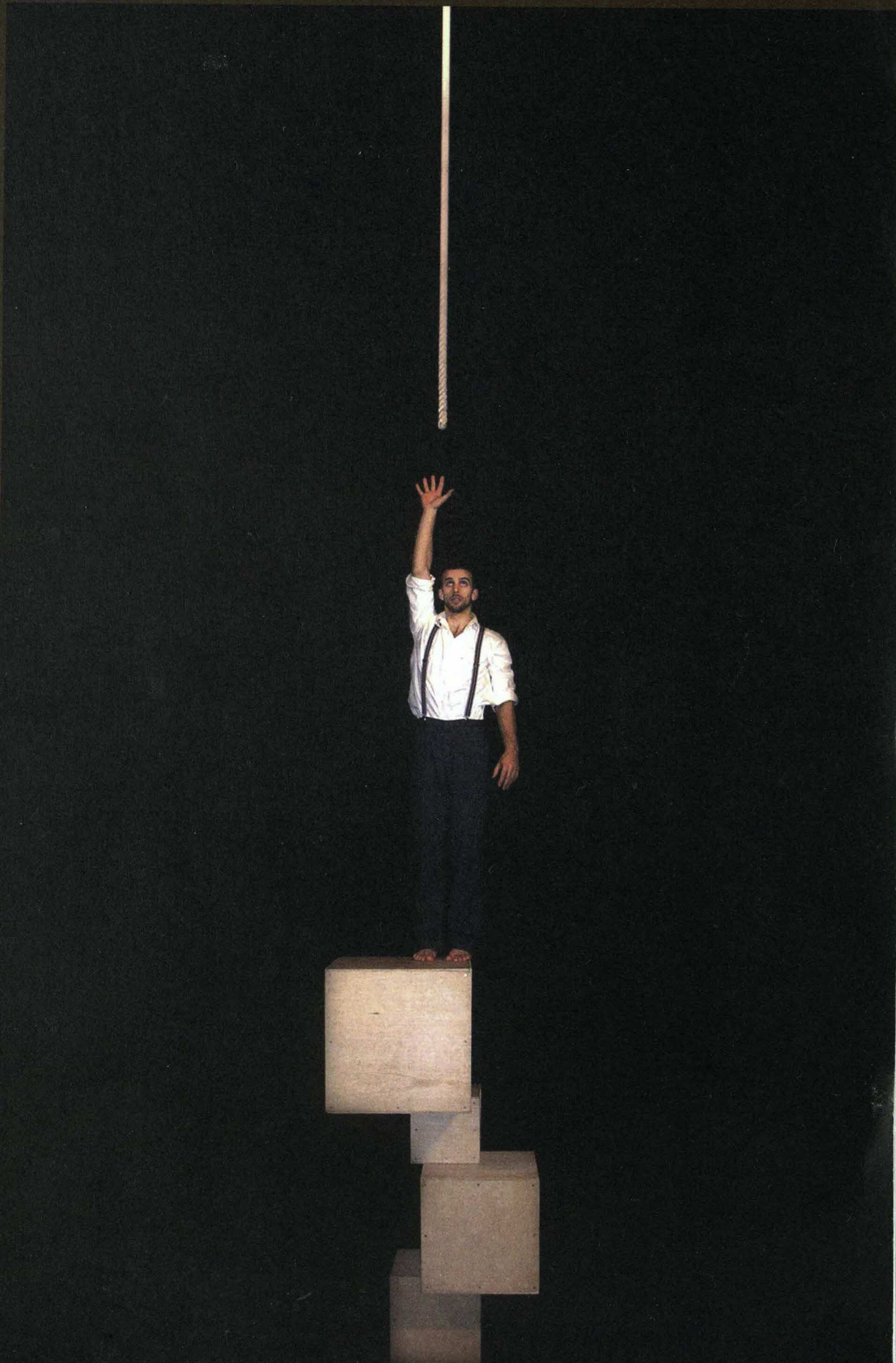


# TOTALTHEATRE

## MAGAZINE

VOLUME 19 | ISSUE 01 | SPRING 2007 | [TOTALTHEATRE.ORG.UK](http://TOTALTHEATRE.ORG.UK)  
TOTAL THEATRE NETWORK CELEBRATING PHYSICAL + VISUAL PERFORMANCE

CIRCUS CIRCUS CIRCUS - THE FUTURE IS HERE  
SCARABEUS FLY WITH THE ORCHIDS AND OCKHAM'S RAZOR BRIDGE GROUND AND AIR  
CIRCOMEDIA CAST THEIR NET WIDER  
ON STAGE AND SCREEN - STARRING STATION HOUSE OPERA AND FORKBEARD FANTASY  
LIVE ART GOES TO CHELSEA AND LIVERPOOL GOES LIVE  
SHALL WE DANCE? WALTZ, FOXTROT, TANGO AND JIVE GO TO THE THEATRE  
PUT A SPRING IN YOUR STEP AND LEAP INTO LIFE THROUGH LIVE PERFORMANCE - PHYSICAL, VISUAL, TOTAL THEATRE





EDITORIAL

It's a given in this publication that when we say 'theatre' we mean something more than buildings: we mean the coming together in one space at one time which enables someone (the theatre-maker) to enact something, and for that something to be witnessed by someone else (the audience). That shared experience doesn't need to happen within a dedicated theatre building. In this issue of Total Theatre we hear about theatre in all sorts of places: in a wood (*Shimadai* by Scarabeus); on a bus (Mat Fraser at Liverpool Live); in a warehouse (Punchdrunk's *Faust*); and on a bandstand (Ragroof Theatre's *Shall We Dance?*).

But built venues remain vital to live performance. Theatre and arts centres are an essential part of a community – a site for performance, but also a place for people to gather and interact, and for workshops and educational projects to take place. Built venues (good ones, anyway) do more than offer a stage on which to perform: they produce, curate and programme seasons of work; they act as an operational base for performance that takes place off site; offer a space for affiliated companies to be housed; and provide rehearsal space for supported artists. In short, they act as a hub for theatre practice.

An example of a venue that does all of the above is Battersea Arts Centre (BAC), who in 2006 celebrated twenty-five years of vibrant theatre life. A quick scroll through history reveals a plethora of names supported by BAC – Complicite, Lumiere and Son, DV8, David Glass, Faulty Optic, Shared Experience, The Right Size, Kazuko Hohki, Ridiculusmus, and Kneehigh Theatre.

Kneehigh's *Rapunzel* has just finished a successful run at BAC. On 12 January I was in the audience when Kneehigh's Mike Shepherd bounced back on set (after many curtain calls – despite the lack of curtains) with breaking news: BAC had received a letter from Wandsworth Council stating that not only was their grant to be cut to zero, but also that the council were demanding a full commercial rent for the building. Taken together, these two measures would make BAC's continued operation impossible. The funding for

BAC costs each Wandsworth resident 38p a year out of their council tax: not a lot to ensure the continuing existence of the borough's flagship arts organisation, an essential provider for the local community and a venue with a national and international reputation.

This news comes hot on the heels of the recent announcement by Gardner Arts Centre that spring 2007 will be their last season. The Gardner has a formidable reputation for presenting the work of international artists such as Peter Brook, Wim Vandekeybus, and Ronnie Burkett, but they are also nurturers of home-grown talent: in this last season Spymonkey will be rehearsing and previewing their new show, *Bliss* (21–24 February). The Gardner closure is due to many factors but the underlying problem is the building, sited on the University of Sussex campus, which needs renovating – something the University doesn't want to pay for. 'For the future, we will want this remarkable building... to play an important part in the life of the University,' said Vice-Chancellor Alasdair Smith. Perhaps as a nice little rent-earner, Professor Smith?

And as if this weren't depressing enough, we now learn that Dartington College may be forced to move from the Dartington Hall Estate, where it has been since its inception in 1961, and that the Theatre Museum in Covent Garden is to close. No doubt both of these are viewed as tasty bits of real estate wasting away in their present usage. In the case of the Theatre Museum, we are reassured that all the archive material amassed over the years will still be accessible – if you can work out how to access it.

All of these buildings are far more than bricks and mortar: they are homes – theatre homes – lovingly nurtured, crowded with ghosts, and echoing with memories. Their requisition for commercial purposes by greedy vice chancellors, council officers, trusts, and boards is a national scandal.

Dorothy Max Prior, Editor

Comments on anything in this issue of Total Theatre Magazine welcome to [editorial@totaltheatre.org.uk](mailto:editorial@totaltheatre.org.uk)

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TOTAL THEATRE MAGAZINE

Editor  
DOROTHY MAX PRIOR  
[editorial@totaltheatre.org.uk](mailto:editorial@totaltheatre.org.uk)

Editorial Forum  
ROBERT AYERS  
FRANC CHAMBERLAIN  
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MISCHA TWITCHIN  
CASSIE WERBER  
TOM WILSON

Listings Editor  
JOHN ELLINGSWORTH  
[listings@totaltheatre.org.uk](mailto:listings@totaltheatre.org.uk)

Editorial Assistant  
ALICE ANDREWS

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Design  
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[studio@studiotonne.com](mailto:studio@studiotonne.com)

Printing  
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Published by:  
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The Power Station  
Coronet Street  
London N1 6HD

Tel 020 7729 7944  
Fax 020 7729 7945  
[www.totaltheatre.org.uk](http://www.totaltheatre.org.uk)

Director  
FELICITY HALL  
[felicity@totaltheatre.org.uk](mailto:felicity@totaltheatre.org.uk)

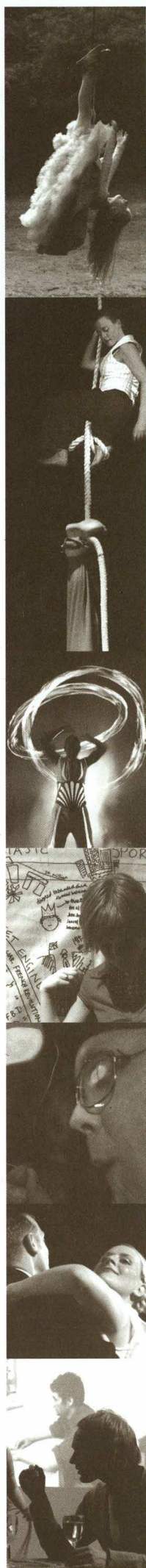
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Lifting your spirits and putting a spring in your step – Total Theatre Magazine Volume 19 Issue 01 focuses on new circus work in the UK. First up is Scarabeus, a London based company of international artists whose latest show Shimadai is a site responsive outdoor performance, using circus skills, which doesn't shy away from the big issues of life and love, birth and death: **WHEN ORCHIDS FLY** CASSIE WERBER **P8**. Off to Bristol next – two articles that reflect on work seen at Circus Futures: **TOMORROW'S CIRCUS TODAY** DONNA CLOSE **P10**, which gives an overview of the conference and showcase, and **ATTENTION TO OBJECTS** JOHN ELLINGSWORTH **P11**, which turns the spotlight on our cover stars Ockham's Razor. This is followed by news of an artist-led initiative to further the cause of circus and street arts in the Bristol area in **CASTING THE NET WIDER** BIM MASON **P13**.

Francis Alexander has been making waves at Chelsea Theatre, bringing live art to theatre audiences – read all about it in **SACRED SPACE** MIRIAM KING **P15**. Our intermittent Best of British series is back with a bang, bringing you a potted history of the much loved and admired **FORKBEARD FANTASY – STARS OF STAGE AND SCREEN** EDWARD TAYLOR **P16**. Waltz, foxtrot, tango, jive anyone? **SHALL WE DANCE?** DOROTHY MAX PRIOR **P18** reflects on the performance power of partner dance. Meanwhile, down in The Basement, we get the insider story on Station House Opera's three-city performance project: **THE OTHER IS YOU** ZOE BOURAS **P21**.

**REVIEWS** **P24** include FeEast (Festival of Central and Eastern European Arts), a round-up of Liverpool Live, the latest Forced Entertainment show, Punchdrunk, Rose English, Russian favourites Maly at Barbican BITE, and Lone Twin's move from live art into theatre.

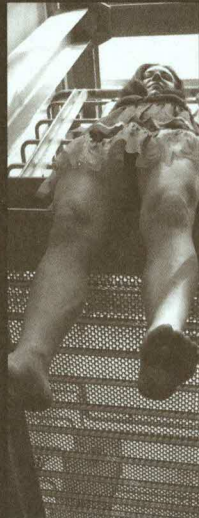
In our front and back regular sections:

**NEWS & PREVIEWS** **P4** gives you the latest information from the sector.

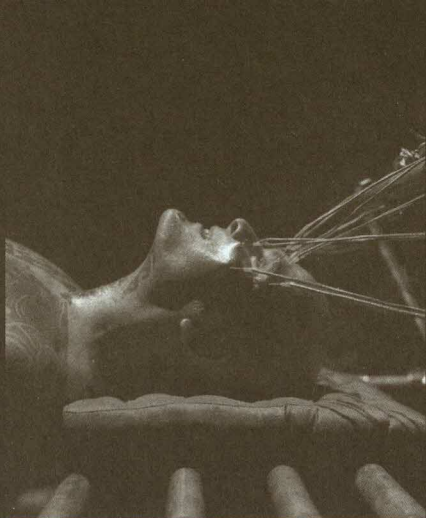
**PERFORMER & COMPANY UPDATES** **P6** lets you know who is doing what, where and when. **MEDIA** **P31** brings you book reviews and DVD releases.

**TRAINING & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT** **P32** lists courses, classes, workshops and conferences.





RON ARNEY AT NATIONAL REVIEW OF LIVE ART



CPTONIC PRODUCTION IRREVERSIBLE



## TOTAL THEATRE NETWORK'S DIRECTOR

Felicity Hall, director of Total Theatre Network, is leaving the organisation at the end of February. She is very much looking forward to subscribing to Total Theatre Magazine and receiving it in the post, instead of being involved in the mailouts. Felicity will be acting arts officer for Epping Forest Arts from March onwards. Total Theatre's editor and team wish her the best of luck in her new post. We thank her for all her hard work for the organisation, steering it into a new direction as a national development agency for contemporary theatre and physical/visual performance, and for her ongoing support for the magazine. We wish her the very best for the future.

## HOW TO ACT CONFERENCE AT CENTRAL SCHOOL OF SPEECH AND DRAMA

The How to Act Conference, hosted by the Centre for Excellence in Training for Theatre at the Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London, takes place 14–17 February 2007. How to Act aims to address not only issues and histories of training for the theatre, but the wider questions of training for our time: how do we learn, through and with the theatre, to act as citizens of the world? See: [www.cssd.ac.uk/pages/how\\_to\\_act.html](http://www.cssd.ac.uk/pages/how_to_act.html)

## ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND NEWS

David Micklem has been appointed to the Arts Strategy team at the national office of Arts Council England, where he will bring his expertise in contemporary performance to a wider role delivering the Arts Council's policy for theatre. David Micklem has been instrumental in the creation of the Street Arts Healthcheck, which can be viewed on the website. See: [www.artscouncil.org.uk/publications](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publications) Arts Council England have also published their Circus Healthcheck, a document summarising the health of the sector and exploring the issues affecting circus arts in England. Later this year, ACE plans to publish a strategy for circus arts responding to the issues raised in the paper, drawing from informal consultation with artists, promoters, producers, and Arts Council officers. See: [www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

## CIRCELTATION

In 2007 Circelation will launch a new Associate Director Award aimed at established circus/cross-artform directors. The Award will offer three leading directors an unprecedented opportunity to attach themselves to one of three regional producing theatres in the UK. Circelation are also changing the nature of their annual laboratory programmes and in the early part of 2007 will be sending out more information on dates as well as details for the new programme. If you want be kept abreast of these developments please join their free mailing list by emailing [info@circelation.co.uk](mailto:info@circelation.co.uk) or see [www.circelation.co.uk](http://www.circelation.co.uk)

## MOVING PARTS 2007 AT MAC

It's been seventeen years since mac identified a need to bring exciting and fresh work from the worlds of contemporary dance and edgy theatre to the West Midlands. This year they've commissioned work from across the UK to make Moving Parts as vital and as exciting as ever. Highlights include: Total Theatre Best Newcomer Award winners Chotto Ookii with *And Even My Goldfish* (16 February); Theatre Alibi's *Caught* (22 February); Darkin Ensemble's *Augustine* (8 March); Sham Theatre's *The Garden*, which was shortlisted for a Total Theatre Award 2006 (10 March); New Art Club with *Dance, Jokes and Art Jokes* (17 March); Trestle's *Little India* (22 March); and Gonzo Moose with *You Don't Need To Know That* (23 March). For full details, see [www.macarts.co.uk](http://www.macarts.co.uk) Alternatively contact mac on 0121 440 3838 or email [enquiries@macarts.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@macarts.co.uk), minicom 0121 440 4923.

## PLASTICIENS VOLANTS IN LEICESTER

Leicester Comedy Festival 2007 is the fourteenth festival to take place in venues across Leicester and Leicestershire. The programme includes over 230 events and will attract audiences of 60,000+. The festival kicks off on Friday 9 February with an Opening Night Celebration featuring French company Plasticiens Volants with their UK premiere of *Perle*. Leicester Comedy Festival and partners Braunstone Community Association have been awarded £50,000 by Arts Council England to bring the pyrotechnic, processional show to the East Midlands. Other confirmed acts include Pam Ann and Tim Minchin, as well as workshops and discussions, some led by Plasticiens Volants. Further information available from: [www.comedy-festival.co.uk](http://www.comedy-festival.co.uk)

## OVAL HOUSE THEATRE

OVAL HOUSE THEATRE's spring season 2007, Where the Art Is, runs until 10 February and celebrates the domestic and mundane. *The Living Room*, by 1157 Performance Group, is an inquisition by artist/performer Jo Dagless where people are encouraged to enter the installation and enjoy a cup of tea and a chat with Jo; *Stories From Suburbia*, also by 1157, is a physical theatre monologue exploring the artifice and oddness of suburbia. In *The Ideal Recipe*, by Ellen Duckenfield, a woman obsessed with feeding people tells her story through a series of recipes. And *Her Bungalow Heart*, by Tom Marshman, commemorates the passage of time by archiving the contents of a home. For full details see: [www.ovalhouse.com](http://www.ovalhouse.com)

## KOMEDIA

Brighton's independently financed arts organisation, is set to export its European café entertainment concept to a second UK city, proposing to rejuvenate an empty city-centre picture house in Bath. Following a recent open tender for the Beau Nash Picture House, formerly the ABC Cinema in Westgate Street, Komedia is now in the process of finalising a lease for the beautiful grade II art deco building with Bath & North East Somerset Council. Komedia intends to open its Bath venue in September 2007. See: [www.komedia.co.uk](http://www.komedia.co.uk)

## RULES AND REGS

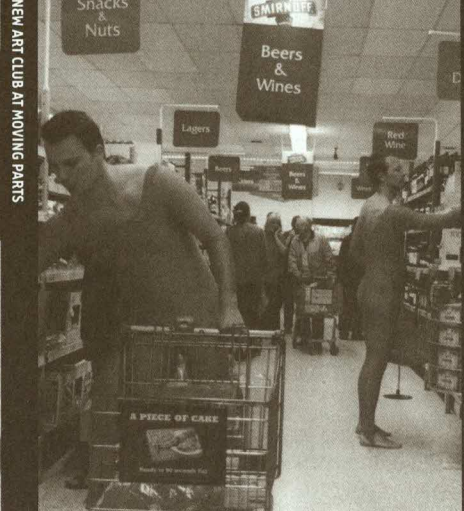
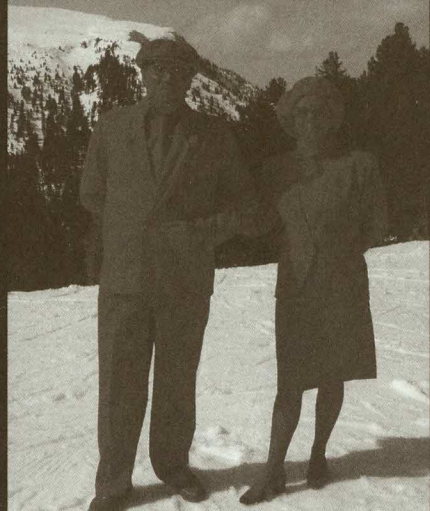
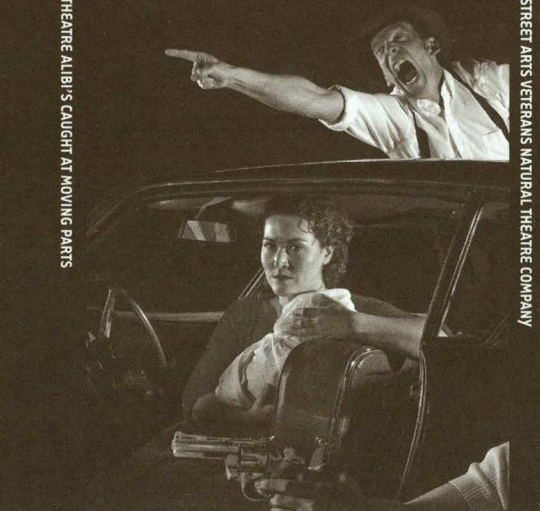
The Rules and Regs Network will be launched on 22 March, at the South Hill Park Arts Centre, Bracknell, and will be an opportunity for past, present, and potential future Rules and Regs artists and partner organisations to discuss Live Art, preview the 2007 season, and see new work. Rules and Regs will be putting on a number of events in 2007, each curated by a different organisation, featuring different artists creating new work under Rules which challenge them to explore their practice and discover new ways of working. Each event lasts approximately one month, culminating in a public showing of work. For dates, see: [www.rulesandregs.org](http://www.rulesandregs.org)

## NEW LANTERNHOUSE WEBSITE

Lanternhouse have a bigger, better, bolder new website. The site has been designed by London-based designer Alex Griffin ([www.alexgriffin.org](http://www.alexgriffin.org)) and built by Pulse Business Solutions ([www.pbsportal.com](http://www.pbsportal.com)) from Egremont in Cumbria. It will give details of all Lanternhouse's up-and-coming projects, as well as contact details, links to partner organisations, books, and news. Reports and photos for all Lanternhouse events and performances will appear almost as soon as they've happened. See: [www.lanternhouse.org](http://www.lanternhouse.org)

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SUBMIT NEWS OR LISTINGS OR TO ADVERTISE IN THE NEXT ISSUE, PLEASE NOTE THAT THE COPY DEADLINE IS 7 MARCH 2007.





### SPRINT FESTIVAL SEEKS PROPOSALS

CPT's new director, Matt Ball, invites proposals for this year's Sprint festival, which will take place May–June 2007. Sprint will be 10 years old this year, and has built a reputation as one of the UK's most important festivals of physical, visual, and experimental performance. Please send a written proposal (no more than 500 words), a company CV, and any additional material to: Matt Ball, Director, Camden People's Theatre, 58–60 Hampstead Road, London, NW1 2PY. Or email [admin@cpttheatre.co.uk](mailto:admin@cpttheatre.co.uk). CPT also has affordable central London rehearsal space for hire. See: [www.cpttheatre.co.uk](http://www.cpttheatre.co.uk)

### EXPRESSIVE FEAT PRODUCTIONS WANTS AERIALISTS

Expressive Feat are seeking funding for an event in Newbury in September 2007 where a skills exchange programme for experienced aerialists (particularly rope artists) will culminate in a one-day performance. The company is keen to hear from experienced/professional aerialists interested in sharing skills, learning new ones, training in a great space, and aiding the company's education programmes. For more information, please contact Tina Carter via the website: [www.exfeat.com](http://www.exfeat.com) or call 01227 280399.

### I CAN'T GO ON LIKE THIS

To celebrate the ninth birthday of Lone Twin, Nuffield Theatre and Lancaster University are hosting an event exploring nine areas of enquiry suggested by the company's work. *I Can't Go On Like This: Approaches on Lone Twin and Related Practice* will be a cross-platform event, putting academic papers alongside performances, readings, speeches, experiments, and other modes of presentation. The event will take place Saturday 17 February 2007, at the Nuffield Theatre, Lancaster.

