

Spring 2011 Volume 23 Issue 01

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TOTALTHEATRE

MAGAZINE



SPRING CHICKENS AND OLD HENS! THE CANNY GRANNY GOES WILD IN THE COUNTRY

WHAT A LOAD OF OLD COCK! THE WORKS OF TIM CROUCH

THE ANIMALS AND CHILDREN TAKE TO THE STREETS, AND IT'S ALL CHILDSPLAY FOR S.P.I.D. THEATRE

MAN AND BEAST, MAN AND MACHINE AT THE LONDON INTERNATIONAL MIME FESTIVAL

RAJNI SHAH SPILLS THE BEANS ON THE MAKING OF GLORIOUS

PLUS THE VOICE OF ROBERT PACITTI, SONG OF THE GOAT'S MACBETH, THEATRE AD INFINITUM, CREATION AT THE POINT, AND A WEALTH OF REVIEWS, NEWS, AND PREVIEWS

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Volume 23 Issue 01 Spring 2011

What do theatre artists need to create work? When asked this question, one of the most frequent replies is: somewhere to make work that's away from the demands of daily life, family commitments, administration and whatever else gets in the way. For makers: somewhere where materials can be assembled then left undisturbed, not put away and taken out endlessly, and big enough to create the necessary structures (set, props, large-scale puppets and animations); for actors, dancers and other movement practitioners, an empty space that's clean and warm and available for a big long stretch of time, rather than rented by the hour.

Space and time, then, is what it boils down to. Enter the creation centre! It's not a new idea: there have been creation centres of sorts in the UK for many years, usually artist-led ventures like Lanternhouse (set up by Welfare State International, as our Canny Granny documents in her column Home Truths, which this issue takes a not-too-reverent look at the subject of creation centres). And many other companies have created spaces for themselves to work in, often opening up those spaces to other artists and projects.

The Canny Granny also mentions Atelier 231 in France, a centre I had the pleasure of working in last month (January 2010). There are a whole bunch of French creation centres dotted around the country and varying enormously in size/style/ethos, with the common factor that they were set up to provide space (and time, as artists are invited to come and work in residence) for artists making street arts, site-specific theatre, and other forms of work for which it is difficult to find spaces to create as they, for the most part, operate outside of the regular theatre 'built venue' network and often involve large and/or cumbersome bits of kit.

There has been talk for years – decades, even – about UK initiatives for street arts and creation centres, and the big news at the moment is that what is being billed as 'Britain's first French style creation centre' – Slip 6 in Kent, still in a process of development... watch this space as it is a subject we will be returning to throughout 2011.

Meanwhile, there is also a drive from venues to investigate the 'creation centre' idea – with Lanternhouse's clean, new, purpose-built building being more the aim than the big old grimy warehouse model. In this issue, Miriam King (who was herself a supported artist of the venue) documents the development of Hampshire venue The Point's new creation centre and supported artists scheme.

Total Theatre Magazine is of course always interested in how artists go about making their work, and in this issue you will find an artist's diary by Rajni Shah, Glory Days, on the creation of her new show *Glorious*, which will premiere at the Barbican as part of SPILL, April 2011. In another of our features, To Infinity and Beyond, Theatre Ad Infinitum's co-artistic directors interview each other.

Our new regular feature, The Works, has Tim Crouch as its subject; Being There gives us a threeway look at S.P.I.D. Theatre's *Childsplay*; and our Voices candidate is theatre-maker and director of SPILL, Robert Pacitti.

The Reviews section includes the new 1927 show at BAC, a multi-voiced reflection on family-friendly theatre, and two special reports on the London International Mime Festival 2011.

Plenty to put a spring in your step, then!

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Spring 2011 News & Previews:
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Front cover image: Zimmermann & de Perrot / Groupe Acrobatique de Tangier, Chouf Ouchouf at Norfolk and Norwich Festival May 2011.
Photo: Mario Del Curto



Glory Days

An artist's diary
from Rajni Shah

*Here's to all the People Here:
Rajni Shah and Glorious*

*I don't like what I see.
I want to change the world.*

Writing about *Glorious* right now is a bit like writing about a lover – a new and exciting one, but one I've hunted for years. An affair I am afraid of, thrilled by, and one which keeps me up at night. That's my disclaimer. Forgive me if I speak too passionately.

You're wond'ring how it starts...

2006

I'm walking across the Waterloo Bridge with producer Julia Carruthers, talking about this and that – and I tell her that one day I'd like to make a musical. She laughs. My work is usually very experimental in form and well known within the live art sector. I know, I say, it's surprising, isn't it? Most people wouldn't expect it. But I've always loved musicals. Someday...

January 2009

Having spent a year declaring that I was going to make a show called *Glorious: a musical extravaganza*, I find an advert through the New Work Network e-digest:

A Month of Sundays – Musical Theatre Writing short courses

I apply for the course (run by Chris Grady) and am accepted. It's very practical and everyone is surprisingly welcoming. I enjoy the feeling of being a beginner. Each week we pair up and write a song or outline based on a theme. I clearly still have a lot to learn. The best thing I come up with during the month is a rhyming lyric about a woman who gets turned into a bear: *Now I'm feeling rather hirsute, I'm a woman in a bear suit.*



July 2009

Several days with the *Glorious* creative team in the Live Art Development Agency's Study Room. We watch a lot of DVDs, read a lot of books, and talk about things we feel are specific to a stage musical: repetition and revisiting, colour schemes and emotions, ritual and self-reference. Sheila (Ghelani) watches *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* for the first time. We talk about what it means to walk into an unknown future, and how much the significance of 'future' has changed for us over the years. We talk about the audience being allowed to feel emotion, and about them being invited at some point to enter into the world of the musical. We don't want to be afraid of the beautiful. And we don't want our audience to be afraid of us.

I want to make a show that reminds us that the people around us are amazing – a show that really takes place in a location, and that embraces the idea that if we come together and listen to each other, anything's possible – that the future's in our hands. It feels like we're shrinking away from ambition and hope, and that only the past can be seen as glorious. I want to apply that word to the future – can we imagine a glorious future, in such uncertain times?

September 2009

Sheila, Lucille (Acevedo-Jones) and I lead a public intervention in Lancaster's St Nicholas Arcades shopping centre. For two days, we invite people to have a cup of tea in an empty shop and write a letter to a stranger. We discover that people have a lot to say – some stay for almost an hour, writing about whatever it is that feels important. They seal the letter in an envelope, and then exchange it for another unopened envelope – a letter that someone else has written and left. We will never know what is in these letters, but it is profoundly affecting just to see the exchanges between people who are young, old, lonely, comfortable, sad, delighted, and unsure. One older woman tells us that she has written about something she carried within her for years, a family secret that she desperately needed to share. Her letter is taken by a schoolgirl.

This is the third time we've made an intervention in Lancaster; it feels familiar and new at the same time. This time we go on to lead a workshop for some of the people we've met writing letters. They astound us with the performances they create.

February 2010

I'm lucky enough to be the recipient of the Wooda Arts Award: six weeks with my own studio in Cornwall. Lucy (Cash) and Lucille visit. We watch Buster Keaton, Jacques Tati, Sally Potter. I read Bruce

Chatwin, Catherine Wood, Tim Etchells, Matthew Goulish, David Byrne, C Carr. I write a very short song. Slowly, the different strands of the piece start to emerge. We want to make something intelligent and beautiful and unusual. But we also want to make something that is anchored around local stories and that can be owned by all the people who take part in it.

All this time standing at the coast here, I am remembering that once we could step across to North America... and whilst our voices are here now in this room, they are drawn in every direction through our land and complex ancestry; they span or spin us across glacial and inter-glacial times, beyond the human (and male) scale of politics, across the edges of languages. We are not so far away.

We decide that we want people from each place where we perform to play a central role in *Glorious* – people telling their stories, people playing the music. People who might not have performed like this before. People we have not yet met.

9 July 2010

I've been tentatively working with composers Ben and Max Ringham since September 2009. Now I have to write some lyrics before we can go any further. This deadline has been looming on the horizon for quite a while. They have been very patient. I am completely stuck. And I am becoming concerned that perhaps, after all, I can't write the lyrics for a musical.

I stare at the page, then at the computer. And then I decide to treat myself like a workshop participant. Write a letter, I say to myself, write a letter to someone you care about.

And just like that, on the 9th of July 2010, the first song emerges: the words I wish I could say to someone who is at once dear to me and far away.

'Dear Lucille...'

This is how it starts.

Since last July, we've been making songs and building costumes and running workshops and writing letters; we've given out flowers and performances and cakes and champagne and tea. We've met 931 people in London, Newcastle, Nottingham and Bristol.

We've built a show in three acts with two short intervals. Each act will



contain the same stories and songs told in a different setting – laying bare the idea that the past returns, and that the future is at once familiar and filled with the possibility of something new.

And it is now that we begin to meet our performers: the people who live in each place where we will perform the show. In Nottingham, Suzie (Shrubb) has started rehearsing with a drummer, a guitarist and a percussionist. In London, she’s working with two whole classes of students from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. The scores that are emerging for the first two shows already sound radically different from each other.

Meanwhile, Karen (Christopher), Lucille and I have set up a small market stall on Whitecross Street in the City of London, near the Barbican (where the show will premiere as part of SPILL), and are taking up residence in a charity shop in The Meadows in Nottingham. We’re offering gifts and conversation, and in return we’re meeting market stallholders and shoppers and local residents. Now we just have to see where our conversations lead us, and find out who would like to perform with us in the show.

These people’s words and music will anchor *Glorious*. It is their presence in each act that will give it shape and relevance. It is terrifying to have built a show without knowing who the performers will be. But *Glorious* has always been about journeying into the unknown, about letting go of what you thought it would be, and opening up to something new.

And then the lights go down, and then the songs begin, and then the curtains open...



Glorious has been commissioned by SPILL Festival at the Barbican, London and co-commissioned by Live at LICA (Nuffield Theatre Lancaster), Wunderbar festival and InBetween Time Productions.

Creative team: Lucille Acevedo-Jones; Lucy Cash; Karen Christopher; Sheila Ghelani; Mary Paterson; Ben and Max Ringham; Rajni Shah; Suzie Shrubb; Helena Suarez; Steve Wald; Chahine Yavroyan.

Funded by Arts Council England, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, PRS for Music Foundation, Royal Victoria Hall Foundation, and many generous individuals.

Glorious premieres at the SPILL Festival, Barbican, London, 19–21 April. See www.spillfestival.com Book tickets at www.barbican.org.uk

Glorious will then be touring in the UK and Europe till October 2012. Starting at the Wunderbar Festival, Newcastle: 28 October – 6 November 2011, and ending at Live at LICA (formerly Nuffield Theatre) October 2012.

For more on the project see www.rajnishah.com/glorious

Page 6: image by Rajni Shah
Page 7: photo by Theron Schmidt, with visuals by Lucy Cash
Page 9: All images are of Rajni Shah’s *Glorious*, photos by Lucy Cash

Home Truths

Welfare State International's final outdoor performance in Uwerston, Cumbria



The Canny Granny Goes Wild in the Country

Ah that fresh country air! Sometimes it feels so creative to be in the wilds, I wonder what I'm doing in the deranged metropolis. Strap on the walking boots I say...

... and head for an Arvon Centre to finish that script. They have the 'retreat' idea down to a tea-and-toast-round-a-farmhouse-table. And I love a workshop you can do in slippers. Tim Crouch and a smith ran my course, and a friend went to one with the Clod Ensemble. Arvon have four of these rural retreats for writers and artists, including one in the delightfully named Sheepwash in Devon.

I grew up in Devon and remember how locals used to laugh at Dartington College – one of the few isolated rural universities run by arts practitioners. Taxpayers' money, they said, was being used to encourage students to make tissue-paper installations in the rain! We're not laughing now that that radical arts experiment has relocated to Falmouth (though I'm sure its new facilities are very nice).

Set up by Welfare State International, the UK's first fully-fledged purpose-built creation centre Lanternhouse pioneered tissue paper artistry. Once, when asked by Total Theatre Magazine's editor (my dear old friend Dorothy) if she ever gets sick of making withy-and-tissue-paper lanterns, Welfare State's co-founder Sue Gill confided that she had a recurring nightmare of being in a nursing home and someone coming in to say 'it's all right dear, some nice young artists are coming in to do paper lantern-making later!' Personally, I wish someone would base a care home on theatre-making – I fancy spending my last days making just-about-still-a-live art.

Forkbeard's Waterslade Studios in Somerset (less a 'studio' than an enclave of cavernous barns full of materials, from latex and fibreglass to bits of piano wire) is where to go in summer to muck about with multimedia. Very nice by

daylight but you wouldn't want to get locked in overnight, what with the quivering rubber Chihuahua and the boxes full of chattering false teeth. A bit like sharing a bedroom with me!

France is great at the whole creation centre thing. Atelier 231 just outside Rouen is an old train shed with artists living in gypsy caravans whilst they are 'in residence'. Oh my roaming heart! You just don't get that stuff in Peckham. (But you do have the CLF art cafe in the Bussey Building warehouse, and a pop-up Campari bar and sculpture garden on top of the multi-storey car park each summer, so the caravans we'll live without.)

Isolation allows the theatre to become a prototype society – Le Théâtre du Soleil, in an old munitions factory on the edge of the Vincennes forest, set up a collective in which everyone is nominally equal. Only it's Ariane Mnouchkine's name one hears most often. And all those Polish people – Song of the Goat, Gardzienice – also make all their actors live, work, sweat and breathe together for months on end, doing crack-of-dawn runs in the woods. Rather than me, I don't care how many singing goats they manage to make.

Nothing is more terrifyingly autocratic than the rural myth of Anton from Derevo making his troupe rehearse naked in the snow. It must have looked a little like a near-death experience: lots of white figures jerking silently against a white background. I hope when my number's up it's beautiful Derevo I'm watching in my mind's eye, anyway.

That's all a bit fierce. I think I'm an urban granny on balance. What about you? Would you be knock-knock-knocking on Devon's door or hot in the city, hot in the city tonight?

Laura Eades is the Canny Granny. In another life Laura is director of The Honourable Society for Faster Craftswomen, whose multimedia theatre show Patchwork, which was boosted by a stint at an Arvon centre, is at Camden People's Theatre's Sprint festival March 21–22 2010.

Atelier 231 Sotteville-lès-Rouen, France just hosted a festival called Fish and Chips, which showcased British companies, where real fish and chips and mushy peas were served: www.atelier231.fr

Dartington College has moved to new facilities as part of University College Falmouth: www.falmouth.ac.uk

Lanternhouse hosts residencies and workshops in Cumbria: www.lanternhouse.org

Théâtre du Soleil is worth a visit if you are in Paris: www.theatre-du-soleil.fr

Song of the Goat recently toured the UK with Macbeth: www.piesnkozla.pl

Sharpen your Polish for a visit to Gardzienice's website: www.gardzienice.art.pl

Meanwhile over in Brazil is the Centro Popular de Conspiração Gargarullo, where Zecora Ura developed their LIFT show Hotel Medea, currently hosting the DRIFT residency: www.gargarullo.com/br

You don't have to go to the country to find things blooming in old buildings, there's plenty in the urban sprawl of London too:

The Old Police Station in New Cross is a DIY arts centre: www.theoldpolicestation.org

Utophia in Deptford: www.utrophia.net

Stoke Newington International Airport are still going strong: www.stkinternational.co.uk

The CLF Art Cafe is based in the Bussey building in Peckham: www.clfartcafe.org

Brick Box are populating Brixton market, and now Tooting market too, with remote control Yukka plants and guerilla orchestras: www.thebrickbox.co.uk

Home Truths | Laura Eades

THE WORKS

A personal view of the works of Tim Crouch by Dorothy Max Prior

‘Look at you. Sitting there with your bellies full of pop and pickled herring. Laughing at me. Go on. Laugh at the funny man. Laugh. Make the funny man cry.’ Tim Crouch, from *I, Malvolio*





On stage is a man dressed as a cockerel – a cock that has just lost a fight by the look of him. His filthy longjohns have a tear at the rear, he's covered in flies, and his wobbling wattles are a bit lopsided. His chest is puffed out, but his pride has been pricked. 'I am not mad...' he mutters repeatedly. He cuts a pathetic figure – pathetically funny, that is. This he knows, and with bitter sarcasm he exhorts us to laugh at him – our laughter confirming his view of us as boorish louts.

This is Tim Crouch as Malvolio in the latest of a series of productions that reinterpret Shakespearean plays from one character's perspective. In previous shows he's tackled Caliban from *The Tempest*, Peaseblossom from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Banquo from *Macbeth*. In this case it's the priggish steward in *Twelfth Night* for whom pride certainly comes before a fall.

We're in the Pavilion Theatre, Brighton, bang in the middle of the festival (May 2010) and I've crept in, late, at the back of the auditorium to see *I, Malvolio* for the second time that day. Why twice? Well, it is always a pleasure and an honour to see a show more than once, but I'm particularly keen to get back for seconds in this case as there are two versions of this show: the 'aimed at young people' version and the 'adults only' version.

Interestingly, I perceive very little difference in the 'performance text' from one show to the next: most of the spoken text is the same; most of the physical action is the same. There is a costume – ahem – alteration for the adult version (we are treated to Mr Crouch's bare buttocks, waved in the faces of the front row, whereas the kids get to enjoy a fetching pair of leopardskin boxers when he bends over at the key moment), but everything else is more-or-less the same.

Well, the same but different – and what makes the difference is the audience. The late-night adult-only crowd is a far more raucous beast, and the atmosphere grows bawdier by the minute. The show evokes the Grimaldi pantomime-clown tradition – which in turn owes a great deal to Commedia Dell Arte, an obvious 'feed' into Shakespeare's comedy scenes – and one of the delights of panto is that the double entendres go over the head (so to speak) of anyone not really old enough to understand.





