

total theatre

Total Theatre Network – celebrating physical & visual performance
Volume 15 Issue 4 Winter 2003/4 £4.00 (free to members)

magazine



Burlesque

Bring on the dancing girls
Six ways to remove a glove
Duckie: Sleaze at the Barbican

PLUS

Circus bites back
BAC's new director
Akhe comes to LIMF

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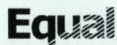
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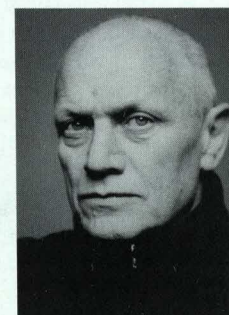
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If you would like to submit news, views, letters or advertise in the Spring issue, please note that the copy deadline is 14 February 2004. The Spring issue will be published on 7 April 2004 and will cover the period April to June 2004.

Cover
Total Theatre award winners
Duckie in 'C'est Barbican';
photo by Hugo Glendinning

Editorial

Feathers are flying in this issue of Total Theatre Magazine; no, not the gentle whisper of angels' wings, more the fluttering of a large number of feather boas as we investigate burlesque. From the carnivalesque performance art pieces of Marisa Carnesky to the Lost Vagueness total environments at Glas-tonbury festival and the launch of the London Academy of Burlesque at the International Workshop Festival, 2003 has been the year that burlesque went overboard – with the year culminating in the invasion of the Barbican by Total Theatre Award winners Duckie who continue on their quest to bring 'the dosshouse to the arthouse'.

So what has happened? Are female performers now so assured in their liberation that they feel free to re-evaluate the forms of exotic dancing and self-display that feminism previously rejected? Perhaps this and other questions will be addressed in the latest Total Theatre Talks, presented as part of the London International Mime Festival, which offers female practitioners of physical and visual performance the opportunity to debate creating work that is specific to female performers. There will be a lot more on this in TT Magazine throughout 2004...

But I am, like Janus, looking ahead when I need to also keep an eye on what is done and dusted – so back to this issue!

Continuing professional development is a subject dear to the heart of Total Theatre. Although all artforms can claim a need for the provision of programmes for artistic development, circus has a particular claim, due to its long history of neglect as an artform, and lack of funding, training and development opportunities. In 2000 the first CircElation project (documented in Vol 13/1) was a trail-blazing event that offered performers and directors a space to learn, play and evolve new collaborations. We herald the latest phase of CircElation with a feature on some of the recent successful circus 'CPD' schemes, including the Jerwood Circus Award and the recent Circus Bites tour.

Another major event in 2003 has been the storming success of 'Jerry Springer – The Opera' which has made the journey from scratch show at BAC to the National Theatre and West End, under the loving guidance of outgoing BAC director Tom Morris. Two different features reflect, in very different ways, on this event. The first is an interview with BAC's new artistic director, David Jubb. The second is a look at music theatre in general – and the wild and wonderful BAC Opera season in particular.

So there we have it – dancing girls, circus artists flying high, singing TV stars... what more could you want for a very Happy New Year!

Dorothy Max Prior
editorial@totaltheatre.org.uk

Submissions to Total Theatre Magazine

Feature proposals are welcomed on all subjects relating to contemporary physical and visual performance practice. Please send outlines to the editor for consideration. All proposals received are considered by the editor and the magazine's editorial advisory group. Reviewers are sought in geographic areas outside of London and the South East. We are particularly keen to hear from would-be reviewers in the North East and Midlands and in Northern Ireland. A copy of our editorial policy and writers' guidelines is available on request. For all the above, please e-mail editorial@totaltheatre.org.uk.

Total Theatre Magazine E-mail Addresses

Please note that changes in our e-mail system mean that each department within Total Theatre Network now has its own separate e-mail address, accessed independently. From January 2004, it is vital that the correct address is used or your mail will not get through to the right person and may therefore not be acted upon.

For the editor, for press releases, general listings and for anything relating to features and reviews or any other copy, or to send electronic images for the magazine, the address is editorial@totaltheatre.org.uk.

For Total Theatre Members' Listings only, the address is listings@totaltheatre.org.uk.

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All e-mails that are intended for Total Theatre Network, including membership subscriptions and renewals, should continue to go to admin@totaltheatre.org.uk.

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IN BOX Louise Jeffreys



Your name?

Louise Jeffreys.

How would you describe yourself and/or your occupation?

I have the best job going. I travel around the world, I meet exciting artists, I select productions to invite to London (for Barbican's BITE programme) – and all with a wonderful and committed staff. What more could I ask for?

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

Fabulous Beast Dance Theatre's radical reinterpretation of 'Giselle' which I saw in Dublin. I want to bring it to BITE.

Which of your artistic achievements are you most proud of?

Bringing international artists to London for the first time, supporting their work and building their audiences: amongst them Richard Maxwell, Robyn Orlin, Ronnie Burkett.

If you could change one thing what would it be?

Guaranteed full houses!

What do you think was the best example of 'theatre' in the past year?

Complicite's 'The Elephant Vanishes', Shared Experience's 'After Mrs Rochester', Bill Viola's 'The Passions' at the National Gallery (not theatre, I know, but it arouses the same feelings in me).

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

Theatre that engages mind and heart, surprises and transports you to another place and makes you think a little bit differently.

Your manifesto for theatre:

Theatre should inspire us to examine ourselves, our humanity and our relationship to the world.

Louise Jeffreys is Head of Theatre at the Barbican and programmer of BITE. She has previously worked at Nottingham Playhouse, ENO and the Citizen's Theatre, Glasgow. Highlights for BITE Jan – March 2004 include: 'Moving Africa', 'The Overcoat' and 'A Doll's House – Nora'. See www.barbican.org.uk/bite for full programme and booking details.

total theatre

network NEWS

www.totaltheatre.org.uk

Acting Director

Felicity Hall, TTN's recently appointed Acting Director writes: I am very happy to be working with the board and members of Total Theatre Network, and the Circus Arts Forum. This is an exciting time for both organisations as they focus strategically on their futures. One of my main responsibilities while I am here is to produce the Total Theatre Network three-year plan to take the organisation up to March 2007. At the same time, I will be working with Circus Arts Forum as they lay down the next stage of their development. I look forward to meeting Total Theatre readers and members over the coming months.

Circus Arts News

The circus document 'Circus in the UK in the 21st Century' is due out at the end of 2003. Created as a result of extensive research and consultation, it is intended as an advocacy document for circus. Its main aim is to help create an environment for the solid development of circus in the UK, and to do so, it outlines the types of relationships that need to grow and flourish to ensure a solid future for the artform. Details of the publication will be on the Circus Arts website: www.circusarts.org.uk.

CAF are pleased to note that Arts Council England has commissioned Hazel Phillips to pull together a regulatory impact assessment of the Licensing Bill on Circus and Street Arts in the UK. It is hoped by the Arts Council that this work can influence both the guidance to the Act and the communication of this new legislation to licensing authorities.

TTN Board News

Jonathan Holloway was appointed chair of the Total Theatre Network board at the board meeting on 2 October 2003. Jonathan is head of the National Theatre's events department which programmes the Watch this Space summer festival and the Festival of Lights. He was also the creative director of Elemental, the large-scale theatre, music,

street arts and site-specific event which showcased UK work at Chalons street theatre festival in France this summer. The board are very grateful to Pilar Orti who acted as interim Chair until the appointment of Jonathan.

AGM

The AGM will take place at 12.00pm on Saturday 17 January 2004 in the Voice Box, Royal Festival Hall. Members will have received papers for the AGM with their copy of this magazine confirming times, and AGM business and agenda.

The AGM will precede our latest Total Theatre Talks (see below), with an opportunity in between the two to see the free LIMF lunchtime performance events at RFH – so TTN members are invited to come along and make a day of it!

Total Theatre Talks

Once again we are pleased to present the Total Theatre Talks in collaboration with the London International Mime Festival. This year's talk, chaired by Dick McCaw, will be taking place at 2.30pm on Saturday 17 January 2003, in the Voice Box at the Royal Festival Hall.

This event, which forms part of Total Theatre Network's ongoing European project, focuses on the ways in which female practitioners work and will explore some of the issues surrounding their working methodologies. The panel will include: Lea Anderson, Marisa Carnesky, Angela de Castro, Lesley Hill, Helen Parrish and Lois Weaver. The debate should be lively and we look forward to you joining us. Further details are available on www.totaltheatre.org.uk.

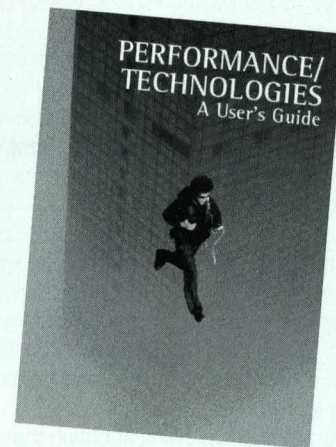
Tickets cost £5.50 (£3.50 concs) but are free for Total Theatre Network members. There is limited capacity so book early. E-mail: talks@totaltheatre.org.uk. Or call 020 7729 7944.

User's Guide Series

'Performance/Technologies – a user's guide' was published in October, with a lively launch

party, hosted by visions festival, which was held at the University of Brighton on 28 October. The new Guide was introduced by series editor Anthony Dean and associate editor Dorothy Max Prior. Alex Hoare presented her performative paper on Presence and Absence, there were films from Yeast, electronic music from local DJs and plenty of wine drunk by the assembled crew of visual and performing artists, funders and producers and Total Theatre members from Brighton and beyond.

This latest in the User's Guide series, published by King Alfred's Winchester in collaboration with Total Theatre Network, looks at the use of sound, visual and new media technologies in performance practice. For further details, see the publications section at the back of this magazine or e-mail users.guide@wkac.ac.uk.



Visions Festival 2004

Following the successful collaboration that brought about the visions 2002 symposium and subsequent User's Guide on performance/technologies, visions, King Alfred's Winchester and Total Theatre Network are working together to create another symposium and subsequent User's Guide publication for visions 2004. The event will take place during the next festival which is planned for 21-30 October 2004. Further details will be in the next issue of Total Theatre Magazine, on our website www.totaltheatre.org.uk or on the visions festival website at www.visions-festival.org.uk.

Flights of Fancy

AMY HOWARD takes a look at some of the opportunities that exist for continuing professional development in circus today



Lindsey Butcher

Circus is everywhere. It has tumbled from the big top into theatres. It springs out at you on the streets, at festivals throughout the country, or indoors at parties and corporate events. It pops up in nightclubs and cabarets, in community centres and youth projects. It poses at fashion shoots and shows off in trendy television adverts. Today, circus has assumed the stature of an artform, embracing both the classic tented circus of childhood memory and more challenging contemporary fusions of form.

But it is just at the point where these collaborative fusions spark and take flight that one of circus's greatest needs is most evident. We all know that artists from every discipline are constantly fighting for the time, the space and the money to be able to explore and develop new ideas, and this is particularly the case in circus, where overheads are high, funding scarce and fully equipped training centres few and far between.

Fortunately, the growing attention that arts funders are paying circus has resulted in the launch of a number of innovative programmes, set up specifically to address this issue.

The **Jerwood Circus Awards**, set up in 2001 by the Jerwood Foundation in collaboration with the Circus Space, give three artists or companies each year the funding to fulfil their creative ideas. A prime example of how helpful this funding can be lies with Giffords Circus, winner of the highest award of £10,000 in 2002. Giffords is a travelling, tented circus, based on the traditional model, that has been introducing more and more elements of contemporary circus into its shows and experimenting to greater and

greater effect with the use of theatre and narrative.

Artistic director Nell Gifford used the Jerwood award to work intensively with three members of her company – dancer and aerialist Isabelle Woywode, aerial chanteuse Emily G Park, and equestrienne Rebecca Townsend – for three months before the start of the touring season. During this time the artists developed 'living doll' characters and shaped a narrative theme that ran like a thread through the show, centring on each doll's quest for individual fulfilment. The team was also able to take further the exploration of human/equine partnership that lies at the heart of Giffords. Rebecca worked with her new dancing partner, Ronan the white Highland pony, to create a stunning piece of acrobatic theatre, and Emily introduced both a live and a toy horse on wheels into her trapeze act.

The funding also allowed Nell to collaborate with other practitioners, like Ron East of the School of Physical Theatre and clown Angela de Castro, and helped her to hone her own directorial skills. As Nell said when I spoke to her, 'Winning the Jerwood has led us to place a greater emphasis on the importance of development time, and this in turn has contributed to our decision to build a circus production headquarters [now under construction].'

The **Circus Space Creation Studio Bursaries**, supported by the Esme Fairbairn Charitable Trust, offer funding and the use of facilities at the well-equipped Circus Space to enable professional circus performers to experiment with new ideas and devise new work, with an emphasis on the process rather

than the finished performance.

Lindsey Butcher was one of the 2003 winners, and her story demonstrates how the initial kick-start that the bursaries provide can really launch an idea into flight and help theory to become practice. Lindsey is using the bursary to research and develop a winch mechanism for a 'continuous corde lisse' – a spliced loop that will allow an aerialist to tumble continually earthwards. The bursary financed an engineering designer's schematic drawings for the modifications that would have to be carried out on a piece of equipment called a cable feeder, but the project moved a step further when the award levered additional funding from Arts Council England South East so that the cable feeder could actually be purchased and the modifications made. Now Lindsey will be able to start work on a new aerial dance piece that incorporates the continuous fall instead of leaving her dream at research stage.

Interestingly, Lindsey was also a Jerwood Circus Award winner 2003, receiving funding for a different aerial project with partnership funding from Arts Council England South East. In both cases the idea could not have been fulfilled without an implicit belief, embodied in both award programmes, in the importance of taking risks. As Lindsey commented, 'Sometimes I think you just have to take that chance and put all your eggs in one basket – and pray!' The programmes embody the spirit of risk, but they also demonstrate, through supporting Lindsey in this case, that professional development is important throughout an artist's career and not just at the early stages. Lindsey is a well-known and experienced performer, but still needs to stretch her own boundaries – as well as those of circus.

The **National Circus Development Project** has been designed to respond to the development needs of circus artists – but this time not solely in terms of artistic development. Piloted in 2002/03, NCDP was instigated by the Arts Council of England to address the difficulties that circus artists and companies were experiencing when it came to dealing with those annoying bits peripheral to the art itself – the fundraising, the business plans, the marketing...

Seven circus companies were selected, some more established, some in their infancy, and Chenine Bhathena, director of NCDP, worked with them over a year to help them develop creatively and to guide them in selling themselves more effectively to their public.

Four of the companies – Circus Ridiculouso, solo artist Matilda Leyser, Fledgling and The Wrong Size – needed time to create new work and the means to show that work in performance venues. Accordingly, they were each given £5,000 seed funding to develop new pieces, showcased in several different venues across the UK under the banner 'Circus Bites'. They were afforded the rare luxury of going on tour without having to shoulder the administrative burdens that touring normally involves. They were given invaluable feedback from their audiences at the end of

The programmes embody the spirit of risk, but show that professional development is important throughout an artist's career, and not just at the early stages

each show, and they had the chance to build relationships with regional venues that might usually be less inclined to host circus-based performance.

Each piece of work, though still in need of development, demonstrated how powerfully and with how much invention circus can be used (in conjunction with words, with music, with poetry, with rollerskating!) to illustrate and convey a narrative. Interestingly, three of the four companies used circus skills to comment

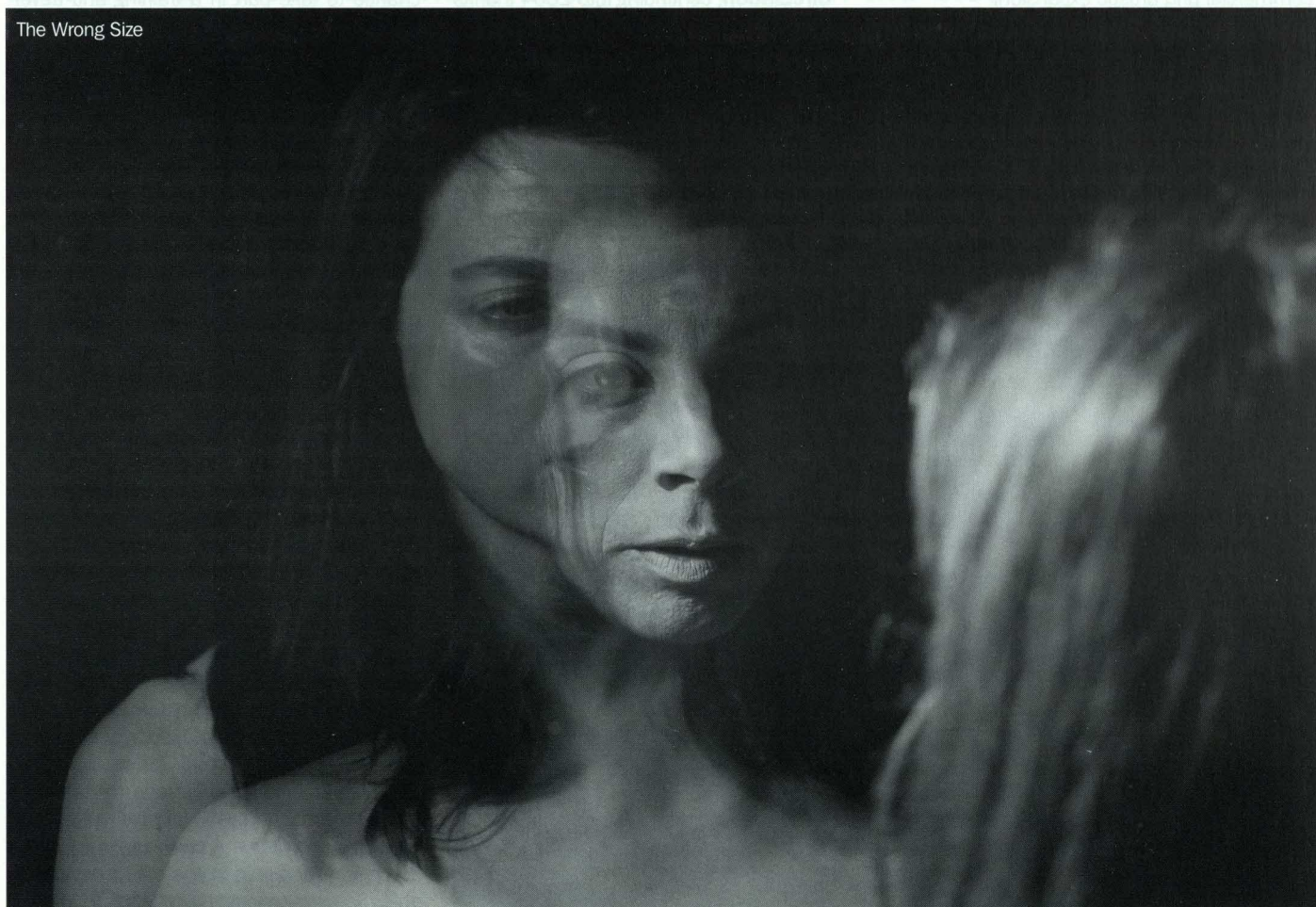
on some of life's darker and more complicated subjects.

Matilda Leyser set herself the challenging task of fusing text with aerial skills. Her cloud swing represented a train, and she carried her audience with her on a spiritual and a physical journey, describing the landscape as it flew past the windows while probing the mental grief of losing a father. Her aim was to uncloak the ethereality that traditionally surrounds the circus aerialist, drawing the audience into intimacy rather than encouraging it to look up at the artist in distanced awe.

Fledgling, a young company that came together through working on Mamoloucos's theatre/circus production 'The Birds', wove tantalising flashes of aerial work into a piece of intricate and playful dance that was inspired originally from Holocaust writings but which seemed more an interpretation of the friendships that life causes us to make and break and all the happiness and grief that come with them.

The Wrong Size, too, based their piece on a text – Donna Williams's autobiography about the condition of autism – and set it within a ring of ice blocks that ironically contained echoes of the traditional circus ring. The two women represented the two opposing sides of their autistic protagonist's mind. While one skated round the ring, the other hung ▶

The Wrong Size



childlike upside down from the trapeze, her white dress around her ears.

