

# **total theatre** magazine

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

Volume 14 Issue 3 Autumn 2002

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## **Total Theatre Awards**

Edinburgh Fringe 2002

## **The Magic Lantern**

Film in theatre

## **Automata**

Puppets and scary toys

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# total theatre <sup>magazine</sup>

Celebrating and promoting physical and visual performance  
Volume 14 Issue 3 Autumn 2002



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If you would like to submit news, views, letters or advertise in the Winter issue, please note that the copy deadline is 14 November 2002. The Winter issue will be published on 7 January 2003 and will cover the period January to March 2003.

**Cover**  
Derevo –  
'La Divina Commedia';  
Edinburgh Fringe 2002  
and touring

# Editorial

From shadows on the cave wall to stick puppets, ventriloquist's 'lap pals' and clockwork toys – the human fascination with animated objects that appear to have a life of their own is as old as time itself. In this issue of Total Theatre Magazine there is plenty of evidence that the interest is alive and well and shows no sign of abating.

Edward Taylor and Richard Cuming take us on a guided tour of the world of automata – living sculptures which can be found in all sorts of places. Richard shares his experience of working with automata maker Paul Spooner. Edward's article is chock-full of all sorts of facts and fancies as he places automata both as an integral part of popular culture and as part of the tradition of animated theatre. In the reviews section, Mitch Mitchelson muses on this year's Puppet Up! Festival in Blackpool.

There's plenty more in this issue besides puppetry: Anne-Louise Rentell's appraisal of Duckie's Nightbird season of live art/unusual theatre; David Bere's investigation of the emerging 'Scratch Performance' phenomenon; Helena Thompson's reflection on the use of film in theatre; and an artist's diary from Jess Naish that looks at creating total theatre with young children.

And for people interested in animated theatre in all its forms – from traditional puppetry to new visual media – October means the Visions Festival at Brighton, which brings together installations and visual theatre performances from all over the world. With a companion programme of animated film, exhibitions and the latest Users Guide symposium (see News opposite for more details), this year's festival looks to be the best ever.

We were also delighted to see that the Total Theatre Awards 2002 winners included many examples of visual and animated theatre – from the simple charms of Shona Reppe Puppets through to the sophisticated sceneography of dance-theatre company Nats Nus and the ambitious design of Wishbone's 'Scapegoat'.

Judged by an independent panel and announced in the last week of the Edinburgh Fringe, the list of winners contained fine examples of the diverse range of physical and visual performance that we represent: the extraordinary contemporary circus skills of Company F/Z, promenade celebratory theatre from Theatrum Botanicum, the finely-honed mime skills of Fiat Lux and the visual and physical virtuoso that is Derevo.

Turn the page for a full report on the Awards and an introduction to all the winning companies – congratulations to you all!

**Dorothy Max Prior**

# Letters

**A response to the concept of ontological street theatre as mentioned by Paul Miskin (TTM 14/1)**

I'm not sure if I understand what on earth ontological street theatre actually is – but if my interpretation of it is close to the mark then I can't for the life of me see what the point of it is.

I can understand that art forms like architecture are ontological in that we take for granted the skill and precision with which buildings are created and they are literally all around us.

Amongst many other things I can see unselfconsciously beautiful shop window displays, I can hear fantastic patter from market stall holders, I can enjoy the extraordinarily co-ordinated aerial displays that flocks of starlings put on at twilight and I can see a dirty, smelly drunk stand out amongst the Nike generation of shoppers. These are all part of everyday life and act as raw material for street theatre.

I can understand that street theatre may start out ontologically but surely it needs to break cover to interest its public? Or are we talking about forms that are so ontological that we don't even notice that they are there? Someone wearing an extremely weird set of underpants under their trousers for instance? Someone thinking impure thoughts maybe? Someone inventing a story in their heads?

The only examples of ontological street theatre I see around me are those poor saps who dress up like Ronald McDonald or Garfield and who hang around shopping malls. They have long since forgotten what they look like, they are doing a 9-till-5 job, they are working for the corporation, they don't consider themselves as performers – all divisions between art and reality have been blurred to the extent that you don't take any notice of them! Surely this is not what is meant?

Groups who blur the line like Natural Theatre or Cacahuete nevertheless create as much attention as possible to the extent that shows get stopped by police or irate shop managers. Not really that ontological; in fact to become ontological would probably remove their bite.

Or does Paul Miskin mean that we should have more street theatre all the time? In which case why doesn't he say that? The problem is that in a festival like Aurillac in France where you are bombarded with the stuff, it starts to cancel itself out and the special qualities of each group can get lost in the mix. Then I suppose it starts to become ontological in that we don't notice it any more like we don't notice beautiful architectural flourishes on many of the buildings in our city centres. A horrible thought. Keep street theatre un-ontological! Let's all stick out like sore thumbs!

**Edward Taylor**



Sharmanka Kinetic Theatre

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# total theatre network news

## Total Theatre Network Staff

*Annabel Arndt writes:* We are delighted to welcome Tansy Lihou as our new Communications Officer. Tansy has previously worked freelance on many projects including the Nott Dance festival and Dance Blitz workshop festival for Dance 4 National Dance Agency. She also co-ordinated the Gedling Dance Showcase for schools and youth groups, was project co-ordinator and workshop leader for Reckless Sleepers theatre company and co-directed and performed with Tanks performance company. Most recently she worked on the mentoring programme and business advice scheme for Prevista development agency, and has also worked for a casting agency. With all that experience we are very pleased that she has joined our team.

After a sad farewell to Whitney Spaner, our intern from USA (see Whitney's review of her work experience below), we welcome Pauline Pepin who is with us until Christmas on a placement. She is studying business in Paris.

## Total Theatre Awards

The awards this year were the biggest yet. We had around 200 companies enter, with 80 volunteer assessors and judges seeing performances. We are very grateful to everybody who made the awards such a success. Although it is difficult to pick out a few, I would like to make a special mention of

Stewart Lee, who compèred the ceremony, and volunteer Becca Gill who acted as assessor, PA, mentor, project co-ordinator, venue liaison and invaluable friend. The awards ceremony, held at the Assembly Rooms in Edinburgh, was an entertaining occasion in itself, thanks to the musical contributions from winners past and present. Pig Iron, who won a Total Theatre Award in 2000 with 'Poet in New York', opened the ceremony with a song from their latest production 'Shut Eye', and Theatricum Botanicum performed an extract from 2002 award-winner 'Go-Go: the Boy with Magic Feet'. Our aim now is for the Total Theatre Awards to happen every year rather than on alternate years as they are of such value to companies who are either shortlisted or winners. A special mention must go to Clive Nicol, who made the wooden awards, and Allan Ross, who made the most supportive venue award.

## Re:visions seminar on new media

Following the highly successful Users Guide to Street Arts last March, Total Theatre Network are collaborating with visions festival and King Alfred's Winchester on the latest in the series 'Re:visions - The Creative Application of New Media in Live Performance'. The re:visions seminar will be the opening event of the visions festival 2002 and will take place on Thursday 24 October, 10am-5pm at the University of Brighton, Grand Parade, Brighton. This seminar is an opportunity for creative artists (both performance and visu-

al), academics, directors, funders and students to explore the outer limits of technology and performance. Speakers/presenters include Matt Adams (founder member of Blast Theory), Andrew Chetty (Head of New Media at the ICA), David Metcrafe (Forma), Holger Zschenderlein (Senior Lecturer in Digital Music, University of Brighton), scenographer Alex Shelton and Andy Lavender (Senior Lecturer at Central School of Speech and Drama). For further information or to book a place call 01273 643194 or e-mail: [visions.fest@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:visions.fest@brighton.ac.uk). £30 standard fee; concessions available for Total Theatre Network members. A publication in the 'Users Guide' series will follow in the New Year.

## An American Intern in London

*Whitney Spaner writes:* The people who work in physical and visual theatre amaze me. This summer I was fortunate enough to work as an intern for Total Theatre Network and I was introduced to this type of theatre. During my stay in London I saw a few of my first physical theatre performances. I was very intrigued with the idea of telling a story without relying on words. I hope to be able to work with this type of theatre in the future, and I can't believe that I didn't realise it existed before...

There is so much work done by Total Theatre Network to promote the art form. Every day I worked with director Annabel Arndt, I could not believe everything that had to be done on a day-to-day basis to keep the network going, including organising numerous databases, membership and endless phone calls. I mainly helped to prepare the Total Theatre Awards which was an enormous job in itself.

Despite all the work there was to do, Annabel and everyone else I met never hesitated to take time out to help me in my new environment. They not only taught me a lot about the world of physical theatre but they also helped me to feel comfortable in London. I never felt out of place except when I answered the phone and the caller could not understand my accent! Now that my internship is complete and I am back in the States I want to keep experiencing physical theatre. I have found a treasure within the theatre world and I don't want to lose it.



Derevo receive their award; photo by Dan Tuffs

# Total Theatre Awards



Derevo; photo by Dan Tuffs

After a break last year, the Total Theatre Awards at the Edinburgh Fringe were back with a bang in 2002.

**DOROTHY MAX PRIOR** introduces the winning companies

## Derevo

### Total Theatre Special Award for Outstanding Innovation and Excellence

Derevo are a company that are long-standing favourites with Total Theatre – and the only one to have won two Total Theatre Awards.

In 1997, their winning production 'Red Zone' was acclaimed as 'the most innovative international production' and in this year's awards they were honoured with a special accolade for 'excellence and innovation', a recognition of their consistent and continuing dedication to physical and visual theatre.

Guitarist/photographer turned performer/director Anton Adassinski has no formal background in theatre but having acquired a

taste for performance worked in dance and pantomime before forming Derevo. He trained with Russian clown Slava Polunin for four years; in an interview in *Total Theatre* (Vol 10/1) he said of this time, 'The clowns were all happy and I was the sad one...' It is this sad clown – the bouffon, the grotesque – which has stayed a consistent element in Derevo's work – and nobody does it better.

'La Divina Commedia' is the perfect vehicle for the sad clown. Originally a meditation on famous artists' suicides, the show was devised in Italy – and Dante's poetic exploration of 'Inferno, Purgatorio e Paradiso' became an obvious point of reference. Presented at Edinburgh in the round (in the Assembly Big Top, Stockbridge), 'La Divina Commedia' uses four towers and a revolving turntable as its stage. Such an astonishing array of tortured characters emerge in such quick succession that it is almost impossible to believe that there are only four performers. Adassinski is joined on stage by Tanya Khabarova, Elena Yarovaya and Oleg Zhukovsky. Each performer is supremely skilled in physical storytelling and the piece has the perfectly realised and grotesquely beautiful array of visual imagery that we have come to expect of Derevo – enhanced by a haunting soundscape designed by Andrey Sizintsev.

The hellish torture and despair of 'Inferno' are perhaps the easy part for a company schooled in expressionist angst – but it is the subtler touches that stay to haunt, such as the image of wistful hope in the eyes of our weary traveller Adassinski ('I am a fool – I am hope') as he faces the seemingly never-ending limbo of his birthday party, and the final

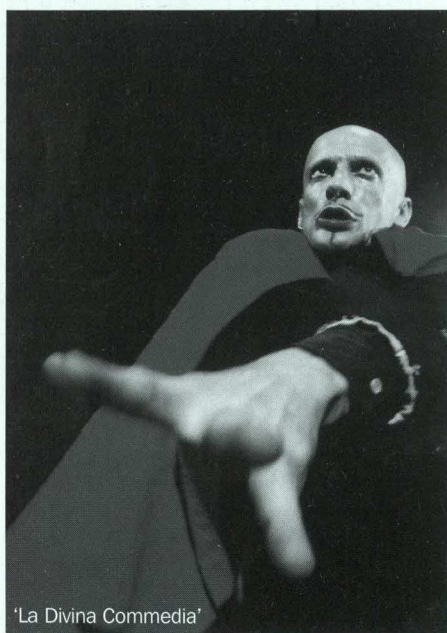
image of potential salvation – a ladder reaching to the heavens, 'pure and ready to mount to the stars', as the hourglass of human mortality sits on the ever-turning wheel of life.

'La Divina Commedia' – produced in the UK by the enterprising Green & Lenagan – moved to the Riverside Studios for its London debut in September. Derevo are working on a return to the UK in the Spring.

## Theatrum Botanicum

### 'Go-Go: The Boy with the Magic Feet'

Here's an idea: bring a 15-strong troupe of Tanzanian musicians, dancers and storytellers (all members of the same family) over from



'La Divina Commedia'



'Go-Go'; photo by Dominic Travers

Africa to Scotland. Put them together with a bunch of local theatre makers – and a Scottish piper – and in a mere five days create a show. Make it a promenade piece with sculptural puppets of jungle animals and pyrotechnics. Weave in a story about the aspirations of a local football manager, and the hope he places in the eponymous Go-Go, a young Tanzanian cowherd. Add a political message about the danger of landmines and – last but not least – place it in the Edinburgh Botanical Gardens.

There are not many people who would take this on board – particularly without the safety net of arts funding. But deviser/director Toby Gough, the creator of 'Go-Go', is used to following his own whims and hunches – and it would seem he finds no enterprise too daunting. The resulting show is an exuberant piece of celebratory theatre – not the most polished performance on the fringe, but that is hardly the point. The two-hour extravaganza of song, dance, laughter and bon mots gives the message that political theatre can be fun.

Toby has apparently created a show in the Botanical Gardens for every Fringe Festival for as long as anyone can remember. He also makes work in other gardens throughout the world – and in his spare time produces and promotes shows such as the highly successful 'Lady Salsa'.

Goodness knows what Theatrum Botanicum will think up for next year – but whatever it is, it is bound to be a refreshing change from the usual Edinburgh Fringe fare.

## Company F/Z

### 'Throat'

'Anyone who thinks circus is just for kids will have to reconsider after witnessing "Throat",' claims Company F/Z's press release – and it is indeed true that 'Throat' is a world away from what most audiences would expect from circus: the 'adult' content that explores masculine sexual identity; the skits and sketches on daytime TV watching and nighttime Travolta disco-dancing – and the rest of the post-modern pot-pourri of pop culture signs and symbols that form the raw material of the show – are outside of the usual circus points of reference. But it remains the case that at the heart of the piece are two superbly enacted traditional circus skills – those of the clown and the aerialist. What is unusual, though, is that both are embodied in just one performer – the much-lauded John-Paul Zaccarini. It is his ability to switch from the earthly humour of the preening pretty-boy to the airy elegance of the angelic aerialist that keeps the audience entranced.

The other half of Company F/Z is director Flick Ferdinando – who over the past decade or more has established a solid reputation as

'Throat' photo by Dominic Travers



a performer and director working in street theatre, cabaret and physical theatre. She doesn't appear on stage in this production – but can currently be seen treading the boards with Peepolykus in 'Rhinceros'.

Producer Martin Sutherland also deserves a mention, 'Throat' being one of many excellent shows (including the Pig Iron/Joseph Chaiken collaboration 'Shut Eye') brought by him to this year's Edinburgh Fringe.

## Shona Reppe Puppets

### 'Cinderella'

In the current climate of interest in new media and new technologies, there have been worries about the survival of the traditional arts of the puppeteer. Is there still a place for theatre productions that have at their heart the simple power of transformation – where some scraps of cloth or a few wooden sticks become a whole world of believable characters? The Total Theatre Award for Shona Reppe Puppets' 'Cinderella' gives a resounding 'yes' in answer – here is a production that succeeds because it shows us, in the words of Awards Judge Mary Brennan, 'that some of the best theatre around has its roots in child's play'.

Aberdeen-born Shona Reppe took theatre studies at Glasgow University, followed by a postgraduate course in stage design. She loved making things but 'didn't want to walk away from them'. Forming her own puppet company in 1997 was the ideal solution: this way she gets to play with the things she's made! Shona's previous work has included a number of successful collaborations with Wee Stories Theatre for Children; 'Treasure Island'

and 'Peter Pan' have both toured extensively in Scotland and the north of England. Her solo show 'Tom Thumb' was a hit of the 2001 Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

This year's show, 'Cinderella', is another classic fairy tale, and another one-woman show – with Shona taking the role of the fairy godmother (the 'magic maker' who conjures up the make-believe world). Cinder's stepsisters are a pair of fashion-fixated maribou trimmed gloves – and Prince Charming an off-stage presence – a news flash on Pumpkin radio, a name, a knock on the door... For, in Mary Brennan's words, 'Frankly, he's not what's important here. What matters is the loving kindness that rescues Cinders, and the sense that magic lurks all around us, even in the most ordinary of daily objects.'

*Thank you to Mary Brennan for permission to quote from her interview with Shona Reppe and her review of 'Cinderella'*

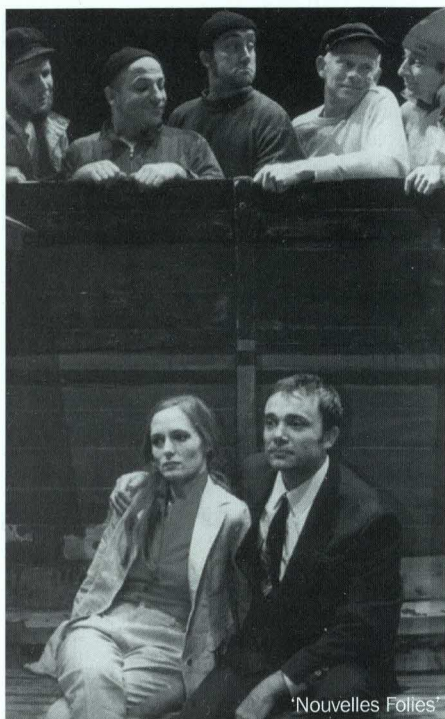
## Compagnie Fiat Lux

### 'Nouvelles Folies'

Brittany-based Fiat Lux are one of France's leading mime companies. Their award winning production 'Nouvelles Folies' has been an enormous international success, touring to many places since its inception in 1999. In 2001 the company played the London International Mime Festival to great acclaim (commended in *Total Theatre* for 'good ensemble work and set pieces... clearly evoked and humorous', and described in the *Stage* as 'full of zany jokes, visual puns, little digs at human foibles and virtuoso miming'). The company is set for a return to LIMF next year.

Compagnie Fiat Lux gain a Total Theatre Award for their mastery of highly skilled, entirely wordless performance. 'Nouvelles Folies' is described by the company as a piece of 'silent ▶





burlesque theatre'. As a show without words, it relies exclusively on the physical skills of the performers to enact its story of misunderstanding, cultural differences and gender games – played out through the tale of two young Parisians holidaying in a Breton fishing village.

Director Didier Guyon (who also performs in 'Nouvelles Folies') trained with Eugenio Barba at the renowned Odin Teatret in Denmark. He formed Compagnie Fiat Lux in 1990. They have to date presented seven productions. The UK has yet to see their two most recent works – 'Les Frères Morveux' and 'A La Bastille'. In the light of their Edinburgh success, it is to be hoped that we get to see both of these shows soon.

## Wishbone

### 'Scapegoat'

Premiered earlier this year at the Sprint Festival, Wishbone's 'Scapegoat' is the brainchild of performer/devisors Paul Murray and Karen Glossop, supported in their theatrical development by Camden People's Theatre. This ambitious production uses the clever visual device of a front-of-stage screen that parts to reveal just part of the performers' bodies in play during any one scene – at one point only feet, at another only heads.

Best of all is when only the centre section is exposed, giving a beautifully cinematic focus on each small movement of the hands. This combined with a discreet but effective use of projection makes for a piece with a strong, rather 'painterly' sense of the power of the flat image – to the point where it is quite a shock when the performers emerge

from behind the screens into full 3D stage presence.

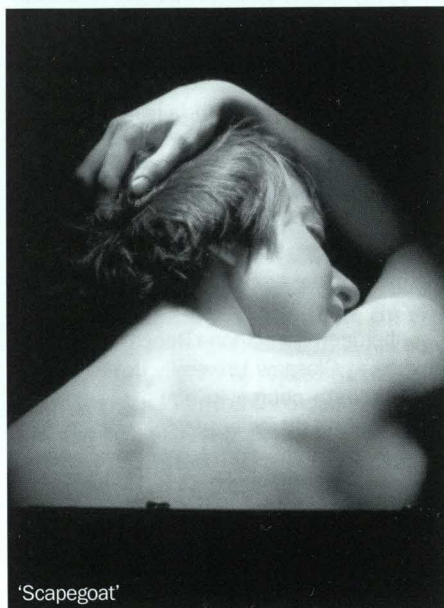
'Scapegoat' is a modern love story – yet universal and timeless in its exploration of issues of fidelity, commitment, adventure and boredom. An engaging text with just the right mix of humour and pathos has resulted in a piece of theatre that, although not perfect, shows great innovation and promise for the future of this young theatre company. The Total Theatre Award is given in recognition of the artistic ambition and is an acknowledgment of the success achieved to date by Wishbone. We wish them all the best in their future development.

## Nats Nus

### 'Ful'

'Ful' is that rare thing: a dance piece with a heart and soul. Here is a company who believe that 'contemporary dance can be used as a theatrical tool that can transmit to the audience feelings and energies created on stage' – and in this stated ambition so well realised, they share the dance-theatre stage with such luminaries as Pina Bausch, Josef Nadj and Nigel Charnock.

Barcelona-based company Nats Nus achieved their Total Theatre Award for their show's dynamic integration of performers and for its scenography – and it is this latter element that is particularly striking. Company director Toni Mira studied architecture alongside his training in contemporary dance and it is this combination of talents that makes the piece so special. Five dancers (including Mira himself who, it would seem, has boundless energy) interact with five monoliths to create what the programme notes accurately describe as 'a compelling architectural world of moving parts'.



Directed by Mira, but choreographed by the whole company, 'Ful' is an example of collaborative theatre-making that successfully uses dance as one of its building blocks but which moves beyond the techniques and constraints of the chosen form to create a piece that appeals to a broad audience to generate appreciation for the form outside of the cloistered walls of contemporary dance practice. Thanks to the Aurora Nova venue for bringing this – and the other excellent dance-theatre pieces presented – to our attention!

## Most Supportive Venue

### St Stephens/Café Direct Aurora Nova

Last year saw the first Aurora Nova festival of international visual theatre and dance, co-hosted by Komedia and Fabrik. The festival's venue, St Stephens, is a beautiful space – a church in the Georgian 'New Town' part of Edinburgh with wooden pews intact and a luxuriously large dance floor, just perfect for movement-based performance.

Lauded in *Total Theatre* (Vol 13/3) for its spirited belief in the potential of artistic collaboration and the emphasis on forms of theatre that cross barriers of language and culture, Aurora Nova had a lot to live up to – and we waited with bated breath to see if the second year would reach the high standards set in 2001.

