

TOTALTHEATRE

MAGAZINE

VOLUME 21 | ISSUE 03 | AUTUMN 2009 | TOTALTHEATRE.ORG.UK
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TO HELL AND BACK - DESCEND INTO ROMEO CASTELLUCCI'S INFERNO, SEEN FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE FOOTLIGHTS

SEND IN THE CLOWNS. PRETTY AS A PICTURE AND CAPTURED IN ALL THEIR FOOLISH GLORY

FIRE! FIRE! FIREWORKS! THE MADNESS AND MAYHEM OF VALENCIAN FESTIVALS

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A CROP OF AUTUMN UPDATES GATHERED AND NEWS OF THE NEW SEASON'S SHOWS HARVESTED

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EDITORIAL

As this autumn issue of Total Theatre Magazine goes to press the madness that is the Edinburgh Festival Fringe is building daily. The magazine's editorial team are in Edinburgh, working our way through our lists of shows-to-see, and the process for the Total Theatre Awards has kicked off, with the magazine's editors and reviewers supporting Awards director Pippa Bailey and her team in the evaluation of the hundreds of shows that have been registered for consideration for an Award. The second stage of the process comes after the shortlisting, and at this stage the assessors' work is done, and the judges come in to make the difficult decisions on who to honour.

There are, throughout this process, formal meetings for the discussion of work, but also endless informal discussions in bars and cafes, outside venues and on street corners. At the essence of all these discussions, formal or informal, is the question: how do we view, review, evaluate, judge, criticise live performance?

This, of course, is a question that goes beyond the Awards judging process to impact on the work of the magazine. Each edition brings questions not only on content but also on the placing of content within the publication. Questions that are always bubbling under include: What do we include in the features section, and what in reviews? What's the difference, for the writer, in commentary on performance work within these different contexts? How do we incorporate the voices of artists and producers, as well as critics, in our commentary on contemporary theatre and performance? What is the point of reviews? They are obviously a vehicle for critical comment, but are they aimed at the artist, at potential bookers, or at the general audience member? How is this different for a specialist publication than for a daily newspaper or general interest magazine? Is print different to electronic media? Should reviews be descriptive, or experiential, or analytical? Do we look at the work as a stand-alone piece, or reflect on it within the context of the artist's or company's previous work, or of work by other artists? Do we take into account how the artist/company chooses to frame themselves – for example, by defining themselves as 'dance' rather than 'theatre', or as 'comedy' rather than 'theatre', or as 'theatre' rather than 'music'? What is 'theatre' anyway, and – dare we ask – what is 'total theatre'?

All of these considerations, and more, will be coming to the fore in coming months at Total Theatre Magazine. We have appointed a Reviews Editor (Beccy Smith) and we are embarking on a new scheme to mentor and support both new writers and experienced writers/reviewers new to us. In this endeavour, we have started on the mentoring process, pairing new writers up with experienced Total Theatre Magazine reviewers (you'll notice that some of our reviews have a two-name credit), and we are hoping to work in partnership with other organisations and other publications to further this initiative.

So if you are interested in engaging in this process in any way – perhaps you'd like to try your hand at reviewing, or maybe you are a venue programmer who would like to work with us on developing new writers in your location – then please get in touch with us, particularly if you live in a geographic region that you feel is under-represented!

We hope you enjoy this issue of Total Theatre Magazine, and as always welcome feedback and suggestions for future content.

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COVER: BOOTWORKS A LITTLE BOX OF HORRORS, APPEARING AT BRITISH COUNCIL EDINBURGH SHOWCASE AND LAKES ALIVE MINTFEST. PHOTO ROBERT JUDE DANIELS



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BOAL AND EVER AFTER

**THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED,
IMAGE THEATRE, INVISIBLE
THEATRE, FORUM THEATRE,
THE RAINBOW OF DESIRE,
NEWSPAPER THEATRE,
THEATRE AS A MARTIAL
ART – AUGUSTO BOAL MAY
BE DEAD, BUT HIS THEATRE
REVOLUTION KEEPS ON
TURNING. CHARLOTTE SMITH
REPORTS ON HIS LEGACY,
DOROTHY MAX PRIOR
REFLECTS ON HIS LIFE, AND
AUGUSTO BOAL LEAVES
US SOME *BON MOTS* TO
REMEMBER HIM BY**

Where do we look for Augusto Boal's legacy in UK theatre today – and where do we find it? Many practitioners have felt the loss of the world-renowned Brazilian director, writer and campaigner who died May 2009.

Boal had direct contact with many UK companies, including Cardboard Citizens, the RSC and People's Palace Projects. Perhaps his legacy is so wide that it is staring us in the face – Boal's work is certainly now a mainstay of theatre practice, and an essential element of higher education and theatre training. Yet it also has a less visible effect, for example in belonging to people who might not usually go to the theatre.

Adrian Jackson, artistic director of Cardboard Citizens, worked particularly closely with Augusto Boal. An expert on the Theatre of the Oppressed, he has translated five of Boal's books. He says: 'The most important is *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, his compendium of games, some of which he invented and others he included or picked up on his travels around the world. As a way in through workshops, it's extremely useful.'

Image Theatre and Forum Theatre are, for him, the two cornerstones of Boal's work. 'Forum Theatre is a uniquely successful tool of engagement because it speaks *of* people's concerns, *to* them, and encourages them to take part in a debate. It's particularly good at speaking to people who have not been listened to before, or who feel that they don't have a voice. Image Theatre is also a very democratic tool for people to experiment with the creation of their own and other possible worlds.'

In his Translator's Introduction to *Games*, Jackson describes Image Theatre as 'a series of exercises and games designed to uncover essential truths about societies and cultures without resort, in the first instance, to words.' Participants 'sculpt' and 'mould' their own, and others', bodies into three-dimensional images.



BOAL, IN HIS OWN WORDS

"Theatre is the first human invention and the invention that paves the way for all other inventions and discoveries. Theatre is born when the human being discovers that it can observe itself; when it discovers that, in this act of seeing, it can see itself: see itself in situ; see itself seeing"

"We must all do theatre, to discover who we are and find out who we could become"

"Theatre has nothing to do with buildings or other physical constructions"

"In the Theatre of the Oppressed, the people who come on stage to recount an episode of their lives are simultaneously narrator and narrated – for that reason they are able to imagine themselves in the future"

"Every game is an apprenticeship for life; the theatre game is an apprenticeship for social life"

"I, Augusto Boal, want the Spectator to assume her role as Actor and Artist, to invade the character, and the stage, taking her place and proposing ways and alternatives"

Invisible Theatre, the second strand to Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed, is a public theatre 'which involves the public in participation in the action without their knowing it'. Boal encouraged Invisible Theatre as a form to be enacted in very public spaces such as railway stations or crowded buses.

Jackson goes on to describe, in his introduction, the third strand of practice, Forum Theatre, as 'a theatrical game in which a problem is shown in an unsolved form, to which the audience is invited to suggest and enact solutions'.

It is Forum Theatre that seems to have had the most impact in the UK. Cardboard Citizens, based in the East End of London, create Forum Theatre with homeless and ex-homeless people, refugees and asylum-seekers. The company uses Boal's techniques extensively, and last year produced a version of Georg Büchner's *Woyzeck*, exploring mental health issues. Its most recent production was *Mincemeat*, an electrifying story of a man whose dead body was used as an intelligence decoy in the Second World War. With its conviction, its quicksilver acting, its use of a guiding narrator, and its closeness to the audience, *Mincemeat* could be seen to be linked to Boal's work, although Adrian Jackson is keen to explain that he has a different view:

'Mincemeat is a production of a completely different kind. A number of the actors have come through the Forum Theatre process, but as a production, it's not influenced by Boal.'

He nonetheless argues that Boal has wider impact than any living theatre maker. 'Augusto moves outside the theatre and his influence extends into an amazing range of corners of society, whereas most other great practitioners have stayed mainly within theatre. When I was asked on a radio show which theatre directors he inspired, I was completely flummoxed, because it's not the right question. He's not influenced many people that listeners of Radio 4 would have identified, but there are tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, of people influenced by his work.'

Paul Heritage of People's Palace Projects says it is particularly sad that in the UK we didn't know Boal as a theatre director. His early experiments in Brazil in the 1960s included theatre in the round, reworking the classics, and giving theatre a more direct role in people's lives. This work was done against a backdrop of military dictatorship and threats to artists. 'He was constantly changing, reinventing some of the things we now associate with him: the joker, the multi-role narrator and master of ceremonies, and of Newspaper Theatre,' explains Paul Heritage. 'But in exile he develops the Theatre of the Oppressed and that's very much born out of exile'.