### CROYDON CLOCKTOWER

Croydon Clocktower plan to engage a Circus and Street Arts Curator in spring 2007. The contract will last up to one year and will be to develop an exciting programme of showcase events, promenade performances, and site-specific work in the venue. The curator will also manage a Croydon Youth Circus project. Further details will be announced in February. See: [www.croydon.gov.uk/clocktower](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/clocktower)

### STREET ARTS MEETING, BRIGHTON 10–11 MAY 2007

Major opportunities for street arts in the UK look set to unfold following the presentation of the Sultan's Elephant in London in 2006 and with Liverpool 2008 and London 2012 on the horizon. SAM 2007 aims to focus on how UK street arts can develop to make the most of these opportunities. The keynote speech will be by Bill Morris, Culture Ceremonies and Education Director for the London 2012 Organising Committee for the Olympic Games and Paralympics, on the 'Opportunities for Street Arts in the Olympics'. See: [www.zapuk.com](http://www.zapuk.com)

### SPILL FESTIVAL OF PERFORMANCE

SPILL is a brand new, three-week international festival of experimental theatre, live art, and performance for London. It includes work from Forced Entertainment, Raimund Hogue, Kira O'Reilly, and Pacitti Company (who are producing the event), and will feature an international symposium, opportunities to meet and eat with the artists, an exhibition, and 40 live performances from a stunning international line up of artists, many visiting the UK for the first time. 2–22 April, across London. See: [www.spillfestival.com](http://www.spillfestival.com)

### THE OPEN SPACE: CALL FOR PERFORMANCE PIECES

As a part of their commitment to helping create and support new work, International Workshop Festival run a monthly showcase for emerging and established artists to perform new or nearly-new work in physical theatre movement or dance. The showcase takes place on the first Saturday of every month – the next dates are 3 February, 3 March, 7 April 2007 at 7pm. Venue: The Siobhan Davies Studios, 85 St Georges Road, London SE1 6ER. For further details and to apply contact: Lexi, The International Workshop Festival, +44 (0) 20 7091 9666.

### FRESH

Launched 18 months ago, Fresh has helped to develop and present more than 50 new performance works over the course of seven festivals, two cabaret nights, and a season of new theatre. The organisation is now putting the finishing touches to its 2007 programme, set to include a car boot sale combining genuine bric-a-brac touting with car-based performance at South Hill Park, a site-focused event at Hastings' Coastal Currents Festival, a Halloween Special for more extreme performance art, and an Office Christmas Party to round it all off. Email [richard@freshfest.org](mailto:richard@freshfest.org) or see [www.freshfest.org](http://www.freshfest.org)

### LEGENDARY EAST END LANDMARK TRANSFORMED

In a £6 million development Artsadmin is transforming the legendary Toynbee Hall settlement – one of the East End's great social landmarks – launching the organisation's home as a new cultural centre, a hothouse for emerging artists and creative industry. The space includes the restoration of the 240-seat theatre, four rehearsal spaces, 16 office spaces and a café, eight new creative media spaces, and a brand new rooftop dance studio, to provide state of the art facilities for the creative artists supported by Artsadmin. Artsadmin will celebrate the opening of the new development in March 2007 with an event featuring a site-specific commission by artist Anne Bean. See [www.artsadmin.co.uk](http://www.artsadmin.co.uk), email [admin@artsadmin.co.uk](mailto:admin@artsadmin.co.uk) or call +44 (0) 20 7247 5182.

### THEATRE PATHWAYS

Launched in November 2006, Theatre Pathways offers work opportunities in the theatre and performance sector for young people aged 16–25 years. The project provides skills development, work experience, and accredited training, and readies participants to work in the performance sector. The project, organised by Immediate Theatre, aims to improve representation of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities in the theatre industry. Theatre Pathways is funded by the London Development Agency and Supported by Hackney Theatre Partnership. See: [www.immediate-theatre.com](http://www.immediate-theatre.com)

### THEATRE MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

Although the Theatre Museum's site in Covent Garden will be closed from January 2007, the Theatre Museum, says Curator Dr Kate Dorney, will continue to document performance and develop its collections. Researchers may access the collections by appointment at the Museum's premises in Kensington Olympia. To make an appointment call 0207 943 4727, or email [tmenquiries@vam.ac.uk](mailto:tmenquiries@vam.ac.uk)

**THE NATIONAL REVIEW OF LIVE ART** takes place 7–11 February at Tramway, with Black Market International and Anne Seagrave in residence. The National Review of Live Art archive is now housed at the University of Bristol. See: [www.newmoves.co.uk](http://www.newmoves.co.uk) and <http://art.ntu.ac.uk/nrla>



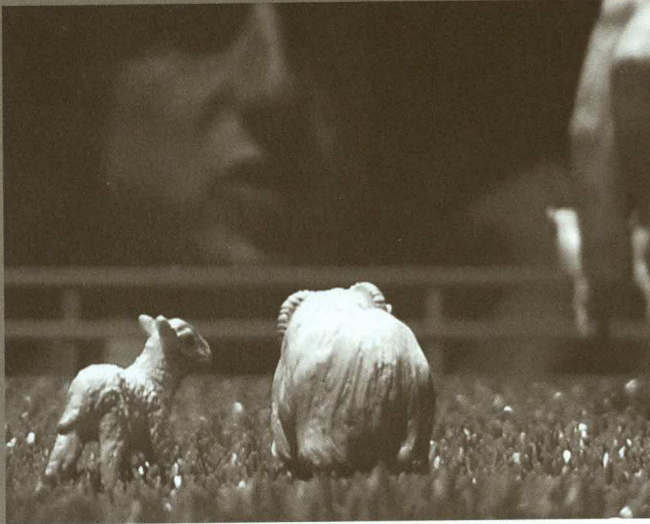
# PERFORMER & COMPANY UPDATES

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PRECARIOUS



ORGANIC THEATRE



## BASH STREET THEATRE

*Cliffhanger!* is an hour-long, silent-movie style production that returns to the golden age of the silver screen. Inspired by Buster Keaton's short film *Convict 13*, *Cliffhanger!* features falling buildings, dare-devil escapology, slapstick humour, and live piano accompaniment. Bash Street have toured the show throughout Europe, with bookings in France, Belgium, Germany, and Spain (where they won the award for Best Street Theatre Show at the Tàrraga International Theatre Festival), and are now re-working and re-directing it for further performance. See: [www.bashstreet.co.uk](http://www.bashstreet.co.uk)

## CHOTTO OOKII

Leeds-based reprobates Chotto Ookii have just finished creating a short film of their first show *And Even My Goldfish* in collaboration with a young production company (currently unnamed). In early spring 2007 *And Even My Goldfish* will tour to Wakefield Arts Centre, Chichester University, Brighton College, and The MAC as part of their Moving Parts Festival. The ARENA festival in Germany is also on the agenda. Chotto Ookii have received Arts Council funding to research and develop a new show, which they aim to complete in time for the summer. For up-to-date information on the company, join their mailing list by emailing [chotto\\_ookii@fmail.co.uk](mailto:chotto_ookii@fmail.co.uk) or see [www.chottoookii.co.uk](http://www.chottoookii.co.uk)

## CHRIS GOODE

Chris Goode's recent adventures have taken him to Sydney Opera House, for a festival airing of his award-winning *Kiss of Life*; and before that to Kennington, for the hip-hop shindig *Rhymes, Reasons & Bomb-ass Beatz* at the Oval House. Upcoming projects include a major new ensemble piece, *Speed Death of the Radiant Child*, for the Drum Theatre, Plymouth; a series of mixed media performances, *The Goodman Portraits*; and a second outing for his acclaimed play-without-words *Longwave* (developed with New Greenham Arts), reaching the Lyric Studio in June. He can be contacted via his erratic and vainglorious blog: <http://beescope.blogspot.com>

## COMPANY PARADISO

will present the first production at the new Ropetackle Arts Centre in Shoreham, West Sussex, on 6–7 February 2007 – a drama and digital media performance by/with young writers and actors. The show is a collaboration between Malcolm Buchanan-Dick (Digital & Installation Arts), Stephen Hiscock (Music), and Jon Potter (Director). This time joined by Jon Oram (Community Theatre) and Nina Ayres (Design). See: [www.companyparadiso.co.uk](http://www.companyparadiso.co.uk)

## FIREBIRD THEATRE

Bristol's Firebird Theatre have received funding from the Arts Council to tour their production of *Faustus* next spring. Olivier award winning actress Kathryn Hunter and Peepolykus artistic director John Nicholson have been engaged to work with them as guest directors on the project. Alongside the tour, Firebird Theatre will also provide educational workshops for young disabled and non-disabled students. It all kicks off at the Bristol Old Vic, March 2007. Email [firebird-theatre@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:firebird-theatre@blueyonder.co.uk)

## FORBIDDEN THEATRE COMPANY

After touring *Goddess* last October and working with the Schools' Proms at the Royal Albert Hall in November, Forbidden Theatre are now working on a new show. *Stung!*, which will run from 27 February to 11 March 2007 at Teatro Technis, has been created within the company and is based on Federico Garcia Lorca's farces. Set in contemporary Madrid, the show explores relationships and society's attitudes towards them as well as the dark side of Internet dating. See: [www.forbidden.org.uk](http://www.forbidden.org.uk)

## FOURSIGHT THEATRE

Following on from its national autumn tour, *Thatcher The Musical!* will be touring to four more venues in spring 2007, including a week at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre which will coincide with the celebration of the company's 20th anniversary. From Parliamentary battles to the Falklands War, from the miners' strike to the knife in the back, *Thatcher The Musical!* reveals the legacy of Britain's first female Prime Minister. It tours 6 February–10 March 2007. For full information, see: [www.foursight.theatre](http://www.foursight.theatre). [boltblue.net](http://boltblue.net) or [www.thatcherthemusical.co.uk](http://www.thatcherthemusical.co.uk) or contact Emma Beale by calling 01902 714257 or emailing [foursight.theatre@boltblue.com](mailto:foursight.theatre@boltblue.com)

## FULL BEAM VISUAL THEATRE

The 2006 version of *The Man Who Discovered That Women Lay Eggs*, Full Beam's comic epic about the history of reproduction, brought the delights of puppetry and mask to audiences around the country this autumn. The tour was complemented with educational resources and discussions made possible by grants from Wellcome, ACE, and ECT. In 2007 the company will be creating a new show, *Sticking Pins*, which takes a visceral yet humorous look at caring for ageing parents, whilst also working with Bath Theatre Royal's Egg Theatre towards a production of *His Dark Materials*. See: [www.fullbeamvisualtheatre.org.uk](http://www.fullbeamvisualtheatre.org.uk)

## GRAEAE THEATRE COMPANY

launches a new training initiative with leading drama schools. Scene Change is a yearlong project of INSET training and performance based workshops aiming to professionally develop drama tutors and expose young people with physical and sensory impairments to potential training opportunities open to them. The goal is to integrate Graeae's current bespoke, segregated training course into drama schools themselves to reflect the 21st century's more inclusive society. Thus, by joining together with leading drama schools Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts, ARKA, and Arts Educational Schools, Graeae has developed Scene Change. For more information contact Alex Bulmer, project co-ordinator, at [alex@graeae.org](mailto:alex@graeae.org) or call +44 (0) 20 7700 2455.

## HORSE+BAMBOO THEATRE

is developing a major new touring production, *Veil*, for 2007/8. Directed by Bob Frith and produced by David Edmunds, *Veil* will create a vivid tale of mystery, concealment, and revelation as two young women, separated and trapped by different cultures, are drawn inescapably to one another. Horse+Bamboo's last production, *In the Shadow of Trees*, recently won the Manchester Evening News Theatre Award and was also shortlisted for Best Design and Best Family Production.





BASH STREET THEATRE



FOURSLIGHT THEATRE



### NATURAL THEATRE

Bath-based Natural Theatre Company have performed in over 66 countries and won many awards whilst on their travels. They have performed on an Italian ski slope and a Spanish beach, and in a French market and a garden centre in Germany. Now people who have seen their world-renowned walkabout entertainment across Europe can read about the performances in Italian, Spanish, French, and German on the company's website – so Ciao, Hola, Bonjour and Willkommen! See: [www.naturaltheatre.co.uk](http://www.naturaltheatre.co.uk)

### NOLA RAE

Nola Rae will take *Mozart Preposterous!* to Lure in France on 3 February, followed by seven performances of *Exit Napoleon Pursued by Rabbits* in Argentan 6–9 February. Nola will be directing *Ben Hur* for Teater Manjana in Stockholm, 19–24 February. On 4 March, she will perform *Elizabeth's Last Stand* for a Charity Gala in Haywards Heath, with two more performances at the River Studios in Westacre, Norfolk, 9–10 March. On 21 March, she will give a repeat performance of *Exit Napoleon* for the Trinity School in Carmarthen. Preparations continue for the new show, *Home-Made Shakespeare*, with Swedish clown Lasse Akerlund, which will have its first performances in May. See: [www.nolarae.com](http://www.nolarae.com)

**OCKHAM'S RAZOR** are pleased to announce a successful Arts Council bid which launches a new era for the young aerial theatre company. Their new work *Arc* was premiered during the London International Mime Festival, and tells the story of three people set adrift in the wide expanse of a strangely claustrophobic sea: suspended in the air, their raft is too small to support them all – someone has to go. For further information about Ockham's Razor, their new production, and touring plans, call Alison King, Turtle Key Arts, on +44 (0)20 8964 5060, email [ali@turtlekeyarts.org.uk](mailto:ali@turtlekeyarts.org.uk), or see [www.turtlekeyarts.org.uk](http://www.turtlekeyarts.org.uk)

**ORGANIC THEATRE** will be touring *Sheepskin* nationally during the spring, before hosting a series of week-long international residencies throughout 2007 in collaboration with the Tobacco Factory, Bristol. Kathakali performer Sasi Nair, Brazilian Candomblé dancer Augusto Omolù, and Indian paratheatrical performance group Milòn Méla are among those participating. See [www.organictheatre.co.uk](http://www.organictheatre.co.uk)

### PRECAARIOUS

Bold and full of conviction, Precarious Dance have dropped the Dance and are now simply Precarious. The name change reflects the company's continuing intermedial approach, the next evolution of which will be their new show, *Druthers*, mixing live and virtual characters. Performance dates and more info on the website. Precarious's co-artistic director Karla Shacklock is also pleased to have bagged Alpha Associate Artist at Swindon Dance, meaning SD will be supporting the development of Precarious's work over the next year with resources and advice. Email [info@p-dance.co.uk](mailto:info@p-dance.co.uk) or see [www.p-dance.co.uk](http://www.p-dance.co.uk)

**PUNCHDRUNK'S** massive site-specific interpretation of *Faust* has extended its run, and will play Tuesday–Saturday until 31 March 2007. *Faust* has been produced in collaboration with the National Theatre. It is lottery-funded through Arts Council England and sponsored by Ballymore. Tickets: 020 7452 3000. See: [www.nationaltheatre.org.uk](http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk)

**THEATRE 0** are working on their new project *Delirium* with the writer Enda Walsh. *Delirium* is a free and outrageous adaptation of Fyodor Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, and is being developed in collaboration with The Barbican, London and The Abbey Theatre, Dublin. At the beginning of 2007, Theatre 0 held a three-week workshop in Barcelona on how writers, directors, and actors can work in a collaborative process that integrates the skills of each, and more workshops are planned for the future. Email: [info@theatre0.co.uk](mailto:info@theatre0.co.uk) or see the (fairly) new and (extremely) beautiful website: [www.theatre0.co.uk](http://www.theatre0.co.uk)

### THEATRE-RITES

Taking its inspiration from the notion that a genius is someone who, like children, keeps asking questions, Theatre-Rites creates magical worlds using theatre, dance, animated shapes, puppetry, and video. Originally commissioned by barbicantbite05 and the Young Vic for the Young Genius Season, the company's show *The Thought That Counts* received critical acclaim and will tour 15 February–15 April 2007. The tour opens at Warwick Arts Centre and includes performances at the Lilian Baylis Theatre, Sadler's Wells, and the Centro Cultural de Belém, Portugal. See: [www.theatre-rites.co.uk](http://www.theatre-rites.co.uk)

**THEATRE SARDINE** are being supported by Arts Council England to develop their show *Clown Atlas*, leading to a showcase performance at the Merlin Theatre in Frome on Friday 16 March 2007. *Clown Atlas* takes the 'play within a play' concept and gives it a good shaking. Six absurd stories, nested together like Russian dolls, explore themes of love, loss, and destruction. This is a romp through theatre history which pays homage to, and deconstructs, genres from cowboy films to Commedia dell'Arte. It will appeal to the whole family from 10 years upwards. Contact John Mead: 01761 436590, [sardinecircus@hotmail.com](mailto:sardinecircus@hotmail.com) or [www.theatresardine.co.uk](http://www.theatresardine.co.uk)

**THE WHALLEY RANGE ALLSTARS** have been commissioned by Manchester International Festival and the Whitworth Art Gallery to create a new installation/performance, *Living Room*. As the name might suggest, it's a room where the audience are part of the furniture, where they can activate parts of the furniture and where some parts of the furniture have their own independent life. It will be at The House of Fun at the GMEX Centre 7–8 July and then moves to the Whitworth Art Gallery for the rest of that month. For further details on this and their summer touring, see: [www.wras.org.uk](http://www.wras.org.uk)



# WHEN ORCHIDS FLY

FEATURES

LOVE, DEATH, AND MOTHERHOOD. CASSIE WERBER ON SHIMADAI, THE LATEST SITE RESPONSIVE WORK FROM SCARABEUS THEATRE

JULY 2006

I meet Daniela Essart at the North London flat she shares with partner Søren Nielsen and their daughter Naissa. They are moving offices, and consequently nothing is in the right place, while collaborators are beginning to gather from different parts of the world to begin rehearsal for the latest project by Scarabeus, the company run by Nielsen and Essart, and dedicated to visual theatre with an aerial edge. Essart, however, is undaunted, as the result of many months of work and thought begins to come together.

The house is full of books, pictures, and orchids. Hanging in the garden are a range of objects, glinting with reflected light and sprinkling sound when touched. On closer inspection, they prove to be constructed from knives, woks, and spatulas. Made by the company's regular composer, Jym Daly, they will provide some of the sound for a planned 'kitchen scene'. Images of domestic naturalism, however, are dispelled by the fantastic concepts with which Scarabeus have already begun to experiment for this piece, to be performed in a series of forests around Britain. And not just in the forests, but in the trees themselves. It is an aim stated by Scarabeus to interact with, rather than merely to occupy, chosen sites, while the company's experience in aerial choreography equips them fully to inhabit the natural architecture of the outdoor spaces in which this piece will take place.

*Shimadai* – *When Orchids Fly* has at its core the relationship between Essart and her mother, and the loss, through death, of that relationship. Also influential is the experience of being a mother herself, and the strange conjunction of these modes of being, which comes to pass towards the end of a life: as Essart puts it, 'becoming a mother to your mother'. The work is described as 'a homage to mothers', and Essart has extrapolated from her own experience to begin exploring more universal themes. At the same time, the personal remains embedded, a necessary component of this piece of work.

Exploration first began on *Shimadai* at Circelation in April 2005, where Essart and a small group of performers worked with Rose English to examine ideas of motherhood, and of loss. The germ of the idea was for a piece that employed all of the possibilities of theatre and aerial choreography, but had at root a simple subject, the life of an 'ordinary' woman, with quiet aspirations: family, home, running a shop. One aim was to 'make the ordinary extraordinary'; to create a work which celebrated all the facets of a life lived with understated passion.

Essart speaks of the grieving process; the various stages, the surprises, the changes that have come about both personally and in the work. Where at first the company had intended to create a spectacular event for an audience of a thousand, the creative process has led them down a different route. Influenced by the intimate nature of some of the stories involved, and sensitive to



the unique atmosphere of the woods where the work will be staged, the performance will now take place with a much smaller audience, journeying through the space, and potentially subdivided into even more intimate groups. Essart has accepted the fact that not every audience member will see everything, and this is part of the magic of the idea. Footage of Research and Development experiments shows performers disappearing in the distance, clues discovered amongst the trees, places in which the view is obscured by intervening leaves or the gathering dark, as well as moments of surprise and intense theatricality. At one point we come across a meal taking place above our heads; in another image three performers, including a young girl, draped in crimson, hang halfway between the canopy and the forest floor.





## SEPTEMBER 2006

My next meeting with Essart takes place in very different circumstances: in Queen's Wood, Highgate, where I am working as stage manager for a week of production leading to three performances. When I arrive, the late September weather is beautiful, and the woods seem full of promise. In the main clearing (which will become known to us as 'the bedroom') is a labyrinth drawn on the ground in salt or sand; the previous night a local coven of witches had used the space to mark the equinox. Respecting the rituals already present in the wood, and the wood itself, is important to the company, who are careful to leave as few traces as possible while working in a site, and none at all when they are gone. The Queen's Wood remains wholly open to the public throughout the time that we are working, so there is a constant stream of passers-by, dog-walkers and children who stop to watch moments of rehearsal in the trees. A frenetic week sees several last-minute changes. The space proposed for the final scene is up a long hill, and the audience must weave through trees to find it. A separate rigging system is needed, adding to the logistics of where the riggers and stage managers will be during the final part of the performance. Eventually, the need for a generator, without which the scene will happen in darkness, forces a change of location. Working outside means that everything we take for granted indoors – electricity, warmth, running water, the ability to keep things dry – poses a fresh challenge. The atmosphere of the woods remains a calming influence, however, and the weather stays warm and friendly, until a downpour forces the cancellation of Friday's opening performance. The next day, however, is bright, and we arrive early in the woods to begin the long and complex set-up.

The audience meets at the Queen's Wood Café, encountering performers who lead them, by two different paths, to the first arena, a large empty paddling pool, painted blue, and forming a natural stage with a backdrop of trees. The journey begins here. As the audience moves through the woods they encounter a set of characters, engaged in the more metaphorical journeys of living and growing. A girl sings an ecstatic song in a pool of blood, and the audience finds itself caught in a web of her making, where puppets copulate and fairytale red apples hang from the trees (apples which formed a daily and immediate sacrifice to the Queen's Squirrels). Performers are suspended in cocoons above the audience's heads, or on swings; an angel stands, improbably high, on the branch of a tree; a high-speed flight is glimpsed through the leaves. Music sometimes follows the audience, and sometimes leads them. As the evening grows darker, it becomes more of an adventure than a sedate passage. As the action progresses into darker and potentially more sinister scenes towards the emotional hub of the piece, the quality of the audience's attention seems to change markedly. Gathered around an arena of fallen branches, quiet descends as we are given a glimpse of grief, hooded and

raised from the dead leaves of the forest floor. The children, who had previously run ahead, asking questions and making comments, are now silent and watchful. A procession, carrying lights and singing, passes in the background.

In this incarnation of *Shimadai*, Scarabeus may not have achieved everything they wanted – due to a large extent to not-unfamiliar budget, time, and technical restrictions, to which all the care and technical expertise of aerial, with the rough-and-ready character of outdoor performance, must be accommodated – but the framework is there on which to build. The audience, leaving the now pitch-dark woods, have a range of reactions. Some are unhappy at having been made to walk so far and so uncertainly, trusting themselves to the darkened trees. Most, however, seem enchanted, emerging from the performance as from the total experience of a parallel world.

After a bereavement such as that experienced by some of those involved in creating the piece, there is, Essart explains, a sense of 'living in a time outside time'. *Shimadai* – a name referring both to a species of orchid and to a Japanese emblem for happiness – aims to render this for its audience, creating a complete, present experience, rather than a period of suspended disbelief or escapism. While the basis of the work is personal, there is no sense of exclusivity: 'My story is everyone's story,' states Essart simply, implying the mixture of sharing the intimate and exploring the universal which informs the work. Loss can lead to discovery, and the piece aims, ultimately, to celebrate an ordinary life, in the most extraordinary of circumstances.

When it returns, *Shimadai* will demand, and reward, our willingness to step outside comfortable theatres – and comfortable responses.

For more information, including performance dates and locations for *Shimadai* in 2007, visit [www.scarabeus.co.uk](http://www.scarabeus.co.uk) or email [info@scarabeus.co.uk](mailto:info@scarabeus.co.uk).

CREDIT FOR ALL IMAGES: SHIMADAI  
PHOTOS ABBY GREWCOCK



# TOMORROW'S CIRCUS TODAY

## CIRCUS FUTURES: DONNA CLOSE WAS THERE

Circus Futures took place over two days in Bristol on 10th and 11th October 2006. The event consisted of a conference and a performance showcase with plenty of opportunities to network. So far, so familiar. However, Circus Futures was one of the most inspiring and well conceived art development events I have been to. What was different?

