

total theatre magazine

The magazine for Total Theatre Network – celebrating physical and visual performance
Volume 13 Issue 3 Autumn 2001 £4.00 (free to members)

World Theatre Focus

Moscow Theatre Olympics 2001
Butoh's New Primitives
Aurora Nova Festival at Edinburgh
Reviews from LIFT and BITE



PLUS
The Art of Scenography
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Celebrating and promoting physical and visual performance
Volume 13 Issue 3 Autumn 2001



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If you would like to submit news, views, letters or advertise to the Winter issue, please note that the copy deadline is 7 November 2001. The Winter issue will cover the period January to March 2002.

Cover
'School for Fools'
at the Edinburgh Fringe
(Formalny/Baltic)

Editorial

For Total Theatre practitioners, a spirit of international exchange and co-operation is an important element, both historically and in current practice. Physical and visual forms of theatre very obviously have the power to cross international boundaries and contribute to a shared culture of human empathy and understanding.

In the light of recent world events, there seems no better time to acknowledge and applaud this internationalism - which unlike its tawdry imitator 'globalisation' does not mean a denial of necessary cultural difference, but rather an embracing of difference and fostering of respect within a framework of shared universal experience.

This issue of Total Theatre Magazine has its focus on the wider world: Emi Slater reports on the Moscow Theatre Olympics and the part Russian clown Slava Polunin has played in using theatre and carnival as forces for liberation. Ajaykumar gives us a sketch of the Butoh movement, the 'dance of darkness' that has inspired Gekidan Kaitasha, who are currently visiting the UK as part of the Japan 2001 series of events. We have reviews from the Barbican International Theatre Event, the London International Festival of Theatre, and the Aurora Nova World Theatre Festival at Edinburgh. Taking a British company's perspective, Geoff Beale of Ophaboom explains the political choices that for him are interwoven with the artistic choice to be in a travelling troupe that performs all round the world - usually choosing the street festivals or rural touring circuits rather than purpose-built theatres.

We also have a feature on Total Theatre Award winners a year on, and Alex Shelton explores the art of scenography in this issue's artist diary. Frantic Assembly's residency at the Brit School fills our now regular education slot, and professional training focuses on Ron East's address to the second international conference on actor training in Paris.

In the last issue, I asked the question 'What is Total Theatre?' - inviting definitions, the charting of the use of the term and reflections on where we are currently placed - particularly in relation to the use of written text. Some of the responses are printed in our new letters section - and Dymphna Callery has taken up the challenge by looking at the use of pre-scripted texts by physical theatre companies.

So plenty to read - and we will be glad to print any responses to our features or reviews.

Dorothy Max Prior

Responses to the article 'What is Total Theatre?', issue 13/2

Moholy-Nagy wrote a number of essays that refer to Total Theatre, in the series entitled 'Theatre of the Bauhaus'. In 'Total Theatre is the Theatre of the Future' (published in 1927) he says: 'Man's new role must be distinguished from his traditional role on the stage to date ... on the Total stage he mobilizes the physical and intellectual means at his disposal, drawn from within himself, in a productive manner.' Later in the essay: 'And so it is with Total Theatre: the totality of the interrelated references of light, colour, sound, movement, form, plane, man - all the possible variations and possible combinations among them - result in a work of art becoming an organism.' Moholy-Nagy concludes his essay with a belief that 'chamber theatre' is no longer relevant, with most being offered by 'circus, operetta, variety ... American clown spectacles - Chaplin, Fratellini' - thus placing the emphasis on the audience's visual experience above all others.

Chloe Black, performing arts/circus student

I read your 'What is Total Theatre?' article - I'm interested that in the end you come up with a series of definitions - it reminded me a little of the debate at the Performance of Place conference at Birmingham recently when the director of Grid Iron Theatre (Ben Harrison) was introduced as someone creating 'site-specific theatre' - when most of the time he sets existing scripts in non-theatre spaces. This provoked Stephen Hodge to come up with a diagram of a continuum - and this is perhaps the way your series of definitions

In response to Total Theatre's review of 'Seal-boy: Freak' ... As an artist one takes all reviews on the chin (no choice innit), but please note that it is for the audience that I open up the wrangle with the mangle of the disabled performer's mind, not for myself, and I have already 'moved on' a while back; it's society that has yet to do so.

Mat Fraser

In response to David Harradine's article in the latest issue, 'Creative Catalysts': I feel I must correct the following passage: 'Exeter University School of Physics recently produced a touring TIE show "Outer Space/Inner Space" in collaboration with site-specific company Wrights & Sites.' Wrights & Sites would never collaborate on a touring TIE

Letters

works, not defining an exclusive set of works, but rather creating a liquid map of shifting territory into and across which theatre practice enters and moves and departs and re-enters.

In some ways the debate is very familiar - and is partly rhetorical and provocative - it's almost like there needs to be a rhythm of puritanism and pantheism - first the absolutists clear the decks of the detritus of theatre that has run out of cultural energy, generating excitement by their ascetic focus, but this is then challenged by the desire to take on the swirling solar systems of cultural meanings that orbit us and so something far more hybrid begins to grow.

Phil Smith, writer/dramaturg

My contribution to your debate about the nature of Total Theatre: 'Cymbeline' at the Globe I believe could fit into that category. 'An adventure in storytelling' with six actors and two musicians; all remain on stage the whole time; the six actors play every role (about 24) without scenery or costume; the stage is an empty space; the only other element is percussion; the stage properties are improvised from percussive instruments. A theatrical experience combining poetry, music, performance, clowning, physical theatre and storytelling - which consciously and directly includes the audience.

Mike Lister, performer/director

Editor's reply: Shakespeare occupies an interesting position in the Total Theatre debate - revered by such luminaries as Copeau and Brook, reworked by Lepage and Wilson - but seen as irrelevant by some physical and visual theatre makers. Perhaps there's an article here to be written ...

show, which by definition cannot be site-specific. As we are quite publicly emphatic about the correct use of this term, I felt I needed to make this clear. The confusion has arisen because I am a member of Wrights & Sites and I did set up the project with the School of Physics ... a new company was brought together by myself and Dr Annette Plaut. As the aim of the enterprise was to promote the School of Physics, we didn't give the new company a name. Perhaps, in retrospect, that was a mistake. It's an easy mistake to make, as the set-up doesn't fit into the usual formulas. However, a true scientist needs to take note of anomalies! Thanks for mentioning it, though!

**Cathy Turner, Research Fellow,
Drama Department, University of Exeter**

total theatre news network

New Logo

Annabel Arndt writes: Time has really flown since the last issue of Total Theatre Network News. We have a new logo on the way, which involved much discussion and consultation with members. We hope that the result is one which encompasses and celebrates the vibrant nature of our physical and visual performance sector. Many thanks to artist Cleo Ibbertson for her help in all this.

Website

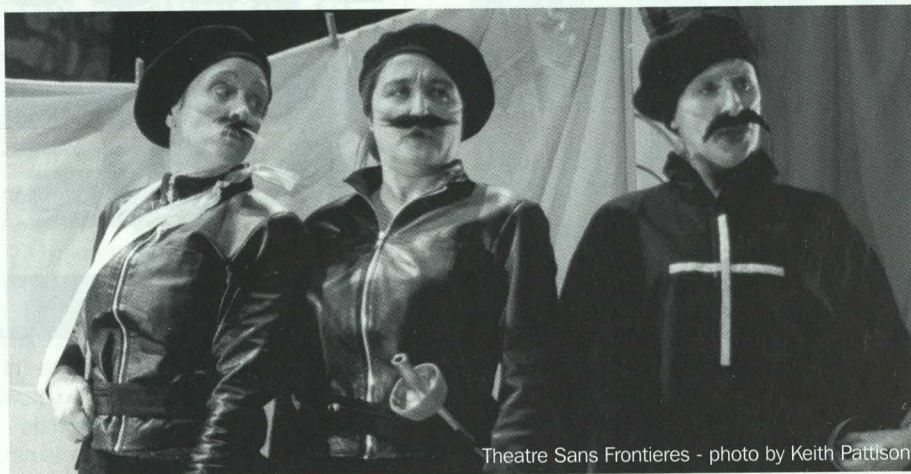
Work is continuing on our new website. It's being designed by Studio 24, a Cambridge-based company which designed the Circus Arts Forum's website (see www.circusarts.org.uk). Meanwhile, there is an interim site posted up at www.totaltheatre.org.uk with information about the network and magazine, and links through to other organisations.

International Workshop Festival

As we go to print, the International Workshop Festival's workshops and Training Matters symposium is taking place. We were very happy to continue our collaboration with the festival, one which has benefited some of our members by offering them discounts on courses and on the conference. There will be a report on the conference in the next issue of the magazine. The 2001 festival will be the last one with Dick McCaw at the helm. We wish him all the best and extend a warm welcome to Luke Dixon, the new artistic director.

Edinburgh

It was good to meet so many members in Edinburgh during the festival either in shows or at our reception which we held at the Scottish British Council with Visiting Arts and the International Theatre Institute (ITI). Many thanks to Glyn Cannon at ITI for helping us to arrange the reception, to all at Boilerhouse and to Allan and Penny for their hospitality. While up in Edinburgh, we started planning the Total Theatre awards for next year. As in previous years, the team of assessors and judges will be independent from Total Theatre Network, i.e. not board members or employ-



Theatre Sans Frontières - photo by Keith Pattison

ees. We always need a large team of people to assess shows, so if you know that you will be in Edinburgh next year and are interested in seeing shows for us, please contact the office.

Advocacy

Annabel writes: I have been continuing to advocate for the sector. I am still working with ACE's drama department on the formulation of their street theatre and circus policies; I have also been responding to ACE's restructuring process, both informally and as a formal response to their 'Working together for the Arts' paper. At the same time, I have been having regular meetings with the new PPS to the arts minister. As always, if there are specific issues which you would like me to raise, please let me know. I very much enjoy receiving 'dispatched', a fortnightly e-mail newsletter produced by Arts Professional and recommend you to register to receive it. All you have to do is go to their website (www.artsprofessional.co.uk) to register.

Street Arts

As part of our commitment to all forms of physical and visual performance, Total Theatre Network is currently focusing on street arts - and specifically the needs of performers. Please call Annabel at the office if you would like to feed into this process.

Questionnaires

Thank you to everyone who posted or faxed back the questionnaire distributed to members. To give everyone a chance to respond,

we are including the questionnaire again with this copy of Total Theatre Magazine. We hope that you will take a few minutes to complete and return - it will be a great help to us in planning future directions. Our fax number is 020 7729 7945 - or you can of course reply by post.

Members Listings

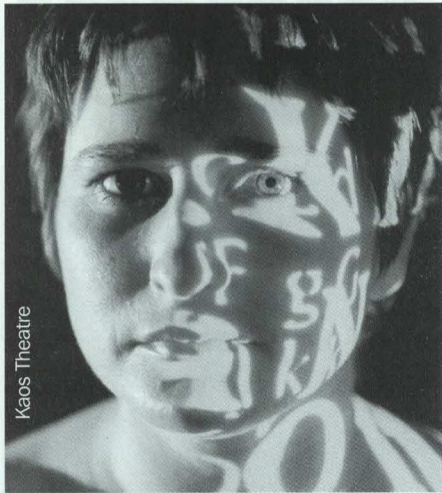
Our listings service is for Total Theatre Network members. If you want to publicise your event, service or news in our listings section, please send us the information before the deadline (next one is 14 November), preferably by e-mail, marking the subject 'members listings' then the relevant heading, e.g. 'members listings - performances'. If you do not have access to e-mail we will, of course, accept listings by fax or post.

Writers Wanted

Total Theatre Magazine is interested in receiving proposals for features on any subject related to physical or visual performance. We are also seeking to give a broader coverage to events outside London, and would welcome more reviewers from across the UK and elsewhere. Please contact the editor if you are interested.

Photo Call

Thanks to those of you who sent in images for our archive, which is currently being re-organised by our work experience student, Scarlet. There is room for plenty more, so keep sending in your prints. (Apologies to photographer Simon Richardson, who we omitted to credit for the IWF photograph in the last issue.)



Tackling TEXT

Physical theatre companies are increasingly using scripted plays - is this artistic innovation or a way to build new audiences? DYMPHNA CALLERY investigates

Increasingly, physical theatre companies are turning to texts, even commissioning new plays. Are they jaded with devising? Attempting to storm the citadel of classical drama? Or perhaps simply seeking to expand their audience base? Physical theatre companies approach texts with little reverence for traditional interpretation. In some cases the most unlikely couplings emerge. Trestle Theatre surprised everyone by exhuming Besier's 'The Barretts of Wimpole Street' for their first excursion into scripted work. This wordy and

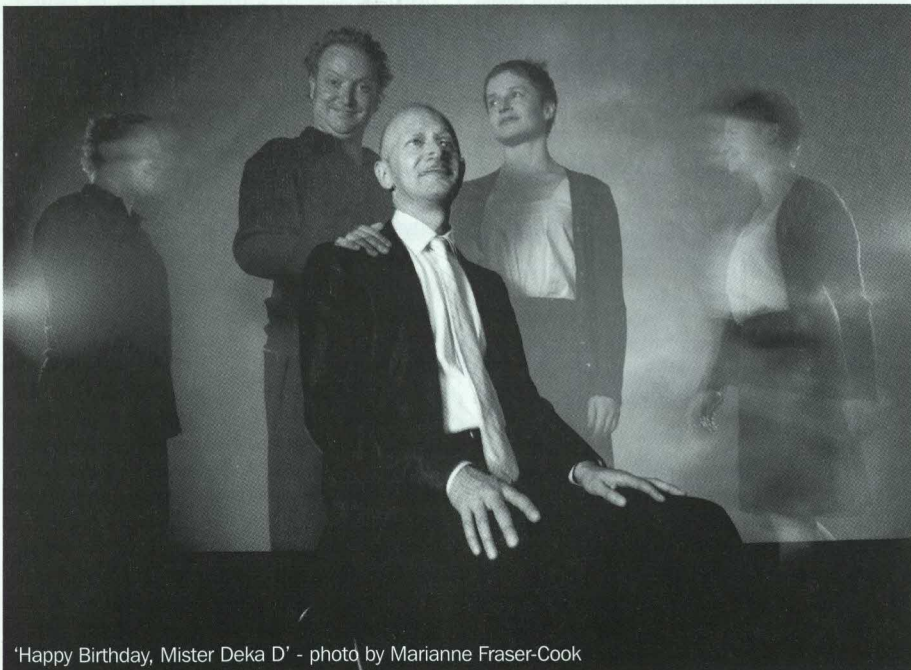
conventionally structured piece of pseudo-naturalism was turned on its head with a highly stylised rendering. The Right Size's comic ingenuity combined with Tim Hatley's active set to revitalise Brecht's 'Mr Puntila and his Man Matti'. And Kaos's stylishly grotesque version of 'The Importance of Being Ernest' sharpened the satirical edge of Oscar Wilde's parlour drama.

Drawing-room drama may be considered the preserve of fourth-wall naturalism. Yet Volcano are currently touring Noel Coward's 'Pri-

ivate Lives' - or trying to. Aware of the company's taste for inventive deconstruction, the trustees have insisted they play the text in the order in which it was written - which they do - although rights have only been granted for them to tour outside England. Volcano set the play in a health spa where the characters are doing drama therapy, so 'Private Lives' becomes a play-within-a-play.

'The play is an exercise in strict formalism, a very taut piece of prose with various mirrorings, and we wanted to respect that,' says director and performer Paul Davies. In true Volcano style, their interpretation defies conventional perceptions of Coward, involving the on-stage removal of knickers, a frenetically tap-dancing heroine and two men in underpants fighting with easy chairs to the sounds of Led Zeppelin. As David Adams puts it in his Western Mail review, 'a sedate story of two sets of lovers degenerates into chaos.' Nevertheless, they've succeeded in broadening their Welsh audience base - a crucial factor.

The Kaos 'Importance of Being Ernest' rocketed the company from small to middle-scale touring - and gained them British Council support for the international circuit. This year they toured Ben Jonson's 'Volpone' and they are soon to unveil their 'Titus Andronicus'. And Foursight's recent production of 'Medea' not only brought in new audiences but generated a BBC commission for a TV production of 'Agamemnon'. Foursight have worked less conventionally with writers in the past, inviting them to provide 'stimulus text' for



'Happy Birthday, Mister Dekka D' - photo by Marianne Fraser-Cook

their devising process. This time, it was translator John Harris who approached them to perform 'Medea'. Artistic director Naomi Cooke played Medea: 'It was a huge challenge. You meet this avalanche of words which is very scary. But in another way it was very refreshing to be working in a more mainstream way.'

Originally intending the production to be very physical, they did lots of preparatory work on image and gesture but ran out of time due to set problems: 'We ended up with a slightly more traditional version which might be a disappointment to our core audience, but the upside was we've broadened our audience base,' Naomi says.

The notion of applying physical inventiveness to text can be counter-productive, as Told By An Idiot discovered. Having developed a physical style in their own devised work before embarking on a text, company members Paul Hunter and Hayley Carmichael read piles of plays before taking the unusual step of commissioning Biyi Bandele. The result was 'Happy Birthday Mister Deka D', a surreal chamber piece in stark contrast to his epic 'Oronooko' for the RSC the same year.

Initially the actors roared round the rehearsal room exploring the play as though they were devising, but eventually realised they were overburdening the piece. Paring away all the physical inventiveness allowed the play to reveal itself: 'You have to learn to challenge the text but also respect it,' says Hayley. Biyi knew the performers and Paul maintains, 'Fundamentally Hayley and me are more like me and Hayley in this play'. Unlike previous shows, this one demanded very little movement: 'This is the stillest I've ever been on stage', remarks Paul, and 'When I do something it feels really massive,' observes Hayley. They found the chaos resided in the characters and needed to be internalised, rather than demonstrated.

Few physical theatre companies work regularly with writers, notable exceptions being: Theatre de Complicite when adapting 'Three Lives of Lucie Cabrol' and 'Light'; Rejects Revenge, whose director Tim Hibberd writes the scripts around shared ideas; and Kaos Theatre where director Xavier Leret penned their early work. Frantic Assembly, however, always start with text and have worked with writers in the devising process since their first show 'Look Back in Anger' - chosen with the idea that an unknown company doing a well-known play might be a good marketing strategy. Their latest venture is different: 'Tiny Dynamite' is a collaboration between Frantic and the doyen-company of new writing - Paines Plough. Noting the calibre of this collaborative team (writer Abi Morgan, whose play 'Splendour' wowed Edinburgh last year, Julian Crouch designing and Vicky Featherstone directing), Guardian critic Lyn Gardner

'It was a huge challenge. You meet this avalanche of words, which is very scary.'

described them as 'Manchester United meets Arsenal'.

Funders and venues have been quick to support the project. But 'Tiny Dynamite' didn't follow the usual Frantic format where writer, director and actors explore a core idea in rehearsal. This time, although draft scripts were overhauled around a table by everyone - administrator, designer, director, actors - it remained essentially Abi Morgan's play. 'Abi's writing is so disciplined,' observes Steven. 'Before we've been quite rude to writers, really. I mean, we paraphrase and skim things and change them. This was quite a shock because we realised we couldn't do that. If we did we lost the play. Maybe because the rhythms depend so much on the words. And we've never really asked audiences to listen. It's more that we've jumped round the stage saying "we'll show you".'

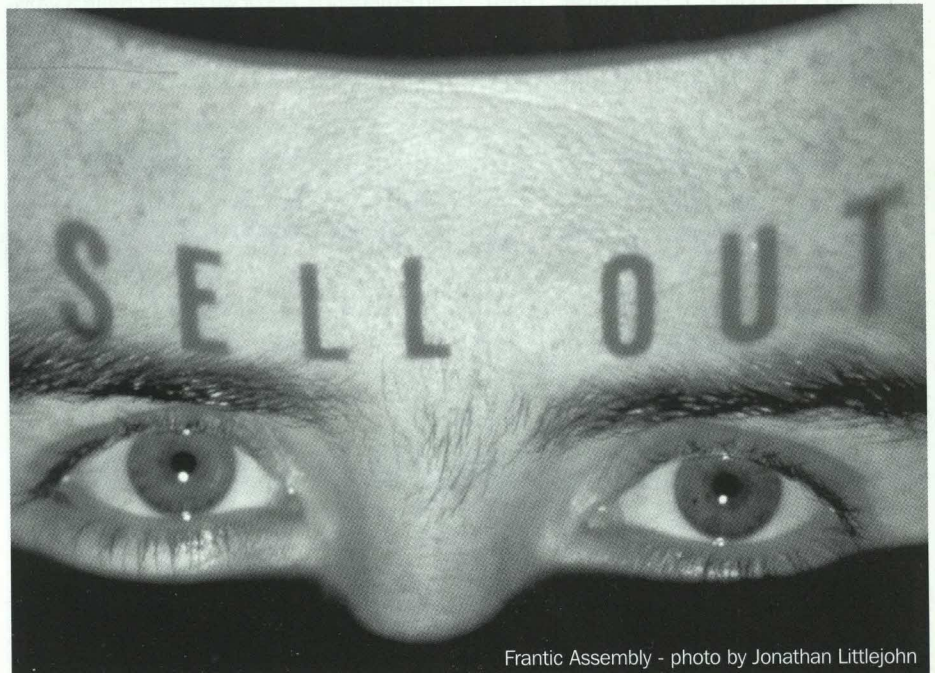
Directors working with Frantic usually have a movement orientation. Vicky Featherstone of Paines Plough is highly regarded for the clarity and detail of her work on texts. Steven is full of praise for her: 'We're not text dummies, but she gave us such an internal understanding of what we were doing - and why. And her perception of the physical goes beyond the simply aesthetic, so we were impressed by her notes on the physical

aspects too.' They started with blocking and spatial relationships rather than their usual physicalising: 'In a way the physical work is invisible,' explains Steven, 'and when we decided where the physical moments were we just knew where they would work.' They found Vicky asked lots of questions which had the whole group wrestling to find answers. The result, he says, was a 'subconscious understanding'.

Critics have focused more on the performers than the company and its style. Consequently the actors feel more exposed, especially as 'Tiny Dynamite' is a very delicate piece which explores triangular relationships. 'We knew we were going to have to "act",' says Steven, 'whereas previously we've used broad brushstrokes in character and a physical way of expressing emotion. This time, feelings are nailed to a narrative and to characters who are other than us. It's very different.'

Has the text-bug bitten these companies? Volcano next encounter a contemporary play: 'Destination' by Austrian writer Thomas Bernhard, to be directed by Kathryn Hunter. Four-sight return to devising with Hans Andersen's story 'The Snow Queen'. They are not using a writer; the starting point is the music, with input from visual artists. And Frantic Assembly go back into 'hard and fast' physical work with Liam Steele directing 'Heavenly'. They will, however, be inviting Vicky Featherstone in to the final stages of the process. That's perhaps the most significant change - inviting a text-based director to have an input on a physical piece: a sign of things to come? ■

Dymphna Gallery's new book 'Through the Body' is published by Nick Herne Books - see www.nickhernbooks.co.uk.



Frantic Assembly - photo by Jonathan Littlejohn

Ophaboom in SPACE

Rural touring is true to the commedia dell'arte tradition - and a political as well as an artistic decision - as Ophaboom's GEOFF BEALE explains ...

Ophaboom Theatre was set up by Howard Gayton and myself in 1991 to research, develop and perform commedia dell'arte. We made the practical and political choice of starting with street theatre and this has continued to influence our work and its function, and has led us into an analysis of the spaces we perform in.

The practical considerations were money. The political ones stemmed from a perception that much theatre - and here I refer to the building as well as the art form - is exclusive. When we set up, accessibility was the buzzword, and the aim was to attract a larger and more diverse audience than the ageing, generally middle-class punter who visited most theatre shows. The mainstream West End theatres were responding with large-scale musicals and spectacles, but this approach can narrow the definition of theatre, limiting it to the role of entertainment. The more adventurous theatre explored other definitions, but played to a dwindling, if enthusiastic crowd. Arts centres were not, on the whole, appealing to a new audience, perhaps due to their images as the preserve of the middle

classes. They were not welcoming institutions.