The aforementioned Newspaper Theatre is a form developed by Boal – and now very popular with drama teachers everywhere! – in which words and images taken from daily newspapers are combined, used in different contexts, and taken as a starting point for improvisations, thus allowing participants to deconstruct the news stories of the day and find hidden truths or expose media lies

People's Palace Projects has, since 1989, collaborated with Boal on various projects. 'He's influenced every step we have taken in terms of games, techniques, strategies and fundamentally about re-examining structures, the relationships between audience, actors and text, and the very act of what theatre can be. That includes work in prisons and probation, in particular two projects in Brazil, *Staging Human Rights* and *Changing the Scene*, as well as international development work and training. It's been at the heart of so much of our work.'

Paul Heritage, who is also professor of drama and performance at Queen Mary, University of London, says Boal leaves 50 years of radical and revolutionary theatre, standing in a great lineage that includes Peter Brook, Stanislavski and Grotowski. This work is continued by the Centre for the Theatre of the Oppressed in Rio and UK companies such as Lawnmowers in Newcastle, Mind the Gap in Bradford, Graeae and Theatre Centre. He also points to Boal's presence in the postgraduate, undergraduate, college and school curriculum. 'Students from college were very surprised to find out that Boal was still alive—he's so great they assumed he must have been dead.'

Cara Jennings uses Image Theatre, Forum Theatre and Invisible Theatre as a lecturer at Morley College in South London. She says she is still learning and experimenting with Boal's ideas, and the process can be reinvented and challenged. The classes cover voice, movement, impro and theory for adults with some acting experience on Friday evenings. 'I think it's really important to try to give people a wider view of what theatre is and how it can relate to and involve an audience as a democratic thing, rather than something you go to watch.' In Forum Theatre the 'Spect-actors' (as Boal dubbed them – participants who are far from the usual passive theatre audience, drawn into the action) are invited by the 'joker' to recreate the scene. Image Theatre can be a moving transformation of oppressive situations, beyond language or national context.

'Boal polarises the group a bit in my experience,' she says. 'We do work with oppression now in Britain and sometimes people respond well and find it very cathartic with problems at work or relationships. Sometimes people don't like looking at the world in that way, thinking about stuff that they find quite depressing, facing up to what goes on in society. They don't like the challenging nature of the work.'

The sessions are group-led, so can take unexpected turns, and reveal stories about people's backgrounds. Cara adds: 'The ethics of Invisible Theatre also seems to get people quite animated. How do people feel about being part of a piece of theatre without being asked? Once I did try briefing a couple of people to be talking over me while I was doing my introduction, and it ended up as this animated argument.'

When I revealed what was happening, everyone got extremely upset, and we had to have this big debrief.' She says Boal's work can also enable political discussions, at a time of anger and dissent on issues such as climate change, and it may take hybrid forms in a more interactive society.



Shara Ismail has been working with Cardboard Citizens since January, after she was referred by a hostel support worker. 'To be honest, I didn't know what Forum Theatre was, I just wanted to do acting,' she says. 'I came across Forum Theatre and it was about changing things, doing things, getting the outside world to come and see what you are doing, and then doing it. From being in the workshops I've become such a confident person. I can use the activities in everyday life. Things that people walk away from, I would actually change those situations. It can happen to everyone, not just oppressed people, everyone is the same.'

Shortly after being interviewed by Total Theatre Magazine Adrian Jackson was due to head off to Brazil for a gathering of key Boal practitioners from around the world (July 2009). 'It was planned before his death,' he said. 'We will be discussing his legacy and how to keep it alive—but there's no danger of it dying.'

Quotes by Adrian Jackson, Paul Heritage, Cara Jennings, and Shara Ismail taken from conversation with the article's author (in person, by email and by telephone interview, June/July 2009).

Adrian Jackson is also quoted from his Translator's Introduction to Augusto Boal's Games for Actors and Non-Actors (Routledge, London & New York, 1992).

Websites for referenced companies:

Cardboard Citizens: www.cardboardcitizens.org.uk

People's Palace Project: www.peoplespalace.org.uk

Centre for the Theatre of the Oppressed (Rio):

www.ctorio.org.br

The Lawnmowers: www.thelawnmowers.co.uk

Mind the Gap: www.mind-the-gap.org.uk

Graeae: www.graeae.org

Theatre Centre: www.theatre-centre.co.uk

IMAGE 1 | AUGUSTO BOAL. PHOTO HUGH HILL
IMAGE 2 | CARDBOARD CITIZEN'S MINCEMEAT. PHOTO HUGH HILL
IMAGE 3 | PEOPLE'S PALACE PROJECTS FAVELA TO THE WORLD 2009-2012. PHOTO RATAO DINIZ
IMAGE 4 | ADRIAN JACKSON, JULIAN BOAL, AND AUGUSTO BOAL. PHOTO HUGH HILL.



WALKING INTO SUNSHINE – AN OBITUARY

AUGUSTO BOAL
BORN 16 MARCH 1931
DIED 2 MAY 2009

Further Reading: Books by Boal
Theatre of the Oppressed (1974)
Games for Actors and Non-Actors
(1992) A second edition, updated
to include two new essays by Boal,
was published in 2002
The Rainbow of Desire (1995)
Legislative Theatre (1998)
Hamlet and the Baker's Son –
My Life in Theatre and Politics
(2001)
The Aesthetics of the Oppressed
(2006)

Boal's Centro do Teatro do
Oprimido in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
continues its work after his death.
See www.ctorio.org.br or email
ctorio@ctorio.org.uk

Boal was born and bred in Rio de Janeiro where he trained as an industrial chemist, graduating in 1952. He then moved to the US, taking up a place as a research student at New York's Columbia University, where he studied drama as well as chemical engineering. In 1955, he wrote and directed his first play, *The House Across the Street*, in New York.

Boal returned to Brazil and was invited to work at the Arena theatre in São Paulo, where he remained as its director from 1956 to 1971. Towards the end of his time there, he took agitprop shows into the countryside and started to develop theatre forms in which the audience helped decide the subject of the play – the beginnings of his life's work as the creator of a truly political theatre; a theatre that was political in its form as well as its content.

In 1974, he published his first book, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, which argued that far from being something passively received, theatre should be a forum for everyone; and theatre-makers should develop skills to involve the audience as 'spect-actors', empowering them to find strategies for personal and social change.

In the mid-1970s, Boal moved to Europe and was appointed professor at the Sorbonne in Paris in 1978. There he taught his radical approach to theatre, setting up a Theatre of the Oppressed centre, and organising international festivals and conferences. He also, whilst in Europe, evolved and developed his notions of an Invisible Theatre, in which actors work in public spaces, engaging audiences (who often do not know that they are participants in a drama) in the action – the point being to investigate, in a theatrical manner, such subjects as sexual harassment or racism. These actions were created in the Paris Metro, on streets and in restaurants in Stockholm, and even on a stage – with the actors, in one famous incident – invading the stage of a business conference! This aspect of Boal's work had an enormous influence – conscious or unconscious – on the burgeoning Performance Art and Street Arts scenes in the UK.

Boal became more aware of the subjective aspects of oppression, embracing the 'personal is political' movement that grew with feminism and the anti-racism movements, and whilst in Paris he collaborated with his psychoanalyst wife Cecilia to facilitate workshops designed to challenge 'the cop in the head'. This work later fed into *The Rainbow of Desire* (originally published in French), a book that heralded a form of practice embracing radical dramatherapy, and which, through using 'introspection' and 'extraversion' techniques, explores the therapeutic potential of theatre to transform lives.

After the downfall of the military junta in Brazil in 1986, Boal returned to Rio de Janeiro. He there set up a Theatre of the Oppressed centre, founded numerous companies, and helped develop a myriad of community-based performance projects. He continued to develop all aspects of his work, including the techniques of Image Theatre, Invisible Theatre, and Forum Theatre, and in 1989 *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* was published, a book that brings together his theories on theatre – but which, more importantly perhaps, provides a tool-kit for practice. I am not alone, I am sure, in considering this work to be the single most important resource to have to-hand when teaching drama workshops to any group of people, of any age, and of any level of experience. Less well-documented than some of Boal's techniques, and of particular interest to choreographers, musicians, and creators of visual theatre, are the exercises he gives, in sections in 'The Arsenal of the Oppressed', on Rhythm, Melody and Sound; and his Games of Mask and Ritual.

In the early 1990s, life and art merged in a fuller way for Boal when he was elected as a member of Rio de Janeiro's city council, and turned techniques first devised to encourage audience participation into a way of making popular laws, calling this technique Legislative Theatre. In 1994 he was awarded Unesco's Pablo Picasso medal, and he had countless honorary doctorates, from universities across the globe.

