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THE DRAMA OF AGEING: THEATRE, AGEING AND LATER LIFE

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ABSTRACT

The growing body of research and scholarship looking at the engagement of older people in the arts emphasises the many and varied benefits of participation, and confirms that continued creativity is essential for a healthy and meaningful old age. Whilst the existing evidence enables us to draw certain conclusions about the value of creative activities in general, our specific understanding of the role that older people play in making theatre – in both professional and non-professional contexts – and what participation in theatre and drama means, is rather more limited. Given that theatre is a cultural arena in which both ageing and older people are highly visible, it is also a matter of concern that many analyses tend to be couched within a deficit model of old age, taking little account of the contributions of older people or of the ways in which theatre and drama may be used to challenge and resist stereotypes associated with old age and the ageing process. Against this backdrop, this chapter reviews three areas: first, we look at how ageing and older people have been – and are currently – represented on the professional stage; second, we describe the evolution of older peoples' theatre groups; and, third, we examine what the existing research evidence tells us about older people's experiences of theatre-making. The chapter concludes by suggesting a number of areas that cultural and critical gerontologists might like to explore further.

INTRODUCTION

Developments in cultural gerontology over the last decade have been expanding gerontology and our understandings of later life considerably (Cole *et al.*, 2000; 2010; Andersson, 2002). This cultural turn is closely allied to critical gerontological perspectives (Bernard and Scharf, 2007; Baars *et al.*, 2013): an approach which acknowledges the wider social and cultural context of ageing; engages with new theorising and new methodologies which cut across the social sciences and the humanities; and which recognises the skills, abilities and contributions of older people rather than automatically framing ageing as 'a problem to be solved' in contemporary society. It is also evident that social and critical gerontologists, as well as literary and cultural scholars, have become increasingly interested in the artistic engagement of older people, and in how the arts may construct, perpetuate or challenge stereotypical views and existing models of the ageing process (Gullette, 1997, 2004, 2011; Basting, 1998, 2009; Small, 2007; Lipscomb and Marshall, 2010; Mangan, 2013). Theatre is, we would suggest, a particularly fruitful context for such investigations not least because it is a cultural arena in which both ageing and older people are highly visible.

Today, older people are visible as audience members and as volunteers, as the continuous surveys conducted by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in England since 2005 show (DCMS, 2013). In addition, older people feature strongly in the theatrical cultures of many countries and eras, both as performers and characters. Yet, although some plays present complex meditations on ageing, it is also true, as Mangan (2013: 23) argues, that 'theatre and performance has always made extensive use of stereotypes and stock characters', and these include caricatured old men and old women. Similarly, many cultural institutions, not just individuals, tend to hold stereotypical and deficit views of what older people are or are not capable of and will tend to write off, or ignore, their contributions to their communities and localities in cultural as in other arenas (Cutler, 2009). Despite many valuable critiques, the role that older people play in making theatre – in both professional and non-professional contexts – is also poorly understood or researched, as is theatre's

potential to develop individuals and communities, and its role – or potential role – in fostering intergenerational relationships. Thus, the purpose of this chapter is threefold: first, to look at how ageing and older people have been – and are currently – represented on the professional stage; second, to describe the evolution of older peoples' theatre groups in various contexts; and, third, to examine what the existing research evidence tells us about older people's experiences of theatre-making. We conclude with suggesting a number of areas that cultural and critical gerontologists might like to explore further.

REPRESENTING AGE ON STAGE

While theatre is in some respects inherently intergenerational, given its general desire to depict real or imagined societies, its representation of older people and the ageing process has often been partial, incomplete or based on stereotype. Old men and women have rarely been invisible, but their place within dramatic narrative has often been marginal and their place within society trivialised. In addition, the position of older men and, especially, women within the theatre industry has often been uneasy, with roles drying up or becoming less interesting as actors hit middle (for women) or old (for women and men) age. These problems are to some extent exacerbated by the revival of older plays as there are relatively few prominent roles for older women in canonical drama, but also affect the writing of new plays for both commercial and fringe performance.