Danny Schlesinger of Circus Ridiculosos had the chance to fulfil his long-held dream of taking the tradition of clowning with balloons to new heights. His clown was a delightfully diffident salesman who grew more and more extravagant in his dance moves as each of his balloon contenders came on stage – though I would have liked to have seen some bigger and better balloon tricks than Danny offered.

All four works, though very different, similarly challenged audiences' expectations of what circus should be. Kirsty Little of The Wrong Size, felt that it was the widespread need for audience 're-education' when it comes to circus that was one of the most valuable lessons to be learned from Circus Bites. 'Our work is probably the least easily accessible of the four companies – one of the most accurate labels that we've found for it so far is 'psychological circus' – and quite often audience members who had brought their children to what they thought would be a bit of light-hearted circus were disturbed by our piece, which dealt with difficult material.' Marketing can be a powerful tool for influencing public opinion, helping to pave the way for a receptive audience, and professional development obviously needs to focus on both commercial and artistic expansion.

A passionate advocate of circus and director of circus/physical theatre management services company CBprojects, Chenine Bhatena believes that another major strand of professional development for circus artists is the opportunity for performers and directors to collaborate, not just with each other but also with



Giffords photo by James Waddell

artists from other disciplines. As she remarked, 'Circus is by its very nature collaborative.'

CircElation, continuing into 2004 thanks to ACE funding and a grant from the Esmée Fairbairn Charitable Trust, is a project that Chenine initiated in 2000 (with Leila Janovich) specifically to encourage this spirit of collaboration and to provide circus practitioners with an arena in which to play, experiment and work together. Programmed this year by Dick McCaw, former director of the Interna-

tional Workshop Festival, CircElation gives selected circus artists and directors the chance to take part in a training and development programme of workshops led by some of the highest profile directors and trainers/tutors on the international scene.

Lined up for the 2004 programme are Gennadi Bogdanov, Mladen Materic (Compagnie 111), Rose English, Avner Eisenberg ('the eccentric'), Phelim McDermott (Improbable Theatre), Cal McCrystal (Spymonkey/Cirque du Soleil), Jonathan Stone (Ralf Ralf) and Mark Murphy (Vtol).

Each of these development programmes and funding schemes represents evidence that circus in the UK has grown up, gaining increasing acceptance in the world of arts funding, training and continuing professional development. Circus has become more than a peripheral attraction that turns up annually on the outskirts of town: as Chenine says of circus's tumultuous journey up the runway of acceptance and respect, 'I think we are at a different point now – a more positive, informed point.' ■

For further information on CircElation, see www.circelation.co.uk. For National Circus Development Project and Circus Bites see www.cbprojects.co.uk. And check out www.thecircusspace.co.uk for details of the Creation Studio Bursaries and the Jerwood Circus Awards. 'Circus in the UK in the 21st Century', the Circus Arts Forum's advocacy document for circus in the UK, is now available. See www.circusarts.org.uk.



Danny Schlesinger

Climbing the Ladder



Ridiculusmus

Tom Morris leaves BAC this month for the National Theatre, paving the way for David Jubb as the venue's new artistic director. But, as EMI SLATER discovers, he's hardly a new kid on the block

Emi Slater: Congratulations on your new job. You've been a part of BAC for some years now though, haven't you?

David Jubb: Effectively, the progression for me has been a very BAC-centred one in that I went from the Lion and Unicorn, a fringe theatre in North London that feeds work into BAC, to working as a development producer at BAC. Then, two and a half years ago I went independent, setting up a company, me&him, with Tim Nunn, which was later renamed Your Imagination, working with a group of artists who are all very much part of the BAC development process – Kazuko Hohki, Ridiculusmus, Cartoon de Salvo...

ES: Previous to that, didn't you also have your own theatre company?

DJ: I was artistic director of Economical Truth. We did a show in 1997, 'Gasp', which was set inside a 26-foot inflatable jelly. I directed it. And then the second show, 'A Little Sexy Something in Between', in 1999. The shows were directed by me and devised by the company, and the work itself was either ahead of its time or dreadful, depending on your bent.

ES: So might we find you directing shows at BAC?

DJ: I don't think so, no. My skills are clearly about supporting artists over a long period of time to develop the highest quality work,

rather than about making that work myself. I think that's where my skills lie and I think that's what makes BAC unique. BAC is fundamentally about supporting innovative companies who will become the next Complicite, Improbable or Ridiculusmus. And so my role is to support those artists to achieve what they want to achieve.

ES: As the new artistic director of BAC, how creatively involved will you be in relation to the work that's produced?

DJ: Well, it's a producer's job, effectively. My role will be to support a generation of artists by creating the structure in which they work and develop. My job is very much about setting those structures in place and working with BAC's artists on the development of their work.

ES: BAC's recently made it into the West End with 'Jerry Springer – The Opera'. How did the project come about?

DJ: My predecessor, Tom Morris, was crucially involved as a producer and in supporting the development of the work. He was involved in the rehearsal process with the composer, Richard Thomas, and then with Stewart Lee, the director. The very first step, as I understand it, was that Richard Thomas, the show's composer, gave a Scratch performance in Studio 2 at BAC at which he sat with a piano

and played some of his ideas. He also had a crate of beer and offered anyone in the audience a beer if they had an idea. So it was a beer for an idea really. Following on from that, it went through a number of Scratch stages where the idea was fleshed out and maybe a singer or singers were introduced, and then that led into the Scratch stages in the main house where there was a semi-staged concert performance. That led to a three-week run in the main house prior to then going to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe with a more fully staged production, prior to then going to the National Theatre. And now the show's transferred to the West End.

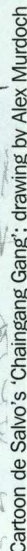
ES: As BAC's new artistic director will your sights now be firmly set on the West End?

DJ: My role is to go out and identify artists of vision. 'Jerry Springer – The Opera' is a very exciting opportunity for BAC but there are many other pieces of work which are of equally as high a quality, equally extraordinary, equally remarkable, but that don't necessarily have a commercial tag to them.

ES: On the one hand, obviously it's great for everybody if you can transfer to the West End and make lots of money...

DJ: But it's also great because it demonstrates that there is an appetite in audiences to see work that isn't being churned out in the

vampire on to a local
 operation balloon
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 Ann Arbor conditions
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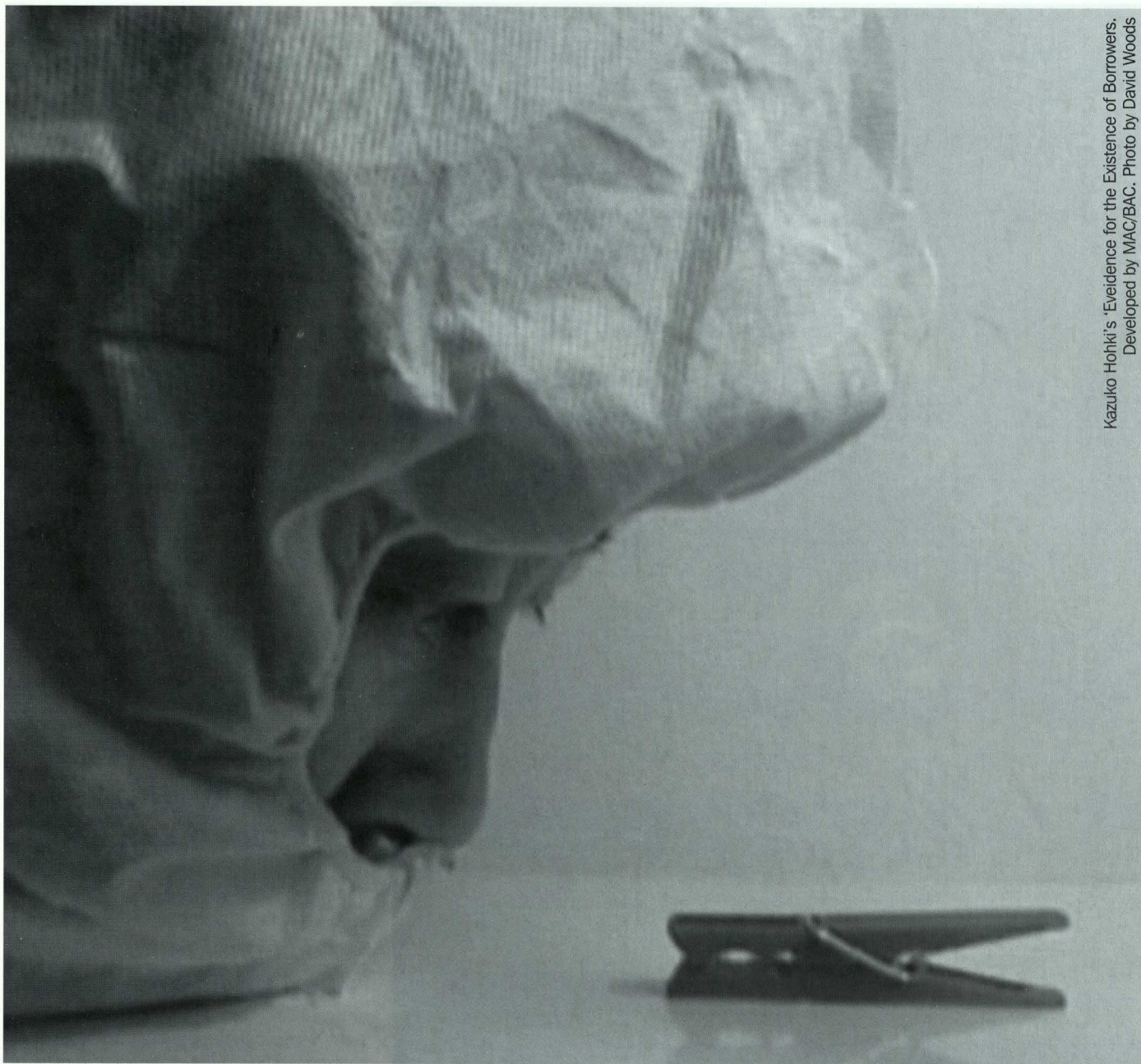


DJ: We need to ensure that the artists who work at BAC are absolutely the centre of everything that happens in the building. There

DJ: In my previous role with Your Imagination, I produced the This Way Up programme on behalf of a consortium of UK venues and BAC. The programme takes four companies at an early stage of development – last year it was Gecko, Sound and Fury, Filter and Patter – and, through the Scratch and the ladder of development process at BAC, produces four very high quality, exciting shows. Each of these companies has no infrastructure to tour that work, no kind of particular producing or dedicated producing capacity in order to support the touring of that work. Gradually, over the years, we will hope to add more venues interested in innovative, cutting-edge work to the consortium. Last year, This Way Up toured those four companies for a two-week festival in each of those venues where each company played for three nights in the venue. They had a great deal of marketing support and we sold the shows to audiences at a relatively low cost. And it worked fantastically well. It was a tremendous success.

DJ: This Way Up was shown in Edinburgh as part of the British Council's 2003 Showcase and there is significant interest from international bookers and promoters in taking the entire package. Because what you've got is a package of work that, without this support structure, would not be seen outside of London. We're giving bookers and promoters opportunities to sell it to their audiences – guiding audiences towards the work. So although it's not a prize, like the Turner Prize, it effectively works to the same principle in terms of the relationship with the audiences because you're simply saying 'This is work we think you should see'.





Kazuko Hohki's 'Evidence for the Existence of Borrowers'.
Developed by MAC/BAC. Photo by David Woods

ES: Are there any overseas venues you look to for inspiration?

DJ: There's a venue called Powerhouse in Brisbane, Australia, that I've never been to, but I admire the sound of it. They put together a very ambitious building with lots of different spaces and they're inviting artists from all over the world to come and present work there. Ridiculusmus has been invited to go there next year.

ES: Anywhere in Europe?

DJ: BAC already has a history of working with the Vienna Festival on the Shout project. I would like to go and see work in festivals like Salzburg and understand better what's happening there and what the structures behind those festivals are. I'm particularly interested in the structures they're using to support new work.

ES: Any closing thoughts?

DJ: One of the things I'm interested in, which we haven't really touched on, is that while BAC has a process by which it supports the development of a piece of work, it has another responsibility if it wants to support those artists over the long term. And I guess this is one area of expertise that I can bring from working with Your Imagination. We need to think about what companies need in order to develop their long-term futures. Because when companies like Complicite grew up the world was very different. They were revenue funded relatively early in their history. That kind of support is no longer on offer within existing funding structures. So we have to work to find new ways for companies. Take Gecko, for example; their show 'Taylor's Dummies' sprang out of the Lion and Unicorn and then came to BAC to further develop through the

Scratch process, ending up at the pre-touring final rung of the ladder with a six-week run in the summer in the main house, which sold out. What happens next? The company needs support. Four types of support: a creative dialogue about the work; a capacity to fundraise and produce new work; to plan and manage tours; and a rockbed of company management, an infrastructure to base the emerging company's work around. I hope that BAC will have a part to play, ensuring this kind of support is more available to companies like Gecko in the future. ■

Emi Slater is artistic director of Perpetual Motion. This interview was jointly commissioned by Total Theatre Magazine and On Tour, the magazine of the British Council's Performing Arts Department. See www.britishcouncil.org/arts.

The Gogmagogs' 'Gumbo Jumbo';
photo by Sheila Burnett



The Sound of Music

HELENA THOMPSON
gets into the spirit
of new opera and
music theatre.

*Additional reporting by
the TTM Editorial Group*

When it comes to critical praise, musicals often fall short of proper recognition. 'Commercially successful' is the closest to a compliment received. But the recent success of 'Jerry Springer – The Opera' has opened the eyes (and ears) of both critics and audience to the possibilities that new musical theatre has to offer.

As followers of fringe theatre will know, commercial success in this case has stemmed from a long process of development. For although 'Jerry Springer – The Opera' (winner of the Evening Standard 'Best Musical' 2003 award) may not now seem like much of a financial gamble, this box office smash's development took a lot of courage on the part of creators Richard Thomas and Stewart Lee. The slow burning success began not as script or score but as just an idea, a

starting point for a devised process, and was initially developed on a tiny budget in the form of development support from Battersea Arts Centre.

There is something beyond the usual music-theatre combination of song, dance and dialogue at work in 'Jerry Springer'. The piece, carefully structured to give the impression of spontaneity, is built around a collection of sketches that chart a fantastical day in the life of the chat show host as he journeys to heaven and hell and confronts the most bizarre of guests. From conception to presentation, as a series of jokes at the expense of both opera buffs and chat show hosts, the show blends high and low culture and captures the flavour of living now.

As the hit show moves from the National Theatre to its current West End home at the

Cambridge, BAC's Opera seasons continue to champion new opera/music theatre as an art-form for our time with a range of new shows being presented in the main house or studio or 'scratched' on the path to future development.

In 2003, there were not one but two BAC Opera seasons. The May season featured Volcano Theatre's new work 'This Imaginary Woman', Springer composer Richard Thomas's 'Kombat Opera Klubneit', and the Gogmagogs' 'Gumbo Jumbo'.

Clod Ensemble are a company often featured at BAC Opera. Their winning combination of music (composed by Paul Clark) and experimental physical theatre (directed by Suzy Wilson) have made them pioneers of contemporary music theatre, taking the form into new territories, often in collaboration with

other artists and disciplines – such as live art, variety, circus and wrestling! The show they brought to BAC in May (previous to a successful Edinburgh run) was 'Greed', which takes its inspiration from the great silent movies and the vaudeville traditions of the 19th century. They returned in the autumn to scratch a number of new pieces: 'Babycase', a striking visual composition that had the air of 1950s espionage thriller; 'Brass Octet', a punchy, vibrant musical composition with subtle intonations inviting a roller coaster of emotional response; a music/circus collaboration created with Jerwood Circus Award winner Gisele Edwards, which was: 'A delight... The mindfulness of movement was beautiful. The trapezist projected her awareness beyond the immediate task into the space, inviting us to join her on her exploration. The live music in these pieces moved harmoniously with the visual imagery throughout the performance – conducting, facilitating and accompanying events.' [Sarah Corbett]

Also featured in the Autumn BAC Opera season was a would-be successor to 'Jerry Springer' in 'Newsnight – The Opera' which is being developed by outgoing BAC director Tom Morris (as was 'Springer') and again takes its name from a TV show – this time the BBC's late night news show hosted by Jeremy Paxman. It tackles subjects from the state of the weather to the death of Princess Diana: each of the musical segments in 'Newsnight – The Opera' sets original transcripts to music. The show takes as a starting point the 1997 Michael Howard-Jeremy Paxman confrontation when the Newsnight presenter asked the former home secretary (now leader of the Tory party) whether he had threatened to overrule prison boss Derek Lewis. The question was repeated endlessly by Paxman as Howard refused to answer – the two creating a musical call-and-response. The show also features Michael Fish's 1987 fateful 'Hurricane? What hurricane?' weather forecast and Kate Adie's



bleak report from Tiananmen Square.

The use of different composers and styles on stage emphasises the dizzying and tasteless changes of tone between items on news programmes, and the piece dramatises the rhetoric of reporting. The music is used to bring out the emotional response that the speaker represses when relaying the news. Both 'Newsnight – The Opera' and 'Jerry Springer' push the real-life characters they depict into a heightened reality where words melt into song and the feelings staged eclipse rational objections, not least the unlikelihood of news presenters singing.

Another BAC Opera show seen in September was 'Names Of The Dead', which sets to music the names of those who died in the Iraq conflict. Stephen McNeff's carefully staged composition transcends the fury provoked by war. He creates an unusual ritual for acceptance by dividing the audience into groups and ushering each to a different position each time a new movement and a new list of names begins. He imbues the movement, the music and the words with a quality of potential endlessness. The brutal statistics of war are placed in a gentler context through this evocation of the passing of time.

The recent successes in music theatre would have to include 'Shockheaded Peter', which is a good example of the creative inventiveness of which new music theatre is capable. Like most of the aforementioned shows it grew from a devising process and like 'Springer' was a fringe hit that went on to West End success. Based on Heinrich Hoffman's cautionary tales of wayward children, and complete with such visual delights as fabric-flamed dresses and papier mache monsters,

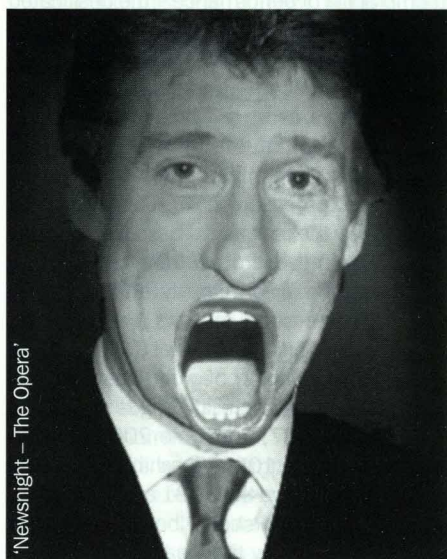
this 'junk musical', as it was dubbed, was created by the Improbable Theatre team with music by The Tiger Lillies and was produced by Cultural Industry.

We have yet to see whether devised hits such as 'Shockheaded Peter' and 'Jerry Springer – The Opera', which rely so heavily on the collective contributions of an entire production team, can outlive their creators, as have some past classics of the musical genre. Indeed, this raises the broader question of how contemporary art can survive whilst reflecting its own time.

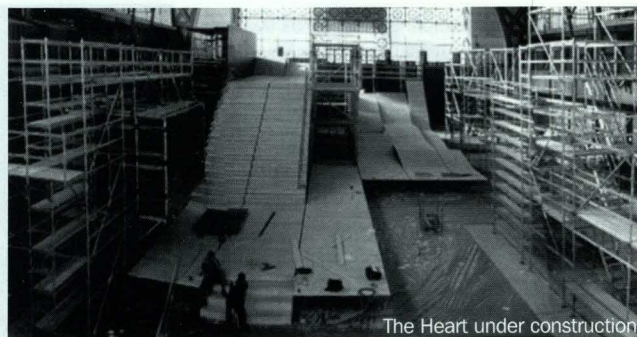
It should also be acknowledged that music-theatre owes a great debt to non-western theatre traditions. South African theatrical troupe Third World Bunfight are one of many companies from outside Europe who are exploring the possibilities of music theatre, often by bringing traditional performance practices into a contemporary framework. 'Mumbo Jumbo', written and directed by Brett Bailey, was one of a number of music-theatre pieces presented at the Barbican in BITE 2003. Through words and song, 'Mumbo Jumbo' explores what it is about music that can transfigure, transform and ultimately heal a fractured and abused community.

