EDWARD GORDON CRAIG

ON THE ART OF THE THEATRE

EDITED BY FRANC CHAMBERLAIN

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ON THE ART OF THE THEATRE

> "We cannot create anything worth seeing or hearing if, like a tame cat, we must first ask others what *they* think is the best thing to do, and the safest."
>
> Edward Gordon Craig, 1924.

On the Art of the Theatre was first published in 1911, and remains one of the seminal texts of theatre theory and practice. Actor, director, designer and pioneering theorist Edward Gordon Craig was one of twentieth-century theatre's great modernizers. Here, he is eloquent and entertaining in expounding his views on the theatre; a crucial and prescient contribution that retains its relevance almost a century later.

This reissue boasts extensive notes from editor Franc Chamberlain, alongside Craig's own idiosyncratic asides, complete with full citations and proper names, guiding the reader through the rich and varied theatrical world that the author inhabited.

Edward Gordon Craig (1872–1966) was the son of an actor and an architect, and his celebrated career was a synthesis of the two professions. Aside from a prolific career in theatrical writing and direction, he is best known for his pioneering work in set design, not least the feted 1912 production of *Hamlet*, with Konstantin Stanislavsky's Moscow Art Theatre.

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ON THE ART OF THE THEATRE

Edward Gordon Craig

Edited and introduced by Franc Chamberlain

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TO THE EVER LIVING GENIUS OF THE GREATEST OF ENGLISH ARTISTS WILLIAM BLAKE AND TO THE ILLUSTRIOUS MEMORY OF HIS WIFE THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

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INTRODUCTION

Edward Gordon Craig (1872–1966) was born into the theatre and spent the whole of his long life involved with it in one way or another. The son of the celebrated actress Ellen Terry (1847–1928), whose career stretched over fifty years, and the architect and designer Edward William Godwin (1833–86), he was also the younger brother of Edith Craig (1869–1947), a director, designer and an active campaigner for women's rights.

Terry and Godwin, who were unmarried, separated in 1875, and in that year Terry made her first appearance in a major Shakespearian role, playing Portia in *The Merchant of Venice* at the Prince of Wales' Theatre in London. In 1878 she joined Henry Irving (1838–1905) at the Lyceum and formed a successful partnership with him both on and off the stage for a quarter of a century. Irving became the first actor to be knighted in 1895, and, whilst this is an important sign of the rising respectability of the actor in British society, it is also a sign of the celebrity status of both Irving and Terry. Terry's scandalous attitude towards Victorian morality meant that she had to wait until 1925 before her contribution to the theatre was similarly acknowledged.

It would be difficult not to be overshadowed by such celebrated figures, irrespective of any lasting artistic achievement, but, at the same time, the connection to such prominent figures in the English theatre, known all over Europe and the USA, meant that Craig encountered many leading actors, designers, directors and painters. Making his first stage appearance at the age of six, and becoming a formal member of the Lyceum Company at the age of seventeen in 1889, Craig was intimately aware of the practices of a major contemporary theatre. In the days before theatre schools and university drama departments, when actors learned through apprenticeships, Craig was mentored by the best, and his opinion of Irving remained high throughout his life. He also performed and toured with other companies, playing leading Shakespearian roles and receiving good notices, and, in 1894, he toured in his own company with *Hamlet*, *The Taming of the Shrew* and other plays. It seemed that he had a successful acting career ahead of him; even if he didn't reach the heights of Irving and Terry, he might still

look forward to running his own theatre as an actor-manager, but in 1897, at the age of twenty-five, he resigned from the Lyceum and ended his acting career.