Some of the oldest surviving plays of the Western tradition feature older men and women in prominent roles. Aeschylus's *The Persians* (472 BCE), one of the earliest Greek tragedies extant, features a chorus of old men, and its opening scenes are dominated by Atossa, the queen mother. Similarly, ancient Greek comedy also featured among its casts older people and, especially, older men. Robson (2009: 95-7) suggests that their appeal to playwrights lay in their outsider status, in the pathos that they could generate through their physical vulnerability, in the level of their investment in public policy, and in the dramatic potential of tensions between younger and older generations. The New Comedy of Menander and others, the narratives of which often focus on conflict between generations, also developed performative stereotypes regarding the representation of older people on stage. Where its predecessor, Old Comedy, presented adult characters as young, mature or old, New Comedy polarised its treatment of age into the young and the old. Unlike much later drama, such plays did not capitalise on the physical presence of the older actor, since classical actors wore masks. In New Comedy, for instance, 'one generation would be represented with white hair and beards, and the other with dark hair and no beards' (Marshall, 2006: 129).

Later European theatre generally eschewed masks and made more use of the actor's body. However, its tendency towards non-realist performance styles meant that casting rarely depended on the age of the individual actor. The protagonist of Shakespeare's *King Lear* (c. 1605-6), still a central text in theatrical culture's meditations on ageing, was originally played by Richard Burbage (b. 1568), then in his late thirties, while a century later, in 1709, Thomas Betterton (b. 1635) played Hamlet when he was in his sixties. As Mangan (2013: 45) notes, "'How to act old" is less common as a feature of actor training today than it once was'. However, greater naturalism has not always created more roles for older actors or more nuanced treatments of ageing and old age. The theatre industry – like the film industry – is noted for its reluctance to furnish complex representations of older women, notwithstanding the commercial and aesthetic success of works such as Gabriel García

Lorca's *The House of Bernarda Alba* (1936), Edith Bagnold's *The Chalk Garden* (1955) or August Wilson's *Pittsburgh Cycle* (1982-2005). Indeed, a study by Dean (2008) found that while a large majority of men saw their gender and age as being represented realistically in various performative media, women did not, although theatre and radio were viewed more positively than film, television and commercials.

Although theatre has drawn heavily on stereotypes about ageing, the precise nature of those stereotypes has been subject to change depending on historical period, geographical location and social context. Recent theatre has also seen productions that have sought to engage directly with the process of ageing and to question realist approaches to theatrical age: examples include *On Ageing* (Young Vic, London, 2010), a devised piece based on interviews with older people but performed by a group of children (see Johnson, 2011), and a radical revision of Shakespeare, *Juliet and her Romeo* (Bristol Old Vic, 2010), starring the 76-year-old Siân Phillips and the 66-year-old Michael Byrne. Nonetheless, scholarship has often hesitated to deal critically with the precise details of the ways in which age is represented in dramatic works. As Small (2007: 5) writes, 'Remarkably little of the vast literature on *King Lear* ... says much or anything about old age' (see also Martin, 2012), and many studies – Small's included – have had little to say about dramatists other than Shakespeare and/or Beckett, and are also relatively uninterested in the specifics of performance.

Discussion of the representation of ageing and old age in drama has often adopted literary and contextual approaches, focusing on particular genres, authors, historical periods or theoretical frameworks (e.g. Woodward, 1991; Taunton, 2007; Martin, 2012). Many analyses have also been indebted to deficit models of old age; Taunton (2007: 82), for instance, argues that in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century literature 'the only way one can grow old in a seemly fashion is to adopt attitudes embodied in an amalgam of biblical precept and stoicism. An old person's only recourse is to accept old age as a misfortune that cannot be avoided'. Similarly, White's (2009) monograph, *Beckett and Decay*, begins with an epigraph from Beckett's 'Tailpiece', 'who may tell the tale of the old man?', and successive chapters treat 'The Body Infirm' and 'Old Age: The Dictatorship of Time'. Yet, recent works show a turn to gerontological frameworks and to what Gullette (2004, 2008, 2011) terms 'age studies'. Marshall and Lipscomb (2010: 2) self-consciously position their collection as an intervention in age studies, drawing on the work of Butler (1990) to contend that 'age as well as gender can be viewed as performative, in that each of us performs the actions associated with chronological age minute by minute, and that the repetition of these performances creates a so-called reality of age both for the subject and for those who interact with the subject' (see also Russo, 1999). In addition, Martin's (2012) concerns are shaped by Gullette's (2004) critique of gerontophobia, while Mangan (2013) devotes his first chapter to an overview of gerontology's potential for the study of theatrical age. The analysis of theatrical age thus has the potential to become richly self-reflexive.

