Led by a Franco-Brazilian team of scholars in the humanities, social sciences, arts and literatures, this joint research project is developing a digital platform for Transatlantic Cultural History to be published in four languages. In a series of essays exploring cultural relations between Europe, Africa, and the Americas, it presents a connected history of the Atlantic space since the 18th century, highlighting the cultural dynamics of the Atlantic region and its crucial role in the contemporary process of globalization.

Performing Arts

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South Atlantic - North Atlantic - Africa - Europe - Caribbean - South America - North America

The Atlantic Space Within Globalization - The Consolidation of Mass Cultures - The Steam Atlantic - Atlantic Revolutions and Colonialism

The Performing Arts section brings together articles examining the transatlantic exchange of objects, practices, and representations in the world of the stage.

The Performing Arts section brings together articles examining the transatlantic exchange of objects, practices, and representations in the world of the stage. Traced here are the comings and goings and the multiple pathways of these artistic exchanges in their different facets. These exchanges can involve a work, a text, an artist, but also a practice, a movement, or a tendency; they can also be related to concepts, imagination and symbolic references that are engaged by all those (people and institutions) that participate in defining the various fields concerned.

Considered here are artistic disciplines related to "staging" and "representation": theatre, of course, but also dance, street art and performance, happenings or opera, and other more hybrid forms, for example theatre-dance, operetta and urban interventions. All stage-scene forms are considered, regardless of traditional distinctions (professional vs. amateur practice; "legitimate" vs. "marginal", etc.). Forms on the boundary of these categories, like those of the *circo criollo*, dinner theatre or community theatre will also be treated under this section, to show the richness of transatlantic exchanges in the performing arts, and to rebalance the participation of various spaces in this cultural brew.

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The Pawnbroker, staged by Marcel Marceau, 1959. Photograph: Étienne Bertrand Weill

Source : Gallica

European performing arts have had an irrefutable centrality in the history of Western theatre, so much so that the exchanges and influences among the various countries have often been analyzed from a unidirectional perspective, from Europe toward the Americas—and, in smaller measure, toward Africa. For a long time, Western theatre was conceived as a fundamentally European story. This section intends to question that traditional conception of exchange by insisting on a growing number of influences and multiple currents (that can also function from Latin America and Africa toward Europe and the United States). In effect, several cities in the Atlantic world were entwined when, at the end of the 19th century Christophe Charle's "society of spectacle" took up the mantle from Jean-Claude Yon's "dramatocratie." Relations are woven, for example, between the European theatre capitals (Paris, Berlin, London, Vienna) and the nascent North American cultural metropolis of New York. First dominated by the Parisian repertoire, then by translations of dramatic works or the theatrical chronicles following the new releases on the old continent, show tours fed the cultural conduits between the United States and Europe. Feydeau, for example, was celebrated in London and New York, as Violaine Heyraud shows us. Actor tours were particularly notable; Sarah Bernhardt's visits in Brazil allow us to observe transformations in the world of Brazilian theatre.

Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

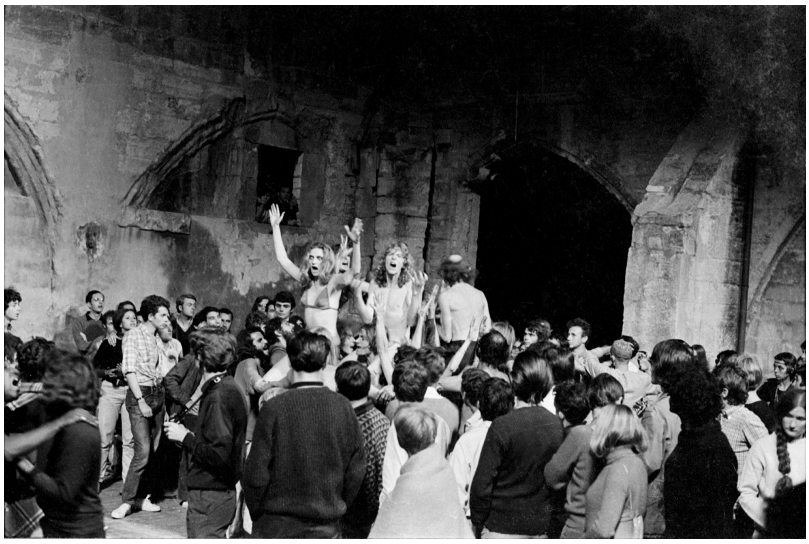
Dramatic tour of Sarah Bernhardt, 1888

Source : Gallica

The birth of the *entertainment industry* brings about the emergence of great entrepreneurs who are active on both sides of the Atlantic, such as the renowned Phineas Barnum and the no less-important Imre Kiralfi. Moreover, the creation of large theatre halls, between the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, in Latin American capitals like Rio de Janeiro, Santiago (Chile) and Buenos Aires, enlarges the circuit of the great international tours, and provides refuge to European artists during the two world wars.