Many theatres and shows create a fourth wall that shuts the audience out. The audience are seated in comfortable chairs and file in; at half-time and at the end they file out; and in between the lights go up and down. As shows are created with more effects and technology, and well-equipped theatre buildings are built to accommodate these advances, the fourth wall becomes ever stronger, inculcating a passivity and detachment in the audience; the dialogue becomes one-sided. Theatres create their shows to dazzle and celebrate the uniqueness of the artist, to set the artist apart from the audience: 'Listen, look on my works and be amazed.'

But if live theatre is important - which it is - and if we believe that it should also be fun, diverting and thought provoking, then this is because it is a dialogue between performer and audience. For an hour or two a collection of strangers become a community and share an experience. And if we are to create a growing audience, we must nurture one that finds itself at home with theatre. One that can be critical, relaxed and expectant; one that is

confident that its role in the experience is active.

I think this includes a rethink of our attitude to the spaces that we play in. We have to find where the audiences themselves are. We and the funding bodies need to consider alternative spaces: site-specific possibilities, street theatre, festivals and also initiatives that take theatre to the audience, such as the Rural Touring Schemes.

One of the reasons that physical theatre is seen as a growing theatre form is that many of the groups are involved in this redefinition of space. For us, commedia's potential to be versatile, both during performance and in its range of possible venues, was a strong attraction. This adaptability allows the art form to appeal to a diverse audience range. We have had people come to see our longer, more dramatic shows based on their experience of some of our half-hour romps on the street.

Politically and radically the 'Reclaim the Streets' movement illustrates the potential for, and energy of, people's desire to be active. Where we are told a road is a road, we find we can alter its definition by using it differently. It can become a venue for a party, a route for the celebration of diverse sexuality, as in the Lesbian and Gay Pride March, or a grass-covered bridge in Hackney. Recently at a festival in Quebec we saw a group of French musicians leave the festival site and play on a street corner - to the despair of the authorities. For a while, the space became a dance floor, for anyone who wanted to dance. At the Eclat Festival in Aurillac, France, the whole town becomes an arena for performances.

For us, commedia dell'arte, traditionally, should be popular and inclusive. Ophaboom's experience has included performances on an island in the middle of a lake in France, in a ballroom, in an old church and also in theatres. We are proud that we strive to work in circumstances that allow an audience to feel that they are part of the show. At one major festival in Spain, we successfully argued with our





bookers and our agent that we had to perform in Spanish, though outside of the context of the show we spoke no Spanish. This allowed at least one family who spoke no English to enjoy our work, and they responded by coming to see all our shows during the festival.

Our attitude has brought us into contact with the Rural Touring Networks. The schemes seem to represent the closest we might come to in these times, of having a group of strolling players moving from venue to venue and briefly engaging and performing within a community. What the venues in the rural schemes have to offer is a constant surprise, a village hall, a school, a badminton court or even a bowling alley. But whatever the limitations or difficulties you face, you know you have the audience's support because they know the venue more than you. We, the players, are being invited in to their community, into their space and we then spin them our tale, transforming the space for them too. Many of the schemes provide hospitality; you are not performing to faceless people, you are an honorary member of their community. The whole experience becomes a dialogue.

Some of the schemes operate with the specific intention of presenting new and challenging work to the audiences they have cul-

tivated, others are involved in urban areas, and some want the more appealing, generally comic shows. But we owe it to these schemes and ourselves to investigate the possibility of performing in these diverse spaces. The press, the accolades, the safe options lie in London and Edinburgh but the hungry audiences are elsewhere. In feeding them we are creating an audience that will itself enter into theatres, and we are also creating the possibility of taking more radical and diverse work to them.

But the rural schemes need support. In France we've seen the level of commitment and support that is needed: the Eclat in Aurillac was given a blank cheque by a businessman for five years to develop its own success and funding. The Baalen Festival in Belgium has been going for 15 years, creating an audience that will confidently sit and discuss with artists and themselves their feelings about certain shows; the whole village accommodates the festival. We sometimes seem confused in our funding approaches in this country. The Streets Ahead Festival in Manchester is one we have seen grow and grow over the years, to the point that when we last played there we met people wandering around the streets, critically assessing and

searching out acts and material that they were interested in. The whole project was geared up to the 2000 celebration, but that was the year that the festival lost its funding.

Any venue, event or festival needs the time to grow and build. As numerous surveys have found, the most effective marketing tool is word of mouth, and that takes time. Any strategy or plan needs to commit itself to at least five years' worth of support, so that plan needs to be right. The initiatives in the rural schemes are an obvious success; they need artists to challenge and entertain the growing audience that they are encouraging. We need to learn from their success how to empower the audience, because that is how you create new audiences:

'It is always popular theatre that saves the day. Through the ages it has taken many forms, and there is only one factor that they have in common: a roughness. Salt, sweat, noise, smell: the theatre that's not in a theatre ...' (Peter Brook, 'The Empty Space') ■

Find out more about Ophaboom at www.ophaboom.co.uk. For information on rural touring contact the National Rural Touring Forum on 01759 303624 or see www.nrtf.org.uk



Photo???

WORLD THEATRE FOCUS

Theatre without Borders

EMI SLATER sings the praises of Russian clown Slava Polunin and his revolutionary 'Ship of Fools'

Many of you will know of Slava Polunin as the clown from Russia who created and performed 'Snowshow' - the one with the wild paper blizzard, huge flying spiders and giant-sized bouncing balls. Or perhaps you know him as the philosophical founder of Litsedei, the famous Russian clown troupe formed from Polunin's Moscow-based 'Academy of Fools', or as the clown in Cirque du Soleil's 'Alegria', or as the leader of a pack of performers and directors emerging from Russia during perestroika which spawned such current favourites as Derevo, Do-Fabrik, Theatre Akhe and Terramobile amongst a host of others - or even as the clown hailed by Monty Python's Terry Gilliam as one of his greatest inspirations ...

You may also know that he is very, very famous in Russia - more famous than a rock star. During the last ten years I have travelled the whole extent of the former Soviet Union and met many people on my travels both in and out of the theatre world - I never once met anyone, young or old, who did not know of Slava Polunin.

What you may not know however is that as well as his own performance work he has also hosted two of the world's most radical and original theatre events. The first one may even have contributed to the fall of the Berlin Wall. In 1989, during the summer before the wall actually came down, Polunin gathered together his wife, children and friends and set off from Moscow in a caravan of vehicles. They called it the 'Caravan Mir'. The word 'mir' means both 'peace' and 'world' in Russian.

Defying visa regulations they travelled and performed all over Eastern and Western Europe, picking up clowns along the way. In Polunin's own description: 'Thousands of artists and hundreds of thousands of viewers participated as co-creators of this grand celebration ... At each stop throughout we were joined by hundreds of artists and viewers, who left their humdrum lives for our life on the road, dedicated to wholly other ideas: celebration and theatre.'

This gives some idea of the kind of effect Polunin has on his fellow artists and audience members. For a brief period in 1989 the clowns became leaders, crossing cultural and national borders and celebrating the end of the Cold War before it had been officially declared. When the clowns of the Caravan Mir performed in West Berlin it was the first time in his life Polunin had had a chance to see his fellow Western circus performers perform live: he was then 40 years old.

It is relatively easy for those of us born in

'Thousands of artists and hundreds of thousands of viewers participated as co-creators of this grand celebration'

the western part of Europe to travel freely if we desire to see the creme de la creme of street theatre, carnival or indoor physical theatre. In the summer months, in countries such as France, Germany and Spain, festivals galore are organised as tourist attractions, local celebrations and marketing ploys. We are free to partake if we have the money to get there. Not so our Russian counterparts. Despite perestroika, the iron grip of bureaucracy still hangs heavily over most proceedings in the former Soviet Union. When I was there in June this year, I was able to manoeuvre myself out of various visa complications by simply waving a few very small denomination American dollars at those petty-minded people who still insist on making moving around seem like a luxury.

Of course citizens of the Russian Federation can and do travel but both economic and bureaucratic restraints prevent the kind of spontaneity that we are blessed with. It is easy for us to take our freedom of movement for granted. This makes what Polunin, his wife Lena and collaborator Natasha Tabachnikova are doing all the more important. Polunin represents to the people of the Russian Federation a sense of freedom and celebration, using his clowning to transform the philosophy of a borderless world. This was nowhere more evident than in a scorching, grey and polluted Moscow in June this year where Polunin launched the Ship of Fools, the second stage of his carnival celebrations - a follow-on from Caravan Mir.

Polunin took the Ship of Fools sailing down the Moskva River, past the Kremlin and Red

Square, launching the largest street theatre festival ever held in Russia. The huge multi-national event marked the close of Theatre Olympics 2001, described by Vladimir Putin as 'an exchange of ideas which defines the future of scenic art'. The concept behind the festival, which ran from April to June 2001, was no less ambitious: 'The Moscow Theatre Olympics will be held at the turn of the two centuries and the two millennia. The Olympics will become the demonstration of results of theatre development in the 20th century in a broad variety of forms: from experiments of avant-garde to folk street shows. By showing the crowning achievements of the world stage; by showing the modern theatre at the Olympic heights, we are helping the national theatre - first and foremost the young generation of theatre practitioners who will take hold of the 21st century stage - to measure their art against the world theatrical culture.' A fitting aim for the capital city of the nation which laid the foundations for so much of the legacy we physical theatre practitioners have inherited today.

The festival was divided into blocks: foreign theatre companies, Russian theatre companies, experimental theatre companies (including Forced Entertainment, Eugenio Barba, etc.) and the street theatre programme headed by Polunin. His enthusiasm and passion to bring to his fellow Muscovites the best of what he describes as 'theatre without borders' resulted in a festival which included solo

performers and companies from all over Europe - east and west - and beyond. An enormous number and range of performers were present - including clown Leo Bassi, Strange Fruit (Australia), Akhe Group (Russia), Perekatipole (Estonia), Teatr Biuro Podrozy (Poland), Els Comediants (Spain), Red Elvises (USA), the UK's Natural Theatre - plus numerous design installations, carnival processions from all over the world, workshops, and music groups.

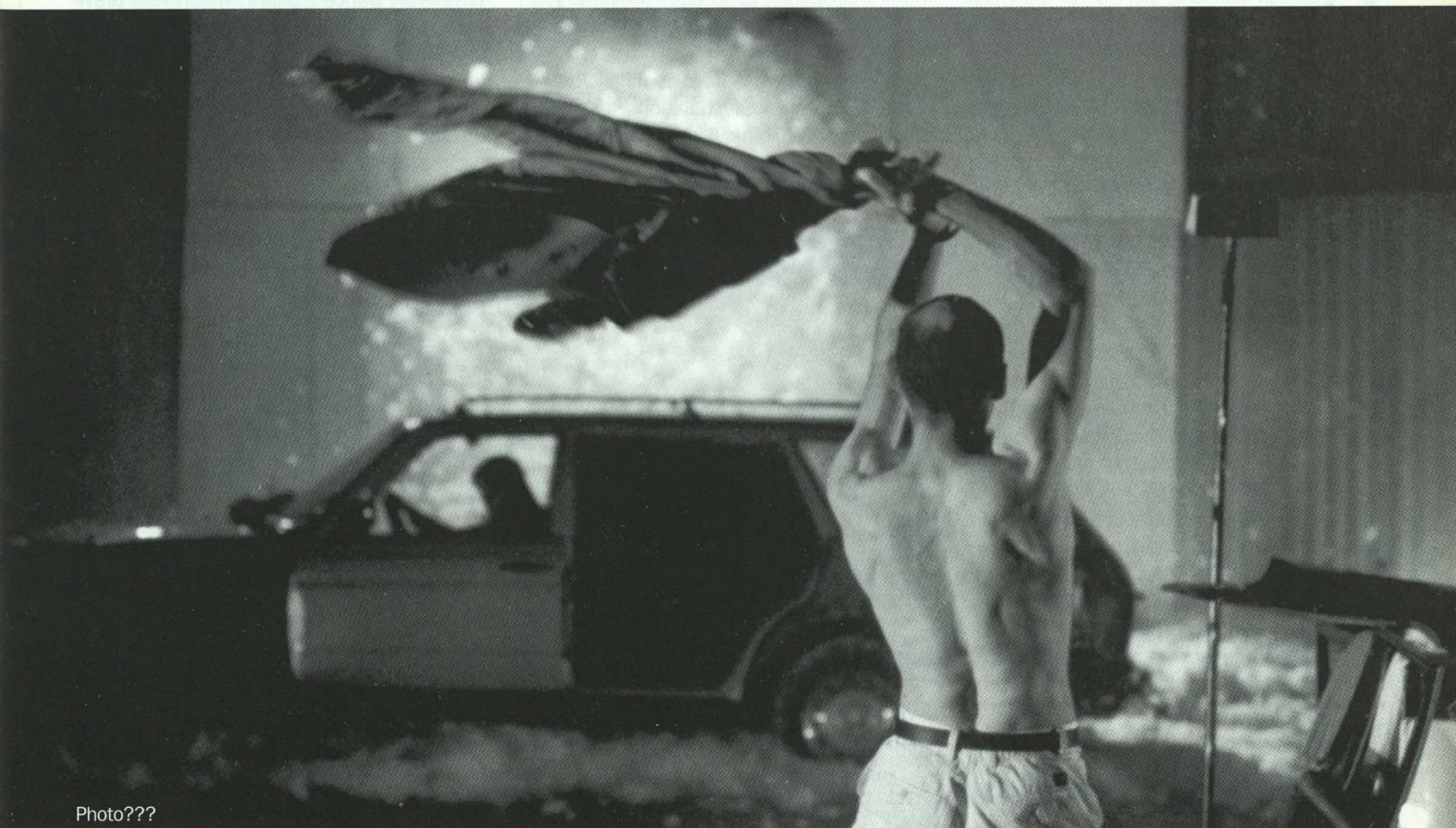
The festivities were focused around the gardens of one of Moscow's many very beautiful state theatres, the Hermitage. Other companies, such as the Netherlands' Dog Troep, were programmed to perform in the spectacular location of Revolution Square, which opens out into Red Square. Natural Theatre Company, frustrated at being restricted to the Hermitage Gardens, broke out and took their 'Red People' walkabout characters into Red Square where, contrary to expectations, a young policeman guarding Lenin's Mausoleum asked to be photographed with them rather than arresting them. Surrounded by a stunning fire installation by French company Carabosse, numerous other companies performed throughout the evening: notably Alarm Theatre from Russia/Germany, and the French company Malabar who stormed the gardens with pyrotechnics that would have made British safety officers have a cardiac arrest.

A sense of joy and excitement and fear-

lessness is something Polunin and his team carry everywhere. They defy bureaucratic gravity by organizing events which make a mockery of any administrative problems we in the west may complain about. The new-found freedom felt by most Muscovites in their lives is feared to be temporary. Most of the people who live in that vast city with its history of theatre and revolution and literature and art feel their lives are still lived at the edge of a precipice. Polunin and Tabachnikova's Ship of Fools is a festival of genuine celebration - something we need more of. We must put an end to the glorified marketing machines or expanded tourist attractions so many festivals have become: theatre is for real life, the food of our souls.

As Polunin himself puts it: 'The state of celebration is a special one, elevating the human condition. When we put on our beautiful costume, arrange our hair, lift our eyes, and polish our shoes, we transform ourselves into a celebratory mode and become actors in the process. We do so in order to 'create' our image and participate in an event that is different from the everyday, grey existence in which we are cogs in a huge machine.' Long may the Ship of Fools keep sailing ... ■

Emi Slater is artistic director of Perpetual Motion Theatre, who have recently returned from Eastern Europe. Their new show 'Perfect' is currently being previewed and will tour in 2002. See www.perpetualmotion.org.uk.



Photo???

WORLD THEATRE FOCUS

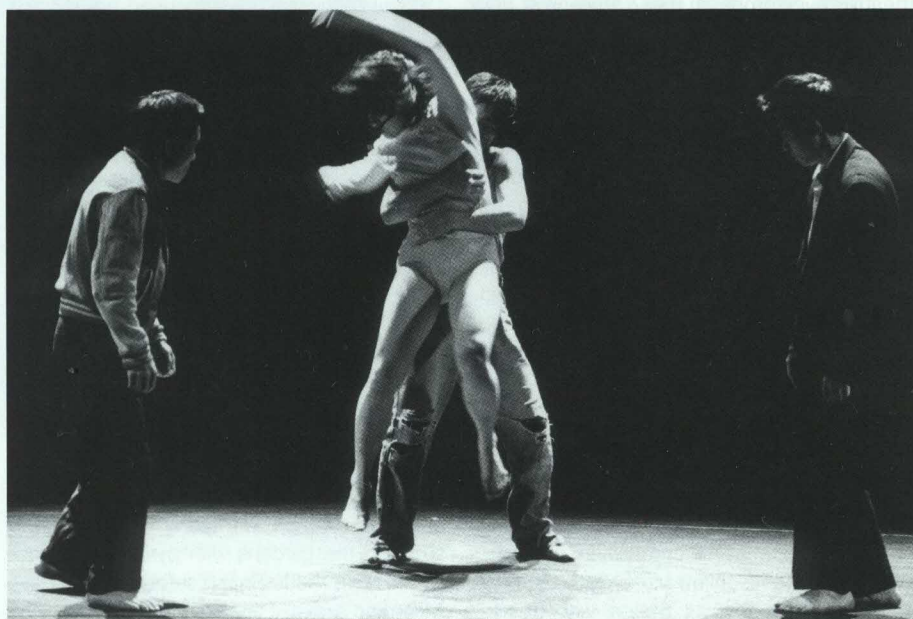
New Primitives

in a Post-Butoh World

Artist and academic
AJAYKUMAR
investigates the work
of Japanese company
Gekidan Kaitasha in
the context of the
post-war Butoh
movement

Gekidan Kaitasha are one of the most pioneering and provocative ensembles in Japan today. They are currently conducting a world tour including the UK as part of the Japan 2001 Festival. The work they will be performing is called 'Bye-Bye: The New Primitive' - Kaitasha's culminating stage production of the 1990s, dealing with the physical and political aspects of the human body. The work consists of scenes that were reconstructed to document how that decade fell into functional and political disorder. It is a work that has seen several manifestations, a work that has evolved and will continue to evolve.

Gekidan Kaitasha, which means the 'Theatre of Deconstruction', was founded in 1985, inspired by Noh theatre, the philosophy of Tatsumi Hijikata (the pioneer of Butoh), Pina Bausch and Martha Graham. Kaitasha's work is influenced by the atmosphere of each venue in which the performance takes place. The company began working in environmental locations, including city ruins, streets, parks, train stations and riverbanks. Their narratives are composed primarily of physical movement and expression, sound and rhythm



rather than words. Language - mostly English and consisting of single phrases or words - is used sparsely.

The company has from its origins experimented with object installations, electronic music, film and other visual media. These works are highly emotionally charged, and some of the images they create are profoundly disturbing. Their characteristic repetitive, obsessive movements are brimming with ferocity imbued with violence.

As mentioned before, the company has been influenced by Tatsumi Hijikata. The term Hijikata coined - Ankoku Butoh: the dance of darkness - is an apt description of Kaitasha's work. Ankoku Butoh, founded by Hijikata and Kazuo Ohno, was a revolutionary underground art movement in the Japan of the 1950s, profoundly influenced by German expressionism and the work of Antonin Artaud. Other seminal influences included Arthur Rimbaud and Jean Genet and Japanese artists such as Yukio Mishima.

Hijikata's first work, 'Forbidden Colours', inspired by Mishima's work of the same name, in one blow re-invented Japanese con-

temporary dance-theatre, which had previously slavishly drawn on western forms. Such a process had been impacting on Japanese art primarily since the Meiji Restoration. The revolutionary experimentation taking place in the art world was inextricably linked to the socio-political situation of Japan in the post-second world war period. Although influenced by a number of European artists, the body that Hijikata was searching for was a Japanese body. Ankoku Butoh is not easy to comprehensively define because it is in a process of inherently re-defining itself, but here I outline some general observations.

The body is the site for exploration

The body that Hijikata looked for was a Japanese body and the bodies that became his muses were marginal bodies in Japanese society. Kayo Mikami writes: 'Butoh is now, always now.' For Hijikata his own body was the site for such a journey. Hijikata's choreographies for his dancers began with words that he would throw at them from which they would have to improvise. Words were important to him. As Sondra Horton Fraleigh describes in her book 'Dancing into Darkness', instead of liberating the body from language, Hijikata tied the body up with words, turning it into a material object, an object that is like a corpse. Paradoxically, by this method, Hijika-

These works are highly emotionally charged and profoundly disturbing

ta moved beyond words and presented something only a live body can express. That is the essence of Hijikata's Butoh. Hijikata saw human existence as inextricably part of the body. But this body only comes alive when it is chased into a corner by words and pain - that is, consciousness. He rigorously practised this point of view with his own body and life.

The rejection of existing Japanese vocabularies of movement

A move away from forms such as Noh and Kabuki towards influence by more primitive expression inspired by shamanistic practice and Japanese culturo-aesthetics relating to nature. This is not to say Noh or Kabuki has not been influential for individual artists but this refers specifically to the overall vocabulary of movement.

A harmonisation of male-female energies yang and yin

This in both male and female artists.

The creation of highly personal dances

Kazuo Ohno in particular elucidates 'finding one's own dance'. There is a correspondence in Pina Bausch's thinking: 'I am not interested in how the body moves but what moves the body.'

The relationship of the body to the universe

Kazuo Ohno discusses this and refers to this always. In a workshop that Fraleigh undertook with him he gave her an improvisation exercise, describing it as follows: 'Tonight we start in the mother's womb. We are swimming in her waters and drinking her life. When you move you should touch something, hear your mother, touch her. Keep this in mind - your body is your mother. She is feeding you the

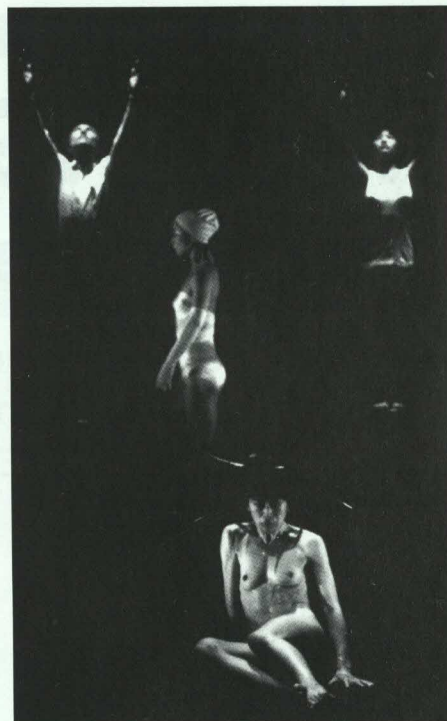
universe as it exists in everything, even so small a creature as a moth. The form of the universe imprints a moth wing. The mother contains the universe, she makes a soup of the universe to feed her baby, a soup of the moth's wing.' There are parallels here in the work of Isadora Duncan. In her biography she wrote: 'I was seeking and finally discovered the central spring of all movement, the crater of motor power, the unity from which all diversities of movement are born.'

As a spectator, I perceive some correspondence in the body expression - shintai - of Gekidan Kaitasha. How could it not be so? However, their body work is not a mirror image of Hijikata's work. It is director Shimizu's distillation of Hijikata's philosophy that is most interesting. Hijikata regarded the brain not as a distinct or primordial entity but as an organ only, one part of the totality of the body and one part of the body's 'creative' experience in performance. An old Chinese saying, also known in Japan, says: 'Think with your abdomen.' (The abdomen here represents the totality of the human body.)

In a recent conversation, I asked Shinshin Shimizu, artistic director of Gekidan Kaitasha, to explain his approach to shintai. He describes below an exercise in walking:

'This is a pretty basic thing, but we have done Hakobi (carrying) - that is, walking. However, it is not 'walking', actually. It is not a movement of the foot. Normally, someone who starts walking moves his leg. But I set up Ki (soul) in front of him. Ki comes from his inside, his mind ... He chases the Ki so that he carries his body ahead. This is the thought of Hakobi. So, he is not walking, but it can be said that he is chasing his representation, his shadow ...'