The conference elements, peppered sparingly over the two days, delivered high-level practitioners, producers, and other arts professionals from the circus world, and provided both historical and contemporary context for debate and discussion. The tone of these presentations and discussions set Circus Futures apart: it was entertaining, informal, and warm, as well as interesting, well researched and informative. Bring on the clowns... Ali Williams from NoFit State Circus was a star turn with a hilarious look at how hard-won critical and artistic success had still meant a three-year fight for financial survival. Charlie Holland's breakneck historical tour of British circus was fascinating stuff. It particularly struck me that the same names kept on appearing over the decades. It was clear there are a dedicated bunch of trailblazing individuals and organisations that keep on pushing forward, taking chances and refusing to bow out. Naturally most of these were at the conference: Gerry Cottle, Carol Gandey, Bim Mason, Ali Williams, and of course Charlie Holland himself.

The conference programme provided plenty of time to network informally. We were ferried from venues en masse in double-decker buses. The organisers know that we circus folk all have a soft spot for mystery trips in big diesel vehicles!

The showcase was the heart of Circus Futures and was innovative in its format in a number of ways. The Circus Futures steering group approached three producers from different backgrounds to curate their programme from the 50 showcase submissions. The showcases would all take place in different venues, highlighting the variety of venues where circus can be programmed and also showcasing the facilities and resources that Bristol offers the circus community. Bristol has stated its

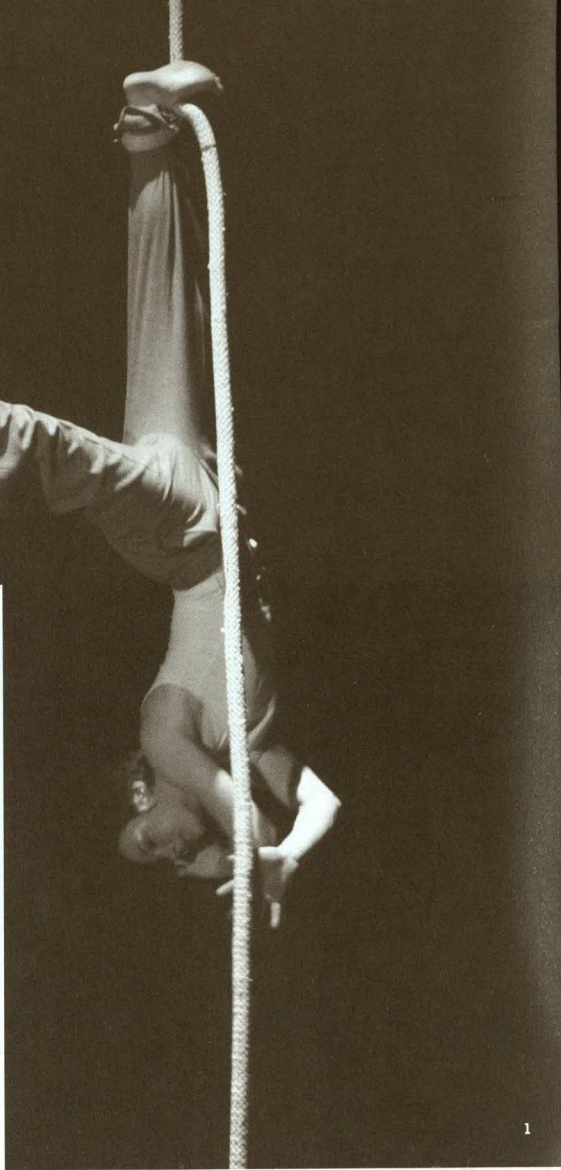
ambition to host a National Circus Festival – it appears ripe to do so.

Back to the showcases. Chloe Dear was first up. Chloe is an independent producer specialising in street arts and one of the key people in NASA – the National Association of Street Artists. Chloe's showcase was presented at Clifton College's Redgrave Theatre in Bristol, a 300-capacity proscenium-arch theatre used by local professional and amateur groups. The programme concentrated on solo and doubles skills-based contemporary circus and was compered by comedian Steve Cousins. The highlight was the circus-theatre performance from Matilda Leyser, using rope and physical clowning to take us through a life journey from birth to death. Tanya Scully presented two aerial dance pieces: one solo and one with Helen Finch. The latter piece was performed on a specially constructed aerial frame creating three horizontal bars and two vertical bars for the performers to utilise in their physical dialogue. Natalie Reckert demonstrated immense strength and grace in her slow and rhythmic hand-balancing piece. Miguel Munoz rather ambitiously took on the archetypal tramp-clown persona for his combination of sleight of hand, juggling, and object manipulation. It did not feel that anything new was being added to that tradition and the awareness of the greats that had made the tramp-clown persona their own weakened the performance. Levity was a doubles dance piece using rope, which looked beautiful but was ultimately unsatisfying, being neither sufficiently narrative- nor skill-based. I was left with the impression that this was primarily a showcase of recent graduates from Circomedia and Circus Space, although this was not stated. The pieces often felt like degree shows rather than fully formed professional performances and I was left wondering what context this could be programmed into. This was a key issue debated at the conference and so may have been a matter of design rather than accident.

The second showcase took place in St Paul's Church – a beautiful venue, now part of the Circomedia campus. This showcase was presented by Bill Gee, former

Independent Street Arts Network (ISAN) coordinator and now an ACE-supported creative producer based at Artsadmin. Bill's showcase focused on theatre-led circus performance. This included a powerful piece of aerial dance and film, exploring identity and images of Arabic women, created by Shunt's Layla Rosa. Bongo Bolero's Richard Durnford performed his breathtaking pole show – a combination of strength, grace, and death-defying bravado that had the audience gasping. Zu Aerial Theatre performed their new dance piece Little Red Dress, which, while it had some beautiful moments, would still benefit from more tension and drama between the two characters. The highlight of the showcase, and of the event, came from a new young company called Ockham's Razor. This was one of the most successful attempts at integrating high-quality theatre practice with highly skilled circus. Following an appearance at the London International Mime Festival in January they will be touring the UK. Catch them when you can...

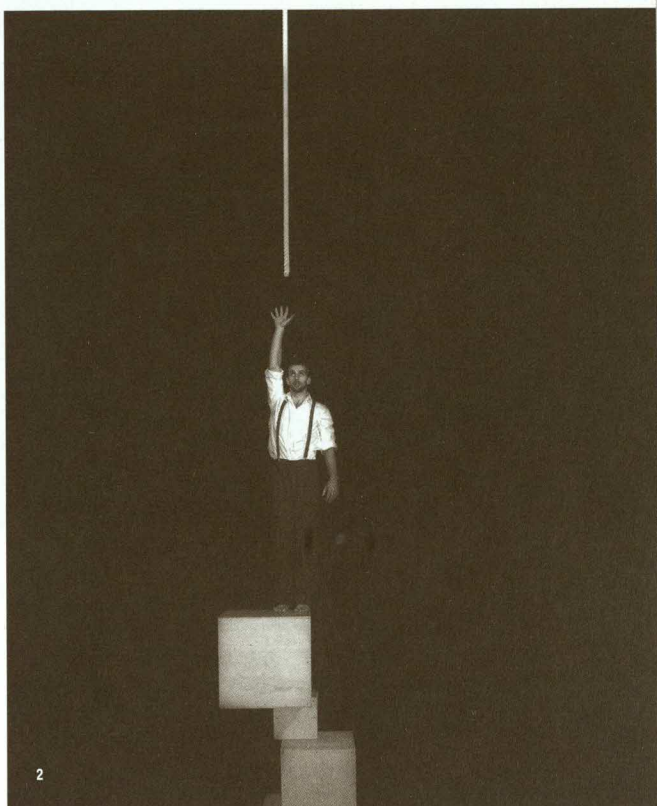
The final showcase was presented by Bristol's own Billy Alwen of Cirque Bijou. It was presented at the Netherlands National Circus Big Top on the Downs. This showcase focused on character-based circus performance and, intriguingly, was 'compered' by a mime: the excellent Fraser Hooper aka Strawberry the Clown. The





# ATTENTION TO OBJECTS

ROPES, PULLEYS, CHAIRS AND CRADLES. PHYSICS AND THE METAPHYSICAL. JOHN ELLINGSWORTH OFFERS AN ALTERNATIVE VIEW OF CIRCUS FUTURES



diverse showcase included comic juggling and object manipulation from Sebastien Valade; Jon Hicks with his unique visual arts speciality act; and a beautiful romantic cradle act from young company Swings and Roundabout. It ended with Cirque Bijou, replete with angle-grinding, pyro, film and dance music. Interestingly, this felt like the most old-fashioned piece in the programme: nothing dates as quickly as 'new', and this was 'new circus', '90s style.

The showcase artists were all invited to attend discussions and showcases with the promoters and stayed in the same hotel as delegates, allowing for lots of interaction and integration. Artists were all paid bursaries to cover their costs including travel, accommodation and performer fees. This was a crucial factor in the artists feeling respected and an essential part of the debate.

The conference element had a practical focus and this meant discussions were lively, rooted in the real world and ambitious for hard outcomes. There was a strong conviction that the occasion should neither be merely a talking shop nor just a supermarket for bookers! The ambition of the conference was to remove barriers to touring contemporary circus work. There was a clear message that everyone involved had a role to play: artists by packaging their work in a way that is attractive to small and mid scale venues and festivals; venues and festivals in making rigging information and programme policies accessible; and producers for being imaginative in seeking to build links between the two.

The focus was on small and mid scale indoor contemporary circus/theatre/dance fusion and most of the practical

recommendations of the conference would not have been relevant to the tented circuses in attendance. The Nofit State presentation touched on the serious feasibility and sustainability issues in touring large scale circus work but the conference did not explore how these might be addressed. It is a complex subject that perhaps deserves a dedicated space for discussion. This again illustrates the rich diversity of the circus community in the UK and which, despite the barriers that might be in their way, demonstrates the solidarity and tenacity that means circus just won't be stopped!

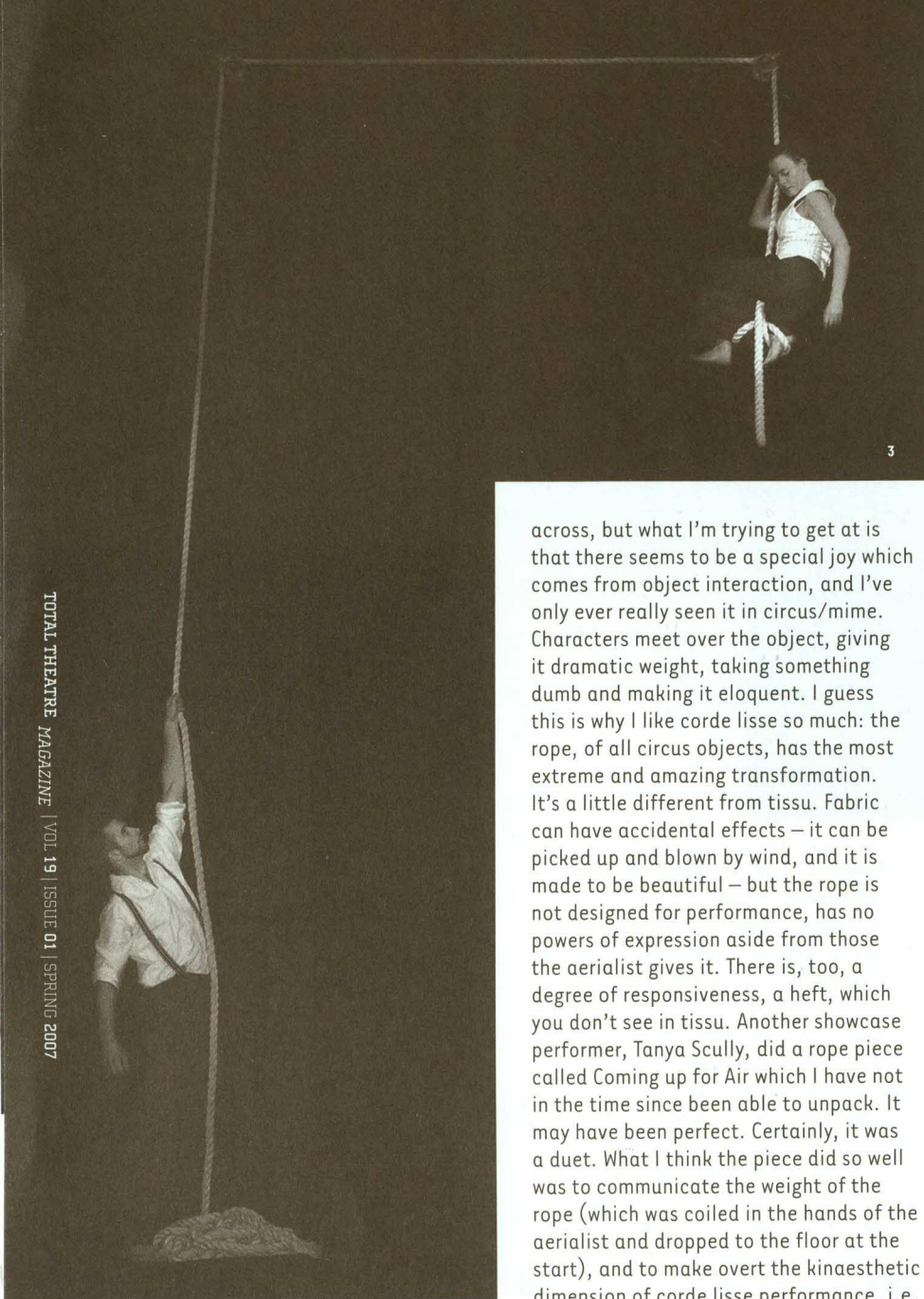
The Circus Futures event was fantastic. It hit the right balance of debate and performance, highlighted the enormous variety and depth of circus and provided practical information for producers, venues and programmers to encourage them to book circus work. Organisers Verena Cornwall and Kate Hartoch – please take a bow!

As you would expect, circus being a largish subject and the future an even larger one, the Circus Futures conference hit upon quite a few different topics, but one question kept coming up – and in a way undercut everything else – which was: How do you get circus a wider audience without compromising it artistically? There was a heavily subscribed open discussion session, Changing Perceptions of Circus, which heated the debate and brought it to boil. The room divided (very generally) into people who felt circus skills were an end in themselves, and those who felt they needed to be a part of some larger artistic design. Messrs. Mason (Bim) and Cottle (Gerry) were very polite while simultaneously shooting each other from cannons or whatever in their minds. Cirque du Soleil was roundly badmouthed until a woman who had been trying to get a word in for about twenty minutes introduced herself as from Cirque du Soleil. I think someone might have suggested there was room for both commercial and artistic success, but this was not a future in which everyone had faith. Rachel Clare (producer and co-artistic director of Crying Out Loud), who works with James and Aurélia Thiérree, reiterated what she had said on an earlier Making Creative Relationships Happen panel and talked about how certain dramatic structures and techniques from theatre – she mentioned recurring motifs – can be mapped onto circus, imposing the psychological world onto the physical. One example she gave was the scene in *La Veillée des Abysses* where James Thiérree repeatedly tries to sit down on a chair, and cannot.

Now, *La Veillée des Abysses* was the first piece of circus I ever saw. I haven't forgotten it. Afterwards, I couldn't adequately describe how it worked on me, but there was something I saw at Circus Futures which might have unlocked the experience.

At a showcase in the Circomedia church, aerial theatre company Ockham's Razor performed a piece called Every Action. For Every Action, they had a special piece of kit: a 25-metre rope which ran over two pulleys, spaced (I am guessing) about fifteen feet apart and (I am still guessing) thirty feet up, meaning that if an aerialist wanted to climb one end of the rope, there would have to be an aerialist





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across, but what I'm trying to get at is that there seems to be a special joy which comes from object interaction, and I've only ever really seen it in circus/mime. Characters meet over the object, giving it dramatic weight, taking something dumb and making it eloquent. I guess this is why I like corde lisse so much: the rope, of all circus objects, has the most extreme and amazing transformation. It's a little different from tissu. Fabric can have accidental effects – it can be picked up and blown by wind, and it is made to be beautiful – but the rope is not designed for performance, has no powers of expression aside from those the aerialist gives it. There is, too, a degree of responsiveness, a heft, which you don't see in tissu. Another showcase performer, Tanya Scully, did a rope piece called *Coming up for Air* which I have not in the time since been able to unpack. It may have been perfect. Certainly, it was a duet. What I think the piece did so well was to communicate the weight of the rope (which was coiled in the hands of the aerialist and dropped to the floor at the start), and to make overt the kinaesthetic dimension of corde lisse performance, i.e. the transference of energy and movement from one body to another. It matters that visual performance is not exactly visual. What I mean is that you are gathering data with your eyes, but you are understanding or experiencing it on the edges of tactile and kinaesthetic sense – in a sympathy of bodies. There was a showcase piece called *What if...?* where aerialist Layla Rosa did a rope piece blindfolded, and all I can think to say about it is that it seemed right that she was blindfolded.

There is more artifice in the equipment Ockham's Razor used, but I think the advantage of specialist equipment is that it can make it easier to establish a scenario. In other words, the custom rig is the set. Do you know what a cradle is? There was an act in the last Circus Futures showcase which used one, and it turns out a cradle is a rectangular metal frame with two tiny wooden platforms at the narrow ends. There is a small amount of necessary padding. One person can hook their knees over and their feet under two sides of the cradle, and from that person a whole other person can hang. In the showcase act, by

Swings and Roundabouts, a shoeshine boy sits looking listless until a lady in finery comes along. He starts to shine her shoes, but she slips out of them and climbs a rope ladder to the high-up cradle. She is ready to throw herself off when the shoeshine boy realises and goes after her. Then he continually catches her as she continually throws herself off until she softens and is saved. So what is the cradle? It doesn't represent any particular thing, not a clifftop or a roof edge, but it works as a psychic precipice and an arena for a dramatic act. It is the set.

Go back to James and the chair he cannot sit in. Pretty clearly the chair is more than just a prop or a piece of equipment – it's metaphysical terrain. And a chair. I think that aside from his skill (because there are many skilled circus performers), the reason James Thiérree is reaching new audiences is that he uses things to express emotions. It sounds simple, but really it's amazing – to see the reality of your inner life in the objects of your everyday existence. The chair is no different to the custom equipment – the cradle or Ockham's rig – it is just a stripped down version of same.

I am not sure much of circus is theatre, but I am even less sure that it matters. If the proposition here is that the skills that make circus performers extraordinary – the skills that set them apart – should be used to represent and animate what everybody holds in common, then, Yes, I agree. Yes.

The Circus Futures conference took place in Bristol 10–11 October 2006. See: [www.circusfutures.org](http://www.circusfutures.org)

Ockham's Razor have recently appeared at the London International Mime Festival and are currently (spring 2007) touring. See: [www.ockhamsrazortheatre.co.uk](http://www.ockhamsrazortheatre.co.uk)

Layla Rosa is a founder member of the Shunt collective. The installation *What if...?* is performed with Geneva Foster Gluck.

Tanya Scully and Swings and Roundabouts can be contacted on [reachingseraphim@hotmail.com](mailto:reachingseraphim@hotmail.com) and [kats.rosen@hotmail.com](mailto:kats.rosen@hotmail.com)

La Veillée Des Abysses, James Thiérree's hugely successful follow up to *The Junebug Symphony*, continues to tour the world. He and sister Aurelia Thiérree are produced in the UK by Crying Out Loud. For further information on current and future Thiérree productions email [info@cryingoutloud.org](mailto:info@cryingoutloud.org)

For further general information on UK circus, see the Circus Arts Forum website [www.circusarts.org.uk](http://www.circusarts.org.uk)

IMAGE 1: TANYA SCULLY  
IMAGES 2 & 3: OCKHAM'S RAZOR. PHOTOS JULIET JENSEN

on the other to act as a counterweight. The way it plays out is that the four performers come across the rope and get curious, exploring in what combinations they can climb it. Somewhere in the middle, they've gotten to this position: the heaviest, strongest performer has ahold of either end of the rope; the lightest performer has ahold of the middle; both are grounded. So the rope starts with Performer 1, goes up to the first pulley, goes down to Performer 2, up to the second pulley, then back to 1. They kind of look at each other, like, What now? Performer 1 has an idea and coils the ropes around his beefy forearms. They look like superhero gauntlets; he's pretty pleased with himself. Then Performer 2 has an idea and starts yanking the middle of the rope so that the gauntlets yank up the guy's arms, as though he's a puppet. He endures this for awhile, it's pretty funny, and then, suddenly, as the music swells and shifts, he runs backward so that the rope's middle rises up towards the pulleys, catching under performer 2. It turns into a giant swing. It took a lot of words to describe that, and maybe it doesn't come





# CASTING THE NET WIDER

BIM MASON REPORTS ON A BRISTOL-BASED INITIATIVE FOR CIRCUS AND STREET ARTS

In 1998 I called a meeting of Bristol-based practitioners that brought together a diverse range of people who had an interest in circus-theatre. These included academics, street performers, writers, a headmaster, and the former editor of *The Catch* magazine. It also included representatives of the many professional companies that had begun to establish themselves in the city. Out of this meeting there came a desire to increase local networking and share common opportunities and problems. In 2002 Helen Crocker set up an informal lobbying group for the sector which named itself CAST (Circus Arts Street Theatre).

In 2003 CAST was given impetus by two significant events. One was the fact that five Bristol street-theatre companies went to Newcastle for the same festival – to help that city with its bid to be cultural capital. This seemed patently absurd and Bristol City Council was duly informed of it. The second was an artist-led initiative by *Desperate Men* who set up the first Bristol street arts showcase, *Outside In*, which attracted over 1,500 people to see 80 different local performers, all of whom gave their services for free, in order to demonstrate the wealth of talent and experience that Bristol had on its doorstep.

Various people involved in *Circomedia*, *Desperate Men*, and *Cirque Bijou* then re-energised CAST's activities and together secured funding for Peter Boyden to draw together a manifesto which made a strong case for investment and recognition and identified some of the needs of the local sector. These included creating opportunities to showcase work, research into potential performance/rehearsal spaces, high-level advocacy, and the idea of having a creative producer to nurture the development of both emerging practitioners and established companies. CAST was soon joined by others including

Albany Artists (a loose collective of practitioners who share a training space), *Fair Play* (street theatre), the internationally renowned Mike Wright (who has his own flying trapeze company, *Above & Beyond*, as well as being *Circomedia*'s main aerial teacher), *Circus Maniacs* (a training school), other local performers, and representatives from Bristol City Council.

CAST now operates with the support of Theatre Bristol, also formed in 2003, a strategic partnership bringing together live art, experimental theatre, circus, and street theatre which includes venues, touring companies, community theatre, education and training establishments, and local government. The aim of Theatre Bristol is to generate more interest, support, and participation for all types of theatre so that, rather than being in competition with each other, everyone benefits. In sectors where there are many independent artists, Theatre Bristol can be more effective by consulting closely with artist-led 'hub' initiatives such as CAST because it will be in closer contact with the grass roots. Because CAST had already articulated its needs through its manifesto, Theatre Bristol has been able to acquire funds to deliver most of its original objectives. So far the work of the creative producer has been the most significant, not only by nurturing companies, but also identifying gaps (which become opportunities for companies to fill) and, where there is an unhealthy overlap, seeing how each organisation can play to its individual strengths, increasing specialisation so as to distinguish the areas of competing companies. Theatre Bristol has funded several creative producers with different remits (e.g. visual and physical theatre, live arts and experimental theatre). The post of creative producer for circus and street theatre is

currently occupied by Briar Monro.

Rather than being an exclusive organisation, CAST is an open, informal partnership – anyone who works locally in the sector is welcome to come along to meetings and contribute to the decisions on the way forward. It has no administrator or constitution. Inevitably, those who do attend meetings have more influence over decision making but they are conscious of doing so for the whole sector rather than out of self-interest. The open-handed approach mitigates against the mutually detrimental competition that is often the norm. Members support ideas that may have no direct benefit to their own work. CAST exists because, as a partnership, it has enough critical mass to give weight to mutually beneficial proposals that would otherwise be easily ignored. It acts on behalf of individual artists when liaising with funders or promoters. It is able to gather and collate statistics and identify sector needs. For example, the need to identify more venues and spaces for training and performance was addressed by research which provided details of height, rigging points, access, power, and persons to contact. This information was then fed in to the Theatre Bristol website for easy open access by all.