There are signs too that scholarship is starting to address in greater depth the specific techniques through which age is staged and the impact that representations of age might have on actors as well as spectators. Fries-Dieckmann (2009: 184) for example, focuses on performance and language to contend that dramatists such as Beckett, Pinter and Stoppard 'undermine one-sided commonplaces of old age' through the use of voice-over, tape-recordings, meticulously specific stage directions, and the on-stage interaction of young and older characters. In the most sustained study of this kind to date, Mangan (2013: 5) suggests that:

Any kind of theatrical performance brings into play both the body and the mind, together with the signifier and signified, with the physical/biological organism that is the performer and with the questions of self and identity which the performance generates. But age, like gender, brings a particular sharpness to some of these questions. Even more than gender, in fact, ageing draws attention to the gaps that can exist between *esse* and *percipi*: between how one feels oneself to be, and how one may be perceived.

Studies of age in drama also have much to learn from recent work on cinema (Chivers, 2003, 2011; Swinnen and Stotesbury, 2012; Gravagne, 2013), with its attention both to mainstream cinema's desire to 'reduce old age to a manageable and controllable set of representations' (Chivers, 2011: xviii) and its capacity to 'allow the ambiguity, vulnerability and creativity – the ongoing becoming – of the old to take centre stage' (Gravagne, 2013: 158). However, as the preceding discussion suggests, the place of older people within the professional theatre industry – as characters and as performers – has been contested and often vulnerable, and scholarship has frequently failed fully to get to grips with the complexities of the issues raised. Its representations should be viewed, moreover, alongside the remarkable emergence of various forms of 'senior theatre' over the last forty years.

SENIOR THEATRE AND THEATRE WITH SENIORS

A key development of the twentieth century has been the emergence of forms of theatre that focus on older people's experience of ageing, involving them in their conception and writing as well as their performance. The roots of these contemporary interests can be traced back through history and to the evolution of different forms of theatre including community, applied and participatory theatre; documentary and verbatim theatre; playback and forum theatre; and reminiscence theatre. Whilst there is overlap and a shared basis in much of this work, Schweitzer (2007: 207) notes an important distinction between the UK and North America and Europe, in that many groups in the UK – including her own work with Age Exchange – initially brought older people together 'as volunteers, greeting and sharing their stories' rather than 'with a view to performing'. By contrast, a desire to perform and a love of theatre were the motivating factors behind what is now termed the 'senior theatre' movement in North America (Basting, 1998; Schweitzer, 2007; Vorenberg, 2011; Mangan, 2013).

Reminiscence theatre is perhaps the genre of theatre most obviously allied with considerations of ageing and old age. Though linked with the growth of reminiscence therapy, reminiscence theatre may or may not have an overtly therapeutic purpose, but it emerged as part of the growing recognition during the 1970s and 1980s of the importance of reminiscence and life review to the mental health and wellbeing of older people (Butler, 1963; Bornat, 2001; Webster and Haight, 2002). A dawning recognition of the changing socio-demographic make-up of our populations and a gradual, but increasing, visibility of older people all provided a backdrop and impetus to the establishment of theatre groups such as Fair Old Times in Devon, England, in 1978 (Langley and Kershaw, 1981-82) and Age Exchange in London in 1983 (Schweitzer, 2007). Reminiscence theatre has also become an increasingly accepted form with which to work therapeutically and creatively with people with dementia. Schweitzer's *European Reminiscence Network*, founded in 1993 provides, among other things, reminiscence training for carers of people with dementia and co-

ordinated a Europe-wide international project: *Remembering Yesterday, Caring Today* (Schweitzer and Bruce, 2008). Schweitzer also devised an educational resource for the Alzheimer's Society called *Voices from the Shadows* featuring the experiences of people with dementia and their carers, and delivered in a series of powerful monologues by two professional actors. In the United States, the name of Anne Basting, who in 1998 founded the *TimeSlips* project, which she still directs, has become synonymous with innovative drama work with people with dementia. In contrast with reminiscence-based techniques, Basting (2009) has devised a way of working which is more about stimulating the imagination than the memory and which uses improvisation to develop plays, performance pieces and creative activities in various community and institutional settings. Her most recent work has been on the *Penelope Project*: a professionally produced play staged inside a nursing home in March 2011, and inspired by residents' discussions on the myth of Penelope from Homer's *Odyssey* (see Mello and Voigts, 2012).