Shimizu develops this explanation of



process further: 'I think that it is necessary to carry out another process with the body that is called "remained as it was born" ... If somebody thinks that he can use his body freely, he does not play as an actor. Somebody who feels something strange and unnatural against his body, exposes his body on a stage. If I express it in language, I use Ki, Kage (shadow) and the Noh sense of Hana (flower) - a body left behind ... Regardless of East and West, everybody seeks freedom on the stage. I am not setting a trend of the new era, but am in this stream of history.'

Shimizu and his company acknowledge the influence of Hijikata but have a contemporary interpretation of Butoh that investigates the notion of Shinkei (nerve or neuron):

'In the sixties, what Hijikata was concerned with was the physical body, not nerve. The body, in this sense, has already become invalid ... there is a (nerve) memory of the past in the performer's body ... If someone says "memory", it is a history ...'

Gekidan Kaitasha are transformers of history - the history of Butoh, of other performance forms, of collective Japanese experience and of the experience of individual bodies. ■

The company will be performing at the ICA in London at the end of October and then touring. For full details contact James Tyson at Chapter (029 2031 1050 or e-mail theatre@celtic.co.uk). This article includes an extract of an ongoing discussion between artist Ajaykumar and Shinjin Shimizu, artistic director of Gekidan Kaitasha. An extended version will be published shortly in the web journal at: www.dramforum.net



PERFORMANCE DIARY

MAKING CONNECTIONS

- the scenographic approach

The visual design of a performance piece can be an intrinsic part of the devising process, as scenographer ALEX SHELTON explains

When I say to people that I am a scenographer, a rather glazed look can appear in their eyes. I quickly go on to explain that I design for performance, at which a light of recognition and interest begins to dawn! However, designing for performance does not fully describe my role as a scenographer.

'Scenografia' literally translates from the Greek as 'writing a scene'. In a visual sense this is exactly what a scenographer does. They create the visual expression of a performance that unifies with other aspects such as movement, text and narrative to provide the total theatre experience. It is about working with performance as a visual artist in a very closely collaborative way. It is about working from a concept with a director, performer or choreographer on the creative development of all visual aspects of a performance to enhance

the understanding, contextualisation and meaning within a performance.

Caspar Neher and Bertolt Brecht provided a good example of a truly collaborative method of working between designer and director. John Willet talks of Neher as being able to 'see the playwright's ideas in operation almost as soon as he had voiced them, then use his controlled sensitivity to line and colour to set them down in an alternative form as a supplement to the words of the script ... It is almost as if the artist were writing the same play in his own medium.' Neher's ideas and interpretations would then inform the director's development of the play. This reciprocal creative relationship is the ideal working environment for the scenographer.

The traditional way of looking at the stage setting is in pictorial terms, perhaps a legacy of the elaborate backdrops of the 18th and 19th centuries. Indeed traditionally this 'picture' is broken down into very distinct categories of costume, set and lighting. During the 20th century, designers such as Neher and Josef Svoboda became increasingly dissatisfied with this approach to the activity of theatre-making. They gave priority to the theatrical concept and its actualisation rather than acts of decorating or the creation of pictures on stage. Their preferred method of working started with the action of the play and development of all visual elements centred around this. This scenographic approach involves thinking of the space not as a picture, but as a moving, evolving timescape.

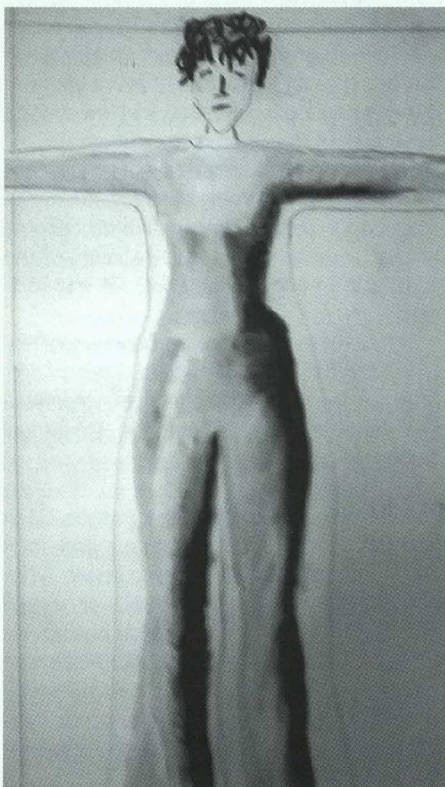
As a scenographer I prefer to be included from the outset of a project. This enables me to develop concepts alongside the director or choreographer and allows our ideas to feed from each other during the creative development of the project. One of my interests is the visual problems created by the use of projected imagery in live performance. The notion of scenography dictates that all visual elements of a production should work together with the performance concept towards a cohesive whole. Often in performances where

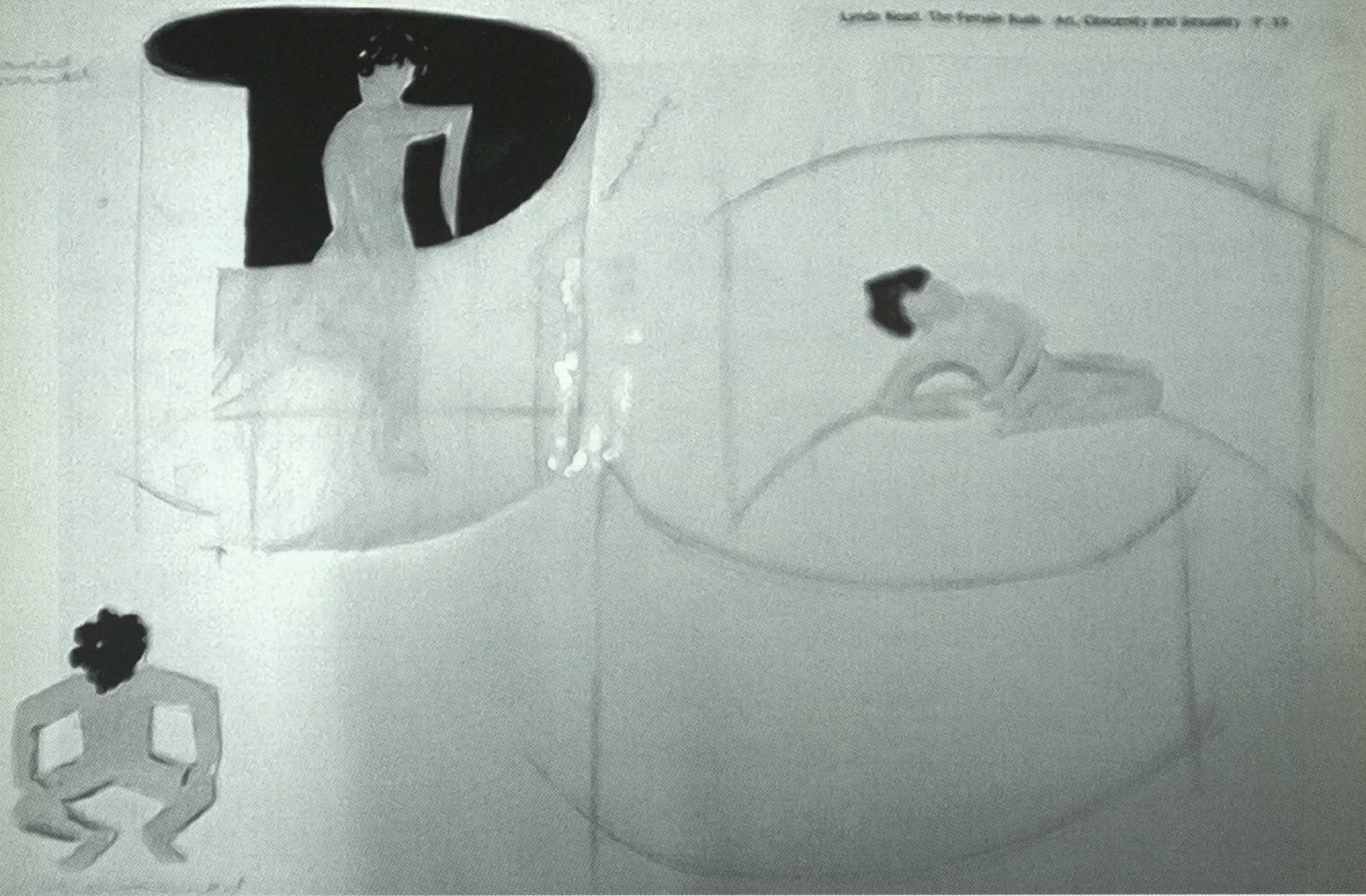
the body shares the performance space with a projected image visual conflicts begin to appear. My focus is confused between wanting to look at the projection but not wanting to miss the live performance. I find that instead of working together, these two elements often only serve to distract from one another and consequently leave me with a sense of having missed out on something.

The desire to resolve this problem, and to test my understanding of the notion of scenography, has led me to develop a project entitled 'Enfold' with performing artist Suna Imre. We set out to identify the similarities and differences within the roles of the performing body and projected imagery, and to examine how careful consideration, both scenographic and performative, of these roles can unify the two entities within a performance environment.

Our focus was the performing body and our starting point was to develop seven key 'poses' which reflected ideas of the body being framed in a classical, fine art tradition. From these Suna went away to develop a structure and movement vocabulary for what was to be an improvised performance and I started to plan the scenography for the piece. I saw my task as creating connections between the projections and the performing body through the design of the space and for the body, but also treating the projections as a scenographic element in their own right. Therefore, their subject matter, colour, scale and texture in relation to the rest of the performance were vitally important. I felt the development of the projections would provide inspirations for the other visual elements and could help to create the connections I was looking for to visually unify all aspects of the performance.

Working from photographs of Suna in the seven poses, I created seven tonal charcoal drawings. I filmed myself in the process of drawing and, after editing, the resulting projections were of drawn images, in tonal shades of greys and pale yellows, gradually





One of my interests is the visual problems created by the use of projected imagery in live performance

building up stroke by stroke from a blank white background on the screen. I was excited by the prospect of the drawn image gradually revealing itself, layer upon layer, juxtaposed with the live body and the connections this would help to make between the two. The images were to be projected at life size on to both screens and the performer, each one starting at different intervals and projected on a loop, to build up until all the projections fill the space at the climax of the piece.

Suna and I then met to share our progress. When the individually developed elements of movement and projection were viewed together they both seemed to ebb and flow in an organically evolving pattern, disclosing things about each other. Suna felt that the quality of movement within the projections would provide an added stimulus in her movement vocabulary. At this point we decided that the piece should be gallery based, allowing the audience to move freely around the space and gain different perspectives on the performance. Taking the results of this meeting

away with me I started on the development of the other elements of the scenography.

It was important that the space and the costume should be sympathetic to the mood of the movement and the projections. Practically it was necessary for the projections to have surfaces on which to fall to reveal the images. These surfaces would include both screens and the performer. I based my ideas around the use of a translucent white material which would create visible layers and a sense of blurring both in the space and on the body. I developed this material into a series of curved semi-circular screens - in place of the familiar rectangles - of varying heights that provided areas of containment in various parts of the space.

As the projection shone on to the material the screen would either be made opaque or transparent depending on the direction of the beam, and the edges of the projections would blur on the concave surface. These interactions would create an interplay between the performer, shadows, projections

and screens. The floor would be white, so some of the projections could overlap the screens onto the floor, but some would remain contained within the screen.

To break up the whiteness of the space and make more connections with the projections I decided that the performer's garment should reflect the colours and textures that were present in the projections, designing a loose-fitting all-in-one garment in silk organza. This fabric made the garment reasonably stiff and structured in feel, and created very three-dimensional shadows. Taking my inspiration from the drawings on the projections, I created another representation of the body on the garment, using organza dyed in similar colours to the projections and layered to reflect the tonal shading on the drawings on the actual body. The colours and textures provided a connection with the projections when the body was in a different part of the space, and when the projections shone on to the body very abstract colours and textures created a new visual dimension to the piece.

This project, a work-in-progress, is just the beginning ... ■

Alex Shelton is a freelance scenographer and a lecturer at King Alfred's College in Winchester. She would welcome the opportunity to work on collaborations with other artists. Contact her on alexandra34@tesco.net.



School for Poets - Ferruccio Ballio

Days of Wine and Roses

DOROTHY MAX PRIOR discovers a new dawn for theatre at the Edinburgh Fringe - with the Aurora Nova world theatre festival blazing the way

This is a terrible confession - but this was my first time at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Excuses have been many: study commitments, kids on school holidays, involvement with summer residencies or environmental art projects ... but more than this a feeling that Edinburgh represented everything I disliked most - hype, spin and PR-led competitiveness.

It was a surprise and a pleasure, therefore, to find myself on my first day in Edinburgh at the Komedia St Stephen's venue, which was hosting the Aurora Nova world theatre festival. Here was air and space - an empty space, a sacred space. A beautiful floor-level performance area in the main body of a gloriously gothic church, perfect for movement-based theatre - and in the basement a coffee bar where animated conversations took place in a mix of Russian, German and English. For a moment, I was thrown back a couple of decades to days of touring in the former Eastern Bloc countries. Seeing Do Theatre's 'Upside Down' reinforced that feeling of past times - a meticulous and beautiful piece of dance-theatre that had a nicely old-fashioned air of decadence, alienation and surreal subversion.

Do Theatre were one of 18 companies from 11 different countries performing in the festival, a joint venture from Brighton's Komedia, Scottish company Ecosmos and Fabrik, the East German company led by Wolfgang Hoffman who believes that 'theatre should be as much a sensual and emotional experience as it is an intellectual one'. This festival was unique in many ways - by the end of my trip I had appreciated this more fully than at the beginning of the week.

On that first day I eased myself in gently with a mere three shows to see - this I learnt was far below quota. I moved on from St Stephen's to the Theatre Workshop to see the Kaos 'Volpone'. Kaos Theatre are renowned for their ability to transpose literary texts into dynamic performance. Bringing Jonson alive

for a modern audience was a difficult task, but Kaos managed it.

The evening finished with a trip to the Old College Quad for Teatr Modjeska's 'Coriolanus', described in the publicity as 'RSC meets La Fura Dels Baus'. The quad is a wonderful location - a space that tells stories in its cobblestones, steps and shadows even without the performer's presence. The show started well, with the audience led into the arena by drum-beating, flame-torch-waving performers. It ended with a beautiful image - a tableau of two women and a child, frozen in solidarity and survival, framed by Doric columns on a balcony high above the quad. In between these two strong points came a muddled mix of shouted lines, much sword-fighting and jostling, and the occasional chariot ride round the quad. The production felt like a missed opportunity in such a gift of a space.

Walking back to my digs, I passed the Pleasance - a complex of performance spaces with a courtyard filled to the brim with late-night revellers. Here was the Edinburgh I had feared - a heaving mass of people networking like crazy, every available space covered in publicity material and an aggressive army of marketeers thrusting invitations to the latest comedy sensation into my unwilling hands. Feeling like Jesus in the temple marketplace I turned my back on the traders and headed for my bed.

On my second day I took the plunge and

did what everyone else seemed to be doing: running from one show to the next in a bid to cram in as much as possible. So at 10.00am I was at the Assembly Rooms to see Ridiculusmus in 'Say Nothing' - an irreverently funny look at the Irish troubles. Two men, one suitcase, a clod of earth and a mountain of imagination - what more is needed? Being in a theatre at this time of day reminded me of lost afternoons spent at the Electric Cinema in Portobello Road - that same shock of emerging from a darkened space into bright sunshine and the bustle of a busy city.

Wandering down the Royal Mile, there is no doubt that I am in Edinburgh during the Festival. My colleague Toby, unlike me, is an Edinburgh veteran - apparently unfazed by the leafleteers in furry costumes, singing nuns, trolley-pushing gorillas, hairy-legged bagpipe players, hokey-pokey ice cream pimps, fluttering banners, bleating salesmen and booming PA systems. Stumbling along the one tiny strip of road that is not occupied by people, dogs, tables or portable stages, I am handed the marketing ploy of the week - a squidgy square of puckered plastic stapled to a flyer. 'Free bubblewrap - get your free bubblewrap.' Unfortunately I can't remember what it was advertising. We are looking for somewhere to eat. There is a queue outside what looks to be a regular baked potato shop - apparently an Edinburgh legend. 'They do vegetarian haggis,' says Toby ... ►

In the basement coffee bar animated conversations took place in a mix of Russian, German and English. For a moment, I was thrown back a couple of decades to days of touring in the former Eastern Bloc countries



Later that afternoon, I return to the Pleasance. I'm in a better state to take in the hurly-burly than the previous evening. Despite giving the appearance that comedy is king, the Pleasance has, over the years, given consistent support to physical theatre (and last year was awarded the Total Theatre Best Venue Award). I'm here to see two shows. Knee-high's 'Red Shoes' is the first - Hans Christian Andersen's dark and dangerous story of obsession and female insurrection. Playing to a packed house, it was both funny and moving, full of rich images and soul-pictures that resonated long after the last curtain call.

It was very hard to move straight into another show, to try to banish 'Red Shoes' to the back of my mind in order to take in the next offering, Scarlet Theatre's 'Love and Other Fairy Tales'. Luckily, although very different, the shows had enough in common for me to just go with the flow and accept that I was going to link them together in my mind - rather like reading two short stories in a themed collection. 'Love and other Fairy Tales' is a thoughtful and provocative performance piece - although the Pleasance Cavern is not the ideal location for work of this sort.

Time to move on - back for my second visit to St Stephens, which has become my oasis of calm. I'm here to see two more shows. First, 'Petriified Skin' by Fabrik, performed by the company's founder members, Wolfgang Hoffmann and Benno Voorham. The piece is a powerful duet that explores personal, social and political division; moving eventually into harmony, collaboration and resolution.

The evening finishes with Formalny Theatre's 'School For Fools', mentioned by a number of people as the must-see show of the festival. This places a heavy burden on

any production - as we wait in the café, we glance nervously at the lengthy synopsis, translated chunks of text and company notes. I pray that we aren't subjecting ourselves to a convoluted narrative delivered in Russian, but needn't worry. 'School for Fools' is a masterful piece of visual and physical theatre, the rich tapestry of narrative threads woven together into a story that is both a heart-breaking picture of schizophrenia and a joyful celebration of the universal rites-of-passage of boyhood. The show deservedly won a Scotsman Fringe First award - which was celebrated afterwards with cheers, hugs and snapshots by the sixteen-strong ensemble gathered in the little snug bar opposite the venue. Everyone looked so wonderfully uncool, so genuinely full of pleasure at their success, that it was impossible not to smile with them and throw good cheer in their direction.

And it is heartening to see that the success story of the Aurora Nova festival has spread. There has been widespread reporting of the so-called 'dumbing-up' phenomenon, where thoughtful and provocative theatre productions are winning audiences at the expense of the once-dominant comedy scene.

The success of the festival has rested on a number of factors: a spirited belief in the potential of artistic collaboration; the emphasis on forms of theatre that cross barriers of

says with a laugh, 'Where I perform is my home - so I take care of it.'

I spend the rest of the evening back at Theatre Workshop, another favourite venue with a commitment to innovative physical performance. Mat Fraser's one-man show 'Seal-boy: Freak' is a hilariously non-PC mix of personal confession and burlesque play-acting on the state of armlessness. In the bar afterwards, Mat says that he is planning a new stage in his performance career - reviving the circus sideshow. Gabba, Gabba, hey, hey - we respect you, we respect you.

It's been a long day - with more to come tomorrow. At lunchtime I see Theatre de L'Ange Fou's 'Entangled Lives' at the Pleasance Dome. It is encouraging to see such a full auditorium. This is the company's first outing to Edinburgh - they seem to have arrived at just the right time. The audience is appreciative of this lovely piece of dramatic mime that merges ensemble movement, spoken text, recorded spoken word and minimally used video into a sound and movement symphony.

It is reassuring to see companies using the word 'mime' in their programme notes with an air of pride rather than apology. Later that day, I saw another company that seemed to have their roots firmly embedded in the noble art of mime. Lazzi's 'Mr Pinocchio' was a surprise gem nestling in the Fringe programme. Performed at the charming and intimate Hill Street

'Theatre should be as much a sensual and emotional experience as it is an intellectual one'

language and culture; and the genuine feeling of enthusiasm that came from everyone involved in the venture. All the artists worked together rather than in competition with one another. They shared meals, and they shared box office receipts.

A defining moment came for me on my third day, having returned to the venue to see 'Pookh Prakh' by Russian company Akhe. This was a mesmerising exploration of primeval forces - a dreamscape that used sound, light and animated objects to explore our deepest responses to the archetypal world. Unusually for the city of fast get-ins and turn-arounds, the company's use of sand, fire and water was not seen to be a problem. After taking their bows, they were joined onstage by members of Diquis Tiquis, the Costa Rican company who followed. Calmly and quietly, the mess was cleaned up. It seemed that everything done in this space was done with love and attention - 'Zen and the Art of Stage Clearing'. When I comment later to performer and choreographer Alejandro Tossati on his impressive turn as a stage-sweeper, he

Theatre, this was a 'circus-for-the-mind', a beautiful re-working of Carlo Collodi's story of the puppet who became a real boy. It was a joy to see two performers so willing and able to tell such wonderful tales through word and gesture alone.

So there we are - eighteen shows in four days. Having been fully initiated into the frenzy that is the Fringe, I left feeling that I had chosen a good year to break my Edinburgh embargo: as Fringe director Paul Gudgin said, 'We have a vintage year on our hands'.

I know that I am not the only person who is putting that success down to the breakthrough that innovative physical and visual performance has made at the Fringe. So many of the shows lauded at this year's Fringe are productions that in previous times would have been lucky to get a mention outside of the enlightened pages of Total Theatre Magazine, but are now being more widely recognised as at the forefront of the restoration of theatre as a vibrant contemporary art form. Let's hope this is the first of many vintage years to come. ■



Circus arts news

News from the Circus Arts Forum: Issue 6 Autumn 2001

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Welcome to Circus Arts News - the newsletter for the Circus Arts Forum, which is hosted by Total Theatre Network and funded by the Arts Council of England to support circus in all its many forms. This autumn sees the start of many new ventures. As training schools throughout the country start a new term, the first ever UK circus degree graduates will emerge from the Circus Space. Touring tented circuses - including our featured company Gifford's - continue to bring in the crowds and venues such as the Playbox Theatre are experimenting with circus projects that take the skills out of the big top and into other spaces. There is also new work to look forward to from companies such as Skinning the Cat, who take aerial performance on to the streets, and Scarabeus Theatre, who are developing a new vision for circus in collaboration with other arts disciplines.

Talking of vision, the Circus Arts Forum will be holding its first

Open Forum day - see below for details - a space for discussion, networking and professional support. Other projects for this year include the creation of a circus lobbying document which aims to identify what circus needs to thrive and how those needs can be met. If you feel that you would like to contribute to this process, please come along to the Open Forum meeting, or contact the Circus Arts Forum office. You can also get in touch with us via our website: www.circusarts.org.uk

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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Circus Open Forum - 23 Oct 2001

Are you a circus performer, trainer, producer or community teacher? Do you work with circus artists or use circus skills in any way in your work? Are you interested in training to be a circus performer or in integrating circus skills into your performance work? Or perhaps you are an arts officer or run a venue or community arts project and would like to know more about circus? If the answer is yes to any of the above, we hope that you will join us for a day of discussion, networking and inspiration ... The Circus Arts Forum is holding its first Open Forum day on Tuesday 23 October at the Battersea Arts Centre in London. Speakers will bring us their vision for the future of circus; we'll work together to create a blueprint of circus needs in areas such as touring, production of new work, professional training and community work - and finish the day off with a chance to meet and greet friends old and new over a glass of wine. To book your place, please e-mail info@circusarts.org.uk marking the subject 'Circus Open Forum' - or send an SAE to Circus Arts Forum at the address above. Hope to see you there!

Community Chest - Skylight wins the lottery!