A few key members of the group have been working in circus and street theatre for over thirty years; throughout most of that time the sector has been undervalued and under-resourced and they are motivated by belief in the value (and enjoyment) of the work rather than as a commercial enterprise. The long years of working in adverse conditions have given them a sense of group solidarity which has led to an attitude of supporting the whole rather than pursuing self-interest. The more commercially minded entrepreneurs are less keen to get involved. Similarly, on a national level, the Circus Arts Forum has until recently had less cohesion because it has required independent, self-interested producers to work collaboratively for the benefits of others.

Moreover CAST has worked smoothly because political and artistic values are broadly shared. There is a healthy balance between a desire for oppositional,



challenging work and an awareness of the importance of appealing to a wide section of the public. Most practitioners do some form of corporate work; the question is how much they design the majority of their work for a market which, whilst not being opposed to a contemporary look, cannot incorporate separate themes or difficult issues, preferring pretty spectacle and undemanding styles.

It might be argued that this constructive co-existence may only be possible with the triple benefits of an expanding economy, increased funding, and a widening market as circus and street theatre become ever more popular.

Arguably the feel-good, mutually supportive quality of the Bristol scene has its drawbacks. There has sometimes been a tendency to avoid rigorous critique with friends giving a false picture of the quality of the work in relation to developments elsewhere.

The challenge now is for them to risk more by experimentation in both content and form. It is for these reasons that CAST is proposing an increasing number of masterclasses from national and international figures – such as that held in October 2005 with the internationally renowned performance provocateur Leo Bassi, which challenged local artists to use their craft in different ways. What If (a professional development project delivered by CAST in collaboration with Kingswood Foundation) will continue to provide free rehearsal space, willing performers, and technical/directorial support for those artists who have the germ of an idea to explore. Also planned is a programme to enhance the skills and widen the vision of local directors.

Having achieved its initial aims and with a new part-time advocate coming into post, CAST is developing plans to broaden, deepen, and highlight its impact, continuing to embed circus and street theatre activity at a very local level: through youth and community projects, development and support of emerging companies, through commissions and encouraging non-traditional approaches such as small-scale performances in unusual locations. Looking further forward it is hoped that the new advocate will be able to attract serious strategic investment and funding for the long-term programming of festivals, and work towards relocating the Albany Artists in a fit-for-purpose building that can also act as a creation centre. The ecology is at present far from complete but given the rate of progress in the last five years the future is generally viewed with optimism.



Bim Mason is, with Helen Crocker, the co-founder and co-director of Circomedia. Circomedia highlights for 2007 include: Mask Making with Bim Mason 3–4 March. Circomedia one year diploma students showcase at Glastonbury Festival 23–24 June. Circomedia End of Year Show at Bristol Old Vic 27–30 June. For full details of the above, and for information on the year-round full and part-time professional training programmes and workshops offered by Circomedia, see [www.circomedia.com](http://www.circomedia.com)

CAST events for 2007 include: What If... 10–18 Feb. A programme of workshops and an exploration space for circus and street artists based in Bristol and the Southwest. Street Arts & Circus Masterclasses with Phelim McDermott and Marcello Magni 16–19 February. See [www.theatrebristol.co.uk](http://www.theatrebristol.co.uk)

## A BRISTOL TIMELINE

- 1986 Fool Time founded by Richard Ward and Franki Anderson
- 1987 Desperate Men move to Bristol
- 1992 Fool Time move to larger premises in Kingswood, Bristol
- 1993 Fool Time collapse
- 1994 Circomedia founded by Bim Mason and Helen Crocker in a converted school in Kingswood, Bristol.
- 1998 Cirque Bijou formed
- Circomedia holds first meeting of local circus interests
- 2002 CAST formed
- 2003 Outside In street arts showcase produced by Desperate Men
- 2003 CAST manifesto produced
- Cirque Bijou begin to produce section of Harbourside Festival
- 2004 Theatre Bristol commences operation
- 2005 Circomedia open second site in St Paul's church
- Leo Bassi workshops held as part of Theatre Bristol conference
- Creative Producer for Circus and Street Theatre post begins
- 2006 What If... creative week. Circus Futures showcase and conference
- 2007 CAST advocate begins work

ALL IMAGES COURTESY OF CIRCOMEDIA





# A SACRED SPACE



## MIRIAM KING MEETS FRANCIS ALEXANDER, CURATOR OF THE SACRED SEASON OF THEATRE-BASED LIVE ART AT CHELSEA THEATRE

People, places, and beliefs we treasure. Relationships, religion, punk, death – and shepherd's pie.

At the Chelsea Theatre, six major international performers/companies presented their take on some of the above, and nominated an artist from the next generation to make a complementary brand new show. In the autumn 2006 season, *Get in at the Start*, we saw the major artists' work placed in a double bill with the 'next generation' artists' new work-in-progress. The spring 2007 season, *The Finished Article*, has the next generation artists re-presenting their initial work after a period of mentoring and redevelopment. A selection of the established artists also re-present their own progressed works. The six major performers/companies (Goat Island, Ron Athey, Kazuko Hohki, Gary Carter, Mem Morrison, and Third Angel) were selected on the basis that curator Francis Alexander 'adored them, is stimulated by them – and they bring to performance new, fresh and invigorating ways'.

The unique feature of *Sacred* is that these major artists select and mentor the next generation of emerging artists (Meline Danielewicz, Sheila Ghelani, Action Hero, Helena Hunter, Dominic Johnson, and Silke Mansholt). Francis feels it's 'important to ask the artists who the exciting next generation are' rather than the curator choosing. Half knew immediately who they wanted to work with; Lois Kiedan from Live Arts Development Agency and Nikki Tomlinson from Arts Admin were consulted to offer suggestions for suitable matches for the other half.

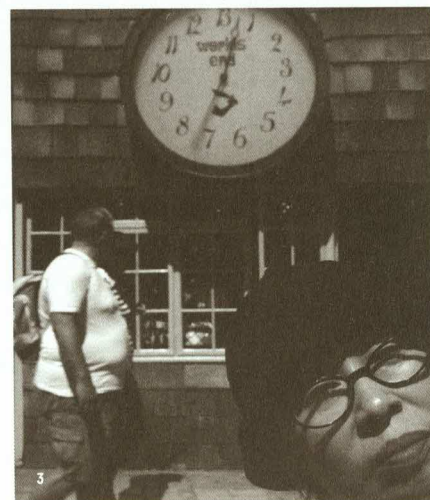
During *Get in at the Start*, all artists have the chance to perform and develop a work over several nights if they so choose, affording an opportunity for the work to breathe. This approach works for some artists, yet is inappropriate for others who may prefer a one-nighter. Chelsea Theatre offers an especially intimate atmosphere – it's a rare treat to be in such a focused

space, with nowhere to hide!

It's a brave thing to present something unfinished to be looked at and assessed by an audience. Silke Mansholt, mentored by Goat Island, presented a subtle and delicate performance. Benefiting from the chance to relax into it over several nights, Silke's *Welcome to the Real World* was wonderful – captivating and shadowy. As Francis says, 'She pulled out all the stops and really thrived in the space.' Each night concluded with an audience question-and-answer session. For Francis, the point of the season is that the audience is allowed in at various stages in the artists' work in progress. It's exciting to know that you're in at the start of something that might completely change by the time the work is complete (whatever 'complete' means), for the artists to enter into a dialogue with the audience, and for the artists to see how the audience has received the work and how this may help sculpt the piece.

Mentoring began in late spring 2006 and was reviewed after the *In at The Start* autumn showings, whereby the artists sat together with their mentors and discussed the progress and usefulness of the mentoring. Have aims been met? Does the methodology need to be changed, or the approach to the work adapted, after the first showing? The mentoring continues during the redevelopment process until the *Finished Article* presentations. Each mentoring happens in different ways according to each relationship. To work with an emergent artist is, says Francis, 'a responsibility and huge privilege'.

This is the first funded season of live art at Chelsea Theatre and a pilot season for future programming. Francis considers what he is promoting to be 'theatre-based live art'. He aims to bring theatre audiences to new forms of work: 'We're trying to convert traditional theatre audiences into live art audiences and trying to make it as easy as possible for them to do something they ordinarily wouldn't do... they are going into a



building that calls itself a theatre, not a gallery or exhibition space... We hope the audience will have had an experience that has changed their perceptions.' For Francis, what he calls 'live art theatre' is moving in a direction away from a more established way of doing things 'and that's where the excitement lies...'

How this process of early-stage performance, audience feedback, mentoring, redevelopment, and final performance will work is yet to be seen, and will of course vary wildly from performer to performer, performance to performance. Yet in all cases Chelsea Theatre and the vision of Francis Alexander allows the rare and richly valuable opportunity for explorative time, space, and constructive feedback—ongoing communication about the work through all stages of an artist's creative process, allowing a synergy of ideas to emerge. 'Theatre-based live art' has found a new and welcoming home.

For full details on the *Sacred* season, including dates for *The Finished Article* solo shows, see [www.chelseatheatre.org.uk](http://www.chelseatheatre.org.uk)

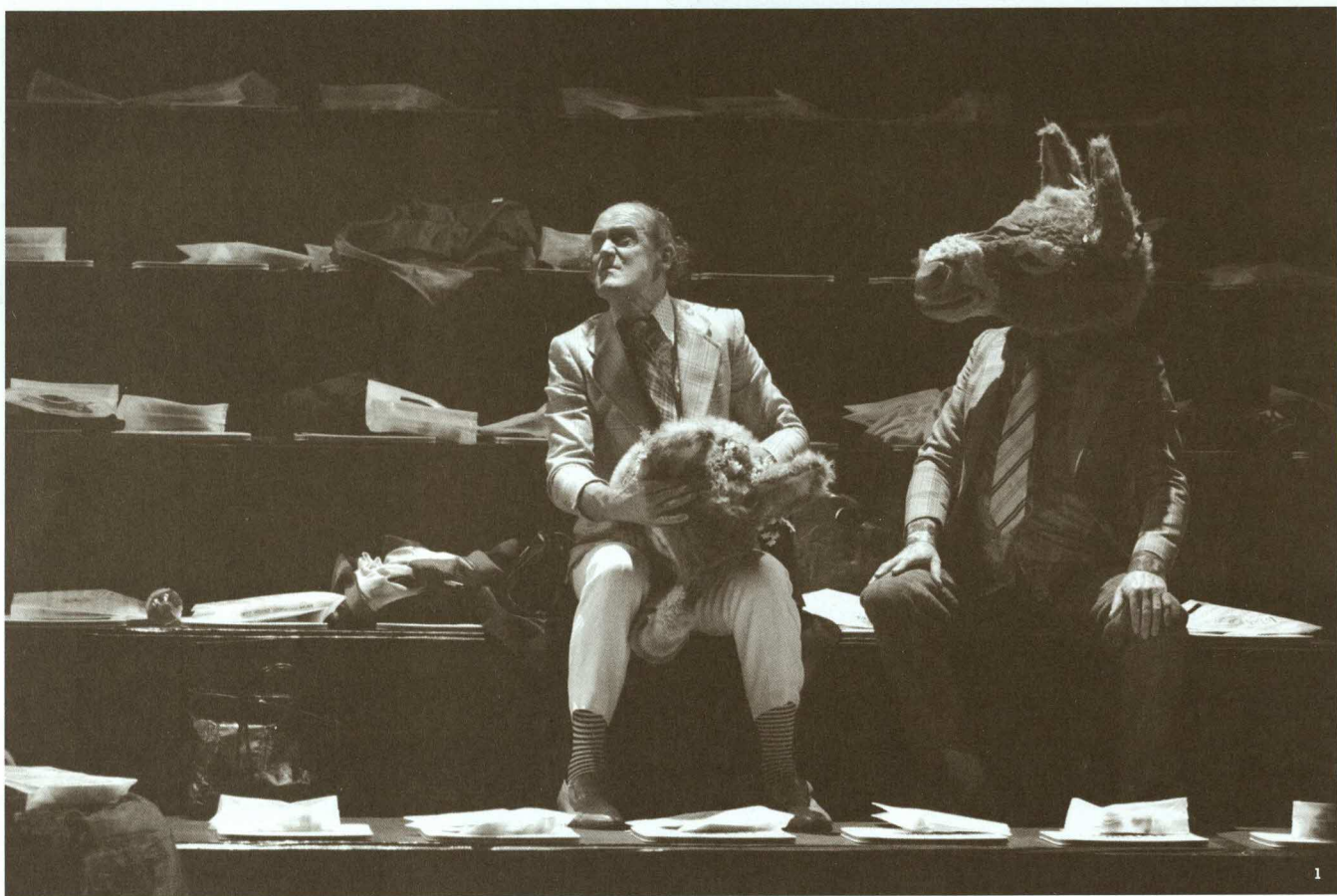
IMAGE 1: ACTION HERO - HISTORY  
IMAGE 2: SILKE MANSHOLT  
IMAGE 3: KAZUKO HOHKI - OH DOH



BEST OF BRITISH

# FORKBEARD FANTASY – STARS OF STAGE AND SCREEN

EDWARD TAYLOR PAYS HOMAGE TO A COMPANY OF MAKERS AND DOERS



In the early '80s Jeremy Shine had set up Radiator, a Manchester-based agency that promoted alternative theatre in all its forms in a wide variety of venues. You could see everything, from performance art to dance to community theatre, as long as you were prepared to seek it out. Forkbeard Fantasy were always one of the highlights of this period and 25 or so years later, they are still a highlight, but these days they tend to play in bigger more prestigious venues – and quite right too.

Forkbeard Fantasy started life as Tim and Chris Britton. They came out of the explosion of performance art in the '70s and developed their craft performing in the arts labs and festivals that were a feature of that period. Established venues were at a premium in those days, so much of the work took place in pubs, parks, clubs, the streets, and galleries. Early shows saw them working with their brother Simon and notorious performance artist Ian Hinchliffe, as well as other performers later to make names for themselves on the circuit. Despite the fact that they were extremely active, most texts on UK performance art tend to ignore them, possibly because their work involves a

strong element of humour – apparently the greatest sin you can commit if you are a performance artist. Fortunately, this kind of inverted snobbery hasn't hindered them...

Their work always involves strong visual elements. Their sets had some sort of mechanical element to them and costumes were often highly and heavily sculptural in form. In the early '80s they started to incorporate Tim's cartoon films into their shows in order to expand the worlds they were creating. They were also joined by maker extraordinaire Penny Saunders whose adventurous approach has proved a perfect complement to their work.

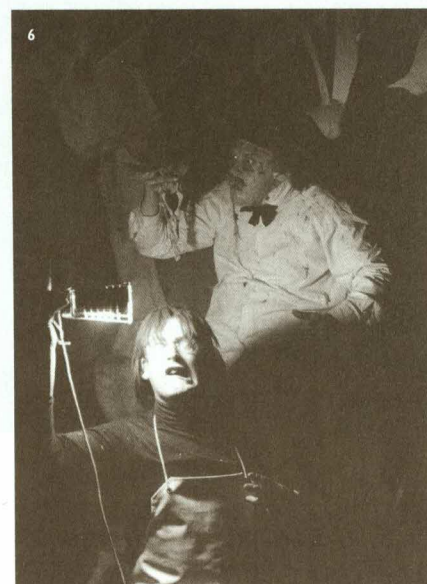
A good example of their early work would be The Brontosaurus Show, made in 1983. This featured two palaeontologists, and the set was the ribcage and leg-bones of a teenage brontosaurus (I'm guessing it was a teenage creature as the adult version would have been too big to fit into the small art centres and village halls that made up their touring circuit). During the show a cartoon film is shown which illustrates the work of great palaeontologists of the past, and another film shows a Siberian dinosaur dig

in all its glory. As the show develops they unpack crates. One features the telescopic neck of the brontosaurus and the second features the skull. The completion of the brontosaurus skeleton in front of your eyes is a lovely theatrical moment: the skull contains a secret which will change the very course of history.

Scientists and the introverted, hermetic world in which they operate is a recurring feature of their work. The scientists are invariably squabbling over different theories and there's a whiff of competition in the air which allows Tim and Chris to add their relationship as brothers into the equation.

Their touring shows came in two sizes. One was a relatively simple get in on the day, do the show, get out on the day affair, and the other involved a day's build beforehand and allowed their visual imaginations to really go to town. Ghosts, made in 1984, is a great example of this and it proved to be a real breakthrough for the company. The story is of a ghost-hunter and to begin with you see a cobweb-covered set which is a haunted house. A film, projected onto a screen stretched behind a window-frame with ragged net





curtains, shows a view of the countryside out of the window. You see the ghost-hunter in the fields, approaching the house. He peers in the window, there's a bit of a noisy kerfuffle, and he falls into the set onstage. Thus began a relationship between film and live performance that Forkbeard have developed ever since in ever more inventive ways.

In the mid '80s the Brittonioni Brothers, a pair of hilarious film directors with a dodgy taste in clothes who were forever winging their way over to international film festivals, started to present short feature films alongside the touring theatre shows. It was these two characters who were chosen to be involved in performances where the performers were forever climbing in and out of the film. At times you were watching someone who was half celluloid and half real. This technique eventually fed into the full-length touring shows such as *A Serious Leak* (1989), in which two live characters argued with two characters on film, or *The Barbers of Surreal* (1998) in which the performers stood in front of a mirror whose reflections were in fact film and where the view out of the window was a film which ran throughout the show.

Forkbeard's sets have always done far more than just stand there and look pretty, but in latter years they became ever more elaborate and intricate to the point where all their touring shows required a day to get in, and they moved from being a small-scale to a mid-scale company. This had its downside in that their touring network got a little smaller, but it also meant that they could stretch out more with the technical back-up to each touring show, which is a definite plus for the audience.

*Shooting Shakespeare* (2004) featured a sequence where technicians in brown coats created a backdrop for a silent film to be made of *The Tempest*. It was a seamless mix of live performance and film and you really couldn't tell what was real and what wasn't. The only thing you could do was sit back and immerse yourself in the experience.

Speaking personally, Forkbeard Fantasy have always been an inspiration for me, not only for the quality of their work but also for their generosity after the show when they would offer words of encouragement and quite happily pass on tips on how and where to get work – a boost to any emerging artist or company. I know of other people who feel the same as me. By all accounts, they were the first performance artists to be in residence in a school and they have carried on this educational activity, as well as running professional training and development programmes (often in the form of Summer Schools) which take place at their home base in the South West of England. This big workspace is alive with objects, puppets, and gadgets from past shows that now feature in interactive exhibitions which form an increasing aspect of their activity. As much thought has gone into how they can come alive for visitors to an exhibition as to how they were used in combination with performers in the shows.

The company are 30 years old but their fertile imaginations and ability to ring new changes on familiar techniques show no sign of slowing down. A pint of what they are on would be beneficial to us all!

Forkbeard's next show, *Invisible Bonfires*, is scheduled to tour in the spring of 2007 and again in the autumn/winter of 2007/8. For further information email studios.forkbeard@virgin.net

The 2007 Summer Schools will take place on 29 June–6 July and 13–20 July.

For further information on all the company's projects, see [www.forkbeardfantasy.co.uk](http://www.forkbeardfantasy.co.uk)

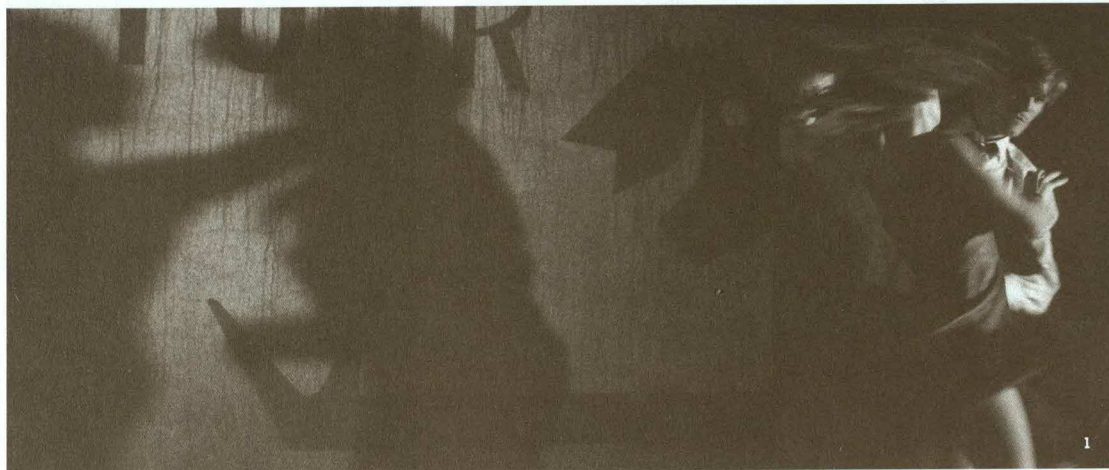
IMAGE 1: *ROUGH MAGYCK* AT RSC (2006)  
IMAGE 2: *GHOSTS* (1985)  
IMAGE 3 & 6: *THE BRONTOSAURUS SHOW* (1983)  
IMAGE 4: *FRANKENSTEIN – A TRULY MONSTROUS EXPERIMENT* (2002)  
IMAGE 5: *SHOOTING SHAKESPEARE* (2004)

ALL IMAGES COURTESY OF TIM BRITTON AND FORKBEARD FANTASY



# SHALL WE DANCE?

WALTZ, FOXTROT, TANGO, JIVE – WHAT'S THIS GOT TO DO WITH DEvised THEATRE? DOROTHY MAX PRIOR REFLECTS ON THE PERFORMANCE POWER OF PARTNER DANCING



It's getting dark pretty early, there's a nip in the air and some squally rain clouds hovering over the South Bank. We are, without a doubt, drawing to the end of the street arts season. This is the first Saturday in September – and the last night of Watch This Space, the festival of outdoor performance at the National Theatre. The show that is to close the three-month season is, perhaps rather unusually for a high-profile street arts event, not a big pyrotechnic or circus spectacular, but a rather gentle and quirky devised piece about ballrooms, bandstands, and older people's memories of partner dancing. A declaration of vested interest here: the company is Ragroof Theatre, the show is called Shall We Dance? and I have been working with the company as choreographer and dramaturg. So I am not standing in the (surprisingly large, considering it is ten o'clock at night and raining) crowd as a dispassionate critic – I'm nervously watching the umbrellas go up and worrying about the potential effect of the weather on the wooden dance floor. As the show gets going, so does the rain. There's a last minute production team powwow on what to do if it gets so wet that the company can't dance on. But the performers give it everything they've got, despite the challenges of wind-whipped frocks and a wet stage (there are occasional much-applauded interventions from stewards with brooms sweeping the water from the dance floor); the audience stays, and by the end of the evening, as the company takes a curtain call, there is a spontaneous mass dance-in and the square is full of smiling, jumping, and jiving people. The floor is not only wet but covered in red and gold glitter confetti, so rather slippery. No one minds. In the middle

of the dance floor, a couple is kissing under an umbrella. People are even dancing up on Waterloo Bridge.

Shall We Dance? (which is, to clarify, a theatre piece about dance, rather than a musical or a dance show) circles for the most part around the social mores of the early- to mid-twentieth century social dance scene. An extensive research and development phase for the project included the recording of interviews with hundreds of people about their memories of partner dance, the construction of a documentation booth as an installation piece in its own right (replete with '30s wallpaper, rugs, and teak gramophone – where photos, film footage and audio recordings can be enjoyed), and the hosting of a series of tea dances in a mix of venues ranging from community halls in Kent, via outdoor squares in central Brighton, to the glamorous environment of The Famous Spiegeltent.

The starting point for the devising process was the material garnered from this extensive pre-rehearsal research. In the recorded interviews, there are comments and issues that come up again and again: the thrill of getting ready to go out dancing; the excitement of the mating game played out on the dance floor; the terrible pressures of conforming to sexual stereotypes; the etiquette of dancing with partners and negotiating the often complex rules of the game; the fear of failure (mostly men) and the shame of being passed by (mostly women); the passion for dancing that can make almost everything else (including threat of death, separation from loved ones, and bereavement) fade away.

