

# TOTALTHEATRE

## MAGAZINE

VOLUME 19 | ISSUE 02 | SUMMER 2007 | [TOTALTHEATRE.ORG.UK](http://TOTALTHEATRE.ORG.UK)  
TOTAL THEATRE NETWORK CELEBRATING PHYSICAL + VISUAL PERFORMANCE

HIP-HOP INTO SUMMER WITH BENJI REID AND DALLY WITH THE DIVINE TAYLOR MAC  
THE POWER OF MASKS – LET'S GO BETWEEN, BEHIND AND BEYOND THE MASK  
EMERGENCY! HERE COMES MANCHESTER!  
LAUGH WITH JOS HOUBEN AND FEEL THE POETRY BENEATH YOUR FEET WITH JOHN FOX AT THE LONDON INTERNATIONAL MIME FESTIVAL.  
CELTIC ADVENTURES AT THE NATIONAL REVIEW OF LIVE ART AND THE CORK MIDSUMMER FESTIVAL  
GET 'EM OFF – THE BURLESQUE BACKLASH BEGINS THE BEGUINE  
MORE, MUCH MORE, INSIDE – TAKE A DIP INTO THE SWIRLING SEA OF PHYSICAL, VISUAL, TOTAL THEATRE





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EDITORIAL

I am at the opening of Blank, a new artists' studio-cum-gallery in Brighton (well, Hove actually). Looking at the programme, it is clear that the dividing lines between the visual/performing/sonic/literary arts are becoming ever more blurred: artists who have studio space here include performance artists (one of whom, Eva Weaver, is fortunetelling with toast in place of tea leaves), a mask/puppet designer (Aya Husni-Bey, whose beautiful triple-faced mask was seen recently in Voodoo Vaudeville's *Mardi Gras* – reviewed this issue), an animator who creates 'bespoke interactive projects', photographers, and sound artists – few of whom confine themselves to one *modus operandi* (there is, for example, a performance artist/bass player trained in physical theatre, a filmmaker/poet, and a sculpture/movement artist).

Also on the list is dance/theatre performer Augusto Corrieri, who I come across standing expectantly in his small whitewashed studio, evening sun streaming in. He welcomes us in, we sit on the floor and he starts. 'So this is theatre' he says, 'it must be as you're all here!'

In this simple and gently amusing beginning to his dance-theatre piece (in which he and an invited member of the audience dance a short routine taught to the participant whilst we watch) we have a beautifully simple definition of theatre. This is a piece in which there is no proper stage, no flats, no pres-scripted text, no curtains or blackout or music other than the sounds made by our two performers. It isn't what most people would call theatre, but Augusto is absolutely right – it is theatre because we are there. We have all agreed to be in the same space at the same time, and to stay put and experience this physically enacted 'story' together, seeing it through from start to finish.

I am often asked what it is exactly that Total Theatre represents. Answering this can lead to a convoluted description full of hyphenated terms (movement-led, image-based) but to me the obvious starting point for what we choose to cover is that it needs to be theatre. We are a theatre magazine; hence our name. It's what we exist to

support. We take 'theatre' to be a very broad and inclusive term, but there are boundaries (even if we enjoy pushing up against them).

So where are the boundaries? What does something need to be 'theatre'? As Augusto knows well, the most vital need – the one thing that distinguishes theatre, makes it what it is – is that it needs 'audience'. Live art (for example) can take place in splendid isolation; an audience may be part of the equation, but doesn't have to be. But there is no theatre without audience (an audience of thousands, an audience of one, an audience in the street that hasn't paid for a ticket, any audience will do!). This subject, the nature of theatre and its relation to audience, is explored in Cassie Werber's article, *Time and Time Again*, in which the shows, events and installations at the National Review of Live Art are appraised from the perspective she understands best, that of a theatre performer and director.

This is the point at which to make clear, though, that one label or tag does not mean that something 'is' something to the exclusion of being something else: a performance can be both live art *and* theatre (NRLA artists Curious, for example), just as it can be dance *and* theatre (hip-hop artist Benji Reid, interviewed in this issue, or the above referenced Augusto Corrieri), mask *and* theatre (any one of our trio of mask artists featured), circus *and* theatre (Ockham's Razor reviewed at LIMF), puppetry *and* theatre (Indefinite Articles, reviewed in Manchester) or cabaret *and* theatre (Taylor Mac, featured in this issue). It's not an either-or situation – belonging in one category does not eliminate you from the other!

This all just scratches on the surface of the nature of theatre, but it's a start...

Dorothy Max Prior, Editor

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

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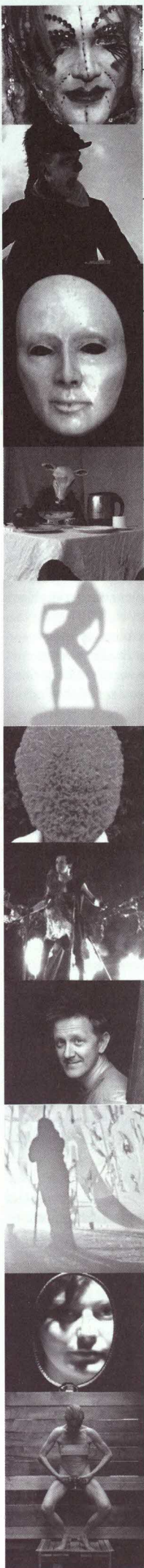
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Mime Action Group  
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There's plenty to crow about in this issue of Total Theatre Magazine, and we are not afraid to say it loud and say it proud. First up is Taylor Mac who reveals what lies **BEHIND THE MASK** DOROTHY MAX PRIOR **P10**. This leads us nicely into our special focus for this issue, with three interlinked articles from mask-theatre practitioners: in **SECOND SIGHT** JONATHAN YOUNG **P12**, the Shams Theatre director, charts his journey from Neutral Mask to Clown through Mask; the founder of Glasshouse Mask Studio asks **WHO AM I ANYWAY?** MICHAEL CHASE **P13**; and finally we hear how masks are everywhere, even Lying with the Animals, in **THE HIDDEN ART** STEVEN WHINNERY **P14**.

Total Theatre has been championing burlesque for many years, but perhaps enough is enough? The burlesque backlash starts here with **TASSEL HASSLE** LAURA LLOYD **P16**. There's performance of a different sort in **EMERGENCY ENTRANCE** BECCY SMITH **P17** as we go to the greenroom Manchester and find out what's new in the North West. Meanwhile across the water in the Emerald Isle, **CORK MIDSUMMER FESTIVAL/SUDDENLY LAST SUMMER** FRANC CHAMBERLAIN & CATHY WALSH **P18** brings us an interview with the festival's new artistic director William Galinsky in anticipation of this year's event, and a round-up of last year's highlights.

An annual event that is always on the Total Theatre calendar is the London International Mime Festival. Two special reports highlight festival presentations: in **THE ART OF LAUGHTER** RICHARD CUMING **P20** enjoys a laugh with Complicite's Jos Houben, and the fount of wisdom that is Welfare State International's John Fox, presenter of the Total Theatre Lecture 2007, is lauded in **THE POETRY UNDER YOUR FEET** JOHN ELLINGSWORTH **P21**.

A festival of a different sort is the National Review of Live Art, which takes place each year in Glasgow. We discover that there are always two sides of any argument in our two-part feature highlighting this event: **HERE I AM AGAIN** ROBERT AYERS **P22** is a thumbs-up from an old hand, while in **TIME AND TIME AGAIN** CASSIE WERBER **P23** is a little less sure that live art is for her!

Our final feature **BREAKING NEWS** MICHELLE REID **P25** brings us face-to-face with pioneer of hip-hop theatre, Benji Reid (no relation!).

Reviews **P26** includes a selection from the London International Mime Festival, a 'new variety' round-up, Kneehigh, Dante or Die, Eddie Ladd, Ken Campbell, Sean Tuan, and Dakh Centre for Contemporary Arts at BITE.

In our regular front and back sections: **NEWS & PREVIEWS** **P6** brings you the latest from the sector. **PERFORMER & COMPANY UPDATES** **P8** has the latest from TT artists. **MEDIA** **P33** brings you the latest batch of interesting publications. **TRAINING & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT** **P34** lists courses, classes, workshops and conferences.



## TOTAL THEATRE NETWORK NEWS

Pippa Bailey has been appointed as interim director, with a brief to lead the organisation through a period of development and change. Pippa Bailey says, 'I am looking forward to working with the fabulous team committed to Total Theatre and am very excited about the future. Over the next nine months we want to talk to the physical and visual theatre community and its audiences to find out how we can better serve this vital and inspirational area of creative work. We want to develop and strengthen the sector, bringing together disparate experiences and voices. And we want to surprise you – expect the unexpected.' Pippa and the Total Theatre Board have expressed their thanks to Sue McCormick, who has acted as interim administrator for the past few months. Pippa can be contacted on [director@totaltheatre.org.uk](mailto:director@totaltheatre.org.uk). For further updates and news of the Total Theatre Awards 2007, plans for which are launched 7 June, see: [www.totaltheatre.org.uk](http://www.totaltheatre.org.uk)

## ACE INVESTS IN PRODUCERS

Arts Council England has announced new strategic investments for the long-term development of producers. The largest of these is in Artichoke, who will receive £620,000 between January 2007 and March 2008. Other significant recent awards for the development of producers include: £200,000 over two years to five London-based, cross-artform producers; £160,000 over two years for the professional development of interdisciplinary producers working across the West Midlands; £90,000 over three years to Martin Sutherland, based at Newbury Corn Exchange, to expand opportunities for the production of new work; £65,000 to the Nightingale in Brighton to develop the work of emerging producers in the region; £127,000 over two years to support emerging artists and venue networks across the North West.

## GRANTS FOR THE ARTS CUTS

The arts world has taken up arms following news of the Arts Council's plans to slash the Grants for the Arts Lottery-funded programme. Following the announcement that £675m of lottery funding would be diverted from the arts in order to pay for the Olympics, it was subsequently reported that the ACE Grants for the Arts scheme will suffer a 35% cut. This

means that during the funding year 2007/2008 only £54m will be awarded, down from £83m in the current financial year.

## PHYSICAL FEST 3 IN LIVERPOOL

Momentum Theatre in association with Hope Street will present seven days of exciting physical theatre workshops at Unity Theatre, Liverpool, 15–22 May: Corpus Soma give a physical theatre workshop on 15 & 16; Bongo Bolero teach acrobatics on 17 & 18; there is a Momentum Workshop on 19, a Jam Day on 20, and workshops from Derevo's Tanya Khabarova and from Andrea Buckley on 21 & 22. Derevo will give a performance of *Reflection* on 22 May, 8pm. Booking info: [www.momentumtheatre.com](http://www.momentumtheatre.com)

NASA is an independent national network of UK-based artists and companies creating work for the street and other outdoor contexts. It works to give its members a much needed strategic voice, to enhance the profile of street arts in the UK, and to develop professional practice through networking, peer support, discussion forums, collaborative projects and advocacy. At its heart there is a dynamic e-group which debates key issues and shares information. To find out more about NASA and its activities, or to join them, see [www.nasauk.org](http://www.nasauk.org) or contact [missioncontrol@nasauk.org](mailto:missioncontrol@nasauk.org)

## MAC TO BUILD

Funding has been confirmed for the Midland Arts Centre (mac) building project this year. Autumn was an exciting time at mac, and sampad are celebrating the confirmation of an £11.6m funding package from partners Arts Council England (5.4m) and Birmingham City Council (£6.2m). The funding will enable mac and sampad to greenlight a building project planned to enhance and refurbish the current mac site. Work will begin spring 2008, with the newly refurbished and much improved arts centre reopening in summer 2009.

THE ACCIDENTAL FESTIVAL is a new festival of arts curated by Central School of Speech and Drama's Performance Arts Students, coming to the ICA in Central London this May. The festival aims to celebrate a variety of artforms, produced by a wide array of artists, ranging from established companies to the most innovative and undiscovered talents, local and international. For more details see: [www.accidentalfestival.com](http://www.accidentalfestival.com)

## TAKE ART 20TH YEAR

2007 is the 20th anniversary of Take Art: Live, the rural touring scheme that takes high quality

arts events to communities in Somerset. The 2007 programme includes Storybox Theatre, Pip Utton, CandoCo, StopGAP Dance, the Fluer Darkin Ensemble, and Linda Marlowe, among many others. See: [www.takeart.org](http://www.takeart.org)

## DELL'ARTE

Joan Schirle, co-founder and school director of Dell'Arte International, has been awarded a Fox Fellowship through Fox Foundation Resident Actor Fellowships, funded by the William & Eva Fox Foundation and administered by Theatre Communications Group. Her Fox Fellowship work will primarily focus on vocal training. She will study in France with members of the Roy Hart Theatre, at the Banff Center with Richard Armstrong, and in New York with Catherine Fitzmaurice and others. Upon completion of her studies, she will lead workshops with Dell'Arte Company members.

THE CUBE MICROPLEX invites submissions for its experimental performance showcase You and Your Work, to be held regularly from 18 May 2007, at the Microplex in Bristol. The venue is interested in bringing together people whose artistic journeys are still at their beginnings, who often find themselves at crossroads, who sweat on a low budget, whose work cherishes a DIY aesthetic and is fairly live. They offer in return the Plex's multipurpose, omnipotent stage (4.6m by 7m), technical support, breathing exercises, and rehearsal time. The venue can reimburse travel expenses, accommodate if necessary, and provide for a good party after the show. For more information contact Birgit Binder and Sylvia Rimat via [YourWork@microplex.cubecinema.com](mailto:YourWork@microplex.cubecinema.com)

## RULES AND REGS 2007 SEASON

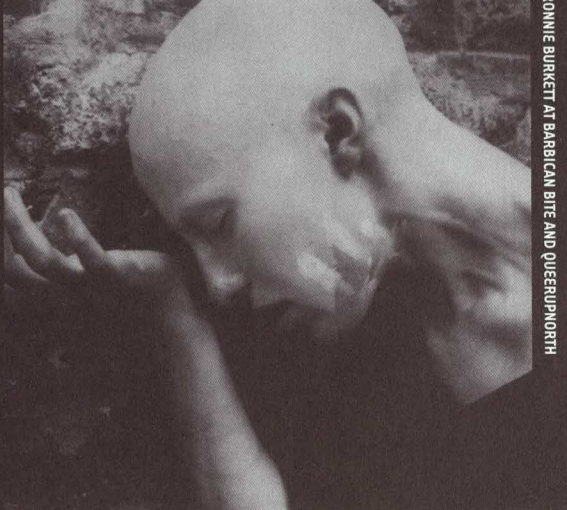
Rules and Regs are pleased to present three Live Art events for 2007. Each event will be curated by a different organisation, featuring different artists creating new work in response to unique rules that challenge them to explore their practice and discover new ways of working. Each event lasts approximately one month, culminating in a public showing of work. Dates: Farnham Maltings (Surrey, 11–12 May); South Hill Park (Bracknell, 25–26 May); A Space (Southampton, 29 June – 1 July). For more information, see: [www.rulesandregs.org](http://www.rulesandregs.org)

## CPT SPRINT

So far this year, Camden People's Theatre has continued to nurture and support companies developing new and exciting performance, with R&D space being given to Types, Little Wonder, ChoppedLogic, Song Theatre, and Badac. Now

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





CPT bursts into summer with its annual SPRINT festival, promising 28 days of the best in physical, visual and experimental performance, discussions & workshops, 4 June – 1 July. For more details see [www.cptheatre.co.uk](http://www.cptheatre.co.uk) or call 0202 7419 4841 for a brochure.

#### NEW LOOK BARBICAN

Following seven years of major refurbishment, the Barbican now has a fresh look. At a cost of £35m, the City of London's Corporation has funded the refurbishment of much of the twenty-acre site. The modernisation has been completed in time for the Barbican's 25th birthday celebrations, details of which can be found on their website. See: [www.barbican.org.uk](http://www.barbican.org.uk)

#### LONDON INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP FESTIVAL

This year's IWF runs 27 August – 28 September. Major themes include celebratory performance and rites of passage. There is a five-day Site Specific Sleep Over with Janice Perry; the Open Space showcase of new work in contemporary dance and physical theatre continues (contact [lexi@workshopfestival.co.uk](mailto:lexi@workshopfestival.co.uk) to be considered for inclusion); and the legendary Annie Sprinkle will arrive from San Francisco, accompanied by Elizabeth Stephens, to offer her Post Porn Performance Lecture and workshops, unique to the festival. Places are limited, so book well in advance. Annie is the cherry on the festival cake this year. Do not hesitate to delve into the tasty layers beneath. See: [www.workshopfestival.co.uk](http://www.workshopfestival.co.uk) or call 0207 091 9666.

#### TARA ARTS REFURBISHED

As part of its 30th anniversary celebrations, Tara Arts opens its recently refurbished South London studio, at 356 Garratt Lane, as an exciting home for emerging artists. Its current HotBed season offers audiences an eclectic mix of the classic and the contemporary as four directors tackle four very different plays across four extraordinary weeks. HotBed runs until 20 May: Tue–Sat, 7.30pm; Sun, 4pm. Tickets: £8, £5 concs, Pay What You Can on Tuesdays, or pre-book all four plays for £25. For more information see [www.tara-arts.com](http://www.tara-arts.com) or to book tickets call 020 8333 4457 or email [tickets@tara-arts.com](mailto:tickets@tara-arts.com)

#### SNUFF PUPPETS IN LONDON

The International Workshop Festival is bringing the Australian company Snuff Puppets to London this September for an intensive professional practice exchange. Working in collaboration with the South Bank Centre and the Thames Festival, the IWF will be hosting the company for three weeks to explore ways to make big and spectacular work in a community

setting. There are a number of places available for young and emergent artists to work alongside Snuff Puppets and leading British practitioners in a rare examination of process. For more information contact IWF on 0207 091 9666 or see [www.workshopfestival.co.uk](http://www.workshopfestival.co.uk) and [www.snuffpuppets.com](http://www.snuffpuppets.com)

#### NEW PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AWARD IN PHYSICAL THEATRE

From September 2007, the Byre Theatre, St Andrews, will join with Theatre Arts at the Adam Smith College, Kirkcaldy, to sponsor international physical theatre practitioner Al Seed to support a new Professional Development Award in Physical Theatre, newly validated and unique in Scotland. The Award will be an intensive experiential learning opportunity for post-training performance practitioners or facilitators, and an opportunity to learn or develop the skills, vocabulary and techniques underpinning theatre where the performance 'text' is derived from the body rather than the voice. Join Al Seed for teaching, professional development and touring work. Contact [simonabbott@adamsmith.ac.uk](mailto:simonabbott@adamsmith.ac.uk) for further details.

#### STREETS AHEAD ENCHANTED EVENINGS 2007

Manchester International Arts are gearing up to present another season of Enchanted Evenings in Manchester this summer. Events will run around the city from 1 June to 30 September, and this year's programme includes: a lakeside Feast Picnic with an international showcase from X.trax and a finale performance of Avanti Display's new show *Stormbringer* (1 & 2 June, Platt Fields Park); high energy, effervescent African circus company Circus Baobab (June 8–10, Castlefield Arena); Bastille Day festivities, with Petit Theatre de Pain (14 July, Platt Fields Park); and performances of IOU Theatre's igloo show *Waylaid* (11 & 12 May, Platt Fields Park). The full line-up is still being confirmed, so there'll be some surprises too. For up-to-date info see: [www.streetsahead.org.uk](http://www.streetsahead.org.uk)

#### CIRCELATION NEXT STEPS 2007/8

Circelation are proud to announce three new associate directors awards. The awardees will be placed at a producing venue for a rolling period of six months developing their work, building audiences for circus arts, and developing the infrastructure for circus arts locally and regionally. Awardees are: Helen Crocker – York Theatre Royal; Gavin Marshall – Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich; and Wendy Hesketh – Contact, Manchester. Each will receive a bursary of £10,000 and will collaborate closely with the artistic, technical and management teams in their venue to create a programme of work in the coming months. For more info please

contact Circelation producer Leila Jancovich on: [info@circelation.co.uk](mailto:info@circelation.co.uk) or see: [www.circelation.co.uk](http://www.circelation.co.uk)

#### SPIRIT + FLESH: FAKIR MUSAFAR IN LONDON

18–26 May, pioneering live artist Fakir Musafar will be on tour in the UK for the first time in twelve years. Spirit + Flesh UK presents an unprecedented insight into his 'body first' approach to making new work and challenges assumptions about the nature of performance and the relationship between an artist's life and his work. Produced by Switch Theatre and funded by Arts Council England, the tour culminates in a unique opportunity to participate in Fakir's work. Other events include a roundtable discussion on Participation and Performance at Queen Mary College – chaired by Lois Keidan, the director of the Live Art Development Agency. Fakir will also present classes on safe piercing for performance and give an informal audience at the Chelsea Theatre, see: [www.fakirtour.com](http://www.fakirtour.com)

#### FESTIVAL! FESTIVAL! FESTIVAL!

The festival season kicks off with a flurry of activity around the country: Brighton International Festival and Fringe, Norwich and Norfolk Festival, and Queerupnorth all take place in May. Highlights for Brighton include *Futurology: A Global Revue* by Suspect Culture and National Theatre of Scotland, a new site-specific version of *The Maids*, translated and staged by Neil Bartlett; and *Mahabharat*, a dance/circus/puppetry piece with music by Nitin Sawney. Brighton Fringe is an open access event, but within that there are strong curated programmes at The Nightingale (including the premier of the new show by Unpacked) and Komedia, who present Prodigal Theatre's *Queen of the Slaughter*, a new show by Gamarjobat, and Taylor Mac. See: [www.brightonfestival.org](http://www.brightonfestival.org) and [www.brightonfestivalfringe.org.uk](http://www.brightonfestivalfringe.org.uk) Norwich and Norfolk are also presenting Taylor Mac, along with Gecko, Circus Ronaldo, and Bobby Baker, as part of their Left Field programme. See: [www.nnfestival.org.uk](http://www.nnfestival.org.uk) Taylor Mac seems to be everywhere: he also takes a trip to Manchester for Queerupnorth, which also features an appearance from renegade Canadian puppeteer Ronnie Burkett. See: [www.queerupnorth.com](http://www.queerupnorth.com) June begins with X.trax festival of street performance in Manchester (1–2 June, see: [www.xtrax.org.uk](http://www.xtrax.org.uk)) and ends with the Winchester Hat Fair, which this year features an increase in the indoor cabaret programme to supplement the full outdoor street arts programme, see: [www.hatfair.co.uk](http://www.hatfair.co.uk)



# PERFORMER & COMPANY UPDATES

ANGEL EXIT THEATRE



DELLARTE COMPANY



MATILDA LEYSER



UNPACKED



## ANGEL EXIT THEATRE

Tamsin Fessey will be directing a new production entitled *The Black Curtain* with her company Angel Exit Theatre. The show, which is a co-production with the Brewhouse, Taunton, will premiere at The Westival in Taunton, 25–27 July, prior to a run at the Edinburgh Festival. *The Black Curtain* is inspired by the stylistic world of film noir and the dark underbelly of contemporary politics, and will be told in Angel Exit's trademark physical style. See: [www.angelexit.com](http://www.angelexit.com)

## BASH STREET THEATRE

are developing a new, mid-scale, street theatre show exploring further the motifs of the silent movie genre. *The Station* will be an hour-long show with live music, set in and around a rundown railway station, and will follow the antics of the railway staff as they deal with luggage, maintenance work and an unpredictable train schedule. Trains and passengers come and go, but things go seriously awry when an unwanted stranger arrives on the 12.45. Bash Street Theatre has been touring and developing street theatre for sixteen years. To see press cuttings going back to 1991, visit the website: [www.bashstreet.co.uk](http://www.bashstreet.co.uk)