In the 'noughties' his work continued with great fervour. He published *The Aesthetics of the Oppressed* in 2006, a volume which he viewed as a crucial companion to *The Theatre of the Oppressed*, and which is equally full of fantastic sound-bites on the power of theatre to transform. In this work, he advocates, with typical trickster glee, Theatre as a Martial Art, saying that 'he or she who stays silent consents'. He continued working almost to the time of his death, developing projects worldwide. Old age brings no mellowing, and in this last book he proclaims that 'I, Augusto Boal, want the Spectator to assume her role as Actor and Artist, to invade the character, and the stage, taking her place and proposing ways and alternatives'. Transgression becomes a key word of his late-stage work: 'To liberate oneself is to transgress. To transgress is to be. To liberate oneself is to be'.

At the end of this book, Boal says, referring to the paths we have chosen as theatre-makers: 'It is simple, very simple, but it is not so simple. This is the beginning. The Spanish Poet Antonio Machado says "Caminante, no hay camino, se hace camino al andar" (Wayfarer, there is no way, the way is made by walking). Andemos – let's walk'.

Dorothy Max Prior

JEREMY GOLDSTEIN

CREATIVE PRODUCER AND THE DIRECTOR OF LONDON ARTISTS PROJECTS, IN HIS OWN WORDS



I love making shows, pulling strings, making it happen, the creation of something new...

My family was very artistic and culture played a big part in our lives. My parents fed my appetite for culture, which probably set me up for a career in the arts.

I'll be 40 this year and this is all I've ever done. I don't know how to do anything else.

When I set up London Artists Projects in 2001, I was very adventurous, and interested in working with new ideas – I still am!

I wanted London Artists Projects to be an alternative to mainstream producing practices which I thought were really quite staid. I wanted to pick up extraordinary projects that no one else would touch and work with artists who, like me, were entrepreneurial in their approach and wanted to do something different and challenging with their careers. It was a very simple premise which slowly but surely is blossoming into something quite special.

Ghost Train (with Marisa Carnesky) was one of our early successes. Audiences crave this kind of work and in a way *Ghost Train*, a live art fairground ride on a real ghost train, preceded the whole hysteria surrounding *Sultan's Elephant* and Punchdrunk's *Masque of the Red Death*. For its time, it re-wrote the rule-book on what was possible in terms of immersive, site-specific theatre.

There is strength in diversity and having a wide portfolio of projects is important to me. Whenever I look at a new project, I ask myself - is this the kind of project I would want to go to myself?

I often work with artists who are interested in site specific, multimedia or audio-visual work – but I'm just as interested in a good script or musical score.

I'm extremely proud of the fact that nearly all our completed projects are newly commissioned works supported and partnered by flagship arts institutions. But it's getting harder financially to survive and the main challenge right now is trying to resource the new work properly from within.

What we do well is to work side-by-side with artists to develop new ideas for a broader public.

Being at Chelsea Flower Show with Jyll Bradley as part of her Liverpool 08 commission, and then launching her book *Mr Roscoe's Garden* and photographic installation *The Botanic Garden* at the Walker Art Gallery as part of Liverpool Biennial was very special for me.

There are new projects in the pipeline – with Jyll Bradley; with directors Annabel Arden, Neil Bartlett, Tim Hopkins; and new work from Cardboard Citizens. There are others too but I can't talk about them yet!

What makes a successful creative team? Difference, rapport, deadlines, communication, leadership. All of these things if managed well can add to the success of a creative team.

Sometimes it's the difference in people's backgrounds which can create a lot of excitement. For instance, when we made the opera *Elephant and Castle* for Aldeburgh Festival in 2007, we paired a classically trained composer Tansy Davies with the electronica world of Mira Calix and the results were really quite astonishing.

As a producer, you have to empower people to do it, take responsibility – own it, so to speak.

A Life in Three Acts (which we are taking to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2009) is of its time and place, and very much in the moment. It's my fourth show with Bette Bourne and my first with Mark Ravenhill. For many people, Bette personifies a unique performance aesthetic and his legendary company Bloodlips changed the face of queer theatre. But it isn't just the performance work that makes Bette tick, it is his involvement in the formation of the Gay Liberation Front, living in a drag commune, and the fight to be himself in amongst all the hypocrisy and lies.

Mark Ravenhill is right when he says that it was Bette Bourne's generation who paved the way for our generation to be as we are, and this new show not only celebrates the momentous struggles and achievements of gay liberation but also reveals a portrait of an amazing individual at a particular point in his life. Bette's stories inspire, are politically charged, but are also very human. They make you laugh and cry and that to me is great theatre too.

Having a bit of self-belief and faith in your projects can take you to places you never thought you'd visit.

Our mission is to work with artists who pursue new directions and open up previously unexplored territory to satisfy audiences who hunger for the live and authentic moments of joy, beauty, magic and meaning that crystallise, reflect and add to their understanding and knowledge of today's world. That says it in a nutshell.

For more on Jeremy Goldstein's work and London Artists Projects, see: www.londonartistsprojects.com

A Life in Three Acts is on at Traverse Theatre Edinburgh from 18-30 August Box Office 0131 228 1404 followed by Royal Theatre in The Hague from 2-6 September and then at Soho Theatre London from 21-27 September Box Office 0207 478 0100. All details are available at: www.londonartistsprojects.com

A LIFE IN THREE ACTS. BETTE BOURNE (LEFT) AND MARK RAVENHILL (RIGHT). PHOTO BY DAVID GWINNUTT

MICHAEL PINCHBECK'S *THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD*.
PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST.



TIM JEEVES MARKS THE END OF MICHAEL PINCHBECK'S ELEGY TO A LOST BROTHER

The Long and Winding Road is Michael Pinchbeck's performance memorial to his brother who died, aged 20, on the 17th of May 1998.

The presence of any memorial is a generator for a complicated interplay between the person remembered, the creator of the monument, and those people – let's call them the audience – who encounter the tribute and contribute to the continuing existence of the deceased with their thoughts.

A beat-up old Ford Fiesta is the site of Pinchbeck's testimonial; spray-painted and broken-down, it has served as the location for hundreds of one-to-one performances throughout the five years of the project. These intimate performances have been created in numerous sites and venues across the UK, and places that the car has parked up outside have included CPT's Sprint festival in London, The Basement's *Supper Club* in Brighton, and the Bluecoat in Liverpool.

In these performances, after settling into the passenger seat, the audience would be asked to buckle their seat-belt, take a travel sweet and then, accompanied by a soundtrack played through the car stereo, listen to Pinchbeck as he tells the story of his car's journey (which begins with the collection of his brother's belongings from the student house in Liverpool that had been his home).

The rear-view mirror becomes the site of the exchange between audience and performer; angled to reveal only our eyes to each other, this simultaneous reduction and focusing of Pinchbeck's presence effectively makes the tragedy of the tale both more manageable and more forceful for an audience.

At key stages throughout the monologue, Pinchbeck directs this reflection elsewhere. At one stage he turns the mirror so that we see our own reflection, reminding us of the important role we have to play in the facilitation of this remembrance, whilst at another point the mirror is turned to display the 365 packages wrapped in brown-paper that are laid on the back seat (each an object that had once belonged to the dead young man).

Like the rear-view mirror that reveals these spatial presences, so the spoken text directs our attention to different aspects of the past. The car is the chief protagonist of the tale, not Pinchbeck and not his brother; we are told something of the brothers but, by using the car's journey as the medium by which this narrative is told, the tale never becomes melancholic. Our attention is shifted between painfully sad thoughts of the emptiness following his brother's death and the more mundane mishaps that are inevitable when using an old car as a touring performance venue.

This skilful management of the audience's involvement provides a major contribution to the magic of the piece. Pinchbeck states that one of the key purposes of the project's steering committee (excuse the pun) was to provide an outside eye and make sure that the piece was made for people other than himself.

Demonstrating his wariness towards self-indulgence, when asked about the possibilities for catharsis within each performance, Pinchbeck informs me of the word's secondary meaning. As well as a purging of emotion, in a medical context 'catharsis' can be used to describe an evacuation of the bowels after an intake of laxatives.

The presence of Liverpool reverberates through the piece. Aside from the Beatles reference of the title and the fact that this was the city where his brother died, the milometer of the car was reset outside the Cavern Club at the piece's outset, whilst the trilogy of endings which brought it to a close were produced by the Bluecoat.

The first of these was the final series of one-to-one performances in the courtyard of the arts centre which were followed the next afternoon, five years to the day after the piece began, with an emotional and somewhat industrial ceremony as the car, complete with the 365 objects taken from the brother's house, was lowered into the Mersey.

The third and most open conclusion took place two weeks after this, after the car had been crushed and dismantled, when the different parts of the vehicle were exhibited at the Bluecoat with a public invitation to take them away.