The different approaches and techniques across Europe and North America are perhaps most clearly encapsulated by the remarkable growth of senior theatre in the United States. In her path-breaking book, *The Stages of Age* (1998), Basting explores eight different theatrical performances and charts the growth of the senior theatre movement from its beginnings in the 1970s through to the first national Senior Theatre Festival in 1993 and beyond. A year after Basting's book was published, Bonnie Vorenberg (1999), one of the pioneers of the movement, compiled the first directory of information which included guidance on a range of things from acting to funding; from academic programmes to playwriting and scripts. At this time, there were some 79 senior theatre groups in the USA but, by 2011, the Senior Theatre Resource Centre had over 800 senior theatre groups on its database. Vorenberg (2011: 18) outlines their characteristics, showing that many groups 'are allied with community theatres', are largely amateur, with just a few professional companies but, like community theatre, 'participants usually live in the local area'. In size, they tend to have between 11 and 20 actors who usually stay between one and three years and leave as a result of illness or other commitments. This means that refreshing and replenishing such groups is an ongoing challenge, but some of the key groups and companies established in the early days are still very active indeed, such as StAGEbridge in California, Elders Share the Arts and Roots and Branches, both in New York, and Dance Exchange in Maryland.

In Europe, where many countries have a strong tradition of community-based theatre, older people's theatre groups are often grafted onto existing organisations. The *Grey Matters* project is a case in point: over a two-year period (2013-15), Bristol-based Acta Community Theatre is bringing together five other European companies in Poland, Holland, Belgium, Germany and Slovakia to make theatre with older people. The intention is to share the work by touring each show to perform in another country and, at the conclusion, to bring together all six companies to share learning from the process. The growth of such companies and projects demonstrates the extent of interest there now is in theatre work with older people. As Mangan (2013: 166) observes, 'mainstream civic theatres' have increasingly become involved, alongside voluntary groups and other organisations. Yet despite this growth, theatre practitioners, researchers and academics still lament the lack of attention paid to what participation in such activities means to older people and what benefits may be derived from it. We therefore turn, in the third part of this chapter, to consider the existing research evidence.

OLDER PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCES OF THEATRE-MAKING

As we have seen, there is a long tradition of theatre addressing and representing ageing and old age and, likewise, of older people's experiences and memories informing and providing material to be turned into dramatic pieces. From a critical and cultural gerontological perspective though, what can we say about older people's direct experiences of being involved with theatre in these ways? What, if anything, do they get from their participation? Cultural gerontology has a potentially important part to play here because, whilst the existing international academic research base enables us to draw certain conclusions about the value of creative activities in general, our specific understanding of what participation in theatre and drama means for older people is rather more limited. Indeed, Lipscomb (2012: 131) argues that more than a decade after the appearance of Basting's (1998) *The Stages of Age*, 'this branch of the arts remains woefully under-researched and under-theorised'. Such lack of scholarly attention means that cultural gerontology has to build its knowledge-base by drawing on a combination of practitioner-knowledge and experience; existing small-scale evaluations and research projects; and from the writings of academic colleagues who may not necessarily identify themselves first and foremost as (cultural) gerontologists.

In the UK, for example, experiential evidence from the work and writings of important practitioners like Schweitzer (2007, 2010), suggests that theatre and drama work can have multiple and far-reaching benefits for all involved. In her description of the establishment and 12-year existence of The Good Companions – the first group in which older people enacted their own memories – she observes how 'the more they performed, the more confident the older people became' (Schweitzer, 2007: 209); how, 'it was noticeable that people's communication and memory skills improved' (209); how they were enabled to see 'connections between very different parts of their lives' (212); and how exciting it was 'watching the older people in this group, most of whom had never acted before, develop into a team of people who were first class communicators' (255). Theatre and drama work, she argues, has social, physical and emotional benefits for the individuals involved, and it also has positive effects on intergenerational relations and on the wider community. These themes also recur in the practitioner literature about the senior theatre movement in the United States (Basting, 1998; Vorenberg, 2011).

