

total theatre

Total Theatre Network – celebrating physical & visual performance
Volume 16 Issue 2 Summer 2004 £4.00 totaltheatre.org.uk

magazine

Animate!

Sexing up Puppetry
Improbable Theatre
Fevered Sleep

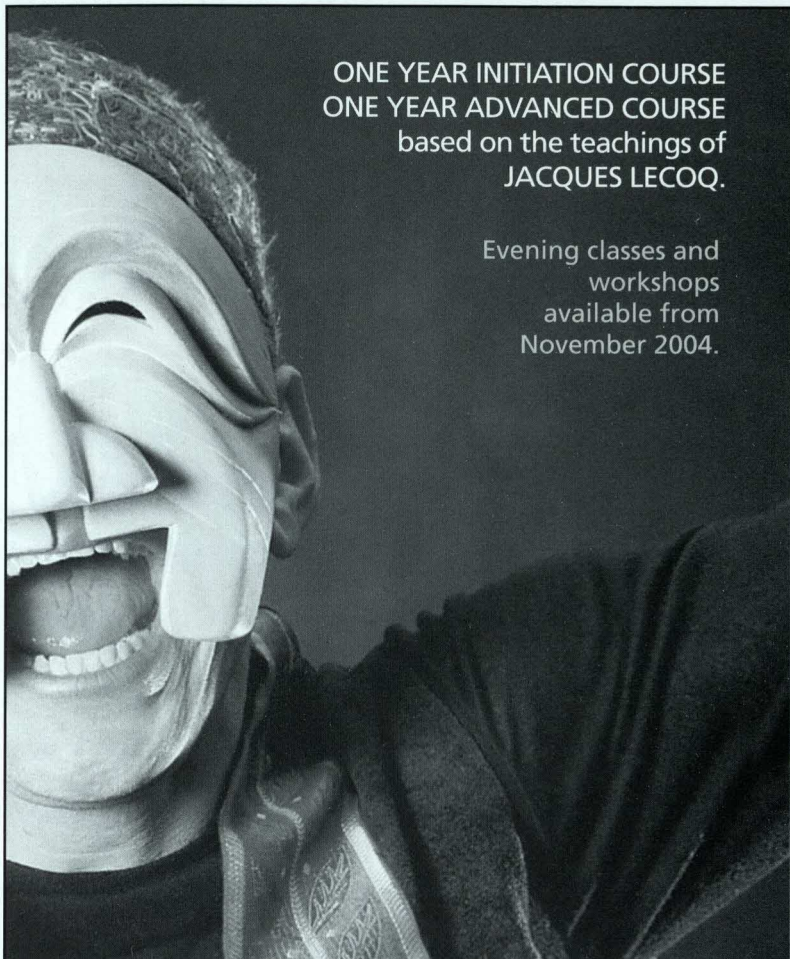


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If you would like to submit news, views, letters or advertise in the Autumn issue, please note that the copy deadline is 14 August 2004. The Autumn issue will be published on 7 October 2004 and will cover the period October to December 2004.

Cover
Little Angel Theatre's
'Jabberwocky', photo by
Adam Crosthwaite

Editorial

In recent years there has been a growing interest in puppetry and object animation – not only on the fringe but also within mainstream theatre practice. See, for example, the National Theatre's production of 'His Dark Materials'. So why isn't puppetry sexy? That's the question posed by Emi Slater in her close-up on the work of Steve Tiplady, recently appointed artistic director of the Little Angel Theatre. A few years back, I wrote a feature for this magazine that suggested that the time had come for puppetry to step out of its ghetto. Progress has been slow but steady – and we are perhaps approaching a tipping point – but we are not quite there yet. And until we are, Total Theatre will continue to push for puppetry to be recognised as a vital and contemporary artform that can take its place alongside other physical and visual performance practices (such as mime, physical theatre and circus) that have thankfully broken free of their shackles in recent years into exciting new areas of artistic investigation, new collaborations, and wider

recognition and funding support.

Improbable Theatre are a company who have been at the forefront of the new visual theatre vanguard, with an ongoing interest in puppetry and object animation in general – and sellotape in particular. Penny Francis (who received an MBE for her services to puppetry) has interviewed the company, who are themselves at a turning point in their practice...

One of the blights of puppetry is the constant assumption that it is work 'just' for children. One of the blights of theatre-making for children is the assumption that this is an easy option. Both of these prejudiced viewpoints revolve around a view that theatre for children is of less artistic value than theatre made for adult audiences. David Harradine, co-artistic director of *Fevered Sleep*, who make work for audiences of all sorts, pours cold water on this notion in his feature *Child's Play*.

First-person artist diaries have always been an important component of our editorial con-

tent – this issue, we are very pleased to have Helen Paris (who spoke at our Total Theatre Talks event on women practitioners in January 2004) reporting on her special working relationship with Leslie Hill in making work that was researched with the help of the Live Art Development Agency.

As always, our eclectic mix of features is augmented by news, reviews and listings. You'll also notice that we have made a few changes for this issue, with a new Preview section that flags up coming events and highlights companies working in the physical and visual performance sector. We'll be making other grander changes in future issues – and would very much welcome your thoughts on the magazine which, along with our 'mother organisation' Total Theatre Network, is in a process of re-assessment and development. You can e-mail me with your thoughts – I look forward to hearing from you.

Dorothy Max Prior
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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:

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total theatre

celebrating physical & visual performance

preview

Here, There, Everywhere

Total Theatre's pick of the festivals 2004

Greenwich & Docklands International Festival 2004

GDIF 2004 will create a series of extraordinary transformations across East London. Highlights include: Dancing City at Canary Wharf (10 July, 1-5pm) – a spectacular array of alfresco dance; a rare London appearance by the Vietnam National Puppetry Theatre (13, 14 & 15 July) and an all-encompassing theatrical experience Monsoon Mela (17 July, 9pm) will transform Three Mills Green into a ritual setting to greet the arrival of a monsoon with installation and performance from Red Earth, vast waterscreen projections, atmospheric dance, aerial trapeze and a live DJ set from Nitin Sawhney. Walk the Plank present 'Supernova' (23 July, 10pm) and the first ever London performance by the acclaimed French theatre company Plasticiens Volants will provide this year's Festival Finale, a spectacular re-working of 'The Conference of The Birds' (24 July, 9.45pm, Mile End Park). See www.festival.org.

Aurora Nova at Edinburgh Festival Fringe

The Aurora Nova Festival of visual theatre and dance at St Stephens has twice won a Total Theatre Award for Most Supportive Venue in acknowledgement of its excellent physical/visual performance programming. For Edinburgh Fringe 2004, Komedia and Fabrik again present a diverse programme of work from around the world, including: Black Hole Theatre Company (Australia) with an adults-only puppet theatre show 'Caravan' – a tale of lust, greed, treachery and revenge set in a 1950s carnival; Teatr Novogo Fronta (Czech Republic / Russia) with 'Dias De Las Noches' set in a music hall in Buenos Aires; Song Of The Goat Theatre (Poland) with 'Chronicles – A Lamentation'; Floez (Germany) – the company who brought 'Ristorante Immortale' to the Fringe returning with 'Teatro Delusio'; and Derevo are back with a new solo work by Tanya Khabarova called 'Reflection'. See www.auroranova.org for full details.

Watch This Space!

Watch This Space is the National Theatre's annual free outdoor summer fiesta, presenting the finest street theatre, music and entertainment in Theatre Square. Now in its seventh year, it has rapidly established itself as one of the largest, most eclectic and dynamic outdoor festivals in the UK. International performance every Thursday, Friday and Saturday lunchtime and early evening until 21 August with the finest street theatre, dance, acrobatics, comedy, mime and spectacle from the UK, Europe and beyond. UK premieres include Germany's Labyrinth presenting 'Twins and Friends' (which is also appearing at Stockton). See www.nationaltheatre.org.uk.

Stockton International Riverside Festival

This year's dates for Stockton's street arts and circus programme are 28 July to 1 August. Programme highlights include UK companies Nofit State, Metro Boulot Dodo with 'FIB', Avanti Display, Mimbire, Neighbourhood Watch with 'Taranta' (SIRF commission and premiere) and Nutkhut with 'The Maharaja's Banquet' which has been developed from walkabout to a full show. International work includes Friches Theatre Urbain's 'Macbeth' (France), dance companies Los Impertibles and Factoria Mascaro (both from

Catalonia), The Lunatics' 'Wanderers' (Holland) and Grejprut's 'Finale' (Slovenia). Many of the above are UK premieres. Full details of the programme are on the website www.sirf.co.uk.

Continental Drifts Present...

If you like festivals or strange arts, this is the spot! Fresh from Glastonbury, Continental Drifts presents The Lost Vagueness Summer Ball (4/5 September) – a weekend in a field with all the weirdness that can be got together: casinos, strippers, Ska, Swing-dance, and anything as off the wall as possible. See Lostvagueness.com for more.

Then on 18-19 September comes Thames Festival. Continental Drift's involvement includes the Lost Vagueness Stage on the Friday with Swingphonias (27-piece crazy orchestra), an all-day DJ/Dance event, a Skate Fest, a street theatre event and much more. See www.continentaldrifts.co.uk for more information.

visions announces UK premieres

Looking to the autumn... the next visions festival of visual performance will take place in Brighton 21-30 October 2004 – ten days of visually amazing performances on stages, in studios, streets and other unusual spaces.



National Theatre's 'Watch This Space!' photo by John Trampler

UK premieres include 'The Star Keeper' by Theatre de L'Oeil from Montreal, which will be presented at the Gardner Arts Centre (23-24 October). Marionettas do Porto from Portugal will perform 'Nada ou o Silencio de Beckett', a bold and playful visual interpretation of Beckett's theatre of the absurd (26-27 October). Visions is also bringing 'Queen of Colours' by Erfurt Puppentheater/Fadenzieher from Germany to the Sallis Benney Theatre at the University of Brighton (26-28 October). Visions will also present work by British companies working creatively with contemporary visual performance for the Launch-Pad event. For further details see www.visions-festival.org.uk.

Updates from Performers and Companies

Clod Ensemble

'Greed', a great success at the Edinburgh Fringe 2003, now has Marcello Magni in the cast and is running at BAC Tue-Sat until 11 July. See www.bac.org.uk. Directed by Suzy Willson, with music by Paul Clark, 'Greed' is a romantic comedy, inspired by the silent melodrama of 1920s cinema and the slapstick of Keaton and Chaplin. It was commissioned by BAC and was developed and had its first workshop presentation at the National Theatre Studio, supported by Arts Council England and the Arts and Humanities Research Board through its Fellowships in the Creative Performing Arts Scheme. See www.clodensemble.com.

Company FZ

FZ are continuing to tour their hit show 'Throat' in the UK and abroad over the summer and into autumn 04 and spring 05. Having opened their new show 'Loser' at the Drill Hall in May 2004, FZ are now developing the show further ready to tour in spring 2005. They are also planning a new production 'OCD', which will open in summer 2005 and also looking at a collaboration with a number of other artists/companies, including Jade. For more info contact CB Projects on info@cbprojects.co.uk, or see www.companyfz.com.

Contemporary Clowning Projects

Angela De Castro is developing her next show 'Only Fools No Horses' with John Wright and undertaking R&D for this production in summer/autumn 2004, ready to go into production and tour in spring/summer 2005. De Castro also continues to develop the Why Not Institute programme. For more information contact info@cbprojects.co.uk, or see www.contemporaryclowningprojects.com.

Expressive Feat

Expressive Feat Productions will perform their aerial dance double-bill 'Looks Deceiving' and 'Does My Bum Look Big in This?' at Jackson's Lane 23 and 24 September 2004 with a national tour planned for Spring 2005. Preparations are also underway to develop 'Box Palestine', a new show for 2005 - working with Rose English. Continuing to develop work in Kent, discussions are underway for the company to be 'In Residence' at the Roundhouse Theatre in Dover from September. For further information on shows or educational work, please contact Tina Carter on 01227 280399 or exfeat@globalnet.co.uk or see www.exfeat.com.

Faceless

Having spent a year in organisational development, Faceless have secured £29,631 from the Arts Council for their new street arts work, 'Puppet Café'. The production, which has recently been through a research and development phase, will be a cafe staffed by puppets and actors serving coffee, pastry and generous helpings of puppetry and interactions to audiences seated within the cafe and around the perimeter. The Cafe is the first of three new street arts works which make up the company's seven-year street arts development plan and will be available in the summer of 2005.

Forced Entertainment

The company's 20th birthday celebrations are well underway with special events in the UK and Europe. 'Bloody Mess', their most ambitious theatre piece to date, will be touring the UK in the autumn and included in a series of events for LIFT. Find out more at <http://www.forced.co.uk/birthday>. Forced Entertainment also announce the publication of a new book which gathers key information about the company's history and work alongside essays by internationally renowned writers, and some of the remarkable



Clod Ensemble 'Greed'
photo by Richard Nicholson

photographic documentation of the company's work by Hugo Glendinning. Available to buy direct from the company at £19.00. See www.forced.co.uk/bookshop.html for more details.

Fran Barbe

Fran Barbe Dance are restaging 'Palpitation' commissioned by Jacksons Lane Zone3 in 2003, and 'Fine Bone China'. The works will be shown at Jacksons Lane in October 2004, followed by a regional tour. Intensive workshops will be run alongside the performances. To join their mailing list or to book the company for performances or workshops, email franbarbedance@yahoo.co.uk.

Gravity & Levity

A new aerial dance company set up by Lindsey Butcher will be touring in Summer 2005, opening at the Brighton Festival. Part 1 of the first piece in a programme of shorts opened at Circus Space as part of the Jerwood Awards in April, and part 2 opened at the Royal Opera House in May. Gravity & Levity have also recently won the SEDA Dance for the Camera Award to make an aerial dance short for the camera as part of this programme. For more information please contact info@cbprojects.co.uk or see www.gravity-levity.net.

Horse+Bamboo

Horse+Bamboo Theatre has already enjoyed European success with its acclaimed production, 'Company of Angels - The Story of Charlotte Salomon', and transatlantic interest has generated a special visit to the US this summer. The show will be developed as a co-production with the established Minneapolis theatre company, Heart of the Beast. Work on the co-production will start in August and the show will run for five weeks in Minneapolis in the autumn. Horse+Bamboo's associate artistic director, Alison Duddle, will fly out to the States this summer to supervise a fresh build of the set and will direct the co-production.

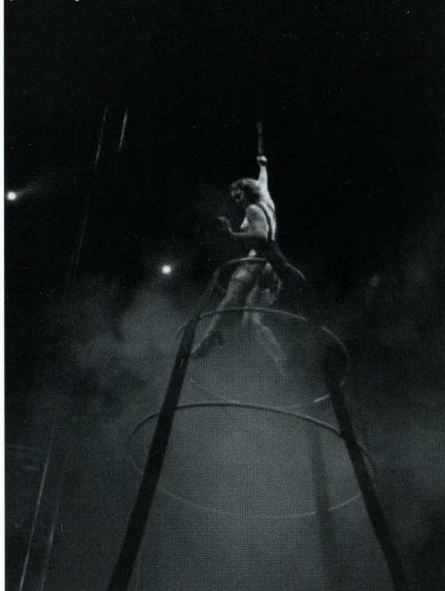
Jade

After the huge success of 'Cake', Jade are now looking to take the show overseas as well as a possible further tour in the UK. They are also planning a collaboration with Company FZ for a middle-scale production to tour in 2005/06. For further information please contact info@cbprojects.co.uk or see www.jadetc.co.uk.

Legs on the Wall

The spectacular and groundbreaking innovators of physical and acrobatic theatre Legs on the Wall will be touring in spring 2005 with their hit production 'All of Me', directed by Nigel Jamieson. For more information please contact info@cbprojects.co.uk, or see www.legsonthewall.com.au.

NoFit State Circus 'ImMortal'
photo by Brian Tarr



MAC (Midland Arts Centre)

This year, mac productions, in collaboration with the Resurrectionists, is creating a new music-theatre piece – which draws on stories from the fractured former Yugoslavia, particularly from those who, as assimilated refugees, have now settled in Birmingham. The play will involve community and professional performers and will incorporate the real stories of individuals affected by the wars in the former Yugoslavia, unearthed by Budapest-based BBC reporter Nick Thorpe, as well as the thoughts and memories of people now living in Birmingham, and a newly created libretto and score for the choir, influenced by Eastern European musical forms.

Neighbourhood Watch Stilts International

NWSI's new show 'Taranta' will be premiered on 31 July 2004 at Stockton International Riverside Festival, commissioned by Arts Council England and Stockton International Riverside Festival. With a total cast of around 50 performers 'Taranta' will be an urban invasion/hallucination of spiders and insect life set to the darker flamenco modes (echoes of the Moorish invasion of southern Spain) and the 'compas' of the Buleria. The new symphony of 'Buleria' for 'Taranta' has been composed and NWSI have assembled an orchestra to perform this driving flamenco compas. The transnational musical team has been drawn from the Newcastle live music scene, and the Spanish flamenco community in Spain and the UK.

NoFit State Circus

'ImMortal', a large-scale show presented in the company's spaceship-styled big top, is a unique, timeless experience where the spectator enters the world of performance. It's a multimedia promenade where action explodes all around, above and below, a spec-

tacular meditation on one of the biggest questions of the human race: 'Are we immortal?' The show has been part-funded by the Arts Council of Wales and Arts Council England. See www.nofitstate.com.

Opera Circus

Opera Circus presents 'Arcane', visual music theatre directed by John Wright with composer Paul Clark of Clod Ensemble and libretto by David Spencer. Devised by the company, it combines music, visual/physical theatre, puppetry and film and is not suitable for under-12s. There are summer dates at Exeter Festival, Northcott Theatre on 6 July and the Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham on 9 July. 'Arcane' will be touring in the UK during October 2004. Please see the website for up to date information – www.operacircus.co.uk.

Phil Smith

Phil Smith performs The Crab Walks! After spending 6 weeks last year exploring the coastline between Dawlish Warren and his childhood holiday destination of Paignton, now, with the help of Anjali Jay, Phil has turned his experiences into a gentle performance about his search for other Devons, wormholes to India and the Egyptian origins of clotted cream! A search for the holiday inside every holiday. Performances will be at Beach Hut no 15, Coryton Cove, Dawlish, 12-16 and 19-23 July at 11.00 am, 12.15 pm and 1.30 pm and will last approximately an hour. To be sure of a place, given the limited capacity, people should ring 01392 410575 or email perform.smith@ukgateway.net to book.

Púca Puppets

Púca Puppets were founded in 1997 to perform water puppetry on Dublin canals, for which they won an AIB Better Ireland Award. Púca has since performed children's shows nationwide and as far afield as Bangkok, where they represented Ireland in the Europe Asia Puppet Festival, 2002. Púca Puppets won the Guinness Living Dublin Award (2004) for 'Songs in Her Suitcase', their second original work for adults, which brings the story of the late actress and cabaret performer, Agnes Bernelle, vividly to life. Using an ambitious combination of puppetry, mask and film, this new show features music produced by Philip Chevron of The Pogues, a long-time friend and former collaborator of Agnes.

Tall Stories

The company is delighted to announce that 'The Gruffalo' will be performing at Whipsnade Wild Animal Park during July and August, thus carrying out the company policy of taking theatre to unusual venues. A second cast will perform 'The Gruffalo' at the Edinburgh Fringe, alongside 'The Owl and the Pussycat', as part of its national tour. Due to building work at its current office, the company is looking for new

office/rehearsal space. Plans are underway for a new touring production for 2005. See www.tallstories.org.uk.

Tamsin Fessey

Tamsin Fessey and her company Angel Exit Theatre will take last year's successful show 'Bolt Upright' to the Junction festival in Tipperary and the Earagail festival at the beginning of July. This summer they will also start work on a new piece written for the company and run a workshop at the beginning of August in Dublin. For more information please contact tamsin@angelexit.com.

Travelling Light Theatre Company

Travelling Light have been awarded £40,000 by Arts Council England, South West to tour 'Too Many Cooks', a play about the darker side of fairy tales which will be brought to life by members of the team that created 'Tir Na N-Og'. The tour begins on 16 September and will include dates in Nottingham, Bristol, Edinburgh, and Dublin before finishing at Manchester's Royal Exchange. A co-production with Bristol Old Vic will be to adapt Quentin Blake's 'Clown' for 3 years +. 'Clown' will begin its run as the Old Vic's studio Xmas show before it tours nationally in spring 2005.

Welfare State International

Thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund, Welfare State International are now developing the 2nd act of 'Longline' informed by researching stories of the people and industries of Morecambe Bay. They will be gathering stories that will reflect people's feelings about living and working in or around Morecambe Bay. This will be part of a 'Stories' publication and exhibition held at Lanternhouse. 'Longline' will organically build on 'Stories' and the new music created in Act 1 towards the vision of a major Festival of the Sands and carnival opera in 2005/6. For further information contact Anthea Rathlin-Jones on 01229 581127 or atrj@welfare-state.com.



Púca Puppets 'Songs in her Suitcase' photo by Ros Kavanagh

The Alchemist



Little Angel Theatre 'Jabberwocky'
photo by Adam Crosthwaite

The power of transformation is at the heart of puppetry's appeal, says EMI SLATER

Julie Andrews did it all: marionettes in 'The Sound of Music' and object manipulation in 'Mary Poppins'. The scene in Mary Poppins when the contents of her bag come to life never fails to capture audiences young and old. The goatherd marionettes in 'The Sound of Music' remain long in our memory as a source of amusement and ridicule...