I was lucky enough to experience the piece a number of times throughout its journey. Watching it on my last encounter, as it was slowly lowered into the river, I was moved to a space of reflection, memory and imagination. I was moved by the rain, which fell harder as the vehicle became fully submerged; and I was moved by the chance intervention of the single swan that swam into the dock at this same time; but most moving of all was seeing the physical space that I myself had occupied in the passenger seat of the car, watching it as it gradually was swallowed by the murky waters of the Mersey.

For further on the artist and on this project, see www.michaelpinchbeck.co.uk



HORSE PLAY

COMPANY FZ HAVE A NEW SHOW CALLED HORSE. FLICK FERDINANDO AND JOHN-PAUL ZACCARINI SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS ON ITS MAKING

What's it called?

HORSE

What's it about?

Er...Horses?

Yes, but what's it about?

Good question....mmm...tricky. Well, I suppose it's about beautiful beasts and ugly humans, powerful creatures and scared beings.

It's been a long time in gestation, a slow creeping, making its way to some kind of end point, (if there ever is an end point in this kind of work). I began by thinking that I didn't want to make a solo show about me – why should I make an audience sit through a load of stuff about my life? Other people have much more interesting stories to tell. No, it would not be autobiographical.

The horse thing came about six years ago when I was walking along a country lane on the island of Terschelling, during the fabulous Oerol festival (a must go). My shoes had a very clear sound against the tarmac and by the time I had arrived at a gate amongst the hedges, the horses in that field were there waiting for me. This happened every time I walked past and so I began to think about them and their behaviour.

This of course led to subsequent experiences where I would try my hand at whinnying to bring them to me. In my fantasy world I was speaking with them but in reality they probably just wanted some food. Next came the pony book and the biscuit tin with horses on it, a gift from the lovely Strangelings boys.

That was six years ago. I wasn't a big horse rider as a kid – in fact I had to give that up for the ballet. I didn't even particularly like horses, I was bloody scared of them. I did, however, decide to learn to ride for the show, to overcome this fear; to try and understand why so many become obsessed with them, adore them, talk about them as though their life depended on it. I began to understand.

'It's a bit like driving a car,' the instructor said. 'No it isn't,' I thought, 'I can control the car entirely; its not going to suddenly make a bolt for it, or open the door and throw me out.'

Having a horse is more than having a pet. They are required to work, to have someone ride on them, to jump, to develop performance skills, to win races and go to war. There's a power in those beasts and an agreement has to be made between both parties; there's some kind of mutual respect that has to occur, rather like the agreement between actor and audience.

I didn't think the opportunity would ever arise with FZ to create a solo show, as my co-director and co-creator John-Paul Zaccarini had done with *Throat*; I wouldn't be able to be so physical, so circus. I had to take a more mature attitude toward the physical training (although that dreadful child will always rear its ugly head, I guess one just knows how to recognise it and rationalise it), and this somehow gave me more space, an ability to care less. We are also very clear at FZ that our physical work comes from the heart of theatre; skill is important, tricks are not.

I hadn't been on a trapeze for fifteen years so a careful ongoing training and strengthening happened alongside the devising and creation of *Horse*. When I got to a point of strength we then began the work on the saddle. We are always keen to develop new kinds of equipment that are integral to the creation; it's a tricky bit of kit and we very quickly found that it pretty much resembles nothing like a trapeze, and we were certain we didn't want it to have the feeling of that either, so very quickly we had to establish some rules to create a different visual view.

The devising process began with me being different kinds of horses, looking at their movement quality – from the earthy Shire horse to the elegant dressage thoroughbred. It became very clear that this was a good starting point for many aspects of the show and we have returned to it throughout the process as a source.

There are three characters in the show all coming from a point of obsession – we discovered that people who become involved with horses at whatever level tend to absorb themselves and fall madly in love with these creatures.

I also realised that the importance of getting to know about these animals and to try and get inside the feelings one might have for them which drive people to these levels. We then used these to develop into human characterisation. We looked at the various vocal worlds of horses; at the auctioneer, and the racing commentator. We then looked at how we could subvert these aspects of horse language.

HORSES FOR COURSES



Another strong characteristic of this world is the clothing, and knowing what must be worn and when. I also realised that it had to be correct – you can't just bung a dressage jacket with a pair of jodhpur boots. This gave rise to the dressing ritual and status of the different clothing that would inform some aspects of the show.

Just recently, before we went into our final stage of production, my mother handed me a bunch of photos of my family – my great grandfather and his wife and my grandmother who married into their family, all surrounded by horses. Then I realised that those funny old gloves with extra suede along the inside of the forefinger which came from my grandmother were actually riding gloves, so I suppose you could say it has ended up being autobiographical in a carousel kind of way.

Also I now understand that the relationship that people have with a horse is so incredibly committed to the point of love, and having spent a good twenty-five years in theatre there is some kind of parallel, which means I must be in love. It also makes perfect sense that John-Paul and I should create a show about horses because the vast and magnificent equine world is highly visual and physical.

Flick Ferdinand



Horse is the second solo show that we have made, the first being *Throat* which premiered December 1998 in Stockholm and then toured for nine years, from Melton Mowbray to Mozambique. In December 2008 a work-in-progress showing of *Horse* at the Horse Hospital in London functioned as something of a marking point of ten years of making work together.

Over those years our working methods, which span the worlds of physical theatre, circus and, most recently, scripted text and video, have evolved and expanded – but we can still see in *Horse* the rudimentary creative principles that made *Throat* such an enduring presence on the physical theatre circuit.

Having both worked extensively with circuses and within circus education on the one hand, and the medium of devised theatre and improvisation on the other, we experience our roles as directors as principally one that listens rather than tells. This is nowhere clearer than when one co-creates a solo show with a performer, because that performer needs to own the stories they will tell onstage.

There are, however, many voices, many stories in *Horse* – just as there were in *Throat* – that help to make it more of a universal experience, and it is this passage from the particular to the universal that we always strive to achieve.

A solo performer has something to say, a desire to give an account of herself, even if she has to enlist someone else's story to assist her, even if she has to create fictional characters that say, better than she can, what it feels like to live a life. Here the job of the director is to listen and facilitate the best way for that story to emerge, to unveil itself.

But *Horse*, like *Throat*, does not tell a linear narrative and I believe that Company FZ creates these disjointed, fragmented narratives because none of us can truly claim to give a coherent account of ourselves – one that is objective, seamless and without contradiction. Our stories are full of ruptures, inconsistencies, things that do not make sense and which we cannot account for. This is a more subjective way to tell a story, to be true to the splintering, the discontinuity that we experience in our day-to-day experience as we try to remind ourselves and others of who we are.

So, with *Horse*, we did not expect to repeat *Throat*, but we found that this way of presenting a life, in this case a life obsessed by horses, a life of thwarted desires, was the best way to invite an audience in. These gaps in the narrative, these breaks in continuity, of sense, are precisely those gaps where an audience member can insert, in this case, their own experience of obsession, or thwarted desire.

A story too well crafted may sometimes be impenetrable, may not allow us in, will not put us to work in the same way, for there are no gaps for us to fill in with our own, private experience.

Most of my own work as director of this first stage of *Horse's* development was as much to do with laughing my guts out as listening. As a reviewer wrote of *Horse* at The Pulse Festival in June, come with 'your sides reinforced'. After ten years of working with each other we find we can laugh at the darkest, strangest things. It's a peculiar and life-affirming way of being honest.

John-Paul Zaccarini

Company FZ's Horse plays at Underbelly's Hullabaloo - The Bosco at Hullabaloo daily during August at 4.10pm. See www.edfringe.com to book tickets. For more on the company, see www.companyfz.com

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THE LURE OF THE HORSE

WHY DO GIRLS – AND BOYS, AND THEATRE-MAKERS – LIKE HORSES? THOMAS WILSON GETS IN THE SADDLE TO FIND OUT

The last couple of years have seen a resurgence of the horse in performance, both as a subject of theatre and as a performer.

From the revival of Peter Shaffer's *Equus*, replete with naked Daniel Radcliffe (the young actor who plays Harry Potter), and the critical and commercial success of the adaptation of Michael Morpurgo's novel *War Horse*, to the resurgence of the performing horse in, for example, the work of Gifford's Circus and in *voltige* group Jive Pony, we have seen a wide range of approaches to including this animal in performance.

Clearly there is something in the allure of these beasts that goes beyond our normal fascination with animals. Is there something in horses that might just remind us of ourselves, something that taps into deeply held associations that are not rivalled by any other animal?