The wordless communality at the heart of music is recognised by Third World Bunfight, showing us how theatre that successfully makes use of song concerns itself with how we feel collectively, and exemplifies the populist yet political in a way no other artform can. ■

For details of BAC Opera 2004 and other programme details for the venue, see www.bac.org.uk. 'Jerry Springer – The Opera' continues its run at the Cambridge Theatre.



Absence Makes the Heart Grow Stronger



ANTHONY DEAN visited the Prague Quadrennial 2003 exhibition of world scenography and here investigates the tricky relationship between performance as an ephemeral event and the material artefacts of theatre design that are the remains of the day...

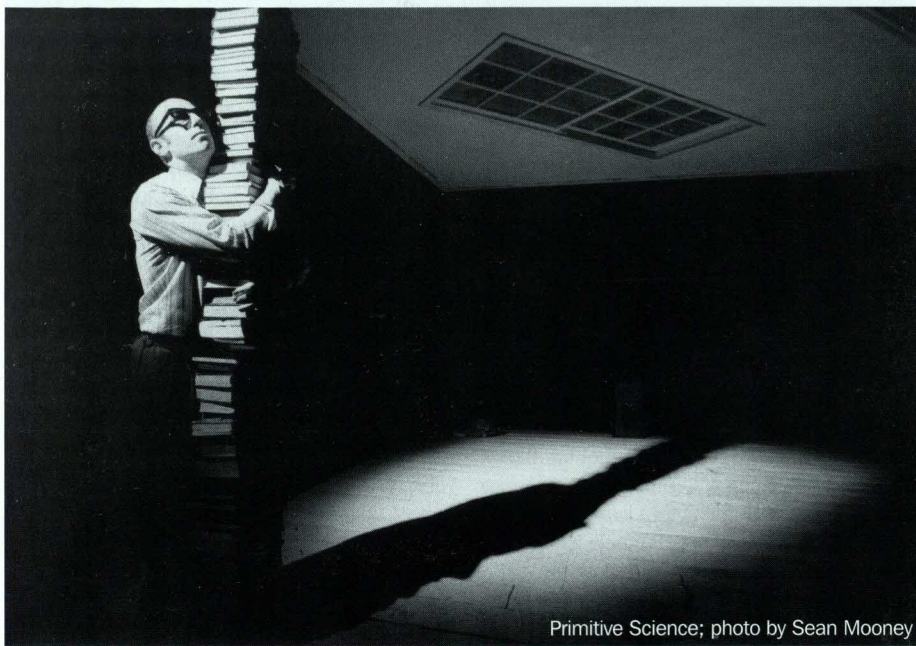
Back in January 2003, I took part in a Total Theatre Talks event held at the Queen Elizabeth Hall as part of the programme for the London International Mime Festival. The topic under discussion was the role of design in physical and visual theatre. As a member of the panel, my contribution to the debate was to question the dynamics of the relationship between stage design, which I will refer to as scenography, and performance. I was interested in the extent to which the scenography of a performance, and here I mean the total moment-to-moment scenographic impact on an audience, was a dynamic confluence of aes-

thetic, kinetic and kinaesthetic phenomena which extended beyond the identifiable (and individual) contribution of the scenographer. In short, in the economy of performance, is the scenographic total greater than the scenographers' part?

Mitch Mitchelson, in his article 'Total Theatre Talks... Design' which reported on this event (Total Theatre Magazine, Volume 15, Issue 1, Spring 2003), offers a view of the scenographer as an 'envisaging auteur for performance' and cites scenography as 'an integral part of the creative performance process'. In the context of a total theatre, of a highly contemporary physical and visual theatre, it

is perhaps easier to appreciate the role of scenography in such terms. However, from the epic site-specificity of the Theatre of Dionysus to the epic-realism of The Berliner Ensemble, theatre-making has always been about synthesis. To what extent, therefore, can we usefully separate the semi-permanent scenographic signs, represented by models, drawings or mediated images, from the fragile evanescence of the moment of performance? Many of us will probably have struggled, at one time or another, to re-create in our minds the energy and immediacy of erstwhile bravura productions, say for example Meyerhold's 'The Magnanimous Cuckhold' or Schlemmer's 'Triadic Ballet', while looking at grainy black and white photographs. What we hold in our hands, on these occasions, are the mere memorabilia of performance – the desiccated souvenirs of vital, living events that effectively expired as soon as the curtain had fallen and the audience had begun to make their way home.

If we agree that the work of the scenographer is an integral part of the creative performance process, how can we fully appreciate their work, or assess its worth, when it is removed from the life-giving breath of performance? Fortunately, an opportunity to investigate such matters was close at hand. The Prague Quadrennial (PQ), the most prestigious exhibition of world-scenography, has been taking place in Prague every four years since 1967, and June 2003 was the occasion for the 10th PQ exhibition. Having previously attended the 1991 and 1995 exhibitions, I felt that I should be able to gather some sense of how the Quadrennial reflect-



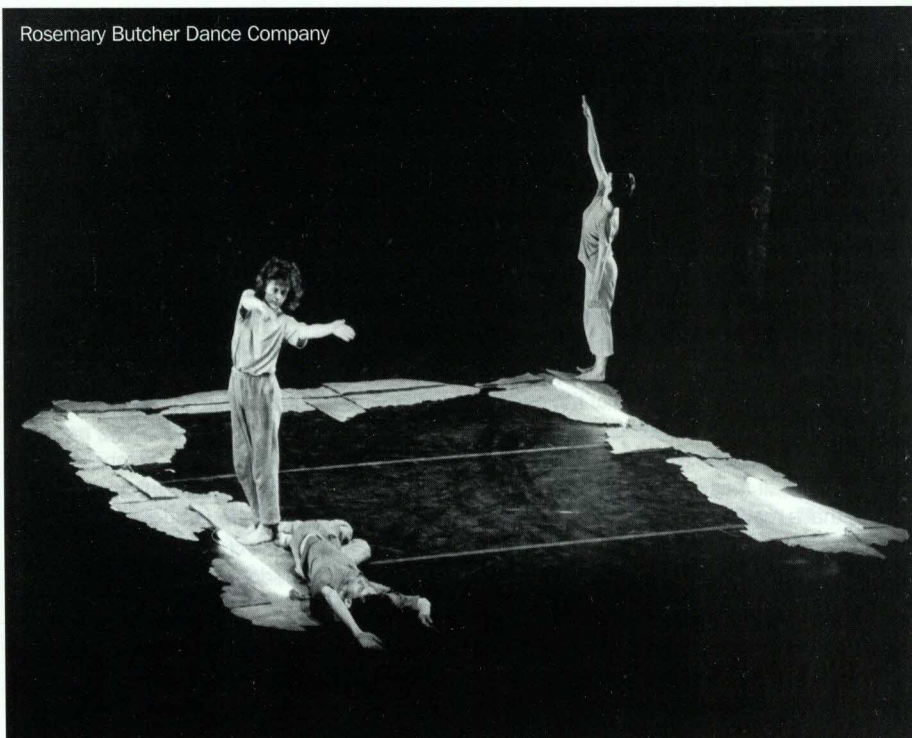
ed any shifts in the dynamics or problematics of the relationship between scenography and performance.

In the introductory section of the 2003 exhibition catalogue, I immediately find Jaroslav Malina (the General Commissioner of PQ 03) echoing the words of Mitch Mitchell, describing the scenographer as often being 'an autonomous creator of the production'. Significantly, he goes on to identify the key problem associated with the work of the scenographer, asking if scenography, as 'a complex of space and time' can truly be exhibited at all; in fact 'does it have any existence outside the production for which it was intended'? His very doubt about the validity of the scenographic schema separated from the living and breathing evanescence of performance, defines the sinuous contours of a deep, dynamic and, perhaps, inexorable relationship.

The Quadrennial exhibition fills the vaulted halls of Prague's Industrial Palace, an elegant glass and steel structure designed in the Art Nouveau style. The building comprises a magnificent Middle Hall that forms the monumental central core of the building and two adjoining wings. One wing houses student work and an exhibition of theatre architecture while the other wing houses the national exhibits of stage design – a kind of scenographic Olympics. Arnold Aronson, Professor of Theatre at Columbia University who has written widely on the subject of scenography, points out that the Quadrennial has always suffered from a kind of Cartesian dualism, a separating of the process from the product: 'It is an exhibition hall filled with models, renderings, sketches and photographs: the tools and ephemera of the design process. From a semi-otic standpoint, it is a vast collection of signifiers, but the thing signified – the theatrical performance – is notable for its absence.' He goes on to comment that the very structure of the PQ exhibition is a kind of 'map of absence'.

But at this PQ a new feature had appeared on the scenographic landscape! In the Central Hall, which is both physically and metaphorically at the centre of the exhibition, is The Heart of PQ – a huge sweeping and labyrinthine structure of tables, towers and platforms: a space-in-flux designed to provide a landscape for performative possibilities. At previous PQs this space had been reserved for special exhibitions, usually major retrospectives of the work of eminent scenographers, so this new development represents something of a major, and highly significant, departure. Posited as a kind of adventure playground for the five human senses, The Heart was a phenomenological labyrinth through which visitors might glimpse the flickering shadow of the creative process of performance-making. It hosted an eclectic programme of live events as well as offering

Rosemary Butcher Dance Company



on-going and interactive encounters that explored sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste. However, at the very heart of The Heart (so to speak) was performance. During the brief time that I was at PQ, in quick succession there were performances from Ryuzo Fukuhara (Butoh dance), Krepsko (physical theatre), Red Shoes (puppetry and mask), Teatr Cinema (improvisation) and Doug Fitch and Mimi Oka (performance art). All of these performances in some way or other, whether pre-prepared or improvised, responded to the spatial and aural opportunities (and limitations) of the specially designed environment. If PQ was a party, The Heart of PQ was most emphatically the kitchen in which we all wanted to be.

The Heart was always interesting, drawing visitors to its chaotic centre and then, without anybody quite realising how, performances were suddenly happening around us. Such was the case with a highly charged and physicalised performance of Sarah Kane's 'Crave' (from Tricklock Theatre Company) that was suddenly being performed on, underneath and around the tables at which we sat. The Heart was, simultaneously, a place to eat, drink and relax, and formed a dynamic scenographic space in which – once we had entered – we became willing or unwitting participants in an engaging meta-performance.

However, all this was in sharp contrast to the rest of the exhibition, where there was more of a feeling of wandering through a makeshift museum just as it was about to close for the evening. I accept that perhaps I am being a little harsh on the rest of PQ, where there was much of interest on display for the discerning visitor. In the professional

wing over 50 national exhibition stands – some of them design gems in their own right – profiled the scenographic skills of countless design practitioners while the other wing featured student work and innovative examples of theatre architecture.

Perhaps the problem was that this new innovation, the introduction of The Heart of PQ, didn't resolve the underlying problem caused by the separation of scenography from the 'elixir' of performance. Perhaps it only served to highlight this schism even more. Maybe this is an immutable problem, one that applies itself to any individual aspect of production when removed from the loci of actual production – or is it, as Arnold Aronson claims, 'that to view... scenographic signifiers in isolation is primarily an intellectual experience, whereas the totality of actual performance is an all encompassing sensual event'?

So what does all this tell us? Perhaps that – by the very fact that scenography is so difficult to separate meaningfully from its performance context – the work of the scenographer is both a profound and a protean component of performance? I certainly believe that it is. While there is no doubt that there is some intellectual value to be gained by the surgical separation of scenography from the 'body' of performance we should always remember that we are engaging in delicate keyhole surgery and not amputation! ■

Anthony Dean is Professor of Performing Arts at King Alfred's College, Winchester. The 10th Prague Quadrennial took place 13-29 June 2003. The next Total Theatre Talks will be held on 17 January 2004. See listings or www.totaltheatre.org.uk

Battling with

For thirty-something years Steven Berkoff's been a man of contradictions: career antagonist and poet, shameless romantic and on-screen heavy, Lecoq-trained mime and voiceover artist, man of the people and loner, sentimentalist, self-publicist, traditionalist and innovator. He's seen it all and is not afraid to call it as it is. The scourge of all theatre that's mediocre or fake. It's the World According to Berkoff and He is the Word.

Now in his mid-sixties, none of his pugnacity and fire is diminished: even sipping a cup of fruit tea he remains an intimidating figure, hugging the corner of the room like a between-rounds boxer. Berkoff's famous anger is real all right. But what exists beneath the surface is far more compelling, sensitive and sympathetic than the inevitable angry outbursts suggest. If not quite a pussycat, he is at least much less the wild and snarling beast than the world – and he – might have us think.

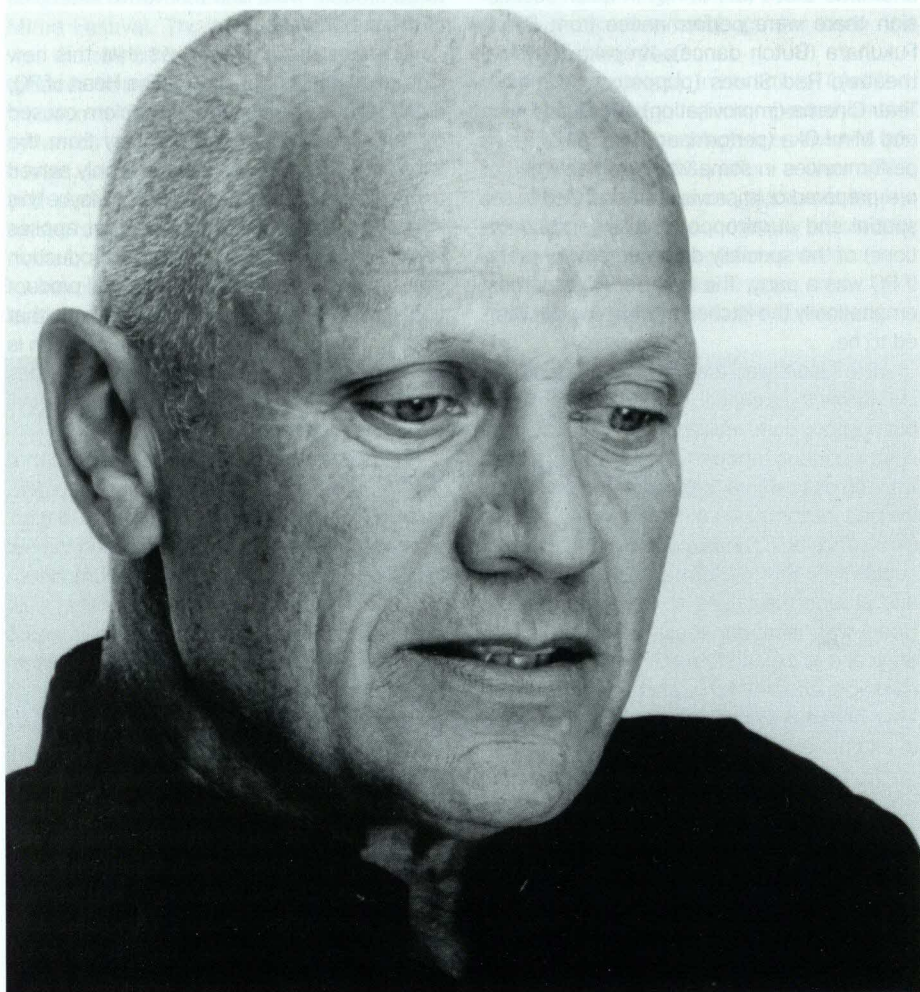
Berkoff is his own worst enemy. Someone who makes enemies of his peers and of the press and even at times of his public. He's about making work, not making friends. Of playwrights he rails that 'there's a lack of any real expression of passion or love. Plays are filled with bitching and hate. It's all about spew. British theatre churns out work that's a form of torture. We feel theatre is a kind of medicine that will assuage our cultural guilt. It's the theatre of medicine. I don't go to the theatre much because I find it too depressing. Too ghastly.'

Berkoff despises the mentality of the mob. Naturally empathetic towards outsiders and underdogs, he gravitates towards those pilloried by the press. Talking about the way that British journalists treated David Blaine during his starvation-in-a-box extravaganza he could easily be referring to his own experiences at the hands of the press. 'It reveals a strange manifestation of sarcasm, bitterness, cyni-

cism towards anybody who's different. There's a loathing, which seems to be in the subconscious of the Brit. A general soup of loathing, disgust, indifference and a lack of compassion... The British press project what is perceived as a good-hearted cynicism. It's posing as satiric but it's callous. The Brits regard this as a good thing, this in-built shit-detector that says "We're good, we're smart". But to abuse someone, to throw balls, to throw eggs... The next time it could be rocks.'

Berkoff's empathy with victims led him to create 'Requiem for Ground Zero', a beautiful work on the page and stage, a 100-verse love story to America and a genuinely haunting memorial to the dead. Berkoff wrote it because he identified with the victims: with Roko Camaj, cleaning the windows of the tower; with the doomed passenger Brad Sweeney as he tells his wife, Julie – a widow by the time she hears his words – to live on and 'have some fun'. Even in the midst of these memories, however, Berkoff can't resist a rant: 'This is 9/11. And I couldn't find a publisher interested and so I had to publish my own poem. No theatre in London would stage "Requiem". I offered it last September 11th, on the first anniversary... zilch interest. It was predictable. I see the little prune-like faces of the theatre managers and I see their expressions and it's predictable. All I see is a tight little prune. And what can you expect from a screwed-up prune?'

For Berkoff, British theatre's response to the events of 9/11 has been disappointing. Predictable. Symptomatic of a country that gravitates to the Tracey Emin and the Damien Hirsts; to artists who 'express nothing'. And that's where Berkoff self-destructs. For a man who's never pulled a punch and who feels free to attack at will he's inordinately angered when the punches come his way. It's a defence mechanism born of isolation and of loneliness and it's as permanent and visible as skin. Berkoff feels that all performers are lonely, defined primarily by the audience, who give them shape. But with Berkoff this sense of being alone goes deeper still. A Londoner who still seems in exile from Elsewhere, he describes his loneliness as an acid that ate away at his soul. And also as something that made things vibrant, allowed his surface to be stripped bare so that his observations became all the more acute. These observations were never sharper than in his career-defining 1975 play 'East', which combined cockney argot, Shakespearean form and cartoon mus-



Berkoff

JOHN FREEMAN rolls up his shirtsleeves for a bout with Steven Berkoff

cularity to blistering effect. According to Berkoff, 'East' 'takes place within my personal memory and experience and is less a biographical text than an outburst of revolt against the sloth of my youth. It is a scream of pain. It is revolt.'

Both the play and Berkoff tell us much about the man behind the work. In fact, it's hard to think of any performative voice that is so inextricably linked to that of its creator. Whether it's the twitching abrasion of the Kray-baiting George Cornell, the passionate evocation of desire that we see in his 'Secret Love Life of Ophelia' or the angry, director-hating Harry from 'Graft'. What speaks loudest, however, is the voice that's the hardest one for us to hear, the voice that's buried deep beneath the lyrical brutality and picturesque profanity. It's the voice of a melancholic outsider, a loner in this most collaborative of arts, it's the voice that makes sense of the line from 'East': 'We get what we think we are, we give ourselves what we deserve.' If loneliness got him into this work it's aloneness that keeps him engaged.

As writer, director, actor and production journalist, Berkoff occupies a unique position. His own claims notwithstanding, there's no one out there to touch him. What he does best he does better than anybody else and he shows no signs of slowing up. Despite closing his 1992 autobiography 'Free Association' with a pledge that he would not be acting past sixty, Berkoff's never been busier. He has recently completed a new book, 'Tough Acts', and is touring 'Shakespeare's Villains' as well as staging 'Messiah: Scenes from a Crucifixion' at the Old Vic (Berkoff plays the role of Satan) and 'One Man' in Malaga.