There are references and incidents that are specific to this particular show, but



**Partner dancing is the perfect structure to juxtapose characters and see how they interact within the boundaries of the dance**

**Marion Duggan of Ragroof Theatre**





## Partner dance is theatre

Luke Dixon, artistic director of the International Workshop Festival



## Lindy hop seemed to perfectly combine our passions for circus and dance

Aila Baila of Swizzleshaker

at the heart of the piece there is a core of ideas shared with countless other shows about, inspired by, or simply referencing ballroom or social dance. It's basically that partner dancing is intrinsically pretty dramatic stuff, so hardly surprising that it has recurred so often as subject matter: examples including the performance work of Rose English, the contemporary dance pieces of The Cholmondeleys and Featherstonehaughs, and the experimental theatre work of The People Show – to name but a few. A recent example is Fran Barbe Dance's Chimaera project, an exploration of the foxtrot in which 'butoh meets ballroom'.

One of the most interesting aspects for me has been the way this interest in partner dancing has been part of the breakdown of the old divides between mainstream and alternative performance practice. Once, partner dance was the love that dared not speak its name – those of us with a penchant for *Dirty Dancing* hiding our obsession from friends and colleagues. The breakthrough was a slow trickle that became a flood. One seminal moment was the arrival in the UK in the mid-'80s of Claudio Segovia's *Tango Argentino*. Contemporary dancer and choreographer Laurie Booth is one of many artists who has spent a great deal of his time exploring the essence of tango, deconstructing its form and reconstructing it into new dance forms. Another tango enthusiast is Theatre Nomad/International Workshop Festival director Luke Dixon, who is one of a number of people who have realised the potential of tango, in its pure unreconstructed form, as a tool for use in theatre workshops: 'Again and again I come back to tango,' says Luke. 'It is a dance of constant dynamic, between desire and resistance, leading and being led. The tango especially opens itself to improvisation... and that makes it a tremendously versatile tool in making performance.' The Argentine tango workshops, led by Andreas Knoop, always sell out at the International Workshop

Festival programmes held in London, Brighton, and Barcelona.

Like Luke, I have often used tango and other partner dances on the rehearsal floor as a starting point for devising physical action, even if working on a performance piece with no content that even remotely relates to ballroom dance. The key tango (and indeed all ballroom dance) elements are perfect for an exploration of the dynamics of physical relationship: leading and following; call and response; taking action and being receptive; moving as one; mirroring, shadowing, and complementing a partner's movement; working with and working against another human body.

Back to Luke: 'I use partner dancing for creating character, relationships, narrative, and drama. With Theatre Nomad we've used it in everything from our *Faraway Nearby* project, which collected and played with stories from around the world, to our recent *Uncle Vanya*. We have had a long interest in gender, and partner dancing is about gender... Partner dancing also implies an audience. The dance hall is as much about the spectator, about the possibilities of involvement in the dance, as about the dance itself. In rehearsal, it can bridge the divide between the circle of the workshop and the openness of performing to an audience.'

Inviting audience members into the dance can be done in many different ways, including the creation of participation events as a central feature of a company's artistic activities – such as Ragroof Theatre's ongoing programme of tea dances. The physical/spatial divide between performer and audience can also be challenged through the creation of a theatrical world into which audience-members may enter as role-players, to a greater or lesser extent becoming an interactive part of the 'play'. The large-scale site-specific work of *Punchdrunk* is a good example of this approach: both *Faust* and *The Firebird's Ball* include ballroom/dance-hall scenes in which members of the audience get drawn into the dancing action. Then there are the 'immersive theatre' total environments created by *Lost Vagueness*, or the lavish balls hosted by *Miss High Leg Kick*, in which the lovely Miss Kick partners the extravagantly coiffed Boogalu Stu in a *Strictly Come Dancing* deconstruction-cum-tribute.

So why are there currently so many artists using ballroom and partner dancing in their work, albeit in very many different ways? Luke Dixon thinks it's because of 'a renewed interest in skill-based performance, in popular culture(s) and in retro-performance'.

An artist who I'm sure would own up to all three of the above is Aila Baila. She and Dave Chameleon are the two halves of the





street theatre and cabaret performance company Swizzleshaker, whose shows use a clever combination of clowning and physical comedy, juggling and other object play, and (of course) partner dancing to enact crowd-pleasing performance pieces that usually circle around the traditional mime/clown story of cheeky chappy meets lovely lady, wants to woo her but gets it all wrong, causing chaos and almost frightening her off, until eventually love wins the day: 'Dave and I began lindy hop about six years ago, and were inspired to use this in our first performance, Cocktails for Two,' says Aila. 'Lindy hop seemed to perfectly combine Dave's passion for circus and my love of dance. From watching lots of original dance clips from the '30s, '40s, and '50s, we realised how rich and exciting the style and humour of this era was. We discovered the exciting link between circus and dance in the routines of 1940s dancers such as Frankie Manning and Whitey's Lindy Hoppers, who looked to clowns and acrobats for new moves to wow the crowds and win competitions at the Savoy Ballroom.'

Meanwhile, off the streets and back in the mainstream theatres, shows featuring partner dance have been everywhere throughout 2006. It's been over twenty years since Claudio Segovia's Tango Argentino wowed British audiences – in May 2006 Segovia's protégé Miguel Angel Zotto was back in town with Tango por Dos, which was frankly a bit of a dog's dinner if viewed as a piece of theatre rather than a dance showcase – there was little in the way of a coherent dramaturgy to justify the wonderful tango set pieces. But just

to prove how it can and should be done, the maestro Segovia was in town two months later, returning to London with Brasil Brasileiro, which took Sadler's Wells by storm throughout the summer months, selling record numbers of tickets in what is usually the quiet season. With a cast of over 50 dancers and musicians, Brasil Brasileiro does for samba what Segovia's previous massive hit did for tango: that is, take us on a fabulous theatrical journey though the social history of the dance, whilst never forgetting that it was there to entertain with performances of the highest possible standard. The show proves (as if we didn't already know it) that narrative and character, place and time, can be evoked perfectly within a physical performance context – words are not necessarily needed to tell stories.

## The dancers make you feel that if only we could all manage to do the samba our lives would all be much happier

Sir Ian McKellen on Brasil Brasileiro

IMAGE 1: PUNCHDRUNK FAUST  
IMAGE 2 & 4: RAGROOF THEATRE'S SHALL WE DANCE?  
IMAGE 3: INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP FESTIVAL  
IMAGE 5 & 6: THE BEE'S KNEES



For information on The National Theatre's Watch This Space 2007 programme see [www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/wts](http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/wts)

The 20th London International Workshop Festival will take place 27 August–29 September 2007. Highlights include Snuff Puppets from Australia and a weekend with Annie Sprinkle. See [www.workshopfestival.co.uk](http://www.workshopfestival.co.uk)

International Workshop Festival has recently launched a series of Workshops Worldwide: See [www.WorkshopsWorldWide.co.uk](http://www.WorkshopsWorldWide.co.uk)

For further information on Ragroof Theatre's 2007 plans for Shall We Dance? See [www.ragrooftheatre.co.uk](http://www.ragrooftheatre.co.uk)

Spring dates for Ragroof Tea Dances at Komedia are: Sundays 11 February, 11 March, and 15 April. See [www.komedia.co.uk](http://www.komedia.co.uk)

Find out more about Swizzleshaker's shows Cocktails for Two and The Picture Show (directed by Gerry Flanagan) on their website [www.swizzleshaker.com](http://www.swizzleshaker.com)

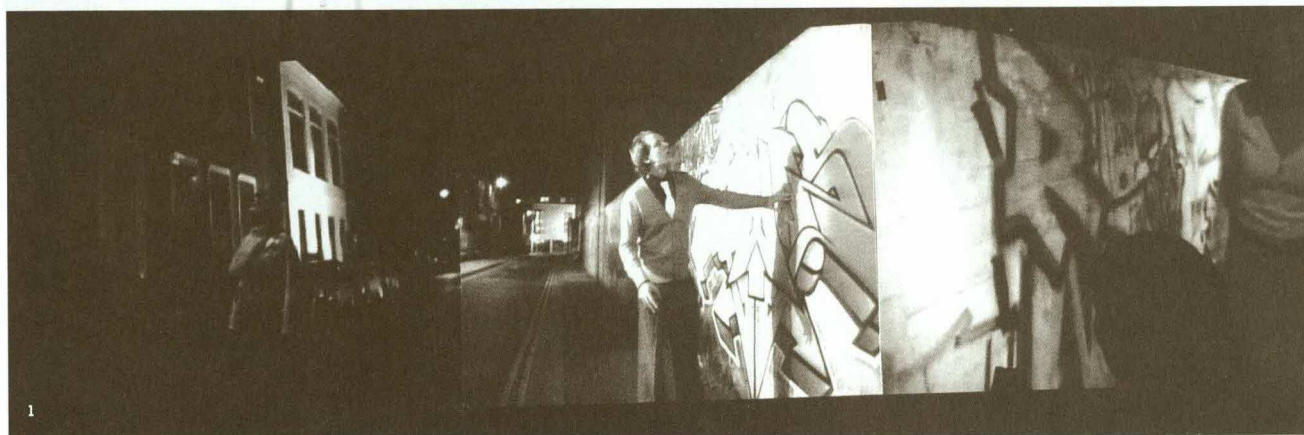
There's more about Aila Baila's other projects at [www.myspace.com/beeskneesplease](http://www.myspace.com/beeskneesplease) and [www.myspace.com/aireflamenco](http://www.myspace.com/aireflamenco)

Brasil Brasileiro was a Sadler's Wells co-production conceived and directed by Claudio Segovia, presented July–August 2006. Tango por Dos was presented by Sadler's Wells at the Peacock Theatre, May–June 2006. See [www.sadlerswells.com](http://www.sadlerswells.com) for information on current and future projects.



# THE OTHER IS YOU

HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE: AN ARTIST'S DIARY BY PERFORMER ZOE BOURAS ON WORKING WITH STATION HOUSE OPERA IN THREE PLACES AT ONCE



How long is the longest phone call you've ever made?

Mine is six hours, during which I imagined the day passing at the other end of the phone as we spoke.

He got up, dressed, had breakfast, cleaned the kitchen, etc, etc.

Or perhaps he did none of the above.

In the last few years from time to time I've devised and rehearsed online using audio-only VOIP (voice over internet protocol) with devisers both far – Helsinki, USA – and near – London. It's a cheaper option than renting expensive rehearsal spaces, with no travel costs or hassles. I had, however, yet to rehearse via online video. At home we frequently now use internet video conferencing with family abroad but the quality of sound and image is variable and it is definitely a poor substitute for live human contact with those you know and love. With those you've never met in the flesh, it is a strange introduction.

Being online via camera allows only a small window to the other place. Outside of the frame is an unseen and often unheard world. So it was with Station House Opera's *The Other Is You*. We (a group in Brighton) were linked via video to a group in Groningen, Holland and another group in Berlin. We saw only what they showed us on camera in either venue. Whatever else was there and whatever else they did (in rehearsal or performance) was unknown.

But we had our theories...

Daily at one o'clock (UK time) our team of eight – director, assistant director, three performers, camerawoman, and two technicians – would 'meet' online with the other groups to rehearse together scripts we'd worked on that morning. The three teams never met; we only saw each other, via video, in rehearsal mode – waiting, listening or trying out a scene. The usual social interaction from which one gets to know colleagues, the incidental banter which gives away major and minor tones of another's life, simply could not happen. For the most part, the other performers remained, just as the title predicted, 'the other'.

However, what people do whilst 'just waiting' can reveal (or seem to reveal) a lot about them. Somehow we did feel that we knew them – a little. We saw their 2D personae daily and had reactions to what we saw, imagined, and were told. In Holland a performer was breastfeeding, apparently. In Germany we saw what looked like a flirtation between two performers. It was a strange mixture of nodding acquaintance and that fake familiarity a viewer has with a TV personality. Despite the gap between us, we relied on each other. We needed each other to be there on cue to complete an action or scene for the audience, though we ourselves did not often see the result on screen due to the physical geography of the venue. It was like working on a three-way virtual trapeze.

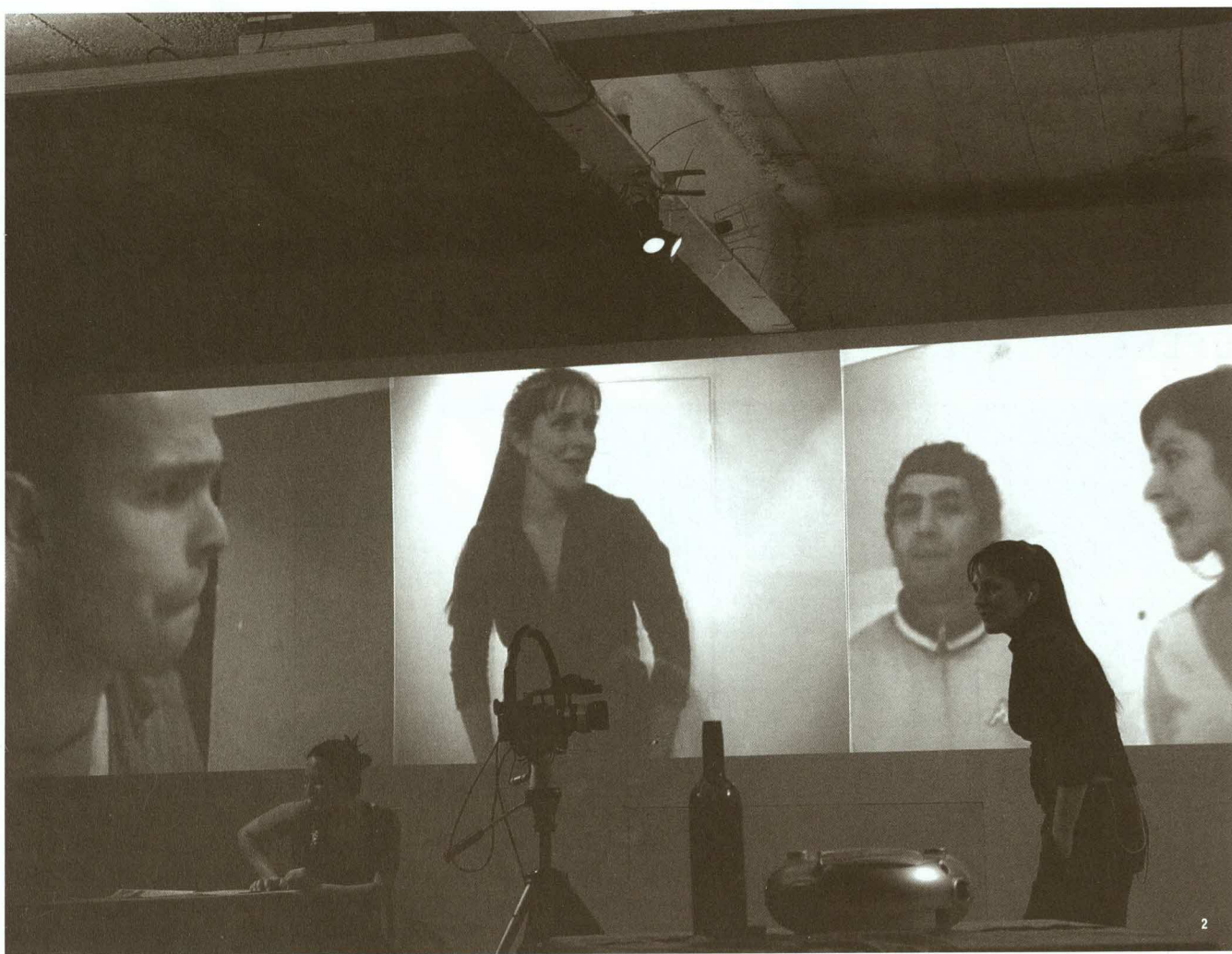
Each venue had a triptych of screens arranged in the same order, showing the live video link from the other two countries. The middle screen was always Brighton.

The camera in each venue was often hand-held, so to appear on camera meant moving to wherever the camera might be at that moment. The blocking settled somewhat as the rehearsal period ended but was never fixed exactly. The geography of the other spaces took shape in our minds, but I found it never took over the reality of the space and place my body was inhabiting. My sense of here and now was stronger than my idea of there – Germany, Holland, virtual space.

In practice it worked like this: To look 90 degrees right of the camera was to look to Holland, to look 90 degrees left was Germany, no matter where you stood. So your body could be in any physical relationship to the live audience watching – facing, behind, to the side, in another space entirely, e.g. outside – but you could be engaging with Holland or Germany depending on where you were in relation to the camera. In the early days of rehearsal this slippery geography was quite mentally taxing ('Sorry, where is Germany now?').

I began to think of the camera as a portal to the other locations. The camera became the device through which my performance persona could connect with the others. The potential of this portal, while attractive, was a piece of technological trickery requiring impeccable timing, both human and machine. We relied on technology to keep us together in the three places, but, with a two- to twenty-second delay on visuals and intermittent internet breakdowns, rehearsals were tricky. We had been warned we would have to be patient. It is clever stuff but fragile...





When half of Europe had a power cut, we had the night off!

The screens did demand most of our attention whilst devising, which concerned me for many weeks, even though I could see why it was happening. The screens were both the unknown element and the place where we all came together. I was worried that the live show would be forgotten and tacked on as an afterthought. In our venue the live show became all about how to inhabit the space. Julian Maynard Smith, director/founder of Station House Opera, frequently used the phrase 'learning to be human'. These words underscored the way all the actions and space between actions was inhabited in the continuous live work. The dominant question was, however: How does this look on the screens? I don't usually work with cameras or streamed image, although I have recently begun to engage with video much more due to the frequent request to provide video documentation. I am still trying to work out how to do this, as it requires translating work to a different medium. SHO's project was good training, as I had to acquaint myself with my 2D onscreen presence. In the funnel of the camera's eye I became either a huge four-foot-square face in close-up, or remained life size but flat and slightly pixelated in mid-shot or, in long-shot, became a distant and murky figure, with facial details obliterated.

I had to try and use these new versions of me.

Keeping these camera-selves in mind, I needed to find approaches that would also work for the live audience who were sitting very close by. I would have liked to have spent more time looking at these two different presences and working with them. The audience always saw the effect of our camera work whilst watching us live in the space. This was fun sometimes as I could be present as a double, for instance, with my back to the audience but my face in close up on the screen. They could see different sides of me (literally!) and we could play with the scale of body parts shown on screen.

Julian has a visual arts background and his primary interests are not theatrical in an orthodox way, even though the final shows do use dramatic structures and characters to a larger extent than I had anticipated. His intellectual engagement with these devices comes from a questioning of perceived notions of self and an interest in an overview of us as a species. This micro- to macro-level analysis of humanity is an intriguing challenge for a performer to explore and share with an audience. Single live performers can present the constant assertion of a single individuality, and the multiple screens with their tripling effect can hint at the similarity of humans, the bigger picture beyond the triptych.

In the early stages, we did take these initial ideas and interests from Julian, discuss them, and try out small exercises (with and without the camera) to explore them performatively. These fragments would then be shared online with the other venues. Simple structures were best to try first with our three-screen format. These sections quickly developed into mini-scenes, some abstract, some with a narrative. There was much disagreement about which scenes were of interest and benefit to the emerging piece. The local teams would discuss the weight and use of scenes amongst themselves and then the directors would have private discussions on the phone, coming back with negotiated agreements on what would stay and what would go. A difference in basic approach to making and understanding work proved a particularly recurrent stumbling block. The Dutch group did not appear to be as comfortable with, or interested in, abstract notions of persona, gesture, scene construction etc. Questions of motivation and other linear narrative concerns, which were asked by them, were not of key relevance to the piece.

As the weeks continued, more and more new, fully complete scenes were sent via email from the directors each morning. This was when I realised that my input on the whole piece was now



greatly limited. Time was passing too rapidly for a fully inclusive collaborative process to continue. Julian was trying, very diplomatically, to incorporate the ideas of the other two directors (and their teams) whilst steering the project on the path he had set from the beginning but it was not easy to consolidate ideas from this joint directing structure in just five weeks.

Julian said at the start that he likes to work with visual artists rather than theatre folk. I did feel somewhat ostracised by this at first, being a theatre-maker. However, I know from experience that not all theatre people are open to playing with theatre's conventions, e.g. ignoring, changing, or breaking the 'rules'. This particular performance did require highly theatrically skilled tasks, which are not easy for a performer, let alone a visual artist. The irony for me was that this piece ended up being the most 'theatrical' work I have done for several years.

Station House Opera's playful attitude toward technology is inspiring but, with or without the cameras, good devising is still good devising... whether you're all in the same room or spread across Europe.

As Julian said: We might not use any technology in the next show.

In 2007 Station House Opera continue to tour the classic work *Roadmetal*, *Sweetbread* internationally, including to Baku, Azerbaijan, in February (winner of a Total Theatre Award at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2005). The company is currently developing new projects, including a new 'telematic' performance, with the working title *Play On Earth 2*, to take place autumn 2007 in Brazil, India, and a European country, and also viewable online for a global audience.

[www.stationhouseopera.com](http://www.stationhouseopera.com)

Zoe Bouras is a deviser/performer and a member of Julia Barclay's *Apocryphal Theatre*. She is currently completing an ACE-funded Research & Development project synthesising Phillip Zarilli's pre-performative training, Barclay's performance awareness techniques, and site-sensitive devising.

## STATION HOUSE OPERA'S FOUNDER/DIRECTOR JULIAN MAYNARD SMITH ON THE LIVE FROM PARADISE SERIES, OF WHICH THE OTHER IS YOU IS THE FOURTH INCARNATION:

For some time it has been possible to produce telematic performances linking distant places using video conferencing or other dedicated telephonic systems. These have had the disadvantage of being very expensive – too expensive for most artists to work with in a rehearsal situation. Then a few years ago the improving affordable bandwidth available on the internet began to bring the possibility for artists and performers in different places to work together in a productive way – where visual and aural contact was not limited by time, and was of a quality where quick and detailed communication became feasible. Station House Opera had had ideas for web performance for a while, and at this point decided to put them into action, to make a performance with performers in different parts of the world, working online to make a joint, live performance which brought together aspects of their own local spaces in a visually combined, but non-existent, space.

To date, four productions have been made, involving linking three locations in a single town (Amsterdam), three towns in a single country (Birmingham, Colchester, London), three towns in Europe (Berlin, Groningen, Brighton), and three cities in different continents (Sao Paulo, Singapore, Newcastle). Each has shared the critical feature of presenting a live performance to an audience in each location while combining to create another performance in a 'fourth', imaginary space.

The aim has not been so much to communicate, as to use the distances (cultural as much as geographical) involved to articulate how we can force essentially unknown people into our own narrative about the world, and how they do the same to us, while we all remain equally a continuing active human presence spread throughout the globe. This presence is bound to be misunderstood, but through the specific narratives of the pieces, the similarities and differences between individuals are treated as unearthly coincidences or conflicts within characters. In this way a character can be played by different performers in different countries, making a story global and parochial at the same time, which can reflect inwardly on each person's own idea of themselves and outwardly on our, as members of a species, utter similarity to each other.



ALL IMAGES: THE OTHER IS YOU AT THE BASEMENT, BRIGHTON.

PHOTOS BY LAURA CHROSTOWSKI/ BRIGHTON FRINGE ARTS PRODUCTION



## FeEast

## FESTIVAL OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN ARTS

*Lissen Theatre*  
**REQUIEM FOR A HOUSE**

*Petr Nikl/The Balanescu Quartet*  
**SOUL-ETUDE**

*Theatre Melange/Ariel Theatre*  
**THE MONA LISAS**

*Dmitry Krymov and the School of  
Dramatic Arts*  
**SIR VANTES DONKEY KHOT**

*Riverside Studios, London*  
November 2006

FeEast 2006 brought an eclectic programme of contemporary performing arts to the Riverside, a highlight of which was the London premiere of *Slavi – The Song of an Emigrant*, the Total Theatre Award winning production by Czech company Farm in the Cave. The season also included the Central and Eastern European Performing Arts Market (CEEPAM), a two-day conference-cum-trade fair plagued by inefficient organisation, with no real opportunities for the claimed intention of artistic exchange, being instead (as I suppose we should have guessed from the event title) predominantly a market place for Eastern European cultural organisations to promote their wares. The highlight was the first showcase performance of the event, a mad and bad grotesque-burlesque glove puppet theatre piece by Lissen Theatre from the Czech Republic. It was downhill thereafter, with long gaps between showcases and a lacklustre panel discussion. The less said about the afternoon solo performance and the technical team 'supporting' it the better, I feel. Let me just say to Ines Worth of Croatia that being on stage means getting through it, no matter what. At first I took the sulks and grumps and re-starts to be some sort of performative

take on the 'liveness' of live art, but unfortunately I fear it was all for real.