So much is dependent on the audience – for the actor's relationship with the audience is always at the heart of Tim Crouch's work

And it feels completely in keeping with Tim Crouch's work that so much is dependent on the audience – for the actor's relationship with the audience is always at the heart of his work, although this manifests in very many different ways according to the work in question.

In 2003, jobbing actor Tim Crouch started to make his own work in response to his frustrations about contemporary theatre, 'its adherence to notions of psychological and figurative realism and its apparent neglect of the audience in its processes'.

His first play (and he likes the word 'play', feeling that those of us making contemporary theatre need to reclaim it from the traditionalists) was *My Arm* – the story of a boy who puts his arm in the air and keeps it there for thirty years. It was an instant success at the Traverse for the Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2003; has subsequently toured the world; and is still performed regularly. It set the stage for a style of work that Tim Crouch has made his own: playing with the borders between illusion and reality; eschewing the sort of elaborate sets, costumes or other devices that distract from the power of the actor's storytelling skills; and inviting the audience in to complete the work. Comparisons are often not useful, but it can help to put an artist into context by citing precedents, and I'd count Ken Campbell, Spalding Gray, and Peggy Shaw in that category – actor-writers whose personal physical presence on stage is as key a part of the 'text' as the pre-scripted words or pre-choreographed actions.

My Arm throws up some interesting thoughts on the power of the storyteller – and the age-old question posed by the presence of the storyteller/narrator: whose story is this anyway? It starts with Tim Crouch welcoming everyone into the space. A tray is sent round and we are invited to lend our personal possessions – keys, jewellery, photos – for the duration of the show. These objects then get used as 'actors' in a live feed video accompaniment to the story (reminding us constantly that in theatre things, or people, represent other things, or people). An old super-8 home movie runs, and Tim starts to chat to us – 'this is me, this is my Dad' – casually at first, slipping effortlessly into 'performance mode', sharing stories about his early childhood, musing on his relationship with his brother, and telling how he used to test himself regularly – for example, by holding his breathe for a dangerously long time. One day, he says, he put his arm in the air – and didn't take it down again.

Now, we can see, as he says this, that he hasn't got his arm in the air, and that both arms are strong and unwithered – but by this point we've been so cleverly lulled into the 'true life story' we've been enjoying that, with a kind of doublethink two-beliefs-held-simultaneously mindset, we accept completely that this is so. It's a wonderful coup de theatre – a

seamless journey into the storyteller's world where we are seduced into fiction by the authenticity of the storyteller. Pure magic!

Tim Crouch's second play, *An Oak Tree* (2005) instigated a rather different game with the audience. A harrowing story of grief and guilt is told by two actors, Tim himself plus someone who has never seen or read the play before they walk on stage. The second actor (who can be either sex, any age) plays a 46-year-old father of a dead girl volunteering for a hypnotism act hosted by the man who was driving the car that killed her (the hypnotist is played by Tim Crouch). He or she is guided through the play by Tim's spoken instructions; sometimes given openly, and sometimes whispered furtively. We are again – albeit in a very different way to *My Arm* – invited to suspend disbelief and accept the storyteller's story, and to accept the representations we are presented with.

It's a dangerous game to play as so much depends on the second actor – not in their acting ability in the traditional sense ('no acting required' is most definitely the order of the day), but in their performance abilities in a truer, purer sense... their stage presence. Just 'being there' is enough – in a kind of secular transubstantiation the 'second actor' becomes the bereaved father whilst still remaining 'themselves'.

An Oak Tree is co-directed by Karl James and Andy Smith (a performance artist usually known as 'a smith'), this three-way creative relationship continuing through to this day.

The trio's next collaboration, *ENGLAND*, premiered at the Fruitmarket Gallery in Edinburgh 2007 (winning a Total Theatre Award, amongst other accolades), this time with the addition of actor Hannah Ringham, co-founder and member of the Shunt collective (who was allowed to learn her lines beforehand!)

The notion of the unreliable narrator is toyed with, the writer/narrator/actor dynamic is tested, and we are invited to ask 'whose story is this?'

ENGLAND is a story of art and culture, of cultural appropriation, and of 'otherness', played out through a story of international art dealing and health tourism. It is a play in two acts. The first act, Dabbing, has a fluid structure: free movement through the space for the two actors and the audience; an ambient soundtrack that pulses then swells and drops; spoken text that has the rhythm and flow of poetry. Act 2, Wringing, shifts gear dramatically to a terrifyingly intense confrontation between the two performers and the now-seated audience. As in other work, the notion of the unreliable narrator is toyed with, the writer/narrator/actor dynamic is tested, and we are invited to ask 'whose story is this?'

Tim Crouch's next play, *The Author* (2009), takes the game with the audience into yet different territory. *The Author* is a play set in the auditorium of a theatre: the Jerwood Theatre, upstairs at the Royal Court, specifically. The staging is all auditorium and no stage: two



banks of seats face each other, with nothing inbetween. Everything that happens, happens here. The structure and rhythm of the piece is exquisite – the performers emerge from the audience with carefully orchestrated precision, shifting into performance mode with clarity. We reach a point in this first section when we are tempted to think ‘is this all there is?’ or perhaps ‘is something else required of me?’ but that feeling is magnificently pre-empted by the script, with a staged walk-out and a strong shift of tone, with the first monologue from ‘the author’, Tim Crouch (playing a character called Tim Crouch, just to shake up the reality/illusion dynamic a little more). At the heart of the play is the question: who are the rapists, the child abusers, the blokes who smash people’s faces in on a Saturday night? As the play progresses, it is starkly illuminated that there are no ‘evil monsters’ marked out with horns or crosses on their forehead: there’s only you and me, the person we are sitting next to. Like the earlier works by Tim Crouch and his co-directing team, the play investigates the way ‘reality’ is mediated in our world, and the nature and responsibilities of ‘theatre’.

For Tim Crouch is someone who cares absolutely, honestly, and completely about theatre – this care and concern manifesting in his dedication to education and to theatre for young people, which later this year will include editing and directing *The Taming of the Shrew* for the RSC’s Young People’s Shakespeare production.

The Shakespeare-inspired ‘I...’ series, commissioned by Brighton Festival, tours regularly to schools – although, bizarrely, *I, Peaseblossom* got banned from all Roman Catholic schools in Brighton for Tim’s depiction of a flirtatious fairy, prompting the magnificent local paper headline, ‘School Bans Shakespeare’.

Which brings us back to the Pavilion Theatre and *I Malvolio*...

As we are talking about potential controversy, we will have to mention the ‘assisted suicide’ scene, in which the wretched Malvolio, determined to end it all, coerces members of the audience to help him hang himself. What happens next changes every time the play is performed... As is so often the case with the works of Tim Crouch, the audience is a vital part of the theatre equation.

Which is just how things should be, I’d say. So settle down now with your pop and pickled herring, and enjoy the show.



For more on the works of Tim Crouch see www.newsfromnowhere.net

I, Malvolio will be touring extensively in 2011: to Latitude, Edinburgh, Moscow, Stratford-upon-Avon, and Bath, amongst other places.

The Author recently toured to Los Angeles, and *ENGLAND* goes to LA in November 2011.

My Arm is playing at the Northern Ballet Theatre at Leeds Met on 11 April 2011.

My Arm and *An Oak Tree* are playing at Bios in Athens 30 March – 2 April 2011.

Some of the material in this article previously appeared in reviews on the Total Theatre website: www.totaltheatre.org.uk/reviews

P10/11: News From Nowhere / Tim Crouch: *I, Malvolio*. Photo Matthew Andrews

P11: News From Nowhere / Tim Crouch: *An Oak Tree*. Photo Nina Urban

P12: News From Nowhere / Tim Crouch: *The Author*. Photo Stephen Cumiskey

P13 right: News From Nowhere / Tim Crouch: *ENGLAND*. Photo Greg Piggot

P13 left: News From Nowhere / Tim Crouch: *My Arm*. Photo Julia Collins



What's The Point?

Miriam King celebrates the enterprising spirit of a venue that gives creation time and space willingly

Tucked away in Hampshire, Eastleigh is a small and unassuming town a few miles north of Southampton. Eastleigh (once popular with trainspotters because of its locomotive-building heritage) doesn't have a great many landmarks, but beyond the bandstand in the municipal park is The Point: a contemporary arts venue, owned and run by Eastleigh Borough Council, offering a warm welcome to artists and audiences alike. Shows programmed include top of the range world-class dance and theatre from companies such as Poland's renowned Song of the Goat Theatre, but the venue is also a regular home for the local youth theatre, and offers a progressive Creative Learning Programme. Here there are classes, workshops and creative projects for people of all ages.

And then there is the Creation Space. A space – yes – for artists to create! There has been much talk over the years of creation centres in the UK, but whilst others have talked, The Point have been quietly getting on with it – with exceptional results.

Even before the arrival of the Creation Centre, The Point's nurturing and development of artists and artist-led projects was well established – something I can testify to personally. Three years ago (in 2007-2008)

I had an artist's residency at The Point, resulting in the creation of an installation/performance piece called *The Reading Room*. This was the last project to take place in what had been Eastleigh Borough Council's old library building, before an extraordinary and exciting renovation took place, resulting in the development of the new Creation Space. In the lobby area of this new space there remains a testament to my time spent there as artist in residence: one library book, returned to the very place where it had been taken out over fifty years previously, *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, the page set open to read:

*'All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts...'*

This book, sited in its own alcove, is a reminder of the building's former self and a pointer to what the space now is.

Gregory Nash, then artistic director of The Point, was there at the beginning to get everything into gear. The Creation Space was born

Melanie Wilson Simple Girl



in the late autumn of 2009 and is now in the capable hands of new director Sarah Brigham. This fully residential purpose-built creation centre, set within a regional venue, is one of the first of its kind in the UK: a state-of-the-art light-filled rehearsal studio with accommodation attached, allowing established artists 24-hour access to the rehearsal room whilst in residence. Four bedrooms house up to ten artists, with the ground-floor bedroom being fully accessible for disabled artists. What luxury... what necessity! To have a purpose-built space where artists can work and live uninterrupted, with the benefit of being able to create, day or night...

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Artists and companies (at all levels of experience) that have benefited to date include Lone Twin, who worked on the third part of their Catastrophe Trilogy, *The Festival*; The Balletboyz who worked on *The Talent*; Hiccup Theatre, who made *The Owl and the Pussy Cat*; Los Banditos; and Udfydance.

Another supported company is The River People, who (being Hampshire based) have a longstanding and ongoing relationship with The Point, as do another Hampshire company, street arts ensemble Wet Picnic. At the time of writing (January 2011), the critically acclaimed Gecko (whose previous works have included Total Theatre Award winning show *The Race, The Arab And The Jew*, and *The Overcoat*) is in residence for three weeks, creating *Missing*. Later this year, the piece will tour nationally.

The Point also focuses on emerging artists, helping them to reach the next step through structured support. Mid-career artists are offered the time and space to develop and flourish. About the process of joining the associate artists scheme Sarah Brigham says, 'Our associate artists scheme is an open call out. Companies are asked to provide examples of their work at a pitch session. We then select the artists who we believe will benefit most from being on the scheme. They then join us for a year-long residency, during which time they receive mentorship, networking opportunities, business advice, marketing and press assistance, and unparalleled access to performance platforms and creation spaces.'

Of course it's a much desired opportunity for the newly emerging artist, yet so vital too for the older 'been around the block many times' artist, no longer 'emerging', yet in need of the opposite: 'retreating' – digging themselves in for a period of reflection and reappraisal. For this purpose, established artists have the opportunity to contemplate, work and create.

An example of a long-established company taking the time to rethink and rework at The Point was Lea Anderson's all-male company The Featherstonehaughs (companion company to her all-female ensemble The Cholmondeleys), who developed new work *Edits* there in September 2010.

'Song of the Goat in residence at the theatre allowed us to really crack open their process for our audiences and artists.'
Sarah Brigham

But arguably the 'jewel in the crown' for the Creation Space to-date has been the relationship with acclaimed Polish company Song of the Goat. In autumn 2010, The Point hosted and produced Song Of The Goat Theatre's *Macbeth* tour, which toured nationally and was a highlight of the Barbican's BITE programme. Of this Sarah Brigham says, 'Song of the Goat in residence at the theatre allowed us to really crack open their process for our audiences and artists. We worked with them on four levels: morning-long taster workshops with University of Winchester students exploring their process; full-day workshops with regional artists exploring process; a week-long residential course with artists from across the UK exploring process in performance; and an in-depth lecture/ demonstration open to all. Audiences and artists had the opportunity to explore the process leading to the performance, debate and critique it with the company, and ultimately comment directly back to the company.'

The trainspotters might be less frequently seen there nowadays, but Eastleigh is now, due to The Point, a fast track to another kind of locomotion.... a vibrant new home for artists and supporters of experimental theatre and dance creation, welcoming and inspiring local audiences alongside anyone from further afield who might wish to venture there – it's just over an hour by train from London Waterloo!

See www.thepointeastleigh.co.uk
Any emerging or established artist or company wishing to use the Creation Space should contact director Sarah Brigham to discuss:
E: thepoint@eastleigh.gov.uk
T: 023 8065 2333

P14: The Featherstonehaughs *Edits*. Photo Matilda Temperley
P15, top to bottom: Song of the Goat *Macbeth*; Balletboyz *The Talent*; Hiccup Theatre



ad infinitum, adv.

limitless; without end; to infinity

To Infinity and Beyond

Taking a break in a Montreal coffee shop, George Mann and Nir Paldi of Theatre Ad Infinitum spill the beans on their work together

Nir is sitting in front of me ringing out coffee from the sleeve of his jumper, having just accidentally dunked it in his *café alongé*; Madonna is singing 'Papa Don't Preach'; the baristas speak flamboyant Québécoise French while dancing; and ice crystals fall outside the frozen window: our *Odyssey* has brought us to the gay village in Montreal, Canada.

We have decided to interview each other about our company, Theatre Ad Infinitum.

Nir: I'll start.

George: OK.

Nir: Tell me about the way we work.

George: The *way* we work? Do we have a *way*? It depends on what we're doing; it's different for each project, no? When we made *Odyssey* we had to find a way to tell that story, when we made *The Big Smoke* we had to find another way, the same for *Behind the Mirror* – each story makes its own demands, challenges us differently, invites us to find a new piece of theatre. I don't think we have a *way*, we have stories to tell through theatre, and we never know how we'll get from A – an empty space – to B, a piece of theatre that tells the story we want to tell. There's chaos to each process. Which is exciting, I think, and more interesting than a *way*, perhaps. Does that make sense?

Nir: You didn't really answer the question.

George: Didn't I? You answer it then.

Nir: '*Like a virgin... touched for the very first...*'

George: Nir?

‘We go into a space and begin experimenting with styles that would best tell the chosen story. This is chaotic: you take risks, improvise, go on a journey, and hopefully discover what you need in order to create your piece.’ – Nir Paldi

Nir: Sorry. So... For me, our *way* is like this: first we decide on the theme or themes we want to explore – we might be inspired, or whatever – then second we think of the story, one that best touches upon those themes, and third we go into a space and begin experimenting with styles that would best tell the chosen story. This is chaotic; you take risks, improvise, go on a journey, and hopefully discover what you need in order to create your piece.

George: Ah, yes, there is a way... and I would add that the third part of our *way* (to begin experimenting with styles) is also about finding a style that will best touch upon the themes you’re exploring too, as well as to tell the story.

Nir: Really? How do you mean?

George: Well, with *Odyssey*, we decided upon one man playing the whole story, and married a filmic and iconic gestural language with traditional storytelling and text – which for us represented a bringing together of ancient and modern worlds: this style best told our story and at the same time touched upon the themes we wanted to explore with Homer’s *Odyssey*.

Nir: And with *The Big Smoke* the protagonist sings the whole narrative *a cappella*, and this opens a door to a means of expressing the poetry in the piece, alluding to the poets that inspired it (Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton and Virginia Woolf).

George: Yes – and, traditionally, emotive subject matter in performance often employs music and song, from professional lamenters and Ancient Greek Chorus to musicals, operas and film.

Nir: And after having gone through the chaos of experimentation and finding the right style, you start a process of making choices – well, choosing the style is one of the first choices you make...

‘It’s really a process of elimination through continually experimenting, slowly homing in, getting closer and closer to what you want to produce, say and tell – and for me I can’t always say exactly what I want, but I tend to know it when I see it.’ – George Mann

George: It’s really a process of elimination through continually experimenting, slowly homing in, getting closer and closer to what you want to produce, say and tell – and for me I can’t always say exactly what I want, but I tend to know it when I see it.

Nir: Can we talk about the difference between creating a piece that is narrative based and uses a lot of text – like *The Big Smoke* and *Odyssey*, and a piece that is non-verbal, like *Behind the Mirror* or the new show, *Translunar Paradise*...



George: Er...?

Nir: I think that our non-verbal pieces require a simple narrative and a more elaborate style, whereas our verbal-textual pieces require a simple theatrical style and a more complex narrative – what do you think?

George: Hmm... I don’t think I would put it this way – I mean, I wouldn’t describe our non-verbal pieces as having a ‘simple’ narrative because – well, it’s not that simple! The construction of non-verbal work is actually very complex and hard to make clear, precisely because you can’t use words; by saying ‘simple’ it kind of undermines this theatrical genre.

Nir: Well for me ‘simple’ is not a swear word, but actually something that is very hard to achieve. I do think that *Behind the Mirror* has a simpler narrative than *Odyssey* or *The Big Smoke*.