Or more accurately, they've come up trumps in the Arts Council of England capital programme. £500,000 has been set aside for Skylight Circus Arts in Rochdale to develop a centre for Circus Arts, focusing on work with young people. For more information contact Jim Riley on 01706 650676 or see their website at www.skylight-circus-arts.org.uk

Swamp Circus Theatre ...

have just finished the Festival of the Scarecrow in Cornwall, which culminated in the creation of the Scarecrow circus. Forty young people performed in the show and an ongoing three-year training project has been set up, working towards accreditation with Cornwall College. Contact them at: swampcircus@btinternet.com

Mamaloucos

You read it here first ... It looks like the long-awaited Mamaloucos production 'The Birds' is going to be co-produced with the National

Theatre as part of their Transformations season. The piece will be an innovative collaboration with a high-calibre artistic team of director Kathryn Hunter, writer Sean Prenderghast, composer Goran Bregovich and designer Tim Hatley who will work with aerialists, actors and musicians. 'The Birds' will launch at the National Theatre in 2002 and then transfer to the Mamaloucos tent for a short tour - to be followed by a more extensive tour the following year. To find out more contact mat@mamaloucos.com

Circus of the Streets ...

is a new venture that promises to bring the energy and excitement of street performance into the big top. Composed of over 50 young people - some graduates of circus schools and some who have learnt their skills on the streets - the company will be performing in Bristol until 14 October, and then on to Cambridge till the end of the month. For more details contact Chris Barltrop on 07836 573600 or visit the website at www.circusofthestreets.com

'Circ.Chicane' ...

is a new multi-discipline show premiering at the Playbox Theatre in Warwick. Directed by Deborah Pope of No Ordinary Angels, it mixes circus, theatre, dance and live music to create a fantasy story in three dimensions that explores the levels and layers of gravity on what appears to be a perfectly normal street ... See www.playboxtheatre.com for more information

The Circus Space ...

and the Jerwood Charitable Foundation are collaborating on a unique initiative to establish an annual circus awards scheme in the UK. The Jerwood Circus Awards will support circus performers, directors and producers through a series of commissions to enable the creation of new work which will premiere at the Circus Space Festival during Easter every year. Successful applicants for 2001 will be announced at the Circus Space in November. To put yourself on their mailing list and apply for next year's awards please contact the Circus Space on 020 7613 4141 or e-mail: enquiries@thecircusspace.co.uk



About twenty minutes into Gifford's Circus show I thought, 'I'm watching a real circus.' I'm not sure what that meant. I've been pondering it ever since.

I'd arrived at the ground behind the Exmouth Arms in central Cheltenham in mid-afternoon. It was dull and cloudy. The living wagons of crew and artistes, the swingboats, the little white tent appeared slightly forbidding, both on show and yet secretive. A little later, sitting in the warmth of the restored living wagon of director Nell Stroud and her husband Toti Gifford, eating chocolate eclairs from the patisserie across the road, drinking Earl Grey tea, I launched my big question:

'Where does Gifford's fit into this monster called Circus?'

I meant to say 'genre' but somehow 'monster' leapt out of my mouth before I could stop it.

'We're new circus.'

'In what way?'

'We work very much as an ensemble. None of us is from circus families. We're rural cousins to trendy London circus. I think for us there's a link between agriculture and circus. Over the winter we lived in this wagon in our yard. There were agricultural implements lying around and they seemed to fit. A couple of nights ago we were watching Fellini's 'La Strada' and many scenes have ploughs and pitchforks and things in the background.'

Nell and Toti enthusiastically described how they built all the wagons themselves. Toti told me that when they set out to do their first stand in 2000 there were no tyres on the wagons. They held up the traffic for miles. Luckily they made enough at their first performance to go out and buy some.

'In your leaflet you say that your show is "inspired by a traditional 1930s circus".'

'Yes, but we're not trying to recreate one, just to use it as a starting point and go on from there. Like we're inventing a memory of something not real but it becomes real.'

That word 'real' again. I think I knew what Nell meant this time. Any

performance is simultaneously real and unreal, even those that let you know it's a show. You still believe it. How had they devised the show? Had Nell's experience of writing 'Josser' influenced their approach? Apparently, she'd consciously not written. They'd held auditions for the performers to see how they played together. They had no particular formula: some ideas and a musical clown number they'd used in 2000. After they'd found their cast they'd spent a day playing. Then they had a week's rehearsal before coming out on tour. It was a process of collaboration.

'I'm just learning this. Some of the performers, especially the dancers, simply wanted to know how they would be slotted in. I think it takes ages, years maybe, to discover your own way. I'm developing my own way of looking at circus. It's probably better to concentrate on one thing. Think of the Brontës. Their poetry is not so good.'

Earlier 'La Strada', now the Brontës. Later she mentioned William Blake. When I went to the box office to get tickets Christophe, the clown, who was working there, discreetly pushed aside a copy of Noel Streatfield's 'The Circus is Coming'.

'I think for us there's a link between agriculture and circus. Over the winter we lived in this wagon in our yard. There were agricultural implements lying around and they seemed to fit'

Days at the Circus

A tale of prancing horses, dancing ladies and Fellini's 'La Strada'. RICHARD CUMING visits Gifford's, a traditional touring circus with a modern sensibility.

Emily Park, who'd previously been an aerialist in the Dome show, came in. She discussed the costume she was making, the style based on the paintings of Degas. And the programme is peppered with quotes on circus ranging from Lucretius (50 BC) to Dame Laura Knight (1936). Nell mentions she read English literature (at Oxford).

'In your book you wrote about your seasons with Santus in the UK and Roncalli in Germany. You said Roncalli was very ego driven.'

'I think it was pride. It was pride in your artistry. I loved the level of exuberance. I learnt so much about total dedication. Professionalism. Only the best is good enough.'

Literary references, artistry, an acknowledgement of a tradition - I was getting a clearer picture of their place in the circus monster. Toti went to fetch the concession wagon whilst Nell showed me round the tent. It was full of busy people; grooming the horses, making costumes (some of the material recycled from Nell's mother's curtains), practising their acts, preparing for the main event: the performance. I'd been wrong. This wasn't forbidding. This was a community of people with a *raison d'être*. It was more than theatre. It was lived, a circus.

'What are your plans for Gifford's?'

'I think we'll always be small. It's quality not quantity. We're probably not going to leave this area really. We got a Regional Arts Lottery Programme grant from South West Arts for lights and a generator. That's a big help.'

'Would you like funding for the creative process?'

'I believe in showbusiness. I think you have to make it viable.'

Nell admitted that a longer rehearsal process would refine the show but 'there's always a sense of chaos about it. A creative chaos.'

She left me to meet administrator Cameron, to write the Gifford's newsletter, whilst I strolled round Cheltenham in the rain. Later, waiting for the show to begin, sitting on plastic chairs in the tent with its sawdust ring, blue velvet curtains and chandeliers, I chatted to my neighbours, Derek Londrigen, from Prestatyn, and Gordon Birch, from Wilmslow.

'We've been chasing circus for forty years. We came down to see Gilbert and Paulo's at Brean Sands. It's a fine show. We thought we'd call in here on the way back,' said Derek.

'We've been interested ever since we were kids. We've both left wives at home,' said Gordon.

'I'm 73 years young,' said Derek.

The show started. A show of charm and artistry, warmth and candour. Timeless, like a child's dream of a circus, but contemporary, borrowing and mixing performance styles, idiom and music. Unpretentious and simple on one level, yet, on another level, sophisticated, with quirky references, appealing clowning, seamless acts. A real circus. In the interval I asked Gordon and Derek what they thought.

'It's really wonderful. The clown is more of a mime though. Would you like an extra-strong mint?'

In the bar of the Exmouth Arms I bumped into Kenny Darnell, proprietor of the aforementioned Gilbert and Paulo's. He'd come up from his show to see Gifford's. He was enthusiastic.

'If all small shows were like this then British Circus wouldn't be in trouble. This is a really good show.'

Back for the second half, a performance of intimacy, warmth and passion. No sense of star acts, more a company working together to create a carnival and a celebration, affectionate, without irony, a rare thing nowadays. As we left, the fairy lights cast shadows on the wet tent. The performers were outside, signing autographs, answering questions. A young child asked Nikita Shannon, contortionist, 'Have you always been bendy?'

I asked James Greig, aged 8, one of the sternest critics I know and son of my companion Cath, if he'd enjoyed it.

'It's really cool. Can you ask Nell if I can go to see the horses?'

Nell was surrounded by a group of admirers. A man was saying, 'I saw your show last year. It was honest. This year the show's even better and it's still honest.'

Honest, yes, I think that sums it up exactly. ■



Angelic Upstarts

TINA CARTER investigates the relationship between dance and circus. Is aerial dance a brand new hybrid artform or part of the circus tradition?

'MoodSwing' photo by Kate March

I have been calling myself a trapeze artist for almost a decade but now feel the term is restrictive as I rarely work on a trapeze. As an aerialist you often clarify what you do with 'it's like trapeze' and the automatic link with circus is made. I no longer work in a circus, so what am I and what is it I do?

Two years ago I set up Expressive Feat Productions and started to use the term aerial dance. It seemed to work - people considered me in a different context. I started to create new work, out of the circus arena, with artists from diverse art forms. I could even apply for funding as an aerial dancer - there was still no box for circus. I had coined a phrase that worked for me - and later discovered that many others had done the same.

So what exactly do I mean by aerial dance?

I rarely create pieces purely for the thrill, skill and wow factor of the circus; I use aerial with other media to express more than ethereal beauty; I challenge my ideas, my concepts, my life, in the air, and continue to seek new ways of pushing the boundaries of the aerial I perform, teach and imagine. Is this a new phenomenon or have I simply progressed with age and caught up with things that have been going on for decades? Does it look, feel and mean any different to what I did before? Does it really matter?

I would probably say yes to all three. A recent discussion with a dancer led me to parallel the route Aerial Dance is taking with that

of contemporary dance. In its simplest form, we could say that traditional dance is like traditional circus, where strength, stamina, skill and innovation are admired and relished in their purest forms. Next came the freedom of expression with Martha Graham's explorations of movement and the infamous term 'conceptual'. Apparently contemporary dance is now freed from these chains and is creating movement for movement's sake, the interpretation lying in the eye of the beholder.

Aerial dance is perhaps at the conceptual stage - certainly this is right for my own company. 'One Blind Eye' explored the concept of watching and being watched through a mixture of relationships: audience and performers, aerialist and dancer, able-bodied and disabled. It was performed in a disused old bank where the invited guests were asked to view the short piece through the glass barrier.

'Identity: You are what you wear' was a Year of the Artist residency in a clothing factory. We created a multimedia installation piece that explored the creation of clothing and its meaning to the wearers, concluding in an aerial duet on an oversized coat-hanger. Nikki Jeffries and I have now redeveloped this final section into 'MoodSwing', an aerial dance duet.

So what of other companies? Thanks to a grant from South East Arts, I recently attended an aerial dance festival in Boulder, Colorado. I was thrilled to find other performers using the same terminology. Frequent Fly-

ers Productions, hosting the event, were exploring aerial with theatre, dance and visual concepts. I anticipated having my imagination blown open to fresh ideas, my skill level challenged and my address book filled with new contacts! I discovered that aerial dance in the States originated more from a dance tradition, where 'circus' was almost a swearword and aerial knowledge was limited. Practitioners appeared to be contemporary dancers in the early stages of aerial discovery, as opposed to being experienced professional aerialists developing a new movement language with their already honed skills.

Alban Elved Dance Company were the exception, using the equipment and movement to tell a poetic non-linear story of two people and their spaces. They used harnesses on static lines to gain height, to experience flight. They performed a comic character piece that was enchanting and funny - Harold Lloyd meets low-flying, contemporary dance. Perhaps this was theatrical aerial dance ...

So what is aerial dance? Is it dance that reaches for the sky via aerial techniques and equipment? Is it aerial that reaches down to earth for its ideas and dancers for its choreographic endeavours? Are we two traditions vying over a developing art form and are we going to meet somewhere in the middle? ■

Tina Carter is artistic director of Expressive Feat. If you want to contribute your thoughts to her research you can contact her at exfeat@globalnet.co.uk

Money for old rope?

Most aerialists will probably be in blissful ignorance of the crisis which is about to hit their supply of cotton rope. Britannia Rope Works in Lancashire is the last source of cotton rope in the UK. Jack Bamford, cotton rope maker for sixty years is retiring at the age of seventy-three. His junior, Terry Broadbent (a newcomer only working for fifty years) is also retiring. When this happens, the ropery will be demolished. Visiting Britannia Rope Works is a memorable experience, a piece of history about to disappear. The ropery hasn't changed since Jack was a lad. The machinery, now on its last legs, is a surprisingly complicated system of cogwheels, fan belts, 150 metres of rope-walk and a small railway track. Working in a freezing cold shed with

hailstones coming through the roof, it is not surprising that Jack and Terry have had enough. But it seems to me that as well as losing our rope supply; we are also losing a precious piece of our culture and heritage. And just in case you were thinking of calling them to stock up ... don't bother, I had the last coils! Through extensive research (I now know all there is to know about rope making!) I have found a museum with rope making machinery that are prepared to do the odd special run of cotton rope. So, when your supplier runs out, contact me via the circus arts forum ... ■

Report by Becky Truman, artistic director of Skinning the Cat

School for Scribble

Formed ten years ago to provide training for students aged 14-19, the Brit School has a deserved and growing reputation. PHIL GUNDERSON reports on their latest project in collaboration with Frantic Assembly



Frantic Assembly are renowned for attracting young audiences to their work, so it is hardly surprising to find that they have built up links with the Brit school over the past four years. Their latest project involved Steve Hogget and Scott Graham, Frantic's artistic directors, working with nearly 60 theatre students to create a site-specific performance in just four days. This is the most ambitious residency the company have undertaken to date. Under the title of 'Scribble' Frantic would take the idea of writing a letter as their starting point and aim to use the non-performance areas of the school. This would mean working in corridors, locker rooms and gyms and planning separate, precision-timed tours for the audience.

On Monday the students all arrive with a letter they have written: Love letters, news, gossip, formal, personal, impersonal, letters of refusal, of congratulations ... The aim is to weave into a complex series of narratives the large and small events that make up our lives. They explore the beauty and pain of teen angst and boredom. It's a clever project as students are notorious for not being able to learn lines, and putting them in the form of letters means that they can read out the text and concentrate on the physical aspects of the performance.

The physical pace and demands that the company make on students soon becomes obvious - Frantic by name and nature. This produces a brave response from the students - most have never worked in this way before. Participants start to compare bruises, as if they are some sort of badge of merit. They talk about how Steve and Scott are never pleased with them, but how the phrase 'That's

crap, do it again' inspires them to go further. It's incredible how the intensity of rehearsals, the sheer repetition and focus on getting details right builds their determination to succeed.

The piece is assembled over four days through a mass of multi-faceted scenes. Nobody yet knows how the 'tour' aspect of the performance will work, and the school takes on the frenetic last-minute activity of the TV make-over 'let's-surprise-them-when-they-come-back-from-their-weekend-away'-type programme. I'm certain that at this moment in the week many huge personal journeys and gaps in learning are being bridged. There is nothing like the adrenalin of performance deadlines to pull people to work together and commit themselves to the cause.

The performance opens in the gym; 'victims' open letters in which they are publicly and humiliatingly 'dumped' by their unseen lovers. This leads on to some fairly predictable, though it has to be said exhilarating, running against walls. Then, relieved that no one has so far been hospitalised, upon opening our own letters, we are split into tour groups and led off into spaces unknown.

There are appearances in corridors by bewigged schoolchildren chanting a re-constructed ABC. You visit a dysfunctional family who read a 'League of Gentlemen'-style end-of-year résumé; you leave the room for a couple of minutes to witness some astonishingly precise and violent locker-bashing physical theatre. Then you are ushered back into the room to find that in the space of two minutes the whole place has been transformed with real grass into a tender environment where two lovers write words on each other's bodies with laconic irony.

The changes in pace, the constant twists and turns in expectations and the sudden appearances and reappearances of characters threading their disjointed texts throughout the tour are what makes the show the experience that it is. A good example is when you chance upon the actors who were earlier humiliated by the 'dumping' letters, who have 'reassembled' their letters to make them read how they would like them to. The whole resembles a shattered mirror with splintered

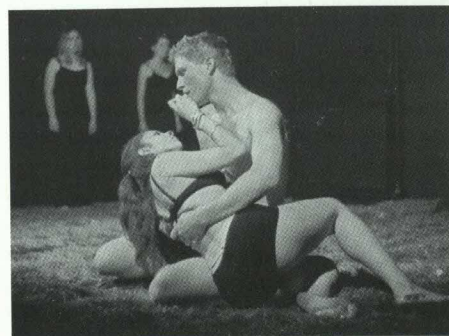
fragments lit by a stroboscope. This is both frustrating and enticing. It rewards the receptive viewer, but don't try too hard to follow each particle or you will be disappointed. This type of performance is definitely experiential and one where the viewer plays an important part.

Personally I find this an exciting challenge, but it raises important questions about the nature of training for young performers: how conscious they are of the whole they are building; how learning to throw yourself against a locker may create a spellbinding moment, but needs to be taken as part of a whole range of theatrical experience.

The Brit school students are fast becoming aware of the breadth of skills that today's performers need to acquire, and this project is one of several links that are on-going with the contemporary scene - Improbable Theatre have recently trained a group for a performance of 'Sticky', and 'Living Incident', a physical theatre group formed from the theatre course, premiered at the Croydon Clocktower in June.

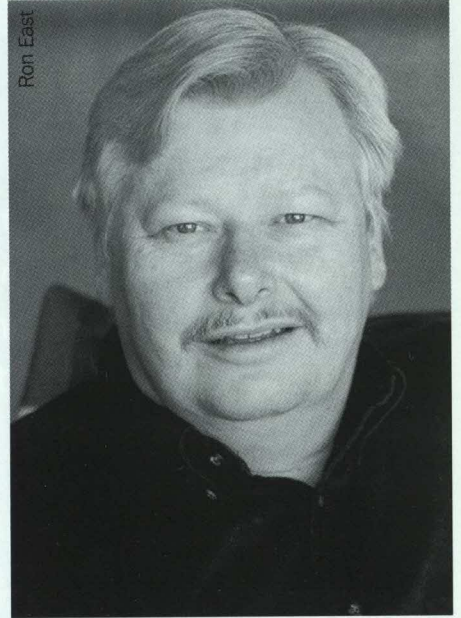
The fact that 'Scribble' has been performed and written by 17-year olds is both refreshing and astonishing, and a real credit to Frantic Assembly. They have sometimes been accused of a lack of depth and a certain predictability, but few companies can match the fervour they inspire in their audiences, an inspiration to others working with young people. ■

For information about the Brit School contemporary theatre festival in March 2002 please contact pgunders@brit.croydon.sch.uk. Further information about the school can be found at www.brit.croydon.sch.uk



Performance Training at the Crossroads

RON EAST presented a paper on his integrated approach to actor training to the Second International Conference on Actor Training. He reports on the experience below ...



As Director of the School of Physical Theatre in London, I was invited to present a discussion paper on parallel training programmes at the Second International Conference on Actor Training in spring 2001, in Paris. The Conference posed two questions: Is it training or is it transmission, and can acting be taught? (It seemed more eloquent in French ...) There were over 400 delegates in attendance from 32 countries.

I chose a 'parallel' approach. I don't train actors, I said, but instead I train creator/performers for the physical theatre. (A bemused silence.) I use the term 'physical theatre' precisely because it isn't defined yet. To me, the theatre is physical by its very nature, and the central driving force is the creator/performer. Shakespeare, Molière, Chaplin, Mamet, Dario Fo, Robert LePage and Simon McBurney - to name but a few - are all creator/performers and their traditions are not parallel or alternative; they are at the very centre of the theatre. I instinctively want to work, not just with actors, but with artists who have something to say, because they are visible. How the invisible becomes visible is central to my work at the School. The future, if we really want one, must have a theatre of creation as its centre.

I don't train actors, I said, but instead I train creator/performers for the physical theatre. (A bemused silence.)

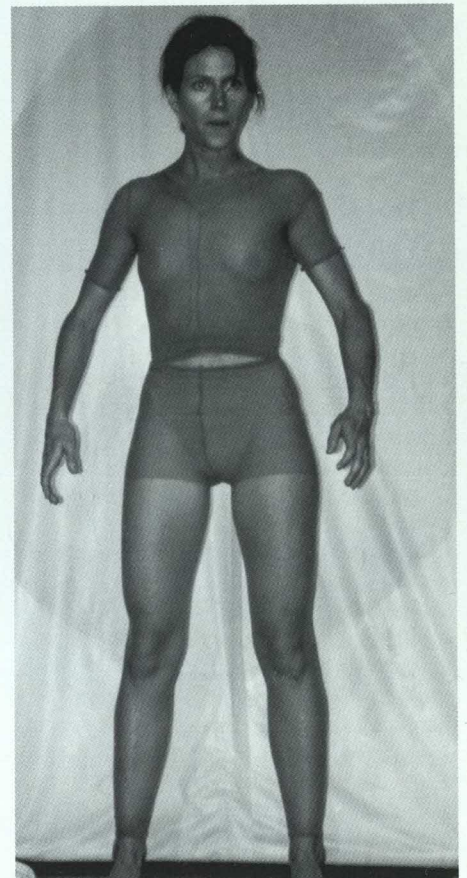
(Silence. Listening? Or was it the simultaneous translation?)

I continued. Our training at the School is not linear; it is integrated, and it starts with the body. It has three phases: a physical identification with theatrical imagery, transferral of imagery into play, and the transformation of play into a personal theatrical style. So all the work our students create is original. They come from around the world to provoke and challenge each other and then an audience in a series of three public presentations during our one-year professional programme. This cross-cultural exchange challenges everyone's assumptions. I provide a learning environment that is respectful of the individual artist, non-judgemental with regards to their material, emphasising the physical learning experience.

This 'experiential' type of learning is like learning to swim, theatrically speaking. Students discover that the body and physical psyche are dynamic, aware, highly intelligent, and discerning. The creative imagination is the voice of schematic intelligence. Once the participants find practically that indeed they have a creative voice, I challenge each student to transfer their creative imagination into the theatrical space. Putting their individual experience and our collective analysis together permits the student to transform the invisible into the visible by creating poetic, resonant images, and they are always personal. (Pause ... The audience is with me!)

As each individual takes ownership of a personal point of view and begins to realise it theatrically, fears emerge. What if I fail? This fear is instinctive and a necessary base for the creative act to become poetic and to be celebrated. You have to take risks. Accompanying the creative process there is a necessary 'destructive' process. Eliminating this destructive process is not an option. It will cause the

student to abandon his dream; so it is included, and appreciated as a necessary part of a dynamic balance, a creative push and pull. Keeping this balance alive, active, positive and productive, directed and continually challenged is the job of the instructor. Sentimentality has no place in the process. Each student, through their experience, begins to make the process their own, and they begin the rite of passage from being a student to becoming a colleague.



The theatre that emerges is always innovative, but it emerges out of tradition. Ah, there's the rub! ... (Quick, what's 'rub' in French?) For example, I employ masks to strip away theatrical decoration, create a nakedness, transparency, an honesty. I don't present the mask as an end in itself, but as a means. Each time the mask is brought to life it is original, because it conjures the poetic. The satirical mask, the comic, the tragic, and the clown.

Remember, my process is not linear, it is balanced and integrated with movement analysis, acrobatics, and skill training. So to respond to the question posed by the Conference - transmission or training - I transmit my passion for the theatre by training skilled creator/performers to take ownership of their own theatrical voices. I am active in the business. How can you work with other artists unless you work as an artist yourself? Jacques Lecoq said to me once, to him teaching is performance. As an instructor he was a consummate creator/performer. I carry that spirit and tradition into my own training process.

(Silence. Applause.) Relief. A beginning. Now fielding the questions and the dialogue starts.