Lissen Theatre's *Requiem for a House*, subtitled *An Evil Play*, comes with a 15-plus certificate: parents be warned, forget Sooty – use of puppetry does not preclude scenes of sexual degradation, gratuitous violence, and the gruesome abuse of everyday objects. I particularly liked the balloons that became inflating and deflating tits and cocks, the mad-eyed finger-puppet mice, and the red painted hands that haunted the house as ghosts of the murdered puppets. The set (the eponymous house) was half the pleasure of the show, a wondrous construction of tactile materials – clattering tin, fluttering paper and creaking driftwood cobbled together in artful disarray. A lovely soundtrack too – the recorded fairground waltzes, discordant music boxes, and ticking timepieces, augmented by the percussive clattering of objects on the set, as well as the intense melodrama of the spoken text, which you didn't need to understand to appreciate, although my feeling that the piece was a little too long might have had something to do with my losing the plot halfway through and drifting into dreamy incomprehension as the bizarre sights and sounds washed over me.

*Soul-Etude* was a multimedia piece presented in The Old Abattoir in Clerkenwell. A word first about site: I find myself wearying of the idea that work is intrinsically more interesting if presented outside dedicated theatre/art spaces rather than in conventional spaces. Here, the lovely installations of Petr Nikl (automata carousel constructions casting wild shadows; a woman encased in an opaque piano; a mirror-headed man peering into a pool of water) and the beautiful playing of The Balanescu Quartet would probably be

just as happy set in a gallery. (Warmer and safer, too!) And I presume that, had that been the case, the audience might have been left to wander around and make discoveries for themselves rather than being herded about like tourists. Having been dragged through the installations, we were led into a large hall to witness the previously separated quartet assembled on a high platform, whilst at floor level four performers played with elastic ropes, billiard balls, and tables with holes cut for heads. This finale set piece had the strangely old-fashioned air of self-consciously avant-garde performance, and made me feel a little old and tired.

Back at the Riverside: *The Mona Lisas*, a collaboration between the UK's Theatre Melange and Romania's Ariel Theatre, felt like a genuinely innovative work that didn't need to try too hard. An ensemble piece, using tried and tested techniques of physical and visual theatre within a conventional theatre setting, the distinct purpose and skill with which everything was done still managed to seem completely fresh and new. The chorus of *Mona Lisas* used rhythm and repetition to tell their/her story, in which the multi-faceted *Mona* deserts her Louvre frame in order to take a long look at the past 500 years. War, famine, man's inhumanity to man, certainly, but rising above it all, art – from Manet's 'pornographic' nude to Duchamp's urinal, to Warhol's multiple images of *La Joconde* herself. The physical skills of the performers (carefully choreographed movement theatre and clown techniques used to great effect) are enhanced by the artful scenography: fluttering silk costumes, a constantly shifting set of painted and lit screens and boxes, and the power of that constantly returning line of *Mona Lisa* masks staring us out.

Those eyes, that face, that smile – a haunting performance.

*Dorothy Max Prior*

In *Sir Vantes Donkey Khot*, Dmitry Krymov brought to FeEast an improbably large cast of eleven, a complete lack of pretension, and some of the most provocative and theatrical dramaturgy I have seen. Provocative because of the sophistication of the images portrayed – visual metaphors for the Quixotic (the character himself is made up of two performers, one sitting on the other's shoulders; a door is roughly painted on cardboard, and then opened) – and for our reception of the work (the accumulation of a flood of sawdust on stage, the detritus of centuries of scholarship); provocative too for its fierce straightforwardness, a commitment to simply presenting the work, with no concession to audience expectation. Its theatricality stemmed from this raw presentation: the lack of illusion on stage – the set was changed noisily behind a simple white curtain, images such as the relative small stature of *Sir Vantes*/*Cervantes*' compatriots – were crudely drawn by awkwardly placing the rest of the cast on their knees – gave way to exquisitely lyrical moments. Puppetry, including a hilarious shadow-autopsy of the giant, was masterfully managed, creating the illusion that you were spinning 360 degrees through the scene, through his ribcage. Invention came thick and fast: a horse that was a wired suitcase plugged in on stage to cue horse sound effects, coming to life as one single long-lashed eye opened in its side. Completely free of self-importance and gloss, this intellectually and emotionally challenging piece was a thrilling insight into Russia's new work sector and a stunning advocate for the value of a festival of this kind.

*Beccy Smith*

DMITRY KRYMOV AND THE SCHOOL OF DRAMATIC ARTS SIR VANTES DONKEY KHOT



*Punchdrunk***FAUST**

21 Wapping Lane, London

November 2006

I kept running into the devil, who kept touching me. He pushed his spread hand into my stomach, stroked the back of my head, told me, 'Follow.' He seemed to be everywhere. Right at the end, in the basement, I saw him in the one scene which made perfect sense to me, where Mephistopheles claims Faust by flinging himself at him, lying on him, walking all over him, and eventually knocking him down. There was some sort of immense requiem playing throughout, and the whole sequence was about as dramatic and powerful as I guess a heart attack must be.

As with previous Punchdrunk productions, *Faust* was a site-specific piece where the audience wear masks and wander around a huge space (in this case a five-storey warehouse) encountering scenes. Chronology is broken; you have to work out who is who. Myself, I never really understood anything. Or I understood events, but could not link them. I watched a man drink one entire bottle of gin, but had no idea why he drank it. I saw two men shut a woman in a locker, but I had no idea who they were. Part of me is frustrated to be told that something is a puzzle and then not be given the means to solve it, but the space, the lighting, the set design, and the dances (solo and ensemble) are all gorgeous, and you could see no performance – just spend all your time in the cornfield or the church or the recreated '50s motel rooms, going through drawers – and still have a fine time. There is a level of detail that I've never really seen before, and if it doesn't exactly cohere, that's a price worth paying.

John Ellingsworth

*Momix***LUNAR SEA**

Peacock Theatre

November 2006

What is it that impresses us in feats of illusion? Is it the spectacle itself, an image, interesting or delightful, enjoyed for its own sake? Or does the fascination lie in knowing that what we are seeing is produced by human agency, and yet not being able to see the mechanics? Or even in seeing the mechanics and nevertheless subscribing to the idea?

In Momix's *Lunar Sea* the illusion was achieved masterfully, but this achievement was almost too great. Luminous patterns and figures, picked out through the use of UV light, and forming themselves on the blackness of the stage, could have been projections, so complete was the disappearance of the performers whose costumes and movements did, in fact, create them. The use of actual projection helped to blur the lines, while the constant score of filmic, sometimes hyperbolic, music added an extra gloss.

After the audience had realised how the trick was performed, therefore, there was little left to enjoy except the images themselves. Like watching a kaleidoscope, or, at less inspired points, a giant screensaver, these images were hypnotic but scarcely encouraging of any deep thought or emotion. I was reminded of descriptions of Victorian experiments in which performers were dispensed with entirely, and the audience treated to a display of music, light, and impressive scene changes. When, towards the end, the dancers at last appeared without their regulation blacks, it was a relief to be reminded that here was not only agency, but also vitality, and the highly choreographed curtain call revealed a band of athletic, accomplished performers. In programme notes, choreographer Moses Pendleton admits that 'occasionally you'll see how its being done, but I don't mind because then you at least realise its being done live'. I would trade illusion for a little more life.

Cassie Werber

*Rose English***ORNAMENTAL HAPPINESS**

Unity Theatre, Liverpool

September 2006

You enter a circular room surrounded by black curtains and take your seat in a circle facing inwards. In the centre of the room is a raised dais with a silver trim. Everything is in muted greys and the atmosphere is concentrated. Two Chinese acrobats in grey leotards enter the room and take their place on the dais. Two singers in black cassocks take their place at two entrances and start to sing. It's choral music which has contemporary and medieval overtones. You can also hear another singer from behind the curtains who walks round the space as she sings, so the music has a genuine physical presence to it. Splashes of gongs and bells punctuate the singing and these appear to be moving around the circle as well.

As the music starts, the dais starts to revolve very slowly. Assistants bring on various wine glasses on glass trays which they give to the acrobats who then, slowly but surely, demonstrate the most incredible feats of balance and gymnastics. It hardly seems possible that a human body can bend that much – but it does! They never broke sweat, there's none of that muscular shaking you can see when bodies are put in such strain – it's a mesmerising experience emphasised by the use of subtle circular motifs throughout. The music has a fragile quality to it (the overall sound reminded me of a glass harp), which complements the use of glasses in the balancing acts.

It only lasted twenty minutes and was the first stage for a show commissioned for Liverpool City of Culture: I imagine the finished piece will further explore the complex relationship between audience and acrobats that is so gloriously hinted at in this lovely excerpt.

Edward Taylor

*Flywheel***SAINTS AND SUPERHEROES**

BAC, London

October 2006

The first outing for *Saints and Superheroes* was full of promise: a ten-minute slot at the One O'Clock Scratch in Edinburgh in August 2005 which featured a wildly anarchic performance from Ed Gaughan as a batty Roman Catholic priest (Dave Allen for a new century), loopy films of *The Incredible Hulk* fallen on hard times and caught on camera down the local pub, and a gorgeous rendition of the Velvet Underground's *Jesus*. Seeing the final production is a disappointment. All the 'development' seems to have knocked the stuffing out of the piece. Basically, it was all there in that original ten minutes. There's been nothing gained by stretching it out into a full-length show, laboured over for more than a year, as this has resulted in every idea being overplayed, diluted to the nth degree. Gone is the razor-sharp delivery, and in comes laboured exchanges with in-built pauses and over-egged punchlines. There's a kind of soupy onstage relationship between the two characters (priests isolated together in a lighthouse) and a weak critique of Catholicism that makes you want to sit down with a DVD of *Father Ted* to remind yourself how it should be done. There is also a coy subtext on men alone together and repressed homosexuality that is so horrendously patronising and old-fashioned that it is hard to imagine how it was ever allowed to remain in the mix.

If ever something has suffered from too much time to fiddle with material, this surely is it. I reckon that being apprenticed to Barry Cryer and put up against the clock to come up with next week's show would do *Flywheel* more good than any number of months or years 'scratching' at BAC.

Dorothy Max Prior





## LIVERPOOL LIVE AT THE LIVERPOOL BIENNIAL OCTOBER 2006

Liverpool Live was commissioned by Bluecoat Arts Centre and The Live Art Development Agency as part of the Liverpool Biennial 2006, and took the city of Liverpool itself as its focus. The festival's specific subject matter of Liverpool's changing local and urban environment was very much in line with this year's overall Biennial theme of 'archipuncture' (acupuncture for the built environment), which aimed to intervene into this 'sick' city in the midst of the Capital of Culture 2008 regeneration project. Within this specifically urban remit, the various performances and one-off happenings of Liverpool Live were challenged to engage wholly with the physical, political, and social fabric of the city.

The artists involved took true advantage of being given free rein over the city centre, situating live work in a variety of locations including shopping malls, boats, street corners, local galleries, and built theatres. This citywide theatre made punishing work for the festival's audience who, corresponding perfectly with the Biennial notion of 'archipuncture', experienced the changing landscape of Liverpool directly underfoot whilst navigating massive construction sites and makeshift street diversions armed only with the ever-present bad festival map. However, for those fit enough to go the distance, the city yielded many well-deserved treats.

One of those treats was found, no thanks to the map, inside Parr Street Studios, where Kazuko Hohki's *Evidence for the Existence of Borrowers*

took groups on an epic two-hour journey into the flawlessly miniature world of Liverpool's small people, The Borrowers, and the Borrower International Network (BIN). Memorable moments of Hohki's highly developed and quintessentially Japanese work included a slick boardroom DVD sales pitch led by the artist and BIN co-worker Mr Andy, the creation of a fully functioning Borrower education centre, and the grand concert finale that featured 'genuine' Borrower musical instruments. Whilst it's true that Borrowers may not have arrived into Liverpool's Albert Dock up the wide trouser legs of sailors or made Beatles-inspired rock music, the gigantic effort and obsessive attention to detail evident in this knowing performance piece is very real.

Another discovered treasure was Joshua Sofaer's fake language gallery tour of Tate Liverpool's *World in One City*, in which Sofaer enacted each nationality included in the Biennale's international exhibition through cleverly skewed versions of the respective languages. Sofaer swooped between individual artworks talking fake Taiwanese, bogus Chinese, and mock American in a heady linguistic mix that was untranslatable yet strangely accurate. His work highlighted the distances these artworks have travelled to reach the global art market of Liverpool, journeys that imitate the colonial trade routes of Liverpool's imperial past.

Alongside the festival's more sculpted live pieces, there were many pared-down

performances that created incidental occurrences intended to be witnessed by the casual passer-by. Extremely difficult to track down, these happenings maintained a direct involvement with the city by remaining firmly on the streets and deliberately using public space to engage with an (often unsuspecting) audience. The people queuing for Billie Piper's autograph outside Waterstones on Bold Street did not realise that they were the lucky few to catch Sean Hawkrigge's intervention *From The Sidelines* but were compelled to join in nonetheless. Hawkrigge's spontaneous clapping spread throughout the confused queue of Piper fans like a contagiously happy rash. Nearby, the very tall Marcus Young was dressed head-to-toe in beige and walked one inch at a time up Liverpool's busy Church Street. Young appeared unfazed by being stared at by pedestrians who impatiently rushed past him with bags stuffed full of shopping. His calm presence was uncanny and forced a pause that was at odds with the wet, grey Liverpool city centre.

However, it was Mat Fraser and Max Zadow's bus tour, *Everything You Wanted To Know About Access In The City, But Were Afraid To Ask*, that completed the most obvious punctuating of Liverpool's city surface. Loaded with both locals and festival-goers, the yellow and purple care-in-the-community bus intervened with the city on many levels, the most literal being the creation of a true urban blockage, the traffic jam, due to the wayward bus getting

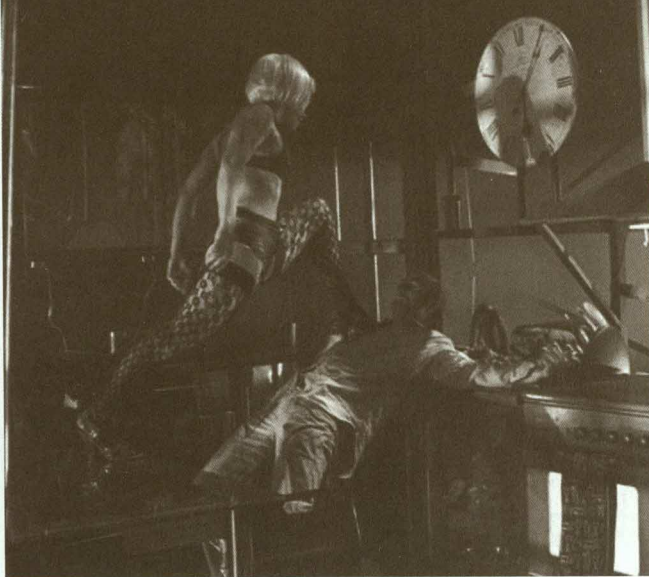
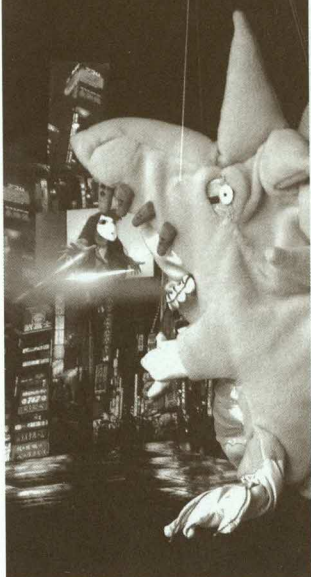
lost and making frequent sudden stops. The tour also enacted an important political function within the context of Liverpool Live: tour guide Mat Fraser provided cutting dialogue that exposed Liverpool's problematic disabled, social, and political access issues, thus uncovering dark secrets that the architectural façade of the city conceals. In keeping with this subversive agenda, highlights of the tour were a dubious Tour of Toxteth, the blocked-off disabled access in the Everyman Theatre (boo), the concrete steps that form the only access to the Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral (hiss), and Upper Stanhope Street, where Hitler once lived (allegedly). Nothing sacred for the city was spared, as Mat sacrilegiously sent up the Pope, Cilla Black, and Beatle John Lennon (for his infamous 'Spazza' impression of people with cerebral palsy).

The tour ended back at Roscoe Lane with a fitting tribute: 'This tour is dedicated to the people of Liverpool, to Hitler, the Pope, Boris Johnson, The Sun, Ken Dodd, and our proud sponsors, The Bluecoat Arts Centre.' All in all it made for an uncomfortable ride: but from its unmediated street-side position, the tour harnessed the raw power of performance, grounded in the everyday, and effectively mobilised real anxieties around issues of disability to create a joyously scandalous zone of sanctioned 'un-pc'-ism that is too important to be left on the bus.

**Rachel Lois Clapham**

*Rachel Lois Clapham is a writer with Writing From Live Art, a Live Art UK initiative.*



*doo-cot***FOLD YOUR OWN**

Drill Hall, London

October 2006

Godzillas, geishas and game-show hosts. Robots, technology, puppetry, and green tea. Origami/monsters and low-budget special effects: these tropes of Japanese culture are all jam-packed into doo-cot's *Fold Your Own*, a performance which enacts as a reaction (an over-reaction?) to their recent interaction with Japanese culture.

The premise: a performance as randomised scenes of an undecipherable filmic narrative, the audience as extras on a simulated film set. The promise: doo-cot's promotional material billed the piece as (and cue imaginary American movie voice-over-man): 'A world where two cultures clash and islands collide. England's dreamers face to face with the land of the surprising sons and daughters.' And yet this is no mere filmic monologue detailing an opposition between east and west, but an intimate and interactive 'psychodrama' where the audience is asked to reconsider their relationship to the foreign and the disconcerting, to enact their 'problems' in a group therapy session disguised as theatre. Certainly, by wearing kimonos and slippers, and being seated on the floor I felt myself to be outside of my cultural comfort zone, and yet the risk involved in just such an interactive performance event seemed lacking: it was too easy to remain so comfortably baffled by the rampaging hand puppets and the multitude of actions and media interpretations that there was little need or desire to engage interactively with it.

The performances themselves were great, the visuals fantastic – humorous and gripping in their ability to draw out the stereotypical mayhem of Japanese popular culture – and yet the invitation to 'fold your own', whether it be narrative, opinion, performance, (or origami bird) was somewhat of a false promise – the level of interaction was disappointing, the origami prescribed and rigidly taught, predominately allowing merely a perpetuation of the clichés we are already so familiar with.

Alice Andrews

*Stan Won't Dance***REVELATIONS**

Laban Centre, London

October 2006

When a production fails so spectacularly that you leave feeling angry, it's vital to analyse why. Upon closer inspection the issues may be subjective, yet unfortunately the serious flaws in *Revelations* were not merely down to taste.

Michael Pavelka's set – a twenty-foot metal-girdered sphere within which the domestic drama unfolds – provided a climbing, crawling, hanging frame for the show's complement of crassly demonic (over-sexed, gurning, hissing) demons. The choreography – working on the principle that every movement of the couple in the 'real world' of the sphere was initiated by nudges delivered, sometimes ingeniously, by one of their personal devils – must have looked great on paper, but in action felt clunky and forced. The central performances were hampered by this, or perhaps were simply bad.

Our compere, Liam Steele, taking all the best lines as Satan himself, tried gamely to convince in his bizarre hybrid of Richard O'Brien's flamboyance, the northern camp of Lily Savage and oversimplified pop psychology of Raj Persaud, but the character was horribly misjudged. The directors illustrated the effect of Satan's wrath in images that referenced the Iraq war, 9/11, and nuclear holocaust, whilst this figure was about as threatening as a panto dame. These reference points were cheapened by appearing in such an arrogant, thoughtless frame, but even this was eclipsed by its treatment of the central relationship. The show seemed to be remarking upon fatalism – why worry about protesting about war and suffering when it's all the devil's doing and not our own? – but the decision to illustrate this using a relationship breaking down because – wait for it – the man wanted to love, whilst the woman (God-fearing of course) could only feel wanted when beaten and abused, was merely bizarre and offensive.

Beccy Smith

*Maly Theatre Company***KING LEAR**

Barbican Theatre, BITE, London

November 2006

The least one should expect from a production of a classic play is that it translates the text into a theatrical language, making of it a work which is contemporary for its audience. All too often, however, this seems in fact too much to expect from productions which rely on theatrical conventions that are not themselves 'classic', but at least belong to the past. The Maly Theatre Company by contrast explores the essential premise of a production – here renewing an understanding of Shakespeare's *King Lear* by their own theatrical means today. While the metaphorical images of the text were largely absent – inaccessible through the often bizarre subtitles, accompanying the performance in Russian – the staging itself provided theatrical images of its own making. The 'story' of this *Lear* was told thereby with exemplary clarity and simplicity – removing, for instance, the hackneyed conventions of virtue and vice from the portrayal of the three sisters; and by theatricalising the Fool as a clown, a witness present throughout, while seated at an off-stage piano. This piano proved to be the very mechanism of Lear's soul, upon which both the Fool and Lear played; from which resounded Lear's rage; and which became, finally, the haunting automatism of Lear's self-deception of life in confronting the dead. Indeed, Dodin's textual adaptation stopped short of Shakespeare's ending, giving the last word to Lear – asking after the breath that will not come, and thereby voicing the very medium of the actor's most essential gesture, without which the metaphor of who lives in the actor's role dies. Would that we could see more such productions – in which Shakespeare's text, even with subtitles, proves not to be a language foreign to theatricality.

Mischa Twitchin

*Signal to Noise***LONGWAVE**

Norden Farm, Maidenhead

September 2006

A turned-in sort of piece, this. Two men live in a wasteland cabin, venturing out in hazmat suits to collect samples of Whatever, conducting then experiments on the parcels of Whatever by measuring them, poking them, weighing them, sending them down a bat-a-rat tube, etcetera. *Longwave* is about companionship, trust, reliance, loneliness, where language falls short, how two people who share space can communicate by sharing space – all of this wrapped up in an instinct-metaphor about science and the effects of isolation and observation. Oh, and it was funny too.

In the cabin with the two men is a radio tuned to longwave; occasionally it breaks in and gives insight into their lives and families, filling in character via the spoken word. The humour in the radio sections was one or two shades darker, and it felt like it was coming from somewhere else – I suppose from the writer, Chris Goode. The rest of the piece belonged to the performers, Jamie Wood and Tom Lyall, who brought humanity, goodwill, and real tenderness into what would otherwise have been a fairly austere world.

The only thing to say against is that it sometimes felt like the set pieces were included for their own sake, but when they are such good set pieces (e.g. a killer bit of puppetry where the mirror and crocodile clips of a scientific widget are turned into the head and dramatically gesticulating arms of a singer) it can hardly matter. I like this kind of theatre. Subtle, luminous.

John Ellingsworth





FORCED ENTERTAINMENT THE WORLD IN PICTURES

*Uninvited Guests***IT IS LIKE IT OUGHT TO BE: A PASTORAL**

Phoenix, Exeter

November 2006

There is a moment early on in this wonderful piece when a cluster of mechanical mono-directional bunnies disperse – an unstoppable and soft diffusion. This is a show of loss, of fragmentation, of ever-growing distances between hope and achievement, aspiration and fear – this is the loss of utopia, dead in history, virulent and alive in ambivalence. Here, it awakes from a pseudo-chumminess of free beer and apple-bobbing into a puritan spasm. It stumbles through near ritual, sweet and unsatisfying, like vomited Coke, its solemnity inevitably empty, but then 'so mote it be'.

And then it soars. Uninvited Guests find an ambivalent seam of lyricism, leaving behind 'bittersweet' in a cloud of unknowing. They scuttle into and then escape the tepee, build layers of electronic farmyard, lie in the sun, settle a New Eden, and entertain themselves with the frisson of normal horrors 'beyond the hill': Tesco Metro, not DJ Derek. Everyone must be longing for their 'garden spot' and the invitation goes out for all to come. In place of such a march is a rural noodling. In the absence of temple building is an absence of threats and a sipping of tea.