He ends our encounter by once again biting the hand that feeds him. He can't help himself. It's in his blood, his bones and his nature. It's a reflex action. At the same time as he is happy to rake in the cash and recognition from film and television work he can't resist having a pop. At the dialogue, which is 'usually insipid... like entering the world of the half-living. The half-dead.' Or at his fellow actors: 'They're zombies. Zombie Actors. I have been involved in television productions at such a low level of zombie-ism that it was like vaporised existence.'

And so it goes and so goes he. It's Berkoff against the world and that's the way he wants it. Even if the world isn't against him at all. Berkoff's world is one he inhabits as a pecu-

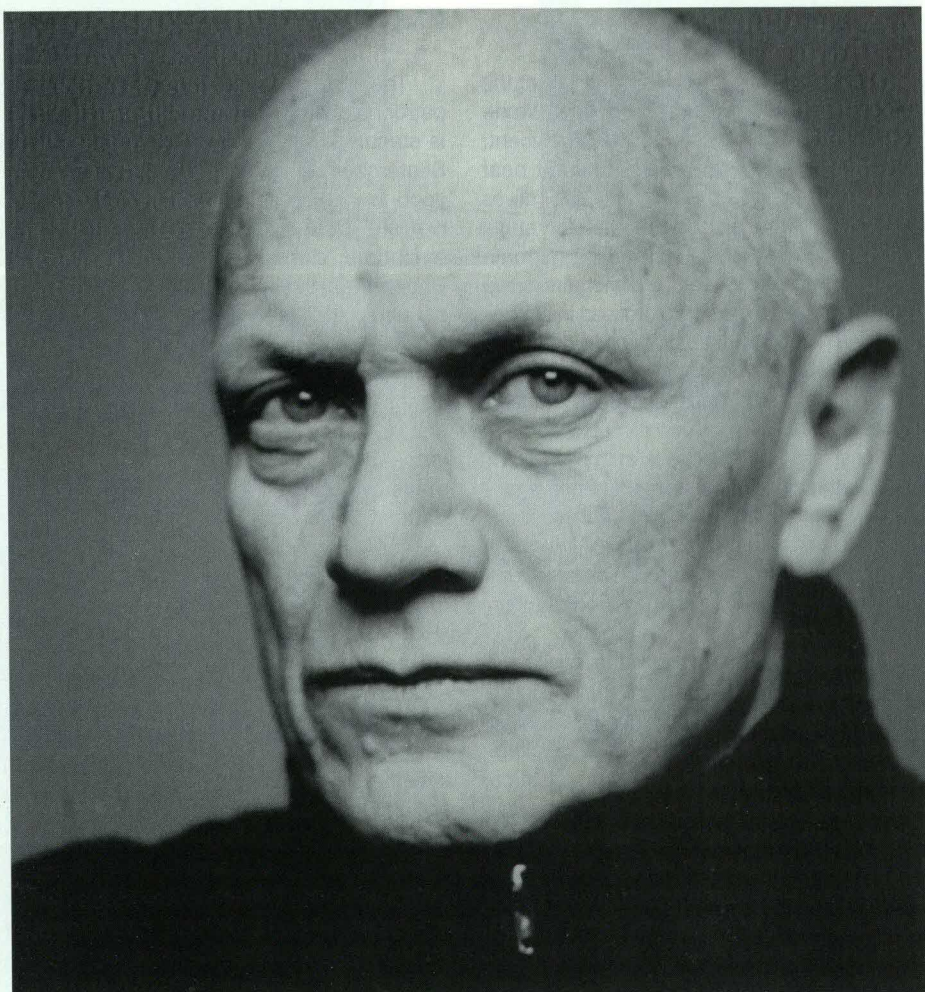
liar type of tourist, as an energised flâneur, deriving pleasure from the underbelly of the city streets, moving among crowds with the discriminating eye of an artist. To live one's life at the heart of the crowd has always been essential to this breed of artist. For Walter Benjamin, the flâneur is the 'heroic pedestrian', located within the group, but simultaneously regarding it with contempt, of the crowd and yet never quite with them at all. And it's hard not to see Berkoff as precisely that: as native and other, as celebration and condemnation, as lover and hater of all that he sees.

Physical theatre isn't about tacking on a few gestures. It's performer-centred work that utilises the actor's natural temperament and inclinations. As Lecoq said: 'Theatre... should not always journey in the wake of existing theatre forms. On the contrary, it should have a visionary aspect, developing new languages of the stage.' Berkoff's work is who he is. And

who he is is what makes the work unique. If Berkoff is getting what he thinks he deserves then he has only himself to blame. Fame, wealth and critical acclaim will get you so far and then it will get you as lonely and alone as you ever were. It's about being comfortable inside one's own skin. It's about respect being given as freely as it's received. It's about knowing when the battle's won. ■

'Messiah: Scenes from a Crucifixion' is at the Old Vic until 3 January. 'One Man' is at the Malaga Festival, Spain, 23-24 January. Berkoff's new book, 'Tough Acts', is published by Robson Books.

John Freeman is Senior Lecturer in Performance Studies at De Montfort University, Leicester and author of 'Tracing the Footprints: Documenting the Process of Performance', University Press of America. E-mail: jfreeman@dmu.ac.uk



Going to Extremes

Transgression and transformation, pastiche and pasties – all this and more as **DOROTHY MAX PRIOR** loses herself in the world of Burlesque performance

Photos, clockwise from top left: Miss High Leg Kick (photo by Jean-Marc Puissan), Jo King, Katie Etheridge's 'Mistress of the East', IWF fan dancer (photo by Sarah Ainslie), Lost Vagueness's 'Can-Booty-Can' (photo by James McCauley), Lucifire at Lost Vagueness, IWF showgirl (photo by Sarah Ainslie), Miss High Leg Kick at the mirror (photo by Darren Evans)



It's a mellow autumn day, and we are at the lunchtime launch of the International Workshop Festival 2003 on the HMS President, a sturdy oak-panelled vessel moored near Blackfriars. There is cheese and wine, olives on cocktail sticks, a ballroom with a low stage and a reception lounge with a long mirrored bar. Perched on the velour armchairs are a selection of people who are dressed in clothes that signify 'sex' to almost anyone you'd care to ask: gentlemen in gigolo suits and slicked back hair; ladies in tight satin dresses, stiletto heels, feathers and furs.

For this is not only the launch of the IWF, but also the inaugural event of its sister organisation, the London Academy of Burlesque, launched under the guiding hand of Miss Lara Clifton who with Miss Tamara Tyrer also runs Whoopee, 'London's first 21st century Burlesque club'.

Looking for all the world like a dodgy MC at a wedding, festival director Luke Dixon introduces our entertainment. First, we have Delilah, a rather chaste striptease dancer complete with twirling pasties – an unreconstructed old-fashioned striptease. The second act is Miss Bella Donna (aka Natasha Bolonkin), in contrast a grotesque postmodern pastiche – a mock-striptease complete with moth-eaten fur coat from under which is removed bra, panties, falsies and ultimately a rubber prosthetic vagina. Welcome to the world of Burlesque...

The gloriously-cleavaged Jo King, patronne of the London School of Striptease, is standing on the ship deck, taking in the September sunshine. I join her, and over a good few glasses of wine we discover that we are both veterans of the pubs-at-lunchtime, clubs-in-the-evening heyday of British striptease, which kicked off in the early-to-mid 70s as Go-Go dancing in white kinky boots and moved into something far more Burlesque with Salome 'harem' costumes (as worn by the late great Jacqui Martine), shiny She-and-Me PVC and leopardskin 1/4 cut bras (the best were made by two lovely ladies in a little room off Bethnal Green Road, I seem to remember).

In those long-gone glory days, the striptease artiste working the East End pubs (particularly if it was a Sunday morning slot in Ilford or Dagenham) would quite likely find herself performing on the same bill as a comedian and a wrestling tag-team. Here we have a range of performance mores that satisfy Jo King's Burlesque definition: a variety of different acts that are 'comedic, saucy, glamorous, outrageous'. We are reminded by Roland Barthes (in 'Mythologies') that striptease and wrestling are both based on contradiction: wrestling looks like a sport but is a spectacle; stripping seems to be about nudity, but is actually about covering, exoticising, occluding the naked truth, the straightforward purity of

the unadorned human body. Everyone who has worked as a professional stripper (of the Burlesque school) knows that you NEVER end naked. There must be shoes and/or stockings and/or gloves – or at the very least jewellery or hair bows.

Jo King is someone who has now ventured into the alternative-art world of cabaret clubs like Whoopee – and she is also running very popular striptease workshops (entitled 'Six Ways to Remove a Glove') for the IWF. But like many others involved in Whoopee, her roots are in the 'real world' of regular punters – although she has resisted the wretched 'get-'em-off and forget the tease' style of recent years: 'I cut my stripping teeth on Burlesque-style striptease. My work is generally based on different personas: glamorous diva, wild rock-chick... I've created more than thirty characters over the years. I have always enjoyed performing in a very tongue-in-cheek manner. I think my intrinsic theatrical vibe is completely informed by and related to the essence of Burlesque.'

This 'essence of Burlesque', as Jo puts it, is something that is seen by many artists as having three different strands of historical influence: classic American Burlesque in the early 20th Century, the 'Naughty Nineties and beyond' in Paris and the saucy Victoriana of old postcards and early film in Britain.

First, a brief trip to the USA. In her intro ►



to 'Strip Show – Performances of Gender and Desire' (Routledge: London, 2002), Katherine Liepe-Levinson points out that 'in its first heyday in the 1920s and 1930s the strip show as Burlesque was so popular it threatened to engulf all the legitimate theatres on Broadway'. Striptease was declared an 'all-American art' in Congress – and its most famous ambassador, Gypsy Rose Lee, was awarded an honorary doctorate by a posse of New York University professors. The now-familiar combination of luscious costume, transgressive sexual innuendo, camp, comedy and music (first jazz, then rock) defined Burlesque, the tradition continuing right through the 20th century to the present day, with the current success of the Miss Exotic World museum and annual gathering, curated by the legendary Dixie Evans, proof that Burlesque in the USA is still very much alive and kicking. Journalist Andrew Gumbell, writing in the Independent on Sunday, pointed out that 'where old-style Burlesque was a precursor to girlie mags, the new USA troupes (such as Lucha Va Voom) are like a resistance movement against porn'.

These sentiments are echoed by Deborah Berke, director of Lost Vagueness, who feels that 'not everyone finds constant explicit imagery and instant gratification to be truly entertaining. In this age we are numbed to the explicit and thus seek out that which is more teasing...'

Chris Meikan of Continental Drifts looks to Gay Paree as a major Burlesque influence and sees the release of the film 'Moulin Rouge' as a defining moment, when something that was bubbling underground went global. He is the promoter of Lost Vagueness, a Burlesque total environment presented at Glastonbury Festival and elsewhere, with its own in-house 10-strong Can-Can team, Can-Booty-Can, choreographed by circus star KT Sarabia.

Chris's definition of Burlesque is one shared by a number of commentators: 'It's frills, spills and interaction with an audience. Clubs like Whoopee are popular not just for the performance but because the public join in by having dress codes and taking on their own role.'

This carnivalesque blurring of roles is something of interest to Deborah Berke, who puts it this way: 'It's all mixed up and turned around and one asks – who is performer, who is guest, who is serious and who is a stooge? Lost Vagueness is not just about presenting Burlesque artists on stage, it creates an entire world of Burlesque parody and twisted norms. At Glastonbury, Lost Vagueness is the size of a small village, with: the Chapel of Love and Loathe (where guests can get involved in a whole cabaret of rituals, from marriage to divorce, bingo to boxing); the gourmet Silver Service Restaurant

– an oasis in the midst of muddy fields of hippies; the Ballroom, featuring Come Dancing and Ska/punk/gypsy bands. Also, the casino, roller-disco, launderette, trailer-park and sculpture garden.'

The notion of a total environment in which performers and audience become merged in the shared fantasy is, for many commentators, at the heart of Burlesque – what Richard Schechner called 'the performer as extension of the environment' into the creation of clubs or bars where the 'performing spectator' enters the space. Echoing this thought, Chris points to the success of clubs such as the S&M playground Torture Garden, which he says is 'way ahead' in their understanding of the Extreme Burlesque performance environment.

'It's frills, spills and interaction with an audience. Clubs like Whoopee are popular not just for the performance but because the public join in by having dress codes and taking on their own role.'

For performance artist, dancer and filmmaker Katie Etheridge, the influences have come from 'softer' sources – Victorian ephemera and old film. Her first brush with Burlesque was as a dancer with the long established Brighton-based VaVaVAVOOM (under the direction of fan-dancer and chanteuse Ms Stella Starr): 'Outside the faux fur and velvet cocoon of the club, I soon realised that in most people's minds Burlesque equals stripping, full stop.' But for Katie it was always far more: 'I have always been fascinated by old postcards and photographs, and a large part of what drew me into Burlesque was the archival images. Seductive, intense, rich, and quirky, sometimes impossibly glamorous, sometimes just weird...' Researching early dance on film, she came across many 'one-minute wonders' from the early 1900s starring female dancers, which inspired an installation in the window of the Old Clock Shop, Brighton, where tiny little screens, surrounded by luscious red velvet curtains, showed her creative interventions on

these early Burlesque and music hall classics; 'Mistress of the East: La Charmeuse de Serpents', for example, 'takes the early 20th century craze for eastern exotica, and fondly mocks the fakery and deadpan delivery of artists such as Ruth St. Dennis and many other anonymous women who danced for the camera in an exotique guise.'

Another artist who has taken Burlesque as her starting point but moved it into new territory is Marisa Carnesky. For over a decade she has 'Oom Pah Pah'ed at alternative clubs and cabarets, whilst simultaneously working the real world strip clubs and bars – following in the footsteps of many other female performance artists including Karen Finley, Annie Sprinkle and Cosey Fanny Tutti who've straddled both worlds (so to speak). She created the Grotesque Burlesque of latex-masked Dragon Ladies for the Raymond Revue bar, but she is trying not to feel a sense of regret at moving on at just the moment when a style of work she has pioneered becomes flavour-of-the-month. 'My energy now has to go into creating my Ghost Train...' Confirmed funding means that this very ambitious and exciting new venture will see the light of day in 2004. Carnesky shares with Russian theatre maestro Meyerhold an interest in the fairground sideshow as a theatrical model, and in 'Ghost Train' she will be creating a full-scale fairground ride peopled with performance artists, using her family's history as Jewish refugees from Lithuania to explore concepts of 'otherness'.

In the meantime, she is still treading the boards – as the penny-in-the-slot tattooed-lady fortune-teller (as seen at the most recent Whoopee Club), and as part of the Duckie team, who bring their very own brand of Burlesque to Barbican BITE over Xmas with the Total Theatre Award-winning 'C'est Vauxhall' (re-titled 'C'est Barbican').

According to Duckie, 'performance art is the new table dancing', although it looks as if it is also true to say that table dancing is the new performance art... Whichever way we look at it, the comic, saucy, imaginative and tongue-in-cheek melange that is Burlesque, far from being a period-piece from the 20th century, is very much here to stay as a powerful aspect of performance practice in the 21st century. ■

Duckie's 'C'est Barbican' is at the Barbican Pit until 4 January. To book, see www.barbican.org.uk/bite or phone 0845 120 7550. Duckie's website is at www.duckie.co.uk.

For Lost Vagueness info, check out www.lostvagueness.com.

The Whoopee Club's website is at www.thewhoopeeclub.com.

International Workshop Festival and London Academy of Burlesque details on www.workshopfestival.co.uk.

London School of Striptease: www.lsos.co.uk.

Four Dancing Ladies

Showgirls, fan-dancers, pole-dancers and more... Our intrepid team of reporters joined the London Academy of Burlesque sessions at the International Workshop Festival 2003. Bring on the dancing girls!

Fan-dancing illustrations by SARAH CORBETT



Miriam King learnt Six Ways to Remove a Glove and had a dizzying time pole-dancing

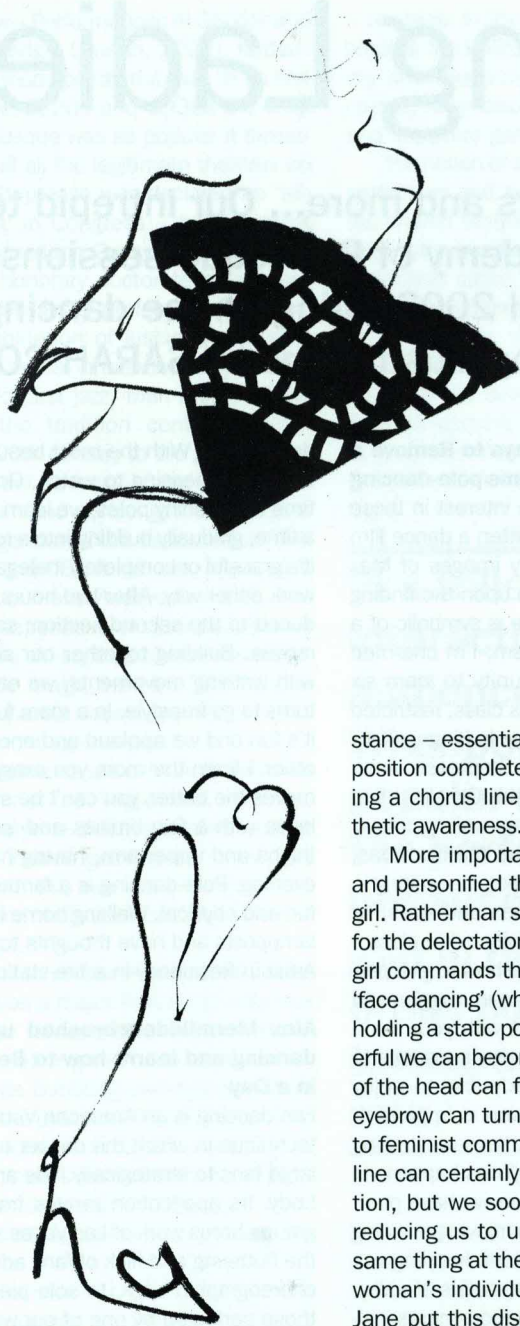
For some time I've held an interest in those long evening gloves. I've written a dance film based on the 19th-century images of Max Klinger and his 'Paraphrase upon the finding of a glove', where this glove is symbolic of a woman's sensuality/eroticism. I'm charmed and excited by the opportunity to learn six ways to remove a glove! This class, restricted to eight participants, is led by Jo King – director of the London School of Striptease. Arriving at a rehearsal room at the Old Vic, I find a row of chairs, upon which are waiting colourful pairs of satin gloves and feather boas; pinks, purples and reds. Ladies are waiting in anticipation, all ages, shapes and sizes. Jo says she will have no negativity in her class – we are all gorgeous. We learn how to give permission to be looked at. We learn wiggles and walks and how eye contact with your audience is everything. How it's very sensuous to look at/touch your own body and to enjoy sharing that. Facial expression is important, smiling without a doubt is the sexiest thing you can do. Removing our gloves happens in the last fifteen minutes, once we have practised the indulgent glory of enjoying showing off what you've got, whilst still keeping our clothes on. We put together a routine of walks, wiggles and auto-caressing movements culminating in the seductive removal of our gloves to music ranging from 'Fever' to 'Sexual Healing'. Sounds cheesy, but when performed with conviction it's hypnotic. I loved it!

A 'sexy, seductive and specialised contemporary dance-form', the pole-dancing class offers the basics to develop your own routine. Recently I've developed a character, 'Pugalo', a glamorous yet rancid scarecrow being. I've thoughts of creating a pole-dance for Pugalo, dislodging him/herself from the scarecrow pole and skanking on and around it. Tree, our teacher, shows us how to familiarise ourselves with the pole, to be confident and remain in contact with it, as if it is our dancing partner. We're taught six spiralling spins and moves where the pole takes all our weight. It's necessary to have good upper body strength. Tree looks like a willowy Won-

der Woman. With the most beautiful bottom, she's mesmerising to watch. Going two at a time to the shiny poles, we learn one move at a time, gradually building into a routine. Either it's graceful or completely inelegant, and hard work either way. After two hours, we're introduced to the second section: saucy gyrating moves. Building together our six pole-spins with writhing movements, we each take it in turns to go freestyle. In a room full of women, it's fun and we applaud and encourage each other. I learn the more you exaggerate these moves the better, you can't be shy about it! I leave with a few bruises and 'pole burn' on thighs and upper arm, having had a brilliant evening. Pole-dancing is a fantastic workout, fun and physical. Walking home I try out a few lampposts and have thoughts to apply for an Artist in Residency in a fire station.