Playing with toys has to be the oldest art form – existing long before the first named puppeteer Pothinos, who plied his craft in Greece in the first century AD. Cartoons, puppets, object manipulation – making something out of nothing, making magic out of the everyday – are all things we now take for granted.

Within theatre practice, puppets have infiltrated the mainstream: 'The Lion King' is still running in the West End; the Royal Shakespeare Company and Opera North have recently realised the magic that puppetry can add to their productions – and then there is the National Theatre's recent production of 'His Dark Materials' in which puppetry is a major – although barely acknowledged or credited – element. Meanwhile, companies like theatre-rites, Improbable, Faulty Optic, Complicité, Dynamic New Animation, Blind

Summit, and Green Ginger go from strength to strength – using puppetry and proud of it.

So what now? Why is there still so little funding for puppetry, despite the good work done by organisations like the Puppet Centre Trust? And why is so much of the puppetry in this country left unrecognised? Why is there no place in Britain where one can train as a puppeteer in the same way one can now take a degree in Circus Arts? Why do drama students learn sword fighting and not puppetry? Why are puppeteers still so often left uncredited on programmes and press releases? Why is puppetry still not sexy?

Someone who is determined to change all this is Steve Tiplady, newly appointed artistic director of the Little Angel Theatre. Much to the chagrin of Tiplady, the Little Angel Theatre is often described as London's best-kept secret. It was founded in 1961 by John and Lyndie Wright and is one of only three permanent-based puppet theatres in the UK. Lyndie Wright is one of Britain's leading puppet makers and makes puppets for productions all over the world. Most of the puppet makers and puppeteers who are working in the 'world of objects' today have at some point honed their craft at the Little Angel Theatre.

Companies such as Faulty Optic met there. And now Steve Tiplady has been taken on as artistic director...

Tiplady's CV reads as a veritable history of British puppetry in recent years. He has worked with Faulty Optic, theatre-rites and Improbable and has recently won Time Out award for 'most innovative Off-West End show' with 'Dust', made with Indefinite Articles, which has been substantially re-developed since its premiere four years ago.

'Dust' is a reworking of Homer's 'Odyssey'. An early version of the piece at BAC was reviewed in Total Theatre Magazine (Vol 12/4) by Anne Louise Rentell who said: 'The company's contemporary re-telling of the tale is visually resonant and intoxicating. Constantly changing vivid dust patterns and drawings translated from an overhead projector onto a screen are a mesmerising and ingenious method of storytelling.'

In 'Puppetry into Performance – A User's Guide' Dorothy Max Prior says of 'Dust' (as seen at visions 2000): 'There is not a puppet in sight, but plenty of objects there to be animated: buckets of sand, bales of cloth, hands scratching patterns in paint on a light box, torsos behind a screen. The relationship between

light and shadow, form and illusion is explored.'

Another Indefinite Articles success has been Tiplady's version of 'Pinocchio', which has been performed over 500 times. It has been running for 10 years – and it is still going strong: it will be seen this summer at the Little Angel Theatre.

Pinocchio is carved from a log – formed during the show: 'It's tricky really – he becomes a puppet from the objects in the show, so there is a kind of truth about it that I like.'

Tiplady says he was never really interested in puppets, he didn't even play with an Action Man when he was a child – but he has always been interested in objects. He says he is fascinated by using objects within a theatrical context: 'Objects can come out of a naturalistic context, you can have a place where the play is set and the objects around you can become characters in that space.' Tiplady is particularly fascinated by the idea of transformation. Like Kantor, Tiplady believes that what keeps an audience interested is the process of transformation, not just the transformation itself.

In 'The Sound of Music', it was what happened behind the scenes that was interesting, not just watching the goats and goatherds... which brings us to the subject of marionettes:

'I have always thought of marionettes as quite fusty and strange and why would you want it – but before I got the job here, I was offered "Jabberwocky". I was turned off by marionettes so I decided it was important I explored marionettes and really tried to find out why I was turned off by them. I decided I wanted the central character to be a marionette and also I wanted there to be a breakout for the marionette... I wanted to explore what happens if you drag the puppeteers down from the bridge. Quite exciting. When we first did this – the moment the puppet broke the marionette stage – was the bit that everyone remembered most, the bit the puppeteers were most excited about. It broke out onto the forestage, keeping the puppet alive all the time. They were very excited and I knew I was onto something – something worth exploring here...'

The audience actually watching the process of creating the puppet is the interesting bit. So taking the marionette puppeteers out of hiding, down from the bridge and onto the stage is what makes it exciting. The audience wants to see the transformation, the process. Similar to Grotowski's ideas of breaking away from naturalism, object theatre is now breaking down the fourth wall. Watching an actor turn into a character there in front of you, or transforming groups of

Why is there still so little funding for puppetry? Why do drama students learn sword fighting and not puppetry? Why are puppeteers still so often left uncredited? Why is puppetry still not sexy?

actors into objects or human scenery, is the same principle as turning objects into characters or creating the characters out of materials on stage in front of the audience – it's the process of transformation we are interested in.

So – if puppetry has all these fantastic opportunities to explore theatrical transformations, why don't people learn puppetry at ▶

National Theatre 'His Dark Materials' photo by Ivan Kyncl



drama school? Apart from anything else, puppetry is about focus; the way you can leave yourself in one place and create the focus in another is a vitally important thing to know as a training actor.

Slavka Jovanovic, former programmer at BAC and currently education officer at the Little Angel Theatre, says: 'I would like to see The Little Angel as a training ground, basing an ensemble here from all different backgrounds. I would like puppets to be used in much more adult theatre. With many companies it is last minute – they expect you to be able to train up a puppeteer in two hours, but you need constant practice to manipulate a puppet properly, you can't just bung it in at the last minute.'

Slavka has been impressed by the development in puppetry in Britain over the past 10 years, which has included object animation and more cross-art form practice, but she says: 'I certainly don't think that a puppetry revolution has taken place – puppetry is still marginalised in comparison to other art forms. It seems to me that art forms such as circus and dance, which had been underfunded and undervalued in the past, have seen a massive turnaround. Their renewed status within the arts has brought with it recognition from the Arts Council both in terms of profile and funding.'

'I think that puppetry has been left far behind – partly due to the fact that people are uncomfortable with it. I think in this country puppetry is very much looked upon as an entertainment for children. I am NOT saying that this is a bad thing. I am just saying that anything which is seen in this category is auto-



Norwich Puppet Theatre/Luis Boy



Opera North and Leeds Met Studio Theatre
'Resonance' at BAC Opera 2004

matically given a lower status. The only way that puppetry will really be accepted in the adult world is when the strategists and money-givers decide that it is important enough to support as an art-form in its own right – rather than seeing it as an enhancement... Puppetry performance can present situations with extraordinary possibilities – ones which would be impossible to replicate in other theatre, let alone in real life. It allows the viewer a depth of vision which may only be otherwise realised through film, or through one's own imagination.'

Steve Tiplady and Slavka Jovanovic have great plans for the Little Angel Theatre and thus puppetry in Britain as a whole. Slavka says that through detailed research and careful planning, they now have a strategy in place which contains a number of core projects for the formal education sector as well as the community. Steve says he wants higher profile international and touring work. He does not want the Little Angel Theatre to be a secret any longer, but most of all he wants higher standards:

'I love object theatre, working with materials. I will still programme all styles of puppetry as long as it is good quality. Despite it being a small world, there are many different aspects of puppetry and it would be a shame

to eliminate any of them. I might have seasons of object theatre, seasons of marionette, seasons of paper theatre, Sellotape, etc. I'd love that. But mainly I just want people to know that what they're getting, whenever they come here, whatever it is, will be something good, something high quality.'

With Steve at the helm I think we can rest assured that the quality control will be a guarantee – and that Little Angel will not remain a 'secret' for much longer. Sing it from the mountains – 'Oh da lay ee – no more lonely goatherds, puppetry is now out of the closet!' ■

For details of 'Pinocchio' and other dates at the Little Angel Theatre and for information on Steve Tiplady's classes in adult puppetry, see www.littleangeltheatre.com. 'Puppetry into Performance – A User's Guide' is part of the User's Guide series of performance studies published by University College Winchester in collaboration with Total Theatre Network. Cost £5 + £2 p&p. Order from users.guide@wkac.ac.uk. For any query about puppetry and object theatre, contact the Puppet Centre Trust on pct@puppetcentre.demon.co.uk. To view the bi-monthly e-magazine Animations and learn more about PCT, go to www.puppetcentre.com

Making Silence Sing

Odin Teatret's South West Residency 2004

Eugenio Barba was wearing the same bright shirts as on his visit to Coventry nearly a decade ago. But the audience at the Exeter Phoenix for his talk, part of the legendary Odin Teatret's latest UK residency, was a mixture of those long familiar with his work and those coming to it for the first time. And that's true of this report as well. First, ANDREA TURNER describes encountering the Odin aesthetic for the first time. Then, PHIL SMITH, who workshopped and listened at Coventry and – over twenty years ago – in Cardiff, reviews the state of the theory...

Andrea Turner:

How does the performer go about discovering and revealing the depth of a text or a score of action? How does she learn to be present and ready, in order to wake up what is not? To be decided, rather than trying to decide? And how can the creation of a 'labyrinth of rules, references and resistances' bring the performer closer to a unified body and voice?

These were some of the questions engaged by the 'Workshop with Julia Varley', for me a high point of the residency. Varley, an actress and pedagogue with Odin since 1976, is an inspiring presence. Her full command of her craft as she teaches is impressive. The workshop lasts four hours; an intense experience, jam-packed with useful exercises. As Varley transmits instructions it is as though she is composing a piece of music from the essence of each participant.

In her work demonstration 'Echo of Silence', a riveting dissection of the performer's technical processes, Varley talks of wanting to 'make silence sing', about her struggle with the natural tremble she has in her voice and the importance of using images to provoke vocal variation: 'Speak with the voice of a Persian cat looking for mice.'

For Odin performers it is important to travel away from a text in exploration, so that deeper meanings can emerge.

Finally, Varley performs her solo piece 'Dona Musica's Butterflies', about identity – a 'dialogue between the character, the actress

and Julia' – and modern physics. It is a truly bizarre theatrical event, highly symbolic and fragmented. The image of the butterfly weaves in and out of the text and visually dominates, darting among the white carnations that encircle the actress. Mr Peanut, (the skull-head Death that often crops up in Varley's performances) slips in at the end to provide an amusing climax: it's all a metaphor for the 'butterfly effect' and issues of existence. Watching the piece, however, I was more concerned with the work of the performer than with philosophical questions. Despite her impressive technique, Varley failed to connect with me in a sensorial way. After the show, I overheard someone say: 'Too tricky.' Having had such high expectations of Odin's work, this was the one disappointment in the residency; overall I found the whole experience to be a real eye-opener.

Phil Smith:

Andrea's disappointment in Julia Varley's performance is revealing. And the fault is not all Varley's. It is a bizarre performance – perhaps closer to Margaret Rutherford than Varley realises – but her director, Barba, must take some responsibility for the piece's reception. In his talk 'Theatre as Absence' he had every opportunity to make clear the aesthetics that inspire it, yet chose another agenda.

Odin have created wonderful theatre – 'Il Millione', 'Anabasis', and, on film here, 'In the Beginning was the Idea' – yet Barba speaks for almost two hours and mentions very little of theatricality or dramaturgy. Instead the deeply autobiographical nature of his work comes to the fore; a theatre, or rather a physical practice, drawn from luminous 'grandfathers', filling personal absences made by exile

and political and intellectual disillusion.

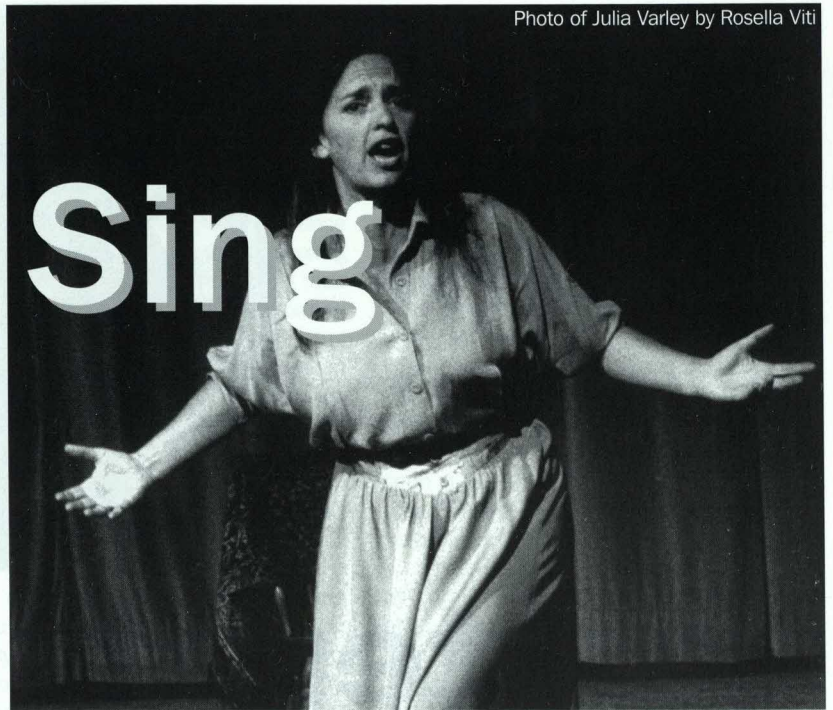
This personal emphasis both contradicts and fits the means of Odin's composition of theatre: protecting the associations of its actors, their individually composed physical actions are disrupted, stretched, slowed, accelerated and collaged by Barba to Borges-like ghostly narratives. Text is worked against or is floated free from the physical score, a tension that invites a complex looking from the spectator. Yet Barba does not describe this, missing the chance to illuminate 'Dona Musica's Butterflies'. Rather than describe the careful structuring and spacing of mutually respected individual associations, silence defends it needlessly.

Barba's talk gives little weight to the spectator or to theatre as communication, but rather to a genealogy of 'anthropological' physical acting (not performing), passing from master to novice, indifferent to evangelism. Barba explicitly says: he has been making theatre for Grotowski. He is charmingly open about his manipulation of others to protect his fledgling Odin. But one can't help wondering what part in his strategy we are playing.

Odin's residency has been a window on part of the work of a great company. Much has been learned and admired. Yet its impact has been as mixed as its participants. And the talk in the bars and seminars is as much of contradictions as silence sung. ■

The Odin Teatret SW residency programme was organised by Organic Theatre Group. Contact John Dean info@organictheatre.fslife.co.uk. For further information on the work of Eugenio Barba and the Odin Teatret see www.odinteatret.dk.

Photo of Julia Varley by Rosella Viti



Hung, Drawn and Quartered



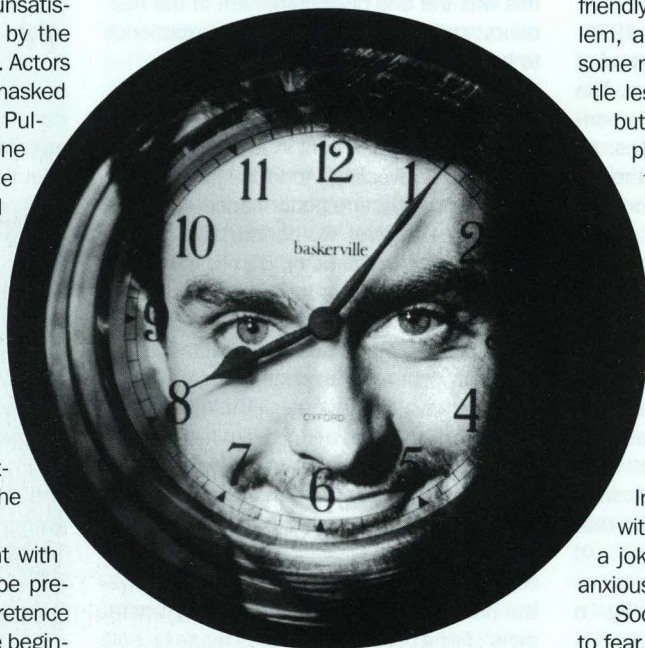
New directions are mooted for the Improbable Theatre partnership. PENNY FRANCIS sheds some light...

The last two shows I have seen by Improbable could not have been more different: one was 'The Hanging Man' at the Lyric, the other 'Sticky' on the South Bank. One was a play in a single magnificent set; the other an outdoor extravaganza on a massive scale, featuring extraordinary sellotape creations, a human on a crane high above the Thames, and a gorgeous firework display.

'The Hanging Man' was about an unsatisfied architect who attempts suicide by the rope – in his own unfinished cathedral. Actors appear out of the skeletal woodwork, masked white figures in tall hats and floppy Pulcinella garb, too soon discarded. One becomes Death, who is angry with the architect: she is not at the beck and call of just anybody with a death wish. Her revenge is to withhold the kiss of death not only from the architect but from everyone else too. Nobody may die. It was a thrilling beginning, promising unusual thematic avenues, existentialist matters, positing self-killing as seductive cop-out. The tone, as always with Improbable, was light-hearted, but the content, or at least the initial idea and the ending, profound.

However, something was not right with this production: the second half, to be precise. There came a moment when all pretence at addressing the matters raised in the begin-

ning was dropped, in fact when almost all pretence of any kind was dropped. The actors suddenly became themselves, informing us about things we'd really rather not have known – for instance how uncomfortable the hanging harness was, besides many real-life domestic and backstage intimacies. An inconsequential variety show developed: we had a dance routine and a torch song, and the story



'Lifegame' photo by Sheila Burnett

lost its way and its dynamic. I felt the temperature drop throughout the theatre.

This should have been an electrifying show, with a great initial idea, excellent performers, great visuals and many superbly theatrical moments. Improbable says about their work: 'It is good to ask whether your show has a gap in it. If it doesn't and everything is finished off, the audience might not have anything to do.' Here, I submit, the gap was too wide.

To some extent, the company ethos puts it beyond criticism, since they insist they like the work to be rough and unready, to change from performance to performance. They rejoice in instant theatre, in keeping with the elements of change and playfulness, surprise and enjoyment (for cast as much as audience). However I saw 'The Hanging Man' twice, but choreography and text appeared unchanged. I was puzzled.

Thus, when I met Julian Crouch at a premiere and he told me that some change of direction was in the air, I wasn't surprised, but anxious enough to ask whether it meant a split in the group. He assured me that it did not, and if I waited a little all would be revealed...

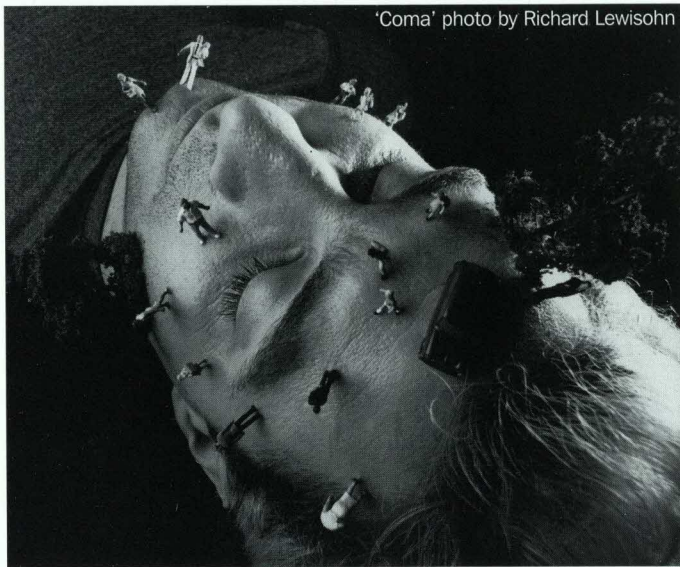
After a couple of months, the time came for the interview, and all four founders were present: Lee Simpson, Phelim McDermott, Julian Crouch and their creative producer Nick Sweeting.

They had just finished a team meeting, and they all seemed remarkably relaxed, smiling affably and chatting about their past and future. Relaxation is a strong characteristic of Improbable: they are masters of the laid-back. Admittedly, Julian looks as if he's been up several nights in a row, which given his schedule at the moment is understandable; Lee looks cool and rested; Phelim always has a hunted air, but is presently looking attentive and friendly, though I think sitting still is a problem, and he plays with his laptop the way some men play with worry beads. Nick is a little less cool, in the manner of producers, but no less cheerful. No egos are on display; in fact they all appear to be taking the interview seriously. Is this a gambit?

I have heard, I say to kick off, that Improbable is beating new paths through the performance jungle...

Though I didn't say so, I thought that judging from 'The Hanging Man', the least satisfying of all their work, at least one new path – a more rigorous approach to dramaturgy, to sustain the fascinating themes they propose – was due. In this show, Improbable seemed to me partly hoist with their own petard, if that isn't too bad a joke. What are these new paths? I am anxious.

Soon I gather that there is not too much to fear, but that Lee, Phelim and Julian each



'Coma' photo by Richard Lewisohn

wants to 'follow his own way', forming a Partnership, which is seen as a looser association than before, but still working within the context and under the banner of Improbable Theatre, when they are not doing freelance stuff as individuals. They illustrate the idea by drawing me a sketch of three satellites revolving round the gravitational pull of Nick Sweeting, the terrestrial force.

