

Editor's Note

Marshall Brown

A festschrift for Herbert Blau, coedited by Herbert Blau? That's right. I don't know of any precedent for it. But then I don't know of any precedent for Herb. *Multitalented* is too feeble a word for him. Though I never experienced it, he was unquestionably a genius of the theater. As a scholar, he is unique in his combination of universal interest and total absorption. Not in any sense self-absorption, for, as Peggy Phelan so eloquently describes, projection is the goal of his writing, and of all else besides. Herb arrived at the University of Washington late in his current career as the plushest of spousal hires, supporting his wife's own powerful talents and leaving behind a rich life in Milwaukee. He remains our oldest colleague in full-time teaching, as beloved of his many students as of the (surely) thousands of friends and acquaintances across the globe, and he outperforms all the rest of us. No name could be less descriptive of its possessor than Herb Blau. He is sweet, sometimes salty, occasionally sour, but too forward-looking ever to be bitter. And his colors are fiery red, sunny yellow, hopeful green, and the purple of obliging noblesse. No shade of blue captures him: he is too energetic for cerulean serenity, too sanguine for the dumps, and, though always convivial over a late-afternoon martini or a lingering dinner, far too levelheaded to get drunk.

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No one more deserves a festschrift than Herb. But the story of how he comes in as editor must be told. This collection arises out of a conference of the same title that he orchestrated at UW. Sometimes a festschrift will bear a title along the lines of: essays on X, Y, or Z. This one, within the rubric of performance, is essays on just about everything, and that perfectly captures Herb's breadth of vision. I did most of the detail work on the publication (wonderfully supported by the assistant editors, Ivan Kidoguchi and then Paige Morgan, and seconded and usually outpaced by the copyeditor, Chris Mazzara, who will never be unsung by me). But the collection would never have been possible without Herb's genius and his friends' extraordinary loyalty, and he worked far harder than he promised to get and keep it all together. The presenters are represented with versions of their conference papers, apart from Peggy Phelan, whose passionate account of the visual imagery of 9/11 was irreducible to print, and she has offered her eloquent tribute in its place.

Herb did not want to be named coeditor, but slighting his contribution would have been a misrepresentation. As for the dedication to him, that is a secret shared with the contributors and his wife, Kathleen Woodward, and if all goes according to plan, he will be surprised to discover it at the moment of publication.