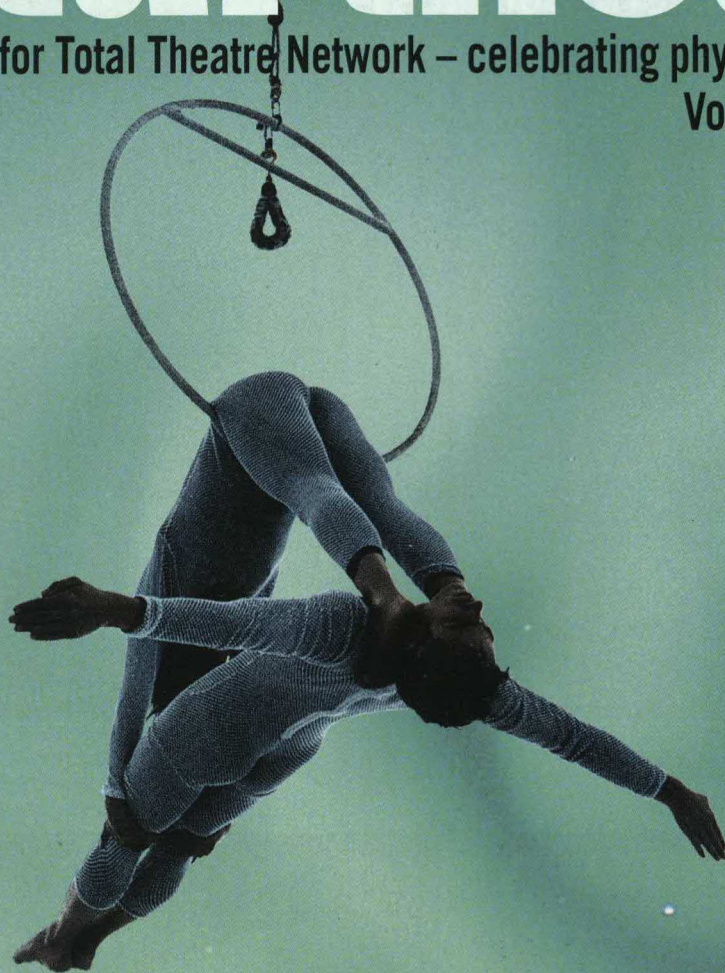


total theatre magazine

The magazine for Total Theatre Network – celebrating physical and visual performance

Volume 13 Issue 1 Spring 2001

£4.00 (free to members)



The Joy of Circus

The 2000 CircElation Project

More props – and a bigger set

The Right Size's new show

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total theatre ^{magazine}

Celebrating and promoting physical and visual performance

VOLUME 13 ♦ ISSUE 1 ♦ SPRING 2001

Welcome to the first issue of Volume 13 of Total Theatre Magazine – and the number is anything but unlucky. As I write, Theatre de Complicite have just guested at the National Theatre and Shockheaded Peter is playing to packed and appreciative houses in London's West End. It can only be a good thing that shows so imaginative and rich are being seen in 'mainstream' venues by new audiences. You never know – they might develop a taste for the kind of performance that most members of Total Theatre Network are already experiencing or creating.

Circus seems to be going from strength to strength, and this issue starts with Dorothy Max Prior's report on the 2000 CircElation project. Circus also features in one of the two Critical Practice debates covered in this edition; the other one deals with the role of the director. Dick McCaw takes a look at how physical theatre workshops can get people to learn mentally and physically, and Dymphna Callery meets The Right Size, who are performing their first devised show since Do You Come Here Often? In contrast, Foursight's Naomi Cooke has written a diary of the rehearsal process of the company's first non-devised show in its fourteen years of existence – a new translation of Medea.

Also in this issue, Anthony Dean writes about last year's international puppetry symposium; there are reports on directing a physical version of Waiting for Godot in a foreign language (now there's a challenge) and on the British Council's overseas touring seminar; and Enrique Pardo of Pantheatre answers the questions in our regular My Theatre questionnaire.

And that's it from me, your guest editor for this issue. My thanks go to John Daniel, Annabel Arndt and the magazine's editorial group – and especially to the new editor, Dorothy Max Prior – for all their help and support.

Toby Mitchell, Guest Editor

Total Theatre Magazine is published quarterly by Total Theatre Network, the UK network for physical and visual performance. If you would like to submit news, views, letters or advertise in the Summer issue, please note that the copy deadline is 7 May 2001. The next issue will cover the period July-September 2001.



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Norrskén by
Zin-Lit – see
Circus Arts News
and listings

Montage by
Dick Hutchinson
and Eva Finder

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London N1 6HD

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Printing
Multiprint
020 7733 9971

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Milia Petrillo

THE JOY OF CIRCUS

The CircElation project in November 2000 brought over 60 performers and directors together to spend a week exploring the relationship between circus and other performing arts disciplines.

DOROTHY MAX PRIOR reports

It is a Friday morning, and I'm in a cafe in Sheffield – the first time in my week with the CircElation project that I have been by myself. Since my arrival last Sunday, days and nights have been filled with workshops, discussions, video showings, talks from guest speakers. The scheduled sessions have been supplemented by animated late-night talks with my temporary flatmates – tutors Gail Kelly and Kathryn Hunter – on anything from the dramaturgy of circus to the role of the writer in physical and visual performance.

Sitting in the cafe, I glance at the full notebook that contains the observations, thoughts and responses to the week. From one of the opening sessions, there is a comment from a participant that her aim is to find the 'honest reason' for wanting to integrate circus and theatre. Others express a desire to explore and play, to 'break the logic' and 'to be touched'. People want to learn how to incorporate skills into concepts, and some hope to meet people they could work with in the future, to 'break the isolation' of the circus performer united only with their trick.

Now, at the tail end of the week, there is an afternoon of presentations by those who felt that they wanted to show some of their working processes to the others. We are holding these presentations at a series of venues throughout the city. The first destination is the Burton Street community centre in Hillsborough, where location scenes for *The Full Monty* were shot. Inside the centre, Gail greets us with 'Welcome to our process' and explains that this part of the presentation will consist of a witnessed warm-up, a series of

duets worked on by trainee directors and performers and a group piece.

The starting point for the work is the phrase 'caught between the moment and the form', most poignantly expressed in a piece called *Jess Learns to Fly*, which grasps the essence of the clown's desire for love and glory juxtaposed with the reality of life's pain and limitations. The group piece takes place in a room with many doors and windows, fully exploited in a performance that uses sound and vision to create a compelling narrative. Slamming doors, crashing coils of heavy rope, footsteps, fists – the rope and doors become living things, engaging with the performers, thwarting them, confronting their desires and fears.

We move on to another venue for the next part of the afternoon – a presentation from a group which has worked with site-specific director Ron Bunzl. The *Compass Theatre*, in contrast to the school-hall feel of the community

One way to avoid the tacking-on of narrative to circus tricks would be to choose, as Kathryn put it, to 'develop the story from the spatial attitudes'.

centre, is an old lady of the theatre. Balustrades, wooden staircases and mirrors create an atmosphere of Victorian music-hall decadence. It feels as if the ghosts of old performers haunt every nook and cranny of the building, a notion exploited fully by the group, who have decided to present a 'proper circus show'.

Every cliché in the vocabulary of circus and variety is re-invented, every metaphor is explored: the broken-hearted clown is scorned by the pretty trapeze artist; the jolly impresario in loud suit wins the heart of the lovely lady singer in evening gown; the merry clown plays the trumpet and the trickster grins and gurns. Like any circus or variety show, we are given a series of tricks and turns to marvel at – but tangled into a subversion of the form. The result is a dark and surreal cabaret in which, for example, a confessing priest crashing from a balustrade and a glamorous housewife washing up in her party frock become linked in a suggestion of guilt and absolution.

For the final part of the presentations we move onto Forced Entertainment's Workstation studio. Here we see choreographer Phillip McKenzie's group, who have created a piece that combines movement theatre with object manipulation and video projection of aerial work recorded the previous day at Greentop Community Circus. The strength of the ensemble work is such that it is hard to believe that the group has been together for only a week. The previous Sunday's introductory gathering now feels a long time away.

That gathering, at the very start of the project, had understandably brought up many different hopes, fears and anxieties about the



Shimon Amnand

coming week. There was, of course, an air of expectation and a desire to engage with the new possibilities offered, but also concerns that approaching things in a different way would be a challenge. One of the big worries was that not all of the workshop spaces were riggable – a blow to some of the aerialists present. The project's artistic director Deborah Pope had spent a lot of the session reassuring those concerned that it would be possible to rig in some spaces, but she also expressed her feeling that people should be willing to let go of their 'safety blankets' – their known skills – in order to find other ways of working.

This turned out to be an oft-repeated mantra throughout the week. Tutor Gail Kelly, an Australian director with years of experience with many different companies from Circus Oz to Club Swing, was insistent in her opening session that the work must start with an engagement with the ground and an awareness of the space as a three-dimensional frame. Only then could the crucial relationship between ground and air be explored.

For choreographer Phillip McKenzie, creating a physical landscape was at the heart of the exploration. His group worked on ways of navigating a space – walking, weaving, flocking, dispersing. They were urged to compose as an ensemble using the whole space, to explore the possibilities of speed and stillness, to take the offers given in the improvisations, to use each other as part of that landscape. The group was a mixture of people familiar with contemporary dance practices and those with other backgrounds, producing a fascinating physical dynamic.

The hardest lesson for everyone was to learn that less is more – to 'allow the stillness to tell you what to do'. For both circus artists and dancers, motion is at the heart of their practice. Yet without the contrasting stillness, the motion is lost in a sea of movement. An analogy could be drawn to music; silence and sound need each other to create music –

'Allow the stillness to tell you what to do.'

movement and stillness need each other to create physical performance.

A third group of participants worked with Kathryn Hunter of Theatre de Complicite, exploring ways of storytelling in physical performance. Her group worked on an exhilarating mix of exercises and devising tools – physical and vocal call and response; merging movement motifs with object manipulation; exploring states of tension; using the chorus in collective storytelling. 'Serving the group' was a notion that many participants struggled with – particularly if a character attribute was added to the individuals who made up a chorus. What had worked well when delivered in neutral mode was suddenly a struggle to maintain.

For many performers wanting to move into work that bridges the forms of circus and theatre, the problem of integrating character into the physical circus skill is something that presents an enormous challenge. Some participants had spoken of their experiences in circus-theatre shows, expressing a concern that the work often veered between the two forms rather than being something that fused them both. One way to avoid the tacking-on of narrative to circus tricks would be to choose, as Kathryn put it, to 'develop the story from the spatial attitudes'. Like Gail and Phillip, she also urged the workshop participants to allow the space to tell the story. On the subject of constructing a character, she offered a series of questions for would-be devisers to work with: Where have I come from? Where am I going? What do I want? What are my obstacles? What are my tactics? By the end of the week, many members of the group felt far more confident with the integration of different sorts of performance skills.

Ron Bunzl, a site-specific director from the Netherlands, also explored character in his workshop sessions – but in a rather different way. He sent his group out on to the streets to find a real-life character to observe and absorb. Participants were urged to avoid the obvious and avoid caricature; to really take in the physical information on offer from the person observed – how do they move, react to other people and interact with objects? On returning to the theatre, the group presented their characters – individually then collectively. The use of entrance and exit was explored, as well as learning to respond to every offered possibility: the whole available space, the other people in the space and the objects within that space.

Another exploration was the 'party trick' – Ron giving the directive for the participants to present something of themselves to the audience, aiming to give a sense of enormous

expectation to a simple act. The 'acts' that followed were an eclectic mix of the surreally banal and the plain bizarre. A struck match, a bra magically removed from under a jumper, a gargled song – whatever the trick it had to be delivered as if it was the most unique and extraordinary happening in the world. Each performer was urged to make more of it, to persuade the audience not to suspend disbelief but to really believe. By really engaging with the physicality of the object they were working with, each performer could celebrate the reality of the thing they were doing. This, Ron felt, is at the essence of circus – the belief in what is real conveyed from performer to audience.

This notion of the reality of circus, in contrast to some forms of theatre that celebrate the illusory, was something that emerged in many ways in the evening discussions, which included a Total Theatre Network critical practice debate as part of the week's events. (See report on page 19.) In that discussion, Reg Bolton spoke of the spectrum of belief; from total suspension of disbelief through to total belief.

In another of the evening discussions, Bim Mason from Circomedia spoke of circus as 'something essential and true'. Later in the week, Rose English reflected this thought when she referred to 'the Spirit of La Verdad [the truth]'. Her talk started with the claim that circus was seductive, cerebral and synaptic. Like one of the week's other guests, former ringmaster turned manager Chris Bartrop, she had an enduring love for the traditional circus act. The fact that people spend a lifetime learning skills that take a nanomoment to perform was proof to her that circus skills, indeed circus itself, is on a 'cosmological sphere' – the perfect metaphor for life itself. Nothing lasts, everything changes, the deepest things are short-lived.

For many people, including participant Pete Turner, authenticity is at the heart of circus. The challenge is to retain that authenticity, that engagement with the heart of humanity whilst moving the work on to new collaborations and investigations. It is a challenge that will continue to be addressed in the on-going CircElation project. Perhaps we could take as our inspiration the text used by Gail Kelly at the start of her week's work: 'We now take for granted that reality is not what it seems and that at any moment a trapdoor may open without warning and drop us into our unconscious.' ■

CircElation is a professional training and development project organised by Bhatthana-Jancovich. For information about future plans please contact the company at info@bhatthana-jancovich.co.uk



Dominique and Françoise Dupuy
International Workshop Festival

Another Kind of Learning

Do we rely only on our brains for learning?
DICK McCAW asks what else comes into play ...

In 1993 I was appointed artistic director of the International Workshop Festival (IWF) and, following the example of my predecessor Nigel Jamieson, decided that I would take part in our workshops. I was in for a sharp shock and a long, slow learning curve. In my first workshop I was confronted with a type of learning which for me was completely new – I was being asked to listen and to learn *physically*. This article is about two milestones in that journey – the teaching of Dominique Dupuy and of Moshe Feldenkrais – and some of the very basic problems that I had to negotiate on the way.

In my first workshop I felt a huge sense of disconnection; while I could understand the instructions perfectly well conceptually (i.e. what they meant) my problem was

in translating the words into actions – I literally could not make the connection. I soon realised that I wasn't confident about such a simple instruction as 'Feel the ground with the soles of your feet'; yes, I could feel something, but was it what I was meant to feel? There was no 'right' answer, reassuring in its predictability and finality. A slight over-dramatisation would be to say that I was deaf to my body and my body was deaf to the world.

Eight years ago I didn't understand how one 'listened' to and with the body – such language was at best poetic, at worst mystifying. Today I recognise that using the word 'listen' in this context has a real and functional meaning. The problem of my deafness was to do with the fact that, along with many in our culture, I had an ▶

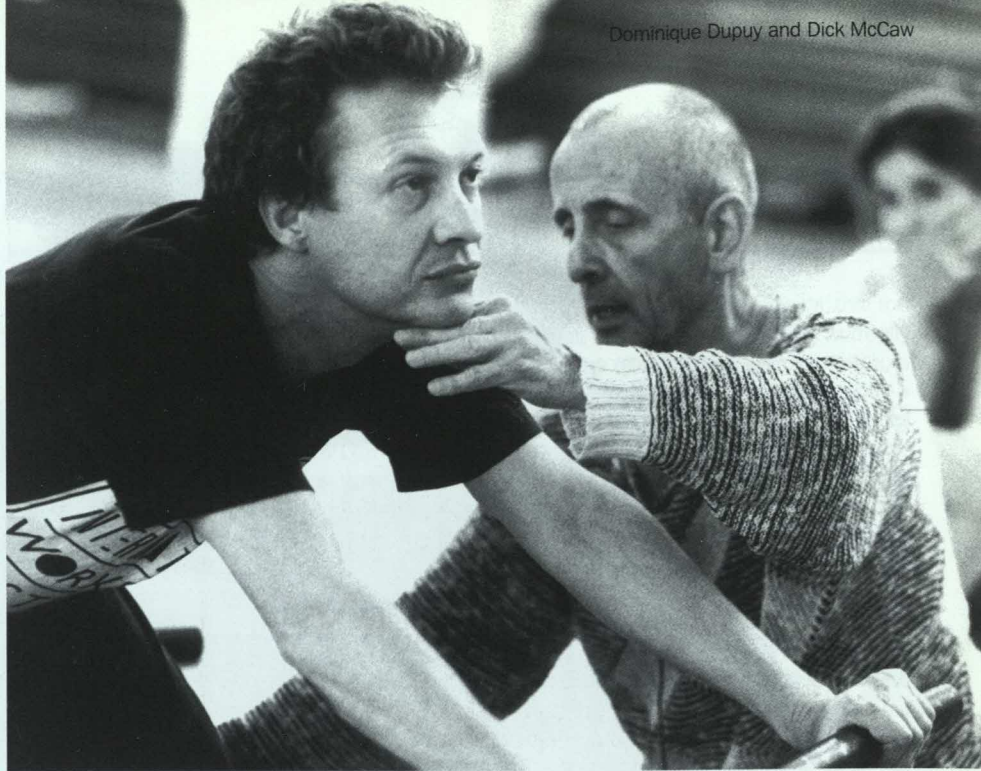
PERFORMANCE

image of myself as consisting of a mind and a separate body – it is I (that is, my mind) that sees, hears and smells; my body is a functional apparatus which just does. The different acts of sensing are taken as 'natural' and require no reflection on my part.

Of course, a moment's thought can get you over such reductive and limiting mind-body dualism. I don't just see with my eyes. The act of seeing is a very complex psycho-physical process which we learn as babies and which is an act of interpretation as we begin to master notions of distance, speed, volume and colour, and as we learn to recognise, name and recall objects. It is good to remember that we did learn as babies how to sense it all; at that stage it was part of the process of making sense of the world. There are professions that demand a further development (or education) of the senses – for example, the wine-taster who can distinguish hundreds of wines blindfolded, or the perfumer who can distinguish as many different scents.

Just as the perfumer can develop a heightened sense of smell, so physical performers can develop a heightened awareness of their sense of movement – or kin-aesthetic sense – and, more generally, of themselves as functioning physical totalities – proprioception. In effect this development of the physical senses is a form of education or re-education. I say re-education because as babies we all learn how to roll over, then to sit, then stand and walk by ourselves – through a process of trial and error. And as soon as we have mastered these skills we forget that we ever taught ourselves and thus lose any ability to correct any bad habits we get into. We lose connection with ourselves as psycho-physical totalities. We become scattered. We lose the ability to listen with and to our bodies. Which is why we need teachers, or in some cases, medical practitioners (*orthopaedics* comes from two Greek words *ortho* – normal, or straight – and *paedos* – knowledge or learning) to re-educate us in the art of posture and movement.