George: Yes, in a sense the narrative for *Behind the Mirror* could be described as much simpler – now that simple is not a swear word – than *The Big Smoke*; but the way you can use words to explore storytelling, and the way you can use the body without words requires two very different theatrical forms. Perhaps this is where style and story meet: the power and comedy of *Behind the Mirror*’s story and analogy, a man whose evil reflection tries to stop him from proposing to his fiancée, came through because of the style we had found with which to tell it.

Nir: And actually adding words would have taken away from the piece and made it less interesting.

George: Right. And no matter where you are from and what your cultural background is, we all understand the language of the body. When you take away the words you are forcing yourself to find another way of telling a story. Not only in form but also in content. It tends to push you towards the archetypal and universal stories that touch directly at the heart of the themes you want to address.

Nir: Right...

George: Yet words – especially in *The Big Smoke*, were a fundamental tool that allowed us to explore a poetic form inspired by Plath and Woolf. I suppose for us, words are a stylistic choice, like masks, puppetry, or choosing mime, or singing a whole piece *a cappella* – not necessarily the essence of theatre as such.

Nir: So maybe we should talk about *writing* too?

George: Writing?



Nir: Well, how we write physically as well as with text...

George: OK. Well... whereas text can feasibly be written before one enters a theatre space, telling a story through actions demands that you practically and physically write your story through rehearsal – being in the space. Writing – as in, with a biro – does happen, but for structural purposes. We write down a story idea and structure – scenes, for example – and then go into a space and try them out. I say *try* because you never really know if your idea or scene will work until you try, and in trying, and doing, you find the necessary solutions to any problems that will inevitably arise. So – we make theatre with words, and theatre without... How would you define the kind of theatre we make?

Nir: It's difficult... we've defined ourselves as physical theatre makers until recently, but actually I like this definition less and less.

George: There's a problem with the term 'physical theatre' now, as it has come to represent numerous unrelated genres – avant garde theatre, movement or dance-based theatre. We are none of those things – and in some cases people use the term in a derogatory sense. We make theatre based in storytelling, and we start with the body. And by that I mean we don't separate the voice and text from the body on stage, we think of them as one entity and create from this perspective, because any vocalisation is physical – everything you do on stage is, by nature, physical. So in a way, the term 'physical theatre' is like stating the obvious.

Nir: And on top of this, there is a danger with the term 'physical theatre' because it gives the impression that artists creating under this label are making something 'other', and separate from 'theatre' per se.

George: And actually we see theatre as a word that encompasses a whole variety of possibilities, styles, genres and stories told in an infinite number of ways. It's exciting, and in a way, limitless.

Nir: So in a sense there isn't a definition for the kind of theatre we make.

George: I would say it's in the name – Theatre Ad Infinitum. 'Ad infinitum' as in 'limitless'. Infinite possibility. We're always striving to find something new. It's a kind of anti-definition....

Nir: So by trying to define what we do we impose limitations, and we don't want to do that. Maybe we should talk about where we're going, creatively, artistically?

George: You're right. Well, we're still walking the line between text and wordless theatre aren't we? First, I'm creating *Translunar Paradise*, a piece using full-face mask, and a photographic *language du geste* style. It's inspired by a poem of WB Yeats called 'The Tower': 'that being dead, we rise, dream and so create Translunar Paradise...'. The character writing the poem, an old man who mourns youth and lost love, inspired the idea of the story of a very old couple: the old woman dies of cancer, and the old man can't move on – he makes tea for two, and lives as if she were still alive. So she comes to him as a phantom and tries to find ways of helping him move on, as they both recall their lives together – from first kiss to the moment she passed away. I'm really enjoying the process, but it's really difficult because I'm directing, and I'm in it, and behind a bloody mask so I can't see what's going on...

Nir: Shall I come in and help as an outside eye? I think it would be very helpful.



George: Me too. We'll sort a time out...

Nir: OK.

George: And then secondly we're creating *Family*, which you'll perform and I'll direct.

Nir: Yes. It's based on my life growing up in Israel, and how I experienced the conflict between my country and Palestine. It begins with my return to Israel after five years. I face an ongoing conflict, a complicated history and an identity crisis that I share with an entire nation. Confronted by my own memories, those of my family, and those of the Jewish people, I have to tackle the complex love-hate relationship I have with my country and attempt to start a dialogue... We want it to be a journey down a rather turbulent, stirring, yet comic, stream of consciousness.

George: It's a challenge dealing with such explosive subject matter, and it seems to demand a very simple approach to the storytelling, because both the themes and stories you tell are enough... But it's weird directing you.

Nir: Why? What do you mean?

George: I mean, it's like a role reversal, you know, after *Odyssey* when you directed me... now I'm directing you – it's interesting.

Nir: Yes, but that's another story, and we should probably round this up, no?

George: Yes, you're right.

Nir: So how shall we end it then, the article?

George: The way we started. In a gay café in Montreal. Madonna singing in the background.

Nir: *Life is a mystery? Everyone must stand-alone?*

George: I feel sick.

Nir: (To the barista) Excusez moi? Avez-vous un sac plastique, s'il vous plait?



Theatre Ad Infinitum is a Lecoq-trained international ensemble based in London that develops new and original theatre for a multicultural audience. The work of Jacques Lecoq defines the fundamental principles behind the theatre they make: company members all share a passion for innovative theatre-making – with and without words – and create using improvisation and the universal language of the body.

Theatre Ad Infinitum UK is lead by two artistic directors, Nir Paldi (Israel) and George Mann (UK). Theatre Ad Infinitum have also recently created a base in Canada led by artistic director Amy Nostbakken (Canada) who is working together and independently with the UK team.

Education and continuing professional training are a core element of the company's work. They have an ongoing educational programme for schools and universities, and run weekend masterclasses for professional practitioners, inspired by the pedagogy of Jacques Lecoq.

Past Productions: *The Big Smoke* (2010), highlighted in the Scotsman's Best of the Fringe 2010; *Odyssey* (2009), winner of The Stage Award for Best Solo Performer 2009, shortlisted for a Total Theatre Award 2010, and Mervin Stutter's Pick of the Fringe 2009/10; *Behind the Mirror* (2008), the Observer's Best of the Fringe choice, shortlisted for a Total Theatre Award 2008, and Mervin Stutter's Pick of the Fringe.

Work in development: *Translunar Paradise* (2011), premieres 5 July 2011 at mac in Birmingham as part of BE (Birmingham European) Festival as the recipient of a BE Festival Development Award 2010; and *Family*, which is planned to premiere in 2012. The company also have a long-term ongoing work in development, *The War Project*.

For more on the BE Festival at mac, see www.befestival.org

For further on all the company's projects and dates for 2011 shows and workshops, see www.theatreadinfinitum.co.uk

P16: George Mann in Theatre Ad Infinitum's *Odyssey*
P17: Theatre Ad Infinitum *Behind the Mirror*
P18: Theatre Ad Infinitum *The Big Smoke*
P19 both images: Theatre Ad Infinitum *Translunar Paradise*.
 Photos Alex Brenner

Voices

Love Romeo Castellucci,
hate Lady Gaga? Step up to
SPILL 2011 with artist and
curator Robert Pacitti, in
his own voice



My background: A working class queer with a foreign surname bought up in a then redneck town within rural England. I grew up in Ipswich; I live in London and Ipswich now so I saw it through – but I became politicised because I had to become politicised or just carry on getting smacked in the face. At that time, Thatcher was in power; AIDS was emerging at the same time I was sexually awakening. I have an ‘agenda’ because I think if you’ve got a brain and any level of analysis, how can you live in this world and not want to sort of engage with things that need to change?

The work I am interested in is work that is aware of what it’s trying to achieve. I’ve invested in work that would call itself activist, or where the makers would understand their practices have a function, because I believe we shouldn’t take money from the public purse unless we’re prepared to be in service.

Lois Keidan at the ICA, in the early- to mid-90s was where I got my education in contemporary performance. Because she programmed some of the most hardcore work I’ve seen.

In the early 90s I wrote Neil Bartlett a letter saying, ‘I want you to know that I feel I stand on your shoulders, but as a young artist I don’t really know where I’m going.’ And he wrote and said, ‘call me at home on this night’... and I rang and he said, ‘can you call me back in ten minutes, I’m just watching the end of Coronation Street’. And so I had a conversation with Neil Bartlett – and he didn’t know me, didn’t see my work for a good few years, but at that time – I think it was just before he went to the Lyric so he was making *Gloria* – that conversation gave me real wind beneath my wings.

So, just one conversation where someone helps you keep your cool, chase your dreams, do what you believe in, really go for it – I support that. Just that changed a load for me.

Lindsay Kemp once gave me £500 to produce a piece of work that had been pulled by Brighton Festival. When I was at college, I was making a piece for a local theatre company based on the diaries of a man that set up an AIDS Centre. Somebody pulled it, they didn’t want it in the Brighton Festival and it was only my second piece of work. I went in a pub, and I got talking to someone who said, ‘Ah, ok, I’m a journalist, and I’m going to meet someone and I’m going to tell them about this.’ And so the next day I was presented to Lindsay Kemp at his hotel in Brighton – he was there as a headlining act for the festival. We had a gin and tonic – at 11 o’clock in the morning! – and he asked me to tell him what I was doing, and why the festival hadn’t liked it. And then he nodded at a person standing next to his chair, who counted out £500, and Lindsay said, ‘go and make the show happen’.

Tracey Emin said years ago on something like Jonathon Ross that artists have to be good business people too, and I really believe that. I think within experimental territories that ‘money’ is some kind of dirty word. We should be savvy and be able to talk about how our own valuation informs our development of income streams. I am a real believer, actually, that art should have to go out there smartly. Savvy, business sense, is exciting. SPILL isn’t just funded by the Arts Council, and going forward none of us can afford to rely on just income from the Arts Council, so this is a very interesting time to have that conversation.

As an artist I didn’t set out to think ‘I’m also a budding producer or presenter’; it absolutely was an urgent tactic to try and create change. In the late 90s/early noughties Pacitti Company was making work internationally, and gaining a profile in the UK. We worked with Helen

Cole at Arnolfini and Anthony Roberts at Colchester Arts Centre, and at one or two other influential venues, including Tramway in Glasgow. But often showing work for two nights to audiences of 15 somewhere that wasn't brilliantly equipped. And it took me a while to realise that I could do something to change that. So I had to take a number of years thinking, 'why is my work not in this place, why is my work not in that place', and I went to some of these places and said look, I've got these ideas, and I want to invite these artists that we've met round the world, and I want to augment that by raising a really high flag for this area of work in this country by inviting some people that were higher profile like Raimund Hoghe, Forced Entertainment, Kira O'Reilly and Julia Bardsley – and we put together the first SPILL festival.

I do think that SPILL landed fairly well-formed because there was such incredible good will from so many different sources. I think SPILL started off to support the industry, really, because loads of us had been struggling to show work. A company like Forced Entertainment are arguably one of our biggest theatrical exports in terms of new work that is bought worldwide, and still they were struggling to sustain a platform in London.

The relationship with The Barbican is really important. It's a great fantastic, enabling, relationship – and it's all about context, and it's all about audiences, and there's something there that is very mutual... there's reciprocity about relationships. We both understand what we are bringing to the table, and how that can effect change in public realms for audiences. But also, behind the scenes, how that starts to shift broader industry expectations about who commissioners are – and that these can be other artists working alongside each other.

There's no point for me putting together this festival that's aiming to try and create change if it just becomes decorative trinkets for exclusive audiences. It has to be about how we address territories of new work across industries, and members of the public.

We made a Tarot Deck for the last SPILL festival, which was very much an attempt to try and find an alternative mechanism to archive the spirit of the time, as much as the critical writing programme or logging work in the festival with SPILL TV. We also tried to find new forms where the audience has some sense of agency or ownership over the ways in which they read that material, so with a pack of cards, we can read them in whatever order we want to.

The National Platform is the kind of gig that I would have wanted when I was starting out. I've tried to set something up which is engaged, high profile, properly resourced, and has an 'on' story in terms of professional development. And just because they are 'young artists' doesn't mean they're necessarily 'young people'. We're not talking necessarily about kids, we're talking about emerging work.

I would say a third of the National Platform applicants are coming from dance and a third from visual arts and about a third are coming from theatre, and then – I know we can't have more than three-thirds but there is also a small community of applicants from sound and music, and that's an area that I'm really passionate about – experimental sound in relation to performance. I really hope to grow that over the next few years.

I'm hoping The National Platform will become annual. Because I think that's a bite-size chunk of activity that I can meaningfully grow an audience around.

One of the things that I'm trying to do with SPILL is to smash this idea that experimental performance is elite. Bullshit to that really, it's about making the invitation to engage as easy to understand and as accessible as possible. And I don't think that that means that the work has to in any way compromise itself; in fact the very opposite. I think the more the work stands on its own terms and is presented genuinely, the more people recognise it as the real deal.

If SPILL does what it says on the tin, in 15 years time it won't need to be here. Because I'm trying to change the profile of experimental work; I'm trying to fill in the gaps on some really important contemporary art histories and I'm trying to leverage some sustainable change for the territory...

It's sometimes hard to quantify radical work. Take an event like Vision of Excess in the last festival, which was a fantastic, wonderful, countercultural, twelve-hour event. It's hard to quantify it, in market terms; why that's important to broader culture. But look at it in ten year's time and I absolutely predict that we'll be able to list all the ways that that event had real impact and influence.

Lady Gaga – (spits) – I hate Lady Gaga! It is really interesting to see how she has taken work from across the last 30 years, and repositioned it – absolutely deployed it for her own end – but I would argue, without any context, without any logic, and without really trying to claim any new ground. So SPILL is trying to have the conversation sideways with people that are making work, and with audiences, to stand shoulder-to-shoulder and try and claim some new ground together.

It's really interesting, working with Romeo Castellucci because the man genuinely is a master. He's definitely someone who's got a very different rhythm to all the other people that we work with.

Five years ago, to have thought that I'd have been working with Diamanda Galás, or Jan Fabre, or Romeo Castellucci, in this engaged co-presenting way would have seemed ridiculous, I'd have laughed. It's been an adjustment in quite a short amount of time, where I've had to take the bull by the horns and go 'lets present the most important people in the world right now' – for me on behalf of audiences, with audiences for audiences, its all about audiences.

Robert Pacitti spoke to Tom Wilson, 24 January 2011.

Pacitti Company is a London-based ensemble of international theatre-makers, live artists, visual artists, sound- and film-makers, researchers and technicians. Convened in 1991 by artistic director Robert Pacitti, the company has spent nearly two decades producing and touring an award-winning body of radical new performance works, worldwide.

Pacitti Company were awarded the 2012 Cultural Olympiad Artists Taking the Lead commission for the East of England. *On Landguard Point* is a project about home: what 'home' means, what makes a home, how we forge our notions of home, what shifts when we view home from afar, or host others in our own home.

For more on this and other projects see www.pacitticompany.com

Initiated in 2007 by Robert Pacitti, the biennial SPILL Festival of Performance returns to London 18–24 April 2011.

SPILL 2011 features six world premieres and four SPILL commissions, showcasing a combination of established and emerging artists during the festival's week-long run, with all performances (other than the National Platform work) presented at the Barbican. There will be large stage works, small delicate interventions, a SPILL Thinker in Residence (Oreet Ashery), talks, salons, film, music – and a backstage feast on Good Friday, 22 April.

Organised by Pacitti Company and SPILL Festival of Performance, and supported by the Jerwood Charitable Foundation, the SPILL National Platform showcases emerging artists from throughout the UK whose work will be shown at the National Theatre Studio over Easter Weekend, 23–24 April 2011, further details to follow via the SPILL website.

To book tickets for SPILL shows, excluding the National Platform, see www.barbican.org.uk

All National Platform shows are free. See the SPILL website for further details on this and on all the shows/events at SPILL 2011.

See www.spillfestival.com

Image is of Robert Pacitti as Death in the SPILL Tarot Pack, photographed by Manuel Vason.



Being There

A threeway view of S.P.I.D. Theatre Company's *Childsplay*

It's 3 o'clock on a Sunday afternoon in January – perhaps not the best time to perform an outdoor piece of site-specific theatre. It may be cold, but the sky is bright in Fulham's Normand Park, and the air is crisp. It's time to put your headphones on and relive your playground memories.

A young and enthusiastic cast emerge, accompanied by a shopping trolley, from the hordes of playing children. The audience is initially reluctant to latch on to their energy, but their participatory reticence does not last long. After a slightly forced introduction, we fall naturally into the rhythm of *Childsplay*.

Each audience member is given a headset or 'portal', which allows us to transfer between eras via a 'time warp'. It's a clunky but workable way of negotiating the different time periods through which the show journeys, charting the various forms of play experienced by 12-year-olds from the 1950s to the present. As the cast play Cowboys and Indians, we listen to testimonials from people's remembrances of playtime, and the games they enjoyed the most. With historically apt music, a filmic element is introduced, as scenarios are played out in front of a soundtrack that only we can hear.

As we warm up to the idea of this show, we're asked to participate in various games. Taken aside to learn clapping games and 'Jenny Jones', female members of the audience are given rhubarb and custard sweets. From a non-judgemental starting point, the increasingly gendered nature of play over time becomes gradually apparent. While everyone



present is able to be included in a game of French and English, there's an added severity if a girl gets hurt. As we veer towards the modern day, the gap between the sexes goes from barely noticeable to divisive.

Sparking an audience debate about the development of play, it's clear that, like anything else, it has evolved with the changing world, rather than taking on an altogether new face. Open spaces, and a childlike defiance of the cold, are both things we should strive to maintain. Nostalgia isn't often thought-provoking – but sometimes it can be.