## BOOTWORKS THEATRE

Having travelled to the moon, defeated invading Martians, wrestled giant rubber sharks and fought 'bullet time' with Agent Smith, Bootworks are about to embark on their most surreal adventure yet: a reworking of Dali and Bunuel's masterpiece, *Un Chien Andalou*, an eyeball-slicing, horse-dragging treat, ideal for film and mixed-arts festivals. Bootworks are also currently presenting *The Black Box*, a five-minute piece of theatre performed for an audience of one by a cast of ten, in the smallest theatre in the world. The company is taking bookings for the coming year, and can be contacted via [physicaltheatre@hotmail.com](mailto:physicaltheatre@hotmail.com) or for more information see: <http://homepage.ntlworld.com/firstperson>

## COMPANY F.Z

are currently touring productions of *Throat*, *Loser* and the *Besame Mucho Cabaret*. *Loser* is a newly developed version of the show that toured previously. The *Cabaret* includes original F.Z pieces alongside other renowned cabaret acts. At the end of 2006, Company F.Z created a new work titled *We Can Be Heroes* with support from ACE London, Croydon Clocktower, Battersea Arts Centre and Dieppe International Theatre. This piece is being developed over the summer and autumn and features music by Brighton-based band The Hat. *We Can Be Heroes* previews in November and a tour is scheduled for spring 2008. See: [www.companyfz.com](http://www.companyfz.com)

## DYNAMIC NEW ANIMATION

DNA have been previewing *Ball Pond Bobby*, an interactive performance for pre-school children. Incorporating a nearby play ball pond, as well as drawing activities, material play and movement, the project explores the early-years development theory of 'schema' or themes of play. DNA are also engaged in a three year project, *Imaginary Leaps*, which aims to develop a methodology for providing performing-arts-based play activities to early-years groups in the settings where pre-school children assemble. DNA's summer touring to festivals and events in 2007 currently includes Glastonbury, Ireland, Wales, Denmark, and various regions of the UK. Email [DNA@dynamicnewanimation.co.uk](mailto:DNA@dynamicnewanimation.co.uk) or see: [www.dynamicnewanimation.co.uk](http://www.dynamicnewanimation.co.uk)

## FOURSIGHT THEATRE

has recently celebrated its twentieth birthday. To mark this special occasion, *Thatcher The Musical!* will run at the Grand Theatre in the company's hometown of Wolverhampton. The Grand Theatre is one of Britain's great Victorian theatres, thought to be one of the finest works of the history theatre designer, Charles J Philips. Its stunning 1894 interior was recently refurbished with help from the Lottery and European Regional Development Funding. See: [www.foursight.theatre.boltblue.net](http://www.foursight.theatre.boltblue.net)

## GONZO MOOSE

Following the successful tour of their new show, *You Don't Need to Know That...*, Gonzo Moose are pleased to announce that they will be taking the production to Edinburgh Fringe this year and touring it again in the autumn. Directed by Abigail Anderson and inspired by Kafka's *The Trial*, *You Don't Need to Know That...* is an exhilarating collision of comedy, drama, slapstick and live music. For information on booking the show contact Liz Bayley at [gonzo.office@virgin.net](mailto:gonzo.office@virgin.net) and for tour dates see: [www.gonzomoose.co.uk](http://www.gonzomoose.co.uk)

## PARA-ACTIVE

Unresolved anxieties, unacknowledged terrors and violent desires are rife in *I Survived St Ursuline's*, a production where the audience are guests at a school reunion. In this war zone, old rivalries, humiliations and harsh memories of the past re-emerge to provoke a bitter-sweet ending. The company is also continuing its Urban Dolls Project, an ongoing performance laboratory which responds to the world with complexity and imagination, performing necessary roles in varying contexts, including experimental pirates, rampant artists, and rebel pedagogues. Contact Nwando Ebizie on 07916278949 or see: [www.para-active.com](http://www.para-active.com)

## MATILDA LEYSER

is undertaking a national tour of her aerial theatre triptych *Line, Point, Plane* this autumn. The tour will follow a period of redevelopment with acclaimed performer and director Andrew Dawson. In *Line, Point, Plane*, Matilda combines physical theatre with aerial skills, dance, original writing, music and design. Collaborators include Annabel Arden, Annie Castledine, Bryony Lavery, Rosemary Lee and Michele Weaver. The show was co-commissioned by ROH2 at the Royal Opera House, The Helen Hamlyn Trust, the London International Mime Festival and the Pegasus Theatre, and was supported by Arts Council England. For further information contact Kate Hartoch on 07789 367784 or [katehartoch@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:katehartoch@blueyonder.co.uk)

## NATURAL THEATRE

The Naturals have introduced several new characters to their large repertoire, details of which are on the regularly updated Latest News pages of their website. Fresh faces include the Trolly Dollies, who enjoy sharing interesting facts about the bizarre artefacts displayed on their tea trollies. These were first seen by a surprisingly riveted audience at Lewisham's Anti-Chewing Gum Litter Day. Natural Theatre are currently hosting the scurrilous monthly *Cabaret Bonbon* in Bath, showcasing the best of local talent alongside acts created by the company. They are also working with local residents on a large-scale public event reviving the ancient ritual of Beating the Bounds. See: [www.naturaltheatre.co.uk](http://www.naturaltheatre.co.uk)

## ORGANIC THEATRE

is continuing to tour *Sheepskin* (at Everyman Studio, Cheltenham 10–12 May), prior to performing at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. The company is also hosting a series of five-day international residencies for professional performing artists, in collaboration with the Asian Arts Agency and the Tobacco Factory, Bristol, funded by Arts Council England. Invited artists are Brazilian Candomblé dancer Augusto Omolù (7–11 May), Indian paratheatrical performance group Milòn Méla (September), and Kathakali performer Sasi Nair (October). See: [www.organictheatre.co.uk](http://www.organictheatre.co.uk)

## PEEPOLYKUS

The innovative clown-theatre company Peepolykus have finally made it to the West End (Duchess Theatre) with their latest show *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Sherlock Holmes' most celebrated mystery has been adapted into a brilliantly funny, fast-paced and gloriously inventive stage show. Bookings: 0870 890 1103 or see: [www.houndonstage.com](http://www.houndonstage.com)





GONZO MOOSE



PEEPOLYNOS



PERFORMER + COMPANY UPDATES

## JONATHAN KAY

The Nomadic Academy of Fools is the latest incredible step in the life of Jonathan Kay. From autumn '07 Jonathan will be teaching his Fooling Technique to ten fools-in-training on a year-long course. The Academy will tour ten locations across the UK and abroad, creating both a school and a company. Any professional may apply for the audition process, which will take place in the first week of July in Winchester. Information on the Academy and the application process is available for download at [www.jonathankay.co.uk](http://www.jonathankay.co.uk), or by emailing [info@jonathankay.co.uk](mailto:info@jonathankay.co.uk) or calling 07707058820

**PUNCHDRUNK** is the winner of the Critics' Circle Theatre Award for Best Designer 2006. In a break from tradition, the Award has been made to a company rather than an individual, in recognition of Punchdrunk's collective achievement in the production of *Faust*. The production was also nominated for the Evening Standard Theatre Awards Milton Shulman Award for Most Promising Newcomer 2006. By the end of its extended run, *Faust* had been seen by more than 28,000 people. Punchdrunk's next production (September 2007; in collaboration with BAC) will be *The Masque of the Red Death*. For further information see: [www.thereddeathcoming.com](http://www.thereddeathcoming.com) or [www.punchdrunk.org.uk](http://www.punchdrunk.org.uk)

**ROBERT JUDE DANIELS** is about to embark on his newest project, *scorezer0*, a dance-film authored by over 50 artists, writers, scholars – and the public. The practical premise of this work continues concepts and themes from his first solo venture, *playing with myself* (2003–5), and is the second part of a theoretical and theatrical trilogy of work that explores new disciplines in dance and theatre composition, attempting to develop a unique physical and compositional approach to making work.

## SHAMS THEATRE

With extensive touring of *The Garden* finished in March this year, Shams are now developing a new clown-theatre project, *Black Stuff*, with an international ensemble, to be scratched as part of the PULSE Festival in Ipswich on 21–22 June, and shown at South Street (Reading) in August. Following the success of his London International Mime Festival course, Jonathan Young will be giving a week-long Clown through Mask workshop in June/July in London, and there are plans for a three-week intensive residential course from the end of August in France or Greece. See: [www.shamstheatre.org.uk](http://www.shamstheatre.org.uk)

## TAYLOR MAC

New York performance artist Taylor Mac, who took the Edinburgh Festival Fringe by storm last summer, is currently on a twelve-week, three-country tour. Mac, whom The Scotsman called 'flawless' and who walked away with an armload of rave reviews and a Herald Angel award, will be touring his show *The Be(a)st of Taylor Mac* to the Komedia, Queer Up North, The Arches, and another half-dozen UK venues, plus Sweden and Ireland. And, just because he likes to keep busy, he will be scratching a new piece, *The Young Ladies of...*, at Battersea Arts Centre as part of the Burst Festival, 10–12 May. For complete tour dates see: [www.taylormac.net](http://www.taylormac.net)

**THEATRE MODO** is taking a break from its professional theatre to create a youth and community spectacle for the Buckie Festival that celebrates the talent and enthusiasm of the region. The three-month-long project will bring together hundreds of participants from school, youth and community groups in workshops and rehearsals to create a large-scale extravaganza involving music, art, dance, drama and fireworks. The show will be staged as street theatre in Buckie on 28 June. The event will process down to the harbour for the dramatic fireworks finale before returning indoors for a celebratory ceilidh. See: [www.theatremodo.com](http://www.theatremodo.com)

**THE CHIPOLATAS** celebrated fifteen years on the road in April this year, and have updated their show, *3-Style*, and their website to include new film edits. The company has plenty of international touring planned for 2007. For more info see: [www.chipolatas.com](http://www.chipolatas.com)

**THE DELL'ARTE COMPANY** will present a visually spectacular adaptation of Moliere's classic comedy *Tartuffe*, 21 June – 1 July, to open its 16th annual Mad River Festival, running in Blue Lake, California. Masks, music, and the trademark physical comedy of the Dell'Arte ensemble combine with the finely crafted satire of Moliere to create an evening of laughter. In May, the Dell'Arte Company will present *Artemisia* at San Francisco's Magic Theatre. A feast for the senses, this original production interweaves the life of the Baroque painter Artemisia Gentileschi with the apocryphal story of Judith. Call 1-707-668-5663 or email [info@dellarte.com](mailto:info@dellarte.com) or see: [www.dellarte.com](http://www.dellarte.com)

**THE FACELESS COMPANY** has received a grant from Arts Council England to produce *Conference of the Birds*, a new professional street theatre show based on the Sufi poem. Artistic Director Bev Adams will be working with John Wright (Told by an Idiot) as dramaturg/mentor, and the medium-scale performance, with community involvement, will feature puppets, masks, sculptural set and music from Nitin Sawhney. The twelve-week tour, focused primarily but not exclusively on Yorkshire, the Humber and North Lincolnshire, begins on 1 June and ends 1 September in Kendal. For more information and bookings call Charlie Wells on 01924 335985 or email [charlie@facelessco.com](mailto:charlie@facelessco.com) or see [www.facelessco.com](http://www.facelessco.com)

## THIRD ANGEL

Originally produced in Sheffield in 2006, Third Angel's *Presumption* toured extensively in February and March, and was joined by *The Lad Lit Project* and the *Pills For Modern Living* exhibition for a mini Third Angel retrospective at Northern Stage in Newcastle. The company is currently running a six-week Directing and Devising Course at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon, running an eighteen-week Creative Learning project at Totley Primary School in Sheffield, and developing a piece in collaboration with Teatro Praga in Lisbon. For more information see: [www.thirdangel.co.uk](http://www.thirdangel.co.uk)

**UNPACKED** are working on their new show (working title: *Idyll – A Comic Lament*) with the help of funding from Arts Council England. It will use object animation, the clown, and daring physicality to tell a darkly comic story of a dead father, a family firm, and a lost childhood. *Idyll* will first be shown in May at the Nightingale Theatre in Brighton, where it is being developed. It will also be at the Pleasance in Edinburgh in August. In the meantime, Unpacked take their previous show, *No Obvious Trauma*, to the Prague Fringe Festival in June. See: [www.unpacked.org](http://www.unpacked.org)

## ZECORA URA

Acclaimed by both audiences and critics and directed by Gabriel Gawin (*Song of the Goat's/ Anima Mundi*), Zecora Ura Theatre's *The Tempest* was created in 2005 during the company's six-month residency in Brazil, and has played to sold-out audiences in the UK and Spain during 2006. After returning to London for eight nights in February 2007, *The Tempest* will now be touring UK venues until 1 July 2007. See: [www.zecora.com](http://www.zecora.com)



# BEHIND THE MASK

TINKER, TAILOR, SOLDIER, SAILOR? JUST WHO IS TAYLOR MAC? DOROTHY MAX PRIOR TELLS ALL

Bistrotheque, London, December 2006: an intimate gay cabaret club. A bare-chested boy (leopardskin toga-dress, glitter-and-glue face that's more mask than make-up, turquoise-blue wig) stomps on stage in a pair of exceedingly high heels. (Shoes which are 'your oppression but my liberation', as he tells it to a woman at the front.) A suitcase full of thrift shop frills and furbelows is tipped out onto the stage (delved into regularly throughout the show, creating ever more enterprising garment combinations), a ukulele is summoned up from somewhere, and off we go...

He sings songs about learning to love himself; he parodies the ludicrous state of soft-focus fear and woolly all-embracing paranoia enshrined in the New York subway system's 'if you see something, say something' tannoy mantra; and there's a soul-searching monologue about morning masturbation and the battle to keep sexual fantasy within politically correct boundaries: 'Black men from San Francisco NO! Twinks NO! Think of Michael, the first time with Michael!' (greeted with whoops and cheers). A musical satire that juxtaposes Dick Cheney's wife's incursions into lesbian erotica ('you couldn't make this stuff up') with the execution of Saddam Hussein gets a slightly more reserved response. The situation, incidentally, a reverse of the audience response when the show played Edinburgh Fringe 2006, where the political satire got the most appreciative applause – horses for courses, I suppose.

Mac (a stalwart of the New York performance scene) was the word-of-mouth hit of last year's Fringe, coming up trumps with a Herald Angel award. There has since been a slow but steady UK build, and a tipping point has now been reached. Yet no one quite knows how to place him. Is this cabaret, comedy, drag, music? Taylor has no hesitation, he knows what he is: 'I'm a theatre artist.' This could be seen by some as a contentious statement. Isn't 'theatre' supposed to be something with a narrative and characters? No, says Mac, theatre is the creation of a stage world that you draw the audience into, in which you tell stories using whatever tools you have: in his case, those tools include his carefully crafted, politically sussed songs and monologues, his suitcase full of treasures and a beautiful body that embraces the masculine and the feminine in perfect yin-yang harmony.

But let's backtrack a bit, back to Edinburgh last summer, and a breakfast conversation with Taylor Mac (oh yes – envy me, dear reader). I'm keen to learn more about his theatre roots...

It all started in small-town America, with an adolescent passion for music theatre that later (with a move to San Francisco) grew into an interest in more alternate theatre forms, from agit-prop to commedia dell'arte, which he discovered when training with Dan Chumley of the San Francisco Mime troupe, and from there embracing physical performance practices such as Suzuki and Butoh. A move to New York brought him into contact with method acting, and he worked with a number of theatre



companies, but like many actors he disliked the situation where he was 'always asking permission to be creative', so set to writing his own performance texts and plays. But he missed singing, and so developed a cabaret act. But that wasn't quite the all-embracing form that he wanted, so the next incarnation, inspired by the lively NY performance art scene, was a kind of performance art/cabaret crossover. He insists, though, that his work is predominantly driven by theatrical intentions and motivations: 'I work conceptually. I take a topic – like "the war on terror" and I work around all the words, emotions, responses that this conjures up.' His work is unequivocally political, but he believes 'you have to go through the personal to get to the political'. One solo show (*Okay*, which has nine characters, all played by Mac) told the story of a teenager who gave birth to a baby during a high school prom, this tied thematically to the '9/11' attacks: 'it was a play about the sudden loss of innocence.'

The driving idea behind all his work is a belief in the need to reject polarisation and homogenisation. 'I want to give the audience an experience of something that is everything – messy, clean, vulnerable, guarded, graceful, sloppy, rehearsed, spontaneous, a success and a failure.' He believes passionately in diversity and feels that theatre should be 'a dialogue between the artists and the audience... dialogue is more interesting if the audience is as diverse as possible.' This no doubt at least part in response to growing up in small-town America, 'singular, homogenised, oppressed', although he is keen to stress that his mother and sister have been a constant source of support. One of his heroes is his friend Scotty, who walks the streets of New York in a rabbit costume, 'a six-foot-four blue bunny'. Proof that 'you can be anything you want to be'.

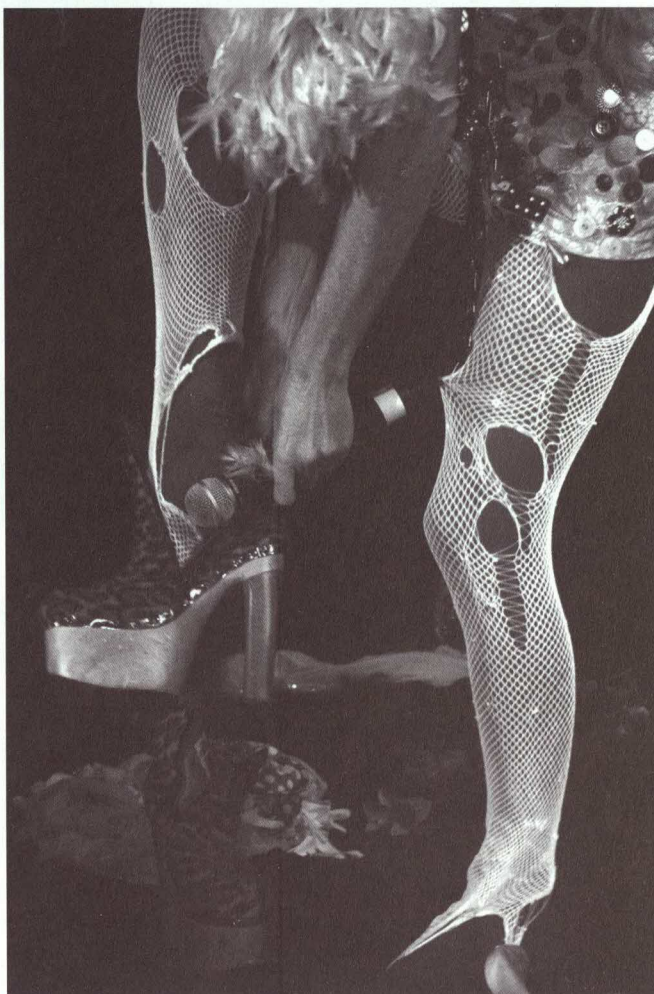
He is also very clear-cut about the fact that although he uses autobiographical material in his work, what we are seeing on stage is a crafted version of the self (hence the mask of layered paint and glitter). He has started to describe himself as 'a fool', referring to Shakespeare's fools whose fantastical appearance



and behaviour allows them to 'speak truths that others can't get away with.' Although he wouldn't necessarily define himself in this way, I see his stage persona very much in the tradition of theatre clown: the heightened self explored and exposed on stage; his multicoloured palette of slap and sequins replacing the red nose/white face masks of the clown/mime.

His all-embracing interest in theatre and performance has brought him into interesting collaborations with other artists, including (as a result of winning an Ethyl Eichelberger Award in 2005) the development of a PS122-commissioned piece called *Red Tide Blooming* with experimental puppeteer Basil Twist. Involving a cast of 12 puppeteer-performers and musicians and 20 lovingly crafted hand-held puppets, it is an apocalyptic musical extravaganza in which 'all the old lady puppets are drowned in the sea so their blue-rinsed hair makes it blue'. Of course, it's fun, and Mac enjoys the notion of 'tradition turned upside down', but there's a serious side too: 'It's anti homogeny' – that word again! – 'and is about the disregard of anything different – queer, old...' Taylor is pleased to have come full circle, back to music theatre but with a different kick: 'honouring musical theatre and burlesque through puppetry and other techniques and theatre genres.'

The show currently touring is called *The Be(a)st of Taylor Mac* and is a composite piece that draws on elements from previous work. He will also be scratching a new theatre show at BAC. *The Young Ladies of* continues his exploration of the political through the personal. This time, he's investigating the life of 2nd Lieutenant Robert Mac, the Vietnam vet father he never knew. The research for the show started with the discovery of a box of letters written, it turns out, by women corresponding with his soldier father: women pen-pals who were 'using him just as I did' with 'their longing for what wasn't there, the "if only I had him in my life..."'. The frustration with discovering that all the letters were from the women's side – there was no knowing what the replies contained – added to his anguish over the absence of his father from his life, but artistically provided the starting point to the new show, which is about contrasts: between absence and presence, between these letters and correspondence with present-day soldiers (referencing the weblogs of American soldiers serving in



Iraq, and the women who romance them). It will (again) be a solo show and he is looking forward to playing out the contrast between his tough lady-loving soldier father and his gender-bender leftie/liberal self. What he's most interested in is the play between 'difference and commonality'.

Taylor Mac's passion is making theatre/art/performance (call it what you will) that is about something. That's what all these projects have in common: it's down with irony, aloofness, death-of-the-author and meta-theatre; up with sincerity, tender loving care, owning the text, and actually being there – no other time or place will do.

*The Be(a)st of Taylor Mac* is currently (spring 2007) touring to the Arches, Glasgow, and the West End of London with a run at Soho Theatre, and can be seen in May at Komedia Brighton, Norwich and Norfolk festival, and queerupnorth in Manchester.

*The Young Ladies of* is premiered as a scratch performance at BAC's Burst 10–12 May.

