

total theatre magazine



The magazine for Total Theatre Network – celebrating physical and visual performance
Volume 14 Issue 1 Spring 2002
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What a Site!

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Scarabeus

PLUS

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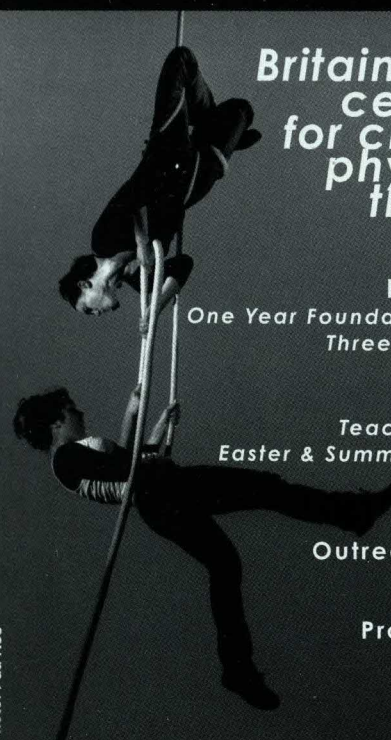
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total theatre magazine

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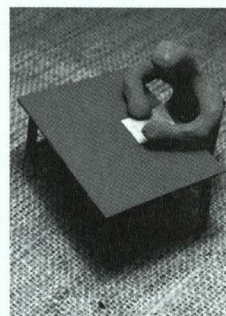
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If you would like to submit news, views, letters or advertise to the Spring issue, please note that the copy deadline is 7 May 2002. The Summer issue will cover the period July to September 2002.



Cover

Scarabeus – 'Hajar'
Greenwich and Docklands
Festival 2001
Photo by Daniela Essart

Editorial

Welcome to the Spring 2002 issue of Total Theatre Magazine. As the weather warms up, we take a look at performance work that engages with site – outdoor site in particular. Phil Smith gives us the lowdown on site definitions, so you need never get your 'site-specifics' and 'site-generics' muddled ever again! Fiona Wilkie reports from the Homo Novus festival which encouraged a dialogue between the performing arts and the city of Riga, commissioning works in airports and petrol stations; and our artist's diary is by Daniela Essart of Scarabeus on their new project 'Landscapes of the Heart' which is inspired by Italo Calvino's 'Invisible Cities'.

On a rather different note, Philip Beaven interviews Cal McCrystal, who made his name as a deviser/director of comic physical theatre through his work with Peepolykus and is currently storming the world with Spymonkey's 'Cooped'. Another well-known deviser is John Wright of Told By An Idiot. In his article 'Who's Writing this Anyway?' he argues that the trick to successful collaboration is allowing the artist's ego to take a back seat to the collective process. This is perhaps what makes 'our' sort of theatre special: the lack of a hierarchical relationship between elements of the creative process (sounds, images, movements) and the open process of construction making the play 'wrought' on the rehearsal floor rather than 'written' before we get there.

With the legendary Pina Bausch in town, it seemed a good time to explore the relationship between dance and theatre. My own article looks at work in this year's London International Mime Festival – and elsewhere – that lives 'Somewhere between Dance and Theatre', and we have a report from CPR's Tanztheater symposium which explores the legacy of German Expressionism and dance-theatre. See also the review section for the Tanztheater Wuppertal's latest visit to Sadler's Wells, and plenty from the Mime Festival too.

Elsewhere, we have a report from the most recent Total Theatre Network Critical Practice debate on Music in Physical and Visual Performance; a training feature on the Bristol residency with Chicago company Goat Island; and our Inbox questionnaire respondent, Mervyn Millar of wireframe, explaining that his favourite ever piece of theatre was made by a wasp...

So there we have it: from English wasps to Latvian petrol stations; from earth, sweat and lipstick with the Goats in Bristol to standing ovations at Sadler's Wells – as always, an eclectic mix of performance practice is represented... Dig in!

Dorothy Max Prior

Letters

More on the concept of Total Theatre from Paul Miskin of Neighbourhood Watch Stilts International...

Total Theatre has a very long history. According to Adrian Henri in his excellent book on Events and Happenings the phrase was probably first coined by Wagner. The idea has fascinated Meyerhold and others who were looking for precedents and alternatives to naturalistic psychological drama – like the classical Greek theatre, with its elements of ritual, Balinese theatre, etc. Subsequently the notion of 'total theatre' has developed a variety of meanings, which derive from different notions of the totalities involved. I thought it might be helpful to try to unravel some of these.

A theatre which utilises other art forms (e.g. painting, judo, sculpture, abseiling, gymnastics, music) without restraint can be described as total theatre. Here the essential idea is of a totality of art forms unified as one expressive syntax from which any element may be appropriate for achieving the theatrical outcome. This is often called a 'multidisciplinary' approach. The French often use the word 'décloisonnement' meaning removal of boundaries, generic limitations or preconceptions. In this sense a total theatre is a de-categorised theatre and is about stylistic freedom and freedom from labelling.

Another defining characteristic is the theatrical experience and the totality of that experience. Those works, which utilise what might be called the immersion experience, all senses of the participant being deluged in the artifice, have been referred to as total theatre... Yet another totality is the totality of the human participants in the event, and much French writing on theatre hints of a yearning to enter into one vast totality, which is the theatre piece, the spectators and the performers. Living Theatre and many other groups typically entered the audience, invaded their body space and interacted with them, physically blurring the boundaries between life and theatre and between performer and audience.

Finally in my (preliminary and I am sure far from exhaustive) list there is the totality of the everyday experience. If theatre enters seamlessly into this totality and fuses with it, we have what I call ontological street theatre where the rift between theatre and life is to all extents invisible. Professionally and theoretically this is the area which interests me most, because of the many interesting consequences of a theatre

where all awareness of artifice and distance can be removed, and art becomes life. I am researching this idea of ontological street theatre elsewhere in a book. So I am not going to pursue it here... I am sure that there are many more theatrical totalities to be discovered. I would be very interested to hear other people's ideas on what are the defining totalities of total theatre.

Paul Miskin

Neighbourhood Watch Stilts International

Welcome to Cabaret...

In 1994 we set up DNA Cabaret to showcase new work in puppetry and visual theatre for an adult audience. By 1999 we'd managed over 50 cabarets including at BAC, the Puppet Centre's 21st Birthday, for the London International Mime Festival, the Lion & Unicorn in Kentish Town, plus an Arts Council funded tour with directorial assistance from Phelim McDermott.

Over the years we had many talented people perform, such as Steve Tiplady, Kazuko Hohki, John Hegley, and Jason Maverick, plus many many more brilliant acts. From DNA Cabaret followed Circus in a Box, Shunt's Cabaret Sundays, as well as Pick 'n' Mix in Hackney and Voodoo Vaudeville in Brighton. DNA Cabaret was always very risky. It was sometimes brilliant, it had crap bits but it was generating the artform of puppetry as well as circus, object theatre, comedy and visual theatre... One day soon we hope to do it again. The cabaret was reliant on talented people making new work. Economically, we couldn't make enough money to pay acts adequately and we had to stop producing DNA Cabaret.

I'm writing as I feel disappointed with Anne Louise Rentell's narrow view of recent cabaret history in London, as written in the Winter 2001/2002 Total Theatre Magazine article. Somehow in only a few years, what was at that time the only opportunity for new work in puppetry and visual theatre to be seen by an informal cabaret audience has been forgotten.

Rachel Riggs

Dynamic New Animation

Editor's reply: *An article of this length can't hope to cover everything and a decision was taken that rather than try to be comprehensive and fail, it was more appropriate for the writer to focus on her own influences and interests so there were inevitably many seminal cabaret events missed out – past and present.*

total theatre news^{network}

New Total Theatre Network Board

Annabel Arndt writes: A warm welcome on behalf of members and staff to our new board members who were elected at the AGM in January. They are: Jon Fawcett, Phil Gunderson, Lynne Kendrick and Danny Schlesinger. I would also like to say a big thank-you to board members who retired in January, especially our administrative chair Dorothy Wilson. Dorothy has been a huge asset to the organisation on many levels. This won't surprise any of you who have worked with her. But I would like to say a personal thank-you for all her advice and support. Dorothy reluctantly stood down because of work commitments but is keen to stay in touch. This means that we have a new administrative chair who is Teri Sayers. Teri is one of the longest standing board members as well as being one of the most active ones so she knows the organisation very well. Teri is taking on the chair for a year.

Sprint

We are very pleased to continue the collaboration with Camden People's Theatre in their Sprint Festival. The festival runs from 7 March to 7 April and, as we go to press, Total Theatre Network are collaborating with CPT in a variety of workshops, symposia and discussions. Highlights include: a training day for emerging companies and artists; workshops with James Yarker, Ben Moor, and Chris Johnston; and 'The Low Down', an in-depth discussion day on collaboration in all its guises taking place on 6 April.

Circus Arts Forum

Total Theatre Network is continuing to host the Circus Arts Forum in its third year of funding by ACE. Discussions will take place during the year about how the relationship will continue after March 2003. In the meantime, we will continue to circulate Circus Arts News as a supplement to this magazine and continue working on projects together. Coming projects include a Circus Symposium held as part of the Brighton Festival in May. See Circus Arts News supplement for more details.

Fresh

For those of you who missed it, we were pleased to be a part of the Fresh Festival of Young People in Performance, which took place at the Brit School of Performing Arts and Technology in Croydon in March. This two-week long festival focused on theatre work by and for young people (in particular those in the 14-17 year-old age group) with workshops, residencies, performances and events, including 'Meltdown' – a discussion in collaboration with Total Theatre Network on training and young people's theatre.

Street Arts Symposium

The Users Guide to Street Arts was held on 25 March. A one-day symposium, it was hosted by Independent Street Arts Network in collaboration with Total Theatre Network, Central School of Speech and Drama, and the Theatre Museum, Covent Garden. The theme was 'Restoration or Revolution? Thirty Years of Street Arts'. A publication in the popular 'Users Guide' series will follow later in the year.

Critical Practice 12

We were delighted to hold our annual discussion on 29 January as part of the London International Mime Festival. This took place after our AGM and proved to be a very interesting discussion on music and theatre. Big thanks to our speakers and to Dick McCaw for chairing – see the report on page 9.

Total Theatre Awards 2002

Yes, they are happening this year. If you are performing in the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, please fill in the application form circulated with this magazine. We will be relying on our independent team of assessors, along with the judging panel, so if you are interested in being an assessor for the awards, please contact the office.

Penny Bernand

Dorothy Max Prior writes: We were saddened to hear of the death of Penny Bernand, designer and co-founder of Theatre-Rites. Penny had already founded two seminal children's companies – Theatre of Thelema (now Quicksilver) and Pop-Up Theatre – when she teamed up with puppeteer Sue Buckmaster to form Theatre-Rites in 1995. Since then, the company have established themselves as leaders in the field of Visual and Animated Theatre with productions such as 'Houseworks', a site-specific piece created for LIFT and set in an empty house in South London, 'The Lost and Moated Land' (1998), and 'Sleep Tight' (2001). Theatre-Rites have done more than almost anyone else in the UK to further the cause of children's theatre, creating beautifully designed and realised work that appeals to audiences of all ages. 'Taking Shape', the Theatre-Rites interactive installation and exhibition, continues at the Theatre Museum, Covent Garden, until June 2002 – a wonderful testament to Penny's work – and the company will honour her legacy by continuing to create the sort of innovative theatre work for which she was renowned.



Theatre-Rites: 'The Lost and Moated Land'. Photo: Mike Good

Who's writing this anyway?

Forget 'Pop Idol' and the hall of fame – join theatre-maker

JOHN WRIGHT in his quest for anonymity

'There is an old story of how the Cathedral of Chartres was struck by lightning and burnt to the ground. Thousands of people came from all points of the compass like a giant procession of ants and together they rebuilt the cathedral on its old site. All sorts of people apparently: master builders, artists, labourers, clowns, noblemen, priests and burghers. But they all remained anonymous and to this day no one knows who built the cathedral of Chartres.' (Ingmar Bergman)

Suckers! How many of you were bribed and coerced into humping those stones about with promises of good fortune and a happy after-life? But for all the unsavouriness of medieval Christianity, art lost a vital creative drive when it was separated from worship. Its umbilical cord was cut, giving art its independence and

leaving it free to generate and re-invent itself, as well as to disappear up its own arse.

The Cathedral of Chartres is as much a monument to communal enterprise as it is to spiritual servitude and there's much to admire here. Today we can call anything art and none of us knows what's beautiful any more, but whatever we do in the name of art we all want our name on it. Fame and recognition have become more important than art itself.

I can't imagine anyone tolerating anonymity on the scale of the Cathedral of Chartres today, but on a far smaller scale and in an entirely secular context, all the profound moments of theatre-making that I've been involved with have been anonymous or at least embedded in the collaborative efforts of the group. In other words it's been very difficult to remember precisely who inspired what.

Invariably it turns out to be some irrelevant, off-the-cuff remark that sparked another idea for somebody else and yet another from somebody else; and by the time we've put something on the floor everybody in the room seems to own it.

I'm addicted to this feeling. Time and again it's brought me back to some sweaty rehearsal room trying to make something from next to nothing. It's the collective imagination of a group who knows how to work together that I find so compelling. It might not be the rebuilding of the Cathedral of Chartres but it's in the same spirit – only without the promise of eternal life.

Devising is so difficult because it's something that you can't do on your own. It requires collaborative authorship, and to do it effectively makes you feel as if you have to fight against everything you've ever been taught.

Most of the work in our drama schools is dedicated to skills of interpretation. It's primarily concerned with language and literary concepts like 'character' and 'genre'. Oh, the word 'performance' is used quite a lot but that's singing and dancing and making people laugh. Where's the content in that? And the notion of play? Well that's just pretentious, isn't it?

We can deconstruct ourselves till the cows come home but the received wisdom makes no distinction between theatre and literature. The writer is the controlling intellect and the controlling imagination. Remove a keystone like that and the whole structure's going to come tumbling down. Well, perhaps it will, but we can always build it up again – and what do we mean by 'writing' in the first place?

Collaborative writing demands skills of creation rather than interpretation. The problem in devising is not that you don't have a writer but that everyone involved is multitasking. In fact you might have too many writers. There could be three or four of them. Their 'proper



John Wright

The real debate in theatre-making is not whether you have a writer or not, or whether you start from a script or not, but where you put meaning

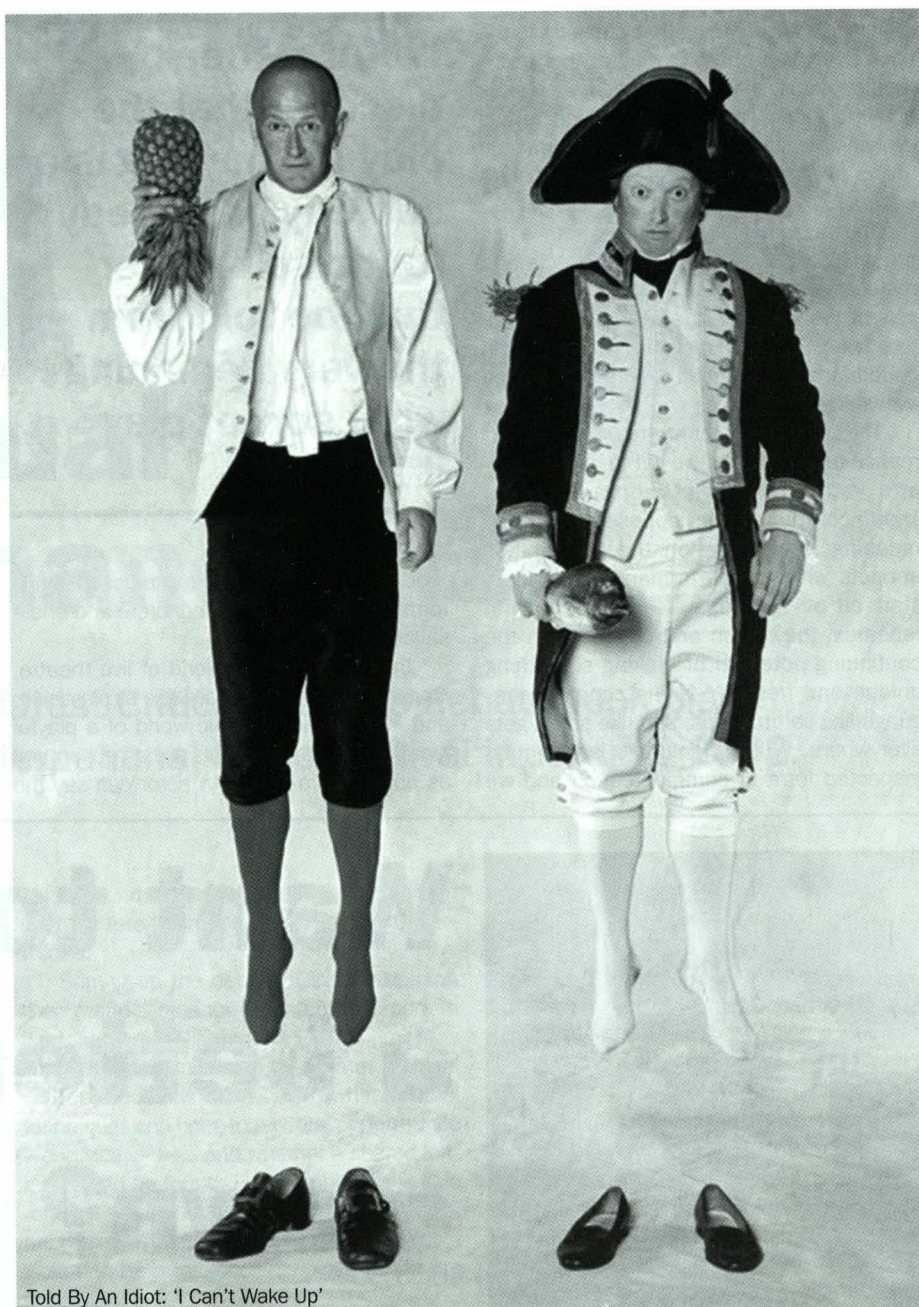
jobs' might be actors, musicians, directors, designers or dancers, so their different contributions will have a particular spin – but they'll all be preoccupied with dramatic structure, content, imagery and language.

You can't get away from language – whether it be visual, musical or spoken – and you can't escape from dealing with a text. As soon as you try to repeat something, you're trying to remember a text, whether it was written down or not. Describe John Cage's maddest *Happening* and you're speaking a text. Dig deep into any impro and you'll find some game, some little impulse that sets the ball rolling; and that's also a sort of text.

The real debate in theatre-making is not whether you have a writer or not, or whether you start from a script or not, but where you put meaning. Our innate preoccupation with language and meaning leads us to invest far more in what we say than in what we do or what we look like while we're doing it. The more we invest in the controlling creative intelligence of the writer, the more we put meaning at the beginning of the creative process rather than at the end. With meaning at the beginning we all know what we're doing right from the start and we can all progress rationally towards the final interpretation of the original idea.

Of course this is a simplification but it's not a facetious simplification and it's infinitely preferable to being vague, lost and confused – but if you put meaning at the end of the process then you've got everything to find. I'd far rather discover that the play I'm making is a comedy or tragedy for myself rather than be told from the very beginning what sort of play it is, what it's really about and how everybody should feel at the end. Predetermined readings of any text are a trap. Of course it's comforting to have a controlling rationale and it's much easier to manage a rehearsal but the most exciting explorers are those who work from maps that are incomplete or even wrong.

'The work of rehearsal,' says Peter Brook, 'is to find meaning and make it meaningful.' In other words to do something first and find the reason why you've done it later.



Told By An Idiot: 'I Can't Wake Up'

Having a text at the beginning of rehearsal is a terrific luxury – let's be clear about this. It's easier at every level to start with a text than without one. With a text, you always have another imagination and another authority in the room to defer to. You have a ready-made structure and a whole raft of decisions already set out for you.

When you devise, you have none of these things. You have to find everything for yourself. You have to find a text first, then find out what it means much later. The only tangible reality is the collective personality of the group you're working with; and that group will make or break the entire enterprise.

To anyone who has spent most of their time making theatre from scratch, 'finding meaning' is second nature. A text might have the potential to give you everything you need

to start with, but in the adrenaline-soaked world of starting from nothing you learn very quickly that meaning can come from anywhere; so you train yourself to look everywhere to find it. You know that any text only appears to give you everything. No matter how rounded the story, how eloquent the dialogue, how impressive the musical score or how plangent the melody – the text is never the whole story.

In making theatre we need to differentiate between the written text and the performance text. The written text contains everything that's transferable – in other words, everything that can be written down to enable you to follow the author's ideas and intentions. This generally means the structure of events and the language to be spoken and some indication of how the material is to be staged. The perfor-

mance text is everything that is unique to the people involved in the playing of that text – their physique, their personalities, their skills and their imaginations. The written text is everything we can read – but the performance text is everything we can see, hear, experience...

The raw materials of the performance text are space, movement and the objects and materials we have around us. The raw materials of the written text are language, structure and ideas. 'Seeing is believing' with the performance text, and in the theatre we see everything.

The more we concentrate on the performance text the closer we get to making theatre rather than illustrating literature. Theatrical meaning as opposed to literary meaning is found when the written text impacts with the performance text. They start off as two separate entities and in rehearsal they clash and collude with the continuing potential of making something unique and fresh. Meaning clings to language like salt to chips, and like salt it gets everywhere. Written language is our most respected form of communication and we

I'd far rather discover that the play I'm making is a comedy or tragedy for myself rather than be told from the very beginning what sort of play it is.

tend to think that meaning expressed in this form is something finite, concrete and unsailable, but it's not.

In the non-literary world of live theatre, language becomes as malleable as plasticine; and in the mad anarchic world of a playful group of actors, meanings are as ephemeral as ripples on a pond. An actor can say the

same line in a myriad of different ways and is capable of doing whatever action he or she wants to do. Here Shakespeare is a god one minute and a tedious old fart the next. The sacred and the profane, the stupid and the profound sit side by side in the clear understanding that the one will always inform the other when the time is right.