Recently, they say, they hit a low point where, although their talents felt as strong as ever, 'everyone was doing everything' (the three write, direct and design), and suddenly it was all too much. There was no room to breathe. They said: 'We'd all be in a room together and nothing would happen.' They felt they had lost their communal muse, and their creativity, which had been flowing so freely in the days when there was no money, was threatening to dry up. In fact they 'bust up and re-formed twice'. Creativity Lost.

There followed some determined re-negotiation of roles and direction (at this stage we may imagine that the quartet was not quite as laid-back as usual) but they have come out of it still together, re-energised. The decision was taken to undertake projects either together or with other collaborators, but under the Improbable umbrella, if all four agree. They would henceforward regard themselves as a Partnership rather than a cohesive, joined-at-the-hip Company, and they would only work on a show all together when they wanted and needed to, which is likely to be often.

They now feel much less constrained, and new work is tumbling out. 2004, says Nick, is a development year, with many company – sorry, partnership – projects on the go, either together or with other collaborators. Creativity Regained!

This news comes as a relief, since Improbable has become a major force in contemporary British theatre, a result of the unique synergy of its four founders. The present programme looks like this:

The revived 'Lifegame' had a sell-out ten performances in the National's Cottesloe Theatre in early May. The show involves taking a member of the audience onto the stage, coaxing him or her to tell their life story, and improvising scenes from that life with a group of players, puppets and objects. It is a typically dangerous idea, and if there is one characteristic of Improbable's work that stands out more than another, it is

making dangerous, improvised theatre. 'Lifegame' can be electrifying or can misfire.

'Sticky' is scheduled for more showings in various countries and is booked for occasions that demand celebration on a vast scale by presenters with deep pockets. My family, with thousands of others, saw it on the South Bank and will never forget it.

The groundbreaking 'Shockheaded Peter' was recently back in London for the fifth time; the producing company is Cultural Industry, but the talents of Improbable shine through it in the direction and design. It has travelled the world, horrifying and amusing young and old wherever it goes.

'Spirit' had another (rare) showing at this year's Fidenza festival of puppet and object theatre in Bochum, Germany at the end of May. I for one will be sad if it leaves the repertoire, just as I am sad that they have ended '70 Hill Lane'. Both productions were Improbable at their best: original, personal, funny, simple, endlessly surprising.

Julian will collaborate soon with Vicky Featherstone of Paines Plough on Neil Gaiman's 'Wolves in the Walls'... Or it could be Lee and Phelim's adaptation of 'Theatre of Blood', the 1970s horror story that starred Vincent Price in the movie, which is the next to see the light.

Lee Simpson is the most self-effacing (not to say self-deprecating) of the partners, but the one whose presence 'drives the company and makes things tick', according to Nick Sweeting. His improv skills are strong; he is highly inventive and loves taking risks onstage. Nick says he

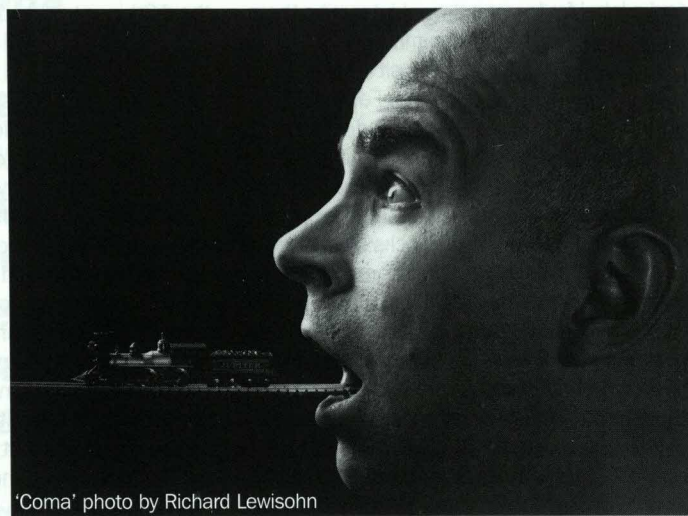
actually 'embodies what the group are all about'. Lee is also one of the A Team of the Comedy Store, where he plays regularly.

Julian Crouch is in constant demand as a scenographer, although within Improbable he directs as well. I've only seen him as a performer in 'Animo' and 'Lifegame', when he is surrounded by Things. He designed 'Jerry Springer – The Opera', and the newly opened 'A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum', both for the National Theatre. He is planning a six-minute film of Pinocchio, showing the puppet-turned-human in sad middle age. He finds himself more and more interested in multi-media design. His animated colour graphics for 'On Blindness', recently seen at the Soho Theatre, were simply beautiful: I'd like them on my wall instead of a static picture.

Phelim is about to work with Steve Tiplady on a production for the Little Angel Theatre. A hallmark of Improbable's shows is the unusual and organic use of animated objects and puppets; so working with a dedicated puppet theatre such as the Little Angel in Islington is not surprising. 'All our shows have a feeling for puppets,' he has said, more than once. Phelim directs and performs, and has even been known to give lessons to an audience, as in 'Coma', which gave rise to concerns that we might lose him to propagandist theatre. Thankfully, it hasn't happened. His acting persona is light, relaxed, detached, with humour never far away, no matter how serious the moment.

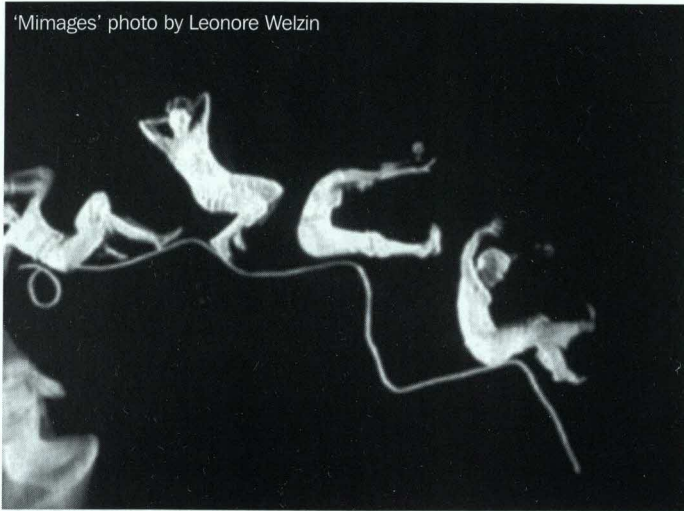
Every new production is a risky adventure: mostly they win, sometimes they lose, always they keep us guessing and leave us arguing, enthusing or questioning. They take pride in the winning and in the losing. 'We are alchemists,' one of them once said. 'We want the audience to witness a miracle, and renew it at every performance.' Most of the time they succeed very well. ■

For details of all future projects see Improbable Theatre's website at www.improbable.co.uk.



'Coma' photo by Richard Lewisohn

'Mimages' photo by Leonore Welzin



Spirited Away

Between dance and mime is –
eurythmy. DOROTHY MAX PRIOR
goes to the New Eurythmy Biennial
in Sweden to find out more.

On a bare stage, lit by blue light, a solo male performer takes the space. He is an arresting presence, tall with a mobile face and large expressive hands that move the air around him. There is an element of clown in his performance – and, like many clowns, he is a beautiful dancer. It is hard to place his piece exactly. There is something of Decroux's exacting corporeal mime, but coupled with the fluidity of Limon's 'release' dance techniques. The movement motifs are sometimes gestural, sometimes moving towards abstraction, but always there is a direct communication with the audience missing from much contemporary dance work. This is the opening section of a 3-part programme called 'Islands' by Igemon Performances. There follows an engaging solo from a female performer; an exploration of plane, level, and the sculptural placing of the body in space. Finally, a duet that combines body-based performance with minimalist object theatre, as white oval discs morph from skates to wings to paddles.

Igemon is the collective name for the work of Hans Fors and Marianne Kleiser – who are both eurythmists. I find myself feeling rather confused – is this really eurythmy? If I had to find a label for Igemon, I would describe them as contemporary European movement theatre – the sort of work that would sit very nicely in the London International Mime Festival or the Aurora Nova festival of dance and visual theatre at Edinburgh. My first experience of eurythmy in performance had been many years earlier. I remember little about it other than a feeling of bemusement as flocks of women in flowing robes floated around the space with firm upright posture. Having subsequently studied eurythmy, I have come to value it as a holistic movement practice, yet I remained sceptical about it as a performing art. But all that was to change... having succumbed to persuasion to attend the four-day New Eurythmy Biennial in Sweden (March 2004), my expectations were challenged as I witnessed

eurythmy emerging as a viable and dynamic 21st century artform...

But let's backtrack a bit. What exactly is eurythmy?

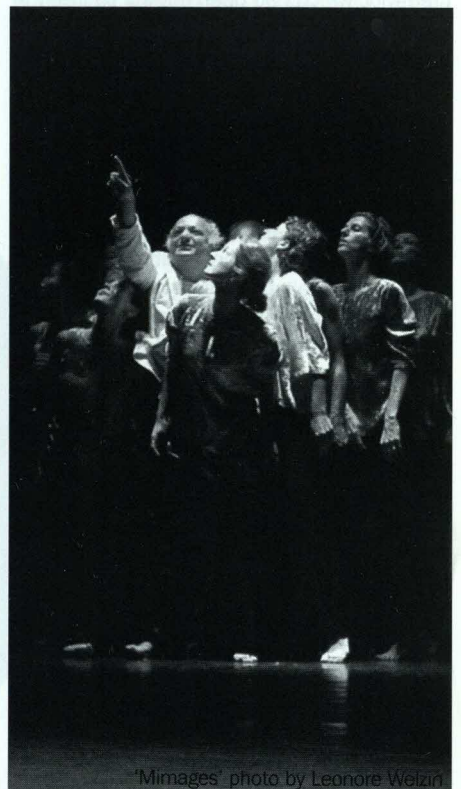
Eurythmy was developed in the early decades of the 20th century by Rudolf Steiner, who saw it as an art of 'expressive visible gesture' placed between dance and mime. Classic eurythmy is divided into two strands of practice: work with the spoken word, termed 'visible speech', which embodies the sound qualities of human speech; and 'visible music', which utilises tone, harmony and interval to create movement patterns to music. To place this in context, we can see the development of eurythmy throughout the Modernist era as paralleling the emergence of expressionist dance and corporeal mime. In a series of lectures given in 1923, Steiner expounded his views on the arts and their mission in contemporary life. His aim was to propose an approach to arts practice that involved 'sacred rituals unfolding in mighty pictures'.

Like many of his contemporaries or near-contemporaries – including Jacques Copeau, Etienne Decroux, Isadora Duncan, Rudolf von Laban and Antonin Artaud – Steiner eschewed the 19th-century traditions of naturalist theatre, pantomime and ballet. In common with Copeau (who decried what he called the theatre of scene-shifters), Steiner felt that 'now that naturalism has followed the grand road from naturalistic stage productions to films... we must find the way back to the presentation of the spiritual, the genuine, the real.' In a rare moment of facetiousness, he suggests that those obsessed with naturalism build themselves a literal fourth wall on stage...

In the same lecture (Oslo, 20 May 1923) he asks 'Why present something on stage which exists anyhow in life? On stage, we cannot behave naturalistically.' Let us, he suggested, create an art drawing its inspiration and its force from a modern knowledge of the spiritual world. Again, there is much in com-

mon with his contemporaries: Isadora Duncan identified the need to find a dance practice that explored the inner self, the soul; after establishing himself as a director, Copeau left Paris in 1924 to found a holistically minded theatre troupe in the Burgundy countryside. In his essay 'Production and Metaphysics', Artaud proposed a total theatre that, through the physical realisation of 'gestures, signs, postures and sounds', adopted 'deep attitudes that might be called "active metaphysics"'. This is reflected in Steiner's view that we should not look down on or deride the material world, but rather 'penetrate into this material world spiritually'.

All well and good – but what has happened to eurythmy since Steiner's death in 1925? Unlike expressionist dance and cor-



'Mimages' photo by Leonore Welzin



'Mimages' photo by Leonore Welzin

poreal mime, it doesn't appear to have informed contemporary performance practice. Perhaps because Steiner is more renowned as a pedagogue rather than a practitioner? But the same could be said of Laban or Lecoq... Perhaps because he divided his energy between arts, science and philosophy? This could be a factor: in a world that likes to keep everyone pigeonholed, the person who developed biodynamic agriculture and founded a new system of educating children would perhaps not be taken seriously as a performing arts guru.

But at least some of the blame must lie with Steiner's successors who have, until fairly recently, kept eurythmy cloistered, preserved in aspic lest it get contaminated by outside influences. Decroux's followers realised that his attachment to the wearing of strange loincloths was doing mime no favours – would that Steiner's followers had felt the same way about Greek robes and slippers! Martha Graham's successors learnt that all that contraction wasn't too healthy – so there was a shift to incorporate 'release' techniques into dance practice. All modern movement practices have learnt that the body as the instrument needs to be nurtured and cared for. It needs to be fluid and relaxed, not stiffly held. It needs yoga and massage and attention to all body parts. And in recent years, eurythmists have joined the mimes, dancers, Butoh artists and physical theatre practitioners who have realised that the bodywork has got to be done.

So it was great to see the Biennial offering workshops in contact improvisation, Butoh dance and devised theatre. There were also

masterclasses that gave an opportunity for eurythmists to work with leading dance choreographers such as Jan Zetterberg (former director of Dansens Hus in Stockholm) and Michael de Roo (former director of Nederlands Dans Theater, together with lectures and seminars that explored eurythmy in relation to contemporary performing arts practice. Christopher Markus (of Circle X Arts), in the provocatively titled 'Kill Your Darlings' advised eurythmists to 'eat the map' – take the teachings of Steiner and thoroughly digest, but then be prepared to make something that is your own. He reminded us that Steiner said that the true artist never does what he thinks the audience wants – he does what he feels he has to do.

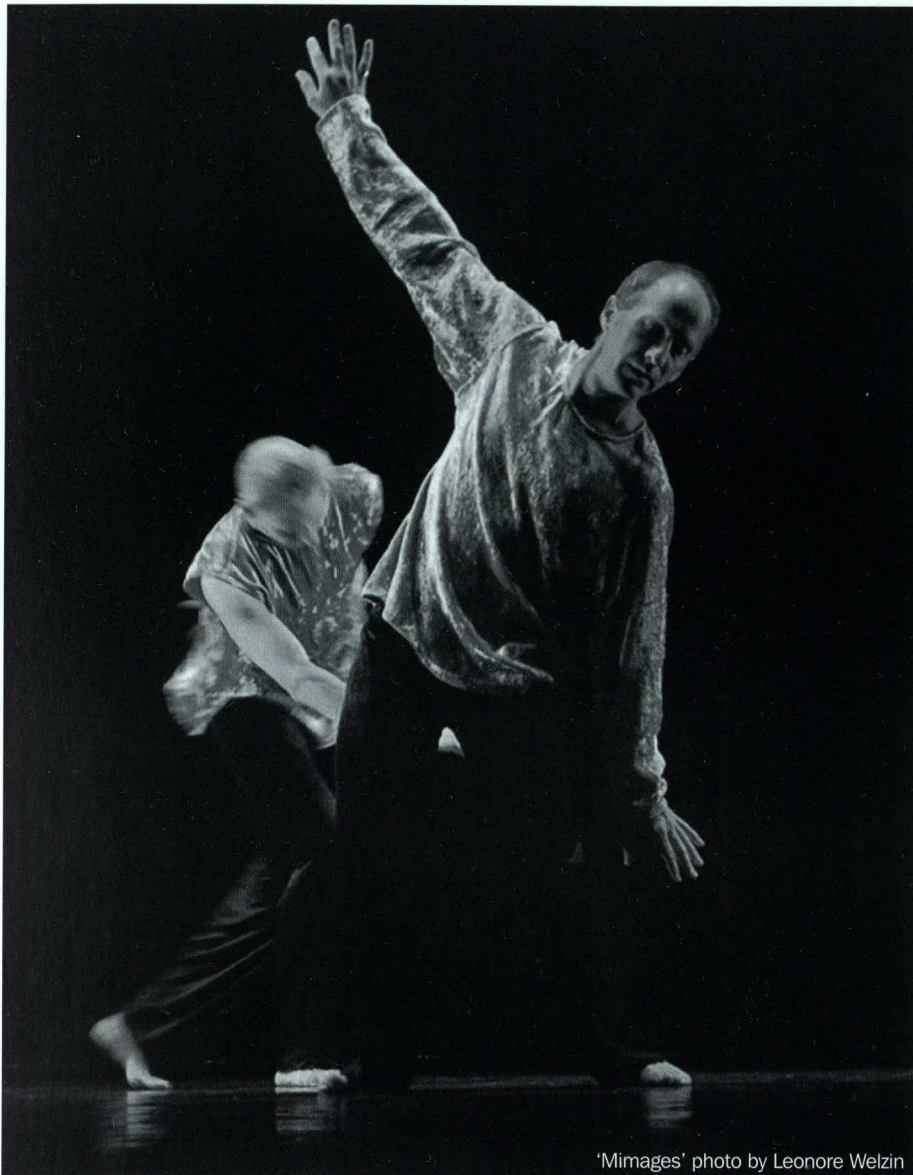
At the beginning of these four days, I am

Eurythmy was developed in the early decades of the 20th century by Rudolf Steiner, who saw it as an art of 'expressive visible gesture' placed between dance and mime

continually asking myself and others whether I am witnessing eurythmy – or is it, rather, eurythmy-informed dance or movement theatre? By the end of the four days, I have dismissed the 'But is it eurythmy?' question as an unnecessary distraction. Bettina Grube, a member of the international Compagnie Maison des Mimages, will not be drawn into this distraction. 'I am a eurythmist. Eurythmy is my practice,' she states. It is this response that sets me on a different train of thought. The relevant question, I realise, is one raised in a discussion session led by dance critic and Butoh practitioner, Leonore Welzin: 'What does a eurythmist choose to do on stage?'

The answer to this is – very many different things... The performance events at the Biennial profile a real diversity of work from contemporary eurythmists. Some are highly experienced performers and choreographers; others are recent graduates of the renowned eurythmy school in Järna – which shares the same site as the Kulturhuset which is hosting the Biennial.

The nearest to a classical eurythmy performance is 'I Begynnelsen', an evocative exploration of the experience of birth, performed beautifully by Charlotte Krantz, with choreography and scenography by Goran Krantz. There are sections with piano, sections with declaimed poetic text and sections of free movement without accompaniment that highlight the intrinsic musicality of the movement. Most exceptionally, there are moments when the space is left uninhabited by performer, a dramatic sequence of colours – mustard, amber, burgundy, fuchsia, jade, peacock – creating a dramaturgy of light. The ►



'Mimages' photo by Leonore Welzin

significance of colour is vital to the piece – inspired by Goethe's colour theory and by Messiaen's interest in the relationship between sound and colour. It is an unashamedly Modernist performance – a work that breaks through the barriers of cultural baggage to reach the essence of universal human experience.

A very different piece is Yuzuru's 'Skymnigen's Trana' a reworking of the Japanese legend of the crane-bird by emerging artist Yoko Pietsch. It is a delightful piece of physical storytelling, suitable for all ages, an integrated and well-constructed piece of visual theatre. The many elements of the performance combine happily: live music played on traditional Japanese instruments, movement work that merges eurythmy with dynamic ensemble dance sequences and martial arts, and strong visual imagery in the scattered red feathers of the bird, the large gold sun that dominates the stage and the blacks, yellows and greens of the chorus's kimonos.

A eurythmist who has broken through to

wider acclaim is Kaya Kitany, seen recently at The Place's Resolution! season with her solo work 'Reasons', directed by Michael de Roo. Three metal sheets hang from wires. Each is inscribed with a text in Spanish, invocations to the spirits of heaven, earth and death. On the floor is a complex hopscotch game – a game of life. It is an autobiographical piece that acknowledges that the realm of dreams, hopes and fantasies is as crucial as the objective facts of a life history. Kaya's movement is fluid and easy, broken with sudden shifts to staccato energy as she leaps up to hammer the metal sheets.

Kaya, Hans and Marianne from Igemon and numerous other bodies (including the energetic Philip Beaven, who is everywhere) can all be found in 'Mimages – a symphony in movement'. This spectacular piece is the jewel in the crown of contemporary eurythmy, featuring an on-stage international ensemble of thirteen dancer-performers, an actor-narrator, two percussionists and an off-stage team that includes producer Ernst

Reepmaker (one of the founders of the International Academy of Living Movement in Vienna), choreographer/director Rob Barendsma and assistant choreographer Alexander Seeger. The space is held from the moment the performance starts to the extraordinary last image – a beautifully enacted 'walk on water' by Melaine MacDonald, who is the epitome of grace and wonderment as she tentatively makes her way from stage back to stage front. Narrator Martin Goldberg is our guide on the journey, which is loosely based around a Dutch sailors' story of bets and bribes and tempestuous travels featuring encounters with serenading sirens. One of the strongest features of the show is the wonderful use of sound. The two percussionists create an enchanting tapestry of tones and rhythms; Goldberg's rich and sonorous voice weaves in and out of the predominantly visual and physical storytelling; there is a wonderful scat-singing cameo from siren extraordinaire Jenny Foster. It is a delight to see such a large ensemble on stage – and particularly one who can seamlessly weave together movement, visual imagery, storytelling and live music in this total theatre of timeless mythologies and archetypes re-invented for the 21st century.