After leaving the Lyceum, Craig picked up the other side of his ancestry: Godwin's contributions to design and architecture and his connection to the Arts and Crafts movement. Craig collected together Godwin's articles and other materials and began to spend more time developing his own visual art skills. In 1893 Craig had met James Pryde (1866–1941) and his brother-in-law William Nicholson (1872–1949) who worked under the pseudonym J. and W. Beggarstaff to produce woodblock engravings and prints for books and posters. Whilst many contemporary engravers were inspired by Japanese art, the Beggarstaffs drew on the style of old English popular pamphlets (chapbooks) and are credited with changing the style of poster art in Britain. The Beggarstaffs assisted Craig to develop his skills in woodblock engraving and, in 1898, he published the first issue of his art journal *The Page*, which had contributions from some of the leading contributors to other art journals of the period such as Will Rothenstein and Max Beerbohm. Craig published *The Page* until 1901 and also contributed artwork to some of the other leading English art journals of the period including *The Studio*, *The Dial*, *The Dome* and *The Savoy*. Whilst Craig had ceased to act, he hadn't abandoned the theatre; he was an avid spectator and regularly made sketches and woodblocks of performances he had seen. These skills were to be of great use throughout his life, and Craig continued his sketches and engravings long after he had stopped making productions, especially for his journal *The Mask*, which he published from 1908 until 1929. Craig also helped Pryde put on a variety performance in Southwold, Suffolk, in 1897, and, in the process, met the composer Martin Fallas Shaw (1875–1958).

In 1899, Craig and Shaw founded the Purcell Operatic Society and, in 1900, Craig returned to the theatre, designing and directing Henry Purcell's opera *Dido and Aeneas* with Shaw conducting. The two men started out with a vision, no money, no venue and no performers. They gathered together a cast of amateurs, plus two professional performers, and rehearsed them over six months before presenting the results in the concert hall of the Hampstead Conservatoire in London.

Craig's first attempt at producing had been in 1893 when, twenty-one years old, he produced Alfred de Musset's *No Trifling with Love* in Uxbridge, but he was still taking on the role of actor-manager at that point, taking the lead role and managing the other actors, as well as designing scenes. But with *Dido and Aeneas*, Craig had stepped beyond the role of actor-manager and into the then emerging role of "director." No longer taking centre stage and arranging everything around himself like Henry Irving and other actor-managers, Craig stepped out into the auditorium to shape the whole event. Godwin, his father, had performed a similar role in

several of his productions, adapting the material, designing sets and costumes, selecting the actors and directing rehearsals (Bablet 1981: 5).

For *Dido and Aeneas*, Craig lowered the proscenium and built a lighting bridge to light the action from above (an uncommon practice at the time) and didn't use any footlights or sidelights. He integrated costumes, set, actors and light as far as possible, with each actor fitting in as part of the overall design. One photograph, which was published in the programme for the 1901 revival, shows a mourner with a right arm reaching diagonally upwards wrapped in gauze in a way that makes it unclear where costume ends and hangings begin, if indeed there is a separation. Craig had clearly moved away from painted backdrops and detailed historical settings which were usual for English theatre of the time.

Dido and Aeneas was relatively well received but only played for three nights and left both Craig and Shaw in debt. Undaunted, they embarked on a second project which was to reprise the production of *Dido and Aeneas* together with the masque from the fifth act of Purcell's opera *Dioclesian*, which they called *The Masque of Love*. In an attempt to attract a larger audience they persuaded Ellen Terry to perform Charles Reade's *Nance Oldfield*, a piece for which she was well known, as a curtain-raiser.

This triple bill opened at the Coronet Theatre on 26 March 1901, but the run only lasted until the end of the month; however, Craig's work was beginning to attract attention. W. B. Yeats, for example, was at one of the performances at the Coronet and he wrote that he had seen:

> the only admirable stage scenery of our time, for Mr Gordon Craig has discovered how to decorate a play with severe, beautiful, simple effects of colour, that leave the imagination free to follow all the suggestions of the play. Realistic scenery takes the imagination captive and is at best bad landscape painting, but Mr Gordon Craig's scenery is a new and distinct art. It is something that can only exist in the theatre. It cannot even be separated from the figures that move before it. The staging of *Dido and Aeneas* and of *The Masque of Love* will some day, I am persuaded, be remembered among the important events of our time.
>
> (Yeats, cited in Bablet 1981 p. 47)

Another member of the audience, Haldane Macfall, wrote that these productions of Craig's were the beginnings of a "new movement" which was "destined to revolutionize the production of the poetic drama" (Bablet 1981: 37). But there were problems; for example, the scene changes in *The Masque of Love* took too long, and Craig realized that there was a need not only to revolutionize design but also to develop new tools to enable the design to function effectively.