I'll give an example, still concentrating on my feet. In 1996 Dominique Dupuy, the French dancer, choreographer and teacher, noticed that I had flat feet. Having announced 'Your feet are horrible', he promptly showed me an exercise. After two years' practice every morning I have noticed a transformation in how I walk and stand, I have less back pain, and I am much better able to answer questions about where and how my weight falls through my feet. In my morning sessions of Yoga I have noticed how my positions (*asanas*) no longer drift off towards my feet, but are animated by an active relation



Feldenkrais overturns the power structure by handing over the tools of learning to the student

between legs, arms and torso. To pick up a word already used, I now feel more connected – and this is more than a static connection; it is dynamic and rhythmic. Each week I notice subtle changes, and I am sure that this process of inner and outer connected-ness is far from over.

The difficulty with this kind of learning is that it takes time. His instruction took less than three minutes to deliver, and yet it took two years to start really taking effect. If the exercise is a good one then the process of learning becomes a rich education in itself – i.e. the process is as important as the goal. One learns how to gauge one's progress, to attune one's sensations in such a way that one knows when one is getting close to getting the form right. You re-learn how to learn physically.

Learning through Movement

In a television interview Moshe Feldenkrais was asked to explain his method. The interviewer was slouched in a soft armchair while Feldenkrais was perched on a wooden chair. He answered, 'If there were a fire, who would get to the exit first, me or you?' The interviewer had temporarily immobilised himself by sinking into the comfy

chair and it would have required great physical effort to change his position. He was not free to move.

When Feldenkrais announced to his students that he would be their last teacher he wasn't setting himself up as their life-long guru, or creating an eternal dependency on him and his teaching. He said this because he was about to give them the skills to be able to read their own bodily structures – to teach and learn from themselves. He devised thousands of lessons to develop our 'Awareness Through Movement'. In these lessons we return to habitual activities such as sitting down, getting up, lying down, and relearn how to do them with more ease, more efficiency, and less effort. His method is non-normative: each of us has a unique body structure, and he gives us the means to understand how to achieve the most from what we have. He hands us back the controls so that we can function with conscious intention rather than through acquired habit. We open ourselves to a continuous process of learning, creating an intelligent body, and a bodily intelligence.

When you take part in a lesson in Awareness Through Movement (ATM) you begin with a very simple test, say turning the head to one side and noting how far you can turn comfortably. Then you are taken through a series of seemingly unrelated exercises: say, moving the hips and shoulders. The difficulty of these lessons lies in the size of each movement, as it only needs to be large enough to register what parts of yourself are being engaged to make it possible. Just as important is to focus on the mental and physical effort which is made before the movement, and this requires a great effort of concentration. There are regular rests between these

In my first workshop I was confronted with a type of learning which for me was completely new – I was being asked to listen and to learn physically

series of minuscule movements during which one is asked to monitor one's sensation: has anything changed in one's sense of the body? Remember this is called 'Awareness Through Movement'. The lesson ends with a return to the diagnostic test that one made at the beginning. You turn your head to the side and, wonder of wonders, you can turn it at least 25 degrees further! And this is without pain, without sweat, without forcing your head round through physical exertion.

Feldenkrais's genius was in translating his perfect understanding of how the body moves (how a frozen pelvis can profoundly affect the possible rotation of the head) into a series of movements which help students to re-educate themselves. This re-education is achieved by the sensual experiencing of all the component parts of a particular movement: for example, the lesson invites you to engage the pelvis as you turn your head. Whereas most teaching is predicated on an exchange of pre-existing knowledge (the factual content of the lesson) which is being repeated, here the repeatable element is confined to the form of the experiment. The content is the absolutely unrepeatable experience of each participant which is made intelligible through the given structure of enquiry. In this method 'experience' is the print-out of information which tells us where we are and how we are functioning; it is the registration of the existence of ongoing psycho-physical processes. In ATM lessons we can understand the neuro-muscular 'hard-wiring' of our structures at work. We both engage and follow the workings of these structures – as I suggested before, we are both the guinea pig and the observing scientist. This is how I understand what Feldenkrais meant when he said that he would be our last teacher.

In Feldenkrais's method there lies a methodological challenge to our notion of education, in both the physical and academic spheres. The school of physical education that most of us learned in has as its catchphrase, 'No pain, no gain'. The process involves much grunting, sweating and effort. The result of this noise, smell and pain is a muscular body. Feldenkrais's proposition is for exercises which keep physical noise to the minimum, the better to listen to the workings of our psycho-physical mechanisms. There is no finality in the process of understanding – our bodies are continually changing as we grow up and then grow old; our selves as living organisms are the proper subjects of our life-long learning. A guru seeks to have power over his disciples, dictating from above and outside what they should think and feel. Feldenkrais overturns the power structure that underpins this classical vertical relationship of teacher-to-pupil by handing over the tools of learning to the student. He teaches us how we can continue to learn (which must surely be a model for life-long learning?). The difficulty, responsibility and risk in his method lie precisely in this double role that he gives to us – both as student and teacher. For all these reasons I believe that Feldenkrais offers us a new educational paradigm. ■

MY THEATRE

Enrique Pardo Pantheatre



What did you see the first time you went to the theatre?

Margot Fonteyn dancing at the National Theatre, in Lima, Peru. I was seven and fell in love with her.

What recent performance has particularly inspired you?

Genesi by Romeo Castellucci.

What productions will you never forget?

A puppet piece by a Japanese butoh master which I saw some years ago at the Dutch Puppetry Festival: a geisha at her boudoir makes herself beautiful, her lover (the puppeteer) appears, they make love amidst the kimonos. It ends with her blowing the last candle out. And Gilgamesh, by Romeo Castellucci (1990).

Which performer, alive or dead, makes you laugh the most?

Mythologist Charles Boer, professor emeritus of Connecticut University.

Who is your favourite playwright?

Heiner Müller. I was also very impressed by the recent writings of French playwright Oliver Py: at last someone who can move, dance and laugh.

Have you ever walked out of a theatre before the end of a show?

Yes, and not as often as I would have liked to.

When was the last time you cried during a performance?

I cry at the movies, not at the theatre. Cinema has taken over crying and the full-on illusion of subjective realism, liberating theatre for more complex challenges (like, for instance, crying-laughing-thinking).

Who is your favourite performer?

I say this in all humility (and as a performer): any animal.

If you could meet any theatre practitioner, alive or dead, who would it be?

Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, as imagined by today's Oxfordians. (This is a tribute to the imagination of Kristin Linklater.)

Which contemporary theatre director's work do you most admire?

Romeo Castellucci.

What does the term 'physical theatre' mean to you?

I see 'physical theatre' today as a particularly British phenomenon: the grandchildren of Stephen Berkoff stomping about the stage, at best an anguished and poetic rebellion against literary theatre. The American version of 'physical theatre' I see as too reverential towards Commedia dell'Arte and post-Lecoq pantomime. (Note: I would use labels other than 'physical theatre' for the Grotowsky/Odin Teatret lineage, or Kantor's, or Pina Bausch's: dance-theatre, image-theatre, etc.)

What would you do if you didn't work in theatre?

Politics.

Enrique Pardo is the founder and co-director, with Linda Wise, of Pantheatre and of the Myth and Theatre Festival (New Orleans July 2001, Belgium 2002.) He directs and workshops 'choreographic theatre'. His latest production is Pandora's Box, performed by Pantheatre UK at venues around Britain. Pantheatre's 20th anniversary will be marked by a symposium on choreographic theatre, 14 May to 4 June 2001 in the south of France. Visit www.pantheatre.com for more details.

More props — and a bigger set



Hugo Glendinning

The Right Size are back with a new devised show, **Bewilderness**. **DYMPHNA CALLERY** caught up with them on tour at Liverpool's Everyman Theatre

The Right Size are back. In their last devised show *Do You Come Here Often?*, two men got stuck in a bathroom for twenty-five years. This time two men fall down the back of the sofa. Down there a surreal Alice-world opens up, peopled by Mr Todd (Freddie Jones), Edna the cleaner (a sack doll), and a man wearing one red shoe who rides a bicycle (Chris Lamer).

Founder member Hamish McColl describes their return to devising, after touring *Do You Come Here Often?* and Brecht's *Mr Puntila and His Man Matti*, as: 'Joyous! Getting back to our addiction to the live laugh and

working without anybody telling you what to do.' Following a stint writing a radio show and pilots for the BBC, he and Sean Foley are full of renewed zest for live theatre. And the success of their last two shows has given them some financial security and opened up possibilities of 'more props, and a bigger set'.

Design is integral in *Bewilderness*. A classic 'real theatre' rake with trap doors – and puppets (on strings) – offers huge potential for physical play, as well as opportunities to exploit visual illusion. However, such a sophisticated concept meant the set had to be built before rehearsals began in January. So

creative decisions had to be made unusually early, including a zany film shot in Egypt in September. Nevertheless, The Right Size policy of creating 'right to the last moment' and improvising on tour still applies: 'You wanna see what goes on underneath that set during the show!' quips Hamish.

They improvise around a script for the first fifty shows or so, only settling into a fixed script when they've tested it out with audiences. 'The best thing is when you're playing with the audience and you get a better line,' says Hamish. Meeting after each show to decide which lines should stick, means that they



'Wouldn't it be great if someone was in a broom costume?'

continue building the script well into the tour. Like Theatre de Complicite, they prefer reviewers to write about the show once it's reached London. By then, it's settled into its groove.

The live-ness of performing is what turns *The Right Size* on. McColl and Foley brought their skills as live performers to Mr Puntila and His Man Matti, playing Puntila and Matti respectively in the acclaimed production directed by Kathryn Hunter and adapted by Lee Hall. 'That was great fun,' they say. 'The challenge was to put a bomb under it, because Brecht's reputation is so doughy.' And although they both agree they'll do another text play at some point, getting into the rehearsal room and charging around making things up after three years has been a tonic. More than that, their new show exploits theatre's live-ness as openly as pantomime. Interactive moments are in-built on a number of levels, not least in the Beckettian sense of the audience as 'tortured souls'.

Whatever happens on stage in this respect has emerged organically out of the rehearsal process. It's the idea which comes first. Going into rehearsal they only knew that they would meet Freddie Jones down the back of the sofa: 'We knew we wanted to do this show with him, because he has qualities which are perfect for this.' Their main inspiration is each other, and the seasoned team of Alice Power (design), Jos Houben (director)

and Chris Lerner (music). Alice is responsible for the enormous broom, a truly great prop. 'Wouldn't it be great if someone was in a broom costume?' said Alice in a design meeting. 'Yes. Hilarious. We'll do it,' agreed Hamish and Sean, without the faintest notion of how to fit it into the show. 'But the image meant something in our world,' says Sean. 'That's how we work. Our job is to make it all link.'

The links are risky at times. Yet in the fairytale world underneath the sofa, anything goes, and the giant broom co-exists happily with a rubber-glove fire, sack dolls and the bicycle. Freddie Jones, working with *The Right Size* for the first time, talks of being 'confounded in a Hamley's of invention', and the toy metaphor is apt. For *Bewilderness* conjures up a world of child-like inspiration, a roller-coaster of imaginative treats.

Yet this show has a darker side, a different tone to their earlier work. It shares the strange logic of a Grimm tale, whilst working on a contemporary level. According to Hamish: 'If I were to draw the bathroom show, it would be a bright box coloured blue. *Bewilderness* has more shadows in the characters, emotions and stories.' Sean points out that 'in the end it's about two people who drive into a lamp-post and die – but it's a comedy.' The discovery that their style can support pathos, that its essential lightness gives them the freedom to go further, is a sign that their work is

maturing. So too is the tighter structure. Hamish acknowledges that the earlier shows, like many other devised pieces, were full of brio but not very well structured. Maybe working on TV scripts has helped. 'We've set a high standard for ourselves about how well written it is,' he says, 'and we're constantly trying to rationalise the storylines.' For Sean, a belief that audiences love stories means the gags have to operate as part of the plot: 'You're building from a lot of angles: the props, the set, design and music – they're all in there together in the making process.'

If there's one maxim for *The Right Size* it's 'play it rather than say it'. Like many physical comedy troupes, they admire the stars of the silent screen with their physical skills acquired through vaudeville. 'When the physical cuts loose into the comedy and you see the freedom of the body, then that's just gorgeous,' according to Hamish. They used Feldenkrais a lot in the early days, less so now. But Feldenkrais has given them a reservoir of physical information and they are able to create hilarious comic 'body-riffs', as memorable as those of the Marx Brothers.

Where they eschew technique is in their use of puppets. 'Well, they're not really puppets. They're just sack people we throw around,' points out Hamish. When one of these (Edna, the cleaner) needed some repair work, Alice suggested Sean could bring her back on the train. He was horrified. What if he had to buy her a ticket? ■

Bewilderness opens at the Lyric Theatre Hammersmith on 1 May, after a national tour.

'READY TO EXPORT?'

UK theatre companies no longer 'tour abroad'; they 'export product'. ANNE-LOUISE RENTELL went to the British Council Overseas Touring Seminar ...

It is an ambition of many theatre companies to tour their work internationally and this ambition is more often than not supported by the British Council's offices here in the UK and its network overseas. Through its Cultural Industries Unit the Council is developing opportunities for British performing arts to 'excel and impress on a world-wide scale'. To make these opportunities happen, the Unit is working in conjunction with Trade Partners UK, the leading Government trade support service for British companies trading in world markets. The performing arts are now being redefined as exportable product within a system that was originally created for the country's primary and secondary industries.

This was the subject of a recent Ready to Export seminar hosted by the British Council. The seminar's purpose was to disseminate the information required for performing arts companies to learn the language to exploit these opportunities; to look at 'exporting' rather than 'touring'; to see arts festivals as 'trade fairs'; and to understand how to market creative product, your 'brand', as 'goods and services'.

Both the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) are brought together in Trade Partners UK. But it is the Creative Industries Export Promotion Advisory Group (CIEPAG) arm of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) from which decisions about the UK's cultural export are informed. Estab-

lished in 1997 to ensure that Government support was being appropriately targeted in the arts, CIEPAG covers a range of cultural product from the performing arts to tourism, hospitality, galleries and heritage.

Most importantly, the Performing Arts cluster group within CIEPAG decides where the priority international markets for exporting performance and related skills are. In turn, Trade Partners UK works on CIEPAG's decisions. Known as a service for commercial trade, Trade Partners does not have a tradition of helping creative industry, but a shift at government level is now enabling it to broaden its remit of support to include the performing arts.

The focus for Trade Partners' services is the website www.tradepartners.gov.uk, a simple-to-navigate address which offers advice and information on overseas markets. Trade Partners also has local and international trade teams or Export Development Counsellors based at branches of Business Link across the country. Overseas Trade Partners UK is represented in the commercial section of the British Consulate. All these representatives are there to talk to and to seek advice on any export opportunities available.

The British Council also works with Trade Partners UK to create a programme of work including Trade Missions to countries overseas. Trade Missions provide opportunities for research into intended markets as well as enabling representatives from performing arts companies to establish relationships with potential part-

ners overseas. The aim of a Trade Mission is to generate business for your company but it must be remembered that developing a relationship can take time. Trade Partners will cover some of the costs of being part of the Mission but the rest will have to be funded by your company. In this sense, the Missions are investments in your company's future with no guarantee of immediate results. You can find out when and where Trade Missions are taking place by visiting the database of events on the website.

Claire Findlay, general manager of Theatre Cryptic, a multi-cultural music theatre company based in Glasgow, spoke at the seminar about the work required for and the benefits of being part of a Mission. She highlighted the essentials of preparation: time dedicated to researching the country you will be visiting, gathering information from companies that have already been there and setting up meetings out there before you leave. A lot of this work will ensure that you are also finding out where *not* to trade. It is also worthwhile to translate any company material you have into the language of the country you're visiting and to learn at least some of that language yourself.

Findlay summed up the benefits of a Mission as the bonus of being part of a group attached to the British Council name, an association that opens doors and lends weight to your visit. This then places you in a good position to network through the Council's reception and one-to-one meetings, and with other companies



Theatre Cryptic: Parallel Lines
Photo: Renzo Mazzolini

Clare Findlay of Theatre Cryptic recommends providing company publicity which is 'sexy'

attached to the Mission. However, there are also drawbacks. The Council staff cannot give your company their sole attention and when you are part of a group all trying to do the same thing, it is difficult to have your 'brand' stand out. In anticipation, she suggests you provide company publicity which is 'sexy' and try your best to sell one-to-one. Follow up all Missions with contact thanking those you met and updating them with any subsequent company developments to ensure that any progress you made on the Mission is maintained.

Theatre Cryptic produces one production a year which tours Scotland before being available for touring overseas. In the past three years the company has toured to Italy, Mexico, Colombia, France and Venezuela. Findlay stressed the importance to a successful mission of a company's ability to get to grips with the language of trading goods and services. It is also necessary to understand your work in terms of it being a two-way endeavour and understanding how your export will contribute financially to the UK economy.

Another case example presented to the seminar came from Maggie Saxon, the managing director of West Yorkshire Playhouse. A couple of years ago a Japanese producer/director visited the Playhouse and saw in action its programmes of theatre work for young people and people with disabilities. Impressed by what she saw, the producer invited Saxon to a conference in Japan to speak about this work which was a new dimension in theatrical practice for the Japanese. Since then a relationship has

developed whereby skills and knowledge will be exported overseas and contribute to the cultural development of another country as well as providing work for employees in the industry in the UK. Saxon stressed the importance of 'thinking globally' through skills exporting and 'thinking locally' in terms of the impact of this export on a country overseas and here at home. She also pointed out the added value of exporting skills rather than productions.

If you are a company interested in looking into the possibilities of exporting your work and skills, the British Council and Trade Partners UK are the best places to start finding information. Once you have highlighted a country and market to which you would like to export your work (your goods and services), you must research that market. The British Council has a number of ways of helping: from papers they already have on file, through to collating further information on potential markets and further collaboration with Trade Partners UK. The Cultural Industries Unit also has a website which is still being developed but definitely worth a visit: www.creativeindustries.org.uk.

The Chambers of Commerce in Coventry also runs an Export Market Research Scheme (EMRS) which provides a research service for companies who have the funds to buy in the expertise rather than doing the legwork themselves. For instance, the Royal Shakespeare Company commissioned an EMRS to ensure the development potential of their North American market was met. The RSC is in a

different league to small-scale companies but still an EMRS is an option for any company embarking on this work.

The British Council is not a funding body and the funding resources within the Cultural Industries Unit are limited to what Trade Partners UK provide towards the Trade Missions. Part of the Council's agenda is to access further funding for export opportunities. It is good also to note that funding is now being redistributed from London out to Regional Development Agencies.