See: [www.taylormac.net](http://www.taylormac.net) or [www.paullucasproductions.com](http://www.paullucasproductions.com)

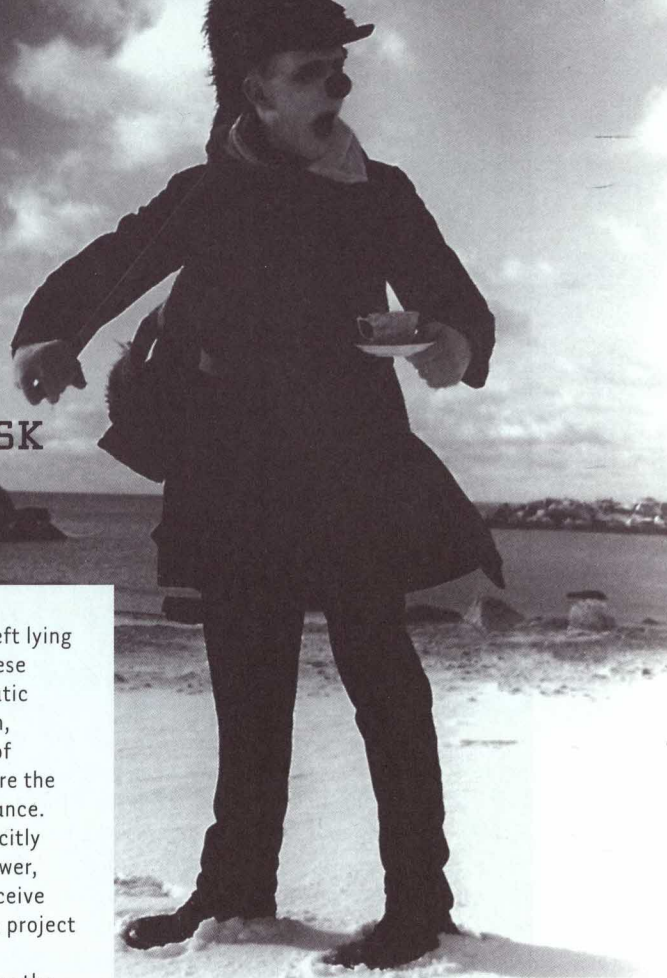
IMAGE CREDITS:  
PHOTOGRAPHS OF TAYLOR MAC BY MARIANNE BARR AND  
MIA JACOBSE





# SECOND SIGHT

## JONATHAN YOUNG OF SHAMS THEATRE EXPLAINS HOW HE MADE HIS WAY FROM NEUTRAL MASK TO CLOWN THROUGH MASK



It's 3am, and a theatre designer is working late for an urgent deadline. As she works in her studio, the masks on her wall start to come to life and speak to her. Terrified, she rushes from the room, fearing for her sanity. This incident captures some of the mixed feelings about masks we have in our post-industrial world: on the one hand, we recognise that they have an uncanny power; on the other, we're scared of losing it, being overwhelmed by 'the other' that lives within the mask. I want to reflect on those mixed feelings through my own experiences with masks, and how we can use the power that masks have in the performances we choose to make.

Lecoq recognised the usefulness of using masks in training performers. Starting with the Neutral Mask, his school was almost a series of masks, even if those weren't always something you physically put on your head. In fact, looking back over my two years there I am always struck by how Lecoq deliberately moves you into a place that is alien to adult, reasonable psychology: elements and objects, animals and artforms, children, monsters, madmen and heroes all feature strongly in that journey, while for Lecoq *les intellectuels* was typically a term of abuse.

With the Neutral Mask, Lecoq points out quite correctly that the mask is useful because, being a symmetric, passionless mask, it places a constraint upon performers to express solely through their body; the same could naturally be said of many of the masks used at the school. But I think there's another, more profound reason that explains the usefulness of masks, which I first experienced with the Neutral Mask: namely that 'the performer is released into performance by the mask's permission'. So writes Declan Donnellan in *The Actor and the Target* (recently reprinted by Nick Hern Books), and a similar idea can be found in Keith Johnstone's *Impro*. And here we come to a central paradox with mask: that though it conceals the performer's face, in fact it allows the performer to reveal far more of herself than she could without it. This is one reason why people who work with masks typically insist that the masks be treated with respect; that they should not

be put face down, for example, or left lying on the floor. Although I've heard these practices justified as purely pragmatic to keep the masks in good condition, I believe they are in fact remnants of much older rituals designed to ensure the mask's magical efficacy in performance. The modern performer or teacher tacitly acknowledges that the mask has power, but like anything else it needs to receive energy from its user in order to then project that power back out again.

Other rituals similarly accompany the donning of the mask, whether this might consist of studying or drawing the mask; feeling its weight and shape in the hands; finding its dynamic or sound (which I will come back to); or breathing the mask on to the face. These rituals help prepare the performer to experience the true function of a mask: to liberate its wearer from their habitual ways of seeing and being in the world, and to see the world through the eyes of the mask, and so (re)act accordingly. In Lecoq, much of this work is done 'outside in', through trial and error, where students and the teacher watch a masked performer, and provoke the person with different suggestions until the mask 'appears', seems to come alive with certain characteristics and qualities that are right for it. You could say that these qualities lie waiting within the mask, to be discovered and co-created with the performer, much like Michelangelo's David within the marble. I remember Lecoq once asking us about our sensations of working in a character mask. One student answered, 'It's like there's another, who's working with me.' This answer clearly pleased Lecoq. 'That's right!' he said, 'With the mask there's you, and there's another.' My own experiences of wearing masks at Lecoq's school were of great freedom, of being able to get out of the way and let the mask take control, allowing me in turn to play with much greater abandon.

It was at this time that I also came across another way of working with masks originally developed by a Canadian, Richard Pochinko. Pochinko had met a Native West Coast American, who had inducted him into that culture's way of working with masks. The resulting synthesis

that Pochinko developed between these Native American and European traditions uses masks as the basis for a non-ego based way of clowning, often referred to as Clown through Mask. In this work, a performer makes and wears six masks (papier maché on a clay mould), an act of facing all 'directions' of the self that allows their full humanity to be later accessed in performance.

Rather than making these masks to be performed with, they are made intuitively, and are worn for the experience or trip that they provide for the participant. The mask's nature is not discovered through the medium of sight but through finding the mask's sound, which is then put into the body and breath, creating an opening into another realm of perception when the mask is donned in two long improvisations of experience and innocence. The wearer then returns from these trips with the vision and body of another, but one that also naturally reveals an aspect of himself. These states are then 'dropped in', as if the performer were still wearing the mask invisibly, and create the basis for a strong emotional journey for the clown and ultimately, the audience.

Now that I have been teaching this work for a couple of years, people sometimes ask me if it is religious or spiritual. They are not necessarily wrong to make that connection, in the sense that I believe any real spirituality must be grounded in the body, and this work most definitely is. However, I think it's far more accurate to see this way of working with masks as mythological. To do this work, you don't have to believe anything. In fact, it's preferable not to go into the work with



expectations or beliefs. What do I mean by this? Mythology is concerned with meaning, not as an abstract system of philosophy (the post-Enlightenment new kid on the block, which we take as the norm) but as a vivid experienced reality of stories, images and persons. In short, a poetic basis of understanding the world – clearly of use for any performer or artist wanting to work at any level of depth. Over the course of the six masks, the different personas the wearer experiences often become more fantastical: I may start to experience myself/the other as an animal, alien, robot, mermaid, or ghost in their own distinctive worlds. At some point, the mask takes me to places, emotionally or physically, that I normally shy away from in daily life. The opportunity that the mask here presents is to inhabit fully these shadowy aspects, to own them so that I can make use of these energies, both on stage and in my life. If we were to encounter these facets of ourselves without the mask, they would be too volatile, too painful to accept and play out. However, the mask makes them safe, to the point of being able to remain in and explore that place, in time even coming to enjoy it. And despite people's pre-conceptions or fears about 'losing control' or the trip becoming somehow unbearable, I have always found these masks to be ultimately benevolent.

When these masks come to be 'worn' invisibly whilst clowning, they provide a strong structure within which the performer is then free to play. As the masks are worn repeatedly, like clothes, they come to feel more homely, and more of myself. I can move from one emotional sphere to another instantaneously, changing my state and view of the world entirely. Magic is normally identified as having an effect 'out there' on the material world, on hard real things. But Clown through Mask shows us that by shifting our consciousness, we also create a shift in perception, and hence of being – our own and that of the audience. And these moments can be transformative, magical. Pochinko's desire was to create a kind of performance that would be truly relevant for today, and in the clown's ability to encompass the utterly ridiculous and the sublime together through the masks, I believe he succeeded.

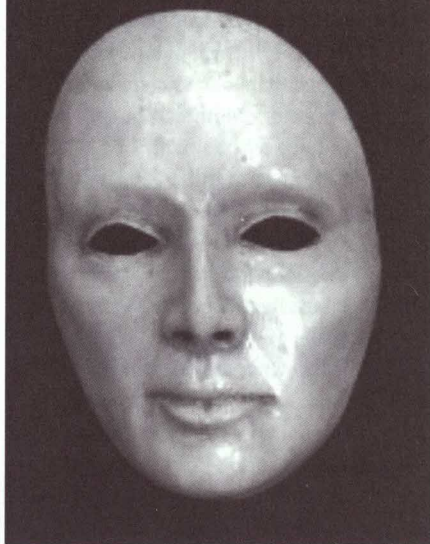
In Sham Theatre's new show *Black Stuff* we will be working with these invisible masks, allowing us to go to places of tenderness, power and cruelty far beyond our reasonable normality. The gift of the mask is ultimately that of second sight: looking again at the world with new eyes, and sharing that vision with others.

Jonathan Young is artistic director of Shams Theatre. His clown-theatre piece, *Sleeping Beauties* (pictured) played at the Edinburgh Fringe, across the Scottish Highlands and North American Fringes. His second solo, the acclaimed multimedia play *The Garden* has toured extensively, and was short-listed for a Total Theatre Award at Edinburgh 2006. *Black Stuff* will be presented as a work in progress as part of the PULSE Festival, at the New Wolsey Studio, Ipswich on 21 and 22 June 2007.

He also worked as artistic collaborator/dramaturg on *Hysteria* with Inspector Sands; and most recently in directing Tamsin Shasha of aod in her new aerial show, *Bacchic*, at the Brighton and Edinburgh Fringes 2007. Since 2005, he has been teaching Clown through Mask to adults and young people, including at the BAC and as part of the London International Mime Festival. His next course is scheduled for 25–29 June 2007. For more information, see: [www.shamstheatre.org.uk](http://www.shamstheatre.org.uk) or email: [info@shamstheatre.org.uk](mailto:info@shamstheatre.org.uk)

## WHO AM I ANYWAY?

### MICHAEL CHASE SEES THE MASK AS THE KEY TO THE ART OF THEATRE



For 27 years I've been exploring the phenomena of masks as a maker, actor, director and teacher; seeking the truth of being on stage; exploring the pedagogical masks of neutral; pushing the extremes of the four temperaments and the seven planets to create tools for actors to learn

the craft of acting; facilitating the Hero's Journey with young people on the painful threshold of adolescence; and working in business with managers, defining management styles and presentation skills with masks. I have lived with masks day in, day out, year in, year out, and now I am left with the question: Who is there when the mask goes on? Who am I anyway?

The mask is like a lens to focus on what is going on beneath the surface. Different styles of masks reveal different keys to the art of theatre. Each practitioner will highlight different essentials – these are some of mine:

#### MASK TRIANGLE

For the mask to remain alive on the stage it cries out for three living relationships: the first is the performer in relationship to their creative impulse and inner spontaneous life, the playful essence; the second is the relationship with the other performers, the other masks on the stage. And the third is the mask in relationship to the audience, the world. Whether this is in dance, mime or

drama the same relationships need to be maintained, if the mask theatre is not to become painful and make us wish the actor would take it off. If the relationships are maintained, a new world begins to emerge on the stage, as if by magic; if not the mask can kill not only the actor's creativity but the scene as well.

#### NO ACTING

When working with Ed Hall on *The Comedy of Errors* with what was to become Propeller Theatre Company, the actors came into the rehearsal room, word perfect off the book, put the masks on and recited the text. 'Dead' masks got in the way of the Shakespeare. The job for the actors was to teach the mask the text. After policing the actors for weeks to get out of the way and let the masks play with the script, with the sounds of the words, moments of truth began to appear. When the first phrases and words were said by the mask it was like watching a child's first words and steps. I was proud of them. Then, slowly, when they seemed to get the hang of it, and the first night came, they all but one panicked and became actors again, and the masks died. The audience wished that they would take the masks off as they seemed to be standing in the way of some good Shakespearean acting. On the fifth night, when they relaxed and began to play the



play, the masks began to take over again and we knew we were in the realm of grace, where the masks happened to be doing Shakespeare as they played the game of theatre.

## MASK AS A FIFTH LIMB

While researching Greek style acoustic mask with David Wiles at Holloway University we discovered that the open-mouthed helmet acoustic mask is not important as a face, but needs to move as a fifth limb. Rather than a picture of dead thinking to do with memory and the past, the mask asks the head to be in relationship with the body, moving, articulated, like an arm or leg. The mask demands the head to move with the consciousness of a limb. From a long distance away you can't see the details of the face, so the movement of the head in relation to the shoulders, arms and torso creates an architecture which conveys meaning and feeling. Positions of the head altered by a millimetre speak miles of emotional space. This is the theatre of image, of storytelling, where rich archetypal images go deep into the psyche and nourish the life forces and spirit. Pictures speak louder than words, and they take us beyond meaning and thinking alone, into the world of imagination, where archetypal pictures create substance for our evolving consciousness.

Theatre is not reality, not natural. It represents a heightened state of relationship with the audience; no fourth wall remains standing when the mask is on the stage. Brick by brick, the masks dismantle the wall, and the audience becomes visible; house lights are turned up a little and the suspension of disbelief becomes tenable within the world created.

I remember the moment in Footsbn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* when Bottom the ass entered with a huge mask and just stood still for a while, wondering what the hell had happened, the entire 500 people drew breath together then burst into laughter. Or when Haley Carmichael, in Told by an Idiot's *Don't Laugh It's My Life*, leant on the table, further and further for so long, with Paul Hunter's mask looking straight out at the audience. Good theatre changes your blood level, like the moment when Greg Hicks playing Dionysus in Peter Hall's masked production of *The Bacchae* turned slowly to face the audience: the entire 800 audience breathed out together, then dived into the palm of his hand like hungry birds. This is the realm where the mask takes us into other worlds, parallel worlds of the psyche and spirit, where – whether we laugh or cry – we will never look



*Michael Chase is artistic director of the Glasshouse Art Centre/Glasshouse Mask Centre, who create mask productions, make masks for clients around the world, and run mask making and using workshops through the Mask Academy. In 2003 Glasshouse Productions produced Antigone with Taurus Voice; in 2005 Peer Gynt; and in 2006 Through Glass Darkly. He is currently working on a new mask production with Gerry Flanagan. In October 2007 the company will be producing the International Mask Festival in which Footsbn Travelling Theatre will be performing A Midsummer Night's Dream and running workshops. Other teachers will include John Wright, Geese, and Ninian Kinnier-Wilson (tbc), and there will be an exhibition including masks by Thanos Vovolis.*

# THE HIDDEN ART

## STEVEN WHINNERY SEES MASKS EVERYWHERE



Scene: Tottenham Court Road, a sunny June day. I'm dodging my way past charity muggers (young person, clipboard, t-shirt/sweatshirt, logo: Age Concern/Greenpeace). One young man on the verge of losing it exhorts the I-pod wearing public to take them out, miming pulling out the trademark white earphones. Cut to ASDA. I'm doing a late-night shop. At the checkout, a group of three people bagging up their purchases: one of them has a Bluetooth headset in his ear; he talks on the phone ignoring the people around him, they seem unaffected and carry on filling their bags.

Is this a strange way to start an article on masks? Not as strange and disconnected as it might seem. We mask ourselves in all sorts of ways. Mask has often been associated with altered states of consciousness, of accessing invisible worlds not available to most of us. Technology seems to have provided a mask that places a barrier between us and our immediate environment and which has given us access to other worlds, if only in the form of playlists of 1,000 songs, and talking in the supermarket while you shop to someone in another supermarket.





scheming dogs, became the genesis of my company. Normally we choose projects but sometimes projects choose us. Such is the case with *Lying with the Animals*. It has been inexplicable and bewildering, I don't know what I'm doing most of the time. I feel like one of those people who claim to have been abducted by aliens who get beamed up, prodded, probed, examined then materialize back in their beds or by a roadside some days later dazed and confused with mysterious nose bleeds. The moral being: don't get involved with masks; they do strange things to you. Why do I do what I do? Because I do.

*Steven Whinnery Co presented Lying with the Animals at the London International Mime Festival 2007. For more on the company see: [www.lyingwiththeanimals.com](http://www.lyingwiththeanimals.com)*

**IMAGE1:**  
LYING WITH THE ANIMALS. PHOTO COURTESY OF LONDON INTERNATIONAL MIME FESTIVAL.  
**IMAGES 2 & 3:**  
STEVEN WHINNERY AS DOLLY IN A WATCHED KETTLE NEVER BOILS, PART OF CLOCK WORKS: LIVE ART IN A SHOP WINDOW, MAY 2005. PHOTOS KATIE ETHERIDGE.

I'm trying to find a doorway into this vast subject, even if it is only a very tiny Alice-sized door that you have to eat cake to get through. I am a mask-maker, director and performer. When I meet people for the first time and they ask me what I do, the most common response is 'fascinating'. Masks intrigue people. There is a certain tone that comes into people's voices when they speak of them; a tone of enchantment, of transformation and transportation to a different realm.

The mask is a magnifying glass, a loudspeaker to the emotions. When we open up to its possibilities, its certain uncertainties, it reflects our own. We profoundly don't know or understand the world about the mask. It does not deal in answers; its sphere is questions, wonderment. The mask misbehaves, it gets sent out of the class all the time. The mask doesn't like authority; if it senses that it is being told what to do, it will do the opposite – masks are by nature anarchic. But if you accept your fundamentally flawed and naughty nature, you can have dialogue, you can have a friend. But if you take on the mask, don't expect a world

that is settled and neat. Don't think you can switch off the light and expect a good night's sleep. Be prepared for sleepless nights and poltergeists.

I cannot say why or how I came to be involved with mask. I can explain the circumstances but I cannot explain the fascination.

My first encounter with mask in performance was seeing a show by the now defunct Moving Picture Mime Show, featuring those wonderful large white naïve/larval masks. I was charmed and transported. The company had all met at the Lecoq School in Paris and that is where I headed in the early 80s. I was bamboozled, challenged, tearful, confused and a very bad student. But in the friction, burn, and deep immersion something got right into my bones and the fundamental tenants of his teaching stayed with me and influenced all my subsequent work.

Several years later I picked up a book on the artist Paula Rego. Her Dog Women series of paintings (of women behaving like dogs), alongside my being a fan of Gary Larson's cartoon series *The Far Side*, with its joy-riding cows and



# TASSEL HASSLE

FEATHERS AND FURBELOWS, SEQUINED BRAS, STOCKINGS,  
AND HIGH HEELS. GET 'EM OFF, SAYS LAURA LLOYD, THE  
BURLESQUE BACKLASH STARTS HERE

What are we supposed to feel when we watch a burlesque performance? *'Phwoor! That woman takes stripping to such erotic heights it's an artform!'*? Or maybe admiration for her bravery, exposing her body – so often the object of much self-criticism and comparison – to scrutiny. Or perhaps *'How liberatingly transgressive! Let's all break the rules. Down with the nanny state!'*

Burlesque is not like other stage nudity: it is overtly seductive. In theatre, there is an assumption that nudity is there for an aesthetic reason. Perish the thought that any of us would have been adolescent enough to have spent our time watching Mnemonic sizing up Simon McBurney's dong, for example, or to have been mesmerised by the sinewy thighs of the beautiful thong-clad Derevo – would we? Well, maybe that duality of art versus basic instinct is itself worth exploring on stage, and maybe burlesque would be a good way to do it. But I haven't seen the show that explores that yet.

Is burlesque supposed to be ironic? Are we supposed to be amused that what was once thought of as scandalous is now only slightly titillating? Is the striptease in a theatrical context a reflection of the way that women's bodies are viewed? Can something be ironic when it is so utterly merged into the object of its irony? The problem is that society has swivelled its chair round back to front and opened its legs to burlesque. The burlesque resurgence has become so popular I'm pretty sure that it has become the very thing it was satirising in the first place: another stall on the meat market.

Let me take you on a lightning tour of my (less than comprehensive) awareness of the burlesque form. In 2006, Jade Jagger had Dita Von Teese perform at her London Fashion Week party (how daring, guaranteed a mention in *Closer* – I wasn't invited, in case you are wondering); the Art Car Boot Sale in Brick Lane revealed a Victorian stripper to a family audience at

four o'clock in the afternoon (I watched a father agonise over whether to extract his transfixed seven-year-old daughter from the crowd); the Whoopee Club hosted an event at the enormous Hackney Empire; my friend's mother hired a belly dancer to sex up her son's wedding reception; a gig in a Russian theme pub in Bethnal Green offered opportunities to eat canapes off someone's skin accompanied by a snake dancer; The International Workshop Festival hosted another series of workshops on (amongst other things) how to take off a glove seductively; my friends and the rest of the British female population went to pole dancing classes ('because it's really toning'); and *Time Out* devoted pages to the exploding scene. And that was only in my backyard.

But – and maybe I haven't seen the best of burlesque, and maybe I'm too prejudiced to dress up as Cleopatra/a dominatrix/a 1930s trollop to go and investigate further – I have remained perplexed by the performances I have seen. I haven't felt turned on, or full of admiration, or liberated. What I have felt has mainly oscillated between body envy (you don't see us muffin-tops twizzling our tassels) and old-fashioned feminist puritanism.

I think burlesque fails to liberate the female performer precisely because she invites the audience to desire her, and this is disempowering. Burlesque uses period costumes to distinguish itself from porn of the lapdancing variety. The theatricality of the costumes makes it quaint and retro rather than modern and mucky – it's okay to do a sex show so long as it's a bit antique. As if objectifying women was itself a thing of bygone eras: 'Ah! I get it! Burlesque is a retrospective nod at those days when we looked at women in such a way'? No, because although we are allegedly in a postfeminist society, we haven't even *begun* to end objectifying women. An example: I was recently out drinking with my partner's work colleagues,

when they all suddenly tapped their watches and picked up their coats to take their youngest recruit, whose eighteenth birthday it was, to a club where everyone puts a pound in a pint glass and then someone takes her top off – an initiation ceremony of the sort I thought no longer existed. In the light of such old-school male behaviour, I'm afraid that with burlesque we have just found another way to be on the podium more openly than ever. Who cares if we choose it ourselves – can't we choose something more original?

Burlesque misses out on one of the great opportunities in theatre: to defy the normal boundaries of the self, to lose oneself in being something completely different, to stop caring and fearing what others think of you. Life doesn't give you these tickets often. What if the predominant expectation were that women be strait-laced and self-effacing? Burlesque would then be the perfect antidote! But surely the current cultural expectation is that women should be slim, sexually desirable, available, and bubbling with 'personality'? Theatre is one of very few chances to be ugly, raw, clumsy, weird and vulnerable – truthfully naked. Aren't we interested in seeing that?

*Do you disagree? Email editorial@totaltheatre.org.uk and let us know.*

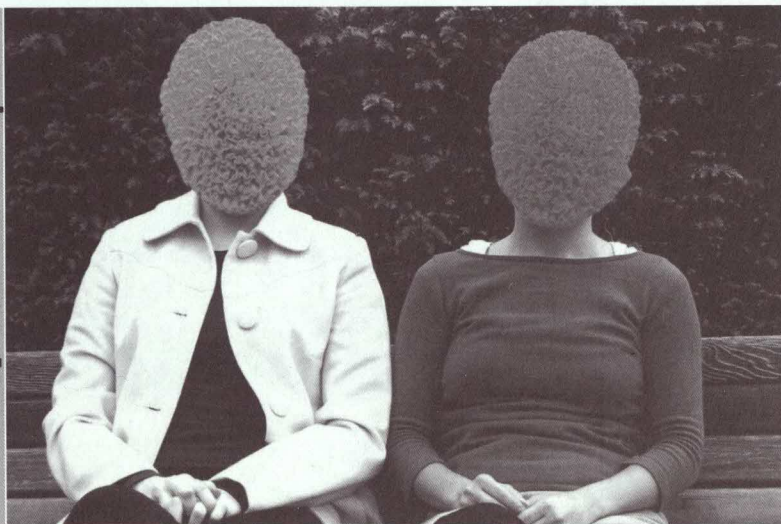
*Laura Lloyd is currently creating a new solo show, working title Russian Doll, and is performing with Shams Theatre*

IMAGE CREDIT:  
PHOTO BY JEAN-MARC PUISSANT



BECCY SMITH GOES TO THE  
GREENROOM FOR A TASTE OF  
WHAT'S NEW IN THE NORTH WEST

# EMERGENCY ENTRANCE



Emergency (launched October 2006 at Manchester's innovative arts centre, greenroom) is an event which wears a coat of many colours. It's a showcase, a two-day smorgasbord of morsels from artists on the edge of emerging; it's also a process – a live assessment of artists applying for the package of artistic, practical and financial support offered by greenroom's Method Lab commissions; it is both regional in flavour and national in its strong vision of contemporary and experimental performance practice. It's at the same time a forum – the fact that many audience members stay throughout offers ample opportunity to discuss and 'review' work by their peers – and it's a networking party, attended by a healthy, heady mix of industry heavyweights, artists and students. It is also a unique opportunity to see and/or show an enormous range of new contemporary arts practice in the North West.