This is a shifting and mercurial world where anything is possible and everything has yet to be found. This means that as a director or facilitator you've got to find strategies that are likely to make something happen rather than strategies for getting people to analyse what they think they might do. We need all sorts of people to make theatre – 'master builders, artists and clowns' – but they all need to cultivate a taste for anonymity in order to share a collective vision. ■

John Wright is an artistic director of Told By An Idiot, whose latest show 'I Can't Wake Up' is currently touring. School for Devisers courses coming up include: 'Places where it hurts' (a course in devising comedy) and 'Places beyond pain' (devising tragedy). For more information see: www.thewrightschool.com



Avner the Eccentric

Want to be a better clown?

DANNY SCHLESINGER goes 'back to basics' with Avner the Eccentric...

As part of the London International Mime Festival, Avner Eisenberg gave a three-hour workshop in clown theatre. We started off with breathing. I believed I was proficient at breathing already, but Avner wanted the twenty-five of us to breathe deeply with the stomach. Then we launched into Avner's philosophy about flight-fight-freeze. What? Humans have three automatic responses to danger: running away, fisticuffs or stillness. The majority of the workshop was exploring this through exercises: playing with your point of balance through falling and how to change your centre of gravity; increasing your resistance and energy to become unliftable or

unbendable; and exploring personal space – how close can you get to someone without them feeling uncomfortable?

What has this to do with clowning...? Wait! The clown or performer has to be comfortable before even attempting to go on stage. In a longer workshop Avner would then move on, applying these principles directly to clowning. We had a little taste of this with the last exercise. Enter the room, find the correct place and show a little trick that you think is brilliant. Simple – no! You have to get the permission from the audience, and you are only accepted if you are totally comfortable with being there. Are you too close or too far from

the audience? And so on... easy to describe but hard to do well.

It was just the beginning of a long journey to Avner's way of eccentric performing. Having taken part in many clown workshops it was really refreshing to have a completely different approach to the same end. Breathing, personal space and balance are things we all know about, but it was interesting to see how they could be used in moving an audience along (through breath), and encouraging volunteers to come and help you (using awareness of personal space). It is always inspiring and nourishing to do workshops, learn new things, improve and build on old ones. ■

CRITICAL PRACTICE 12

Music in Physical and Visual Performance



David Lasserson

Total Theatre Network's latest Critical Practice debate took place as part of the London International Mime Festival in January 2002. TOBY MITCHELL reports...

Total Theatre Network's twelfth Critical Practice debate was chaired by the inimitable Dick McCaw, who introduced the event by wondering whether the classic guidance of 'Don't play with the mood, play against the mood' still applies to sound design today.

The first speaker was Elaine Bastible from Ishka, who spoke about the rehearsal process of their production 'A Red Day', which involved full-body masks of Picasso characters. She started out as a sculptor and referred to musicians/composers/sound designers simply as 'sound sculptors'. With 'A Red Day', the company got the characters moving first, finding a physical language, before inviting a sound sculptor in, who, according to Elaine, mainly created soundscapes. The company then did more development work, with a second sound sculptor who worked more on the interior life of the characters. Seeking a happy medium, the company then worked with a cellist, who did both.

Ross Brown (freelance composer/musician and tutor at Central) spoke next. He sees sound as totally integral to the performance, and, as an ideal, prefers to compose in the rehearsal room and perform live. He is presently writing a paper on 'small sounds', the three main points of which are as follows: from the audience's point of view, sound and music are simply part of the performance; at all times during the performance, the company must know where the audience's focus is – auditory or visual; background

music/sound is just as important as that which is in the foreground and shouldn't be undervalued.

Stirring up the debate, David Lasserson then made a plea for putting music more in the foreground. His work with the Gogmagogs involves music-making as a form of physical theatre, and he is interested in what musical techniques can bring to physical performance – and vice versa – and whether a shared language can be found. For example, he sees a musical score as a script for physical theatre, and believes that a musician playing, say, a viola can be a microcosmic piece of theatre in itself.

Sam Thomas and the Chipolatas fuse folk music and circus. Sam said that musical street theatre is hard because there's so much piped music around – in shops, cars, etc. The Chipolatas mix hip-hop, drum, accordion, juggling and percussion – and have mostly lost their 'patter', due to the amount of performing overseas they do. He likes the audience to 'groove with them' and says, quite simply, that music makes the show work.

Finally Mat Costain from the Generating Company continued the circus connection. In his view, both circus and music give us access to feelings and atmosphere without our having to actually understand or think. He also pointed out that audiences of both circus and music appreciate the skill and hours of rehearsal involved – whereas in theatre we're not meant to notice the performer, just the character.

The debate then opened up to the floor. A question was asked about clown performers such as Avner the Eccentric, whose shows often have no music at all. David replied that his sounds and movements can be seen as music in themselves, and Ross pointed out that silence can be musical too – and that we are often scared of silence. In fact when *Ridiculusmus* announce 'Five minutes of silence', it soon descends into utter chaos.

The next question asked whether music in physical/visual performance is more illustrative, contrapuntal or dialectical. The general response was that it still seems to be 'background', but that it is being used more and more in other ways. According to Ross, western music has evolved in relation to the form of the written score – just as plays have evolved in relation to the written script. But now that devising is becoming more common, this can change. Music can be used as a camera – to zoom in, change perspective, comment. A character can have their own interior metre/rhythm/music – and these can also be used to inform the character itself.

As a final point, David Lasserson discussed the possibility that classical concerts will soon die out – because 'people get bored'. He maintained that we need to revivify the genre – perhaps with what he called 'kinetic concerts', mixing music and movement. Personally, I'm looking forward to seeing whole symphony orchestras roaming freely around their natural habitat of the wide-open spaces in the Albert Hall... ■



wireframe

IN BOX

mervyn.millar

The second in our series of e-mail questionnaires

Your name?

Mervyn Millar

How would you describe yourself and your occupation?

It's a point of hesitation. Usually I say 'theatre director', sometimes I say 'puppet maker', and very occasionally 'puppeteer'. I've never said 'writer' – it sounds like a lie. Often I mumble more than one of those, in different orders, fading into incoherence. I suppose if I were to try and be purely descriptive I'd say 'theatre-maker', but I think I might cross the line into wanker at that point, so the mumbling will continue.

What have you seen, read or experienced lately that has been an inspiration?

Heiner Goebbels' stunning 'Hashirigaki'. Handspring Puppet Company's work over the last few years – 'The Chimp Project' and their 'Ubu and the Truth Commission'. Forced Entertainment's 'Quizoola'. Marcos Valle. Gertrude Stein's 'Making of Americans'. Georgie Fame. The handle on a bird puppet in a show at BAC. Other people's enthusiasm. Panamarenko. Georges Perec. Stan Laurel. Jimmy Corrigan, the smartest kid on earth. A huge geometric paper spiral in Fabrica. Syn-copation. Steve Bell. Clifton Chenier. An installation in a gallery somewhere which I can't remember the name of or artist; lots of shiny etched walls, water, sounds, some discreet films... it might be better in my head now than

it was. Several others of those. Saturday Night Fish Fry. Some adverts on the telly. A short film with colours about a hot dog seller I read the script of for a BBC competition – it didn't win of course. Pulleys. The Stone Brothers singing, once – crazy glottals. A big floating inflatable glowing sphere for traffic accidents – I didn't actually see that, I was told about it. The Museum Of. Those subterranean towers NASA have where they just drop things and measure them.

Which of your artistic achievements are you most proud of?

Hopefully the next one and the ones yet to come. I hope the work keeps improving and developing.

If you could change one thing (in yourself, your life/art or anything anywhere...) what would it be?

It'd be nice to think you could open up the minds of some of the billions of bigots and the blood-thirsty across the world, especially in the States. But I'd probably be selfish and make some space for myself to work and keep things in.

What do you think was the best example of theatre in the past year (regardless of whether it defined itself as theatre)?

This wasn't in the last year (sorry) but a wasp flew past me once, pulled up short, and veered to the ground. It then burst open and a tiny parasite limped out. It was utterly shock-

ing, exhilarating and fascinating, strangely funny, very short and I still think about it. I wish I could say that about theatre!

What does the term 'Total Theatre' mean to you?

I don't like the term – it's meaningless, as if there were Partial Theatre (discuss...). A good piece of theatre engages you so much you don't care whether it's filling in tick boxes; a bad show can be as total as it likes but it still bores. Cleverness, ambition, novelty, technical brilliance are nice to see in their way, (and let's be honest, artistically they can be very, very impressive) but if you want theatre, they're there for the audience.

Manifesto

Get on with it.

Mervyn Millar works with wireframe, the Steam Industry, and as a freelance. wireframe's 'North Hill Relay', a piece of theatre for audiences of eight at a time, every half hour, is at BAC (020 7223 2223) over Jubilee weekend. He directs Brecht's 'Man is Man' for the Steam Industry at the Finborough in May (020 7373 3842) and is designing and directing puppetry for National Theatre Education's 'The Tempest', also opening in May. In October, wireframe present a large-scale installation and theatre piece at the Fabrica gallery in Brighton as part of visions2002. Website: www.wireframe.org.uk

ON SITE

What exactly do we mean by site-specific? PHIL SMITH gets digging into Site terminology, unearthing a few definitions along the way

Is it me or is the phrase 'site-specific' used more than ever before? And for an increasing range of performances? Fantastic that the work of people and groups like Station House Opera, Mike Pearson, IOU, Sue Palmer or Wrights & Sites may now get a raised profile. But maybe a stab at a little clarification wouldn't go amiss.

If 'site-specific' means anything it's the making of something that is specific to its site – an artwork or a performance that is inspired by, possibly entirely created in, but certainly always presented within and as part of its site, and generally one that makes the site the predominant element. Even where it is physically possible to transfer the performance or artwork to another site, that is not the intention and in that process it would cease to be site-specific.

Simon Persighetti's 'Passages' in Exeter's underground Roman water system is site-specific. It is sited not just in that particular physical space, but in the practices that have gone and go on there, referencing and including the participation of the tourist guides who work there.

A genre often called site-specific is a kind of performance made for and about particular kinds of sites. Like Grid Iron's 'Decky Does a Bronco', which toured numerous playgrounds – a play in which a central feature is a 360-degree turn on swings: a 'bronco'. This kind of work should really be called 'site-generic'.

Then there's 'site-sympathetic'. Punchdrunk's tailoring of the text of 'The Tempest' for last year's performance at Buckland Abbey, for example. This showed sensitivity towards the specifics of the site – its sea-faring resonance with Shakespeare's text – but in the end this was a work predominantly created elsewhere, brought into and performed sympathetically at a site rather than site-specifically.

Of course all this stuff overlaps. Best think of it as a continuum:

- inside the theatre building
- outside the theatre building
- site-sympathetic
- site-generic
- site-specific



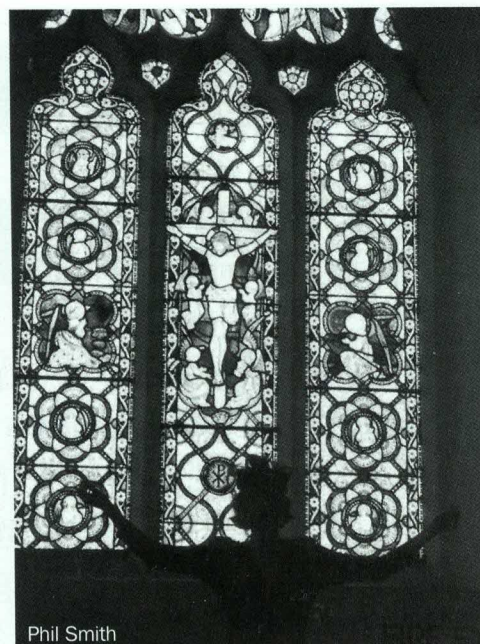
Sandra Reeve

But what is 'site' and how innocent its choice? Choosing a place for a performance can give it a kind of legitimacy. But what nostalgic or chauvinistic sensibilities to the ambience of heritage or identity might influence these choices? And what denial might influence the avoidance of other sites?

And how specific are sites to themselves? Virtual particles leap in and out of existence. In the most ambient of sites there are many places present in one: the Indian architecture of a hotel on Paignton seafront. There are wormholes: a discarded videotape on a bridge is a tunnel to an anonymous room where three naked women talk to camera about foreplay.

And how to perform, make and behave in the site once it is chosen? Odin Teatret's site-generic 'Anabasis', created for town and village squares, is as garish, multi-sourced and picaresque as any marketplace. I will never forget its performance in Coventry City Centre, specifically Mister Death's intervention in an open-air aerobics display – suddenly, under the lycra, bones were visible. But some site-specific practitioners might find that too invasive (what is the point of an art that engages with site only to obscure it or replace it?), preferring a gentler, transparent presence; colouring the site by their actions, but always and predominantly allowing it to be read through them.

Personally, I find both ways legitimate, depending on the site. When I created a performance for my own attic (where I write), I made it as visually and textually noisy as is the inside of my head when I'm working there; when creating a performance with young peo-



Phil Smith

ple in a former church and graveyard, the aim was for transparency.

It's not only sites that are porous. In Multiple Women's recent film 'On The Brink', movement artist Sandra Reeve levers herself across the rocks of the Dorset coastline. A hybrid of: crab; the mud she's caked in; Sandra; and places in her body's experience and training (Java, Lausanne, dusty Bristol church hall). We are also sites. Our bodies are extended organisms reacting to, and acting on, boundaries far beyond our skins. We are in, intimately in, our sites. And they in us.

Site-specific performance, indeed site work of all kinds, is at an exciting moment right now. It's growing. It's talked about. It has no pre-eminent philosopher or group, but rather a diverse history of practice. And it has a future, not as a vague term for performances outside theatre buildings attempting to revivify tired plays, but as a place where disparate makers, writers, journeyers and dancers can engage with its ambiguities, its edges, its wormholes.

The popularity of 'site-specific' is maybe no virtue in itself, but it is an invitation to engage with the shifting and contested ground of the very idea, and to work in sites, peopled and layered with all their ambiguities and controversies... Get in there! ■

Phil Smith is a member of Wrights & Sites – see their website at www.ex.ac.uk/~shodge/ws.html – and a Visiting Tutor at Dartington College teaching a Site/Landscape and Performance module. He is also working as writer/dramaturg on a number of projects including Perpetual Motion's new show 'Perfect'.

The Tourist Encounter

What are the possibilities for an international site-specific festival? FIONA WILKIE went to Latvia to find that the star of the Homo Novus festival was the city of Riga itself

I think I was expecting something more ostensibly Soviet, bearing in mind the memory of the 'Union' from which Latvia gained its independence in 1991. My friend slows her car as we cross the Daugava river on our journey from the airport – I lean out of the window and take a photograph of the old town ahead of us.

It is the turrets in particular that make me think of Germany rather than Russia, but perhaps it is the cinematic Germany of 'Chitty Chitty Bang Bang'. Already, then, other places, other performances, merge to stage my encounter with Latvia's capital. Riga is beau-

tiful, but – as my tour moves beyond the old town – it seems to be at least three different cities co-existing side-by-side.

Frequently as a spectator of site-specific performance I find myself also in the role of tourist, and these two experiences greatly inform one another. Over four days in Riga the city was performed for me in a variety of ways both within and outside of the theatrical events I had gone to see. Framed literally at times through my camera lens or the car window and metaphorically through the stories and anecdotes of my Latvian friend; experienced at different tempos – the lingering pace

of an empty bar on a Sunday evening, sipping coffee at the window; the steady amble of a shared walk through the rainy streets; the gliding stop-start of a tram; the bumpy urgency of the bus taking festival guests to the Daugavgriva Fortress – the city hints at its theatrical possibilities.

Last year Riga was more than usually conscious of the way in which it performs itself, both for its residents and in a wider European context: 2001 marked the city's 800th anniversary and 'Riga 800' celebrations and commemorations filled the streets. Homo Novus 2001 was organised to fit alongside these celebrations.

The festival aimed 'to provoke a dialogue between performing arts projects and city surroundings' and to 'decentralise art from the city centre to the neighbourhood'. Between the 14th and 23rd of September 2001, performances were staged in, among other places, petrol stations, a ruined fortress, museums, private houses, and an ex-Soviet airport. Political motivations are evident here, reflecting an impulse to use a variety of spaces as a means of reasserting a collective and civic identity following a problematic political and social history. In many ways, Homo Novus 2001 was as much an advertisement for the city of Riga as any tourist brochure.

So what are the landmarks, the places of interest, on my tour of Riga as staged by Homo Novus?

First on the itinerary is the Daugavgriva Fortress. Formerly a military site, it is now little more than a crumbling wall offering a number of different performance levels. Here, a mystery play – 'I Played, I Danced' – is presented by the Lithuanian group Miraklis. The performance is visually and aurally stunning,

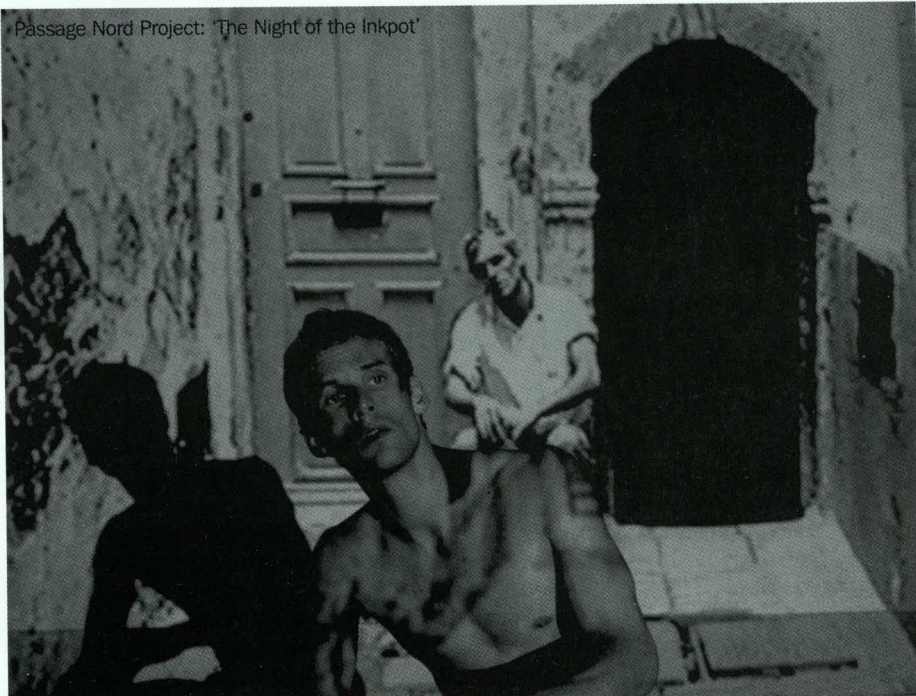


with its use of colourful puppets and masks, fireworks, dance, and a haunting new musical score. Baltic myth and music are com-modified for me in an evocative setting; I begin to feel slightly uncomfortable in this touristic experience – taking pleasure in a beautifully packaged product whose words and cultural significance I can't understand. Always attracted to non-theatre spaces, the group asserts that 'each performance fits organically into the surrounding environment, its relief and atmosphere'. But is an 'organic' fit the most interesting way of engaging with a site?

The following evening a group of us squeeze into a car and drive to a petrol station on the outskirts of the city. A Norwegian group – The Passage Nord Project – performs 'The Night of the Inkpot' on a stage built between the rows of pumps. This stark, unwelcoming space is overlaid with other spaces by means of a video screen on which images of Morocco are projected; a theme of alienation emerges as the live performers (three Norwegian and one Algerian) interact with their virtual screen presences. But the site plays little more than a superficial role in all of this, as director Kjetil Skoien is regretfully aware. He tells me that the performance will move to another petrol station the next day; Statoil, the company that owns these sites, is the chief sponsor of Homo Novus 2001.

On the Sunday before I leave Riga I see two performances presented by major Latvian theatres. Both are based on pre-existing scripts, but have enjoyed the luxury of extended rehearsal time within their sites. 'Thirsty Birds' inhabits the fascinating ex-Soviet airport at Spilve and makes aesthetic and conceptual use of its waiting room location. But what remains with me now is the memory of the space itself: its faded mock-Roman architecture; its atmosphere of musty disuse. Sometimes, it seems, a site can resonate powerfully for the spectators almost despite the performance. Later, sitting with other spectators in one of Riga's communal apartments – another relic of the Soviet era – I contemplate whether I am still occupying the role of tourist, or whether something else has

The notion of a 'site-specific festival' carries a number of immediate problems. For a start, festivals are commonly restricted to a particular area.



taken over. This is the apartment of the lead actor in 'The City' (the second of the Latvian productions), and it is here that I begin to experience the intimate potential in this meeting between performance and site.

These performance experiences, intertwined with my touristic encounter with Riga, start me thinking: about cultural differences in attitudes to place and space; about corporate ownership of site; about tourist photographs as site-specific documentation; but most of all about issues of site-specificity (or, more generally, the use of non-theatre sites) in festival conditions. Within Homo Novus the performances most able to interrogate their sites were the home-grown ones; in the visiting performances the site became a backdrop – interesting in its own right but not made more interesting by the theatrical encounter. None of the performances took the site as a starting-point for devising, and therefore the festival as a whole was not able to get the most out of its purported 'site-specific' stance.

The notion of a 'site-specific festival' carries a number of immediate problems. For a start, practical considerations mean that festivals are commonly restricted to a particular area, thereby restricting the types of sites that can be used and range of performances that might be created. Some artists enjoy rural spaces; others need to engage with the urban. The chances of these two groups meeting at a festival are slim. The 'international festival' compounds the problems – the pragmatics of time, money and proximity mean that visiting work is unlikely to have been born out of creative engagement with the place of presentation. This is where site-specificity breaks down and becomes something else instead...

I don't want to suggest that the site-specific festival is an impossibility. Rather, I'm excited by the idea and the new possibilities it seems to offer for intriguing juxtapositions and dialogues between work. But we need to be aware of the whole set of problems that is created when a festival aims at site-specificity.

So what might an 'ideal' site-specific festival look like? Perhaps here we could draw on successful existing models such as LIFT (the London International Festival of Theatre). This formerly biennial festival has been represented in the national press as Britain's major pioneer of site-specific performance and has afforded artists the opportunity to engage fully with their sites. Now almost legendary examples are Deborah Warner's two performance installations: the 1995 'St Pancras Project' that explored the disused spaces of the Midland Grand Hotel, and 'The Tower Project' of 1999, in which spectators were led one at a time through the upper floors of the former British Telecom tower at Euston. But even in the example of LIFT, site-specific work is balanced with other modes of performance. Imagine instead a wholly site-specific festival in which both local and visiting practitioners are invited to create different performance-based approaches to a set of interrelated sites. Both familiar and touristic responses to the environment might be brought together, generating a real debate about how we create meaning from the spaces we inhabit and visit. ■

Further details of Homo Novus 2001 can be found at <http://vip.latnet.lv/jti/homo/eng/>. For more details of the on-going LIFT festival see www.liftfest.org.