Because the funding and staffing pot is limited, the Council has to be strategic and this means that it also has its own priority markets. These are countries in which a sustainable relationship with the UK is trying to be established – such as Russia, China and India. That said, different departments within the Council vie for priority space and therefore North America becomes a priority purely on the basis that UK performing arts have such a strong influence over there.

Whatever your product, whatever your market, there are now opportunities for theatre companies and venues to get a foot in the door of what was traditionally only for commercial industries. The fact that the performing arts are being included in the UK's export policy is a major plus for the creative industry as a whole. As long as you understand how to play the possibilities to advantage, and start to think in different ways regarding your creative product and where it can go, there is a whole world out there waiting to be discovered. ■

PUPPETRY



Improbable Theatre, Animo. Photo: Sheila Burnett

into

Performance

November 2000's international puppetry symposium confirmed that puppetry is being embraced by a range of contemporary theatre artists. ANTHONY DEAN (Head of the Production, Art and Design Department at the Central School of Speech and Drama, London) explains the lure of the puppet ...



Photo: Tim Nunn 0378 901198

The rediscovery of puppetry played a vital role in the process of rebirth that eventually developed into Modernist drama...

The links between puppetry and drama theatre go back a long way and they are perhaps bound together more inextricably than most people realise; like the strings on a marionette, once tangled they are difficult to separate again. The puppet, described by Edward Gordon Craig as the 'degenerate form of a god', has a history at least as old as the concept of theatre itself and shares similar origins. In literature as well as in drama, the puppet has excited the imagination of the artist – after all, Don Quixote 'tilted' at a band of marionette soldiers before he attacked a row of windmills! And, whilst not always 'centre-stage' in the development of drama, the puppet was continually ready and waiting in the 'wings'.

However, the relationship between the puppet and the actor has long been an uneasy one and this may go some way towards explaining why the puppet has been absent from our dramatic stage for long periods. The emblematic nature of the puppet has often been at odds with the prevailing requirements of the drama theatre. Nevertheless, the unique possibilities offered by puppetry – the essential differences from, as well as the broad similarities to, the drama theatre – have continued to fascinate dramatists and theatre artists down the centuries.

Craig's dissatisfaction with the actor was, in large part, because of his perception that the actor could not make a 'work of art' out of his body, but only 'a series of accidental confessions'. To the artists who gave life to the modernist movement, the puppet offered the possibility of salvation for the theatre – a kind of redemption for theatre as an art form, that would save it from being simply the bourgeois diversion that they perceived it had become. In 1917 the Russian theatre critic Yuliya Slonimskaya wrote: 'The marionette does not imitate life. It creates its own fabled life, which bends creator and spectator alike to its own laws.'

Now, at the turn of the millennium, there is a palpable resurgence of interest in puppetry – among both theatre artists and audiences – as an expressive and creative performance medium. This renewed interest, this 'call' of puppetry to the dramatic stage, clearly has strong parallels with that earlier time. Then, as

now, theatre artists were looking to find new forms of theatrical expression; as an antidote to what they then regarded as the formal and moribund theatre of the day. Then, as now, the boundaries between performance disciplines became somewhat fluid as dramatists and theatre artists looked outward for inspiration. Then, as now, one of the ways in which a generation of theatre artists sought to stimulate and revivify drama was by opening it up to the world of the puppet. The rediscovery of puppetry (and just how many times does puppetry have to be re-discovered?) played a vital role in the process of rebirth and renewal that eventually developed into Modernist drama and from there into the Avant-Garde ... The rest (as they say) is history.

As I have suggested above, the role that the puppet has played in the development of the theatre and of dramatic literature is easily underestimated. The dramatic imaginations of such theatrical heavyweights as Goethe, Kleist, Büchner, Wedekind, Maeterlinck, Jarry, Cocteau and Lorca were all profoundly influenced by their interest in, even fascination for, puppetry. Goethe was given a puppet theatre at the age of twelve and it had a profound effect on his dramatic vision. Through its nurturing and shaping of the creative imagination of so many important artists, this seminal art form can legitimately claim to have had a decisive influence on the development of 20th century theatre.

But what of the development of a theatre for the 21st century? Is it possible to see a familiar pattern emerging? Is the dominance of 'traditional' drama theatre again being challenged? There can be little doubt that puppetry (live animation, object theatre – call it what you will) is once again fascinating many of today's most innovative theatre artists. The recent work of companies such as *Improbable* (*Shockheaded Peter*) and *Complicite* (*Light*) – to name just two – provide evidence of this. Artists are, once more, deliberately blurring the boundaries between performance disciplines and other means of artistic expression; therefore, we should not be surprised that once again the puppet is being embraced by a range of influential theatre artists. Practitioners such as Robert Lepage, Robert Wilson and Ariane Mnouchkine have regularly incorporated puppetry as a vital component within their work. Although naturally puppetry has thrived as an integral part of some of the most imaginative children's theatre, now it has again found an adult audience who welcome it as a major and magnetic force within the vanguard of contemporary theatre practice.

This awareness that more and more theatre companies are incorporating puppetry as a significant element within their work prompted the Central School of Speech and Drama (in association with Total Theatre Network) to organise the symposium *Puppetry into*

Performance: A User's Guide. At the symposium, and within the pages of the subsequent publication, a very strong sense of the acceptance of puppetry within the broader context of performance emerged, with an increasing number of companies and theatre artists now taking it for granted as a vital component of their work. It seemed possible to agree that puppetry, once again, was welcome to take its place on the theatrical 'stage'.

My own enthusiasm for puppetry was inspired by the work of companies like Theatre DRAK of Eastern Bohemia and the Philippe Genty Company. What impressed me most about these companies is that they were simply making great theatre, using every theatrical means at their disposal – but with a clear emphasis on the animation of objects, material and figures. DRAK's production of *Pinocchio* was staged with numerous performers and one puppet, while the performances devised by Genty filled huge stages with light, movement and the magical and mysterious manipulation of materials.

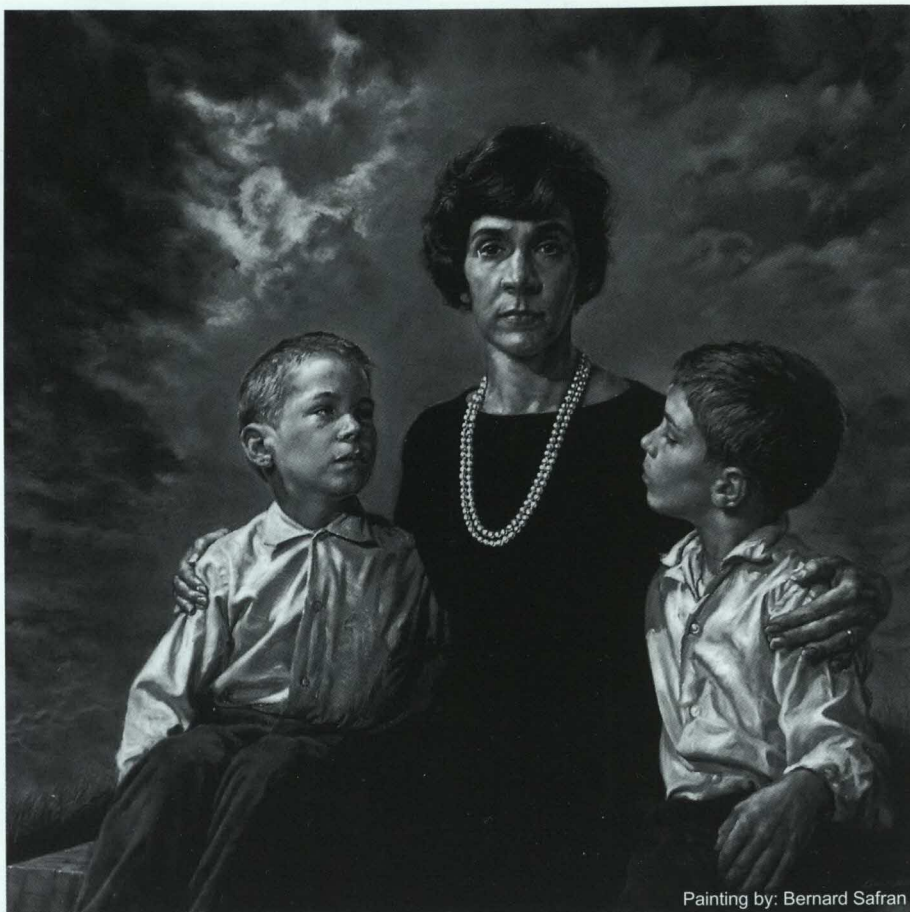
Faced with work of this kind from some of the most interesting theatre-makers – directors and scenographers – in the field, one is obliged to review and re-assess received ideas about puppetry as being of a specialised, and therefore by definition limiting, form unfit to share the 'legitimate' stage with the actor. Today these ideas seem old-fashioned and their purveyors out of touch with the zeitgeist of contemporary performance practice.

The symposium and the subsequent publication provided an opportunity for practitioners who are incorporating puppetry and object animation into their work to share with the wider theatre and academic community their creative rationale and working methods, drawing together views on this topic from a range of contemporary practice for the first time. The symposium was held at the Theatre Museum on 27 November 2000 and was mounted jointly by Central's Production, Art and Design Department, the Theatre Museum, Total Theatre Network and the Puppet Centre Trust.

Contributors to the symposium included Duccio Bellugi Vannuccini (Theatre du Soleil), Clive Mendus (Theatre de Complicite), Sue Buckmaster (Theatre-rites) as well as Julian Crouch and Phelim McDermott (*Improbable Theatre*). In addition to these contributors, Lucy Neal, co-founder of the London International Festival of Theatre (LIFT) acted as chairperson to the presentations and discussions on the day. The symposium drew together approximately a hundred delegates drawn from the contemporary performing arts sector across the UK. ■

*The publication associated with the symposium, *Puppetry into Performance: A User's Guide*, is available at £5 per copy and can be ordered by telephone on: 020 7559 3990.*

PHYSICAL TEXT



Painting by: Bernard Safran

4 61 days after sitting down to write the Arts Council of England funding proposal for this project, after what seems like an age of preparation with the director, the composer, the designers and the puppet maker, we gather as a collaborative team in our entirety. Twelve, including the seven actors. We have 29 days to realise the play. A huge leap between all that is in the mind and the impending practical analysis and manifestation.

This is the first time in Foursight's fourteen year history that the company has performed a classic text. Every previous production has been devised. Foursight is committed to physical theatre, anchored to the basic theme of biography, and aims to investigate, celebrate and re-evaluate women's stories, to gain a deeper insight into contemporary society. Foursight productions are defined by the creative process. We believe that the quality of the experimental process is as important as, and directly informs, the quality of the product. For this reason, the company has developed a process which aims to produce work using a collaborative, non-hierarchical process and which fully integrates the actor into the creative process.

With these principles in mind, we approach with excitement and determination the proposal from John Harrison to premiere his new

translation for Cambridge University Press of Euripides' *Medea*. We usually start physically – the words springing from the action. This time, we start with an extraordinarily dense text, from which the action is born.

We find ourselves faced with many questions. Why after two thousand years does *Medea* still stand in front of us, whispering, shouting? What is she saying? How can we listen to her? What is the tragedy of the play? That she kills her children? That she is trapped in a patriarchal society? Is she entirely responsible or are we all in some way implicated? How do we make the Chorus work for today's audience? How do we deal with the *deus ex machina* – the unlikely ending of the play?

Following several core group meetings, certain approaches and artistic areas are collectively agreed prior to rehearsals. They include:

1. The use of puppets for the children.
2. The time referencing of ancient, 1950s and present day on stage.
3. The day the play takes place is Jason's wedding day to the Princess.
4. The Chorus will sing the Odes and some of the music text will be written in Greek.
5. The set design and construction.
6. The basic recorded soundscape.



Dave Finchett

After fourteen years of devising shows, Foursight decided to approach a classic text – John Harrison’s translation of Euripides’ Medea. In this diary, artistic director NAOMI COOKE charts the journey from first rehearsal to second night ...

We agree a clear rehearsal schedule: to explore the play in thirds over the first three weeks; to generate clear options; to use weeks four and five to make clear choices, reduce, shape, polish and deepen. We agree that we will examine the play through five main themes:

1. The Public and Private.
2. Relationships.
3. Power.
4. Spirituality.
5. Telling the story.

Before we begin, the music is composed, the actors know their lines, the basic set is ready.

WEEK ONE: THE PUBLIC AND THE PRIVATE

A key question in Medea: who knows what when? Dorinda Hulton (director), leads us through an exercise in learning to listen – the play involves a great deal of listening. Then the first read-through. Lively, exhilarating, and determined.

Each day begins with an hour of warm-up and a brief company meeting. With Dorinda we physically explore: relaxation; clarity of order; being present; having a free centre; reduction – finding the essentials.

With Patrick (Jason): we examine ways of greeting by touching chin and knees as in the ancient Greek tradition. We work with extremes. With Jill (Nurse): we focus on the

voice and placing it, and the text, in different areas of the body, rooting the sound. There is intensive work with Alison Duddle (puppet maker) – bringing the boy puppets alive, seeing how they move, feel, communicate.

These discoveries are explored by Ria (Chorus) in her warm-up with us, examining the manipulation of each other through contact improvisation. We think this may be an opening which leads to developing a style of movement for the piece. To address the concern that an audience will find the puppets disconcerting, we play with the idea of a ‘pre-prologue’ – where the puppets are introduced to the audience.

We put the first third of the play on its feet. This includes intensive work between the Chorus and the composer Mary Keith.

Mapping out entrances and exits – deciding to use the auditorium to the full. We explore the text and the relationships within the context of public and private. Who hears what when? Who knows what when? We search for key moments of choice, as we intend to mark them with physicalisation. Anxiety expressed by the Chorus regarding learning the music. More time designated to that.

We share the week’s work. Good feedback – centring around questions concerning the set, costume, the rehearsal schedule and

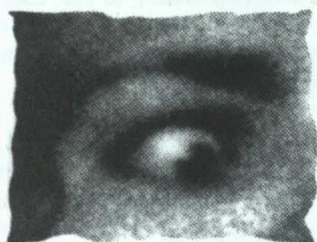
origins of characters. Where are they all from? Could Medea, the Nurse and the Tutor be from Albania? Aegeus from Germany? We experiment with the inclusion of the Albanian language. It feels right. The run is 47 minutes! Needs to be 35. Time to let the work soak through and to prepare for next week.

WEEK TWO: RELATIONSHIPS

Working with the emotional subtexts, e.g. between Medea and Jason – I love you, I hate you, I want you. Dorinda leads work on rooting the journey in physical movement: travelling, turning, falling – taking a chosen subtext and then working with the text. This awakens remarkable complexities of emotion and meaning in the text. We work on finding our character’s six ‘named’ body parts, e.g. courageous womb, retching throat, weary feet. Also – rooting the image in breath and ‘climbing into’ the character – we explore text imaged from and relating to that body part.

Music and puppetry work continue intensively. Patrick explores the physicalisation of the Odes with the Chorus.

Run of section two. Feedback of ideas and thoughts followed by re-cap of work. Meeting – lengthy. Expressions of anxiety, inevitable venting. We move on. Difficulty in trusting the process – people coming up against their own limitations. ▶



WEEK THREE: POWER

We gather and work vocally on the exercise: 'Who would know ought of art, must learn, and then take his ease.' Rooting the breath in the belly and working with the abdominal muscles, we seek to free the voice and sustain the breath.

In twos we follow each other's vocal sounds located in both the breath and the emotional through-line of the text. We feed-back on each other's habitual sound, pace and pitch. Freeing sound in relation to character. We each pick text, root it in the breath, then the sound, then the word.

We re-work our way through section one, deepening, honing – trying clear options – thinking of status and power.

Patrick leads a warm-up where we are filling the space, moving, encountering, dodging, turning. Then we introduce 'Derek falling to the right' or 'Lisa falling forwards' and we all have to catch. Then Suzuki Training – lowering the centre of gravity and connecting with our chi energy – moving through space. We find a partner and start to move and improvise, connected at the centre. We add the element of power and improvise, then combine with another pair and experiment, always letting the relationships in the play come about by referencing status.

I spend a morning with Alison working intensively on the murder of the puppets in Ode 5. We piece together Episode 6 and Ode 5. We spend a day on the Odes. How do we combine two theatrical conventions – a singing Chorus and a speaking Medea, without it seeming 'eggy'? We work on the relationship between the Chorus and the audience in relation to the other characters. We seem to uncover a dynamic that will work.

Dorinda leads us through imaging the words of a speech. Instead of speaking them, breathe them and gesture each image, either indicatively, imitatively, metaphorically or expressively. Then speak the text, imaging the whole time and self-selecting the gestures. A breakthrough. The text comes alive and the physicalisation of the text comes to the fore. A natural deepening occurs.

WEEK 4: TELLING THE STORY

Dorinda and I sit down and revise Medea's objectives in every scene and her overall objective in the play, e.g. 'I want my honour', 'I want to be heard', 'I want to die'. We are asked to physicalise each objective so that we can individually run through a personal physicalisation of the whole play.

We move into the theatre and have costume fittings and a session of stage combat skills – incorporating the violence into the play.

Each day this week, we examine the Episodes and through clear character objectives we find the through-line of the play. The Chorus concentrate on discovering reactions

Much of the week is spent trying to resolve a problem with the set ...

and actions through the breath – and then extending the breath into movement. Every day we ask the questions 'Who? What? Why? When? Where?' If we can answer, we grasp the sense of the story.

On Day 5 we run the play for the first time in front of friends and share feedback. It's positive, which is a relief, but we realise the function of the Chorus now needs clarifying. The show is running at two hours and needs to be an hour and forty-five minutes.

WEEK FIVE: SPIRITUALITY (THE OVERALL MEANING)

Dorinda spends time with the Chorus, clarifying objectives and role. We alter the beginning of the show, to establish the Chorus as part of the audience and then work through the whole play, tightening Chorus responses and reactions, the style of their movement and its effect on the movement of the characters.

Much of the week is spent trying to resolve an unforeseen problem with the set which fundamentally affects the way the scenes have been staged. Frustrations run high, but we pull together and ultimately find a solution which can be rapidly put into effect.

We hone specific scenes and try out suggestions made by the outside eye last week. By Thursday we are ready to run again, and the shape and rhythm of the play really come into focus. We knock the running time down to an hour and fifty minutes. The play is now ready for an audience.

WEEK SIX

We open at the MAC in Birmingham, to a full house. The show doesn't go as planned. Fear seems to grip us and we lose that deep sense of connection with character. For me, playing Medea, it was a case of trying too hard. Being on stage and forever working harder and harder to find the woman. We feel deflated. Dorinda suggests we let go. We must focus on our character objectives and above all want to tell the story – to let Euripides' words work for us.