Back with the support of a new sponsor, Café Direct, Aurora Nova 2002 presented another innovative programme of physical and visual performance – again in St Stephens with the additional resources of the nearby Theatre Workshop. Every participating artist in

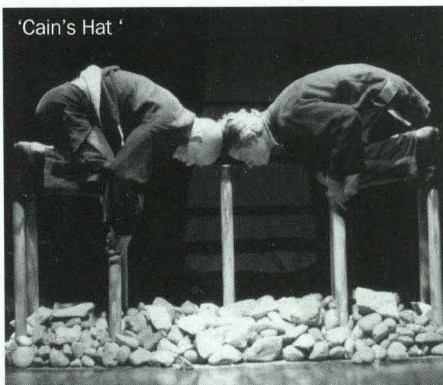


St Stephens, Wolfgang Hoffman and David Lavender; photo by Dan Tufts

the festival helped out in the running of the venues – they shared the costs involved but also the rewards. It is a testament to the success of the programme to note that so many of the short-listed companies for the Total Theatre Awards performed at this venue – which saw work presented from all corners of the globe including Spain (award-winners Nats Nus with 'Ful'), Brazil ('Such Stuff As We Are Made From'), Hungary ('Cain's Hat' from Artus), Iran ('The Mute Who Was Dreamed' by Theatre Bazi), India (Daksha Sheth Dance Company's 'The Circus of Earth and Sky') and a USA/East German collaboration ('Fallen' by Jess Curtis Gravity Physical Entertainment with Fabrik).

Once again, the programme director was Fabrik's Wolfgang Hoffman, who has said that his personal vision is guided by the belief that 'theatre should be as much a sensual and emotional experience as an intellectual one'.

Although it is his wide knowledge of the international dance and visual theatre repertoire that drives the festival, he is ably supported by David Lavender and all the directors and staff at Komedia who have put so much effort into making this venue such a success – an oasis of calm and beauty in the midst of the hurly-burly of the Fringe.



## The Shortlist

Over 200 productions were entered for this year's Total Theatre Awards. 80 independent assessors and judges saw these shows – eventually reducing the massive entry list into a shortlist of twelve. Having lauded the winners, it seems only fair to give honourable mention to the rest of the companies on the short list. These were as follows...

### Artus: 'Cain's Hat'

This renowned Hungarian company presented two shows at the Aurora Nova festival. 'Cain's Hat' brings visual arts sensibilities into the performance space and blends in a perfect musical score (incorporating live song) to create this successful mix of 'serious humour and abstract theatre'.

### CafeDirect: '5065 – Fancy a Lift?'

Performed by Alexei Merkushev, this specially commissioned short piece was placed somewhere between corporeal mime and butoh dance – an exploration of the existential angst of a lost soul who awakens (from sleep, amnesia or death?) to find himself in an occupied lift...

### Compagnie Au Cul Du Loup: 'Monsoon'

Described as 'a theatre of objects and musical images', Monsoon explores the relationships between land and water, sound and action. Bridges become xylophones and hats turn into Chinese Lanterns – a wonderful exploration of the musical potential of objects – and of the human body. Whimsical and enchanting.

### Do Theatre: 'Upside Down'

Taboo, myth and ritual explored through this modern re-working of the Frankenstein story. Do Theatre's trademark brutal expressionism is both darkly humorous and delightfully disturbing – an outing for the deepest depths of the human psyche.

### Jess Curtis Gravity Physical Entertainment with Fabrik: 'Fallen'

A dance-theatre meditation on the theme of gravity that incorporates poetic text and live cello mixed with pre-recorded sound and engaging choreography. Physical meets meta-physical... 'the moment of falling is a moment of transition'.

### Théâtre de l'Ange Fou: 'The Government Inspector'

An exquisite example of Decroux-inspired ensemble performance – a classic text re-worked into a new interpretation that combines spoken text with superb physical acting and a darkly sumptuous design. ■



# Nightbird Lullabies

Fancy a spot of flower-arranging or a trip back to school? ANNE-LOUISE RENTELL burns the midnight oil with Duckie for their season of unusual theatre. Photos by Kamal Ackarie

I think most people would agree that there would be a million better things to do on a Saturday than don a uniform and go back to school for fun...

I did just this as part of 'Nightbird' – Duckie's summer collection for 2002.

'Nightbird' was a season of new work comprised of eight pieces commissioned by Duckie producer Simon Casson from eight contemporary artists. They were to be a series of 'spontaneous interactive playful happenings' taking place in non-theatre venues across London.

The press release began by claiming the exercise to be a 'live art laboratory exploring the potential of new theatrical inventions'. A



'Fragrant'

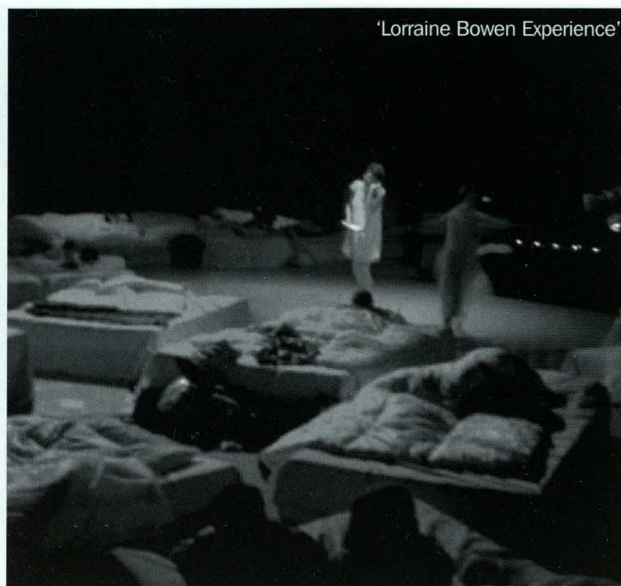
tautological claim which put me immediately on my guard, the sceptic in me raising an eyebrow at yet another promise of creative novelty amid the existing clamour of publicity and marketing strewn through the capital.

It went further to say that the season would tread the 'wayward path from conceptual art to popular entertainment' – would be a 'mixed bag'. I started to feel smug: Aha – just as I thought, they're covering all bases, avoiding commitment, and therefore side-stepping potential criticism. I was wary – these claims leaping confidently from the pages of the press release could turn out to be another case of the emperor parading in his birth-day suit.

And then I was disheartened – each piece was to be 'disposable like the pop culture (it is) born out of'. I'm tired of pop culture being the hook that creativity hangs its hat on these days; it's simply a way of dodging commitment to the belief that an idea will work or even that it has the capacity to transform. The inherent irony in this statement is also a copout for the product and the audience. It is allowing itself not to be taken seriously and the audience not to engage.

However, as a fan of Duckie's work to date I felt torn and so banished my grumpy alter-ego to a dark corner and cheerfully stepped out to various obscure venues to discover 'Nightbird' for myself.

Confession number one: I didn't see all the pieces commissioned. I missed the 'Lorraine Bowen Experience', the all-night sleep-over (by all accounts a night of innocent communal pleasure); couldn't get into the 'Class Club' (enough said); was out of town for 'The Crystal Ball'; and got stuck on a bus in the pouring rain on the way to 'Carnesky's Burlesque Ghost Box' – an outdoor event which I cursed myself and the elements for not seeing.



'Lorraine Bowen Experience'

Confession number two: I spent all of Charlie Pulford's 'Are You God?' in St Peter's Church, Vauxhall, at midnight, trying to stay awake in near darkness with people reading aloud from books. I sat, half prostrate on the carpeted stone-flagged floor, desperately wanting to be horizontal, but martyring myself instead at the altar of 'new invention'. It exists in my memory as a surreal dream from which I desperately wanted to escape. I can't comment any more than this.

Forgive me.

Along with the Cholmondleys and the Featherstonehaughs (see the review section of this issue), two pieces in particular did get me thinking: Tom Castle's 'The Old School' and Jyll Bradley's 'Fragrant'.

On a sunny Saturday in June I dragged my best mate from school to a day trip down memory lane some fourteen years on at Charles Edward Brooke School. Instructed to wear black and white, we were issued with school ties on arrival and given the timetable for the day before being put through a school assembly and having our class photo taken. I soon discovered that this was in the main a serious attempt to recreate a day at school.

Our first class was English, in which we had to compare Wordsworth and Shelley and find metaphors and similes under the tutelage of a robed and bespectacled headmaster. Then there was music with Miss Bowen, an art class with life drawing, the creation of fireworks in a science lesson and a maths exam with problems you needed a degree from Harvard, let alone a calculator, to solve. (My friend and I were ostracised for attempting it by a girl I know would have bullied me further given half the chance.)

In geography I actually learnt something about the economies of different countries and how difficult it is to master international trade when, as a Third World country, you only

have five sheets of yellow paper and one pair of scissors – and the table next to you, the US of A, has twenty times your paper, more scissors, compass, set squares, 6 pencils...

The treat of the Nightbird season was 'Fragrant', also at St Peter's Church, a flower-arranging demonstration given by two women who actually are flower arrangers. I had initially suspected a parody but this was the real thing. Gillian Poulain is Area Demonstrator for the National Association of Flower Arrangers and exhibits at the Chelsea and Hampton Court Flower Shows, and both she and Margaret Canavan are members of the Woodford Flower Club, City Creations and Capel Designers.

On the theme of 'Dreams Come True' they created six arrangements, works of art in their own right, whilst relating anecdotal pearls about their husbands, children and holidays, and giving tips on which flowers to use where: 'If you feel in doubt, leave it out. I say, if you want to win, stuff it in.' Even the thorny stem

of politics reared its head: 'I always said I wouldn't buy Columbian carnations but sometimes your principles go by the wayside, don't they?'

Both women were brilliant speakers, natural entertainers with a real gift for timing, honesty and subtle delivery. Alan Bennett himself couldn't have written better.

'Fragrant' and 'The Old School' were not highly developed works but doors opening onto different ways of seeing, be it theatre or more poignantly, our own personal experience. Tom Castle enabled me to revisit an old me to discover that some of those adolescent insecurities I thought I had outgrown still existed. Jyll Bradley gave space and time and the focus of creation to ordinary lives well lived and in so doing raised them above the everyday.

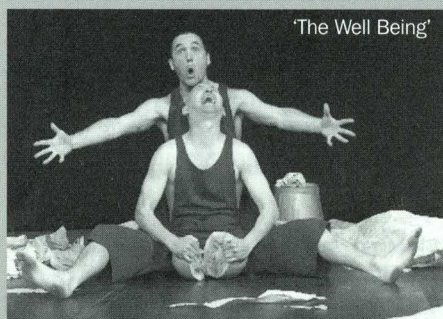
It would be good to see this kind of work, or at least approach to work, progress further, not to have it exist or sold as an interesting experiment that came and went, as 'dispos-



able' tat, and in that sense not much different to the manufacturing of the latest Pop Idol.

This was an experiment to be proud of with thought and integrity at its core – I hope there will be more to come. ■

To find out what Duckie are up to next, call 020 7737 4043.



#### Your name?

Andrew Buckland.

#### How would you describe yourself and your occupation?

I am co-creator of Mouthpeace's 'The Well Being' with Lionel Newton and Lara Foot-Newton. I am lucky enough at the moment to be employed by the Drama Department at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa, as an associate professor, but I have the strong feeling that I am a better actor/performer/theatre maker than I am a teacher.

#### What do you think was the best example of theatre you've seen in the past year?

The most inspiring work I have seen was a production called 'Immortale' by Il Ristorante – truly inspirational. Moving, exquisitely skilful, beautifully timed, performed and directed by a group of geniuses.

#### Which of your own artistic achievements are you most proud of?

'The Well Being' is the culmination of a series of works starting in 1986, in which we (myself

## IN BOX

# andrew.buckland

### The latest of our e-mail questionnaires

and other members of the Mouthpeace company) have tried to develop a style of theatre which employs the imaginations of the audience to take them on a fantastical journey using as little as possible in the way of theatrical tricks, but relying on the power of the physical and the skill of the players.

#### If you could change one thing (in yourself, your life/art or anything anywhere), what would it be?

I would like to make more facilities and training institutions available to the learner theatre makers of the Eastern Cape in South Africa. Because of the history of this country there are thousands of talented people who, given the opportunity, could contribute to the development of a world theatre in a unique and most extraordinary way, but are still lacking the basic training facilities and opportunities.

#### What does the term Total Theatre mean to you?

Much of the work we do – although this is not something we set out to do – is to discover what is this thing called Total Theatre. I believe

there is no answer except the pursuit of the answer. The point of the quest is the quest itself. Our answers are in the area of theatre which relies on the skill of the player and the director to create work which engages the audience in a creative conversation with the players, and which moves everybody involved towards some kind of awareness.

#### Your manifesto for theatre?

Still working on this. Theatre is our most fundamental creative activity and is the primary means of our evolution as a species, and as such needs continually to be reinvented. Theatre is Dead! Long Live Theatre!

*Mouthpeace began in 1986 when Andrew Buckland was awarded the Standard Bank Young Artists Award for Drama. Since then, they have created many shows including: 'No Easy Walk' (inspired by the work of Nelson Mandela), 'Between the Teeth', 'Bloodstream', 'Feedback', 'Human Race', 'The Water Juggler' and 'Makana'. Mouthpeace's 'The Well Being' returns to the UK in spring 2003.*

# Bloomin' Marvellous

Where does work with and by children fit into the 'total theatre' debate? Bloomin' Actors, a new participatory performance project for children living on the Shelthorpe estate in Loughborough, have been investigating the possibilities. Company performer/dramaturg JESSICA NAISH reports

There has been prolific debate about the definitions and scope of total theatre, with provocations offered and practices exchanged. One area of creative process and physical/visual performance which is not often reported is innovation in young people's total theatre.

Phil Gunderson's recent feature about the Fresh festival put the voices and experiences of young people in their teens and twenties as theatre goers and makers back into the mix. In response to Fresh participant Emma Baggett's call 'to start again, start with children and get them to play from a young age... and go on playing', this article will focus specifically on work by and with children and how their creativity contributes to growth and innovation in total theatre.

In Volume 12 issue 2, Dorothy Max Prior proposed that total theatre is: 'A collaboration between the performance space and every-

thing that happens within it, including sound, movement and visual imagery'. In Volume 14, issue 1, Paul Miskin referred to the multi-disciplinary approach where 'a totality of art forms [are] unified as one expressive syntax'.

In my own work making performance with children it is the pursuit of a total experience (spiritual, physical, emotional, visual, vocal...) which motivates; as Paul Miskin calls it 'the totality of the human participants in the event... the theatre piece, the spectators and the performers'.

Total theatre is a process, a way of working, an ethos, which thrives on diversity and the creation of unity in diversity, in terms of methods, form, content and human experience. (By unity don't read neat and tidy, read unification of purpose and holistic approach, with space for dissonance and multiple meanings.) The collaboration, which transpires in the performance space between diverse per-

formance elements, is the result of a process in which diversely disciplined artists and participants have consciously collaborated and played.

It's a risky, unpredictable business, but the potential for learning and creating 'out of the box' which is generated by working this way with young people can be very inspiring – for when given the space, children are the most natural and eloquent promulgators of total theatre.

## **Bloomin' Actors – making total theatre in collaboration with children**

25 March 2002: Ali Maclaurin and I unload sound equipment, sari silks, sand and miscellaneous making materials into the community room in Shelthorpe School. We start with the space – the transformation of the space into another world, turning the familiar into something other (like the parallel universe accessed by Platform 9 3/4 in Harry Potter). Ali makes spiral paths of stones leading from a sand-filled rockpool; she also hangs the silks in swoops from the ceiling. There is a map hidden in the space and unfinished postcards from Shelthorpe on Sea. This suggestive space is the children's first physical and imaginative port of call: it will be the stimulus for the week's devising process.

The children and I enter the space as performer-explorers. We have set up the rules for the improvisation outside the room and agree to find out as much as we can about the world we discover through the doors. During the week the children work collaboratively with Ali (scenographer and visual artist), sound artist Oogoo Maia, and myself as performer and dramaturg, to create the places, characters, songs and stories of Shelthorpe on Sea. They engage in devising happenings which directly respond to the familiar physical surroundings of their school, and which also manifest their



personal imaginative responses to the idea of Shelthorpe on Sea. This is also the very first project, where the children are learning the challenges of team-work, the discipline required to learn new skills and the developing of the confidence to explore creative, artistic impulses.

The four-day process was hard work for us all, and I had to keep reminding myself that this was the beginning of something new. When you aim to encourage children to become primary creators of their own work you are necessarily having to help them learn the skills to do that, as well as being patient with them as they adjust to being placed in roles of responsibility which they may never have experienced before. The unity of purpose and distance travelled by the group showed itself most tangibly when they shared their work with the local community.

### The Spirit of Performance

28 March 2002: In low-slung shadows and the remnants of a gloriously sunny day an audience gathers in a school playground. Parents, babies and kids on bikes and boards are waiting for the Bloomin' Actors. They've been told not to expect a play, more of an 'event' celebrating the first phase of a new performance project. The Bloomin' Actors round the corner, a multi-coloured crew of plentimaw fish (inspired by Haroun and the Sea of Stories), mermaids, gatekeepers, guides and sea dragons, greet the audience with a song welcoming them to Shelthorpe on Sea.

They lead the audience off on a journey through various sites and happenings. Ten rainbow umbrellas dance and spin like giant sea anemones, a clown wanders with a baby guitar through a Trim Trail transformed into an undersea world where fish faces peep through rubber tyres and mermaids ring a ship's bell. The audience is invited to move on by a piper's trill. They follow until they reach the entrance to the inner cave of Shelthorpe on Sea. The gate keeper asks for the password; the audience keep guessing – they don't get the password Maxime has decided is the key – but she takes pity on one shivering Dad and lets them in with 'Bloomin' Actors'. They were meant to say 'Mystic Portal', of course, but in this performance Maxime knew she had to be in the moment and improvise with the audience.

The Mystic Portal leads into a room swathed with sari silk, from ceiling to floor. The audience stands in a circle and witnesses a mesmeric underwater dance; music and silk fill the space. When the dancers sleep the lights go out and the audience is beckoned to gather around a rock-pool overflowing with sand, stones and fairy lights. The children and Oogoo softly sing Nature Boy: 'There was a boy, a very strange enchanted boy...'

The performance gently comes to a close. There is warm applause, some tears and



many smiles. No one knew what to expect, and over coffee and biscuits after the performance the audience could not quite describe it except that what they experienced was 'different', not like usual theatre; it had a little bit of everything, without sitting down to watch a 'show'. The children who had devised and performed the piece pulled their parents around the exhibition of pictures, maps and secret envelopes hanging on threads from the ceiling, which were the precious documents of their creative process.

Outside in the playground the bikers and boarders had stripped the flags and multi-coloured crepe streamers and tied them around handlebars and wheels. A trail of purple, blue and green led out of the school gates down the avenues of the estate. The world of Shelthorpe on Sea – not bound by restrictions of theatre space, theatre-going conventions or etiquette – had spilled, undiluted, into the alleys, pavements and porches of the estate. The ephemeral nature of the performance moment was juxtaposed by the continuation

of the spirit of the event – a spirit communicated in a truly theatrical form, i.e. primarily physical and visual, celebratory, somewhat unpredictable, multi-layered, responsive to specific environments and inviting participation (in process and in performance) for makers and audience alike.

If children can be encouraged to become makers of their own theatre (in diverse places and spaces and for diverse audiences), to work collaboratively and be assisted in developing an integrated skills base ranging from design and scenography, writing and performing to creative consultation and reflective evaluation, then a culture of growth and innovation in theatre practice (and culture) will inevitably occur.

What I am learning with the Bloomin' Actors is that total theatre is as much a philosophy, an attitude to work or a way of being as it is a theatre practice. It is a culture rooted in encouragement and experimentation, responsive to the personal and the individual, and reflective of the universal. When working with children, without short-cutting to traditional adult/child hierarchies, you cannot create anything unless you are willing to embrace this integrated approach and be patient that the process will bear fruit. It is not neat and it is not tidy, but some really interesting work is being made, which quite innocently demonstrates the magic of total theatre. ■

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*Bloomin' Actors project is funded by the Children's Fund and supported by Chamwood Arts, Shelthorpe Primary School, Special Units and Community centre and Loughborough University. It is run by the Bloomin' Actors children's steering group: Ali MacLaurin, scenographer and lecturer at Loughborough University and Jessica Naish, theatre maker and education officer at the Sherman Theatre in Cardiff.*



# The Magic Lantern

**W**hen it comes to critical analysis, the influence of film on theatre proves elusive as a screen image. 'Film theatre', it seems, is a tough term to define because the role of film in the theatre that embraces it is specific to each show.

Andrew Lloyd Webber's 'Bombay Dreams' may seem to be outside of Total Theatre Magazine's remit of 'physical and visual performance', but the presence of film posters on stage warrants a second look and serves as my starting point for considering the role of film in theatre...

For there is something beyond a plot at work in this play about the making of a Bollywood blockbuster. The musical treats the audience as voyeurs on the film-making process. A scene showing a Bollywood film in rehearsal makes the audience aware of watching characters watching each other and hints at how best to appreciate the show. From conception to billing as a 'Bollywood musical', this playful exposé of the film industry is a kind of postmodern joke at its own expense and relies for its humour on the use of film in theatre.

Whether or not 'Bombay Dreams' succeeds as an amusing experiment in big-budget theatre making, we note that less mainstream practitioners also use film in theatre to humorous effect. Robin Orlin's darkly funny 'Daddy' at the BITE 2002 festival exemplifies the technique. Orlin satirises Busby Berkleyesque cinematography by surrounding her performers with CCTV cameras to expose their ill-timed and amateurish performance. Orlin's performers play the parts of bad actors unaware of the cameras watching them as they delicately pass plates to each

other and fastidiously link arms: only on screen from a bird's eye view is the reality of their amusingly unsynchronised configurations revealed.

Not that film in theatre needs to make the audience laugh. Madani Younis of the Asian Theatre School in Leeds cites film as imperative to 'the new language of performance for Asian theatre', and his debut 'Streets of Rage' at the West Yorkshire Playhouse features live footage – to serious effect. His attitude to that footage in this devised response to the Bradford Riots is telling: 'Rather than bombard my audience with multimedia overload, I want them to question the real film footage (showing the police arresting 23 young men) before them.'

'Who Goes There?' by Dreamthinkspeak at the BAC also treats film as a sombre medium. This promenade rework of 'Hamlet' involves set pieces like heartbroken Ophelia watching herself and Hamlet on screen, or lusty Gertrude mesmerised by her own heavily made-up TV image, and the show would have been puzzling had these installations not

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**As a means of expressing the conflict between reality and perception, film comes into its own on stage**

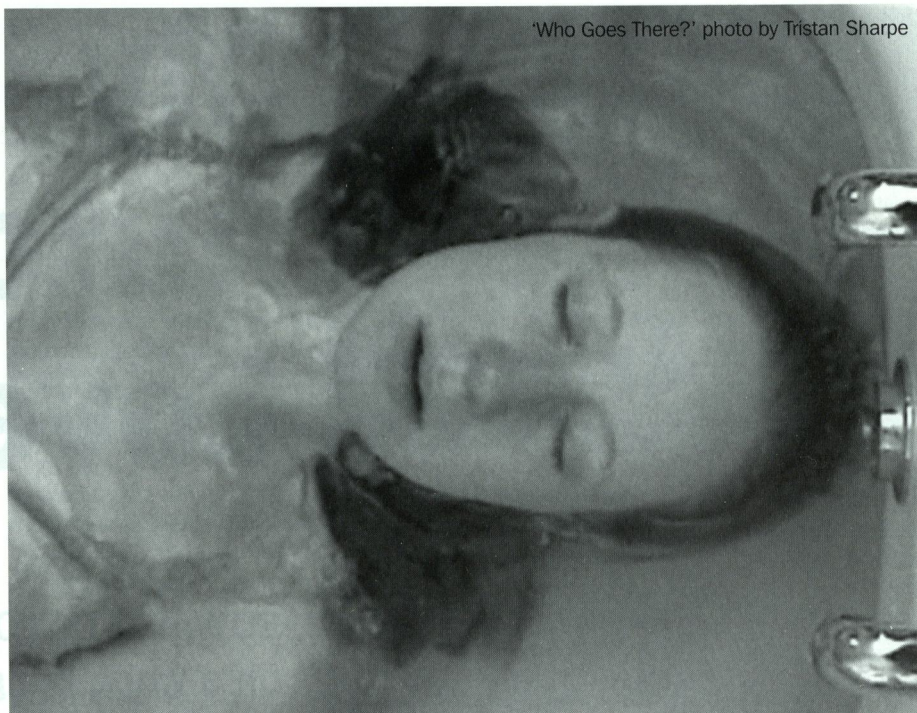
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been linked by the theme of intangibility. Ophelia's grief, like Gertrude's pain and the ghostly presence at the heart of this piece, is deeply felt but impossible to pin down. This is because 'Who Goes There?' focuses on the haunting, loss and grieving at the heart of 'Hamlet', approaching Shakespeare's poetic drama from the point of view of Hamlet's dead father and employing film tantalisingly as an example of how we can fool ourselves that something dead still lives. For as a means of expressing the conflict between reality and perception (a conflict which can indeed be funny, as when the ugliest characters in 'Bombay Dreams' pose for the camera) film comes into its own on stage.