Alex Mermikides brushed up her Fan-dancing and learnt how to Be a Showgirl in a Day

Fan dancing is an American Vaudeville erotic technique in which the dancer uses a pair of large fans to strategically hide and reveal her body. Its application ranges from the large group chorus work of Las Vegas shows where the fluttering and flick of fans adds oomph to choreographic work, to solo pieces such as those perfected by one of our workshop participants, a professional erotic dancer who goes by the name of Miss Lilly White. Fan-dancing was first popularised in the 1930s by Josephine Baker, whose innovative routines incorporated African dance, Charleston and Lindy Hopping, and who was the inspiration behind the dance piece we developed over the course of Kat Culbert's in-depth workshop. I caught the first and last days of the week-long course, which gave me the chance to see a real-life 'before and after' as a group of sensible, straight-off-the-street women transformed themselves into glamour-pusses and powerful objects of beauty. 'Objectify me – but on my own terms' was Kat Culbert's key phrase and it's the principle that underlies the fan dance. In conventional stripping, once the clothes are off, they're off. A pair of skilfully articulated fans, on the other hand, allows you ►



to choose precisely what to reveal, when (if at all) and you can always hide it again. This ability to choose just how much to give to a particular audience frees us to enjoy the audience's attention and admiration. The fan dance is a powerful lesson in learning to seduce, subvert and play with an audience, both in performance and in life.

You wouldn't think there was much to it, being a showgirl, would you? You'd have thought that her biggest challenge would be not falling over her heels while keeping a ridiculous headdress in place. 'Be a Showgirl in a Day' Jane Turner's eye-opener of a workshop showed us that the arts of display, posing and maintaining a sincere smile are far from easy. It takes some bodily stamina and control to affect and move in the showgirl

stance – essentially a sexualised basic ballet position complete with turn out. Synchronising a chorus line takes a developed kinaesthetic awareness.

More importantly, Jane both showed us and personified the intelligence of the showgirl. Rather than simply being a passive object for the delectation of an audience, the showgirl commands their attention. An exercise in 'face dancing' (what to do with your face while holding a static pose) illustrated just how powerful we can become as performers: an incline of the head can flip your heart, a raise of the eyebrow can turn a saucy pose from Playboy to feminist commentary. Working in a chorus line can certainly seem like a military operation, but we soon learned that rather than reducing us to uniformed clones, doing the same thing at the same time highlights each woman's individuality and personal beauty. Jane put this discovery in historical context: while the post-war taste in showgirl was for the young and conventionally beautiful (think Busby Berkeley), the principle underlying pre-war chorus lines was a display of the variety of female beauties (colour, age, size) 'someone for everyone'. Jane Turner's 'Be a Showgirl in a Day' was an empowering, educational and above all fun experience.

Katie Etheridge went to the Tableau Vivant Workshop

The premise of this workshop (led by Alice Skidmore and Tamara Tyrer of the Whoopee Club) was simple enough. Select an image, anything from classical sculpture to 50s glamour, and re-enact it to create a living picture. Easy.

Twenty minutes later I'm lying awkwardly squashed between fellow participants as we

attempt to depict an Indian painting of ten women in the shape of an elephant (I'm the front left leg). Taking my turn to step out and view the resulting tangle of bodies from above, I agree that yes, it does sort of look like an animal.

Historically, tableau vivant straddles the sacred and the profane, from religious scenes in the Middle Ages, to nude lovelies evading Victorian censorship laws by posing as classical sculptures. With the advent of photography, 'living pictures' became a popular 19th-century bourgeois party piece. Ironically, the paintings recreated were often sketched originally from live models, setting up an interesting cyclical relationship between the live and captured image.

After the introduction, we were left to it, and launched ourselves into a frenzy of arranging limbs, improvising costumes, and bodging sets. All fun, but a few basic props would have saved time. The obvious problem is that when you are in the picture you can't see it, so it was difficult to know if we were getting anywhere without a large mirror. It would have been nice to see contemporary examples of the art form, like George Chakravathi's stunning take on *The Last Supper*, which illustrates that tableau vivant can still be a breathtaking, spectacular, and powerful medium in the digital age.

Sarah Corbett got some tips on how to Create your Own Speciality Act

We initially set about defining a 'speciality act'. It proved very interesting to hear variations on the theme – especially to get beyond the skills-based act into the strange, eccentric and ridiculous. As the workshop (led by live art performer/writer Joshua Sofaer) unfolded, it became clear to see that given enough momentum, conviction and individualism absolutely anything can become a speciality act: so on that note we invented fantasy scenarios and kept a booklet for each idea. Then we took a Polaroid for one of the creations. These two techniques allowed for a different perspective on the act and provoked further developments. Working in pairs and as a group, giving and receiving impartial feedback, was very beneficial. The quality and quantity of material developed in such a short space of time was surprising. The ideas I generated will directly feed back into my work (with Topical Broadcast and Brink of Distinction). I have gained a new approach as a starting point for initiating ideas and especially useful was how to make a visual idea (in the form of a drawing) into a physical reality by giving it a task to perform. Though I didn't fully realise my act in the workshop I hope to present it at a platform for new ideas that may be set up in consequence of the festival. It was a great idea for a workshop. ■

Akhe

Theatre of Engineering



Akhe's 'White Cabin'

MISCHA TWITCHIN welcomes Total Theatre Award winners Akhe to the London International Mime Festival

One of the joys of the fantastic Aurora Nova series of 'mini-festivals-within-the-fringe-festival' at Edinburgh has been the appearance of the Russian company Akhe in the UK – first with 'Pooh and Prah' in 2001 and this year with 'White Cabin'. For if one dreams of a theatre that is not prescribed by words, then here is that dream come to life, gleefully playing hide-and-seek with our expectations of the relation between stage and story. Now, thanks to the London International Mime Festival, 'White Cabin' – winner, amongst many other prizes, of both a Total Theatre Award and a Fringe First at Edinburgh – can be seen again, together with 'Plug and Play', described by the company as a kind of club night with 'live painting' alongside live sampling by their DJ.

Whilst based in St Petersburg, where most of the company were born and have studied, Akhe doesn't have a theatre of its own. Recalling Kantor's notion of a Wandering Troupe, they not only perform internationally, but also make their work wherever they are invited to – this autumn, for instance, at the puppet festival in Neuchâtel in Switzerland. Theirs is a theatre, however, illuminated not by the spectacle and publicity associated with such festivals, but by the company's sheer playfulness. Rather than relying on a juggernaut full of the latest festival-standard high-tech equipment, Akhe can still pitch up with a few suitcases, packed simply with what seems like bric-a-brac to produce no less sense of amazement.

Like clowns, they toy with the spectator's imagination, provoking equally laughter and nostalgia, as each simple gesture touches

something true in experience through a sense of wonder at what does not actually exist. As they play with objects which they may have either found or have crafted, producing the material images of things that in their hands magically appear intangible, theirs is a theatre of real and wonderful make-believe.

This is, in a way, the underlying theme of 'White Cabin'. As the audience enters, the flat shadows familiar from the cinema flicker in the darkness on the tiny screen of an editing machine. Although they appear to move they are, of course, only animated – invisibly – by a projector. In the theatre, however, these images are transformed; objects are animated – visibly – before our eyes. They exist, like puppets, both materially and immaterially – with the real mess and havoc of the former played off against the dream-life of the latter.

Founded in 1989 by three members of the experimental Yes/No Theatre Group of Boris Ponzovsky (who they acknowledge as their teacher), the company began by exploring their own diverse range of interests, from street happenings to concerts and exhibitions, and even to making short black and white films. Since 1996, however, with two members of the original group – Maxim Isaev and Pavel Semtchenko – still at the heart of the company, Akhe has devoted itself more to theatre-based projects. Both of them painters, Isaev and Semtchenko fashion all of the objects that appear within the shows themselves, with both sound and light also produced by the company.

Besides the company's shows and their notable collaborations (which are set to con-

tinue with, amongst others, Derevo), each of the artists in Akhe also does work outside of the company, ranging from projects with Slava Polunin to the designing of cafes and clubs in St Petersburg. Now with seven core collaborators, they operate as a kind of artists' collective, based on the shared experience that their collective projects offer greater possibilities than any one of them could create on their own for developing a sense of theatrical creation.

Their word for this creation is 'engineering' – not, however, to suggest that the small miracle of theatre is simply the workings of a machine, but to point up the identity of the creative and the technical within their art. Their sensibilities and perceptions are transformed into an often-surreal visual and material reality, with which the performers can then play without the inhibiting resort to the pretence with which an actor normally has to imbue both objects and space.

Distinct from the 'drama' served by actors' theatre, therefore, or even as distinct from 'physical theatre', Akhe emphasises that what they share with an audience is, like a dream, visual – calling theirs an 'optical theatre'. They stage such stories as their audiences will become the authors of. From the theatrical reinvention of the images of things, audiences will come to tell their own stories, putting into words what the performance has to say without them. ■

Akhe's 'White Cabin' is at the Purcell Room 14-18 January as part of LIMF. 'Plug and Play' is at Komedia Brighton on 20 January. See www.mimefest.co.uk and www.komedia.co.uk.

Peepolykus 'Mindbender'

Komedia, Brighton,
September 2003

Gonzo Moose 'When in Rome'

Komedia, Brighton,
October 2003

Leikin Loppu 'Tony & Pat'

Komedia, Brighton,
October 2003

Komedia has always been a strong supporter of physical comedy – since opening in 1994 they have played host to all the familiar names: Commotion, Hoipolloi, Foursight, Rejects Revenge, Brouhaha... and of course Peepolykus, who have brought every show from 'Let the Donkey Go' onwards to the venue. Last year, Peepolykus toured their version of Ionesco's 'Rhinceros'. Their latest offering, 'Mindbender', is a return to the familiar territory of the three-man devised theatre clown show, developed with director Darren Tunstall.

'Mindbender' takes us into the psychic world of Michael Santos. We start with the to-be-expected spoof on the phenomenon of the TV magician or psychic, with David Santos (no relation?) in his element as the flashy showman – more Derek Achora than Derren Brown. There's some classic Peepolykus playacting and parody

including a send-up of mime school glass walls/imaginary doors with a very clever sound-on/sound-off twist plus the usual clown-play of establishing relationships and hierarchies between the characters, with Javier Marzan in his familiar role as the I'll-do-anything-for-a-laugh sidekick and John Nicholson as the naïve stooge who agrees to be the audience plant. The spoof mind-reading scenes take a nod in the direction of Forced Entertainment's 'First Night', although stay within safe boundaries of pastiche rather than deconstruction.

The show develops with a Faustian twist to the proceedings: having suffered heart failure during a masochistic stunt (shades of Houdini and Blaine), Santos does his deal with the spirit world: one night of genuine psychic power and he'll die a happy man. But is it for real? The whole thing hinges around the shift in the second

half to real rather than fake magic – but although some of the tricks are convincing, the necessary wow factor is missing, and the ending feels a little lame. There is, however, a scene towards the end which is so perfectly absurd and wondrously funny that it makes the show: John Nicholson's character, relegated from his role as audience stooge, regains the focus of attention by turning up on stage in disguise as a bear. It's a moment of pure comic genius – after that, anything would be an anti-climax.

A rather different style of physical comedy was brought to Komedia by Leikin Loppu whose 'Tony & Pat' is set on an allotment, and apparently inspired by 'Antony and Cleopatra'. It is a wordless blend of physical clowning, surreal visual tableaux and eccentric dance/mime, that in its precisely choreographed and musically sensitive physical expression remind-

ed me of Nola Rae's work with Sally Owen and at other points reminded me of Bouge-de-la's 'Under Glass': perhaps this latter connection was down to the shared interest in tortured romantic relationships and the strange sprouting of plastic flowers! As will have been gathered, this is a show that has many familiar elements to veterans of British mime/physical theatre – but in its combination of those elements it is an original, entertaining and often touching exploration of love amongst the leeks and lilies.

Also at Komedia, appearing as part of the Paramount Comedy Festival, came Gonzo Moose with 'When in Rome'. This is physical comedy with no holds barred, a rollicking romp through ancient Rome that grabs every cliché and myth and half-remembered bit of history and serves it up as a fast-paced comic stew – slaves and gladiators, Caligula and Nero, Caesar and Brutus, vestal virgins, soothsayers, senators and power-hungry mothers. Directed by Shifting Sands' Gerry Flanagan (whose previous company Commotion were a leading light in British physical theatre), it features one of the rising stars of the form, Paschale Straiton, who's destined, I'm sure, to be one of the great female clowns. Previous work (with Company F/Z and Dark Horse amongst others) has proved her comic ability, but Gonzo Moose is the perfect vehicle for her talent – which relies heavily on bouffon and slapstick combined with sharp verbal repartee and surreal visual gags.

However, this is not a solo show: the other half of the act is Mark Conway, who at first seems to be the Ernie to Paschale's Eric as she steals every line and visual gag from him. But as the comic mayhem progresses, the match evens up and by the end of the show I'm convinced they are a marriage made in heaven. Sitting in the front row, I did almost fall over with laughter at more than one point. It's hard to pick a highlight from such a fantastically funny show, but the bizarre cuddly-toy puppetry and the one-woman portrayal of the whole Roman senate have to be mentioned. As does the great set design from Strangeling David Bernstein. I especially liked the statues with the lovely plaster-of-paris tits and the vestal virgin's eternal flame of glittery red paper. Viva Roma!

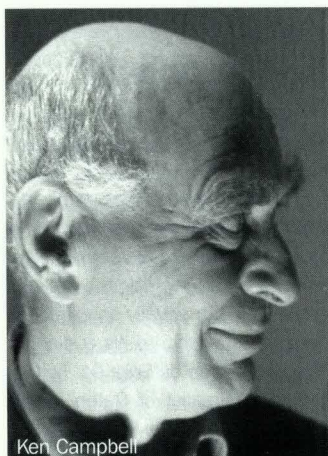
Dorothy Max Prior



Gonzo Moose



Leikin Loppu



Ken Campbell

Ken Campbell 'I'm not mad, I've just read different books'

Phoenix, Exeter, October 2003

This visit to Kenworld is an absolute pleasure. Shuffling around a table, books laid out like a display at a conference, Ken Campbell lets us and the universe in, his hands flapping on top of his head as if his skull were opening, bay door like, to admit some imponderable spaceship bearing ideas from the edge. But rather than a story or a philosophy, what Campbell gives us is a map.

He begins with a few routes off the mainstream – early Jackie Chan, the Jeremy Beadlean Library, the Cathar 'heresy', Laughing Jesus, a Swiss cult with a screenplay problem. Those familiar with Kenworld can guess that these seemingly disparate lanes are all part of some Ken-coherent topology, it's just that we haven't been told yet.

And sure enough, as we enter an invigorated second half the routes meet in quantum entanglements – we are simultaneously travelling high science with professors Deutsch, Penrose, Hawking et al, middle-brow necromancy at Ken's local Old Catholic church, deep into an Intra-Montane temple.

If there's a weakness it's the coalescence into a final meaning – all about 'time lines'. Having set so many hares to catch, Campbell isn't quite sure where to stuff them all. Pity he didn't pursue Roger Penrose a little more. Then, rather than a final narrative, he might have ended by dissolving big Self and little plots in Penrose's quantum consciousness – but can the

one-person show survive that?

Phil Smith

Doo Cot 'The Golem'

BAC Octoberfest, London, October 2003

Watching Doo Cot was an intellectually provocative experience that created a good deal of discussion. Here is a solo show exploring the Jewish myth of the creation, actions and death of the Golem through a jarring mix of puppetry, live action, video and music.

The influence of Tadeusz Kantor on Nenagh Watson's work was striking as she manipulated the boundaries between puppets as objects and puppets as 'live' characters. This ensured the audience never achieved any real sense of empathy with the protagonists, leaving some of the interactions 'soulless'. Watson was at times engaging, although her deliberate arrest of the transitions by disappearing for periods of time and extending scene changes allowed the audience time to lose focus and I found myself failing to invest in the performance. Subsequently her final monologue, in full house lights, lacked any power and seemed too divorced from the need to communicate with the audience, rather than purge a personal emotion.

Sharing the stage with Watson were accompanist Sylvia Hallett and video artist Rachael Field. This foregrounding of the technical elements reflected the deliberate 'epic' approach to the performance; unfortunately several interactions felt clumsy and lacked imagination. The musical score, performed on a variety of instruments, highlighted the narrative's root as an oral legend. The multiple video images projected on stage were most successful when 'doubling' the live action, although others were lost in the general mêlée.

As a male observer, the description of Doo Cot's work as 'unmistakably female' provoked a variety of thoughts and feelings while watching, leaving me unsure as to my supposed critical stance. I found several interesting theatrical conundrums to take away, but lacked certainty of the performance's relevance to the world.

Tom Wilson



Doo Cot

Jade 'Cake'

BAC, London, November 2003

The kitchen as metaphor for life is a rich source of theatre: the Jade company's comedy 'Cake', set in a smart modern kitchen, cleverly shades meaning and mood and is sometimes farce, sometimes drama. The central character (played perfectly by Victoria Worsley) is a housewife demonstrating the niceties of preparing a Victoria sponge for her family. Here is cake-making as a manifestation of love through oral, sugary gratification. The family is strange: a set of spoons which behave like lively children on whom the woman dotes.

Then a big curly-haired, stiff-limbed doll emerges from a cupboard to rupture the cosy atmosphere, striding into the mess already on the cooking counter (no substitutes here – the ingredients and the kitchen equipment are all real, and the actor is an expert at the cake-making). John, the doll, is more difficult to deal with than the spoons, which have the advantage of silence. John has a penchant for awkward questions, like most children, and attempts to distract the mother, demanding attention and affection, impatient with the never-ending promise of the cake. She is conscious of her doll-ness, her limited movements, but she is also very human, wilful and unexpectedly foulmouthed. Increasingly riled, the cake-maker tries to maintain a smiling calm in the middle of the mounting mayhem.

The two puppeteers, the excellent Steve Tiplady and Rebekah Wild, manipulate the spoons delicately and

the doll roughly. They are true experts. The dynamics are not right yet, as the piece did not seem to go anywhere, but it was never less than entertaining, original and intriguing.

Penny Francis

Angel Exit 'Bolt Upright'

Players Theatre, ESB Dublin Fringe Festival, September 2003

An old crone opens in laboured Irish (in the wrong dialect) inviting us into her tale. My heart sinks at the 'stage Irish' tone. But when she throws her ball of wool to an audience member and he winds in the cast, I am drawn into their story and their dynamic way of telling. A chorus of six 'Faeries' provide narration, buffoonery and setting, through physical action and by operating Golema and Gamble's clever set (most of the company have faery names themselves), flitting in and out of roles in ingenious comic-costumes.

Although timing was rough at first, understandable for a premiere, they warmed up to outstanding performances, particularly from Jonathan Gunning whose comic genius could hijack this fine ensemble were it not for the strong direction evident from Acushla Bastible (clearly another Faery). Thus, they perfectly framed Iseult Golden's Mairead, the only 'real' character, whose optimism flounders in superstitious Donegal where she tries to care for two charmed orphans – eerie puppets, skilfully operated by the hooded faeries Cotter and Fessey.

Bryan Quinn provided spooky and emotive live music, but shouldn't move props, as it breaks the clever construct of the Faery control of the story, otherwise seamless. Language and physical imagery were clearly informed by an excellent devised process, with witty results. The Famine's portrayal as a manic ceilidh dance was suitably irreverent to Irish literary theatre tradition, subverting such clichés. Perhaps a similar subversion was intended in the opening scene – although realised less successfully. I am glad to know these faeries are at work and look forward to their future magic.