The range and diversity of performance on offer was energising, and the sheer logistics of getting everything up and roughly to time were impressive, especially when every part of greenroom's multi-layered space was in use. The use of site, however, was perhaps the least successful aspect of the programming, with events occurring in public spaces that

weren't geared towards intervening in the audience's chit-chat, or whose scale simply felt wrong. There were exceptions though: Caution Horses's impressive reinvention of the cramped, dank space of a graffiti'd gents' toilet confronted English etiquette with engagingly surreal performance moments. Similarly Crimpers of Fire's *So You Think You're Gay?* capitalised knowingly on the combination of a cabaret setting with the transparent liberalism of the audience to set up some genuinely unnerving moments during their lecture-demonstration on sexual/cultural politics.

Analysis of cross-artform, non-linear performance or live art-based work is notoriously loaded, with subjectivity of response inevitable. From a dramaturgical perspective I focus on the work's success in recasting ideas or experiences, its unity or integrity of intention, and the creation of an arresting relationship with an audience. In these terms there were some notable performances. Roz Norbury's *Bathtime* was a lyrically simple piece of self-revelation, in which form perfectly complemented content. The vertiginous shifts in tone offered by Sinead King in *Looking for Love – Sex is Just another Dance* were genuinely exhilarating. The day's closing performance, *How to Kill a Rabbit*, combined menace with mayhem in its story

of homespun dirty bombs, capturing the bewildering array of feelings and responses provoked by the subject.

The remit for Emergency focuses squarely on artists' development through offering space, audience and a resonating context. There were problems with the work – decisions fluffed, poorly thought-through or rendered ideas, occasionally some old-fashioned bad acting – but this is part and parcel of putting new work out there. Cumulatively, in an astonishing eleven hours of programming, there was a huge amount to excite, provoke and entertain. I left feeling not only that I had shared with some intriguing artists early steps in their development, but that as an audience member and practitioner I had developed too.

*Emergency 2006, which involved 36 performances over the two days, took place in greenroom Manchester, October 2006, produced in partnership with contemporary performance development agency hAb. Greenroom was established in 1983 to develop and present local, national and international performance at venues across Manchester, and has recently been awarded new investment from Arts Council England in recognition of its essential role in giving artists breathing space, access to resources and contacts with networks across Manchester, the UK and the world.*

*Emergency 2007: Taking place September 28th and 29th, this year's event will turn greenroom into a frenzy of artistic activity. Performances and creative works take over every space, from the more traditional performances in the theatre space, to smaller pieces taking place in the toilets, the box office, the bar, the kitchen. To submit your idea, email [emergency@greenroomarts.org](mailto:emergency@greenroomarts.org) before 17 August 2007.*

*Details and submissions information will also be available on the greenroom website. See: [www.greenroomarts.org](http://www.greenroomarts.org)*



IMAGES FROM EMERGENCY 2006 COURTESY OF GREENROOM



# CORK MIDSUMMER FESTIVAL 2007

FRANC CHAMBERLAIN INTERVIEWS  
FESTIVAL DIRECTOR WILLIAM GALINSKY

The Cork Midsummer Festival was a civic initiative in 1997 and has grown considerably since then, attracting a large number of visitors during 2005 when Cork was the European City of Culture. In 2006 there were nineteen international projects and over fifty performance-based ones in all.

Previous Midsummer Festivals in Cork have had plenty to interest the reader of Total Theatre and last year saw a range of artists from Stan's Cafe and Nofit State to Pucá Puppets showing their work. In January 2007, William Galinsky took over as director from Ali Robertson.

*Franc: What was it that particularly interested you in this post?*

William: Essentially I've always wanted to run a festival. A few years back myself and Ben Harrison, the director of Grid Iron (fantastic site-specific company based in Edinburgh), made a joint application when the artistic directorship of LIFT came up. It was a long process and really focused me on what I'd want to achieve if running a festival. I suppose it made me realise that a festival was more attractive to me than either a company or a building. I imagined a festival which was both local and international, presenting work and commissioning new work which pushed the boundaries of live performance and was made by the most interesting practitioners but which did not lose its sense of being rooted in a particular locality and having

a huge sense of popular appeal. When Cork Midsummer Festival came up and I saw what had been achieved here over the last few years it really chimed in with the vision I had conceived of what a festival should be like.

*Is this vision similar to the one that's guided the festival in the past?*

Is it the same vision as Ali's? No, it isn't. But Ali's vision has planted a very fertile seedbed for me. Of course it's all of the companies and practitioners Ali worked with as well. Companies like Corcadorca and successive companies like Hammergrin and Playgroup have been making popular work which really pushes the boundaries and the audience response has been phenomenal. For example, I am so excited about Corcadorca choosing to do Wojcek this year. And because they have such a following I can be pretty sure that what to a Cork audience is a relatively obscure play will be a huge hit. The appetite has been created for unusual work – for theatre as an 'event' – something out of the everyday. Where the vision differs slightly is that I will focus on at least one big-scale international theatre premiere for Cork this year (and this will be a regular fixture, I hope, for the festival). In addition, for the future I am very interested in establishing co-producing relationships between artists on a local, national and international level.

*What else is on the programme for this year?*

We will be presenting Stan's Cafe's new piece, *The Cleansing of Constance Brown*, straight from the Vienna Festival. It's an installation theatre piece for an audience of 25 people at a time, set inside a self-contained corridor which arrives on the back of two articulated lorries. The corridor measures 20m by 5m by 3m. As I'm sure you can imagine, it's been quite a task to find a space that can take it – the only possibility is the Millennium Hall.

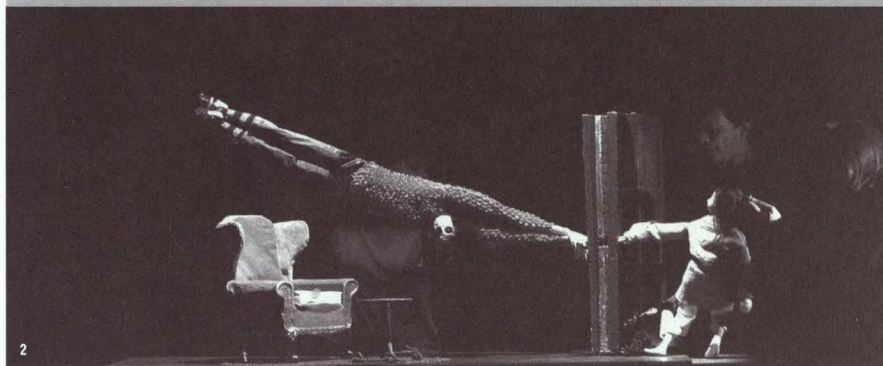
The international piece is the Experimental Theatre of Syria/Theatre Babylon Beirut with their production of *Bath of Baghdad*. It's a tragicomedy about the Iraq war set in a public bathhouse. I saw it at the Cairo International Festival of Experimental Theatre last year and was really blown away by it.

Adrian Howells (*Salon Adrienne*) is also coming back with a very daring new piece called *Held*, for which we're renting a house. And then there's Stephen Mottram and Fabrik Potsdam. We've also Fidget Feet, a wonderful Irish aerial theatre group, whose piece will be a spectacular family event – and a disco for toddlers called *Baby Rave*.



# SUDDENLY LAST SUMMER

FRANC CHAMBERLAIN AND CATHY WALSH HARK BACK TO SUMMER DELIGHTS AT THE CORK MIDSUMMER FESTIVAL 2006



Pucá Puppets (Dublin) performed an eerie adaptation of Neil Gaiman's novel *Coraline* at the Firkin Crane. The puppet platform was an old pool table with occasional extensions which was rotated to give a sense of travel: Coraline walks, it rotates... The large stage space was in darkness, with a sense of the props and puppets around ready to be brought on. None of the puppets or objects were fully visible off the table and this contributed to an atmosphere of eeriness, of something just out of sight waiting to emerge from the shadows. The downside of this was that the sense of foreboding continued throughout and seemed to flatten out the dynamics of the performance. The stage pictures and puppets were lovely and fitted very neatly with the mood of Gaiman's novel and had something of the spirit of Dave McKean's illustrations for *The Wolves in the Walls*. There are slow, intense dreamlike images which linger, Coraline walking... a David Lynch moment with two old lesbian thespians and their audience of dogs... buttons for eyes... a mother's arm nightmarishly extending... Coraline being hurled through the mirror, slowly somersaulting to land on the other side, trapped.

Fire and water were key elements in Corcadorca's *The Tempest*, performed in Fitzgerald's Park, with the set built into the pond, was visually striking and there was some well-worked humour in the comic scenes, but this wasn't a strongly performed piece of total theatre. Perhaps the strongest moments were the storm scenes and the atmosphere created by the community choir. Jools Gilson-Ellis was listed as the choreographer but there was little evidence of her work in this performance.

A short walk from Fitzgerald's Park, Nofit State (from Wales) brought their spaceship and *Imortal2* to Cork, creating a whirlwind of amazement; an enveloping circus experience. The music is sumptuous, often teasing with references to other things – is this *Amelie*? *Moulin Rouge*? Imagine a circus by Jeunet and Caro... There were gorgeously graceful moments founded on great strength and technique, especially in the aerial work. The spectacle was hung on the theme, not really a narrative, of the 'roof people' who were in a passage between life and death, a liminal space where they have a last chance to live life to the full, to do whatever it is they need to do as they move from mortality to

immortality. Aspects of everyday life were worked beautifully into the piece: fighting (boxing match above), loving (stunning physical dialogue on the rope), dancing, and eating, each offering the potential for a transformational moment of happiness. It isn't the story that holds, but the moments and, for the spectators too, there are possibilities for being moved, uplifted, and transported.

In contrast to the multi-performer spectacle and slight narrative of *Imortal2*, local boy Ed Malone performed an intense piece of solo physical theatre with verve and passion that was one of the high points of the festival. *The Self Obsessed Tragedy of Ed Malone* was an autobiographical story of adolescent angst with multiple characters emerging through rapid shifts of action and voice. After a year at Lecoq, Malone's fitness and focus have improved and the intense physicality was sustained throughout the poignantly entertaining show. Ed's tragedy emerges amidst love, pain, confusion, laughter, and saliva, sometimes with the openness of a public confession and at other times with a sense of a secret subterranean narrative.

Stan's Café's *Of All the People in all the World*, was almost a piece of still life. The weighing out of rice and its arrangement in heaps to give a materiality to abstract statistics had its first formal gallery outing in Cork at Triskel@21 Lavitt's Quay. Each grain of rice standing for an individual, with different sized heaps for the number involved in various contemporary and historical activities poses questions for the viewer. The relative significance of each event, for example, can't be reduced to the number of grains in the heap but emerges from the relation between the heap and the information that the spectator already carries. The presence of performers in brown grocer's coats, weighing the rice and interacting with the audience, provided a welcome warmth.



Cork Midsummer Festival 2006 took place  
20 June – 1 July.

Cork Midsummer Festival 2007 will take  
place 19–30 June 2007.

Tel: +353 21 4215131.

Email: [info@corkfestival.com](mailto:info@corkfestival.com)

See: <http://www.corkfestival.com>

IMAGE 1:  
CORCADORCA THE TEMPEST

IMAGE 2:  
PUCA PUPPETS CORALINE

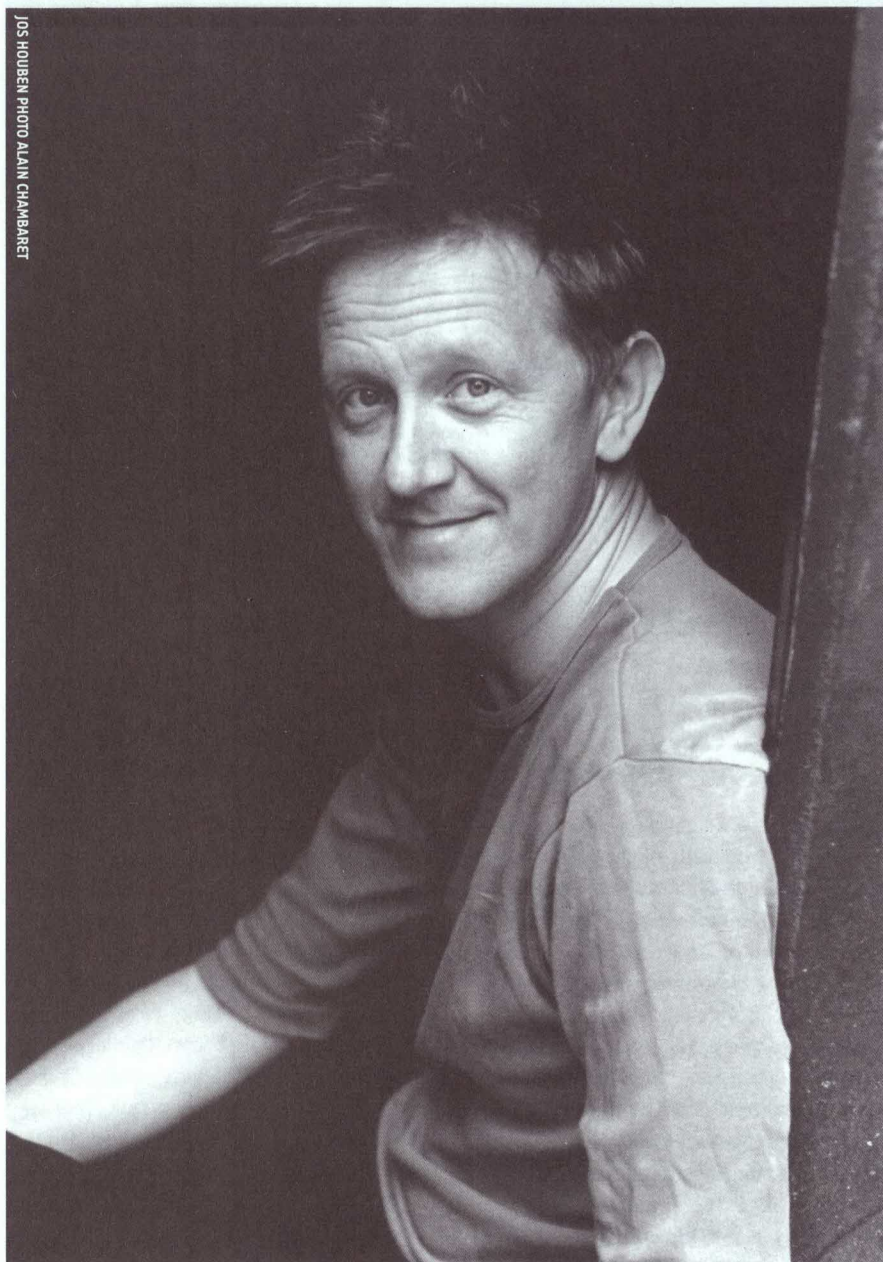
IMAGE 3:  
STAN'S CAFÉ – PHOTOS FRANC CHAMBERLAIN



# THE ART OF LAUGHTER

RICHARD CUMING ENJOYS A LAUGH WITH JOS HOUBEN

JOS HOUBEN PHOTO ALAIN CHAMBARET



On a bare stage with a couple of chairs and a table as his props, Jos Houben makes us laugh, think and reflect for an hour with his illuminating lecture-demonstration on physical comedy and slapstick. The very title of his lecture, *The Art of Laughter*, is a challenge to himself and us: should he fail to embody his own provocation and not make us laugh then we suspect that he does not know what he is talking about! However he easily reveals himself to be a master of his art, and the lecture, which follows in the tradition of those of Jacques Lecoq and Pierre Byland, makes for wonderful entertainment and, in parallel, considers some of the underlying principles of comedy, notably drawing on the theories of the philosopher Henri Bergson to whose essay-lecture, *Laughter*, published in 1900, Jos refers throughout. A basic principle of Bergson's theory is that we laugh when

a human being ceases to behave like a human being, with the human's customary fluidity or 'élan', but instead behaves in a mechanistic or puppet-like way, for example, when someone falls over, whilst trying to retain their dignity. It is worth noting, however, that nearly thirty years later, in 1927, the writer Wyndham Lewis proposed an almost exactly opposite theory in his short essay, *The Meaning of the Wild Body*, namely that we laugh when a human being attempts to behave like a person, for in reality we are 'all things or physical bodies behaving as persons'.

Beginning with simple, everyday movement such as walking with the head leading, or with chest thrust forward, Jos exaggerates, develops and embellishes these to create playful and comic situations, which reveal a richness of embodied character. Simultaneously he

demonstrates a subtlety and precision of the body and its relationship to props and space, in which the end result is a delightful clumsiness. He continually catches us off-guard with unexpected endings which act as counterpoint to what are standard, although nonetheless delightful, physical comedy routines. This is superbly demonstrated in his attempt to chat up a willing 'volunteer', which results in him creating havoc with table and chairs. Jos's art compares to other great physical comedians, for example, Jacques Tati, who, in *Monsieur Hulot's Holiday*, delicately attempts to straighten a picture, resulting in the destruction of an entire room. In addition, drawing on his training with Lecoq and in Feldenkreis technique, Jos discourses on the physiology of the human body, the way in which it is constructed, and the comic potential of different parts of the body. He further reveals the ways in which individuals emphasise certain parts of the body, and attempt to hide or protect other areas, with the paradoxical result that this draws attention to the hidden.

Throughout his performance Jos demonstrates an enviable ease in his body, which is fluid and expressive. This is more than mastery over his body, with its connotation of disciplining the body, but is suggestive of someone who is working in harmony with his body. Thus he conveys a relaxation and assuredness in movement, which from the outset permits the audience to relax and go on the journey of laughter with him, especially as he speaks to us directly. Our laughter is unforced. Mention should be made of the vital role played by the two volunteers who were invited up onto the stage to play. They worked well with Jos and permitted him to develop the comic potential of the relationship between different physicalities, increasing the laughter.

Although the title of the lecture, *The Art of Laughter*, suggests a broad canvas, Jos did not consider laughter arising from the vast area of verbal or subversive comedy, and neither did he consider the roles of comedy specific to shared cultural contexts. Wisely he concentrated on the area of the playful and the physical, in which areas he is an absolute master. It is fitting that he dedicated his show to another master of physical comedy, the great comic acrobat Johnny Hutch, who died in December 2006 at the age of ninety-three. I hope that Jos too will be giving this joyful, affirming lecture-demonstration until his nineties.



# THE POETRY UNDER YOUR FEET



JOHN FOX PRESENTED THIS YEAR'S TOTAL THEATRE LECTURE AT THE LONDON INTERNATIONAL MIME FESTIVAL, AS WITNESSED BY JOHN ELLINGSWORTH

John Fox, on his feet, talking, for about one hour. It was one of the better things I saw at the Mimefest. A brief history of Welfare State International, the company John co-founded, and with partner Sue Gill co-directed, charted a thirty-year evolution from travelling circus days to large-scale spectacles through to work rooted in WSI's local Cumbrian community and the recent *Dead Good Guides*: as John put it, 'from the caravan to the hearse'. It also introduced the concept of 'rites of passage', which sets trained artists in the role of 'secular celebrants' who create ceremonies for pivotal life events – births, namings, marriages, deaths. This 'taking art into life' became the main strand of WSI's work in its last years (the final WSI show, *Longline*, was an opera and an ending ceremony), and it is perhaps unsurprising that the desire to find 'a way of life as an artwork' began to conflict with the day-to-day pressures of running a very large company and its purpose-built arts centre – health and safety, targets and strategies, 'spiders in the fire alarms', etc. Particularly enervating was the bureaucracy and box-ticking and red-tape, described by John as 'anti-life stodge' that 'suffocates spontaneity'. WSI closed down on April Fool's Day 2006.

The boxes, though, are everywhere—in theatre, critics are only interested in reviewing the 'bits they can sit down for'; outside of theatre, capitalism, materialism and New Labour are taking from life the things that make it worth living, and 'the words spiritual and sacred are becoming debased'. John Fox of course is a leftie; probably a radical; I don't think an idealist. In some ways it would have been nice to have had an audience that wasn't so receptive to all this, for the sake of interesting friction, but the impression I got was that while the politics – which were explicit in the talk, and in some of the clips of old WSI shows – were the animating spirit of the company, WSI's art and performance owed most to 'applied vernacular art' – art written and devised by local people, belonging to their community. It is the least exclusive collaborative process you could invent. John took a quick census of the audience and was slightly horrified – but unsurprised – that so many people had been told at school that they could neither draw nor sing: 'Everyone can draw, everyone can sing.'

While WSI made some overtly political work, and while John made some overtly political statements (arguing that although the targets were clearer in the sixties, the need to engage with politics is 'as relevant and urgent as ever'), what I found most convincing was the – I'm not sure – whatever is the opposite of 'anti-life stodge'. John may have given a tongue-in-cheek artistic policy in the talk – 'When in doubt set fire to things. When in real doubt, put wings on them' – but he also said that 'extraordinarily beautiful images' can give

people a 'knot on the rope ladder'. I think that can be interpreted several ways; I think that ceremonies are knots on the rope too. A late WSI project took a plaster cast of a rock that was sinking into the sand of Morecambe Bay, and used it as the basis of an installation piece, *One Rock*, which was a triptych project of 'mythology, morphology, geology', engaging all of the senses, but featuring in part a video of the microscopic life that existed on the rock, set to music. This was the longest piece of footage we were shown in the talk, and it took a while to win me over, but did. It's what you always knew was there, seen as if for the first time, 'the poetry under your feet'.

On 1 April 2006 Welfare State International came to the end of its 38-year journey. The name Welfare State International has been archived, with an online archive maintained by Lanternhouse International and a physical archive being created within the Theatre Collection at Bristol University.

For the Welfare State International archive see: [www.welfare-state.org](http://www.welfare-state.org)  
To find out about the ongoing work of John Fox and Sue Gill see: [www.deadgoodguides.com](http://www.deadgoodguides.com)



IMAGE 1:  
WELFARE STATE INTERNATIONAL'S LONGLINE FINALE  
IMAGE 2:  
WSI HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT 1981



# NATIONAL REVIEW OF LIVE ART

## ROBERT AYERS IS BACK FOR MORE AT THE NATIONAL REVIEW OF LIVE ART 2007



The National Review of Live Art has been going, in one form or another, since 1979. It hasn't happened every single year since then, but I have been to every single festival but two (one of which was last year's). That's more than any other human being on the planet, including its artistic director, the remarkable Nikki Milican. In 2001, I was inducted as an 'honorary associate' of the festival, mostly by way of a long-service medal, I suspect. If the NRLA has become an institution, then I'm part of the furniture.