The final performance is a new work by Company de Voto – choreographed and directed by Biennial producer Peter de Voto. It is an ensemble dance-theatre piece that balances drama and humour as it explores one-on-one relationship, group dynamics and individual action in relation to the chorus response. Narrative unfolds, then dissolves in front of our eyes as the ensemble re-groups, and a new hero steps forward from the chorus. We are taken on an emotional journey, yet given freedom to respond, the choreographer-director allowing the space for some work from the audience in completing the images presented. It is a cool and stylish piece, set on stage in conjunction with a flat, painted metal sculpture that seems to change not only colour but texture as light falls upon it.

And so as the Biennial's last event draws to a close, I cannot help thinking that if Rudolf Steiner were alive, he would be here in the front row of the beautiful Kulturhuset theatre, applauding loudly – for, as the man said, 'Art is eternal; its form changes.' ■

Compagnie Maison de Mimages and the International Academy of Living Movement are a pan-European initiative with headquarters in Vienna. Email Ernst Reepmaker on fundevogel@compuserve.com or see www.fundevogel.com. See also www.livingmovement.org. For the work of the Kulturhuset I Ytterjama, including the New Eurythmy Biennial, see www.kulturhuset.nu. All quotes by Rudolf Steiner are from lectures quoted in 'The Arts and their Mission', Anthroposophic Press, New York.

Adelaide, Adelaide

Circus Oz photo by Shane Reid



SOPHIE TRAVERS on Australia's festival of festivals

The Adelaide Fringe is the largest festival of its kind in the southern hemisphere, second only to Edinburgh in the world. The Fringe runs concurrent with the biennial Adelaide Festival in March, the original arts festival in Australia and still widely considered to be the best. In 2002, however, the Festival had a bad year under the direction of visionary American, Peter Sellars. His programme challenged funders, sponsors and the Festival Board beyond their limits and his vision of a democratic, radically accessible festival faltered through lack of support, causing audiences to vote with their feet. They marched en masse to the Fringe, which rose to the challenge with a hugely expanded programme. This year, with new directors for both Festival and Fringe (Stephen Page and Karen Hadfield respectively) there was a degree of conservatism in the Festival, balanced by ebullient confidence on the Fringe. Both festivals reported record ticket sales, with the Fringe in particular benefiting from internet sponsorship to boost online sales.

The Fringe flexed its muscles by running two concurrent late night venues. With its traditional hub the Spiegel tent undergoing repairs, the Fringe Lounge, within the University precinct of venues, took over the cabaret slot in an underwhelming lean-to with plastic chairs. Performers like the shockingly subversive Moira Finucane, (who last year made her mark at London's Duckie, in the appropriately seedy Vauxhall Tavern), struggled to have any impact on the featureless stage. Musical acts, such as the Ennio Morricone Experience, a group of performer/musicians recreating the movie classics with surprising appeal, fared better at holding the attention of the Lounge's

easily distracted audiences.

At the other end of town, the Garden of Unearthly Delights, programmed by a consortium of mainly Melbourne-based presenters, focused upon keeping the crowds circling amongst a corral of sideshow tents, orbited by free street performers. The unlikely hit of the Garden was from Belgium. The Man who Breathes through his Eyes wore a leather G-string and immersed himself in a full bath. This enigmatic performer wowed audiences in his tiny tent by sending streams of bubbles through his eye sockets. On the larger stages, The Happy Sideshow succeeded where more theatrical acts, like Peepolykus's 'Mindbender' failed. The Sideshow's larrikin mix of freakish sword-swallowing and contortions, rave culture-inspired angle-grinding and charming juggling routines made no attempt at coherence and kept its hyped up, beer-drinking audience guessing.

Produced by the Festival, Circus Oz's Big Top dwarfed the Garden, selling out to thrilled family and tourist crowds. The Big, Big Top Show, was the trademark mix of highly polished stunts and slap-dash improvisation. The muscular performers swashbuckled their way through a high-energy set and the BMX riders, rapping and fluorescent costumes kept things up to date.

Circus Oz made another less successful appearance to open the Festival club, The Universal Playground. For two nights only, they presented 'The Blue Show'. With raunchy costumes, a jazzier band but essentially the same acts, the new commission looked under-rehearsed. Uncharacteristically, the performers seemed uncomfortable in their roles and audiences were left cold.

Fortunately, there were plenty of further

distractions in this heavily programmed venue. A rolling menu of Fringe performances preceded the bands and DJs that kept things rocking late into the night. Christine Johnson, an extraordinary operatic performer, was one of the stars, wandering through the crowds in her Cruella de Vil get-up, barking weird songs and emulating native birdsong at alarming volumes. On stage she continued to unsettle her audience, 'singing' the hairstyles of unfortunate onlookers to the schadenfreude of their friends.

In other venues, there was the usual mix of text-based and physical theatre, stand-up comedy and contemporary dance. A couple of successes from the Edinburgh Fringe were incorporated into the Festival programme. Thus, Guy Masterson's '12 Angry Men' and The Imaginary Body's '100' gained profile where others struggled to be noticed in the 88-page Fringe brochure. The surprise hit came in the form of Melbourne-based Nicola Gunn, whose one-woman physical comedy, 'Tyrannous Rex', launched this 24-year-old onto the national stage. Gunn's bewildering epic, inspired by time spent in Scotland and a love of Russian literature – and accompanied by elastic gurning and accomplished mime – was performed with memorable charisma.

As the bulging books close and backs are patted all round, Australian performers and presenters breathe a sigh of relief that Adelaide Fringe and Festival appear to be back on track, co-operating healthily to keep this small South Australian town on the performing arts map of the world. ■

See www.adelaidefringe.com.au.

P CHILD'S A Y

So you think making theatre for children is the easy option? Think again, says **DAVID HARRADINE** of **Fevered Sleep**

Sometime in late 2001, I was sitting in the café at BAC with Sarah Quelch (senior producer at BAC who was then head of BAC's Youth and Local Arts programme) and Sam Butler, who with me is co-artistic director of Fevered Sleep. We were talking about a project we'd just done, and Sarah asked us if we'd ever thought about making work for children. Well, we were honest, and no, we said, we hadn't thought about it. I think you should, Sarah said, Will you come and try out some ideas?

Two and a half years later, and work with, for, and by children is as centrally placed in Fevered Sleep's creative philosophy as the work for adults that we have always done. We have just finished a tour of 'Feast your Eyes', a theatre piece for 4-7 year olds that was the first piece for children to go through BAC's Scratch programme, and which started life as a half-term workshop back in early 2002, the first stage of the process that we had discussed that day in the café. In Summer 2003 we were commissioned by LIFT to make 'The (once in a blue moon) Ball', a midsummer's event for 6-10 year olds that for one night only transformed BAC into a multi-sensory

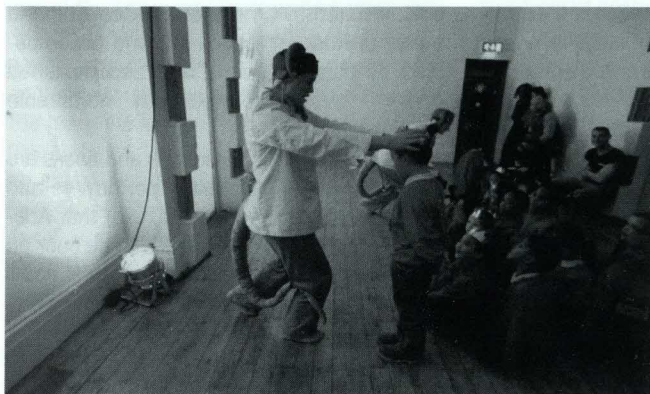
performance installation, complete with horse-racing, dancing, ice sculpture, food and a polar bear.

In both these events, we have wanted to make an absolutely child-centred experience, in which the roles the audience play are central to the structure of the piece. So in 'Feast your Eyes', the children became guests at a banquet; the adults – cast as starving peasants – were not allowed to sit at the table that formed our stage. For 'The (once in a blue moon) Ball' this principle went even further: our young audience were grandees at the ball; their adults were literally put to bed (pyjamas and all) in an adjacent room, but not allowed into the ball itself. And in both pieces, we tried to create a space in which there was an opportunity for chaos, for anarchy, for play. This necessarily means that the event has to exist very much in the moment, as a real and endlessly dynamic dialogue between the work and the audience, in which the unpredictability of children's ideas and children's responses are absolutely central to the piece itself.

So are we now a 'children's theatre company'? No: Fevered Sleep makes work for audiences of all ages: some of which is stu-

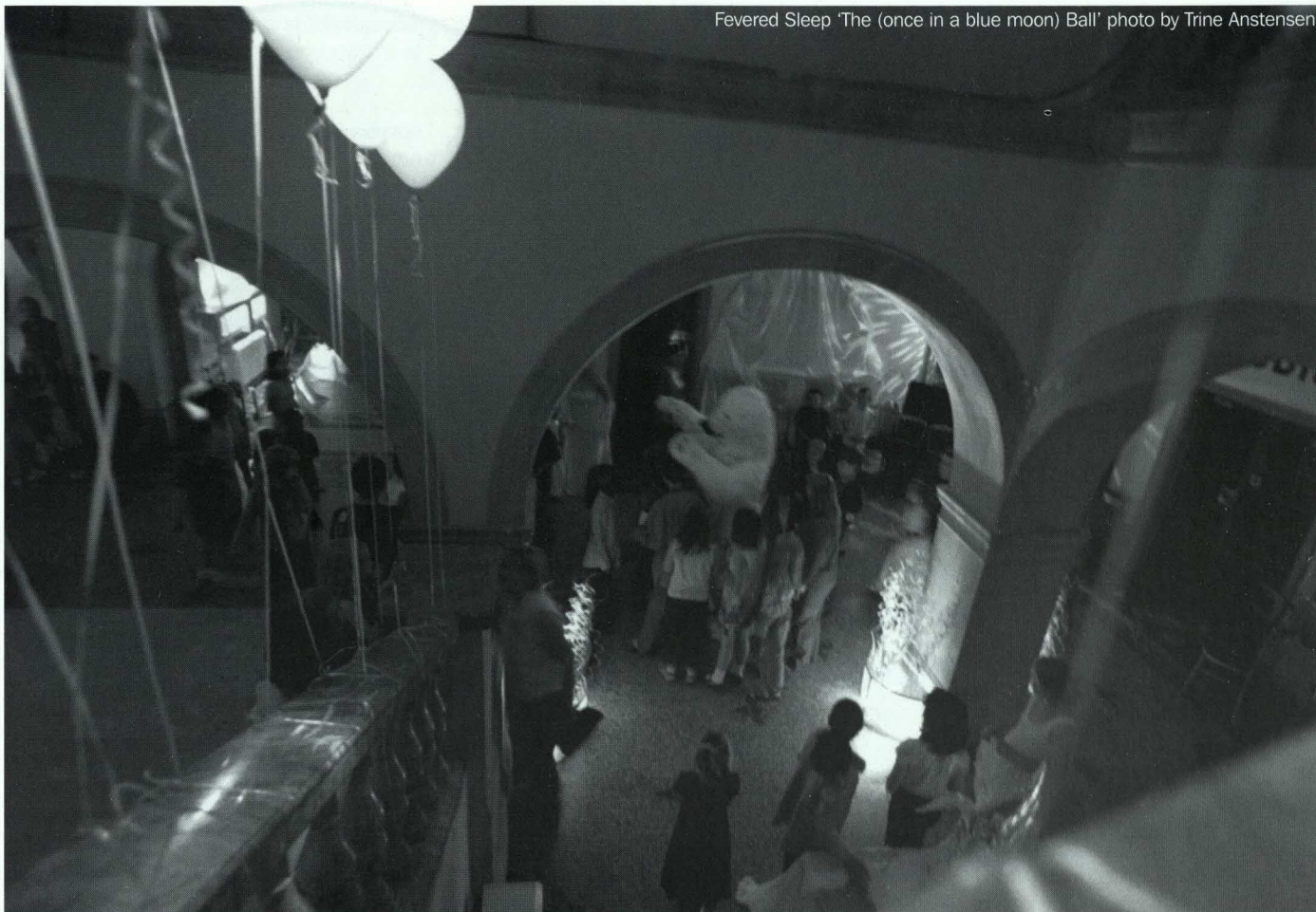
dio-based, some of which is site-specific; some of which is performance, some of which is installation; some of which is for adults, some of which is for children. Our refusal to get pinned down to one way of working is absolutely central to what Fevered Sleep is about. OK, but we do sometimes make 'children's theatre', right? Well, no, I don't think we do. We make theatre. We make performance. We make installation. We try to make work that engages its audiences and which is magpie-like in the ways it brings together music, design, movement, text, ideas. The principle of how we work doesn't change in any way according to who we are making work for.

Of course, children are different from adults, and they experience the world differently from adults, and differently from other children (the difference between a three and a seven year old is phenomenal, much greater than the difference between a thirty and a seventy year old). In approaching work for children, we've had to find ways of acknowledging those differences, at the same time as being true to a passionate belief that we should approach the devising process in exactly the



Fevered Sleep 'Feast Your Eyes'
photos by Trine Anstensen





same way as we do when making work for older people. You can't ignore the fact that children lead different emotional lives; live in different kinds of imaginative worlds; have different boundaries between fiction and reality than the rest of us. But that doesn't mean that we should presume that children's tastes are less sophisticated, less demanding, or that children are less critically rigorous. In fact, I have come to believe – deeply believe – that children are the best audience that one could ever hope for. I also believe that for an artist to learn about his or her own work and own process, working with and for children is one of the best learning experiences you can get. Children don't know 'theatre etiquette'; they aren't polite; they don't think about protecting the feelings of the vulnerable artist: you have to make good work, the best work you can, otherwise they'll talk, they'll roam around, they'll want to leave. They'll leave. Noisily.

So it makes me really frustrated when I speak to people about Fevered Sleep's plans for future projects for children, and get a reaction that implies that we've sold out, that we're compromising our work, that we've taken an easy route. Nobody who's ever genuinely engaged with children, with their desires and their ideas and their criticality, could ever think that they make for an easy audience. If the history of children's theatre is one marked

by work that is under-supported, under-reviewed and under-rigorous, then the future of children's theatre must lie in not only developing the financial and critical frameworks in which the work is made, but also in developing the attitudes of artists and practitioners, and in finding ways in which work for children is absolutely integrated into the mainstream of the work we all do all the time, and not relegated to its margins.

To me, as an artist, how I feel when I'm making new work, and how I feel when I'm around children, are kind of the same. The work I make – that so many of us make – grows absolutely out of play-led processes, in which improvisation and imaginative discovery are at the very heart of the creative journey. There's such a deep connection between

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improvisation in a rehearsal room, when everyone's searching for sense or form in all that chaos, and a child's daily improvisations as they try to make a place in an endlessly bewildering world. There's such a deep connection between the sense of joy in play which comes easily to children – and which the best theatre might nurture in them – and the play that structures such a lot of devising processes. And a child's imaginative world, like theatre, is absolutely the home of metaphor: where objects can be transformed from one thing into another; where nothing need necessarily be as it seems; where appearance and reality need not always line up. Part of the reason why artists end up being artists is because it's a role that allows us to play and to dream and to live in a metaphorical world. For me, there's only a fine line between that world and the world that children inhabit, and in that line is a rich seam of creativity and potential that all artists – at least once – should explore.

So: imagine you're sitting in a café. And I'll ask you: have you ever thought about making work for children? What do you think it will be like? Child's play? There's only one way to find out. I look forward to seeing what you find. ■

David Harradine is co-artistic director of Fevered Sleep. See www.feveredsleep.co.uk.

A Special Relationship

Separate but together...
HELEN PARIS on her own and
Leslie Hill's solo pieces,
'Family Hold Back' and
'Smoking Gun', a double bill
researched with support from
the Live Art Development
Agency. Photos by Hugo
Glendinning



Leslie and I met at the Jezebel season programmed by Lois Keidan at the ICA in 1995 when we were both engaged in making solo performance work. Admiring each other's work we discussed the idea of collaboration and formed our company curious the following year. In a sense we were drawn to the differences in each other's practice – Leslie came from a more text-based practice and I created work from a movement, studio-based place and we were interested in the kinds of work we might create together. The work of curious over the last eight years has spanned live performance, video, film, installation and digital art, and has included collaborations with scientists, artists and computer programmers. Despite meeting through solo practice, since starting curious we had focused on collaborative works and had not presented solo work since 1999. Cue the reappearance of Lois Keidan. After curating Live Art at the ICA, Lois had gone on to establish the Live Art Development Agency and, with co-director Daniel Brine, was running a new funding programme, One to One Bursary Awards. The bursaries were specifically geared towards 'mid career' artists interested in having time and space to focus on their practice, and enabled artists to undertake a course of chosen investigation, which is not geared towards a specific product. In 2002 and 2003, Leslie and I were fortunate to each have one of these awards which supported two very different periods of research.

Over the years I have used what I call body memory as a way to create text, image and movement. I am interested in the pockets of

creativity, forgotten or hidden memory stored within the body. One particular area of investigation for me during the bursary award was underwater work. After a near-drowning experience I had developed a huge fear of being underwater. Part of my bursary programme was to face this fear, enter my own Room 101 by taking a course of scuba diving lessons. By putting it down on paper as part of the bursary application I had made a commitment. Even so I left this to the very end of my programme of research and can still remember distinctly the moment between being on dry land and seeing myself moving inevitably towards the edge of the ocean, weighted down by the heavy diving belt... The moment plays back like a film in freeze frame. The feeling after the underwater experience was one of euphoria. In terms of released body memory the process was slower and revealed itself later, back on dry land, back in the studio.

Meanwhile whilst documenting my underwater experience, Leslie was having her own unsettling experience in the South Pacific. Despite the lush beauty of the surroundings, the island seemed to make her hair stand on end as strange half-remembered echoes of her family's past flickered through her subconscious. She later discovered that this was the buried family knowledge of her grandfather's involvement in Operation Crossroads – the world's largest nuclear bomb explosions on the Bikini Islands 50 years ago. Leslie's research the following year focused on ques-

tions of where we come from and where are we going as a species, particularly in relation to codes of 'intelligence' – DNA and military.

Creatively enriched and informed by these periods of research Leslie and I decided to make two new solo shows, 'Smoking Gun' and 'Family Hold Back'. It is interesting to note that although the bursaries are not geared towards production, many of the artists who have received the award have gone on to make work strongly influenced by their experience. I think the liberation the One to One bursary gives by not stipulating an end product actually works to free the artist and open up creativity.

'Smoking Gun' and 'Family Hold Back' are programmed as a double bill. Although each piece is self-contained and could be presented independently, the pairing of the shows reveals a 'special relationship'. Leslie's 'Smoking Gun' opens the double bill. Charting her heritage from both Cowboys and Indians, Leslie explores a heritage of villainy and heroism. 'Smoking Gun' is essentially about humanness: where we come from, where we're going and why we can't seem to stop killing each other. Through the piece Leslie draws on current genetic research which links us all to a shared ancestry, inviting reflections on notions of 'us' and 'them', victims and perpetrators and migration and survival. The per-

formance questions concepts of 'intelligence' in a world where the principle undertaking of our time is the preparation for war:

Leslie: 'Where are we going? Because with the exponential increases in our capacities, the destination isn't looking too promising if we can't get a grip on ourselves. Now all human societies have had an 'enemy' – a concept of 'us' and 'them'. Where does this tribalism come from? Should we blame the mothers? If it's in the nurture, couldn't we bring ourselves up to know better? Then again, wouldn't it make more sense to just blame the men? A cursory glance at history would suggest that they are hardwired to fight. But we hate to admit that some things about us are genetic, because we hate not being in control. Fate: bad. Free will: good. But these days it looks like we might be able to start getting in there and editing our code. We could really go to town on free will then, couldn't we?'

The lens narrows slowly through the performance as Leslie moves from talking about creation, migration, genealogy and DNA to honing in on the things that link us, that makes us all related, all culpable. The large red, white and blue target is moved from its starting position upstage to its final positioning down stage front and centre, its paint shining sickly under the lights. Standing in front of

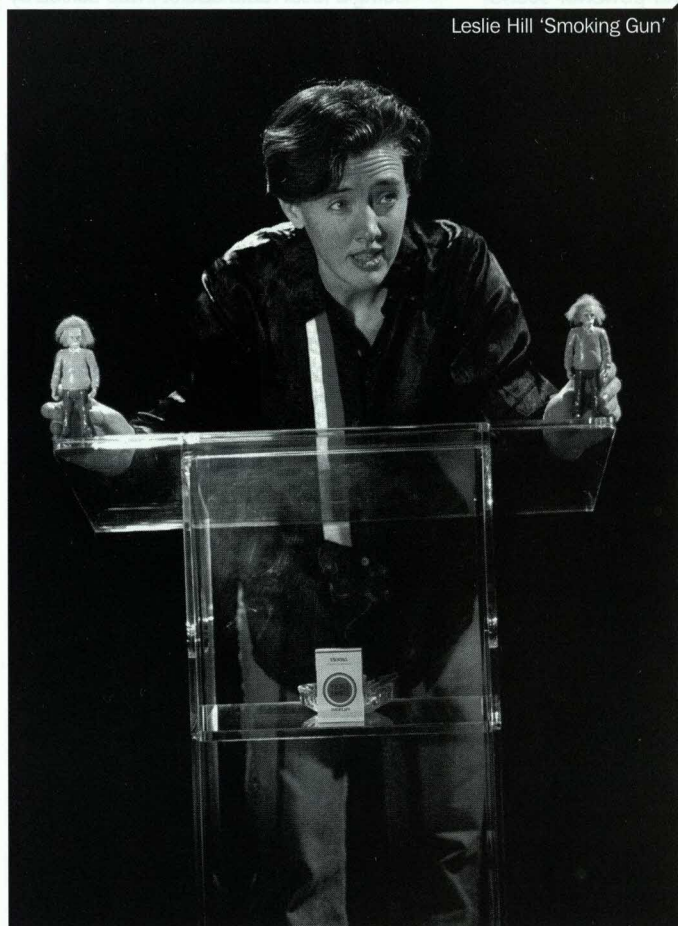
it, her head directly in the bullseye, Leslie takes us up to the present and the brink of the US election. She leaves the stage to the voice-over of George Bush's recent State of the Union Address and his promises that the will of America is the will 'of all mankind'.