Landscapes of the Heart

An artist's diary by DANIELA ESSART, artistic director of Scarabeus, who are working with Piano Circus on a site-inspired new production

The Project

'Landscapes of the Heart' is a new large-scale multidisciplinary production by Scarabeus and Piano Circus, currently in the research and development phase.

This is what is planned: six musicians will suspend themselves and their pianos and six performers will create a vertical dance on dif-

ferent buildings around the country. The tri-dimensional shape of each building will provide a physical and metaphorical structure, an arena in which the performers climb and abseil. Suspended bodies will curl, dance and fall into gravity-defying drops whilst elevated above the ground by harnesses and ropes.

The framework connecting the performance and the location is inspired by Italo Calvino's 'Invisible Cities'. In the book, the visionary traveller Marco Polo describes to the Kublai Khan imaginary cities. Cities – places of exchange, not only of goods but of words, desires and memories. The aim in Marco Polo's heart is to discover the secret reasons that bring men to live in cities.

We want to explore – physically and metaphorically, with sound and with vision – the concept of City, bringing Calvino's 'Invisible Cities' to life in urban locations.

The videoscape, which is an integral part of the performance, is a subjective reading and homage to a more intimate vision of London and its cultural diversity. We are playing with different textures: the screened image projected directly onto the texture of the buildings; the live performers against the fabric of the buildings and the video image; the projection of the video image strategically applied to the modern architecture and the different features of the three buildings – the use of live camera allowing us to focus the audience on details that otherwise will be missed because of the project's scale.

The Diary

The following diary is an account of my thoughts and feelings during two luxurious weeks of research and development.

Caro Diario: 5 November 2001

Gone fishing for images with Gavin Lockhart, our amazing video artist and my beloved little daughter Naissa. We have been shooting

angels at Highgate Cemetery. Our timetable for today said: 'walking – talking – dreaming'. So we did.

6 November

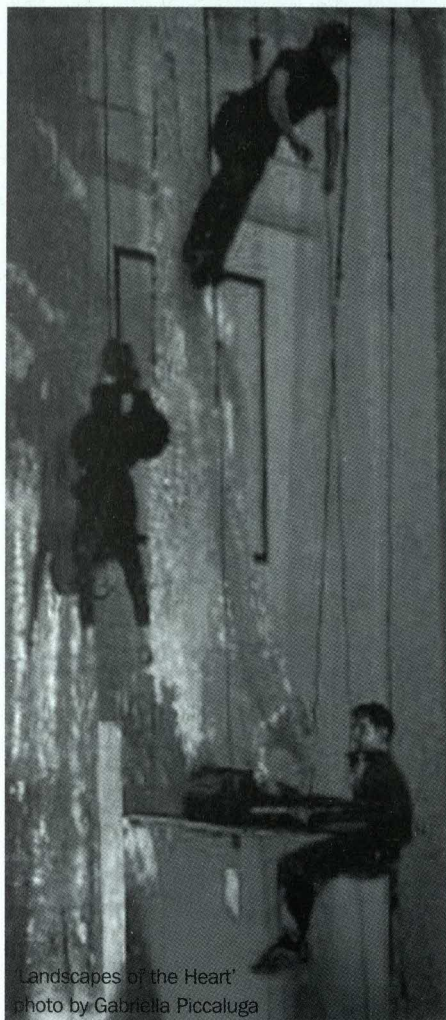
Traffic by night at London Bridge. Looking like molecular colourful parts of a whole. Reflections of busy commuters on the marble of a building. The heaven of Rufus's boat.

7 November

I got it: we need to establish whose the gaze is. Video and not voyeurism. Video and not National Geographic; Gavin is very strict. We decided it is Naissa's gaze, very new to the world. I am sure it is Gavin's gaze as well, accustomed to the wild of Skerry in the Highlands, and now looking at a city. My gaze towards London is very worn out, but today I am observing and enjoying... Hackney's peace carnival mural – I found a new injection of energy, a new motivation to make this project. I explained to Naissa that the people portrayed in the mural were walking, singing, playing music and 'playing mass' to offer her a better world. My ode to a more human world and more human cities is 'Landscapes of the Heart'.

10 November

After days spent with Gavin taking images of this London with an incredibly shining and polished façade and rotten entrails, I feel that we too need a more ragged landscape. In the past, I thought of silk costumes opening into gigantic projectable fans; now I see cheap and torn muslin, dyed in various shades of blue, spilling out from cut tails of beautiful mermaids... The journey is from the water to the air. Angels and mermaids scanning this city. We tried to project on water down at Rufus's boat. The water was stealing our images, perhaps just trying to put them back in her womb and delivering them again vivid and stronger. My will and my clarity are growing stronger.



'Landscapes of the Heart'
photo by Gabriella Piccaluga



Scarabeus's 'Hajar' photo by Daniela Essart

12 November

And then I finally found myself with electronic pianos and pianists suspended in the air... I have been waiting for this moment for more than two years!

15 November

Angel from Abney Park Cemetery and 'tripping' lights... The beauty of our performers playing in slow motion against a landscape made by angels' faces, hands and wings. Moments of magic when a chill goes through my spine. Then the knowledge: I know how this show is going to begin.

And then... The madness of the lights of the cars by night passing under London Bridge, shot zooming in and out of focus, a fantastic moving image. The performers going mad during their improvisation, because they have been moving so slowly and in such a controlled way for hours. Steve Reich blasting different cities' sounds over a throbbing club tempo... We are all taken somewhere else.

The wall has become so big; there is a pulsing energy and the pleasure to dance, dance and dance even more.

18 November

Textures, colours and above all details. The creative use of live camera in performance is so exciting. It has so much potential to distil gems of truth and close-ups of people's emotions that otherwise would be lost by the size of the performance.

No dividing line between performers and pianists; John Paul Zaccarini, our sensitive and flamboyant choreographer, suggests a lot of hands. I like the effect of close-ups of black and white piano keys and hands and feet...

We both advocate a strong theatrical impact. No movement for the sake of movements, but the essence of movement. I am longing for honesty in performance. Condensed truth and distilled moments of beauty. I can see it now, this show will be fantastic!

Two months later...

Some thoughts that chase through my dreams... The possibility for a show where memories dash from pain to pleasure in the blink of an eye, where the images are raw and direct. 'Landscapes of the Heart' is going to be a passport to evocative places and fond memories that we are usually too shy to show in public spaces. It excites me – the idea of creating a performance that talks about people and where they belong, their stories and histories.

I can see it clearly now; we are not talking about mermaids any more – we are talking about women and their heart. Yes, the one that pulsates in our collective chest. This show is not blue any more – it is going to be red. ■

Research and Development of 'Landscapes of the Heart' was funded by the Jerwood and Gulbenkian Foundations. The production and touring of the project is subsidised by the Arts Council of England and the PRS Foundation for new music. See www.scarabeus.co.uk

Somewhere between Dance + Theatre

What lies between dance and theatre? DOROTHY MAX PRIOR reflects...

I started with a simple objective: to write about movement-based performance work that lives somewhere between dance and theatre. Then the problems set in. The first was that I needed to give what I wanted to describe a name – and the most obvious name for this work would be ‘dance-theatre’.

But that term has a very specific connotation, being very firmly identified with Pina Bausch and the German Expressionist legacy – and wonderful though this work is, there are other influences and legacies in the story of dance-theatre.

But in order to reflect on how dance and theatre can work together, I felt I needed to clarify what these terms meant to me... and I've learnt along the road that if I have any questions to resolve about movement-based performance, looking to the teachings of Rudolf Laban is usually a good starting point. This seemed particularly relevant on this occasion, as a direct line of influence can be drawn back from contemporary Tanztheater to Laban's work.

So what are the differences between dance and theatre? In his essay ‘The Mastery of Movement’ (1950) Laban tackles this very question, saying: ‘In pure dancing, the inner drive to move creates its own patterns of style, and of striving after intangible and indescribable values.’ I envisage a tiny baby, alone in a room – the chest rising with the breath, the eyes moving side-to-side, a fist clenching and unclenching – this is dance in its purest form. As Laban says, ‘dancing does not always demand spectators’ – it is the movement of life itself. This is in contrast to theatre, which is in essence defined as a relationship between performer and spectator.

In the same essay he talks of another form of movement activity that is an extension of the urge to play: to ‘act out’ experiences and emotions that have been experienced, or may be experienced in the future; or to rehearse actions to be used in real life. The analogy he gives is of the young animal going through the motions of hunting: the kitten or puppy chasing a ball – running, crouching, pouncing, retrieving...

In these repeated patterns there is a motivation beyond pure movement – the creation of a ‘dance’ that reflects a relationship with the outside environment; yet still there is no need

for a spectator, so by Laban's definition this is still not something we can describe as theatre.

So what is theatre? I would agree that a definition of theatre would take in the need of a witness (perhaps this is what makes the difference between ‘play’ and ‘theatre’ in two otherwise indistinguishable actions?) And it is in the relationship of performer and witness (or ‘audience’, as the witness is rather oddly labelled – as if the ears were more valid than the eyes) that the nature of theatre lies. Theatre is intrinsically about communication – is a communion of giving and receiving, a way of sharing both core human feelings and responses to the environment in which we find ourselves.

It is in this essential notion of shared experience that pure dance presented on stage often comes unstuck. For witnessing dance performance can often feel uncomfortably voyeuristic – even with a fairly broad knowledge of and interest in dance, I often find myself wondering why I am bothering to watch something when my presence is so obviously not needed by the performers. Although I can admire the abilities and techniques of the dancers, for the most part I need ‘theatre’ in some form to be part of dance performance.

I am left with the question of what sort of theatre the dance is going to merge with to create work I might enjoy seeing performed. Back to Laban again – he feels that ‘human movement, with all its physical, emotional and mental implications, is the common denominator of the dynamic art of theatre’ and cautions against the over-use of the ‘static components’ of décor and costume.

Now part of me agrees with him – we seem now to be in territory also occupied by

Decroux's corporeal mime: the power of the unadorned human body to tell stories and enact feelings – perhaps there is nothing so wonderful.

But there is also a little voice of protest in my left ear – I'm thinking of some of the other early twentieth century innovators who have contributed to the history of movement theatre, and the story of the relationship between dance and theatre. There is the Bauhaus group – works such as Oskar Schlemmer's ‘Grotesque Dance’, where the movement of the dancer is dictated by the elaborate construction of glass that enfolds her... and there is Lois Fuller, perhaps the first dancer to work with the relationship of artificial light to body and fabric. Both of these could be said to have a natural (or should that be unnatural?) successor in Lindsay Kemp, whose work is often described as dance-mime, but which in many ways has strong connections to sculpture. In his latest work, ‘Dreamdances’, the final vignette is a direct tribute to Lois Fuller – Kemp adorned with the largest pair of angel wings imaginable, which flow back and forth across the stage, washed with an astonishing and beautiful succession of coloured lights.

Then there is the Russian maestro Meyerhold, slotting dancers into his elaborate stage constructions to create extraordinary living machines – his work, being theatre influenced by architecture, has a natural successor in Josef Nadj. In ‘Comedia Tempio’, the piece presented at this year's London International Mime Festival, Nadj uses highly trained physical performers who interact with a fully three-dimensional construction of unfolding boxes, cupboards and doors. These create an extraordinary labyrinth, suggesting everything from the domestic clutter of an Eastern European home to a Victorian cabinet of curiosities or a madman's chamber of dreams and nightmares. The performers – whose rich range of backgrounds and skills include dance, mime and circus – tumble, climb and balance on anything and everything: doors, ladders, chairs, each other...

Here is a very different form of movement theatre to that envisaged by Decroux and Laban – a form in which the engagement with a physically constructed environment is the essence of the piece... and looking back over the history of performance placed between

Dancing does not always demand spectators... Theatre is a relationship between performer and spectator

dance and theatre, this extra element has so often been present.

Pared down to its most basic manifestation, it is the phenomenon of the Chair (used to great effect in 'Comedia Tempio': chairs piled upon chairs; a mass of people squirming through chair legs; a lone woman left sitting on a chair at the top of a ladder...). For if you want to move dance away from pure abstracted movement, into the realm of a theatrical exploration of human beings' relationship to their environment (be that domestic or beyond), then what better way than with a chair?

This is explored most beautifully in another of the Mime Festival shows – Diquis Tiquis' 'Shy Shining Walls'. The choreography combines the talents of the two performers – a mix of many influences that include dance, movement theatre and clown – placing them

on a bare stage furnished only with two chairs. The succession of interconnected but separate 'dances' that unfold tell a complex story of negotiated human relationship – the chairs at various points representing both immutability and the vehicle for transformation and engagement.

The part played by the Chair in the history of dance-theatre is referenced with characteristic humour and insight by Pina Bausch in 'Masurca Fogo', the latest Tanztheater Wuppertal production to reach the London stage. A performer comes on stage with a few pieces of wood. He makes a chair – which is placed centre-stage. A female performer sashays on... the chair is removed: end of scene.

So there, finally, I reach a conclusion. What lives between dance and theatre? More often than not, a chair.

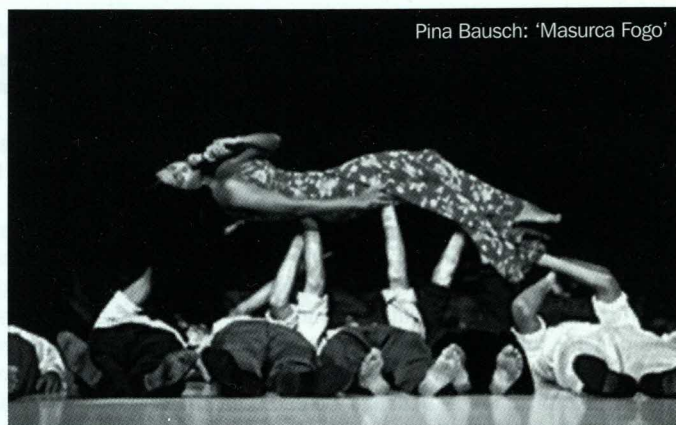
Pina Bausch's performers are obviously highly skilled dancers – but her skill as a director lies in understanding that dance needs to be more than just a demonstration of technique to hack it on stage. She shares with Josef Nadj, Lindsay Kemp and Diquis Tiquis the understanding that an audience seeks an engagement, a sharing, from the performers. It is this sharing, this willingness to bring something for celebration, commiseration or reflection directly from one human being to another that puts the 'theatre' in 'dance theatre' rather than allegiance to any one tradition of practice. ■

Dorothy Max Prior's article on her work as a dramaturg in dance-theatre will soon be posted on the dramaturgy web journal at www.dramforum.net



'Comedia Tempio': photo by Lajos Somlasi

Grounded in Europe: Tanztheater and its Legacy



Pina Bausch: 'Masurca Fogo'

The Centre for Performance Research held a symposium on Tanztheater at the University of Surrey, Roehampton, in November/December 2001. PHILIP BEAVEN reports

This was an intensive two and a half days of lectures, videos, performance and workshops exploring the origins and legacy of Dance Theatre (Tanztheater).

As a prelude to the first speaker we were shown extracts from two seminal Mary Wigman works, 'Green Table' and 'Witch Dance'. Ana Sanchez Colberg, a fiery Puerto Rican who lectures at the Laban Centre, mapped the road from Ausdruckstanz (Expressionistic Dance) to Tanztheater (Dance Theatre). According to her, dance theatre lives between dance and theatre. The term describes dance as a total stage event, a total theatre. Rudolf Laban first brought this concept to dance. For him, dance was an inner necessity that spoke directly to the heart and the spectator should distil in his own way the material presented, leading to multiple individual interpretations of a work.

Kurt Joos, a student of Laban who was later based at Dartington, wanted to centre his work around the human condition, to convey a social message and to move beyond Ausdruckstanz. Pina Bausch, one of his students (1955-59), sees her work directly influenced by his ability to leave his students free, by the way he sought to expand his students' imaginations and didn't want to be imitated or copied. Bausch sees working from subjectivity as the main thing she has taken from Joos. Asked about the meaning of her work she will say – 'Don't ask me, just see it!'

That was certainly enough to think over for one evening...

On Saturday morning I chose the 'Introduction to Ausdruckstanz' technique with Ana Sanchez Colberg, though I feared that my body might not stand the rigours of a dance masterclass. Fortunately she gave us all room to work within our own abilities, but worked us hard with exercises drawn from Laban, Joos

and Bausch, ending with short improvised duos that we showed to each other. It was exhilarating and sweaty!

After lunch there was an unintelligible talk, at least to my non-academic brain, from Meg Mumford on dance and national identity. Fortunately it was followed by Carol Brown who presented an astonishing piece, 'Bodenweiser on the Beach', a performance-lecture invoking the legacy of Gertrude Bodenweiser, the Austrian proponent of Ausdruckstanz. With a wonderful natural presence and exuberance, she established a set of repeated movements, ending with a pirouette reminiscent of the Dervish dances. The whole piece was beautifully crafted, each repetition with a subtly adjusted dynamic and a progressive development of gesture and tempo.

Bodenweiser was a pioneer of modern dance in Australia and New Zealand, where she fled after life became too hot for her in pre-war Austria. She was a great collaborator and sought a dance that could express all human feeling. She was provocative, creating dances that parodied other dance forms such as ballet and jazz and constantly explored new ideas, taking in dances from other cultures and adapting them if they interested her.

Liz Agg's from Brighton had a hard act to follow with her lecture-performance based on the Russian dancer Heidi Dhinskowska (also known as Hi Jinx). It took me a while to realise that this was a beautifully fabricated parody of our desire to create icons from the past (complete with original film clips from 1904!).

The most controversial contribution was 'Conspiracy of Silence' by Marion Kant, a research fellow at the host university. Her fundamental thesis is: Mary Wigman collaborated with the Nazis, but all of her biographers

have more or less ignored this. Why? Is it because criticism of Wigman is seen as an attack on Modern Dance per se? Is it the blindness of true believers – and should therefore Ausdruckstanz be seen as a cult and its members believers because they accept no criticism? Or is it simply a question of art for art's sake and the rejection of enlightenment or criticism due to its powerful culture of anti-intellectualism? This certainly stirred up the audience and there was some hot debating in the tea break...

On Sunday I only managed the performance-lecture by Sondra Fraleigh, who had studied with Wigman in the 50s and since made an extensive study of Butoh. Her childhood had been spent in the shadow of the first US nuclear tests in Utah, and the consequences for the health of herself, family and friends was horrific. There is something magical about seeing an older woman, with years of stage experience, perform. It is as though condensed in her simple movements was a richness, a substance and spirit that can only be achieved in old age. She went on to compare Butoh with the essence of Wigman's impulse – 'the metaphysics of Butoh is the metaphysics of the human body, soul and spirit; this was the same for German Expressionistic dance'.

Overall, this event was highly informative and enjoyable and superbly organised. I was left with one question. Over the weekend there were frequent references to 'physical theatre' but is what the dancer calls 'physical theatre' and what the actor calls 'physical theatre' the same? I proposed to CPR that they consider this as the basis for a future symposium! ■

Centre for Performance Research website: www.theopr.org.uk

Circus arts news

News from the Circus Arts Forum: Issue 8 Spring 2002

www.circusarts.org.uk ■ e-mail: info@circusarts.org.uk ■ Tel.: 020 7729 7944 ■ Fax: 020 7729 7945
c/o Total Theatre Network, The Power Station, Coronet Street, London N1 6HD

Circus is a viable and successful artform and entertainment medium – but is often surviving despite rather than because of the circumstances in which professional circus practitioners are operating.

Circus in the UK currently lacks the support and recognition that it needs to grow and develop in a way that is equal to the status and success circus enjoys in some other parts of the world – and equal to the status and support received by other performing arts disciplines in this country. This is not a problem that can be resolved overnight – the needs are many: financial hardship, cultural status, attitude of press and public, lack of substantial arts funding, to name but a few. But identifying the specific needs of circus as an art and an industry – and, just as importantly, how those needs can be met and by whom – is a vital first step. To this end, the Circus Arts Forum has created a Research and Advocacy document, the result of a long process of research and consultation. This will soon be available on our website at www.circusarts.org.uk.

The report from the Circus Open Forum, which took place on 23 Oct 2001, is now available. It will be posted up on our website – or you can request an e-mailed copy from the office at info@circusarts.org.uk.

We are also pleased to announce that following this success we are hosting another opportunity for discussion and networking – a circus seminar as part of the new Brighton Circus Festival. 'Circus: The Sky's the Limit' takes place on Saturday 18 May at 2.30pm. See below for more details. Book your place soon! We look forward to seeing you there...

Dorothy Max Prior
Co-ordinator, Circus Arts Forum

Circus Arts News is published by Total Theatre Network and edited by Dorothy Max Prior on behalf of the Circus Arts Forum.

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Arts Council – New Strategies for Circus

The Arts Council of England have released their much-anticipated Circus Strategy paper. Total Theatre Network director Annabel Arndt has acted as a sounding board during the process of researching and writing the paper and members of the Circus Arts Forum have been individually and collectively consulted. The paper, mainly intended as an Arts Council internal strategy document, gives recognition to circus as an independent artform in need of more resources, and there is a commitment to a number of positive changes – including increased developmental funds for circus, more support for circus national networks, and funds for a circus conference. National Touring Programme funds totalling £1,000,000 over 2002/2003 and 2003/2004 will be allocated to circus, street arts and carnival projects, and a part-time dedicated circus officer will be appointed. This can only be good news – let's hope that the same positive attitude is adopted by the new Regional Councils which will soon replace the Regional Arts Boards. See www.artscouncil.org.uk for details of their funding schemes and criteria and for a list of the regional offices.

Brighton Circus Festival

During the weekend of 18-19 May, Brighton's Preston Park will be transformed into a Circus Village featuring tents large and small, stalls and an outdoor trapeze rig. This is the pilot year for the new festival – with plans to develop into a major event in the international circus calendar. There are two commissions for local circus companies: 'Le Cirque des Spectacles' is described as a homage to circus history evoking fantastical images of traditional touring freak-shows, circus and carnival; and Brightfx 'Ignite!' combines circus skills, dance music and pyrotechnics.