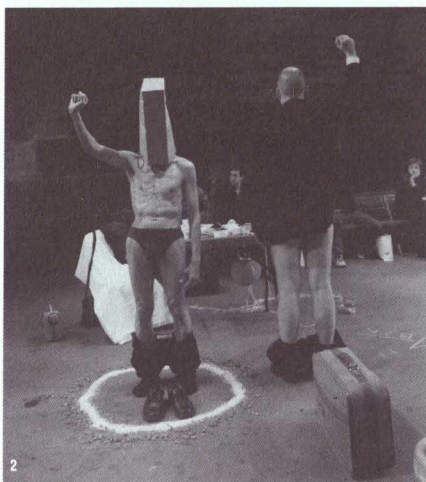
This time around, I edited the festival brochure – not an onerous task, really – but in return they paid my expenses to come over from New York. It's easy to forget, when you're not actually at the festival, what a real powerhouse the NRLA is. There is nothing else like it in the UK, nor in the whole of Europe, nor – in my experience, anyway – anywhere else

in the rest of the world. Five long days, something like 100 separate performances, installations, interventions, screenings, talks, discussions, and other performance art-type events, and an eager and enthusiastic audience. They will queue for an hour and more to get into the things they really want to see, clamour to have a ten-minute one-on-one séance with Francesca Steele – a naked women with a hand mirror in a darkened room – and show immense respect towards an Alastair MacLennan 24-hour actuation – in which he moved with characteristically majestic slowness among the various objects (including a burnt-out car) that he had accumulated around him.

Performance art – sitting uncomfortably between theatre and the visual arts – is an acquired taste, and so is this festival, but I am not alone in coming back year after year. The key to its continuing success has been its deliberate programming of the venerated old-timers of the performance art canon alongside newcomers at the beginning of their careers. Boasting centuries of experience between them were this year's artists in residence, Black Market International and Anne Seagrave. Over the years Seagrave has evolved an utterly unique movement style, all rhythm and repetition, to weave a mesmeric mystique around her performances. Also here was the perennially charismatic Guillermo Gómez-Peña – accompanied by Roberto Sifuentes and Gabriela Salgado – who presented one of his genuinely unsettling performances at the intersection of sex

and international politics. Among the younger artists I was particularly impressed by Helena Walsh's placenta-cooking piece, *Consuming Colonies*. Bringing the older and younger together lends a sense of benevolent kinship to the whole event into which audience members are swiftly drawn – not least because the audience is peppered with artists who are keen to see one another's work. What it also means is that there is a genuine riskiness to the event: over the years I have witnessed some simply wonderful moments and – no less part of the NRLA's essential mix – some truly ghastly ones.

This time around the balance was very much tipped towards the wonderful: we had the stunning Charlotte Engelkes from Sweden, a performance art soprano who offered *Miss Very Wagner*, a beautiful, virtuosic, and often hysterically funny take on Wagner's artistic world. There was Alexis O'Hara from Québec, who offered spectators a shoulder – and a *Sorrow Sponge* – to lean on during the course of the festival and then, on the Sunday afternoon, a performance mixed live in front of us out of their confessions. There were Marie Cool and Fabio Balducci from Paris, conjuring a gentle magic out of the merest of ingredients: a length of string set alight, Scotch tape stretched from one wall to another, or a few sheets of typing paper moved around on a table top. There was Jamie McMurry pouring red and white paint over himself, swallowing a good deal of it, smashing glass, and catapulting a lit table lamp into a pillar. There was Marilyn Arsem, buried under cold black dirt for the





better part of a day in a greenhouse out in the garden, and Gwendoline Robin risking life and limb by staging a firework display from within her own clothing. Alexander del Re arrived from Chile to perform *Social Education for Girls*, a curious blend of technology and crazy slapstick that tackled the knotty subject of how women all over the world are encouraged to see themselves in particular curtailed ways. And upstairs in a small dark room Daan Vandewalle spent several hours performing Alvin Curran's mesmeric solo piano piece, *Inner Cities*.

If there is something irksome about some of the work that turns up here, then it is less in the performance itself than in the dead weight of absurd theory under which many of the younger artists find themselves labouring when they leave our universities and colleges. I am told that this is a temporary trend, though I would

have to say that I have seen this situation only worsening over the last couple of decades. I find it genuinely sad that these young people have to perennially re-educate themselves after the example of their predecessors at events like this.

After a good deal of agonising, the National Review moved house a couple of years ago. It abandoned its long-time subterranean home, The Arches nightclub right underneath Glasgow Central Station, and set itself up in the much larger Tramway out in the southern suburbs. The irony is that the move was principally to accommodate its fast-growing audience. But its success has already caught up with it, and it is still likely that, despite having purchased a day ticket, audience members will be turned away from the most popular events. Oddly enough, there seems to be very little dissatisfaction with this state of affairs, and the constant queuing is

celebrated by the majority of spectators as one of peculiar pleasures of the festival. 'Great for networking!' people will comment. (Though old-timers like myself can probably think of more comfortable circumstances in which to make friends and influence people.)

The networking is crucial, though. One of performance art's virtues is that its makers have to be physically present at its staging. So a worldwide circle has developed making ports of call in key locations. For British audiences it is fortunate indeed that one of those locations is Glasgow and our National Review of Live Art. I would recommend it warmly when it rolls around this time next year. And the year after that, and the year after that.

## TIME AND TIME AGAIN

### NATIONAL REVIEW FIRST-TIMER CASSIE WERBER DIPS HER TOES INTO LIVE ART'S WATERS

With a background which is more theatre than live art, I was keen to expand my knowledge and the National Review of Live Art seemed the perfect beginning. I hoped to immerse myself in live art, and was prepared to be challenged, shocked, and hopefully excited.

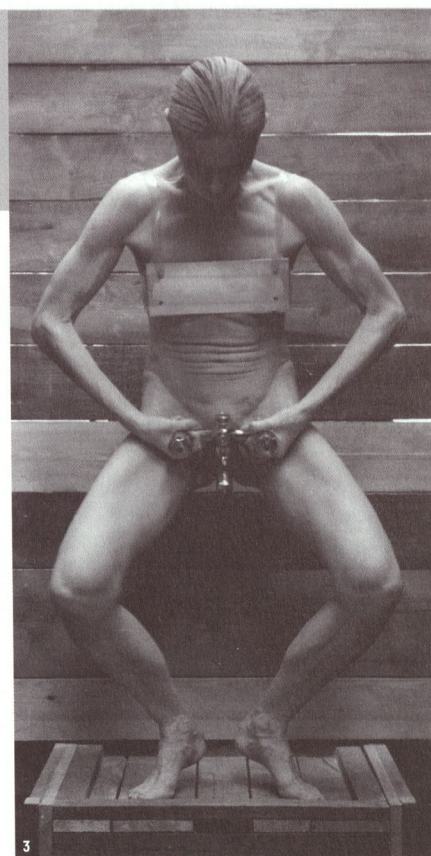
In theatre, timing and pace, tension and release are fine tools. And it was in the works' relationship to time that I found one of the greatest challenges to my expectation of what constitutes 'performance'. For a theatre piece to work, timing is crucial; it can be precise, or elongated into a long, slow experience; it can be minute (the dropping of a plate at the exact moment that a hand reaches to catch it); it can be varied. But the interplay of the time at which actions occur and the expectation of the audience, is key in keeping the work vital.

On the first day at the NRLA, I found that in terms of this relationship to time I was often wrong-footed. I found myself waiting for things to happen; waiting for the 'point' of something to be revealed, desiring changes in tempo, moments of climax – however small – in which the audience and performers could share an experience. I missed the finesse of the performer's relationship with the audience, and for whom the audience's reaction is critical; I missed the discretion of artists who have an eye on the experience as a whole, as opposed to a single aspect of it – a texture, a concept. Live art must by definition occupy a certain duration of

time. The presence of the audience in that time is variously important; we are often free to leave and maybe come back, but we are not free to experience the piece with complete autonomy, as we might with a made piece of art, because it happens then – live.

Claire 'refuses to use her surname, employing a deliberate strategy of anonymity'. *Flagrante Delicto* saw the artist 'Claire' walk through a series of doors, slamming them behind her, the sound, by its very nature, putting the viewer on edge. I watched for a long time, thinking that repetition can compound or change the experience of an action or sound; the artist herself repeated it for four hours. The rhythm had satisfaction to it, and the action was strong and powerful. In another room close by, Ginny Reed performed *Until My Pencil Runs Out*, in which she walked around the walls, dragging a pencil along the surface and re-sharpening it until it ran out. Since it is almost unheard of, in daily life, that a pencil is used until it actually runs out, rather than being lost, we speculated as to whether it was possible at all. It was, it seems. Hooray for rationality. Outside, Marilyn Arsem was *Wintering Over* in the Greenhouse, buried for several hours under earth and cloth.

I do not explain these installations in order to disparage them, but rather to demystify, something which many of the artists also seek to do in programme notes. But I do admit that many of the



installation or duration-based works left me cold – sensually unstimulated and mentally unchallenged. I had laughed at my own preconceptions of 'performance art', based on a general awareness of experiments from the sixties onwards: nakedness, stillness, slowness, nothingness; confrontation, random actions, violence, obscurity. I was surprised to find so many of these stereotypes being perpetuated rather than exploded. I hope I approached the work with openness and interest, and was surprised to find myself bored, at times, almost to the point of desperation, such as in Black Market International's daily installation, which I



found heavy, dully oppressive and stilted on every occasion that I visited it.

When I came to Sarah-Jane Grimshaw's durational piece *The Abject body in constant motion* I had reached a point of intolerance. The audience filed into the room, and sat around the edges. Perhaps the artist wanted to encourage a freer approach, but without signals, we sat, waiting. From a plastic bottle hanging from the rafters, beetroot juice dripped into another container. Grimshaw (like Claire and Ginny Reed, an emerging artist invited to participate under the NRLA's Elevator scheme) sat still at the other end of the room. We waited, she waited, juice dripped. After observing for a while, I started to think about other things. Then, about the things I could be doing instead of sitting here watching juice drip; everything I could potentially learn and experience. To find the value in doing nothing, I think it is necessary to make a conscious choice, and I found the enforcement of inertia, imposed by 'waiting for something to happen', excruciating. I began to develop a fantasy, which bordered on fear, that we were all going to sit there until all the juice had run from one container to the other; judging by the quantities so far, about two more hours. After twenty minutes I left, the relief warm and palpable. My time my own, my time and that of every audience member, worth so much.

Throughout my third and final day at NRLA, particularly, I found myself longing for the visceral, the quick, the intense. I wanted to swim in the sea, dance, have sex, smoke, get drunk, scream, converse. I wanted something to happen, and I wanted to escape, as I have wanted to escape from nursing homes, office jobs and family gatherings. I found my position as an audience member whose presence was not required and whose time was both taken up and unfilled, unbearably passive.

At the other end of the spectrum were performances which engaged both mentally and viscerally. Marcia Farquhar's *Act of Clothing: 7up* employed a low tech, improvisatory style for its patchwork life story, told through garments infused with memories like smoke, sweat and perfume still detectable in the cloth. Self-deprecating, funny and engaging, Farquhar not only performed but listened and responded from moment to moment. I had been a member of so many audiences confined to hushed, reverential solitude, asking 'Are we allowed to be here? Is our presence required, or incidental?', to which Farquhar was a tangible relief. Charlotte Engelkes solo *Miss Very Wagner* also took the form of a performance with seated audience in a theatre-like format. Reminiscent of Forced Entertainment's *Bloody Mess*, it was full of exuberance,

ordered chaos, and the sense of having been knocked together, improvised yet cleverly structured by someone with a bank of skills and a riotous imagination. German opera was interspersed with direct narrative, classical ballet with a remote controlled swan, one limp wing dragging, a desperate survivor in the face of adversity.

David Izod and Allen Johnson were storytellers, occupying the same performance space on consecutive nights, but a thousand stylistic miles apart. In *The Bill Dixon Memorial Tour* Izod, sitting behind a table and reading a well-constructed account of a cycling trip made to commemorate a dead uncle, ranged over subjects including the end of a long-term relationship, an experiment with internet dating, hotel rooms (loved for the plentiful towels and exemption from responsibility), pub food ('fucking lamb shanks'), and journalists (worse than lamb shanks). It ended with a piece of sound advice, borrowed, but told from the heart: 'Work hard. Expect Nothing. Celebrate.'

The next night, I watched my last performance at NRLA, another man telling a story, but how very different the energy. Allen Johnson's preoccupation in *Another You* is the complex relationship between himself and his father, comprising shocking abuse and what appears to be an incongruously close friendship. Johnson's account is searing, painful. I am tempted to say 'searingly honest', but this is still a performance. How much of the artist are we seeing? And, if we're getting the message, how much does it matter? Both these ambiguities, and a host of other possibilities, are contained in the title of the piece.

Sheila Ghelani's *Grafting and Budding* (another Elevator performance) was, ostensibly, full of questions. The letting of the performer's blood at the outset also acted as a prick in the side of the audience, meaning that we were on full alert, watchful and nervous. High stakes drifted into vaguer territory as Ghelani cut apples in half and re-paired the halves; red on green, green on red. This process was interspersed with semi-opaque texts, and the repeated question: Do we know where she's coming from? I think she was referring to her half-English, half-Indian heritage, but this was more of a presentation than an exploration. Ghelani professes an interest in skin, but if there are fascinating ideas here, they go unexplored. While the piece begins with a symbolic breaking of the skin, it does not cut deeper. There's fruit, and there's glitter, but there isn't much meat, not enough intellectual engagement or communication to allow the mind or the senses to explore.



What I found most difficult in the work at NRLA was lack of specificity. Of course, these are artists in search of something, and I am not demanding easy answers. But in order for an audience to really get something out of a performance, isn't it important for us to be able to engage with the ideas in it, and to immerse ourselves in the sensory experience? Perhaps remaining open to interpretation is one of the goals of some of these pieces, but I found the lack of specificity too close, at times, to a lack of genuinely interesting ideas.

I returned from Glasgow glad to have had an insight into a less familiar world, but frustrated by it; thankful to many of the artists, and critical of many; thankful also to the curators – though a more intense experience could be created with more simultaneous and repeated performances, cutting down on waiting times and the possibility of missing things. Perhaps I don't know this work intimately enough to criticise it; but I would also criticise such exclusivity. I, and the artists at the NRLA, can only try to invent, to live well, to be honest, brave and rigorous. To work hard and with lightness. And we can try not to take ourselves, and our work, too seriously.

National Review of Live Art 2007 took place  
7–11 February at Tramway, Glasgow.

See: [www.newmoves.co.uk](http://www.newmoves.co.uk)

IMAGE 1:  
FRANCESCA STEELE

IMAGE 2:  
BLACK MARKET INTERNATIONAL

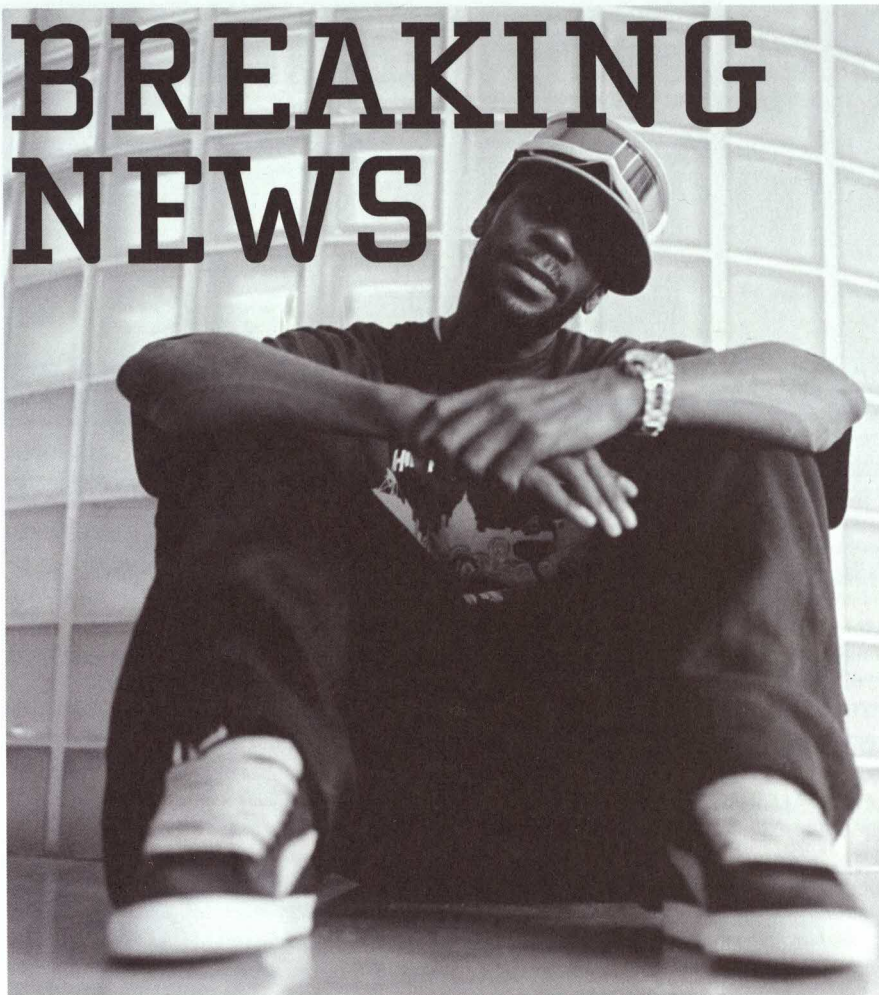
IMAGE 3

ANNE SEAGRAVE

IMAGE 4:  
GWENDOLINE ROBIN



# BREAKING NEWS



## MICHELLE REID MEETS UP WITH BENJI REID

Benji Reid is a creative producer, deviser and director, and has been creating hip-hop theatre for over ten years. He trained as a dancer with the Northern School of Contemporary Dance and as an actor with Philippe Gaullier and Double Edge Theatre. Following his years as a freelance performer he formed Breaking Cycles.

Benji's street dance and hip-hop has brought him a wealth of accolades and achievements: GLC Break-Dance Champions with Broken Glass Street Crew, European Body-Popping Champion and 2nd in the 1986 World Dance Championships. Benji has also worked with musicians Soul II Soul as the main dancer and (co)-choreographer for their world tour.

In theatre, Benji has worked widely with highly regarded companies such as the David Glass Ensemble, Trestle Theatre, Theatr Clwyd and Black Mime Theatre. It was with Black Mime Theatre that Benji first became interested in directing. After his first production co-directing Jonzi D's solo show *Aeroplane Man* (1996) Benji went on to direct his first main stage play, the hip hop musical *Avalanche* for Nottingham Playhouse. This became the starting point for his company Breaking Cycles.

*Mr Sole Abode* is a new piece devised by Benji Reid and physical theatre performer Leo Kay (artistic director of London based company Madrugada).

Partly inspired by Nigerian writer Ben Okri's *The Famished Road*, *Mr Sole Abode* is an exploration of the spirit, the body, and the conflict between the two. It is a one-man show (performed by Leo) about a self-proclaimed architect who has grown weary of living in modern society and decides to live in a fridge. This description just scratches on the surface of a play that has much depth and many layers to be unravelled. For a piece that is just short of an hour, it explores some expansive ideas, and, like Benji's other work, continues to raise thought-provoking questions.

I met with Benji to talk about the production. 'We explore ideas of perception and sanity and consider the thin line between the sane and the insane,' Benji tells me. 'Leo embraces the ideas of quantum physics and the question of truth, and how one is able to change the reality they live in through changing their patterns of perception.'

I asked Benji whether he thought it was possible to successfully opt out of 'normal life', and his response was to highlight the many different types of ways that people have made this a reality. These examples include London Waterloo's cardboard city in the 1990s and squatters in areas of his hometown, Manchester, but his most affecting inspirations were the disused

tunnels under Manhattan's West Side.

There is a strong poetic influence in *Mr Sole Abode*; the dialogue is peppered with poetry, rhythmical and fluid, which keeps this work fresh, vibrant and impassioned.

'There are three things I like to explore as a physical actor,' Benji reveals. 'Music, language and movement, and how interlinked the three can be.'

As for the future for the two collaborators, Leo has in mind two pieces of work that he is looking for partners and producers for, based around scientific and spiritual philosophy and humanitarian issues. Meanwhile, watch out for Benji's new physical theatre piece, as yet untitled, inspired by Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*.

Breaking Cycles are dedicated to creating and producing inclusive, highly energised and emotionally conflicting physical theatre. They want to challenge the boundaries of multi-disciplined artforms. *Mr Sole Abode* is movement theatre at its most reflective. After watching this, you leave the theatre with more questions than answers, examining yourself and the society in which you live; something that more theatre should be doing.

*Madrugada's Mr Sole Abode was devised by Benji Reid and Leo Kay. It was seen by the author at the Lyric Hammersmith, February 2007.*

*For further on National Theatre supported artist Benji Reid, see:*  
<http://www.breakingcycles.co.uk> and  
<http://profile.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=user.viewprofile&friendID=57489006>  
[www.myspace.com/benjiireid](http://www.myspace.com/benjiireid)

*For further on Madrugada see:*  
[www.madrugada.info](http://www.madrugada.info)  
 or email: [leo@madrugada.info](mailto:leo@madrugada.info)

IMAGE CREDIT:  
 BENJI REID PHOTO BY POPPY BERR



# REVIEWS FROM LONDON INT

## JANUARY 2007



COMPAGNIE PHILIPPE GENTY LA FIN DES TERRES PHOTO PASCAL FRANCOIS

Philipp Boë

### MEMOIRE DE LA NUIT

ICA

As soon as I stepped into the theatre at the ICA, a sense of inevitability seeped into the expectation which attends the entering of a performance space: I knew what to expect. Of course, this is not strictly true; one of the reasons theatre can be so enjoyable is that it can always surprise us, and confound our expectations. I wish I had been proved wrong, and that the performance had explored unfamiliar territory, but it did not. Boë is a skilled performer whose currency is illusion and physical dexterity, and whose palette is Magritte-inspired surrealism, and all the attendant physical theatre accoutrements: hats, walking sticks, suits, shoes, trenchcoats, umbrellas, eggs. Also perfectly consonant with this style is a 'mysterious' story (I would question whether the creators themselves know what it is about), a fascination with dreams, surprise phone calls, strangers, shadows. So often in work like this, there is a sense that much time has been spent on rehearsing physical tricks, and none on the development of interesting text; indeed there is an uncomfortable muted quality, whereby speaking at all seems to become increasingly difficult, and text consequently banal. The illusions were slick and as such, enjoyable: a telephone receiver leaping into Boë's hand from nowhere; objects moving, disappearing and materialising in unexpected places. But when I saw the chest-of-drawers at the beginning of the show, I wondered if Boë planned to disappear into it. And so he did. There is nothing much to complain about in this competent wander around a gallery of theatre arts. That is my complaint.