After the interval, the target is replaced by the dinner table. It shines white, innocuous, luminescent under the lights as the performance airs the perversities of politeness at the English dinner table where no one mentions politics and everyone knows that Trotterscliffe is pronounced Trosley.

Helen: My Mother is so polite she waits for the whole of the plane to be served before she takes the foil off



Helen Paris 'Family Hold Back'



Leslie Hill 'Smoking Gun'

her square dinner tray and bursts the plastic cutlery free from its cellophane pack. She answers the phone like an RAF radio operator – 'Hello Maidstone 6 4 niner niner echo tango bravo fox-trot'. When guests came to dinner she would mouth the letters 'FHB!' And we would know. To wait. Politely. Till everyone else was served. Family. Hold. Back.

However as the performance unfolds the table is revealed as another, very different target as beneath the damask, codes of Englishness are exposed as weapons of mass destruction, as is the ubiquitous silver service canteen.

Helen: Above the table cutlery is criss-crossing.

Under the table people are slipping dossiers, guns, knives to one another. People are dealing arms, telling lies, taking lives. Boy it's fast moving down here. Above someone says, 'Can I trouble you to pass the peas? Please.'

At the very start of 'Family Hold Back' a mouthful of water is choked discreetly onto the white tablecloth. The neatly folded napkins become gags, stifling speech. The piece comes full circle at the end as the table becomes a place to drown in.

Codes run through both pieces – genetic codes of culpability and hereditary; DNA codes which link us inextricably; codes of secret societies; codes of table manners and the truth of what goes on under the table; codes of behaviour, of recognition. Presented together the two pieces offer other readings; different codes to crack; a route to piece together. US/UK. Two destinations. The connections are personal and elemental. ■

For more information on curious and current international touring schedule see www.placelessness.com or email project manager Cheryl Pierce at Artsadmin: Cheryl@artsadmin.co.uk. 'Family Hold Back' and 'Smoking Gun London' premiere will be at The Drill Hall on 30, 31 October and 6, 7 November 2004 ('Smoking Gun' will be presented with two different endings, pre and post American Presidential election).

INSIDE

Speakeasy's 'The Radio Show'



OUT

KATIE ETHERIDGE reports on the 10th Anniversary Streets of Brighton Showcase – not all of which was in the street!



Ragroof 'Make Do and Mend' Photo by Rupert Mealing

A new dimension was bought to this year's showcase, in the shape of the 'Famous Spiegelent'. An original 1920s travelling dance salon and sideshow cabaret marquee, complete with wooden dancefloor and cosy mirrored booths, it became an interesting backdrop for new work. A halfway house between the streets and traditional indoor theatre, the Spiegelent reflects a long European history of popular performance in temporary spaces, from fairground booths to travelling tented theatres and circuses.

The use of this space was made more interesting by several companies presenting the same work both under canvas and outdoors. An enjoyable example was Speakeasy Theatre's 'The Radio Show'. It's 1912, and three eccentric characters are demonstrating the wonders of wireless communication to the Radiograph Society. A beautifully realised Heath Robinson-esque set and inventive use of sound support this comic re-enactment of an early radio broadcast. Proceedings are led by Paschale Straiton's marvellous bespectacled, twittering Miss Tweedy. The clever time-lapse device during her long technical lecture has great comic potential and could be developed into a longer sequence for more laughs. The audience interaction, however, was a bit clunky, and the ending sudden and downbeat. The piece was less effective outside the atmospheric cocoon of the Spiegelent and lends itself more to a theatrical or site-specific setting (a musty church hall perhaps).

The Spiegelent was at its best when integral to the work. This cannot be better demonstrated than by Ragroof Theatre's 'Make Do and Mend', which transported audiences back in time to a 1940s tea dance. The wooden floor is bought to life by dancers of all ages energetically jiving away to big band music.

Just as the audience is getting comfortable with their cuppas, there is an air raid siren. The dancers scatter, and the story begins as a gawky female narrator spills a tin of buttons onto the floor. From these buttons flow a montage of memories, channelled by the six-strong cast. Local people's reminiscences of living, loving and longing in 1940s Brighton are beautifully evoked through text, movement, gentle comedy and powerful soundscape. Three female performers, gorgeous in pillar box red 40s dresses, seem to totally embody the period as they create exquisite, clear images through elegant gestural choreography. However, the role of the fantastical-kooky button curator needs clarification. As instigator and outsider, when skipping from omniscient narration to first person reminiscing, the character loses its definition and blurs with the others. It is difficult to think how else this genuinely poignant piece could be improved. A live band perhaps? Maybe this will happen in Ragroof's next planned collaboration with older people, a bandstand tour.

Heading outside... Walkabout relief came in the form of the Comic Character Creations Co. whose new 'Hairy Flashers' elicited screams of horrified delight from a gaggle of office girls hanging out of a window and slightly unnerved giggling from passers-by. 'The Sleepwalkers', also new, did not offer such instant gratification as they wandered along zombie-like in their pyjamas, mumbling unconscious nonsense. It was 'The Lost Ramblers', an established piece from the company's repertoire, who claimed the streets as their own. The militant map-wielding walkers gathered delighted followers as they caused compulsive interactive mayhem: climbing over security barriers, sitting down in front of a car and marching into shops.

Looking Glass's new 'Walking Tables' was

a genuine oddity and surreal eye-catcher. From a distance they look like two giant wedding cakes; closer up you see that each is a table groaning with cakes and topped with an elaborate birdcage containing a growling, gurning head. Brave spectators fed cakes to the disembodied damsels through the birdcage doors. It was weird and wonderful enough without the accompanying musicians.

Being a local radio addict I was tickled by the Strangelings' 'Bramble FM' ('Radio so local you can smell it'), which took the form of a live roadshow broadcast from a caravan. Despite a less than ideal siting and not being able to see DJ Maureen inside the caravan, I lost track of time passing the dutchie on the left hand side and discovering that I can in fact blow up balloons. I could have been there all afternoon if it hadn't been brought to my attention that the piece is a three-hour installation.

Other highlights included flattery-to-go from the Complementary Compliments Service, dada dance from The Freds and witnessing several genuine ladies of a certain age watch the wonderful dry-land synchronised swimming team 'Ladies of the Waves' by Doggy Totty.

After tramping the streets for two days it didn't seem to matter whether a piece was under canvas or open sky, walkabout or static – it just had to work in its context. As 'the street' is not a fixed, unchanging place, the best shows interacted with or reflected their environment in some way. Here's hoping the next decade will bring more and more high quality, sensitively sited and perhaps site-specific new work to the Streets of Brighton. ■

Streets of Brighton is produced by Zap Arts – see www.zapuk.com. The Famous Spiegelent website is www.spiegelent.net.

Zip Zap Boing

TOM WILSON takes us on a tour of the Jerwood Circus Award Winners' new work

This is the 7th year the annual Springboard festival has been held at The Circus Space and the fourth year Springboard has been the central platform for the Jerwood Circus Award Winners. These awards have seen a wide variety of work created from traditional to more experimental concepts and I journeyed to see this year's offerings from the three winning companies with delightful memories of 2003's enchanting offering from Gifford's circus and their bijou tent amidst the bustle of Hoxton Square.

This year's programme contained an eclectic approach to circus with all three Jerwood-winning artists/companies – Lindsey Butcher, K-DNK, and Empress Stah – containing established performers, and in some cases previous winners assisting in one guise or another. This meant that much of the work represented a chance for these performers to push into new territories and stretch their investigation of what circus can be.

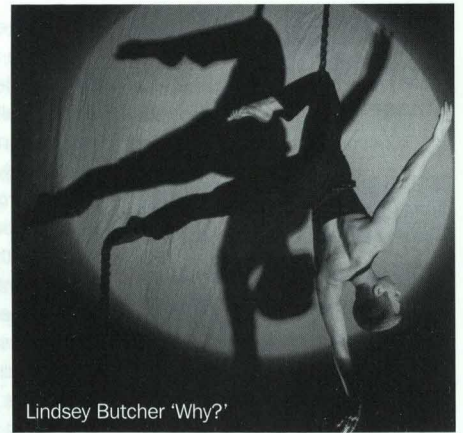
The initial week saw the first piece from new company K-DNK (formed of Sean Gandini, Kati Ylä-Hokkala and John Blanchard) explore the sound made by juggling balls on a variety of surfaces. This aural investigation has been a key feature of Gandini and Ylä-Hokkala's previous work with Gandini Juggling and Jerwood has allowed them to explore 'boings' on a larger scale, primarily off and around a series of giant triangles. In addition, 'No Exit' – made in collaboration with John-Paul Zaccarini – sees an increasing element of theatrical characterisation, built upon the tensions between three characters: a dowdy introvert, a lumbering tramp, and a sleazy extrovert. Moving from scene to scene, the different relationships allow the balls to create new rhythmic patterns; from a soul-destroying mechanised 'production line' (table-based 'thud' juggling) to the competitive bouncing of balls off a variety of three-dimensional structures, including an impressive finale of a frantic four-ball combo rebounded by Blanchard off the interior surfaces of a 10-foot high equilateral triangle. Despite the high degree of skill there is more to K-DNK than engrossingly rhythmic patterns, for they exemplify a carefully measured shift towards a more unified total theatricality for juggling.

In contrast to the success of K-DNK's experimentation was Empress Stah's work in the second week. Billed as 'Swinging from the Chandelier' there was relatively little aerial work in this outwardly adventurous, but ultimately un-engaging solo. The problem is part-

ly the large space in which this was performed, swallowing up much of Empress Stah's energy and characterisation. However, there were significant structural and conceptual problems which bear the brunt of the blame for hamstringing this piece. The narrative was constructed through a series of short sketches that were meant to show the potted history of Dolly Diamante (a decadent performer from the turn of the 20th century). In execution these monologues were disjointed and bland, only achieving momentary humour in a WWII-spy scene. In addition the dynamic of the piece was uneven, and the 'adult' edge of nude performance became a mask for the failing narrative thread.

The greatest tragedy, apart from the ridiculous nude tap dancing, was the extended periods in which Empress Stah mimed to a mix of 20th-century popular songs. Not only was the sound far too loud to make this convincing, but her performance style prevented me getting any sense of irony in the use of this device. Instead, these moments became painful and embarrassing. In fact, the most effective part of this piece was the much-underused giant chandelier, funded by Jerwood and most definitely an example of form over substance.

The final week saw the prime spot taken by £10,000 Jerwood Winner Lindsey Butcher, previewing a section from her new aerial work 'Why?'. Butcher has, for a long time, bridged circus and dance – working with Gandini Juggling, Scarabeus, Virginia Farman's Disco Sister and Siobhan Davis to name a few of her past engagements. This leaves her ideally placed to explore the tensions between the two art forms.



Lindsey Butcher 'Why?'

Emerging from a contemporary dance aesthetic, 'Why?', a duo for single-line harness, had a taut, punchy feel as the dancers spun on and sprang from the vertical face of the upstage wall. Fin Walker's choreography took advantage of the physical difference in her dancers (Butcher and Lee Clayden) to experiment with the possibilities of gravity and suspension in short bursts of arcing movement. The clean, slicing feel of the movement was supported by Ben Maher's pulsing score, evoking a clear sense of the tension in the freedom found hanging 20-foot up on the end of a rope. This effective marriage of the visceral thrill inherent in all aerial work and the studied composure of contemporary dance highlights exactly what is possible with a simple, but rigorous concept.

This year's Jerwood Winners were, in short, a varied mixture of arresting and inventive work, of varying success. What was particularly evident was the benefit gained from the wide-ranging collaboration between established artists from different art forms and styles, something circus can utilise to develop a wider audience base. ■

Springboard took place in April 2004. For further information on the Circus Space's ongoing projects and programmes, including the Jerwood Circus Awards, see www.thecircusspace.co.uk.



K-DNK 'No Exit' photo by Matt Hennem

Momentum

'Tmesis'

Fervent

'I am Blinking'

'Sing O Goddess,' says Homer at the start of his Iliad. In classical drama and poetry, it is to the gods that we look. What do they think of our earthly struggles? What can we learn? In Momentum's 'Tmesis', a White Goddess oversees the struggles of two earthlings who tussle and scrap – they can't live together in harmony yet are bereft when apart, seeking solace from the gods. In the classical 'home' of the gods – to the rear of the stage and elevated – we find our eyes are drawn to the Goddess constantly. How is she responding? What can she be thinking? 'Tmesis' is an unashamedly philosophical piece: inspired by Aristophanes, it investigates Plato's theory of the origin of love – the division of the perfect two-headed eight-limbed creature into the two sexes, each eternally seeking its lost other half. The theme is explored through evocative music, stylised tableaux – and most effectively through the gritty acrobalance skills of the performers. The beauty of body-based circus skills in performance is that they can act as a metaphor – for 'balance', 'conflict', 'unity' or whatever – but they are also simultaneously there before our eyes in visceral, physical reality. The performers are not just 'acting', they are 'being' too. This young company are all graduates of the Hope Street Phys-

ical Theatre School in Liverpool, and have been mentored and directed by Rowan Tolley. This is a carefully crafted and well executed piece of physical performance, thoughtful and refreshingly free of trickery or post-modern irony – and I look forward enthusiastically to seeing where they next take their talents.

Fervent's 'I am Blinking' is experimental theatre in the good old-fashioned sense of the word; a theatre that shakes the bones and assaults the senses. The performance space is delineated by a boundary of strewn feathers. There are two structures made from wood, wire and paper standing in the space; they could be hutches or chicken shacks... We suspect they house something unpleasant. Under the perfectly placed Emergency Exit sign in the corner is a woman with a ball of string for a head. Three performers explode from inside the shacks. There are fights and stylised Capoeira sequences – a web of string criss-crossed across the space tied to wrists and feet – enunciated text that is a touch Gertrude Stein, or even Edith Wharton. Shades of early La Fura in the mutated-animal movement and a touch of Shunt in the attempts to engage every aspect of the space. But Fervent are very much themselves in the fantastic musical soundscape they have created – an extremely interesting mix of recorded sound (found and composed), live electric bass and guitar and an inventive use of mic'd vocal sound with sighs, throaty breaths, guttural clicks and the occasional real word emerging. And in an extraordinary coup de theatre it seemed that Fervent had somehow managed to close the road outside – and import a number of large drills to provide an



Fervent 'I am Blinking' photo by Jen Taylor

Einstürzende Neubaten-style background drone... The dramaturgical possibilities of sound are an under-explored area of theatre practice – and Fervent would be well advised to continue this research for future productions. Not so much 'watch' as 'listen to' this space!

Dorothy Max Prior

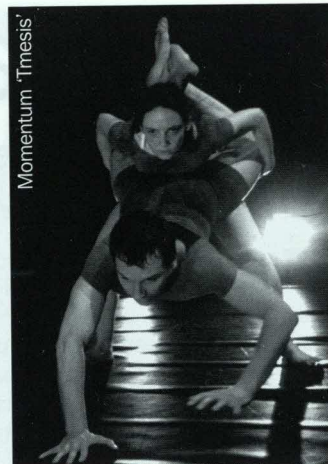
Pleasure Seekers

'Ariadne'

Chris Goode and Theron Schmidt

'His Horses' [REMIX]

Newly-formed Pleasure Seekers presented their first production at the 7th annual Sprint Festival. 'Ariadne' eschews a linear narrative line, revealing instead in the shifting realities of a stranded woman surrounded by wine bottles, suitcases and memories. A meditation on arrested existence, anchored in the volatile present of her eternal daily routine, confronting idealised pasts and thwarted futures. Accompanied by a 1950s soundtrack of picturesque love is a parade of puffy dresses with courtships alongside the silent futile ferocity of a physical desire played out in a series of movement and trapeze sequences. With her lover cast as a lurking shadow, the action's cyclical structure embodies Ariadne's experience. Some might find the violence she cultivates disconcerting, but its emphasis should not be misconstrued as misogynist. Its presence (in the piece and in the theatrical space) articulates an attempt to feel alive in a time and place devoid of 'real' life. The two performers deftly use rope work, slides, minimal text and 'dressing up' costume. Although movement sequences need the sharpness and development woven into the rest of the piece, they are buoyed by their raw physicality. Unfortunately the promising use of cpt's space was marred by floor work being lost to anyone seated beyond the second row. Regardless, there is a sense around this work of open-mindedness that is difficult to encapsulate. It is not abstract work that can mean whatever you want it to. Rather, the piece does not attempt to direct your



involvement or emotions, but includes your experience of the encounter in its disclosure.

'His Horses' [REMIX] was reborn one year after its showing at last year's Sprint. There are moments when its rough emotion allows for affecting contemplation. Schmidt is the lone performer sliding through languid and arduous physical precision. Accounts of being and loss resonate when the work is specific. A fragment finds the performer dressing himself in a soaking shirt, dripping as it hangs off him. He stands before us weighed down and chilled, material sticking to the skin. A dried leaf, snatched from under a table, caressed and cherished and later burnt to ashes. Distinctive paint handprints on the wall blur in a frenzy of names of turn-of-the-century luminaries. However, the specificity that anchors the above fragments in this re-imaging of the piece is not present or consistent enough. In this showing, the coupling of theatre and performance art conventions don't support the piece's rhizomatous structure, as a series of blackouts creates a relationship with the audience that not only distances but also excludes involvement. When Theron lights candles at the end of the piece they are, understandably for practical reasons, fake. Yet it illustrates a lack of oxygen in this particular mix. Ostentation thinned out by the melancholy of its exploration. It is challenging to address live performance and theatre in new ways. The encounter with 'His Horses' [REMIX] seems to approach us but struggles to make connections. It is vibrant when the work has space to develop and amplifies imagination when abandoning generalities and delving into the organic.

Elyssa Livergant

Kabosh Theatre
'Todd! – The Demon Barber Of Fleet Street'

The Helix, DCU, Dublin,
 March 2004

'A Singular Establishment for gents to get the chop!'

The off-stage door opened and the cast burst into harmonised singing: from that moment it was clear that this was a theatrical experience to relish. Appropriate to its subject, the presentation was a Victorian burlesque, stylised in the musical tradition but infused with contemporary physical theatre and dance techniques. All areas of the production were exemplary. The cast proved multi-talented, and their characterisation clean and witty (as was much of the text they inspired during rehearsals, where the piece was created collaboratively).

Equally, their voice work was vigorous, as necessary for a show featuring almost constant singing, and they provided aural colour also, through their use of a violin, cello and double bass. The latter were also employed for visual effect, as director Karl Wallace used theatrical tableaux as a foundation to the piece, drawing together his cast's excellent physical skills (Diane O'Keefe deserves particular mention), the quirky costume design (which recalled the period while also clowning-up appearances), and the excellent set and lighting design. The latter, by Amy Smyth, painted the luscious images with light, picking out the details of costume and characterisation, and leaving us with a rich final image. Music, by Conor

Mitchell, was of course central and attention was paid to every detail, so that silence allowed us to hear the subtle swish underlining the use of red ribbons for the murders. Highly recommended; had it been possible, I would have gone again immediately the following night.

Niamh Lawlor

Ronnie Burkett
Theatre of
Marionettes
'Provenance'

BITE Barbican Pit, London,
 April 2004

It's a stunning set – wooden cabinets and counter painted with Art Nouveau swirls are lit with a changing palette of Maxfield Parrish colours. In pride of place is 'Tender', a painting of a beautiful young man – a naked swan in green stockings, tethered to a tree. The cast of marionettes includes the blue-socking Pity Bean who is obsessed with the painting and its subject, brothel madam Leda, who we encounter at different stages in her life, and Vespa Poopermann, cross-dressing keeper of the brothel. Camp? You bet your rhinestone glasses.

Burkett is an acknowledged master of adult puppetry but also a superb physical performer. Even without the puppets, he could hold his own against any solo performer-storyteller. He narrates, he gives voice to the characters with astonishing instant transformations – and he does things with marionettes you really wouldn't believe. They are totally, eerily alive – sitting on his extended leg, roller-skating, bickering, ballroom dancing. The

story circles around the ongoing intrigue of the provenance of the painting. There's romantic obsession, bad sex, childhood misery in the locker-room, two rapes, a Wizard of Oz style discovery about getting what you want (you have it all along) and some very nice frocks. Like filmmaker Almodovar, Burkett plays with emotional response, throwing the superficial and the life-shatteringly serious together with gay abandon – and gets away with it. 120 mins – no interval and no one can return if they leave. There are no half-measures – you are with him or you go. I came out bruised and exhausted – but, you know, that's life, sex and art for you.