The programme also includes work from The Circus Space and Circomedia and a performance by the Ateliers de Cirque Amiens from France. The big top shows are Moscow State Circus (which runs from Wednesday 8 to Sunday 26 May with two performances a day) and Circus Baobab from West Africa, whose new performance 'Les Tambours Sauteurs' is directed by the legendary Pierrot Bidon (18 to 21 May).

All this plus free open workshops in aerial skills, acro-balance, juggling and clowning. For more information call Zap Productions on 01273 821588 or see www.zapproductions.co.uk.

Circus
Baobab



Circus: The Sky's the Limit

This seminar, hosted by the Circus Arts Forum, is aimed at circus practitioners but open to all. It takes place as part of the Brighton Circus Festival on Saturday 18 May at 2.30pm. Lined up to take part are an eminent panel of local, national and international circus professionals including Gerry Cottle of the European Entertainment Corporation, Pierrot Bidon (formerly of Archaos, currently directing Circus Baobab) and Tina Carter, aerialist and artistic director of Expressive Feat. Places are free but please pre-book if possible to ensure yours is reserved. Telephone 020 7729 7944 or e-mail info@circusarts.org.uk

On the Road Again...

It's the start of the touring season for circus – new shows galore on the road. Gifford's Circus will be featuring national equestrian vaulting champion Rebecca Townsend as part of the new line-up... and they will be making their traditional appearance at the Hay On Wye literary festival between 31 May and 9 June. Call them on 01242 572573 for more information.

Following the success of last year's 'Storm', The Generating Company will be touring a new show, 'Gangstars', kicking off with a run at the Circus Space Festival, 5-14 April. Set in a fictitious city during the prohibition, 'Gangstars' follows the adventures of an innocent immigrant new to the city and draws on influences from film noir, the Berlin of Brecht, vaudeville performers and Capone's Chicago. It is directed by Sean Kempton, one of the four company directors who created Storm, and features a cast of ten young circus performers. To book tickets or get full details of the tour call 020 7907 7038.



The Chipolatas – photo by Guto Muniz

No Excess Baggage

Why juggle in the rain when you can be in Australia? SAM THOMAS of the Chipolatas explains how they've made the company a desirable British export

It is now ten years since Jasper, Tristan and myself first appeared as the Chipolatas at a folk festival held at Butlins holiday camp in Bognor Regis. That early performance featured unicycling and juggling tricks set to live music and an acrobatic clog dance routine taught to us by the late Sam Sherry (Lancashire music hall performer and gentleman).

Having been brought up around community circus projects and folk music festivals it seemed natural to try to fuse these two forms. Through street-theatre style shows and cabaret spots we developed a way of making the music and the movement work together.

We became the fringe act that filled the gap left by my father's show 'The Fabulous Salami Brothers'. Travelling from Shetland to Sidmouth we toured the country, taking our unique brand of adrenaline-fuelled entertainment to cities and towns. And this was fine in the summertime. But what to do come the winter months?

We had several cold winters touring Shropshire, the North Pennines, Devon and Lincolnshire. And then we thought... let's go to Australia! Through contacts from the folk scene we got gigs at festivals in Victoria and New South Wales. We wrote to the British Council, who agreed to sponsor performances in New Zealand and Thailand. So that was it – we could make it work. For February, March and April we said goodbye to the rain, the grey and the motorway. Almost overnight, in one long-haul flight, we were an international act, all the way from the UK.

We had several cold winters touring Shropshire, the North Pennines, Devon and Lincolnshire. And then we thought... let's go to Australia!

The climate and the vibe that Australia offered couldn't have been more agreeable. Relaxed happy people in our audiences were a joy to perform to. We found we were having to slow down a little within the show. There is a space there that we don't have here – simply because we are a small island with lots of people on it, and Australia is a big island with not many people on it! We had the opportunity to meet some great performers and exchange ideas and addresses; the world seemed to get smaller and yet bigger at the same time.

That trip to Australia was the first of many. We have now toured there six years consecutively and have a healthy reciprocal relationship with fellow performers and promoters – we also arrange tours for Australian acts coming to Britain.

By 1995, the Chipolatas were becoming regular favourites on the UK festival scene, and because we were being invited to return to venues on an annual basis, we felt we needed a new style of show. We employed the musical skills of bass player Barnaby Stradling and fiddle player Jock Tyldesley and 'The Chipolata 5' were born.

Playing traditional English dance tunes on melodeon and fiddle, backed by funky bass lines and percussive sounds proved to be an exciting new performance project. The show requires a full PA system and more logistics than the trio but it enables us to play to larger audiences.

Having written a very enthusiastic report to the British Council from our southern hemisphere tour, we sent them a CD for the 'Chipolata 5' show and a promotional video for the Chipolatas. This clarified what we were presenting, as sometimes promoters found it difficult working out what we did. Were we a band? Were we a circus street act? The answer is... both!

The British Council liked what we'd sent them and, and as the trio, we began to work on further contracts with the Council, travelling to the Middle East and Central Asia.

When performing to non-English speaking audiences the music was a perfect tool for communicating our ideas. Rose English (performance artist) said in a talk that she gave at the first Circ-Elation course



The Chipolatas – photo by Guto Muniz

in Sheffield: 'Music bridges the gap between theatre and circus.' Based on our experiences, I would wholeheartedly agree.

Having never been successful in getting funding to take the time out to make new work, we have adopted an attitude of 'getting on with it' and new material comes from time spent together on tour. We try our new ideas in and around already established routines and improvise with it depending on the atmosphere of the show. This way of rehearsing on the road is not ideal, but festival sites are a fertile ground full of colourful characters and we have collected stories, tunes, tricks and dance moves from all around the world which influence our work as we go.

We are developing a style of theatrical storytelling using material from the repertoire of my father, Taffy Thomas MBE, storyteller. His influence gives us our roots. It emphasises the 'Englishness' of our style. We are young custodians of this evolving tradition. We perform what 'The Scotsman' described as 'characterised routines that mingle circus with music hall, topped off with mischievous 90s irony'.

Having played the Edinburgh Festival and received this five-star review, we were invited by Cultura Inglesa, who promote English language and culture, to perform our children's theatre show in Sao Paulo. This was a fantastic experience as the Brazilian culture is driven by rhythm and dance. We performed in schools and small theatres, parks and public spaces to enthusiastic crowds. We concentrated on highlighting the percussive elements of the show. This approach made our characters very clown-like. We instinctively used our physicality to get our meaning across. It created a new territory where rhythm and music were paramount.

Our work takes many forms, such as playing to a segregated audience in Salalah, Oman, with women on one side and men on the other. Or performing in Jerash, Jordan, in a fenced-off area with armed soldiers placed uniformly along our front row... facing the audience. On a British Council tour to Kazakhstan, we performed in the central shopping area of Almaty. It felt like no one there had ever seen anything like us before; we were completely surrounded by smiling faces of all ages.

To demonstrate the versatility of our work, we, in one day, performed at the Kazak Children's Centre for Leukaemia in Almaty to fifteen young children, their carers and parents. It was a gentle show with a delicate audience and was a very moving experience. After this performance we were taken to the Kazakh State Central Circus... Nothing could have prepared us for the size of this space – it was more like an ice-hockey stadium than a circus. With a seating capacity of 2,000, it was the biggest indoor venue we have ever played. After 45 minutes of local children singing pop songs and performing dance routines to backing tapes, it was our turn to enter the ring... It will go down as one of the most memorable performing experiences of our lives. Everyone in the audience was on their feet, clapping to the beat and laughing along with the show.

To date we have performed in over twenty-six different countries; fourteen of those have been sponsored by the British Council. Our props, costume, musical equipment and personal baggage weigh no more than 75 kg. We literally have no excess baggage.

So what's next? In January, we worked with director Ron Bunzl on new ideas for the three of us. This five-day process enabled us to develop new material that came from exchanging ideas and performance techniques.

We have several contracts in the UK and Europe this summer and will be heading off to Australia again in the winter. Future plans include developing a teaching method for our style of work, so we can pass on skills and performance traditions in a workshop environment.

Over the years I have wrestled with the relevance of what we do, having to justify being a clown for a living, I suppose. But on reflection I wouldn't change it for the world. There is a street performer's term used for describing the front row of an audience, which is 'the edge'. Once you've got your edge, then you can work.

So... here's to keeping our edge together! ■

Find out more about the Chipolatas by visiting their website: www.chipolatas.com

LAUGH OF THE WORLD

KEVIN BROOKING
reports back from
El Risa Do Terra
festival



Kevin Brooking

The Laugh of the World Festival was held in the remote north-eastern state of Paraiba in Brazil, in December 2001. Over two years of frenzied planning and furious fundraising by actor and director Luis Carlos Vasconselo and his team resulted in a special and unforgettable event that brought together international clown personalities and around 200 Brazilian performers. There were workshops, symposiums, performances and street events – as well as some serious tanning.

The special flavour of the event was partly due to its exotic location in the far-flung city of Joao Pessoa. Even for the Brazilian actors this was a remarkable destination. The strong cultural traditions of the North-East meant that we were bombarded by tingling triangles, flutes and whistles, some very strange folk/carnival clans plus a heavy metal punk band which was backed by Brazilian batucada beats. A wonderful woman singer/goddess named Selma do Coco finished off one of the evenings with her royal rhythms.

The opening performance in the (too big) 2,400-seater circus tent featured Tortell Poltrona from Barcelona. Tortell is the founder of Clowns without Borders. His haphazard clown character seems clumsy but he has the technique and precision of a ballerina. He is a likeable clown who uses a lot of audience participation, and he radiates the simplicity and generosity found in great performers.

Australian Sue Broadway, founder of RaRaZoo, one of the first circus theatre groups, was also performing in Joao Pessoa along with her partner. Her famous tea party with tea cups on the head and lovely open characters were a touch of beauty and elegance among the dust and the disorganisation.

Laura Herts (France/USA) performed her evening clown-mime concert 'Last Tango in Paradise' which among other themes made fun of women's quixotic pursuit of beauty. Her madwoman clown character with her trademark wild hair was like having a hyperactive child in the ring, unruly but charming.

Brazilian Angela de Castro, founder of London's Why Not Institute of Clowning, was the international clown coordinator for El Riso do Terra and her extraordinary silhouette appeared throughout the festival.

Jango Edwards (USA/Holland) is known for his show called 'I Laugh You'. His beer squirting, hot dog and condom gags, as well as his playful nudity, were definitely shocking for the locals. The grand finale was in a more poetic tone. Jango called all the clowns on stage and spoke about clown love and clown hope for the world. A torch was lit and the clowns all paraded off to light a bonfire for a samba under the full moon.

I was also invited to perform in the festival. My 'Horus Plasticus' is a kind of post-

modern futuristic Maori blue-footed booby dance. 'Patras Arriba' is based on a man who is cold, spits ice cubes, and who then warms himself up on the audience. This was nicely incongruous in the hot and humid tropics.

Also in contrast to the heat was Kai from Denmark's Odin Theatre. He performed in a full-body polar bear costume and lost many litres of sweat. Otto the Bear brought many qualities to the event. He played the accordion and trumpet, hula-hooped and led the musical parade for the final evening's performance. Bravo, Otto!

I have to mention the Argentine Chacovich. Calling himself 'a clown for the third world', he demonstrated how one aspect of the clown's archetype is the shaman. Using rituals and games he created an energy in the audience that was convincing. His mastery of a big crowd and his experience were lovely to behold.

Brazil is truly a rainbow nation and clowns of all hues were performing. The Ghanaian acrobat/clowns Kakalaj were THE crowd-wow-ers. Their enthusiasm and total acrobatic control filled up the giant chapiteau.

Brazilians have a great love of red-nose clowns. You could say that the tradition of the circus clown has become the defining silhouette of most of the Brazilian performers. One red-nose enthusiast was the organiser Luis Carlos (Xou-Xou), who in his pristine make-up and big shoes had the tent in roars of laughter with his comic patter as well as his water-spilling and trying-to-ride a unicycle routines.

The exception to the red-nose rule were two trapeze actors in ballerina drag. Called Las Minima their trapeze technique was impeccable and the characters were perfectly subtle and very funny.

For the finale a special and original Brazilian group called Lumi presented very funny acts in classic clown gear; but most wonderful of all was their singing in the final musical parade of the last show. The packed house joined in the chorus, full of emotion, while the clowns poured out into the big top for a final bow.

I turned and noticed a small raggedy kid stumbling around in the ring blowing bubbles. He was loving all the excitement and I realised that if it was for anybody, all the work, effort and laughter was for him.

In the end everybody went their separate ways and the world is still fighting, but maybe in subtle ways the clown energy that was generated will grow. Maybe seeds that were planted in Joao Pessoa will take root, shaking a deep laugh out of the world... After being face to face with the magic in Brazil I can almost believe it. ■

Contact Kevin Brooking at kbzt@skynet.be

After Grotowski

PAUL ALLAIN on how the Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski have fared since their mentor's death

Grotowski died in January 1999. Since his death (see my obituary of him in *Total Theatre*, Vol 11/1), I have started to investigate Grotowski's legacy, focusing initially on the Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski, and Thomas Richards' showings of 'Action' and 'One Breath Left' at the Generazioni Theatre Festival, which I attended in June 2001 in Pontedera, Italy.

'Action' was not listed in the Festival programme but was shown for twelve invited guests. Mario Biagini introduced this 'not a theatre event' as we huddled around a table in the remote brick farmhouse space some five miles or so outside Pontedera itself. After his precise introduction, he disappeared quietly off, only to return in a whirlwind with the rest of the company to 'do' 'Action'. Biagini turned into a charged, almost possessed soothsayer who prefaces the piece with a frightening incantation in English. His presence also drives the collaboration with Singaporean group Theatre Ox in their co-production of 'One Breath Left', which is directed by himself and Thomas Richards.

The Workcenter is feeling its way by touring 'Action' and struggling with many of the questions this brings; safeguarding its intimate nature yet opening it to international audiences; finding a space equivalent to the rich atmosphere and acoustic support of their studio; and charging appropriate fees. Such touring may well have to become the lifeblood of the Workcenter, which depends on visiting participants supporting themselves financially for long periods, usually of at least one year. Yet it is not just pragmatics that drive this opening up, for the group exude a strong sense of wanting to share the fruits of their research. The justification for this makes absolute sense with a piece like 'One Breath Left', which tells a story with texts and music, uses objects, lighting, costumes, scenography, and which is avowedly theatrical. How one manages to promote and manage such a personal piece as 'Action', that Biagini suggests we should respond to as a 'poem', is another matter.

'Action' centres quite simply on the vibrant resonance of Afro-Caribbean songs, most notably in Richards' and Biagini's pulsating

bodies. Accompanying these are precise dances, walks and actions, and very occasional moments of characterisation. At one point Richards became a boy. It was not as if he was playing a boy character. The transformation was total and I was convinced he had become a 'little Richards'. Adults act children with great difficulty and often much embarrassment. This was a sleight of body, a fleeting moment in a storm of actions.

For 'One Breath Left', five or so rows of seats created the auditorium and two long streams of coloured cloth made a funnel-like stage space. The performers swept through the audience and onto the stage in a whirl. This group have refined the art of dramatic entrances – surprisingly rapid appearances that leave you immediately expectant and focused. There was no audience warm-up

here or languid beginning. We were straight in.

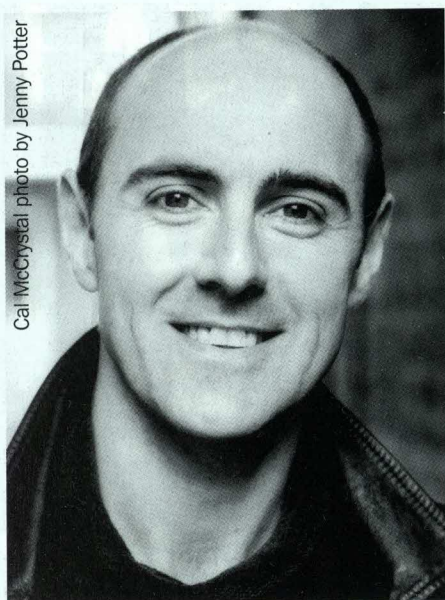
'One Breath Left' is overtly more theatrical and presentational than 'Action'. It very much seems to belong to Theatre Ox's own group and national culture, drawing on ancient Chinese songs and a story derived from ancient texts of Chinese philosophers. The vocal range is high, nasal and atonal, rather than the deep resonance of the Afro-Caribbean songs of 'Action', though the sound is pulled out and almost conducted by the singer with a similar almost semaphoric waving of the arms.

Gey Pin Ang is physically compact and shows extraordinary range and vocal projection as the dying woman, whose final dream-like fragmentary moments and recollections the piece presents. The four performers from Singapore move with lightning speed and absolute precision in complete interactive harmony. This rigour is tempered by moments of light comedy, including a hand-puppet play above a tautly stretched white sheet and the absurdity of familiar philosophical conundrums spoken emphatically and energetically in pidgin English, projected directly to the audience in storytelling mode. No word is ever lost to poor enunciation or projection.

The partnering of 'One Breath Left' with 'Action' makes sense in showing a progression from 'Art as vehicle' to 'Art as presentation'. There has been an opening up in the Workcenter's activities. 'The Bridge: Developing Theatre Arts' began in May 1999 and is exploring the transitional area between presentational and vehicular art, that is simultaneously for and not for a spectator. 'One Breath Left' is an experiment in at times directing audience attention and at other times 'abandoning' it. I can attest that the experiment works. Grotowski's legacy is very much alive and the search goes on. ■

Paul Allain is Course Director of the MA by Practice as Research at the University of Kent, now taking applications for admission in Jan 2003. Jerzy Grotowski's essay 'From the Theatre Company to Art as Vehicle' is included in Thomas Richards' book 'At work with Grotowski on Physical Actions' (Routledge 1995)

The Workcenter is feeling its way by touring 'Action' and struggling with many of the questions this brings; safeguarding its intimate nature yet opening it to international audiences; finding a space equivalent to the rich atmosphere and acoustic support of their studio; and charging appropriate fees.



Send in the Clown

PHILIP BEAVEN interviews deviser/director Cal McCrystal, the 'big daddy' of comic physical theatre

I first saw Cal McCrystal at Total Theatre's Network's Critical Practice on 'The Role of the Director'. I was looking for a director to do a work placement with for my MA in Advanced Theatre Practice. It was one of those impulsive things, as I hadn't seen any of his work. I just went up to him and asked him and he immediately said yes. Afterwards I thought – I hope I like what he does!

Before starting on the placement, I went to see one of his current productions – Spy-monkey's 'Stiff'. And I nearly fell out of my chair laughing...

I was very nervous when I observed my first rehearsal of Spymonkey's new show 'Cooped', but everyone made me feel welcome. Cal included me in some of the games, looking for my real talent (I hoped). I fanta-

sised about being invited to join them; maybe I could be a clown actor. One day he set up a scene with performer Petra Massey – playing Laura du Lay, as demure as possible, while every now and again farting and burping. The scene was good but the sound effects weren't working well, so Cal asked me to try them. That was when I found my real talent – farting and burping sound effects. It was a bit of a comedown, but I guess we all have to start somewhere.

Over the last five years Cal's star has been rising. It was his work with Peepolykus, and its surprise success at the Edinburgh Fringe in 1996 that started the ball rolling. This year he had five shows playing at the Pleasance.

He was born in Belfast, the son of the journalist Cal McCrystal (which often leads to

confusion). His natural acting talent was already noticeable at school: 'It was the only thing that I ever got really praised for at school. I had real difficulties concentrating in lessons. I think because I was so crap at everything else, not that I was the top actor in school.' In 1978 he went to the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. 'My drama school was very Shakespeare, Chekhov, etc., very Stanislavsky, and they always gave me the comedy roles, character comedy acting, and so it became my whole ethos that I would become unrecognisable on stage as myself.'

In 1981 he started his acting career and did all the usual jobs – rep, soaps, sitcom, adverts, radio drama and the odd film. He also worked as a kids' TV presenter. So why did he turn to physical and devised theatre?



Peepolykus: 'Let the Donkey Go'

A friend of his, who had done some clowning, told him about an advert in 'Time Out' for a course called 'Find Your Own Clown' with Pierre Byland. 'It was a terrifying prospect because inside every comedian is the fear that you are not really funny. Some people don't seem to have that fear – they look so cool that you think they just know that they're funny. But I certainly thought – I am actually not funny, I am just pretending to be funny – and there is a difference.'

And as anyone who has done clowning knows, that first approach to your clown is hard. During the course, someone recommended him to go to Philippe Gaulier, and he took to the work immediately. 'It wasn't that the work itself was new, but that someone was saying to me, what you do when you are standing up there in front of everyone, that is exactly right, that is what this work is about. I thought, that is very different from what they told me at drama school, where they told me to stop doing that.'

This approach gave him a whole new perspective on acting. 'I think all good performances start with the clown, because the clown is the simplest, most truthful part of yourself, the most vulnerable part, the most enthusiastic part. Any actor will tell you that the 'child' in them is very strong and clowning is letting that 'child' be free to play.'

As a result of having seen him perform with Gaulier in 1996, Peepolykus asked him to take over the direction of their show 'Let The Donkey Go'. With its success he went on to co-write and direct their next two hits, 'I Am A Coffee' and 'Horses For Courses'. This led to offers from The Boosh, The Cambridge Footlights, Leikin Loppu, Mel & Sue – and Spymonkey.

I felt privileged to accompany the rehearsals for 'Cooped'. It is always fascinating to watch another director work and see it in comparison to one's own approach. Although based on games and improvisation of scenarios that seem unrelated to the show, there is a definite direction in mind. He often knows the sketch he wants to use when he sets up the impro, even if the content isn't completely clear. He always manages to give the actors lots of confidence to play while letting them know very directly when it is crap, without elevating his own status!

The first performances of the work before an audience are regarded as an integral part of the devising process, a view echoed by fellow director John Wright who considers that a show is 'never completed, only abandoned'. Implicit in this is a sense that the audience, and what lives between them and the players, is essential to developing a show. It is a sort of audience participation, though the activity of the audience and their involvement with the process is essentially unconscious. The direc-

Spymonkey: 'Stiff'



tor accompanies the performances, watching the show, reading the audience, listening to how it is received, giving notes to the performers. When bigger changes are necessary, the show is taken off the road for periods of re-rehearsal. In this way the show continues to evolve until it is no longer performed, or 'abandoned'.