Craig and Shaw's next endeavour was Handel's *Acis and Galatea*, which they presented in a double bill with *The Masque of Love* for six nights in March 1902. Once again they worked on a small budget with amateur performers but achieved memorable results. Yeats again was impressed and wrote of one scene that it belonged "to an art which has lain hid under the roots of the Pyramids for ten thousand years" (Bablet 1981: 50). Yeats's appeal to the distant past doesn't need to be taken literally; Craig's design success had less to do with rediscovering a lost art and more to do with making innovative use of new technologies.

Despite the praise that the Purcell Operatic Society's productions received, Craig and Shaw were unable to obtain funds for another production. Laurence Housman, who had seen all of the Society's productions, wrote a nativity play, *Bethlehem*, with music by Joseph Moorat, which he wanted Craig to stage. Housman offered to pay expenses, and Craig agreed on condition that he had complete control over the production. Craig was unhappy with both Housman's text and Moorat's music, so he edited them both leaving very little of the original music and replacing it with pieces by composers such as Bach and Mozart.

Bethlehem was presented in December 1902 at the Large Hall of the Imperial Institute in Kensington, London. Craig and Shaw discovered that the acoustics were very poor. Craig draped the walls, which reduced the problem, but he did so in a way that blended with the colour design of the rest of the set and effectively made the audience part of the scene. Craig created the image of a flock of sheep by filling sacks with wood shavings and then tying the corners to suggest ears (Innes 1998: 75), and where it would have been expected that a doll would be used to represent the baby Jesus, Craig used a light. When the cloth covering the manger was lifted, the light shone onto the faces of the actors to symbolize the divine radiance.

In 1903, Craig designed some scenes for his uncle, Fred Terry, for *For Sword or Song*, but the design was altered and edited. Craig wrote: "That is why I want 100% liberty when I work in a theatre" (Bablet 1981: 55). This level of artistic control was something he'd had in his four productions since 1900, but it was something that he was never to have again. Most of the amateurs who had worked with him on *Dido and Aeneas* had returned for all four productions, and Craig was able to instruct them in the actions that he wanted to be carried out. Martin Shaw gives a sense of the movement aspect of Craig's work on these pieces when he writes that the openness of the performers meant that Craig could ask them to sing "crawling, leaping, swaying, running—anyway that Craig fancied" (Innes 1998: 73).

Craig's next production was Henrik Ibsen's *The Vikings in Helgeland* in collaboration with Ellen Terry. The production, which opened at the Imperial Theatre, London, on 15 April 1903, was, once again, an artistic success but not a commercial one. Craig also encountered problems with the actors, who objected to his lighting design and his use of a sloping stage.

Unsurprisingly, Craig did not consider that the purpose of light was to make sure that the actor's face was seen but to create a score of atmospheres where as much or as little of the actor was illuminated to create the necessary effect in the overall design. It should be noted that it wasn't only the actors who objected to some of the lighting choices: George Bernard Shaw was also unhappy (Bablet 1981: 58).

Ellen Terry had invested her own money in *The Vikings*, but it was running at a loss and the production had to close after three weeks. The next production was *Much Ado About Nothing*, again with Terry, again an artistic success, and again a commercial failure. Terry was no longer able to support the project and went on tour to restore her finances, and Craig was never again to create a performance in England.