Since the horse's domestication (sometime between 4000 and 2000 BC), the human race and the horse have had an ongoing working relationship, and the horse's place in the history of performance is also long-standing, from the dancing horses of the Tang dynasty to the 'high-diving' horses of the Wild West shows of 19th century America, then on into the 20th century as a prominent act in many circuses. The horse's presence as performer in its own right was formalised in western theatre history with the equestrian displays of Philip Astley in the 18th century. It is from these displays that modern circus developed and much of the 'canon' of equestrian performance skills set down; from High School (advanced riding skills), Liberty (working horses without rider and reins) to 'trick riding' including *voltige* (acrobatics and movement on the moving horse).

The development of equestrian performances outside of explicit circus contexts is in no small part due to the work of French equestrian theatre company Zingaro. Established in 1984 and beginning with a series of 'equestrian cabarets', Zingaro, led by artistic director and trainer Bartabas, established an increased theatricality and sensitivity in working with horses away from the context of circus. Zingaro established an approach to the creative process that focused on what academic David Williams calls 'encounters with horses', identifying these encounters as having sympathy with 'impulse-based dance forms' (such as contact improvisation). In essence, shifting the focus to seeing what happens when human and animal meet, rather than what existing tricks can be mastered.

For performances that involve real horses the focus of the 'encounter' between human and animal is far more prominent and unpredictable, being the source of amazement or consternation of an audience. What lies at the heart of these approaches is the desire to make contact with another sentient creature, whose own personality is revealed in the moment-by-moment connection on stage. This is a rarely discussed element of equestrian performance, and often plays second fiddle to questions of spectacle and the handler's skill in commanding his or her equine partner.

One of the most prominent UK artists to have worked with horses is Rose English. English's long-standing fascination with the horse culminated in her legendary 1992 production *My Mathematics*. In this she explored ideas surrounding numbers, in particular the number zero, aided by a 'learned horse' who seems to be able to count autonomously. English has written about the sensations and delight of this contact with the personality of the horse:

'...Although I would cue him, he would often misbehave in a very exciting and alarming fashion. So he was in a way telling me and modelling in his own behaviour how much wilder, more unpredictable, vaster and more exciting really *everything* is when you get invited into the space of the stage. Once I was asking the audience whether what I was doing with the horse was coercion, and he replied very firmly by butting me with his head into the wings. Which is about the clearest answer I've ever received on stage.'

HORSES FOR COURSES



English further explored the allure of the performing horse at a lecture she delivered at The Roundhouse's Circus Fronts Festival in 2007, examining the horse's place in 'iconic images that are actual, legendary, psychological...' Of particular interest was English's exploration of the 'caprice' of the techniques and presentation of the spectacle of the performing animal. She charted the adornment of horses, of their riders and of the desire to embellish the natural activities of the horse. Yet at the heart of her lecture remained the sense of the desire to make contact with the horse, with the intangible pull of these animal beings on the human being. English articulated the relationship between the skill of working an animal and the appeal of the horse as a 'being', as a 'character'.

At the more mainstream end of the performance scale is *Spirit of the Horse*, an 'equestrian theatre spectacular' led by Nikki Fossett and co-directed by circus luminaries Robert Fossett and Philip Gandey. Reflecting the Fossetts' roots in traditional circus, the show is constructed from pre-existing equestrian acts arranged into an overall narrative and theme. Nikki Fossett though is keen to emphasise her desire to work beyond this 'potential artistic limitation', aiming to improve the theatrical experience as she develops the company. She speaks passionately about wanting to provide interest for audience members that work with horses and those who do not – mixing skill-centred acts with narrative and theatrical components.

This activation of the animal into 'more-than animal' in the presence of humans is evidenced in *Jive Pony*, led by Rebecca Townsend (formally a member of the Jerwood Award-winning Gifford's Circus, a company who have established themselves as a traditional touring circus and whose horses have played a prominent part in its success). Townsend's work is predominantly amongst the summer County Shows, presenting Liberty and Liberty *voltige*, with an informative strand that highlights Townsend's approach to working with her horse, Ronan. Key to Townsend's work is the explicit reference of the relationship between the human and non-human performers. The small scale of this pairing, performed in a naturally-lit outdoor space, has a more intimate feeling than the spectacle of *Spirit of the Horse*. There is, in the work, a balance between displaying 'skill' and displaying 'being'; both the horse's 'being' and Townsend's and Ronan's 'being' together.

In the performance this explicit demonstration of a relationship encourages an audience empathy. Even in an outdoors environment, there is something intriguing about the delicacy of the relationship, rather than the tricks that can be performed. Thus the animal's presence in performance becomes pleasing to watch not because of the 'handling' of that animal, but because of the exchange of trust, the exchange of a presence. This exchange suggests to us that we are not so removed from these magnificent creatures, and that, as Rose English intimates, we might find something of their elegance, nobility and wildness within ourselves.

When it comes to the representation of horses on stage (as opposed to performance that engages actual horses), then the most prominent theatrical horse at present is Joey, Michael Morpurgo's *War Horse*, who began as a character in a children's book; his literary function a way of exploring the human experience of war without, in Morpurgo's words, 'taking sides'. The way in which Joey can step into all manner of situations and uncover human frailties whilst also allowing us to place ourselves in the situation is reminiscent of Anne Sewell's *Black Beauty*, the original literary horse. But what has marked the appeal of this theatrical rendering of a literary success has been the achievement of the puppeteers (led/trained by Handspring Puppet Company) in presenting the lifelike quality of the horses, thus succeeding in finding the pathos and catharsis of Morpurgo's original narrative. This has allowed the puppeteers to find and recreate what we could term the 'non-human humanity' of the horse, a quality of dignity that anyone who has worked with horses can attest to. This is reinforced by the success in creating life-size creatures. The scale is important, as the power and grace of the real thing is bound up in the fact horses are bigger, stronger and faster than the humans who ride them.

In contrast to the grand-scale catharsis of *War Horse* and the raw encounter of equestrian shows is Company FZ's latest offering, simply entitled *Horse*. This solo show (featuring Flick Ferdinando) sets out to explore the human-horse relationship from the human perspective, through a complex collage of associations and caricatures. Unlike the more common approaches to the use of animal qualities in characterisation, FZ choose to mine the qualities of the human individuals who work or enjoy horses, thus predominantly exploring the situation for comic and emotive content.

What this production raises most successfully is the darker side of our relationship with horses; for example the ways in which we might dispose of them when we're done with them – of their skin, of their hooves, of their meat, of their heads; thus raising the complexity of our debt to the horse. FZ also set out to explore the sexualised 'equestrienne', with the connotations of the language surrounding horses: 'riding', 'stallion', 'girth', and the like. Indeed, the sexuality evidenced in horses and the terms surrounding the horse (and his cousin the donkey and half-brother the mule) have proven fertile ground for the theatre-maker (think of Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*), and in this context achieve a similar effect, to uncover the conscious and unconscious desires of a character.

What all of these productions do is draw on the long-held and deep association with the horse to express something of our human nature. That the horse draws our attention, whether the subject of a performance or the performer itself, is due not just to its size and physical power, but also to its inherent grace, subdued wildness and sharp intelligence.

This desire then to connect to the horse, and its independent spirit, is at the centre of our beguilement with this creature.

The National Theatre production War Horse continues its West End run at the New London Theatre, and is taking bookings until February 2010: www.newlondontheatre.co.uk

Company FZ's Horse was seen by the author of this article at Jackson's Lane in London, and the show will be presented at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe August 2009: www.edfringe.com

*Equestrian Theatre Zingaro: www.zingaro.fr
Jive Pony: www.jive-pony.co.uk and Townsend's other strand: www.barebackburlesque.co.uk
Spirit of the Horse: www.equestriantheatre.co.uk*

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THERE'S A PLACE FOR US

LIAM JARVIS OF ANALOGUE THEATRE COMPANY SHARES HIS THOUGHTS ON THE MAKING OF BEACHY HEAD, THE SECOND IN A TRILOGY OF PLAYS WITH A SENSE OF PLACE

August 2009 marks a cathartic moment for Analogue. It will be an exciting opportunity for us to share with audiences at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe a project that has been almost two years in development.

Beachy Head is the second part in a trilogy of new work that we are making. Our first show *Mile End* (which appeared at the Edinburgh Fringe 2007, followed by a UK and International tour) being the first part – with the third part yet to be revealed.

There are a number of things that connect the three parts of the trilogy; perhaps the most apparent thing is that at the epicentre of each story is a protagonist desperately trying to take control over their lives. In the case of *Mile End*, the central character only finds the help he needs by murdering an innocent victim; in *Beachy Head*, a character takes control by ending his life; and in the third part of the trilogy, a character loses his life through a tragic accident whilst going to extreme lengths to create a better future for himself and his family (the exact subject matter of this show is a secret for now).