I think that what makes McCrystal's approach different is that he holds the material closer to himself; much of the show is based on him, his life and things he finds funny, together with details about the lives of the actors that he has prised out of them. 'When I start thinking about the show, I come up with ideas and this continues all the way through the rehearsal process – it is just things I think are funny. It is full of moments from life, things that I have remembered, even lines from films. For example, Petra sitting on Toby's knee in the love scene from "Stiff" says, "Am I so unattractive that you can speak to me of other women?" That is a line that Arkadina

says to Tregorin in "The Seagull". Most of the stuff in the show I can reference back to something in my life, that someone has said to me, or I've seen, or dreamt of or something.'

So after these great successes, where next? This year he will be: Director of Clowns for the new Cirque du Soleil show; associate producer on the BBC's revival of Basil Brush; making a film with Spymonkey based on 'Cooped' shot in a Scottish Castle; developing a sitcom idea of his for which the BBC have given him funding. And he is going to work on a new Spymonkey show.

So it looks like we will see a lot more of him in 2002... I am certainly glad to have had the opportunity to experience his work close up. ■

Interview quotations are taken from Practitioner Study Interview by Philip Beaven, MA ATP thesis 2001, Central School of Speech and Drama.

My Heart is Pounding

MEL DOLAN finds love and inspiration at the Goat Island Summer School in Bristol 2001



I remember sliding slowly across the floor, covered in earth, sweat and lipstick, shaking, muttering, heart pounding. Quite by chance, my lover sits in the audience where I'm heading. This is a piece about love, among other things – at least it turns out that way. I climb over my lover to reach my desired exit through the window; a real-life encounter telescoped into an imaginary space.

Miranda is writing Arundhati Roy on the wall: 'To love, to be loved, to never forget our own insignificance, to never get used to the unspeakable violence... to seek joy in the saddest of places, to pursue beauty to its lair, to never simplify what is complicated or compli-

cate what is simple. To respect strength not power. Above all, to watch. To try and understand. To never look away. And never, never to forget.' Krista and Robert declare dualities and throw themselves against the wall. Jo makes a fire. Robert's teddy bear watches in silence.

This was one of the final pieces we devised in the second Bristol Goat Island Summer School (they've run several in their home town of Chicago). The emphasis is on development and encouragement of new theory and practice in art/performance.

I had not expected to arrive at this new place in myself after three weeks of learning. Each experience along the way had been

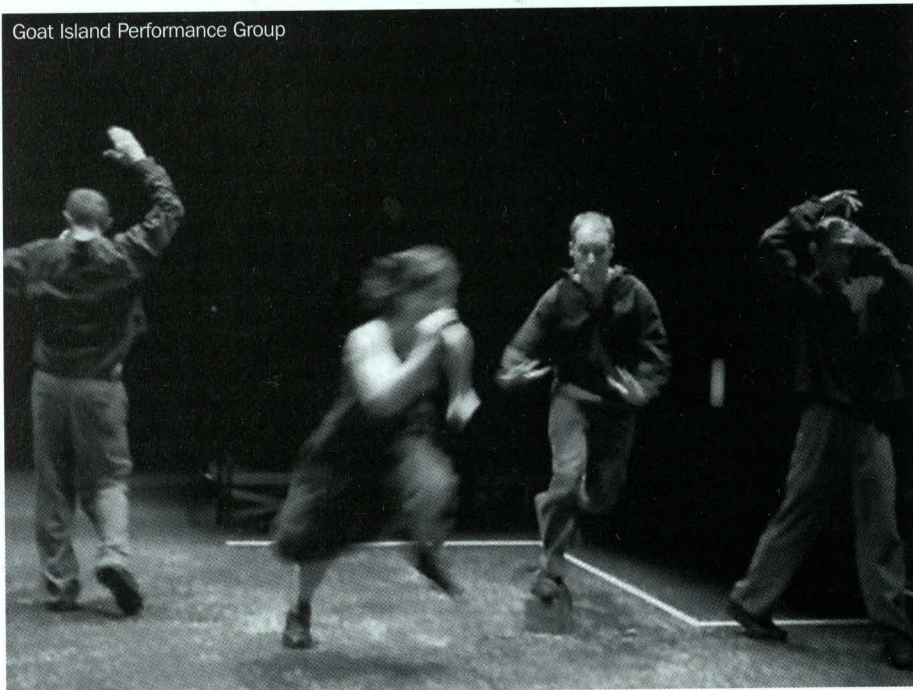
equally rich and varied. The most important aspect I found was the bringing of our own lives and experiences, our draft autobiographies, into the work, and building creative responses to each other.

'Goat Island performance work is a series of responses, to the exercises we give ourselves, to our surroundings, to the events of the world, but mostly to each other.' (Goat Island school book number 2)

This idea of creative responses is key to the Goats' process. They spend up to two years developing one of their own performances, with a full toolkit resplendent with exercises and methodologies which they rigorously put into practice. There is a high level of democracy and equality of input within their group. This was evident in how they ran the school, all giving their own individual teachings, within a carefully thought-out structure. Each member also gave a talk, where they got lovingly introduced by a co-member with care and value. It set up a fine example of respect and support for our individuality and our participation in a collaborative process.

The School was an opportunity to study together in a structured creative environment. Always, we started from the personal, the autobiographical. We start with our own response to a directive. That is then shared, as a 'fragment', with others. At some point, the responses get pooled, in another response, made as a group or solo. The initial contributions get mixed up in the collaborative pot, abstracted, some bits heightened, some forgotten. It felt a lot like the process of collective democratisation of individual experiences found in devising Forum Theatre. Here is the idea of sacrifice for a harvest – what

Goat Island Performance Group



This idea of creative responses is key to the Goats' process. They spend up to two years developing one of their own performances, with exercises and methodologies which they rigorously put into practice

can you find when you radically limit your choices?

Directives and clear instructions helped us to practise new ways of collaborative working ('make a list of moments to steal, create a menu of material, disrupt routine'). Here is the methodology in methodology: first prepare your way of working, then do it, and collect the fragments you want to play with. Repeat.

Individual research was often a starting point for the collection process. Goat director Lin Hixson sees research 'as an agent from the outside that transforms the material within, that brings nutrients to the digestion of our personal, individual experiences'.

Part of this research was to keep a daily journal for the duration of the School, in any form we chose, in a way we had not done before (gather something: a sound, an object; make a record of each 2pm; draw the same thing each day). We can find art in the smallest of things, in repeated actions. These are great starting points and for me, that's always the hardest part. As it says in Julia Cameron's 'The Artist's Way', the thing that gets in the way of making art is thinking you have to make Great Art.

For a while now, I've been trying to make life my art, not art my life. The journal project was a reminder of how to ground my inspiration. These little repeated actions give me a clue about the nature of embodying art. Creativity is not something that happens outside of my daily life, tagged on under 'professional activity'. John Fox of Welfare State once kindly and wisely suggested that I focused on my lifestyle more than my theatre company. Was it in line with my beliefs and aspirations? Was I happy or true to myself?

Are the sacrifices we make for art sometimes misplaced? If we have choice, are we using it wisely? Performers like Linda Montano and Tehching Hsieh have taken this to their own limits, creating art in everyday life, from tiny daily rituals to seven-year performances. I'm still doing this journal-making now. Who knows what will come of it? Right now they are private performances, rituals and temperature-gauges.

I feel that if I engage with myself, I also engage with the collective zeitgeist. If I start with the personal, it becomes something that everyone can connect with. When I watched the Goats in their current show about an unnamed disaster that happened on a Tuesday – 'It's an Earthquake in my Heart' – I wondered again about the strange synchronicity of art and life. It seemed to be about September 11th. Although I was watching it on September 12th, they started working on it two years ago. Was it just a chance thing? Or my interpretation? Or prophecy? A strange result of engaging with 'now'?

'In order for humans to believe or say anything with certainty we tend to select what we view... Our single point of view is developed from our experiences. Is there anything we know for sure?... Perhaps we should only trust things we see with the inclusion of another person's eyes and response.' (Bryan Saner's talk)

There were other ways of collecting material presented to us, in the form of research exercises and trips, where we would be given a suggestions guide of what to collect (architectural/movement fragments, a repeating event). Some were inward, like a writing exercise – 'What is your landscape?', 'Fleeting thoughts', 'An event that changed you', 'Why were you in pain in such a beautiful place?' In others we ventured into the great outdoors, observing:

*an element that is seen
an element that remains hidden
an element that offends nothing
shifting figures around a steady centre
an element of uselessness*

*a list of things equal in weight
a list of elements similar in quality*

*a distant gesture
a voice that fades
a point that vanishes*

a mistake

We created a variety of work over the three weeks. A lot of the performances were creative responses to other performances. All the work became connected. Some responses came as interventions, transforming or



Goat Island Summer School

expanding one moment in a piece. We created solos, duets in chance groupings, secret instructions (to perform in private and collect evidence), installations, outdoor and site-specific work and final bigger pieces.

Looking back, I am amazed and I wonder if I could do the same for myself without encouragement.

The school was supported by South West Dance Services, the Arnolfini, and Bristol University. This gave it a sense of place and recognition – and accessibility, with subsidised places. Both the school and the participants were valued from outside. There was some understanding about what we would gain from the experience. It's not often that a course like this has such a network of support and it made a real difference to me. The connections we made have been valuable to follow up. As have the exploits of fellow participants, who are making performance, live art and all sorts across the UK and beyond.

The closing exercise was given in a set of instructions displayed in large bold type, held by a silent Matthew Goulish. We write and edit some words and give them as gifts to each other. We receive them like flowers, or parcels with surprises inside. What does that word contain for you? 'Something to cherish,' said my wordgift. ■

For more information about Goat Island, contact CJ Mitchell at kcgoati@xsite.net

Reviews from the London International Mime Festival, January 2002

Lightwork 'London/My Lover'

ICA, LIMF 2002

Two screens, two cameras, two people (a man and a woman), two lives and an urban setting: London. These are the starting points for Lightwork's latest piece of live performance with mixed-media technology. 'London/My Lover' attempts to illustrate that the human body is as much a sum of its history and experience as the alleyways and footpaths of a city. At least, that's what I gathered from the programme, in which quotes from Peter Ackroyd and Roland Barthes are used as illuminating supporting material.

It is interesting to take two separate lives in the same city and in effect distil them by looking at the events in each character's day simultaneously. Such distillation allows a quiet and reflective study of two lives that eventually intersect by chance – and for London to flex its muscle in the lead role, playing none other than Cupid.

This was achieved quite effectively through combined recorded video image and live camera on stage as backdrop to the actors 'going through the motions' of their characters' daily routine. Some of the mime here was a bit unclear – at one point I thought she was sewing an elaborate tapestry rug to the office floor.

There is nudity – and this is where Barthes and co. on the programme became more relevant – but the con-

nection between urban landscape and the body as landscape remained spurious. The final image of two actors stranded starkers on separate podiums, gazing at each other through the video lens, not having physically connected at any point during the performance unfortunately meant that the whole exercise fell flat.

Anne-Louise Rentell

Conservas 'Femina Ex Machina'

ICA, LIMF 2002

'Femina Ex Machina' has probably the best opening sequence I have seen on stage ever. An interesting claim so I will try to recreate it here for you.

A raven-haired girl-woman lies centre stage (butt naked) sucking a lollipop, meeting the audience's gaze with non-plussed audacity – for some time. Then, enter stage right a girl on a swing, a very low swing, which arcs the length of the other's body, just skimming her buttocks. Then she starts smacking the buttocks with her shoe over and over again, for some time. I sense the audience growing impatient and irritated with such cheek, on behalf of our Lolita. But, just at the point when you think it's getting too much she suddenly draws a gun and shoots the girl on the swing. Blackout.

Yes, not quite the same as being there, I know, but I laughed loud. This was the first of seven vignettes in a similar vein, some as well realised and others not so, but all employing a witty and often surreal take on 'femaleness'. There is a scientific study of the unusual creature known only as 'woman in love'; a woman in black who has her own supply of tears

which run out; a tiny TV image of a coin being placed in the vaginal slot and some very strange machines. Or were they devices for torture? And of course, there is the woman with her head in the goldfish bowl...

Conservas is a Barcelona-based company led by performance artist Simona Levi. Their work is so fun and refreshing I could have watched it for hours.

Anne-Louise Rentell

Fabrik 'Petrified Skin'

ICA, LIMF 2002

Fabrik are described in the programme as 'literally born from the wreckage of the Berlin wall – its founders selling chunks of it to finance their theatre dreams.' An historical truth that translates into very good marketing. The two performers are set up as 'victims... separated by a hideous material obstacle... which prevents their spiritual development'. An audience is encouraged to empathise before the piece even begins. I do exactly that – ferociously; Berlin is a city very close to my heart.

Wolfgang Hoffmann and Benno Voorham present this sparse and gentle piece of theatre in the spirit of human communication. It was created in 1992, three years after the wall came down, in an intense and complicated climate.

It is the simple coming together of two men, one from East Berlin and one from West Berlin. The piece begins with a repetitive sequence with the East Berliner taking huge running jumps in a passionate attempt to cross the line of bricks curving down the centre of the stage which makes up the sparse and refreshingly simple symbolic set, only to be prevented by the man from West Berlin. The piece continues with a lot of running around and repeated, unoriginal contemporary dance moves, which for any emotional impact rely on the relationship between the two men. Sadly only Wolfgang Hoffman really engages with the audience; one warms to him and cares what will happen to him, and unless this is balanced with the equivalent engagement coming from the other performer, Benno Voorham, then the piece will always remain fatally flawed – watching two men pile and unpile a mound of bricks has to be

charged with something very intense to hold an audience's attention.

The fall of the Berlin wall and the resulting implications were very intense both for the people that lived there and for the world at large – this does not come across in 'Petrified Skin'. Writing about it in the programme is not enough.

Bridget Azizov

Compagnie Leandre-Claire 'Madame et Monsieur'

Purcell Room, LIMF 2002

Inspired by silent movies, 'Madame et Monsieur' is Chaplinesque, Keatonesque genius. Leandre Ribera and Claire Ducreux play two homeless waifs who meet, fall in love and begin to dream. Brown paper packing tape that they find in the dustbin becomes the bricks and mortar of their fantasy home as they build a life together, get married and have a child. They hang pictures on the wall, make plants grow, eat great meals, dance the tango, kiss, make love, clean, listen to the radio...

The performers utilise their phenomenal physical expertise to bring layer upon layer of meaning to moves both simple and complicated. There are numerous physical games played between them which take the audience into a realm of such tenderness and mutual support – she gets upset when he walks through the walls of their make-believe house; he tries to make her realise it's not real while at the same time unfailingly supporting her dreams.

The piece is brilliantly interlinked by piano music played by David Moreno (who becomes part of the action on many occasions) and the excellent 'special effects man' Aimon Ninerola, who is credited in the programme as 'The Other'. The irony emanating from his sign posting, pancake flipping, rain and other effects is quite simply hilarious. He also plays a brilliant tramp in search of a drink coming in from the outside world into their fantasy and disrupting everything.

This device of bringing someone from the outside in is further explored when a member of the audience is brought onstage to play the couple's child.

The night I saw it, they manoeuvred the action so well it was impos-



sible to see how this could ever fail. The whole audience were smitten by the touching sincerity of the performers and their interaction with another human being from another world. They even presented him with his own roll of brown packing tape so he could go and build his own dream house. Compagnie Leandre-Claire are a rare jewel in this world and must be treated as such. Pure joyous genius.

Bridget Azizov

Compagnie 111 'I.J.K.'

Purcell Rooms, LIMF 2002

Compagnie 111 from Toulouse, France, perform their show 'I.J.K.' with the stage set with numerous different-sized, wooden, hollow, colourfully painted boxes. Then begins an hour or so of balls – balls that bounce on, in, across and inside the boxes, manipulated with precision by Anne de Buck, Aurelien Bory and Olivier Alenda. Music also features heavily in 'I.J.K.' Anne plays the accordion and is accompanied by the rhythmical beating of the bouncing balls on the boxes, which resonate at differing pitches. There is also a juggling number to a tango played on a guitar. Rhythm, musicality and juggling are the main focus of the show. The cubes are used to good effect; they are moved around the stage, hidden in, juggled upon – and there is a great sequence in which Anne begins walking up the staircase of cubes and carries on walking in the air aided by the other two performers.

The largest cube was utilised as a slide and climbing apparatus, and a scene evolved which had beautiful child-like qualities to it. However, the surprise scene was the shadow section where the movement of the balls in shadow were producing some impossible balances and fantastical illusions of balls passing through wood.

Nevertheless the play between the three artists stayed on the same emotional level throughout – soulless. An air of pretentiousness came across: 'We're good and we know it'. This is not to take anything away from their high technical skill levels and imagination, but the show lacked something that left it as a mesmerising demonstration rather than a magical and moving piece of circus theatre.

Danny Schlesinger

Basil Twist 'The Araneidae Show and other pieces'

ICA, LIMF 2002

Basil Twist's dextrous talents were previously experienced in 'Symphonie Fantastique', presented at the Mime Festival 2001. Twist's creation tested the boundaries of performance space and technique via the manipulation of objects through water. His new solo work, three stand-alone pieces, is as adventurous.

'Angel's Tarantella' is a melodic and humorous introduction, in which an angel plays violin in deep concentration. Passionately bowing, her intensity lifts her to another level as the music takes hold.

'Stickman' is an exploration of the puppeteer's technique. A stick figure, simplistic in form yet sophisticated in motion, has life breathed into it



Basil Twist

through Twist's adept control of the strings. An intimate relationship is exposed through miniature, concentrated movements like a hand twitch or a slight head turn. This careful performance was interspersed with lighter moments of excited jiggling, indicating Twist's confidence in the form.

Filled with surprising images, 'The Araneidae Show' takes its name from the spider family, influencing the artist's 'fragile web of illusion'. Surreal observations, rather than narrative, make up this vision of dolled-up divas, and a filmic tour down dingy passages leads us to scenes of back-street sex and lonely despair. Mangy cats fighting over the motif spider, become embroiled in a cartoon-spin, only to shed their skins – from which emerge the camp divas with which the piece began.

Regarding his puppets as performers in their own right, Basil Twist's

impressive creations contain elaborate design and detailed figures, providing accessibility to his abstract presentations. Logistically complicated, this is a powerful and emotive collection of work.

Afriye Obeng

Avner Eisenberg 'Avner The Eccentric'

Purcell Rooms, LIMF 2002

Avner the Eccentric presented his show to a capacity crowd. His skills in magic, juggling, balancing objects, mime and slapstick are fantastic, together with the fact he is a superb theatre clown. Most of the tricks have been seen before, but it is Avner's ease and gentle character that endear him to the audience.

There is a lot of dropping objects, picking them up and dropping them again – as one problem is solved

another arises. There is also much juggling of popcorn and baseball bats, and balancing of a sheet of newspaper, a stack of paper cups and a peacock feather – then out of nowhere an incredible feat of acrobatics.

The show starts with Avner sweeping the stage. He then, after messing about with cigarettes and matches, communicates 'Five minutes until the show begins.' Thus the waiting – and a long series of nonsense – commences. The show only 'begins' ten minutes before its end, when Avner sits down at a table and starts eating serviettes and performing magic with a glass of wine.

The way Avner works with the audience is astounding – all with silence and gestures. At one point he conducts the whole audience in three sections in whistling and noise-making. When he drops a baseball bat he asks a woman in the audience for a

kiss to make it better, and then deliberately hurts himself to get another!

The physical predicaments are imaginative and simplistic but develop logically and organically. There is so much joy from such ridiculous party tricks so skilfully presented. It is this lightening of the heart that you take with you out of the theatre.

Danny Schlesinger

Ishka Theatre 'A Red Day'

BAC, LIMF 2002

This young company used full body masks to bring to life characters and scenarios based on Picasso's paintings. Thus Dora Maar, Picasso's lover, was annoyed by the presence of two of his other creations, a horse and the white lady. She attempted to escape from her frame, only to encounter both Picasso himself and the bull from Guernica.

Visually the masks were both striking and beautiful, creating a powerful impression that the paintings have come to life, although technically and rhythmically the actors sometimes failed to animate them. The sound was imaginative and arresting, especially in the Guernica sequence where visual and aural elements simultaneously conveyed a sense of beauty, menace and horror.

These elements were so strong they tended to overwhelm the drama. It is revealing that director Elaine Bastible notes in the programme, 'It is not very usual that a creative process starts with design, but that is how this show began.' Furthermore, despite the masks' three-dimensionality their drama was never more than two-dimensional. Picasso himself, for example, was presented as that familiar figure, the male artist who simply wants to paint. Yet behind that carefully cultivated persona was a complex being who concerned himself with the reality behind the masked.

The end result was that the audience was presented with a series of moving sculptures. Undeniably aesthetically pleasing, the show failed to fully engage. However I look forward to the future work of this company as I feel that they are creating an interesting development of mask work.

Richard Cuming

Ashdown Mummers

'St George and the Turkish Knight'

Ashdown Forest Pubs, Sussex, December 2001

On the weekend before Xmas, the Ashdown Mummers took their tale of the battle of good and evil to the hosteleries of Sussex, racing from pub to pub in full costume and make-up with a band of loyal followers tearing behind.

The origins of the play are lost in the mists of time – it is linked to the medieval miracle plays, and shares with commedia dell'arte the tradition of a travelling troupe presenting a story in which each of the archetypal characters is played by an actor who keeps that role for life. Characters such as the Doctor, Beelzebub and Old Father Christmas himself, dressed in traditional green not Coca-Cola red.

The story is a simple one, an allegorical tale of life versus death – as represented by St George and his combatant the Turkish Knight. Performed at the winter solstice, it celebrates the rebirth of the light and regeneration of nature. After a fearsome battle, the Turk is vanquished – and St George is restored to life by the kiss of a fair maiden (usually the pub barmaid).

The Ashdown Mummers have been performing this play for two decades – 'and they're no better now than they were then' says one fond admirer. It's true that they're not the

best actors in the world – but that is hardly the point. In restoring the Sussex Mummers tradition, they have done a great service, reminding us that the roots of theatre lie in the folk ritual dramas. It's all a matter of taste ultimately – if the idea of a hearty band of lusty-voiced men in tatters and bells appeals, then seek them out next year. If not – stay out of the woods of Sussex.

