



Performance Theatre and the Poetics of Failure (Routledge Advances in Theatre and Perfo)

Sara Jane Bailes

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What does it mean to "fail" in performance? How might staging failure reveal theatre's potential to expand our understanding of social, political and everyday reality? What can we learn from performances that expose and then celebrate their ability to fail?

In *Performance Theatre and the Poetics of Failure*, Sara Jane Bailes begins with Samuel Beckett and considers failure in performance as a hopeful strategy. She examines the work of internationally acclaimed UK and US experimental theatre companies Forced Entertainment, Goat Island and Elevator Repair Service, addressing accepted narratives about artistic and cultural value in contemporary theatre-making. Her discussion draws on examples where misfire, the accidental and the intentionally amateur challenge our perception of skill and virtuosity in such diverse modes of performance as slapstick and punk.

Detailed rehearsal and performance analysis are used to engage theory and contextualise practice, extending the dialogue between theatre arts, live art and postmodern dance. The result is a critical account of performance theatre that offers essential reading for practitioners, scholars and students of Performance, Theatre and Dance Studies.

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