Dorothy Max Prior

James Thierree
'La Veillee Des Abysses'

Easter Delirium, South Bank
 Centre, April 2004

In 'La Veillee Des Abysses' we are invited into a world of surreal scenes acted out with the relentless logic of dreams. The colours are rich but gloomy, the colours of castles and country houses – mahogany, deep blue, slate grey, amber. Time and space melt as we move from one scene to another. We are outside in a storm. We are indoors – where? In a lost domain where eternal childhood comes up sharply against adult sexuality. Archetypal characters people the dreamscape – brides and knights, fools and tricksters. The inanimate objects have magical qualities: an enormous wrought-iron gate is climbed on, around and through – yet opens of its own accord when it wants to; people are swallowed by a sofa; a newspaper attaches itself to a man (Thierree in a wonderful homage to Grandpa Chaplin) who cannot remove it, no matter what.

This surreal circus seems far from the traditional – and yet... we note that each specific trick or skill is given its own turn in the spotlight; the classic circus model reworked. Contortionist Raphaelle Boitel emerges from a suitcase to create a glorious dance of displaced limbs; opera singer Uma Ysamat is an honourable addition to the roll-call of musical clowns with her battle with frock and piano, both out to get her; Brazilian acrobat Thiago Martins confounds expectations with a slow and sensuous capoeira danced

to the lush jazz classic 'Lilac Wine'.

'La Veillee Des Abysses' is a very rare beast in its perfect blend of form and content. It's circus, it's dance, it's theatre – it's poetry in motion.

Dorothy Max Prior

Kneehigh Theatre
'The Wooden Frock'

BAC, London, April 2004

Revelling in the darkness, eroticism, physicality, bawdiness and comedy of the folk tale, Kneehigh's 'The Wooden Frock' is a little-known variation on the Cinderella story. Some aspects of the narrative are familiar: the dead mother as guardian spirit; the impossibly beautiful dress to go to the ball; the prince and his anonymous dancing partner. Other elements of this version are new, such as the proposed incestuous marriage between Mary (the Cinderella of the tale) and her father; her protection by a dress made of wood; her decline from virgin daughter into savage runaway.

Although there are moments in this production when the clarity of the storytelling begins to slip, and narrative leaps occur that aren't entirely made sense of on stage, this is clearly a production by a company that takes joy in the challenge of transforming stories from oral tradition into popular theatre. The moments when the pleasure of the actors in playing with and for a live audience is apparent, and when the visual language of the stage captures the emotional heart of the story – such as when Mary repeats a litany of body parts she cannot see under her wooden cage, or when a wedding dress of stars is lifted above the stage – are full of a profound beauty and joy. The company don't always manage to maintain this, and the scenes when the style shifts away from the self-consciousness of playing to the fiction of acting are weaker than the rest.

This is a production that only occasionally manages to soar, but when it does take flight, it offers something really special. With wonderful performances from Amanda Lawrence and Alex Murdoch, in turn revealing the tragic and comic edges of the tale, and both utterly absorbed in the moment of their roles, 'The Wooden Frock' is a really good piece of theatre that isn't quite the sum of its parts.

David Harradine



Kabosh 'Todd!' photo by Lesley Doyle

**Forced Entertainment
'Bloody Mess'**

Centre Pompidou, Paris,
May 2004

One two, one two. The hairy PA guys drag mic leads across a wide stage occupied by a foul-mouthed cheerleader, a grating rock chick and an actress lying on the ground who's wandered into the wrong show. There's a gorilla, and a couple of sad clowns who turn nasty. The panoramic span also takes in the onstage/backstage detritus of a rock gig: broken chairs, disco 'traffic lights', silver cardboard stars, foil ribbons...

As deconstruction is the game, let's steal a trick from Levi-Strauss – 'Bloody Mess' is to Rock 'n' Roll as 'First Night' is to Variety. Together, they are a twinned investigation into the contract between performer and audience that is 'Theatre'.

In 'First Night', Forced Entertainment asked: What is an audience? Why are you here and what do you want? In 'Bloody Mess' the question is: What is a performer? Why are we here and what do we want? Rock music, an ego-driven performance mode, is the perfect metaphor for this investigation. The question is set up transparently as each of the ten performers confides his or her hopes to the audience... it's downhill from then on and no one gets off lightly. What follows is a get-down-and-get-dirty, thrilling, horrible, fantastic, cathartic, wet and sticky two hours.

This is a 'culmination show' that marks the company's 20-year anniversary.

If you are fan of Forced you'll like the blurring of truth and fiction in biographical detail; the familiar visual

motifs – clown make-up, animal costumes; the 'interview' technique, the confessions and the endless lists. If you've never seen them – this is a good place to start: 'Bloody Mess' has some of the elements of earlier durational performances whilst holding tight to its dramaturgical purpose. If you don't like them – well, stay away. You'll only be disappointed.

Dorothy Max Prior

**Dende Collective
'The Piranha Lounge'**

Lyric Studio, Hammersmith,
March 2004

Dende Collective is a multi-ethnic collective of artists who are continuously looking for different ways of breaking the traditional physical space between performers and audiences. Their last piece, 'Onefourseven', was set in a doctor's waiting room, with audience members becoming patients waiting for their turn. This time we are welcomed into an after-hours club after giving the password to the bouncer. The simple transformation of the Lyric Studio into the Piranha Lounge makes you feel like you have entered a special place.

Sitting around the wooden tables of the Piranha Lounge, you are rapidly drawn into Dende's enchanting world, enveloped in magic surrealism and full of bizarre characters who all have a story to tell.

The stories, by Brazilian writer Murilo Rubiao, unfold with ease in front of our eyes. The piece was devised by the ensemble under the direction of Andre Pink, and scripted by Mark O'Thomas: a woman who falls in love with dragons pleads with her neighbours to leave them alone; the sexy Petunia greets her lovers with

a whip; while the Barbosa, the creature with animal-schizophrenia, fights to become a man.

The international cast of eleven use both text and movement to provide an evening of high-quality entertainment. Music, masks and commedia dell'arte also add to the piece's theatricality. I particularly enjoyed the unusual moment when the actors left the performance space, joined a different group of audience members and then each gave their own rendition of the beginning of Barbosa's story. One of many memorable moments lived in the Piranha Lounge.

Pilar Orti

**Paines Plough/Frantic Assembly/Graeae
'On Blindness'**

Soho Theatre, London,
February 2004

The beginning is a blank canvas, and the end a rich collage of action, visuals and sound. 'On Blindness' is a daring collaboration of three companies, three designers (one also a painter) and a writer, Glyn Cannon. The designer-painter is Julian Crouch, Natasha Chivers produced the dramatic lighting, Nick Powell the sound and original music. Paines Plough (new writing), Frantic Assembly (physical, metaphoric work) and Graeae (Britain's leading company of disabled theatre practitioners) are the three companies. Between them they have much to say and to represent about contemporary mores and attitudes, in love, in art, in sex, in relationships between people with and without disabilities.

The skeleton of the piece is a pair of couples and their mating games. The weaving together of their contemporaneous stories, of the choreography of the couples and their friends, the abundance and confluence in the small space of the expressive means – words, movement, animated paintings – is ambitious and, after a slow start, engaging. The piece is brimming over with ideas and insights, also irony and humour. The language is everyday, even flat when it is not shocking – a contrast with the stylised staging.

The animated back-projections by Crouch are beautiful; the perfor-

mances are in every case sharp and true. The piece was devised, but four directors are credited, Vicky Featherstone and Jenny Sealey and the two players from Frantic Assembly, Steve Hoggett and Scott Graham, whose movement poetry I would have liked more of.

Penny Francis

**Tbilisi Marionette Theatre/ Rezo Gabriadze
'The Autumn of my Springtime'**

BITE, Barbican Pit,
March 2004

This was the second show by the renowned Tbilisi Marionette Theatre (founded by Rezo Gabriadze in 1981) that BITE has hosted. The first – 'The Battle of Stalingrad' – evoked the epic of 'the Great Patriotic War', contrasting the generals' points of view with various animals caught up in the blizzard of History: a pair of star-crossed horses, an ant searching in the sands for her lost child. In this second show the animals are more fantastical and, as its title suggests, the evocation of the Soviet era is more paradoxical – wistful, or perhaps whimsical, even.

The recurring image of electricity pylons on Gabriadze's stage recalls Lenin's famous definition of a Communist twentieth century prevailing over the bourgeois nineteenth century – like the power of electricity over steam. And yet the puppets' stories hark back nostalgically rather than triumphantly heralding the future. Gabriadze's puppets and props often look as though made from the worn and weathered materials of the past – a desk from a flea market, lace cut from an heirloom.

Manipulated with an unplaceable placidity, the puppets give their gestures to stories told, and songs sung, on an accompanying recording of actors' voices. The performance begins and ends with a death – but in between the imagination literally takes flight on the wings of our anarchic hero, a friend of everyone. While the detail of the puppets' movement was equally expressive, the episodic structure of this show, however, seemed less affecting than the more richly layered 'Stalingrad'.

Mischa Twitchin



Forced Entertainment 'Bloody Mess' photo by Hugo Glendinning

Forkbeard Fantasy
'Shooting Shakespeare'



Little Angel Theatre

'Jabberwocky'

Little Angel Theatre, London, April 2004

On the eve of his seventh birthday, Milo dreams of leaving behind a domestic childhood and travelling out into the world to hunt and slay the Jabberwock, a rite of passage that will allow him to become a bigger, braver, bolder boy, no longer trapped in the age of six. Opening with a surreal birthday ritual, 'Jabberwocky' unfolds as a journey that obeys the peculiar, uncanny, impossible logic of the unconscious: two military prawns swim through the forest as though it were the sea; Milo and the Bander-snatch dance a horizontal ballet on the trunks of the trees.

When this production breaks free of the constraints of the narrative that Lewis Carroll's poem suggests, and instead delves into the absurdity and chaos that is its formal heart, it becomes a piece of wondrous simple beauty, a metaphor for the inexplicabilities and dangers of the world of the developing child. Steve Tiplady's staging fully exploits the potential of the puppet theatre stage, and brilliantly deploys the depth of field, and play with scale and perspective, that such a space enables. At times, there is a risk of the stage becoming cluttered, and Peter O'Rourke's design is best when it is pared down and sparse, and although some of the puppets are expressive and rich with character, others – and unfortunately this includes both Milo and the Jabberwocky itself – fail to truly come alive.

The production treads the fine line between pleasure and fear that is characteristic of much children's art, and is vitally supported in its exploration of the dark heart of the

poem by Hannah Marshall's wonderfully evocative and rhythmic score, a bold and urgent combination of live and recorded cello. This thrilling darkness – the darkness of dreams and of nonsense – and some gorgeous visuals, will stay with me for a long time.

David Harradine

Nola Rae

'Exit Napoleon – Pursued by Rabbits'

Komedia, Brighton, March 2004

It starts slowly. In her customary fashion, Nola Rae arrives on stage from the auditorium, a Michelin-man bundle of clothes and blankets with clattering culinary objects dangling from her rabbit-bellied body. She settles herself on stage, then takes her time establishing her buffoonish army-cook clown character, with a great deal of play with her kit-bag contents – which includes the first of many mangy rabbits that will eventually strew the stage. Having played the knapsack contents to the full, she then investigates the tent that is the centrepiece of the stage – Napoleon's tent, we are to assume.

At first it would appear (from the boots sticking out of the end of the bed) that the tent is occupied – but no... Having ascertained that the great dictator (mark 1) isn't actually there – the clown-cook steps into his boots. S/he then discovers the audience – toy soldiers to play with who are mimed orders to turn tricks – stand, sit, applaud. S/he then takes this further – finding a Josephine from the audience to place on a pedestal, dance with and pop into the bed. The Josephine is totally at ease on stage – a testament to Nola Rae's expertise in the management of performer/

audience interaction. Rae says goodbye to her Josephine and retreats further into the tent, and to fantasies of the glories and sorrows of war which reference Chaplin's Great Dictator and evoke recently-seen media images of war and siege.

It's a hard act to pull off – a full-length wordless one-person show. But it's Nola Rae, so it works – it's hard to think of anyone else who could manage such a feat of endurance.

Dorothy Max Prior

Shared Experience

'Gone to Earth'

Gardner Arts Centre, Brighton, March 2004

Written in 1916 at the height – or should that be depth – of the First World War, 'Gone to Earth' is a very strange novel, from a fairly strange author – Mary Webb, who remained neglected until after her death. Imagine a lyrical, feminine, sensitive version of Thomas Hardy.

Shared Experience take one of her more poetic and allegorical novels and turn it into a gripping and intelligent piece of theatre. It's a fairly slight plot – hypersensitive country girl wooed by un-sensual clergyman and sensual blackguard squire. But from the first scene, where Hazel Woodus runs screaming from her father who is slaughtering the pig, Shared Experience run both melodrama and allegory seamlessly together. The squire finds her by the side of the road, while the stamping of shoes by the cast at the back of the stage evokes both horses' hoofs and the tramping of fate.

Throughout the performance, the rest of the cast is behind wide, wrought-iron grilles (that the actors wind in and out of to exit or enter) and their stamped foot chorus underpins and supports the action on the fairly minimal front of stage. Shared Experience go far beyond retelling of the story – they add texture, depth and shading, the result of strong improvisation and physical skills well integrated with the more naturalistic dialogue. It does make a difference that the cast were sharp and confident in their movements, clear and resonant in dialogue, and very comfortable moving from tableau to action. This is where they succeed so

well, using song, dance & movement, taking opportunities from the book itself and melding it all together into a satisfying piece of theatre.

Bill Parslow

Forkbeard Fantasy

'Shooting Shakespeare'

The Lowry, Salford, March 2004

This is a show about pioneers of early cinema who, in an effort to give status to their fledgling art-form, raided the plays of Shakespeare. The fact that early films were silent whilst Shakespeare is anything but seems to have bothered them not one jot.

This incongruous meeting of two seemingly incompatible modes of expression doesn't seem to have bothered Forkbeard Fantasy either – and for that we can be enormously grateful. 'Shooting Shakespeare' is no reverent straightforward telling of early cinema history, but is a springboard for the company to give flight to their imaginations. If you're familiar with Forkbeard shows you will know that there is much interplay with live and filmed characters, that the set does far more than just stand there looking pretty and that the performing is gloriously over the top.

However, the real achievement of this company is that despite these familiar approaches they always ring changes on what they do so that the experience of watching them feels as fresh as a daisy.

So we get a story about how cinema is threatening live theatre and we see how the grand actors of the day were forced to adapt or die. We have a story of squabbling artistic egos as the characters are spurred on to more ludicrous flights of fancy... and just in case you think they've forgotten Shakespeare, they manage to weave together numerous Shakespearean characters in and out of a version of 'The Tempest'.

Best of all was a sequence where they created the set for the play they were to film. It was a truly mind-boggling fusion of live and filmed action. At times it appeared so multi-layered that you didn't know what was what so the only decent thing to do was surrender to the experience.

Great title, great show.

Edward Taylor

**Voodoo Vaudeville
'Cabaret Berlin'**

Komedia, Brighton,
February 2004

There's plenty of New Vaudeville around – mostly pastiche and parody with very little substance – but Voodoo Vaudeville are one step ahead of the game. Years of experience, at their home base at Komedia in Brighton and touring to festivals elsewhere, have gained them a deserved reputation for class acts glued together by a core-team of kooky chorus girls, jazzy-tranny musicians and the decadently debonair Master of Ceremonies Chris Cresswell.

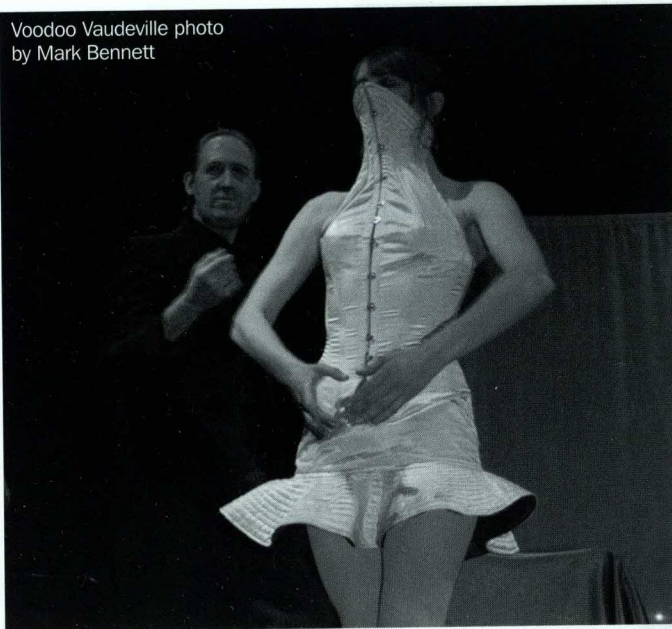
This particular Voodoo was themed around the ever-appealing camp classic 'Cabaret' – an obvious choice but handled well. Helen Kane (whose Marilyn is one of the best female cabaret acts on the circuit) swapped her blonde wig for a sleek black Liza page-boy to play out another well-observed aspect of the feminine naif-clown; choreographer Janine Fletcher and her girls gave us dance routines with plenty of pizzazz, and for the grand finale we were dragged into contemporary political awareness by a rendition of 'Tomorrow Belongs to Me' sung to a background image of Blair and the burning cities of Iraq.

The theme wasn't stretched to breaking point: the speciality acts existed as little worlds unto themselves – and what bizarre worlds.

Mim King moved from mad scarecrow-woman to contortionist extraordinaire, arms almost dislocating as she pulled them around her body, a fiendish grin and knowing wink challenging the audience; clown Danny Schlesinger's musical saw-playing and batty balloon bouncing epitomised the essence of circus – the art of doing something perfectly useless perfectly; Chris Cresswell and Avis Cockbill brought us a corset dance sur pointe that had the perversely surreal beauty of a living Magritte; Swizzleshaker's 'Cocktails for Two' was a lovely barboy-meets-girl routine comprising physical comedy and popular dance; Ruth Glaser gave us a mute rendition of 'Bright Eyes' that was funny, sexy and scary all at the same time.

All this and Baby Warhol too! For those who have not met him: Baby Warhol is a small, naked, nasty pup-

Voodoo Vaudeville photo
by Mark Bennett



pet with the bite of a Barbarella doll – ask him questions and prepare to be humiliated.

Komedia's café-theatre space is the perfect setting for the show – filled to overflowing with tables occupied by wine-swilling Voodoo devotees, waiters easing through the crowds bearing trays of exotic titbits, glasses clinking, cigarette smoke swirling, saxophones singing. Even the intervals are entertaining with the scantily-clad chorus alternating between languorous lolling on chairs and churlish tormenting of the red face/blue face mime artists (and of course tormenting of mime artists should be encouraged at all times). At the end of the show, space is cleared and the audience take to the dance floor as Scissors Sisters pound from the PA.

So a good time was had by all. And it has to be said – others play at vaudeville, but Voodoo Vaudeville play harder. This is the genuine article – classy, arsey, arty entertainment that's hopefully coming to a town near you. So get out your glad rags, paint your face, put on your dancing shoes and join the party.

Dorothy Max Prior

**CanDoCo
'Microphobia' &
'The Human Suite'**

Queen Elizabeth Hall, SBC,
London, March 2004

The first piece, choreographed by Betina Strickler and Luca Silvestrini from Protein Dance, begins with a race

across the stage divided by the leads of microphones, an exciting and interesting take. The piece uses microphones throughout, using the leads as part of the choreography, swiftly passing power from one performer to another as the microphones are deftly worked into the movement, making great use of their amplification possibilities with both movement and voice.

CanDoCo prides itself on being 'a professional dance company specialising in the integration of disabled and non-disabled dancers'. There were, however, many moments throughout the piece where the two performers in wheelchairs, (David Lock and Marc Brew) seemed to be just watching as the able-bodied dancers took the choreography for themselves. This was infuriating to watch. It was almost as if the choreographers did not know how to deal with the possibilities presented to them and consequently ended up just using the wheelchairs for creating speed and energy rather than using the dancers within the wheelchairs. Just one example was the start of a love duo between Marc Brew and Stine Nilsen, both excellent dancers with huge potential. They began what could have been a stunning love duet – Marc completely out of his wheelchair – but it ended all too quickly without developing at all.

Stephen Petronio created the second piece called 'The Human Suite', based on Tartini's The Devil's Sonata punctuated with The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face. It was almost as if the piece had been choreographed by e-mail and learnt

parrot fashion by the performers. Only Chisato Minamimura seemed to me really in the piece; she alone struck me with her presence. I left the theatre with the overriding ego of the very talented 'non-disabled bodied' dancers still with me – and an empty feeling of wasted opportunity.

Emi Slater

**Dot Comedy
Various**

Big in Falkirk, May 2004

Dot Comedy's big plan was to flood a festival site with a variety of infiltrations: over the weekend of the Big in Falkirk festival it was very difficult to escape from their particular brand of inspired nonsense. Not that I'm complaining: in one brief stroll, I encountered the staff of their Mis-Information Tent who warned that an escaped vulture was still in the area; I watched an architectural dig unearth what may have looked like a kid's bicycle but was in fact Neolithic jewellery – and I met two vacuous TV newsdesk reporters who turned the slightest detail in the audience into 'breaking news just coming in.'

Best of all was a new infiltration: 'Why?' This involved a team of ten boffins in white lab coats with bios and pads following the head scientist (performer Stompy who resembled a young Einstein on a bad hair day) like a gaggle of geese. The densely-clumped group launched themselves into the festival area and went at a hell of a lick as Professor Stompy threw out formulae, theory and conjecture. At times the group would shudder to a halt and the professor would single out a member of the public and invite questioning: 'Why are children small?'; 'Why has that man got a tattoo?' and so on. The answers given display Stompy's quick wit and ability to insult people and get away with it. When the questioning is exhausted the group quickly move on. In a busy festival site the sheer energy of the image demands attention.