Cassie Werber

Ockham's Razor

### ARC

Linbury Studio Theatre, Royal Opera House

I love Ockham's Razor in a way that is unnatural and intense and would probably scare them if they only knew. This year they rocked the Mimefest with a trilogy of pieces: *Arc*, in which the three performers are adrift on a raft represented by a suspended grid of scaffolding; *Memento Mori*, a duet on a custom metal frame; and *Every Action*, performed on a rope run through two high-up pulleys. They seem to have an understanding – conscious or not – that the two functions of any piece of aerial equipment (rope especially) are that it saves and it binds, and that the balance and grace of a performance can unfold into this metaphorical dimension. So the reality of a raft at sea is that it saves your life but it is also a prison – which picture here the grid of scaffold bars. The concept is subtlest in *Memento Mori*, where the two performers – Death and a mortal – act out their sick dependency, Death catching the human and returning her again and again to the metal frame. *Every Action* twists this slightly. Four strangers explore the possibilities of a rope where the actions of an aerialist on one end will affect the aerialist on the other, basically just having a good time. Ockham's Razor are good performers. They are making (on audience reaction) extremely popular work. They devise brilliantly. *Arc* is the weakest of the trilogy, needing perhaps more direction to order its ideas and compact its invention, but the trilogy is strong. It lifts you up.

John Ellingsworth

Steven Whinnery Co

### LYING WITH THE ANIMALS

ICA

We are often told that the British are an animal-loving nation which sentimentalise the animal kingdom and anthropomorphise its behaviour. UK artist Steven Whinnery reinforces this assumption, his *Lying With The Animals* being a mask show that blurs the boundaries between the animal and the human. Whinnery's excellent masks here force the body to work hard, struggling to retain both its obvious humanity and its unmistakable affinity to the animalistic. Unfortunately this strategy seems mainly to work on the slightly twee level of the comic link between the two worlds (even the most miserable amongst us permits a rye smile at an animal 'acting up'). Perhaps what might be of greater interest could be the human falling into the animalistic, into a pure bodily emotion and action. This possibility was touched upon by the wonderful soft-toy puppetry conducted by Sophie Powell and Daniel Gentely. Here an elephant and some strange naked female form came to life (as do toys at midnight) to act out a very human drama of love and despair – *Romeo and Juliet* for preschool. Rather than seeming bathetic, however, this scene seemed to convey something of the emotions that the mask theatre seems ripe to reap, coming across as far less twee than the sheep, the cheeky monkeys or the dogs doing their tricks. *Lying With The Animals* bills itself as inspired by Gary Larson's *The Far Side* cartoons, and this is apparent, and well performed, and yet I think has the potential to be much more than a re-enactment of a comic tale.

Alice Andrews

Compagnie Philippe Genty

### LA FIN DES TERRES

Queen Elizabeth Hall, South Bank Centre

A large insect with a human head and fluttering wings hunches over a prostrate female in a white dress. With its front two legs it rolls her backwards and forwards and she eventually becomes encased in a polythene cocoon. The insect's legs are controlled by fibreglass rods, the body is on a counterweighted rod, and the wings, made from maribou feathers, are battery-operated and shimmer with frenzied movement. This puppet has four operators and when you watch the scene you are double-taking continuously between the narrative they are creating and what they need to do to create it. It's a marvellous scene to watch. *La Fin des Terres* has many such marvellous scenes. Philippe Genty (who designs/directs the shows in collaboration with choreographer Mary Underwood) is a master of stagecraft: the stage has several trapdoors through which performers can disappear or appear; black screens travel restlessly across the back and front of the stage like windscreen wipers, depositing or removing performers from the stage picture; a puppet with a photograph for a head turns into a live performer and again the switch is astounding – when did that happen? The manipulation of the larger-than-life puppets is of a very high quality indeed. However, there is a very big 'but'. The company are creating a dream world so the lack of narrative logic should not be a problem, but they have so many ideas, and stretch out in so many different directions, that the show becomes a series of unconnected scenes, the sole justification for which seems to be a nice object or effect. Rather than creating a dream world this creates a kind of circus where the audience waits for the next beautifully executed effect. For all the skill involved, I left the show feeling less than satisfied.

Edward Taylor



## Collisions

### NOTHING LEFT TO LOSE

Purcell Room, South Bank Centre

*Nothing Left to Lose* is directed by Tanushka Marah (winner of a Young Vic Young Director's Award) and devised by Company: Collisions. It explores the nature of war, courage and love and is a mixture of dance/movement theatre, clown, mime, puppetry – and bold and beautiful a cappella singing.

The play opens with low lighting and sinister music. A walking stick, an old rag, a bucket and a bicycle wheel all hang distended from the stage ceiling; a set reminiscent of *Cold Dark Matter: An Exploded View*, the installation by Cornelia Parker. The backdrop is a mass of barbed wire, flooded with an eerie blue light. Two impressively animated child puppets are fighting. The 'normal' childhood violence between the puppets opens the way for the rest of the play. The entire audience and stage is then completely enveloped in darkness, there's the sound of gunshot, and a stream of feathers fall from the ceiling onto the stage floor, a magical and spellbinding effect.

As the lights rise, we see an ensemble of seven 'dolls', covered in sand and dust, a community together braving the destruction and wreckage of a war-torn country. All they have is each other and their strength of spirit. Even at moments when all seems lost, they celebrate together through song, taking us on a journey through innocence, joy and grief. The dolls all share an indecipherable verbal language, which they use in conversation and song. For me, this worked, as the movement and expression conveyed an intense clarity and the songs' melodies had the power to tug on your heartstrings. *Nothing Left to Lose* is a good piece of physical storytelling, both touching and entertaining, that left me with a sense of enchantment.

Michelle Reid

## Zimmerman and Perrot

### GAFF AFF

Linbury Studio, Royal Opera House

## Mathurin Bolze Company

### TANGENTES

Barbican Theatre

Despite being Swiss in origin, there is a certain amount of pessimistic Gallic whimsy about this trio of performer, DJ and giant revolve. Being a technically intricate and somewhat over-designed show, it suffers from a range of problems, but is not entirely without mirth.

Primarily, its rather old-hat anti-capitalist tone about how awful it must be to have an office job made my heart sink, even as the virtuosic Martin Zimmerman regaled us with the descent of his office worker from bumbling erstwhile victim to overweight pod-dwelling bachelor through his use of contortion and acrobatic mania.

Similarly virtuosic was Dimitri de Perrot's DJ-ing, which despite a rather standard range of found sounds and scratches, mixed a hectic and driving score. If anything, the piece was saved by the emergence of cardboard punch-out and fold chairs, table and lamp, although even the gang of recalcitrant cardboard workers couldn't entirely carry the show. The most satisfying sequence saw Zimmerman punch out and fold, from a single gate-flat, the poky studio of his hero, complete with cat and mouse. It was in this moment that an intriguing world was conjured up and in many ways this was the real beginning of our hero's journey (50 minutes too late). But still there persisted a general ambience of an exercise in how much could be achieved with a lot of cardboard and a briefcase. Sadly the piece was much less than the sum of its parts. A bit like an origami water bucket – clever but practically ineffective.

Playing across town at the Barbican, another graduate of the French National Circus School and of Josef Nadj's *Cri du Caméléon* was Mathurin Bolze with his new quartet *Tangentes*. When I first saw him two years ago he promised much with a delightfully captivating and uplifting solo on trampoline. However his latest offering is a heart-breakingly arid 75 minutes long, sharing many of the faults of *Gaff Aff*. Once again the piece provides spectacle and tricks aplenty, although none particularly revelatory; and the piece proves to have little cohesive rationale for the audience's experience. It features clumsy monologues in French (for which we are provided a written translation – leaving us to make the choice of where to look – surely a crime for visual or physical theatre?). Distressingly, despite a lavishly dystopian bleak set, the piece failed to create a valid world for us to engage with. Consequently, each of the performers' interactions lacked any real depth or development and, like the marionettes they at times manipulated, became bod-ies frantically waving and leaping in the dark.

The use of treadmills and tread

wheels, although providing diverting images, left little time for Bolze's natural home, the trampoline, and neglecting the very tool that last time provided him with such an eloquent and intriguing physical language contributed to a feeling of a muted-voice.

What both these pieces share is an aching need for a director to grab hold of them and beat them into a cohesive experience for an audience, for despite the obvious skills of the performers, without a firm guiding hand they seem self-indulgently crippled by too much content.

Tom Wilson

## Buchinger's Boot Marionettes

### VESTIBULAR FOLDS

ICA

'So how are you going to review that?' asks my companion, obviously pleased that it's me not him who has that task. Stepping outside, I bump into Mime Festival director Joseph Seelig, who offers a challenge: 'Tell me what that was all about in fifty words or less!' So, gentlemen, here goes: Hybrid puppets, mutant toys and veiled freaks journey through a succession of fantasy landscapes: burlesque Gormenghast; gloopy primal swamp; Brazilian (as in Gilliam, not the country) lab dedicated to the torture of rabbits. Dead or alive? Limbo? Think gaming, not theatre: complete the task, move on a level. Game ends.

You want more? Okay... *Vestibular Folds* presents a metaphysical paradigm of the universe based on the model of a skipping gramophone record. The conceit is that it is the story of a tragic opera, *Shellachrymellaecum*, written by 19th-century marionettist, alchemist and dentist Ichabod Appleseed. The resulting recording of same is designed to sound identical whether played forwards or in reverse.

The soundtrack is a glorious multi-sampled, multi-layered cornucopia of aural allusions. Imagine a hurdy-gurdy-playing showman and a bluegrass guitarist jamming with Throbbing Gristle, with Luciano Berio on the mixing desk.

The performance space is divided into six boxed units. The lighting moves the action from space to space, so the whole thing is like a Victorian cabinet of curiosities that you've put your penny in and pressed the button to light up. Visually, it works like a series of tableaux vivants. Never has the natural spookiness of the veiled puppeteer been better exploited, particularly in a sudden switch from trad-black

to all-white.

As for character and action: There is torture. Disembodied talking heads. Toy trains. Vampires. An anaemic albino bat. An ant-lion. A jellyfish. The messiah. More torture. Meanwhile, the music goes round and round.

Dorothy Max Prior

## Faulty Optic

### SOILED

ICA

Everything we have come to expect from the genius that is Faulty Optic Theatre of Animation is here: a lonely old (puppet) man haunted by memories of lost love; the intricate junk-construction sets that transform from faded bedroom to nightmare; the atmospheric soundtrack that evokes a bygone era of circus and burlesque; the disjointed narrative veering from the wistful, to the macabre, to the grimly humorous; the ghost-train ride created by a hand-held video meander through a miniature world. In this version of events, our hero discovers that his twittering pet-bird – the very picture of innocent (though stropy) playfulness – is guilty of murdering his long-lost mermaid lover.

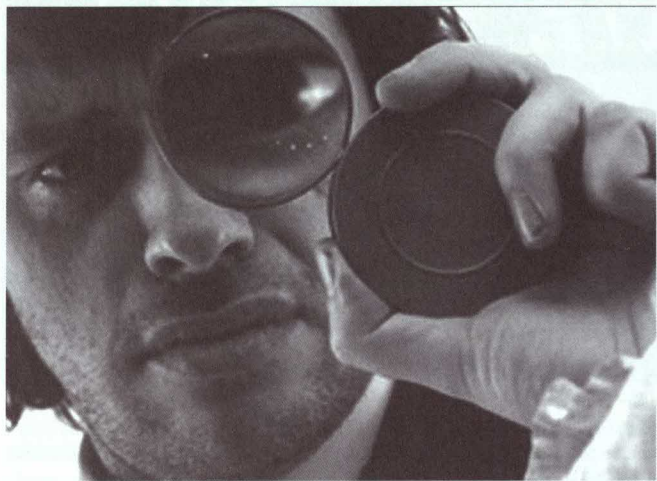
Banning the only joyful thing in his dusty and bug-infested home, our hero plunges into a despair that is painfully evident as he reaches, stretches, leaps in vain to open the high cabinet where his lover's remains are kept – only to collapse into a delirium that has him soundly beaten in a boxing match against a twisted ballerina. A disused seaside fairground, the scene of his long-gone fishy romance, becomes a journey through hell complete with half-buried skulls, foraging dogs and smoke-stained machines. There is a happy ending, as our puppet-hero eventually emerges from the dark and finds companionship in his cleaning-obsessed friend, but it's not really the story that matters in a Faulty Optic show. We watch for the magical way in which the characters come to life – although these are lives of quiet desperation – and conjure an array of haunting and heartening emotions.

Alex Mermikides



# NEW VARIETY AND VAUDEVILLE

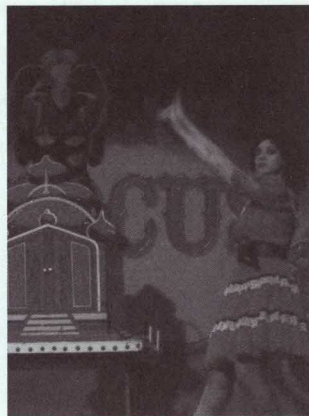
COME INTO MY PARLOUR



VOODOO VAUDEVILLE



THE INSECT CIRCUS



TOTAL THEATRE MAGAZINE | VOL. 19 | ISSUE 02 | SUMMER 2007

## DIRTY DIAMOND REVIEW

Komedia, Brighton  
December 2006

## THE INSECT CIRCUS

Hoxton Hall, London  
December 2006

## COME INTO MY PARLOUR'S TWELFTH NIGHT BALL

Knogle Hall, Brighton  
December 2006

## VOODOO VAUDEVILLE'S MARDI GRAS

Komedia, Brighton  
February 2007

So what's 'new variety'? Well, in my book variety (new or old) includes circus. The variety halls which are still spread across Europe (although few in the UK are still in use for that purpose) were set up with the stage depth and height necessary for acrobatics, juggling and aerial work. The typical variety programme would balance (excuse the pun) the circus acts with song-and-dance routines and comedy turns.

*The Insect Circus* is an interesting take on the variety show format. It started life as a much-loved installation touring street arts festivals in its own beautifully painted caravan. The conceit, as the name implies, is a circus in which the exotic beasts doing the daring stunts are all insects, bugs and invertebrates: so visitors are treated to models in display cases, automata, posters and costumes that celebrate the daring feats of wriggling worms, lumbering snails, beautiful butterflies and dastardly wasps. Then came the idea of creating a live show, brought to the perfectly preserved Hoxton Hall, one of London's original music hall/variety venues. A massive amount of care and attention to detail has gone into the creation of this show. It is clear, even had I not known it, that the artistic team behind the Insect Circus are visual artists and makers: as each insect act (oh all right, it's people dressed as insects)

appears on stage, we ooh and aah at the lush and clever costumes and props. There are some gorgeous set pieces: a lovely aerial act from The Flutterbys; *Ephemera the Evanescent Mayfly* (who only lives for a day) which involves a wonderful Isadora Duncan pastiche; a fluttering moth pinned by her wings by knife-thrower The Great Flingo; The Mighty Mites, a ludicrously funny puppet skit. But there are also fillers, such as a praying mantis tango which threw away an opportunity to explore the dance between sex and death. There is also a real imbalance of performance skills: when, for example, Marisa Carnesky comes onto the stage in her various roles (which include *Fakira*, *Queen of Mystery* – a wonderful reworking of the *Cabinet of Swords*), there is a feeling that the ante is being upped: here is someone who has the oomph to walk onto Marie Lloyd's music-hall stage as if she has a right to be there, no apologies. In comparison, our ringmaster (project maestro and maker Mark Copeland) seems a little too nervously self-aware.

Chris Cresswell is someone who knows a bit about taking a stage. *The Dirty Diamond Review*, which he comperes and produces, was set up in collaboration with Komedia specifically to support and nurture new variety, the acts brought together with that same age-old intention of entertaining with a mix of skills-based physical performance, music and comedy. Sadly, it would seem that this venture will be no more. The final show gave us the very able juggler Max Haverkamp and acrobatic clown Annette Fiaschi, who presented their witty and skilful individual acts, then appeared together with a very lovely, gently humorous acrobalance piece; speciality act The Great Voltini, who did wonders with electricity; and the Bees' Knees who gave us their excellent renditions of classic 'eccentric dance' numbers. Although the quality of work seen

was, on the whole high, there were a few dips and some odd decisions on running order – most notably the choice of a very average tissue act by Flame as the finale. Coming after the superlative hula-hoop act of world champion Angie Humphries, which brought the house down, this was inevitably something of an anticlimax.

Meanwhile, Chris Cresswell's main venture, *Voodoo Vaudeville*, carries on regardless. Having last year devised a theatre show (*Skin of the Moon*), the company reverted to an everything-including-the-kitchen-sink cabaret-burlesque mish-mash for Mardi Gras. It starts magnificently: Cresswell is resplendent in his theatre-clown persona, balancing feathers on his nose with a hangdog expression while sidekick and foil Rachel Blackman establishes her delightful Southern Belle character Evangeline (Lord, save her soul!). She's a great female clown, and they make a terrific team. There's a wonderfully theatrical entrance for the musicians and chorus who arrive as a jazz funeral procession, a motley crew of masked zombies and painted hussies bearing a coffin through the audience. We are then treated to a series of great acts in quick succession, including *Voodoo* favourite Mim King, who presents a snake-armed contortion dance; China Delius, who gives us a delightful quick-change peek-a-boo act; and Katie Sarabia, who charms and spooks in equal measure with her seductive triple-faced mask. But then it's interval time, and it's downhill from thereon in. 'He sabotages his own work,' says my companion of Cresswell, and I can't help but agree. Parts two and three contain some strong acts (notably an appallingly funny assault on political correctness by the wheelchair-bound Screaming Stephen Hawkins, and a welcome appearance by that no-good puppet, Baby Warhol), but overall both quality and pace slacken. There are moments of jaw-

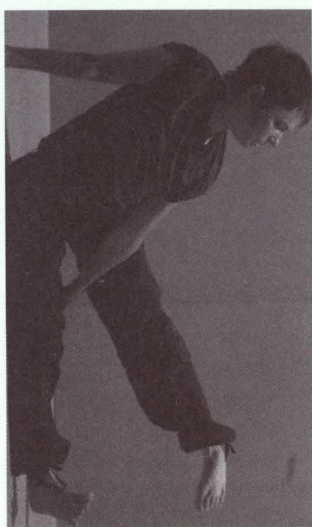
dropping awfulness, particularly when the stage is occupied (again) by scantily clad burlesque hopefuls doing some sort of sixth-form dance-cum-performance-art routine. I wanted to shout 'Get 'em off' but was afraid of being misunderstood. It is frustrating because when at their best, Voodoo are truly magnificent. Discipline is what is needed!

Come Into My Parlour offers many delights and delectations, but suffers from some of the same difficulties. Like *Voodoo*, the company can always bring in a crowd, and they romp merrily through their Victorian sketch show with gay abandon. There are Tom Lehrer songs (including a delightful rendition of *Poisoning Pigeons in the Park* by company star Miss Fay), films (by Katie Etheridge) that re-enact classic *What the Butler Saw* early burlesque vignettes, a mixed bag of magic and illusion (including a clever but rather too slowly paced escapology act by company mainman Tony Ashton), and plenty of robust physical comedy and ham acting. The whole thing is loosely held together by a very thin plot: it's like a revival of the Victorian am dram show that Spymonkey might have been parodying in *Cooped*. And it is framed very nicely, the audience invited into the game by walkabout preachers, Sally Army lasses, freak sideshows and strumming troubadours who all help to provide an immersive and inclusive theatrical environment. The difficulties they share with Voodoo are a seeming inability to say no: no to performers lacking the necessary skills; no to over-lengthy acts; no to inclusion of scenes, set pieces or characters that have no logical reason to be there. Both companies are at a point where they need to take stock and decide what they want. If the answer is a semi-professional three-times-a-year jolly romp for friends in the old hometown then fine, carry on as is. If the answer is a professional touring show that could win new audiences countrywide, then the answer in both cases is tighten up, rehearse, get a director, and don't be afraid to cut the crap.

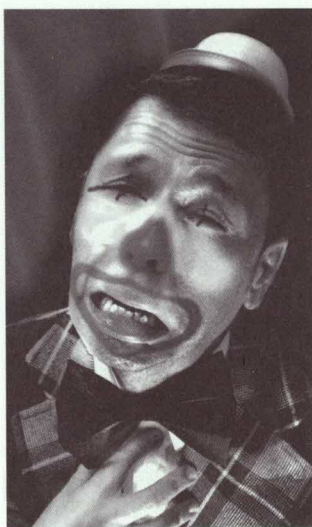
Dorothy Max Prior



EDDIE LADD PHOTO KEITH MORRIS



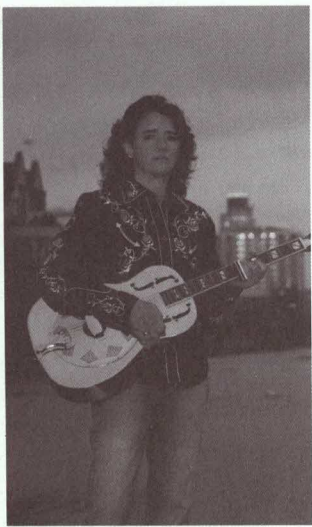
SEAN TUAN JOHN KILL THE KLOWNS



LONE TWIN NINE YEARS



CURIOUS/LESLIE HILL (BE) LONGING



Eddie Ladd

**COFFY CORFF/MUSCLE MEMORY**

Linbury Studio Theatre, Royal Opera House, London

February 2007

This is an interesting one. You are: watching Eddie Ladd dance/move on a wooden stage with a free-standing MDF room at the back; listening to narration through a set of headphones; listening to music coming from speakers; watching live footage on one of a bank of computer screens, this footage mixing live capture of Eddie with recorded material, overlaying much of it with various SFX. Maybe you are also scratching an itch or wanting to go to the toilet. It's a lot to deal with. But for me it really worked. I heard some audience dissent on my way out, but the combination of so many different media and the division of attention – which normally turns me off – gave me a pleasant sensation of being caught and carried everywhere by unexpected currents. The way it worked is that you would arrive at an emotion and have really no idea what caused it – I got a bit teary during one section, where I was watching live footage of Eddie put through kaleidoscope-like refractions and multiplications, two Ed-dies running on each other's feet. It might have been the music (by Dewi Evans) that made me cry, or it might have been some grand structure of tension and release. Who knows? *Muscle Memory* is subtitled 'an essay on foot' and there is an interesting if slightly fragmented essay in the narration, but the piece as a whole is a long way from the logical progression of thought and formal structures of essaying. It helps that Eddie Ladd seems so comfortable and open. When at the start she comes out and says hello, you feel she really means it. It's almost shocking.

John Ellingsworth

Sean Tuan John

**KILL THE KLOWNS**

Nuffield Theatre, Lancaster

January 2007

Sean Tuan John's *Kill The Klowns* makes a crazy kind of sense. It taps right into the air of psychotic desperation that seems to ooze through the cracks of a clown's grease paint, scaring little children and making the rest of us laugh, uncomfortably, at the big top antics. There aren't any banana skins here, though; the dancers are carefully placed and choreographed in an interestingly lit space. There is a sense of watching them as they are being watched, that the dance they weave is the underscore of a failing vaudeville act and that somewhere just over our own shoulders there is a waning seaside audience, half watching as they wait for the ex-Corrie star at the top of tonight's bill. There's nothing slick about the dance, which isn't to say it isn't tight. The ragged edge of the details suggests that the Klowns' hate/love/hate of their work is about to overwhelm them, and in fact it does, to those terrifying consequences that we've suspected all along of the white-faced figures and their painted-on smiles. Of the individual performances, there's an oscillation between the sometimes impenetrable figure of the dancer and the contrasting over-reach of the actor, and here it serves really beautifully to articulate the degrees by which we feel ourselves able to see the performer. Because of its overlapping and thoughtfully staged qualities, interleaved with witty text, it leaves the distance between the Klowns, the performers and us intriguingly ambiguous. This dark ambiguity characterises the fate of our Klowns, too – we don't know what happened but we know it was bad. Their desolate dance has no future or possibility of redemption. And in knowing this, we feel it might make sense if someone would finally just Kill the Klowns.