Dorothy Max Prior

Théâtre Sans Frontières

'L'Enfant Peul'

Warwick Arts Centre, November 2001

Although this is an adaptation of Amadou Hampate Ba's autobiography, it has all the trappings of a traditional folk tale. Perhaps because it has a young boy at its centre, and features Kings and Wise Women. Or maybe it's the style of the piece: simple use of indigenous props and corrugated screens to promote a multitude of locations, a combination of music, acting and storytelling.

Performed in French, this complex story of Ba's family origins and early years under French colonialism, conjures up the atmosphere of African village life. The programme offers a précis of the narrative together with a family tree to help audiences work out the relationships. But unless you studied this in depth prior to the performance, you might find yourself

lost. Actors play as many as four roles, as well as representing childhood friends and operating as storytellers. Despite the clever use of costume indicators, I found myself totally confused at several points.

The eight-strong multi-cultural cast fill every corner of the stage, a refreshing change to the small-cast shows we're used to. Movement is accomplished and precise. And they perform with relish. Whether the language was a barrier I couldn't penetrate, or whether the adaptation tried to embrace too much of the original, I'm unsure. But I left frustrated at not being able to work out what was going on. Théâtre sans Frontières' aim to facilitate communication between cultures wasn't working for me.

Dymphna Gallery

Mary Oliver

'Mother Tongue'

ICA, London, November 2001

'Mother Tongue' is a one-woman show that sits somewhere between theatre and performance art. Mary Oliver appears on stage alone but not alone – she is supported by a computer and a number of video monitors each of which features a Mary playing a projection (in both the visual media and psychoanalytical senses of the word) of her own mother and sisters, giving us a multi-layered representation of the performer and her family heritage and cultural influences. Much of the piece hinges around the notion of the mother tongue – the first language, the root experiences of childhood as communicated by the complicated system of words and gestures, signs and signifiers and symbols, encountered in the bosom of the family.

So far, so good. But the trouble with Mary is the usual 'performance art' conundrum of how to pitch the representation: is she 'being herself' or is she 'acting'? The show is an example of the dangers of a fear of 'acting'. In her real-time role of narrator of her own story, she seems rather hesitant and somehow 'not real'. By contrast, her on-screen 'acted' representations of her mother, sisters and younger self are spotted on and heart-wrenchingly 'real'. And when she moves away from the semantic role of language into the semiotic realm of sounds, sighs and

songs the piece soars to new heights – a particularly wonderful moment is when a choir of Marys become her family (including her dead Scottish mother) singing 'Amazing Grace' in unison. Although flawed, 'Mother Tongue' is a brave and beautiful evocation of the language of love and life.

Dorothy Max Prior

Niall Ashdown

'Hungarian Bird Festival'

Exeter Phoenix, January 2002

This is a crafty and exceptionally well-crafted hour and a half. The craft is rooted in Ashdown's pragmatism. His almost desultory opening sets the norm from which subtle variations have an incrementally exaggerated effect.

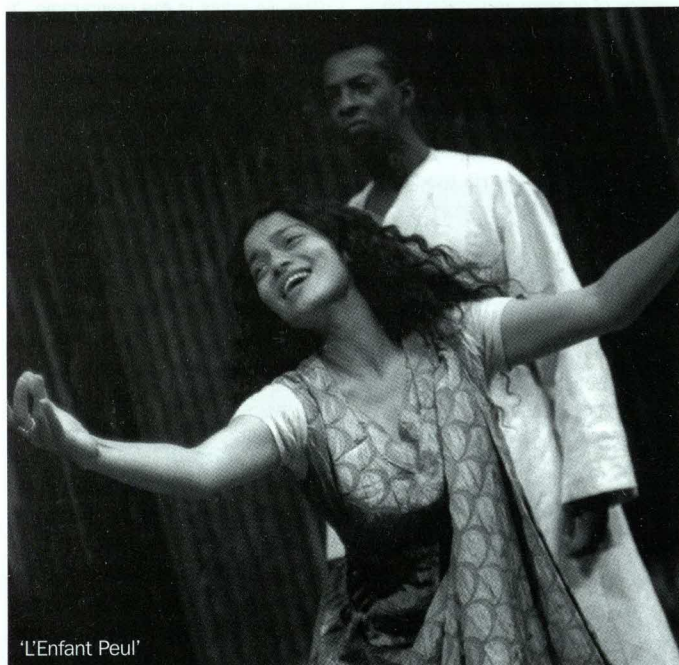
Ashdown, Comedy Store regular and member of Improbable Theatre, plays the same game with his physicality. Rejoicing in his flabby belly and recruiting his breathlessness after a bit of bird-imitation for an Attenborough-like piece of wildlife commentary, he first denies any physical craft – so his subsequent well-controlled and precise impersonations of various 'birders' and birds have all the more impact.

The craftiness is in the show's transition from its mildly deprecating opening remarks to a gradually revealing of affection for the objects of the birders' expedition (the ornithological holiday of Hungary of the title).

All this is mediated through Ashdown's relationship with his dad on this holiday. His dad is bossy, pedantic, a bit of a show-off to the ladies, and he snores for England – all grist to Ashdown's gentle comic mill. But, like the birds, when Ashdown wants to access his root affection for his father there is a problem: he has done so much undermining that his warmth is erected on an uncertain structure. Affection for Dad and birds are united in a single, affecting fantasy image – the two men stroking the plumage of a trusting dotterel. This is the climax of the piece, but as if acknowledging he hasn't quite done enough Ashdown adds a crowd-pleasing 'Bird of the Week' TV send-up and an exultant listing of all 129 species of bird spotted on his Hungarian adventure.

An always engaging show, perhaps slightly disappointing for its lack of ambition.

Phil Smith



'L'Enfant Peul'

Theatre Alibi

'Why the Whales Came'

Komedia, Brighton,
November 2001

RSC

'The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe'

Sadler's Wells, London,
December 2001

Tall Stories

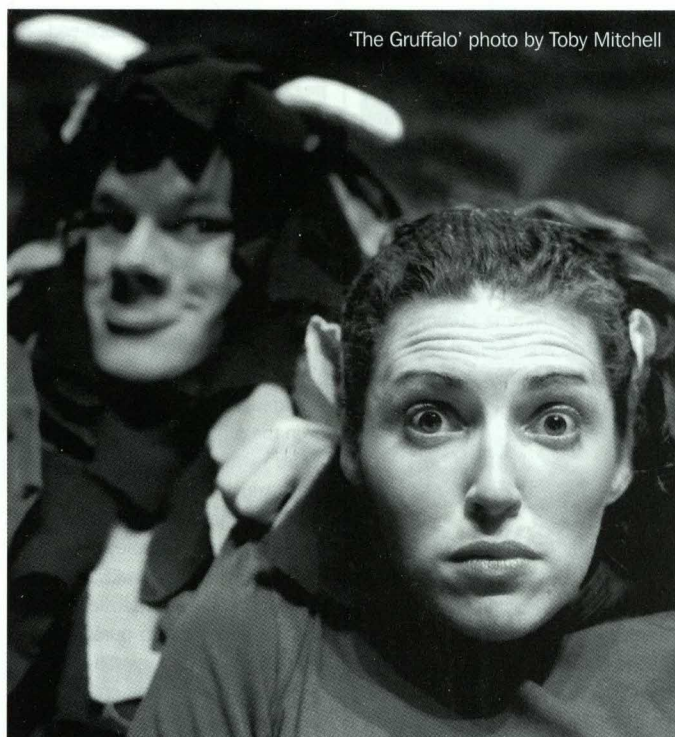
'The Gruffalo'

Komedia, Brighton,
January 2002

Being a mother-of-three I quite naturally detest children's theatre – I have sat through so much dross over the past decade... Ghastly TV presenters telling adult-oriented jokes, nasty furry puppets that have terrorised my children, appalling literary adaptations that make me wish I'd stayed at home and read the book. So it was with some trepidation that I approached the winter season of 'family shows' with my youngest child in tow.

Our first outing was to Theatre Alibi's 'Why the Whales Came'. This was a thoughtful, lyrical, sometimes melancholic but ultimately uplifting story. It offers the idea that we can all make strong, moral choices about our relationship to the external world – in the sense of both other people and the physical environment. As its theme is the emergence of self-awareness and the mirroring of the self in one's choices it is ideally suited for the targeted 8-13 year olds. The company used a mix of story-telling, props made from natural objects and strong physical performance to tell their tale well. Congratulations go to the Komedia for programming the show in the early evening – the full house proved that this is an ideal time for young theatre-goers.

Next, the Xmas show at Sadler's Wells, an adaptation of C.S. Lewis's second Narnia story. Being a Royal Shakespeare Company blockbuster, all the stops were pulled out: we had trapdoors, carousels, billowing silk cloths and sleighs riding across the stage accompanied by prancing reindeer and dancing unicorns. The leads were all rather 'actorly' and the darker side of Narnia predictably glossed



'The Gruffalo' photo by Toby Mitchell

over – the White Witch played with all the high camp of Cruella De Vil – but it was nevertheless a good entertaining afternoon out.

Back to the Komedia for the last of our three: Tall Stories' 'The Gruffalo' is also based on a favourite children's book and featured people pretending to be speaking animals – but there the comparisons end. There wasn't a trapdoor in sight – just the simplest of sets, a group of real Christmas trees and little else. Aimed at very young children, this is a simple tale told well, with the universal appeal of all good theatre. A little mouse takes a walk in the woods, ignoring warnings of danger. She scares off predators by threatening to summon up the Gruffalo – eventually conjuring him up and taming him with her wit and presence of mind. Like Aesop's famous 'mouse' fables, this tale of empowerment and self-determination has an obvious appeal to little people. The show is an absolute delight – witty, but the humour is in the clever development of the animal archetypes (the salsa-dancing snake was a particular favourite of ours) rather than inappropriate jokes. The three performers are all great – we were particularly enchanted by Hilda Gardner as the mouse. And although aimed at under 5's, this was the show that 9-year-old Francis liked best – we are still singing 'G-G-G-Gruffalo' loudly on bath nights.

This was a perhaps a lucky strike – three out of three good shows. Or maybe there is a quiet revolution happening in children's theatre...

Dorothy Max Prior

Told By An Idiot

'Aladdin'

Lyric Hammersmith,
December 2001

It's panto season and Told By An Idiot serve up an alternative recipe to the usual high camp shenanigans, though not without the classic ingredients of the dastardly villain, the cross-dressing and the obligatory audience participation.

Aladdin's search for true love, performed with engaging charm by Hayley Carmichael, is hindered by the power-crazed Abanazer, played with devilish relish by Richard Katz. Seeking escape from the drudge of her Wash and Twirl laundrette, Widow Twankey – a sparkly Paul Hunter delivering blows to the head from Twankey's breakfast special frying pan – yearns for money. While Aladdin's best friend Wishee Washee, a hilarious turn from Javier Marzan, careers about the stage with his trademark Peepolykus clowning. Of course love wins the day and Aladdin gets to marry the princess and, thanks to the genie, becomes exceedingly rich, whilst the baddie is suitably thwarted

and having accidentally swallowed the genie, slinks offstage arguing over who gets to choose what to eat for dinner.

Although occasionally missing the mark with heavy repetition of some gags, and wordplay referencing songs from the 70s and 80s – perhaps a little obscure for the younger audience – the sheer glee with which the performers play the comedy is a delight. This is intelligent, feelgood pantomime beautifully staged and rich with humour, a perfect antidote to Christmas excess. Altogether now: 'He's behind you!'

David Bere

Patter

'A Quiet Meditation on Magic'

Lion & Unicorn, Kentish Town,
December 2001

A magician and his beautiful assistant attempt to perform magic tricks. Though never truly successful, Peter Arnold and Melanie Wilson perform with absolute conviction as they proceed to demonstrate how the magician acts to fool you – though here it is the magician who is the fool. Two quiet clowns haplessly stumbling through routines without a discernible end. Mistakes are made, but undeterred the performers soldier on as though nothing has happened.

Not so much deconstruction of the magician's art (there is none of the brash bravado of Penn and Teller), this is more about the art of failure and repetition. How, through practising sleight of hand and misdirection, the audience can be amazed. Arnold and Wilson choose to take the theory and play games with it – like a mimed fleck of dust that is thrown between the performers, to appear and disappear all over the stage.

Yet amongst the oddity and hilarity of some of the games, it is the unexpected use of one real trick – a member of the audience writes their name on a piece of paper which is then ripped up only to be pulled intact from a lemon – which leaves you wanting more of the real magic. Despite this, the show is performed with an understated pleasure and a winning charm. This show is exactly what it says on the label: a quiet meditation on magic.

David Bere

Forced Entertainment 'First Night'

Robin Howard Theatre, The Place, London, Dec 2001

Red plush curtains, leggy girls, guys in loud suits, big teeth smiles and loads of slap. What have we here? Yet another postmodern pastiche of the world of variety – a bag of cheap tricks that both send up and honour popular entertainment, the amusing-ourselves-to-death Big Night Out? Well, no. This being Forced Entertainment, we are not let off so lightly. Having set up the premise of a knowing romp through the fag-ends of showbusiness, the company move the whole thing onto another level. 'First Night' uses techniques familiar from earlier work such as 'Speak Bitterness' – toe curling personal confession, endless lists, the juxtaposing of the mundane and the profoundly important – and applies these to set pieces such as a wonderful re-working of the Mr Memory act in which audience members have the nature of their death foretold: 'You in the second row – breast cancer.'

We are pushed into a confrontational re-evaluation of our relationship to 'theatre'; our passivity is challenged – yet there is no obvious possibility of active engagement. Our choice is basically to put up or get out – which some do. We are exhorted to forget

the outside world, then fed a list of things to forget, from babysitter problems to the car-crash down the road. And of course the urging of forgetfulness reminds us of the absurdity of the notion of theatre as a self-contained capsule existing outside of the time, space and action of the real world. But here we strike another irony: for 'First Night' is in many ways a conventional drama – conforming to the Unities and fulfilling Aristotle's requirement of Catharsis. Laugh – I nearly died.

Dorothy Max Prior

Gogmagogs 'Troy Town'

Riverside Studios, London, November 2001

'Troy Town' takes its inspiration from labyrinths. In a cross between a TV game show and a computer game, the contestants attempt to find a way out of the labyrinth while illustrating the moods with their instruments: the Gogmagogs are seven classically trained string players. The set has many entrances and exits where performers – mainly couples – appear from in various states of agitation. They call to each other, implying relationships which at times reminded me of the star-crossed lovers in the forest outside Athens in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'.

The music, created and played by

the performers, was interspersed with a very simplistic, repetitive text. At the peak of the show masks are introduced and a Minotaur bull with an erect penis appears which then mates with a cow, while the other members of the cast, wearing horns, play the music and dance around. The ending is a ritualistic slaying of the bull, then the performers/players are told they can move onto level two!

This was the Gogmagog's sixth show – and the first in which the music was composed by the company in the rehearsal process. I left the theatre with admiration for the way these musicians moved around the stage while playing their instruments. But I wondered what they were trying to achieve with this awkward mix of genres, and they desperately need a writer if they want to pursue text in their shows. Having seen a couple of previous shows – their collaboration with the composer John Tavener was very good – 'Troy Town' was a disappointing experience.

Philip Beaven

Passe Partout 'Progress in Flying Machines'

BAC, London, November 2001

Directed by Paul King, who previously directed the comedian Garth Merenghi, this show steers a simple flightpath between whimsical come-

dy and storytelling. From tales of magnificent men in their flying machines attempting to defy gravity and reach to the heavens there emerges a love story of a man pursuing a woman seemingly lost to the angels – she simply evaporated into thin air.

The theme seems to be that man will never give up on his quest to succeed, no matter how ludicrous the idea. Alice Lowe, David Mitchell and Robert Webb excellently perform the lunacy of noblemen and monks striving to build successful air-machines. In its comedy it soars amongst the clouds swooping from the sublime to the ridiculous, especially Lowe's portrayal of a monkey coerced into the cockpit of another doomed aircraft.

However, the love story seems to be flying in a different direction to the tales of mad flights of fancy. By injecting a narrative of a lovelorn traveller chasing the ghost of his missing girlfriend we are never quite sure whether the piece becomes a meditation on loss or valiant stupidity. How long do you cling to the memory of the lover who has left you? Sparsely staged around a bunk bed, the trio performs with perfect comic timing. Despite the incongruous coupling of a love story to the comic material the performers remain true to the emotional journey of the characters, heightening the pathos of a story essentially about man's folly in flight.

David Bere

Dende Collective 'Viva Maria'

The Oval House, Kennington, November 2001

A Brazilian double-bill. Two plays about Brazil, the allure of Brazil, the beaches, the sun, sex, soap operas and the perfect destination for Europeans on the run.

The first play is about an ageing soap-opera star who has it all – the money, the fame, the enemies, the virile husband, the best plastic surgeon and the cocaine habit to match any A-list celebrity. A story about bitterness, jealousy and betrayal, coming on strong like a Jackie Collins novel. This is a solo piece that relies heavily on the ability of the actor; though she captures the mercurial Maria with viscous precision, her face wrapped in cling film like the shiny



'First Night'

gloss of the plastic surgeon, her occasional transformation into Maria's arch enemy fails to convince.

The second play is a murder story about an Englishman on the run. Escaping murder in England to search out his dream date – a woman he met in an Internet chatroom – he lands in Brazil pursued by the ghosts of his victims. What ensues is a confusing switch between his imagination and his reality culminating in a stand-out dream sequence. His ghosts, taunting him with his insecurities act out, like children in the playground, the murder of his final victim who dies symbolically with the shot of a party-popper to the heart. Unfortunately, trying to marry real and symbolic violence undermines the drama by failing to accurately pinpoint how his ghosts are illustrating the moral conflict that is raging in his head.

David Bere

Circus Ronaldo 'Fili'

Amersfoort Festival 2001,
Holland

'Fili' is a glorious mixture of theatre and circus which takes place in a big top. As you take your place, various performers begin the job of warming you up, thus introducing you gently to the running gags, squabbling and anarchy that permeate the performance. The Ronaldos have a long history of circus and the atmosphere is intimate and worlds away from the off-putting slickness of Cirque du Soleil.

At the back of the tent the father of the family appears. He's all in black with a tricorn hat, mutton chop sideburns, holding a crossbow. He lights the arrow, takes aim and shoots it into a target which bursts into flames. A parade then enters the tent. Music, a pantomime horse and lots of fire. This sets the tone for the show which features inspired clowning, high quality circus skills performed at breakneck speed, a heavy gothic atmosphere and theatre which draws heavily on the commedia tradition.

High points? At one point the electricity 'fails'. The usher (dressed like a Dutch burgher) stands in the pitch darkness holding a candelabra which illuminates a sea of faces – a living Rembrandt painting. A marionette opera descends into complete

anarchy with a randy puppeteer, a diva who sings completely flat and a rogue dragon which sets the puppet theatre alight. Then, a solemn parade – the family bring on a four-poster bed of nails. The mother, dressed in heavy black lace, takes off her slippers, climbs a ladder of swords and lies on the bed which is carried off. Breathing-taking. This show is a treat. Croydon Festival brought it to the UK in 2001 – I hope other promoters in England will bring it over this summer.

Edward Taylor

Lindsay Kemp 'Dreamdances'

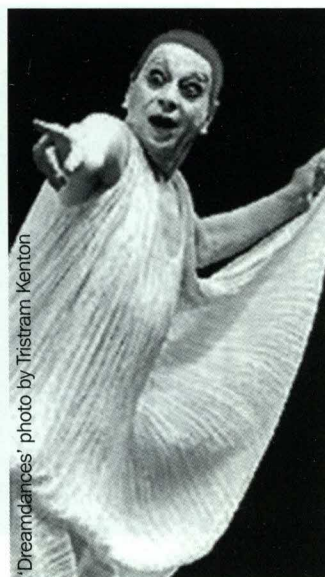
Peacock Theatre, London,
January 2002

Pina Bausch Tanztheater Wuppertal 'Masurca Fogo'

Sadler's Wells, London,
January 2002

What a luxury to have these living legends in London in the same week. There is no point in attempting critical aloofness – quite simply, Lindsay Kemp and Pina Bausch have directly or indirectly been the major influences on current dance-mime and dance-theatre practice.

Lindsay Kemp changed my life: seeing 'Flowers' in the mid-1970s taught me that dance didn't have to be po-faced or pretty – it could be ironic and decadent. And I learnt of the existence of mime. His latest show 'Dreamdances' consists of ten vignettes – many taken from or influenced by earlier Kemp works. He is often accompanied by Nuria Moreno and Marco Berriel – and Berriel's choreography is strongly featured throughout. Although these are both accomplished dancers, and their pieces entertaining, the stage only really comes alive when Kemp is on it. It is his clown-like quality of vulnerability and self-exposure that makes him so riveting to watch. Highlights included 'Memories of a Traviata' – an excuse for the famous Kemp angst-ridden walk on stage in a big frock – and the extraordinary 'Requiem for Antonio Salieri'. This is an ode to genius – and a rail against the injustices of the gods. In a piece of perfect theatre, Kemp as Salieri silently rants



'Dreamdances' photo by Tristram Kenton

and tears his hair out as a soundtrack of Mozart's music becomes ever louder... The final piece 'The Angel' is a visually stunning composition; Kemp stage-centre wearing the world's biggest pair of wings washed in light of many colours – an ode to dance pioneer Lois Fuller and an example of the fruits of the fabulous long-term collaboration between Kemp and lighting artist John Spradbery. Then came the bows. Lindsay Kemp's curtain calls are performances in themselves: with immaculate precision and timing, he enters and exits time and again – manipulating the audience to a frenzy. For this alone he should be lauded as our country's greatest showman.