I learnt this for myself when commissioned by Haringey Arts Council to adapt and modernise Shakespeare's 'Hamlet' into a new version called 'Ophelia', albeit a very different event from Dreamthinkspeak's collection of interactive installations. Presented with Jackson's Lane's spacious stage I set about trying to retell the classic using a variety of media and found that film as a background addition merely detracted from the stage where I sought to anchor the narrative. The solution I hit upon was to wholeheartedly digest film into that narrative and make Hamlet a film-maker. Watching the characters' on-stage reaction to Hamlet's 'mousetrap' film served to propel the action forward and offered the audience insight into the characters' preoccupations by demonstrating Hamlet's infatuation with his own perceptions.

Of course, putting film-makers or film watchers on stage is not the only way to engage an audience in film theatre... Ever-ambitious, Shunt's eloquent and intriguing-

**HELENA THOMPSON**  
reflects on the  
long-standing  
relationship  
between stage and  
screen and asks:  
How has film  
influenced theatre  
and what sort of  
theatre benefits  
from the presence  
of film?



packed 'Dance Bear Dance' is proof of the craftsmanship required to successfully stage a filmic piece of theatre. This show about image (as self-referential as any Hamlet rework) amounts to nothing more and nothing less than a dramatic collection of images that realise the essence of film as live performance. The show's form is imitative of the shifting focus it makes its subject, and the ever-changing context in which film appears heightens the drama of the piece. Whether treated to displays of slow-motion burning or bombarded with photos warning of a culprit on the loose, the audience experience theatre in a powerfully filmic way.

Also exploring the film/theatre relationship are multidisciplinary dance-theatre company, Ricochet. Judging by their recent piece, 'Point Of View' (choreographed by Neil Greenberg), their notion of the audience as voyeurs on the film-making process is more sophisticated than Lloyd Webber's. Their dance piece involving video projections walks the fine line between the cerebral and the emotional as the piece enacts in the flesh what film only represents. 'Point Of View' raises questions of subjectivity without compromising on its power to move.

Like the artists behind 'Who Goes There?' and 'Point Of View', poet and critic TS Eliot was preoccupied with the notion of the image – not surprisingly given his role as artistic pioneer when cinema was growing up. In times of critical confusion I've often found him a useful voice of calm. He never wrote for the screen, but he did know all about artistic hybrids, and though working in the fields of poetry and drama, it is film which informs the imagery of his writing:

'It is impossible to say just what I mean!  
But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in  
patterns on a screen:  
Would it have been worth while...  
No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant  
to be'

In this poem about the difficulty of 'saying what I mean', Eliot not only refers to Hamlet (a favourite with film/theatre practitioners, as we have seen) but employs film as symptomatic of all that is enigmatic and elusive. And it seems to me that the theatre pieces using film most effectively do so in a similar way.

Tim Etchells, director of Forced Entertainment and another critic-artist, would certainly agree. In 'Certain Fragments', his description of his characters' text as 'ghosts of real feeling' sounds like a description of film

itself. Like many theatre practitioners making use of film, his concern is for both the emotional and the critical. Indeed, film theatre practitioners often act as critics and their work shares a similar preoccupation with themes such as perception, objectification and identity.

In recognising that the best of film theatre practitioners warm to the subjectivity at the heart of film, I have my conclusion: What sort of theatre benefits from the presence of film? The theatre that successfully makes use of film deals with how we judge, and is often the stuff of artist-critics – practitioners whose critical faculties have been sharpened by constantly justifying a new genre. Film theatre at its best is ground-breaking performance which moves us to perceive that things aren't what they seem. ■





# My Automatic Lover

**EDWARD TAYLOR** takes us on a whizz-bang tour of the world of the automata – moving sculptures, mechanical puppets, scary toys and more...

**T**eatro des Automates is a turn of the 20th century Spanish sideshow where mechanical puppets act out incidents of domestic life. Little scenes are enacted in glass cases. In one a flirtatious dancer wiggles her hips lasciviously again and again and again. In another a baby crouches down and deposits a large turd on the best family carpet, much to the horror of the nursemaid. Underneath the cases you can see the mechanics which cause these scenes to happen.

The dancer is able to wiggle because of a wooden ball and socket joint where her hips are and a turning cog with uneven spokes which bestows an irregular rhythm to her movements. If she was too repetitive in her undulations the eye would not be fooled and she would merely be clockwork. In another context clockwork toys would be fabulous but here the fascination is in seeing how the artists who created her have translated mechanical actions into human actions.

In puppetry, there are forms where you can see the operators operating the puppets. Bunraku puppets from Japan may have several puppeteers. Far from diminishing the effect, it in fact adds to it. You can see the skill involved in bringing the puppet to life. At the end of the Wuhan puppet company's shows (basically traditional Chinese stories demonstrated by glove puppets) the puppeteers demonstrate the hand movements involved in allow-

ing the puppets to leap from hand to hand all over the set and switch direction quickly – it just makes you marvel more. Puppetry often involves movements which seem at a tangent to the effect being created. If you step back from the fiction the puppet is involved in, you witness a strange interdependent dance between a human and an inanimate object.

Automata also perform for the public but in doing so have removed the human operator from the equation. The Teatro des Automates would be presented at a fairground in a tent – the public would visit them much as they would a theatre. They would see a mechanical representation of society with all its follies, absurdities, garish delights and grotesqueries. The humour and approach is seaside-bawdy pushed one step further. The fact that puppets are involved allows notions of good taste to be challenged in a way that would probably be illegal in a theatre with live actors. Fairgrounds, always shadowy places at the best of times, would be the ideal venue for these assaults upon the sensibilities of decent people. The racial stereotyping of some of the figures unfortunately reflects the period in which it was created.

One of the most interesting features about automata is how they have tended in the past to exist outside of theatres, galleries and museums. From fairgrounds to seaside emporia it's as if there's always a touch of showman charlatanism to the art of creating mechanical life.

The whiff of the freak show is never far off. It seems to be an art created by people possessed of an unhealthy talent. Many of today's artists play with this concept – Cabaret Mechanical (a showcase for many of the UK's best automata makers), once housed in a unit in Covent Garden, has now relocated to Southend where the end of pier ambience enhances its treasure trove of animated figures. The exhibits range from traditional fairground figures like a strongman, a quack doctor and a fortune-teller to the gnomish antics of Anubis the Egyptian jackal god. The mix of showmanship and esoteric mystery persists.

There has been a huge cross-fertilisation going on between this work and another form which was also viewed as living in the 'lower' regions of the art world. Early cinema was first shown in fairground sideshows – people would see film trickery where burning objects were shown backwards so that a flower, for instance, appeared to be born from the flames. Méliès would film magic tricks or trips to the moon. When the Lumière brothers first showed a film of a train arriving at a station, people in the cinema booth leapt out of the way. Fairgrounds also featured exhibitions of waxworks which realistically depicted the ravages of disease upon the body – the exhibits are a mixture of prurience and public education; the calm expressions on the faces contradict the fact that their innards are on view via a sliced open belly.

Within the 'higher' regions of the art world, automata makers such as Eduard Bersudsky create miniature theatrical allegories which you sit and watch. (The Theatre Museum in Covent Garden is currently hosting the Sharmanka Kinetic Theatre exhibition of automata created by Bersudsky.) His creations mix religious themes with the carved figures of medieval carnival. The controversial American artist Paul McCarthy and his collaborators wear puppet Pinocchio masks (amongst others) to emphasise the de-humanising actions in his performances. We are dragged through a series of degrading actions performed by characters from our childhood. It takes the bad taste of the Teatro des Automates and pushes it into areas where subconscious desire meets crass mass commercialism. Ventriloquist's dolls often have licence to say the unsayable, often cruelly puncturing their owner's pretensions.

Automata can also be found on city streets. Medieval clocks would often open up to reveal the automated struggles between life, death, good and bad that time symbolises. In Newport town centre crowds gather in front of Andy Plant's mechanical clock just before the hour, waiting for it to spring into life. It has become a piece of street theatre.

The tall Roman columns that support the clock collapse, angels and devils vie for attention in a few vivid moments. He describes it as a white-knuckle clock, again emphasising that the fairground is never far away in being an inspiration for today's automata makers. Street theatre itself often uses puppets and mechanical creatures – Green Ginger's Gaston le Gouache is a puppet who draws you in the manner of a quick sketch artist; IOU Theatre created a show of giant tin toys called 'Autoperipatetikos' (the original name for such inventions). It's a rich and varied area...

Cabaret Mechanical were commissioned by a shopping centre in Sheffield to make a huge journey, 'The Ride of Life' – you sat on a sofa and were taken through various automated environments chronicling the passage between life and death. Hell was depicted as a miniature (f)unfair, Heaven was a choir of singing heads – in between you encountered a kitchen full of danger for the careless child, a theme park where history was condensed into its lowest common bland denominator and you were nearly run over by a full-sized animated lorry lurching towards you in the manner of Lumière's filmed train, amongst many other treats. Sadly its extraordinary mix of black humour, sarcasm and invention failed

to impress the American backers and although the project was finished it was boxed up and left to rot in a warehouse. Luckily, parts of the exhibition were temporarily resurrected and shown at several museums where they busted all attendance records.

I went to see 'Monsters Inc.' recently. I enjoyed it but the technique is terribly intimidating. It was only when I realised that a human hand still has to create each trembling hair on Sully the main monster's body (albeit via the finest computers that money can buy) that I felt a connection to it.

Despite the sophistication of modern computer animation there is still a fascination in watching little figures imitate life right there in front of you. The fact that you have to look in odd corners to discover where these figures might be performing adds to the magic of their discovery. The fact that the mechanics are there to see, whether it be a team of puppeteers or the turning of mechanical wheels, makes the magic even stronger – it makes it even harder to divine the skill of the makers. ■

*Sharmanka Kinetic Theatre continues at the Theatre Museum Covent Garden until spring 2003. See [www.theatremuseum.org](http://www.theatremuseum.org)*



IOU Theatre photo by Porl Medlock

# Spooner's World

Real live automaton

**RICHARD CUMING** tells how he entered the weird and wacky world of Paul Spooner

In Paul Spooner's slyly comic and thought-provoking book on the history of automata, 'Spooner's Moving Animals' (Virgin Books 1986), he states:

'It seems to me that the more nearly the machines resemble people, the more sharply the remaining differences between them and us are brought into focus. It is not natural to subject a real human being to the minute examination the almost-human machine invites.' (p.7)

This exploration of the difference between live performers and machine counterparts and the 'minute examination' of them was one of the themes in Mark Ross's theatrical adaptation of Paul's book, 'The Zoo of Tranquillity'. It was first performed at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith in autumn/winter 1989, with Sylvester McCoy as Sir Vester, and myself as his robot demonstrator, Professor Spooner. It subsequently transferred to Off-Broadway with the parts being played by Avner the Eccentric and his wife, Julie Goell.

In order to emphasise these differences Paul created large-scale versions of his automata, some of which then went on display in the now defunct Cabaret Mechanical Theatre in Covent Garden.

For example we presented a parodic art lecture with a life-sized 3D wooden version of Manet's Olympia lying languidly on her sofa, her torso undulating suggestively, while behind her stands her trembling servant (in this case the jackal-headed god, Anubis, whom he uses frequently in his work). When the performers left the stage at the end, an apparent pile of junk slowly transformed itself into a giant chicken, which laid an egg, then proceeded to crow in triumph.

Finally, we returned as ourselves and invited the audience on to the stage to

inspect the automata, which they did seriously and reverentially, as though at an art exhibition.

The illusory reality of puppets and automata and their relationship to how they operate mechanically has fascinated many practitioners and writers.

In 1802, for example, the German poet Heinrich von Kleist published an essay, 'About the Puppet Theatre' ('Selected Writings', Dent 1997), in which he discusses how the simple mechanical movements of the puppet appear 'gracious' and lifelike. Later Edward Gordon Craig focused on this relationship between actor and puppet, in 'The Actor and the Ubermarionette' (see '20th Century Performance Reader', Routledge 1996), whilst in 1918 in the pages of his journal, 'The Marionette', he attempted to classify puppets by country of origin, costume, the ways in which they may be animated, etc.

Some of Paul Spooner's automata, such as the aforementioned chicken, require an electric power source to animate them, whilst at the same time he delights in revealing their inner mechanisms. 'Spooner's Moving Animals' even contains cut-out models for the reader to make – although, ever helpful, he does suggest that if they don't feel like making them, 'our Director has their interests at heart and will allow them to relax on the grass if they can find someone else to make the models for them.'

In 'A Puppet Tree' in 'Puppets, Masks and Performing Objects' (TDR Books, New York, 2001, ed. John Bell), Stephen Kaplin asserts that the division between actor and puppet may not be sharp, but, 'as the physical distance between the performer and the object widens, the amount of technology needed to bridge the gap increases' (p.23). Of course, there are many forms in which the actual presence of the operator is precisely the point,

but it is intriguing for the observer to watch an automaton work by itself and to attempt to work out how the mechanism works.

Thus Paul created a Dodo for Kneehigh Theatre, which 'I based on a pneumatically operated deckchair, which peed on you as it flew over you. It required a great deal of tinkering with the thing to get it to work and when not flying looked like a deckchair.'

Automata are generally 'much less resilient than human beings.' For example, with his son, Tim, he designed and made the Fishboy puppet for Kneehigh's production of 'Fishboy' which 'requires constant cleaning and repair, especially now they're performing outdoors.'

His automata appear to have a life of their own, but 'I have to make the mechanism for the things, and they become a reflection of me', which seems to suggest that, whilst watching a performance with mechanical objects and puppets, audiences carry out a complex mental operation. They suspend their disbelief in the performing object's unreality, whilst simultaneously recognising that, however distant, there is an operator and a creator without which the puppet cannot live.

Amongst other things, 'The Zoo of Tranquillity' was a series of visual and psychological puzzles and puns about the real and the ideal. What had been performing objects during the performance, at the end became still sculptures. The audience had to make that shift in their perceptions, as they had to in comparing the apparently life-like automata with the real-life performers, who themselves were adopting a role (in my case that of an automaton.)

Through his creations, both automata and puppets, Paul Spooner addresses these extremely complex notions in a slyly subversive, ironic and thoroughly entertaining way. ■

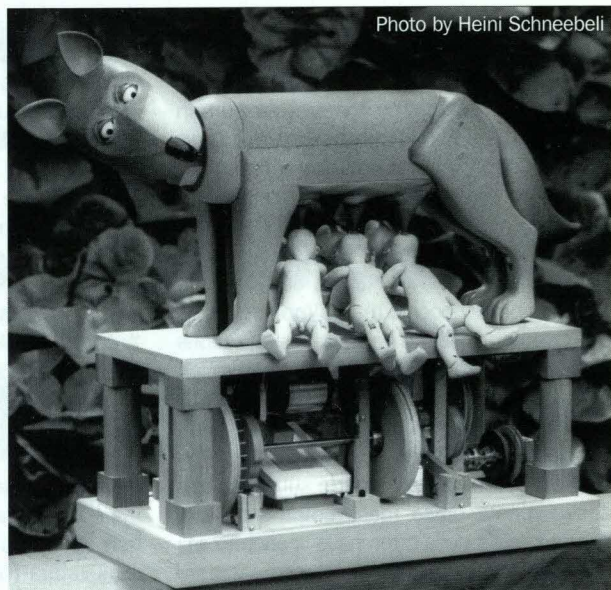


Photo by Heini Schneebeli



# Circus arts news

**News from the Circus Arts Forum: Issue 10 Autumn 2002**

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

As I write this, the restructuring of the Arts Council of England is still taking place (see back page for more details of this process). We are currently planning our next circus conference which will take place early next year. Fuller details will appear in the next issue of Circus Arts News and everyone who attended the Circus Open Forum will be sent information. An issue which is causing serious problems for the industry is insurance. While we are doing as much we can, it remains a very real problem for companies to get cover – in particular for aerial performance. We have been writing to the Department of Trade and Industry, Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Arts Council of England, and are in regular communication with different brokers and BIBA, the British Insurance Brokers' Association, who are setting up a working party to look at the difficult issues

around employer's and public liability insurance. As soon as we have any practical news, we will post it up onto the Noticeboard section of our website. On the subject of the website. I am always pleased when I hear about the increasingly large number of people who have found work/hired someone through the website or just used it to find specific information. It doesn't cost anything to use and the address is [www.circusarts.org.uk](http://www.circusarts.org.uk)

**Annabel Arndt, Director, 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 Space Creation Studio Awards

The Circus Space announces the winners of its 2002 Creation Studio bursaries, described by Charlie Holland, Programme Director, as 'a real opportunity for circus artists to explore new territory which we are confident will lead to a higher standard of performance in the future'. The awards enable both aspiring and established circus performers to experiment and work towards devising new work – with an emphasis on the process rather than finished product. This is the first of three years of these bursaries which are funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, with an additional three awards made through funding received from UBS Warburg.

The winners of the awards funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation are: Emma Insley to experiment with a four-person swinging triple-trapeze bar routine; Lila Lively & Alison Bullock to create a new aerial act based on 'Trolley Dollies'; Mark Morreau to experiment with 3D animation and circus; Amber Noble and Gemma Mawson towards a new acrobalance routine; Steve Rawlings to experiment with rhythms within different juggling patterns. These each received a bursary of £1,000.

Bursaries of £500 were granted to: Girisho Gordon to create and explore the potential of new aerial equipment; Andrea Gaechter to create new equipment and experiment with aerial work; Sam Hague and Stewart Pemberton to create new equipment and work towards a juggling act.

The winners of the awards funded by UBS Warburg are: Lucie Pasquier – £1,000 to create new aerial equipment and experiment with it; Max Haverkamp & Annette Fiaschi receive £5,000 to explore a new Acrobalance routine; Ajay Chhabra, also £500, to develop tumbling within an Asian circus group. Congratulations to all of you!

For further information on any of the Creation Studio Bursary Award Winners please contact: Lee Kendall at the Circus Space. Telephone 020 7729 9522 ext 248; e-mail [lee@thecircusspace.co.uk](mailto:lee@thecircusspace.co.uk); or see the website at [www.thecircusspace.co.uk](http://www.thecircusspace.co.uk)

## Playbox Theatre – New Projects

Playbox Theatre have received substantial funding from Regional Arts Lottery Programme to create a multimedia production to open 9/11 in 2003. Working with playwright Ron Hutchinson the creation is an epic work responding to events of September 11th 2001. Using video, design, movement, circus and text, Ron's work is now in early devel-

opment phase at the Creation Studios of Playbox Theatre, and will subsequently be directed by Stewart McGill. Playbox Theatre are also planning to co-produce, with early music band Armonico Consort, a staged version of Victoria's Requiem on Good Friday 2003 in Warwick at the Dream Factory. A choir, aerialists, movement artists and actors will create a full response to this magnificent work. Will this be the first time circus has been featured in a full requiem?

Playbox Theatre increase circus training output from September with a new training team and guests. The areas covered now include wire walking, juggling, manipulation, clown, trapeze, corde-lisse, plate spinning, acrobatics, rola-bola, choreography, direction and creation of solo and group acts. For information on any of the above Playbox projects call 01926 419555.

## Circus Star!

Selected from over 400 international applicants, Nicky Pearson, 17, from Circus Maniacs Youth Circus, Bristol, England, has been offered one of eight places on the three-year course at the Ecole Nationale du Cirque, in Montreal. It is a fantastic achievement. Nicky is only the 3rd Brit to gain a place at this school, (the others being Lucy Morgan and Donald Grant). Nicky has trained and performed with Circus Maniacs Youth Performance Company for four years, and has represented Britain and won prizes at several International Circus Arts Festivals. Nicky is still looking for funding/sponsorship for her training; it will cost her £7,000 per year for fees and living expenses. Anyone able to help – please e-mail [nickyappeal@circusmaniacs.com](mailto:nickyappeal@circusmaniacs.com) or phone Jackie on 07977 247287.

## Circus Maniacs – Try It Out Cabarets in Bristol

Starting Autumn 2002, Circus Maniacs offer opportunities to Circus and Physical Theatre Performers to display newly developed work in front of a live audience. Their 'Try It Out' Cabarets will be held about six times a year. The next dates are: Saturday 19th October 2002 at 7.30pm and Saturday 16th November 2002 at 7.30pm. Facilities include fixing points up to 8m high for aerial acts. Any artistes or acts who are interested in presenting work on either of the above dates should contact Jackie at Circus Maniacs: 0117 947 7042 or e-mail [cabaret@circusmaniacs.com](mailto:cabaret@circusmaniacs.com). For further information on these and other Circus Maniacs projects and plans see the website at: [www.circusmaniacs.com](http://www.circusmaniacs.com)

# Crossing the



Company members of  
Skinning the Cat,  
Circus of the Sky,  
reflect on the process  
of creating their  
heralded new  
production 'Rubicon'.

Photos by  
Harvey Dwight

**R**'ubicon' premiered in Bradford, was performed at this year's Glastonbury Festival in June 2002 and was then presented at the Circus Space in London in July. The show is a luxuriant and abundant melee of ideas and images, referencing traditional circus and music hall but with a contemporary buzz. Many of the elements are familiar from previous Skinning the Cat productions – the exploration of the decadent pleasures of domination and submission and the creation of colourful characters such as the spooky ringmistress, exotic creatures and valkyrie-like women – but here brought together in a fuller exploration of these favourite themes and metaphors.



## **In the Beginning... Jacky Crosher – Assistant Artistic Director and Performer**

'Rubicon' is an aerial drama that takes place on and around a 10m high by 10m wide beautiful golden arched trapeze structure. The whole structure, costumes, story and trapeze rig was conceived and designed by Becky Truman and then the company fleshed the story out in rehearsal. Working with an aerial company on a new show is an experience unlike any other. Those of you that have worked with a touring trapeze company or a touring circus will know that it is hard work, most of which is very unglamorous and involves enormous amounts of driving, loading, unloading and the setting up of the tent or trapeze rig. The actual performance is only a tiny piece of the whole shebang.