The work forming our trilogy is rooted in rigorous research, real stories and concrete locations. The title of each work is a place name that is connected to the story we are telling. Our debut production, *Mile End*, began life as an investigation into the tragic death of an innocent commuter, Christophe Duclos, who in 2002 was pushed in front of a tube train in the rush hour at Mile End Station by Stephen Soans-Wade. Stephen, from Poplar, East London, had tried to get himself sectioned under the Mental Health Act, but psychiatrists had decided that whilst he had displayed some abnormal and anti-social traits, they were not sufficient to have him detained. His threats of violence were largely ignored, with devastating consequences.

We decided to make a short piece of work inspired by aspects of this story, initially staged at the Young Vic. The form the work took was an experiment in trying to find a performance language that could put the audience inside the mind of a man who was fighting an internal battle with a personality disorder. Entirely by chance the day of the performance was also the first day of Soans-Wade's trial. We presented an early work-in-progress at the Lion & Unicorn in London, in summer 2006. During rehearsals, another tragedy occurred – Mehmet Bala pushed John Curran onto the rails at Highbury and Islington. These resonances between the fiction of our work and the reality of the daily news were quite alarming, but also for us reaffirmed the relevance of the subject matter and the importance of using theatre as a place to interrogate some of the important questions emerging from these stories. Who was to blame? Were mental health patients receiving the level of care and support that they needed? Our research into these questions, and the quest for answers, brought us into contact with some inspirational people and organisations, including mental health charity SANE and Jayne Zito.



Jayne founded the Zito Trust after her husband Jonathan was stabbed by a schizophrenic, Christopher Clunis, at Finsbury Park station in 1992. What Jayne courageously observed of her husbands' killer was that he was himself the 'victim of a policy'. The murderers in cases such as these were mental health patients that were themselves the victims of a system that was failing to provide the right level of appropriate care. This was a message that was at the very heart of *Mile End*.

The process of making our work is a long-term commitment for all involved. As a group of collaborators, we use theatre as a vehicle to investigate those areas of life that we feel we need to better understand. In 2007 our attention was drawn to a newspaper article that featured a photograph of a solitary telephone box installed on the cliff tops at Beachy Head in 1976. A sign was planted a few feet away that reads, 'ALWAYS THERE DAY OR NIGHT'. Below this message is a telephone number for The Samaritans.

We had never been to Beachy Head, although we were aware of its reputation as one of Britain's prominent suicide spots. There was something about the idea of this phone box, at the very edge of the divide between life and death, that was incredibly hopeful to us – its very existence being perhaps the kindest gesture directed towards those who, for whatever reason, had come to the cliffs and might want someone to listen to them at a moment of despair.

We first visited Beachy Head on the 22nd of September 2007. The phone box looked surprisingly ordinary. It was a sunny day and the first impression of the place was its breathtaking beauty. And yet there were small details that distinguished the beautiful surroundings from other areas of natural beauty, making it more than just a tourist site. Small bunches of flowers and wooden crucifixes were dotted along the cliff edge, commemorating the passing of a son, daughter, sister or mother; pinpointing the decisive place and moment when someone chose death over life.



On this first trip we found ourselves much closer to the subject matter than we had anticipated; from the gardens of The Beachy Head pub we witnessed in the distance the sight of the police and local chaplaincy team comforting the grieving relatives of Melanie Wells (wife of Sussex cricketer, Alan Wells) who had jumped earlier that morning. Witnessing this tragic aftermath from afar, the ethical dilemmas of making art about this incredibly sensitive subject became very real for us. We spent the day and into the night up on the cliffs, walking the two or three miles to the old Belle Tout lighthouse and back. We continued for some weeks after to try and make sense of our project and whether we should continue with it. What good could staging this kind of grief possibly do?

When creating a project over a long period of time, frequently the initial objectives change. As you begin to go down one path of inquiry, real life presents itself in sometimes shocking and surprising ways. Such was the case with news of the extraordinarily sad deaths of the Puttick family which made the headlines in May 2009. (The body of five-year-old Sam Puttick was found in a rucksack, together with the bodies of his parents, Kazumi Puttick and Neil Puttick, at the foot of Beachy Head. It was later revealed that the severely disabled child had died from meningitis at his home four days earlier, and his parents had decided that they couldn't live without him).

Whilst the timing of these events has coincided with our project, tragic events at Beachy Head are not uncommon and the timing is less coincidental than it might seem. On average, twenty people take their lives at Beachy Head every year. It could be argued that there would never be a right time to investigate Beachy Head; art would always be far too close to real life wouldn't it? For this reason the journey of this play has been one long investigation into the ethics of telling such stories, focusing increasingly on those who are left behind.

With an Arts Award from the Wellcome Trust's Engaging Science programme we were able to invest two years into the research process, interviewing pathologists and forensic psychologists, members of the Samaritans and bereavement counsellors. We also met those who had previously attempted suicide as well as relatives and friends of those who had taken their own lives. From these encounters, we are painfully aware that this subject continues to be an enigma. All too frequently those who are left behind cannot determine definitive reasons or understand the motivations that compelled such an act.

Whether people go to the theatre to avoid or embrace real life is another debatable subject. Theatre exploring the bleaker facets of life is likely to have little appeal in the current climate isn't it? So why spotlight an issue that has so few answers? We think it comes down to a need to openly ask informed questions in the only way we really know how; to let our characters ask those questions for us.



Liam Jarvis is, with Hannah Barker, Co-Artistic Director of Analogue. Beachy Head plays at the Pleasance Dome at 5.25pm daily throughout the Edinburgh Festival Fringe (no shows 17, 24 or 31 August). Book tickets at www.edfringe.com or www.pleasance.co.uk

For further information on the company, and for future plans for this show, see www.analogueproductions.co.uk or email producer Ric Watts on ric@ricwatts.com

The Zito Trust, cited in this article, is a charity working to reform mental health policy and law, and to provide advice and support to victims of mentally disordered offenders. See www.zitotrust.co.uk

The Samaritans provides confidential non-judgemental emotional support, 24 hours a day, for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those which could lead to suicide. Further information on the organisation and details of how to make a donation to help their work, or how to train as a volunteer, can be found at www.samaritans.org

ANOTHER ROAD

THE FOREST FRINGE BECKONS! ANDY FIELD STEPS OUT INTO THE UNKNOWN

BOOTWORKS.
PHOTO BY ROBERT JUDE DANIELS

*"Midway this way of life we're bound upon,
I woke to find myself in a dark wood..."*

So it's mid July. We're stumbling towards August at a terrifyingly breathless pace. The van is organised, the flat is organised. I'm sick with excitement and trepidation. The rain is flexing its watery muscles like a killjoy bouncer almost waiting for his chance to flatten the mood of the party.

It feels like approximately an hour ago that we were making the summer's first journey to Edinburgh back at the beginning of June, when the festival was a lifetime away and we were set to have a long hot glorious summer of radiant British sunshine.

I remember walking back into Forest Fringe's home on Bristo Place and taking a great Proustian lungful of its smell; a strange mix of good café food and dusty church hall. It could have been last summer again. I remembered the feeling of Deborah Pearson and myself pitching up in Edinburgh with just a good idea, some hugely talented artists, and a dream of what the Festival might be. For two weeks we remained on just the right side of *knowing what we're doing* and had a truly incredible time. Never did we imagine we'd see people queuing round the block for our shows, or see ourselves collecting a Herald Angel (in fact, that didn't happen... by then we were already back down in London so someone had to collect it for us). The whole thing was an implausible, delirious adventure.

More than anything else, though, it was unrepeatable. We knew we couldn't just do the same thing and we knew we didn't want to. But already, standing in the empty hall in June, things felt different. The place felt a little more confident; it was breathing a little slower, its shoulders a little more open. More than anything it felt like we were ready to rely a little less on positioning ourselves as a plucky little island in the vast ocean of the Festival. This year we wanted to step out.

We wanted Forest Fringe to be something other than a venue. We liked the idea that it could become a community, a loose collective of artists and audiences who share with us the things we find exciting and the things we want more of. We'd already created a weekend event in collaboration with BAC in which Forest Fringe companies were scattered across the maze of rooms in their beautiful old town hall and the audience had the opportunity to roam through the building discovering the secrets hidden behind various doors. It was a brilliant experience and in Edinburgh we only wanted to do more of this.

And so that's exactly what we've tried to. To create not just a programme of events but a whole world of strange and beautiful experiences bleeding out from Bristo Place into the rest of Edinburgh.

Mesmerising audio shows leading you off into the city, installations hidden in shops, a dying postal service whose decaying letter boxes can be found hidden in tunnels and libraries and graveyards. There will be pamphlets of imagined events, impromptu happenings in secret locations, huge discussions on the future of Edinburgh, a phone you can call at any point and have a miniature audio encounter by a different artist every day. And possibly most excitingly, a multi-faceted collaboration between ourselves, BAC and The Arches, involving a series of tantalising artistic journeys between our home and the Arches' new base at St Stephen's church.