Niamh Lawlor

Compagnie Josef Nadj

'Le Temps de Repli'

The Place/Dance Umbrella,
October 2003

'Le Temps de Repli' combines dance and deadpan theatrical clowning in a short piece that is comic, skilful and touching. Using an eccentric movement vocabulary, performers Josef Nadj and Cecile Thieblemont explore the daily and banal rituals of relationships.

At times I was reminded of a cross between the worlds of Kafka and Beckett, yet this exploration is fundamentally light-hearted, never taking itself too seriously. Thus, whilst there is an air of absurdity, it never feels strained after. In fact what is remarkable is how the two performer/dancers have synthesised their separate styles, to make the complex look simple and the stylised appear natural.

Sometimes, the relationship between the duo is apparent, as when they dance acrobatically on a table top; at other times it is deliberately obscure. Overall I felt that they were having fun and I found myself laughing frequently.

They are accompanied on stage by musician Vladimir Tarasov, who uses an array of percussion instruments to create sound effects in a variety of drumming styles, sometimes playing to the performers and occasionally leading them in a semi-improvisation. His sensitivity and understatement add a further layer to the whimsicality and charm of the piece. This is an intentionally slight

and overall feelgood piece. I came away feeling that I had been witness to an intimate and poetic theatrical encounter.

Richard Cuming

Jasmin Vardimon Dance Company 'Lullaby'

The Place/Dance Umbrella,
London, October 2003

Lullaby combines video projection, dance, dramatic action and dark humour. Five performers, including director/choreographer Vardimon, lead us into a multi-layered and thought-provoking insight into illness and hospitalisation.

Opening with a crazed monologue by what appears to be a three-foot-high baseball player in head protection peering through hospital curtains, we're immediately in a state of suspense as to what will happen next. It's a waiting-room scene, a girl within her own world, stereo earphones in. Amidst coughing patients, the man next to her is trying unsuccessfully to embrace her. There's a dancing doctor in surgeon's greens and a mischievous, jerky nursing auxiliary.

Dancing is precise and often illustrative of the dialogue – for example in a wonderful routine between a doctor and a nurse utilising a pillow on the theme 'Kill the disease without killing the patient; treatment can be more painful than the illness'. Medicine is a battle and a quest for victory over illness.

There's a fantastic percussive routine with a handheld microphone

by Hofesh Shechter as a doctor/specialist. Later, Vardimon plays/dances a pneumatic robotic 'Stepford Wife' of a nurse with a pulsating neon heart badge pinned on her chest. There are skilful choreographies with Zimmer frames. Video projection is imaginative and surprising. In one scene, a doctor examines the female patient with a camera concealed next to a lamp on his forehead – the image of what he sees is projected onto a hospital curtain. It's unnerving. There's a beautiful, moving animation of two hearts pulsating, projected onto two dancers' torsos. One heart leaves, travelling down arms to meet the heart of the other, which fills with red. 'Lullaby' is beautiful, surprising, compelling, Truly theatrical dance theatre.

Miriam King

Protein Dance 'The Banquet'

QEH, London, October 2003

Richard Strange is tall, bald and wry. He is a musician, writer and adventurer and together with David Coulter (formerly of the Pogues) he created a bizarre live soundtrack with voice, accordion and guitar for Protein Dance's new show 'The Banquet'. The four dancers were rough and ready with their bodies, throwing themselves around the stage with gusto and passion. They fluctuated brilliantly between extreme animal physicalisations and posh toffs at a party. The sexual agendas, both animal and human, were played out in the style of a wildlife documentary with Richard Strange 'performing' David Attenborough.

The piece had an old-fashioned feel to it, accentuated by the slightly derivative set (Kantor meets Richard Foreman) and dull lighting. The high point of the performance was a beautifully evolutionary dance at the start with the dancers transforming from monkey to insect and back to human again under the glare of a UV light. I wish it had continued in this vein. Another high point was a primeval sumo wrestling-style comedy duo between the two male dancers which parodied the maleness of men beautifully. But overall the piece had a dull, unoriginal feel to it, as if we'd seen it all before.

Emi Slater

Ko Murobushi 'Edge 01'

The Place, September 2003

Using improvisation between predestined anchor points, Ko Murobushi (who studied with the founder of Butoh, Hijikata) is extraordinary – with equally as extraordinary a relationship to his audience. The first section of 'Edge 01' by this radical minimalist of Butoh opens with three monolithic 'cupboards' on stage. There is the sound of creaking seats in the audience, low light on us and a suspended haze on stage as Ko, like a shadow in an alley, shifts form behind and between these cupboards. Now in front of us, wearing white shirt and grey trousers, he is standing and contracting and falls backwards onto the ground, hard. No soundtrack, he is talking to himself. It is frightening, alarming, fascinating to witness; you feel you're looking into something too private and you want to sit very still.

Ko Murobushi melts and morphs and stamps. His trousers come off and the soundscape comes in with a sound like vapour escaping. Ko is chilling and disturbing to watch. A muscle and clay-like body out of which something is trying to hatch, emerge; and it's painful. Like a hybrid between an anatomical model of a man and an alien, he stands, picks up his clothes and indicates to the sound operator to cut the music.

Second section... a square of light becomes a corridor of light. Crawling like a muscular slug with limbs, leaving a glistening trail of sweat, Ko looks to us and asks 'Happy?'. He is so within himself and this intense experience, yet acknowledges the audience watching him. I departed feeling I had seen something I had not witnessed before, a concentrated human hurricane enclosed in flesh.

Miriam King

Tadashi Endo 'Migrations 01'

Jacksons Lane, London,
October 2003

There continues to be a widening approach to Butoh, with different companies articulating their own dis-



Jasmin Vardimon Dance Company

tinctive style. Endo's 'Migrations 01' straddles both the dark introspection and the comic surrealism of Butoh, creating a shifting emotional landscape on the stage, reflecting the theme of migrations in a variety of forms.

'Migrations 01' shifts between solo and trio with all the performers having the quality of nomadic 'spirits'. The concept of a sculptural body is much in evidence as seen in the landscapes created by the performers' backs and the animal imagery used to inform several motifs.

A striking feature of Endo's work, that contrasts distinctly with the work of Sankai Juku, is the allowance he makes for each performer's individuality to inform their work. As the performance progresses, each performer is slowly allowed to communicate an essence of a character, giving us an opportunity to access a humanity within this visceral genre. Particularly effective are Yael Karavan's clownish facial expressions as the performers inflate their mouths to bursting; and Yumino Seki's melancholic character, at times an outside figure, excluded by the other females.

Music and lighting play a key role, deliberately jarring us out of an enrancement and driving the performers onto the next stage. At times the lighting lost much of its effect due to imprecision in the timing. Having said that, the effects themselves served to further articulate themes of longing, isolation and journeying. Most affecting were the arrhythmic and rhythmic soundings of the performers' feet upon the stage: Endo's soft and aching patters at the close of the show evoking a desperate repetition and blind faith; and Barbe, Karavan and Seki's striking 'boot dance' lending a darkly humorous epithet to the movement on stage.

Tom Wilson

Fran Barbe Dance 'Palpitation'

Jacksons Lane, London,
September 2003

'Palpitation' integrates dance, Butoh and Sukuki actor training method and asks: 'What makes your heart race? What makes it beat?' A company of twelve performers, directed and choreographed by Fran Barbe, entice us into a shapeshifting world of creatures,

beings and shimmering impressions. To the sound of 1950s thriller-style music, white-gowned figures glide across the rear stage like ocean creatures. To the sound of rain, dry bodies on the ground crack open like pods, listening and poised. Then, a sound like the creaking of a ship at sea in a rainstorm. Elegant and curious, like unidentified life under a microscope, a chorus of floating specs; wide, wide mouths, like a grouping of white blood corpuscles, merge into formation. Screaming Pac-men. Lost ghosts. Nightmare pupae.

Amazingly simple yet effective moments such as the performer with fingers spread, hand planted, smothering, over the face. Lovely image of heads on pillows, pillows on ground, bodies pushing across the floor in sleeping motion. I write in my notes 'Rachel Sweeney has great feet'.

'Palpitation' is beautifully theatrical and wondrously atmospheric. I'm impressed by the simplicity and effectiveness of the costumes; white gowns, each unique, all with high necks and long arms that completely cover the body, yet completely enhance and extend the bodies' line and movement. Fran Barbe Dance creates work that leaves deep impressions, not only on the retina, but impressions which surface days later from the subconscious. An exploration of the perpetual discovery of becoming.

Miriam King

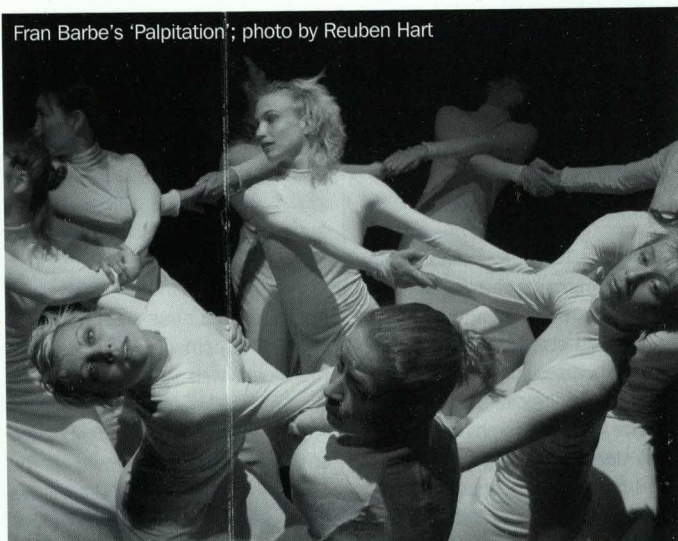
Compagnie Les Grooms

'The Threepenny Ring Cycle'

Ross-on-Wye International
Festival, August 2003

Les Grooms brought their deconstructed but respectful condensed version of Wagner's 'Ring Cycle' to The Prospect, the bucolic environs of an old pumping station overlooking the Wye Valley. The audience were met by the performers, briefed on the story and the parts the actor/musicians were playing, then conducted to their places under the canvas tent on either side of a ribbon which represented the Rhine. Aficionados of the company's promenaded production of the 'Magic (Tragic) Flute' would recognise from this opening

Fran Barbe's 'Palpitation'; photo by Reuben Hart



the characteristic style of the company: their candour with the audience and the absurdist, rough comedic theatrics.

Puppetry, models of Valhalla, slapstick, and anachronisms joyfully abound. The actors regularly tell us how much time would have passed in the original 16-hour operas as they distil the action to 90 minutes. But the company are fine musicians and singers who preserve the well-known sections of the four operas and treat us to virtuoso musicianship and opera rendition.

This is not a parody of the Ring, but a celebration – we were treated to a theatrical coup worthy of any production of the Ring. The audience are led out of the tent to follow Siegfried's funeral procession around the garden, with majestic views of the valley below at twilight. With serendipity, the Twilight of the Gods is enacted before our eyes. The tent collapses with the cast underneath, representing the destruction of Valhalla. And the tent then transforms into the Rhine, receiving the ring back again and reprising the Rhinemaiden puppets from the beginning. We witness renewal coming from destruction – an event to grace any international festival.

Mitch Mitchelson

Ridiculusmus 'Ideas Men'

BITE, Barbican Pit,
October 2003

David Woods and Jon Hough are not afraid to be dangerous, either with

themselves, their audience or their material. Here two Ideas Men in a faceless company attempt to come up with ideas, when they don't have any (except accidentally). 'Ideas Men' is a highly effective satire on bureaucracy, office politics and how we are all now meant to be creative. Moreover its subtext is concerned with how to come up with ideas to make a piece of performance, and the danger that you might not have any good ideas.

The two performers are both highly adept, transforming themselves in an eyeblink into a variety of business types (the boss, the secretary, the clock-watcher). Repetition and the sense of passing the time in pointless tasks add to the comic effect. Add a large table, two computer keyboards, one of which gets smashed, and two chairs – in which Ridiculusmus create a nightmare world with physical aplomb, vocal dexterity and some pointed slapstick.

Their relationship with their audience is both playful and threatening. There is the sense that they are continually teetering on the edge of attacking us, only drawing back at the last second; that they are playing with the performed and the real. Ridiculusmus are here using comedy as a weapon to challenge the world of business, and ultimately of our human and technological capacities. They are dealing with important material, challenging the notion that we have to be seen to be imaginative, creative, individuals, forever being 'on the ball' and in the process making an imaginative and exhilarating piece of theatre.

Richard Cuming

Inbal Pinto Dance Company 'Boobies'

BITE, Barbican Theatre,
October 2003

Structurally 'Boobies' is classical ballet, but spoken in a physical language of angular and convulsive movements, suggesting an instinctive involuntary behaviour in its surreal 'prehistoric' characters.

The stage resembles a ruddy, rocky desert providing a fantastical world for Pinto's creations to ferret about in. The desert is lit by a low moon which surprises us when it first swallows both principals and corps. This is a performance that is light in form but dark in content, reflecting the paradoxical nature of our existence as thinking animals.

The principal characters are a mixture of a cold Elizabethan female, a 'fat skinny man' (with an air of the great Leonard Rossiter about him) and a green, goateed fish. This obscure trio, often mounted on a trolley, present small vignettes of subtle conflict and simple love, eliciting titers of appreciation from the audience.

These scenes are interspersed with the sprite-like behaviour of the corps, recalling scuttling insects and darting birds, creating a shifting pattern of status and social order. This *mélée* evokes our darker imaginings and has a flavour of the Jabberwocky. With a wide array of gaudy costumes, and occasional prosthetics, in a murky palette of colours, the visual is certainly fore-grounded in this performance and it is an accessible and thoroughly enjoyable evening of dance.

Tom Wilson

William Yang 'Shadows'

BITE, Barbican,
November 2003

The notion of transferable skills in art-making is one that interests me greatly. Is writing so very different from creating visual images? In recent years, artists have been more willing to apply their ideas to a number of different disciplines – the same starting points working their way into many

means of creative expression.

William Yang is a prime example of this artistic mobility: having established himself as a playwright, he next became a renowned photographer – and then created a series of autobiographical performance pieces reflecting on his life as a third-generation Chinese-Australian.

'Shadows' is the first of his works 'to tell stories other than my own', using his trademark theatrical style of monologue with slide projection. And what slides! Two large screens show stunning images – of the Sydney gay scene, of a kangaroo hunt in the South Australian bush, of Checkpoint Charlie and desolate streets in East Berlin. He weaves together a number of lives: we follow the fortunes and misfortunes of an Aboriginal Australian family, run parallel with the story of the oppression of the German immigrants of South Australia interned during the war. Many of the images are of meals: the basic human needs of sustenance, comfort and community reflected on through the slides used as windows into the lives of many different souls. Yang does not compete with his images: his performance style is to recite his complementary story-in-words with a gentle, deadpan humour and soft, reflective intelligence.

He is accompanied by multi-instrumentalist Colin Offord, whose music is well-used as a scenographic tool: setting the scene and denoting scene-change or passing of time. Words, music and visual images unite to create a poignant and beautiful piece of theatre.

Dorothy Max Prior

Third Angel 'Class of '76'

Phoenix, Exeter, October 2003

Alexander Kelly bought a long mac when he was a teenager. He wanted to be a detective. Now he can be, 'Class of '76' being that final speech in which loose ends are tied up and the narrative collapses into one person's or one plot's fault. Except that Third Angel's suspensor is rather different, consisting of particles of light in the air above the stage, coalescing into young faces whenever Kelly interposes a small sheet of white paper into the beam. The projection is of him and his young schoolmates – the

class of '76, Chuckery Infants School. It's a magical and beautiful device that unifies the piece, an elusive and allusive metaphor of memory that we only ever catch in hovering fragments.

In 1999 Third Angel constructed an imagined performance based on the photograph – making up fibs about what had happened to the children. But this time it's for real. Alexander Kelly is presenting what he's been able to ferret out about his classmates. Even perform it back to them. So he says.

The cool, friendly, de-analysed presentation of the children's stories – businesses they run, children they now have, illness and dubious honours – all this creates space for the audience to make their own patterns. To ask questions and wonder about their own early school memories and about the gaps and 'clues' in this one. A warm and engaging show appreciated by a large audience.

Phil Smith

Frantic Assembly 'Rabbit'

Gardner Arts Centre, Brighton,
October 2003

Occasionally, a company that makes physical/devised theatre steps over the divide to tackle a piece of new writing. Frantic Assembly's 'Rabbit' is a dark 'meet the family' comedy by hip young Australian playwright Brendan Cowell. In what seems to be an enormous act of reverence to the text, the script is given to us as the programme for the performance. And grateful for it I was too. Without it, I wouldn't have known what an excellent play this is – and I certainly wouldn't have got the ending, which Frantic frittered away with the poor cooked rabbit.

This, I realise, is a pretty damning statement – to be fair, the play was enjoyed by a full house, with the audience average age far lower than at most theatre events. And there was a lot to like. I liked Sam Crane as the 'talented but wasted' MC Spin and Karl Sullivan as The Driver (a classic absurdist character who acts as a catalyst to the trauma). The second act was a blend of taut dialogue, minimal but effective movement integrated into the play, and an excellent use of Dick Bird's wonderful holiday-home set, with indoor and outdoor scenes

played on either side of the panoramic window, nifty lighting shifts creating the scene changes.

But the first act needs to get its act together – the tacked-on bursts of repeated movement motifs that interrupt the dialogue made me squirm in my seat. I can't think of anyone other than Nigel Charnock who can do this well. Ultimately, the production just couldn't manage to pull together the pre-existing text and the physical expression of that text on the stage.

Dorothy Max Prior

The Wrestling School/ Howard Barker 'Thirteen Objects'

Riverside Studios, London,
October 2003

That a performance takes place in a theatre does not, of itself, make it theatrical – although, of course, going to the theatre means precisely seeing work that may change, or at least challenge, what one imagines to be 'theatrical'. From a company called the 'Wrestling School' one might hope for a lesson in the physicalisation of text and space; for an approach to performance that has developed beyond the conventional inert postures which are supposed to be compensated by an affected 'classical' or 'emotive' tone of voice.

There are those who find Barker's company exciting and distinctive, but neither quality was discernible on this occasion. The stage offered no refraction of text in performance, but simply a backdrop – as if everything had been rehearsed in the absence of the design. Even the basic physical function of entrance and exit was clumsy, while the lighting appeared to have been added as an after-thought.

For theatrical experiment there must be a question, a challenge, addressed to its own performance possibilities. Here it felt as though nothing was to be discovered about the text – still less about its 'thirteen objects' – through the performance. With everything described in words, often numbing in their literalness, the presence of anything else – not just the objects, but also the audience – felt redundant.

In a scene devoted to a postcard, for instance, the text satirises the duplication of the image by the written

caption, while the actress simply stands before us, holding the postcard to which she occasionally draws our attention by turning it over in her hand. Barker, as the director of his own work, appears indifferent to a history of theatrical research in which the performance of text, as a physical relation between word and image, has indeed been 'wrestled' with between writer and director – Genet and Blin, or Garcia, for instance; or Bernhard and Peymann, Koltès and Chéreau.

To recall an old Artaudian metaphor for performance: being offered the hollow and desiccated husk of its skin, sloughed off long since, offers no experience of either the snake's movement or its bite.

Mischa Twitchin

The Rude Mechanicals 'The Wife of Bath'

Hampton Court Green,
August 2003

A few days after watching this show I was sitting in Kew gardens, looking at

the dappled rays of sun streaming through the branches of a beech tree. That moment of suspended time was in many ways like this show. It held within it a sense of the perfect English pastoral idyll; for those moments, like this show, are timeless.

The space, on Hampton Court Green, was defined with a feeling of travelling carts drawn around, and utilised gas lights to provide illumination, giving the whole show a sense of a travelling troupe of medieval performers.

The characterisations in the show were inspired by movements from the commedia dell'arte, and avoided the common pitfall with this type of movement of imprisoning the performers within it, and instead worked to support the performers and give them a lot of freedom, which they clearly relished.