Something of the impact of theatre-making on the lives of older people can also be gleaned from evaluations of the work of arts organisations such as Magic Me, founded in the East End of London in 1989, which has undertaken research about its work in partnership with individual academics. One example is their three-year *Our Generations* programme, which involved over 1000 people in intergenerational projects in diverse settings across the multicultural London borough of Tower Hamlets, and was subject to both internal and external evaluation (Magic Me, 2009). There are tantalising hints in the report about the impacts it had on older participants, including positive experiences of being taken out of an institutional setting; being stimulated to reassess their sense of place; recognition of their abilities to contribute; an overriding sense of enjoyment; and 'small, significant and cumulative shifts in attitude' illustrated by one older participant who remarked of the children they worked with, "'I was surprised by how gentle and considerate they were'" (Magic Me, 2009: 114).

Other than these sorts of commissioned evaluations, research-based studies of older people's experiences of theatre-making are few and far between. A recent UK review on the impact of

participatory arts on older people, conducted by the Mental Health Foundation (2011), cites just three UK studies (Pyman and Rugg, 2006; Hafford-Letchfield *et al.*, 2010; Johnson, 2011). Like the Magic Me evaluations, the Hafford-Letchfield *et al.* (2010) study demonstrates that working with older people through drama activities enhances intergenerational learning, enabling (young) participants – in this case social work students – to think outside their established views of older people. Similarly, Johnson's (2011) evaluation of *On Ageing* highlights how the devising process helped create positive impressions amongst children of older people as active and fun. For older participants, there is evidence from Pyman and Rugg's (2006) qualitative study of community theatre members – the only one to include interviews with both performers and production crew – that theatre and drama engagement results in enhanced skills and learning ability; improved confidence and self-esteem; new social connections and friendships; and a sense of individual and collective enrichment, achievement and 'community spirit'. They also note that, for recently bereaved people, having 'a reason to go out and a welcome when you arrived' was particularly valued, while performing a role on stage could provide a temporary distraction from grief (2006: 568).

Other existing research, notably from North America, derives from the remedial use of the arts and tends to be couched within therapeutic and/or health and well-being frameworks. In this context, the oft-cited studies by the late Gene Cohen (2006; 2009) and his colleagues (2006; 2007) were instrumental in establishing the physiological and psychological benefits of arts participation for older people and confirming that creativity is essential for a healthy and meaningful old age (Kastenbaum, 2000). Likewise, the systematic review of creative and performing arts programmes conducted by Castora-Binkley *et al.* (2010), and which includes music, singing, visual arts and dance alongside drama, highlights positive impacts for community-dwelling older adults in terms of both physical and mental health. More recently still, Noice *et al.*'s (2013: 10) review of 'wellness studies' shows how seven studies exploring theatre and drama with older people produce 'converging evidence of cognitive/affective benefits'. The Noices' own research over 25 years also demonstrates that theatrical-based interventions improve older people's cognitive skills because drama requires participants to be active rather than passive, to engage mentally, physically and emotionally at a high level, and to take part in problem solving (Noice and Noice, 2008; 2013; Noice *et al.*, 1999; Noice, Noice and Staines, 2004). They also observed significant increases on a personal growth scale and on tasks of daily living. As Mangan (2013: 169) concludes, their work 'gives good experimental and empirical reason to think what many have long suspected: that acting is good for you'.

THEATRE, AGEING AND LATER LIFE: POTENTIAL AVENUES

Theatre, like cultural gerontology itself, is, by its very nature, both inter and multi-disciplinary. It thus holds out the promise of fruitful explorations and convergences in a number of areas, both between disciplinary perspectives and in practical terms. Some scholars with backgrounds in theatre and performance studies, like Basting (2000) and Mangan (2013), are highlighting the connections with age studies; likewise, some gerontologists are engaging with the narrative and performative turn evident in the social sciences and adopting tools more commonly associated with the arts and humanities to co-create outputs with older people, to disseminate research findings, and to provide a bridge between different disciplinary traditions (Denzin, 2001; Jones, 2006, 2013; Roberts, 2008).

Combining critical, narrative and performative approaches might, Lipscomb (2012: 118) argues, enable us to do a number of things: to explore in greater depth the ways in which age is performed on stage and how actors, audience members and playwrights experience the ageing process; to expose and interrogate societal attitudes towards older people and raise awareness of issues such as ageism, ageist practices, chronological and biological relativism, and inequalities; and to confront and challenge the prevalent narrative of decline and what it means to grow older.