With all this we've found a way to once again race off into unknown lands, and it's as brilliant and eye-wateringly terrifying as we hoped it would be.

FOREST FRINGE 2009 PROGRAMME

Forest Fringe will be returning to the Edinburgh Festival from 17–29 August – featuring a dynamic, eclectic line-up of experimental shows, works-in-progress, installations, intimate encounters and special events.

This year's line-up of artists includes a brilliant mix of internationally acclaimed companies such as Curious, Improbable, Bill Aitchison, Third Angel, Rotozaza and Action Hero nestled alongside some of the country's most exciting emerging artists, including Tinned Fingers, Kings of England, Belt-Up Theatre, Deborah Pearson and Chris Williams.

BAC continues to support Forest Fringe this year as it grows and develops, returning with an innovative series of events, including their legendary one o'clock SCRATCH. The programme also features a number of BAC developed and supported artists and shows.

Forest Fringe will also be collaborating with a number of other venues for the first time, including the Hide&Seek Festival and Stoke Newington International Airport.

All this will be available at whatever price you want to pay, with all tickets being by donation only. By remaining defiantly not-for-profit we're able to continue to keep costs as low as they get to encourage generosity, adventure and a sense of community from both our artists and our audiences.

The Forest Fringe is based at the Forest Café, Bristo Place, Edinburgh. For more information please contact co-director Andy Field at andy@forestfringe.co.uk or 07894 345627. See www.forestfringe.co.uk

ABSOLUTE BEGINNERS

TOTAL THEATRE'S CANNY GRANNY PAYS TRIBUTE TO PINA BAUSCH AND ASKS: WAS IST TANZTHEATER?

Pina Bausch died on 30 June 2009. I will never forget being shown a documentary video of her choreography when at university (I was a mature student). It had a clip of the show with real dogs in it, everyday body language turned into choreographed movement, and lots of sexually charged scenes of people in negligees and bare feet. Her sets were total installations: a field of carnations; a wall fitted with revolving doors; floors of earth. Her shows were surreal and dangerous – a mixture of music, characters and a sculptural approach to staging. She called it Tanztheater.

When the video finished the lecturer (who was renowned for lazily consuming fun-size snacks from his lunchbox whilst he met you in his office – let's call him Mr. B) said portentously: 'Respond'. We looked at each other blankly: Respond how? Through the medium of tanz? The fact was, dance theatre companies had crapped on any movement we could produce from such a great height that it hardly seemed worth pointing our toes.

Mr B, I'm worried about cracking a hip, but here is my response. What is Dancetheatre, Tanztheater, Dance Theatre or dance/theatre? (Here I swipe the air diagonally to indicate the forward slash in the latter combination.)

'Tanztheater rarely tells a story – not in the way you would expect – but often tells of experience, reminds us of sensations or feelings and chimes with our own memories,' says Lindsay Winship of Sadler's Wells. (I try to represent this unconscious connection by hitching up my skirt, squatting low, with arms outstretched.)

Sanjoy Roy, who reviews dance for The Guardian, describes Bausch 'demanding that her performers dig deep within their own memories and feelings'. (The 'digging' is one of my favourite moves, in fact. Hopefully the neighbours below are out).

This process, which is clearly deeper than simply pasting some dance and theatre side by side, is echoed by other leading companies. 'All participants should work in a manner that facilitates a thorough and fearless examination of the self', says the manifesto of Fabulous Beast, a company based in

PINA BAUSCH'S TANZTHEATER WUPPERTAL
THE RITE OF SPRING. PHOTO BY ULLI WEISS

Ireland. (I forgot what I was responding to there for a moment, because I couldn't resist just 'being' a fabulous beast.)

But although there are often references to the emotional impact of Bausch's work, (Zoe Anderson of The Independent refers to 'an atmosphere of violence or shame'), and to the physical endurance of her dancers (e.g. in *The Rite of Spring*), there is rarely reference to the kind of impressive moves that characterise dance theatre as we currently know it. (I hazard a spin. Nice.)

Face it: DV8's pop-fuelled explorations of sexual politics are acrobatic. Les Ballets C de la B appear offhand about the most energetic actions. Frantic Assembly's origins as two non-dancers from Swansea getting a choreographer to batter them into shape may sound attainable, but have inspired a generation of graduates to wish they had very thick kneepads. (Here I plunge to the carpet and roll, gingerly, towards the fireplace.)

Thankfully, there are plenty of practitioners out there who are exploring dance's place in their performance in an entirely unflashy way. Dan Watson, whose dance theatre solo *Semi Detached* featured in the Coachwerks experimental theatre festival in Brighton in June, notes: 'The body is inherently interesting. It's not just about creating dance to be aesthetically appreciated. Virtuosity holds people back. The audience can feel that they don't know how to read it, and on top of that, there's always the little voice in the head that says, "I can't do that"'. (I breathe a sigh of relief.)

So there we are. A tribute to a highly influential hybrid artform, inspired by the late great Pina Bausch, that has physical theatre practitioners rethinking what their bodies might offer to the cause.

My own response (do it with me now, please): forward slash, squat, digging, the beast, spin, plunge, roll gingerly – and breathe.

Laura Lloyd is the Canny Granny

Coachwerks experimental theatre festival, Brighton:
<http://performancewerks.blogspot.com>

The Arcola launches its new space Studio K with *Adventures in Movement*:
www.arcolatheatre.com

The Place has an artist development programme for movement-oriented practitioners: www.theplace.org.uk

Chisenhale Dance Space is an artist-led development studio for experimentation in dance: www.chisenhaledancespace.co.uk

Fabulous Beast:
www.fabulousbeast.net

Vincent Dance Theatre (currently also featuring dance theatre legend Liz Aggiss): www.vincentdt.com

Frantic Assembly:
www.franticassembly.co.uk

Les Ballets C de la B:
www.lesballetscdela.be

DV8: www.dv8.co.uk

For information on the Sadler's Wells autumn 2009 season, see www.sadlerswells.com

For more on the late Pina Bausch and her company Tanztheater Wuppertal, see www.pina-bausch.de



FIRE! FIRE!

EDWARD TAYLOR ON THE IMPORTANCE OF PYROTECHNICS IN THE FESTIVALS OF THE VALENCIA PROVINCE IN SPAIN

One of the features of living in the suburbs of a British city is how, over the years, the sound of fireworks being let off has become more and more of a familiar sound. As the fifth of November approaches, the frenzy increases until it's hard to tell whether what you are hearing is a display or the work of children taking advantage of the date to practice new forms of trouble-making.

A YouTube clip (since taken down) featured handfuls of fireworks being shoved into a telephone box to create mayhem – the sort of thing you would applaud if it was part of a street theatre show, but which you tut-tut when it's done in the name of vandalism.

TV and poster campaigns warn us of the dangers involved, but I'm sure anyone from Spain would be wondering what all the fuss is about. It's not an exaggeration to say that Spain is firework mad. They incorporate firework displays and hair-raising pyromania into all of their religious ceremonies to act as a genuine moment of catharsis – one of many different moods that such an event aims to engender in the participant. There is, it would seem, a visceral quality to the Catholicism practised in Spain!

As one example of many such festivals: the *Fira y Festes* takes over the entire town centre of Gandia (in the Valencia province) for five days each October. Roads are blocked off; stalls offering medieval-style treats and food line the streets; local drum, pipe and brass bands parade every day; there are music stages dotted around town. In 2008, there was a substantial street theatre programme ranging from large scale French group Malabar to a Belgian side-show of performing fleas (there aren't any fleas present, just a series of micro-effects and the skill of the ringleader who can make you imagine they are there!), and there are also a variety of interactive games and musical instruments for the public to play with.

It's an extremely noisy environment and all the shows are over-attended to the point of bursting by an enthusiastic public – the Spanish seem to see it as their divine right to participate en masse in anything that happens outdoors. Gandia is the best-known festival in the province; the *Merce* takes place in Valencia itself in March (to mark the feast of St Joseph). It is all about fireworks and the burning of huge satirical sculptures – each neighbourhood has its own society, and the sculpture building and subsequent fiery destruction happens even in the smallest of squares! Before the *fallas* are ignited the fire engine arrives to hose down the surrounding buildings so the heat doesn't crack the exterior brick and stone work.

Valencia is also famous for two particular forms of firework displays that take pyrotechnics into deeper waters than we are familiar with in the UK. Both of these, of course, are central events in the *Fira y Festes de Gandia*.