The performances from all of the cast were fantastic, with some deft individual touches, yet it was undeniably an ensemble piece. If I were to split hairs I would say that it could have done with a bit of editing, just to shorten it a touch, but that is not to say it dragged at all. All in all it was bawdy, challenging, lively, funny, skilful and touching in good measure,

and the moments of real pathos were handled expertly by the cast. A superbly crafted, well performed and entertaining piece of theatre.

Howard Gayton

David Blaine 'Above the Below'

Tower Bridge, London,
Autumn 2003

But is it art? And who decides – artist/enactor, audience/witness or critic/commentator? David Blaine's stay in his Perspex box – on view 24 hours a day, living without food for 44 days – will no doubt become another seminal 'performative' event for the academics to chew over.

That aside, the publicly enacted and witnessed demonstration of physical endurance has always been a part of our shared cultural experience – and a vital aspect of showbiz – from the mystic's bed of nails to the fairground showman's fire eating or skin stretching.

When I went to see David Blaine, there was no intention of viewing this

as an artwork or indeed of reviewing it for this magazine, just the usual 'going to the zoo' curiosity. But when I got there what I found was theatre, pure and simple. Despite (maybe because of) the kitsch and schmaltz, being there is profoundly moving. Life imitates art in the Gillian Wearing hand-lettered cards held up to the sky: 'If you feel weak we will give you strength'; 'Keep the faith David'; 'You're a star – keep on shining'. A bunch of busking students in silly hats sing 'a ringy-ding-ding-dong' endlessly, with an occasional shout of 'all the money goes to the world's hungry'. There's a Mister Softee ice cream van, and a bagel bar a stone's throw away. And above it all, the 'holy actor' who, to paraphrase Grotowski, sacrifices himself for us. Yes, I was brought up as a Roman Catholic – so maybe I'm pre-disposed towards this sort of 'communion'.

A shared experience, a ritual, an act enacted and witnesses moved to re-evaluate basic presumptions about themselves and the human condition. I didn't expect to be profoundly moved but was.

Dorothy Max Prior

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PERFORMER & COMPANY UPDATE

BAC's

new Artistic Director is to be David Jubb, currently director of theatre producers Your Imagination. Jubb trained at Bretton Hall, Bristol University and Central School of Speech and Drama. In 1999, Jubb joined BAC as Development Producer where he was instrumental in developing BAC's Scratch Programme. David Jubb will start at BAC in January 2004 when Tom Morris takes up his post as Associate Director at the National Theatre. See the interview with David Jubb elsewhere in this magazine! See also www.bac.org.uk.

Company:Collisions

will be touring their production of 'Medea' in February and March 2004. This show was developed when Tanushka Marah, Artistic Director, received a Young Vic Young Director Award. A cast of six (including Denise Evans as Medea) tell this devastating story through movement, text and song in the original Greek. The company is also planning a tour for the Autumn of 'The Constant Tin Soldier' (reviewed in Total Theatre 15/2) which was commissioned by Zap Art for Streets of Brighton 2003 and will be adapted for indoor theatre production. For more details about the company please contact Tanushka Marah on 07932 776114 or company.collisions@virgin.net.

CB Projects

In 2004, CBP are focusing entirely on producing middle-large scale events including work with Derevo, Legs on the Wall, Contemporary Clowning Projects and NoFit State Circus. Chenine will continue to offer consultancy services to artists/companies. For further information please check the website www.cbprojects.co.uk.

Dynamic New Animation

have been awarded grants from the Arts Council North West for Research & Development for their new touring children's theatre production 'A-Tishoo!' for Easter 2004, as well as subsidy for 'Genie in a Bottle', DNA's issue-based youth project with The Wellcome Trust Pulse fund. Adam Bennett is currently performing in 'The BFG' at Bolton Octagon for Christmas. Planning is also underway for a new street theatre performance for festivals next year. See www.dynamicnewanimation.co.uk for further info.

Foursight Theatre

presents Aeschylus' 'Agamemnon'. There are perhaps no deeper issues for our communities at present than those of 'home' and 'war'. Foursight Theatre re-tells one of the world's greatest dramatic texts – the story of Agamemnon, a king who sacrificed his daughter in order to facilitate the winds of war. This production will be an extraordinary project for Foursight Theatre, providing the opportunity to perform in traverse, with video projection, puppetry and a multi-cultural cast reflecting the diversity of 'home' as contemporary British society. For dates see the performance listings. For more info contact Emma Beale on 01902 714257 or e-mail us at foursight.theatre@boltblue.net. Visit the website at www.foursight.theatre.boltblue.net.

Fran Barbe

launched a new company, Fran Barbe Dance in 2003, with two new Butoh-based dance works: 'Palpitation', a Zone3 commission for Jacksons Lane, is an ensemble work exploring 'what makes your heart race' and 'Fine-Bone-China' is a 'solo with chorus', in which surreal and absurd transformations between woman and animal explore the confinement of refined manners. These two works are available for touring in 2004. E-mail franbarbe@hotmail.com or call 07931 710808.

Mimbre

are currently booking their summer tour 2004 and will this year present both their outdoor shows: 'Trip-tic' – a highly visual piece of acrobatic theatre performed on and around three towers; and 'sprung' – a more intimate display with an elastic backdrop and dynamic acrobatics. Both shows are directed by Flick Ferdinando and are available for bookings from March onwards. For details phone 07801 325 415 or see www.mimbre.co.uk.

Natural Theatre Company

have just returned from Egypt where the renowned Flowerpot Men and the Coneheads assisted with the launch of the British Council offices. In December they will be working once again with the British Council, but this time in Nigeria. They've recently launched their new motto 'Go ahead, challenge us!' and are currently looking for anyone to test their artistic capabilities, so they can prove their absurd kind of street theatre and walkabout entertainment is suitable at any event... Please contact Helen Chamberlain with your challenging ideas on info@naturaltheatre.co.uk, or telephone 01225 469131.

Nola Rae

has been awarded a grant for a new show by The Arts Council of England, South East. 'Exit Napoleon Pursued by Rabbits', directed by John Mowat, design by Matthew Ridout, music by Peter West, will be booking from April 2004. This is a solo performance of textless theatre, combining clowning, mime, puppetry, dance and music. The theme deals with dangerous charisma and how to get it. Referring obliquely to small dictators, all of whom started as outsiders, managed to gain power and then wreak havoc, the clown is taken over by a desire to rule. Enquiries to Valerie West on vwest@dircon.co.uk. Tel: 020 8444 6248

Perpetual Motion Theatre

have received funding from The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and the Royal Victoria Hall Foundation to research and develop a new show based on the board game Risk. Using movement, video and multilingual text, 'Risk' will be developed in London and Poland in early Spring 2004 and will be devised by Karin Heberlein, Toby Hughes, Leticia Santa Fe, Philippe Spall and Christophe Wagner and directed by Emi Slater.

Tall Stories

The ever-mighty 'Gruffalo' is continuing to tour. One cast plays Norden Farm this Xmas, while another plays Warwick Arts Centre, before setting off for the New Victory Theatre on Broadway and a US tour. Meanwhile, 'Something Else' has a Christmas run at Soho Theatre. The company's

next project will be a small to medium scale touring show based on Edward Lear's classic nonsense poem 'The Owl and the Pussycat', from April 2004. Full details: www.tallstories.org.uk.

Travelling Light's

latest production 'Cloudland' has been an enormous success with audiences everywhere – 'a reminder that drama for the under-5s is one of the most inventive areas in British theatre today... it takes real skill and guts to produce work for children like this' (The Guardian). Demand for the show has meant that the company has extended the tour until 5 June 2004. This will enable the show to return for a week at Bristol Old Vic at Easter and perform at the Lyceum Theatre in Edinburgh as part of the Bank of Scotland International Children's Theatre Festival. See Listings for current touring dates or www.travellinglight.co.uk.

MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Bright, intelligent, multi-skilled, hard-working, flexible, adaptable, enthusiastic... I could go on. I am a freelance project manager on the hunt for the right project. I'd like to be able to use my fundraising knowledge, administrative skills, organisational prowess and creative inspiration to help a young/old, growing/established artist/company on a short-term project basis (1 to 5 months from December 2003) whilst I winter before my next circus season. My professional background lies in fundraising, public relations, arts administration and, most recently, playing the saxophone in a circus ring. If you have a project that you'd like someone to manage, I may be the right person for the job. Give me a call on 07866 180280 or e-mail me at amycehoward@yahoo.com. CV and references available on request. Fees negotiable.

'Creative Connections;

business and the arts working together to create a more inclusive society': This report, written by Phyllida Shaw for Arts & Business with support from Marks & Spencer and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), emphasises the benefits that can be reaped from the collaboration between business and the arts working together in a community. See www.AandB.org.uk for further info.

Equity

are considering extending their public liability insurance to cover fire if they can get enough people who are interested. Even if you are not a member this would vastly reduce the amount people have to pay for their insurance, which is important to us all, but they need to have enough people to make this viable. Please contact Michael Day at mday@equity.org.uk for further information.

Independent Theatre Council (ITC)

offer training in all aspects of arts management and administration. Phone 020 7403 6698 or e-mail training@itc-arts.org.

FUNDING NEWS

Artsadmin Artists' Bursary Scheme

In 2004, Artsadmin is offering bursaries for UK-based artists working in performance, experimental theatre, time-based and live art. For

more information and guidelines please visit: www.artsadmin.co.uk/bursary or send a stamped SAE to: Bursary Scheme, Artsadmin, Toynbee Studios, 28 Commercial Street, London E1 6AB. Deadline: Monday 19 January 2004. The Artsadmin Artists' Bursary Scheme is funded by Arts Council England, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation

offers not only funding programmes but also low-interest loans to the voluntary sector – including not-for-profit arts organisations. See www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk.

Networked Bodies

is for professional artists working in the live art, interdisciplinary practice and contemporary performance. To make proposals to Networked Bodies you must be practising in Live Art, contemporary performance or interdisciplinary artforms, you must be a member of NWN who is not in full time education. Networked Bodies will be online in early 2004 at www.newworknetwork.org.uk. For further information visit NWN's website or contact NWN's Co-ordinator Sophie Cameron. Networked Bodies is funded by Arts Council England.

Oxford Samuel Beckett Theatre Trust

The purpose of the award is to help the development of emerging practitioners of experimental theatre. A grant of up to £30,000 and a three-week run at Riverside is on offer (winners of the 2003 award – Cue Deadly – are currently performing at Riverside Studios). Bold, innovative and challenging projects favoured. Next deadline is 20 February 2004. Send: a 500 word outline proposal; CVs; details of any previous funding/awards received; an SAE; details of where you heard about this award (i.e. Total Theatre Magazine!). Selected candidates will be asked for a second submission. Send to: Romilly Walton Masters, Director, Oxford Samuel Beckett Theatre Trust, P.O. Box 2637, Ascot, Berks SL5 8ZN. See www.osbtrust.com for further info.

The Tesco Charity Trust Community Award

offers one-off donations of between £2000 and £5000 to appropriate projects. Phone 01992 646768 or see www.tesco.com/corporateinfo.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ARTISTS

Akademi

Calling all artists and teachers of South Asian Dance forms all over the UK! Akademi South Asian Dance UK receives countless enquiries requesting artists, teachers and workshop leaders for performances, events, commissions, arts in education and other project work: on average 3 to 5 a day... Would you like to join our database and e-group? If the answer's yes – please send an e-mail with your full contact details to lisa@akademi.co.uk and a short paragraph on your experience, or call 020 7691 3210. We are keen to hear from artists or teachers from all areas of the UK. We also want to hear if you are running a regular class so we can add it to the SADA website: www.southasiandance.org.uk.

Croydon Clocktower

is seeking submissions by end January '04 for a showcase of innovative and dynamic new circus acts and talent to be staged during the week of 14 June. Please contact jonathan_kennedy@croydon.gov.uk for further details, or write to Jonathan Kennedy, Arts Programmes Manager, Croydon Clocktower, Katharine Street, Croydon, CR9 1ET.

Dynamic New Animation

are looking for performers and musicians for 2004, with some puppetry experience or circus/physical skills. Please contact rachel@dynamicnewanimation.co.uk or see www.dynamicnewanimation.co.uk for further info.

FlashedDance

Photographs sought for exhibition of photographs of dance to be held at Riverside Gallery, Richmond Old Town Hall – coinciding with the borough's annual festival, Leap Into Dance. Applications sought from emerging photographers of dance. Photographers may submit up to three works for consideration, for a one-off non-refundable entry fee of £10. For guidelines call 020 8831 6460 or e-mail a.coleman@richmond.gov.uk. Closing date: 12 Jan.

Polka

seeks 1 West-African actor & 1 Hispanic actor (preferably Brazilian) for a staged reading/work in progress of 'The Shoe' by Roger Lang (director: John Wright) at the Polka Theatre for 26-31 January 2004. The play is very physical and visual and both actors need to be experienced in physical theatre. Contact Frauke Franz, Dramaturg, Polka Theatre, on +44 (0)7866 500 473 or frauke@polkatheatre.com.

Sidelong

is a Brighton-based company looking for performers for new devised piece 'Sour Grapes', rehearsing February, performing March 2004. It probably involves fables, morals, taste sensations and ways of being murdered. Performers interested in physical theatre and/or martial art/body awareness training particularly welcome. Previous productions include the ongoing Omnibus project – a series of instruction-based pieces at the Exeter Phoenix and on a bus in London. For more details contact Zoe on 07989 323794 or zoebouras@btopenworld.com.

Streets of Brighton

seeks artists for their 10th Anniversary Showcase 6-8 May 2004. Expenses for travel, accommodation, meals offered plus technical support, inclusion in the delegate handbook and opportunity to perform in front of 100,000 people! Contact Veronica Stephens for further details on 01273 206960 or veronica.stephens@zapuk.com.

Winchester based Platform 4

are looking for a re-lights person to light our spring 2004 theatre tour of 'The Visitation of Mr Collioni' by Anna Murphy. The tour will cover 15 to 16 dates in the South East/South West and London. Fee £110 per day plus travel and accommodation when needed. Freelance contract, 3 March to 1 May 2004. If interested phone 07711 809249 or e-mail catherine@platform4.org. Company website is at www.platform4.org.

ARTISTS AVAILABLE

Fran Barbe

completes her Creative Fellowship in the Performing Arts in March 2004, which was awarded by AHRB and Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation, and based at the University of Kent at Canterbury. She is available for teaching and guest lecture work in her research area of Butoh dance and the actor training method of Tadashi Suzuki. To contact Fran Barbe e-mail franbarbe@hotmail.com or call 07931 710808.

Sarah Corbett

seeks work as a theatre design assistant. She is an experienced illustrator, designer and physical/visual theatre maker. E-mail topicalbroadcast@hotmail.com or phone 07989 438028.

EQUIPMENT

Video projector and touring van for Hire

Scarabeus (London based) have a Sanyo XGA 2600 ANSI lumens projector with a wide angle zoom lens for hire. We also have a touring van with driver for hire. The van is a stylish silver 814 Mercedes Vario V reg. with 9 seats, wheelchair access and separate cargo compartment for set, props and costumes. The driver is very patient, reliable and handsome. Please call Søren on 020 7281 7493 or info@scarabeus.co.uk.

Projectors for Hire

Third Angel (Sheffield based) has two ultra portable LCD projectors for hire. Panasonic model PT-L720E, 2200 ANSI lumen – bright, powerful, easy to tour (we have flight cases for both) and an absolute bargain at £85 per day or £250 per week each (plus VAT). That's less than half the price of commercial hire for similar models, and we're open to negotiation! Check www.panasonic.co.uk/product/ultraportableprojector for full spec or call Hilary on 0114 281 2044.

Back Projection Screen for Hire

6m x 2.75m freestanding folding frame back projection screen available. £60 per day or £180 for the week (plus VAT), but open to negotiation. Call Hilary at Third Angel on 0114 281 2044.

Sony DSR-PD150 DV Camera for Hire

Broadcast quality mini-DV camera, with on-board mic. £90 per day or £270 per week (plus VAT), but open to negotiation. Call Hilary at Third Angel on 0114 281 2044.

CHANGES

Platform 4

33 Bar End Road
Winchester
Hampshire SO23 9NP

WEBSITES

www.akademi.co.uk

South Asian Dance UK website.

www.artistsagainsthewar.org.uk

Artists Against The War were set up during the recent Iraq conflict – and are still campaigning!

www.artmedia.com.au

For contemporary Australian and New Zealand Literary and Performing Arts

www.artsexplorer.net

Google hasn't got it? Try this, the new specialist search engine for the arts, initiated by Metier.

www.artsnetworks.net

Now live! Contains over 400 relevant listings for the creative and cultural industries.

www.artsoutheast.co.uk

Reviews, events diary, information on venues and arts organisations and an e-mailed newsletter.

www.circusperformers.com/acts

Missing Link Productions present their latest roster of exciting performers... acrobats, clowns, circus stars, street artists, magicians!

www.communitydance.org.uk

The new website for Foundation for Community Dance.

www.constellation-change.co.uk

Dance on Film News – a bi-monthly publication that takes the reader inside the art and culture of Dance on Camera.

www.creativecommunities.org.uk

The Centre for Creative Communities encourages interaction and debate among those interested in combating social apathy and promoting civic engagement.

www.decibel-db.org

Decibel is an Arts Council of England initiative to raise the voice of culturally diverse arts in Britain.

www.evaluationforall.org.uk

The evaluation toolkit from the Scottish Arts Council, aimed at developing self-evaluation skills in arts organisations.

www.jose-navarro.com

Physical and visual theatre performer.

www.theatre-express.biz

A new website for professional performers. Free service updated daily.

www.thisisliveart.co.uk

Live Art Development Agency – info on all current schemes, bursaries, projects and initiatives can be found here.

www.variant.org.uk

Variant is a free, independent, arts magazine. In-depth coverage in the context of broader social, political & cultural issues.

PUBLICATIONS

Performance/Technologies – a user's guide

King Alfred's Winchester/Total Theatre Network Series editor – Prof Anthony Dean

Associate Editor – Dorothy Max Prior

This latest in the User's Guide series, published by King Alfred's Winchester in collaboration with Total Theatre Network, looks at the use of sound, visual and new media technologies in performance practice and includes special features on Blast Theory, Franklin Furnace in NY and Yeast (amongst many others) together with critical appraisal and commentary on many contemporary theatre-makers including Stan's Café, Lightwork, Station House Opera, Wireframe and The Wooster Group. Orders or enquiries to usersguide@wkac.ac.uk.

The Intercultural Performance Handbook

John Martin

Routledge/Taylor and Francis, www.routledge.com

What can performers in the west learn from the technical performance traditions of Africa and Asia? This is the starting point for this practice-based and holistic look at intercultural performance practice, using themes such as breath, energy, rhythm and improvisation. Many physical theatre practitioners – particularly those who have also done any martial arts training – will be familiar with many of the exercises, but it is great to have aspects of so many sound practical working methods brought together in one volume. This would sit very nicely with Boal's 'Games for actors and non-actors' on the library shelf of anyone teaching or devising physical performance.

Routledge Performance Practitioners

Michael Chekhov – Franc Chamberlain

Jacques Lecoq – Simon Murray

Vsevolod Meyerhold – Jonathan Pitches

Konstantin Stanislavsky – Bella Merlin

These are the first four titles of a new pocket-sized series looking at key figures in 20th century performance. And isn't it good to see Lecoq up there with the greats? Makes you realise that physical and devised theatre is at last being taken seriously as a major strand of contemporary performance practice. What's nice about these (apart from the fact that they fit in a handbag which is always a plus) is that they combine history, critical overview, a specific detailed look at a couple of key texts, companies or working practices and then a whole section on practical application – exercises, methodologies and/or approaches to actor training.

To take the Lecoq volume as an example – we have a knowledgeable author (Simon Murray) working in consultation with key figures such as Simon McBurney of Complicite and former pedagogical director of the Lecoq school, Thomas Prattki; a section on the life and work of Lecoq; a section on Lecoq's texts; an examination of Complicite's 'Street of Crocodiles' and the work of Mummenschanz; a section on practical exercises including an intro to neutral mask; a useful glossary of key names.

Series editor Franc Chamberlain has done a great job in bringing together a series of introductory guides that are meaty enough for those with pre-knowledge but accessible and

inviting to those meeting these key practitioners for the first time. A very welcome addition to any library.