Our second night clicks into place and the champagne flows. We look forward to nine weeks of touring and allowing the connection between ourselves, the audience and this incredible story – to grow. ■

Foursight are continuing to tour Medea. See listings for details or telephone 01902 714257.



Circus arts news

News from the Circus Arts Forum: Issue 4 Spring 2001

www.circusarts.org.uk ■ e-mail: info@circusarts.org.uk ■ Tel.: 020 7729 7944 ■ Fax: 020 7729 7945
c/o Total Theatre Network, The Power Station, Coronet Street, London N1 6HD

As we near the end of the Circus Arts Forum's first full year under the nurturing wing of Total Theatre Network, it is an appropriate time to look at the work done to date and our goals for the future. The Forum has a working group with a wealth of different skills and experiences – people from diverse backgrounds with very different approaches to circus are sharing information and working together to further the aims of the Forum. The group is currently chaired by Verena Cornwall and has a number of sub-groups with special responsibilities such as training, PR, and advocacy. This working group is supported by Max and Annabel, who work from the office at Total Theatre. We have spent much of the last year focusing on communication, research and advocacy – both within the circus community and out to the wider world. We will continue on this path for the following year, with a special focus on advocacy.

We are currently about to move into an exciting new phase with the launch of the Circus Arts Forum website. Whilst we will be continuing to offer information and support through our established channels, we will also have the website as a principal means of communication. Designed by Studio 24, with information compiled by the co-ordinator with the help of the Forum working group, the

Circus Arts Forum website is a database-driven site that we expect to become a focal point for the circus community.

Static pages on the site give information on funding, training and health and safety. There is a links page to other circus organisations, and a monthly noticeboard which will have current listings, auditions, classes, etc. By signing in to the site as a member, anyone using it will have access to the database, which will be a means of finding individuals or organisations by, for example, geographic area or listed skill. The site will also have current and past issues of Circus Arts News posted.

The website address is going live at the end of February. Do please put yourself on it as soon as possible – and help to make it the living, breathing vehicle of communication that circus so badly needs! That crucial address is www.circusarts.org.uk – go there now ...

Dorothy Max Prior
Co-ordinator, Circus Arts Forum

Circus Arts News is published by Total Theatre Network and edited by Dorothy Max Prior on behalf of the Circus Arts Forum.

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New Collaborations

The CircElation training project, held in Sheffield last November, brought together circus and theatre performers and directors to explore possibilities for new collaborations between circus and other arts disciplines. There will, no doubt, be many fruitful new ventures that emerge as a result of this week, but one immediate result was the setting up of a weekly open workshop at the Albany Centre in Bristol – Wednesdays 6–8pm. E-mail sandersonjenny@hotmail.com or phone 07767 337966.

If you are interested in learning more about CircElation, which plans to hold follow-up events around the country, contact info@bhathena-jancovich.co.uk. If you want a copy of the full report on CircElation e-mailed to you, please contact Max on info@circusarts.org.uk.

The Chipolatas have established a reputation for themselves as a quirky performance troupe with their mix of acrobatic clog dancing, traditional English song and circus skills. Sam Thomas describes his company as 'custodians of an evolving tradition' – a sort of folk art for the 21st century, perhaps. They have now started work on an exciting new project with Kathryn Hunter as director, a collaboration that came about as a result of the CircElation project. The Chipolatas have another collaborator on the project – Sam's dad Taffy Thomas, a renowned storyteller whose famous tailcoat of embroidered images is described by Sam as 'a sort of jukebox – people pick an image and Taffy tells the story'. The project raises a number of interesting questions about the way spoken word can be used with physical and visual performance – finding the right way to combine the different elements will be a challenge, but one that Sam feels confident can be met.

Zin-Lit' are a multi-discipline company creating a new production called Norrsken (Aurora Borealis). Company director Elias describes the show as a blend of dance, circus, theatre and visual arts – with an intention of allowing the art forms to live side-by-side rather than creating a fusion. They premiere the production at the Tabernacle in Notting Hill on April 25th. Contact them on 020 8525 1931; www.zin-lit.com; or e-mail: norrsken@zin-lit.com.

Circus News Snippets

- Want to get a degree in circus? Applications are invited for the Circus Space/Central School of Speech and Drama BA (Hons) in Theatre Practice – Circus. Contact course director Tim Roberts on 020 7613 4141 or e-mail info@thecircusspace.co.uk.

- If you fancy training on the road, the Academy of Circus Arts, linked to Zippo's Circus, will be holding auditions in April. Zippo's new touring show will be premiered in April at Blackheath in London. www.zipposcircus.co.uk

- Circo.go is the name of a project for young people aged 14-17 offering training in circus, physical theatre and street performance. It takes place in the Cambridge area during the Easter holidays and is part of a Year of the Artist project funded by Arts Council East. Contact circo.go@totaltheatre.org.uk for more details.

- Circus: Blueprints for the Future is the title of a one-day mini conference which is being held at Wysing Arts near Cambridge, supported by Year of the Artist. Anyone interested in circus is welcome – particularly if you live in the East of England region. E-mail info@circusarts.org.uk for more information.

- The Arts Council of England has shown that it means business by giving financial support through the National Touring Programme to a number of circus and circus-theatre productions – expect to see a new aerial show from Skinning the Cat, a multi-discipline new production from Scarabeus Theatre and Quilombo, a new acrobatic dance show from Polichinelo Circus. Contact the Arts Council to find out about future funding possibilities. www.artscouncil.org.uk

Swamp Circus Theatre have been touring contemporary tented circus for the past decade. Artistic director **BRETT JACKSON** gives us some insight into life on the road



On the edge of the city, on a piece of grey grass behind the derelict supermarket ... on the village green, next to the Royal Oak Freehouse ... on the school field next to the red graffiti of the local community centre ... by the old bandstand in the centre of the park ... by the boating lake in the middle of the common, by the beach, at the country show, the muddy pop field, the wasteground, the disused car park ... stands – the Circus Top, surrounded by bright signs, trucks and trailers. A colourful mixture of travelling artistes, taking new ideas, laughter, music, extreme acrobatics and serious stupidity to the people – from city centres to village greens.

Each week our office receives letters from young people eager to join a touring circus ... having trained in the school gym, joined a youth circus, left the office job, met a clown, worked the street, worn rubber on stilts in the club, graduated from circus school perfecting those essential moments ...

The Olympic Games, opera, clubland acts, new variety, shopping centres, street festivals, TV commercials, circus schools, horror shows, galas, art festivals, pop festivals and the Dome have all served to promote the profile of circus arts. But circus has always trodden its own

A mixture of characters, nationalities, temperaments and beliefs working and living together daily, closely ...

road with its own special performance spaces and relations with local communities. It is a travelling art form and touring tented, contemporary circus is important in its evolution.

Since 1992 Swamp have toured tented acrobatic theatre with an environmental theme, live music and a circus school attracting the local community. As touring costs rise there is an increasing pull towards the corporate pot of gold to pay the way and finance the new experimental work.

But looking at the last ten years of Swamp's work it has not been the corporate launches, glitzy exhibitions or hospitality balls that we remember but the tours that take our work out to a huge variety of new audiences ...

It is a creative struggle: how to train, rehearse, raise funds, administer, experiment, write, design, record, build, direct, choreograph, transport, mend and tour a circus community. How to pay, feed, and accommodate artistes – in a purple collection of trucks and trailers. It all comes together in the end – it has to; a mixture of characters, nationalities, temperaments and beliefs working and living together daily, closely for six months or more.

Here are a few memorable snapshots from the past ten years.

1994 – Fundango a go-go

The fat man with the red face welcomed us whilst brandishing a long fat German sausage. The Arts Centre we had been promised was the former slaughterhouse – a desolate area of concrete behind the station. We aren't able to use our tent or seats due to German regulations; and had to hire a tent from the notorious Kurt and Kurt ...

The six-inch thick concrete was drilled for pins. As our tent manager Tom and others vibrated for two days, the stilt-transvestite Ice and her robot jugglers menaced the populace into buying the first tickets. A cafe bus with a bar (free to artistes) arrived and the shower trailer was plumbed in, heralding a change of heart. A plea to the local newspaper resulted in a forest of potted plants and trees surrounding the tent in an attempt to hide some concrete. The real colour came as a local posse spray-painted the front of the Schlachthof with a Swamp mural and hip-hop acrobatics.

As the show opened the friendliness was huge – the local anarchist bakery brought us wholesome bricks of bread and cherry cakes, local punks and youth circus jugglers came to help with flyers and a masseuse offered her services to tired acrobatic muscles. Beer and apple wine flowed, and posters and impromptu performances covered the city. A film company put Fundango on TV, the director of Circus Roncali loved it and the show was hauled off to continue at the Museum of Modern Arts in Bonn. Many circus friends pull big four-

Hit the Road, Jack

wheel wagons with tractors – you can drive almost anything as long as you don't exceed 10 kph. Slow, but there's lots of forest to see and chocolate to eat.

1997 – The Grand Bleu Tour

Terre en Fete, South of France, sweaty acrobats, sun, Mediterranean sea, seven trucks and trailers, a double-decker bus, Swamp big top and cafe tent, and mountains of official French paperwork. Working with a local arts festival, bringing local artists, musicians and deep-sea divers together to celebrate the Mediterranean Sea and promote its ecology. The last beach in the world inhabited by a pirate clown determined not to let anyone else play on it. The audience pass through an exhibition of objects brought up from the sea off the Cote d'Azur by local divers – including sculptures made from large numbers of Coke cans and plastic bottles.

Alongside the show, millions of dollars worth of yachts were daily polished, the chrome of their helicopters glistened in the sun as a classy contrast to our painted trucks. And the audience were great – knowing and loving the circus tradition. After the show, with dripping make-up and stinging eyes, we were invited out to be spoiled in the restaurants as the cultural and culinary hospitality combined. From the coast we headed inland to occupy the well-manured and dusted stand recently vacated by Cirque Gruss. Local youths – often already versed in circus skills from school – leant against our guys juggling and slinging yoyos.

Then up into the Alps. As the double-decker whizzed round hairpins, villagers looked and shouted directions to a cooler green valley. The tent is surrounded by purple peaks, sheep, goats, wide-eyed kids and perfumed air. Our procession around the narrow cobbled streets of the town ended predictably with free drinks with the mayor at the bar central. Soon coaches of Arab children from Nice emptied into the circus top to join the old ladies in black, farmers and their kids from local villages, hippies with friendship bracelets, lovers, art dealers, tourists in shades and stray dogs. Back to the coast, we finally set up on the famous stand in Juan les Pins where the jazz festival takes place. We performed to laughter from the wearers of smartly cut suits, chic beach wear, reflective lenses, pop UV fashion outfits, cultural

T-shirts and trend-conscious tourist lycra. The Mistral wind did its best to sail the tent to sea and wash away the sand around our pins. But there is a great sense of artistic appreciation in France and travelling shows are not chased away immediately ... Circus is seen as a high art form.

2000 – Swamp in Edinburgh

A friendly green dell in the centre of the city sandwiched between the railway and Princes Street, looking up to the castle, the mound and the space-rocket-like Scott Monument. The Garden Party promised a festival within the festival with Lady Salsa, Flea Circus, Jive Junkies, Mamalodi African dancers and the Mamaloucos Circus Big Top housing MOTO from Swamp Circus Theatre. The MOTO project involves the themes of air, breathing and motors. It is a devised production and the storyline is illustrated by mime, aerial dance, stilt-dance, acrobatics, contortion, choreographed juggling, original live music from The Icecream Men and film. A big, bright, clash of fifteen artistes, musicians and technicians.

Paul's rinki-dinkesque bike-truck with peddlers and seven-piece band roamed the streets with fliers; our mobile van-stage followed up – and shows in clubs, Ross bandstand, showcases, Pick-of-the-Fringe and in the street were the name of the publicity game. Photos on the front of the Scotsman and the Times helped to bring the punters in; though the way into the gardens was a confusing maze of barriers, security guards, fairs, face-painters, tattoo artistes, balloon modellers and drunk chaps with blobby noses. Edinburgh is totally remarkable during the festival, with a thick soup of shows, art, artists, film-makers, agents, critics and promoters – it's the biz. We were glad we weren't outside halfway through the month of August when things turned soggy and street artists retired to pubs. The MOTO show caught on, the excellent team partied and we survived with several invitations to tour to venues in the UK and abroad. ■

Swamp are currently raising funds to work with a French director to continue the development of the MOTO project. They can be contacted on 0114 2560962, or see www.swampcircus.com

Angels of the Ring

Angela de Castro

BIM MASON, founder and co-director of Circomedia, was invited to participate in the Anjos do Picadeiros Circus Festival in Brazil last December. It was an eventful experience, as he reports below



Anjos do Picadeiros (Angels of the Ring) is a bi-annual clown festival held in Rio de Janeiro. This year the scope of the festival was widened to include skills acts ranging from the comic acro-trapeze of La Minima to various artists with an intense style akin to DV8. Over the week there were acts from more than forty different Brazilian groups, together with a strong contingent that had made the arduous overland journey from Argentina.

For each festival a number of international artists are invited to perform or lead workshops. Previously, they had invited figures such as Nani Colombioni whose style had been an inspiration to the host company, Teatro Anonimo. This year they invited Angela de Castro – who is from Brazil but now resident in the UK – to direct the opening show and to run her popular clown workshop. Alvin Tam from Montreal was teaching and performing Chinese Pole, and I ran a workshop in the use of masks for a group of actors, directors and writers. The group's commitment and imagination took the work to some exceptional moments. The other guest was the masterful comic provocateur, Leo Bassi, who offered the festival a new dimension in clowning. At the opening debate the narrow concept of clowns with red noses performing to family audiences was vehemently challenged and this issue was tussled with

repeatedly during the week, culminating in the Anonimo clowns ceremoniously removing their noses mid-performance.

The atmosphere was extraordinary – the sheer size of Brazil means that frequent meetings between practitioners isn't possible. One gets the feeling that these isolated groups explore the possibilities much more thoroughly, intensively and for longer than in Britain where space and time is more expensive and where practitioners are exposed to such a dizzying array of influences. Because the average standard of living is much lower than in Europe, performers work with fewer resources and have to be more dedicated to survive. The results are impressive and standards compare very favourably with the best of New Circus in Britain.

Perhaps because of this, Cirque du Soleil were holding auditions. These auditions provoked another debate about the standardisation of circus in the global market. At the end of one cabaret evening, Leo Bassi launched into an extraordinary tirade against their practice of video-recording acts without consent which, together with all their audition-recordings worldwide, provides them with a huge bank of other people's ideas. He warned against the dangers of a single company enjoying worldwide dominance, drawing a parallel with Coca-Cola squeezing local products out of the market. He finished this

tirade by tearing up their poster and using his squirting briefcase as if to urinate on it. The Brazilian circus community, struggling to achieve a distinct identity for their New Circus and wary of the dominance of North American culture, greeted this with huge applause.

The festival was based at the Funacao Progresso which, like the Circus Space, is a former industrial building situated at the intersection of the modern commercial city and the old poorer districts. It has had a long, complicated history – with energetic New Circus pioneers struggling to find space, equipment and recognition by staging extraordinary events. The building was being hastily renovated in time for the festival – scaffolding, wheelbarrows and cement mixers crossed paths with jugglers and unicyclists. Indeed, the cabaret space was not completed until about an hour before the performance was due to start – and even then doors were being welded and an improvised ladder was used to fix the exploding electrics.

Despite a delayed start the cabaret contained tight routines and ran fairly smoothly – and where it didn't, Angela de Castro and myself as clownish stage-hands filled in with our routines or improvised wildly to the delight of the public who, we found out later, are unused to performers taking the risk of making something out of nothing. Delayed starts seem a local custom and nobody minds too much – in one case the public was crammed into a sweaty theatre foyer for over an hour. Unable to move in or out I was made aware of my latent claustrophobia and my English sense of punctuality, order and fair queuing. But the Rio crowd made the best of it: someone got a laugh by balancing a plastic bottle on his nose; a local poet flamboyantly declaimed his work and then a song was taken up by all. Before long everyone was samba dancing, singing and beating rhythms on anything available, carefree of any impatience – a little different from your average British theatre audience! ■

Circus in Collaboration

Total Theatre's Critical Practice 9 was held in Sheffield as part of the CircElation training week in November 2000 – DOROTHY MAX PRIOR reports

A full house of sixty or more people gathered in Forced Entertainment's Workstation studio for Total Theatre's autumn Critical Practice discussion which took a look at the relationship between circus and other arts – particularly theatre, dance and site-specific performance.

Deborah Pope, from aerial company No Ordinary Angels and artistic director of CircElation, raised a number of questions that she felt were emerging for people working in this space where circus meets other disciplines. She spoke of the challenge of writing and devising for circus, of finding a relationship between the skills and the concepts, and the challenge of taking the art of circus beyond the craft.

Circus-theatre director Gail Kelly spoke of her work with contemporary companies in Australia – including Circus Oz and Legs on the Wall. Her own all-female company The Party Line has up to seven performers, a composer/sound artist, a visual artist, a text artist/dramaturg and a rigger in the creative team for every show. Inspired by the work of feminist critic Judith Butler, their intention collectively has been to find a 'performance of the feminine'. Over two or three months they work together to devise a performance text. Gail said that they don't dismiss circus skills, but 'we don't want to fall back on what we know'. The driving force behind the work was an exploration of 'where we are in our personal process of exploding the feminine'.

Kathryn Hunter – a long-term member of Theatre de Complicite – described herself as a 'circus baby'; she had only recently started to work with circus performers. She saw circus as something that could lend life and breath to theatre, an

art that celebrates not only the human form but also human potential. Kathryn was interested in the notion of circus using writers – she saw interesting possibilities for the writer as someone involved in the devising process and a documentor of the emerging performance text. She drew an analogy to the role of the writer in earlier theatre traditions such as the Commedia dell'Arte, and the work of Moliere and Shakespeare. She acknowledged the permanence of the written word and felt that

Celebrating the joy of doing perfectly useless things perfectly ...

playwrights could be more aware of the potential of circus – Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* was an example of a play written for circus performers and ideally performed by vaudeville clowns.

Reg Bolton, who has often been described as 'the godfather of new circus', felt that there were many crucial differences between circus and theatre; not least the difference between the theatre audience's suspension of disbelief and the circus audience's ideal state of total belief. At the far end of what he described as 'the Father Christmas spectrum' is 'total belief', the awe and wonder of the young child. This was the emotion that circus can bring out in an audience. In answer to the question 'Can circus and theatre go together?' he replied yes – with great delicacy.