Over the course of the ensuing three days, the Conference seemed to split into three factions. The State-supported or 'establishment schools', who often audition over a thousand candidates for about 20 positions over a period of months, were criticised, eloquently, by their own graduates for providing irrelevant training. It was at the same time necessary, they said, to graduate from these schools to get work - because as each of these institutions proudly declared, they have special, exclusive, and sanctioned relationships they carefully cultivate with official state culture and 'the business'.

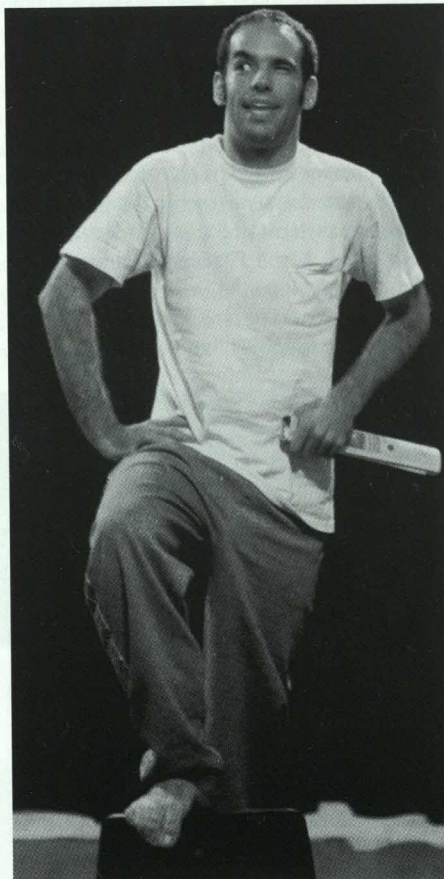
Then there were the parallel programmes; various, usually independent, frequently cross-cultural, and focused on contemporary creator-driven theatre presentation. If they survive, they create traditions of their own. They were enthusiastically received, encouraged and applauded by the 400 participants. Why? For their bravery in bucking against a system rooted in a theatre of the past and an industrial organisational model? The romance of being the alternative? Most of these schools were 'international'. Perhaps they are addressing a larger audience.

Last, but by no means least, the master instructor/practitioners, in revolt, offering a direct apprenticeship model, of learning by doing. Concentrated, intense experiences, ably represented by our keynote speaker, Eugenio Barba. He reminded us that it was the individual instructor/creator's vision that made all the difference, and the institutional training 'factory' was irrelevant. Besides, it is



a relatively recent construct, and therefore it can be changed. This encouraged a lively debate on the future and our place in it. Of course there were so many points of view, and so much to discuss, that in the end we were left to reach our own conclusions ... and attend the next conference.

So, what do you think? As I write this article I am reminded by the radio about the thousands of people storming the barricades and protesting in Genoa. Rioting. Demanding change. No sentimentality there. They are also



varied, usually independent, frequently cross-cultural, and focused on the presentation of contemporary issues. Perhaps we have to release our artistic grip on the past, and move to confront more pressing issues in the present and the future. I am never comfortable at conferences - the academic posturing, the passivity of discussion. They pose questions, but there are no pat answers. That means doing something ourselves.

But, of course, at a conference, there is also the opportunity to meet old friends, and make new ones, to 'network' - and what better place than Paris. I particularly enjoyed being at the Théâtre de la Colline in the 20th arrondissement where the conference took place, because I lived here when I attended the Ecole Jacques Lecoq many years ago. The 20th was the workers' quarter then, and they nicknamed me Gavroche after the character in 'Les Misérables'. 'Eh! Gavroche, tout va bien?' The Théâtre de la Colline was progressive and focused on presenting new work. It still is. It reminded me about the passion I have for the theatre, and what I am trying to do ...

There was one powerful common theme that united all the various factions at this conference. It certainly projected a confidence in the future. Everyone agreed, no matter how jaded, that the international theatre scene is so young, dynamic, muscular, challenging and energetic that there is an opportunity for a new generation of artists to emerge, and a new definition of 'total' theatre to be created. The future is ours, if we take it. ■

The School of Physical Theatre runs a full-time professional programme, a summer intensive and part-time classes. Contact them on 020 8215 3350 or see their website at www.physicaltheatre.com. All photos: School of Physical Theatre.

The Midas Touch

What happens to Total Theatre Award winners after they leave Edinburgh? REBECCA BROWN gives us a run-down of the fate of three of last year's winners. And, in case you are wondering, the awards will be back with a bang for 2002.

Theatre O: 'Three Dark Tales'

Theatre O (formerly Generally Better Productions) have attracted a lot of attention since winning a Total Theatre Award in Edinburgh 2000. In January this year they set off on a three and a half month UK tour, before jetting off to Brazil in April for the Cultura Inglesa festival; indeed they have attracted a great deal of international interest since their successful run in Edinburgh last year, which also gained them management for the company, helping the performers to be more free to concentrate on their high-energy performance. Early August saw them end a three-week run at the Barbican Pit, as part of the BITE season, leading them straight into this year's Edinburgh stint, once again in the Assembly Rooms' Edinburgh Suite. They were also one of 25 shows to be invited to perform in the British Council's theatre showcase, attended by up to 160 international promoters, which will no doubt lead to more exciting opportunities for this most promising of young companies. As it is, they only have a short time to recover before jetting off once more this October, this time to New York, which will host them for a ten-week run, then on to Australia and New Zealand. With these dates secured and plenty of other potential interest in the pipeline for these young performers, the world, it would seem, really is their oyster.

Shunt: 'The Ballad of Bobby Francois'

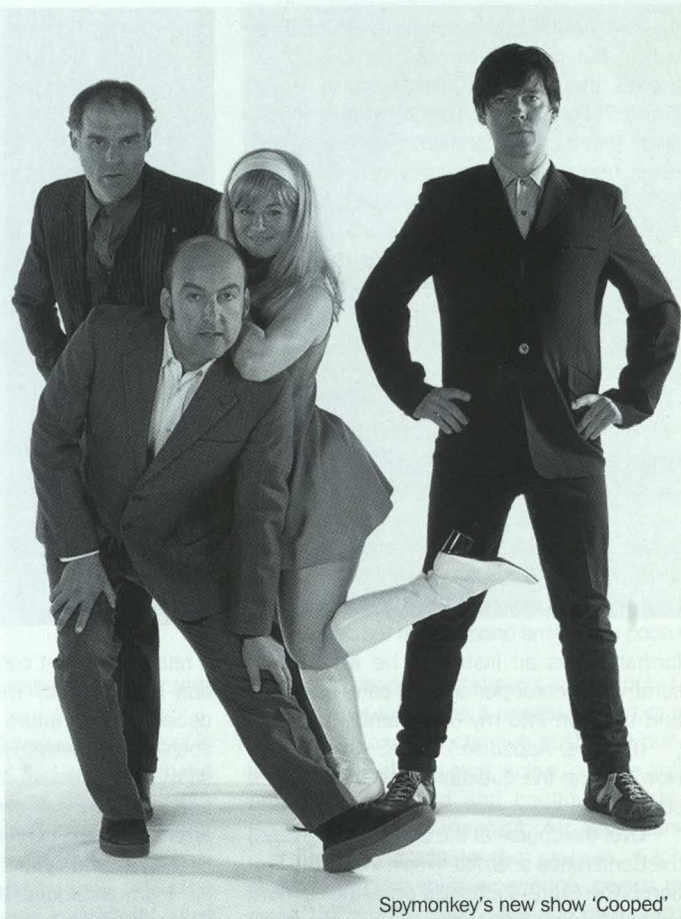
Shunt continue to be a very proactive young company, attracting interest wherever they go; with projects large and small under their belts and on the horizon, they're certainly shaping up as a company with staying power. Their increasingly popular cabaret performances continue on alternate months at their London base - the characterful railway arch in Bethnal Green. They were invited to take part in the London International Mime Festival in January, and made their mark on the Drome venue in London Bridge, drawing new audiences and old faithfuls alike over their three-week run of 'Ballad'. They were commissioned by Croydon Clocktower to perform two shows in Croydon's town centre - alarming shoppers in the Whitgift shopping centre with flood warnings. A few Shunt company members launched a smaller-scale project, 'Pink-Orthodox', at Riverside Studios for three weeks in June this year, and similar small projects continue to develop in the pipeline. The company are currently creating a new series of Sunday cabaret evenings for BAC's OctoberFest (formerly the British Festival of Visual Theatre) in a damp East London railway arch - promising 'comedy, film, dance, circus and blown fuses'. The company are already looking to next summer with ideas for a full-scale project, so they continue to steamroll ahead; their enthusiasm doesn't seem to falter, and the ideas just keep coming.

Spymonkey: 'Stiff - Undertaking Undertaking'

Spymonkey have been touring with their new show 'Cooped', and as with their hilarious hit show 'Stiff' last year did a run of preview performances before Edinburgh, at venues including BAC and the Wimbledon Theatre Studio. 'Cooped' was premiered at the Komedia in home town Brighton before moving on to the Pleasance Courtyard in Edinburgh, with a second Edinburgh run for 'Stiff' at the same venue. They too were one of the companies invited to perform at the British Council Showcase at this year's Fringe. This year has also seen them at BAC, Riverside Studios and the South Bank's Purcell Rooms for the London International Mime Festival - not to mention Finland, Hungary, America, Spain, Switzerland, Mexico, Syria and Canada.

So as you can see, our Total Theatre Award winners have gone from strength to strength in one short year. The awards were sorely missed at this year's Fringe - but they will be back next year. If you think that your company may be eligible for an award and are performing in Edinburgh 2002, then watch this space for information on nominations. ■

Rebecca Brown is a member of Ariel Teatr, whose show 'A Little Requiem for Kantor' was another of last year's award-winning productions.



Spymonkey's new show 'Cooped'

**Komedia Productions
'Catastrophe'**

Komedia, Brighton Festival, May 2001

David Lavender's production brought together 'Rockaby', 'Ohio Impromptu', 'A Piece of Monologue' and 'Catastrophe' - the last being the play Beckett wrote for Vaclav Havel, playwright and erstwhile President of Czechoslovakia. The first - although you always thought of Billie Whitelaw - transcended any such unfaithful fantasies as you were caught by the at first still, then rocking, presence of the woman in the chair while her thoughts filled the auditorium from loudspeakers, as if we were sitting inside her brain. The self-referential speech, the windows that have blinds drawn that look out onto still more windows that have blinds drawn, the circularity of it all, were beautifully balanced in the pause between 'I said to myself' and 'Whom else?' - rueful, almost humorous, accepting and final. Who else is there to talk to?

The second play, with the reader and the listener, was again visually perfect, still, though not minimalist, for they had their black clothes, the table, the book, the slow but deliberate gesture of turning the page holding the audience's attention in time as the play turned the same page.

The third rant, a man in his night-shirt, was hard to hear; you dipped in and out of the long sentences, drifting off in between, but it was mercifully short in total. The odd punter, whose patience was tried, walked out and so they missed 'Catastrophe', a witty, powerful playlet with all its

undertones of obedience, conformity and the shaping of matter into art: colour, costume and characters making it seem like a sumptuous cabaret after the first three plays.

Bill Parslow

**Spymonkey
'Cooped'**

BAC, London, July 2001

'Cooped' was funny. Very, very funny. Spymonkey follow their smash hit 'Stiff' with an even more ridiculous collection of characters and situations. The ensemble work is superb and it is clear that Spymonkey love performing. They are all performers with great charisma and the energy they generate rubs off on the audience - leaving us full of joie de vivre and laughing joyously. They run around naked and screaming in the best rendition of the Adam and Eve story I have ever seen, a great parody culminating in a hilarious underpinning of the whole idea of having naked performers which most companies take so seriously - brilliant.

Particular characters stick in my mind: the kissy-kissy Catholic priest who insists on his ring being kissed incessantly; three Jewish guys pulling each other's wigs off; a hilarious - if a little long - pop song and dance routine; a puppet murderer; lots of really really naff tequila jokes.

When I saw it there were perhaps too many 'lazzi' that seemed out of context, some dreadful scene changes and some unfunny characters - a chinese flying acrobat impression for example which we could have done without. But I have extreme faith in Spymonkey and I am sure the work

will develop and reach great heights. Check them out and laugh. They deserve it.

Bridget Azizov

Company Paradiso and Ensemble Bash

The Barn, Southwick, Adur Festival, June 2001

Company Paradiso have established a reputation over the years for innovative physical theatre. This new work-in-progress, like their last production, 'I only came to use the phone', has as one of its core themes the relationship between the sexes. Director Jon Potter seems to like the 'man-woman-doctor' triangle, used in very different ways in both these productions, giving plenty of opportunity for explorations of themes such as power, truth and trust.

Lest this sounds like a heavy-duty psychological drama, let me say that the doctor/counsellor character is played with customary hilarious buffoonery by Spymonkey's Aitor Basauri. The couple's angst-ridden relationship is portrayed as an extraordinary dialogue by actor Ros Philips and musician Stephen Hiscock in which her vocal pleas for communication are met with paradiddles on his drumkit; his clanger-like calls on mouth organ met by her St Vitus Dance. Here is a rare thing: theatre that uses not just live music but the intrinsic musicality of voice and movement as a crucial element of the piece.

Hiscock's own company, Ensemble Bash, perform live percussion with true theatrical awareness. A symphony played on a dinner table started

the set - which went on to include a John Cage piece. They presented supposedly 'difficult' pieces of avant garde music with confidence to a packed house as part of a community festival - proving, as Company Paradiso had done earlier, that artists do not need to 'dumb down' to have popular appeal.

Dorothy Max Prior

**Split Britches
'Double Agency'**

Hoxton Hall, London, June 2001

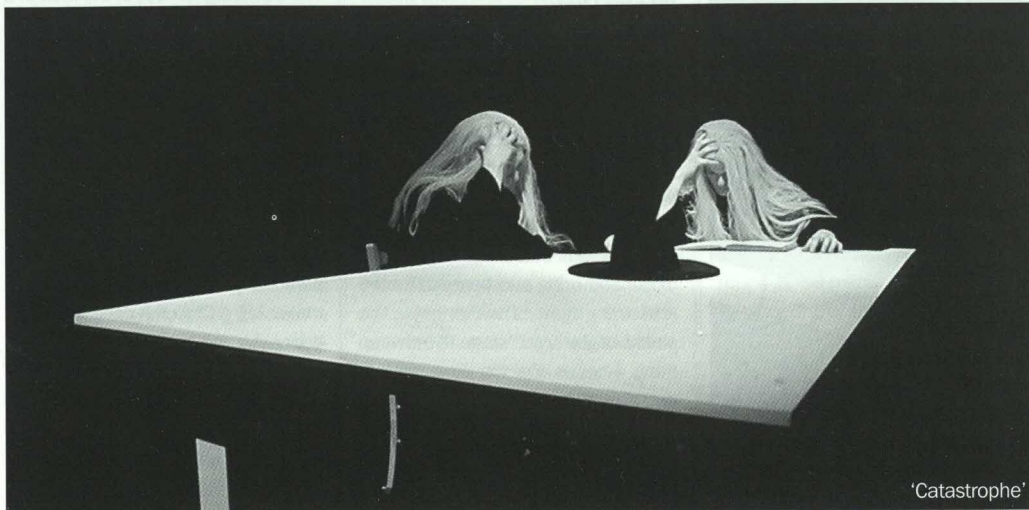
This double-bill by the legendary Anglo-American company Split Britches was perfectly placed in this former music-hall and variety venue. 'Miss Risque', a new work, is billed as 'a story of secrets and showgirls'. As the audience arrives, the glorious Lois Weaver is in place, taking up most of the stage; her snow-white dress flowing over tiered platforms, a headdress adding to the height so that she presides over the audience, a larger than life Liberty Belle. Enter Peggy Shaw, private dick and stage-door johnny, on a journey from awestruck Peeping Tom to adoring dance partner.

'Miss Risque' both subverts and celebrates the vaudeville tradition. The show is a feast of female drag - the powdered and permed showgirl and her be-suited and moustachioed beau both artificial constructs, yet both true and powerful representations of aspects of womanhood.

'It's a small house and we've lived in it always' is an established part of the company's repertoire; a 'play' in word, song and movement. Two lonesome lovers act out the girl-boy (or girl-girl) tease and truculence of a married life. Lois Weaver maps the feminine, Peggy Shaw pulls off an extraordinary portrait of 'masculinity' - her 'butch' is not a stereotypical machismo but the nervy, exasperated, pleading masculinity of the 'boy-man' who tries to do what his woman wants but so often gets it wrong.

Having worked together for over twenty years, theirs is a stage partnership of a rare calibre - together they spark and fizz. Split Britches are political in their very existence, but eschew agit-prop to create theatre that is multi-faceted, funny and beautiful.

Dorothy Max Prior



'Catastrophe'

Stephen Mottram's Animata 'Organillo'

BAC, London, May 2001

An organillo is a little organ - a cross between a wind-up player piano and an accordion - that Stephen Mottram heard playing on the street in Mexico City. Whereas most of us would happily remember the strangely aquatic puffs and groans of the instrument as part of a holiday memory, Mottram came home and made one of his own, and uses its sounds as the inspiration for this, his latest show. The oddly arhythmical and melancholy sound of the organillo is woven into the electro-acoustic soundscape of this production in Sebastian Castagna's score, and provides a watery backdrop for the miniature narratives that Mottram's objects and puppets unfold. It is a shame that the sound of the organillo is not used more in the soundtrack - the electronic effects that replace it are not nearly so evocative as the instrument itself.

Mottram's creations are enchanting and at times disturbing. Exploring a theme of reproduction and transformation in a strangely amniotic sea, he conjures shoals of fish, finned humanoids with the distended eyes of aliens, strange creatures and a pair of disembodied hand puppets that are uncannily alive and incredibly expressive. As an exercise in constructing narrative through fragments and images, without any reliance on

text or explanation, this production is really strong, although the denouement of the piece rather fails to live up to the time it took to get there. Some of the visual motifs are overused - there is only so much interest one can sustain in a shoal of fish - and the seductively hypnotic soundtrack only deepens the sense of sleepiness that this repetitiveness encourages. As a demonstration of Mottram's skills as an object maker and puppeteer, this show is wonderful, but as a piece of theatre it lacks the structure and development it needs to excel.

David Harradine

Wireframe 'The Lusiads'

The Museum Of, London, May 2001

'The Lusiads' is the greatest literary work in the Portuguese canon, an epic poem charting Vasco da Gama's 1497 expedition to the Indian Ocean. Wireframe have ambitiously attempted to condense this into an hour's worth of theatre, using puppets, text and visual storytelling. The show begins wonderfully, with a puppet landlord in the venue's impromptu bar quizzing a silent puppet sailor who then leads us into the performance space. In many ways, this opening sequence is the most interesting part of the show - raising the possibilities of integrating puppet performance into 'real' settings, away from the formality of the stage space and the distance of the formal beginning. But the show itself sinks a little on two counts.

The heightened poetry of the narrative demands a performance style that is generally not managed by the actor/puppeteers. Too often, the vocalisations of the text come through in voices that just do not line up with the swarthy, rough, gruff way the puppets looked (with the exception of Mark Down, who finds a dark and dramatic tone for his texts). The result is the opening up of a space between the puppet and puppeteer that shifts the focus away from the puppet and on to the actor. I found myself usually watching the living performers, not their cork and rope companions - a worrying consequence in a puppet show.

The show has also been designed and devised specifically for the venue - and the Museum Of provides a perfect foil for the nautical themes, its bare beams and rough floors complementing the beautiful set and lighting designs. But the space's shape is both a blessing and a curse: whilst the narrow perspective of the building allows for some very lovely and evocative visuals, the puppets themselves became lost - they are just too far away too often, and again the often thin voices of the actors don't carry back to where the audience are straining to see and hear. It seems that Wireframe's strengths lie in the visual, in the evocative making and manipulation of puppets and settings, and this piece relies too heavily on a text that demands a certain gravitas that the company just does not find.

David Harradine

Walk the Plank/Kaboodle Productions 'Moby Dick'

Salford Docks, Manchester, May 2001

The nautical experience begins as soon as you board the Fitzcarraldo. The theatre is in the hold. Overhead an awning is stretched between the bulkheads, canvas that flaps in the wind. There is that evocative smell of diesel and brine and beneath us the reassuring hum of the engine. The planks of the small stage fit between the bulkheads, like the lower deck of a whaling ship, and from this platform the four storytellers play out their incredible roles. These are the crew of the Pequod and this is Ishmael's

story, played with sensitivity by John Langford. He interacts directly with the audience, hauling us on board where we witness his initiation into the tough world of the harpooners.

A colourful crew from all the seven seas includes Queequeg, a South Sea cannibal in a smokestack hat, played with mercurial energy by Nicholas Chee Ping Kellington, whose moonstone eyes twinkle as he grins, and then burn with fire as he hunts the whale. Madeleine Bowyer plays Pip, the cabin boy, with haunting conviction as she swings from the rigging like 'an angel hovering over the waves'. One of the treasures of this production is the scene in which she plays the French cook and sings a song to the sharks imploring them to moderate their appetite. Max Rubin plays the vengeful Ahab with a sombre malevolence. Uncompromising performances, delivering Jim Burke's relentless poetry with energy and commitment. Lee Beagley has harnessed the theatrical elements to transform Melville's vast saga into a tightly choreographed production. A gripping narrative in the best tradition of storytelling, told with good humour and humanity.

Michael Lister

RAIR Experimental 'Tympan'

The Anvil, Basingstoke, June 2001

It is pretty rare to find an honest use of adjectives on a publicity flyer nowadays, but I can honestly confirm that this dance/video cross-form work is indeed as spectacular as it claims. The etymological root of the idea of a show as spectacle comes from the Latin verb *specere*, 'to look at', and in this durational event the activity of looking and being seen is at the very heart of the work. There are two performers in the piece - dancer Suna Imre improvises for nine hours starting at twelve noon, shifting through a personal movement vocabulary and a personal journey in the space; filmmaker Miles Chalcraft dances his own dance around her, as he videos and records her actions.

Each hour, the footage from the previous section is projected back into the studio, until finally eight projectors beam eight hours of time onto



'The Lusiads'

the walls, archiving the piece as part of its very presentation, and collapsing the spatial and temporal distinctions between now and then, here and there. Visiting the piece several times during the day, viewers see Imre caught from every angle, exposed for our contemplation, laid bare before our very eyes. The roughly circular layout of the Forge (the Anvil's studio/cinema space) adds to this panoptical effect, and for a piece named after an organ of hearing, the density of seeing and being seen in this event is as dizzying as it is visually beautiful.

As the recorded sounds of the piece layer back over each other, and visual motifs skitter across the projected screens, only the hourly breaks to which Imre treats herself interrupt the strange temporal concertina of the work, and they leave a peculiar absence in the studio as her electronic avatars dance across the walls. It happened that on the day I saw this piece, the Grimethorpe Colliery Band were blowing their brasses in the main house, and many of their audience popped in to see the 'experimental stuff' in the studio. That so many of them lingered and looked says a lot about the flexibility of those audience demographics we all so rely on, and attests to the burgeoning success of RAIR Experimental, in their mission to introduce contemporary performance to a diverse and different audience.

David Harradine

Vis a Vis 'Picnic'

Platt Fields Park, Manchester,
July 2001

In a picnic area at dusk, a woman emerges from an orange tent wearing a mudpack with cucumber eyes and lipstick. Upstage is a forest of giant green tubes, reminiscent of early 'Dr Who', looking both sinister and ironic. Her husband is Mr Clean. Around them the detailed landscape is animated with wit and ingenuity. A figure in black leather intrudes upon their complacency, falling across the table to reveal a large knife embedded in his back.

From this point on, they crank up the dramatic tension with a relentless barrage of black humour and graphic violence. Winding the audience into a

state of hysteria, the drama hurtles towards a climax of death and destruction. Rarely have I laughed so loud. And that was only the end of the first half. A modern thriller, the tone is cinematic, while at the same time revelling in slapstick.

The company now repeat the performance for the other half of the audience, while those of us who were the audience now go backstage to see the technical crew in action. Less macabre but equally funny, the tone here is more classic comedy - a homage to Buster Keaton. And the climax equals that of the first half. Having taken complete control of the environment, this production could have been performed inside. But even though the open sky did add to the atmosphere of the Picnic, the main value of presenting this piece outside was to emphasise the fact that we were seeing theatricality of cinematic ambition performed in real space and time. 'Picnic' is a breath of fresh air.