Black and Asian Theatre at The Theatre Museum

Ed. Susan Croft

This redresses some of the imbalance in the documenting of Black and Asian performance in the UK. This guide contains information on performances and publications, and catalogues the archive material held at the Theatre Museum, Covent Garden. Edited by Susan Croft who has done so much brilliant work at The Theatre Museum/ Victoria and Albert in archiving those performance areas that other archivists don't reach! The guide is currently free – there will be a small charge in future. To order a copy e-mail tmenquiries@vam.ac.uk or tel 020 7943 4717. The Theatre Museum have also put out a call for further archive material on Black and Asian performance – so whether you are a contemporary performer or the relative of someone who once trod the boards – get in touch.

An Exeter Mis-Guide

Wrights & Sites, www.mis-guide.com

The map is not the territory... but in this case, the map invites you look, listen, smell and feel the territory in a different way (in this case, the city of Exeter). So... take a compass, let a child take you for a walk, walk from the saddest place to the happiest place, walk until your anger wears out follow the memory of water, look skywards, walk along any street and re-design it to fit your desires... This is walking as a conscious, creative practice. The mis-guide is produced by Wrights & Sites, a collective of artists, writers and theatre-makers who include journey-making and site-specific performance amongst their many interesting ventures.

Exit, Pursued by a bear

Louise McConnell

Bloomsbury, www.bloomsbury.com/reference

A dictionary of Shakespeare's characters, plays, poems, history and stagecraft. And the second publication reviewed in this issue of Total Theatre to flag up the work of 19th-century Black actor Ira Aldridge... there must be something in the air! A useful compendium full of 'fascinating and often little known facts'. Handy for students and dramaturgs alike!

The Art of the Animateur

Animarts/Guildhall School of Speech & Drama/LIFT

www.animarts.org.uk

An investigation into the skills and insights required of artists to work effectively in schools and communities. This research report conducted by Animarts in partnership with Guildhall School of Music & Drama and LIFT (London International Festival of Theatre) is the result of a year-long programme of research whose objective was to better understand the roles and abilities of animateurs and teachers and to explore the wider implications for their training and professional development. Consultation rounds on the report will be taking place in the next few months around the UK (dates and places TBA) and any feedback prior to this is welcome.

COMPANIES

Company:Collisions

'MEDEA'

FEBRUARY 2004

- 5 Ashcroft Arts Centre
- 6 Queen's Park Arts Ctr, Aylesbury
- 9-10 Komedia, Brighton
- 11 Newbury Corn Exchange
- 13 Bowen West Theatre, Bedford
- 19-20 Miskin Theatre, Kent
- 21 Midlands Arts Centre, B'ham
- 25 Portsmouth Arts Centre
- 26-28 Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, Guildford
- 29 Clair Hall, Haywards Heath

MARCH 2004

- 2 Eastbourne College, Eastbourne
- 8 South Hill Park, Bracknell
- 9-10 Trinity Theatre, Tunbridge Wells
- 17 Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton
- 19-20 Unity Theatre, Liverpool

Chipolatas

JANUARY

- 17-18 LIMF, Royal Festival Hall, London

FEBRUARY

- 6-13 Huima Festivaali, Helsinki, Finland

MARCH

- 1-10 Tour of Reunion Islands

Foursight Theatre

'AGAMEMNON'

01902 714257 or
foursight.theatre@boltblue.net
www.foursight.theatre.boltblue.net

FEBRUARY

- 5-7, 12-14 Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

Jonathan Kay's Theatre of Now

07803 882293 or
theatre_of_now@madasafish.com

JANUARY

- 16-18 365 Ditchling Road, Brighton

Kabosh Theatre

'TODD - THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET'

www.kabosh.net

15 MARCH TO 11 APRIL

- Old Museum Arts Centre, 7 College Sq North, Belfast

Natural Theatre Company

www.naturaltheatre.co.uk

JANUARY

- 27-28 Freiburg Performing Arts Fair, Germany

'SCARLATTI IN PARADISE'

FEBRUARY

- 13-14 Rondo Theatre, Bath
- 17 Feb - 30 March 'Scarlati in Paradise' Germany / Luxbg tour

Nola Rae

020 8444 6248

www.nolarae.btinternet.co.uk

ELIZABETH'S LAST STAND

JANUARY

- 15 Gulbenkian Theatre, Canterbury
- 30-31 Théâtre Jean Villard, Montpellier

MOZART PREPOSTEROSO

JANUARY

- 13 Leicester Phoenix

MARCH

- 27 L' Atrium, Dax
- 29 Théâtre Municipal, Brive-La-Gaillarde

Platform 4

'THE VISITATION OF MR COLLIONI AND OTHER DIVINE INTERVENTIONS'

07711 809249

MARCH

- 5-6 Pegasus Theatre, Oxford
- 9 Westminster School
- 12-13 Lighthouse, Poole
- 17-21 South St Reading
- 19 Limelight Theatre, Aylesbury
- 23 March - 3 April Latchmere Theatre, Battersea

Nose to Nose

'IMPRO NIGHTS'

01342 823410

22 FEBRUARY, 15 MARCH

- Peredur Centre for the Arts, near East Grinstead, W. Sussex

Travelling Light Theatre Company

'CLOUDLAND'

www.travlight.co.uk

JANUARY

- 2-8 The Ark, Dublin
- 10 Royal Exchange, Manchester
- 17 Half Moon Theatre, London
- 18 Croydon Clocktower
- 21-31 Lighthouse, Poole

FEBRUARY

- 7 Sherman Theatre, Cardiff
- 8 Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury
- 14 The Door, Birmingham Rep
- 17-21 Polka Theatre, Wimbledon
- 28 Nuffield Theatre, Southampton

VENUES

BAC

www.bac.org.uk 020 7223 2223

JANUARY

- Until 17 Jason and the Argonauts
- 13&14 Patter - 'The Experts'
- 16&17 Blind Summit - 'Martin's Wedding'
- 20&21 Gecko - 'The Race'
- 24 Jan-22 Feb Told By An Idiot - 'I'm a fool to want you'

The Bull, Barnet

020 8449 0048 www.artsdepot.co.uk

UNTIL 16 JANUARY

- Kazzum in association with artsdepot - 'The Little Mermaid'

Komedia, Brighton

Full details: www.komedia.co.uk
A couple of highlights:

9-10 FEBRUARY

- Company Collisions - 'Medea'

16-17 MARCH

- Theatre Alibi - 'One in a Million'

The Little Angel Theatre

'THE SECRET GARDEN'

Until 2 February

The Corn Exchange Newbury

01635 522733

www.cornexchangenew.com

Highlights at New Greenham Arts:

FEBRUARY

- 7 Ridiculusmus - 'Ideas Men'
- 26 Full Force Dance Co - 'Headcase'

Highlights at the Corn Exchange:

JANUARY

- 17 'The Art of Dying' - Italian clowns
- 21 Pep Bou - 'Bufaplanetes'

FEBRUARY

- 11 Company:Collisions - 'Medea'
- 25 Company F/Z - 'Throat'

FESTIVALS

National Theatre

www.nationaltheatre.org.uk

6 DEC 2003 - 6 FEB 2004

Festival of Lights - free winter festival. At the darkest time of the year the National presents a free winter celebration of light and illumination inspired by light, fire, sun and moon festivals from around the world, exploring themes of magic, mysticism and metamorphosis. Light sculptures exhibition (Monday - Saturday, 10.00am - 11.00pm). Free festival late night Saturdays in January (10.30pm - midnight). The light sculptures installation will provide a stunning backdrop to the free festival Saturdays - an eclectic mix of spectacular late night events inspired by celebrations of light from around the world and drawing upon London's rich cultural diversity.

JANUARY

- 3 The Kremlinares (Music)
- 10 Denis Tricot with Alexander Balanescu (Fire display & music)
- 17 Nzi Dada (Music, visuals & perfs)
- 24 Chinese New Year (Music, dance & theatre)
- 31 Sister India (Music, dance & visuals)

London International Mime Festival

www.mimefest.co.uk

10-25 JANUARY 2004

Selected Highlights:

- 12-14 A2 (UK) - 'miss, did it hurt when you fell down from heaven?' (ICA)
- 14-18 Akhe (Russia) - 'White Cabin' (Purcell Room)
- 15-18 & 21-25 Black Hole (UK) - 'Forget Me Not' (The Albany)
- 20-24 Canadian Stage Co (Canada) - 'The Overcoat' (Barbican)
- 16-18 Compagnie 111 (France) - 'Plan B' (QEH)
- 10-12 Fabrik Company (Germany) - 'Pandora 88' (Purcell Room)
- 21-22 Gandini Juggling (UK) - 'Duet/Quartet' (Purcell Room)
- 15-18 Joan Baixas (Spain) - 'Dopamine Suite' (ICA)
- 15-20 Paolo Nani & Kristjan Ingimarsson (Denmark) - 'The Art of Dying' (Leicester Phoenix Arts (15) Croydon Clocktower (16) Newbury Corn Exchange (17) Purcell Room (19-20)
- 23-25 Pep Bou (Spain) - 'Bufaplanetes' (Purcell Room)
- 19 Ridiculusmus (UK) - 'How To Be Funny' (ICA)
- 21-25 Theatre 2.0 (Canada) - 'Breath[e]' (ICA)

UK TRAINING

Academy of Circus Arts

Winchester and touring, 07050 282624

DIPLOMA COURSE

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

Birkbeck College London/National Council for Drama Training

E-mail l.abraham@bbk.ac.uk
020 7631 6861

MA Theatre Directing: New course this year. 2 yr full-time. Will accept professional experience in theatre in lieu of 1st degree. Course practice-centred and includes secondment to a theatre company and mentoring relationship to a professional director.

Butoh UK

0208 674 1518 / mgr35@aol.com

Organises regular workshops taught by international practitioners.

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

Centre for Performance Research (CPR)

Aberystwyth, 01970 622133

For programme see www.thecpr.org.uk

CircElation

www.circelation.co.uk

CircElation, the professional development programme for circus artists and directors, will be happening in Leeds in 2004, between 22 March-4 April. There will be 2 week-long workshop programmes for circus artists as well as 4 weekend 'taster' workshops. Plus 2 week-long directors programmes. Deadline for applications and nominations is 10 January 2004.

Circmedia

Bristol, 0117 947 7288

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

The Circus Space

London, 020 7613 4141

Introduction to Circus Skill Courses: Saturdays 24Jan, 7 & 21 Feb, 6 & 20 Mar, 3 Apr

Western Skill Courses: Saturdays 28 Feb, 17 Apr, 19 Jun. Course led by: Simon Beaumont.

Full details of all classes and professional training/development programmes - including the only BA in circus in the UK - available on the website.

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)

Expressive Feat

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.

Hope Street

Liverpool, 0151 708 8007

Physical Theatre Programme. Train and produce three original shows (Mask, Ensemble and Christmas co-production with Unity Theatre). Must be resident in Merseyside at point of application. See www.hope-street.org

Jolly Good Productions

01748 821621, Richmond, North Yorks

Training courses for individuals or groups in the following: Clowning, Punch and Judy, Face Painting, Magic. Contact Ron or Hazel Wood. E-mail ron@jollygoodfun.co.uk or hazel@jollygoodfun.co.uk

Kaizen Creative

Manchester, 0161 374 2353

The Arts of Coaching courses for arts professionals. Phone or e-mail info@kaizen-creative.org or see www.kaizen-creative.org

LISPA (London International School of Performing Arts)

www.lispa.co.uk

Theatre training based on the teachings of Jacques Lecoq – director Thomas Prattki is the former Pedagogical Director of the Ecole Jacques Lecoq in Paris. LISPA is now accepting students for introductory and advanced full-time programmes. Short courses will also be available soon. E-mail Maider Illana on welcome@lispa.co.uk. LISPA now accepting applications for 2004/5 introductory & advanced courses. 547023 or m.welton@qmul.ac.uk.

London International Mime Festival

www.mimefest.com

Workshops...

JANUARY

- 17 Gandini Juggling
- 17-18 Theatre de l'Abge Fou & Ecole du Mime Corporel Dramatique
- 24 Aspects of Max Wall
- 24-25 The Teachings of Jacques Lecoq
- 31-1 Told by an Idiot

Middlesex University

London, 020 8411 6148

School of Art, Design and Performing Arts – MA Choreography with Performing Arts. Full time, exploring choreography.

Nose to Nose

+44 (0)1342 823410

Clown Improvisation. Workshops for organisations and the public. Introductory Days and Weekends, Residential Intensives. Course of 4 weekends Jan-June, 2004 (for caring professions), Maidstone, Kent. 'Discover the Clown Within' 6-day: Easter and Summer Intensives. Call for 2004 brochure or see <http://members.aol.com/nosetonose>

The Penquoit Centre

01342 825639

Close to sea and mountains in west Wales, an ideal place to develop new forms of theatre discipline. Phone or e-mail dan.skinner@btinternet.com

Rescen/ Middlesex University

020 8411 5711

MA Choreography with Performing Arts; full-time cross-artform course. E-mail machoreo@mdx.ac.uk

School of Physical Theatre

London, 020 8215 3350
school@physicaltheatre.com

Full-time one-year professional training programme – Oct. 2003 to June 2004
TheatreWorks production year – September 2003 – June 2004
Intensive weekend workshops – call or e-mail for more information.

Theatre Training Initiative

www.theatrettraining.org.uk

Suzuki Actor Training sessions held every Wednesday evening for those with experience and fortnightly Saturday sessions open to all. Kalaripayattu training sessions in association with Phillip Zarrilli and Martin Welton (Tuesday evenings). E-mail info@theatrettraining.org.uk for further information or to be added to TTI's mailing list, or call Fran Barbe on 07931 710 808 or Antje Diedrich on 07905 260935.

Total Theatre Talks

17 JANUARY

An exploration of female practitioners within the physical and visual sector. Voice Box, Royal Festival Hall: Saturday 17 Jan 2.30-4.30pm. The discussion will look at the way in which female practitioners work and explores issues surrounding working methodologies. The international panel will be led by Dick McCaw. £5.50 (£3.50 concs). FREE to Total Theatre Members. E-mail talks@totaltheatre.org.uk or call 020 7729 7944.

University of Kent, Canterbury

01227 823338

MA by Practice as Research – for information or to apply for entry to the course in January 2003, please phone Paul Allain or e-mail p.a.allain@ukc.ac.uk

Welfare State Int'l/Bristol University

0117 928 8897

MA in Cultural Performance. Welfare State International, in collaboration with Prof Baz Kershaw, Chair of Drama at Bristol, offer this unique 1 year MA which combines the practical with the academic. Students spend one semester in Bristol then go to WSI's Lanternhouse to participate in the company's programme. For more details contact Arts Faculty, Senate House, University of Bristol BS8 1TH.

Winter Clown School

12-25 JANUARY (MON-FRI)

The London International Mime Festival, Battersea Arts Centre and The Why Not Institute present a Winter Clown School. Led by Angela de Castro, the School combines clowning with classes in singing (Juliet Hill) and eccentric dancing (Barry & Joan Grantham), leading up to performances of the HaHarmonics, The Institute's clown choir, at BAC, Monday 12th – Sunday 25th January, £350. Bookings and information to The Why Not Institute, People Show, Pollard Row, London E2 6NB. Tel: 020 7739 8363. E-mail: whynotinstitute@aol.com.

The Wright School

Artistic director John Wright (Told by an Idiot/Trestle etc). Workshops and intensives. Contact Becky Kitter at thewrightschool@email.com.

OVERSEAS

Actors Space

Barcelona, info@actors-space.org

The Clown, 5-16 April 04. What is that unique quality of each actor that makes us laugh? Two weeks of intensive training and comic creation. With Simon Edwards (director of the last kneehigh show 'Skulduggery') and Marian Masoliver. £360, accommodation and meals included. See: www.actors-space.org.

Barabbas

Ireland, + 353 (0) 1 671 2013

As part of City Arts Centre's review process 'The Civil Arts Inquiry' Barabbas... the company is offering a free module in its unique physical performance training methodology for practising actors/performers. For further information, phone, e-mail info@barabbas.ie, or see www.barabbas.ie

'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

www.dellarte.com

Auditions for Physical Theatre Programme take place throughout the US, Canada, Mexico and Europe. For info and application see website.

Ecole Internationale de Theatre Jacques Lecoq

Paris, +33 1 47 70 44 78

Two-Year Course plus the Laboratory of Movement Study (LEM).

Ecole Philippe Gaulier

Paris, 01 48 57 69 37

Numerous courses – Le Jeu, Neutral Mask, Bouffon, Clown, Greek Tragedy, Melodrama – at the new Paris base. E-mail philgaulier@aol.com or see ecolephilippegaulier.com.

8th International Butoh Festival Mamu

21-25 JANUARY 2004

in Göttingen, Germany. Preliminary List of Artists: Ko Murobushi, Katsura Kan, Tadashi Endo's Mamu Dance Theatre (including London dancers Yumino Seki, Yael Karavan and Fran Barbe) and Brazilian company, Lume. Daytime workshops and evening performances. For details contact Tadashi and Gabriele Endo on endo@em.mpg.de or gendo@butoh-ma.de. See www.tadashi-endo.de.

Espace Catastrophe

Bruxelles, +32 (0) 2 538 12 02

Training in circus and performing arts. Contact espace@catastrophe.be or see www.catastrophe.be

Mime Centrum Berlin

www.mimecentrum.de

'The Biomechanics of Meyerhold' and other workshops

National Institute of Circus Arts (NICA)

Australia

Bachelor of Circus Arts, combining contemporary circus and physical theatre. Summer & Winter Short Course programmes, Summer Saults and Winter Saults.

International students encouraged. For further information visit www.nica.swin.edu.au.

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.

Total Theatre School

Australia, sophie@totaltheatre.com.au

The Annie Stainer International School of Physical Theatre offers one- and two-year intensive performance-based courses in physical theatre techniques. Includes: Creative Movement, Theatre, Mime, Feldenkrais, Mask, Improvisation, Dance, Circus Arts, Voice, Singing, Text, Script Writing, Martial Arts, Stage Combat and Clowning. See www.totaltheatre.com.au.

ZID Theater LAB

Netherlands, +31 20 488 8449

ZID Theater offers a training opportunity for performers, actors, dancers, performance artists and other professionals. Exercises based on various physical disciplines, the use of voice, working with materials and group improvisations, are the ingredients of the training. E-mail info@zidtheater.nl or see www.zidtheater.nl.



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WHAT IS ESSENTIAL FOR THEATRE?

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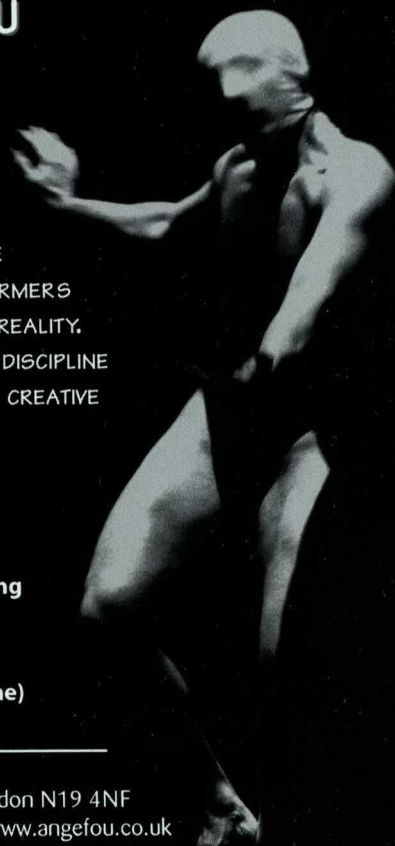
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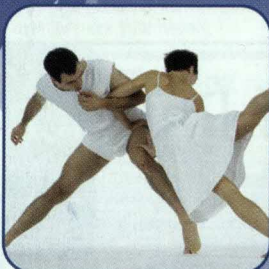
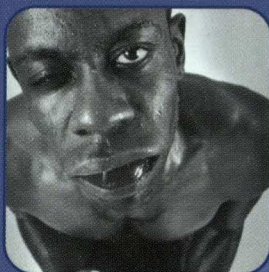
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