Helena Rampley, Total Theatre Magazine reviewer



Childsplay is in one sense a game played with the audience – and the only way to rehearse it is with an audience. Therefore the previews, including the performance described below, were about testing out the games, structure, and relationship between actors and audience.

Unlike a conventional preview period, we had no time to consider feedback and rehearse between shows, as we run on Saturday and Sundays only, at 12pm and 3pm. The usual cuts, tweaks, and, hopefully, breakthroughs, all had to be postponed until after the first weekend. For me that was the hardest part of the day – careering from one show to the next with a sense of ‘winging it’.

The show consists of scenes looking back at children’s play in years gone by, and interludes between the scenes in which the actors play games with the audience. It was these interludes in which we felt most exposed – we’d devised and rehearsed but not yet scripted them. The actors were engaging and charming, and the audience of adults and young families seemed delighted, but it was hit-and-miss as to whether they’d get all the relevant information or technical instructions into their semi-improvised banter. Largely they did, but by the time we reached the epilogue I felt that the tempo was sagging, and I was faced – for the third time that weekend – with an ending which I knew wasn’t finished but remained unable to fix.

After the show I pulled all the devised/improvised dialogue into a script, which we learnt and rehearsed in time for the following weekend. We couldn’t have done this without the freeform experiments of the first few performances, and I respected the actors’ nerve hugely, but it was nail-biting stuff for myself and the creative team.

I think we all shared a pride that we’d managed to create a show that worked so well in its environment, physically and socially. Instead of fighting any of the aspects of outdoor life that can make theatre difficult, we’d designed with them in mind. When asked during an interlude whether he thought children played differently now from when he was twelve, one audience member answered, ‘Well before I came here I would have said that kids don’t play any more, but I mean, just look around you – kids everywhere, playing all around us.’ And it was true. It was better than any set we could have built, and it was all real.

Rachel Grunwald, co-creator of *Childsplay*

I open the door to Normand Park’s disabled toilet and greet my fellow cast, four other shivering teenagers. This is our changing room for the next six cold weeks. I stick on my thermo pack under my vest – its heat is meant for muscle strain, but it also helps with being freezing.

We’re all pretty nervous and tired after the small, shy audience of today’s 12-noon performance. Josh hurt his back during the final interactive interlude where we all play Knights, charging around on each other’s shoulders. On top of that, my throat’s starting to hurt, probably one of the many flu bugs that have plagued the *Childsplay* team since December rehearsals.

But once this 3pm preview begins I start to feel better. The dozen or so people who’ve turned up are happy to get involved, and I slip into pretending to be twelve as soon as we start playing Grandmother’s Footsteps. I try not to overthink it and just let the games’ actions work their magic at making me a child.

We charge through the scenes and costume changes for the different decades and I’m relieved that people are keeping up with the MP3 players. Only once do I need to reset someone’s track to get the right music and interviews for the scene. When we reach the 90s I can see Jamie’s left his zip undone so that his costume for the 2010 scene is showing through. He sees me looking and does it up with a grin.

I feel invigorated when it’s all over, like a kid at the end of playtime. I’m pleased with my performance because I felt like I really engaged with the audience. For the first time I notice that it’s almost dark – we finished just in time.

Aaron Gordon plays 12-year-old Samuel in *Childsplay*

Childsplay by SPID Theatre Company took place at Normand Park, Lillie Road, North Fulham, London. The performance reflected on here was at 3pm, Sunday 9 January 2011. <http://spidtheatre.blogspot.com/>

All images: S.P.I.D. Theatre Company’s *Childsplay*. Photos Alison Neighbour

Tom Wilson goes to the London International Mime Festival and reflects on three very different circus-theatre shows

When the Circus Comes to Town



Mathurin Bolze/MPTA *Du Goudron et des Plumes*. Photo Christophe Raynaud

The London International Mime Festival has been a significant programmer of contemporary circus for over three decades, raising the artform's profile and playing a key role in presenting important British and European companies in a theatre setting. Where popular notions of circus may have struggled to move beyond the classical circus form, the companies programmed by the festival have illustrated how circus has been moving in a number of exciting directions, in some cases maintaining a link to traditional aspects of the discipline whilst in others forging a way to establish new formats. This year's companies at the traditional end of the spectrum included Atelier Lefevre and André. The duo's understated and whimsical *Le Jardin* is typical of this strand: an unimposing 90-minute composite of juggling and hand-balancing sketches notionally set amongst what feels like a small allotment.

Lefevre and André bring a certain Gallic rusticity to their work as the two dour clowns find games to play with garden objects. This

is not surprising given Lefevre's previous life as a farmer and, perhaps because of this, and André's previous incarnation as industrial draftsman, there is an unsentimental attitude to the work, each vignette balanced within its own logic and slotted into place without fanfare. This of course makes it all sound rather dry, but there is wit in the work as they balance and manoeuvre around the stage, scaling bedding boxes with shovels, wrapping themselves in hosepipes and hanging from the garden awning, all accompanied to a selection of taped tracks of French crooning and André's gentle Banjo playing. The piece is built upon this understated presentation of images and a simple offering of tricks: Lefevre's manipulation of a concrete block and André's brow-beaten juggling are examples of the latter, whilst their crisp shadow-play an example of the former.

Perhaps it is their maturity, perhaps it is the nature of their work, but there is an easy and uncomplicated view of performance and the perambulatory dynamic of the piece is

a refreshing contrast to the usual youthful brashness of contemporary circus, so that even whilst Lefevre manipulates himself on and around his wheelbarrow there is a casual air of a lazy Sunday afternoon in the allotment, unassumingly ensconced in the Southbank Centre.

Playing at the Barbican, one of London's more adventurous large-scale venues, fellow Frenchman Mathurin Bolze and Compagnie MPTA represents the more youthful and thrusting strand of contemporary circus. This is a rich Michelin-starred meal rather than the wholesome simple fare of traditional forms. They follow an approach that is built on finding the theatricality and dramaturgy within the circus spectacle. Their new work, *Du Goudron et des Plumes*, continues Bolze's interest in the metaphorical possibilities of theatrical circus and in technical ideas of suspension and weightlessness, and his ascendancy as one of the key contemporary circus directors in France.



Upswing *Fallen*



His previous work seen in Britain has been primarily dominated by large constructions, including a treehouse built on the roots of a trampoline in *Fenêtres* and a series of platforms and giant wheels in *Tangentes*. For *Du Goudron et des Plumes* Bolze and his four companions balance, slide and leap across a giant suspended platform, reconfiguring the landscape of this isolated stage with the rearrangement of a series of wooden planks and metal bars. Inventive, virtuoso and fast-paced as a whole, it was framed as an episodic and open-ended meditation around images of 'mythical voyages'. Beginning in a contemporary dance aesthetic, a now common input into contemporary circus vocabulary, it passed into more theatrical territory as the piece progressed with a number of stand-out episodes, including a captivating duo for dual

Chinese pole that robustly played with ideas of rebound and manipulation but seemed to fail to capitalise on the play of status and power within the vocabulary.

As his work matures, Bolze is beginning to find the possibilities of the artform, the 'metaphorical weight' of the images that he identifies in the programme notes as making the art a rewarding experience beyond the thrill of the event, but here these possibilities come thick and fast and this breakneck speed, coupled with the at times overwhelming visual spectacle, worked against the more delicate and subtle possible meanings that might have emerged. Like much of this strand of circus, the company are often enticed by the possibilities of the spectacle and it takes a certain confidence to pare this down. This could have become a more profound meditation on the nature of confinement and hope – images that we saw running throughout the piece – but an audience needs more time to sink into a work this dense if it is to achieve the metaphorical weight Bolze desires, something that younger circus directors would do well to remember if this is the kind of work they aspire to.

Playing in a very different key at the Purcell Room, regularly the home of unsung delights, was British company Upswing. Boldly engaging with narrative circus in their first full-length piece *Fallen* they have the responsibility of representing this key trend in current British circus, a trend that includes a board range of narrative approaches – from established artists Ockham's Razor to younger companies such as Genius Sweatshop. Director Vicki Amedume has in this instance approached the challenge of narrative circus by beginning with non-circus-trained performers and a loose, unhurried narrative. This first

choice lends a more grounded, psychologically-centred quality to the work, whilst the second choice is a pleasing antidote to the usual narrative chaos of other work. Centering on the detention of a West African woman and her reconciliation with 'the loss of child and husband' the piece borrowed from a range of aerial disciplines including silks and a safety line as simple metaphorical devices to present the central figure's emotional journey. It is the atmosphere of the journey that stands out more than the circus material, and a stark melancholy permeates the scenes, reinforced by the sparse feel to the choreography of the movement vocabulary. Constructed on a fraction of MPTA's budget, *Fallen* was striking in eschewing spectacle, embracing a sensitivity to the theatrical rhythm and pacing of the piece, whilst using frugal means to create a number of arresting moments of metaphor. In spite of this engaging choice, it still feels like the early days in its journey as a circus-theatre performance, not quite full enough in its communication of the narrative for theatre, nor quite rich enough in its use of circus. As with any devised performance, though, this one should grow in detail on tour and could well turn out to be the slow burner of the festival.

All shows seen by Tom Wilson at the London International Mime Festival 2011: *Fallen* by Upswing at Purcell Room, Southbank Centre, 25 January 2011; *Du Goudron et des Plumes* by MPTA/Mathurin Bolze at Barbican Theatre, 26 January 2011; *Le Jardin* by Atelier Lefeuve and André at Linbury Studio Theatre, Royal Opera House, 28 January 2011.

There are further reviews of LIMF 2011 shows posted on the Total Theatre website.

Man and beast; man and machine. Dorothy Max Prior witnesses some extraordinary encounters and tantalising transformations at the London International Mime Festival 2011

Transformers



Sobelle & Ford *Flesh and Blood & Fish and Fowl*



Teatro Corsario *La Maldición de Poe*

What is it to be human? What is our journey as a human being? What distinguishes us from the rest of the animal kingdom, and how do we place ourselves in relation to the rest of the natural world? What distinguishes us from the objects we interact with, and from the machines that we have built to serve us?

These mighty philosophical questions are at the heart of a number of shows presented at the London International Mime Festival 2011 – the specific qualities of ‘human nature’ tested when the human encounters ‘otherness’ (animate or inanimate; beast or machine).

In *Les Corbeaux* (*The Crows*), a collaboration between choreographer/performer/scenographer Josef Nadj and freeform jazz multi-instrumentalist Akosh Szeleenyi, we are taken on a journey that explores the heart of ‘crownness’ – revealing, along the way, that the human form can embrace ‘otherness’ and somehow enter the spirit both of other living creatures (crows) and of inanimate materials (paint, paper, brush).

Taking the form of an improvisation between mover and music-maker, *Les Corbeaux* is a work that, although it has a set framework or structure, will inevitably be substantially different from show to show. It is not the easiest or most accessible of Nadj’s work – and it perhaps compares unfavourably with his collaboration with Miquel Barcelo, *Paso Doble*, which shares a similar exploration of the man/beast/material matter triad – and is similarly a kind of ‘live action’ artwork (3D sculpture in *Paso Doble*; 2D painting in *Les Corbeaux*).

For this reviewer, the show (as seen on this occasion) didn’t work as a complete piece.

There were far too many sections of musical noodling and ritual ‘actions’ (with metal tubing and sand and the like) that seemed like downtime, and which I felt I’d seen/heard a thousand times before. (A mis-spent youth going to London Musicians’ Collective gigs and performance ‘happenings’ in warehouses probably to blame.)

Yet within that not-quite-satisfactory whole, there were sections of beautiful movement work from the always-mesmerising Nadj – and the moment of transformation, when Nadj drops himself into a barrel of sticky paint and emerges glistening black from head-to-toe, arms flapping, is magnificent: he is the essence of ‘crownness’, yet also paint incarnate as his wild writhings on the white paper floor creates an instant painting that is reminiscent of the graphic abstract expressionism of Franz Kline.

Staying with the animal kingdom: in an interview for the last issue of Total Theatre Magazine (Voices, Total Theatre Volume 22 Issue 04, Winter 2010), ‘existential clown’ Geoff Sobelle spoke of the use of the many stuffed beasts in his show *Flesh and Blood & Fish and Fowl*: ‘As objects, the animals present this great theatrical dilemma – they’re alive but they’re dead... they present this great tension onstage that we really fell in love with.’

The show can be seen as an exploration of the human being’s ‘animalness’ and/or of our foolish battle to assert ourselves above nature. We may have desks and computers and high-rise office blocks, but when it comes down to it we are beasts trying our best to survive, along with everything else that lives on this planet.

Our two antiheroes, ‘Gerry’ and ‘Rhoda’ are stuck in a Beckett-esque world; a warehouse office that they are seemingly unable to leave. As the show progresses, their ‘animalness’ becomes evermore apparent: she yaps and flusters like a sick dog; he yawns and slumps and scrapes his fingernails down the wall like a zoo-caged chimpanzee. He eats his microwaved dinner like a snuffling pig; she’s sick in the filing cabinet, retching like a poisoned cat. They have sex in the wheelie bin, going at it like rabbits... The mood shifts with the gradual intrusion into their space of the natural world, in the form of animated stuffed ferrets and rats, walking trees, shadowy deer and, eventually, bears (on stage and screen). And as Geoff says in the interview: ‘If it comes to fisticuffs, I’m sorry but my money’s always on the bear.’ We are, perhaps, less the masters of this planet than we’d like to think.

Spanish puppet theatre company Teatro Corsario’s *La Maldición de Poe* (*The Curse of Poe*) is one of many shows of recent years to draw on the works of Edgar Allan Poe, and on the sad facts of his life. Here, the biography and the fantasy are merged into one phantasmagorical mellee. As is typical of this company’s work, Rabelaisian excess, grotesquery, and bawdiness are the order of the day – though, all to less effect than has been seen in their previous LIMF shows, *Vampyria* and *Aullidos*. Somehow there is an edge – of irony, humour, awareness perhaps – missing.

But the standard of puppetry (a mix of methods) is excellent, the company using what has been described to me as ‘a corridor of white light’ to create an effect whereby the manipulators are unseen against the black background. As with the above show,



Akhe Gobo

the relationship between man and beast (or perhaps between humanness and beastliness) is key to this production, which revels in puppet-animal life with anthropomorphic attributes, including a murderous singing cat and a giant dancing monkey played by a performer in a whole-body-mask monkey suit – providing an interesting reflection on quasi-humaneness as he/she/it terrorises the puppet human characters whilst ‘aping’ their behaviour. It is extremely disturbing to see this beast’s human hands ripping off the (wooden) heads of the ‘humans’.

Gobo. Digital Glossary is Akhe’s interpretation of the Everyman story. And being Akhe – renowned exponents of ‘theatre of engineering’ – it goes without saying that their take on this archetypal morality tale, mapping the path of (virtuous and productive) life, and exploring what it is to be truly human, would mean an investigation of man’s relationship to the material world.

As a series of ‘chapter headings’ are flashed up onscreen (‘Hero’s Perspective’, ‘Hero’s Dream’, ‘Hero’s Pain’) the stage is transformed into a cross between a child’s playroom and a laboratory to test the laws of physics. A head is dunked into a tank of purple water; a body winched up and suspended by a rope around its feet. A small robot figure is manipulated across a table by balloon power, and a pair of glasses on a long thread of elastic is wound around a face. Noddy’s friend Big Ears comes a cropper, and there’s a boxing match with a puppet kangaroo. There’s spontaneous combustion, a cat’s cradle of laser lights to negotiate, and books dismembered. What does it all mean? ‘We play, therefore we are’ perhaps? Or that we are powerless in a universe in which the objects will always have the upperhand? Given the surreal nature of many of the actions and images, and the fact that many of the actions are simultaneously portrayed by live feed video (on both a small downstage screen and full-back-wall-size upstage screen), and/or the live actions interweaved with projections, there is a suggestion of the human being as a puppet of destiny; a plaything of the universe – God’s toy.

More physics, and then some: in *Sans Objet*, Compagnie 111 (led by Aurélien Bory) focus their attention on the relationship between man and machine. ‘Are we not already mixing the biological and the electronic?’ Asks Bory



in the show’s programme. ‘In the past, to test his capabilities [man] measured himself against animals. Today the challenge is technology.’

It starts with a moment before birth: on a darkened stage an enormous sac of black polythene moves gently with the rise and fall of something within, and we hear small creaks, bleeps and sighs. The sac stretches and we see the shape of a head. Its neck cranes, and – eyeless and still in its ‘womb’ – it turns to look straight towards us; our hearts melt. Enter two male acrobats (black suits, bare feet) and the spell is broken: the lights come up, and the polythene is tugged off to reveal a motionless giant industrial robot, basically an enormous mechanical arm (a refugee from a car-building plant).

At first, the men seem more interested in the polythene than in the robot, scrunching it up, and rolling it into a giant ball that becomes a replacement head in the first of many ‘headlessness’ moments in the show. Then the robot notices them, and the game begins... The subsequent explorations raise interesting questions of ‘humanness’ as the robot seems to play out a series of human emotions and reactions, and the men become ever more automated, morphing into cyborg-like amalgams of man and machine – although occasionally snapping back into human consciousness and self-awareness in moments of transition from scene to scene.

The clichés of automation and mechanical animation are embraced head-on and we see –

or imagine we see – treadmills, hamster wheels, see-saws, wind-up toy soldiers, and clockwork dolls. The robot’s former life is referenced in images of forklifts, industrial shelving, and packing boxes. There are more whimsical images, like a moment where sliding screens turn the men into a live version of that card game where you swap heads-bodies-and-legs: a game of isolated – dislocated, almost – body-parts which plays with the notion of the puppetesque.