Michael Lister

Watch This Space Outdoor events

The National Theatre, London,
June 2001

Leandre and Claire were two homeless tramps who created a home of their own with cardboard, Sellotape, brooms and a lot of imagination. Dance, magic and juggling ensued but the main purpose through storytelling and audience interaction was laughs, and for me this was weak. However it was received well; I overheard: 'This is so cute.'

This was in contrast to the skills-based show of the Valayev Family Circus. There were two drummers, two performers and one high wire. Every trick on a wire you can think of they did: walking across the wire, bouncing across, backwards, forwards, trays on feet, sitting on a stool on the wire, bicycle, unicycle and (the best one) blindfold and feet bound to the wire whizzing around and around. They had little in terms of presentation skills and rattled through each trick, sometimes repeating the good ones. It was made to look easy. A good, honest wire-walking show.

Honesty was hardly present at Café des Illusions. Magic, mayhem and prestidigitation were set in a café.

Two characters, George and Lucienne, presented a highly polished show. Appearances, disappearances, vanishing tricks, levitations, transformations, transportations, and silly magic were all applied to the multitude of objects one finds in a café. There was a lot of chat in heavily accented English, and money tricks followed by 'It also works in Sterling!' My favourite trick was the pouring of water into three glasses; each time the liquid turned into red or blue or white. The glasses were poured back into the jug, returning to translucent water. Lastly the water was poured into the fourth glass, changing to green. A top visual show, using the magic of theatre and theatrically creative magic.

Danny Schlesinger

Odin Teatret 'Mythos'

Echoes of Resistance
Residency, Salisbury Festival,
June 2001

'Mythos' is a powerful and moving series of encounters between figures from Greek mythology - Cassandra, Orpheus, Oedipus, Daedalus, Medea and Sisyphus - and a historically real Brazilian revolutionary, Barbarosa. The audience seated on either side of the traverse stage is put in the position of observer/judges in this 'Ritual for a Short Century', as Eugenio Barba subtitles it. In a programme note he states that the short century in question runs from 1917, the Russian Revolution, to 1989, the fall of the Berlin Wall.

At the start, the characters calmly drink wine, grouped round a large table, covered with a snowy white cloth and candelabra, a tableau at once bourgeois and threatening, until they strip away the table to reveal the body of the revolutionary, lying on a vast rectangle of gravel underneath.

Sisyphus constantly rakes patterns in the gravel to create a labyrinth - paths along which the revolutionary stumbles - and a graveyard, surrounded by piles of plastic hands, reminiscent of the numerous atrocities committed in the short century, and still being committed now.

The performers used an extraordinary and precise range of vocal and physical techniques and music to explore notions of recent history,

myth, heroes and revolt. Ultimately what gave this production its power was its absolute clarity, in which every detail was given weight and consideration.

In a final coup de theatre a pair of plastic hands played hauntingly on the accordion, the performers left the stage and white gauze curtains were lifted, leaving us looking at an installation of destruction and chaos, which lingered in the memory for a long time afterwards.

Richard Cuming

Para-active 'Al'Daakan dancing at the feet of Kali'

Stratford Circus, London,
July 2001

Para-active's 'Al'Daakan' is a confusing manifestation of physical theatre, traditional Asian movement and myth about one girl's quest for revenge on the jealous demon that possessed her once beautiful great-aunt. We are introduced to friends Vasya and Zenobia at logger-heads over the latter's nightmares about her aunt's encounter with the demon, subsequently tormenting Vasya who can no longer take disturbed sleep and the effects of Zenobia's delirium. Unable to understand the dream and exasperated by Zenobia's problem, Vasya suggests they visit the 'Sleep Doctor'. As a result, Zenobia discovers the dream's long-forgotten and sinister core.

Told in a combination of English and Gujarati, Bharatanatyam and physical theatre the company competently relate Zenobia's experiences in the show's first half. Translation is used to commentate effectively, and there are some obvious attempts at audience interaction. However a brimming second half, with incidental percussion making interesting use of a mostly underused set, does little to rescue a narrative that becomes difficult to grasp in the complex integration of performance styles.

There are some strong performances, in particular from Persis Jade Maravala, who plays both female and male characters with wit and eloquence. However, this isn't enough to bring clarity to this piece, which in aiming for accessibility to both Asian and Western audiences snags the fable in its multiple stylistic threads.

Afrieye Obeng

Streets of Brighton Festival

Brighton, May 2001

This year's Streets of Brighton was a delight. The sun shone, the bands played, and visitors, residents and artists mingled merrily at the pavement tables outside every café. Brighton-based Company:Collisions took this café culture as the starting point for 'Percolator', a Zap Productions commission for the festival. It's a cheery mix of dance, mime and multi-gendered flirtatious posing. The company have established an ongoing working relationship with choreographer Shelley Love whose influence is strongly present in the lovely play on gesture and physical attitude in the piece. 'Percolator' is far more of a frothy piece of fun than the company's indoor theatre work - and could be improved by having a little more body - but it works well set as it was at a real pavement café.

Another festival commission was 'Land Ho!' from the Faceless Company. This was less successful - a static theatre piece aimed at a family audience. It was a production with a lot going for it - good costumes, visual gags and movement sequences - with a particularly funny spoof underwater scene. But it was overburdened by a treasure-hunting narrative that fell rather flat, particularly towards the end, and spoken text that was sometimes superfluous and often lacking in pace.

Aerial company Skinning the Cat presented 'Claire de Lune' on their own portable rig. The show references the rich history and traditions of circus and features three characters: a burlesque Mistress of Ceremonies and two exotic 'beasts' with tails and claws who vie for their mistress's attention. The tormenting fairground music, the yellow Trickster teeth of the Ringmistress and bared fangs of the human beasts all added up to a disturbing, dream-like carnival of human animals. The climbing, swinging and spinning of the 'beasts' felt all the more spectacular for being performed in such close proximity to the audience.

The evenings saw a focus on visual spectacle - with an emphasis this year on British companies. Improbable Theatre created their first major outdoor work. Called 'Sticky' it

was an evolving and transforming sculpture - made from rolls and rolls of sticky tape and animated by fire.

The following evening, Red Earth presented their commissioned work 'Flux' in the park. This suffered by being billed as the big Saturday night event. The surging crowds of people were expecting something thrilling and were rather bemused by Red Earth's slow and meditative installation. It was a visually beautiful piece - lines of flames in metal sculptures, triangular wooden structures that moved apart then together, with a soft and seductive live soundscape - but needed to be experienced by an audience who could move around, rather than one trapped behind barriers with a crowd of revellers shouting 'Where's the fireworks, then?' All things considered, it would have made more sense to place Red Earth elsewhere and use this space for a crowd-pleasing finale to the festival.

Dorothy Max Prior



Reviews from BITE - Barbican International Theatre Event

Ronnie Burkett 'Happy'

BITE, Barbican, London, June 2001

If uniqueness is a prerequisite of true artistry, then Ronnie Burkett is an artist. I have roamed the world looking at productions with puppets and

never seen anything remotely comparable to Happy, which is a play for a small army of string marionettes, performed by one man with an assistant who hands him the figures, stage-manages and makes the set revolve. The same assistant also built the most beautiful parts of the set, and she is a master-craftsman, although I should probably say mistress-craftsperson. Her name is Terri Gillis.

'Happy' tells a story set in a handsome rooming house which seems to be a retirement home until a young couple appear, after which it is difficult to pin down anything definite about the house, since live characters walking through it clearly died some time ago, and the past seems still to have a hold on the present. The dead only find rest when memory lets them go and a symbolic RIP can be effected in the form of a burial in one of the drawers of a vast and beautiful dresser that dominates the stage and a

precision and astonishing speed - during a duologue, for example. While sculpting the faces he imbues each with a voice, and while making the bodies he aligns legs, torso and head to give each a special stance and gait. The resulting figure is like a typical snapshot, an iconic representation of the character, each one distinct, charged with vitality, caught in the act of speaking.

Happy adds up to the tour de force we now expect from Burkett, but this is no circus turn or variety act. The dramaturgy is engaging and intriguing, dealing with small lives and big emotions, death and memory, the stages of grief. The puppets as they always do distil to their essence character and emotion. The illusion of life is pervasive, despite the presence of string controls, brilliant technical precision, the puppeteer's constant presence, the unhidden mechanics. Your brain snaps in and out of gear, now acknowledging only dead matter, now engaging completely with living beings (what Jurkowski calls the 'Opalisation Effect' and Tillis more mundanely 'Double Vision'). This is a distinguished performance conceived and performed by a master of theatre.

'Happy' is the last of a trilogy, the others being 'Tinka's New Dress' and 'Street of Blood'. All are astonishing, but 'Happy' is the summit of the mountain Burkett set himself to climb. Watch out for his next ascent - he has promised it won't be long in coming.

Penny Francis

Théâtre de Complicité/Emerson String Quartet 'The Noise of Time'

BITE, Barbican, London, July 2001

'The Noise of Time' is a collaborative production that explores the dramatic and personal contexts of Shostakovich's 15th string quartet. Directed by Simon McBurney, it uses an extensive voice-over soundtrack, and a simple visual and physical dramatic counterpoint to the music and the words, to conjure the spirit of the composer - both the essence and the ghost - and to give him a voice that asks the audience to listen beyond the notes of the music and into its heart.

The performance opens with four of the Complicité ensemble alone on stage, in a tightly choreographed and textless sequence of movement and rhythmic interaction. Set against a shifting orange backdrop, the silhouetted figures display great physical skill in evoking the clearest of moods with the simplest of gestures and movements. Flickering between stillness, slowness and joyful intensity, this opening segment is followed by the entrance of the four players of the quartet itself, who perform the timeless, arching, death-dominated opus as the rest of the piece.

Accompanied still by the other performers, and by gradually appearing images projected against the back of the set - following 'Mnemonic', projection seems to have formally entered Complicité's visual vocabulary - the musicians form a calm and intense centre at the heart of the work, which is a strong and confident attempt to find the musicality of movement and image, and the dramatic heart of a piece of classical music.

David Harradine

Reviews from LIFT - London International Festival of Theatre

Bobby Baker **'Box Story'**

LIFT, St Luke's Church, London, June 2001

The time has come to talk of many things - not shoes or ships or sealing wax but cornflakes, perms and burning mattresses; jelly fights and sugar sculptures. 'Box Story' is the final piece in a series commissioned over 10 years by LIFT. I'd missed all of Bobby Baker's previous Daily Life investigations of shopping, housework and raising children - too busy shopping, doing housework and raising children - but so glad I finally made it to the party.

If only all performance art were like this: touching, heroic, revealing, comic, tragic, optimistic, melancholic ... A whole life is re-created, distilled, processed and packaged with a rare power and beauty: her father's death, her child's thwarted hopes and dreams, her desire to both fit in and rebel. Her unique personal experience and universal human experience are both represented in the consumer

goods strewn across the floor, mapping the world. A washing powder ozone layer, a rainstorm of orange juice, a mustard desert island and chocolate people.

'What a terrible mess,' she says, looking down on her ephemeral sculpture. This being a still-consecrated church, this could be viewed as desecration but it isn't, it's celebration. A communion, a thanksgiving, a benediction. We share her joy, her pain, her awareness of the extraordinariness of ordinary everyday life. Artist, mother, daughter, wife - life, the universe and all that. 'Box Story' is a perfectly packaged piece of art.

Dorothy Max Prior

Donnellan/Ormerod **'Boris Godunov'**

LIFT, Riverside Studios, London, June 2001

The British Cheek by Jowl team of Declan Donnellan (director), Nick Ormerod (designer) and Judith Greenwood (lighting designer) recently defected to Russia, securing some of the best actors in Moscow to infiltrate the Russian psyche and present a wholly modern and passionate interpretation of Alexander Pushkin's 'Boris Godunov'.

Written in the 19th century and set in 17th century Tsarist Russia, the play questions identity and the right to power. Grigori, a young monk, sees his way to the Tsar's crown by impersonating the dead, supposed murdered tsarevitch. With the might of the dead brought back to life and weighty public support he challenges Boris Godunov's rule.

The stage is set like a runway with the audience sat on either side facing itself, at once the Russian people and a jury presiding over the events that take place before it. Short capsule-like scenes utilise the whole space, moving from Grigori's extraordinary rallying of public support in a scene oozing youthful charm, optimism and blatant manipulation, to the small but beautiful fountain scene in which a confession of love also brings a confession of true identity.

In the hands of this highly successful collaboration a revered text bursts free of tradition with minimalist and precise use of modern dress, simple, strong imagery and the clari-

ty of its performances. Alexander Feklistov's Godunov is strangely antic, almost 'contemporary dance' in his physical manifestation of internal struggle and I found his portrayal difficult to understand. However, Eugeny Mironov is particularly compelling as Grigori; his portrayal of pure ambition is so likeable it lingers in the mind for days.

Anne-Louise Rentell

Societas **Raffaello Sanzio** **'Genesi'**

LIFT, Sadler's Wells, London, July 2001

In his manifesto for a theatre of cruelty, Antonin Artaud calls for a theatre beyond psychological realism, an immediate theatre, a theatre of wild nature and terror, full of beautiful and brilliant images, rare and horrifying sounds and notes, stark movements and strange objects and insane worlds. The cruel and beautiful theatre created by the Italian company Societas Raffaello Sanzio - whether deliberately 'Artaudian' or not - holds on to this Artaudian legacy and makes it real. This show is jam-packed with stunning ideas and brilliant images, and even though it oddly fails to grab the gut as it seems it should - for this viewer at least - it is nonetheless a remarkable piece of work.

Populating the show with a cast of mainly non-professional performers, director Romeo Castellucci has an eye for the physically unusual: a contortionist plays Adam, twisting in a glass display case; an old woman, post-mastectomy, represents Eve. The murderous Cain has a withered arm, and an opening sequence in the laboratory of Madame Marie Curie features a male anorexic squeezing through an impossibly small gap between two iron rods. This concern with creation and destruction, with knowledge and murder, is taken further in the central movement of the three-act show. Subtitled Auschwitz, this act is performed entirely by Castellucci's own children, and is paradoxically the most calming and beautiful part of the whole piece.

In the end, there is just too much packed into this production to ever begin to translate into words: suspended cases of churning, whirling water; mechanical arms writhing

across the stage; improbably fat actors and impossibly cute bunny-ear wearing children; blazing fire and raging noise and screeching cassettes. A nightmare of collapsing worlds; a vision of beauty and horror; a remarkable piece of theatre from a remarkable company that really should not be missed.

David Harradine

Reviews from the Edinburgh Fringe Festival August 2001

Lazzi! **'Mr Pinocchio'**

Hill Street Theatre

Lazzi! take their name from the commedia dell'arte - the word means 'improvised comic business'. The company seem to have their roots firmly embedded in the noble art of mime - writer, director and performer David WW Johnstone is a renowned practitioner who has worked with many of the world's greats - including Mnouchkine and Marceau. I didn't know any of this when I went along to the charming and intimate Hill Street Theatre - but was just following a whim that this might be an interesting performance.

Lazzi's 'Mr Pinocchio' was the surprise gem of my visit to Edinburgh, a 'circus-for-the-mind' that used physical expression and words together to create a beautiful reworking of Carlo Collodi's story of the puppet who became a real boy. It was a joy to see two performers so willing and able to tell such wonderful tales through word and gesture alone. Johnstone's all-grown-up Mr P is a wonderful portrait of nostalgia, confusion, resignation but above all affirmation of life with all its foibles and difficulties. Sandy Grierson, who previously worked with the award-winning Ariel Teatr, is a delightful Pinocchio, conjuring all the character's magical mix of naivety, self-centredness, charm and developing sense of shame and purpose on his life path from piece of wood to fully-fledged human being.

Lazzi knock the nails in the Disney coffin and restore Collodi's story to its rightful place as one of the greatest parables in European literature - and in doing so give us a wonderful and enchanting piece of theatre.

Dorothy Max Prior

Scarlet Theatre
'Love and other Fairy Tales'

Pleasance Cavern

What do women really want? This is the question at the heart of Scarlet Theatre's 'Love and Other Fairy Tales', a deconstruction of Chaucer's 'Canterbury Tales' that places the Wife of Bath as a feminist icon - earthy, intelligent and, it is suggested, the storyteller who fed Chaucer his ideas ...

It is interesting that another champion of this character, Alison, was Angela Carter - her essay 'Alison's Giggle' being a mainstay of feminist literary criticism. This seems an appropriate link, for the production is very Carter-esque in both its exploration of the dark side of fairy tales and folk stories, and its challenge to the heroine's traditional placing in the text as the 'other' to whom things are done.

The piece is typical of Scarlet in many ways: using their characteristic multi-layered approach to storytelling, strong ensemble choreography and a simple but effective set design of white panels that evolve from backdrop to building - with the clever addition of simple silhouette projections. In other ways, it felt less sure of itself than previous work such as 'Seagulls' or 'Princess Sharon'. The script, by comedy writer Nick Revell, seems occasionally to inhibit the company. The beginning of the show in particular feels a little drawn-out - and not helped by a 'cantering' movement motif that is repetitive to the point of tedium. Once we move away from the regular scene-setting dialogue into the magical storytelling at the core of the piece, it feels as if the company suddenly become themselves. A thoughtful, entertaining and provocative piece of theatre.

Dorothy Max Prior

Formalny/Baltic
'School for Fools'

Aurora Nova at Komedia St. Stephens

'School for Fools' is a masterful piece of visual and physical theatre, the rich tapestry of narrative threads woven together into a story that is both a heartbreaking picture of schizophre-

nia and a joyful celebration of the universal rites-of-passage of boyhood.

It begins with a familiar post-modern theatrical device - the narrator/confessor talking directly to the audience about the story to follow. As this is a story of split personality, we have two 'I's' telling the tale ... The difficulty of translating from the Russian is itself used as part of the theatrical content of this introduction, as language and gesture move out of synch to hilarious effect. We then move into the main body of the piece. Semi-translucent curtains create layers of space and time in the performance space. Behind these soft screens we see a world in motion, reminiscent of the beautiful 'city symphony' films of the 1930s: the moving shadows of a swirled skirt, stark graphical outlines of a passing bicycle, figures grouping together and dispersing like a flock of birds.

The unfolding story is helped along by a recorded spoken text - the soft accents of a Scottish child floating over the visual images. Yet it is the physical performance skills of the 16-strong ensemble that carry the most weight, creating a cornucopia of characters that - appropriately for the subject of schizophrenia - appear and disappear, mutate and morph: the mad babushka, the melancholic teacher, the tiny ballerina, the adored mother.

As with Alain-Fournier's novel 'Le Grand Meaulnes', I know that these images of a lost childhood will haunt me for a long time to come.

Dorothy Max Prior

Do Teatr
'Upside Down'

Aurora Nova at Komedia St. Stephens

Do Theatre have developed a theatre language that is both evocative and visually beautiful. Audiences have come to expect a lot from them. In this production, physical expertise and visual clowning combine to parody Soviet insane asylums. 'Upside Down' begins with a furious and macabre castration of a patient by a Chaplinesque doctor and his busy assistant, played brilliantly by Alexander Bondarev and Irina Koslova - the execution of which is performed with perfect precision, almost losing its horror it is so well choreographed.

There follows a series of vignettes and episodes from hospital life with the doctors and patients reversing and changing roles throughout, creating a mish-mash of cheeky and humorous incidents with axes and ballet tutus. A mysterious cupboard from which the characters emerge on a regular basis, covered in blood, features throughout and the piece integrates small catches of text and a hilarious rendition of a song perfectly performed with an irony of which the Russians would be proud. One very striking moment in the piece was a solo sur pointe performed by Evgeny Kozlov whose bony and butohesque body was exentuated by the wooden point shoes - had the image of the male swan not been already stale in our minds from Adventures in Motion Pictures' 'Swan Lake', this would have been a spectacularly strong moment.

Another very compelling part was a duet between the two men which was moving and strong in its simple rendition of a mutual male respect and love - wonderfully undercut by the knowledge that before long one would be patient and one would be doctor - but the timelessness of the bond between them rendered itself a cut above the day to day drudge of asylum life.

Bridget Azizov

Paines
Plough/Frantic
Assembly
'Tiny Dynamite'

Traverse

This was a collaboration made in theatre heaven. Performed by Frantic Assembly, written by Abi Morgan for Paines Plough, and designed by Julian Crouch of Improbable Theatre, it is a story of how if you are frightened of death you cannot live life to the full, and if you fear losing the one you love, you cannot love at all.

The force of this show lies in its tenderness and the simplicity of the actors' performances. Friends since childhood, careful Lucien, a risk-assessment officer, and wayward Anthony, a homeless wanderer, have both loved and lost the same woman. Once a year Lucien takes Anthony on holiday and this year they meet Madeline and history

threatens to repeat itself: a holiday romance becomes a love triangle as the two men fall for the same woman.

Played out on a sparse decking stage with lights glittering like stars in the background, scenes with Frantic's trademark movement style flow between flickering video projections and haunting music creating an atmosphere of balmy summer days and hinting at passionate undercurrents redolent of summer romance. The stories of chance survival from a lightning strike, and the fear of loss and the pain of love, and never saying quite what you mean even though you should, are performed with refreshing honesty. This is a show that courses through your veins like a love tonic and leaves you invigorated by its depth of feeling.

David Bere

Periplum Tree
'Artaud in Wonderland'

Komedia Roman Eagle Lodge

This was a unique and extraordinary piece that stretched my definitions of theatre as I watched it - and is doing so now as I write this. Here, style and content were working in harmony to create an image and exploration of a raging, insightful, paranoid and delusional madness. Using a simple set of hanging white cloths, a soundtrack of breathing and domestic cries, and a series of swinging lights the audience are plunged into the last rants of a dying disturbed genius. We are in a hospital, a garret room, a film set.

This is a startling evocation of the tortured drive of Antonin Artaud. This was no explanation, no cold analysis; here we were in the furnace of a mind that could imagine the concept of a Theatre of Cruelty and was compelled to articulate it. The play of words and ideas was complicated, but images still remain: a dialogue between Adolf Hitler and Groucho Marx, the paranoid loneliness of a man talking to his shoe and the sense of how the language of theatre and film mirror that of surgery and hospitals. Not an easy piece, something of an experience, but one performed by Damian Wright so mesmerisingly that as he bowed, I almost felt Artaud chuckling at us. Or was he cackling?

Geoff Beale

PERFORMER & COMPANY UPDATE

AboutFace Theatre Company UK

are - after their sell-out performances of 'Close Ups' at the Brighton Festival and at the ARENA Festival in Erlangen, Germany - going into the first production phase of their third piece, 'The Suicide Project'. This new show focuses on our relationship to joy, pain, freedom and life-changing decisions. After a series of open workshops, the company has invited Kayla Fell and Jane Larsen to join the team for the first phase of creation. The work-in-progress 'Suicide Project' and 'Close Ups' are available for booking. For information, please contact Joanna at AboutFace Theatre Company UK, 17 Wilbury Grove, Brighton & Hove BN3 3JQ; or telephone/fax 01273 773989; or e-mail aboutfacetheatrecompany@madasafish.com

Angela de Castro

plans to tour 'My Life is Like a Yo-Yo' after a successful Scratch performance at BAC in July. The show is a rollercoaster ride around the world focusing on the physical, emotional and geographical ups and downs of a performer's life. It mixes poetry, live music and text within a magical flying tent of a set. There will be further Scratch performances of 'My Life is Like a Yo-Yo' during OctoberFest at BAC, 25-26 October at 9pm. Angela is also working on a Shakespeare project called 'Only Fools, No Horses', planned for summer 2002. For more information, contact CB Projects on 020 8348 0203 or info@cbprojects.co.uk

Base Chorus

have been creating and touring work for the past five years and will be touring their most recent show, 'The Corrupted Angel', in April/May 2002. The show combines ensemble physical theatre, with an original score and lyrics by Patrick Dineen. The company toured the show to a handful of venues in spring 2001, received excellent feedback and was invited to develop the tour further in 2002. For more information, contact CB Projects on 020 8348 0203 or info@cbprojects.co.uk

BGA

was commissioned by the Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, and the Greater London Authority to deliver a programme of medium-scale events for Trafalgar Square throughout September. The programme of events included: 'Trafalgar Feats' - some excellent contemporary circus companies; 'Udichi at Trafalgar' - a programme of some of the best Bangladeshi dance and music, programmed by Tower Hamlets based Udichi; 'Trafalgar Beats' - a night of rhythm, featuring everything from tap dance to big beats from Sister India; and 'One Year On' - celebrating one year of the GLA's control of Trafalgar Square. To find out about future projects telephone 020 7633 9330 or see www.b-g-a.co.uk

Bocadalupa

completed a successful UK tour of 'Dodo Diaries', performed by Jenny Sanderson and directed by Amy Rose. The show is an absurd, highly visual and physically versatile exploration of the mysterious death of a Victorian lady explorer. 'Dodo Diaries' will tour further UK and international

venues in spring 2002. The company will begin work on their next show in September. It has the working title 'mmm, slanty ...' and will be available for touring in 2003. Bocadalupa is also co-producing a new performance platform in Bristol in 2002 based on Seattle's On the Boards 12 Minutes Max format. For further information about any of Bocadalupa's projects, please contact Jenny or Amy on 0117 922 1400 or email amyrose@netgates.co.uk.