Ron Bunzl, a site-specific artist from Amsterdam, said his inter-disciplinary practice evolved from his background in painting, sculpture and music. In his work he uses many different elements (movement, music, images, words, space) and draws on different traditions (theatre, dance, circus, opera), aiming to find vehicles that connect with the audience. He spoke of finding personal truth and collective truth and described the work as 'an adventure in changing perspectives'.

Choreographer Phillip McKenzie brought us all down to earth by saying that talking about performance was like dancing about architecture. He said that he felt like a fraud and knew nothing about circus... His own personal performance work was kick-started by seeing Lyndsey Kemp in *Flowers* after which 'whole dimensions opened that I didn't know existed'. With reference to new collaborations, he advised younger people to 'go for it' – and advised older people to take young people's advice.

These last few comments started a discussion on the difference between most of the panel – who had come to circus via other disciplines – and many of the younger people in the room who were starting off with a circus skill base and building on that. Ron urged people to stay true to their ideas, to 'find ways, new spaces'. Reg said that the secret was to find out what you are good at and do it. And although it was seen as right and good that circus should move into new collaborations, Reg expressed a view held by many of us that the traditional model still had validity – 'celebrating the joy of doing perfectly useless things perfectly'. ■

The Role of the Director

Total Theatre Network's Critical Practice 10 – The Role of the Director in Physical and Visual Performance – was held at the Royal Festival Hall as part of the London International Mime Festival in January 2001. **TOBY MITCHELL** reports

A capacity crowd packed into the Royal Festival Hall's Voice Box on the middle Saturday of the London International Mime Festival to hear a diverse and distinguished selection of directors give their views on their role in physical/visual/devised theatre. Ably chaired by Dick McCaw of the International Workshop Festival (who also acted as simultaneous interpreter for Didier Guyon), the debate proved a valuable insight into working methods – or the lack thereof.

First up was Peader Kirk (replacing Paul Hunter at the last minute), who said that when he directs, he loves being surprised by his own work, and that he also wants the audience to think, 'Oh, what a surprise ... But of course it had to happen.' When he directs he tries to give form to the work, while not determining its outcome. The performers 'do'; he watches and shuts up. He also sees the director as encompassing many roles: coach, double agent, metronome, audience ... stupid and reckless risk-taker. The one thing a director shouldn't be is 'a daddy' (or, more generally, 'a parent').

After Peader came Anton Adassinski from Derevo, who started controversially by saying that every society or group needs a dictator. He expressed his worry that today people seem lazy, that they want success immediately, that they won't work at something for five or more years. And, according to Anton, 'theatre is dying' ... 'So, why do we act?' he asked, and then went on to say that we need to transform ourselves, so we live longer and live more lives. In Russia it used to be thought that actors brought new souls into the world – because they have the 'white devil' – so they weren't buried in consecrated ground. Getting back to the topic, he said that after a month of rehearsal, he's ready to show the first

merings of a show – but only after a year is it 'nearly there'. He's happy to perform a show for years, to bring productions back years later – and likes to keep four shows going at the same time – in a kind of rep. (Wouldn't we all?)

Flick Ferdinando (director of *Throat*, starring John Paul Zaccarini) explained that she first started in dance, and is now head of the theatre department at the Circus Space, so is working on ways to connect theatre and circus. She said she directs from an emotional perspective, and when working with circus performers who work on their 'tricks' every day and love to be 'in control', she enjoys making them go out of control. She believes physicality is important, but energy is just as vital, and that it's good to play a lot in rehearsal –

themes and starting to write a story through improvisation. The director is the 'point of synthesis' – otherwise there are just too many ideas and you can end up with the theatrical equivalent of the Golden Delicious apple, cultivated to please the lowest common denominator. He concluded by saying 'In a body you have to have a head – even if the head's not the best bit!'

The final speaker was Cal McCrystal (*Spy-monkey*, *Peepolykus*, etc.), who said he started his career as an actor but for the last five years has been simply directing. He claimed to be more of a 'daddy' director, combining his ideas with the actors' personalities. When he starts work with a company, he'll first look at each performer's skills. Then he'll say 'Right, now what are you bad at? What do

'In a body you have to have a head – even if the head's not the best bit!'

and work out what it means later. Finally she said that it's useful for directors to perform sometimes too.

Then came the turn of Fiat Lux's Didier Guyon, speaking 'through' Dick McCaw. (Though there were times when the audience suspected his English was better than he let on.) His first major influence was Bolek Polivka, a Czech performer who is very precise – but gives the impression that he isn't. His second influence was Eugenio Barba, whose discipline and precision are second to none, but who has 'clonelike followers'. For Didier, the role of the director is to choose a strong theme and to choose good performers. But after that he has no recipe – he starts from scratch each time, finding secondary

your friends tease you about?' – and that's what will end up in the show. One performer he worked with became very worried that he wasn't funny, so Cal got him to repeat 'I'm not funny' to the rest of the cast – until he was. Cal said that as a director he's primarily a 'laugh-counter'; that there can be pathos in his shows too, but that it's more accidental.

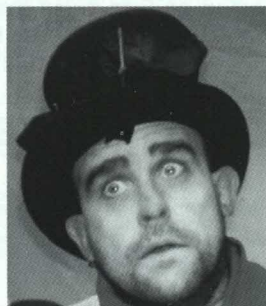
The session finished with an open discussion, though with a depleted panel (other commitments meant some early departures), but it was generally agreed that whether the director is a parent-like figure or not, it would be good to come up with a vocabulary and/or grammar for devised work – something that was more precise than simply, 'That works and that doesn't.' ■

ESPERANDO A GODOT



JONATHAN YOUNG spent last summer in Spain, directing a physical version of *Waiting for Godot*. Speaking very little Spanish himself, how tricky was the task?

Waiting for Godot is considered very alternative in Spain. Too difficult, or boring, or just unknown.



It was a long wait. A Spanish friend, Juan, first proposed the project just as we were leaving Lecoq's school over two years ago. After a delay of six months, then a year and more, after the rather dubious promise of funding from the region of Castilla-la-Mancha, *Godot* finally arrived. Or at least our chance to wait for him.

This was my first time in Spain, and on the first day of rehearsals I could just about get my mouth around the sounds to order *una cerveza*, but little else. How do you direct a company in a completely foreign language? It turned out to be simpler and far more productive than I'd first imagined. At first Juan, the other director, acted as my translator, but I quickly picked up a basic 'working vocabulary' over our first month of rehearsals. A few basic terms sufficed, from which everything could be derived: to play, pleasure, impulse, rhythm. To put them into full sentences of good Spanish proved harder, but who was I trying to kid? Some of my mistakes entertained the company for weeks.

But the advantages of my unfamiliarity with the language soon showed. This was the first time I'd worked with a written text for four years and the prospect was daunting – especially as it was one of Beckett's 'biggies'. However, as Juan and I began searching for ways to play the text, I became vividly aware of the physical presence of the actors – what Eugenio Barba calls the 'pre-expressive base' of a performer, their state and energy that is the foundation of what they're trying to play. I began to observe the actors with an animal-like attention – and myself too. Terrifyingly simple questions came

to me. Were the performers interesting to look at, charismatic or a bit dull? Did I really like the sounds they were making? Why did one movement seem right and not another? At which precise moment did I switch off and get bored with a particular improvisation? Sometimes they looked at me with wondering eyes ('Why did Juan invite this weird English guy here in the first place?'), as I repeated the same clumsy words over and over – the game, the game, where's the pleasure, the urgency?

In fact, we spent four weeks completely devoted to this kind of 'pre-expressive' research. We played many games, naturally, as early on we decided this is what Vladimir and Estragon do, apart from wait, to pass the time. 'Entertain or wait' became our motto, and it was suitably ruthless. The actors gradually passed from the stage of panic-stricken to a cooler, more real urgency. For all our talk of 'the void' that the characters face, that void is also a completely real and ever-present possibility for the performers – that the audience gets bored. From one second to the next – that simple. 'It's how you do it, how you do it,' Vladimir says, 'if you want to go on living', and this search for form and detail eventually informed the whole show. How else do you hold an audience's attention for ninety minutes when nothing significant happens?

We made masks and played with them, another way to help us escape from a psychological way of acting, and into a freer world of play. Rather than demanding realistically portrayed characters from the actors, we began playing with the idea that each character has a 'vessel', a simple physical attribute ▶



This was my first time in Spain, and on the first day of rehearsals I could just about get my mouth around the sounds to order *una cerveza*, but little else

that is present throughout the performance and acts as both a form and a motor. Fortunately for us, Beckett had indicated some clearly, but as always it took time to find the way to create them. For Vladimir it was his dodgy bladder; Estragon his boots and balance; Pozzo had farts flying from his mouth – a giant windbag; and Lucky the eyes of a telly addict.

Early on Juan asked me what purpose the bowler hats had in the play. Should we ignore them, modernise them or what? Initially stumped, we were eventually led by the bowlers into what became our main image for the play: the world of the circus, the music hall, clowns. It's not an original take on *Godot*, for sure, but for us it was decisive and concrete, the way we found to bring the text to life. So we invented our story of the two has-beens, Didi and Gogo, shoved on stage by Signor Antonio to 'entertain or wait' with the public until the arrival of the star. The duo, from another era and now pathetic, constantly on the edge of the flop, live the tragicomedy of Beckett's joke: *Godot* never shows.

Taking clowning as means and method was dangerous. After our second month, the play possessed the rapid musical rhythms, the energy, the playfulness that we'd been looking for from the start. But now our version was too slapstick, too 'in yer face', too clowny, and we knew we were missing something. We began

to go in exactly the opposite direction, to look for the nuances, the subtleties, the tenderesses, the tragedy. At times, the actors balked at our apparent change in direction. But they had the courtesy to trust us even when we seemed deranged.

In retrospect, it was the apparent contradictions, accidents and chance that led us to some of our most significant discoveries. Once, running through the play technically the afternoon before a performance, we discovered that the actors could afford to use less energy. Without the pressure of having to 'act' but just 'going through the motions', a beautiful quality of ease and economy entered the movements. As a result, the play took on a lightness that it lacked earlier.

Similarly, in the week before the opening night, we performed for four nights to a small invited public – leading to a decisive and wholly unpredicted change. Watching the audience as closely as the actors on the third night, and wondering about the relation between the two, I realised what was lacking. For weeks we'd talked a lot about clown, but in all the technicalities, we'd neglected the crucial element: the contact with the public. The next day we went over the play again, checking over all the moments where it was possible to share something directly with the audience. From then on the contact with the public became our litmus test during the show – when that

contact was sincere and open it lent tremendous power to the action.

After two and a half months of rehearsals, we took our baby to a theatre fair in Puertolano (two hours south of Madrid) for the programmers of the region. It was a strange event, where sixteen shows over four days are offered entirely free to anyone who cared to wander in. And wander in they did – and a few wandered out too. But by the end of the show, we had a gripped public who laughed, held their breath in our silences and finally applauded enthusiastically.

To my surprise, *Waiting for Godot* is considered very alternative in Spain. Too difficult, or boring, or just unknown. Very few people I talked to had ever read the text or seen a production, but all seemed to have some idea of 'what it was about'. So most people were surprised to find the show so funny and moving. One programmer even had the good grace to tell us he liked it, but that Beckett was no longer interesting for today. Fortunately a major article appeared a few days later in *El Pais* saying exactly the opposite. *Godot* must have made a few calls on our behalf ... ■

Jonathan Young is the founder of SHAMS, a clown theatre company. Their first production, Sleeping Beauties, plays at the Edinburgh Fringe this year.



total theatre^{network}

Celebrating and promoting physical and visual performance

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Critical Practice Discussions

Members might have noticed that we have been increasing the frequency of our critical practice discussions. We were very pleased to have held discussions as part of the Visions festival in Brighton in October on puppetry, at the CircElation project in Sheffield in November on cross-artform collaboration, and then as part of the London International Mime Festival in January on the role of the director.

Total Theatre Network Board

A big welcome to our new board members. They are Dymphna Callery, a theatre lecturer and regular contributor to Total Theatre Magazine, Olivia Jacobs, artistic director of Camden People's Theatre, Jason Hird, artistic director of Leikin Loppu, and Pilar Orti, co-director of Forbidden Theatre.

Discovery

In the past, Total Theatre Network has pioneered week-long peer exchange workshops which have taken place at a variety of different venues, overseas and in the UK. Dorothy Max Prior would like to hear from members who might be interested in taking part, so she can assess the interest in holding one later this year.

Volunteer Wanted

After the departure of Marion Wallis, our membership officer, we are urgently looking for a new volunteer. If you have a day free per week (or more), please give Annabel a call in the office.

Writers Wanted

Total Theatre is looking for writers to contribute features, articles and reviews. Please send proposals with samples of work and CV to the Editor.

Total Theatre Funding News

Total Theatre Network is delighted to be receiving an increase in funding from the Arts Council of England. It is very encouraging to have their commitment to the work we have been doing stated in public. According to their literature, they say we 'play an increasingly effective role in promoting and developing work in the area of physical performance and circus'.

This funding will allow the company to develop its operating capacity. The decision means that we now have guaranteed funding until 2003/4, which will enable the organisation to plan far more effectively. It must be pointed out, however, that we will not be receiving any increase until April 2002, so next year will be about our ninth successive year at standstill.

x.trax Festival

Total Theatre Network will be holding a Critical Practice discussion in Manchester as part of the x.trax street theatre festival. x.trax is the UK's annual cross-artform showcase, designed to give promoters an opportunity to see the best international performance work from the UK and beyond. The discussion will be on the morning of 6 or 7 May; please see the enclosed leaflet for further details. For further information on the festival, check out www.xtrax.org.uk.

Sprint

In March, Total Theatre Network collaborated with Camden People's Theatre on their Sprint festival, co-hosting two afternoon discussions and a day's training on marketing and fundraising.

Year of the Artist

Total Theatre Network has received funding from Arts Council East (formerly East England Arts) for a YOTA education project. It consists of a week of workshops for 14-17 year-olds, giving them the opportunity to try out physical performance skills and will conclude with two showings. The project will take place over Easter and is being led by Charlie Hull of Grip Circus. Connected with the project is a one-day mini-conference for circus arts practitioners, producers, promoters and anyone interested in the development of circus in the UK. This will look at regional development and how the art form is evolving, and will be held on 28 April at Wysing Arts, near Cambridge. If you are interested in attending, please call the office.

New Total Theatre Editor

We are very pleased to announce the new Total Theatre Magazine editorial team. After a recruitment process at the beginning of the year, we have appointed Dorothy Max Prior as the new editor, starting with the next issue. She has been a regular contributor for some years and is a member of the editorial group. Those of you who have dealt with Toby Mitchell, our guest editor for this issue, will be pleased that he is staying on. He will take over the production side of the magazine and has also joined the editorial group.

Total Theatre Awards

At the time of going to print, it is looking very unlikely that the Total Theatre Awards will be going ahead this year. Sponsorship is urgently being sought, so if any member has any hot

contacts, please let me know. We are very grateful to AndCo, who supported us for the last two years and enabled the awards to be such a success.

Basil Twist
Symphonie Fantastique

ICA, January 2001

Basil Twist's *Symphonie Fantastique* went down a storm in his native New York, where it played to sell-out houses for a year and a half before being snapped up for LIMF and transplanted into the ICA theatre.

Black curtains cover all the stage save a central rectangular space which is Twist's three-dimensional canvas; the water-filled, five hundred gallon, glass-walled tank in which unusual objects such as feathers, mops and ribbons dance to the soundscape of Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*.

It depends on your taste, but the overall result of so much billowing manipulation of colourful floaty things is either stimulating or soporific. The beautiful use of lighting with the animation of weightless fabrics definitely creates a kaleidoscopic effect which is mesmerising. 'It's like listening to music with your eyes,' says the press blurb – or like watching a Kandinsky canvas come to life.

However, from the front the tank looks like a large TV screen; and its size in relation to the blackness which surrounds it recreates the familiar experience of watching the box. Perhaps it is just this familiarity in a 'live space' which prevents the initial novelty of this beautiful work sustaining itself beyond the first half hour.

At the end of the performance there was a magical revelation. The curtains were pulled back to show the machinations of the piece: the huge backstage area, wet animators, a whole other living, breathing world which had been denied us in favour of its clever polished result. Suddenly it was all hugely interesting, but unfortunately all too late.

Anne-Louise Rentell

Derevo
The Rider

QEH, January 2001

In their show *The Rider* and its title, *Derevo* suggest that the Actor is a shifting figure who surfs on changing emotional and political currents; someone who is nothing in themselves, except with an audience,



when a persona is adopted or thrust upon them. From the brief programme note I take this to be the kernel of the piece.

Many of the fleeting images were not original or new: the idea of actor as prostitute, murderer and Christ, the Lady being wooed and marrying the old peasant, and the ceremonial meal at the long table. But the stark staging and use of colour bring a freshness to our eyes, and we have a sense of otherness from the performers' Russian perspective. They can present the Navy, political rallies and dislocation – and avoid cliché, where a British company might drop into stereotype. This creates some arresting moments of lunacy and perspective.

However, a major criticism is that while Anton Adassinski is a talented comic clown with firebrand energy, this is not an ensemble piece, which is a shame since all the performers were strong. At times there was a distinct sense of padding, as presumably the main man was preparing for his next incarnation. Strangely, although this was created in 1992, it felt unfinished.

Essentially a collage of images and following no distinct narrative line, many in the audience were unsure how to react, feeling ill at ease with the obscurity and confusion. Still, the piece is ambitious and in places brilliant. The vitality of the vision and Anton's joy in performing cannot be doubted, but the structure cannot hold what he wants to say.

Geoff Beale

Fiat Lux
Nouvelles Folies

Purcell Room, January 2001

Fiat Lux presented *Nouvelles Folies* to a full house in the Purcell Room. From the moment the lights went up on three beach huts, set against a sea wall, the audience were able to enjoy a clearly evoked and humorous piece about the seaside. The huts were home to a group of four local Breton fisherman, a solitary sailor and a young couple of tourists, who we first see being mis-directed out of their way by one of the local Bretons.

The piece sketches the rivalry between the locals and the tourists mainly along male ego lines. But it is not really interested in narrative, indeed the slight story of the woman and her partner, and the Breton with a strange laugh, suggests a style and characterisation that the piece never intends to pursue.

What we are presented with is some strong ensemble work, good set pieces and routines – such as when all the performers flap and rustle the newspapers they are reading as a wind rises, or when we see their mounting reaction and horror to the sea coming in.

But there is no danger and no demands are made on us. The audience enjoyed it, but I had the feeling of being at the seaside or in a park on a sunny afternoon – pleasant and it passed the time. Perhaps that is

enough, but the response to the one truly anarchic piece of comedy, when a crucifix procession behind the fence is disrupted by the pigs that have been cleverly set up some time before, would suggest that this is not the case. Now to have started with that anarchy ...