Ultimately this is not a show about man *versus* machine; it is a metaphysical reflection on man as machine and machine as man – and on what happens when the two meet.

The questions suggested at the beginning of this piece, it would seem, have no simple answers. But perhaps we have fooled ourselves into thinking they ever did. Being human – or otherwise – is a complicated business.

All shows were presented as part of the London International Mime Festival 2011. Dorothy Max Prior saw *La Maldición de Poe* by Teatro Corsario at Southbank Centre’s Purcell Room 15 January; *Gobo. Digital Glossary* by Akhe Engineering Theatre at ICA 18 January; *Sans Objet* by Compagnie 111 / Aurélien Bory at Southbank Centre’s Queen Elizabeth Hall 21 January; *Les Corbeaux* by Josef Nadj and Akosh Szelewenyi at Linbury Studio Theatre, Royal Opera House, 24 January. *Flesh and Blood & Fish and Fowl* by Geoff Sobelle & Charlotte Ford was presented at the Barbican Pit 19–29 January 2011. It was seen by the writer at Traverse Theatre at St Stephen’s as part of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, August 2010.

Macbeth – there, we’ve said it! Emily Ayres sees Song of the Goat tackle the Scottish play

Something Polish This Way Comes...



Song of the Goat *Macbeth*

The Midlands has been short on opportunities to see good European physical theatre, and outside of the Edinburgh Festival and Fringe we in the UK have been slow to recognise the importance of this type of body- and impulse-led practice. In July 2010 we had the first ever Birmingham European Theatre Festival at Stan’s Cafe’s A E Harris space (www.befestival.org), which was rough and ready and low on audiences, but showed signs that Grotowski was alive (if not due some blasphemous reinterpretation). Then in the autumn came a visit to the newly reopened mac (Midlands Art Centre) by the legendary Song of the Goat company – renowned followers of Grotowski, whose intense physical training in voice and movement work, and long process of devising and honing their work, have gained them a fierce reputation.

Perhaps my expectations were too high for this show, having wanted to see the company since missing them in Edinburgh in 2005, but *Macbeth* – a show that Song of the Goat have created over the past two years – was underwhelming in its overall effect. The essence of the practice – ensemble, rhythm, impulse, emotional texture, ritual, organicity, craft – is very much what makes the performance so impressive, yet with all these ingredients added together, there was still a sense of it missing the mark.

To perform with such minimal scenery and without the theatrical ingredients we (on the experimental end of theatre practice in the UK, at any rate) would recognise as ‘normal’ – no recorded music, no promenade or walkabout opportunities, no installation, no one-on-one encounters, no digital media, no trickery or deceit – puts the work firmly in the ‘poor theatre’ tradition, pioneered by Grotowski, and means the vocal and physical ensemble work must be the chord that strikes the heart of the audience. The choice of *Macbeth* as the inspiration made sense in the physical scenes of murder and violence, but their vocal work did sometimes swallow the text rather than bring it out of itself and into the room.

Perhaps the reason this work seems dated, or perhaps a better phrase would be ‘out-of-time’, is that it takes such a very long time to make. The process cannot be rushed; it’s an organic one that picks up changes in temperature and emotion like an embryo does in the womb. It’s a process that checks all along that there are no defects; that all limbs are growing properly. You can’t grow a hand without the arm being there first. However, here on the British theatre scene we have grown numerous theatrical limbs all mashed together to form some hybrid beast of live art, performance, digital media and music – and as such, we work much faster and much less rigorously. Our ideas might be more cutting-edge but we

lack the discipline with which to approach them. Song of the Goat have the discipline, but are short on cutting-edge – and short on irony.

It was good to see so many young people in the audience. Of course, *Macbeth* is firmly on the curriculum in the UK and seeing actors working in what some young students might view as an alien style – thinking with their bodies and not bowing to the weight of the written word – can only be a good thing for a disgruntled teenager struggling with Shakespeare.

Macbeth is an impressive piece of ensemble music theatre that is so tight rhythmically that the overall effect is like one living, breathing and resounding chord. Whether the text was *Macbeth* or another classic might make no difference, which may or may not be problematic to audiences. The vocal work is beautiful and the text does fly at times, but the music didn’t seem as fresh and challenging as I had expected it might be. I’m interested in Grotowski’s work and the line of theatre that comes down from his work, but I’d like to see some theatre by a company of young Polish practitioners next. What does Grotowski mean to them now? Is he dead to them, or alive?

Emily Ayres saw *Macbeth* by Song of the Goat Theatre (Teatr Piesn Kozla) at mac, Birmingham, 13 October 2010.

Dorothy Max Prior enjoys 1927's extraordinary new show at BAC

The Animals and Children Took to the Streets



1927 *The Animals and Children Took to the Streets*. Photo Nick Flintoff

audiences of a certain age, and the 'crossing the celluloid divide' work of Forkbeard Fantasy another. But 1927 have a unique flavour and an aesthetic that is very much their own.

The particular talents of each company member are exploited to the max. We've mentioned filmmaker/ animator Paul Barritt's contribution, but there is also Suzanne Andrade's razor-sharp writing and precisely articulated delivery; the very deft and delightful performance work of Esme Appleton; and the superb presence of composer/musician/performer Lillian Henley.

The musical elements of 1927 are one of its USPs. Lillian's piano provides the 'glue' for the show – setting the pace, changing the mood, and giving nuance to the scenes. In 1927's first show, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, she was in front of the filmic set, almost as a silent movie accompanist. In this show, she is integrated into the action – her piano hidden and her framed 'hatch' cleverly transformed by the projected images from apartment block window to ice cream van, cinema box office, or railway station ticket office. She even gets to leave her piano for a brief moment, transforming into a hobbling old woman who carries an unwanted puppy in a bin bag to shove down a rubbish chute. (Bayou Mansions is that sort of a place.)

With such onstage ease and offstage expertise on show, it seems hard to believe that *The Animals and Children Took to the Streets* is only 1927's second show. The first, *Between The Devil...* was a massive success at the Edinburgh Fringe 2007 – winning a Fringe First, a Total Theatre Award, and a Herald Angel, and subsequently toured worldwide to great acclaim.

So, with a lot to live up to, this second show has been a long time in the making. *The Animals and Children Took to the Streets* finally premiered in Australia autumn 2010 before taking up residency at BAC for a full month over the winter holiday season. It has been 'scratched' at various points over the past couple of years, and this slow development has meant that there has been a solid investment in the work from both the company and the audience. This investment has paid off, as 1927 now have a second beautifully imagined and wonderfully realised show that will no doubt have a long and fruitful life.

Dorothy Max Prior saw 1927's *The Animals and Children Took to the Streets* at BAC, London, 17 December 2010.

Welcome to Bayou Mansions, a smelly slum block on the downbeat and debauched Red Herring Street – a place where shady deals are done behind shuttered shopfronts, neglected children run riot, and canny cats rule the roost. We are warned: there will be victims; there will be villains. Trust no-one, suspect even your own shadow... and watch out because the wolf is always at the door.

The motley crew of residents – who include a host of housebound ladies-of-dubious-reputation clad in old-gold gowns; a downtrodden immigrant caretaker; a sassy wheeling and dealing shopowner and her Bolshevik daughter; and a naïve newcomer, a community artist who feels she can save the world with 'love and collage' – are all played by the three onstage members of 1927. In an extraordinary feat of physical and visual performance, these three are mixed and mingled in with the set and props created through some of the most beautiful and cleverly integrated animation that you are likely to see on a stage – courtesy of fourth, offstage, company member Paul Barritt. To add to the mix, additional characters also exist in animated form – a herd of unruly children as silhouettes; various cartoon cats; and the artist's child, Little Evie, who (almost

inevitably) gets kidnapped. Oh and there is a lovely 'absent character' in the form of Wayne the Racist, who makes the caretaker's life a misery.

There unfolds a deliciously dark story of do-gooding that does no good, thwarted ambitions, and dubious problem-solving. Can there be a happy ending? Unlikely – although we are given the choice. But no matter how hard we beg for 'idealism' inevitably it's 'realism' that wins the day. The artist packs her bags and leaves, defeated; the caretaker nurses a broken heart and resigns himself to another seven years saving the seven hundred and seventy-seven Pounds he needs for a ticket home; and the Bayou brats are sedated into sleepy conformity. Well, it's a resolution of sorts...

Stylistically, 1927 embrace a whole smorgasbord of influences and references and feed them into their work: silent movie melodrama, German expressionism, Soviet constructivism, the (grim) Grimm brothers, ETA Hoffman, Tim Burton, and the haughtily cruel humour of Joyce Grenfell's monologues... and yet somehow it all pulls together. Yes, there are precedents and points-of-reference – *Shockheaded Peter* would be an obvious one for

Beccy Smith and her team of intrepid reviewers round up a winter season of family shows with a Total Theatre ethos

From Red Shoes to Robins



Unpacked Robin and the Big Freeze



Tobacco Factory The Adventures of Pinocchio

On high days and holidays the forms and techniques of visual and physical theatre receive a Cinderella-like transformation to waltz with mainstream theatre audiences around the land. At a time of year when families venture out in greater numbers to share some cultural treats, stages across the country employ a greater range of theatrical approaches to entice and enthrall these broad audiences. Visual / physical / total theatre techniques readily support the breadth of situation and settings of classic children's stories whilst inviting audiences to work collaboratively on the task of completing images and making meaning itself a playful, childlike experience. Audience participation is readily accommodated, as are a wealth of performance styles including popular song and dance, by the elasticity of 'alternative' theatre forms. Work for family audiences, unconditioned to more established theatrical conventions, offers a unique arena in which to develop new audiences, to experiment, and to gently push the forms and languages of more established theatre spaces. In this cross-country round-up we look at four winter season theatre shows for family audiences and reflect on their 'total theatre' content.

The Red Shoes at Liverpool's Unity Theatre

With Kneehigh Theatre's revival of their renowned version of *The Red Shoes* about to hit BAC for a long run (March–April 2011), another version pips them to the post at the Unity Theatre in Liverpool.

In a clever transplantation of Hans Christian Andersen's original story to the golden age of cinema, Unity's version of *The Red Shoes* gives its audience a hearty and entertaining tale which, as is traditional with theatre of the season, presents a clear moral sensibility – in this instance, a directive to follow your dreams whilst remaining pure of heart.

With a style reminiscent of the dream of Technicolor cinema that the protagonist Grace pursues at the cost of her friends and family, the bright colours and showbiz accents are both engaging and glamorous.

A well-sculpted musical soundscape is present throughout much of the action, seamlessly leading into the cheery musical numbers, though sometimes the magical atmosphere created onstage acts as an auditory fourth wall, discouraging the audience participation that we hanker after at this time of year. Thanks to the splendid efforts of the talented cast (particularly Graham Geoffrey Hicks as the disarming pooch, Ralph!), such distancing doesn't last for long and by the end the audience is booing the baddies with the best of them.

Lighting design is also key to the telling of the story, and works well to maximise the cinematic feel. The piano keys which make up some of the set floor are lit as they are danced upon in a musical scene reminiscent of Tom Hanks in the film *Big*, whilst the use of front and back projection creates some magnificent silhouettes, which in the more film noir moments combine magically with the moral ambiguity of Mike Idris' character of The Shoemaker to present some genuinely chilling imagery.

A warm and engaging production, presented with humour and imagination, *The Red Shoes* is a show that magnificently marks the festive season.

Tim Jeeves saw *The Red Shoes*, at Unity Theatre, Liverpool, 8 December 2010.

The Adventures of Pinocchio at Bristol's Tobacco Factory

Tobacco Factory Theatre present a brand new reworking of the traditional story of *Pinocchio* – set in the round and putting to good use the four or five entrances and exits for whizzing one scene or set of characters in and another out, so that there is a constant feeling of busyness and 'what's going to happen next'.

In the show's programme, Toby Farrow, who wrote this adaptation, says that he has used 95% original material in his script, as the original, dark story is quite confused. Still, this adaptation seemed rather confusing to me, with a dizzying number of scene changes and extra characters played by the cast of six. The

show's director explains in his own foreword that they tried to recreate a 'mad, inconsistent, exhilarating and endlessly frustrating world' – the world of children, the world of Pinocchio. This did work and I'd agree that children were enraptured by the show, which drew the audience into a new 'world' of sights, sounds and experiences. Whilst the script and the characters were strong, the design and the movement direction of the show had a lot to do with the success of this effect.

Peta Dennis' Pinocchio is an old-fashioned child at heart with a sweet-natured naughtiness. Beautifully styled, with an occasionally growing nose and a real wooden wig, he becomes rather too nice by the end! Dennis leads the cast in some great movement that recalls a child's play, and the rest of the six-strong cast swap in and out of a range of characters seamlessly, with special commendation for Felix Hayes (Antonio, Mr Poliziotto, Jimmy). His humour is impeccably timed, and his well-written, off-the-wall supporting characters – best among them Jimmy The Cricketer – are roguishly appealing.

The story follows Pinocchio through a series of strange lands, on a journey ultimately to find his papa, who is also searching for him. There are way too many confusing, higgledy-piggledy scene changes – and although some of them are impressively evocative (the inside of the belly of the whale, for example), it often felt like we were waiting for the next leg of the journey, and sometimes like we had skipped a leg and ended up somewhere else entirely.

The director, Andy Burden, describes the production as 'sometimes scary, sometimes thrilling and sometimes funny', but that's not entirely true. It's not at all scary and very rarely is it thrilling, but it is certainly funny, and engaging too. Some greater emotional risk-taking might have paid off and helped this production to be more than just a nice show for all the family.

Geraldine Harris saw *The Adventures of Pinocchio* at Tobacco Factory, Bristol, 10 December 2010.

Red Earth Theatre's *The Lost Happy Endings* at MAC in Birmingham

The Lost Happy Endings goes beyond a mere stage adaptation of Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy's story as words and phrases are fleshed out, animated and played with. As 'ever' is left hanging, the word 'after' turns into fat, a rat, a fart, and even fear. In line with mac's tradition of producing inspired family shows over the festive period, the production encourages creative learning and does not recoil from challenging material. The young audience's ability to engage with complex emotions is treated here with utter respect. Jub's sprinkling of fairytale endings over the city to send children to sleep is a scene of solemn and touching beauty. Yet, when their happy endings disappear, fairytales scarily linger with images of Cinderella's step-sisters feet bleeding into a bucket or those of Snow White's



stepmother trapped in hot-iron shoes while she dances to her death. In fairytales, as in life, there is much to learn about the consequences of what you might wish for.

The Lost Happy Endings offers something radically outreaching, and is more in the tradition of fairytales that challenge our perception of reality by revealing a hidden world just nearby. The text is interpreted into British Sign Language (BSL) which is woven into the fabric of the play very successfully. As a non-signer, I have always felt somehow excluded when contemplating the physical and emotional engagement of sign language in theatre. But *The Lost Happy Endings* is a celebration of the all-encompassing nature of sign language and through its stagecraft makes it accessible to all. While much of a hearing person's world knowledge is gleaned from layers of intermingled background sounds, a deaf person's mainly occurs through visual markers, hence their different world perspectives. Reading might unite both of these worlds, but what happens in theatre? Sign-language-interpreted theatre is a relatively recent development and has its limitations, but by bringing sign language centre stage, the show compels the audience to open up to alternatives and adds another dimension to the performance. At times, the performers sign without speaking. Rather than reversing any possible frustration deaf spectators might experience at the theatre, when having to look at the stage and the interpreter at the same time, for the hearing person, this opens a door to a magical unknown. The play's magical themes impregnate these moments and like the sprinkled fairytale endings upon the sleepy town, the gestured signs complete the stories and make the audience feel whole. The far reaching and embracing theatricality of sign language demonstrated in this play enables the audience to relate to the characters on a more profound level and ultimately to all the parents and children sharing bedtime stories happily ever after.

Fred Dalmasso saw Red Earth Theatre's *The Lost Happy Endings*, at mac, Birmingham, 12 December 2010

Unpacked's *Robin and the Big Freeze* at the Dome, Brighton

In Grandpa's garden in the Dales, mean-spirited Robin guards his worm patch and his tree, enjoys his daily feeds from the windowsill, and lives an isolated and uncomplicated life

From the first scene-setting song, Unpacked show their strength: the musical arrangements and harmonised voices are spot on, the lyrics witty and the energy high. The set is lo-fi but sufficiently effective and uses its garden-themed props imaginatively. A big plastic flowerpot makes a good drum and there is an inspired 'breaking news' skit in which all the garden furniture takes a role. Puppetry is always a feature with Unpacked, and here the Robin puppets, big and small, ooze character. Bobble hats become snow-buntings with accompanying Nordic chirrups, Grandpa is transformed into a snowman (without breaking the narrative), and even the audience's rolled up bits of paper create an effective snowball cascade when thrown from the dark seats onto the lit stage.

Robin soon realises that in order to survive the harsh weather he must join forces with the migrant birds. Grandpa, who is delivering the Christmas post on his dear old bike, Betty, sees a sign for help flying above his cottage, and cycles home to find Gemma locked-out and nearly an icicle. With its message of working together and overcoming prejudice duly delivered, and snow fluttering all around the festive scene, the opening song is given a rousing reprise: 'good things come to the bird that's bold'.

Lisa Wolfe saw Unpacked's *Robin and the Big Freeze* at the Dome, Brighton, 12 December 2010.