After *Much Ado About Nothing*, Craig received an invitation from Count Harry Kessler, who had seen *The Vikings* as well as an exhibition of Craig's designs, to produce a play at the court theatre at Weimar (Germany). Craig declined because he did not consider there was any chance that he was going to get the "absolute power" he required. He did, however, travel to Germany as Kessler's guest in 1904 and began a project with Otto Brahm at the Lessing Theater in Berlin. Brahm wanted Craig to design Hugo von Hofmannstahl's translation of Thomas Otway's *Venice Preserv'd*, and von Hofmannstahl was willing to give Craig a free hand. Brahm, however, was committed to a detailed photographic realism and was unhappy with Craig's approach and got a scene painter to make alterations to Craig's designs. Craig's response was to resign from the project and write a letter to the press explaining his position. This letter was published all over Germany and added to Craig's growing reputation. In December 1904, Kessler organized an exhibition of sixty of Craig's designs, portraits and other works in Berlin. It was at this point that Craig met Isadora Duncan, the American dancer who was revolutionizing the art of dance and who was at the height of her fame. Craig and Duncan began a passionate affair, and Craig accompanied her as she toured around Europe. Craig took on the role of her business manager, redesigned her set and brought in Martin Shaw as her conductor. From Duncan, Craig took the idea that movement was the root of the art of the theatre, although he was to distinguish this from dance.

In a week at the end of April in 1905, Craig wrote *The Art of the Theatre: First Dialogue*, which was published later that year in German and soon translated into Dutch and Russian. Craig's reputation was rising in Europe, yet he still hadn't produced anything other than his writings and designs, if we leave aside his redesign of Duncan's lighting and set. His designs were influential and exhibited in several European cities during 1905, the year in which he also produced four designs simply called *The Steps*. Each of the four designs comprised a "long, broad flight of steps that filled the whole stage between two high walls" (Innes 1998: 139), but the differences in light,

shade and colour, combined with the positioning, posture and gesture of the human figures, generated differences in mood or affect. In the same year, Max Reinhardt invited Craig to design *Macbeth* and *The Tempest* for him, as well as George Bernard Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra*, but Craig's designs were always altered, and eventually he gave up and returned unsigned the contract that Reinhardt had given him.

Kessler had attempted to bring Craig together with the Italian actress Eleanora Duse and von Hofmannstahl to produce the latter's *Elektra*, but although Craig made some designs, the production didn't happen. In 1906, however, Duncan brought Craig and Duse together, and Craig agreed to design for a production of Ibsen's *Rosmersholm*. This time the production did happen, and Craig wrote an extensive programme note which included the maxim: "Realism is only Exposure, whereas Art is Revelation" (Bablet 1981: 87). The production was a success, and Craig and Duse planned to collaborate on future productions, but *Rosmersholm* was taken on tour to Nice (France), and Craig's set was cut down so that it would fit into the theatre, destroying the proportions he had carefully designed.

In 1908, Craig was invited by Stanislavsky to collaborate on a production of *Hamlet* at the Moscow Art Theatre, a production which eventually opened in 1912, a delay partly caused by Stanislavsky's ill-health, and partly because the theatre was not subject to commercial pressures and had a considerably longer rehearsal period than was usual in the rest of Europe. From the beginning of his collaboration with Stanislavsky, Craig was working on his invention to solve the scene-changing problems that occurred during The *Masque of Love*. His solution was a set of light, highly mobile and two-way folding screens which could be adjusted to create a variety of configurations for different settings. Craig patented his invention in 1910, and he gave a set of screens to Yeats for the Abbey Theatre in Dublin where they were successfully used for several productions between 1911 and 1914. The screens were also used in the Moscow *Hamlet* but with different views of their success. *Hamlet* was the last production Craig worked on until 1926 when he designed Ibsen's *The Pretenders* for the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen.

It was also in 1908 when Craig began to publish the journal *The Mask*, which, with some brief interruptions he kept going until 1929. *The Mask* became a virtual stage for his ideas, where he could explore the theatre traditions of other cultures as well as contemporary innovations (Taxidou 1998).

On the Art of the Theatre

What is clear from the above narrative is that Craig was a man of the theatre, that he was skilled as an actor, designer and director. If he had been prepared to make more compromises or had been fortunate enough to find the money to own and run his own theatre he would have created far more

productions rather than a handful. Although Ellen Terry gave him control over *The Vikings* and *Much Ado About Nothing*, the last production he really had full control over all artistic decisions, where the performers were willing to follow his lead, was *Bethlehem*.