Dot Comedy stand out in their ability to come up with fresh situations to showcase their improvisational, visual and verbal talents. I also like the eye for a bigger effect – so much walkabout gets lost in a crowd. I hope other promoters are adventurous enough to book them en masse.

Edward Taylor

Benji Reid 'The Pugilist'

Hoxton Hall, London,
April 2004

'The Pugilist' is one piece in a solo triple bill by body-popper and performance artist Benji Reid. Benji presents Sweet Boy Barry, a boxer whose career we follow, from early days in the playing field against a local bully to the latter end of his career, losing his fights and his popularity. In juxtaposition with Barry's life is that of Gofer, Barry's second in the boxing ring and observer to his rise and fall. Where Sweet Boy Barry has floundered, Gofer has gained in insight and understanding.

The physicality of this piece is quite straightforward; Barry's movement is strong and aggressive as opposed to Gofer's which is awkward and unconfident; his dialogue at first gormless becomes more assured as he establishes himself in the boxing world. Barry – once strong, silent and determined – becomes arrogant and careless. This text-led piece is played with a mix of humour and predictable solemnity. It doesn't include the body-popping technique for which Reid is known, but some simple and precise mime.

The accompanying pieces in the triple-bill are 'The Holiday', a piece about escapism which draws on Reid's body popping and performance poetry ability – and 'Style 4 Free', a free-form improvisational piece in which Reid performs against a bass guitar improv, giving a relaxed commentary about the inspiration of his work, referencing popular culture and attempting to incorporate aspects of the space in his piece. But in this short segment he brings nothing particularly surprising or new to the audience. His improvisational process seemed to lack the impetus to make it of interest.

Akua Obeng-Frimpong

Platform 4 'The Visitation of Mr Collioni'

Latchmere Theatre, London,
April 2004

There is much to enjoy in this show – too much. An Italian café is run by a

lonely oddball who has assembled a contraption to listen to the speech of angels, but he never realises that right under his nose is a real live one – the waitress at the café. Her secret identity and his suspicion provide an enlivening tension. It is played out sensitively and precisely by the two actors who are the show's biggest asset: Sarah Thom and Colin Carmichael. They play multiple roles; Sarah makes the writing shine its brightest when she speaks the poetic language of angels (although elsewhere the beautiful writing seems to slow the pace), and Colin is as enjoyable in female guise (a bra shop owner) as male (the vicar).

The show is packed with imaginative ideas and whimsical imagery, from the coffee cups to a collapsing church. There is enough material for several shows here – the fact the writer started with three stories means that the plot takes confusing detours. By the end, the distance between the audience and the action has stretched beyond the point of contact – suddenly we are in Venice and someone is having a baby up a tree!? We are content with less, and the multimedia input is extraneous.

A great mixture of creative energies have collaborated to produce this show. They just need one last person to be in on the whole creation – someone entirely innocent, to check it all comes across.

Laura Eades

Theatre Alibi 'One in a Million'

Komedia, Brighton,
March 2004

Theatre Alibi move easily from productions aimed principally at children to work for adult audiences. Following a national tour and West End run with 'Why the Whales Came' (based on the children's modern classic by Michael Morpurgo), Alibi's latest work 'One in a Million' (written by company veteran Daniel Jamieson) is a quirky and idiosyncratic tale of buskers, gangsters, shopgirls, romantic assignments and sexual secrets. Circomedia graduate Tom Wainwright and Alibi regular Jordan Whyte are perfectly cast as the kooky couple who – in various guises and manifestations – meet, part and meet again

to eventually find true happiness.

Witty writing, sharp physical performance, a beautiful 'frame' set that makes shop windows or apartment walls slide into place in the wink of an eye, and a clever use of diageic music (in the busker's recurring appearances singing to a beat-box) are just some of the reasons that this is such a gem of a show. I loved every minute, so it is hard to pick out highlights – but a scene that has stuck in my head is an on-set row in a kitchen augmented by an off-set/on-stage smashing of plates into a bucket.

The quality of work emerging from Alibi places this highly inventive theatre company in a deserved position of success with theatre audiences of all ages.

Dorothy Max Prior

Shifting Sands 'Romeo and Juliet'

The Hawth, Crawley,
February 2004

Shakespeare's Globe 'Romeo and Juliet'

Shakespeare's Globe,
London, May 2004

Who said comedy is tragedy plus time? Maybe ol' Will himself for all I know. What I do know, though, is that the difference between the two is no more than the breadth of a hair from fair Juliet's head. This was demonstrated most clearly when I had the pleasure of escorting a group of 14-

year-olds to see two versions of 'Romeo and Juliet'.

The 'comic' one first... Shifting Sands' theatre-clown interpretation used slapstick, physical comedy, and a deconstruction of the text that – yes! – gave us back its structure, meaning, clarity. I thought I knew this play – but I heard lines for the first time; I really, truly understood the feelings behind and between those lines; I felt and I empathised. Take the balcony scene. Juliet (the perfectly imperfect Paschale Straiton) is precariously perched on top of a stepladder. She holds a plank of wood that she peeks above or tries to peer around. She's never quite sure of her footing; the boundaries are shifting for her all the time; she's about to fall. It's funny – but we hold our breath for her too. Enter Romeo – and those famous words are transposed from one to the other: mingled, shared, exchanged...

After all the shenanigans, the death scene is played straight – in low lighting, calmly and sincerely. There is not a dry eye in the house. Compare and contrast: Shakespeare's Globe present a competent-enough 'Romeo and Juliet' – but it's dead as a dodo. The familiar words roll by. Nothing wakes us up, nothing startles us into reflection. Most of the show is adequate – but the death scene is a farce. A ranting Romeo straddles Juliet like a lovelorn necrophiliac. The 14-year-olds try not to laugh. 'I had to put my hat in my mouth,' says one afterwards. 'Funny isn't it,' says another, 'that the funny version was sadder than the serious one.' Well yes, it's a funny old world.

Dorothy Max Prior



Theatre Alibi 'One in a Million'

'Hidden Territories – the Theatre of Gardzienice'

*Włodzimierz Staniewski/Alison Hodge
Routledge/Arts Archives*

A print and CD-Rom package documenting the work of the Theatre of Gardzienice. The CDR contains video footage of this legendary Polish company – including productions, interviews and documentation of their 'expeditions' to Polish villages which breached the boundary between life and theatre. The book is drawn from discussions between Alison Hodge and Gardzienice's artistic director Staniewski. It explores the origins and practices of their 'ethno-oratorio' song theatre and environmental performance. Staniewski shares with his mentor Grotowski a belief in a theatre that returns to its origins in ritual and religion. Seeing theatre and daily life as an integrated whole practice, he (like others before him such as Jacques Copeau) eschews the 'administrative theatre' of the cities for the countryside – a 'new natural environment of theatre', and can be placed with Schechner, Barba and Brook at the forefront of an all-embracing internationalist theatre rooted in the environment in which it is created.

'Disability and Contemporary Performance – Bodies on Edge'

Petra Kuppers; Routledge

Admirably refusing to open with any sort of definition of 'disability', this book aims to investigate where cultural knowledge about disability leaves off and the lived experience of difference begins. Six sections look at various aspects of

disability and performance, including the oppression of disabled performers and the freak show (with a focus on Mat Fraser's 'Sealboy'); deconstructing images and performing disability (referencing CandoCo and Bill Shannon amongst others); outsider energies (which looks at 'alien bodies' and 'anti-theatre) and a chapter called 'New Technologies of Embodiment – Cyborgs and Websurfers' that looks at disability in relation to constructed bodies (blind man plus stick being an interesting given example of 'cyborg') and the embodied nature of vision. With its exploration of a broader context of the human body in performance, together with its focus on the contemporary practices of disabled artists, this is a book that should be read by anyone working in performance.

'Play-Acting – A Guide to Theatre Workshops'

Luke Dixon; Methuen

Very much what it says on the tin: a playful guide to devised theatre-making by Luke Dixon – director, teacher and artistic director of both Theatre Nomad and the International Workshop Festival. It's in two parts: 'Body and Voice' makes reference to anatomy, physiology and reflexology and looks at rhythm and movement games and starting points for devising based on mostly physical impulses. 'Heart and Soul' explores the emotional starting points for theatre: it starts with senses and chakras and moves on to tango and transformations – making suggestions for explorations on gender, archetypes, mirrors and dreamtime. With short chapters that each focus

on one idea for working, simply developed, this would be a great book for performing arts students or for teachers or fledgling directors new to devising – and therefore would make a very useful addition to performing arts libraries.

'The Dead Good Funerals Book'

Sue Gill/John Fox

Engineers of the Imagination (revised edition)
Welfare State International, renowned for their large-scale community celebrations and site-specific shows, have in recent years created intimate rituals for family events such as marriage, the naming of children and funerals. Dead Good Funerals provides solid, responsible information about how to organise a suitable ceremony.

'Safety Guidance – for street arts, carnival, processions and large-scale performances'

ISAN/David Bilton et al

www.streetartsnetwork.org.uk

The Independent Street Arts Network have come up trumps with this new safety guide. The beautiful colour photos (mostly by Paul Herrmann) of contemporary street performances invite the reader in; the text is well-written and clearly laid out, with crucial information placed into clearly-defined bullet points, notated with references to other documents or publications to go for further information where necessary. This is an essential guide for anyone making work in public spaces. See www.sam-arts.co.uk to order.

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total theatre

www.totaltheatre.org.uk

network NEWS

The future and Total Theatre Network

Acting director Felicity Hall writes: This is a very exciting time for Total Theatre Network as, on our 20th birthday anniversary, we embark on a period of organisational change. We will be looking at what the organisation does and how it can develop the way in which it celebrates physical and visual theatre more effectively. As part of this process we are including a short questionnaire in the mailout of this issue of Total Theatre Magazine. Please do fill it in and send it back to us; alternatively a copy can be found on the website for downloading and emailing. Your comments are vitally important to this process. We will also be carrying out telephone research with a number of members to look at more detailed questions. If you would like to contribute in more detail on the ways in which Total Theatre Network should be changing, or if you have any questions about this process, please do email me at felicity@totaltheatre.org.uk or phone me on 0207 7297944.

Total Theatre Salon and 20th birthday party in Edinburgh

As part of the changes at Total Theatre Network, there will be no Total Theatre Awards in Edinburgh in 2004. Instead we will be presenting the inaugural Total Theatre Salon followed by the 20th birthday celebrations for Total Theatre Network. The Salon, generously sponsored by University College Winchester (formerly King Alfred's) will provide an informal opportunity to debate and discuss the notion of total theatre (the artform) and what its boundaries are within performance as a whole and to reflect on the past, present and future of Total Theatre (the organisation). This will be a ticketed event, open to all and free to TTN members. The Salon will take place on Monday 23 August, 6.30-8.30pm, at the Outhouse Cafe Bar, 12a Broughton Street Lane, Edinburgh. Email admin@totaltheatre.org.uk to book.

The party will provide the opportunity for Total

Theatre Network members and friends to celebrate the 20 years of Total Theatre in true Edinburgh Fringe Festival fashion. It will take also place at the Outhouse Cafe Bar, 8.30 till late.

TTN Membership and the Website

We are currently updating the Total Theatre website (at www.totaltheatre.org.uk). In the very near future members will be able to register, change contact details and pay membership fees online in a members-only part of the website. Members will also be able to post listings on a noticeboard section which can be read by any visitors to the site. You will receive notification and information about all the changes as soon as the site is ready. In the meantime, please continue to post payments and contact detail changes to the office for processing.

Total Theatre Explores

The consultation and research section of Total Theatre Explores, a Creative Renewal Project funded through the European Union Social Fund, continues with discussions with a variety of individual artists. In addition we will be hosting a Total Theatre Talks event at the 'Interdisciplinary Landscapes: Postfeminist Practices in the Arts' Conference at University College Northampton in September 2004. If you are interested in contributing to the Total Theatre Explores project, which aims to address gender and performance with particular reference to the experiences and needs of female practitioners, please contact Becca Gill at becca@totaltheatre.org.uk.

Total Theatre Talks – Street Inspiration at x.trax

The second Total Theatre Talks event of 2004 was a collaboration with x.trax and took place on Saturday 5 June during the x.trax street arts showcase which was held in Manchester on 4-

6 June. Liz Pugh of Walk the Plank, Jim Parris of Nzi Dada and Roger Hartley of the Bureau of Silly Ideas were on the panel to speak about what inspired them to make work in the street. The talk included a discussion from the floor on the subject, and was stimulating and well attended by leading street arts practitioners, promoters and delegates from the UK and abroad. A previous Total Theatre Talk at x.trax led to the setting up of the 'Revolution or Restoration?' User's Guide symposium and publication on Street Arts which has proved to be such a valuable resource for the sector, and we are very pleased to be continuing our fruitful collaboration with x.trax. See www.xtrax.co.uk for full details of artists and delegates attending the event – and for their future plans which will include the decibel showcase 2005.

Drawn to Perform – a symposium at visions 2004

Visions, University College, Winchester and Total Theatre Network present Drawn to Perform, a symposium to explore visual springboards for visual and performing artists. This will be the opening event for visions, the biennial international festival of visual performance, and will be held on Thursday 21 October 2004 (9.30am – 5pm) at University of Brighton, Grand Parade, Brighton. Drawn to Perform will bring together artists, theatre practitioners, funders and academics, producers, promoters, and students to explore visual sources of inspiration for use in contemporary performance work. Speakers will include: Rose English, Liz Aggiss (Divas), David Harradine (Fevered Sleep) Tristan Sharps (dream think speak), John Fox (Welfare State International), Edward Taylor (Whalley Range All Stars) and Penny Saunders (Forkbeard Fantasy). Special offer! Standard fee is £40; reduced rate for artists/students is £20 – but it is just £15 to Total Theatre Network Members if booked by 1 September! To book please contact visions on 01273 643194 or email visions.fest@brighton.ac.uk. See www.visions-festival.org.uk for full details.

FUNDING NEWS

Calling Artists in East Anglia

Artists making work or thinking of making work in East Anglia (Herts, Beds, Essex, Cambs, Norfolk, Suffolk): ESCALATOR is a new scheme to find and fund artists making performance work in the eastern region. For more info call Anthony Roberts at Colchester Arts Centre, 01206 500900 or 07814 695598.

British Council

The British Council is the UK's agency for international cultural relations. Their general aims are to advocate the best of contemporary UK innovation, creativity and diversity in high-impact projects overseas and to foster strong UK-international links. They are not a funding body as such; however some financial and/or logistical support is occasionally available to UK-based arts projects taking place overseas. See www.britishcouncil.org/arts. Email theatredance@britishcouncil.org.

MANAGEMENT

CB Projects

CB Projects has become purely a producing house, in order to focus and concentrate their work entirely on 5-6 companies/projects. They are therefore not offering tour booking and/or marketing/management services. Chenine Bhatena will continue to work with Leila Jancovich on developing an annual Circulation programme. Key clients are Contemporary Clowning Projects, Company FZ, Gravity & Levity, Jade and Legs On The Wall. www.cbprojects.co.uk

ITC News

The Independent Theatre Council (ITC) has been running training courses for the performing arts sector for twenty years. With a philosophy based on 'good art thrives on good management', ITC provides a range of training services to promote this learning. The Training Programme for the year (from April 2004 to March 2005) is now ready. The annual brochure in printed form is available by contacting training@itc-arts.org or 020 7403 6698. Full details and the booking form are also available on the website: www.itc-arts.org.

ITC/Equity Street Arts Contract

The Independent Theatre Council (ITC) and Equity have launched their new agreement for the employment of Street Artists. Street Arts is a burgeoning area and many Street Arts companies had specific ways of working which the existing ITC/Equity Agreement for Performers and Stage Managers did not always address. Both Equity and the ITC consulted their members working in this sector and jointly drew up new Agreements - still in draft form, but effectively being given a year's trial. More information from Jackie Elliman at ITC for Companies and Michael Day at Equity for Artists. Email mday@equity.org.uk or phone 020 7670 0235.

Missing Link

The Production Company for Circus Performers and Entertainment Solutions. From Aerialists to Acrobats, Clowns to Contortionists, Mime Artists to Magicians, they provide for your entertainment needs. See www.circusperformers.com

OPPORTUNITIES

Run away to Cirque du Soleil!

Cirque du Soleil Auditions in Edinburgh 29-31 August 2004. Cirque are seeking not only circus artists but also physical actors, mime artists, street artists and other performers with unique acts or exceptional skills for new Cirque du Soleil ventures 2004-2006. Invitations to audition will be sent out after demo tapes have been evaluated. For full details of

how to apply, see casting.cirquedusoleil.com

Sound Designer for Hire!

Freelance sound designer (with experience of technical and production management, lighting design and video projection) Paul Bull has returned to the South-West after 30 years in exile up-the-line. He is looking to establish new links with companies and projects based in the South-West. Paul's new contact details are: Paul Bull, 18 Kinnerton Way, Exwick, Exeter EX4 2PR. Phone: 01392 275886/07774 223314.

Trainee wanted for Summer Youth Project

Youth Music Theatre UK is looking for a trainee to work on a summer youth project 16-21 August in Durham. Travel, food and accommodation will be paid for, but no fee. They are looking for an enthusiastic person interested in working with young people and learning from experienced practitioners. The project will involve clowning and buffon. For more info please see: www.youth-music-theatre.org.uk. If interested please email kathburlinson@youth-music-theatre.org.uk and attach a CV.

Youth Theatre seeks theatre practitioners

If there are any practitioners who specialise in physical theatre and live in the Havant area and would be interested in delivering a workshop for the Physical Theatre programme of events for Act One Youth Theatre from Sept-Dec please phone 02392 480113 or email damon@havantartsactive.

Festival of Theatre for Young Audiences

Inspired by Take Off and other festivals that profile work for young audiences, Travelling Light Theatre Company are planning Bristol's first Festival of Theatre for Young Audiences, which they are co-producing with their partner QEH Theatre. It will take place in July 2005.

Research help - Devising processes and practitioner methodologies

Researcher (PhD) seeks practitioners willing to talk about their methodologies, working patterns, and goals. Is your practice informed by particular approaches to training or shaped by evolving company methods? How do your practices emerge differently to accommodate each new project? What do you see as the role of 'text' in devising? How do spectator responses feed back into your practice? How have your approaches developed over time? If you would be prepared to discuss your work or perhaps just exchange emails, I would be delighted to hear from you. Contact Jayne on: jaynerichards@blueyonder.co.uk.

Aerial Dancers wanted

Expressive Feat Productions will be touring their shows 'Looks Deceiving' and 'Does My Bum Look Big in This' in autumn 2004 and spring 2005 and are looking for two new contemporary aerial dancers to join the company. The shows take diverse looks at women and clothing. Performers should have a good performance track record ideally covering aerial, dance and theatre work. Rehearsals will be from 13 September with the show opening at Jackson's Lane on 23 September; final tour date presently 16 October. Anyone interested should contact artistic director Tina Carter for more details on 01227 280399 or exfeat@globalnet.co.uk.

Theatres of Science: Crossovers and Confluences

Call for Papers and Workshops for conference 8-11 September 2004. This conference will address some of the many exciting ideas and practices taking place at the intersections between drama/theatre and science. The

conference is aimed at academics, artists, scientists, teachers, researchers, writers, performers and educationalists. For further info on the focus of papers and workshops please contact dramasci@glam.ac.uk.

Mimbre Space Share

Acrobatic company mimbre are currently looking for other small-scale theatre or art companies based in North or East London, who would be interested in sharing an office space. Please contact Silvia on 07814 650 917 or info@mimbre.co.uk.

RESOURCES

Live Art Development Agency

Houses a variety of video and photographic documentation and a range of publications from exhibition and festival catalogues to critical commentaries and artist's publications. See website for artists materials they have for sale, with books and DVDs/CD-ROMs by artists such as: Tehching Hsieh, Blast Theory, Forced Entertainment, Joshua Sofaer and La Ribot. Contact: info@thisisliveart.co.uk or 020 7033 0275 or see www.thisisliveart.co.uk.

WEBSITES

www.on-the-move.org

Just-launched website dedicated to information about international activities, projects and their funding - intended for artists and performing arts professionals from the European Union and its surrounding countries.

www.brinkofdistinction.co.uk

Brink of Distinction's new website with information on all our acts, lots of images, video and photo gallery.

www.newworknetwork.org.uk

For the Networked Bodies new online project awards scheme.

www.eventus.org.uk

For anyone delivering (or wanting to deliver) regeneration projects through creative activity.

www.awardsforall.org.uk

For the latest on this small-scale lottery grants scheme for arts, sports heritage and community projects.

PERFORMANCES

Circus Space Cabaret

13 AUGUST

Doors open 7pm, show starts 8pm. Tickets from £10 to £20. John-Paul Zaccarini, rope idol; Tujo, acrobatic balancing; Thomas and Markus Furtner, diablo and devilstick from Germany; Bibi and Bichu, fast club passing; Too High, aerial romance from Girisho and Raquel. NB The Cabaret will be ongoing throughout autumn 04 and spring 05.

Circus Starr EDINBURGH FESTIVAL FRINGE BIG TOP

Circus Starr's special Edinburgh Fringe 2004 Big Top production. Top-flight acrobatics, breathtaking balancing and side-splitting comedy. Featuring the world's smallest stuntman, Trevor Steel, and the incomparable classic comedy of Peter Sandow & Company. High-speed acrobatic excitement from the Julios Troupe of Bulgaria and Opresco from Romania. Runs 7 August to 4 September.