Geoff Beale

La Ribot
Still Distinguished

South London Gallery, January 2001

Is it mime? Is it theatre? Is it live art? No, it's dance, says *La Ribot* in her post-performance discussion at the South London Gallery, which raises an interesting question of the relationship between content and context. Placed in this airy white space, her third set of *Distinguished Pieces* feel very different to series one and two which I saw presented in the darkened auditorium of the ICA theatre.

The title of this series, *Still Distinguished*, reflects both the continuity of the work, and the 'still picture' of painting or sculpture. Thus, the audience are free to move around to view the Pieces, a series of eight tableaux and short performances, from any angle. At times we group around the performer in a horseshoe shape, creating a 'stage' for the work. At other points we move and mingle, shifting position to view her from

another angle, as we would a sculpture.

In a number of the Pieces I was reminded of Bauhaus director Oscar Schlemmer's view of dance/performance as an extension of painting – moving shape, colour and form from 2D to 3D. For example, in *Another Bloody Mary*: a series of red objects are placed in a still-life composition on the floor, a red cloth spread like a matador's cloak. *La Ribot* lies spread-eagled across the cloth, legs akimbo in fluorescent green stilettoes, a nylon wig placed as a fig-leaf.

Other Pieces rely a little more on action but share the mood of quiet confidence. I have seen many performances that use a combination of nudity and surreal imagery, but have never seen an artist or audience so relaxed and engaged in the process, no doubt due to *La Ribot*'s wonderful balance of humour and intelligence. Throughout, she has a theatrical intent that somehow creates the 'pit' between artist and spectator. We are graciously invited into her space, our belongings mix with hers on the floor, yet ultimately she remains distanced from us – framed by her own powerful presence in the space.

Dorothy Max Prior

Theatre de l'Ange Fou Entangled Lives

Hoxton Hall, January 2001

Corinne Soum and Steven Wasson were the last assistants to the great mime impresario and pioneer Etienne Decroux and in 1984 set up the acclaimed *Ecole de Mime Corporel Dramatique*. I came to watch their work therefore with great anticipation – would they live up to my expectations?

What I found most refreshing about their latest piece *Entangled Lives* (their 17th project to date) was the pure energy. It was a joy to see such strong, charismatic performers, four men and four women all dressed in white, with little to distract from their oozing passion. The sparseness allowed one to concentrate on the power of their movement and the series of very intricate, detailed and heartfelt body impulses they created before us. It is difficult to describe it as choreography; it is more like body patterns undulating up and down, like

a river or waves, sometimes gentle, sometimes rippling, sometimes surging up together and then crashing back into the sea again.

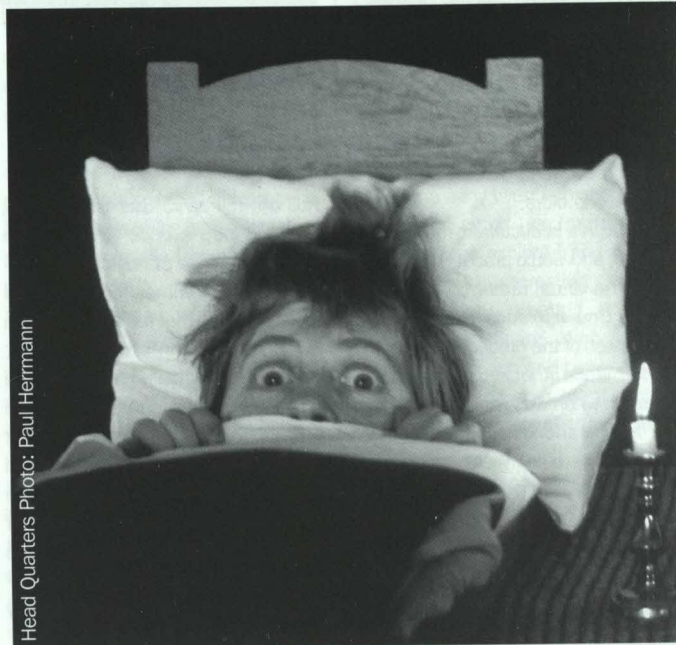
The piece was inspired by the poetry of French writer Jean Tardieu and the performers integrated their speaking of text (in seven different languages) in a compelling and often very funny way. Their ensemble work was superb but I wanted to get nearer the performers, to get inside their world, I wanted more.

The brave minimalism was spoilt for me by a small video screen hanging nominally from the balcony at Hoxton Hall showing pictures of distorted faces at the start, and at the end of a Gandhi-like character (was it Gandhi?) with crowds hugging each other to 1930s dance music. The strength of Etienne Decroux was sure-

various guises. The two performers, Hayley Carmichael and Lisa Hammond, use very few props to indicate time and place and with no spoken word, their work is simply evoked.

In *Oh, Good Grief*, a friendship is struck up between the inhabitants of rooms either side of a dividing wall. Hammond's longing for a reciprocal knock goes unanswered, and what appears to be a friendly game soon has tragic consequences. After *You* is a passionate declaration of unrequited love in which the heart is literally ripped from its casing and proffered to the astounded beloved.

The setting for the performance is a mirror image of the audience's space – a bank of tiered seating. It's not until the final piece in the selection that this effect is utilised by the



Head Quarters Photo: Paul Herrmann

ly in his research into the possibilities of the human body as performer – and not into the use of video technology. To use video at all was therefore, in the words of Tardieu, 'a glimpse of madness stealing into the heart of my soul'.

Emi Slater

Told by an Idiot A Little Fantasy

Battersea Arts Centre,
January 2001

In *Told by an Idiot*'s new offering, *A Little Fantasy*, four wordless works in progress explore love and loss in

two performers, when the seating predictably becomes a cinema and then, more imaginatively, a coastal path leading to a beach. The development of a friendship and the devastating effects of loss and ensuing grief are demonstrated through a scenario which shifts from cinema to beach and back again.

However, until this piece the seating looms inert and redundant. As a weighty backdrop to the work it highlights the fact that the pieces are still very much in their formative stages and, while well performed, remain underdeveloped improvisations. Although the pieces were advertised as 'works in progress' I felt let down and annoyed by what I saw

and the request for audience feedback in the bar after the show compounded this.

Anne-Louise Rentell

Whalley Range All Stars Head Quarters

National Theatre Foyer,
January 2001

In the venerable tradition of circus and fairground sidebooths, *Whalley Range All Stars* have created an intimate piece of theatre for ten people that lasts ten minutes – not a minute each, as the Master of Ceremonies explains to the waiting theatregoers, but a full ten minutes for everyone to share together. The company has constructed a portable theatre space for the show that references those end-of-the-pier funny photo wooden cut-outs, transforming the most sensible citizen into a grinning head above a static body.

The show begins even before the audience is let in, with those at the front of the queue examined and measured to make sure that their heads are suitably balanced. One of the joys of seeing the piece is to witness the audience nodding solemnly as they are taken through the 'health and safety' measures.

Once inside the booth, we are treated to a participatory performance that gently teases and toys with notions of passivity – be that the passivity of the theatre-goer, hospital patient or young child. We are taken into a world where we are at the mercy of our guardians and have no choice but to trust that they will look after us. It is a simple idea, well executed, that has universal appeal – the sample audience that shared my sitting ranged from ages eight to eighty and all came out looking equally pleased with the experience.

The only downside was the placing of the booth. I had previously seen the show in the Pavilion Gardens in Brighton, a perfect pitch. This time it was in a crowded foyer next to a live jazz band. This is not the first time that I have found myself wishing that street arts and performance in public spaces could be placed appropriately so that they can be appreciated properly – rather than put in the busiest spot regardless.

Dorothy Max Prior

Cartoon de Salvo Meat and Two Veg

Battersea Arts Centre, February 2001

If anybody deserves a rave review it is Cartoon de Salvo for Meat and Two Veg. On the way into the space we are asked if we would like to enter 'the raffle', for which the prize is a very tempting looking carrot cake. This slightly unexpected and off the wall moment very nicely sets us up for what is to come.

Three very engaging wartime characters grin at us as they peg washing to lines crossing the stage, and the story begins. Violet, a young girl, is fascinated by her absent brother and what it is to be a boy. Home equals repressed parents in the best of stiff-upper-lip, middle of the road English tradition, having tea at exactly four o'clock, and keeping everything proper.

Few companies ever get it as right as this. Cartoon de Salvo's lively, energetic and charming show gives us exactly what we want from a comedy. Intrigue, great gags, hilarious skiffle music, a warm welcome, and even a tea break! Never do we get the impression of being excluded, and we are always involved with the dilemma of our leading character. Full of dramatic irony, we never forget that we are part of the game. There really are too many good moments to list individually. Great performances, design,

lighting and direction. This is a talented company full of energy and ideas, who seem to really understand the power of the modern clown, using it to full effect, to tell a great story. Definitely worth a look.

Dave Richter

Doo-cot Life on Line

The Arena Theatre,
Wolverhampton,
February 2001

If you're into techno-wizardry and gadgets Life on Line is for you. A range of impressively clever ideas and images feed this piece, although often the simplest work best. When digital icons of the art world's Madonna and Child end up carried on a scrap of cloth – which then turns into a 'baby' – the boundaries between different media collapse. Similarly when Nenagh Watson's naked body is swathed in green tape and digitally projected, the disjunction between screen-world and stage-world blurs.

But this is digital art rather than theatre, and would probably work better in the virtual rather than the real world. One applauds the technical cleverness of the production, but as a performance it lacked warmth. The moment when we were invited to play our mobile phones captivated some, but left me cold. Weak movement and puppetry skills only alienated me further. If you put yourself onstage,

then at least bother to acquire the necessary performance skills. Theatre has to connect with spectators living and breathing in the same space. Doo-cot need to acquire some sense of the urgency necessary to communicate theatrically.

That said, the underlying premise of Life on Line is fascinating, and charts an uneasy course between the modern idolatry of technology and the human need for some sense of the divine. There are memorable moments that bring you up against the past and a potential future, where technology is the new saviour, in an almost-hymn to a digital world. If the seeds of the story inherent in this piece were unearthed, it could make a powerful comment.

Dymphna Gallery

Marissa Carnesky Jewess Tattoos

Sallis Benney Theatre,
Brighton, November 2000

Roll up, roll up ... See the amazing tattooed lady, a bride stripped bare of the trappings of her cultural heritage yet still enmeshed in the old Yiddish stories that remain written on the body. See the sleeping beauty, dressed in virginal white, awake to tell tales of the horrors behind the wide-open eyes of the doll. See her dance sur pointe, her constrained feet a metaphor for traditional female passivity. See her lie on a bed of nails, dressed in burlesque sequins and feathered tails, a caged bird plotting her escape. See her wash away her sins in a baptism of blood.

Naked, tattooed in contravention of the ancient laws of her Fathers, Marissa remains what she is: a Jewish woman assessing the relationship between inheritance and self-determination. Her full-length show Jewess Tattoos explores this relationship through visual tableaux, spoken text, video and song. It references the legend of the Golem, the man-of-clay that inspired Shelley's Frankenstein, to create a modern story of the self-made woman: moulded to others' expectations but ultimately her own unique person. Reworked for this one-off performance in Brighton as part of the Jewish Film Festival, the piece feels a little unsure at times – a fortune-telling section inviting audience

participation falls a little flat. But Marissa's strength and energy as a performer together with the wealth of ideas amassed and presented are enough to keep us engaged.

As visual artist, writer, director and performer she has set herself a difficult task, but rises to the challenge. Jewess Tattoos is a work that embraces a number of different arts disciplines: a compelling piece of theatre informed by a visual arts sensibility; an expressionist dance merged with storytelling; a vaudeville entertainment that embraces the poetic. But above all a performance that invites the audience to witness the rite of passage from innocent childhood to informed womanhood.

Dorothy Max Prior

Pantheatre UK Pandora's Box

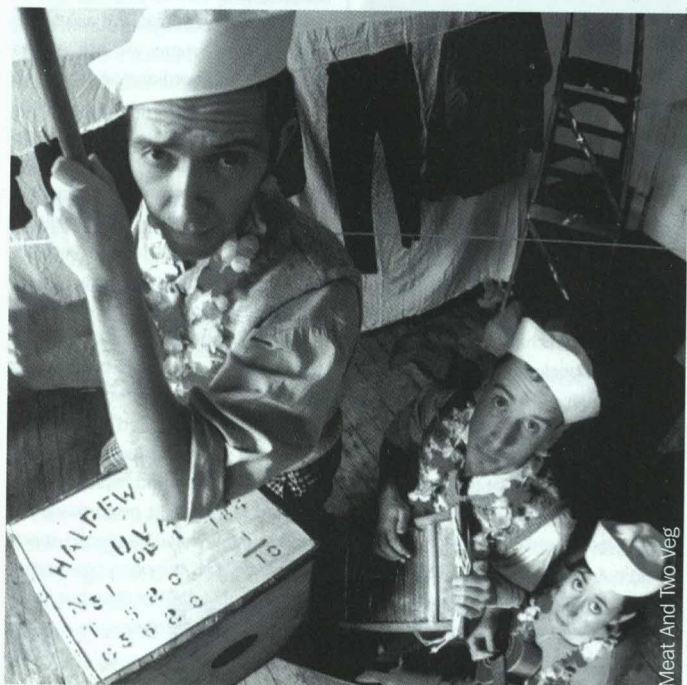
Portsmouth College Studio,
February 2001

Taking as its starting point the Greek myth of Pandora's Box, director Enrique Pardo states in the first of several copious programme notes, 'We are not retelling the myth, we are commenting on it, and the way it lingers in everyday imagery.' Thus to the three original characters of Pandora, Prometheus and Epimetheus, Pantheatre have added the trickster clown, Augustine, the Goddess figure of Uga and the Norse mythical character, the Volva.

On an effectively simple set, both sensual and threatening, of what appeared to be dull red hessian, concealing half the stage, the actors explored notions of and attitudes to gender, sex, death and violence.

There were some fine performances, notably by Angela Bullock as Uga and Faroque Khan as Augustine. The use of hand-held lights was effective, as was the sound which combined contemporary music (from, amongst others, Einsturzende Neubaten) and live piano composed by Pardo, although I found the narrated text pretentious. Skilled movement, and some powerful images, such as the silent entrance of the three women from slits in the hessian, created some breathtaking moments.

However, the problem with this show was one of coherence. What



Meat And Two Veg

at first promised much turned out to be a mish-mash. There were too many ideas, and some rigorous pruning was desperately needed. In a world where myths are created and discarded almost overnight, this show could have been a real opportunity to explore the nature of myth and its effects on us today.

Richard Cuming

Robert Wilson & Lou Reed

POEtry

Odeon, Theatre de l'Europe, Paris, December 2000

Two years after *Time Rocker*, director Robert Wilson and song writer Lou Reed have taken on another collaborative project: POEtry, based on the stories and the life of writer Edgar Allan Poe, is another attempt at blending Wilson's notorious formalist aesthetic with Reed's dexterous song writing.

The show is structured as a rapid succession of different independent scenes whose visual and aural quality are both extraordinary and disappointing: an actress wearing a long dress, walking slowly at the back of the stage, sings *Perfect Day* unaccompanied by instruments; a teacher pokes the student who cries, then laughs, as the set changes to a forest; a set flooded by beautiful lighting effects is taken over by an actor singing, in a musical style: 'These are the stories of Edgar Allan Poe, not exactly the guy next door!'

The contrast between the two styles – hallucinatory and aimed at an intellectual audience in the case of Wilson, readily enjoyable and grabbing in the case of Reed – might have provided an interesting artistic challenge, as Wilson's past productions have proved. Unfortunately the contrasting aesthetics, in this case, remain unresolved: the mood of the piece is never decided, always shifting between formalist and commercial, thus generating a sense of confusion as to what the aim of the collaboration really was.

Finally, although beautiful and spectacular because of its scale and visual genius, the show's visual sequences seem to draw heavily upon an established repertoire of images of Wilson's old work: the 'motifs' have started to look like

overused products. And so as Wilson begins this self-parody, one wonders how the intention of his work has been lost.

Augusto Corrieri

Rotozaza

Rotozaza 5 [Grace]

Lion and Unicorn, London, February 2001

Rotozaza are known for innovative projects like *73*, the traffic-jam-chaos-causing, karaoke bicycle installation that halted the Stoke Newington Festival in 2000, and *Bloke*, where the performer has no idea what is expected of him during the show. Director Anthony Hampton has a very idiosyncratic and distinct approach to making 'New Theatre'. Whatever our expectations or requirements are as an audience, Hampton may thwart them, but he never bores us.

Grace takes the almost indefinable shape of an internal dialogue, played out as a rehearsal process. Equipment litters the stage; a plethora of paraphernalia (the mess of the unquiet mind?): tape machines, lights, microphone, *stuff everywhere*.

Two performers, Zhana Ivanova and Sylvia Mercuriali, seem to represent the two parts of the dual character, and take us through an internal journey that is held together only by the random logic of the private mind. Through a series of vignettes, we are taken through the constantly changing nature of the self's relationship with itself. This is initially a very closed piece and one starts to wonder 'Why bother with an audience?' – at which moment Matt Rudkin's 'Bloke from the pub' comes in, giving the show a chance to open up by asking questions. Once we are let in, there are many touching moments, mainly due to the telepathic complicity between Ivanova and Mercuriali, who have developed a wonderfully intimate stage relationship.

This is a work in progress and as such is likely to be changing every night. It is disappointing for this reviewer, however, that the huge scope for comedy and lightness isn't exploited and that a piece that is potentially very moving, remains director's theatre rooted firmly in the mind.

Dave Richter



SOB

Go the Way Your Blood Beats

Hoxton Hall, London, February 2001

In *Go the Way Your Blood Beats*, SOB present a devised piece of work exploring the performers' personal experiences of contemporary New York alongside a representation of the city in the early twentieth century.

Issues such as racism and alienation are explored and provide the piece with interesting material. The imaginary meeting between Langston Hughes and Lorca is a fantastical light touch and hinted at the possibilities and coincidences that abound in a metropolis the size of New York.

At times, especially during the performers' confessionals, the show has a documentary feel about it, lending the evening substance and context. The fact that the performers can also sing well is used to great effect by director Orla O'Loughlin and we are treated to some good jazz.

Go the Way Your Blood Beats is confidently performed but overall there is something of the drama student production about the piece. Performances slide too quickly into comical caricatures which, while entertaining and sometimes quite satirical, keep the work safe.