Pina Bausch's 'Masurca Fogo' was also a joy – and a surprise. Any remaining elements of Ausdruckstanz seem exorcised from her work. This piece is a wondrous ode to life and love – and a celebration of dance. Popular and social forms of dance are often referenced in contemporary dance-theatre: but usually as a pastiche or ironic, skin-deep passing metaphor. In this piece, Bausch takes the Masurca of the title – a lilting rhythm in three/four – and creates a repeated series of movement motifs that recur throughout: like the music, they are lyrical, joyful and exuberant. It has become such a cliché of contemporary dance that one should work against the music not with it that it is a startling and revolutionary delight to see dance presented as a form that has an intrinsic and powerful relationship to music. This forms the foundation of the piece, which is then merged with powerful visual images – often in the

form of film projected across the whole stage – and physical theatre set-pieces: a water slide created from a large sheet of plastic, a human surfing of bodies, the onstage construction of a chair which is then left to sit alone on stage. All elements combine to produce a harmonious and beautiful performance piece that sings the joy of being alive in a human body – surely the essence of dance and theatre.

Dorothy Max Prior

Metro.Boulot.Dodo 'GAG, a nasty piece of work'

Robert Powell Theatre, Salford
University, December 2001

Stage right a gauze cube, back-lit, represents the cell. Upstage, four shiny alloy bar stools upon which perch four young adults, their backs to the audience. Above their heads three TV screens and beneath these a sound system. Stage left a lectern.

The first monologue begins with the fractured testimony of a confused hostage, then becomes the unintelligible ramblings of an Oxford don before rising to a crescendo of Wagnerian myth. Between their monologues they perform rhythmic movement to modern dance music while clutching empty glass bottles. These slick and well-rehearsed performances cleverly create a monotomy of action and rambling discourse which achieves such a level of banality that, in order to continue to focus my attention on the performance, I was left with a stark choice: either I would have to gnaw off my limbs to avoid screaming or I would have to attempt to divine a meaning within this work of art.

These are the nurtured, educated professionals of the modern Western world, aggressively assertive and purposeful. But underneath their arrogant defensive psychology they yearn for the romantic and mysterious heroes of Wagnerian myth.

A figure, obviously from a previous generation, is confined to a cell within the TV screen. This pathetic bound figure represents the rejection of the paternalistic values of the past by a brave new generation, who by questioning everything demonstrate that they know nothing.

Michael Lister

PERFORMER & COMPANY UPDATE

A Quiet Word,

formerly Alison Andrews Co., presents two new works, integrating film with live performance: 'Shift/Shaft' is the story of a woman dying in a pool of her own blood and begins many years ago in a white room that smells of antiseptic... The piece explores a life without memory. 'Burnt Offerings and Bad Habits' is the story of the preparations for a production of 'King Lear'. These complementary pieces form one work, exploring the effect of the past on the future. They will be touring Autumn 2002. For more information or to view a CD-Rom of the performance, contact: Emma Tregidden or Dawn Fuller on 0113 2485459, or e-mail onestop.touring@virgin.net

AboutFace Theatre Company UK

are bringing two shows to the Brighton Festival this year; 'close ups', an intimate, dream-like meditation about love, life and loneliness directed by Tim Hall (formerly of Forced Entertainment); and 'The Suicide Projects', a theatrical lecture about those left behind, using four bodies, a white board and non-permanent markers performed by Kayla Fell, Jane Larsen, Nathan Rimell and Joanna Rosenfeld. Recently Joanna could be seen collaborating with New Lore Company in their work-in-progress show of 'What I?' at the Old Vic as part of the New Voices evenings. For company information please e-mail aboutfacetheatrecompany@madasafish.com or call 01273 773989.

Angela de Castro

is currently re-developing her semi-autobiographical piece 'My Life is Like a Yo-Yo', which is touring from May through until August. Directed by Gail Kelly and written by Bryony Lavery, 'My Life is Like a Yo-Yo' peers into the world of this Brazilian-born clown, exploring identity and transformation. A solo show that mixes stand-up, poetry, clowning, music and text, revealing the person behind the clown. This project has been supported by ACE, the Brazilian Embassy and BAC. De Castro will also be touring 'Only Fools, No Horses' in Autumn – a delightful take on Shakespeare, with music, magical design and a small ensemble of performers. Funded by London Arts. Details: CB Projects on 020 8348 0203.

Base Chorus,

following a successful tour of 'The Corrupted Angel' in 2001, have re-developed the show and are touring again this April and May. Base Chorus present a highly charged piece of physical theatre, combining a cinematic feel (with full-on surround sound) and a powerful and moving musical score. This production has been supported by ACE and North West Arts. Details: CB Projects on 020 8348 0203.

Forbidden Theatre Company

have received a grant from the Lottery's Awards for All programme towards one of their education projects. They will be working on a show with ten young people and four professional actors. The aim is to show the young people how a professional company rehearses a show and

acquaint them with training methods in acting. The resulting performances will take place at the Diorama Studio Theatre on 25 & 26 May of this year. For further information please contact 020 7813 1025 or email us at info@forbidden.org.uk. Visit www.forbidden.org.uk

Heir of Insanity

has successfully secured funding from the Arts Council of England to produce a new show based on the myth of Atlantis. The new show will fuse stunning aerial and acrobatic skills with up-to-the-minute technology. It will be staged on a specially designed aerial rig with an incredible inflatable set. The company has begun rehearsals and the show will be world premiered at the Hippodrome, Great Yarmouth, during Easter weekend, 2002. For more information, please e-mail julia@heirofinsanity.com or telephone 07721 587279.

Horse + Bamboo

has recently pulled off a 10,000-Euro funding coup from the European Association for Jewish Culture (EAJC). The money was awarded for the development of a new work 'Company of Angels: The Story of Charlotte Salomon' which will go on tour across the UK later this autumn. The show will use masks, puppetry, performance and live music – an approach which has won Horse + Bamboo a unique reputation in the UK and in Europe. Charlotte Salomon was a German Jewish artist who died in Auschwitz in 1943, aged just 26. In the last year of her life she produced a series of 765 gouache paintings that provide one of the most penetrating visual records of an individual's life in the Nazi era.

Hoxton Bark

is a fabulous new monthly cabaret evening at Hoxton Hall, one of London's few remaining original Music Hall venues. The opening night on 28 February saw the incorrigible Miss Ida Barr present her own unique mix of old favourites and modern ditties. She was joined by Marilyn Monroe, the Great Orlando and the Strangelings – amongst many others. On 4 April, Tammy Whynot will take the stage – together with Rachel the egg-laying Aphrodite, the Half Naked Chef, Cristy Gilbert and Danny Schlesinger. Prepare to have your imagination tickled and your propriety outraged. Contact Anne-Louise Rentell for more information – or to offer yourself as a future act: 07949 061636.

In Toto Productions

are back after three years with their largest and most ambitious production to date. 'The Hair of the Dog', which they will be playing at the Trinity Arts Centre, Tunbridge Wells, from 19 to 24 March as the headline act of their 'Innovations' season, combines film, puppetry, music and live action to tell the life story of Bruno – a man brought up in complete isolation who goes on to develop terrifyingly powerful eyesight. Following the performances at Trinity, the show will be playing at the De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill, on 25 April and will open the Brighton Festival on 4 and 5 May at the Sallis Benney Theatre. The production will be available for booking for dates later this year. For information, please contact Lou Cope at In Toto Productions, PO Box 2247,

Brighton BN1 3DQ or e-mail admin@intoto.freemove.co.uk

Kabosh,

recently nominated at the 2002 Irish Times/ESB Theatre Awards, are embarking on their UK and Ireland tour of 'Mojo-Mickybo' by Owen McCafferty. This award-winning production will tour across England, Scotland and Wales between September and October before returning to Ireland in November as part of Queens Festival in Belfast. The company will also be launching a physical storytelling project at the end of the year and into Spring 2003. For further details contact Kabosh 028 9024 3343 or email kabosh@dircon.co.uk

Niki McCretton

is touring her solo show 'Worm-Hole' in the UK during April and May, following the success of a run at Edinburgh. The show then tours to the first Prague Fringe festival in June and onto Canada and the USA throughout July and August. The tour ends with a visit to the Apatiscena International Festival of Theatre and Dance in Crema, Italy. She is currently developing her new show 'Heretic' which is being directed by Guy Dartnell and is the result of a Commissions Fund Award from South West Arts. 'Heretic' charts the lives of those who have been sidelined, have fallen from grace or are excommunicated. For more details phone Niki McCretton on 01278 446400 or e-mail nikimccretton@lineone.net

Ophaboom

now have a website (www.ophaboom.com) and are currently touring their new show 'Robin Hood'. They hope to be working with four other European commedia companies to establish a network interested in mask performance. The company is looking to develop the cross between masks and bouffon and are planning a demented version of the Burke and Hare story in early 2003.

Niki McCretton



postscript

performed a new collection of ideas as part of a work in progress night on 11 March at the Lion and Unicorn Theatre, Kentish Town. They hope to follow this with a full-length show in the summer. The new work is a devised piece and sees them collaborating with new performers. For further information on postscript or the performance e-mail postscriptcontact@hotmail.com.

Rejects Revenge

is starting a new phase of its existence. With former co-artistic directors Ann Farrar and David White stepping down from the everyday running of the company, this leaves Tim Hibberd to steer the company, alongside new administrator Jessica Egan. This year, Rejects can be found performing an old favourite 'Peasouper' at the Singapore Comedy Festival over Easter. The rest of the year will be spent writing and planning the new mid-scale show, expected to tour in March / April 2003 – watch this space!

Richard Knight

is starting a new company called Mime the Gap, which will offer corporate entertainment and performances for street festivals. Contact Richard on 07970 685982 or e-mail: knightlee@compuserve.com. Website: www.mimethegap.com

Ridiculusmus

launch their first EP on CD, 'Eepeeseedey, a very Ridiculusmus groove' and are appearing at BAC, presenting a scratch performance on Tuesday 30 April as part of the Opera 2002 season. Feedback will be welcomed in the bar afterwards. The new website www.ridiculusmus.com contains details of the company's theatre, radio, television, music and publications.

Shifting Sands

are touring their new highly physical and hilarious production of 'Faustus' from February to April 2002, funded by East Midlands Arts. They are currently looking at a new project for later in the year, as well as possibilities of re-mounting 'Faustus' in November. Details: Gerry Flanagan on 01629 55795.

Tall Stories

performed their version of 'Snow White' at Showcase 2002 in Philadelphia – as a result of which it was booked to play three weeks at the New Victory Theatre on Broadway in 2003. They are currently in a state of hysteria. Meanwhile, the company presented 'The Gruffalo' in the platform space in the National Theatre foyer in February 2002, continuing a tour which has taken it to venues including Battersea Arts Centre, the Birmingham Rep and the Bristol Old Vic. 'The Gruffalo' travels to Warsaw in June and returns to the Edinburgh Fringe in August, alongside a new show which the company are currently developing. See www.tallstories.org.uk for more information.

Tell Tale Hearts

recently completed the final UK tour of 'Murder, Madame?' in February. The company is now gearing towards their new project – 'Donkey Haughty', a fantasy adventure inspired by



Ridiculusmus

Cervantes' classic, comic odyssey 'Don Quixote'. Creating Spanish plains and colourful landscapes, the mad, heroic world of Quixote's imagination is explored through the use of puppetry and transformations! To be devised by the company, directed by Javier Marzan (Peepolykus/Told by an Idiot) with puppetry direction by Alison McGowan (Improbable/Theatre Rites), 'Donkey Haughty' will be trotting into London theatres in September 2002, and will be available for touring for the autumn season 2002. Please contact: Isabel Caballero or Natasha Holmes on 020 8888 3780 or e-mail ttharts@cwcom.net for further details.

The Detonators

is a company founded by Margaret Swallow (UK) and Tiago Gambogi (Brazil). They created their latest show 'My Generation – kaleidoscopic childhood' in Brazil and premiered it in July 2001 with funding from the British Council. They have now relocated to Dorset and will be presenting the production in various theatres in 2002/03. For further information contact fab_thedetonators@hotmail.com

The Rose Theatre Company

are currently touring 'Faustuslite', a live/video interactive version of Marlowe's text, with Dan Skinner, Faroque Khan, Sadie Jemmett. 'A daring production – like an exhilarating fairground ride' – The Scotsman, Edinburgh Festival 2001. For further information contact Dan Skinner on 01342 825639 or e-mail dan.skinner@btinternet.com

Théâtre Sans Frontières

have been busy planning their next five years' work, as a result of the recent Drama Review in which they were awarded additional money from Northern Arts and a National Touring Franchise. Between 2002-4 they have a variety of productions planned, including: 'Alice', a co-production with Edinburgh theatre company Benchtoours, based on 'Alice in Wonderland' in English, 'Manon Lescaut' in French; a production in Spanish; and a multilingual production called 'Lipsync' which will be a collaboration with Robert Lepage and Ex Machina in Quebec. At the same

time they continue to tour their popular 'Le Tour de France' for 7-12 year olds and family audiences. They are always looking for new performers, in particular those with a physical theatre training and who speak French and/or Spanish. E-mail CVs to: admin@tsfront.co.uk

Whalley Range All Stars

present 'Bedcases', a new show for 2002. This performance involves five performers in a large bed with five members of the public. The show lasts ten minutes and takes place inside a small tent. It features the company's trademark visual imagination and adds several new surprises. A special musical soundtrack has been composed and recorded by Clive Bell. The show has been commissioned by Stockton International Riverside Festival and Coventry Arts Alive. Look out for dates in July and August. These will be posted up on our website: www.good.co.uk/wr.allstars. 'Bedcases' can be seen in Stockton from 1 to 4 August as part of a mini-retrospective celebrating the company's 20th birthday.

Zin Lit'

performed at the Luleå Winter Biennial on 1 March – a true outdoor challenge with temperatures down to -30° Celsius. Their aerial acrobatics above the famous Erik Westberg Vocal Ensemble symbolised the celebration of the arctic circle. Their show 'Norrskén' continues to tour Sweden. Zin-Lit' is aiming to create a New Stage Centre in the south of Sweden. Permanent stage, rehearsal space, horse facilities, office, exhibition hall, guest accommodation, educational activities and seminars are being established.

OPPORTUNITIES

Black Labrador Community Arts

are looking for artists working in performance or video to showcase their work or run a workshop or discussion as part of their fourth annual community arts showcase festival in Manchester, 31 May to 9 June 2002. If you are a community arts practitioner and interested in taking part, call Gail Skelly or James Walmsey on 0161 833 3050 or e-mail gail@communityarts.co.uk

Blast!

is the BBC's new arts initiative for UK youth. During the summer months of 2002, in arts centres and youth clubs throughout the UK, 12-19 year-olds will produce acts of imagination in dance, art, music and film. They will bring their ideas to the BBC and receive encouragement, advice and practical support from a range of arts specialists. Blast! is supported by the DCMS and Arts Council, and will culminate in various showcasing opportunities across the UK during late summer 2002. There is an opportunity for artists to become involved – by putting your contact details on BBC Blast's online source book or by joining a growing list of paid experts who will provide advice to young people taking part in the Blast project. If you are interested please contact Jo Wheeler on 020 8752 5138 or e-mail jo.wheeler@bbc.co.uk

COTA,

the collective of theatre artists, are currently accepting submissions for the forthcoming ROAR 3 season at the Lion and Unicorn in Kentish Town London in May 2002. Companies and artists who are interested in a two-night slot in the season should submit proposals to organisationcota@hotmail.com. The slots are offered on a 50/50 box office split basis. COTA and the Lion and Unicorn support new work and artists by providing a safe environment to try out and develop new ideas. For more information contact COTA at the above e-mail address or see www.cota.org.uk and www.lionandunicorn.co.uk

For Site

investigates the relationship between dance and the urban environment using Shoreditch as the site. Architects, designers, dancers and visual artists will work together over four weekends in April, May and June. If you are a dancer or performer with a background in improvisation and would like to take part please contact the Chisenhale Dance Space on 020 8981 6617 for more information or see www.chisenhaledancespace.co.uk

Spymonkey

are looking for a stage manager to join the team over the next few months, including UK and international touring of 'Stiff' and 'Cooped'. Contact Spymonkey management: Kathy Bourne, Tiger Aspect Productions, 7 Soho Street, London W1D 3DQ. Telephone +44 (0) 20 7434 6787 or fax +44 (0) 20 7434 6825 or e-mail: kathybourne@tigeraspect.co.uk

Stoke Newington Festival

(21-23 June 2002) invites applications for its commissioning programme. They are offering three commissions of £1,500 each for new work. The festival takes place in Clissold Park – and work must be suitable for a family audience. Contact Fiona Fieber on 020 8356 6410 or e-mail info@stokenewingtonfestival.co.uk

visions Launchpad

offers companies a space to show their work to national and international programmers and venue managers during the opening weekend of visions, the high-profile international festival that runs from 24 October to 2 November. We are currently looking for companies working creatively with contemporary visual performance. Visions will offer Launchpad companies a venue, timeslot on Saturday 26 October and some technical and marketing support. If you are interested in showing your work at visions Launchpad send visuals, details and any forthcoming performance dates to: Linda Lewis, Director: visions, Theatre and Gallery Office, University of Brighton, Grand Parade, Brighton BN2 9JY. E-mail visionsfest@brighton.ac.uk and telephone 01273 643194. See the visions website at www.brighton.ac.uk/gallery-theatre/visionsfestival

RESOURCES

Park Studio,

a rehearsal space in Stoke Newington, is now booking for spring/summer. 7 x 10m (approx. 700 sq ft), with semi-sprung pine floor. Well-heated, with natural light; small kitchen; tape/CD player. Close to shops, cafes and Clissold Park. Rates £7 to £15 per hour. To book please call 020 7249 7141 or e-mail: sunnyparkstudio@hotmail.com

Photographer Sally Burford

specialises in event and performance photography. To commission her or find out more about her work, telephone 01242 577997 or e-mail chipolatas@cwcom.net

Tall Stories

are looking for (cheap) office space in north London, suitable for 2-3 people. If anyone can help, please e-mail tall.stories@virgin.net or telephone 020 7372 3003.

WEBSITES

<http://iti.gold.ac.uk>

New website for the British Centre of the International Theatre Institute

www.artsfestivals.org.uk

Festivals in the UK

www.britcoun.org/visitingarts

Visiting Arts Directories help plan international events at home and tours abroad

www.euro-festival.net

European Festival Association database of music, dance and theatre festivals

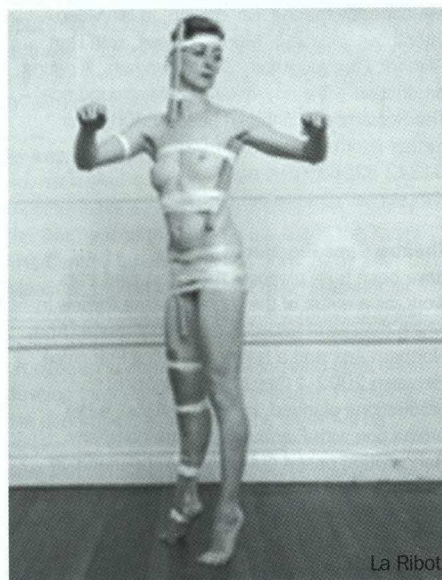
www.nyaf.org.uk

National Youth Arts Festival

PUBLICATIONS

'Exposures'

Manuel Vason, Lois Kedan & Ron Athey
Black Dog Publishing/Live Art Development Agency



La Ribot

A collection of photographs of nineteen British-based live art practitioners by former fashion photographer Manuel Vason, together with essays by Lois Kedan of Live Arts Development Agency and writer/performance artist Ron Athey. Each featured artist also contributes a written text. The photos are glossy and beautifully realised stills of what are often disturbing and challenging performance works – raising questions about the voyeuristic eye of the camera and the relationship between 2D art and live performance. But this is a must-have record of the current scene for anyone interested in body-based performance art/live art. Glorious technicolour images of all the familiar faces (and other parts of the anatomy...), including Total Theatre favourites Marisa Camesky and La Ribot. E-mail info@bdp.demon.co.uk to order a copy.

Playing the Fool

Roly Bain

Canterbury Press

An autobiography from Britain's best known clown-priest (yes, there are a number of them out there...), 'Playing the Fool' explores the concept of the Holy Fool and the link between healing and humour, circus and sacrament. A mix of historical information on the origins of clowning and a personal memoir of Roly's work in schools, hospitals and prisons. See www.scm-canterburypress.co.uk

Your Body, Your Risk

Edited by Scilla Dyke

Dance UK

New guide book aimed at dancers that looks at the ways of dealing with the pressures and problems of physical performance work – with particular emphasis on eating disorders. Would also be useful to anyone working in other intense physical forms such as circus and physical theatre. Available to order from Dance UK, Battersea Arts Centre, London SW11 5TN. Or see www.danceuk.org

Fit to Dance

Dr Peter Brinson & Fiona Dick

Dance UK

Not a new publication, but a companion volume to the above publication containing a much fuller analysis of the risks to dancers' health, including relevant research from sports and medicine. Available to order from Dance UK, as above.

Discourses in Dance – Redefining Dance Research

A new journal from the Laban Centre, edited by Ramsay Burt and Susan Leigh Foster. It is 'a new international, peer-reviewed, bi-annual journal covering research in the field of dance and related areas'. The journal aims to promote the development of dance research in the international academic field. Articles address the rapidly expanding discipline of dance studies as it is developing through scholarly and artistic forms of dance research. It will be published twice-yearly and subscriptions (UK & Europe) will cost £35.00 for individuals, £75.00 institutional. Contact discourses@laban.co.uk for further information.