Rebecca Nesvet enters a New York Time Machine

Radiotheatre

Of all the treasures of New York City's contemporary avant-garde theatre scene, it is difficult to find a company that is both as innovative and as traditional as Radiotheatre. Founded in 2004 by the director and writer Dan Bianchi, and honoured with two New York Innovative Theater Awards, Radiotheatre creates narrative-based performance pieces that layer dialogue and narration by live actors with unnervingly precise recorded sound effects, and symphonic background music. Often adapted from classic horror and science fiction from both sides of the Atlantic, including the works of HG Wells, Mary Shelley, Edgar Rice Burroughs and Edgar Allan Poe, Radiotheatre's shows harness archetypal tales to modern technology, such as digital sound and film-scoring software. The result engages the intellect whilst hijacking the emotions with an intensity rarely seen on either stage or airwaves.

Radiotheatre performs in various Off-Off-Broadway venues, often retooling and reviving plays from their constantly augmented permanent repertory. In December 2010, this reviewer saw their HG Wells adaptation *The Time Machine* at the Red Room Theater in Greenwich Village's East Fourth Street, a corridor that is also home to the New York Theatre Workshop, La MaMa, and several internationally famous theatres. In *The Time Machine*, and, indeed, all Radiotheatre plays, there is not much to see onstage. Atop a pile of vintage suitcases, a glowing sign reads 'Radiotheatre' and the actors are provided with music stands and microphones. But there is far more to Radiotheatre than meets the eye.

'Some people see things as they are and ask "why?," actor Frank Zilinyi begins. 'We see things as they never were, and ask "why not?" Ladies and gentlemen, this is Radiotheatre.' Then, *The Time Machine* opens with an unnamed woman, (played by Katie Siepert) confessing to the audience in agitated tones that her husband (played by Zilinyi) claimed to have discovered that 'time is a kind of space' – and to have just invented a machine that will propel him into the future or the past and allow him to safely return. This seems like another of his mad ideas, but soon he bursts into their parlor again, traumatised and bearing a story of a visit to the year 5959, where the human race has evolved into two subspecies, the aristocratic yet imbecilic Elooi and the resourceful yet ruthless Morlocks. As the Time Traveller investigates this world, loses his time machine, and finds something perhaps more valuable to him, the future is built with aural themes deftly produced and organised by Bianchi and sound engineer Wes Shippee. Meanwhile, Zilinyi and Siepert's clearly conveyed facial expressions and sparsely



efficient hand movements keep the narrators rooted in the picture they create, making the Red Room Theater and the theatre of each spectator's mind co-exist with great tension.

Bianchi has streamlined Wells' plot to move forward at a brisker, more frightening pace, eliminating Wells' didactic fixation with Marxist historical prophecy. (In the original, the Time Traveller identifies the Morlocks with the global proletariat, and the Elooi with the bourgeoisie.) Bianchi's most significant alteration of his source material is the invention of the Time Traveller's wife. Whereas, in the (Victorian London) original, the Time Traveller demonstrates his machine and narrates his adventures to a pompous, dispassionate group of scientific and medical men, who challenge his report but have no emotional engagement with him, Radiotheatre's Time Traveller dreams of visiting the future and recreating the past in order to understand, atone for, or even prevent the accidental death of his young daughter Mary. His wife does not want to believe in time travel because she has accepted her bereavement. Her husband has not, and his tinkering and wanderlust threaten to upset not only the order of the universe, but her private sphere. By thus blending horrific memory with a vision of an even more terrifying future, the grand historical narrative with the private interaction of a very ordinary couple, Radiotheatre makes its layered performance totally compelling.



In 2010, BBC Radio announced a merger of its drama and documentaries departments and axed the Radio 4 Friday Play, which had for decades been associated with thematic risk-taking and the development of talented British playwrights. As Leo Benedictus reported in a Guardian editorial, radio theatre is 'dying'. Perhaps radio theatre is – but of Bianchi's New York Radiotheatre, we can confidently announce, 'it's ALI-I-I-I-I-VE!'

Radiotheatre's *The Time Machine* was seen by Rebecca Nesvet at Red Room Theater, New York City, 28 December 2010.

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BOOKS AND OTHER MEDIA PUBLICATIONS + RELEASES

Drama Games for Those Who Like to Say No

Chris Johnston
Nick Hern Books
ISBN: 978-84842-049-6
£8.99 pbk
www.nickhernbooks.co.uk

Described (pretty accurately as it goes) as ‘a dip-in, flick-through, quick-fire resource book’, and one of an ongoing Nick Hern Books series, *Drama Games for Those Who Like to Say No* is – unsurprisingly – for teachers and workshop leaders working with ‘difficult or reluctant students, youth groups, young offenders, and all those who seem intent on saying “no” to whatever is offered them’.

It’s compiled by veteran workshop facilitator / drama games maestro Chris Johnston (of *House of Games* fame), and the author brings to this collection his impressive track-record of work with professional theatre practitioners, in the wider community, and – specifically – within the prison/remand centre system. Thus, we trust his judgement on what exercises work in what sized group with what aged participants, and how much time should be allowed for the game... and it is good to have all of this summarised efficiently with each exercise. He also includes a short Training section to help teachers/facilitators working with challenging groups to gain some professional development and support.

It may be a small book, but it’s packed to the brim with bright and breezy ideas (ninety games in all, so that works out at around 10p a game – a bargain!). The first half focuses on getting-started games, some of which will be familiar territory to those who run drama workshops regularly, and some more unusual ones. The second half of the book is its USP: a selection of scenarios to kick-start role-play sessions, broken down into headers such as ‘Skills – Reasoning’ or ‘Challenges – Managing Emotions’. There is some crossover with Boal’s *Theatre of the Oppressed* work, but that is no bad thing – the world could certainly do with as much as it can get of drama-initiated ‘collaboration’ ‘communication’ and ‘negotiation’ (to reference a few more section headers).

DMP

The Reluctant Escapologist – Adventures in Alternative Theatre

Mike Bradwell
Nick Hern Books
ISBN: 978-1-85459-538-6
£14.99 pbk
www.nickhernbooks.co.uk

Mike Bradwell is a legendary figure, a mainstay of British counter-culture for over forty years. I first met him in 1975-76 when I was working at the ICA in London. I was assistant stage manager, and the ICA theatre regularly programmed the company he founded and directed for many years, Hull Truck Theatre Company. I also, in 1976, helped to programme an Ethnographic Film Festival at the ICA (this in the days when you didn’t need a degree in Arts Management to be let loose in a venue, and could multi-task), which featured new-kid-on-the-filmmaking-block Mike Leigh’s first feature *Bleak Moments*, in which Mike Bradwell played a transient South London guitarist, the lost and lonely Norman. To those of us ‘of a certain age’, the 70s punk ethos will always rule our souls. Mike Bradwell’s take on the ‘here’s three chords, now form a band’ line is thus: ‘Find a play. Squat a building. Steal a van. Now make a show.’ Well go on, what are you waiting for?

Of course the history of Hull Truck features heavily in Bradwell’s book, as does working with Mike Leigh (on stage, then on screen). But we are also treated to the onstage mass orgasms of *The Living Theatre*; eating fire with Bob Hoskins; and becoming an underwater escapologist (reluctantly – hence the book’s title) in the Ken Campbell Roadshow. Oh and then there was his proper job, running the Bush Theatre in West London for ten years – in which the theatre-punk renegade finds himself dealing with Health & Safety officers and funders galore. All this is interesting, but for this reviewer, the best bits are the tales from the early days: after all, who could resist a chapter entitled ‘Who Put the Cunt in Scunthorpe?’ especially when the opening line is ‘It was not easy to make revolutionary theatre in Scunthorpe in 1968.’

In his foreword, Mike Leigh recounts Bradwell’s attempt (before he’d even written the thing), to get a print-worthy quote for the book. ‘I wasn’t sure what would suit,’ says Leigh, ‘so he suggested “Buy this book. It is a work of genius. Laugh? I almost shat.” Well, I read it and it gave me diarrhoea.’ And what better endorsement could you ask for than that?

DMP

The Art of Acting... and how to master it

David Carter
Creative Essentials / Kamera Books
ISBN: 978-1-842243-221-1
£12.99 pbk
www.kamerabooks.com

It is easy, here in the hallowed halls of Total Theatre, to fall into the trap of thinking that there are no longer any divides in theatre-making practice, and that evolution of practice in the past three decades – in which physical and devised theatre and ‘new writing’ have moved ever closer – means that we are sharing so much of the same territory. Then there has been the inroads of, on the one hand, contemporary collaborative theatre-making and, on the other, multimedia cross-discipline live art, both beloved of so many of our university departments.

But then along comes a book like *The Art of Acting* to remind us that there’s a whole other world out there: a world in which statements like this are delivered with no hint of irony: ‘there are aspects to the job of directing a play that need not concern an actor ... set and costume design, planning the lighting and sound, and the like’. And then: ‘the balance of opinion among actors seems to be that, while there are some excellent directors around, the majority are not much help’.

In its favour, the speedy and brief run through of ‘the history of acting styles and techniques’ references the likes of Copeau, Grotowski and Brook in passing, and could be useful to someone who wants to get a straightforward précis of theatre history.

But most of the book is dedicated to a necessarily shallow ‘teach-yourself acting techniques’ approach, bolstered up with tips from famous actors and ‘actresses’ (as this book insists on labelling women actors). It also cautions against an over-reverential attitude toward Stanislavski, then references him endlessly throughout.

This book, I fear, will not be high on most Total Theatre Magazine readers’ wanted lists, and in its approach and attitude (born of David Carter’s 30 years in am dram, and reverential approach to ‘the theatre’) is probably about as far away from Mike Bradwell’s ethos as you could possibly imagine!

DMP

East/West: Distorting Mirrors

David Sanson & Tiago Bartolomeu Costa
(Editors)

TEAM Network

€6

www.team-network.eu

A strange, lyrical review-essay about Latvian director Alvis Hermanis, the Iron Curtain, and the songs of Simon and Garfunkel; a miniature, sideways reflection on the fall of the Berlin Wall, seen through the lens of a documentary film about the Berlin industrial music group Einstürzende Neubauten; a trip through the urban and mental landscapes of post-Soviet Georgia and Armenia that takes in kamikaze loggias (housing extensions), *euroremont* ('eurenovation' – political movement toward Westernisation, pro-euroatlanticism and pro-capitalism), and ad hoc public transport as a living map of the pre-Soviet city and language; a ten-page catalogue of sometimes obscene Russian porcelain figures representing riot police in explicit liaisons, women stretched over stacked bags of Vetonit brand wall plaster to accommodate the hard-hat builder behind, lesbians with rottweilers, etcetera.

East/West: Distorting Mirrors is broad and deep. Collecting from the 09/10 output of TEAM Network, a consortium of thirteen arts magazines from eleven European countries, it touches on dance, circus, sociology, visual art, architecture, film – and in the context of many different cultures and local histories. Each article is a window onto a carefully chosen and revealing scene.

Some slightly shonky translations can be put aside, as, all in all, it's a satisfying and nourishing read. Presentationally, the anthology is not quite a book, not quite a magazine – A4-size; perfect bound; thick, good paper. It looks very nice, feels very nice. Similar annuals are usually on sale for more like £10 or £15; this one is unmissable at 6 Euros.

JE

*Books & Other Media compiled by John
Ellingsworth & Dorothy Max Prior*

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UPDATE FESTIVALS



Harminder Singh Judge

In 2011 there's no National Review of Live Art, but in its place the festival that always surrounded it, **New Territories**, continues on. Covering a month and a half (mid February to end of March) and visiting theatre venues and public spaces across Glasgow, New Territories draws together work from the performance collective Black Market International, Richard Strange's legendary Cabaret Futura, Louise Lecavalier ('not seen in Glasgow since her totemic performances with La La La Human Steps in the 1990s'), and many more. There's also a major new strand to the festival: TIPA – This is Performance Art, a three-year programme delving into the history of performance art across the world (with 2011 focusing on Europe). As always, the festival programme is a rich and beautifully presented document, so check the New Territories website if you're curious.

One of the big guns in the spring season, the high-brow but demotic **SPILL Festival of Performance**, a biennial event trained on live art and experimental performance, returns to the Barbican in 2011 with faces old and new. Following on from his trilogy at SPILL 2009, Romeo Castellucci and his company Societas Raffaello Sanzio are back with *The Minister's Black Veil*, a new work that is 'freely inspired' by the work of the American writer Nathaniel Hawthorne. Also returning, UK artist Rajni Shah presents the world premiere of *Glorious*, a site-responsive, mutating, endlessly collaborative musical that addresses audiences' anger and fear at the

current state of our society and world, and Harminder Judge will, in another premiere, perform a new work taking (free) inspiration from Norwegian black metal and British heavy metal, *Do What Thou Wilt*. Elsewhere in the programme there's an audiovisual concert and art project to 'explore the potential to perceive invisible multi-substances of data permeating our world' (Ryoji Ikeda, *datamatics [ver.2.0]*); an installation film based on a radio performance work by Diamanda Galás that deals with asylum institutionalisation (Davide Pepe and Diamanda Galás, *SCHREI 27*); and a performance archive of audience voices spread across the Barbican (Helen Cole, *We See Fireworks*). As well, there's a film evening curated by festival director Robert Pacitti (classic B movies strung together by the theme of invasion), a platform for work by emerging artists, and an exhibition of a tarot deck reimaged by 22 contemporary artists.

Norfolk and Norwich Festival, an event that grew phenomenally under the directorship of Jonathan Holloway (who stepped down last year to take up a post at Perth International Arts Festival), again offers a rich, full-spectrum programme for those with total theatrical interests. Swiss director and DJ duo Zimmermann & de Perrot team up with the Moroccan Groupe Acrobatique de Tangier to present *Chouf Ouchouf*, an extraordinary and extraordinarily true work capturing the danger, joy and urgency of life in the Medina; Belgian company Ontroerend Goed are at the festival again with *A Game of You*, the

final part in their trilogy of immersive theatre (it's probably a good idea to read everything about it before buying a ticket); Mammalian Diving Reflex, the Canadian company behind *Haircuts by Children*, return with a piece that asks how much responsibility we can give to the youngest generation (*Children's Choice*); and, complimenting the indoor programme, outdoors there's a promenade show from Basque company Deabru Baltzak, *The Wolves*, as well as several of this year's Without Walls commissions (see separate news item).

Two new festivals on the radar in 2011 are **Digital Stages**, a six-day event to showcase performances across disciplines that incorporate digital media (dance, theatre and visual art), with discussion panels, talks and practical workshops, and **emerge**, a festival for emerging artists working in the outdoor arts (see separate news item).

Finally, with programmes unannounced at the time of writing, keep an eye out for news of **Bristol Mayfest**, reliably a busy and vibrant testament to the city's arts scene, Camden People's Centre's **Sprint**, Brighton's large **Festival and Fringe**, and Manchester's **Queer Up North**.



New Territories

14 February – 26 March 2011,
Glasgow | www.newmoves.co.uk

Sprint

March 2011, London |
www.cptheatre.co.uk

SPILL Festival of Performance

18–24 April 2011, London |
www.spillfestival.com

Digital Stages

22–27 April 2011, East London |
www.digitalstagesfestival.co.uk

Norfolk and Norwich Festival

6–21 May 2011, Norwich |
www.nnf11.nnfestival.org.uk

Brighton Festival

7–29 May 2011, Brighton |
www.brightonfestival.org

Brighton Festival Fringe

7–30 May 2011, Brighton |
www.brightonfestivalfringe.org.uk

Emerge Festival

May 2011, Winchester |
www.emergefestival.co.uk

Queer Up North

May 2011, Manchester |
www.queerupnorth.com

Prague Quadrennial

The Olympics of scenography, the Prague Quadrennial, returns in 2011 for its twelfth edition, and, like most genre- or artform- or discipline-specific events, we currently find it taking vigorous action to dissolve the borders of its historic identity.

Speaking to TT, Sodja Lotker, the artistic director of the Quadrennial, explains: 'In the last fifteen years we've been trying to extend the field of scenography and show that scenography appears in many, many disciplines – not only dramatic theatre. And another important thing is we've been trying to show the context of live performance and live events, because taking scenography out of context is a deadly thing.'

So what is the Quadrennial? Not a festival, more than an exposition, it's a cluster of projects that encompasses performances, workshops, presentations, lectures, a temporary library of artist portfolios, and an online E-scenography network – all circling around a massive design exhibition, which, like the Venice Biennale, invites countries (this year 62) to curate and present their own areas. Among its many parts, the Quadrennial's most interesting element to Total Theatre is the Intersection project, which argues for scenography as a discipline between theatre and visual arts. Sodja: 'The idea is to create an exhibition which is exhibiting live performance – and it's about 2000m² and inside these

2000m² we're creating 30 white cube boxes. It's going to be open for eight hours a day, 11am – 7pm, and actually these boxes are little galleries and theatres. Half of them are going to be more installation and video and so on, but the other half are one-to-one performances. The boxes go from 2m² to 4m², and the live performances are done by visual artists and theatre people.'

When it first began the Quadrennial was focused on design for traditionally staged theatre. 'During communism the Prague Quadrennial was one of the rare places eastern and western artists could meet,' says Sodja, 'and that was the charm of it. A lot of international organisations like the ITI [International Theatre Institute] were made in Prague around the Quadrennial because this was the place they could meet. And then in the 90s we really had a problem because this main charm was gone and people started travelling and everyone had access to information and now you can see things on the internet – so it was very hard for us to find a new reason of existence and why you do these things and what the context is.'

Sodja maintains that the Quadrennial was never an industry event, that it was always for artists, but admits that its audience has in the past been mostly other scenographers and those familiar with the discipline. Bringing in more casual audiences has been a long-term aim, and when fire damage prevented the festival retuning to its old home – Prague's extraordinary, unhinged Industrial Palace (Sodja describes it as 'an art nouveau fairground') – the organisers saw it as an opportunity to change the relationship of the Quadrennial to the public. 'In looking for a new place in the centre we had to change the dramaturgy of the thing and actually divide these spaces around the centre of Prague,' says Sodja. 'Which is actually good, because now the main exposition is in this constructivist, white art gallery, so it's a new context, a visual arts context, for scenography. The vision is to move towards becoming an interdisciplinary performance design event – something which is missing in the world.'