Company FZ 'THROAT'

Contact CB Projects on 020 7787 7869, info@cbprojects.co.uk www.companyfz.com www.cbprojects.co.uk

JULY

1-19 Spoletto Festival, Italy

AUGUST

19-30 Brasil Circus Festival TBC

SEPTEMBER

9-12 Tarrega, Spain TBC
15 21 South Street, Reading
16 Theatre Festival Hambach
17 Windsor Fringe Festival
29 Wakefield Arts Centre TBC

OCTOBER

1 Theatre Royal Bury St Edmunds
12-13 BAC, London
15 Trinity Theatre, Tunbridge Wells
20 Unity Theatre, Liverpool
21-23 Nuffield Theatre, Southampton
28-30 Circus Space cabarets TBC

NOVEMBER

1 Riverside Theatre, Coleraine, NI
3 The Arena, Wolverhampton
4 Weymouth College Theatre TBC
w/c 8 Montpelier, France TBC
w/c 15 NovArt Fest, Bordeaux/Dieppe TBC
23 Lakeside Theatre, Nottingham
24/25 Melton Theatre, Melton Mowbray

Faceless

'LAND HO!'

JULY

15 Grimsby Arts Festival
17 Grimsby
21 Kingussie
22 Nairn
23 Inverness
24 Dundee
31 Traquair Fair

AUGUST

7 Rhythms of the City Leeds

GREEN MAN, WHEELIE BINS, SHORT SHIPS & BUREAUCRATS

(Walkabouts)

JULY

6 Rhythms of the City Leeds
11 Pontefract Liquorice Festival
14 Grimsby Arts Festival
18 Lytham St Annes
29 Grimsby
30-31 Linz Austria

Falsa Imago 'DAMAGED BY MIRACLES'

AUGUST

Mimos Festival Perigueux (France)
Edinburgh Fringe Festival

OCTOBER

International Mime Festival of Belgium
International Mime Festival of Reus (Spain)

High Spin

DOUBLE-BILL

'Who Dunnit?' choreographed by Maxine Doyle
'Sleepwalker' created by Miriam King

JULY

9-10 The Corn Exchange, Brighton
More dates in autumn 04 and spring 05 tbc

Mimbre

JULY

Winchester Hat Fair - 'sprung'

Out There, Bracknell – 'Trip-tic'
Warsop Carnival – 'Trip-tic'
Womad Festival, Reading – 'sprung'
Bracknell – 'sprung'
Needham Market – 'Trip-tic'
Stockton International Riverside Festival – 'sprung'

AUGUST

Stockton International Riverside Festival – 'Trip-tic'
Leeds – 'Trip-tic'

Nola Rae

JULY

8-11 Ellen Terry Theatre – 'Mozart Preposteroso!'
15 Bridport AC – 'Exit Napoleon Pursued by Rabbits'
17 Falmouth Arts Centre – 'Exit Napoleon'

AUGUST

6 Vaour, France – 'Exit Napoleon'
7 Vaour – 'Elizabeth's Last Stand'
24-8 Teatr na Woli, Warsaw – 'Mozart Preposteroso!'

SEPTEMBER

14 Bedales School, Petersfield – 'Exit Napoleon'
25-6 Belfort, France – 'Exit Napoleon'

NoFit State Circus

'IMMORTAL'

JULY

11-18 Birmingham International Festival
23-1 August Stockton Festival

AUGUST

6-15 Escape festival, Swansea
20-30 Pembroke Dock Festival

Púca Puppets

'SONGS IN HER SUITCASE'

JULY

8 Friar's Gate Theatre, Kilmallock
9 St John's Theatre, Listowel

AUGUST

4 Linenhall, Castlebar
6 Feile An Phobail, Belfast
8 Pavilion, Dunlaoghaire

Whalley Range All Stars

JULY

11 Croydon – 'Pig'
12 Newbury – tbc
18 Swindon – 'Pig'
24-5 Ghent, Belgium – 'Pig'
28-9 Lienz, Austria – 'Pig'

AUGUST

4 Bromsgrove – tbc
7 Ealing – 'Pig'
15 Church Stretton – 'Pig'
17-19 Jersey – 'Pig'
21-2 Gravesham – tbc
28-9 Terryglass Arts Festival, Eire – tbc

SEPTEMBER

17-19 Thames Festival – 'Pig'

CONFERENCES

Drawn to Perform – a symposium at visions 2004

21 October 2004 (9.30am – 5pm) at University of Brighton, Grand Parade, Brighton. Visions, University College, Winchester and Total Theatre Network present Drawn to Perform, a symposium to explore visual springboards for performance. Opening event for visions, the biennial international festival of visual performance. Standard fee £40; reduced rate for artists/students £20; £15 to TTN members if booked by 1 September. To book phone 01273 643194 or email

visions.fest@brighton.ac.uk. See www.visions-festival.org.uk for full details.

The Next Stage Conference

8-9 September 2004 at Nottingham Trent University. 'I've prepared you for a theatre that does not exist – go out and create it!' (Jacques Lecoq) A conference for teachers, practitioners and researchers in the field of design for performance, organised by the Association of Courses in Theatre Design and supported by Nottingham Trent University and Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design. The conference will examine current and future developments of education provision in the field of design for performance, and the implications for professional practice. Conference Fee: £100

For further information/conference booking, email molly.fleischer@ntu.ac.uk.

University of Kent, Canterbury

Open Symposium with The Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski and Thomas Richards 6-7 January 2005. There will be 3 or 4 presentations including information about archiving and documentation of past and present work and screenings of the film documentation of 'Action' (2000) and 'Downstairs Action' (1989). To register interest in receiving further information, which will be available in September/October, please email Susan Quarell at seq@kent.ac.uk. The symposium is part of the EU-funded programme Tracing Road Across, and is supported by the AHRB. See www.tracingroadsacross.net.

UK TRAINING

Academy of Circus Arts

Winchester and touring, 07050 282624

DIPLOMA COURSE

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

Albany Centre, Bristol

The Flummery Room is a space for opening the imagination and developing a sense of play and invention. Monday evenings ongoing class. Open to all. Any questions? Ring Amy on 0117 966 3204 or Jenny on 07767 337 966.

Bristol University

MA in Cultural Performance

For 5 years WSI has collaborated with Bristol Uni to offer this unique MA. Students spend one semester in Bristol before coming to Lanternhouse to participate in the WSI programme. Contact: Arts Faculty Office, Senate House, University of Bristol, Tyndall Avenue, Bristol, BS8 1TH.

Central School of Speech and Drama

London, 020 7559 3990

MA ADVANCED THEATRE PRACTICE

A four-term course with choice of: 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.thepr.org.uk.

Circelation

Due to the success of Circelation 2004, we are now planning for the programme to become an annual event with dates now set for 2-15 April 2005 in Leeds. We were delighted to work with Deborah Pope in 1999 and Dick McCaw in 2004 on the artistic programme, however as of 2005 Chenine Bhatena will be taking over as the artistic programmer working closely with Circus Institutions in the UK and overseas. Application forms available from September. Please check the website on www.circelation.co.uk.

Circomedia

Bristol, 0117 947 7288

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

Circus Space

020 7729 9522

New Circus Degree Programme: Foundation Degree in Circus Arts (2-year vocational course) and BA (Hons) Degree in Circus Arts. Applications for the course starting in October 2005 will be taken from July. Contact the Degree Admissions Service on 020 7613 4141 or email degree.admissions@thecircusspace.co.uk.

CPR – The Summer Shift 2004

CPR's International Programme of Performance Workshops – summer highlights:

- Taal-Fusion – Bollywood dance workshop, 10-11 July
 - Motiroti – video & photography to create performance, 12-16 July
 - Joan Mills – voice retreat, 17-18 July
 - Mike Pearson – performative expedition, 20-21 July
 - Richard Gough – performativity of food, 22-25 July
- For further information on fees for the Summer Shift programme and to book please visit www.thepr.org.uk/summershift4.htm or contact CPR on +44 (0)1970 622133 or email cprwww@aber.ac.uk.

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 Corporel Mime (Decroux Technique).

Gerry Flanagan

020 7430 0544

Clown Workshops at the City Lit, London.

Jolly Good Productions

www.jollygoodfun.co.uk

Clowning, Face Painting, Punch and Judy. Contact Ron Wood on 01748 821621 or email ron@jollygoodfun.co.uk.

The Kelman Group

Leeds 01484 851227
www.kelmangroup.com

Runs regular workshops in the improvisational techniques of Scott Kelman, Kelmanworks Exploring, a new approach to physical and vocal skills, making discoveries in complicity, presence and composition, becoming a

more confident and playful improviser, developing sensitivity in ensemble work.

Laban

Creekside, London

info@laban.org, www.laban.org
020 8691 8600

Laban Summer School: 2-week intensive in contemporary dance, contact impro, physical theatre, etc., that gives a flavour of the Laban centre. Suitable both for professionals wanting a refresher and for those thinking of applying for full-time dance training. 19-30 July. Course fee £450.

LISPA

www.lispa.co.uk
020 8969 7004

2-year programme based on the teachings of JACQUES LECOQ (Initiation Course and Advanced Course). Evening courses and weekend workshops for professionals and beginners. Contact welcome@lispa.co.uk

Little Angel Theatre Puppetry Classes

Little Angel, Islington, London
www.littleangeltheatre.com

Separate evening courses throughout the summer in: general puppet making with Lyndie Wright; puppet manipulation with Ronnie Le Drew; marionette with Jonathan Broughton; and puppet carving with Jan Zalud. Will also be running the Little Devil, a puppet club for grown-ups. For details on all courses call Steve on 020 7359 8581 ext 3

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 Impro. Workshops for organisations and the public. Introductory Days and Weekends, Residential Intensives. Call or see <http://members.aol.com/nosetonose>

Ophaboom

Ophaboom Theatre will be running a week long course on Commedia dell'Arte in London during autumn 2004. There will be limited number of places. Anyone interested should contact them at workshop@ophaboom.com.

The Penquoit Centre, Pembrokeshire

Rose Theatre Training Workshops 2004

A supportive and beautiful environment, near the Pembrokeshire coast.
22 Aug to 4 Sep – Ritual, Panic and Nature
22-28 August – Ritual and Gesture
29 Aug to 4 Sep – Choreographic theatre

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. Now accepting applications for 2004/05. 9-27 August – 3-week Summer Intensive 17-18 Apr – Workshop: The Human Comedy 15-17 June – School Public Perfs 19 April – 'An Open Mind', TheatreWorks production

Theatre Training Initiative

www.theatrettraining.org.uk

For regular weekly training and intensive workshops in Butoh, Suzuki, Kalaripayattu and other disciplines. UK and international teachers.

Saturday Training Sessions 10.30am-1pm in Islington, London. Ensemble-based physical and creative training. Bookings & Info: lukas@theatrettraining.org.uk or phone 07733 326765.

'Making the Body all Eyes': yoga and kalaripayattu with Martin Welton. Regular sessions taking place with Martin Welton on a weekly/fortnightly basis. For further info e-mail martin@theatrettraining.org.uk Autumn series of training and professional development opportunities for performers. For details check website or call Fran Barbe on 07931 710808.

University of Kent, Canterbury

01227 823338

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

The Why Not Institute

London +44 (0) 20 7739 8363
whynotinstitute@aol.com

The Why Not Institute Summer Clown School

5-30 July: Various options/course combinations including:

'There Is No Business Like Show Business' – eccentric dance workshop by Barry and Joan Grantham

'I Like To Sing In The Bath' – group singing workshop by Juliet Hill

'How To Be A Stupid' – clowning workshop by Angela de Castro

'How To Be A Stupid' – the advanced follow up workshop (NB This course can only be taken by people who have already done Angela de Castro's workshop on 2003/2004)

For more details and description of the courses please contact the Institute.

The Wright School

London,
www.thewrightschool.co.uk

Making something from nothing –10 and 11 July, 10am till 5.30pm, £70
 University of Masks – 6-10 September, 10am till 5.30pm, £160
 See the new website for full details.

OVERSEAS

Academy of Living Movement

Vienna, Austria, Tel +43 1 8892945
www.livingmovement.org

4-year professional performance training – a new approach to the schooling of movement artists. Incorporates bodywork, eurythmy, ensemble, devising, neutral mask, scenography, storytelling. Contact: info@livingmovement.org. UK applicants can also contact Philip Beaven: philip@livingmovement.org.

The Actors Space

Barcelona, www.actors-space.org

The Creative Actor, 19-30 July. During this two weeks we will work with: the Neutral Mask, le jeu (action), reaction, complicity, space, timing, mask theatre and mask making, dynamics of a scene (situation, rhythm, crescendo), theatre creation and performance.

Passionate Nature, 2-13 August. This workshop will allow the actor to discover a heightened level of acting through the use of the half mask (Comic register) and the natural elements (Tragic register). During this two weeks we will be working with: Modern Tragedy, the Half Mask, Comedy, Half mask making, Outdoor theatre, Dramatic registers.

All workshops are led by Simon Edwards
 Price: £370 (includes all meals and accommodation). For more info: info@actors-space.org or contact Julia Twomlow on 01736 331 583

Butoh: Body Resonance Workshop with Yumiko Yoshioka

Schloss Broellin (International Art Research Location, situated Northeast Germany, 2 hours from Berlin). Dates: August 13-22. Price: 550 Euro / 500 Euro (student concession) includes fees and full board (Please bring a sleeping bag). Includes Noguchi Gymnastics and Tai Chi training for relaxation, dynamic training for energy flow, structured improvisation, combining image and physicality in Butoh-related work.

Butoh Centre Mamu

www.tadashi-endo.de

Short courses and long intensives throughout the year in Butoh at Endo's studio in Gottingen (near Hannover) in Germany. Next intensive workshops: 20 September-3 October. Cost: 300 Euro inc accommodation.

10 December-19 December. Cost: 200 Euro inc accommodation

Contact Gabriele Endo for details: gendo@butoh-ma.de or +49 551 790 6245

'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).

École Philippe Gaulier

Janville-sur-Juine 91150 Tel +33 (0) 1 60 82 19 83 philgaulier@aol.com
www.ecolephilippegaulier.com

13/09/04-06/05/05 – School 2004-05; Le Jeu, Neutral Mask, Bouffons, etc.

Espace Catastrophe

Bruxelles, +32 (0) 2 538 12 02

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

House of Games 04

This week long residential course is now in its 4th year. It will be run at La Maison Verte (www.lamaisonverte.co.uk) in the Languedoc region of Southern France 4-11 September 2004. The cost is £375 inclusive (£350 if booked by 31 May). The course is of especial interest to those leading drama or theatre programmes within community settings, and is led by Chris Johnston. Enquiries about the course to m@maggiegordon-walker.com.

Institut International de la Marionette

Charleville-Mezieres, France
www.marionette.com
institut@marionette.com
 Tel 00 33 (0) 3 24 33 72 50

Summer workshops 2004

Advanced professional training in puppetry. Open to puppeteers, actors, mime artists, dancers.

The Shadow's Other Side – 2-20 August. Led by Luc Amoros (Amoros and Augustin). Fee: 750 euros. Also run 3-year National School of Puppetry prof training course, residencies for researchers and other creative initiatives. Publishers of Puck.

Mime Centrum Berlin

www.mimecentrum.de

'The Biomechanics of Meyerhold' and other workshops.

Mobile Academy Berlin 2004

www.mobileacademy-berlin.com

30 August to 19 September. Courses by reputed artists and teachers from all over the world. Email carolin.hochleicher@mobileacademy-berlin.com or phone +49 (0)30 – 259 004 89.

Total Theatre School

Australia, sophie@totaltheatre.com.au

One- and two-year intensive performance-based courses in physical theatre techniques. See www.totaltheatre.com.au.

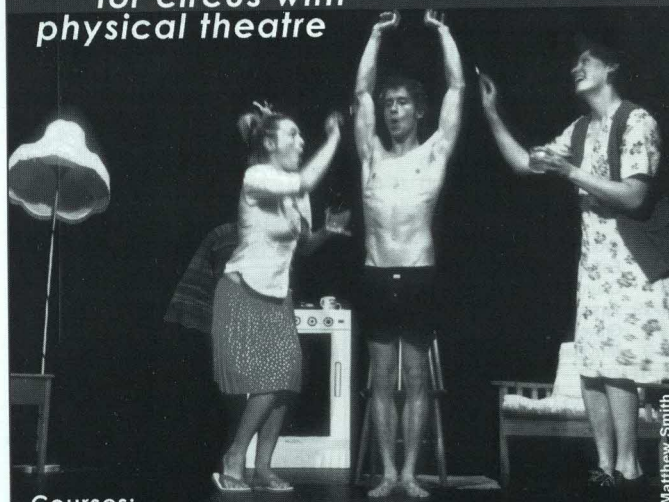
ZID Theater LAB

Netherlands, +31.20.4888449

ZID Theater offers a training opportunity for performers and theatre directors. Summer school and Artists in Residence programme are upcoming. For more info contact: karolina@zidtheater.nl or see: www.zidtheater.nl

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for further information: +44 (0) 117 9477288
 email: info@circomedia.com www.circomedia.com
 Circomedia, Britannia Rd, Kingswood, Bristol BS15 8DB UK

DESMOND JONES

School of Mime and Physical Theatre



The dynamic modern alternative to conventional drama school, offering a three-month highly intensive Foundation Course and a five-term Course to professional standards. The Autumn Foundation course begins on 27 September 2004 (mornings only, Monday to Friday); fully international; certificates awarded.

The course includes: *Classical and Modern Mime Technique, Mime Acting, Story-telling, Verbal/Physical/Psychological Improvisation, Style and Stylisation, Masks, Body-Balance, Colours, Timing, Building and the Theatre of Excess, Caricatures, Commedia dell'Arte, Children, Men and Women, Chimpanzee, Acrobatics, Stage and Body Dynamics, End of Term Performance and much more.*

The School is unique in giving a thorough and intensive grounding in mime and acting techniques, combining the approaches of Decroux, Lecoq and Keith Johnstone to a high professional standard of physical expertise and acting ability. We explore the energy, creativity, excitement and power of modern visual and physical theatre.

We are one of the world's leading schools of mime and one of the originators of physical theatre. Founded in 1979, the School is totally international, the longest-established in Britain and one of the largest of its kind.

SPECIAL COURSES

Impro! – Verbal Improvisation – Keith Johnstone techniques (6-7 November)

Introduction to Masks – Neutral and Half-masks (20-21 November)

Summer Course: The Energetic Actor – All aspects of mime and physical theatre (12-16 July)

Refresher classes for past students (Tuesday evenings)

Brochures: The Registrar, 20 Thornton Avenue, London W4 1QG. Tel/Fax: 020 8747 3537
www.desmondjones.co.uk email: enquiries@desmondjones.co.uk

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL®



Year-Round Openings.

Cirque du Soleil is seeking to explore new artistic genres other than circus arts (the cabaret *ZUMANITY*™ and the upcoming show directed by Robert Lepage).

Cirque du Soleil opens its doors to all types of new talent.

We are seeking:

- **PHYSICAL ACTORS** with keen creative skills, solid acting training and strong theatrical experience. We also welcome clowns, contemporary mimes, street performers and artists with unusual body types.
- **Other PERFORMERS** with unique acts or exceptional skills.

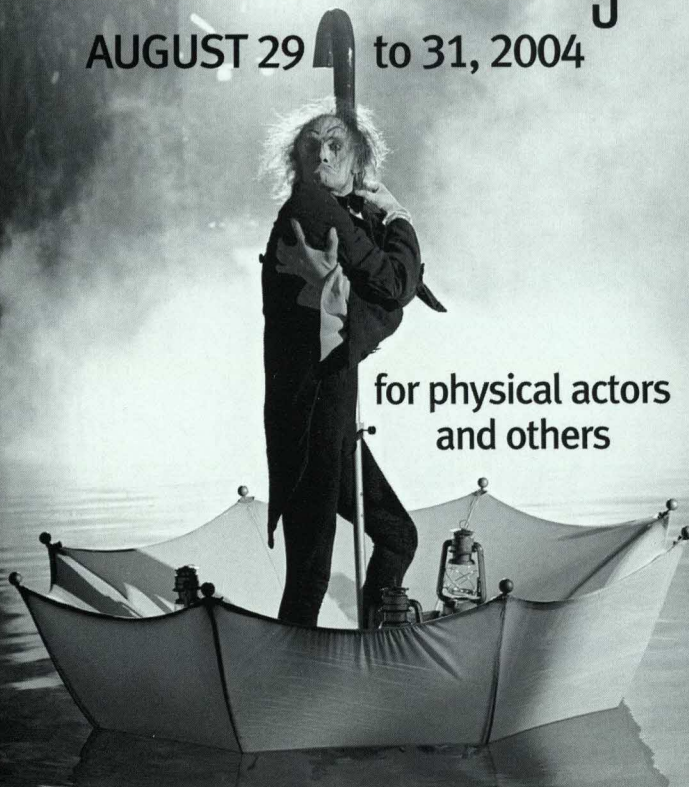
On an invitation-only basis; send your material NOW!

Details:

<http://casting.cirquedusoleil.com>

Auditions in Edinburgh

AUGUST 29 to 31, 2004



for physical actors
and others

CONTROLUCE

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JOHN FOX (WELFARE STATE INTERNATIONAL)
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