Perhaps it is the fact that the piece is comprised of too many bits and that no through-line is sufficiently explored which prevents the subject matter from really having an impact. I wanted to know more about Langston Hughes, for instance – the man and his poetry – but was only given dissatisfying snippets. This is an ambitious piece of theatre which is

enjoyable and strong but never quite realises the potential of the sum of its parts.

Anne-Louise Rentell

Theatre des Bouffes du Nord

Le Costume

Warwick Arts Centre, February 2001

Peter Brook's work over the last decade has focused on minimalism – small plays with small casts. And this is no exception. *Le Costume* is a simple tale, charmingly told, set on a square of carpet. There is no spectacle, no array of effects. What is exquisite is the measured exactness of the actors' movements, the way they never seem false. Even set pieces, like the drunks swaying round the stage, or the ladies' sewing circle (played by two male actors), are dexterous and controlled yet brimming with vitality. And each actor seems to share the skin of whichever character they play.

This is the kind of storytelling theatre that Brook's journey to Africa was about. The story itself comes from South Africa – Can Temba's strange tale of a wife punished for adultery was originally produced by Barney Simon for the Market Theatre, Johannesburg. With its abrupt shifts between despair and laughter, and its exposure of human failing, *Le Costume* becomes a tragi-comedy operating on a universal level. There may be a dated feel about its portrayal of women, but that doesn't detract from the power of the ending – which is all the more stunning for the simplicity of staging.

There was something sacred about the ending of the performance.

Whether this was the result of the reverential applause from a white middle-class audience for the work of its favourite theatre guru, or a genuine response to the journey the four black actors had taken us on, is open to debate. But for many in the audience, it was difficult to leave.

Dymphna Gallery

Third Angel Where From Here

ICA, London February 2001

Does a theatrical experiment necessarily mean experimental theatre? Perhaps not in this case, despite the company's own publicity. In a white-box set, a kind of dream room, two actors – a man and a woman – each test out what they can make the other, and thus the audience, believe about their present.

The production separates out the different layers of their speech: the implicit relation between the actors themselves and the explicit relation between the characters of whom – and, perhaps, as whom – they speak. The interplay between what we see and hear, between what is present in the telling of the stories concerning a man and a woman and the past of which they speak, is itself the subject of the play. Its relation to the audience, however, seemed to consist mainly of the occasional laugh of recognition at various references in the script.

Most interesting in the production was perhaps the way it projected the presence of objects in performance: narratively present through the actors' descriptions of other rooms at other times, and yet also present before us in the absence of anything else from such scenes. If the objects' presence seemed more theatrically real in marking the interplay between past and present, doubt and deception, speech and gesture, perhaps this was because the two actors seemed sometimes to be performing in two different productions. The man was almost intimately expressive of anxieties and doubts about the stories he was telling, as if they did indeed constitute his relationship to the woman, of their way of being in the present; the woman, however, seemed almost neutral throughout, as if untouched by the question of either his or indeed her own gestures.

At times, too, the other room evoked by the stories sounded too much simply like the room in which they had been devised. While there was a lot that was interesting in the production, it seemed somehow to take this interest for granted, rather than experimenting with its own performance.

Mischa Twitchin



Trestle Theatre Blood and Roses

St Albans, February 2001

Trestle is coming up to its twenty-first birthday which will see the opening of its permanent base in St Albans. It bodes well, then, that their latest venture *Blood and Roses* – The Story of Lambert Simnel met with such enthusiasm from locals at St Albans Abbey Theatre.

Captured twenty years earlier in the failed battle of Stoke, Simnel's punishment is to work in the royal kitchens. From here he recalls his life as a ten-year-old imposter to the English throne. The 'present-day' scenes,

set in said kitchen, spark with the friction between the slightly overblown characters. They are determinedly naturalistic – the only masks in sight are firmly embedded into the characters' reality.

It is in the interjection of the more stylised flashback scenes that the production fails. These are signposted with clunky lighting changes. The brown kitchen set is so fussy with period detail that it rarely manages the transformations into the various required locations. Masks are little more than identity-badges for the rebels (half-masks) and the Tudors (full mask which render their voices Dalek-like). There was no such division in the earlier work where the worlds of the silent masked characters and the speaking unmasked characters overlaid each other effortlessly.

While there is no faulting the immaculate performances and crunchy, witty dialogue, *Blood and Roses* does not quite measure up to expectations. It is surprising that such a grown-up company feels it needs the 'excuse' of the flashback form to break away from a strictly representational style.

Alex Mermikides

Wireframe North Hill Relay

The Lion and Unicorn, London, February 2001

Inside The Lion and Unicorn's theatre space is a booth. In the booth there are headphones and stools for up to four people – although on this occasion I was the sole audience member. Above the primitive-looking control panel – reminiscent of the control of a 50s B-movie rocket – is a blacked-out gauze window. Out of the corner of one's eye, one can see slide projections which continue, I think, once the lighting changes and an arctic diorama is revealed.

Throughout the show's 25-minute duration, the audience has the choice of listening to the voice of Tryphena Mulford or, by flicking a switch, listening to the music (presumably composed by Wireframe member Adam Keeper). For the most part I opted to listen to the voice, which appeared to be issuing instructions – instructions that were frustratingly vague and constantly

beyond clear understanding. The controls also enabled the audience members to turn on lights on the tiny platforms that grew out of the wintry landscape. Being alone in the booth I took the opportunity to use all four controls, desperate to make sense of the game this landscape seemed to be playing.

North Hill Relay is a genuinely unique piece of work. It is devoid of actors – unless one counts the puppet that occasionally appeared. Perhaps it was because I was alone but the puppet provided the more reassuring moments of this unsettling show and, I blush to admit this, at one point I even waved to it!

In North Hill Relay, Wireframe create a kind of creepy, ambient theatre that defies easy categorisation, but rewards careful observation.

Ray Newe

Yllana 666

Riverside Studios, London, February 2001

Maybe 666 is intended as a dissection of masculinity in crisis, a grotesque parody of unreconstructed male mores and a searing exposition of the dispiriting retreat into infantilism that underpins the 'New Lad' culture. Or maybe it is just a puerile stream of willy and bottom gags that would not look out of place in the playground. Either way it is very funny.

Set in a prison, the four male members (tee-hee) of this cast reduce to slapstick the rituals and displays of machismo culture before emerging from their prison garb as implausibly-phalussed satyrs – roaring and swaggering around the stage to the music of those old devils the Rolling Stones.

Yet, despite the undeniable vigour and virtuosity of the performances, 666 fails to live up to the outrage promised by its publicity. All the show really wants to do is make an audience laugh – regardless of how cheap a laugh it is. It foregoes the kind of real anger, that could have made it genuinely edgy and threatening, in favour of pratfalls. For all its bawdy force and in-your-face posturing, 666 is a curiously polite show – an adult pantomime, then, with plenty of filth but far too little fury.

Ray Newe

PUBLICATIONS

Tantalus

is the publication in book form of John Barton's original text for Sir Peter Hall's exciting new production. It represents the author's exploration and shaping of what he finds most resonant and rich in Greek myths. Tantalus is published by Oberon Books at £9.99 (ISBN 1-84002-160-8).

Performing Processes

(Creating Live Performance), edited by Roberta Mack, was recently published by Intellect Books. The book explores the dynamic relationship between creative process, presentation and spectator response to provide students and scholars in drama with new insights on performance from poetry to pantomime. A 128-page paperback, the book is priced at £14.95 (ISBN 1-84150-010-0).

NOTICEBOARD

AboutFace Theatre Company

has the following video & audio equipment available for hire: Philips front and back video projector (with analog access), 2m x 2m free-standing front and back projection screen, 2 TV monitors, 3 VCR recorders, JVC Digital Video camera, Digital Photo Camera (2.1 pixel), portable Mini Disc Recorder/ player plus mic. Rates are the cheapest in Brighton. Please contact Joanna on 01273 773989.

Bodily Functions

is a Brighton-based forum for practitioners of mime, physical and devised theatre and live art performance. The forum has a database of artists living in the South East and frequently runs workshops, performance platforms and skill-sharing sessions. Details: 01273 385928. e-mail: dorothymax@excite.com

extant performance company

has a small amount of video projection equipment for hire. The company can also undertake the editing and assist with the production of multimedia shows. The service they offer is aimed at small companies who would like to try their hand at this area of presentation but are put off by the expense. Incredibly competitive hire rates for fellow practitioners. Details: 07946 460545. e-mail: extant_pc@hotmail.com

MissingLinkProductions

provide acts to suit your entertainment needs - from aerialists to acrobats, clowns to contortionists, mimes to magicians. Lunches, launches, parties publicity, cabarets, soirees. Details: 020 8341 7645. e-mail: info@MissingLinkProductions.co.uk www.MissingLinkProductions.co.uk

Rehearsal Space

at good rates, 30 x 60ft incl. stage, natural light, centrally-heated, E9. Call Clare on 020 8983 6134.

Rehearsal Spaces

available in East Dulwich, London. Two studios with raised floors. Suitable for performance, rehearsals, lectures and workshops. Details: 020 7582 9375.

Rehearsal Spaces

available in recently renovated studio 2 minutes walk from Highbury & Islington tube, London. Two large studios, large kitchen and production office. Details: 020 7288 1495. e-mail: a&a@corsica.in2home.co.uk

Rehearsal Spaces

available at Hope Street Ltd, Liverpool city centre. Three spaces: 15m x 6m x 3m; 12m x 6m x 2.75m; and 10m x 6m x 2.75. Competitive rates. Details: 0151 708 8007

Rehearsal Space

available for hire from Nitro, 6 Brewery Road, London N7 9NH. Spacious studio (30ft x 40ft). Access to photocopier, fax, showers and kitchen facilities. Available seven days a week on flexible short and long term lets. Details: 020 7609 1331. e-mail: tasha.btc@virgin.net

Rehearsal Spaces

available at Toynbee Studios, Aldgate East, London. 5 spaces suitable for rehearsals, showcases and performances. Prices start at £40 per day for the smallest studio (4.5m x 8.5m) and go up to £120 per day for the theatre (stage 11m x 10m). Prices are subject to VAT. Details: 020 7247 5102.

Rehearsal Spaces

available for hire at the People Show Studios, Bethnal Green, London. Three bright, airy spaces plus well-equipped workshop, audio-visual editing suite, self-contained production office and access to photocopier, fax and kitchen. Access times flexible. Details: 020 7729 1841.

Rehearsal Space

available at reasonable rates at Oxford House, Bethnal Green, London. Facilities include a cafe and photocopying and fax. Bookings can be made seven days a week. Details: 020 7739 9001.

Rehearsal Space

available at competitive rates in London N1. Bright spacious studio 6m x 10m with attached green room and parking. Details: 020 7241 2942.

Rehearsal Space

available at the Half Moon Theatre, London. Very reasonable rates. Details: 020 7265 8138.

Rehearsal Spaces

available at Rush House, Three Mills Film and TV Studios, London. Five spaces of varying sizes available on flexible short and long term lets. Details: 020 7377 1154.

Rehearsal Space

available from £6 per hour at Chisenhale Dance Space, London. Details: 020 8981 6617.

Rehearsal Space

available to hire from Clean Break Theatre Company in London NW5. Studio, meeting room and workshop space available. Details: 020 7482 8600.

OPPORTUNITIES

AboutFace Theatre Company

Is looking for people for future collaborations. The company is based in the Brighton & Hove region, and is offering two free full-day workshops for performers/actors/writers/musicians and/or film makers who are interested in working in a performance environment. 12 and 13 April 2001. To book a place, contact the company in writing: AboutFace Theatre Company, 17 Wilbury Grove, Brighton & Hove BN3 3JQ. Tel./Fax: 01273 773989; e-mail: aboutfacetheatrecompany@madasafish.com AboutFace are also seeking a tour booker: reliable, with excellent telephone skills, a passion for cutting edge performance art/experimental theatre, and an adventurous innovative mind. Work from home is possible. Please send CV to address above.

extant performance co.

are co-producer of Northern Exposure, a dance festival taking place in North London in June. The event is a mixture of choreographies from dance and dance theatre companies and presentations of dance and movement videos. The organisers would welcome any applications. Further details from: Steve Hill, The Bull Arts Centre, 68 High Street, Barnet, Herts. EN5 5SJ; or e-mail Nexposure@fsmail.net

Intrepid Theatre

Theatre/drama facilitators needed for tour of Chol's Story, a young refugee's journey to share and experience. A theatre-based touring workshop for 13-14 year olds. Touring 19 March to 3 July - selected dates before Easter, fully booked mid-May to 3 July. Contact Richard Hawley for further details: Intrepid Theatre, 39 Abinger Place, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2QA. Tel./Fax: 01273 476226; e-mail: intrep@dircon.co.uk

Jonathan Kay and the Theatre of Now

To take Theatre of Now further, Jonathan is working regularly with performers who have knowledge of his way of working and/or extensive experience of working with an audience - actors, musicians, dancers, etc. Please contact Anne-Louise on 020 7639 5280 or theatre_of_now@madasafish.com for more information.

Natural Theatre Company Update

Thanks to an Arts Council of England National Touring Programme Grant of £95,000 the Natural Theatre Company is going middle-scale with their production 'Rasputin'. This will be an actor-musician production, with a cast of seven. Rehearsals begin in September and the show will tour England from October. The Naturals will be seeking very experienced actor-musicians who can play any/all of the following: piano, cello, violin, flute, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, trombone, accordion, guitar and of course the balalaika. Contact: Ralph Oswick, Natural Theatre Company, Widcombe Institute, Widcombe Hill, Bath BA2 6AA; e-mail: naturals@dircon.co.uk; www.naturals.dircon.co.uk



Gifford's Circus

North West Arts Board

have announced a cash boost of £1m from the Regional Arts Lottery Programme to the Manchester 2002 Commonwealth Games North West Cultural Programme (25 July-4 August 2002). The cultural programme is seeking to attract applications from all art-forms for projects taking place in the region. Contact Greer Roberts on 0161 827 9233 for more details. Deadline for receipt of applications is 30 April 2001.

Scarabeus Theatre

are looking for strong performers with either a background in dance/movement and/or climbing/abseiling for their new production Landscapes of the Heart. A collaboration with Piano Circus, Landscapes will go into production later this year ready to commence a tour in spring 2002. Auditions will also be held later in the year. Please send CV and covering letter to 38A Kingsdown Rd, London N19 4LA or info@scarabeus.co.uk.

Streets of Brighton 2001

are currently looking for artists to present showcase performances on 10, 11 and 12 May 2001. The festival runs in conjunction with the National Street Arts Meeting, attended by artists, major UK festival programmers, international directors, arts organisations, local authorities, regional Arts Boards, the British Council and the Arts Council of England. Also attending will be our international partners who regularly book programmes of British work. Please contact Bec Britain at Zap Productions for more details. Tel.: 01273 821588; fax: 01273 206960; e-mail: bec.britain@zapuk.com. Zap Productions, 7a Middle Street, Brighton BN1 1AL.

CONTACT CHANGES

AboutFace Theatre Company UK

17 Wilbury Grove
East Sussex
Hove BN3 3JQ
Tel./Fax: 01273 773989
e-mail:
aboutfacetheatrecompany@madasafish.com

The Academy of Circus Arts

(Formerly Zippo's Academy of Circus Arts)
Tel.: 07050 282624
e-mail: zippos.circus@virgin.net

Cambridge Drama Centre and The Junction

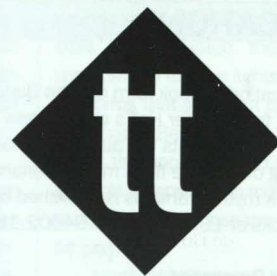
Caroline Griffin
The Junction
Clifton Road
Cambridge CB1 7GX
e-mail: caroline@junction.co.uk

The Weird Sisters

4 Shamrock St
Clapham North
London SW4 6HE
Tel./fax 020 7720 4252
Mob.: 0771 536 0021
e-mail: weirdsists@aol.com
www.weirdsisters.co.uk

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www.writernet.org.uk



total theatre^{magazine}

Total Theatre Magazine is the national quarterly for physical and visual performance. It reaches practitioners, performers, administrators, universities, colleges, students, trainers, venues, funding organisations and the public. Total Theatre Magazine includes features, articles, interviews, reviews, news, opportunities, developments and information on companies, performances and workshops around the country.

Total Theatre Network was founded in 1984 to advocate greater recognition and status for mime and physical theatre, providing opportunities to meet, share and bring together the views of the profession. Since its inception, it has grown and developed a crucial role in raising the public profile of physical and visual performance and is an important source of information and advice for the public and practitioners. Total Theatre Network also organises and supports activities designed to develop the sector.

As a member of Total Theatre Network you can contact the office any time to use the Information Service, ask for advice and to give your comments and suggestions. Total Theatre Network is your organisation and suggestions for campaigns, activities, contributions to the magazine and volunteering offers are always welcome.



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MIME ACTION GROUP REG. CHARITY NO: 1052358. REG. COMPANY NO. 3133599

AboutFace Theatre Company UK

have relocated to East Sussex and are touring Close Ups for the autumn season 2001. It will also be shown in a non-theatrical venue in Brighton in May 2001. For information about dates, venues and tickets, please call 01273 773989. AboutFace Theatre Company are also providing event entertainment for corporate organisations and events, and have recently worked with Cirque Du Soleil in London. Details: AboutFace Theatre Company, 17 Wilbury Grove, Brighton & Hove BN3 3JQ.

The Big Picture Company

toured A Dark River (inspired by Lorca's Blood Wedding) in March. More tour dates in October 2001, accompanied by a full programme of workshops. Details: 020 7348 0203.

Bocadalupa

is a Bristol-based international theatre company formed by Amy Rose and Jenny Sanderson. Following a successful run at Bristol Old Vic in October, Bocadalupa are touring their first show The Dodo Diaries in spring and autumn 2001. The Dodo Diaries is a comic journey combining text, movement and the world of flightless birds. Bocadalupa can be contacted on 0117 9221400 and 07767 337966; fax 0117 9225599; e-mail gg.amyrose@netgates.co.uk

Boilerhouse

have been accepted on to the Advancement programme! The aim is to facilitate lasting permanent change in existing arts organisations. They will now go on a scoping study to look at how to achieve the aim of turning boilerhouse into a large-scale, outdoor/street theatre company. If the scoping study shows this to be possible, the company will receive up to £350,000 over 3 years to realise this aim! The funding will go towards training, resources and additional personnel during the transitional period.

Company Paradiso

will premiere a half-hour work-in-progress version of their new show, performed by Ros Phillips and Aitor Basauri, with direction by Jon Potter and composition/music by Steve Hiscock (founder member of the percussion group Ensemble Bash). The Barn Theatre, Southwick, 8 June, 7.30. Phone 01273 440277 for details.