COMPANIES

Angela de Castro 'MY LIFE IS LIKE A YO-YO'

MAY	
3	Windsor Arts Centre
8	Plymouth University
9-11	Royal Exchange, Manchester
16-18	Israel
23	The Arc Theatre, Trowbridge
JUNE	
6	Phoenix Theatre, Exeter
7-8	Ustinov Studio, Bath Festival
13	The Bull, Barnet
AUGUST	
4-26	Assembly Rooms Edinburgh

Natural Theatre Company 'WALKABOUT'

APRIL	
13	Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith
'RASPUTIN'	
MARCH	
20-14 April	St. Pauli Theater, Hamburg
APRIL	
19-20	Theatre Royal, Bury St. Edmunds
24-27	Theatre Royal, Winchester
7-8	Lawrence Batley, Huddersfield
10-11	South Hill, Bracknell

Nikki McCretton 'WORMHOLE'

APRIL	
4	The Bull Theatre, London
6	Hoxton Hall, London
13	The Rondo Theatre, Bath
18	Merlin Theatre, Frome (inc workshop)
19	Merlin Theatre, Frome
23	Exeter Phoenix
24	Bridport Arts Centre, Dorset
25	Chat's Palace, London
MAY	
14	QEH Theatre, Bristol
23	Studio Theatre, LMU Leeds
30	Strode Theatre, Street
JUNE	
6-16	Prague Fringe Festival
JULY	
10-14	Thunderbay Fringe Festival, Canada
18-28	Winnipeg Fringe Festival, Canada

NoFit State Circus SCIENCE CIRCUS TOUR

029 2048 8734	
MAY	
9-12	Roath Park, Cardiff
16-19	Acton Scott Farm Museum, Shrops
23-26	Malvern Fringe Festival
30-2 June	Jubilee Park, Edmonton,
JUNE	
5-8	Bath Children's Festival, Victoria Park
13-18	Ambleside Circus Festival,
20-24	Coombeshead Coll., Newton Abbott
28-30	Glastonbury
JULY	
4-7	Hanson Fest, Bexley
11-14	Uckfield Festival, Sussex
18-21	Gloucester Festival
27-28	Cardiff Festival (TBC)

Ophaboom 'ROBIN HOOD'

APRIL	
2	Winkleigh, Beaford Arts
3	West Ansey, Beaford Arts, Devon

4	Sutton Veney, Wilts
5	West Dean, Wilts
6	Woolfardisworthy, Beaford Arts
10	Alston Town Hall, Eden
12	Darwen Library Theatre
13	Sheringham Little Theatre
17	Dudley Black Country
18	Key Theatre, Sudbury
19	Clearbrook
20	Lydford
24	New Theatre Royal, Portsmouth
25	Loughborough University
26	Lacy Hall, Hallbankgate, Eden.

MAY	
4	DAN, Northwich
8	Danebank Theatre, Crewe
9	Hartlepool Town Hall Theatre
11-22	Highland Tour, Scotland
24	The Gate, Goole
25	Spilsby Theatre
29	The Ridings, Winterbourne
30	Brewery Arts, Cirencester
31	Falmouth Arts Centre
JUNE	
1	Sterts Open Air Theatre
2	Shoreham/Adur Festival
6	The Town Hall, Stourbridge
7	The Orchard, Grantchester
8	Trinity Arts, Tunbridge Wells
9	Arts in Parks, Northampton
21	Swaffham Festival
22	Newhampton Arts Centre
26-27	Gawthorpe Hall, Padiham
28-29	Turton Tower, Bolton

Point Blank 'NOTHING TO DECLARE'

0114 2493 650	
APRIL	
8-13	Southwark Playhouse, London
16	Huddersfield University
18	Portsmouth Studio Theatre
MAY	
16	The Roadmender, Northampton

Ridiculusmus 'EPCD'

APRIL	
30	BAC, London
'SAY NOTHING'	
28 MARCH TO 1 APRIL	
	Melbourne Comedy Festival

The Rose Theatre Company 'FAUSTUSLITE'

MAY	
2	Aberystwyth Arts Centre
4	The Glass factory, Stourbridge
6-7	Chequer Mead, East Grinstead
11-12	The Space, Stroud
15	Hood Manor, Dartington
17	New Theatre Exeter

Spymonkey 'STIFF'

APRIL	
4-15	Taiwan
17-23	Athens, Greece
MAY	
10-11	Tower, Winchester (with 'Cooped')

'COOPED'

APRIL	
25	Colchester Arts Centre
26-27	The Junction, Cambridge
MAY	
7	Fareham (TBC)
9	West End Centre, Aldershot

14	The Swan, Wycombe
18	Portsmouth Arts Centre
JUNE	
20-28	BAC, London

VENUES

The Little Angel Theatre, London

020 7226 1787	
www.littleangeltheatre.com	
APRIL	
2-7, 20-21, 27-28	'The Peach Child'

The Circus Space, London

APRIL	
5-14	Generating Company - 'GangStars'

Exeter Phoenix

01392 667054	
APRIL	
6-7	half/angel - 'Spinstren'
19	Retina Dance Company - 'X'
MAY	
7	Gitanjali Kolanad - 'Walking Naked'
13-14	imitating the dog - 'Five Miles and Falling'
JUNE	
6	Angela de Castro - 'My Life is Like a Yo-Yo'
10-11	Fanclub Dance
20	Company Q - 'Charmik-1'

MAC, Birmingham

0121 440 3838	
Selected events only - for full programme, please phone.	
APRIL	
12	SAMPAD and mac - 'Asian Spring'
13	SAMPAD and mac - 'Asian Spring'
14	SAMPAD and mac - 'Sabha'
26	Not the National Theatre - 'Hysteria'
28	The Puppet Lab - 'Rapunzel'
MAY	
9	Theatre Absolute - 'Raw'
11	PuppetLink and The Midlands Puppet Forum - 'The Puppet'
11	Extravaganza
19	The Little Angel Theatre; The Selkie Bride Theatre 11am & Leiken Loppu - 'Today's Special (Very Special)'

Gardner Arts Centre, Brighton

APRIL	
13	Quicksilver - 'All by My Own'

Hoxton Hall

020 7739 5431	
APRIL	
4	Hoxton Bark - a new monthly cabaret, with Tammy Whynot, Rachel the egg-laying Aphrodite, The Half-Naked Chef, Cristy Gilbert, Danny Schlesinger, and more...

Manchester International Arts

0161 224 0020	
www.streetsahead.org.uk	
MAY	
5	Improbable Theatre - 'Sticky' (Platt Fields Park)
JUNE	
3	Jubilee event - 'A Feast of Delights' (centre)

JULY	
19-23 (TBC)	Legs on the Wall - 'Homeland' (centre)

Young Vic, London

020 7928 6363	
www.youngvic.org	
10 MAY TO 22 JUNE	
	The Young Vic Theatre Company and Cheek by Jowl - 'Homebody/Kabul' by Tony Kushner

FESTIVALS

Blackpool Festival of Puppetry and Visual Theatre

07976 946003	
'Puppet Up!' is a yearly festival of puppetry and visual theatre in and around the town of Blackpool.	
4 May-15 June	Forkbeard Fantasy exhibition at the Grundy Art Gallery.
4-16 May	visiting visual and puppet artists from all over the UK will be working with Blackpool residents to create the parade on Saturday 18 May.
17-19 May	theatre performances include Faulty Optic, Forkbeard Fantasy, Theatre Insomnia and Lempen Puppet Theatre from the UK and the French company Access L'Air. Street performances include Tanit Teatro from Spain, Lighthouse Theatre, Moving People, Larkin a'Bout, Hugh Jart, The Wright Stuff and Theatre Insomnia.
	Horse + Bamboo Theatre will this year be working with the Grand Youth Theatre to create a new piece of street performance commissioned by the festival.

BAC Opera 2002, London

020 7223 2223	
25 APRIL TO 19 MAY	
Leave your bow ties at home: BAC's innovative approach to Opera/Music Theatre includes work from The Shout, Ridiculusmus, Gogmagogs, Opera Circus, Kombat Opera, Kaos and Ralf Ralf.	

Brighton Festival

01273 700747 / 709709 (BO)	
MAY 2002	
Month-long international festival kicks off with the Children's Parade on the opening Saturday (directed by Same Sky); Streets of Brighton is held on the second weekend (Thursday 10 May to Saturday 12) - a full-on three-day programme with major international street artists, new UK commissions and the National Street Arts Meeting and Showcase (see www.zapuk.co.uk). The new Circus Festival is on the following weekend (18-19 May). Indoor events include the new show from In Toto, 'Hair of the Dog'. Phone for a Brighton Festival brochure or see www.brighton-festival.org.uk	

ROAR 3

020 7686 7759	
MAY 2002	
A festival at the Lion and Unicorn Theatre in Kentish Town programmed by COTA and described as 'a concoction of new work, emerging artists and pure mayhem'. It also acts as a forum for discussion and feedback - some of the work will be presented as Scratch performances. The festival starts on 7 May. Call Amy on the above number or 07816 832614 for more details.	

TRAINING & WORKSHOPS

UK TRAINING

The Academy of Circus Arts

Winchester and touring, 07050 282624

DIPLOMA COURSE

Six-month training inside the big top. E-mail zippos.circus@virgin.net

Central School of Speech and Drama

London, 020 7559 3990

MA ADVANCED THEATRE PRACTICE

A full-time four term course offering the following strands: Creative Producing, Dramaturgy, Lighting Design, Object Theatre and Puppetry, Scenography, Sound Design, Writing, Performance, Direction. See www.cssd.ac.uk

Circomedia

Bristol, 0117 947 7288

- One Year Foundation (RSA Diploma)
- Three Month Introductory
- Evening Classes

The Circus Space

London, 020 7613 4141

BA (hons) Theatre Practice – Circus (two-year degree course). E-mail: enquiries@thecircusspace.co.uk
Also adult classes in circus skills.

The Desmond Jones School

London, 020 8747 3537

Full-time and part-time professional training in Mime and Physical Theatre. Also run short courses in impro/mask, etc.

Ecole de Mime Corporel Dramatique

London, 020 7272 8627

Movement Theatre and Corporeal Mime (Decroux Technique)

Ecole Philippe Gaulier

London, 020 8438 0040

Contact: Philippe Gaulier School, St Michael's Church Hall, St Michael's Road, London NW2 6XG.

Exploratorium

0161 2329154 (or 0161 3742353)

Choreographic residency open to dance makers inter/nationally with an idea they wish to explore. Dates: 31/8-7/9 (TBC). Subject to funding – register your interest now at projects@dancenorthwest.org.uk

Expressive Feat Productions

01227 276069 (www.exfeat.com)

Aerial workshops for adults and children every week at Whitstable Sports Centre. Professional training available in aerial silks, trapeze and choreography.

The Greek Theatre Mask in Ancient and Modern Performance

Royal Holloway, University of London

20-21 April 2002. Contact Angeliki Varakis, Department of Drama and Theatre, Royal Holloway University of London, Egham, Surrey TW20 0EX. E-mail: a.varakis@rhul.ac.uk

Hammersmith and West London College

0800 980 2175

New Btec in Creating Music and Dance for Theatre. Call for information on this and other courses offered.

Hope Street

Liverpool, 0151 708 8007

Physical Theatre training programmes – include street theatre, ensemble, mask theatre, admin skills. For information see www.hope-street.org

Jonathan Kay

London, 020 7639 5280

FOOLING IN THE THEATRE OF NOW

Workshop programme for Spring Fools: Laurieston Hall, Scotland (13-20 April); Queen Mary University, London (April/May – dates tbc). For more information contact: Anne-Louise Rentell theatre_of_now@madasafish.com

Kaizen Creative

Manchester, 0161 3742353

'THE ARTS OF COACHING'

Courses for professionals who coach, mentor, facilitate, teach or manage in arts, educational and cultural contexts. The next Certified Programme led by Rivca Rubin will run in Manchester. 15-18 August – 4-day Foundation Course 19-25 August – 7-day Practitioner Course 5-8 December – 4-day Advanced Course For full details and costs phone or e-mail info@kaizen-creative.org. Website: www.kaizen-creative.org

Laban Centre

London, 020 8692 4070

Post-grad courses at Laban include: MA Choreography, MA Performance, MA Scenography (dance). Individually tailored research degrees: MPhil and PhD. See www.laban.co.uk or info@laban.co.uk

Middlesex University

London, 020 8411 6148

School of Art, Design and Performing Arts – MA Choreography with Performing Arts. Full time, exploring choreography in relation to contemporary performance issues and interdisciplinary work.

Nose to Nose

01342 823410

Clowning Improvisation on the Empty Stage – introductory weekends and 6-day residential intensives (15-20 April and 5-10 August); workshops to discover the clown within. Next year: generous bursaries for first-timers to Clown 1 courses. Call for a brochure or see <http://members.aol.com/nosetonose>

The Penquoit Centre

01342 825639

Close to sea and mountains in west Wales, this is an ideal place to develop new forms of theatre discipline. Some bursaries are available. For information and booking forms, phone or e-mail dan.skinner@btinternet.com

Puppet Up! 2002

Blackpool, 07976 946003

Education workshops as part of the puppetry/visual theatre festival – from March 2002 – including professional development masterclasses with Faulty Optic, Theatre Insomnia and Access L'Air.

Call Rachel Riggs (artistic director) for further information – 07976 946003

Rose Theatre Training Workshops 2002

01342 825639

14-20 April – Spring training workshop with Kristin Linklater, one of the most respected voice teachers in the world. Early booking is essential. £390/£330 24 July to 4 August – the Summer School celebrates all aspects of Rose Theatre practice. Explore your creativity in a supportive environment. £390/£330 26 August to 15 September – The Rose Training Academy. An international academy of teachers including Enrique Pardo, (Pantheatre, Paris), Christopher Siverton and Maria Sendow (Song of the Goat, Poland), Michael Chase (The Mask Studio, UK), Richard Ramsbotham (Hibernian Way) and Nicolas Nunez (Director of the Tailleux de Investigación Teatral in Mexico City). £525/£450

School of Physical Theatre

London, 020 8215 3350

SEPTEMBER 2002 TO JUNE 2003

The Professional School – one-year intensive programme in three terms. Part-time Classes – introductory and advanced.

Theatre Training Initiative

London, 07931 710808 or 07905 260935

Ongoing weekly practice in Suzuki's actor training method at Chisenhale Dance Space, Wednesday evenings 6.30-9pm Saturday sessions once a month, soon to be weekly. Call for more details. Intensive workshops in various training practices, including Kalaripayattu with Philip Zarrilli (5-7 April 2002) and Gardzieniec with Paul Allain (13-14 July 2002). Contact us to receive further information or book a place: theatre_training_initiative@hotmail.com

The Why Not Institute

London, 020 8987 6661
(whynotinstitute@aol.com)

Performance, teaching, professional development, resources and events connected to contemporary clowning. Courses and weekly sessions with UK and international teachers. Artistic director: Angela de Castro. Spring term dates: 27-28 April – Marcello Magni (£120) 24-25 May – John Wright (£120) 24-29 June – Angela de Castro (£180) 9 April-25 June – Play sessions (Tuesdays £10)

The Wright School

London, 07951 958665

THE COMEDY CONNECTION – JOHN WRIGHT WORKSHOPS

29-30 April – Being like you are (Simple clown)
20-21 May – Why is that so funny? (Comic timing)
3-4 June – Going to where it hurts (devising for comedy)
17-18 June – Being worse than you are (Parody)
1-2 July – Who do you think you are? (Archetypes)
15-16 July – Making magic realism (bringing reality into fantasy)
Cost £50 per course with reductions for booking more than one. For more information please visit the website www.thewrightschool.com or e-mail thewrightschool@email.com or phone Becky Kitter on 07951 958665

OVERSEAS

Butoh-Centre Mamu

Göttingen, Germany, 00 49 551 485863 or 551 790 6245

Monthly workshops in 2002: 8-10 April, 12-14 May, 7-9 June, 5-7 July, 4-6 October and 6-8 December. Intensive workshops for those with experience in Butoh: 12-21 July 2002.

Full Time Mamu School: Year two commences 18 November 2002. It is possible to attend a trial period before committing to a full year of study. Further information at www.tadashi-endo.de or email endo@em.mpg.de

Centre Selavy

Nr Poitiers, France, +33 5 45 29 65 56

Workshops. E-mail: selavyjr@aol.com

'Circo a Vapore' School of Theatre

Rome, Italy, +39 06 700 9692

Two-year professional training. See www.circoavapore.3000.it or e-mail for info in English circoavapore@tiscalinet.it

Dell'Arte International Summer Workshops 2002

Great workshops, excellent instructors, exciting performances and incredible creativity in a very beautiful place.

18-29 June – Mask Making and Mask Performance

18 June to 6 July – Generating New Material

9-20 July – Comic Archetypes

23 July to 17 August – Clown
See www.dellarte.com or e-mail dellarte@aol.com

Ecole Internationale de Theatre Jacques Lecoq

Paris, +33 1 47 70 44 78

Two-Year Course plus the Laboratory of Movement Study (L.E.M.).

Espace Catastrophe

Brussels, +32 2 538 12 02

Amateur and professional classes in circus, physical theatre and performing arts. See www.catastrophe.be or e-mail espace@catastrophe.be

Mime Centrum

Berlin, +30 44 651860

Movement training for actors, mimes, directors and dramaturgs. Autumn programme includes: 'The Grotesque Theatre – The Buffoni' with Mina Tinaburri and 'Grotesque Dance – Underground Rivers' with Irina E. Andrejewa. See www.mimecentrum.de

Patricia Bardi

Amsterdam, +31 (0) 20 689 7783

Vocal Dance and Voice Movement Integration – courses throughout autumn/winter. Phone for brochure or see www.patriciabardi.com

ZID Theater Laboratory

Amsterdam, +31 20 4888449

Weekly training programme for the performer in the physical-visual theatre: see www.zidtheater.nl

Rose Theatre Training Workshops 2002

Spring workshop – Kristin Linklater
Rose Theatre Summer School
Rose Training Academy August

April 14 – 20
July 24 – August 4
August 26 – Sept 15

Rose theatre training is a challenge on a personal and physical level, inviting discipline, trust and commitment. Following the success of last year's training workshops, the company is offering a new sequence of training events for performers and theatre students as well as the annual summer school for all ages and abilities.

Spring Training workshop April 14 – 20: Kristin Linklater

Currently chair of drama at Columbia University, NY, Kristin Linklater is one of the most respected voice teachers in the world. This five-day intensive is for students, teachers and practising performers. Early booking is essential. Cost: £390 (students £330), inclusive all food and accommodation.

The Summer School July 24 – August 4

Celebrates all aspects of Rose Theatre practice. Over 10 days we will work with voice, character, body, text, improvisation, movement, mask and stagecraft, and will conclude the workshop with a performance. The summer school is for anyone who wants to explore their creativity in a supportive environment. Cost: £390 (students £330), incl. food and accommodation.

The Rose Training Academy August 26 – September 15

This is a three-week intensive training programme for theatre students and performers. We now have an international academy of teachers including **Enrique Pardo** (Pantheatre, Paris), **Christopher Sivertson** and **Maria Sendow** (Song of the Goat, Poland), **Michael Chase** (The Mask Studio, UK) and **Richard Ramsbotham** (Hibernian Way). **Nicolas Nunez** (Director of the Tailleux de Investigación Teatral in Mexico City) is this year's invited teacher. Cost: £525 (students £450), incl. food and accommodation.

The Penquoit Centre, situated on 300 acres of organic farmland in west Wales, close to sea and mountains, is an ideal place to develop new forms of theatre discipline.

Some bursaries are available.

For further information and booking forms, contact:

Daniel Skinner, 10 Riverside, Forest Row, Sussex RH18 5HB, UK
Tel: +44 (0)1342 825639 E-mail: dan.skinner@btinternet.com
The Rose Theatre Company is a Registered Charity No. 1007031

WHAT'S YOUR FUTURE?

Audition after audition after audition...
Or the creation of vital new work?

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OUR PROFESSIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM



DELL'ARTE ACTORS WHO CREATE
International School of Physical Theatre
POB 816 ■ Blue Lake, CA ■ 95525 ■ 707-668-5663
dellarte@aol.com ■ www.dellarte.com

International Theatre and Film Acting Workshops The Actors Space Barcelona Summer Workshops 2002

The Creative Actor 22nd July - 2nd August

Essential training giving a comprehensive experience and understanding of playing and creating physical theatre: Neutral Mask, Le Jeu, Mask Theatre, Children, Theatre Performance and Creation.

Passionate Nature 5th - 16th August

Half Mask Theatre, Half Mask Making, Outdoor Performance, Physical Voice, Comic Scenarios, Chorus, Modern Tragedy.

The Clown 19th - 30th August

Two weeks of intensive training and comic creation where the actor discovers his or her own personal clown.

Acting for Camera 2nd - 13th September

From stage to screen - This is a fine tuning experience for the physical actor to enable him or her to find and apply their performance in the right degree for the camera.

The Teachers

Lecoq trained physical theatre practitioners Simon Edwards (UK) and Marian Masoliver (Spain) have provided specialist training for actors, theatre companies universities and theatre schools all over the world.

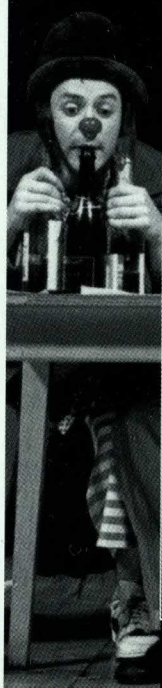
One workshop is £295 - €475

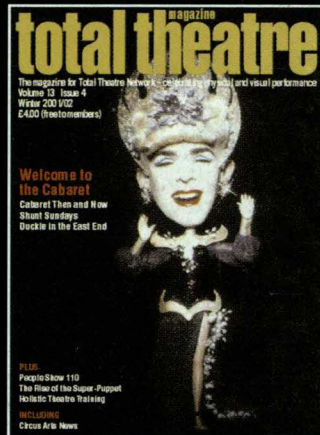
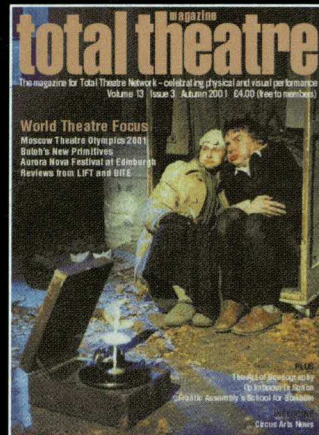
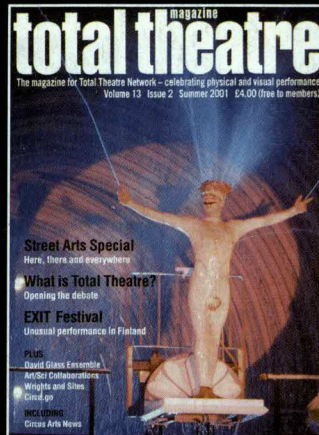
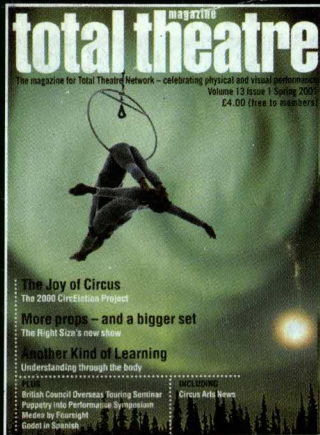
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