Throughout *On the Art of the Theatre*, first published in 1911, Craig argues that for the theatre to become an art, its crafts must become unified under the control of an artist for each production. This theatre-artist must be someone who is versed in all of the theatre's crafts and not simply a manager. In other words, the future theatre-artist should undergo the kind of apprenticeship that Craig himself underwent. Craig also argues for state subsidy and for the theatre to be freed from commercial pressures. For much of the past fifty years, state funding has been available for theatre, and other arts, throughout Europe, but it is something which cannot be taken for granted and is always subject to cuts. The theatre-artist needs training and funding, and Craig offers some different models of training and possible ways of funding, but he neither developed his own model of training, nor secured the funding that might have made that possible.

On the Art of the Theatre does not present a simple set of solutions. Craig wants to enable the theatre to become an art. He points to theatres elsewhere and from different times but not to suggest that they are copied or resurrected in Europe, rather to remind his audience what the art of the theatre can be. In his introduction, Hevesi notes that Craig has helped him see that there may be more art in a ropedancer than in a classical actor, and that's important because it opens up the possibilities for theatre. No longer simply the interpretation of a literary text, nor trapped within old aesthetic forms, the theatre can be recreated.

Craig, amongst other things, is against realism, the star system, the vanity of actors, commercialism, and the domination of theatre by literature. The art of the theatre, according to Craig, is not the craft of "putting on a play"; it is the art of creating a performance out of "Action, Scene, and Voice." These materials are what all theatre is made out of, whatever the genre and whether human actors are used or not. In "The Actor and the Über-Marionette," Craig both argues for the removal of human actors and for a loophole that would allow them to remain:

> But I see a loop-hole by which in time the actors can escape from the bondage they are in. They must create for themselves a new form of acting, consisting for the main part of symbolical gesture. To-day they *impersonate* and interpret; to-morrow they must *represent* and interpret; and the third day they must create. By this means style may return.

This ambivalence in Craig's text can be read as a contradiction that needs to be resolved, reducing it to an either/or position: either the über-marionette

or the actor. This oppositional view misses an important aspect of Craig's argument: that there was a need for a new form of acting. The new actor would be a kind of "über-actor," as different from the old actor as the human being was from the ape, just as there would be a similar distance between the über-marionette and the familiar wooden object with strings. Craig is playing with the idea of the *übermensch* articulated by the influential philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1885). Nietzsche's term was translated as "superman" by George Bernard Shaw, but later "overman" was preferred, and a recent edition (2006) translates *übermensch* as "superhuman." The *übermensch* goes beyond the human and is the imagined next step in evolution and, similarly, Craig imagines the über-marionette as a step beyond the human actor. To take advantage of Craig's loophole, actors needed to go beyond the current models of what it meant to be an actor, lose their vanity and no longer simply be interpreters of texts but creators of their own art using action, scene and voice.

In 1945, Craig was in Paris visiting the school of Etienne Decroux, and he praised Decroux's reinvention of the art of mime, which Decroux called corporeal mime (see Leabhart 2007, and Leabhart and Chamberlain, *in press*). Collaborating with Decroux at this time was Jean-Louis Barrault, and Craig was unequivocal in his praise of Barrault's mime piece *The Horse*. Barrault was, wrote Craig, the "actor, director, and creator of the most purely lyrical thing I have had the pleasure of seeing on stage up to this point: I mean *The Horse*. Like all lyrical creations, large or small, this was easy to understand…and it was irresistible" (Craig in Leabhart and Chamberlain *in press*).

Barrault, in Craig's view, had exploited the loophole and had become a creator, as had Decroux, and beside their work "the operas and other state theatres of Europe seem ridiculous." It isn't as simple as saying that Decroux and/or Barrault had fulfilled Craig's vision of the theatre, as if there were some unique and eternal solution to the problems that he posed. Any solutions can only be temporary and partial, always pointing beyond themselves to what might be possible in the future otherwise the theatre would become frozen into stale repetitions.

Whilst Craig's impact on the development of the idea of director-as-artist is regularly acknowledged, and the influence of his work on directors such as Jacques Copeau, Vsevolod Meyerhold, Peter Brook, Jerzy Grotowski, Eugenio Barba and Robert Wilson has been well documented, the rise of directorial theatre obscured to some extent the development of creative ensembles.