Eve Wedderburn

Lone Twin

**NINE YEARS**

Leeds Met

February 2007

Lone Twin's *Nine Years* is a funny kind of retrospective. There's this hilarious diatribe that runs right through it about falling insects and fucking cappuccinos (or something) that's laugh-out-loud funny. But it's also other kinds of funny. Though it's a retrospective, it's not a description of what Lone Twin's Gregg Whelan and Gary Winters have been up to for the last nine years. What remains after the judicious editing is a gloriously gentle tale of their work away from home and no sense that the pair spent a single moment apart (except once back in 2005 when Gary went to the loo just as the Beatles came on the radio). The world they describe is a giant heart-shaped city where they collect stories, start marathon line-dances and make clouds. It's peopled by lonely waiters, first time hang-gliders and the company's scattered, whispering supporters, who throw water when it's needed and use the pair like a vast trans-city dating service. In making the roads that they've travelled a single, unending road that spans from Canada to Australia, Lone Twin have located their tale with the precision of cartographers in the hyper-reality of experience. It is the geography of memory that they are mapping and they do so with a compelling simplicity of performance. The last kind of funny here is the quality of whimsical rage; they are at once apoplectic and fatalistic, innocent and wise. They spew rational nonsense that is written in sweet-hearted prose. At the end of it all, the journey brought them back home. What will they do now, if it's not conduct a worldwide search for someone to hold hands with on a bridge? Whatever it is, we can look forward to with glee; it's taken them nine years to begin.

Eve Wedderburn

Curious/ Leslie Hill and Helen Paris

**(BE) LONGING**

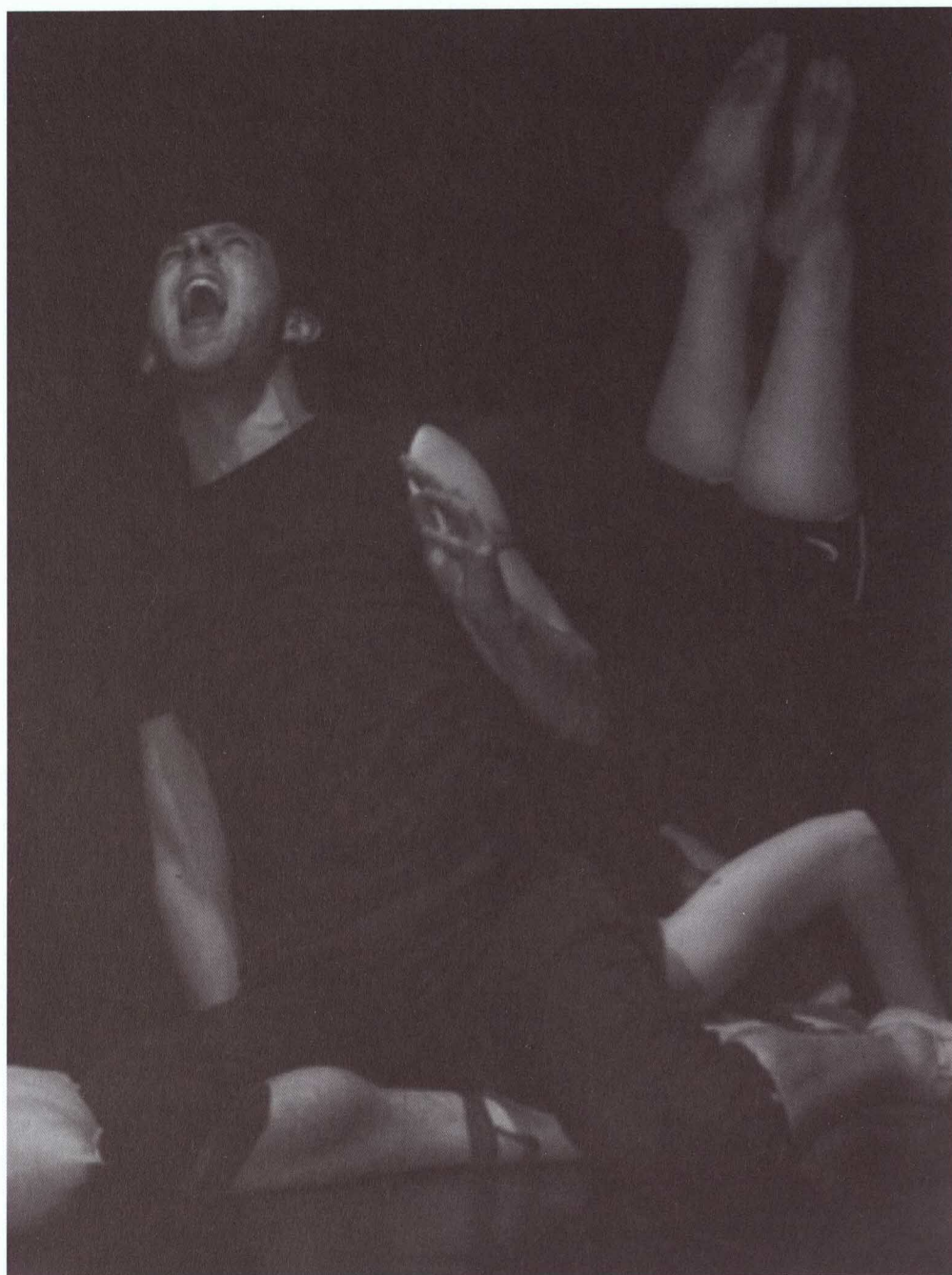
The Tramway, National Review of Live Art

February 2007

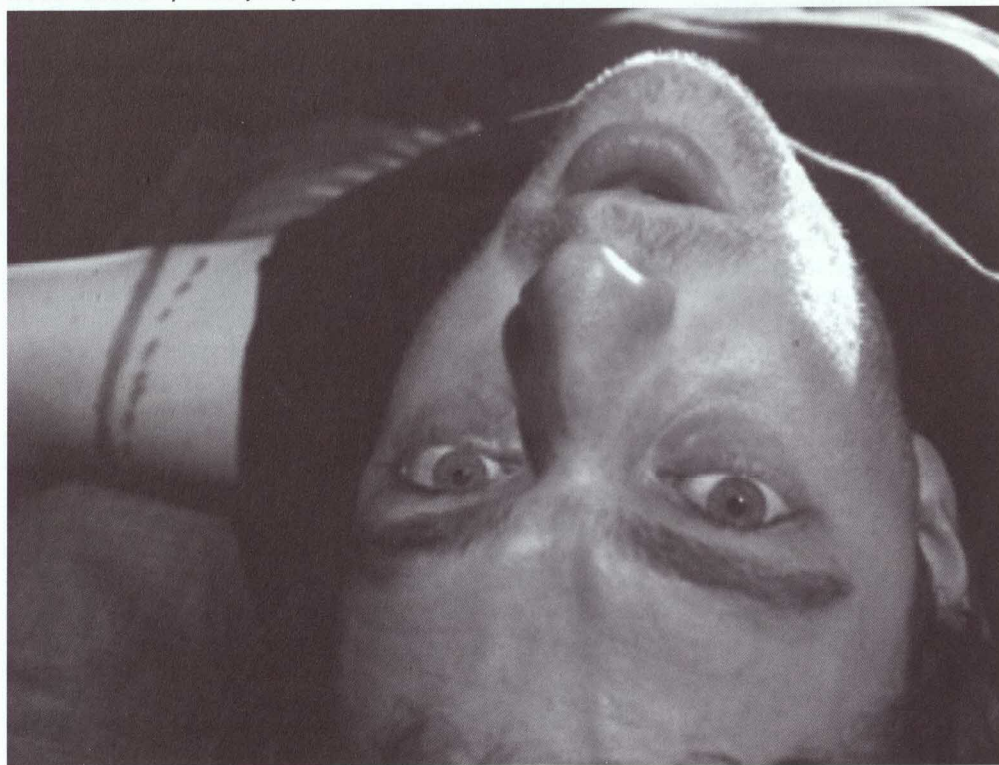
The lights go up on Leslie playing electric guitar. It is an excellent rendition of a well-known blues classic. After a few bars she stops playing, moves closer to the microphone and begins her monologue. But the music continues... Leslie's first words are the frank admission that, despite taking lessons, she can't play the guitar. Leslie goes on to talk openly about her life's various disappointments, small and large, as the music continues to play. This very intimate initial scene sets the confessional tone of *(Be)longing*, in which tales of loss, love and longing are delivered with touching humour and pathos. *(Be)longing* is spilt into two parts, with Leslie Hill and Helen Paris each performing solo for thirty minutes. Leslie is a part-Cherokee cowgirl with an embroidered shirt and a mid-western drawl who longs for home, dreams of a fresh start and of being able to play the blues. In comparison, Helen is a distinctly homegrown disappointment, an Englishwoman who is tortured by her own thoughts, her longing for love, and an addiction to coffee, cigarettes and wine. Both women want to fit in, to belong, and 'long for' the fantasies they act out on stage. But they ultimately fail to achieve their desires – and that failure is at the heart of the piece. The longing embodied within these stories transmits to the audience as painfully tangible. Desire tirelessly stalks these two women and, by implication, all of us. In the end, Helen and Leslie want to 'belong', but mostly they simply 'long'. Theirs is perhaps a clear case of the grass is greener and the question might be: Do they really want to 'fit in'? It's doubtful. But it doesn't matter. The real issue is the lack, the very longing to belong, that shapes life.

Rachel Lois Clapham





DANTE OR DIE CALIPER BOY – PHOTOS JUSTIN JONES



dANTE OR dIE

**CALIPER BOY**

Camden People's Theatre, London

December 2007

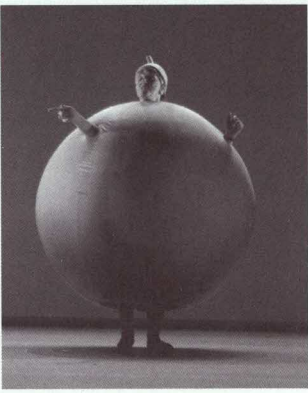
The show begins amidst the chatter of pre-performance drinks, gushing reunions, and absent stares; a melodious acoustic twang drifts through the enclosed space of CPT's foyer and we are hooked, caught un-awares, interrupted mid-sentence. Our faces drawn up to meet the music, we are lured into the performance space, a procession of eager followers, following our Pied Pipers (the excellent folk band Left With Pictures working in collaboration with dANTE OR dIE's Yaniv Fridel). And, as with the Pied Piper, we are guided to a sad tale of lost children, haunted histories and social estrangement. The tale of Caliper Boy recounts a modern urban myth of a 12-year-old boy who escapes the confinement of his prostitute mother's cellar and comes to voice the apprehensions of the city – and of us all.

Combining dance by Sarah Sproull, music and some wonderful speeches delivered by Terry O'Donovan, dANTE OR dIE evoke the loss of home and the insecurities of the city. The extended opening scene that consists of approximately five minutes of uneventful counting sets a space for questioning this loss, and a pace that, as it accelerates by way of distorted bodies and a series of disparate and disorientating stories, leads one to enfold oneself in the Caliper Boy's question: 'Why aren't I like the other children, Mother?' While some scenes seem purposelessly long and obscure, on the whole, *Caliper Boy* is a thoughtful response to the childhood fears of un-belonging that remain with us, haunting our sense of self. This response is helped enormously by the troubling score that provides momentum, and the tumbling, tangled stories that lead us – nowhere in particular.

**Alice Andrews**



BOBBY BAKER HOW TO LIVE



**Bobby Baker**  
**HOW TO LIVE**

Oxford Playhouse, Oxford  
January 2007

Performance artist Bobby Baker spent years investigating *Daily Life* in her celebrated series of that name. But what follows *Daily Life*? Big questions call for big answers. After years of research, Bobby Baker is ready to give us the answer to the biggest question of all: *How to Live*. Eleven skills precisely are what Bobby Baker recommends in this charming mockery of self-help therapies used in the treatment of mental health. Eleven skills precisely, each one served up with thinly veiled reference to Bobby Baker's own experiences of living (56 years and two months of it to be precise, as of the date of this show), and punctuated by video and still projections. Throughout, she returns to the idea that success in living is 'in the detail', in the smallness of things, and likewise the delight of this show is in the detail – the momentary manic grimaces, the short asides, the delicate interplay of sensible ideas against the more ludicrous and, of course, the attention to sensible, practical down-to-earth shoes. On stage Bobby Baker is gentle but impish, nestling in an anti-theatrical territory, drawing focus to the exasperations of daily life and the effect of these, as well as sending up the techniques of the self-help movement. It is the projections that serve this so well. Placed as punctuations to the 'explanation' of each skill they elicit fits of giggles for the plain simplicity of each 'skill'. Of course this is all supported by the able assistance of 'the patient', a shiny garden pea. What is most enjoyable about Baker's work is the simple presentation of a human being riding the waves of the world and trying to make sense of it through the art event. A treat for bad days.

Tom Wilson

KNEEHIGH CYMBELINE



**Kneehigh Theatre**  
**CYMBELINE**

Luric Hammersmith, London

*Cymbeline* did what Kneehigh do so well: reached out and pulled the audience into the action. At the Lyric, the production's ambition and buoyant cast struggled slightly with the combination of a design comprising a huge cage and a proscenium arch theatre. Though the structure had a distancing effect, full use was made, thematically and physically, of the iron bars that kept the King trapped with his lounge-singing nurse-mistress, and Imogen encased in the castle of her father's grief. The delightful mixture of technology and tradition sees hoodies hanging outside the palace; a remote-control postal Ferrari; a giant board-game unfolded when *Cymbeline* wages war on Caesar. This exuberance and excess is exciting, though live music, often integral to Kneehigh's pieces, sometimes slows the action rather than propelling the story on. The production, bursting with ideas, and ever surprising, has been criticised for making free with Shakespeare's text, and the attitude taken by the company is not reverential. But in making a story with some very silly moments come alive, the technique of stripping down the text and building it anew allowed complicity between performers and audience. For those wedded to Shakespearean accuracy, this was like a love affair: playfulness and raw emotion taking precedence over fidelity. If at moments the dialogue strayed towards mundanity, and we missed sophistication and poetry, the strength of the performances made it work. Hayley Carmichael quietly glowed, mis-reading a letter in which Imogen is accused of having 'played the strumpet' in her lover's bed, roaring out her rage at the false accusation: 'I don't even PLAY the trumpet!' Carmichael commands a huge range of expression, and at the other end of the spectrum, the gentle question 'Where's his head?' rings out over the hushed audience. Like so much of this company's work, emotional punch and punchline effortlessly combined.

Cassie Werber

KEN CAMPBELL DRAWING BY NEIL MCCANN



**Ken Campbell**  
**HYPHENATOR**

The Drill Hall, London  
December 2006

Devised theatre? Standup? Stand-up-sitdown-standup? Exhibition of abstract art? Juice bar? Improv? It's the usual Ken Campbell. His mania for connections has not diminished (the programme notes give a definition of the word 'Apophenia', which is 'the experience of seeing patterns or connections in random or meaningless data'), and there is the accustomed mix of exaggeration, autobiography, esoteric knowledge, different books, bizarre props, and good humour. What distinguishes *Hyphenator* is that it is a domestic show – from the set (more or less a study), to the content (e.g. the lives and deaths of generations of family pets as mini dynastic drama), to the easy audience/performer relation. It was good, but not as good as it could have been. I missed the trick Ken Campbell has of building a circuit that somehow reaches outside of itself for its power – I wanted him to say serious things through whimsy. I've heard him do it before. I shall never forget a piece I heard years ago on the radio where Ken introduced Jackie Chan to *Anne of Green Gables*, imagining a new super-series *Chan of Green Gables* – and then, without any apparent effort of transition, began to talk very movingly about the (then recent) attack on the World Trade Center. Perhaps in *Hyphenator* the lines of deranged enquiry didn't have enough crossing points, but they were always curious and always funny, and it was a nonstop ride. 'A full stop is a lie, or a hyphen coming straight at you.'

John Ellingsworth

NIKI MCCRETTON SPACE 50



**Niki McCretton**  
**SPACE 50**

ICIA Bath University, Bath  
February 2007

They say that Space has no beginning and no end; it simply goes on and on. After about two hours I was beginning to get that feeling during the premiere of a show that celebrates 50 years of space travel and in which Niki McCretton tells us about her childhood dreams of going to the moon.

Assisted by several fellow astro-nuts she has created a series of vignettes based around the theme of lunar exploration, but the whole thing took a good half an hour to ignite and take off.

One cosmonaut laboured for about a light year to wrap the other in foil, bubble wrap and masking tape. During those moments the theatre, like deep space, began to feel like a very lonely place.

For me, the most charming parts of the show were the most whimsical; a delightful lunar sand dance; astronauts speaking through walkie-talkies to mimic the sound of space chatter; a hand-held micro camera that recreated a live lunar landing scene and an astronaut surfing a lunar sea.

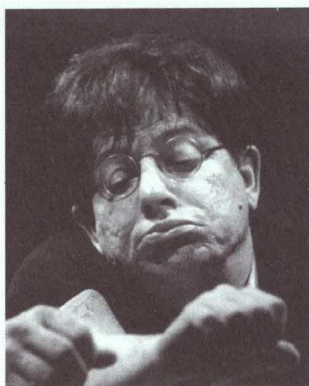
Apparently there were many artists from various disciplines contributing to this show and I think that they have simply put far too much in. This is the negative side of the current buzz word 'collaboration'.

Don't get me wrong: the show is not a complete waste of time and space; there is a good piece in there somewhere, but slack directing and editing make it way too long. Hopefully it will be heavily edited once it's out on the road – I think that the show could easily lose an hour.

That will save the company a fortune in sticky tape and bubble wrap so my advice to the director is to take out that midnight blue pencil and go at the script like a lunatic.

Brian Popay





Polish Cultural Institute

**FERDYDURKE**

Bloomshury Theatre, London

February 2007

Already seen at Edinburgh, all across America, and as far afield as Japan, it has taken eight years for this award-winning production by the Lublin-based Teatr Provisorium to reach London. Gombrowicz's 1937 novel – *Ferdydurke* – is here condensed into an hour-long play of three scenes, making the most of the actual dialogue provided by the author. In a kind of prologue, however, we are introduced to the physical language of the piece. Here the relation between self and other is seen in the mirror of face pulling, a challenge to the deadpan seriousness with which adults affect not to notice each other. A simple wooden box-frame contains only a bench, which transforms the 'set' from a park to a school, from a town house to a country manor. This open, and yet confined, space amplifies the grotesque grimaces, the spitting and farting, of the four late-middle-aged actors. Their effort with English pronunciation (in Danuta Borchartt's translation) compounds the desire to be understood. That is the dilemma of the narrator, addressing a theatre in which the seats do not transform at all. In the sense of 'losing face', though, we all realise that this face is never simply our own, but a hostage to those cannibals of our cherished ideals – the others, those who ascribe to us the absurdities of which they would rather be unburdened than enjoy for themselves. This is the very paradox not simply of the actor, but of the audience.

Mischa Twitchin

*Indefinite Articles***THE MAGIC LAMP**

Royal Exchange Studio Theatre, Manchester

December 2006

The small theatre is bathed in warm lights, the banks of seats placed so they face each other, and in the middle of the space are swathes of material hung to resemble the inside of a tent. Puppeteer Steve Tiplady advances to the centre and gives a short history of shadow plays, whose origins lie in storytelling in fire-lit caves. At first you think all this a bit worthy, a bit Theatre-In-Education, but actually it sets the tone perfectly for what is to follow – an Iraqi version of the Aladdin story, told using shadows cast by two overhead projectors onto a screen that bisects the room, and which can be raised and lowered as and when the story dictates.

Indefinite Articles (Tiplady and performer/puppeteer Sally Brown) use simple materials to create unexpected images at the service of a familiar story. At one point there's a three-way conversation between the hero, a princess and a rogue magician. An image of all three is projected into the air and a scrap of paper is moved around so it picks up the projected image: the princess talks so the paper is moved to catch her image; the hero talks and the paper is moved to catch him. There's no hesitation in finding the image so the storytelling never misses a beat. The jewels in the cave are created by adding drops of coloured water into a tray of oil which is then projected onto the screen. The genie likewise is formed by drops of water in oil, agitated by hand when he needs to disappear.

All the mechanics of the story are laid bare: there's no hiding behind sleights of hand or theatre blackouts – and all this, for me, adds to the strength of the storytelling of this ingenious and, yes, magical show.

Edward Taylor

*Dakh Centre for Contemporary Arts***MACBETH: THE PROLOGUE**

Barbican Theatre, London

February 2007

What could act as a prologue to the story of Macbeth? Shakespeare's play is a carefully constructed logical whole, its narrative poised in balance between the forces of destiny and self-responsibility. The view from the Dakh Centre for Contemporary Arts was more gloss than backstory, an impassioned cry for moral relativism – Macbeth was hero as well as murderer, and he both loved and tyrannised. A historical continuum is suggested: youthful squabbling breaks into competitive violence; a king is killed; the people are dissatisfied and restless under liberalism, then revolt under tyranny. Macbeth is simply one weave in a larger pattern.

What the company articulate most powerfully is a richly poetic sense of disorder: ritual order, beautifully established through rustically simple choreography that feels age-old, breaks down; human faces ossify to masks and melt to clay; throaty chanted harmonies degenerate into dissonant shrieks. The stagecraft is astonishing – surreal and beautiful masks move through the steady beats of ritual exchange and create a sense of the primal impulse of aggression and intimacy, sexuality and tenderness that underpin all society. Cocooned in woven rugs, surrounded by simple faces daubed on the walls, and with blood-red light bathing the stage, this young company presented a passionate vision. The raw voices of the amazing musicians cracked in ways that belied the cynicism of the occasional poorly translated narrative voice-over (which tried to make ironic their cyclical vision of history). Perhaps less about Macbeth than about the inhumanity and madness borne of a political corruption that this company have experienced first hand in their home in the Ukraine, this immersive provocation was stirring stuff with genuine heart, and images to feed the imagination.

Beccy Smith

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Copy deadline for next issue is **7 June 2007**. Publication date is **1 August 2007**. The next issue will cover the period August–October 2007.

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## PRINT PUBLICATIONS

*Reviewed by Dorothy Max Prior*

### THEATRE OF MOVEMENT AND GESTURE

**JACQUES LECOQ**

**ED. DAVID BRADBY**

**ROUTLEDGE**

**ISBN 978 0 415 35944 3**

**£18-99 PB**

**WWW.ROUTLEDGE.COM**

It's hard to believe, but this is the first English translation of Lecoq's *La Theatre du Geste* – seminal writings on modern mime (aka 'physical theatre'). In it, Lecoq reflects on the gestures of life (walking, professions, situations etc.); the journey from pantomime to modern mime; and the nature of mime – 'the art of movement'. There is also a section co-authored with Jean Perret on the explosion of mime (including reflections on commedia, clown, mask etc.) and further material on theatre of movement by Alain Gautre. This is an essential read for anyone involved in mime – oops, physical theatre – but it's a shame that some of the editorial sloppiness from the original remains uncorrected (and who can blame Lecoq – he's a mime, not an editor!). Examples: an assumption that everyone knows that Ariane Mnouchkine is founder/director of Theatre du Soleil rather than crediting her accordingly at the head of the interview; Lecoq given as author at the start of Chapter 7 although the majority of that chapter is written by Gautre; Perret's reflections on other mimes (Decroux, Barrault, Marceau) oddly interspersed with Lecoq's own writings; boxed out sections with no credited author – are they Lecoq's words or someone else's? Despite these criticisms, this should be on your bookshelf.