For Skinning the Cat's last big touring show, 'Enchantress', we had a rigging time of 10 hours and we already knew that 'Rubicon' would be bigger and more complicated. So our first week began with loading everything into our big 7.5 tonne truck, known as Gloria, driving from our office and storage space in Bradford to a disused gothic church, which was to be our creative space for three months. The church was amazing, with a large central area, with pulpit on one side and altar at the far end. On either side were six large pillars and three gothic arches. Above the arches was a balcony walkway high in the air overlooking the central area. Pillars and balconies are always useful for aerial companies as they can be put to use for tying off. The church is a fantastic space, but the temperature is almost unbearable. It's March, and the space heater and six gas heaters don't even dent the cold. We rehearse looking ridiculously like Michelin men in padded boiler suits and hats, and crowd round the fires like little match girls in the bitter cold...

# Rubicon...

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**Having spent a year dreaming and scheming about a show, it is wonderful when it finally takes shape**

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**Easing into Shape – Becky Truman, Artistic Director and Performer, takes up the tale...**

Having spent a year dreaming and scheming about a show, it is wonderful when it finally takes shape: the scenes I had envisaged now before my eyes, the new props designed, the soundtrack imagined... In a way the music is the most exciting as it pulls together all the parts and emotions in a show; it takes a certain skill to explain the feeling and tempo of a piece to a composer when he hasn't a clue what a bungee/silks/corde lisse act is. Possibly the funniest session was persuading a trumpet player to play badly!

Personally, as a rigging anorak, my happiest moments are when the aerial props arrive. The flying bicycle, long dreamt of and subsequently the technical bane of my life, looked every bit as stunning as it had in my head; and the giant birdcage, in which I was to do my silks act, was finally winched up in the air. Equally as magical but on the subtler front was the first time we managed to get a rather nervous Gisele into a giant bubble; an orange hammock suspended from the golden arch revealing two giant green eyes moving in unison; the first moment the collapsing flower actually collapsed...

There was the terrifying day when we realised that the top section of the rig was tearing due to repeated swinging. Some heated discussion with the structural engineer revealed a manufacturing fault that resulted in taking the rig down at the eleventh hour of rehearsals, causing us to lose a vital few days and acquire the new name 'Skin of their Teeth'!



**And finally – the show on the road – Chris Barltrop, the company's Marketing Consultant reflects...**

When those weeks of labour and rethinking and slog led us to be standing in the Combustion Chamber at the Circus Space, looking at the rig set up overnight by the same people who would perform on it that evening, we wished all in one thought that it was all over but also that it could never end, because like it or not at that second we were all there because we were lucky and privileged and part of something unique – the first independent performing company to present a circus-based show on that scale and in that style. You think of the quotes about first nights (and in spite of the show's success at Bradford and Glastonbury, this was a first night – the first time in London!) and you know how right they all are. No matter how ready it all is, it's never ready for that night...

If only there was only just one more day! ■

*Rubicon is now touring. For further information see the website: [www.skinningthecat.com](http://www.skinningthecat.com)*

# Taking Circus Seriously

As the Arts Council of England continues its restructuring process, **ANNABEL ARNDT** reflects on the place of circus within the funding system

**T**he Arts Council of England is currently in the middle of a 90-day negotiation with their union so cannot be specific about different roles within the new organisation until after those 90 days have passed. What they have said is that they formally recognise circus as an art form. Where before there have been inconsistencies in the way in which circus is viewed across the country, with there now being one national funding organisation, these should be cleared up. ACE have decided to place circus in the newly named theatre department – this was previously drama. Every theatre office across the regions will have circus listed as an area for which they are responsible – something the heads of departments will have to take on board.

The bad news is that it would appear that the newly created role of circus officer at the Arts Council will disappear; instead there will be an officer at regional level responsible for circus with the Director of Drama at ACE having overall responsibility. This can be compared with the way carnival is being treated, with the difference that the officer at regional level for carnival will be a Senior Officer and the circus officer will not.

With the exception of lottery funds, circus will now be on the same playing field as any other theatre company. So theoretically circuses/circus companies will be able to access exactly the same level of funding as theatre companies.

The Arts Council has recently set up a new National Circus Advisory Group. They have assembled a group of key people representing all aspects of circus. ACE sees the role of the group to be a strong and active advisory system to advise ACE and the rest of the funding system.

At a time of such structural change, it can only be good that the group has been set up at this point so that it can monitor the way in which circus is prioritised within the Arts Council. At the first meeting, Drama Director Nicola Thorold said that she would be looking to the group to do just that, to ensure that circus will be treated as a priority – a very important role if there is to be no senior officer solely responsible for circus at central office.

The new group will also be involved in the assessment of the National Touring Programme, a fund which has so far distributed £445,000 to circus projects.

Another role for the group will be to lobby ACE at higher levels on their funding priorities. It was recently announced that an additional £75 million pounds has been allocated to the arts from 2005/6. We will of course be working hard to ensure that the Council members who set ACE's priorities will understand the important role circus plays in our cultural lives, its historic underfunding and how readily it fulfils their strategic aims. ■

## Moto Mania



Can British circus hack it? **BILL BROOKMAN** says yes – having seen Swamp Circus's 'Moto II' show

**A**gatha Christie said that there were only six basic plots in novel writing. Non text-based theatre seems limited to only one: a free spirit is captured by a bunch of ghouls. She sees all their tricks (as do we), then achieves some sort of cathartic apotheosis. Circus is so difficult. Perfecting one skilled performance can take up all of an artist's life. So when Swamp Circus performs a narrative show, stock acts are slotted in and the cast prays that the story will flow. These are my only teeny moans about Swamp Circus's brilliant production 'Moto II' (described by the company as 'radical acrobatic theatre') which I saw at the Crucible Theatre, Sheffield.

Swamp Circus has had a long hard road to perform in a main house theatre. Brett Jackson, first-among-equals and Artistic Director of the collective company, had eyes which seemed to say 'it has taken me so long to get here – was it all worth it?' I suspect he was exhausted. It was worth it – well done, Brett. The five-ball juggling by Big Grey was almost too effortless; I thought it must only be four balls and had to quickly count them. The double aerial silk performance by Michele Laine and Jane Osborne is world standard. There was not one weak performer. The Crucible managed to get fire permitted on stage! That's one in the eye for the litigation slugs. When will we finally shift the perception in Britain that you have to be foreign to be good at circus? Swamp Circus are shovelling as hard as they can – don't give up! ■

See [www.swampcircus.com](http://www.swampcircus.com) for details of the company's future plans.

# Neutral Gear

Lecoq described the Neutral Mask as the central point of his teaching method. THOMAS WILSON attended a spring residency with Thomas Prattki, the pedagogical director of Ecole Jacques Lecoq, and here shares his thoughts and responses to the week

**W**ords often just can't communicate what seems to be essential about our lived experiences. And this is why, I suppose, so many of us find our experiences can only be articulated through other means...

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**Exterior:** A large granite outcrop on which sits a steepled church.

*Pan 360 degrees: Great swathes of rolling hills, bright sunlight and the smell of fresh air. The steeples of 17 neighbouring parish churches can be seen.*

*A long winding lane, on both sides tall 16th-century buildings, in various states of repair and habitation. A single ancient Citroen sits on the roadside, the only testament to modern world.*

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**Location.** Retreating to a rural location is often the choice of the modern urbanite. There is a legacy in our shared artistic heritage that uses this retreat to recharge, share knowledge, work, create or just get out of one of our heads. More and more courses are being offered that provide this opportunity, and the opportunity should be taken. To go away is to come home, to leave is to arrive...

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**Interior:** A small village hall, high stage at one end, double doors at the other. High windows from which beams of sunlight illuminate and heat small squares of the wooden floor. Two gas heaters, one stereo, and an assortment of benches and chairs in an alcove.

*Table, cloth, brown leather neutral mask. One on top of the other.*

*SFX: The sound of a gas heater being lit.*

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**Interior:** Small village hall, 14 figures, a motley collection of performers/educators/learners.

Similarly, I observe, neutral mask work uses the same approach. To go away from the fullness of our expression, acquired since birth through osmosis, direct instruction and mimicry, in order to reach a stage of full awareness of our expressivity. I observe that this invariably produces tensions and conflicts – suddenly in a fight for identity, expressivity is magnified, by the donning of a simple mask, coupled with the instruction: 'Wake up and explore the mask's environment.' With each new trial, each new attempt, a plethora of possible wakings and explorations emerge. Theatre is awakened, when the desire is to move away from theatricality.

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**Jacques Lecoq** founded his own school in 1956;

Jacques Lecoq posed questions, gave no answers;

Jacques Lecoq was '... like a gardener...';

Jacques Lecoq had no style to propose;

Jacques Lecoq called himself '... a neutral point through which you must pass in order to better articulate your own theatrical voice'; Jacques Lecoq's '... method was to apply the laws of movement to dramatic creation and to different acting traditions';

Jacques Lecoq's key words include jouer, le jeu, transference, essence, moteur, rhythm.

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**The body.** The body is infected with tensions and habitual responses.

Question [no answer required]: Is the neutral mask an anti-retroviral agent used to treat this?

Question [answer immediately]: Is your jaw tense at the moment? Are you clenching your jaw?

Loosen it, and breathe. Does your neck relax? Do your shoulders relax? Does your breath relax? Has it provoked a change?

The body is supported by the breath, the breath by the body.

Simplicity.

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**Interior:** The village hall. 14 figures sitting in a line on two benches and chairs. They face a single figure. The single figure stands to their left at the back of the hall. The figure wears a neutral mask. Silence. The figure crosses the back of the space. It stops halfway and turns. It runs towards the audience. Stopping suddenly, it raises both arms as if to reach a wave. [Pause]. The figure is still. The head turns away and the body follows. Slowly, purposefully, it walks back along the route it came.

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**Time.** I cannot see people watching me yet. I have not turned to see them. I am sitting. I wait, conscious I want more time, but with each second that passes meaning is created – meaning I'm not in control of. I'm fighting a losing battle against time. Time creates meaning, imposes meaning on me. I turn, anxious to relax my jaw, my body. Paradox: rushing moves my head; I am moving too slowly to control it. I am unsure. Something is created for the audience. I stumble on. Time chasing at my heels. How can I save this? How can I relax? I breathe – more unintentional meaning. My mind wanders; I wrestle with the time it takes me to get back to a focus on the task. I move a limb; I'm not sure if it was the one I wanted to. Too late. Onwards. Isolated from the outside world the human condition is clearer than ever. The irony is lost on me in my rush to get to the end. I reach a conclusion. I stop. Enclosed in leather I hear my breath racing.

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*Jacques Lecoq on neutral mask*

'Such fundamental things occur with this mask that it has become the central point of my teaching method.'

'When a student has experienced this neutral starting point his body will be freed, like a blank page on which drama can be inscribed.'

'Essentially, the neutral mask opens up the actor to the space around him.' ►

'The idea that everyone is alike is both true and totally false. Universality is not the same as uniformity.'

When I'm teaching, I constantly implore my students to do first and talk later. Some accept this, and some can't get out of planning, thinking and projecting their desires through words.

How do we break through this? How to encourage fledgling auteurs and dramaturgs to temporarily discard their linguistic safety net and plunge into the abyss of exploration?

How? Simplicity. Simple exercises with a simple premise and open possibilities. Simple instructions like 'start at zero and make your way to ten', 'repeat until I say stop.'

Working with neutral mask some ideas start to crystallise, some avenues start to appear.

Words arc into space, cutting through the waves of silence.

**Space.** A fundamental part of human existence. A fundamental part of human tension. The source of all human conflict, the premise for the greatest moments of human connection. From the battlefields of the world to the bedrooms of the world, space is the defining and unifying factor.

Can just a body change the space? Can a few words change a space?

The answer has to be a resounding yes!

But harder to answer, harder to achieve:

How does a performer take the space?

How does the performer change the space?

Does the performer ever fill the space? And how does the watcher see this change?

These are the crucial and most critical questions at the beginning of creating work.

And how do words relate, words that already have their own concrete meaning in space. How do we bypass the meaning of words? How does each word have a personal meaning for us? How can we no longer be slaves to the meaning of words? How can words be a catalyst for us, a catalyst for us to exceed their narrow almost didactic constraints? ■

*All quotes are taken from 'The Moving Body' by Jacques Lecoq, Methuen 2000. Thomas Wilson is a teacher of drama involved in creating and performing physical theatre and butoh-inspired work. Thomas Prattki this year leaves his position as pedagogical director of Ecole Jacques Lecoq in Paris in order to establish a new school in London. To find out more, e-mail aureliusarts@excite.com*

# If you've got an itch – SCRATCH!



Kazuko Hohki

**What do you do if you have a great idea for a new show but don't know what an audience will think? Well, you could ask them, says DAVID BERE. Photos by Tim Nunn**

There is a current trend on the London fringe that boldly opens the door for experimenting with ideas and work in its most elemental forms. The early stages of a work-in-progress is called 'Scratch' and has been a fundamental part of BAC's programming for a couple of years. According to Louise Blackwell, who programmes Scratch, the idea began during one of BAC's six-monthly brainstorming meetings. 'Kazuko Hohki, a storyteller and co-founder of The Frank Chickens, said that it would be great if she could show some of her ideas in front of an audience at a really early stage in the development of the work – and from that the Scratch nights were born.'

The term 'Scratch' is a curious one. The word conjures up an image of a group of musicians, a skiffle board, guitar and perhaps percussion played on bottles, boxes or whatever is easily to hand, sitting around just jamming. The dictionary offers a couple of apt definitions – as an adjective: 'collected or made

from whatever is available'. Or you have the more specific: 'from scratch, meaning from the beginning'. Put more simply, Scratch is a better word for work-in-progress.

Scratch at BAC has two faces, Scratch nights and Scratch performances. These are respectively the first two stages in BAC's programming structure, known as the Ladder of Development. Scratch nights occur on the first Sunday of every month, and are an opportunity for artists to perform in 'an evening of low-tech cabaret theatre' with '1-10 minutes of work in its infancy'. This could then lead to a two or three night run of Scratch performance, where the work has progressed from mewling infancy and can walk and talk but hasn't achieved maturity, yet. The important aspects of these evenings are that the ticket prices are low (pay what you can on Scratch nights) and the audience is encouraged to give feedback in the bar afterwards. BAC requests that during Scratch performances the artists invite

friends 'and potential friends of the work' so that feedback can be given in a constructive and fair way.

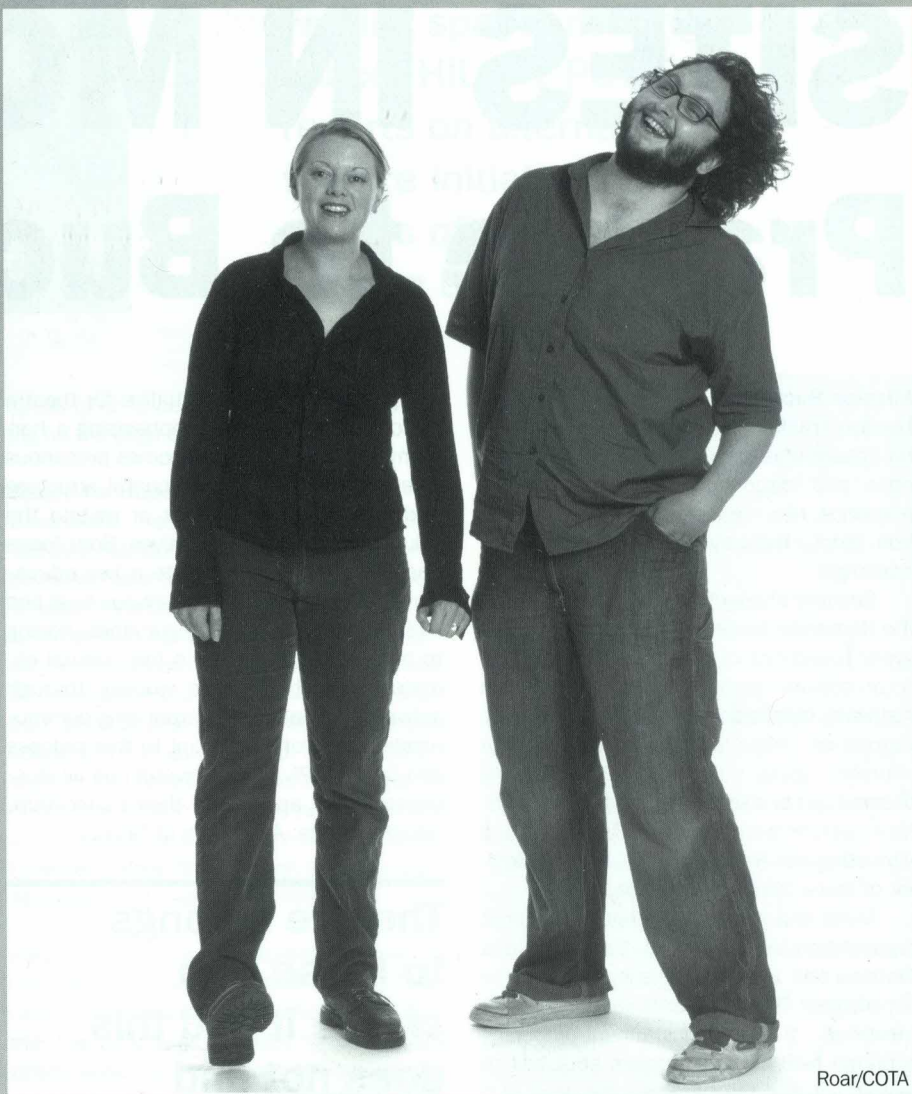
Scratch has been growing in success and has begun to develop a loyal following. Louise points out that Scratch audiences are not just made up of artists' contacts but 'people who are interested in seeing experimental work and contribute to the development of it. The whole point of the evening is that we all end up talking about the work shown. This always happens and makes for a very busy and exciting night in the BAC bar.'

This success has now begun to spread further afield. During BAC's Octoberfest last year the Lion and Unicorn pub theatre in Kentish Town hosted the Roar festival (a festival within the festival). The Roar festival featured Scratch nights on the three Mondays during the run. Since then Scratch nights have become a fixed feature in the Roar festivals and, now that they have moved from the Lion and Unicorn, what is now known as the Roar Projects.

Producer Tassos Stevens says that BAC's model has been an inspiration to Roar's Scratch, and sees it as a valuable way of creating new space for new artists. The model is the same as BAC's – up to 10 minutes of material gathered together with four or five other artists for an evening's programme. Tassos's remit is straightforward – it is the work that comes first. The ambition of an idea from its inception to the preliminary stages of its realisation is to him a main goal of Scratch. Tassos agrees that Scratch is a better term than work-in-progress, 'which has too much stigma attached, often to work that is second rate and is a rip-off for the audience'. Roar Projects in its ideals is an outlet for people bursting with enthusiasm and ideas, and provides a forum in which to explore their visions, offering the support of a stage and an audience in which to air a theatrical vision not yet fully realised.

The Roar Scratch is a free night; you come along and participate by buying at the bar and telling people what you thought. Though there is no guarantee of the quality of the work, with such a wide variety on offer there will certainly be flashes of brilliance jostling with crap; nonetheless the event is certain to be enjoyable.

Quality is not a prerequisite in participating in Scratch; it is a belief in the work and a desire to put something on stage, and in the process if the product is left wanting then this should and will be discussed afterwards. In many ways there is a licence to fail – as in Scratch development the door is open to absolutely anything, from running around naked covered in Sellotape reciting passages from 'Le Morte d'Arthur', to performing the tentative beginnings of a drama born of your heart.



Roar/COTA

What is fundamental to Scratch is the audience; this event is as much a chance for opinions to be aired as a breaking down of the walls between producer and purveyor. In all instances the audience is invited to drink with the performers or director and speak their mind about the show. At BAC this is set up from the outset by introducing the piece and requesting that the audience take certain ideas of what they have seen to the bar afterwards. For Roar the purpose is even more specific – the event is free on the premise that you are obliged to drink in the bar afterwards. This is quite a radical approach to developing work and it is here that Scratch comes into its own. Audiences are rarely asked directly to think about the work they are seeing (though they will always have an opinion), let alone to be asked to relay their thoughts back to the actors or director. A good example of direct audience influence came when Marcello Magni was given the opportunity to perform a Scratch show at BAC for two nights, and in response to comments on the first night changed his show for the second night...

At BAC the approach is contained and focused on its own venue remit – for BAC artists to develop new work, thus leading to a completed show airing a run of two or three weeks. For Roar all you need to participate is a good idea and the courage to take the risk of putting it on stage. But the process is one of development and is still heading towards the programming of finished pieces for a Roar festival. The ends are the same. Both have the same goal at heart in the promotion of new work, providing a space for experimentation and progress in the production of theatre. As Tassos says, 'There needs to be an open door on the fringe for exploring new ideas with people who are committed to the work, committed to putting the idea before an audience'. ■

*Roar Projects Scratch nights are at The Gate and Arcola. Roar 04 runs 5-17 November at The Latchmere. Contact Tassos Stevens at [roarproject@hotmail.com](mailto:roarproject@hotmail.com). BAC Scratch nights are on the first Sunday of the month, and during Octoberfest. Contact Louise Blackwell at [louiseb@bac.org.uk](mailto:louiseb@bac.org.uk)*

# SITES IN MOTION: Prague to Bucharest

## Mission Bucharest

London-Frankfurt-Bucharest. On this long-haul coach voyage miles are devoured in darkness and discomfort and time has no relevance, now measured in neon petrol station stops, highway toll-gates and border crossings.

Scenery change reaches completion at the Romanian border, echoed in the whirling gypsy soundtrack of local radio, hanging garlic on colourful parasols, rusting pipes, open highways, vast fields of dying sunflowers, blue Carpathian mountains, shining Orthodox churches, gypsy mansions, haystacks... All become part of a setting sun as darkness falls. Next stop and final destination: Bucharest and a meeting with Nona Ciobanu – theatre director of Toaca cultural foundation.

Toaca is a non-governmental non-profit organisation established in 1996 by Nona Ciobanu and Julian Baltestescu – actor and set designer. The name has a variety of potent meanings – a religious instrument producing a primal beat used by monks as a call to prayer, but also the name for the peak of a mountain in Moldavia reached by a rickety stairway – and in verb form means 'to hack to pieces'.

Toaca's stated ambitious intentions are: *To provide an 'outside the system' framework for contemporary art; to offer young artists cross-disciplinary training and support for independent projects; to promote communication between Romanian freelance artists and between national and international cultural values; to create a space where art, politics and social issues can interact; to broaden the scope of cultural projects into the community.*

## Networks and Partnerships

To fulfil these aims Toaca is part of a partnership programme with MAPA (Moving Academy of Performing Arts) Amsterdam, mamapapa of Prague and the Contemporary Dance Association, Bratislava.

I came into contact with this network as a student of Scenography at DAMU Academy of Performing Arts in Prague through a course programme entitled 'space as a partner' led by Tomas Zizka of mamapapa organisation. Like Toaca, mamapapa is an

independent artist-run initiative for theatre performers and artists emphasising a harmony and balance that becomes precarious when surrounding governmental structure and cultural policy neglect or negate the value of such cultural initiatives. Both Toaca and mamapapa incorporate a key educational role in organising continuous local and international exchange programmes, hoping to bring about changes in the cultural climate in which they are working through active participation. An expanding communication network is crucial to this process and here MAPA plays a pivotal role as illustrated in the apt title of their publication, 'Moving Minds: A Network of Talent'.