She suggests three potential avenues for researchers: first, analyses of plays featuring older characters, and their production and staging; second, analyses of play scripts specifically about ageing and issues encountered in later life: works with intended social change in mind; and, third, closer examinations of the older people who act and are involved with theatre groups. A striking example of the second of these suggestions can be seen in the transformation of Feldman's doctoral study on widowhood into a script – *Wicked Widows* – by well-known Australian playwright Alan Hopgood (Feldman *et al.*, 2011). Performed by three professional actors, it has been seen by over 6000 people across the state of Victoria. Responses to the performances affirm that, amongst other things, the years that follow a spouse's death are 'much more than just a time of depression, negativity, and prolonged sadness' (Feldman *et al.*, 2011: 896), and leads the researchers to conclude that theatre of this kind is an important medium for engaging older people in meaningful discussions about their lives.

To Lipscomb's three possibilities for research, we would add three others. First, there is substantial scope for comparative work. It would be instructive, for example, to see theatre and drama work with older people compared and contrasted with other (community-based and collective) art forms such as music-making, dance and singing, exploring the ways in which different artistic practices and traditions facilitate and support people to age in ways that they choose and which gives meaning to their lives. Second, theatre and drama can deal directly with pressing practice and policy issues such as age-related discrimination in different arenas; the absence of services; or the plight of carers. Beyond this, however, cultural gerontologists have the potential to contribute a much-needed critical perspective to the existing disjuncture between ageing policies and arts policy. In the UK at least, these two policy arenas are yet to be brought into one field of engagement.

Third, and finally, we would endorse Lipscomb's (2012: 136) call for interdisciplinary collaborations involving 'a broad spectrum of academics and professionals'. She cites Basting's *Penelope Project* (2011) as 'a bold move in this direction' (Lipscomb, 2012: 136) and, in similar vein, our own *Ages and Stages* project has also attempted to take up this challenge (Bernard *et al.*, in press). Begun in 2009, it is a continuing collaboration between a research team comprising a social gerontologist, humanities scholars, a psychologist and an anthropologist, working together with theatre practitioners from the New Vic Theatre in Newcastle-under-Lyme and older people who now constitute the *Ages & Stages Company*. To date, we have examined historical representations of ageing within the Vic's ground-breaking documentaries and docudramas; explored contemporary recollections and experiences of older people who are, or have been, associated with the theatre in different ways; devised and toured three research-based and contrasting performance pieces; and developed, delivered and evaluated a pilot inter-professional training course. At the time of writing, we are supporting Company members to co-explore and co-research their experiences of the last four years and to articulate, through live performance, the cultural value of what they have been engaged in.

CONCLUSION

Readers familiar with the wider literature and research around creativity and ageing will have been aware of many parallels and resonances with the material and developments we have reviewed above. Indeed, the work on creativity undertaken by the late Gene Cohen and his colleagues was fundamental to scholars' attempts to articulate more precisely what the engagement of older people in the arts adds to their lives. Theatre and drama is not exceptional in this respect, though it differs from some other artistic forms in its inherently collective and community qualities. This dimension makes it particularly important, in that engagement in senior, intergenerational or community-based theatre groups has the potential to address pressing social concerns such as isolation and loneliness, as well as contributing to physical and mental health and wellbeing. However, although theatre and drama is a presently under-utilised medium for conveying positive messages about growing older (Feldman *et al.*, 2011), it is much more than this: it can also add meaning to people's lives through its ability, when sensitively handled, to open up and address a range of other issues in a safe and supportive environment. Theatre's potential lies, therefore, in its ability to help us move away from a narrow focus on health and wellbeing, and on deficits and problems, and articulate what else might be achieved by bringing theatre and drama to bear more directly on the concerns of (cultural and critical) gerontologists and others interested in our ageing population. This challenge is a demanding, but exciting, one.

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Dance Exchange <http://danceexchange.org/>

Elders Share the Arts <http://www.estanyc.org/>

European Reminiscence Network <http://www.europeanreminiscencenetwork.org/>

Grey Matters project <http://www.acta-bristol.com/grey-matters-2/>

Magic Me <http://www.magicme.co.uk/>

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme <http://www.newvictheatre.org.uk/>

Penelope Project <http://www.thepenelopeproject.com/>

Roots and Branches http://community.tisch.nyu.edu/object/OCC_int48.html

Senior Theatre Resource Centre <http://www.seniortheatre.com/>

StAGEbridge <http://stagebridge.org/>

TimeSlips project <http://www.timeslips.org/>