Then the storm: a brown twilight, a terrible eeriness, an apprehension, and the arrival of the monolith, something un-faced has come: 'I am the stag I nearly collide with.' The murderer claims victimhood too. People are turned upside down in an apocalypse of half-heartedness: 'It is like it ought to be, but it is not.' This is the gentle death of hope sensitively enacted, the squander of utopia, the dissipation of community and ritual. And yet there is a gentle, squandered, dissipated sensibility here; it smells like tomorrow.

Phil Smith

*Augusto Corrieri***QUARTET (FOR ANNA AKHMATOVA)**

Nightingale Theatre, Brighton

November 2006

Quartet hinges on a lovely idea and like many good ideas it is stunningly simple – a deconstruction of a performance into its component elements: movement, objects, music, words. Each is performed alone, one after the other, the audience imagining the complete performance from the placing together in memory of its four parts. The inspiration is an incident that took place in Milan in 1913, when dancer Anna Akhmatova came onto the stage and the conductor (allegedly because he was so entranced by her) forgot to start the music. So she dances the piece in silence, but when she leaves the stage the music starts...

Corrieri's solo performance has just the right balance of humour and serious intent. Each scene is introduced by the artist. The movement section is elegantly surreal – it is only later that we understand some of the odder movement motifs, as shirts, mic stands, and glasses of water come into their own. The 'objects' section is an odd mix of animation and pure clown, as the performer plays with the audience's knowledge that of course the objects cannot really take on a life of their own, so must be helped. His 'I'm here but not here' facial expression as he propels an object through the space is a delight to behold. The music section is enchanting: Corrieri stands still and listens, and we listen, and the stillness on stage is heart-rending. The spoken text section works least well for me – I find myself wondering why his mouth wasn't moving in the movement section, then worrying that I'm taking it all too literally. Despite this one small reservation, I felt that I'd witnessed an extraordinary performance. Just twenty minutes long, but listen: small is beautiful.

Dorothy Max Prior

*Forced Entertainment***THE WORLD IN PICTURES**

Contact Theatre, Manchester

November 2006

In the post-show discussion of *The World in Pictures*, Forced Entertainment are moved to remind the audience at Manchester's Contact Theatre that they are adults: 'We are grown people. You know? Some of us are in our forties,' they implore, 'And this is the best we could come up with.' The mixture of resignation and incredulity with which this is spoken does not seem to be related to some private anguish related to ageing. It is instead an assessment of the company's latest attempt to tell the *History of the World*. Insofar as it is such an attempt, the suggestion that it falls short of the mark might be accurate. But as a telling of the retelling of history, it is – as might be expected of such an experienced company – brilliant: articulate, provocative, and carefully crafted.

Beginning in the ambiguous middle ground between performance and non-performance, *The World in Pictures* proceeds from the Stone Age, via a suicidal leap, Raquel Welch, and a tea dance, to the unimaginable future. The narrator is overwhelmed by the story and the story itself is threatened by its chaotic relationship to those whom it is supposed to describe. With a notable quality of stillness (it's all in the training), a lone performer, caught in the headlights of history, blinks back at the audience: it becomes clear that the attempt to tell the history of the world has collapsed in a desperate search for a reliable position from which to relate such a story. Unapologetically, the only possible relationship they offer is the certain knowledge that we will all be forgotten. It is a curiously comforting thought.

Eve Wedderburn

*Schaubühne am Leibnizplatz***ZERBOMBT (BLASTED)**

Barbican Theatre, BITE, London

December 2006

If anyone is in any doubt that total theatre can be text-based, Thomas Ostermeier's *Blasted* shatters it. Ostermeier rises to the challenge that Kane implicitly sets any director – to match her explosive imagery with inventive staging that renders the seemingly un-presentable both visible and piercingly urgent.

Ian and his ex-girlfriend Cate (committed performances by Ulrich Muhe and Katharina Shuttler) meet for one night in a hotel. Ian preys on Cate's child-like vulnerability and rapes her. The moral filth of his actions spread to the outside where a war is being fought: a war that returns to their bedroom and renders it a wasteland. Über-sleek is designer Jan Pappelbaum's modern hotel room, which rotates on its own axis, matching the lives spinning out of control. Hundreds of fluorescent tubes illuminate the shifts. Sterility is emitted in this cold white light so that even when the room is 'blasted' and reduced to debris and ash, it remains a clean and elegant space. Such sterility means this *Blasted* is distanced from the raw punch of the writing. The general tone of detachment does, however, serve to denote the gap between man and the acts he can commit.

In 1995, *Blasted* was shocking because of the unrelenting brutality of the violence. Now, it is the unrelenting lack of heart in the violence that truly shocks. Evil and good oppose each other, but usually both contain real emotion. Not here. Emptiness lingers. So it is that in Ian's final moments his silent actions scream. Climbing into the hole in the floorboard with the dead baby, he cradles it in his arms. Then, he starts to eat it. Tiny bones are crunched between his jaws. He does not flinch. Where have we landed?

Marigold Hughes





*Penny Dreadful*  
**THE BITCHES BALL**  
 Hoxton Hall, London  
 November 2006

Penny Dreadful is a new company that takes lesser-known historical characters as a source for devised theatre making. The subject of their first production is 18th-century writer, actress, and prototype feminist Mary Robinson. Immortalised by Joshua Reynolds, and renowned for her portrayal of Perdita in *A Winter's Tale* (which brought her to the attention of the young Prince of Wales), Mary famously became the mistress of said Prince (later King George IV) but suffered a mysterious crippling illness in her mid-twenties – the play pursues the notion that this resulted from a miscarriage – and was rejected by her lover. Yet despite ill health, financial ruin, and the disapproval of respectable society, the 'bold and disgraceful' Mary lived on in proud independence to publish her writings worldwide.

Directed by Mick Barnfather of Complicite, *The Bitches Ball* is a good solid piece of theatre, with a sharp script, strong physical ensemble work, and hearty Commedia-influenced clowning. Mira Dovreni is just right as Mary, and the other four cast members play all the other characters and the chorus. Each has a scene focused around their talents: Pascale Straiton is her usual lovely clown self as Mary's elocution teacher (shades of *Pygmalion*), and Ian Street makes a wonderfully petulant Prince George. The design is excellent: velvets and silks in magenta, old gold, powder blue; looking glasses and folding screens, high-rise wigs, cloaks and petticoats whipped on and off as characters morph from scene to scene. Almost everything happens in view on stage – and indeed I think the piece could move easily into any setting, indoor or out. On the evening I saw the play, it was particularly pleasurable to be part of an audience of young people who gave the company a rousing ovation. Historical drama is dead, long live historical drama!

*Dorothy Max Prior*

*Company Fierce/Quarantine*  
**SUSAN AND DARREN**  
 Gardner Arts Centre, Brighton  
 November 2006

Darren lives at home with his mother in the house he grew up in. He's a professional dancer and Susan a professional cleaner. We enter to the sound of Up Town Top Ranking. Mother and son are dancing: the uniqueness is that they're not fictional characters, they're for real. We're all up on the stage. The audience sit around three sides of a large parquet floor. There are some armchairs and a row of TV sets that make up the fourth side. I'm sitting on a stool behind a kitchen work surface. Darren describes the furniture in his mum's sitting room; Susan tells us about her choice of sofa and her favourite place to sit. Darren asks whether his father, who died before he was born, ever wore a hat. There's a quiet dance between son and mother; she asks him what he'll miss about her when she's gone: her shepherd's pie. I'm making sandwiches. My butter knife is poised mid-spread during the sharing of a moving and intimate conversation about Darren's father's murder. Mid-show there's a question time where the audience are invited to ask anything they wish. There's an audience participation dance routine using moves learnt in a pre-show workshop. On the work surface directly in front of me, Susan tenderly washes Darren and dries him with a tea-towel. At the end, they dance together into darkness. Their mutual love and pride is dazzling. Yet that's not the end. We're all invited to stay to eat the buffet. We nibble, drink and chat, dance to disco music. It's the best night out I can remember. I'm moved, almost to tears, by the honesty, directness, warmth, and clarity in the performance, and have great fun at the party! This is poignancy unadorned. Extraordinary ordinary lives celebrating just being.

*Miriam King*



*Fevered Sleep*  
**AND THE RAIN FALLS DOWN**  
**WARWICK ARTS CENTRE**  
 November 2006

Performance intended for very young children has to negotiate a tricky path between being patronising on the one hand and offering an experience more for the benefit of the performers on the other. Happily, *And the Rain Falls Down* by *Fevered Sleep* (directed by David Harradine) fell into neither trap, the show being in equal measures enchanting and imaginative, truly engaging its young (and, in the case of the reviewer, considerably older) audience. Performers Laura Cubitt and Carl Patrick found a genuine sense of playfulness as they indulged themselves in the various pleasures that water can bring, as well as expressing the sadness when it trickles away. They emerged, hands raised with palms up checking for rain. A drip from above quickly turned into a torrent which the actors allowed to play on various parts of their bodies. The second scene saw Cubitt and Patrick coax a gushing spring from a plughole in the floor, much as one might encourage a dog from its kennel. Then, in the third section, the entire stage was flooded with rain from above, allowing the performers to skip, play and dance, Gene Kelly-like, with umbrellas. At this point, several small umbrellas descend and are handed out to the children in the audience who are then encouraged to join the actors in getting thoroughly wet. The end of the piece was then neatly signified by the construction, using colourful golf umbrellas, of a rainbow. Truly wonderful.

*Wallace McDowell*

*Rob Roth and Theo Kogan*  
**SCREEN TEST**  
 PS 122, New York  
 December 2006

When a show is billed as a 'Sci-Fi Punk Rock Multimedia Epic' and promises 'Postmodern Butoh Choreography' you might wonder quite where the joke begins and ends. Having experienced *Screen Test*, I am not at all sure that I am any the wiser. The show features Theo Kogan (ex-Lunachicks) and her young band *The Skyscrapers*, a couple of over-acting go-go dancers (the postmodern butoh exponents, presumably), some video projections by Rob Roth, and a frankly banal storyline that drags in a nuclear holocaust and Hollywood filmmaking.

The whole thing is an exuberant mess, and little more than an elaborately staged music gig. Ms Kogan is undoubtedly the show's star. She occupies centre stage for most of the piece, has a hell of a voice and a lot of tattoos, can be made up to look like Debbie Harry in her pomp, and is really only defeated by an amplification that manages to make most of her lyrics incomprehensible.

Everything else in *Screen Test* is accompaniment, and at a couple of points the whole thing collapses into an unwitting parody of a fetish costume ball: stagehands tricked up in outfits that are equal parts *Carry On Nurse* and *Swan Lake*, wheelchairs and hospital gurneys being wheeled around the place in artsy slo-mo, and the butoh girls getting changed in full sight of the audience.

Still, I could not find it in myself to dislike Roth and Kogan's efforts. Their show was technically polished and mercifully short. Perhaps next time around they should take themselves a little less seriously. And let the audience in on the joke.

*Robert Ayers*



**Bandazi****BREAKFAST AT AUDREY'S****Company of Angels****VIRGINS**

The Theatre, Chipping Norton

September 2006

Two trips inside two weeks to The Theatre in Chipping Norton, which retains the varied and adventurous programming that I saw at this delightful Cotswold theatre in my formative years.

Breakfast at Audrey's, written by John Binnie, is a 2005 Fringe Award winning show now on the road. It has a rich and delicately meshed realisation of two narrative strands, the life of Audrey Hepburn and that of Holly, an anorexic Glaswegian teenager. The production is an emotive yet unsentimental exploration of both biography and social issues, allowing the physical images to expose the characters' psychologies and entrapment, thus ensuring a genuine emotional truth in what so easily could have become a banquet of sentimental angst. This is due in no small part to the decision to allow Holly no voice, prompting us to fill in her dialogue and thoughts for ourselves, and to see her as an individual and not merely as a representative of her condition. Hepburn's signature tunes are eloquently placed throughout to transport us to the glitz of Hollywood and the pathos of a suffering teenager, while the use of a hooped trapeze, the centrepiece of the set, easily conveys the iconic status and symbolic connotations of Hepburn's and Holly's psychology and social position, without imposing upon the narrative. This use of trapeze is used to embody all of the themes of the play, but never feels overused, instead becoming a supporting character to the performers (Philippa Vafadari as Hepburn/Holly and Fiona Bruce as their respective mothers), who shift effortlessly between their roles. Bandazi have tenderly crafted the theatrical and circus elements into an engaging and rewarding show.

Company of Angels specialise in challenging theatre for young people and Virgins, a new play by their resident writer/director John Rettalack, proves to be a cut above the issue-based theatre that was fare in my youthful days. However, whether it is really challenging as a play is less certain. It takes a broad and honest look at the levels of openness about sex and emotions between parents and their progeny, though at times it felt a little cumbersome as it ticked the boxes of the issue, and the dialogue lacked a truthfulness in moments. Fleur Darkin's choreography, constructed in collaboration with the performers, served to highlight the emotional subtext of the characters' interactions. Its combination of angular movements against curving bounces gave it a fluid and well-defined purpose, but its status as a transitional element kept it firmly in second place to

the text and the narrative. This was a play with dance rather than one emerging out of the fusion of the two art forms. Its charm lay in the moments of humour and delicacy by the actors, notably Peter Machen as the youthful-looking father, who raised the rather pedestrian text above the mundane.

Tom Wilson

**Lone Twin Theatre****ALICE BELL**

Phoenix, Exeter

November 2006

On a green, baize-like strip, with a shimmer of summer, actions of crossing, from one side to another. People can change. 'You can change your heart,' we are assured. And yet prowling the green is a wrestler-helmeted enemy, a defined 'identity' trying to define others, one who cannot change (only enforce) costume or heart. Alice Bell is a gently told, but violently sourced, story of a woman who crosses the line from one 'side' to another, in the midst of war. She assumes a new name, but wrestler-helmeted evil demands more than that.

Lone Twin's Gregg Whelan and Gary Winters have moved from being performers of their own work to become artistic directors of a piece performed by others. In doing so, they have passed on something of the 'thingness' of their performance voice – their restraint and optimism, their aplomb – to performers Antoine Fraval, Cynthia Whelan, Molly Haslund, Nina Tecklenburg, and Paul Gazzola.

To the thrum and strum of ukuleles and the semaphore of everyday actions, the practical transformation of people (even when they are working for the Bad Man), and the loss (to everyone) when someone is forced to leave, are played out in a clear narrative, and as a warm, hopeful signal across the green divide. In the words of Kwame Anthony Appiah: 'the great lesson of anthropology is that when the stranger is no longer imaginary, but real and present, sharing a human social life, you may like or dislike them, you may agree or disagree, but if it is what you both want, you can make sense of each other in the end.'

Phil Smith

**The World Famous****CRACKERS?**

Dunroan Park, Tunbridge Wells

September 2006

We were shut into a doughnut-shaped pen ringing a central platform. The lights went off, music started up – you know the kind: weird mixed beats with vocal samples (sinister vocal samples) overlaid – and the central platform started to rise up, lifting a white canvas banner, onto which was projected a slowly rising fuse. I am not 100 percent sure of the chronology of what happened after that. There were fireworks in the middle; there were fireworks behind and all around the outer edge of

the crowd, arcing inwards so that sometimes you were enclosed by a dome of brilliant light; there was a woman in black clothes edged with what might have been tinsel who made strange humming noises and exhorted the audience to do the same in order to invoke fireworks; at some point burning wicker men appeared and exploded, then came alive and started walking through the crowd; there was so much smoke you couldn't see the sky; it rained firework debris.

Was it theatre? Probably not – something can be theatrical without being theatre. There was a short film at the beginning, mixing animation with what looked like footage of the London Tube bombings, and I don't think it had any place there. Not that it mattered. It was soon forgotten, and at the end of the show a boy in front of me turned to his mother and said, 'That was magnificent.' He was about ten, and you could tell the word was at the very top of his personal vocabulary.

John Ellingsworth

**Lost and Found Theatre****THE LOST MOON**

Nightingale Theatre, Brighton

September 2006

The Lost Moon utilised the combined talents of three experienced practitioners and so, as you'd expect, the show's technical aspects were highly accomplished: Hannah Marshall's atmospheric cello accompaniment seamlessly meshed with Mandy Travis's confident handling of the puppets, both under the direction of Nino Namitcheishvili, founder member of The Georgian Puppeteers' Club and director, performer and puppeteer at The Basement Theatre in Tbilisi. The story, an old English tale from the fens, was one of fear, ignorance, then reconciliation. The puppets were strangely crafted, almost inhuman creatures: yokels that looked like upright turtles with a leering, leaning perspective. The puppetry, and the characters' slow distinctive country speech, peppered with repetitions of 'aye' and 'appen', had a good, well-paced humour. Other parts of the show used shadow puppetry and light to contrast and break up the slower rhythm of the basic story – but at an hour long the narrative did feel quite slow.

The symbolism of the loss of the moon, the guiding light in the treacherous mists of the fens, came across with strength and beauty. When Lucas the wandering lampan took off across the fens without a light, this was a metaphor of courage and loss that stayed with the audience. And there were genuinely chilling moments when the three yokels dismembered the puppet cow in a naive act of ignorance (a simple disassembly of parts on the stage an evocation of greater slaughter). I felt it could have had more pace, but it has stayed with me as a strange and meditative piece of storytelling.

Bill Parslow

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Book reviews by Alice Andrews,  
Dorothy Max Prior and Tom Wilson

**FOUR MAGICAL DAYS IN MAY:  
HOW AN ELEPHANT CAPTURED  
THE HEART OF A CITY**  
**ED. NICKY WEBB**  
**ARTICHOKE TRUST**  
**ISBN 0-9554702-0-X**  
**£18**  
**WWW.ARTICHOKEPRODUCTIONS.CO.UK**

Here it is: the book of the event of 2006: the (literally) traffic-stopping residency in London of veteran French street arts company Royal de Luxe with *The Sultan's Elephant*. Just as the event itself was way more than a street arts production, the book is way more than the usual documentation. It's not just the sumptuous pictures by official photographers Matthew Andrews and Sophie Laslett, although these are reason enough to buy the book, but also the carefully commissioned essays and reflections, which offer us a kaleidoscope of viewpoints from participants. Thus we have, amongst others, the director (Jean-Luc Courcoult), the crane driver (Lee Bartley), the usher (John Ellingsworth), and the policeman (Trevor Jenner). There is plentiful comment and reflection from witnesses to the event, who include writers Susannah Clapp and Howard Jacobson, and street arts practitioners Julian Crouch and Edward Taylor. Reading the sentiments expressed, we are left with the heartwarming feeling that there were no passive observers, only participants. If you were there, you'll need this book as a keepsake; if you weren't, you'll need it to show you what you missed.

DMP

**THE PATH OF THE ACTOR**  
**MICHAEL CHEKHOV ED. ANDREI  
KIRILLOV AND BELLA MERLIN**  
**ROUTLEDGE**  
**ISBN 0-415-34366-6**  
**£39-99**  
**WWW.ROUTLEDGE.COM**

The Path of the Actor is a readable and accessible composite of the first two autobiographies of acclaimed actor and theorist Michael Chekhov, including the obligatory introduction and afterword. The autobiography splits into two parts, Chekhov's first autobiography (The Path of the Actor) and extracts from his second one (Life and Encounters). The first is most accessible with a sense of building narrative, something that the edited highlights of the second do not possess. Both sections provide Chekhov's own detailed reflections on his personal struggles with artistic methods, personal problems, and spiritual beliefs. Detailed historical endnotes accompany both biographies, managing to avoid being dry or superfluous. The Path of the Actor is a book for those with a general interest in theatre history or the personal artistic, emotional, and spiritual journeys of practitioners; and, like most autobiographies, makes good bedtime reading.

TW

**HERE WE STAND: POLITICS,  
PERFORMERS AND PERFORMANCE**  
**COLIN CHAMBERS**  
**NICK HERN BOOKS**  
**ISBN 1-85459-920-8**  
**£20**  
**WWW.NICKHERNBOOKS.CO.UK**

Another gem from NHB. The linking together of Paul Robeson, Isadora Duncan, and Charlie Chaplin may at first seem puzzling, but read on... for their anti-establishment stances, they suffered, respectively, scrutiny from McCarthy and denial of a passport (Robeson), hostility and derision (Duncan), and even expulsion from the US (Chaplin). Chambers takes his title from Robeson's testimony stating his refusal to change his views on racism and freedom fighting, and he uses the noble examples of these three performers from different arts disciplines to offer reflections and interesting insights on the role of rebel performers — these three, like many others, were derided for being 'merely' performers, who do not have the gravitas of writers. It's excellent stuff, a gripping read. Chambers provides an intelligent yet accessible and highly readable account of the politics of performance and the dilemmas of the celebrity activist: in trying to remain faithful to their beliefs, 'a successful performer speaks out at his or her peril, then as now'.

DMP

**THE IMPROVISATION GAME:  
DISCOVERING THE SECRETS OF  
SPONTANEOUS PERFORMANCE**  
**CHRIS JOHNSTON**  
**NICK HERN BOOKS**  
**ISBN 1-85459-668-3**  
**£12-99**  
**WWW.NICKHERNBOOKS.CO.UK**

There's a Miles Davis quote given at the beginning of this welcome new volume from House of Games author and veteran improviser, Chris Johnston: 'Play what you hear, not what you know'. This serves as a perfect mantra for Johnston, who says in his introduction, 'Most improvisation is considered as a sub-section of an art form; here I'm trying to look at improvisation as a core discipline, the fundamentals of which exist within all the separate genres.' After a brief and idiosyncratic two-page history, he gets down to the practical business, exploring the why, the who, the what, and the how of improvisation. Johnston draws on his own extensive experience, but also interviews and references such luminaries as Tim Etchells, John Wright, Guy Dartnell, and Phelim McDermott. It makes for essential reading and is both a source of inspiration and a great toolbox for budding devised theatre makers. Nick Hern Books have forged a path as publishers who focus on the practice, rather than the theory, of theatre and performance — and this is a wonderful addition to a catalogue already full of treasures.

AA

**NAVIGATING THE UNKNOWN: THE  
CREATIVE PROCESS IN  
CONTEMPORARY PERFORMING ARTS**  
**ED. CHRISTOPHER BANNERMAN,  
JOSHUA SOFAER, AND JANE WATT**  
**MIDDLESEX UNIVERSITY  
PRESS/RESCEN**  
**ISBN 1-904750-55-9**  
**£25**  
**WWW.MUPRESS.CO.UK/  
WWW.RESCEN.NET**

Through addressing the creative process in the performing arts, Navigating the Unknown brings together the artist's voice with that of academic research in the fields of dance, performance, live art, and music. Excellent contributions from practitioners such as Rosemary Lee, or educational psychologist Guy Claxton, in addition to academics such as Adrian Rifkin, present a rich insight into the various confrontations involved in the mysterious goings-on of 'creativity'. Employing these various voices, the text itself engages with and challenges the norms of writing on, in, and with performance, performatively revealing the manner in which reading can itself become a creative process rather than remaining a normative method as is too often the case. Any book which seeks to address the creative process in this manner, however, necessarily risks becoming a victim of its own intentions, confusing and befuddling the reader rather

than engaging and stimulating them. Luckily this is not the case for Navigating the Unknown, which would be a valuable read for anyone interested in the field of the performing arts.

AA

## DVD

**BUTOH DVDS AVAILABLE FROM  
UNIVERSITY OF KENT**

An archive of DVDs is available which documents the Daiwa International Butoh Festival 2005. There are five titles: MA, by Tadashi Endo; DO, by Shinonome; Butoh Before the Dawn, by Yumiko Yoshioka; Joker in the Forest, by Katsura Kan, and My Soul Shaken by a Little God, by Koichi Tamano. They can be purchased individually or as a set. Prices range from £10 to £18, or £69 for all five titles. To receive an order form and complete price list email [f.a.barbe@kent.ac.uk](mailto:f.a.barbe@kent.ac.uk)



# TRAINING & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

See [www.totaltheatre.org.uk](http://www.totaltheatre.org.uk) for listings updates  
A fuller list of full-time and post-graduate degree courses, training programmes and classes is available at: [www.totaltheatre.org.uk/explores](http://www.totaltheatre.org.uk/explores)

## PERFORMANCE DEGREES AND POSTGRADUATE COURSES

### BRUNEL UNIVERSITY

West London  
[www.brunel.ac.uk](http://www.brunel.ac.uk)  
donna.white@brunel.ac.uk  
MA Contemporary Performance Making Two Years part-time, One Year full-time  
This MA bridges the gap between academia and the professional world giving you the opportunity to network and engage in supervised and self managed projects. Specialisms in directing solo performance and performance writing are offered with opportunities for professional work placements and apprenticeships. Also: BA (Hons) Electronic Arts and Performance, MA Digital Performance. Exploration of multimedia theatre, dance, and performance art.