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## Theatre belongs to those who create it and this does not and perhaps should not extend to property

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MAPA was officially established in 1993 and the emphasis has remained on the small scale, multidisciplinary training and all-round entrepreneurship. This is achieved through workshops, a summer academy and the defining MAPA 'Academy on Wheels' tour in which the summer's production is packaged and toured to host partners in their mobile studio/office/theatre.

The aim is the creation of a sustainable future for its active partners in local and regional development and exemplifies the Slavic origins of the word Mapa as both road map and portfolio, a travelling showcase.

## The Problem of Property

If there is any question of belonging, it is that theatre belongs to those who create it and this does not and perhaps should not extend to property. Originally signing a 15-year lease

agreement under the new communist government, the stability of the Toaca cultural centre is uncertain. Nona acknowledges that, if necessary, they will unashamedly move on, conserving energy and commitment for the production of new and innovative theatre above a constant and perhaps doomed battle with authorities for space access. It all boils down to the power play involved in such spatial politics.

Toaca is housed in Casa Eliad, a 19th-century building that functioned as a house of culture during communist times. (Culture then limited to the symbols of the official arts: a typewriter, a sewing machine and a folk ensemble.) It now faces resistance from all sides. The local Mafia operate a car wash and laundering service in the forcibly redundant outdoor theatre and such opposition goes beyond this to local government and the refusal to recognise the vibrant creative community growing from this location in Bucharest's sector 3.

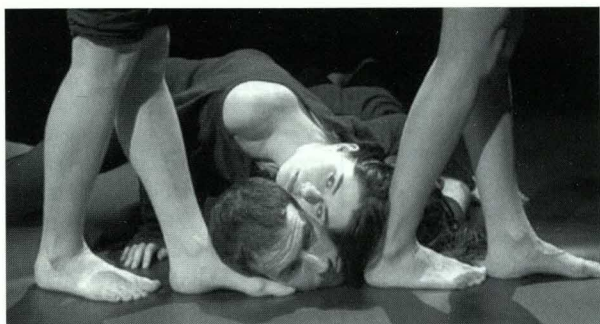
Part of the 'Bucharesti Frumos' (beautiful Bucharest) facade project, the historic value of the site also presents its own difficulties. Building on the philosophy of the multi-skilled performer, this group of committed artists transformed the building from dereliction to cosmetic splendour. This improvement has become a double-edged sword. A common local authority policy of demolition has been swayed as the property is now coveted for its increased real estate value and the gained position of heritage listed building. Saved from the wrecking ball to face different forces of change.

## Dancing Around Policy

*'If the motion around us stops, four days will fly away like crows.'* (Pavel Storek)

Despite the value placed on the function of a cultural centre as a centralised base camp and meeting point, the logistical difficulties in this strategy have contributed to another movement. A move towards a concept and practice of the moving site is employed to create continuously expanding and changing autonomous zones.

The very roots of mamapapa organisation – a grounding in Meyerhold's bio-mechanics and theatre perceived as a Constructivist mobile space coupled with a tradition of



## Finding space, making space. HILARY POWELL reports on alternative theatre initiatives and the politics of space in Eastern Europe

squatting in preparation of artistic occupation – has made this an obvious move for the Prague group.

The literal threat of eviction is continually faced by mamapapa. Their office and meeting base at Studio Citadela, Prague 1, is relatively stable as it remains under the auspices of the culture friendly Linhart Foundation. However, mamapapa's ambitious collaborative space projects have often met an abrupt end at an early stage.

A recent example is the proposed Kotelna Partnership. This aimed to combine the resources of mamapapa, Pimac (Prague international media centre), Tri-media lab and a meeting space for the Linhart foundation under one roof. This roof was to be an old boiler factory's but this plan has quite literally fallen through. The surrounding Karlin industrial quarter is undergoing rapid urban regeneration and a progressive interdisciplinary cultural centre fostering international links apparently has no value within such a scheme and is now added to a long list of 'disappearances'.

The transitional has been forced to work as an advantage, prompting intensely site-specific events exemplified in the previous use of the factory as the site for a four-day festival of European performance.

Such a strategy presents a means of survival and an ethos for such groups made homeless within a state of cultural drought. Money poured into Prague as a labelled city of culture 2000 – but little fell on such small-scale independent initiatives working in direct reaction against the state-funded repertory system. Just as much of the site-specific work emerging in Western countries in the 1970s came about through doubt and reaction against a system of commodity capitalism, economics have overtaken politics in the new multi-party environment of the Czech Republic only serving to compound the politics of space. Is this a new state of emergence or emergency?

In Prague a monumental statue of Stalin has been blown to pieces and replaced by a giant metronome beating ponderously slow time over a city in which countless times exist and move at a faster pace. There may be setbacks, interruptions, but it is still possible to

speak of an underground movement operating on the edge of state culture.

### Space for Hope

Beyond the 'heart of Europe', described as 'between occidental and oriental', Bucharest obviously has a different tale to tell, yet, in both situations one cannot escape from, or help but be impressed by, a certain utopian spirit present in the passion of such groups in the face of varied adversity. A utopianism quite apart from political past... a harmony of individual voices in the creation of both a centre and a catalyst for change. There remains space for hope: 'The theatre today has perhaps to help in the search for a space for hope; it cannot however create false illusion and the mere appearance of hope.' (J Koval) ■

*Hilary Powell is currently studying for a PhD in Cultural Studies at Goldsmiths College. Combining theory and practice, she is investigating the processes involved in the artistic appropriation of the spaces and sites of the wasted margins or junk spaces of the city. Her own installation practice incorporates such elements. E-mail: hilary\_powell@hotmail.com*

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## Theatre Trash 'Battery Operated Birds'

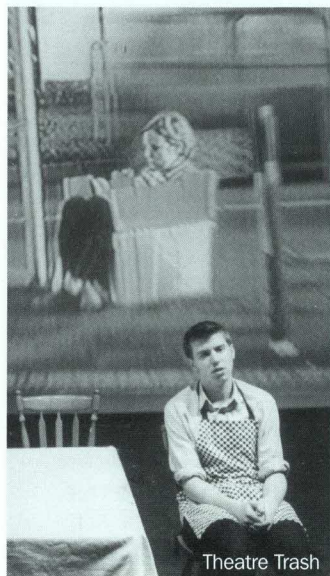
Edinburgh Fringe Festival,  
August 2002

Intriguing in both name and in presentation, 'Battery Operated Birds', devised by the ensemble 'Theatre Trash', is a piece about emotionally damaged characters trying to find fulfillment in their lives. Dry humour is expressed in the repetition of day-to-day scenarios in a seemingly average household, reworded as if filmed for a health and safety video. Domestic tasks symbolise the forming of relationships and the household's inhabitants attempt to get it right without knowing that they are being made to try again and again.

Using video projection, an exploration of advice fed to the general public through commercial media inspires the text and physicality of this work. Warnings of everyday dangers in the home and guidance on how to avoid them are interspersed with the daily exchanges between a landlady and her tenants, alluding to dysfunction within their lives.

The messages are that 'someone has to suffer for the rest of us to learn' and that 'happiness is a procedure for which it is difficult to find instructions'. Through a macabre and comical window we witness mistake after mistake, part of daily routine but controlled by external forces.

This was a competent production brought to us by a young ensemble with an interesting take on modern living. They manage to hold the audience's attention; however one can't



Theatre Trash

help feeling that they are not quite developed enough as a company to fully express the intent of the piece. An ambitious start.

**Akua Obeng-Frimpong**

## Catalyst Theatre 'The Blue Orphan'

Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh  
Festival Fringe 2002

It was great to see a world premiere at Edinburgh – there seemed to be so few on the Fringe this year – from this enterprising Canadian company. 'The Blue Orphan' shares many familiar elements with the company's previous success, 'The House of Pootsie Plunkett': a stunning lighting design that uses rich shades of violet blue, gold, green and deep magenta in abundance; a collection of oddball characters that speak an other-worldly poetic text; a sculptural use of still and moving figures in counterpoint.

The oppression of the familiar versus the horrors of the unknown is a theme common to both productions. In 'Pootsie' it was the claustrophobic environment of the dysfunctional family, here it is the intensity of small town life – as lived in Crooked Creek (which, as the story begins, is poised on the brink of cataclysmic change). Catalyst Theatre explore ideas with currency in contemporary culture – in this case the proverbial wing-flapping butterfly of chaos theory and the interconnectedness of all events – but their reference points are those of myth, archetype and fairy tale. Like most famous fairy tales, from the Brothers Grimm to L. Frank Baum's Oz stories, contemporary cultural references mix in easily with the alternative world created. 'The Blue Orphan' takes the company even further away from naturalistic drama into fantasy realms by using the much-maligned medium of music theatre, with a score composed by artistic director Jonathan Christenson who also co-writes, directs and performs in the production!

The work of Catalyst Theatre is lush and lavish, rich and romantic. It is excessive and indulgent – in the best sense of those words – like being wrapped in velvets and silks and spoon-fed strawberries with home-made ice cream. What a treat!

**Dorothy Max Prior**



'The Blue Orphan'  
photo by Ellis Brothers

## Attic People 'Drip'

C Venues, Edinburgh Fringe  
Festival, August 2002

A sweltering black box space seems an appropriately agonising venue for 'Drip', a darkly comic piece based around a water conservation contest. However, Attic People, under the direction of Lucinka Eisler, forego the limits of the imagination offering an experience nowhere near as excruciating as that of the cartoonish characters. Tenants within an apartment block – lively caricatures with exaggerated physical attributes – eagerly await the opportunity to compete in the 'Annual Cracker Valley Water Conservation Contest'. The challenge: to use less water than the neighbours and win, at all costs.

Unassuming Ben has a secret yearning for his landlord's niece, Lise, who changes his life. He daydreams about a world through the plughole, risking the neighbours' lead in the competition by taking regular baths and drifting off to idyllic aquatic life.

A table and a recurring soundtrack are used to great effect in this slick production. With well-observed comedic flare, all aspects of life in the apartments without water can be viewed. A chorus imitate the sounds of creaking plumbing and the cast employ Lecoq-inspired movement to convey the architecture of the building – taking rides in the elevator; sliding down the trash chute; walking up and down the stairs.

The energy escalates as the neighbours get wise to Ben's secret soaks and get militant, resulting in a tragedy. The prying neighbours, including a hunched homicidal granny from the Deep South, and a frizzy-haired woman with a large ass and a fond-

ness for 'Salty Snacks', turn on Ben in their bid to win the competition.

This is a consummate ensemble of performers who utilise traditional chorus to fill the space with an almost limitless variety of vocal effects and visual imagery, telling an original tale with eccentric charm.

**Akua Obeng-Frimpong**

## Pig Iron Theatre Company / Joseph Chaikin 'Shut Eye'

Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh  
Festival Fringe 2002

'Shut Eye' starts with a bed and a coma patient and at first presents itself as a regular piece of naturalistic drama. The ward auxiliary mops around the bed; the coma patient stays in his own silent world as his sister muses aloud on their relationship and her own life worries. And then... with ease and fluidity the whole thing shifts into a space between dream and reality, where characters and stories mesh and weave into a beautifully realised exploration of co-existing opposites such as presence and absence, love and duty, memory and amnesia.

At first the slip into alternative realities is almost credible as part of a 'real life' story: the sister's business colleagues arrive for a power breakfast meeting by the bedside that is rather unlikely but still possible... From then on it's a steady slide into parallel universes as everyone bursts into song, beds dance across the stage and, like the White King in 'Through the Looking Glass', we ask – who is dreaming whom? And if you are dreaming me what happens to me when you wake up? Who is 'self' and who is 'other'?

Moments that have stayed to haunt: two figures curled together, hanging from a ladder, a picture of fragility and sibling love; the sound of an accordion from a whimsical wandering Sandman; a half-eaten muffin sitting on the unconscious body; a horribly funny re-enactment of the moments before a car crash. The company use any and every theatrical element – words, music, physical action and visual motif – to create a piece of theatre that is both funny and moving – a totally rewarding experience.

**Dorothy Max Prior**

## Puppet Up! Fest

Blackpool, May 2002

Evoking your first memory of puppetry can situate you in time's slipstream as accurately as carbon dating. My first encounter with the world of the animated inanimate was Muffin the Mule, dancing on the top of a piano to the serenade of a bright and cheerful presenter. On subsequent reviews of this moment, courtesy of nostalgic television playback, the strings are clearly visible, but I am sure, at the time, I was transported magically to a state of suspension of disbelief. Several years later (ahem!), I found myself in a Bunraku theatre in Osaka equally suspending disbelief as clearly visible puppeteers manipulated the characters of Japanese folk tales with an anatomical accuracy and grace that brought alive a miniaturised but epic world. Somewhere between these formative experiences, while working on a community theatre project, I was exposed to The World Puppet Festival in Charlevill-Mezieres. There I encountered surreal shadow play, Wagnerian puppet opera, the Passion as puppetry, blue puppet shows, performance art and the great Spanish company La Claca whose allegory of fascism brought alive the paintings of Joan Miró. I was initiated into the epic sweep of the puppet world. (More about Sweep's puppet partner later!)

Meanwhile the puppetry flame has been kept alive in this country by companies such as the Little Angel (currently under threat from funding withdrawal as I write), the British Puppet Centre at Battersea Arts Centre, Faulty Optic and Green Ginger amongst others. Compared to Europe, puppetry in this country would seem to be under-funded and insufficiently profiled. However, with the persistence of various companies, training courses, the utilisation of puppetry in theatre and performance productions, there is change afoot and appreciation that puppetry is not only the preserve of the children's entertainer.

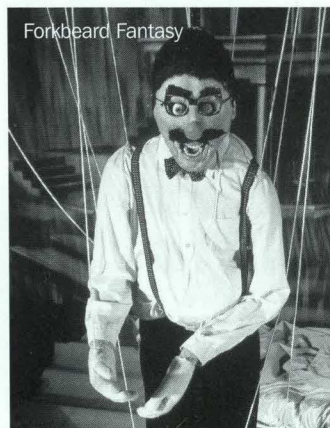
A festival such as the Blackpool Festival of Puppetry and Visual Theatre is a particularly bright and incandescent beacon illuminating the variety of puppetry manifestations (through programming by the festival director Rachel Riggs) that is imagi-

native as it is comprehensive. A procession through the streets of Blackpool evoked a strong community engagement with the participation of local groups who had been preparing for the event with puppetry animators in an outreach programme. The parade also contained on one hand the innovative and vastly experienced IOU with their spectacular giant leech and on the other, the equally experienced and age-defying Sooty himself.

Street performances ensured that the town centre was animated with a combination of static shows and perambulatory interventions. Shoppers, the curious and festival aficionados found themselves in a waking dream as miniature circus acts rose behind newspapers (Original Mixture), an elegant ballroom dancer on stilts waltzed with his better half the lovely Yolanda (Larkin a Bout), two boffins scrutinised the streets (Moving People), and giant puppets tangoed through the crowds (The Lighthouse Company). The Fairly Famous Family juggled their lavatory brushes while Horse and Bamboo collaborated with the local youth theatre and brought us 'Ships that Passed in the Night'.

An indoor programme balanced the unique weird and fecund imagination of Faulty Optic with the beauty of Acces l'Air's object, shadow and puppet theatre while Sooty held court on the Prom. Forkbeard Fantasy confounded our perceptions with 'An Experiment in Contra Projection' as film and life, screen and theatre, puppet and persona, blurred their edges. At the Grundy Art Gallery, Forkbeard treated us to an exhibition of peepshows, automata and trompe l'oeil.

Puppetry has been out of the nursery a long time. Companies such as Improbable and Complicité have used it as a component of their per-



formance language. I am sure that companies that specialise in this medium would welcome even more recognition than currently exists. Festivals such as Puppet Up! 2002 raise puppetry's profile and celebrate its diversity. And why Blackpool? Because of developmental work on the ground, a sympathetic council and the vision of a perceptive director in Rachel Riggs...

**Mitch Mitchell**

## The Wooster Group

'To You, The Birdie! (Phèdre)'

Riverside Studios, Hammersmith, May 2002

'The legendary' is something of an over-used epithet – but in the case of New York's The Wooster Group entirely appropriate. Seeing them for the first time, there is a sense of familiarity with their trademark theatre language and the technological devices used: the deconstruction of a classic text; a combination of spoken and pre-recorded word and song to form a multi-layered soundscape; interaction between live performers and their video-taped alter-egos; postmodern referencing of a variety of both 'high' and 'popular' cultural data thrown together to provide a re-evaluation of those signs and symbols... this due in part to having seen so many artists who have been influenced by them.

But whilst sitting entranced by the unparalleled competence of the company in their use of ultra-modern technology came the thought: underneath it all, what we have here is a version of Racine's *Phèdre* that is remarkably true to the original text – which both celebrates the Classical ethos (with its striving for perfection and obsession with form) yet also offers a dispassionate critique of Classicism.

The icy blue-white horizontal fluorescent lighting strips seem to be sideways-on Doric columns, toppled towers; the moveable steel frames, monitors and glass panels a celebration of all that is sharp and functional and perfectly formed – yet cold and hard and unyielding (but we all know how glass and steel can bend and melt).

Into this environment are placed characters whose emotional lives are boxed into the glass coffins of TV screens or acted out on a point-scoring badminton court, their voices dispossessed, transposed to other bodies. We witness their distress but find it hard to feel for them, busy as we are enjoying the spectacle of it all...

**Dorothy Max Prior**

## Acces l'Air

'Après La Pluie'

Puppet Up! Festival, Blackpool, May 2002

With simple beginnings – mutterings, the odd word, a candle and a letter which becomes the first shadow screen, the story unfolds of the amazing sea journey of Collette Carrigan's grandfather. The attic contains sea-going items – a diary which becomes shadow theatre; a ship's wheel showing shadow sailors; ships which are headaddresses lit with little lights. In a strong Liverpool accent Collette accompanies these images with romantic sea shanties.

The humour kicks in with a buxom mermaid who lures the poor seamen to their deaths. Donning a magnificent wig our performer takes on this role around a dressing table with three mirrors, which are in fact, alternatively windows and shadow screens. The plot becomes fantastic and after being totally gripped by the journey through an inventive set, I felt a mood change in the audience.

The lightness was a good contrast but I feel we were not pulled back into the mysterious world which had been established. It could have been done with the underwater sequence but that was weak considering Collette's obvious talents in creating images. Also the plot became very moral, with the mermaid taking revenge on humans for their treatment of the sea. The idea was good but came from nowhere. It could have been introduced through the medium of the seamen earlier. Before judgments can be dished out, the crime must be established not presumed.

The control and inventiveness of lighting and screens throughout the whole performance was excellent; the use of the set and objects, curious and exciting.

**Diana Bayliss**

## Walk the Plank with Bambuco

Greenwich Meridian, Greenwich and Docklands Festival, July 2002

0° longitude: It was a beautiful summer evening and the perfect location, adjacent to the Cutty Sark in Greenwich, Bambuco's organically geometric structure of poles mirroring the wooden masts of the famous tea clipper. We had walked – no, marched – through the under-river foot tunnel from the Isle of Dogs, having admired the view across the river – the two wooden constructions created for different reasons by people at different points in time united in a space overloaded with historical and geographical significance. So even without the presence of the human performer, here was a theatre of space and design, evoking many responses and reflections on human voyage and endeavour; on the interaction of cultures and commodities; on the relationship between land, air and sea.

As the sun set, the sculpture was activated by waves of light. This being the work of pyrotechnic masters Walk the Plank, these colours were not the pure primaries of a regular firework display but the rich jewel tones of ruby, jade and lapis lazuli which seemed to skip along the structure. Performers climbed and clambered – the introduction of the human figure giving an immediate sense of scale, a changed perception of the dimensions involved: short spaces between bamboo poles were suddenly great gaping holes to the sky that a person could easily fall through. An aerialist swung her trapeze gracefully and carelessly out over the water. The choreography was the sort of 'simple'

perfection that makes it all look as easy and enchanting as watching a child on a swing – no sense of someone up there 'doing tricks'. In its magical combination of site, visual design and physical skill this was an event that showed that outdoor performance has as much power to touch the soul as any other form of theatre.

**Dorothy Max Prior**

## Network of Stuff Theatre

'The Pickled King'

Camden People's Theatre, May 2002

Network of Stuff Theatre (Felix Hayes, Andrew P. Paton and Thomas Warwick) unravel the hysterical story of a kingdom in a terrible state. King Oliver has been missing from the throne for nearly fifteen years and his nasty son, Lord Otto, is ready to take over the crown. However, the King is not dead, merely pickled, and lies in a jar in Dr Able's pantry of medical keepsakes. The near-senile anatomist is aided by the near-stupid Simon. Simon can hear the King speak in the jar: the King wants his kingdom back. Simon reveals his stupidity and the gift of hearing voices to the Grand Deacon and the torturer (both evil). Then begins the dramatic race to see if the pickled king will return to the throne or if the nasty Lord Otto will continue controlling the kingdom as the crowned King...

The three performers portray a wide array of characters through their superb physicality, accents and mime. The story unfolds both backwards and forwards in time. Physical and verbal comedy both play a strong role. For example, Simon takes the king-in-a-jar to the park and attempts to play frisbee with

him, except that the frisbee bounces off the glass. When the jars first come alive is also a superb moment: the pickled French Brain, Pickled Baby and the Pickled King have a poetry night but two of them hate poetry and only the King is enthusiastic. A great line comes near the end when the Grand Deacon says, 'A wise man moves swiftly when the shit starts to fly'.

Although the complex story was gripping, at times the pace was slow. The show could have benefited from music, which would have enhanced the actor-generated sound effects. There were also lots of words and it would be interesting to see how through other means some parts of the story could be told. However, three great performers performed a hilarious and highly original faux-historical tale.

**Danny Schlesinger**

## Mapping4D

'Little English – Another British Museum'

Camden People's Theatre, June 2002

As soon as I entered the theatre, I was presented with something unexpected: the seats were stripped and the whole space transformed into a white box museum. Exhibited were six examples of people living in England: 'The Londoner', 'The second generation immigrant' etc. As we walked among them, they began to speak their various experiences of Englishness, gradually building an impression of the cultural diversity of the society which this project takes as its subject.

The striking design and delicate direction provided a fascinating environment to occupy and the audience genuinely did have the choice of which voices to listen to. The storytellers were diverse not only in their backgrounds but also in delivery and style, which appealed to me, as this seemed to allow their personal experiences individual voice.

However, as the piece moved away from installation in the direction of a more recognisable theatricality, I felt that this diversity caused problems. The different levels of performance within the company made it difficult to feel truly struck by the ensemble images and scenes, leaving the performers looking a little lost in

space and the piece becoming more general, both theatrically and politically.

This is an ambitious and exciting project and, for me, the most interesting direction for its future would be to find a conclusion more related to the detail of the personal experiences of those performing within it, with which the piece began.

**Gemma Brockis**

## Company Q

'Charnik-1'

Phoenix, Exeter, June 2002

'In a black hole anything can happen.' According to Company Q's publicity. The problem is that physical reality is more limited than that. Especially under the extreme gravitational conditions of a black hole.