Forbidden Theatre Company

premiered their new adaptation of Alice in Wonderland at the Diorama Arts Centre for two weeks in February. The show, which follows Alice on the night before her wedding day, and combines text, music and movement, will tour to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in rep with Forbidden's first devised piece Flat One. Details: 020 7813 1025; www.forbidden.org

Forced Entertainment

performed in Ireland for the first time ever this New Year thanks to an invitation from the 4th Dublin International Theatre Symposium. As well as performing Speak Bitterness and Quizoola! to ecstatic reactions, members of the company led a workshop and talk. Quizoola! is a performance of questions and answers. Over several hours three performers interrogate each other with a text of 2000 questions whilst the audience is free to arrive, leave and return at any point. (For more information: http://www.forced.co.uk.) First Night is Forced Entertainment's groundbreaking new project for middle-scale theatres. Its cast of nine comprises the regular company plus invited guests. It opens in September 2001 and will tour the UK and Europe.

Foursight Theatre

premiered their new touring show, Euripedes' Medea – in a new translation by John Harrison – at mac, Birmingham, on 6 & 7 March as part of the Moving Parts Festival. Foursight tour Medea to venues throughout England until May 2001. Details: 01902 714257. www.foursight.theatre.mcmail.com

Jonathan Kay and the Theatre of Now

are now developing work with other performers. Within Theatre of Now Jonathan challenges contemporary theatre practice by eliminating the distinction between performer and audience. Using a mixture of improvisation and intuition and working without a script, he encourages the charting of undiscovered theatrical territory. For more information contact 020 7639 5280 or theatre_of_now@madasafish.com

Modo

Martin Danziger won the Arches Award for Stage Directors. This award run by the Arches in Glasgow gives three directors the opportunity to stage new works at the Arches in early May.

Martin Danziger will direct Dead Pan – a new devised piece intermeshing the struggles of five 20-somethings to become real grown-ups with imagery and episodes from both Peter Pan and the older darker myths of Pan and Bacchus. Performed in promenade the show will mix engaging contemporary narratives with physical and image-led pieces of visual theatre. Venue: the Arches, Glasgow; dates to be confirmed.

Ophaboom

Ophaboom are celebrating their tenth anniversary this year. Things to celebrate also include: Arts Council funding for their re-tour of The Hunchback of Notre-Dame; their visit to Canada in July, their directed show for Hope Street Liverpool being resurrected as a showcase for the students of Hope Street; Howard and Geoff's possible teaching visit to Texas; and the company's first real stab at London performances at Chats Palace, Camden People's Theatre and The Little Angel. The Little Angel celebrates 40 years in 2001, so that puts it all in perspective.

Púca Puppets

present Mary Mary's Last Dance at Project, Temple Bar, Dublin, in April. On tour from July, Mary Mary's Last Dance is a puppet theatre piece for ages 18-110 years. A celebration of life, and of death, the show uses puppetry, live music, an interactive set and animated props to create magical, yet human moments, in a visually exciting way. E-mail: nlaw@connect.ie

Riptide Performance Company

are touring alternative music clubs and venues throughout the Midlands with a highly-charged physical theatre performance entitled Bite. Backed by pot noodles, a fork and Faith no More, the company have created a vibrant blast of theatre to reach new venues and audiences. This initiative has been supported by East Midlands Arts. For details, e-mail: danjer@riptide.force9.co.uk Website: www.riptide.force9.co.uk

Scarabeus Theatre

are one of the UK's leading outdoor multidisciplinary performance companies, and have recently been awarded an Arts Council Grant towards their new production Landscapes of the

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6-8 July
Clown Improvisation
with Nose to Nose

at **HAWKWOOD COLLEGE**
Painswick Old Road, Stroud GL6 7QW
01453 759034



Zin-Lit' photo by Eva Finder

Heart. A collaboration with Piano Circus, *Landscapes of the Heart* is inspired by Italo Calvino's book *Invisible Cities* and explores the connections between identity and environment. The show will go into production later this year ready to commence a tour of five venues in spring 2002. For more information contact 020 7281 7493 or info@scarabeus.co.uk

Shunt extended the run of their Total Theatre award-winning *Ballad of Bobby Francois* into February, after its success in the London International Mime Festival. www.shunt.co.uk

Tall Stories are presenting their production of *Snow White* at three Canadian festivals in the spring, while their new show *The Gruffalo* (based on the multi-award-winning picture book) will play at the Scottish International Children's Festival in June and then tour to schools and the Edinburgh fringe. For more information, call 020 7372 3003 or e-mail tall.stories@virgin.net

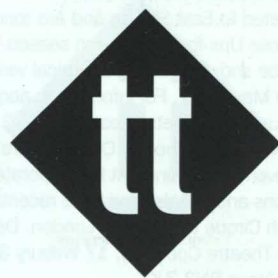
The Tell Tale Hearts have successfully completed their spring tour of *Murder, Madame?*, directed by Total Theatre award winner Nola Rae. The show will be re-worked for touring in the autumn. Interested parties should contact the Tell Tale Hearts at ttharts@cwcom.net or Isabel on 020 8888 3780 or Natasha on 07803 724529. Plans are currently underway for a new touring show for 2002.

Theatre O (formerly known as Generally Better Productions) are touring *3 Dark Tales* extensively throughout the UK this spring. In July *3 Dark Tales* will be programmed at the Barbican, London, as part of BITE. Details: 020 7348 0203.

Théâtre Sans Frontières is 10 years old! We have a busy year ahead to celebrate. A show for primary schools – *Le Tour de France* – going out in the spring, followed by a visit to the Edinburgh Festival with the hugely popular *Les Trois Mousquetaires* and culminating in the autumn with a national tour of *L'Enfant Peul*, a co-production with Atelier International de Recherches et de Créations Théâtrales based in Paris. This will be our biggest show yet with a cast of nine. We are also delighted the internationally acclaimed director Robert Lepage has recently become patron of the company. If anyone would like more information e-mail us on admin@tsfront.co.uk and we'll put you on our mailing list.

Wireframe presented the latest in their experiments in theatre and installation, *North Hill Relay*, at the Lion and Unicorn Pub Theatre in February. For an audience of between one and four, the show is a responsive, live experience, with a richly textured environment of light, sound and image. More dates to follow. E-mail wireframe@bigfoot.com or website www.wireframenet.freeuk.com

Zin-Lit' will be presenting their first ensemble production – and the world's first New Stage production – *Norrskén (Aurora Borealis)* on 25-28 April at the Tabernacle in Notting Hill, London. After this premiere, the show will play in Stockholm in October, and then tour Scandinavia and continue round the world. *New Stage* combines art forms without interfering with their genuineness. *Norrskén* consists of circus, dance, theatre, live music and visual art. For more information, phone 020 8525 1931 or check out www.zin-lit.com



total theatre magazine

FREE LISTINGS SERVICE

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- ◆ Management News & Awards
- ◆ Noticeboard
- ◆ Publications
- ◆ Performers & Company Update
- ◆ Performances & Festivals
- ◆ Workshops & Training

DISPLAY ADVERTISING

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Size	Members	Non-Members
Full page	£150	£270
Half page	£100	£200
Quarter page	£75	£120
Eighth page	£50	£80

Advert Dimensions (mm)

Size	Rotation	Width x Depth
Full page	-	188 x 269
Half page	landscape	188 x 129
Half page	portrait	89 x 269
Quarter page	landscape	188 x 64
Quarter page	portrait	89 x 129
Eighth page	landscape	89 x 64

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650 leaflets	£65	£95
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ADVERT COPY DEADLINES

Season	Deadline	Published
Spring	14th February	7th April
Summer	14th May	7th July
Autumn	14th August	7th October
Winter	14th November	7th January

PERFORMANCES

**AboutFace Theatre Company
CLOSE UPS**

01273 773989

MAY

10-26 ACT, Academy for Creative Training, Brighton

**Catalyst Theatre
THE HOUSE OF POOTSIE
PLUNKETT**

020 8348 0203

APRIL

20-21 Merlin Theatre, Frome
24-25 Arc, Stockton
26-28 The Tron, Glasgow

**Foursight Theatre
MEDEA**

01902 714257

APRIL

3 Old Town Hall, Hemel Hempstead
4-5 The Brewhouse, Taunton
6 The Forest Arts Centre, New Milton
7 Havant Arts Centre
10 The Roadmender, Northampton
19 Stratford Circus, London
20-21 Theatre Royal, Winchester
25 William Brookes School, Much Wenlock
26-27 Shrewsbury Music Hall, Shrewsbury
28 The Courtyard, Hereford

MAY

1 The Palace Theatre, Redditch
2 Roborough Theatre, Exeter
3 Marlborough College, Marlborough
4 The Arc, Trowbridge
9 Stamford Arts Centre
10 The Castle, Wellingborough
12 Arc Theatre, Stockton on Tees

Gifford's Circus

07818 058384

APRIL

27-30 Seven Springs, Glos.

MAY

4-7 Cirencester, Glos.
10-14 Moreton in Marsh, Glos.
17-21 Upton on Severn, Worcs.
25-30 Hay on Wye Literary Festival, Powys

JUNE

1-11 Lydney, Glos.
14-18 Frampton on Severn, Glos.
21-25 Chipping Sodbury, South Glos.
28-2 July Broughton Gifford, Wilts.

JULY

12-16 Minety, Wilts.
19-30 Minchinhampton, Glos.

**Intrepid Theatre
CHOL'S STORY**

01273 476226

MARCH TO JULY

Schools tour

**Jonathan Kay
KNOW ONE'S FOOL**

020 7639 5280

APRIL

29 Greentop Community Circus, Sheffield

JULY

14 Electric Theatre, Guildford

**Ophaboom
THE HUNCHBACK OF
NOTRE-DAME**

020 8442 9655

APRIL

6 Wilberforce Hall, Bristhstone, Isle of Wight
7 Wroxall Centre, Isle of Wight
19-20 Chats Palace, Hoxton, London
24-28 Camden Peoples Theatre, London

MAY

4 The Maltings, St Albans
11 Georgian Theatre Royal, Richmond
12 The Gate, Goole
13 Spilsby Theatre
14-20 Yorkshire Rural Touring
25 Universal Hall, Findhorn

JUNE

1 Stourbridge Town Hall
7 Adur Festival, Shoreham-by-Sea
15 Compass Theatre, Ickenham
18 Grassington Festival
30 National Youth Festival, Ilfracombe

JULY

6 The King's School, Canterbury
7 South Hill Park, Bracknell
11-16 Quebec International Festival, Canada
18 Darlington Arts Centre
21-22 Metz Festival of Theatre, France

**Ophaboom
FAUSTUS**

020 8442 9655

APRIL

5 Dartmouth High School, Great Barr

MAY

22 Invergordon Arts Centre
23 Lyth Arts Centre

JUNE

28 Falmouth Arts Centre

**Pantheatre UK
PANDORA'S BOX**

0131 3461405

MAY

2-5 St Brides Community Centre, Edinburgh

**Perpetual Motion
Theatre**

ONE - (THE OTHER)

020 7483 3798 or 07779 729794

APRIL

3-5 mac, Birmingham (Moving Parts Festival)
28 Limelight, Aylesbury, Bucks

**Púca Puppets
MARY MARY'S LAST
DANCE**

nlaw@connect.ie

APRIL

17-21 Temple Bar, Dublin

JULY

On tour

**Ridiculusmus
SAY NOTHING/YES, YES,
YES/THE EXHIBITIONISTS**

020 8348 0203

APRIL

1-28 Touring in Holland

**Sue Lee & Kosta
Andrea Theatre
Company
CARNE VALE**

020 8348 4289

APRIL

5-7 Jackson's Lane, London
20-1 Hoxton Hall, London

MAY

1 Wimbledon Studio Theatre

**Tall Stories
SNOW WHITE**

020 7372 3003

21 MAY-10 JUNE

Canadian tour

THE GRUFFALO

28 MAY-3 JUNE

Scottish International Children's Festival

**Theatre Alibi
LITTLE WHITE LIES**

01392 217315

APRIL

3-4 QEJ Theatre, Bristol
6 mac, Birmingham
10-11 Ustinov Studio, Bath

**Theatre O
3 DARK TALES**

020 8348 0203

APRIL

27-28 The Pavilion Theatre, Dun Laoghaire
30-5 Drum Studio, Plymouth

MAY

10-12 Waterfront Hall, Belfast

**The Weird Sisters
CHEAP DAY RETURN**

0771 536 0021

APRIL

20-29 Orlando, USA

**Zin-Lit'
NORRSKEN (AURORA
BOREALIS)**

020 7565 7800

APRIL

25-28 Tabernacle, Notting Hill, London

FESTIVALS

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4-7 MAY

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11th & 12th

Greek Tragedy

14th - 16th

Fired Terracotta Masks

17th - 19th

Commedia dell'Arte

21st - 23rd

For a brochure contact:
The Mask Studio
The Centre for
Science and Art
Lansdown, Stroud,
Glos. GL5 1BB
Tel: 01453 786772
mask.studio@virgin.net

PERFORMANCES

Circus Maniacs

Bristol, 0117 947 7042

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3/4, 10/11, 17/18, 22/23/24/25 MAY

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£320. Contact:

flickferdinando@thecircusspace.co.uk

Ecole de Mime Corporel Dramatique

London, 020 7272 8627

Movement Theatre & Corporeal Mime
(Decroux Technique)

Ecole Philippe Gaulier

London, 020 8438 0040

For more information contact: Philippe
Gaulier School, St Michael's Church Hall,
St Michael's Road, London NW2 6XG.

Green Room Workspace

Manchester, 0161 860 6528

MONDAYS

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Steven Wasson / Corinne Soum

- The school offers a 20 hours
weekly training in corporeal
mime and physical theatre
based on the Etienne Decroux technique.

Visit our web site:
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- Training includes:
Technique, improvisation, composition and repertoire.
- Students may join the school at the beginning of each month.

Photos:
Roberto Aguilar
Christopher Eaves

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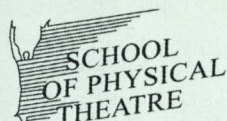
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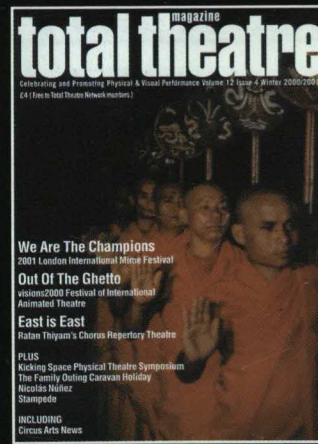
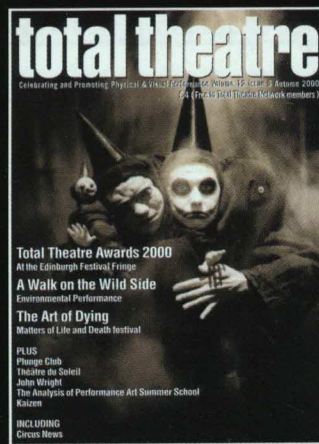
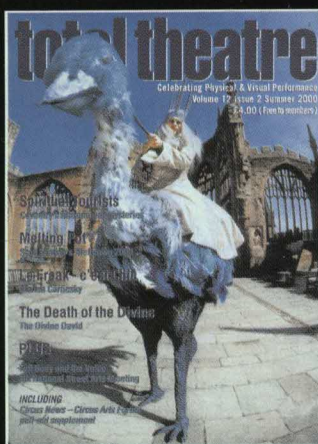
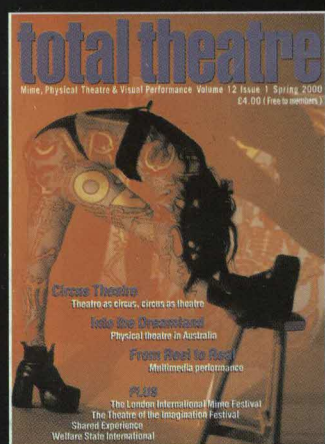
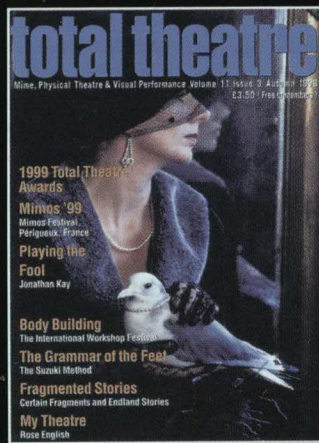
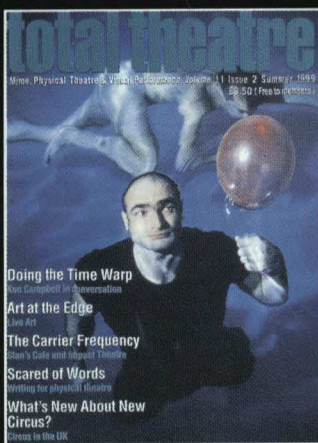
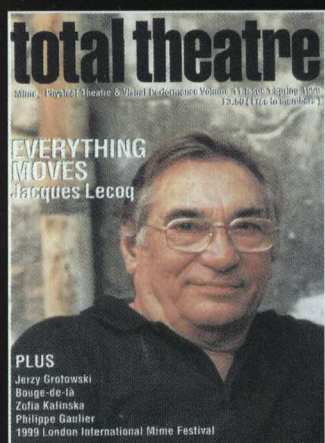
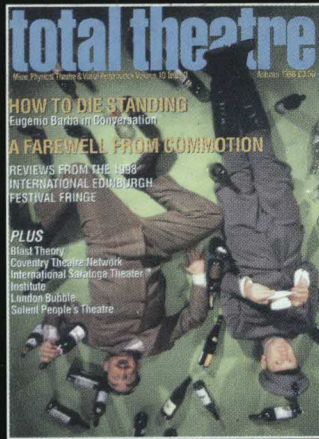
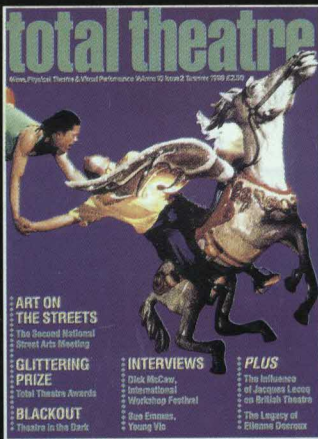
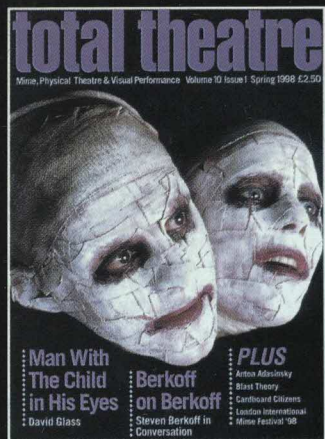
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