### CENTRAL SCHOOL OF SPEECH AND DRAMA - MA ADVANCED THEATRE PRACTICE

London  
T: +44 (0) 20 7559 3901/3960  
[www.cssd.ac.uk](http://www.cssd.ac.uk)  
MA Advanced Theatre Practice  
Drawing together ten different theatre-making strands: creative producing; directing; dramaturgy; performance; lighting design; puppetry and object theatre; scenography; sound and music; visual media; writing for performance. Practice-based course that prepares students for making new and innovative theatre in companies. One year, runs October to October. The school offers a range of studentships and bursaries to assist with costs of study.

### THE CIRCUS SPACE

London  
T: +44 (0) 20 7729 9522 (general enquiries)  
T: +44 (0) 20 7613 4141 (degree admissions)  
[www.thecircusspace.co.uk](http://www.thecircusspace.co.uk)  
degree.admissions@thecircusspace.co.uk  
BA (Hons) Degree in circus arts. Foundation Degree in circus arts (2 year vocational course). Also ongoing adult classes/ professional training and development.

### MIDDLESEX UNIVERSITY/RESCEN MA CHOREOGRAPHY WITH PERFORMING ARTS

London  
T: +44 (0) 20 8411 6148  
[www.mdx.ac.uk](http://www.mdx.ac.uk)  
machoreo@mdx.ac.uk  
An opportunity to undertake a deep involvement in choreographic investigation across the performing arts.

### ST. MARY'S COLLEGE - BA IN PHYSICAL THEATRE

Strawberry Hill, London  
T: +44 (0) 20 8240 4059  
machonj@smuc.ac.uk  
[www.smuc.ac.uk](http://www.smuc.ac.uk)  
BA Physical Theatre undergraduate programme explores the academic and practical discipline of this expanding area of performance. A challenging and extensive range of modules are on offer, throughout the three years, taught by active specialists in the field.

### UNIVERSITY OF KENT, CANTERBURY

T: +44 (0) 1227 823338  
p.a.allain@ukc.ac.uk  
[www.kent.ac.uk/sdfa](http://www.kent.ac.uk/sdfa)  
MA by Practice as Research in Drama. Former students include Kazuko Hohki, Ridiculusmus, Ian Morgan (Song of the Goat/Piesn Kozla).

### UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

[www.leeds.ac.uk/theatre](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/theatre)  
T: +44 (0) 113 3439109  
enquiries-pci@leeds.ac.uk  
MA in Performance Studies - main specialisms are Theatre as Social Intervention and Contemporary Choreography, but scope also for those interested in scenography, directing or performance education.

### UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

[www.plymouth.ac.uk/arts/theatre](http://www.plymouth.ac.uk/arts/theatre)  
T: +44 (0) 1752 238106  
MA Performance Practice  
Aimed at professional theatre and performance practitioners and/or graduates who wish to advance their practice and reflect upon their creative processes within the field of visual, body-based performance. Commencing October 2006 (1 year F/T, 2 years P/T).

### UNIVERSITY OF WALES, ABERYSTWYTH

T: +44 (0) 1970 621911  
[www.aber.ac.uk/tfts/teaching/degrees/postgrad/performance](http://www.aber.ac.uk/tfts/teaching/degrees/postgrad/performance)  
hhp@aber.ac.uk  
MA in Practising Performance  
Innovative MA dedicated to the practice of performance, with particular attention to devised performance, physical theatre, site-specific work and time-based art. Start date: October of each year. Course Convenor Dr Heike Roms.

### UNIVERSITY OF WINCHESTER, SCHOOL OF COMMUNITY AND PERFORMING ARTS

[www.portal.winchester.ac.uk](http://www.portal.winchester.ac.uk)  
performing.enquiries@winchester.ac.uk  
T: +44 (0) 1962 841515  
MA Theatre and Media for Development  
This course integrates community theatre and media practices with development studies. The school offers various undergraduate courses in Dance, Drama, Theatre, TV, Performing Arts and Screen Production.

### PROFESSIONAL TRAINING - VOCATIONAL COURSES

#### ACADEMY OF CIRCUS ARTS

Winchester and Touring  
T: +44 (0) 7050 282624  
<http://freespace.virgin.net/zippos.circus/>  
zippos.circus@virgin.net  
Diploma course - six months training in circus arts inside the big top.

#### CIRCOMEDIA

Bristol  
T: +44 (0) 117 9477288  
[www.circomedia.com](http://www.circomedia.com)  
Centre for contemporary circus and physical performance. Courses include: Two-year professional training programme One-year foundation (OCR Diploma) Three-month introductory Two-year BTEC (National Diploma in Performing Arts) Teacher Training Course (one year, part-time) Create and Promote - making and marketing circus art  
Circomedia will also be holding a series of evening and weekend workshops.

#### DESMOND JONES MIME AND PHYSICAL THEATRE

London  
T: +44 (0) 20 8747 3537  
[www.desmondjones.com](http://www.desmondjones.com)  
enquiries@desmondjones.com  
Regular short Courses in Mime and Physical Theatre with one of the world's leading practitioners. A unique blend of Decroux and Lecoq techniques. Powerful, exciting and creative. Classical and Modern Mime; Story-Telling; Masks; Commedia; The Psychology of Colours; Dramatic Timing; Physical/Verbal/Psychological Improvisation; Stage and Body Dynamics; Performance etc. Also, Private, Individual and Group Lessons. Corporate Lectures and Workshops on Projecting Image and Personality. Specific Workshops for Colleges of Art, Film Animation Courses etc.

#### ECOLE DE MIME CORPOREL DRAMATIQUE

London  
T: +44 (0) 20 7272 8627  
[www.angefou.co.uk](http://www.angefou.co.uk)  
infoschool@angefou.co.uk  
Decroux technique movement theatre and corporeal mime. Professional training in technique, improvisation and composition. Students may join at the beginning of each month. Drop-in classes Tues and Thurs 6.30 - 8.00 PM

#### HOPE STREET APPRENTICESHIPS

Liverpool  
T: +44 (0) 151 708 8007  
[www.hope-street.org](http://www.hope-street.org)  
Lasting six months (19 March-2 September 2007) the programme involves business matters, initial specialist training and five contrasting projects. Aim: to form a company of enthusiastic and talented individuals who wish to broaden their outlook. Places available for: 4 Workshop leaders, 6 actors, 1 director, 1 music director, 1 production manager, 1 filmmaker, 2 designer/makers, 2 digital designers, 1 lighting designer, 1 sound designer. Application forms available online. Deadline: 5pm Thursday 15 February 2007

#### INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY GLOBAL THEATRE EXPERIENCE (IUGTE)

London  
[www.iugte.com](http://www.iugte.com)  
info@iugte.com  
Annual Laboratory course in directing, starting in October. Distance courses in Producing and Coaching for Directors.

### LONDON INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF PERFORMING ARTS (LISPA)

London  
T: +44 (0) 20 8969 7004  
[www.lispa.co.uk](http://www.lispa.co.uk)  
welcome@lispa.co.uk  
Two-year professional programme based on the teachings of Jacques Lecoq: initiation course and advanced course. Evening courses and weekend workshops.

### SCHOOL OF PHYSICAL THEATRE

Three Mills, London  
T: +44 (0) 208 215 3350  
[www.physicaltheatre.com](http://www.physicaltheatre.com)  
school@physicaltheatre.com  
One year intensive professional programme  
TheatreWorks Production Year Summer Intensive

## COURSES, CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS

RENA MIRECKA LABORATORY, 'THE WAY' & ZYGUMNT MOLIK VOICE AND BODY WORKSHOP  
University of Kent, Canterbury  
p.a.allain@kent.ac.uk  
18-22 June & 26-30 June. £300 for both workshops or £170 for each one. Send CV and brief covering letter explaining interest to above email.

### CIRCOMEDIA

Bristol  
T: +44 (0) 117 9477288  
[www.circomedia.com](http://www.circomedia.com)  
Mask making workshop with Bim Mason, 3-4 March 2007. Limited places £70 p.p. + £5 for materials.

### CIRCUS MANIACS

Bristol  
T: +44 (0) 117 9477042  
[www.circusmaniacs.com](http://www.circusmaniacs.com)  
info@circusmaniacs.com  
Summer School and term time classes in: Trapeze, Aerial Skills (Corde lisse, Tissu, Aerial Ring, Web), Tight-wire, Chinese Pole, Acrobatics. For anyone interested in learning or improving their technique in the above skills.

### THE CREATIVE RETREAT

Gardenstown, Banffshire  
[www.creative-retreat.co.uk](http://www.creative-retreat.co.uk)  
Arts Holidays suitable for artists seeking to refresh their arts practice or find a new one. Enjoy the beautiful Banffshire Coast for a weekend of good food, good company and creative exploration.

### DANCE RESEARCH STUDIO

London, N1  
T: +44 (0) 20 7613 0341  
[www.jackylansley.com](http://www.jackylansley.com)  
drs@jackylansley.com  
Movement with Voice (Training and creative work)  
Tuesday Mornings 10.30am - 12.30pm  
One Day Intensive Workshops - The Actor Dancer: Interdisciplinary Performance. Directed by Jacky Lansley. Individual Sessions also available. For information on other activities and space hire at the Dance Research Studio see website.

### EXPRESSIVE FEAT PRODUCTIONS

T: +44 (0) 1227 280399  
[www.exfeat.com](http://www.exfeat.com)  
exfeat@globalnet.co.uk  
Training opportunities for aerialists in Kent. Please contact the company for full information on class times.

### GLASSHOUSE MASK ACADEMY WORKSHOPS

Stourbridge, West Midlands  
Tel: +44 (0) 1384 399458  
theatre@ghc.rmet.org.uk  
17 and 18 February £80/£70  
Puppet and the Mask  
10 and 11 March £80/£70 Seven Planets and Soul Forces: All the World's a Stage  
2-6 April £230/£200 The Hero's Journey - a Path to understanding Biography and Myth, Mask Using and Making  
4-6 May £100/£80 Making Half Masks for the Stage  
9 and 10 June £80/£70 Directing Masks  
16-20 July £230/£200 Masks in Nature, Mask making and Using  
25-28 July £160/£140 Performance and presentation in Mask  
Administration T: +44 (0) 1384 399 458  
Glasshouse College T: +44 (0) 1384 399 400  
Email [theatre@ghc.rmet.org.uk](mailto:theatre@ghc.rmet.org.uk)

### INDEPENDENT THEATRE COUNCIL TRAINING PROGRAMME

London  
T: +44 (0) 20 7403 6698  
[training@itc-arts.org](mailto:training@itc-arts.org)  
[www.itc-arts.org](http://www.itc-arts.org)  
Total Theatre subscribers save 15% on ITC one-day training courses and seminars! The majority of their courses take place in central London and cover everything from fundraising to press relations; employment law to producing and touring; finance to leadership.

### INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP FESTIVAL

[www.theworkshopfestival.co.uk](http://www.theworkshopfestival.co.uk)  
Autumn season in London; spring season during the Brighton Festival in May. See website for full details.

### THE KELMAN GROUP

Leeds  
T: +44 (0) 1484 851227  
[www.kelmangroup.com](http://www.kelmangroup.com)  
Regular workshops in the improvisational techniques of Scott Kelman. Kelmanworks Exploring is a new approach to physical and vocal skills, making discoveries in complicity, presence and composition and developing sensitivity in ensemble work.

### MAC

Birmingham  
T: 0121 440 3838  
[www.macarts.co.uk](http://www.macarts.co.uk)  
Autumn courses and workshops in physical theatre, dance and movement, and circus.

### PANTS ON FIRE

[www.pantsonfiretheatre.com](http://www.pantsonfiretheatre.com)  
Adventures in Space course - a unique 10-week part-time course in ensemble and physical storytelling lead by Lecoq trained tutors and presented by Pants on Fire. Adventures in Mask is another 10-week course in mask performance. Some students have met and formed their own companies through the course and many of Pants on Fire's cast members have been selected through this process.

### PARA-ACTIVE, URBAN DOLLS PROJECT

Stratford, East London  
T: 07916 278 949 / 020 7474 0009  
[www.para-active.com](http://www.para-active.com)  
nwando@para-active.com  
Actor training programme drawing on dance, theatre, acrobatics and martial arts. Part improvisation, part happening, part workshop, part encounter.

### THEATRE TRAINING INITIATIVE

London  
[www.theatrettraining.org.uk](http://www.theatrettraining.org.uk)  
info@theatrettraining.org.uk  
Developing the art of live performance through challenging, intercultural practice. Weekly classes, intensive workshops and creative development opportunities. Previous workshops have included Butoh, Suzuki, Kalarippayattu and Yoga for Performers. Full details on the website.

### THE WHY NOT INSTITUTE

London  
T: +44 (0) 20 7739 8363  
[whynotinstitute@aol.com](mailto:whynotinstitute@aol.com)  
Chwytynotes with De Castro, eccentric dance and more.

### THE WRIGHT SCHOOL

London  
[www.thewrightschool.co.uk](http://www.thewrightschool.co.uk)  
Being Worse Than You Are (Parody)  
27 and 28 January 2007, £100  
On stage any skill and any defect can be used to your advantage, this course concentrates on your defects and teaches you to exploit them to your own advantage. Being worse than you are is an approach to parody which exploits our personal foibles and uses them. Also 24 and 25 February The Gentle Art of Idiocy (Clowning)  
24 and 25 March Why is that so Funny? (Intensity)  
Classes and workshop programme led by John Wright - see the website for full details.

## CONFERENCES, SEMINARS AND SYMPOSIA

### MOVEMENT CONFERENCE FOR MOVEMENT AND PHYSICAL THEATRE PRACTICE AT MOSCOW ARTS THEATRE SCHOOL

T: 020 7449 1570  
A number of Russian theatre schools will take part in the conference, which will involve a sharing of ideas, methods, and theatre and performance practice. 1-7 April 2007. Course fee: £550 (includes all conference sessions, letters of invitation, transport to and from the airport in Moscow (if you chose to fly at designated times), trips to the theatre and a coach tour of Moscow).

### STREET ARTS MEETING AT STREETS OF BRIGHTON 2007

Thursday 10th - Friday 11th May  
A key event in the UK street arts calendar, providing an opportunity for artists, producers, arts officers, programmers and funders to meet and debate current issues within the industry. Register at [www.streetartsmeeting.co.uk](http://www.streetartsmeeting.co.uk) or email [info@streetartsmeeting.co.uk](mailto:info@streetartsmeeting.co.uk) for a booking form. Delegates £175, Artists £75 excluding VAT

### THE DANCE THEATRE JOURNAL WRITING ON PERFORMANCE CONFERENCE

A three-day conference planned to take place at Laban in March 2007 co-produced by Dance Theatre Journal with Bonnie Bird Choreography Fund, Association Dance of the African Diaspora (ADAD), Laban and Goethe Institute. The conference's aim is to develop existing discourse within British dance journalism and academia whilst also providing access to new writers and entry points for artists who wish to engage in the discussion of their work. Further information: Emeline Fèveotte T: +44 (0) 20 8691 8600 or email [e.fevotte@laban.org](mailto:e.fevotte@laban.org)

### TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT - OVERSEAS

#### ACADEMY OF LIVING MOVEMENT

Vienna, Austria  
T: +43 1 8892945  
[www.livingmovement.org](http://www.livingmovement.org)  
info@livingmovement.org  
Four-year professional training in performance/movement theatre. Incorporates bodywork, eurhythm, ensemble, devising, neutral mask, scenography, storytelling.



**BUTOH-CENTRUM MAMU**  
Göttingen, near Hannover, Germany  
T: +49 (0) 551-7906245; M: +49  
(0) 172-2754785  
www.tadashi-endo.de  
gendo@butoh-ma.de  
Intensive workshops with Tadashi  
Endo throughout the year. Join the  
mailing list to be kept up to date.

**CIRCO A VAPORE SCHOOL OF THEATRE**  
Rome, Italy  
T: +39 06 700 9692  
www.circovaporeschool.it  
circovapore@tiscali.net  
Two-year professional training.  
Further info (in English) available  
on request - email above.

**DELL'ARTE**  
California, USA  
T: +1 707 668 5663  
www.dellarte.com  
info@dellarte.com  
Dell'Arte is the North American centre  
for the exploration, development,  
training and performance of the  
actor-creator, and offers the only MFA  
in Ensemble-Based Physical Theatre  
currently accredited in the US, in addition  
to its one-year Professional Training  
Program for Physical Theatre Actors.

**ECOLE INTERNATIONALE DE  
THEATRE JACQUES LECOQ**  
Paris, France  
T: +33 1 47 70 44 78  
www.ecole-jacqueslecoq.com  
index\_uk.htm  
contact@ecole-jacqueslecoq.com  
Two-year professional training together with  
the Laboratory of Movement study (LEM).

**ECOLE PHILIPPE GAULIER**  
www.ecolephilippegaulier.com  
ecole@ecolephilippegaulier.com  
The school begins in October and ends in  
June and includes the following workshops:  
Le Jeu, Neutral Mask, Tragedy, Bouffons,  
Melodrama, Masked Play, Characters,  
Shakespeare, Clowns, Chekhov, and  
Writing and Directing a Show.

**ESCOLA DE CLOWN DE BARCELONA**  
Barcelona, Spain  
T: +34 933 042 846  
www.escoladecolow.eu  
email: info@escoladecolow.eu  
Comprehensive clown training programme  
covering both practical and theoretical  
aspects of the clown arts. Also offers  
opportunities for research projects.  
3-Month Clown Studies Course: 20 hours of  
class per week, for 12 weeks, ranging from  
the search for one's personal clown to the  
creation of original performance. Work also  
covers: play, improvisation, failure, the  
fool, the trickster, clowning in theatre/  
street/circus, clown consciousness, hospital  
clowning and theoretical/historical studies.

**ESPACE CATASTROPHE**  
Brussels, Belgium  
T: +32 (0) 2 538 12 02  
www.catastrophe.be  
espace@catastrophe.be  
Training in circus and performing arts.

**INTERNATIONAL PERFORMING  
ARTS LABORATORY**  
Riga, Latvia  
www.iugte.com  
30 March - 4 April, 2007. Programme  
includes intensive practical training,  
lectures and discussion club.  
Accommodation and meals provided.

**THE INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP FESTIVAL**  
Worldwide  
T: 0207 091 9667  
www.workshopsworldwide.co.uk  
victoria@workshopfestival.co.uk  
Be a Showgirl in Paris, a Tango Dancer  
in Barcelona, a Drag Queen in Berlin, a  
Belly Dancer in Egypt, or a Travel Writer  
in South Africa. See website for details.

**MIME CENTRUM BERLIN**  
Berlin, Germany  
www.mimecentrum.de  
Courses in mime and physical performance  
including Meyerhold's Biomechanics.

**NICA**  
Australia  
T: +61 3 9214 6975  
www.nica.com.au  
The National Institute of Circus Arts (NICA)  
encourages applications to its Bachelor  
of Circus Arts from talented people with a  
background in circus, gymnastics, sports  
acrobatics, trampolining, martial arts,  
dance, diving, extreme sport, performing  
arts or physical theatre. International  
students are encouraged to apply by video.

**PATRICIA BARDI, VOCAL DANCE &  
VOICE MOVEMENT INTEGRATION**  
Amsterdam, Netherlands  
T: +31 (0) 6 120 38733  
www.patriciabardi.com  
info@patriciabardi.com  
Curriculum consists of Vocal Dance;  
Body-Mind Centering; Anatomical Studies;  
Developmental Movement; Bodywork  
Principles and Practises. November 2006  
- June 2007. Certification programme  
in Vocal Dance and Voice Movement  
Integration (VMI) Practice also offered.

**TOTAL THEATRE SCHOOL**  
Australia  
www.totaltheatre.com.au  
sophie@totaltheatre.com.au  
One and two-year intensive courses  
in physical theatre techniques.

**ZID THEATER LAB**  
Netherlands  
T: +31 20 4888449  
www.zidtheater.nl  
info@zidtheater.nl  
Training for performers and directors.  
Summer school and artists in residence  
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by **WITOLD GOMBROWICZ**

# FERDYDURKE

IN ENGLISH

## TEATR PROVISORIUM

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13 - 17 FEBRUARY 2007 7.30 PM

Ferdurdurke, winner of Edinburgh Fringe First, is a truly stunning piece of physical theatre and comes to the Bloomsbury Theatre for one week only. This forgotten treasure of 20th century literature is based on Gombrowicz's wonderfully rebellious novel. A repressed 30-year-old writer is sent back to re-experience his school days - the show celebrates the cheeky, nasty inner child whose sheer lack of manners allows him free rein for a vulgar assault on personal and political convention. Ferdurdurke is likely to delight and offend with its grotesque and anarchic tirade against conservative dogma.

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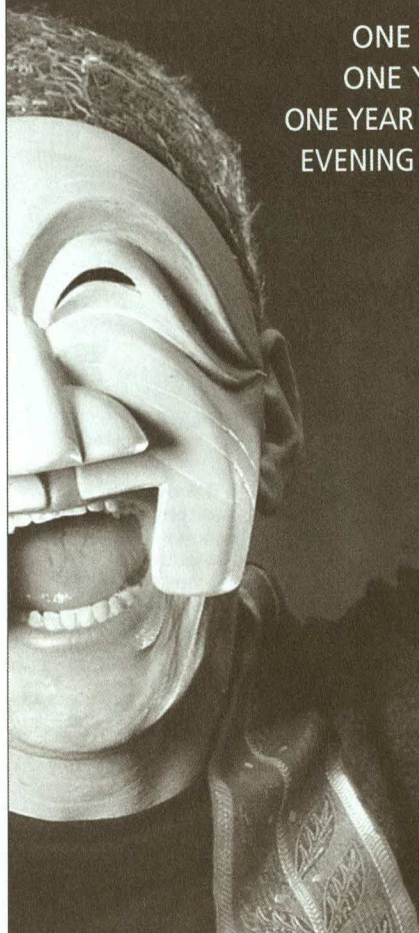
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Director: Ron East

# theatre de l'ange fou

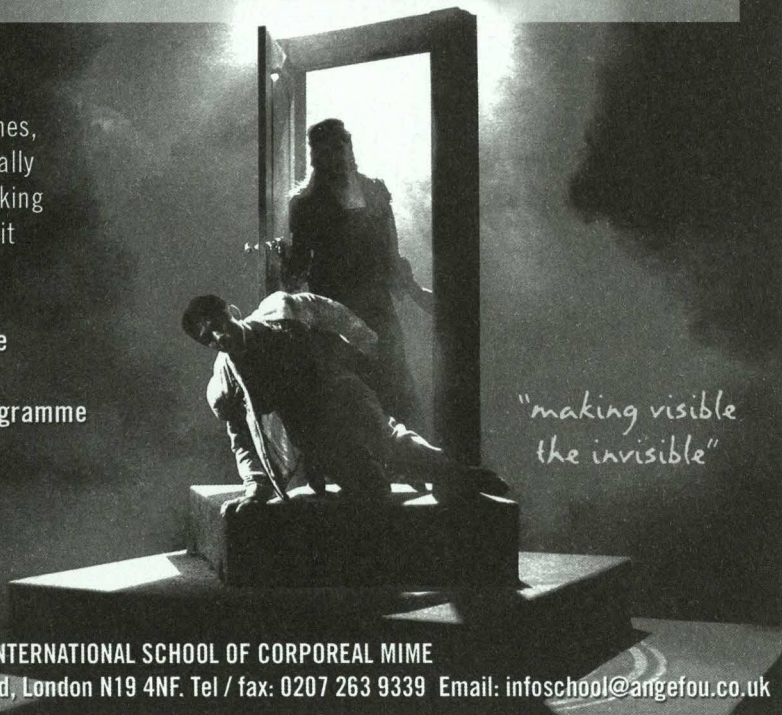
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