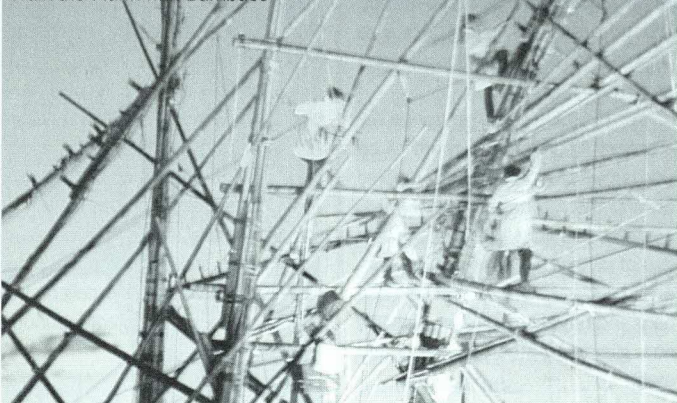
The claim in the programme is that 'Charnik-1' is 'inspired by astronomical and cutting edge cosmological ideas'. But it has more in common with Walt Disney's 'The Black Hole' in its attempt to maintain a human corporeal presence. The choreography of Charlotte Hacker and the dancing of Lisa Kendall and James Flynn would, in other circumstances, be emotionally engaging. But here they are intrusive, the dancers always aware of each other, inappropriately privileging human consciousness. Again the programme: '... we will be testing the interaction of humans and black holes'. For their sake I hope not.

Company Q's humanism gets in the way of their aims and subject. The space – dynamically lit and designed by Erik Rehl and the Surface Material Designer Emma Jeffs – is centred around a huge red (turning glacial blue) swirling funnel, like a plumed galaxy from a Hubble Space Telescope image. The electronica of Andy Visser is engrossing, if a little too close to the bleak wrecks of space movie soundtracks: 'Aliens', etc. The problem is with the humans. Romantic. Unfeasible. Metaphorical. The sublime qualities of the music and the scenography are dispersed.

Surely, to evoke the quantum events and extreme conditions of a black hole some denial of the human body has to be articulated. This show claimed to be based on cutting edge cosmology, but its physics are Newtonian.

**Phil Smith**

Walk the Plank with Bambuco



## Artists in Exile 'I Dream of a Window'

Riverside Studios,  
Hammersmith, June 2002

Artists in Exile, founded by theatre-maker Caryne Chapman Clark, is a London-based collective of professional artists from around the world. Most were forced to flee their homelands and thus 'rendered voiceless and powerless' – many were victims of torture or other forms of extreme oppression.

'I Dream of a Window' is a collaboratively devised theatre piece directed by Clark and based on the writings of Syrian poet Ghias Aljundi. It bears the mark of the experiences of the writer and company members – yet still presents a picture of the power of the human spirit to soar above physical and psychic abuse. Particularly strongly realised are the visual design of the piece – with its beautifully simple use of projection and frame structures – and the choreography from movement director LouLou Omer, who creates patterns of harmony and discord, unity and separation from her ensemble of four actors. Live music is always a wonderful bonus in a theatre production – and the guitar here is the perfect choice.

Less well realised is the spoken text – for though it is obvious that the words are powerful and often disturbingly beautiful the performers seem unsure of whether to deliver them as actor, poet or storyteller. My inclination would have been to deconstruct the written text – take away the preciousness but keep the power by re-allocating the words to different points in the action or different characters, perhaps, taking advantage of work and blur the distinctions between artistic techniques.

Their work is full of imagery but is anything but picturesque. They set up in a tight little square and presented four different tableaux/performance which repeated slowly over a period of two hours. You walked from one to another and although each tableau operated in its own separate little world, sounds from one bled into another and you might be distracted by the audience's reaction to a scene you weren't watching. You could browse or watch one until you recognised when the sequence was starting to repeat.

the multi-national cast to use languages other than English in the performance.

Although not a perfect piece of theatre, 'I Dream of a Window' is a profound and deeply moving production.

**Dorothy Max Prior**

## Shunt 'Dance Bear Dance'

Arch 12A, Bethnal Green,  
August 2002

It's not over till the fat lady sings – or in this case till the fat bear does his dance. Just when you thought it was all over comes the final soupçon, a little teaser from shunt: curtain call as performance art.

'Dance Bear Dance' is total theatre in the Wagnerian sense of the term: one is reminded of the review of the first performance of 'Parsifal', described as 'midway between mass and orgy'. All exotic and fetish-fodder human life is here: spymasters, foreign agents, nuns, priests, casino croupiers, trapeze artistes... a sort of compendium of contemporary archetype.

With more than a nod in the direction of Artaud, shunt create a theatre of the senses that sometimes crosses over into sheer sensory assault. At times I found myself thinking 'I'm too old for all this' as we were yet again dragged from one space to another, left to flounder in the dark or terrorised by loud bangs. Yet what else to expect in a show about gunpowder plots and the politics of terror? Shunt want their audience to physically experience the event, not just cerebrally take in the ideas. And if you are younger than me and thus

not reared on 70s anarchic 'happenings' it will all be new to you.

Least I sound too cynical I will say that shunt do it very well: the dramaturgy of the show, the visual sensibility, the use of light and space, is realised far beyond most contemporary young theatre-makers' capabilities. The performers work extremely well together – although less sure of themselves in interaction with the audience, which they encourage yet shy away from when the bait is taken. I enjoyed myself – in a heart-in-mouth-in-the-ghost-train sort of way – but next time will wear comfy shoes.

**Dorothy Max Prior**

## Les Arts Sauts 'Kayassine'

Victoria Park – Greenwich and  
Docklands/BITE festivals,  
July 2002

As you squeeze through the billowing inflatable doors, you enter the vast and dark dome-shaped tent, subtly lit by what appears to only be the exit lights. As the evening was particularly humid I was glad to be seated in a relaxing deck chair, complete with headrest, looking up into a starlit ceiling, reminiscent of the London Planetarium.

The opening sequence was acutely timed in soft slow balletic movements on static trapeze, by two white chiffon costumed women. Accompanying them were the sounds of the live musicians; one suspended from the ceiling with his double bass, while the cellists, harp player and two singers on the ground stood on extensive metal RSJ's. Craning their necks, the singers appeared to be serenading, chanting and possibly even worshipping the aerialists, as indeed they provoked the image of angels hovering above them. Harnessed by rather more warrior-like men, they glided on ropes gracefully through the air, creating a hypnotic beginning.

A narrative began to build, creating strong filmic images with transition from one section to the next flowing effortlessly. However, after rather a long and dramatic set change, where the huge joists lifted from the ground, taking with them the musicians and performers high towards the ceiling, the narrative seemed to disappear into a frantic

series of swinging trapeze and aerial stunts, incorporating the impressive cast of thirteen. Humorous undertones throughout kept the audience entertained. The endearing daredevils were technically perfect, creating a visually exciting show of mass appeal, to be enjoyed by all.

**Tansy Lihou**

## Giffords Circus

Barrington, Burford,  
July 2002

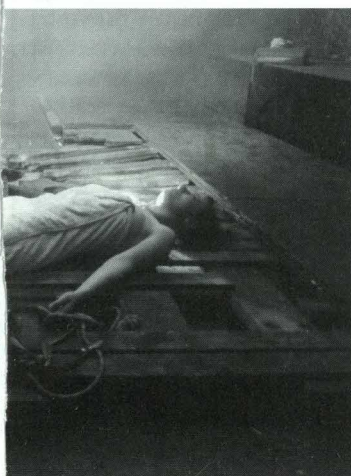
We drive into the picturesque Cotswolds village of Little Barrington at dusk. Handpainted signs direct us to a field where a small Big Top is pitched. Around it the wagons, caravans and trucks create a homely circle that draws the audience right into the heart of circus life.

This feeling of intimacy is integral to Giffords Circus. The tent, with its tiny sawdust ring and close-ranged seating, attracts us like eager children to the window of a sweet shop. The mystery of the delights within is preserved, yet at the same time we are made complicit with the magic. The artists interact directly with the audience and after the final bow the children are allowed to dance inside the ring.

The show is a team collaboration, put together over a very short period of time. Nevertheless, each part melds into a flawless jewel of a whole. The acts are simple and delicate. They blend the powerful legacy of traditional circus with a sense of irony that plays with the concept of circus as a world beyond human physicality. So Nell's magnificent 'high school' act is followed by the light relief of a pantomime horse, while M. Lee, the aerial chanteuse, combines strength and grace with comedy – tapdancing on the bar in frilly Shirley Temple knickers.

At the interval, kids clamber around on the swings while directors Nell and Toti Gifford and the dancers weave among the chattering crowd selling programmes and magic unfolding flowers. The feeling is of an extended family tea party, and for those who choose to stay for dinner under the awning of the restaurant wagon to feast on stargazy pie, this careful illusion continues long into the night.

**Amy Howard**



# The Cholmondleys and The Featherstonehaughs

'One and a Half: The Pub Show'

The Vauxhall Tavern, London, April 2002

The Cholmondleys and The Featherstonehaughs kicked off the Duckie-produced Nightbird season brilliantly with two dance works performed in the infamous confines of the Vauxhall Tavern.

Wearing skeletal masks, producing eerie, shaking, rattling movements and accompanied by the amazing 'country-electro avant-garde duo' the Victims of Death, the ten dancers were straight out of those B-grade horror films I didn't always manage to avoid seeing in high school. Therefore, from the beginning of the first set, I thought it was going to be funny. But no matter how hard I tried, instead I found it compelling, disturbing, confronting and nightmarish. It subverted my initial boring expectations and I didn't laugh once.

The second piece was a delve into the cabaret world of pre-Nazi Berlin, all performers Liza Minelli's Sally Bowles gone wrong somehow: black corsets, wigs, suspenders, same deadpan bored expressions. The uniformity, androgyny even, lent an almost dreamlike quality to the performers' flirtatious, slow, deliberate movements. The crowd couldn't take their eyes off them and the performers finished with us baying for more.

During the night, an engraver recreated punters' sexual fantasies on paper to then be hoisted up the pole for all and sundry to see. Whilst there was nothing out of the ordinary (save one woman's desire to brand her name on the blacksmith...?) it did

add to the general 'je ne sais quoi' of the evening, by the end of which we were all jumping up and down to the London Readers Wives' inimitable turntable selection... Fantastisch, mein Herr!

Anne-Louise Rentell

# Winchester Hat Fair

June 2002

The Hat Fair is 'Britain's Longest Running Festival of Street Theatre,' and since the mid 1970s it has developed into a four day event, which takes over the whole of the centre of Winchester, as well as surrounding venues, including the Cathedral Green. This year over 40 companies from all over the world were performing. On the Saturday afternoon there is so much going on it's almost impossible to move in the High Street.

And yet it still manages to retain a feeling of smallness and cosiness. This is partly because of the real sense of community involvement at its heart, partly because of the loyalty of many performers (notably Haggis & Charlie, Palfi the Laughologist, Circus Fudge) who return time and again, partly because of the size of Winchester, and partly because founder Jonathan Kay is still very much in evidence.

This year there was a further expansion. The Theatre Royal hosted two nights of cabaret, the Teazer - 'An Evening of Decaying Decadence,' - and 'Lennie and Morris's Voodoo Vaudeville.' Furthermore, the Bioscope Show was in a new venue behind the Cathedral; the Broadway had been completely opened up for the Saturday Night Street Continental, and Wolvesey Castle presented 'A Feast of Fire', which, with its stunning and imaginative use of the space,

colour and use of music was, for me, the highlight of the four days.

Less successful was Compagnie Elixir from France, who presented 'La Machine' as the culmination of the Street Continental on Saturday Night. A cross between Mad Max and Archaos with a sort of Heath Robinson contraption, emitting flames, smoke and stench it slowly made its way down the High Street manned by a post-apocalyptic crew, before stopping in the Broadway. The ensuing performance seemed to be more of the same, promising much but delivering little.

In an overview of this length it's impossible to review each act but amidst the jugglers, stiltwalkers and clowns were some real gems. I particularly liked The Strangelings at the Picnic on the Sunday. Two polar explorers outside their tent, passing the time waiting ('I wonder where Oates has got to.' 'He said he may be some time, Sir.') were funny, touching, absurd and well characterised. Their presentation subverted the standard approaches of street theatre, in that they avoided playing or appealing to their audience.

Then there were the Australian Aborigine dances of Red Centre Dreaming, although I had my doubts about their authenticity; nevertheless they were strong and unusual, the dancers embodying the essence of the animals they portrayed, especially the kangaroo. And finally Talia Theatre's The Doodlebug Bomb was an object lesson in how to build a show which fits perfectly into an outdoor venue whilst engaging its audience in time-honoured fashion. The inflatable bomb was pretty good too.

Under Director Cat Lorrigo and her team the Hat Fair accomplishes the difficult feat of developing and broadening its range of work, whilst remaining true to its roots as an event where all performers are welcome. It will be interesting to see how it consolidates this year's achievement and in what ways it will continue to grow.

Richard Cuming

# Mamoloucos Aristophanes' 'The Birds'

National Theatre, London, August 2002

For a company whose defiant mission is 'to create work based on circus that

throws out the rulebook and starts again', what better play to experiment with than Aristophanes' 'The Birds'? This satirical comedy not only questions and derides the laws of politics and religion but also provides the perfect opportunity for theatre and circus to fuse in a marvellous, unholy coupling that has seldom before been attempted with such success.

Director Kathryn Hunter makes full use of the slapstick comedy central to the original play, and by doing so she binds the beauty and grace of her birds tightly to the absurdity of the human race. Though our focus in 'The Birds' is captured by the artists who perform the fantastic feats of flight on corde lisse, static trapeze, bungee trapeze and trampoline, it is drawn continually back to the antics of Pezza and Eck, the two human protagonists who can charm with words despite their lack of wings (these two have a purpose in the production traditionally fulfilled by the circus clown).

But Hunter is not just stacking words against body here - she also demonstrates what power the two have when combined. Her aerialists speak, though many of them are new to acting.

In fact, the coupling of circus and theatre in 'The Birds' resonates within the whole concept of men and birds united. By the final scene the rulebook has truly been thrown out, and the chaos that takes its place as Pezza and his feathered flock limp from the stage is something that we secretly revel in. Let's hope that just as circus has penetrated now into one of this country's main theatrical institutions, 'The Birds' will be able to adapt itself to the big top and go on tour as originally planned.

Amy Howard

... galaxy from a Hubble Space Telescope image. The electronica of Andy Visser is engrossing, if a little too close to the bleak wrecks of space movie soundtracks: 'Aliens', etc. The problem is with the humans. Romantic. Unfeasible. Metaphorical. The sublime qualities of the music and the scenography are dispersed.

Surely, to evoke the quantum events and extreme conditions of a black hole some denial of the human body has to be articulated. This show claimed to be based on cutting edge cosmology, but its physics are Newtonian.

Phil Smith



The Strangelings

question: does the balance of life fall on of joy, or of sorrow? The show, co-directed by Heinen and Anne Rautiainen, is being produced with the help of COTA and will be booked for dates later this year. For details contact Anne Heinen on 020 8368 3313 or dheinen@onetel.net.uk

### Théâtre Sans Frontières

will return in the autumn with its sell-out 'Tour de France'. This adventure story traces the exploits of three 'Sans Frontières' detectives as they follow the famous race attempt to recover the leaders' jerseys which have been stolen by 'Le Fantôme Cycliste'. The show introduces a young audience (aged 8+) to some simple French phrases, with the interactive video screen sequences and traditional and original live music and song. Curiouser and curiouser... In December, Théâtre Sans Frontières will tour 'Alice' – a new adaptation based on Lewis Carroll's classic stories. The show is a co-production with the Scottish theatre company Benchmarks, touring England and Scotland. Performed by a cast of 10, the show is suitable for children aged 8 and upwards, their families and friends. For more information, telephone/fax 01434 652484/607206, e-mail admin@tsf.co.uk or see www.theatresansfrontieres.co.uk

### Trading Faces

have toured their co-production with Forest Theatre company 'Double Trouble' over the summer to outdoor urban and rural locations across the south, south-east and west of England. This commedia-inspired family show, so popular in 2001, the companies continue touring it again this year. The show combines traditional leather half-masks, acrobatic movement and song in a story of two

The company's aesthetic is very minimalist; there is no expression of skillful art on show – the objects are a collage of crude woodwork, job-lots of unexpected day-to-day items and food stuffs – the costumes are charity shop items combined in unfamiliar ways. The performance style is understated – the performers carry out physical actions and tasks rather than act out characters – the aim is to create a scene where each element has an equal balance. The sounds and music are created by objects that function equally well as sculpture or musical instrument.

The four scenes take recognisable actions from normal life and abstract them so they take on a new dimension. The work consistently engages and has great humour within it but does not set out to entertain. Scenes may confuse you, challenge and even offend. The juxtaposition of moods is quite deliberate. In such a tourist haven of photo opportunities it was a pleasure to see such tough and uncompromising work.

**Edward Taylor**

## Legs On The Wall 'Homeland'

Manchester, July 2002

This performance was dedicated to the asylum seekers currently kept in camps in Australia. The show began with Eastern European music. The audience stood in the road looking up at the flat featureless wall of the 25-storey Premier Lodge Hotel. A lone figure appeared at the top, a man standing on the vertical plane of the wall, facing down to the ground below.

In slow motion he ran towards the street, attached to a rope that negated the effect of gravity. His shadow danced in his wake, stretching, elongating, spinning and twisting as the man zig-zagged across the vertical plane. And then he flew. Effortlessly he launched himself into space, to fly in great arcs across the wall.

Another figure made her way down to join the dance. She too flew in arcs across the building. A man and a woman working together to create a dance drama that was turned through an orientation of 90 degrees, onto a vertical plane. This inversion gave a poetic irony of translated aspirations.

The couple's aim was to gain the city. But their journey was a descent from impossible heights to the grime of the urban street.

Images of refugees seen through windows and doors were projected onto the surface of the wall. Another couple ascended from the street, climbing over these images. Pulled apart, they struggled to find each other. But at last all four were united in joyous reunion.

This was a breathtaking performance that achieved a poetry of motion unrestrained by gravity. Manchester International Arts deserve credit for having identified this location and bringing Legs On The Wall halfway across the world to exploit its potential.

**Michael Lister**

## Trestle Theatre 'The Adventures of the Stoneheads'

National Theatre, London, July 2002

The Trestle Theatre Company's latest creation was presented as part of the Transformation season, which has shown evidence of the National Theatre's new commitment to promote physical and visual forms of theatre alongside the best of 'new writing'.

'The Adventures of the Stoneheads' is truly a piece of art, using minimal set designs and talented performers to paint a series of beautiful images. Serious issues are dealt with but there is just the right touch of comedy thrown in to keep the audience satisfied.

Stoneheads is a reversion to the style of work for which Trestle became famous: it is performed in mask and not one word is spoken – the emotional journey at the heart of the story is conveyed to the audience through expressive body language and creative visual imagery. The masks have only one look to them but with a simple movement such as a slight tilt of the head the character suddenly looks happy, sad or mad.

The story at the heart of the Stoneheads – the journey of main character Milan (Alan Riley) – is told through a range of artistic expression: mask, movement and an eclectic collection of music ranging from obscure Transylvanian Jewish pieces to the hip hop sounds of current diva Mary J. Blige. The set is simple, yet the way it is activated and the excellent lighting system draw you into Milan's journey; as the stage spun and the music slowed during the scene where Milan goes to a pub and drinks himself into oblivion I think I may have got a little tipsy myself!

**Whitney Spaner**

## Warner & Consorten MIMOS mime festival

Perigueux, August 2002

Into the pretty picture postcard location of Perigueux came Warner & Consorten from Amsterdam, a collective of artists who explore multi-disciplined work and blur the distinctions between artistic techniques.

Their work is full of imagery but is anything but picturesque. They set up in a tight little square and presented four different tableaux/performance which repeated slowly over a period of two hours. You walked from one to another and although each tableau operated in its own separate little world, sounds from one bled into another and you might be distracted by the audience's reaction to a scene you weren't watching. You could browse or watch one until you recognised when the sequence was starting to repeat.

Trestle



## PERFORMER & COMPANY UPDATE

### Dell'Arte Company

has been invited to be the American presence in a new internationally collaborative project that will open the 28th World Congress of the International Theatre Institute (ITI) in Athens, Greece, 15-20 October 2002. This project is a collaboration between Greece, Germany and the USA. It is an extraordinary international venture that is unique and will subsequently tour throughout Greece and Germany. Dell'Arte will be the American partner to the ITI centers of Greece and Germany in producing this project. If you would like to find out more about this or other Dell'Arte projects, performances and training programmes for 2003, send a mail to [omword@aol.com](mailto:omword@aol.com) and you will be put on the newsletter mailing list.

### Dynamic New Animation

kicked off the summer season with Rachel Riggs directing May's annual 'Puppet Up! 2002' Festival of Puppetry & Visual Theatre in Blackpool. The work culminated in a spectacular grand parade through Blackpool's streets. Adam Bennett continues a busy touring schedule, delighting children nationwide with 'Sweetie Pie' (with Hannah Ringham), 'Chicken Licken', 'Thurtinkles Telling Tales' and 'Around The World'. DNA will be touring France this autumn with gigs at Lille's 'Brumes et Frimes' and 'Belforts Puppet Theatre' to name a couple. Another exciting development is the re-working of their adult puppetry show 'Skin Deep Circus'. This show is set to tour for a limited period this October, with a view to touring internationally next year. Catch it while you can! Contact 07976 946003 or [DNA@dynamicnewanimation.co.uk](mailto:DNA@dynamicnewanimation.co.uk) or [www.dynamicnewanimation.co.uk](http://www.dynamicnewanimation.co.uk)

### Expressive Feat Productions,

having recently performed 'The Tempest' with Changeling Theatre Company at Maidstone Millennium Riverstage and their aerial dance piece MoodSwing II at the Bull Arts Centre, Barnet as part of the Northern Exposure dance festival, will next bring 'Pixilation' – circus theatre show with Fidget Feet to various venues in Ireland from November. Also: Scratch Circus Nights – under construction! A new venture enabling circus artistes to showcase new and challenging work in Kent. For more information on any of the above please contact Tina on 01227 280399 or [exfeat@globalnet.co.uk](mailto:exfeat@globalnet.co.uk)

### Forbidden Theatre Company

in association with the Wimbledon Studio Theatre will be presenting 'Spell' from 10-22 December 2002 at the Wimbledon Studio. The piece has been created by the company and uses text, movement, original music and colourful visual elements to tell the story of the first ever Witch. Based on two of the tales by the Brothers Grimm, the show is suitable for children 7+ and more than enjoyable for adults. For further information visit [www.forbidden.org.uk](http://www.forbidden.org.uk)

### Foursight Theatre

will be touring their newly devised adaptation of 'The Snow Queen' from mid-December 2002 until

mid-February 2003. It opens at the Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton and then tours nationally in the new year. Described as 'a life-changing journey, which will make your teeth chatter, your soul tremble and your belief in the human spirit grow all the stronger'. Through music, puppets and physical theatre, Foursight breathes life into this enchanting and magical story, which is directed by Foursight's artistic director Naomi Cooke, with design by Purvin and music composed by Jill Dowse. For more details call 01902 714257 or see [www.foursight.theatre.mcmail.com](http://www.foursight.theatre.mcmail.com)

### Green Ginger,

after two years of worldwide touring from Pembrokeshire to Pakistan, have been awarded first prize for their performance of 'BAMBI the wilderness years' at the World Festival of Puppet Arts in Prague. The Festival featured artists and companies from Venezuela, Vietnam, Russia, Turkey, India, China as well as many European countries. Green Ginger were invited to perform their dark comic-book version of Felix Saltern's classic story during the Festival's opening ceremony. The company was nominated for a number of prizes including Best Director and Best Manipulation, but fought off stiff competition from companies from Italy and Germany to secure first prize in the main category of Best Performance.

