belonging to a dynastic chain of kings, and how this became manifest in opera performances.

Taking the view that political events exist solely as theatrical action, Chapter 5, "Royal Encounter: Communicating Power for Consensus," is less convincing. Gustav III's actions in political events, such as the coup d'état the king carried out in 1772 and the war against Russia in 1788, are treated in detail, with focus on the king's self-presentation; Berlova writes that "Thanks to his mastery in performing, Gustav III united his persona with the symbolic figure of the monarch. His personality became characteristic of the hero he was enacting" (150). Though this is an interesting perspective, some remarks on activities in parliament relevant to the situations would have enriched the discussion. Chapter 6, on Gustav III and contemporary monarchs' interest in theatre, is compelling but is above all descriptive, rather than analytical, and the comparison itself is relatively short.

The research referenced is extensive and spans more than a hundred years. A source-critical discussion about the literature used would have increased the reliability of the study, though. The author shows some understanding of the difficulties in interpreting older sources, specifically regarding the problems of reliability that can occur when evaluating statements from the eighteenth century, but rarely does the discussion critically question the source material used. All in all, however, Berlova's book is a good contribution to the international knowledge of Gustav III and his contemporaries' perception of the importance of the theatre in society.

doi:10.1017/S0040557422000424

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Feeling the Future at Christian End-Time Performances

By Jill Stevenson. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2022; pp. xii + 230, 7 illustrations. $75 cloth, $59.95 e-book.

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When the coronavirus disrupted the world in 2020, some Evangelical circles deemed the pandemic a biblical apocalyptic prophecy coming to pass. Several radical groups even declared the COVID-19 vaccinations the mark of the beast, an imprint representing one's allegiance to the empire of the Antichrist. Discussions of the end times certainly predate the pandemic, however, as Jill Stevenson demonstrates in her insightful new book, *Feeling the Future at Christian End-Time*

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https://doi.org/10.1017/S0040557422000436 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Performances. Christian end-time theology, or eschatology, began in the Old Testament and continued through the ministry of Jesus Christ. Dramatic depictions of the end times stem from the Middle Ages and, as Stevenson demonstrates, served specific theological (and often political) purposes. In *Feeling the Future,* Stevenson studies modern Evangelical end-time productions linked to churches and other religious organizations throughout the United States to demonstrate how these immersive performances construct deeply felt anxiety about future time within its viewers for specific aims: to save one's own soul and that of another, and to remain vigilant and prepared for the inevitable end times.

In her Introduction, "Seeking an End," Stevenson outlines Western Christian eschatological history before discussing modern Evangelical performances that foster future time. She profiles one of the earliest contemporary performances, *Scaremare,* originally staged in 1972 by Reverend Jerry Falwell. Unlike the other performances she analyzes throughout the study, *Scaremare* uses Halloween-like tropes—zombies and clowns, for instance—to scare its spectators into salvation. Though the performances thereafter are more nuanced in their approach, *Scaremare* serves as an early model of this genre.

In Chapter 1, "The Landscape of the End: Time, Affect, Threat, Absence," Stevenson notes that in place of fear, modern end-time performances rely upon a "dramaturgy of threat that foments anxious, unsettled emotional states within spectators . . . to give the future a felt presence" (27). Producing anxiety within spectators' bodies meets various theological objectives. For instance, in Chapter 2, "Scripting the Absence of Feeling: Hell House, Judgement House, and *Rapture House*," the author discusses three end-time walkthrough productions that inspire in audience members a recognition of how one's own choices impacts one's salvation both now and in the future. In Hell House, hosted by Trinity Christian School in Cedar Hill, Texas, for example, spectators walk through scenes of real-life situations, such as school shootings, teen sex, and abortion, that direct spectators "to consider how the choices they made during those encounters will impact a person's eternal destiny" (53). According to the creators of these experiences, producing anxiety about the future leads people to make better choices in their day-to-day lives as they prepare for the end.

In Chapter 3, "'It Is Happening!': Feeling the Impending Future at *Hell's Gates*," the aim of the case study shifts from recognition of one's own choices to an intentional watchfulness for signs of the coming end times. Stevenson takes her readers to a production outside of Atlanta called *Hell's Gates*, an immersive experience of the post-Rapture world where participants are introduced to an apocalyptic world. Throughout the production, spectators were forced into chaos and confusion, such as being yelled at by tour guides to move quickly to the next staging area or being bombarded by guards to take the mark of the beast or be killed. This production's "dramaturgy of threat" creates an anxiety that, "despite the many clear warnings and signs, you will not be ready when Christ comes again" thus inspiring in spectators an intentional "watchfulness and attention" for signs of the end times (77–8).

In Chapter 4, "Forgetting the Future: Noah's Ark as Palimpsest," Stevenson examines the immersive Ark Encounter in Williamstown, Kentucky, a biblical museum housed within a full-size replica of Noah's Ark. Here, spectators are ambushed by myriad written and visual biblical and historical materials from

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0040557422000436 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Genesis to Revelation, such as detailed placards and exhibits, creating anxiety that they have forgotten what they need to know to be prepared for the end times. Stevenson argues that spectators experience the Ark as a palimpsest, a manuscript on which the original writing has been scraped away so the page could be reused, so that participants read "the passages about (or even from) the future through past and present layers of meaning" (110). Although she makes a compelling argument, the author waits until the very end of the chapter to explain what is at stake when one forgets. Admittedly, this critique is minor in an otherwise stellar study.

In the final chapter, "A Memory of the Future: Rehearsing the End at *Tribulation Trail,*" Stevenson returns to end-time walkthroughs but shifts the focus from one's own salvation to that of another. Employing the theory of prosthetic memory to "foster empathy across difference," Stevenson describes how audience members at *Tribulation Trail,* a thirteen-scene immersive experience that takes spectators through the seven years of the apocalypse, "create a personal, embodied memory of events that *will* occur in a prewritten, 'historical' future" (132, 133). Spectators who participate in this production experience anxiety for the soul of another by resonating deeply with their familiar experience. For instance, one character is seen skipping school, is shot by an unknown perpetrator, and is told by a demon that she would spend eternity in hell due to her actions as she cries out, "I didn't have time, I didn't know . . . !" (138). The production's goal is to inspire spectators to evangelize to people so they might be saved in preparation for the end times. Stevenson ends her book with a moving Coda, "Feeling the Future: New York City, 2020–2021," in which she discusses the various anxieties fostered by "the media, government leaders, local institutions, friends and family" and herself while living in NYC through the pandemic (163). She argues that until we can agree on a common threat, we will always experience future times differently, and the anxiety caused may never be alleviated.

Among the most meaningful components of Stevenson's writing is her objectiveness in—and, I might add, kindness to—her case studies. The author does not judge the dogma of her subjects, which others might be quick to deem radical or conniving. Instead, she seeks to understand an understudied affective (and effective) mode of Christian performance by systemizing how Evangelical organizations manipulate the emotions of their viewers to further what they believe to be the Kingdom of God. Furthermore, the book is a master class in autoethnography, marrying vivid storytelling, smart analysis, the application of theory, and historical contextualization in a way that invites the reader into the experience with the author. Although I was not at these performances myself, I could certainly imagine what it might be like to be a participant and, at times, even feel the anxiety generated from them. (I also spent time with the book's digital materials available on Fulcrum, as well as extant videos of these performances on YouTube). This book is a must-read for scholars who study the intersections of religion and performance in any capacity, especially those with an interest in the end times.

doi:10.1017/S0040557422000436

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