrénées in Toulouse, France (2011), World Stage Harbourfront Centre, Toronto, Canada (2012) and at SESC Pompeia, São Paulo, Brazil (2013). *Town Hall Affair* received advance showing at The Performing Garage, New York City in May 2016 and then was performed at deSingel, Antwerp, Belgium (2016), Centre Pompidou, Paris, France (2016), The Performing Garage (2017), REDCAT in Los Angeles, California (2017), Z Space in San Francisco, California (2017), Sydney Opera House, Sydney, Australia (2018), Barbican, London, United Kingdom (2018), KAAT (Kanagawa Arts Theatre), Yokohama, Japan (2018), Kyoto Art Theater Shunjuza as part of Kyoto Experiment 2018, Kyoto, Japan, and at the Schaubühne, Berlin, Germany (2019).

[23] Livingston, Jenny. *Paris Is Burning*. Moskwood Video, 1990.

[24] Butler, Judith. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex."* Routledge, 1993.

[25] D'Emilio, John. *Sexual Politics, Sexual Community: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1983.

[26] Fierstein, Harvey. *Bella, Bella*. Premiered October 22, 2019 at MTC at New York City Center – Stage I.

[27] O'Hara, Robert. *Booty Candy*. Samuel French, 2014. Jackson, Michael, R. *A Strange Loop: A Musical*. Theatre Communications Group, 2020.

[28] Drury, Jackie Sibblies. *Fairview*. Theatre Communications Group, 2019.

[29] See Mufson, Daniel, ed. *Reza Abdoh*. Baltimore & London: PAJ Book and John Hopkins UP, 1999. And the voluminous catalogue of the 2019 exhibition "Reza Abdoh" held at MoMA PS1 and KW Institute for Contemporary Art: Azimi, Negar, Malakooti, Tiffany, Vazquez Michael C, eds, *Reza Abdoh*. Berlin: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2021.

[30] "*A 24-Decade History of Popular Music* is a 24-hour long performance art concert. Its creation began in 2010 and the entirety of it was performed from beginning to end in 2016, at St. Ann's Warehouse, Brooklyn and subsequently in four 6-hour chapters at The Curran Theater, Theater at the Ace Hotel (CAP UCLA), The Melbourne Festival, Philadelphia International Festival of the Arts (The Kimmel Center), and the Berliner Festpiele's Immersion program series. It won The Kennedy Prize, an Obie, two Bessies, two Australian Helpmann Awards, a Drama Critics Circle Award, and was a Finalist for the Pulitzer Prize." Source: https://taylormac.org/. Accessed October 10, 2023.

[31] *Kiki and Herb* is a cabaret style queer performance created and performed by Mx (Justin) Vivian Bond and Herman Mellman. It started in the 1990s in small venues and, then, went all the way to Broadway at the Helen Hayes Theater (August 2006). The characters reappear here and there for limited runs.