In the 20th century, flow and movement intensify after various waves of migration which are themselves consequences of, among other things, wars and political crises. The performing arts, from one side of the Atlantic to the other, are not indifferent to these demographic currents. The most mainstream tendencies in theatre (of which New York's Broadway is one of the more emblematic crystallizations) as well as avant-garde movements find their distinctiveness in the cultural mixing that comes out of these migrations.

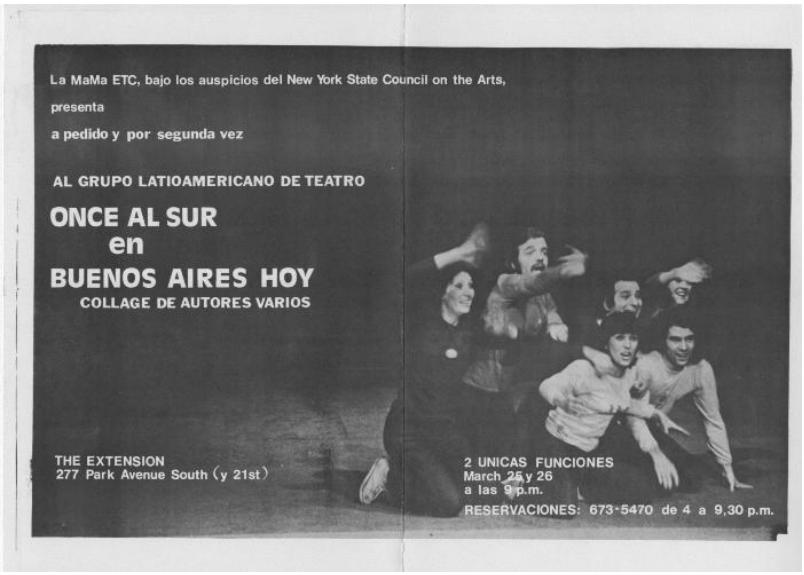
In American-style musical comedies, the so-called "*people's opera*," one can observe re-appropriations of European opera. The origin of the South American independent theatre movement is fostered from the people's theatre of Romain Rolland and the antifascist struggles of exiled anarchists. Theatrical European avant-gardes are privileged points of reference for American experimental theatre during the 1960s, notably in the Off-Broadway theatre circuit, which later inspires several stage experiments in Europe as well as in Latin America, etc. The tours in Europe and Latin America of the troupe *The Living Theater* are one example.



"Paradise Now" by *The Living Theater* in the Cloître des Carmes at the Avignon Festival, 1968

Source : OpenEdition Journals

Years later, Latin American exiles during the military dictatorships reverse the voyage, strongly influencing the experiments of political theatre as well as theatrical studies in their countries of refuge. So it is with the wide dissemination of the "theatre of the oppressed" of Augusto Boal in Europe; the integration of Latin-American artists in prestigious theatre companies like the *Theâtre du Soleil* of Ariane Mnouchkine in France or the La MaMa Experimental Theater Club in New York; or the configuration of research networks on *Latin American Theatre* in the departments of Spanish in North American universities. Other performance disciplines like dance, puppetry, circus and clown techniques, or, more recently, performance art, renew their aesthetic codes and methods of creation through cultural exchanges in several directions.



A show program for La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club's February 1972 production of "Buenos Aires Hoy". The production was performed by Grupo Once Al Sur, with artistic direction by Rubens Correa.

Source : La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club

Therefore, multiple modalities of circulation are considered under this thematic section, whether they be material or intangible. One object can "play" within the geographical space concerned, producing perennial or temporary effects in spaces of refuge. This is the case, for example, of the tour of a play, the travels of an artist, the translation of plays or of theoretical texts, or the diffusion across the Atlantic of a style or a technique. Circulation can also operate through re-appropriations of a practice, of an idea, or of a tendency in various sociocultural spaces and contexts. This is quite obviously done through specific cultural brokers (people, associations, institutions, etc.), but it is equally made possible by specific situations in the countries of reception (for example,

targeted cultural policies, social activism, the influence of censorship or repression, the effect of economic crises or times of economic growth, etc.), with each of these factors (which can also interact with one another) producing unique results. Such is the case, among others, of Latin American re-appropriations of popular theatre, street theatre in capital cities, the teaching of certain techniques or the diffusion of acting theories, or re-readings and diverse uses of classical theatre according to context. These are the many modalities and complexities of artistic circulation that this section endeavors to cover.

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See on Zotero

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