### Horse + Bamboo

theatre company will soon be heading out on an eight-week national tour of their new show, 'Company Of Angels – The Story of Charlotte Salomon', which is based on the life of a German Jewish painter, born in Berlin in 1917. She was put to death just 26 years later in Birkenau concentration camp. In the last year of her life, while in exile in the South of France, she produced an amazing series of 765 paintings called 'Life? Or Theatre?' The paintings provide us with one of the most penetrating visual records of an individual life under the Nazi regime. Horse + Bamboo will use this amazingly rich material to create a visual and musical world to bring to life the world of the paintings as a piece of theatre. For booking details, contact the company's new tour booker Penny Mayes at Dramatic Solutions, on 020 8441 8575, or log on to the Horse + Bamboo website at [www.horseandbamboo.org](http://www.horseandbamboo.org)

### Lazzi!

in 2003 will be producing Witkacy's (Sl Witkiewicz) 'The Madman and The Nun', in various venues in Edinburgh, hopefully art galleries. The play, written in 1923, was a precursor of all European avant-garde theatre, before Genet, Ionesco, Pirandello, Dario Fo, Beckett, etc. It was ahead of its time and probably will be again. Dates will be announced when finalised, with performances at the next Edinburgh Fringe very likely. Also, David WW Johnstone will be offering master-classes in physical comedy. [www.lazzi.co.uk](http://www.lazzi.co.uk)

### Niki McCretton's

'Heretic' is a new production funded by South West Arts, and devised by Niki and Guy Dartnell. It is a solo performance by Niki McCretton, following her production 'Worm-Hole' which has been touring in Canada and the USA. It has been directed by Guy Dartnell and has a commissioned musical score with guest vocalist Rosie Brown.

After this touring the this show i Prague Fri been invite prestigious will also be dance thea premiering December. June Gamb Staddiscon +44 (0)17

### Opera Circ

collaborativ 'The Case', showcasing Theatre (w the Studio October. Fo on 020 73 .co.uk or c

### Sinéad Ru

with Out of to undertak on the natu step in or c an artist to Sinéad Rus character, a Evening wit is devised i director of Sarah Hirs from 11-13 with a group video projec a one-off pe birds united. By the final scene the stories of Italo Calvino Unzstsky been thrown out of both contact BAC 020 7223 2223.) Out of Inc were last seen at BAC in January with their critically acclaimed 'Life in the Folds'.

### Tall Stories

continue to tour 'The Gruffalo', which was a total sell-out at this year's Edinburgh Fringe and is about to be released as a 'live' video. Their new production, 'Something Else', also gained great reviews and sell-out audiences at the fringe. 'Something Else' plays at the Komedia Brighton this Christmas and has received funding from Southern Arts to tour in the spring. 'Snow White' plays the National Theatre platform space in December, before touring to Broadway and eastern America in the spring. See [www.tallstories.org.uk](http://www.tallstories.org.uk)

### Theatre Dappertutto

is a newly formed company whose first production, 'Pan and Boone', has recently run at Camden People's Theatre. The story is based on a new play by American Jeff Carey, which has been adapted to combine different kinds of puppets, live actors, shadows, and video clips. Pan and Boone are brothers who inhabit the dark and whimsical world of their father's bedtime stories. There they encounter bizarre, comic characters who slowly unveil a grim family secret, and allude to their father's ongoing struggle with depression. Despite its humour, the play poses a serious

question: does the balance of life fall on the side of joy, or of sorrow? The show, co-directed by Dale Heinen and Anne Rautiainen, is being produced with the help of COTA and will be booking for dates later this year. For details contact Dale Heinen on 020 8368 3313 or dheinen@onetel.net.uk

### **Théâtre Sans Frontières**

will return in the autumn with its sell-out show, 'Le Tour de France'. This adventure story on bikes traces the exploits of three 'Sans Frontières' detectives as they follow the famous race and attempt to recover the leaders' jerseys, which have been stolen by 'Le Fantôme Cycliste'. The show introduces a young audience (aged 7-12) to some simple French phrases, with the help of interactive video screen sequences and a score of traditional and original live music and French song. Curiouser and curiouser... In December and January, Théâtre Sans Frontières will tour with 'Alice' – a new adaptation based on Lewis Carroll's classic stories. The show is a co-production with Scottish theatre company Benchtoots, and will tour England and Scotland. Performed in English, the show is suitable for children aged 7 and upwards, their families and friends. For further information, telephone/fax 01434 652484/607206, e-mail admin@tsfront.co.uk or see www.theatresansfrontieres.co.uk

### **Trading Faces**

toured their co-production with Forest Forge Theatre company 'Double Trouble' over the summer to outdoor urban and rural locations across the south, south-east and west midlands regions. This commedia-inspired family show was so popular in 2001 the companies couldn't resist touring it again this year. The show combined traditional leather half-masks, acrobatics, live music and song in a story inspired by 'The Comedy of Errors' and Goldoni's 'Venetian Twins'. This autumn Trading Faces collaborate with Oxfordshire Touring Theatre to create 'The Little Prince', bringing mask theatre to family audiences for an autumn and spring tour of village halls and art centres. Both co-productions are part of a plan to develop work as part of the Southern Touring Theatre Consortium, an artistic alliance between Forest Forge Theatre Company, Oxfordshire Touring Theatre Company and Trading Faces. This collaborative approach to touring theatre creates new artistic opportunities for all three companies to benefit their local communities and audiences in the southern and south-east regions. For more information on Trading Faces visit www.tradingfaces.demon.co.uk

### **ZID Theater**

combines physical and visual performances since 1991. The group performs in special locations, in theatres and at festivals, throughout the Netherlands and abroad. ZID Theater has performed and given workshops in former Yugoslavia, Denmark, Czech republic, England, Germany and Columbia. Karolina Spaic is artistic leader and theatre director of ZID Theater. In her work she combines elements from physical theatre tradition, theatre anthropology, performance art and visual art. Sebo Bakker has been working with ZID Theater since 1992 and has performed in all ZID's group productions.

Besides ZID Theater, he has performed in several productions and films, including Jan Fabre's production 'Universal Copyrights 1 and 9' in 1996 and 1997.

## **MANAGEMENT & FUNDING NEWS**

### **A4A – Awards for All**

continue to offer small grants to projects that increase creativity/ extend access to the arts. Telephone 0845 600 20 40 or see their website for latest guidelines and application forms: www.awardsforall.org.uk

### **Camelot Foundation**

have published new guidelines – they have around £2m to distribute and their current programme is called 'Transforming Lives'. Not specifically an arts programme, it is aimed at 'bringing marginalised young people into the mainstream of UK life' – particularly young people who are: asylum seekers, disabled, with mental health problems or who are young parents. Telephone 020 7828 6085 or e-mail info@camelotfoundation.co.uk.

### **Interact**

in association with Meridian Theatre Company is offering one award of £20,000 and two of £10,000 to help realise a theatre production or tour. Closing date 14 October. Tel 020 7793 4145 or see their website at www.interactroleplay.com

### **Lisa Ullmann**

travelling scholarship fund offers financial assistance to anyone working in dance or movement practice to travel abroad to undertake a short course of study, undergo practice-based research or attend a conference. Deadline 25 January 2003. Download application forms from www.ullman-trav.fsnet.co.uk or send an SAE to The Secretary, LUTSF, 24 Cuppin Street, Chester CH1 2BN.

### **NESTA,**

the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts, supports innovative cross-practice work with a number of funding programmes. For details call 020 7645 9538, e-mail nesta@nesta.org.uk or see www.nesta.org.uk

### **Visiting Arts**

and Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation have launched a new series of awards. They will provide opportunities either for commissioning Portuguese artists resident in the UK or for companies to collaborate with Portuguese artists not resident in the UK. E-mail nelson.fernandez@britishcouncil.org (020 7389 3019) or miguel.santos@gulbenkian.org.uk (020 7908 7622).

### **Winston Churchill Travelling Fellowships**

offer opportunities for artists, writers, designers, choreographers and others working in the performing and creative arts to acquire knowledge and experience abroad related to their trade, craft or profession. It does not cover courses or academic study – but would, for example, fund a trip to work in another country. Closing date 30 October. Send SAE to Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, 15

Queens Gate Terrace, London SW7 5PR, or e-mail office@wcmt.org.uk

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

### **ROAR PROJECT: teamlion**

is regrouping under the banner of CoTA, Collective of Theatre Artists. With a mission, as before, to help develop new work and new artists. CoTA will be producing the ROAR PROJECT, ROAR Scratch Nights and the ROAR season of new work. ROAR Scratch Nights are open to anybody to try out any idea in front of an audience. From there, they will help you develop your work into a full-length slot in the ROAR season and will then help push the most promising work into bigger venues. For further info, e-mail ROARPROJECT@hotmail.com or organisationcota@hotmail.com or tassos.stevens@btopenworld.com

## **RESOURCES**

### **Decent affordable rehearsal space**

in Central London (Lisson Grove NW1) for choreographic work. Subsidised by London Arts and UK Foundation for Dance. Sprung floor, natural light, sound system, showers. £30 per day. Call Kerry Andrews at Marylebone Dance Studios on 020 7258 0767 or e-mail ukfd@globalnet.co.uk

### **Rehearsal room**

for hire in Trestle Arts Base, St Albans, Herts. Sprung dance floor. Call Syd Foggarty on 01727 850150.

### **Rehearsal space**

in SE London: Lady Florence Hall in Deptford Broadway. Close to DLR. Affordable rates. Contact Linda/Adrian 020 8694 5797.

## **WEBSITES**

### **www.artmedia.com.au**

is the site for contemporary Australian and New Zealand Literary and Performing Arts. Check it out for updates on Physical Theatre down under.

### **www.artsoutheast.co.uk**

is the portal for arts news in the South East. Latest newsletter on line now.

### **www.ashdendirectory.co.uk**

is dedicated to environmental art and performance of all sorts including: puppetry investigating genetic engineering; environmental arts education work in schools; project on landscape and memory. News, articles, interviews and more.

### **www.CircusPerformers.com**

MissingLinkProductions – entertainment solutions. Also telephone +44 (0) 20 8341 7645 or +44 (0) 79 8932 1593

## **CHANGE OF ADDRESS**

### **Chenine Bhatena**

CB PROJECTS, 19 Appach Rd, London SW2 2LD  
Telephone: +44 (0) 20 8671 4668  
Mobile: +44 (0) 7970 494831  
E-mail: chenine@cbprojects.co.uk  
www.cbprojects.co.uk

## NOTICEBOARD

### CHERUB

81 The Cut, Waterloo, London SE1 8LL  
New telephone/fax number: 020 7928 1033  
E-mail address still: visnevski@cherub.org.uk  
Adminstrator: vimarriott@cherub.org.uk.

## PUBLICATIONS

### Games for Actors and Non-Actors

Second Edition

Augusto Boal, trans. Adrian Jackson  
Routledge

'Games' is something of a bible – a must for all physical theatre practitioners – whether performer, teacher or director. Is there anyone out there who doesn't already own a copy? It's an invaluable resource – rush out and buy it now! If you have the first edition is it worth buying the second? In all honesty no – the core material is the same; the new photos are OK but much like all workshop pics; there are a couple of new essays from Boal on his recent work – and a reflection on September 11 2001 which says nothing that is particularly unexpected or insightful. And it's twice the size – which if you use it mostly as I do (to plan exercises on the bus journey on the way to teach a workshop) is a minus...

### The Twentieth Century Performance Reader

Second Edition

Ed. Michael Huxley and Noel Witts

This, on the other hand, is a second edition with substantial additions including new texts by Tim Etchells (Forced Entertainment) and live artists Marina Abramovic and Allan Kaprow – together with recent performance theory from Marvin Carlson and Judith Butler. All the old favourites are there too: Appia, Artaud, Barba, Barthes, Bausch, Beckett, Brecht, Brook... and that's just the beginning of the alphabet of fame. Original thoughts from the mouths of a mighty herd of theatrical horses. Indispensable on any library shelf.

### Theory/theatre: an introduction

Second Edition

Mark Fortier

And another second edition... One wonders why, if Fortier has new insights on how literary theory relates to performance, he doesn't just write another book rather than twiddle with this one. That said, this remains a good starting point on all that semiotics/ structuralism/deconstruction stuff that anyone taking a theatre degree has to trawl through nowadays. And it saves you reading all those big difficult books by the likes of Derrida! So introducing: Saussure, Foucault, Lacan, Kristeva et al. All related to literary theatre texts and contemporary performance practice – though it has to be said that despite the photo of Scarabeus on the cover neither they nor any other purely physical or visual performance company is mentioned and the emphasis stays on literary theatre ('the play' – be it Shakespeare, Chekhov or the Wooster Group's re-working of Arthur Miller).

### The Performing Arts in Africa: A Reader

Ed. Frances Harding

Routledge

Aha – a first edition! Described as 'the first anthology with key writings on African performance drawn from many parts of the continent', this is an important new book for two reasons: it is a valuable documentation of and reflection on African performance practice (from comic opera in Ghana to the use of Pidgin language in Cameroon) and also a volume of interest to all theatre practitioners for its insight into key issues. These include: the relationship between storytelling and theatre; the use of mask and masquerade in performance; the nature of festivals and the relationship between ritual and theatre (from the perspective of Nigerian Echeruo rather than American Richard Schechner for a change!); voice and language in a multilingual society; and politics and social issues in performance. Harding's introduction is a valuable contribution to the book, introducing thoughts on the nature of performing and spectating, the concept of transformation and the role of 'popular' arts – all from the perspective of African performance practice.

See [www.routledge.com](http://www.routledge.com) for all above publications

### Eyes On Stalks

John Fox

Methuen

This is a beautifully illustrated and simply-written book that focuses on the personal experience of Fox (artistic director of Welfare State International) and the other artists and participants in the wonderful 30-odd year history of the company that launched a thousand tissue-and-wit structures into the night skies of England. Welfare State started with the aim to 'make images, invent rituals, devise ceremonies, objectify the unpredictable and enhance atmosphere for particular places, times, situations and people' and Fox takes us on their journey – from experimental street theatre performances inspired by fairgrounds and pop culture (a giant Punch and Judy show and a production called 'Superman and The Fleas') through to the famous processions and lantern walks, the massive fire-and-fury environmental shows like 'Raise the Titanic' and the gentler activities of recent years that include the development of meaningful ceremonies and artefacts to mark birth, death and life's rites of passage.

[www.methuen.co.uk](http://www.methuen.co.uk)

## FESTIVALS/EVENTS

### BAC Octoberfest

Battersea Arts Centre 020 7223 2223

Octoberfest is now in its 2nd year. Showcases from Improbable Theatre, Angela de Castro, Bobby Baker, Peepolykus, Tell Tale Hearts and Clod Ensemble – amongst many others. Scratch performances from Kazuko Hohki and Cartoon de Salvo. Children's programme includes new work from Fevered Sleep and Tam Tam Theatre. Workshops from Frantic Assembly and Dick McCaw/Geraldine Stephenson.

### Expo

0115 915 3581

24-26 OCTOBER

Intense 3-day live art event in Nottingham as part of the Now festival. Includes gallery work, studio performances and site-specific work.

## Glasgay 2002

[www.glasgay.co.uk](http://www.glasgay.co.uk)

1-16 NOVEMBER

UK's largest multi-arts festival for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people.

## International Workshop Festival

020 7261 1144 [mail@workshopfestival.co.uk](mailto:mail@workshopfestival.co.uk)

[www.workshopfestival.co.uk](http://www.workshopfestival.co.uk)

4-24 NOVEMBER

From Trapeze to Shakespeare to Burlesque: Three weeks of professional workshops with leading international practitioners including: Butoh with Katsura Kan, Capoeira with Carlo Alexandre Teixeira, Commedia dell'Arte with Paola Cavallin, Skinner Releasing Technique and Low-Flying Trapeze with Robert Davidson, the Ultimate Shakespeare Workshop and Portuguese artists Ana Tamen and Francisco Camacho.

## visions

### THE FESTIVAL OF VISUAL PERFORMANCE

01273 644099 [www.visions-festival.org.uk](http://www.visions-festival.org.uk)

24 OCTOBER TO 2 NOVEMBER

This year's visions has a distinctly global flavour, with around 35 companies taking part from as far afield as India, Australia, Spain, Israel, Germany and France as well as Britain. Before many of the festival's ticketed performances, there are free 'visions starters' shows taking place outside on the streets and in theatre foyers. Selection of events below. For full programme call the hotline or see the website.

#### OCTOBER

- 24-25 Tram Theater – 'Plume d'Ange'
- 25-29 Wireframe – 'Elevation'
- 25-26 Igneous – 'Body in Question'
- 25 visions Cabaret with Maybellene
- 26 Joan Baixas and Paca Rodrigo – 'Terra Prenyada'
- 26-27 Les Locataires – 'The Tenants'
- 26 visions launch pad
- 25-27 Puppetry into Dance
- 27 Teatron Theater/Figures Theater Tübingen – 'Children of the Beast'
- 29 Tell Tale Hearts – 'Donkey Haughty'
- 29 Fanny & Alexander – 'Romeo and Juliet – et ultra'
- 30-31 Ishara Puppet Co – 'In Conversation'
- 30-31 Stephen Mottram – 'In Suspension'
- 30-2Nov Forkbeard Fantasy – 'Frankenstein'

#### NOVEMBER

- 1-2 Dark Horse – 'The Joy Society'
- 2 Ding Foundation – 'Being a Bird'

## re:visions seminar

24 October, University of Brighton, Grand Parade, Brighton

'The Creative Application of New Media in Live Performance'. This seminar is an opportunity for creative artists, academics, directors, funders and students to explore the outer limits of technology and performance. Speakers/presenters include Matt Adams, Andrew Chetty, David Metcrafe, Holger Zschenderlein, Alex Shelton and Andy Lavender. Phone 01273 643194 or e-mail: [visions.fest@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:visions.fest@brighton.ac.uk)

## Re-Embodying Histories: Recent Works of Lea Anderson

12 October, University College Chichester

Day of appraisal of Lea Anderson's work. Presentations and a live performance of her latest work 'Speed Ramp'. Phone Miranda Labuschagne on 01243 816431 or e-mail [m.labusch@ucc.ac.uk](mailto:m.labusch@ucc.ac.uk)

## Rural Shift

22-23 October, Bakewell, Derbyshire

Aimed at arts agencies, rural arts organisations, farmers' groups and local authorities it will take the Arts Council report entitled 'Investing in Rural Creativity' one of its starting points. Participants are promised case studies, seminars and field studies(!) illustrating innovative rural arts and social inclusion projects. Telephone 01706 827961 or e-mail [littoral@btopenworld.com](mailto:littoral@btopenworld.com)

## COMPANIES

### Dynamic New Animation (DNA) 'SKIN DEEP CIRCUS'

07976 946003  
www.dynamicnewanimation.co.uk

#### OCTOBER

- 18 Horse + Bamboo Centre, Rossendale
- 22 Studio Theatre, Leeds Metro Uni.
- 24 The Hawth, Crawley
- 25 Portsmouth Arts Centre
- 26 The Bull, Barnet, London
- 30-31 Chats Palace, Homerton, London

#### NOVEMBER

- 22-23 Science Museum, London

### Foursight Theatre 'SNOW WHITE'

01902 714257

#### DECEMBER

- 17-22 Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

#### JANUARY

- 4 Suare Chapel, Halifax
- 8/9 Komedia, Brighton

### Horse + Bamboo 'COMPANY OF ANGELS'

01706 220241 www.horseandbamboo.org

#### OCTOBER

- 14 EM Forster Theatre, Tonbridge
- 16 Dartington College
- 17 QEH, Bristol
- 19 Gulbenkian, Canterbury
- 21 Eastbourne College
- 25 Chancellor Hall, Chelmsford
- 30 The Ridings Winterbourne
- 31 Phoenix, Exeter

#### NOVEMBER

- 2 Boumemouth
- 7 Citadel Arts Centre, St Helens
- 8 Southport Arts Centre
- 13 Blackfriars Arts Centre, Boston
- 16 Phoenix Arts Centre, Leicester
- 19 Charter Theatre, Preston
- 20 The Roses, Ormskirk
- 21 Guildhall Arts Centre, Grantham
- 22 Theatre in the Mill, Bradford
- 27 Bridgwater Arts Centre
- 28 The Arc Trowbridge
- 30 St Mary in the Castle, Hastings

#### DECEMBER

- 4 The Old Town Hall, Hemel
- 7/8 Square Chapel, Halifax

### Kabosh 'MOJO-MICKYBO'

kabosh@dircon.co.uk, +44 28  
90243343 (ROI: 048 90243343)

#### OCTOBER

- 5 Cambridge Drama Centre
- 9 Dorking Halls, Dorking
- 10 Solihull Arts Complex
- 15 Darlington Arts Centre
- 17 Dunfermline Carnegie Hall
- 18 Birnam Institute, Perthshire
- 23 Mold, Theatr Clwyd, North Wales
- 24 Theatr Clwyd, Mold, North Wales
- 26 Harlech Theatr Ardudwy, Wales
- 30 Hemel Hempstead Old Town Hall
- 31 Windsor Arts Centre, Windsor

#### NOVEMBER

- 1 Barnet Old Bull Arts Centre
- 2 Gloucester Prema Arts Centre
- 4 Queen's Uni Drama Studio, Belfast
- 5 An Culturian, Falls Road, Belfast
- 6-9 The Helix, Dublin
- 12 Garage Theatre, Monaghan
- 14 Balor Theatre, Co Donegal
- 15 The Riverbank Theatre, Newbridge
- 18 Linenhall Arts Centre, Castlebar
- 19-23 Pavillion, Dun Laoghaire

### Jonathan Kay

theatre\_of\_now@madasafish.com

#### OCTOBER

- 10-20 Hoxton Hall, London

#### OCTOBER/NOVEMBER

- The Phoenix Project, Glastonbury

### Niki McCretton 'HERETIC'

#### OCTOBER

- 19 The Plough Arts Centre
- 25 The Merlin Theatre
- 28 Exeter Phoenix
- 31 The Rondo

#### NOVEMBER

- 1 Shaftesbury Arts Centre
- 6 Strode Theatre
- 14 Tacchi-Morris Arts Centre
- 21 Bridport Arts Centre

### Kala Chethena Kathakali Company 'A STORY FROM THE MAHABHARATHA'

02380 420114 www.kathakali.net

#### OCTOBER

- 9 Brewhouse Theatre, Burton on Trent
- 10 Guildhall Arts Centre, Gloucester
- 11 Music Hall, Shrewsbury
- 12 Bath University
- 14 Playgoers Theatre, Louth
- 15 Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton
- 16 Burnley Mechanics, Burnley
- 17 Stafford Gatehouse, Stafford
- 18 Courtyard Arts Centre, Hereford
- 19 QEH Theatre, Bristol
- 20 Bull Arts Centre, Barnet
- 22 Maltins, Ely
- 23 Theatre Royal, Margate
- 30 Lemon Tree, Aberdeen
- 31 Bryer Theatre, St Andrews

#### NOVEMBER

- 1 St Brides Centre, Edinburgh
- 2 The Tramway, Glasgow
- 3 Stanwix Arts Centre, Carlisle
- 5 Darlington Arts Centre, Darlington
- 6 City Hall, Hull
- 7 Queens Hall Arts Centre, Hexham
- 8 Town Hall, Middlesbrough
- 11 Phoenix, Exeter
- 12 Dartington Hall, Totnes
- 18 Stafford Circus, Newham, London
- 19 Hawth, Crawley
- 21 Blackheath Hall, London
- 22 Sallis Benney Theatre, Brighton
- 29 Aberystwyth Arts Centre
- 30 Theatre Ardudwy, Harlech

### Lusty Juventus

#### 'M(OTHER)1'

#### OCTOBER

- 3-7 Argo Theatre, Athens, Greece

### Metro-Boulot-Dodo

#### 'BLOWUP'

#### OCTOBER

- 10-11 Phoenix Arts, Leicester
- 14-15 Roadmender, Northampton
- 16 Blackfriars Arts, Boston
- 17 University of Derby
- 26 Arts Theatre, University of Bath
- 31 Robert Powell Theatre, Salford

#### NOVEMBER

- 6 Loughborough University
- 7 Djanogly Theatre Nottingham
- 8 Lakeside Theatre, Essex University
- 12 Nuffield Theatre Lancaster
- 14 Theatre Studio, Chester College
- 15 Gulbenkian Theatre, Kent Uni.