UPDATE VENUES + ORGANISATIONS



Wired Aerial Theatre



Theatre Alibi Goucher's War



Circolombia Urban

Without Walls, the consortium of eight of the UK's leading arts festivals, continues its mission to bring the best new outdoor theatre and performance to as wide an audience as possible. The Without Walls commissions for 2011 are: Bad Taste Cru, *Tribal Assembly* (dance); Candoco and Scarabeus, *Heartland* (aerial dance theatre); Mark Smith & Rachel Gadsden with Deaf Men Dancing, *Alive!* (dance theatre); Graeae, *The Iron Man* (large-scale puppetry/theatre); Red Herring, *That's The Way To Do It!* (walkabout theatre); Whalley Range All Stars with Babok, *Imaginary Friends* (mobile puppet performance); and Wired Aerial Theatre and Nigel Jamieson, *Title tbc* (large-scale aerial dance theatre). The 2011 commissions will be performed at a selection of the eight Without Walls festivals.

Rules and Regs is pleased to announce some new development programmes for 2011. First up, Rules and Regs at South Hill Park, R&R's flagship programme, returns to SHP for its fourth year, this time with Jo Bannon, Florence Peake and Melanie Wilson (performances 25 & 26 March). Then there are two new collaborative strands: Digital R&R, a new digital art development programme with Videoclub (14 March – 13 May), and Relay, a new programme for visual artists co-curated by Quay Arts and A Space (22 March – 30 April). Finally, Parallel Play is a peer development group at the Nightingale Theatre, Brighton that adapts the basic Rules and Regs model. For more info see: www.rulesandregs.org

Warwick Arts Centre: This spring there's a triple-bill of military performances at Warwick Arts Centre: *The Soldier's Song*, Quarantine's installation offering an intimate, screen karaoke liaison with a currently serving soldier (audience members enter a booth and choose which of seven soldiers they want to sing to them); Theatre Alibi's *Goucher's War*, the surreal tale of a darkly-minded children's writer co-opted by the military (with animation by Forkbeard Fantasy); and National Theatre of Scotland's long-running piece about the Iraq war, *Black Watch*. Dates throughout March; check the Warwick Arts Centre for details. www.warwickartscentre.co.uk

Sadler's Wells: In March Sadler's Wells hosts the first ever London appearance of Bartabas, a director, performer and stage designer renowned for his work in the equestrian arts. *The Centaur and the Animal*, performed with Bartabas himself on stage, follows the interaction between man and horse during the process of dressage (the highest level of training a horse can achieve) in a settling and reconciliation of two characters that leads eventually to the mythical symbiosis, *The Centaur*. 1-6 March 2011. www.sadlerswells.com

Jacksons Lane: For those who didn't make it into the sold-out run at the London International Mime Festival, Faulty Optic's *Flogging a Dead Horse* is at Jacksons Lane 3 & 4 May 2011 – a piece which starts eleven kilometres down in the deepest ocean, where ink blots, intercoms and moon theory are all part of an investigation into the similarities between seabed sludge and the human brain. Also transferring from LIMF, Upswing's *Fallen*, an exploration of identity, stories and exile, is at the venue 6 & 7 April 2011. www.jacksonslane.org.uk



Rules and Regs

Roundhouse: Two works by young artists at the Roundhouse this spring. Following a sell-out run at CircusFest 2010, Circolombia are back with a reworking of their 'gritty and modern' show *Urban* (4–6 April). Then *The Fat Girl Gets a Haircut and other Stories* (26 April – 7 May) comprises thirteen candid tales on themes of love, family, sexuality and religion: a boy collects tears in carefully labelled jam jars; a girl is horrified that her best friend thinks her father is 'hot'; and a young boy bricks himself up in a Lego tower... Created and performed by a company of teenagers, with artist/director Mark Storer. www.roundhouse.org.uk

Organisations

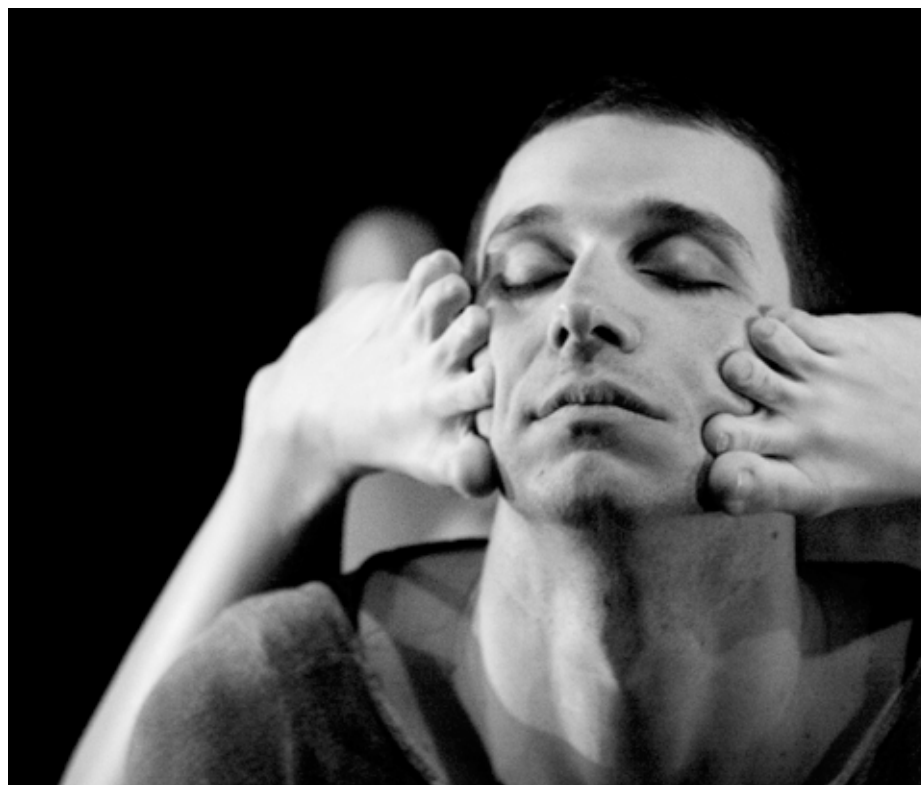
Theatre Artist in Residence at Middlesex

University: Middlesex University's Department of Performing Arts has created a new theatre artist in residence position to support new and emerging work. Based at Trent Park, the department has a range of performance and rehearsal spaces and well-equipped technical workshops/studios. The successful candidate(s) should be a practising performer/director/maker at any stage in their career who would like the opportunity to have a workplace to continue and develop their own work. The department are particularly interested in applications from artists whose work focuses on: video and performance, writing for performance, or devising. The artist(s) appointed will be given access to appropriate studio facilities (May – November) to use at any time (8am – 5pm) and during holiday times with prior arrangement. For more information: n.herrett@mdx.ac.uk

Fresh Tips is a day of advice for younger artists working with live art from experienced practitioners including Ron Athey, Stacy Makishi, Oreet Ashery, Curious, John Jordan, Adelaide Bannerman and Lois Weaver. Fresh Tips is part of Queen Mary's AiR project to sustain established live art practitioners, support emerging artists, and invest in the spaces that nurture their work and audiences. At the School of English & Drama, Queen Mary, University of London 13 March from 1.30pm. Organised by Queen Mary and the Live Art Development Agency www.airproject.qmul.ac.uk | airproject@qmul.ac.uk

Emerge Festival: The Faculty of Arts at The University of Winchester – in collaboration with Winchester Hat Fair, Eastleigh's The Point, and the street theatre company Wet Picnic – is this year staging the emerge festival 2011. Emerge is a street arts festival specifically designed to support the professional and artistic development of emerging outdoor arts companies and individual artists, as well as to help create a platform of support networks across the UK for those seeking to establish professional careers within this rapidly growing sector. The festival wants to hear from aspiring, enthusiastic young companies and individual performers (or duos) who are looking for an opportunity to showcase their work. Check the website for more info: www.emergefestival.co.uk

UPDATE TRAINING + PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Tmesis

Mick Barnfather Easter Courses: Mick Barnfather is running three courses this Easter: Play, Rhythm and the Ensemble (18 & 19 April), a workshop which examines how stage presence and the dynamics of play between actors contributes to a vibrant ensemble, and how rhythm can be used to surprise and to create comic and dramatic moments; Characters (20 & 21 April), looking at ways of finding larger than life comic characters using a number of different improvisations and methods including use of the half mask, and with the focus on the fun of playing another person, looking at their physicality, their voice and above all the imagination that defines these characterisations; and Clown and Comedy (25-29 April), a workshop looking at what makes us laugh, the pleasure to be ridiculous in the space and how we can be funny. www.mickbarnfather.com

Forkbeard Fantasy are offering two six-day residential courses in 2011. These Summer Schools give you the chance to discover new ways of working in an inclusive, stimulating environment. The courses take place at Forkbeard's Waterslade Studios in the heart of rural Devon, with glorious food, accommodation and creative inspiration provided. 15-22 July and 29 July – 5 August. Details and application forms can be found on the Forkbeard website: www.forkbeardfantasy.co.uk

The Au Brana Residency 2011 is an intensive investigation into modes of storytelling and material generation for performance led by OBRA, Matej Matejka and Leo Kay. This work session offers a rare opportunity for artists to be propelled by an ensemble whilst enriching their individual creative practice in an environment created to support artistic endeavour. The residency is directed at performance practitioners with an interest in theatre training and devising, and is limited to fifteen participants. 6-27 July. €750 + €22 per night accommodation. www.aubrana.com | info@aubrana.com

Duende is running a series of ensemble physical theatre workshops incorporating psychophysical training, improvisation, and ensemble development. Workshops in 2011 include: Berlin (March); Athens, Thessaloniki, Mitlini (April); South of France (May); Yorkshire (June – September); and Stockholm (November). The work is led by John Britton, using processes developed from both European Laboratory Theatre and Dance Improvisation. It will focus on the importance of pleasure, attention to task, structuring of attention, connectedness to others, discipline, freedom in improvisation, and developing and maintaining creative flow. For more see: www.ensemblephysicaltheatre.com | johnbritton@ensemblephysicaltheatre.com



Mintfest International Summer School for Street Arts 2011: 'New and emerging' street artists are again being offered the chance to work with leading national and international artists on a ten-day residential course in Kendal, Cumbria. The course will run 27 August – 5 September and will give students the opportunity to work intensively with one of three highly experienced artists on a show that they will perform at Mintfest, one of the UK's leading street arts festivals. For further information:

www.lakesalive.org | jenny@kendalartsinternational.com

Play, Space and Create: At the Rag Factory in London on 5 & 6 and 12 & 13 March, Wet Picnic will be running Play, Space and Create, two intensive weekends of workshops based on the teachings of Jacques Lecoq. It is a unique opportunity to work with a professional company to explore working as an ensemble through movement theatre, storytelling and improvisation, and for participants to develop new skills and devising techniques. The workshops are for professionals, semi-professionals and students who wish to complement their studies or are looking for fresh ways to approach theatre and find new creative impulses.

www.wetpicnic.com | penny@wetpicnic.com

Physical Fest 7: 28 May -4 June in Liverpool, Tmesis Theatre host Physical Fest 7, another exciting edition of their annual international physical theatre festival with eight days of workshops, classes, events and performances from the world's best practitioners. The line-up (tbc) includes Lorna Marshall, Gey Pin, Nigel Charnock (DV8) and Theatre Ad Infinitum, and the festival is also accepting submissions from companies wishing to perform in 'Fest Live', a showcase which presents extracts of new physical performance work from both emerging and established artists. For more information:

www.physicalfest.com | physicalfest@tmesistheatre.com

Conferences

How Does Your Garden Grow: How Does Your Garden Grow? – Cultivating Theatre and Performing Arts is a conference to consider models of theatre and performance development, especially in regional contexts, and how such work can have a beneficial relationship with the host communities. Its main aim is to examine how innovative theatre can best be nurtured, taking examples from international contexts and looking at the role of regional theatres, regionally-based companies and development agencies. It will also look at the contribution of non-theatre-specific organisations, especially the education, health and youth sectors, and investigate what evidence there is of the many benefits regional theatre development can bring to communities and how it can enhance regional identity, widen access to the arts, and contribute to local economies. Organised by PANeK in partnership with the School of Arts and Gulbenkian Theatre, University of Kent, Canterbury and with support from Arts Council England and Kent County Council. Conference fee: £100.

www.panek.org.uk | cathy@panek.org.uk

UPDATE PERFORMER + COMPANY

Benji Reid *The Devil has Quentin's Heart*



Bootworks Theatre



Analogue begin a 22-date UK tour of their 2009 Edinburgh hit *Beachy Head* in February and run until the end of March. The critically acclaimed multimedia show has been revised and recast since the Fringe, and a script is being published by Oberon to coincide with the tour. In April, the company continue development work on new show *2401 Objects*, a co-production with New Wolsey Theatre Ipswich and Oldenburgisches Staatstheater, developed at Farnham Maltings and National Theatre Studio. In May they tour the UK with *Lecture Notes on a Death Scene*, an immersive one-to-one performance experience.
www.analogueproductions.co.uk

Benji Reid: An ultra-successful Wall Street trader, Quentin, discovers life in the underbelly of New York as an alcoholic living on the streets. He sees that greed knows no limits and makes one last wager to save his soul before Satan comes knocking. Benji Reid's *The Devil Has Quentin's Heart* is a twisted, funky and perverse modern-day tragedy incorporating performance, storytelling and dance theatre. At Contact, Manchester 2 March; Nuffield Theatre, Lancaster 4 March; New Wolsey, Ipswich 8 March; Albany, London 10 March; Nuffield Theatre, Southampton 24-26 March; and the Northcott, Exeter 1 April.
www.breakingcycles.co.uk

Bootworks Theatre: The celebrated Black Box continues to tour current shows *Une Boite Andalouse*, *The Good the Bad and the Box* and *The Little Box of Horrors*, in addition to a new children's show based on Oliver Jeffers' *The Incredible Book Eating Boy*. Other new projects include Baby Boxes, commissioned by Making Tracks, and The Black Box³, a 'green' and portable performance venue that promises to expand the company's audience capacity. Whilst Baby Boxes sees a number of 'mini box' installations mounted onto tricycles, the revolutionary Black Box³ will host an exciting programme of work, kitted out with full lighting, multimedia and sound capabilities.
www.bootworkstheatre.co.uk

Bottled: From January 2011, Bottled operates from both London and Bern, with their performance/outreach programmes regularly taking place in both the UK and Switzerland. The second performance of *Der Schachspieler* (*The Chess Player*), developed at Centre Dürrenmatt Neuchatel in collaboration with Swiss musicians, took place 17 February 2011 at Jazzwerkstatt Bern. At the end of March the ensemble will continue working on *Pure Pleasure Seekers*, a performance which will be on tour in 2012. Throughout the spring the company are also delivering a Creative Partnerships project at Bulmershe Secondary working with teachers to develop creative teaching methods using technology.
www.bottledfed.org | info@bottledfed.org



UPDATE
The Chipolatas *Gentlemen of the Road*



Famous and Divine

Canopy: A raucous, northern peahen and her dandy, new romantic son are doing a spot of 'subtle' self-promotion. They're on their way to a speed-dating event. Mrs Preeners wants to see her Graham settle down with a nice bird but Graham has other ideas... Think Spring Watch meets Blind Date circa 1985. *The Preeners* brings you comedy characters, sensational animated costumes and a healthy dollop of audience participation. Canopy hit the road with *The Preeners* in June. There are still a few dates available in the calendar so if you are programming for outdoor arts and theatre events get in touch:
www.canopyintheorchard.com

Edward Rapley has returned from training with Philippe Gaulier in Paris and is putting the finishing touches to the final part of the Self trilogy, *Who Knows Where*, via various scratch nights. At the same time he is working on booking the three shows for touring. His next project is a verbatim reading of incident books from pubs and bars across England. This work will form the beginning of the England trilogy. Edward will also be working with Darkin Ensemble and Lucy Foster and Chloe Dechery. He is now one of the new supported artists of the Basement, Brighton.
www.edwardrapley.co.uk

Famous and Divine create devised work which explores the hidden, secret, and silenced areas of women's lives in contemporary society, seeking out that which is unspoken, inexpressible, transgressive in the experience of being a woman. In their new piece, *Fugitive Songs*, two women 'steal away' from their everyday lives into a fantasy created from their silenced desires. After the premiere 18 March at Bath Spa University the show goes to The Brewery Theatre, Bristol 10 April, and Brighton Media Centre Studio (as part of Brighton Festival Fringe) 7 & 8 May.
www.famousanddivine.org



The Paper Birds Others

Foursight Theatre and Portuguese company Teatro do Montemuro's new show *Pertencia* tours the UK in March following a national tour of Portugal. *Pertencia* is a wet nurse. She works for The Butcher. For his is no ordinary shop and he is no ordinary butcher. Actors from the two companies portray a host of vivid characters, mixing Portuguese, English, live music, song and physical imagery. Lyrical and grotesque, poignant and funny, the production moves between the real and fantastical as *Pertencia* uncovers the reality of The Butcher's business and the dark revelation of her past. www.foursighttheatre.co.uk