**JACQUES COPEAU**

**MARK EVANS**

**ROUTLEDGE PERFORMANCE**

**PRACTITIONERS (SERIES EDITOR**

**FRANC CHAMBERLAIN)**

**ISBN 978 0 415 35435 6**

**£15-99 PB**

A welcome addition to the Routledge Performance Practitioners series, which offers straightforward introductory guides to key theatre-makers. Mark Evans's volume on Jacques Copeau (who lived and worked in France in the late 19th/early 20th century) shines a welcome light on this oft-neglected figure, a trailblazer of actor training, physical theatre and ensemble acting. He is also now viewed as a pioneer of community-based theatre, having abandoned the highlife of Paris for the Burgundy countryside with his renegade troupe of actors, which included the godfather of contemporary mime, Etienne Decroux. The book follows the series's established format, so includes an overview of Copeau's life and work, an analysis of his key ideas, and a series of practical exercises offering an introduction to his working methods (including neutral mask, chorus work, rediscovering childhood games, and silent improvisation). The must-have Copeau book remains the John Rudlin/Norman H. Paul edit/translation of Copeau's own texts on theatre; but for all newcomers to Copeau's work, this new publication would be a good starting point.

### COMMEDIA PLAYS: SCENARIOS,

**SCRIPTS, LAZZI**

**BARRY GRANTHAM**

**NICK HERN BOOKS**

**£12.99 PB**

**ISBN 978 1 85459 871 4**

A follow up to Grantham's much loved *Playing Commedia*, this is a good solid addition to the commedia canon, offering eight original short plays from different periods and styles of commedia dell'arte. Also included is a collection of Lazzi, the comic set pieces which glue together the stories of new-found love, jealousy, and adultery that are the mainstay of commedia. Total Theatre has it first hand (from teachers recently returned from the frontline of commedia workshoping in Italy) that Grantham's Lazzi exercises are particularly useful for initiating teenagers into the essence of commedia play. In an era in which political theatre and satire are re-emerging, the commedia templates offer a unique opportunity for the exploration of current events in the social and political landscapes. And as for those stock characters: still relevant? Can we think of anyone who answers to the name of Capitano, a man whose gaudy and shabby façade of strutting braggadocio, arrogant egocentricity, and feigned machismo peels off to reveal a weak coward, timid of almost everything?

### A PERFORMANCE COSMOLOGY:

**TESTIMONY FROM THE FUTURE,**

**EVIDENCE OF THE PAST**

**ED. JULIE CHRISTIE, RICHARD**

**GOUGH, DANIEL WATT**

**ROUTLEDGE/CENTRE FOR**

**PERFORMANCE RESEARCH**

**ISBN 978 0 415 37258 9**

**£29-99 PB (£24-99 IF**

**ORDERED FROM CPR)**

**WWW.ROUTLEDGE.COM**

**WWW.THECPR.ORG.UK**

A beautifully presented book, which seems to be a sort of overspill and extension of the centre's thirtieth-birthday celebrations in 2005 (encompassing the Towards Tomorrow? five-day gathering of performances, lectures and events). The luscious 300+ colour pages include testimonies, ruminations, and reflections from a kaleidoscopic range of artists, cultural commentators, and academics (and some who are all of those things). The roll-call includes: Paul Allain, Franc Chamberlain, Jane Goodall, Adrian Heathfield, Heike Roms, Frankie Armstrong, Matthew Ghoulish, Tim Etchells, Susan Melrose, and cpr mainman Richard Gough – all in all, a compendium of the voices and faces of alternative performance practice. Hard to pick a highlight in such a wonderful collection, but one desert island choice might be Guillermo Gomez-Pena's performance text, *Declaration of Poetic Disobedience*. Another might be Philip Auslander's *AnimalCam*, a reflection on 'non-human performance' (animals, robots...). Beg, steal, borrow, or (preferably) buy this book!

### 'IN COMES I': PERFORMANCE,

**MEMORY AND LANDSCAPE**

**MIKE PEARSON**

**UNIVERSITY OF EXETER PRESS**

**£17-99 (PAPERBACK)**

**ISBN 978 0 85989 788 4**

**£50 (HARDBACK)**

**ISBN 978 0 85989 787 7**

What ties people to places? Here's a book to challenge the boundaries of academic study and both artistic and scientific practice! The title (opening line of many a Mummers play, as in: 'In comes I, the Fool...') reflects both the focus on regional performance traditions and the use of the self as a source for performance works. Aiming to create a 'deep map', it takes the notion of 'region' as its topic, flying and fluttering between archaeology; local and personal histories; folklore; and 'biographical wandering'. It provides a documentation of local/rural performances and 'performative events', using snapshots of moments in time from the past 200 years. In tandem with recent projects by companies such as Wrights & Sites, Red Earth, and the Centre for Performance Research, this book is an expression of a growing artistic interest in landscape, an

exploration of a sense of place, and a reflection on the interrelationship of hands-on sensory experience, memory, and imagination – perhaps sparking a new interpretation of the term 'environmental art' along the way. Includes archive photographs and recent works by Hugo Glendinning and others.

### ANIMATED ENCOUNTERS: A REVIEW

**OF PUPPETRY AND RELATED ARTS**

**ED. DOROTHY MAX PRIOR**

**PUPPET CENTRE TRUST**

**ISBN 978 0 904842 05 0**

**ISSN 1754-3053**

**£15 PB (SPECIAL**

**INTRODUCTORY PRICE)**

**WWW.PUPPETCENTRE.ORG.UK**

Animated Encounters is the first in an annual series, *Animations in Print*, published by Puppet Centre Trust in addition to their quarterly web-based magazine, *Animations Online*. The theme for this first volume is puppetry in relation to other artforms: dance, opera, fine art, street arts, new writing, etc. It features a series of commissioned articles from practitioners such as John Fox (who writes *Welfare State International's* puppet story), and Ken Campbell (who gives the reader an inimitable teach-yourself guide to the art of ventriloquism); articles by academic-practitioners such as Matthew Isaac Cohen of *Royal Holloway London*; an interview with Anthony Minghella on the creation of *Madam Butterfly*, featuring puppetry by Blind Summit; and a further eclectic mix of material including a paper by PCT leading light Penny Francis, a photo strip by Forkbeard Fantasy, and a Timeline of UK puppet activity in 2006. An essential purchase for anyone interested in puppetry or theatre of animation (an admittedly biased view!).



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London, N1  
 T: +44 (0) 20 7613 0341  
[www.jackylansley.com](http://www.jackylansley.com)  
[drs@jackylansley.com](mailto: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

Kent  
 T: 01227 280399  
[www.exfeat.com](http://www.exfeat.com)  
[info@exfeat.com](mailto:info@exfeat.com)  
 Regular classes and training opportunities in Dover, Faversham and Whitstable for the absolute beginner to the trained professional. Taster Sessions, Private Classes, Creative Development, Touring Workshops also available.

### FORKBEARD SUMMER SCHOOL

T: 0117 930 9933  
[www.forkbeardfantasy.co.uk](http://www.forkbeardfantasy.co.uk)  
[ff@forkbeardfantasy.co.uk](mailto:ff@forkbeardfantasy.co.uk)  
 13 July - 20 July and 29 June - 6 July 2007. Week-long course exploring film and digital video, lighting and camera skills, final cut Pro, compositing, editing, projection systems and surfaces.

### GLASSHOUSE MASK ACADEMY WORKSHOPS

Stourbridge, West Midlands  
 Tel: +44 (0) 1384 399458  
[theatre@ghc.rmet.org.uk](http://theatre@ghc.rmet.org.uk)  
 Classes and summer school. Call or email for full details.

### RONNIE BURKETT THEATRE OF MARIONETTES MASTERCLASS

Queerupnorth, Manchester  
[www.queerupnorth.com](http://www.queerupnorth.com)  
 May 14-15  
 The Puppet Centre Trust has teamed up with queerupnorth to offer this unique opportunity to spend two days with Ronnie Burkett exploring the creation and interpretation of text for puppetry. For further information email: [Natalie.Querol@puppetcentre.org.uk](mailto:Natalie.Querol@puppetcentre.org.uk) or tel: 020 7228 5335



**INDEPENDENT THEATRE COUNCIL****TRAINING PROGRAMME**

London  
T: +44 (0)20 7403 6698  
training@itc-arts.org  
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  
T: +44 (0)20 7091 9666.  
27 August – 28 September  
Major themes include celebratory performance and rites of passage. There is a five-day Site Specific Sleep Over with Janice Perry and professional development opportunities with Australia's Snuff Puppets. Annie Sprinkle will offer her Post Porn Performance Lecture and workshops, unique to the festival. Places are limited, so book well in advance. See website for full details.

**THE KELMAN GROUP**

Leeds  
T: +44 (0)1484 851227  
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.

**MICK BARNFATHER**

Stoke Newington, London  
www.mickbarnfather.com  
Mick Barnfather (Complicite)  
Summer Clown and Comedy course runs from 30 July – 10 August. See the website for full details.

**MOVE INTO LIFE WITH SANDRA REEVE**

West Dorset  
T: 01297 560511  
www.moveintolife.co.uk  
info@moveintolife.co.uk  
Autobiographical Movement workshop, 30 June – 4 July: mindfulness in movement, embodiment and environmental awareness. See website for full programme.

**PARA-ACTIVE, URBAN DOLLS PROJECT**

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

**RENA MIRECKA LABORATORY, 'THE WAY' & ZYGMUNT 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.

**THEATRE TRAINING INITIATIVE**

London  
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, Kalaripayattu and Yoga for Performers.

Full details on the website.

International Exchange Project with Frank Theatre, Australia. Open Workshop: Frank / Suzuki Performance Aesthetics 1–12 July 2007. For more information contact fran@theatrettraining.org.uk

**THE WHY NOT INSTITUTE**

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

**THE WRIGHT SCHOOL**

London  
www.thewrightschool.co.uk  
Classes and workshop programme led by John Wright – see the website for full details.

**CONFERENCES, SEMINARS AND SYMPOSIA****REPEAT REPEAT CONFERENCE**

T: 01244 513038  
www.chester.ac.uk/cpra/conference  
repeatrepeat.arts@chester.ac.uk  
University of Chester  
Two day conference exploring the concept of repetition across the visual and performing arts.

**STREET ARTS MEETING**

Zap/University of Brighton, Sallis Benney Theatre  
www.zapuk.com  
info@streetartsmeeting.co.uk  
Thursday 10th – Friday 11th May  
Delegate rate: £175 + VAT/  
Artist rate: £75 + VAT. Includes: lunch and dinner both days.  
Key event in the UK street arts calendar providing an opportunity for artists, producers, programmers and funders to meet and discuss current issues within the sector. Ideally located to see the Streets of Brighton showcase within Brighton Festival. SAM 2007 highlights include: Bill Morris, Culture Ceremonies and Education Director for the London 2012 Olympics; David Micklem, Senior Strategy Officer for Theatre, launching ACE's Strategy for Street Arts.

**THE CONSTANT PRINCE**

University of Kent, Canterbury  
T: 01227 827564  
k.j.goddard@kent.ac.uk  
A screening of a performance by Grotowski's Laboratory Theatre, followed by a symposium discussion with those who made it happen. 24 June, 11am–8pm.

**TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT – OVERSEAS****ACADEMY OF LIVING MOVEMENT**

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

**AU BRANA WORKSHOP SEASON 2007**

www.aubrana.com  
info@aubrana.com  
International workshops in southern France on a formerly ruined farm converted into studio space with on-site accommodation. Workshops include Anna-Helena McLean (Gardzienice) with Pamela Prather (Yale), Song of the Goat, The Chorea Theatre Association, The Drift Project (Para-Active/ZecoraUra), Theatre Zar, Les 8 Bottes Jaunes and the Au Brana Theatre Company.

**BUTOH-CENTRUM MAMU**

Gottingen, 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.circovapore3000.it  
circovapore@tiscalinet.it  
Two-year professional training. Further info (in English) available on request – email above.

**CORPOREAL MIME WORKSHOP**

WITH THOMAS LEABHART  
Aurillac, France  
www.lamontade.com  
hello@lamontade.com  
T: +33 01 43 36 30 42  
July 16–28 2007  
12 days, 7 hours per day. Decroux's repertory and technique + personal creation workshop Further info from website, or contact Nicolas Queinnec, Le Cercle de la Montade, 25 bd Arago, 75013 Paris, France

**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. Intensive summer workshop series, 26 June – 21 July, in Blue Lake, California. Dell'Arte also offers summer intensives in Denmark, 29 July – 17 Aug.

**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: +34 933 042 486  
www.escoladec clown.eu  
email: info@escoladec clown.eu  
Comprehensive clown training programme covering all aspects of the clown arts. Three month Clown Studies Course: from the search for one's clown to creating original material (next courses: 10 April – 29 June; 1 October – 21 December). Weekend Workshops with visiting practitioners (Franki Anderson, Moshe Cohen, Sue Morrison, Danny Schlesinger, Jesús Jara, Jango Edwards, etc.). Summer schools July and August.

**ESPACE CATASTROPHE**

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

**INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL****OF MAKING THEATRE**

Athens, Greece  
www.toc.gr  
8–15 July 2007. An opportunity for theatre-makers from different parts of the world to share and get acquainted with new working methods and ideas in Acting, Movement and Voice.

**THE INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP FESTIVAL WORLDWIDE**

T: +44 (0)207 091 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. 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 programme – see website for full details.



# cartoon de salvo

## Theatre Workshops

One of the country's most respected international touring companies are hosting a series of weekend workshops.

Renowned for their fresh, irreverent, spontaneous, script-defying theatre, Cartoon de Salvo are the team behind Meat & Two Veg (Observer Top Ten Shows of the Year 2002), and 2005's allotment-set outdoor theatre event The Sunflower Plot.

### Day One: Complicity and Presence

Looking at how actors can find pleasure to be in front of (and with) the audience

### Day Two: Devising for Story

What happens to the actor when the devising process focuses on story? Who is the writer?

Cost: One day £40, Both days £70.

Early bird discount: 10% off, if you book by 31 May

9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> June, 10am – 5pm at Jerwood Space, London

16<sup>th</sup> \*17<sup>th</sup> June, 10am – 5pm at Farnham Maltings.

7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> July, 10am – 5pm at

The Nightingale, Brighton

For more information please email [ellen@cartoondesalvo.com](mailto:ellen@cartoondesalvo.com)



## BECOME A NEXT GENERATION PERFORMER

### BA in Contemporary Theatre (3 years)

Inspired by individuals and performer led companies such as Robert LePage, Theatre de Complicite, Improbable Theatre and Kneehigh, this three-year BA course is an opportunity for people who want to prepare themselves for the professional demands of today's theatre, film television and related fields as creative performers.

This unique and highly challenging degree program encompasses training in acrobatics, scriptwriting, voice, singing, dance, movement, design and puppetry. This course was launched in 2004, in response to demands from professionals and applicants for training to prepare actors for the challenges of new ways of working in performance arts. This is a training opportunity for those who want to experiment, explore and participate fully in the creative process while expressing themselves both personally and politically through performance.

For more information visit [www.east15.ac.uk](http://www.east15.ac.uk) or call 0208 508 3940

### Final Productions showcase

Thursday 11th June at 1pm

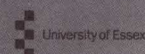
The Studio, Soho Theatre

Refreshments served from

12.30pm, show starts 1pm

Showcase is open to industry professionals only. For more information please contact [asedg@essex.ac.uk](mailto:asedg@essex.ac.uk) or call 0208 508 3940

**E15**  
Acting School



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# 32 years

of actor training  
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## Dell'Arte International

The source for training in ensemble-based physical theatre among the majestic redwoods and rugged beauty of California's North Coast.

## Commedia dell'Arte Intensive June 26 - July 21, 2007

with Giovanni Fusetti, Joan Schirle & Ronlin Foreman  
Join us in a lively exploration of a form at the root of any actor's spontaneity and creativity.

### Also this summer...

**Generating New Material** with Daniel Stein, **RasaBoxes™**  
**Training** with East Coast Artists and **Dell'Arte Abroad** in Aasen, Denmark. Full color brochures available, check website for details.

## Dell'Arte International

P.O. Box 816  
Blue Lake, CA 95525  
+1 707-668-5663  
info@dellarte.com  
www.dellarte.com

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London, England

*"The School offers a carefully structured set of themes from the tragic to the comedic providing the technical ability and theatrical skills necessary to develop professional standards of expertise"*

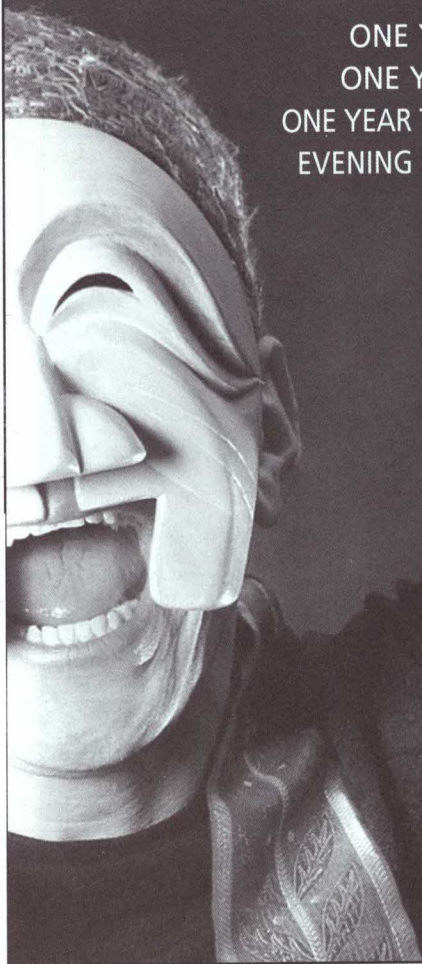
full-time professional programme October - June  
summer Intensive August  
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The School Of Physical Theatre, Three Mills Film Centre, Three Mills Lane, Bromley-by-Bow, London, E3 3DU, England  
tel +44 (0)20 8215 3350 fax +44 (0)20 8215 3482 e-mail school@physicaltheatre.com web www.physicaltheatre.com



Director: Ron East





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"Our aim is to foster a never ending curiosity in life as it is, a strong vision of life as it could be, and a fully alive body with which to express creative visions."

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Founder of LISPA  
(former pedagogical  
director of the Ecole  
JACQUES LECOQ).

*Lispera*

London International School of Performing Arts

# theatre de l'ange fou

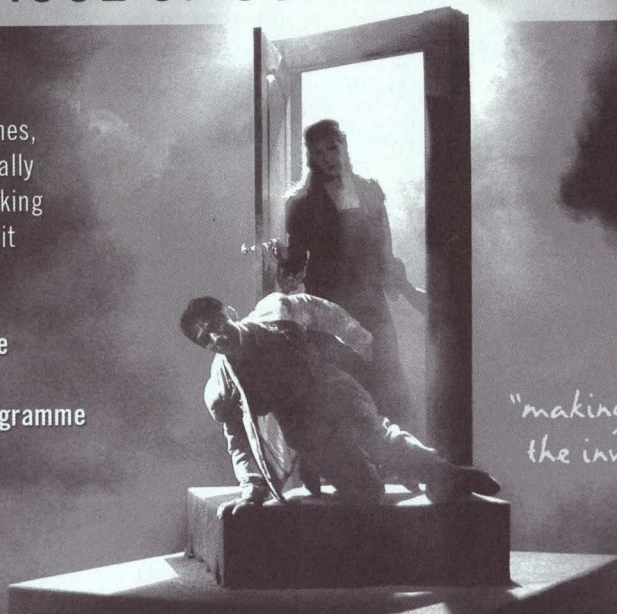
## INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF CORPOREAL MIME

Directors: **STEVEN WASSON & CORINNE SOUM**

Offering a range of full time professional programmes, the International School of Corporeal Mime is specially designed for people preparing for a career as a working artist, performer and creator, and wishing to commit to a rigorous and inventive training.

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- ▶ Two Year Full Time Advanced Training Course
- ▶ Three Year Full Time Professional Diploma Programme
- ▶ Summer School 2007
- ▶ Evening classes and weekend workshops

For further details go to: [www.angefou.co.uk](http://www.angefou.co.uk)



*"making visible  
the invisible"*

Theatre de l'Ange Fou INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF CORPOREAL MIME

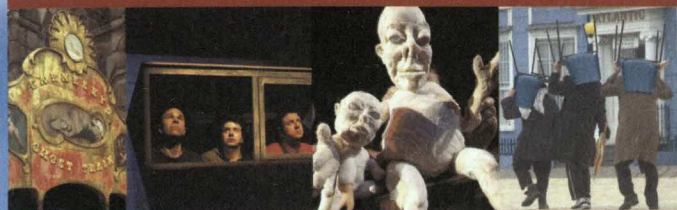
Belgravia Workshops, Unit 207, 157-163 Marlborough Road, London N19 4NF. Tel / fax: 0207 263 9339 Email: [infoschool@angefou.co.uk](mailto:infoschool@angefou.co.uk)



# THE SUMMER SHIFT<sup>07</sup>

CPR International Summer School of Theatre and Performance ABERYSTWYTH, WALES, UK

7 - 18th July 2007



WORKSHOPS - TALKS - PRESENTATIONS

## Want to make a shift?

Try new ways of working - explore different approaches to making theatre and performance - develop your creative practice amongst like-minded participants from around the world - take time away and work with leading practitioners?

The CPR Summer Shift 2007 is an intensive working retreat in beautiful West Wales where participants can choose their own pathway through a series of workshops exploring innovative processes of composition working with landscape, soundscape and sonic performance, music-theatre, magic and burlesque, and physical training, or can simply enrol on individual workshops.

With guest artists: **Geraldine Pilgrim, Mike Pearson, Simon Thorne and Ingrid von Wantoch Rekowski, Marisa Carnesky, Ric Jerrom & Brian Popay.**

For full details on The Summer Shift, or information on our other activities - workshops, performances, Resource Centre, publications, journals and book-shop - contact CPR at the address below or visit our website: **[www.thecpr.org.uk](http://www.thecpr.org.uk)**

Tel: **+44 (0) 1970 622 133**

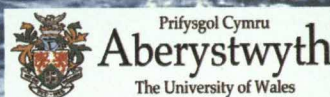
**Better still - why not join our e-mailing list and receive regular updates and news bulletins - we'd love to hear from you...**

Centre For Performance Research  
The Foundry/Y Ffowndri  
Parry Williams Building,  
Penglais Campus, Aberystwyth,  
Wales, UK SY23 3AJ

**[cprwww@aber.ac.uk](mailto:cprwww@aber.ac.uk)**



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THE ARTS COUNCIL OF WALES  
SUPPORTING CREATIVITY





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- MA Cultural and Arts Management
- MA Devised Performance
- MA Theatre and Media for Development

Image: 'Some Short Exercises in Love' By Fevered Sleep A piece commissioned by the Faculty of Arts for the launch of the Performance Gymnasium

For further details on the full range of courses offered at the Faculty of Arts visit:

W: [www.winchester.ac.uk/arts](http://www.winchester.ac.uk/arts)

T: (01962) 827234

E: [courseenquiries@winchester.ac.uk](mailto:courseenquiries@winchester.ac.uk)