### Puca Puppets

00 3531 797 9889 / 838 6338

#### 'PEG! PEIG!'

#### OCTOBER

- 3 Plearaca, Galway
- 18 Castlebar Library, Mayo
- 19 Sonas, Louisburgh, Mayo

### 'MARY MARY'S LAST DANCE'

#### OCTOBER

- 28 Balbriggan Co. Dublin
- 30 Newbridge, Co. Kildare

### Tell Tale Hearts

#### 'DONKEY HAUGHTY'

020 8888 3780 / ttarts@boltblue.net

#### OCTOBER

- 10-11 Rondo Theatre, Bath
- 15 Falmouth Arts Centre, Cornwall
- 16 The Acorn Theatre, Penzance
- 18-20 BAC, London
- 23 Square-Chapel, Halifax
- 25-26 Greentop Circus Centre, Sheffield
- 29 Komedia, Brighton (Visions fest)
- 30-31 Jackson's Lane, London

#### NOVEMBER

- 2 Lochalsh Arts Network, Plockton
- 4 West Coast Arts, Aulbea
- 8 Ardross hall, Ardross
- 9 Rosehall Community Arts
- 11 Skerray Hall, Thurso
- 19-8 Dec BAC, London

### theatre-rites / Lyric

#### 'CATCH YOUR BREATH'

#### OCTOBER

- 10-12 Warwick Arts Centre
- 16-19 Baboró Children's Fest, Galway
- 25-27 Gardner Arts Centre, Brighton
- 29 Pegasus Theatre, Oxford

#### NOVEMBER

- 1-2 Now Fest, Lakeside, Nottingham
- 5-6 Take Off Fest, New College, Durham
- 9-10 Green Room, Manchester
- 15-16 The Lemon Tree, Aberdeen
- 20-24 macrobert, Stirling
- 27-28 Howden Park Centre, Livingston

#### DECEMBER

- 3 Dec-4 Jan Lyric Hammersmith, London

### Third Angel

#### 'LEAVE NO TRACE'

0117 987 7877

#### OCTOBER

- 26 Wickham Theatre, Bristol Uni.

### Théâtre Sans Frontières

01434 652484

#### 'TOUR DE FRANCE'

#### OCTOBER

- 22 Gulbenkian Theatre, Canterbury
- 24-25 Wilde Theatre, Bracknell
- 26 Bonington Theatre, Nottingham
- 28-29 Stantonbury Campus Theatre, Milton Keynes
- 31 Theatre by the Lake, Keswick

#### NOVEMBER

- 1 Stanwix Arts Theatre, Carlisle
- 3 Take Off Fest, Gala Theatre, Durham
- 5 Square Chapel Centre, Halifax
- 6 Forum 28, Barrow-in-Furness
- 7 Alnwick Playhouse
- 8 Wynd Theatre, Melrose

### 'ALICE'

#### DECEMBER

- 12-14 Queen's Hall Arts Centre, Hexham
- 17-21 Whitley Bay Playhouse
- 23-24 Stanwix Arts Theatre, Carlisle
- 28-30 Phoenix Arts, Leicester

#### JANUARY

- 3-4 Darlington Arts Centre

### Trading Faces/ Oxfordshire Touring TC 'THE LITTLE PRINCE'

www.tradingfaces.demon.co.uk

#### NOVEMBER

- 20 Appleton Village Hall, Oxon
- 21 Cuddesdon Village Hall, Oxon
- 22 Alvescot Village Hall, Bampton
- 23 Kelmscott Village Hall, Lechlade
- 27 Harwell Village Hall, Oxon
- 28 Goring Heath Parish Hall, Oxon
- 29 Stanton Harcourt Hall, Oxon
- 30 Filkins Village Hall, Oxon

#### DECEMBER

- 3 Hailey Village Hall, Witney, Oxon
- 4 Thomas Hughes Hall, Uffington
- 5 East Challow Hall, Wantage, Oxon
- 6 Hornton Hall, Banbury, Oxon
- 7 Wytham Village Hall, Oxon
- 10 West Oxford Primary School
- 12-14 Pegasus Theatre, Oxford
- 17-19 Arts in Cambridgeshire
- 20 Bloxham Village Hall, Oxon
- 21 New Beaconsfield Hall, Oxon

#### JANUARY

- 2 Steeple Aston Village Hall, Oxon
- 3 Aston & Cote Village Hall, Oxon
- 4 Duns Tew Hall, Bicester, Oxon
- 7 Shrivernham Memorial Hall, Oxon

## VENUES

### The Bull Theatre

68 High Street, Barnet EN5  
020 8449 5189

#### OCTOBER

- 16 Theatre O - 'The Argument'
- 19 Company of Angels - 'Hannah and Hanna'
- 30-31 Guy Masterson Productions - 'Oleanna'

#### NOVEMBER

- 1 Kabosh - 'Mojo Mickybo'
- 2 Tribal Soul/UK Arts International - 'The Man Who Committed Thought'
- 6 Theatre Melange - 'Woyzeck'
- 8 M6 - 'Breathing Space'
- 9 The Big Picture - 'Taj'
- 10 International Workshop Fest/Theatre Nomad - 'Ghetto Goats'

#### DECEMBER

- 2 Cartoon de Salvo - 'Meat and Two Veg'

### Hope Street

Liverpool, 0151 708 8007

Presentations in collaboration with Unity Theatre. Box office: 0151 709 4988

#### OCTOBER

- 25-26 The Government Inspector

#### 6 DECEMBER TO 18 JANUARY

Beauty & the Beast

### Hoxton Hall

020 7739 5431  
tickets@hoxtonhall.co.uk

3 OCTOBER, 7 NOVEMBER, 5

#### DECEMBER

Hoxton Bark - cabaret

#### OCTOBER

- 10-13 Jonathan Kay - 'Know One's Fool'
- 31 Motion Collective - 'Poetry in Motion'

#### NOVEMBER

- 2-3 Zygo - 'The True Life... of Julia'

## TRAINING & WORKSHOPS

- 8 Fleur Darkin Dance Theatre – 'Cosmopolitan'  
9-10 Fecund Theatre  
14-24 Acme Construction Company – 'Who is Bobby Lopez?'

### Little Angel Theatre

14 Dagmar Passage, London N1; 020 7226 1787

**12 OCTOBER TO 24 NOVEMBER**

Jonah and the Whale

**7 DECEMBER TO 26 JANUARY**

Beauty and the Beast

### Take Art! – Rural Touring in Somerset

#### SHIFTING SANDS – 'FAUSTUS'

01629 55795

**OCTOBER**

- 16 Wadham School, Crewkerne  
17 Portesham Village Hall, Dorset  
18 Sturminster Newton School, Dorset  
19 Regal Theatre, Minehead, Somerset

### STORYBOX THEATRE – 'THE TIN SOLDIER'

01237 422171

**OCTOBER**

- 23 Wellesley Park School, Somerset  
25 Tintinhull Village Hall, Somerset  
13 Baltonsborough Hall, Somerset

### TALL STORIES – 'THE GRUFFALO'

020 8342 8555

**OCTOBER**

- 29 Dulverton Town Hall, Somerset  
30 The Regal Theatre, Minehead

**NOVEMBER**

- 2 Batcombe Village Hall, Somerset  
3 Priddy Village Hall, Somerset

### ZYGO THEATRE – 'JULIA PASTRANA'

020 8348 0203

**NOVEMBER**

- 6 Watchfield Village Hall, Somerset  
7 David Hall Arts Centre, Somerset

## UK TRAINING

### The Academy of Circus Arts

Winchester and touring, 07050 282624

**DIPLOMA COURSE**

Six-month training inside the big top. E-mail [zippos.circus@virgin.net](mailto:zippos.circus@virgin.net)

### Central

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](http://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](mailto:enquiries@thecircusspace.co.uk)  
Also adult classes in circus skills.

### The Desmond Jones School

London, 020 8747 3537

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

### Ecole de Mime Corporel Dramatique

London, 020 7272 8627

Movement Theatre and Corporeal Mime (Decroux Technique)

### Expressive Feat

01227 276069 ([www.exfeat.com](http://www.exfeat.com))

Aerial workshops for adults and children every week at Whitstable Sports Centre. Professional training available in aerial silks, trapeze and choreography.

### International Theatre Institute (ITI)

14-21 October

29th ITI World congress takes place in Athens, Greece. The theme is 'Oedipus: The Stranger as a Dionysiac Mask of Oneself'. E-mail [iti@unesco.org](mailto:iti@unesco.org) for further information or see the ITI website: [www.iti-worldwide.org](http://www.iti-worldwide.org)

### Kaizen Creative

Manchester, 0161 374 2353

The Arts of Coaching courses for professionals who coach, mentor, facilitate, teach or manage in arts, educational and cultural contexts. Advanced Course (4 days) 24-7 October. Phone or e-mail [info@kaizen-creative.org](mailto:info@kaizen-creative.org) or see [www.kaizen-creative.org](http://www.kaizen-creative.org)

### Laban Centre

London, 020 8692 4070

Post-grad courses include: MA Choreography, MA Performance, MA Scenography (dance). Also MPhil and PhD. See [www.laban.co.uk](http://www.laban.co.uk) or [info@laban.co.uk](mailto:info@laban.co.uk)

### Middlesex University

London, 020 8411 6148

School of Art, Design and Performing Arts – MA Choreography with Performing Arts. Full time, exploring choreography.

### Nose to Nose

01342 832410

Introductory weekends, residential intensives. Starting Autumn 2002: 'Clown Towards Performance' – five weekends in Sussex. Call for brochure or see [members.aol.com/nosetonose](http://members.aol.com/nosetonose)

### The Penquoit Centre

01342 825639

Close to sea and mountains in west Wales, an ideal place to develop new forms of theatre discipline. Phone or e-mail [dan.skinner@btinternet.com](mailto:dan.skinner@btinternet.com)

### School of Physical Theatre

London, 020 8215 3350

Full-time one-year professional physical theatre training programme under the direction of Ron East, October-June. Now accepting applications for 2003/04. 3-week summer intensive programme August 2003; 1 week

theme workshop July 2003; intensive weekends 3 times year year. For more info see [www.physicaltheatre.com](http://www.physicaltheatre.com) or email [school@physicaltheatre.com](mailto:school@physicaltheatre.com)

### Theatre Training Initiative

London, 07931 710808

Ongoing weekly practice sessions based on Tadashi Suzuki's actor training method at Chisenhale Dance Space, Wednesday evenings 6.30-9.00. Introductory sessions available once a month (next sessions 19th October, 16th November and 7th December 2002). More details: [www.theatrettraining.org.uk](http://www.theatrettraining.org.uk) or [info@theatrettraining.org.uk](mailto:info@theatrettraining.org.uk)

### Trestle Theatre Company Workshops

01727 850950 / [admin@trestle.org.uk](mailto:admin@trestle.org.uk)

Led by company director Toby Wilsher. For performers, directors, writers and theatre students.

Physical/Visual Theatre – 22 October  
Jumping Form: Theory into Practice – 24 October

Storytelling in Theatre – 29 October

Mask Theatre – 7 November

### University of Kent

01227 823338

MA by Practice as Research – for information or to apply for entry to the course in January 2003, please phone Paul Allain or e-mail [p.a.allain@ukc.ac.uk](mailto:p.a.allain@ukc.ac.uk)

### The Why Not Institute

London, 020 8987 6661

([whynotinstitute@aol.com](mailto:whynotinstitute@aol.com))

Performance, teaching, professional development, resources and events connected to contemporary clowning. Courses and weekly sessions with UK and international teachers. Artistic director: Angela de Castro.

### Yorkshire Arts Dance Workshops

0113 243 8765

20 October – Bedlam Dance Company workshop. Level: Professional artists and dance/physical theatre practitioners, dance/physical theatre students and recent graduates.

Also workshops by:

Tom Sapsford – 17 November

Jeremy Nelson – 1 December

Abdelaziz Sarokh, Belgium – 7 & 8 December

## OVERSEAS

### Butoh Centre Mamu

Gottingen, Germany +49 551 485863 or 551 790 6245

Weekend Butoh workshops with Tadashi Endo: 11-13 October, 1-3 November, 6-8 December. Intensive workshops: 21 October to 3 November; 2-8 December. One-month-butoh-workshop: 13 January to 15 February. See [www.tadashi-endo.de/workshops](http://www.tadashi-endo.de/workshops) or e-mail [endo@em.mpg.de](mailto:endo@em.mpg.de)

### 'Circo a Vapore' School of Theatre

Rome, Italy, +39 06 700 9692

Two-year professional training. See [www.circoavapore.3000.it](http://www.circoavapore.3000.it) or e-mail for info in English [circoavapore@tiscalinet.it](mailto:circoavapore@tiscalinet.it)

### Dell'Arte

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

Auditions for Physical Theatre Programme take place through individual appointments throughout the US, Canada, Mexico and Europe. Application forms for 2002-2003 admission and additional information can be obtained from the website.

### Ecole Internationale de Theatre Jacques Lecoq

Paris, +33 1 47 70 44 78

Two-Year Course plus the Laboratory of Movement Study (LEM).

### Espace Catastrophe

Bruxelles, +32 (0) 2 538 12 02

Training in circus and performing arts. New season of courses starts September. For full programme and information on auditions contact: 18 rue de la glacière, 1060 Brussels or phone, e-mail [espace@catastrophe.be](mailto:espace@catastrophe.be) or see [www.catastrophe.be](http://www.catastrophe.be)

### Mime Centrum

Berlin, +30 44 651860

Movement training for actors, mimes, directors and dramaturgs. Autumn programme includes: 'The Grotesque Theatre – The Buffoni' with Mina Tinaburri and 'Grotesque Dance – Underground Rivers' with Irina E. Andrejewa. See [www.mimecentrum.de](http://www.mimecentrum.de)

### NICA

[www.nica.swin.edu.au](http://www.nica.swin.edu.au)

The National Institute of Circus Arts is Australia's Centre of Excellence for professional training in circus arts and physical theatre, offering a 3 year Bachelor Degree in Circus Arts. We encourage international applicants to apply by video. Audition criteria, application forms and course information are on the website. Applications for 2003 close on 29 November.

### 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](http://www.patriciabardi.com)

### The Seahorse Project

Paris, +33 (0) 1 43 38 79 75

**A YEAR OF CORPOREAL MIME TRAINING 2002/3**

Direction: Thomas Leabhart. A physical and theoretical inquiry into theatre and the actor's body – 16 September 2002 to 27 June 2003. Phone or e-mail [hippocampe@noos.fr](mailto:hippocampe@noos.fr) or [tleabhart@pomona.edu](mailto:tleabhart@pomona.edu) or [mapage.noos.fr/hippocampe](http://mapage.noos.fr/hippocampe)

### ZID Theater

Amsterdam, Netherlands, +31 20 4888449

ZID Theater offers a training opportunity for performers, actors, dancers, performance artists and other professionals. Exercises based on various physical disciplines, the use of voice, working with materials and group improvisations, are the ingredients of the training. Tuesday mornings 10-12: training with actor Sebo Bakker. See [www.zidtheater.nl](http://www.zidtheater.nl) or e-mail [info@zidtheater.nl](mailto:info@zidtheater.nl)

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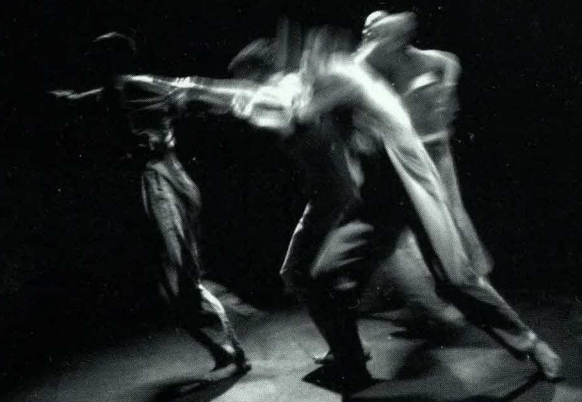
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## Ecole de Mime Corporel Dramatique and Theatre de l'Ange Fou

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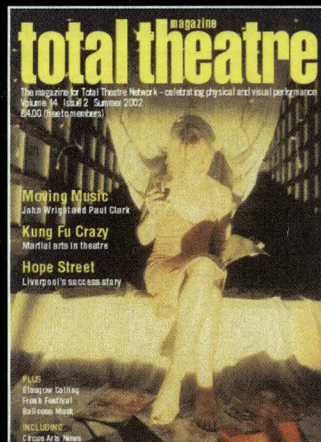
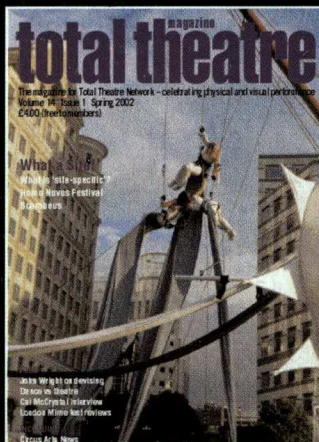
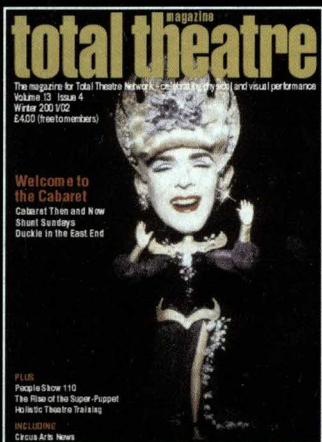
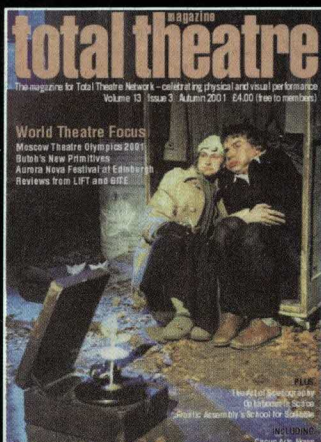
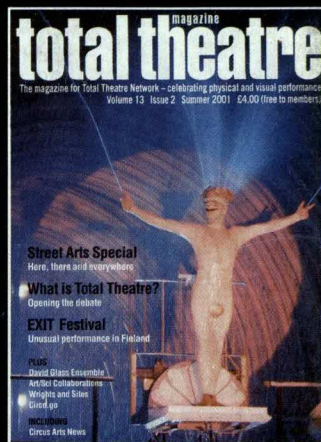
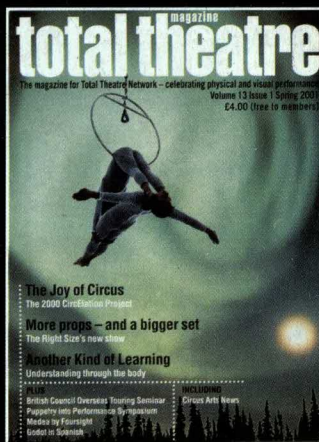
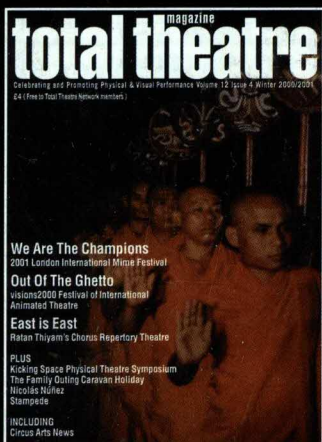
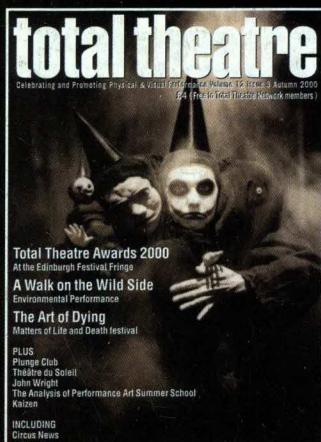
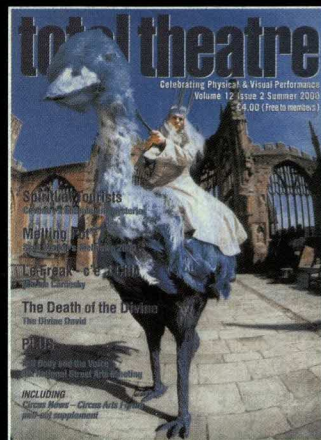
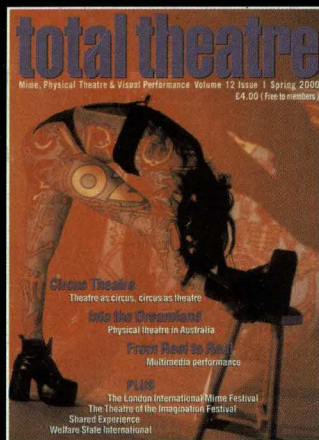
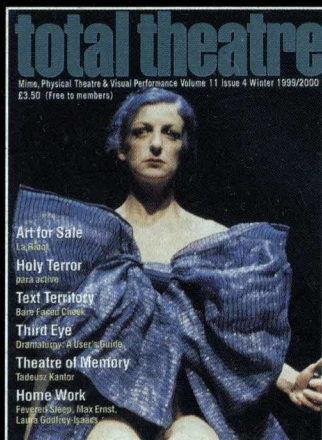
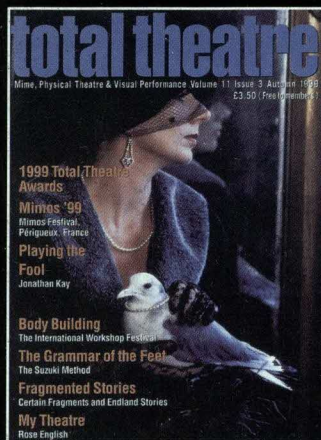


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