Company:Collisions'

new work is currently touring in the south-east. Called 'La petite mort', it is an adult adaptation of Hans Christian Andersen's fairy story 'The Little Mermaid'; an absorbing visual re-interpretation of the tragic story that explores the universal themes of lust, passion and betrayal. The all-female production uses aerial theatre and specially commissioned music. See www.companycollisions.com

Green Ginger

toured 'Bambi' to Pakistan, France, Netherlands and Scandinavia, continuing to receive great reviews. Recent activities include collaborations with Welsh National Opera and the Ecole Superieure de la Marionnette in France, commissions to produce two new works for a pan-European erotic puppetry festival and a street theatre festival in Hannover, Germany, plus training provision for Aardman Animations, Carlton TV, Welsh College of Music & Drama and Garsington Opera. They are shortly off to California to perform street theatre shows at the invitation of the National Assembly of Wales! Phone 0117 922 5599 or see www.greenginger.net

Fevered Sleep's

new show 'Written with Light' will open at the Undercroft at the Roundhouse in January 2001. Following a period of R&D funded by London Arts, the company has been awarded a production grant from the Regional Arts Lottery Programme, and continues to explore the history of photography and the ways of using photographic processes live on stage. 'Written with Light' is part Victorian ghost story, part meditation on the poetry and philosophy of photographs themselves, part installation, part puppet show. Fevered Sleep is also running an education project alongside the show, and will be working with art and design students in the London borough of Enfield, and an ensemble of student performers from Middlesex University. 'Written with Light' runs from 17 January to 4 February 2002. Fevered Sleep is reviving and reworking 'Shore' for national touring in April 2002.

Fizz Theatre Company

has just been awarded a grant from the Regional Arts Lottery Programme to create and produce a new show called 'Goblin Feast', for four to nine year olds. The show will be touring venues and schools in the spring and will include the usual mix of audience interaction and physical theatre, as well as developing some innovative use of contemporary dance. The funding will allow time for the three performers to experiment with devising, as well as working with a contemporary dance choreographer. With excellent timing the new office equipment from the ITC 21st Century Office Project has arrived at the Fizz office ready to start the management of 'Goblin Feast'.

Forbidden Theatre Company

will be presenting their version of 'Alice in Wonderland' at the Wimbledon Studio Theatre from 11 to 22 December, following their Edinburgh run. This version, adapted by artistic directors Georgia Bance and Pilar Orti, follows 18-year-old Alice through her dream in Wonderland, on the night before her wedding. Six actors race through over 25 characters, accompanied by an exciting new score (by Craig Adams) - shedding feathers, frills, tarts and hearts as they perform this 'gloriously inventive dance' (Time Out). Visit www.forbidden.org.uk

FPLA

are continuing to democratise art through a series of 'ephemeral public art' projects. These include: 'Sunday Best' - the national car boot art project; 'Hat' - a reminiscence and performance work within Birmingham Market; and an Action Research project for C-plex exploring the 'what is it?' factor of public art. They're also interring 2000 videotapes below ground in a 'timecapsule' project and producing an expanded cinema piece using dead actors. (Never say they don't follow their equal opps policy.) FPLA - art where you live.

Jade Theatre Company

have created a new show 'The Cassowary Plum' with an integral outreach and audience development programme planned for spring/summer 2002. Exploring the themes of risk and adventure, 'The Cassowary Plum' combines acrobats and actors; visual spectacle and illusion; circus stunts and magic; animation and digital projection; music and live action. For the outreach programme, each group will be led by a local artist/youth worker in collaboration with one of the Jade core creative team members. For more information, contact CB Projects on 020 8348 0203 or info@cbprojects.co.uk

Kabosh

return to the prestigious Belfast Festival at Queens with 'Sleep Show', which brings together director Karl Wallace, designer David Craig and Dublin composer Denis Roche. Kabosh present heightened, quirky physical theatre, set to an electrifying soundtrack at a secret location in the heart of the Belfast Docklands. Visual clues around town lead you to the mystery site. 'Mojo-Mickybo', their highly successful show which toured Ireland and the USA two years ago, is set to return next year with an extensive UK tour. This award-winning production by Owen McCafferty follows the childhood adventures of two friends in 70s Belfast. Promoted by UK Arts International the show will tour England in autumn 2002. Telephone Kabosh on: 028 9024 3343

Kala Chethena Kathakali Company

have a new production called 'Dussassana Vadam', a story from the Mahabharatha told through the classical dance-drama form of Kathakali of Kerala, South West India. The production features top international artists from India, brilliant costumes and live music. For further details of performances and the linked education project of Asian story telling, please contact the company on 023 8042 0114 or see www.kathakali.net

Legs on the Wall

is creating and performing a new theatre show 'Flying Blind' in partnership with Axis Theatre from Vancouver, the Belfry Theatre in British Columbia and the Arts Theatre in Vancouver. This is a co-devised production with director Roy Surrent from the Belfry Theatre (director of Axis Theatre's hit production 'The No. 14'). It will premiere at the Belfry Theatre on 27 September running until 21 October. It runs in Vancouver at the Arts Theatre from 31 October until 24 November.

Midland Arts Centre

continue to build partnerships with other organisations. MAC aims to make its programme particularly attractive to young people and those for whom experience of the arts is new. MAC encourages access to the arts as a tool for celebration and self-expression. Five independent arts organisations are based permanently at MAC: Sampad (the leading development agency for South Asian arts), Sound It Out, Stan's Café Theatre Company, Geese Theatre, Caliche South American Music and 404 Productions. Many more regularly rehearse, meet or base their programmes there. MAC's PR department can be contacted on 0121 440 4923.

para active theatre's

new show is called 'Al'Daakan'. para active theatre bring their brilliantly expressive fusion of dance, physical theatre and story-telling to this powerful tale of a young girl's search for truth and knowledge. Drawing inspiration from Phoolan Devi and Kali (the Indian goddess of revenge), the performance combines Asian dance, drama and live original music with the gestural language of Bharata Natyam to create a highly accessible piece of challenging and thought-provoking theatre.

Rejects Revenge

The Rejects are on the road again with 'The Bicycle Bridge' (see Performances), culminating in a three-week run at the Lyric Studio, Hammersmith, during November. After that look out for a new show in Spring 2002 - check up on www.rejectsrevenge.com. Structurally, David White and Ann Farrar have stepped down from full-time involvement, leaving them as Associate Rejects and Tim Hibberd as sole artistic director. 'Lunatic', 'charge' and 'asylum' spring to mind ...

Riptide Performance Company

are re-touring 'Anima', a highly physical one-woman show, translated and adapted from the work of contemporary French writer, Patrick Gratién-Marín. Fans of the 1999 tour include a member of The Prodigy, who declared, 'Completely inspiring ... I was totally blown away by it!' It plays at London's Etcetera Theatre from 2 to 21 October. Check out the website www.riptide.f9.co.uk for regional dates, or contact the company directly on danjer@riptide.f9.co.uk

Shifting Sands

are to tour 'Faustus' in Spring 2002. Gerry Flanagan (co-founder of Commotion Theatre) has re-worked the classic tale combining clowning, text, animation and physical theatre, giving it a unique and fresh look. For more information, contact CB Projects on 020 8348 0203 or info@cbprojects.co.uk

Shunt

continue their cabarets in Bethnal Green in October, as part of the BAC's OctoberFest, and again in December. Other projects include a double bill of Heiner Mueller - 'The Father' and 'Mommensen's Block' - at Chapter Arts Centre in Cardiff (October 19) and in Bethnal Green (the first three weekends in November); and in December a work-in-progress presentation of material leading towards the company's next big show (in summer 2002). Shunt has recently taken on a second railway arch and can also offer space for rehearsal, including rigging facilities for aerial work. Details: www.shunt.co.uk and 020 7739 9905.

Span²

is a major international artists' residency project curated by André Stitt and Roddy Hunter. 21 established and emerging artists (including Stuart Brisley, Tania Bruguera, Ma Liuming, Esther Ferrer, Kim Jones, Tanja Ostojic, Kira O'Reilly, lonetwin) have been commissioned to make new site-specific works over the four weeks of October 2001, at Dilston Grove, London SE16. The programme provides a rare opportunity to see a broad range of new work and engage in the process as it happens, through weekly symposia, performance and installation. Information: www.span2.org or info@span2.org or 020 8480 7825.

SplitMoon

theatre company presents two pieces by Carl Peter Stürm from 9 to 27 October at Teatro Technis, London. There is a cast of six actors; original music is being composed and will be played live by two Uruguayan musicians. 'The Bell-Ringer of Lilybaeum' uses rhetoric language and biblical imagery and symbolizes the isolation of the idealist. 'Aulitho' is 'a piece for seven voices and a light'. Set in an Egyptian town, the production will be performed in English with some French and Italian. SplitMoon formed to produce innovative, previously unperformed new drama with an international focus and an emphasis on non-naturalism. Writing of other worlds - geographically and imaginatively - the company aims to promote cultural exchange.

Tall Stories

are continuing their national and international (Ireland, Singapore, Poland, Czechoslovakia) tour of 'The Gruffalo', having gained five-star reviews and full houses in Edinburgh. They are also reviving their acclaimed production of 'Rumpelstiltskin' in December/January. See www.tallstories.org.uk

Tell Tale Hearts'

'Donkey Haughty' is a new show based on the classic Don Quixote by Cervantes. Described as 'a fantasy adventure' it is to be directed by Javier Mendes (from Peepolykus) with puppetry direction by Alison McGowan (Improbable, Theatre Rites) and will be available for touring from March 2002. Further details available from: Natasha Holmes on 020 8806 6514 or Isabel Caballero on 020 8888 3780 or ttarts@cwcom.net

Theatre Sans Frontieres

are delighted to announce an increase in funding from both Northern Arts and the Arts Council's National Touring Programme. The company's work is much in demand for its skill producing plays in

their original language that are physical, visual and very accessible. For their latest project, Theatre Sans Frontieres have collaborated with the Paris-based Atelier International de Recherche et de Creation Theatrale to create 'L'Enfant Peul', a vibrant piece of theatre bursting with colourful images, song, movement and epic storytelling. To find out more telephone 01434 652484 or see www.theatresansfrontieres.co.uk

Theatre Training Initiative

(TTI) is a non-profit organisation with the aim of promoting and providing ongoing training and development for professional actors and performers. TTI's work presently focuses on challenging vocal and physical disciplines and on ensemble work. TTI is currently running weekly training sessions in the Suzuki Actor Training Method at Chisenhale Dance Space in London, but also plans to organise intensive workshops in Suzuki Training as well as other areas of training in the forthcoming year. For further details about TTI's work please contact Fran Barbe on 07931 710808 or Antje Diedrich on 020 8694 0692 or e-mail theatre_training_initiative@hotmail.com

Trestle Theatre Company

announces the launch of the St. Albans Trestle Young People's Theatre Company. An RALP award from Eastern Arts and a Capital Lottery award will enable them to convert a disused chapel to house the new company - and provide a major new centre for community activities. The new young company will perform their first production as part of the opening celebrations in Spring 2002. Contact Sherrell Perkin at Trestle Education on 01727 850989.

Trolley Theatre

are now taking stock, having completed the mammoth 'Superseed' project. 'Superseed' included a community theatre and visual arts project, a street party event and a TIE tour, highlighting local food links and the enviro-impact of the global food industry and WTO. Street show 'The Blipvests' was also performed during the summer, fervently patenting people's DNA and selling life-enhancing drugs from Multilife PLC in glorious doo-wop vocal style! New projects and collaborations are on the horizon - including a show about foot and mouth. Walkabout and workshops in Bristol continue. Any suggestions please e-mail trolleytheatre@bigfoot.com

visions

is Britain's biggest festival of puppetry and animated theatre. The festival aims to present the very best puppetry from Britain and abroad. It is promoted by the University of Brighton and takes place every two years. Performances, exhibitions and workshops happen in the University theatre and gallery as well as other theatres, and outside in the streets and unusual spaces of Brighton and Hove. The next 'visions' festival in 2002 will concentrate over one weekend: 25-27 October. 'visions' has considerable experience of touring international puppetry companies around Britain and the team has the expertise required to deliver successful tours, if promoters are interested in working in partnership with this service. Phone 01273 643194 or e-mail visions.fest@brighton.ac.uk

MANAGEMENT NEWS

Bhathena Jancovich

has now closed. Chenine Bhathena is running a new company, CB Projects. Please contact her with all enquiries regarding tour booking and tour management as well as troubleshooting, company development, marketing and consultancy. Telephone 020 8348 0203 or email info@cbprojects.co.uk. Leila Jancovich is now working as a freelance consultant and can be contacted on 07970 173774.

Black, Asian and Chinese arts

have received a boost from the Arts Council of England, who have earmarked funding of more than £29m for projects that include a new Chinese Arts Centre in Manchester and the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust. Other recipients include Talawa Theatre Company, who described the awards as 'a chance in a million for Black British theatre'. For further details of awards see www.artscouncil.org.uk

The Jerwood Charitable Foundation

is funding research into the current state of dancers' health and the incidence of injury among dancers to be carried out by Dance UK. The research will follow up the only previous such survey. This was carried out by Dance UK in 1994, and published as 'Fit to Dance?'. The new study will take about two years. It will start in September 2001 and the findings will be published in Summer 2003. The benefits will include new knowledge and increased understanding to be used to reduce injury, enhance performance excellence and extend dancers' performing careers. See www.danceuk.org

Lakeside Arts Centre

is the new name for what was formerly the University of Nottingham Arts Centre. A major expansion of their public arts facilities are planned for this new centre, which incorporates galleries, a recital hall and a number of theatre spaces, including the new Djanogly Theatre. For more information contact their marketing officer on 0115 951 5797 or e-mail neil.bennison@nottingham.ac.uk

The National Network for the Arts in Health

(NNAH) has been set up to share and extend information in the rapidly expanding field of arts in health. They are establishing a directory of practitioners and can offer advice on sources of funding for artists working in this area. Contact Lara Ellen Dose on 020 7261 1317 or see www.nnah.org.uk

'Setting the Streets Alive'

is the title of a professional development day for new promoters and administrators with little or no experience of managing street art events. The day has been organised by ISAN - the Independent Street Arts Network - and will be led by Anne Tucker of Streets Ahead/x.trax and Edward Taylor of the Whalley Range All Stars. It takes place on 24 October, 9.30-5.00. Contact Bill Gee on 020 7633 9330 or e-mail: mail@streetartsnetwork.org.uk. Website: www.streetartsnetwork.org.uk

West Midlands Arts

has commissioned PlayTrain to deliver a series of

courses and events for artists, arts organisations and playwrights. If you live in the region and work with young people, find out more about their programme of events and seminars from Janet Hetherington on 0121 766 8446

AWARDS & COMMISSIONS

The Arts Council of England

has announced awards made around England under the second round of the Arts Capital Programme, which supports arts building projects costing over £100,000. A joint bid from MAC (Midlands Arts Centre) and Sampad, the national agency for South Asian Arts, was made to the Arts Council for £5 million towards the redevelopment of the Cannon Hill Park based arts centre which is the base for both organisations. This first commitment of £500,000 towards funding the project will enable the early stages of development work to commence and act as a platform to attract partnership funding from Europe and other sources.

The British Council

'Grants to Artists Scheme' run by the Visual Arts Department is the only source of funding available to individual artists through the British Council. Designed to offer assistance towards transportation of work and travel for UK resident visual and performance artists participating in an overseas exhibition, grants are awarded on a competitive basis. Download an application form and guidelines at www.britishcouncil.org/arts/vad/grants/grants.htm or contact The British Council, 11 Portland Place, London W1B 1EJ (telephone 020 7389 3045).

Comic Relief

have announced their new guidelines for grant applications for 2001/2003. For guidelines and application form send a large SAE to: UK Grants Team, Comic Relief, 5th Floor, 89 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7TP.

The Jerwood Circus Awards

have been established by the Circus Space and the Jerwood Charitable Foundation as an annual circus awards scheme in the UK. This will give talented circus artists the opportunity and time to develop innovative performance projects. In 2001 there will be three awards - one of £10,000 and two of £5,000. Call 020 7729 9522 ext 248 for a leaflet.

London Arts

announces two new opportunities for artists. For those who want to develop their artistic connections outside the UK, the 'Go!' scheme will make awards of amounts up to £250 for short international visits that aim to develop collaborations or cultural exchange. And 'London Bursaries' provides help for artists seeking professional development training. This includes attendance at workshops, seminars, conferences, etc. Bursaries would normally be for up to £500. For application forms or more information about either of these funds call 020 7608 6100, e-mail lonab.co.uk or visit www.arts.org.uk/londonarts

Observerships for Choreographers

is a new programme which provides opportunities for choreographers to develop their knowledge of an unfamiliar area of work by observing an experienced colleague in the workplace. Dance UK

is delighted that several of the UK's top choreographers will be providing observerships in a range of situations including opera, film, musical theatre, corporate events, sports events, television, dance theatre, drama and music video. We are seeking applications from experienced choreographers who work in any style or situation who wish to learn more about working in these and other situations and can demonstrate a commitment to diversifying into new areas of work. Further details from Catherine Willmore at Dance UK on 020 7228 4990 or e-mail danceuk@globalnet.co.uk

The Regional Arts Lottery Programme

(RALP) will continue until at least March 2002, despite mooted changes to the arts funding system. They accept applications for project grants, capital grants and grants for organisational development and are currently administered via the regional arts boards. You can get an application pack by leaving your name and address on 020 7608 6179

OPPORTUNITIES

AboutFace Theatre Company UK

is looking for a tour-booker to work on a commission basis. Has to be interested in experimental theatre. Please contact AboutFace Theatre Company UK, 17 Wilbury Grove, Brighton and Hove, BN3 3JQ (telephone/fax 01273 773989).

Box13Troupe

is a new Brighton-based venture that will be both a performance ensemble and a production and education company. They are currently looking for artists who can 'speak, sing and move with confidence in a performance situation', with the aim of creating performances that are 'surprising, profound, magical, exciting, fun and entertaining...' Please send a CV with photo to: Box13Troupe, PO Box 13, Brighton BN2 1XA

Howard Gayton of Ophaboom Theatre

in collaboration with the Little Angel Theatre require two puppeteers and one musician/puppeteer for a tour of a commedia-inspired glove puppet version of 'Romeo and Juliet'. Workshop auditions will take place over two days during the week of 15 October 2001. Pre-rehearsal dates in November, main rehearsals in January 2002. Touring through to December 2002. Please send CV and covering letter highlighting experience in puppetry, movement, music and languages to: Little Angel Theatre, 14 Dagmar Passage, London N1 2DN

Salamanda Tandem

require a professional female dancer to perform in 'triptych', a dance based cross-art-form performance piece. You need to be trained in ballet and contemporary and have strong improvisational skills. The piece will be performed in a regional tour commencing in Lincoln Cathedral on 8 and 9 March 2002 and is one aspect of Salamanda Tandem's Regional Arts Lottery Programme project. Auditions will be held in Nottingham on 10 October and will be by invitation only. All interested dancers must send CVs and photographs to Salamanda Tandem, 38 Laurie Avenue, Forest Fields, Nottingham, NG7 6PN.

NOTICEBOARD

Performers wanted

for a one-week research project investigating stillness as performance. No particular technique or training required but experience of still practice (e.g. life modelling, meditation, etc.) would be useful. Fee: £150 for the week plus travel within London zones 1-2. Project in mid-November, audition 21 October. To apply, please send a letter detailing your interest in the project and your experience of still practice to: Still Moving Project, Chisenhale Dance Space, 64-84 Chisenhale Road, London E3 5QZ. For more information e-mail rachelgomme@hotmail.com

RESOURCES

Park Studio dance studio

is re-opening. 7x10m beautiful, well-heated spaces with pine floors and sound system in Stoke Newington, London. From £7 per hour. Telephone 020 7249 7141

Subsidised studio space

at 12 Lisson Grove, London NW1. 6.7x9.14m sprung floor, natural light, sound system. Just £25 per day. Call Kerry Andrews at Marylebone Dance Studio on 020 7258 0767 or e-mail ukfd@globalnet.co.uk

WEBSITES

www.artfuture.com

Art and new technology

www.artscatalyst.org

Information on art/science collaborative projects

www.artsprofessional.co.uk

New online magazine for those working in the arts

www.carnivalnet.org.uk

Information on carnival events

www.circusarts.org.uk

Total Theatre-hosted site for circus of all sorts

www.liveartlondon.demon.co.uk

Live Art Development Agency site

www.londondance.com

Online resource for dance launched by Sadlers Wells and London Arts

www.nolarae.btinternet.co.uk

Nola Rae's new website

www.streetartsnetwork.org.uk

Information on UK street arts

www.theatremuseum.vam.ac.uk

National museum of the Performing Arts - includes National Video Archive of Stage Performance

www.theatrenow.com

Theatre listings, reviews and news

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

CB Projects

4 Ossian Mews
Ossian Rd
London N4 4DT
Tel: 020 8348 0203
www.cbprojects.co.uk

Centre Selavy

selavy@wanadoo.fr

Jenny Sanderson and Brink of Distinction

28 Foster St
Eastville, Bristol BS5 6JE
Tel: 07767 337966

Open Performance Centre

Unit 2, Earl Street
Sheffield S1 4PY
Tel: 0114 249 3650
www.opcentre.force9.co.uk

theatre-rites

The Warehouse
12 Ravensbury Terrace
London SW18 4RL
Tel: 020 8946 2236
www.theatre-rites.co.uk

Theatre Venture

Stratford Circus
Theatre Square
Stratford
London E15 1BX
E-mail: info@theatre-venture.org

Theodora Children's Trust

(Clowns for children in hospital)
42 Pentonville Rd
London N1 9HF
Tel: 020 7713 0044
E-mail: theodora.general@virgin.net

Youth Music

One America Street
London SE1 0NE
Tel 020 7902 1060
www.youthmusic.org.uk

PUBLICATIONS

'Through the Body'

By Dymphna Callery
Nick Hern Books, £12.99

A wealth of experience in one book, 'Through the body' is a step-by-step guide to the theory and practice of physical theatre. With sections on devising, mask, complicité, rhythm, play and total theatre, this inspiring book will no doubt become a must-have for practitioners and teachers of physical theatre, combining theory and practice as it does in a thorough but accessible format. Available from Offstage Bookshop or www.nickhernbooks.co.uk

'Art, not chance - nine artists' diaries'

Ed. Paul Allen
Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, £8.50
Wonderful insights into the artist's working process from an eclectic mix of people - including performance artist Bobby Baker, whose entries read like a middle-aged Bridget Jones, and Richard Wentworth, who chooses to focus on just one day in his life as artist and curator. A treasury of interesting ideas and observations. Available from Turnaround Publishing Services Ltd 020 8829 3000.