A teacher such as Jacques Lecoq, whose teaching centred on movement in the broadest sense of the word and emphasized the creativity of the actor, has had a profound effect on the European theatre without ever having a significant reputation as a director. Craig would have been in agreement with Lecoq that movement was at the heart of theatre, that, as

Lecoq said, "everything moves." Craig would also have appreciated the use of masks, the creativity of the actors, the freedom from the text, and the experiments in space, colour and architecture that occurred at Lecoq's Laboratory for the Study of Movement (LEM). Companies such as Mummenschanz and Théâtre de Complicité, trained by Lecoq and functioning as creative ensembles, have contributed to a broadening of the general understanding of what theatre can be over the past twenty years. Simon McBurney of Théâtre de Complicité has said, "I am fascinated by the movement of things" (quoted in Murray 2007: 106), not just the movement of human beings but the movement of things in general: everything moves.

Craig was a visionary who opened up this view of a theatre based in movement, not literature, and his work is one of the roots of contemporary physical-theatre practice which not only embraces the work of Lecoq and his graduates, but also DV8, Pina Bausch, Jerôme Bel, Anne Bogart, and Goat Island (see Murray and Keefe 2008a). Whilst Craig made a clear distinction between the art of the theatre and dance, he was thinking primarily of the ballet, both classical and modern, and the work of Isadora Duncan. The blurring of genres that has occurred in the past twenty or so years and the development of dance-based physical theatre such as the work of DV8, and various experimental approaches to dance, have brought dance closer to Craig's conception of the theatre.

This emphasis on the significance of Craig's loophole for the actor is at odds with what Craig himself was up to. He didn't act after 1897 and didn't explore the kinds of possibilities that Decroux, Barrault and Lecoq were to take up. Craig put his emphasis on the director as theatre artist, arguing that the production had to be under the control of a single figure who could integrate all of the elements. Any creative ensemble has to solve the problem of how to get a view of the work from the outside, but it doesn't follow that having a director is the only option and hundreds of students devising their own work in university drama departments have demonstrated the contrary.

Craig's *On The Art of the Theatre* has been one of the most influential theatre books of the past 100 years. It has touched all of the great theatre makers in one way or another, has contributed to the development of devised theatre, mime and physical theatre, performance design, animation, mask, actor-training, and to theatre history as a study of performance traditions rather than of dramatic literature.

"The Art of the Theatre (First Dialogue)" was the first of the essays contained in *On the Art of the Theatre* to be published, and it is a good place to start reading and then go back to the first essay. Once the basic arguments have been laid out, the rest of the book elaborates possibilities for developing the art of the theatre, some very practical, some speculative and visionary, and rails against those habits and institutions which are in the way.

Craig is clear that *On the Art of the Theatre* isn't a textbook; it doesn't have the aim of telling anyone how to make theatre, although it does have a number of practical exercises that can be explored and may be helpful in learning the art. Nor is it an elitist book; Craig hopes that people who are fond of art and want it to grow will feel at home even if they don't know much about the art of the theatre. Craig's Playgoer in the two dialogues is an enthusiast, and Craig assumes that the reader will have some knowledge of the London theatre scene that he grew up in which includes an awareness of European companies, dramatists and players who have visited the capital. For present-day readers who have little knowledge of the history of the theatre, Craig's constant references to plays, theatres, playwrights, actors and theatres can be quite confusing. In addition, Craig doesn't always reveal the sources for some of his quotations, and, on top of that, he misquotes. Endnotes are provided in this edition to help the reader navigate the web of references.

Franc Chamberlain
Cork
March, 2008.

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PREFACE

To the first impression, 1911

What should be said as Preface? Should one ask for forgiveness from those one unwittingly offends? Should one admit that words are all nonsense, and that theories, even after one has practised that about which one theorizes, are really of little account? Or should one stand on the threshold and receive one's guests and hope that they will enjoy themselves? I think I shall do the latter.