Laura Mugridge: Comedian and theatre-maker Laura Mugridge won a Fringe First at the 2010 Edinburgh Festival Fringe with her solo storytelling show *Running on Air*. The intimate and charming show is for five people at a time, and takes place in the back of her yellow vintage VW campervan 'Joni'. Following her Fringe success, Laura is taking Joni and the show on the road throughout spring 2011. Confirmed tour dates include Harrogate Theatre, Brewhouse Theatre, Beaford Arts, Paisley Arts Centre, Drum Theatre Plymouth, South Street in Reading, and Wales Millennium Centre. For more information and upcoming tour dates see Laura's blog: www.adventuresinwellingtons.blogspot.com

Karla Shacklock: Whilst in residence at various theatres in the UK and Het Atelier in the Netherlands, international choreographers and dancers, Lucie Petrusova (formerly of T.R.A.S.H) and Karla Shacklock (formerly of Precarious) have brought together a cross-disciplinary ensemble to create a boundary blurring double bill – *Nobody* and *Beyond*. Produced by L'avventura in Tilburg and Productiehuis Brabant in Den Bosch and supported by Arts Council England, the new work combines cutting-edge costume design, high-octane raw performance and live composition, and will tour the Netherlands, Czech Republic and the UK in April/May. For more information and tour dates: www.karlashacklock.com



Openbatch Theatre



Natural Theatre Company: Building work is well underway on the company's fantastic new youth street theatre studio, The Mezzanine, with a grand opening planned for mid-May. Amidst clouds of brick-dust Natural's administration bravely continues to organise UK and worldwide touring, youth projects, a residency at Melbourne Comedy Festival and a large-scale event for April's Bath Comedy Festival, The White Wine Arts Trail, involving sixteen actors, Arthur Smith and a big red Routemaster bus (and lashings of white wine!). www.naturaltheatre.co.uk & www.bathcomedy.com

NIE: Join NIE for the UK premiere of their new nautical show, *Tales from a Sea Journey*. Seafaring myths, rambunctious shanties and vivid stories from the deep abound in this epic piece of theatre – inspired by a journey across the world's saltiest stage. NIE combine storytelling, physical theatre, live music, multiple languages and their European ensemble for this new show which moors up at Cambridge's The Junction, Colchester's Lakeside Theatre, and Oxford's North Wall Arts Centre, before an extended tour in the autumn. www.nie-theatre.com

Openbatch Theatre observe everyday life – their own and others. They like the little things, the small stories, the unexpected and the expected. They want to use the theatre event to create a unique experience. Formed at Dartington College of Arts, Openbatch are now based in Bristol, where they are working on their current project, *Home*. There is something sinister about *Home*. In amongst the lamps and wallpaper, stories are unravelled. Stories that are kept behind closed doors. *Home* mixes up the real and the fabricated. It'll feature as part of Flourish at the Barbican Theatre Plymouth on 4 March. www.openbatchtheatre.co.uk



People Show

Karla Shacklock **Paper Birds:** It's been a busy winter for The Paper Birds. The company ran an intensive ACE-funded R&D period, during which they worked with Rod Dixon of Red Ladder and Sue Parish from Sphinx Theatre Company. Sadly their first 'Feminist Futures' symposium was 'snowed off' but will be re-scheduled for a brighter month! In February and March the company will be touring *Others* to 22 venues Nationwide – take a look at the website for venues/dates. In April the Paper Birds will also begin devising their new show with partnering venues The National, The Junction and the Lawrence Batley Theatre. www.thepaperbirds.com

People Show: People Show takes over The Pumphouse Gallery in Battersea Park, 11-15 May. The company will create one of their trademark multi-disciplinary, live multimedia experiences in collaboration with students from Roehampton University and ALRA as part of Wandsworth Arts Festival. People Show will work with Wandsworth arts groups, Battersea Park visitors and local residents to create a show that reflects on the Pumphouse's 150 year relationship with the people of Battersea. The gallery will be open during the day with installations, and will come alive at night with ticketed performances. www.pumphousegallery.org.uk & www.peopleshow.co.uk

Platform 4 are making *Memory POINT(S)* in association with The Point in Eastleigh. Inspired by people met at the local Alzheimer's Society, the piece will involve filmmaker Gerry White and musician Pete Flood from Bellowhead, and will be a unique headphone walk around the Point's unknown spaces (spring 2012). At the same time, in autumn 2011, P4 will be touring their *Macbeth*, a taut psychodrama brought alive by the sonic experiments of guitarist Bic Hayes (ex-Cardiacs) and composer Jules Bushell. Characters appear and disappear from the shadows as part of a nightmarish vision... www.platform4.org

Publick Transport is back on tour 23 March – 9 April 2011 with *The Department of Smelling Pistakes*, a hilarious satire on mind-numbing bureaucracy and Party paranoia. Set in a Tatiesque-cum-Orwellian world of tannoy broadcasts, random directives, microdots and listening devices, *The Department of Smelling Pistakes* is a delightfully daft piece of slapstick comedy about a Soviet civil servant's attempt to hold onto his job even though he can't remember what it is, while an Inspector threatens to wrestle it from him by putting him through a series of bizarre tests. www.publicktransport.com



Publick Transport

Rajni Shah Projects: A haunting and unusual new musical featuring performances by local musicians and residents at each tour location, *Glorious* explores the spaces of fear and hope that have emerged with our increased awareness of climate change, shifts in border policies, and the dramatic impact of the financial collapse. At a time when many people feel disempowered and frustrated, this production by Rajni Shah and company beautifully embraces a sense of hope in an unknown future. Premiere 19-21 April at Barbican Silk Street Theatre as part of SPILL. www.rajnishah.com

RedCape Theatre: From *Newbury with Love* is the new play from the award winning RedCape Theatre, a physical theatre company committed to telling true stories that matter, move and entertain. From *Newbury with Love* tells the intimate true story of daily life in two very different worlds, Newbury and Moldova, during a fascinating period of social and political history, and will include performances from Newbury Youth Theatre and pupils from the Aleccu Russo school in Chisinau, Moldova, who have been taking part in a cultural exchange and Facebook communication. The premiere performance is at Corn Exchange, Newbury 9 –12 March 2011. www.recapetheatre.co.uk

Red Herring has received a commission from the Without Walls street arts consortium to deliver *That's The Way To Do It*, produced by Time Won't Wait. The show is a raucous and alternative Punch and Judy show that sees our lovable rogues run amok in these anxious, credit-crunched times. Part walkabout, part performance, part installation, the show culminates in a tug of war with an enormous string of sausages. For touring details see: www.redherringproductions.co.uk & www.timewontwait.com

Shams: Following a successful run at Edinburgh 2010, Shams' installation-promenade show *Reykjavik* is due to tour across the UK from May onwards, playing at the Albany, Birmingham mac, Stockton ARC, Contact Theatre in Manchester, and, finally, the Roundhouse for two weeks in August. For 2011 Shams are also developing a new visual theatre production, *Thin Ice*, set in Greenland during World War Two. For more on both projects see the company's website: www.shams.org.uk



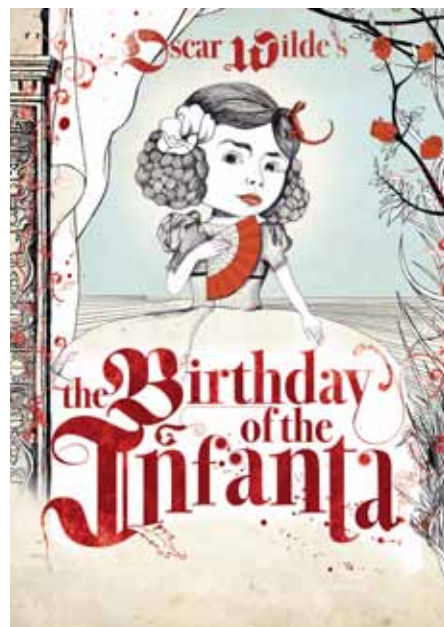
Red Herring That's The Way To Do It

Théâtre Sans Frontières is touring its brand new production in simple French for 8 to 12 year olds, *Les Aventures de Lapin*, to UK schools from February to April 2011. Based on amusing tales from the French-speaking Caribbean, *Les Aventures de Lapin* has evolved from a LinkedUp collaborative drama and French project with schools in North and South Tyneside. *Lipsynch*, the nine-hour epic celebration of language and voice, co-produced with Robert Lepage and Ex Machina, will be appearing at the Aréna Patrick-Poulin in June as part of Quebec's Carrefour International de Théâtre. www.tsf.org.uk

The Chipolatas were recently awarded the 'Bachelor of Arts Diploma' for best family show (as voted for by the public) at the World Circus Festival, Geneva 2010. Dates for their show *Gentlemen of the Road* are already confirmed for this season in the UK, Europe and South East Asia, with more to follow. For further details and an updated tour diary see: www.chipolatas.com

The Frequency D'ici is the new name for the collaboration between Jamie Wood, Tom Frankland and Sebastien Lawson, working with producer Ric Watts. The company created the 2008 Fringe First winner *Paperweight*, and throughout 2010 have begun to develop its follow up, *Free Time Radical*, a co-production with the New Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich, which has also been developed at Jersey Arts Centre, Norden Farm Centre for the Arts and New Greenham Arts. Public performances of the new show take place at the New Wolsey and Pleasance, Islington in March 2011, ahead of a run at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in August.

Travelling Light have been working with Polka Theatre to co-produce an adaptation of Oliver Jeffers' award-winning book *Lost and Found*. After a highly successful four-month sold-out run in Polka's Adventure Theatre, the show hits the road in February, with the tour opening 24 February at the West Yorkshire Playhouse. After taking in venues up and down the country, the tour will end 5 June at the Tobacco Factory in Bristol. Dates and venues can be found on the company website: www.travellinglighttheatre.org.uk



Trestle Unmasked



Théâtre Sans Frontières Lipsynch



Unpacked Robin and the Big Freeze

Trestle Unmasked presents *The Birthday of the Infanta*, an adapted work based upon the bittersweet story by Oscar Wilde, performed in Trestle's unique physical style. Adults and youngsters alike are cordially invited to join the Spanish Princess at her twelfth birthday party. This is the only day of the year the Infanta is allowed to play with other children, but mixing with those not of her own rank comes at a price. *The Birthday of the Infanta* draws on the passion and rhythms of Spain, taking the audience on a compelling journey through the constraints of social hierarchies and showing them the price paid for love. For tour dates see: www.trestle.org.uk

Unpacked: Having recently showcased some new work at Battersea Arts Centre as part of the Puppet Centre Trust Showcase, Unpacked are now touring their hugely successful winter show *Robin and the Big Freeze*, commissioned by Brighton Dome. The company will also continue to tour their kids show *Jumping Mouse* and will be at the Spark Children's Arts Festival in Leicester in June. www.unpacked.org



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Dramatic Space	31st Jan – 18th Feb	Clown and Comical Worlds	28th Feb – 18th Mar

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Email: course.enquiries@winchester.ac.uk



Out & About

David Leddy *Susurrus*Kieran Hurley *Hitch*. Photo Nial Walker

Pippa Bailey

I am determined to be cheerful. I won't take full responsibility for the doom and gloom, there are external forces at play, but attitude is everything and I am being positive.

As 2010 drew towards an end UK students were taking to the streets over government plans to increase tuition fees. In many cases support to humanities courses will be abolished altogether. This situation is intolerable. The public outcry, plus the size and number of demonstrations was deeply heartening. I went straight from one such march to speak at the Brit School in November, to a room full of aspiring performers, about site-specific performance.

The Brit School is the only free secondary school for performing arts and technology in Britain, based in Croydon on the outskirts of London. Anxious to separate itself from the stage-schools churning out 'tits and teeth' showbiz stars, the school offers tuition in a range of performance styles and well equips its students for further education. The music department is famous for teaching the likes of popstars Amy Winehouse and Leona Lewis. The performing arts department has also had its share of success stories – Ashley Madekwe has graced the stage at the Royal Court and the Royal Shakespeare Company; and Cush Jumbo, who has performed at the Lyric and the Bush Theatre, is another one to watch out for. And as a random hit, ex-student Sam Hextall became Paris Hilton's British Best Friend through the reality TV series! But teachers are realistic: not everyone who attends the Brit School will go on to dizzying heights and they ensure their students get a well-rounded view of the range of roles open to them. I found the group interested, engaged

and keen to learn, asking intelligent questions in order to prepare for their site-specific show in January. Against the backdrop of the student demos I paused to think about how drama teaches empathy and curiosity in people. We need it to better understand ourselves and other people in the world who may be different from us.

End of year business included a gathering of ITC membership for the AGM at the Old Vic in London where the hot topic was funding from non-government sources. There was discussion about the American model of philanthropy, which the government is proposing to offset the public spending cuts. An expert panel included Sue Gillie, a social enterprise philanthropist; David Hall from the Foyle Foundation talking about the role of charitable trusts and foundations; and Craig Hassall, managing director of English Touring Ballet on corporate and individual giving. The afternoon was devoted to breakout sessions and one that particularly caught my eye was the new WE DID THIS 'crowd funding' website (www.wedidthis.org.uk). Crowd funding is popular in America, most notably used during the Barack Obama presidential campaign. The principle is simple – instead of asking a few to give a lot of money, you ask a lot of people to each give a little. Charities have been practicing this model for some time but it is still rare in the arts. WE DID THIS works on a time-limited campaign (three months, say) and you determine a target sum to raise. The first rule is: if you don't meet your target, you won't get the money. There are potential problems with this approach, particularly as artists often find a way to produce their work without funding and this may lose supporters' confidence. But Ed

Whiting and his team are keen to find suitable projects and are consulting with the sector. The prospects are exciting.

My midwinter downtime was spent with family and friends in Australia. The week between Christmas and New Year can be dead time, but the Woodford Folk Festival is a brilliant stocking filler. The festival is held on a 500-acre environmental parkland located on the Sunshine Coast Hinterland on Jinibara Country, just over one hour north of Brisbane, Australia. This event officially starts on 27 December but many arrive on Christmas Day. It finishes on 1 January with a spectacular fire event. Predominantly a music festival – featuring folk, alternative and world music – WFF also offers a range of performance and live art. Flipside Circus was a stand-out show, with astonishingly talented youngsters bouncing off the walls. Bunk Puppets, shortlisted for a 2010 Total Theatre Award, ran shadow puppet workshops and performed their new work-in-progress. Quality street performance was sadly lacking this year, but the Woodford Cricket Team cheered the crowds, most of who were mourning the Ashes test games as the English trounced the Aussies. It rained – torrential, tropical rain – and the mud equaled the mire sometimes found at Glastonbury. (The start of the flooding that was to drown Queensland in coming weeks). WFF celebrated its 30th year in 2010/11 and offers a wonderfully sustainable event, where people are encouraged to think about how human effort can bring positive effect on earth. It's a joyous way to start a new year.

Pippa Bailey is director of Total Theatre, who produce the Total Theatre Awards. See www.totaltheatre.org.uk

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greenroom FUTURE EVENTS

MARCH

THU 3	Turn 2011	Dance Platform
FRI 4	Turn 2011	Dance Platform
SAT 5	Turn 2011	Dance Platform
SAT 5	Turn 2011	Mixed Movement
FRI 11	What We Made	Matt & Nath [SeedFund]
FRI 11	World of Wrong	The Two Wrongs
FRI 18	Once Upon A Something	Trace Theatre
FRI 18	And Hell Followed With Them	Drunken Chorus
FRI 25	On The Sofa With...	Chris Fitzsimmons [SeedFund]
FRI 25	Growing Old With You	Search Party

APRIL

FRI 1	One - Part 3	Rebekka Platt & Dave Birchall [SeedFund]
FRI 1	Shringara: Journey of Desire	Seeta Patel
THU 7	Method Lab: Two Peas Without A Pod	Levantes Dance Theatre
THU 7	Method Lab: I Belong To This Band!	Kings of England
THU 7	single.com	Sian Williams [SeedFund]
FRI 8	Method Lab: Two Peas Without A Pod	Levantes Dance Theatre
FRI 8	Method Lab: I Belong To This Band!	Kings of England
FRI 8	single.com	Sian Williams [SeedFund]

MAY

FRI 6	Abandoned Things: A Static Change Project	Joseph Lau [Turn 2010 Prize Winner]
FRI 13	Valerie	Mary Eddowes [SeedFund]
FRI 13	Epic	Foster & Déchery
FRI 20	We Are Heroes	Anonymous [SeedFund]
FRI 20	The End	Michael Pinchbeck

JUNE

FRI 3	EDge 2011	London Contemporary Dance School Company
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The Interminable Suicide
of Gregory Church

Deabru Beltzak (France)
The Wolves, World premiere

**Fleur Elise Noble
(Australia)**
2 Dimensional Life of Her

Graeae (UK)
The Iron Man
World premiere

**Groupe Acrobatique
de Tangier / Zimmermann
& de Perrot
(Morocco / Switzerland)**
Chouf Ouchouf

**Jerome Bel & Pichet
Klunchun
(France / Thailand)**
Pichet Klunchun and myself

**Mammalian Diving Reflex
(Canada)**
The Children's Choice
Awards, UK premiere

**Mariano Pensotti
(Argentina)**
The Past is a Grotesque
Animal, UK premiere

**Mehr Theatre Group
(Iran)**
Where were you on
January 8th? UK premiere

**Ontroerend Goed
(Belgium)**
A Game of You

**Pichet Klunchun Dance
Company (Thailand)**
Nijinsky Siam, UK premiere

Red Herring (UK)
That's The Way To Do It!
World premiere

Strut & Fret (Australia)
Cantina, European premiere

Tilted Productions (UK)
SEASAW, World premiere

**Vivarium Studio
(France)**
L'Effet De Serge
UK premiere

**Whalley Range All Stars
(UK)**
Imaginary Friends
World premiere

**Wired Aerial Theatre
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Pichet Klunchun Dance Company
Nijinsky Siam

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