'Oh Lover Boy'

By Franko B.
Black Dog Publishing, £19.95
New glossy from body-art supremo Franko B, linked to his recent performance work and

exhibition at 'home'. The iconic international Red Cross symbol is the central motif to his recent work - placed in harmony with or contrast to household objects and Franko's own bleeding body. It would be fair to say that many people would find these images disturbing - but there is no denying their power and graphic beauty. Order through: Info@bdp.demon.co.uk (telephone 020 7613 1922).

'The Dream Dictionary for the Modern Dreamer'

By Tim Etchells
Duckworth, £9.99
Forced Entertainment's artistic director Tim Etchells emerges as the Joseph Campbell of the Blank Generation. 'Dream Dictionary' takes archetype and myth into the 21st century with humour and irreverence. Sample entries: to dream of a car-boot sale 'the past will return on you, wreaking vengeance and threatening prosperity, upending stability'. Popping bubblewrap: 'A dream of annoyance and irritation to come'. But a dream of Pot Noodles 'augurs well for the future'. To order, see www.ducknet.co.uk (telephone 020 7434 4242).

'Commedia dell'Arte - a handbook for troupes'

By John Rudlin and Olly Crick
Routledge
A companion volume to John Rudlin's definitive 'Commedia dell'Arte: an Actor's handbook', covering history and professional practice from 1568 to present. It is a comprehensive and inclusive book, spreading the net to include not only companies such as Ophaboom and La Compagnie de Trois Oranges, who have an obvious direct relationship to Commedia - but also those such as Moving Picture Mime Show and Desperate Men whose works have many of the trademarks of the Commedia tradition. Whether you are a member of a contemporary troupe or someone wishing to know more about the tradition, this is an invaluable guide. See www.routledge.com

'Hamlet in Pieces'

By Andy Lavender
Nick Hern Books, £14.99
This intellectually rigorous but readable book is an examination of the radical re-working of Hamlet by three of contemporary theatre's most influential practitioners: Peter Brook, Robert Lepage and Robert Wilson. In essence, the book explains the success of these productions not as re-interpretations but as texts in their own right - what Andy Lavender refers to as 'the play without the play'. See www.nickhernbooks.co.uk

'Performance Analysis - an introductory coursebook'

Ed. Colin Counsell and Laurie Wolf
Routledge
Includes texts by the usual critical theory favourites: Barthes, Levi-Strauss, Foucault, Cixous, Butler, Bakhtin et al. Sections on Decoding the Artefact, the Performing Body, etc., will be familiar territory to many - but what makes this book a valuable addition to any library is the way in which this material is presented in a collated and accessible format - thus saving performing arts students from having to carry back-breaking loads of books home as it's all here in one volume. See www.routledge.com

COMPANIES

**The Big Picture Company
'A DARK RIVER'**

020 8764 1613

OCTOBER

- 12-13 Tron Theatre, Glasgow
- 21 BAC, London
- 30 Arena, Wolverhampton

NOVEMBER

- 1 Ellesmere Arts Centre
- 20 The Hawth, Crawley
- 21 Rose Theatre, Ormskirk
- 24 Limelight Theatre, Aylesbury
- 29 Gulbenkian, Canterbury
- 30 Arts Alive, Shropshire

DECEMBER

- 7 Croydon Clocktower
- 8 Merlin Theatre, Frome
- 13-15 Royal Exchange Studio, Manchester

**Company:Collisions
'LA PETITE MORT'**

07932 776114

OCTOBER

- 12 Bowen West Theatre, Bedford

Nola Rae

'ELIZABETH'S LAST STAND'

NOVEMBER

- 22 Chancellor Hall, Chelmsford
- 24 Nuffield, Southampton

DECEMBER

- tba Forest Arts, New Milton

Para Active

'AL'DAAKAN'

OCTOBER

- 5-6 Leicester Haymarket
- 24-28 Stratford Circus

NOVEMBER

- 8 The Bull, Barnet

Quicksilver and Himawari Theatre Group

'BABY LOVE'

020 7241 2942

OCTOBER

- 22-24 Royal National Theatre
- 25 Darlington Arts Centre
- 27-28 Arc Theatre, Stockton on Tees

Quicksilver

'TALKING WITH ANGELS'

OCTOBER

- 7 Trinity Theatre, Tunbridge Wells
- 9 The Plough Arts Centre, Torrington
- 12 Public Rooms, Bodmin
- 13 Nuffield Theatre, Southampton
- 17 Taliesin Arts Centre, Swansea
- 19 Canolfan Ucheldre Centre, Holyhead
- 20 Neuadd Dwyfor, Pwllheli
- 22 Gateway Theatre, Chester
- 23 The Castle, Wellingborough
- 24 Spilsby Theatre, Spilsby
- 25 Half Moon Young People's Theatre, London
- 27 De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill
- 30 Solihull Arts Complex, Solihull

NOVEMBER

- 1 The Point, Eastleigh
- 2-3 Bloomsbury Theatre, London
- 5-6 Warwick Arts Centre
- 10 Grange Arts Centre, Oldham
- 12 The Rose Theatre, Ormskirk

- 13 Citadel Arts Centre, St. Helens
- 15 Square Chapel, Halifax
- 16 Daneside Theatre, Congleton
- 17 Darlington Arts Centre, Darlington
- 19 Upton Community Centre
- 20 Murdishaw Community Centre
- 24 New Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich
- 28 Gulbenkian Theatre, Canterbury

DECEMBER

- 1 Cambridge Drama Centre,

**Rejects Revenge
'THE BICYCLE BRIDGE'**

OCTOBER

- 15 Town Hall Theatre, Hartlepool
- 16 Grand Theatre Studio, Blackpool
- 17 Met University Studio Theatre, Leeds
- 18 The Met, Bury
- 19 Sir Robert Martin Theatre, Loughborough
- 20 The Brook Theatre, Chatham
- 23 Rothes Halls, Glenrothes
- 24 Alsager Arts Centre, Cheshire
- 25 Borough Theatre, Abergavenny
- 26 Valley Theatre, Liverpool
- 27 Cheshire Rural Touring Circuit, Chester
- 30-31 Komedia, Brighton

NOVEMBER

- 1 Guildhall Arts Centre, Gloucester
- 2 Corn Exchange, Bedford
- 3 Arts Alive, Shropshire
- 5-24 Lyric Studio, Hammersmith

**Tell Tale Hearts
'MURDER, MADAME?'**

OCTOBER

- 25 Davenham Players Theatre, Northwich
- 26 Caxton Arts Centre, Grimsby
- 31 Invergordon Arts Centre, Scotland

NOVEMBER

- 1 Little Florians Theatre, Inverness
- 12-13 Jacksons Lane, London
- 14 The Soundhaus, Northampton
- 24 The Greentop Community Circus Theatre, Sheffield

**Theatre Sans Frontieres
'L'ENFANT PEUL'**

01434 652484

OCTOBER

- 10-11 Queens Hall Arts Centre, Hexham
- 13 The Maltings, Berwick-Upon-Tweed
- 16 The Arc, Stockton
- 17-20 Gulbenkian Studio, Newcastle
- 23 Courtyard, Hereford
- 25-26 Brewery Arts Centre, Kendal
- 29 Rose Theatre, Ormskirk
- 30 Phoenix Arts, Leicester
- 31 Mac, Birmingham

NOVEMBER

- 2 Stanwix Arts Theatre, Carlisle
- 5 Theatre by the Lake, Keswick
- 7-9 Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry
- 12 South Hill Park Arts, Bracknell
- 13 The Mill, Banbury
- 15-16 Trinity Arts Centre, Tunbridge Wells
- 19-20 Corn Exchange, Newbury
- 21 Bedales Olivier Theatre, Petersfield

**Trestle Theatre Company
'BLOOD AND ROSES'**

01727 850 950

OCTOBER

- 8-9 Plowright Theatre, Scunthorpe
- 10 Palace Theatre, Newark
- 11-12 MAC, Birmingham

- 15-16 Charter Theatre, Preston
- 17-18 Gateway Theatre, Chester
- 19-20 Holland Centre, Spalding
- 25 Acorn Theatre, Penzance
- 26 Falmouth Arts Centre
- 27 Barbican Theatre, Plymouth

**Vincent Dance Theatre and Dada von Bzudlow Theatre
'DROP DEAD GORGEOUS'**

020 8541 5399

OCTOBER

- 5 Arnolfini Bristol
- 8 Acorn Theatre, Penzance
- 10 Truro College
- 11 Studio Theatre, Bodmin
- 12 Tacchi Morris Centre, Taunton
- 17-18 Laban Centre, London
- 30-31 Crucible Studio, Sheffield

NOVEMBER

- 1 Green Room, Manchester
- 3 Northern School of Contemporary Dance, Leeds

Zippo's Circus

07050 121416

Currently in London and the South-East
www.zipposcircus.co.uk

VENUES

Camden People's Theatre

020 7916 5878

OCTOBER

- 16-4 November Polymath - 'Famous Last Words'

NOVEMBER

- 7-10 Perpetual Motion - 'Perfect'

Gardner Arts Centre

01273 685861

OCTOBER

- 11-12 Cholmondeleys and Featherstonehaughs - '3'
- 23-24 Gekidan Kaitaisha - 'Bye-Bye: The New Primitive'
- 31-3 November Peter Brook - 'Le Costume'

NOVEMBER

- 13 Forced Entertainment - 'First Night'
- 25 Ennio Marchetto
- 27-29 David Glass Ensemble - 'Unheimlich Spine'

Hoxton Hall

020 7684 0060

OCTOBER

- 19-21 Second - 'A Live Slam Installation'
- 26-28 Kar

NOVEMBER

- 2-4 Bobby Baker's Box Story
- 10-11' Strike Softly Away From Body'
- 15-16' My Husband is a Space Man'

Laban Centre London

020 8692 4070

OCTOBER

- 17-18 Vincent Dance Theatre
- 24-25 Retina Dance Company
- 31-1 November Henri Oguike Dance Company
- 31-1 November Physical Recall

Phoenix Arts, Leicester

0116 255 4854

OCTOBER

- 12 Metro Boulot Dodo - 'Gag - A Nasty Piece Of Work'
- 30 Theatre Sans Frontieres - 'L'enfant Peul'

NOVEMBER

- 13-14 Frantic Assembly / Paines Plough 'Tiny Dynamite'
- 28 2021 Performance and Theatre Gargantua - 'Phantom Limb'

DECEMBER

- 10-15 Presto Puppets - 'Rumpelstiltskin & The Puppet Cabaret'
- 28-29 Pop-Up - 'Stary Stary Night'

FESTIVALS

BAC Octoberfest

020 7223 2223

(Formerly British Festival of Visual Theatre)

Month-long festival of physical and visual theatre, held at BAC and other London venues. Highlights include: Tim Etchells, Shunt, Told By An Idiot, Ridiculusmus, Cartoon de Salvo, Indefinite Articles, Faulty Optic, Frantic Assembly, Angela de Castro, Blast Theory.

Belfast Festival at Queens

02890 667 687

26 OCTOBER TO 11 NOVEMBER

Includes British Council partnered showcase of new and challenging work produced in Northern Ireland - includes Kabosh, Ridiculusmus and Tinderbox. See www.belfastfestival.com

Dance Umbrella, London

020 8741 4040

3 OCTOBER TO 10 NOVEMBER

British-based and international dance and dance-theatre artists. See www.danceumbrella.co.uk

Now Festival, Nottingham

0115 915 3581

22 OCTOBER TO 11 NOVEMBER

Innovative cross-artform festival featuring cutting edge performers such as Gob Squad, Stelarc and Goat Island. www.nowfestival.org.uk

Span² - International Performance Art

020 8480 7825

1-27 OCTOBER

Dilston Grove, London SE16
Includes Talking Process: Thursdays 4, 11, 18, 25 October. See www.span2.org

Visions 2001

01273 709709

The festival of international animated theatre at the Sallis Benney Theatre, University of Brighton

OCTOBER

- 26 Theatre Insomnia - 'Pop Up Book'

NOVEMBER

- 30 Theatre Insomnia - 'Lost Paradise'

UK

The Academy of Circus Arts

Winchester, 07050 282624

DIPLOMA COURSE

Six-month training inside the big top. E-mail zippus.circus@virgin.net

Central School of Speech and Drama

London, 020 7559 3990

MA Advanced Theatre Practice.

A full-time four term course offering the following strands: Creative Producing, Dramaturgy, Lighting Design, Object Theatre and Puppetry, Scenography, Sound Design, Writing, Performance, Direction. See www.cssd.ac.uk

Circomedia

Bristol, 0117 947 7288

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

The Circus Space

London, 020 7613 4141

BA (hons) Theatre Practice - Circus (two-year degree course). E-mail: enquiries@thecircusspace.co.uk

Also adult classes in circus skills.

Acrobalance courses with Peter van Valkenhoef. 12-16 November - 5-Day Course for experienced Acrobatic Balancers. 17-18 November - 2-Day Course for less experienced Acrobatic Balancers.

Clown with Fraser Hooper. 16 October to 4 December (Tuesday evenings) - 'Clown for Beginners'. 21 October to 11 November (Sunday afternoons) - Advanced Clown Course.

The Desmond Jones School

020 8747 3537

Full-time and part-time professional training in all aspects of Mime and Physical Theatre. Also run short courses in impro/mask, etc.

Different Directions

Loughborough, 01509 222970

9 NOVEMBER

Loughborough University and Nottingham Playhouse present Symposium 1: Exploring the director as maker of performance in the 21st Century. Contact: Deborah Clarke, Loughborough University (e-mail: d.l.clarke@lboro.ac.uk) or see www.nottinghamplayhouse.co.uk

Ecole de Mime Corporel Dramatique

London, 020 7272 8627

Movement Theatre and Corporeal Mime (Decroux Technique)

Ecole Philippe Gaulier

London, 020 8438 0040

Contact: Philippe Gaulier School, St Michael's Church Hall, St Michael's Road, London NW2 6XG.

Hope Street, Liverpool

0151 708 8007

Physical Theatre training programmes - include street theatre, ensemble, mask theatre, admin skills. For information on how to apply to next year's programme see www.hope-street.org

Kaizen Creative

0161 374 2353

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For info packs and to book tel: 0161 374 2353; e-mail info@kaizen-creative.com; website www.kaizen-creative.org

Middlesex University

020 8411 6148

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Full time, exploring choreography in relation to contemporary performance issues and interdisciplinary work.

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01342 823410

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Off The Page Conference

London, 020 7265 8138

One-day conference on defining accessible theatre-making for people with physical disabilities and sensory impairments. With practitioners from Forced Entertainment, Graeae Theatre and CandoCo Dance Company. 19 October at Half Moon Young People's Theatre, London E1. E-mail liselle@halfmoon.org.uk to book.

para active

020 8599 0823/07903 126850

We will be running 'para lab', a theatre laboratory beginning in October 2001.

School of Physical Theatre

London, 020 8215 3350

SEPTEMBER 2001 TO JUNE 2002

The Professional School - one-year intensive programme in three terms. Part-time Classes - introductory and advanced.

Spectacular Events

01748 822232

Courses on children's entertainment: phone Ron Wood or e-mail enquiries@spectacularevents.co.uk

University of Kent

Canterbury, 01227 823338

MA BY PRACTICE AS RESEARCH

A new research MA programme (from January 2002) invites proposals and applications. Full-time and part-time study. For details phone 01227 824040 or e-mail recruitment@ukc.ac.uk

Why Not Institute

London, 020 7733 7026

Angela de Castro's school for clowns held at ArtsEd, 14 Bath Rd, London W4 1LJ. Autumn programme includes courses in Eccentric Dance.

Wolfsohn/Hart Voice Work

London, 020 8567 2003

6/7 OCTOBER INTRODUCTORY WEEKEND

Year-Long Cycle of 7 Weekends - led By Noah Pikes, founding member of Roy Hart Theatre. Noah Pikes is offering a maximum of 18 places in an ongoing group who will work over 7 weekends, beginning on 27/28 October 2001. Email: ollydavis@compuserve.com or see www.thewholevoice.com

OVERSEAS

Centre Selavy

Nr Poitiers, France, +33 5 45 29 65 56

Workshops - e-mail selavy@wanadoo.fr

'Circo a Vapore' School of Theatre

Rome, Italy, +39 06 700 9692

Two-year professional training. See

www.circoavapore.3000.it or e-mail for info in English circoavapore@tiscalinet.it

Dell'Arte International School of Physical Theatre

California, +1 707 668 5663

2001/2002 Professional Actor Training Program runs October to June. Print out the application forms from the website at www.dellarte.com or e-mail omword@aol.com

Ecole Internationale de Theatre Jacques Lecoq

Paris, +33 1 47 70 44 78

Two Year Course plus The Laboratory of Movement Study (L.E.M.).

Espace Catastrophe

Brussels, +32 25 42 54 15

Belgian resource centre for circus arts.

Grounded in Europe: Tanztheater and its Legacy

London, 01970 622133

30 NOVEMBER TO 2 DECEMBER

A Centre for Performance Research Project, Roehampton Institute, London - a symposium for performers, dancers, choreographers and educators. Phone or email: aop@aber.ac.uk

Mime Centrum Berlin

+30 44 651860

Movement training for actors, mimes, directors and dramaturgs with Gennadij Bogdanov and Mina Tinaburri. Autumn programme includes: 'The Grotesque Theatre - The Buffoni' with Mina Tinaburri and 'Grotesque Dance - Underground Rivers' with Irina E. Andrejewa. See www.mimecentrum.de

Noh Training Course

FEBRUARY TO MARCH 2002

Singapore - 8-week course from internationally acclaimed Noh expert Professor Richard Emmert, joined in the final week of training by Master Noh Actor/Director Kanze Hideo. All applications should be addressed to: The Curriculum Coordinator, Practice Performing Arts School, 31 International Business Park, #01-05, Creative Resource, Singapore 609921. Or e-mail admin@ppas.edu.sg; website: www.ppas.edu.sg

Patricia Bardi

Amsterdam, +31 (0) 20 689 7783

Vocal Dance and Voice Movement Integration - courses throughout autumn/winter. Phone for brochure or see www.patriciabardi.com

ZID Theater Laboratory

Amsterdam, +31 20 4888449

Weekly training programme for the performer in the physical-visual theatre: see www.zidtheater.nl



'Drop Dead Gorgeous'
Photo by Hugo Glendinning

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

TOTAL THEATRE MAGAZINE FREE LISTINGS SERVICE

Members can use this service to
inform readers of their activities.

DISPLAY ADVERTISING COST

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

Size	Rotation	Width x Depth
Full page	portrait	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

BAGGED MAILING SERVICE

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inserting leaflets up to 14g. Prices are
individually negotiated if your leaflet
weighs more.

Number	Members	Non-Members
650 leaflets	£65	£95
900 leaflets	£90	£125



© Theatre de l'Ange Fou

- The school offers a 20 hours weekly training in corporeal mime and physical theatre based on the technique of Etienne Decroux.
- Training includes: Technique, improvisation, composition and repertoire.
- Students may join the school at the beginning of each month.

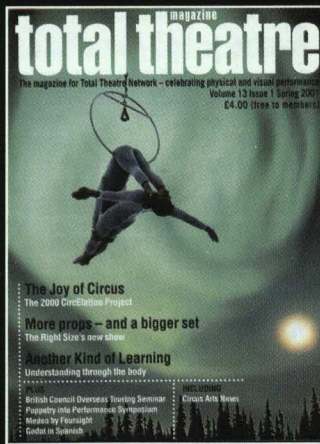
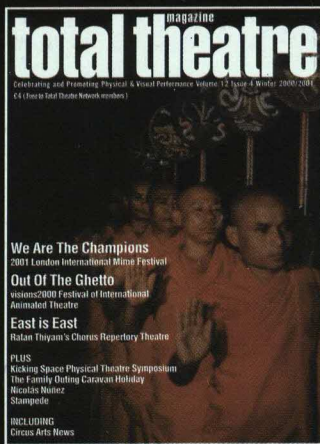
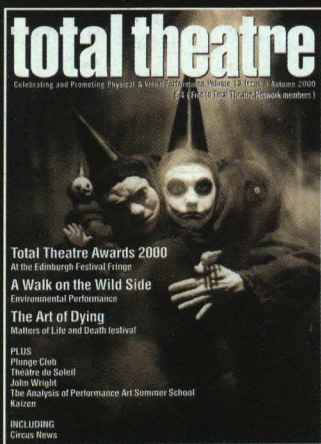
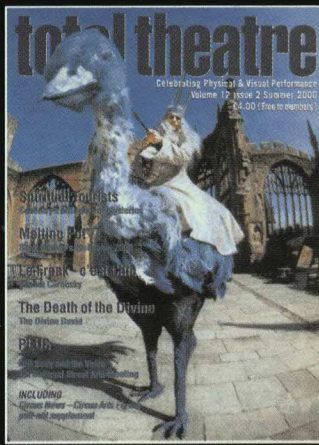
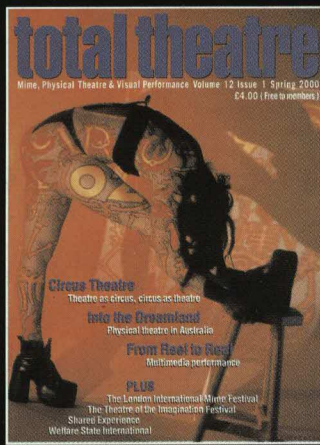
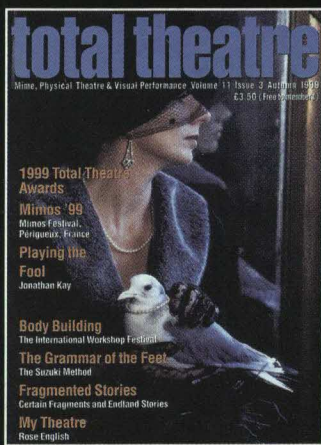
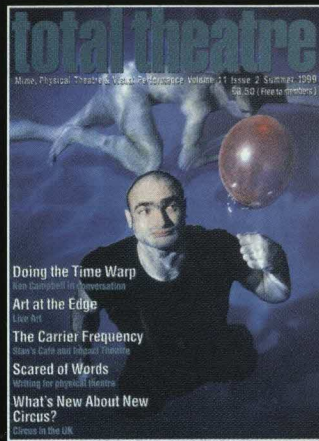
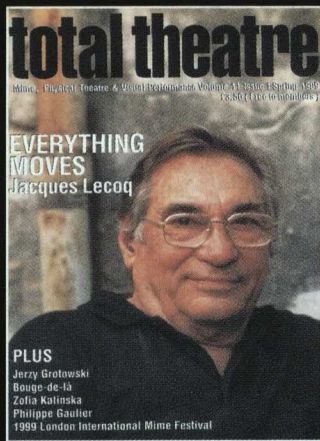
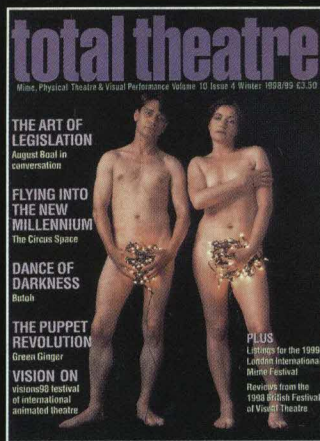
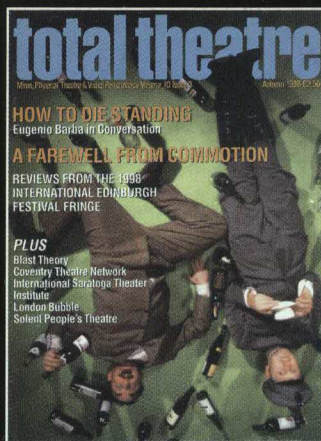
Ecole de Mime Corporel Dramatique and Theatre de l'Ange Fou

Artistic directors: Steven Wasson / Corinne Soum



Photos: Roberto Aguilar, Christopher Enaves

Ecole de Mime Corporel Dramatique
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