Well, in this case, my guests are made up of a thousand invited friends, and those half-dozen one did not invite and never would invite, because of their very evil or foolish intentions towards our art. For instance, I willingly throw open the doors of this book to my very dear friends, the artists, whether they be painters, sculptors, musicians, poets or architects. These, of course, will stand aside for a moment to allow first of all the beautiful ladies to pass. Then there are the scholars. Well, as I have only schooled myself in one particular branch of knowledge, I feel very shy about meeting such guests.

Coming after them is that group of kindly people, men and women, who, without knowing much about art, are fond of it and encourage its growth. These, I am happy to believe, will feel at home here.

Then there are other surprises, those engineers, those directors of journals, those managers of stores, those sea captains, men who startle one by suddenly putting in an appearance and expressing a sincere and hearty desire to join in the festivities.

Last of all, there is what is known as the theatrical profession. How many of these will accept my invitation? A rare few, perhaps, but certainly the best. So when the rest of us have all assembled, we shall welcome Hevesi,[1] from Budapest; Appia, from Switzerland;[2] Stanislawski,[3] Sulergitski,[4] Mosquin,[5] and Katchalof,[6] who come from Moscow; Meyerkhold,[7] who comes from St. Petersburg; De Vos,[8] from Amsterdam; Starke,[9] from Frankfurt; Fuchs,[10] from Münich; Antoine,[11] Paul Fort,[12] and Madame Guilbert,[13] from Paris; and our great poet who has won over the stage, Yeats,[14] from Ireland; and after these the shades of Vallentin,[15] from Berlin; and Wyspiansky,[16] from Krakow.

Least of all are the uninvited guests, with their cheap cynicism and witty remarks which are calculated to put a blight upon every pleasant moment, upon every achievement, who will attempt to rob our happy gathering of all enjoyment, if they can possibly do so.

Well, let us hope for the best, that these people will stay away. To the others I present what is within the house and beg that they will forever hold towards it and myself good thoughts.

Being in my own house, I let myself go. I am not careful to be cautious among my friends. If I were to do so, they would think that I suspected them of being spies.

It is a great honour for me to feel that among my friends are the names of the first artists in Europe. And I think we can all feel happy on the progress which our movement has made, a movement which is destined ultimately to restore the Art of the Theatre into its ancient position among the Fine Arts.

E.G.C.
London, 1911.

Notes

1 Dr Sandór (Alexander) Hevesi (1873–1939): Hungarian director, playwright and theoretician. In 1904 he was a founder member of the Thalia Association, which introduced naturalism to the Hungarian Stage, and later became its artistic director. Thalia disbanded in 1908, and Hevesi became artistic director of the National Theatre. He became a supporter and friend of Craig, and the two discussed the possible creation of a European Art Theatre with Hevesi as director. Craig dedicated his essay "The Actor and the Über-Marionette" to Hevesi and Jan de Vos.

2 (Author's note.) Appia, the foremost stage-decorator of Europe, is not dead. I was told that he was no more with us, so, in the first edition of this book, I included him among the shades. I first saw three examples of his work in 1908, and I wrote to a friend asking, "Where is Appia, and how can we meet?" My friend replied, "Poor Appia died some years ago." This winter (1912) I saw some of Appia's designs in a portfolio belonging to Prince Wolkonsky. They were divine; and I was told that the designer was still living.

(Editor's note.) Adolphe Appia (1862–1928): Craig's description of Appia as a "stage-decorator" doesn't really catch the radical nature of Appia's design concepts as he argued for non-naturalistic and three-dimensional, symbolic, staging that had considerable affinity with Craig's own. The two men eventually met in 1914 and became firm friends and, although they never worked on a project together, they did hold a joint exhibition of their designs in Amsterdam in 1922.

3 Konstantin Stanislavsky (1863–1938): Co-founder, with Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko in 1897, of the Moscow Art Theatre (MXAT), one of the most influential theatres in the world over the past century. Stanislavsky's approach to acting, with an emphasis on realism, was simultaneously admired and rejected by Craig. Stanislavsky read Craig's pamphlet, *The Art of the Theatre*, in translation in 1906, and, encouraged by Isadora Duncan, who was performing at MXAT in 1907, invited Craig to discuss the possibility of a production. It was agreed that