First up is the *masclela*. This is a daytime display. A street is caged off and in the cage you can see strings of firecrackers dangling like some strange form of fruit from fuse wires which criss-cross the 200 metres of road that is cordoned off. At both ends are rows of small mortar-shell tubes. The public gather at both ends. To begin with, three aerial explosions are set off, each about a minute apart – it's almost like calling the faithful to prayer. Then, the whole lot is ignited from one end and travels towards you courtesy of everything being fused together. It's loud – and I mean *loud*. You can feel the air displacement in your chest as the explosions come closer. It's a truly exhilarating experience – part 'my God this is loud' to part 'oh my God this is *too* loud.' Certain sections of the firecrackers are connected by a quicker fuse so the explosions gather pace as they come up the street. It's an exquisite mix of a controlled fear, an anxiety that it could go seriously out of control, and hysteria caused by the intensity of the explosions. Did I mention that it is also incredibly loud? The explosions break into a gallop and many in the audience flinch backwards before it all comes to an ear-shredding end. Then it's giddy relief that it's all over and your hearing is still intact, plus delight with the whole experience.

Next up is the *correfoc*. This is performed late at night. You gather at the end of a street and await what will happen next. You can hear loud music off a side-street and in the distance you can see the sparks of Roman candles moving through the crowd. A chariot that is pumping out techno music is being pushed along and there is a team of horned, leather-clad figures who are brandishing the candles on sticks. They move with a very purposeful stride, which sets them apart from the audience. They are everywhere and when they pause for a while gangs of people crouch under their fireworks and dance in the sparks. The music whips up the mania and as you dodge the efforts of one figure who is scything the ground with a firework you find yourself in the line of fire of another figure who has appeared as if from nowhere. You just don't know where you are at times and the whole experience makes you laugh out loud as well as wonder where the threat will come from next. It brings back those childlike thrills of being chased, half-hoping you won't get caught and half-hoping you will.

What is most extraordinary about both displays is the audience they attract. This is no trendy, knowing theatre crowd: these events are traditional and attract both young and old; some very old at that.



In Valencia, the whole city comes out to watch the *mascletas* which take place daily (often just after lunch) inside a permanently erected giant cage in the centre of the city. This is no sidelined activity, it's an important part of the cultural fabric and each *mascleta* is introduced by the mayor, high on an overlooking balcony. It's extraordinary to see the city 'suits' watching what is basically five to ten minutes of huge explosions with awe and respect...

A few adventurous promoters have attempted to promote these kinds of events in the UK, but without the understanding and complicity of the audience, they fail to catch fire in the way they do in Valencia's towns and cities.

OUT & ABOUT

PIPPA
BAILEY

Bratislava is a beautiful city set on the banks of the Danube, near the Austrian border, just 40 miles from Vienna. The city hosted the spring plenary meeting of IETM – International Network for Contemporary Performing Arts, one of two annual meetings held in different European cities; it will be in Vilnius this October and Glasgow spring 2010. This was my first visit to an IETM meeting. The host country presents a showcase of performance but these are not trade shows and thankfully lack the desperate tension between artists and promoters prevalent at many arts markets. IETM Bratislava was conceived in response to '2009: the European Year of Creativity and Innovation'

The question raised was: What culture without education? What education without culture? Focusing on this relationship between academia and the arts characterises the IETM emphasis on making connection, but the sheer size of the meeting (over 400) can be daunting when travelling alone. The welcome was extremely warm with a special session for 'newbies' to help us get acquainted. The organisation has two official languages, French and English, and outside the formalities many other languages are spoken, bringing people together.

One of the main roles of IETM is to encourage artists' mobility, international collaboration and cultural exchange. However, IETM, its members and all touring performing arts companies now face the enormous 21st century challenge of climate change and 'Peak Oil' (the increasing scarcity of cheap energy). Ironically the image for the meeting was of airplanes with jet stream tails weaving their way across a slide, as viewed from above, a pair of shoes standing on its edge – no visual pun intended. The environmental impact of all the energy used getting hundreds of people across Europe (and beyond) to these gatherings, not to mention the impact of touring all the performances, is mind blowing. Speakers included Judith Knight of Arts Admin, Andrew Ormston from RGA Consulting in Edinburgh, Guy Gipens from Kaaithheater in Belgium, and Juraj Rizman representing Greenpeace in Slovakia. Judith and Guy are part of the 2020 network – six partners coming together to explore art and climate change. Judith spoke about the inefficiency of touring since the advent of cheap flights and how much more effective visual artists have been to communicate about these complex issues than performing artists. The picture wasn't rosy

Fira i Festes Gandia Edward Taylor attended Fira i Festes 2008 in Gandia, Valencia (Spain) 1–5 October 2008. Gandia is Valencia's 'second city'. The 2009 dates for Fira i Festes Gandia are 29 September – 3 October.

Las Fallas Valencia Las Fallas festival takes place each March in the city of Valencia, capital of the Spanish province of the same name. The focus of the fiesta is the creation and destruction of *ninots* (giant sculptural structures featuring puppet caricatures of real or fictional characters) which are made from cardboard, wood, papier-mâché and plaster. The *ninots* are carnivalesque in tone, and usually depict bawdy scenes or satirical takes on current events. They are crafted by neighbourhood organisations and take almost the entire year to construct. The *ninots* remain in place until 19 March, the day known as La Cremá (the burning) when all of the *ninots* are set on fire at 12am (midnight) by the local *bomb-eros* (firemen). Each year, one of the *ninots* is spared from destruction by popular vote. This is called the *ninot indultat* (the pardoned puppet) and is exhibited in the local Museum of the *Ninot* along with the other favorites from years past.

Lewes Bonfire Society The nearest that the UK gets to the mayhem and misrule of the Valencian Fallas and Festes is probably Lewes on Bonfire Night (5 November). The town's seven bonfire societies (jointly known as the Lewes Bonfire Council, spend the year planning their elaborate processions and bonfires for 5 November. The Lewes Bonfire Society's website warns outsiders to stay away on 5 November, so be warned! See www.lewesbonfirecouncil.org.uk

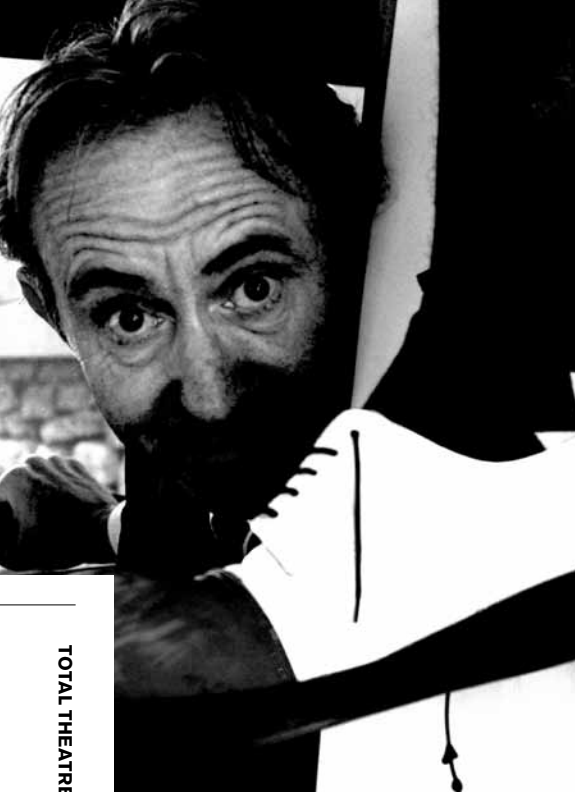
All images taken from Las Fallas in Valencia.
Photos by Milo Foster-Prior

but some exciting suggestions were made to add offsetting principles to standard contracts, demanding sustainable resources be used where possible and encouraging others to help tackle the problem.

Playing their part in the 2020 network, Arts Admin collaborated with the British Council to create Slowboat (London, June 2009) which looked at the crucial issue of international performing arts touring in the context of climate change. Invited artists and producers involved in touring enjoyed a locally sourced dinner and listened to Peter Tom Jones – Skyped in from Belgium – calling for leadership and urging us to 'change or be changed' as climate change continues to alter the world around us. Al Tickell from Julie's Bicycle, whose agenda is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions caused by the music business, shared stories about their work. In 2007 there were 110 million CD sales in the UK, this was one element of the music industry which was responsible for a comparatively high proportion of emissions. Research indicated that a move to cardboard sleeves could result in a 95% cut in the greenhouse gases created by the production of CD packaging, so replacing plastic with card has been their aim, with a very positive response from other people working in the music industry. The following discussions concentrated on the new British standard BS 8900 for creating sustainable events. Many participants were frustrated by the lack of concrete knowledge in the sector about how sustainable or not existing practice is, and focusing on the government standard did not utilize the wealth of knowledge and creativity in the room. However, it was a bold beginning and many pledges and initiatives were inspired.

Primarily the answer is simple: travel more efficiently, waste less and communicate more. Find ingenious ways of reducing your emissions and encouraging others to do the same.

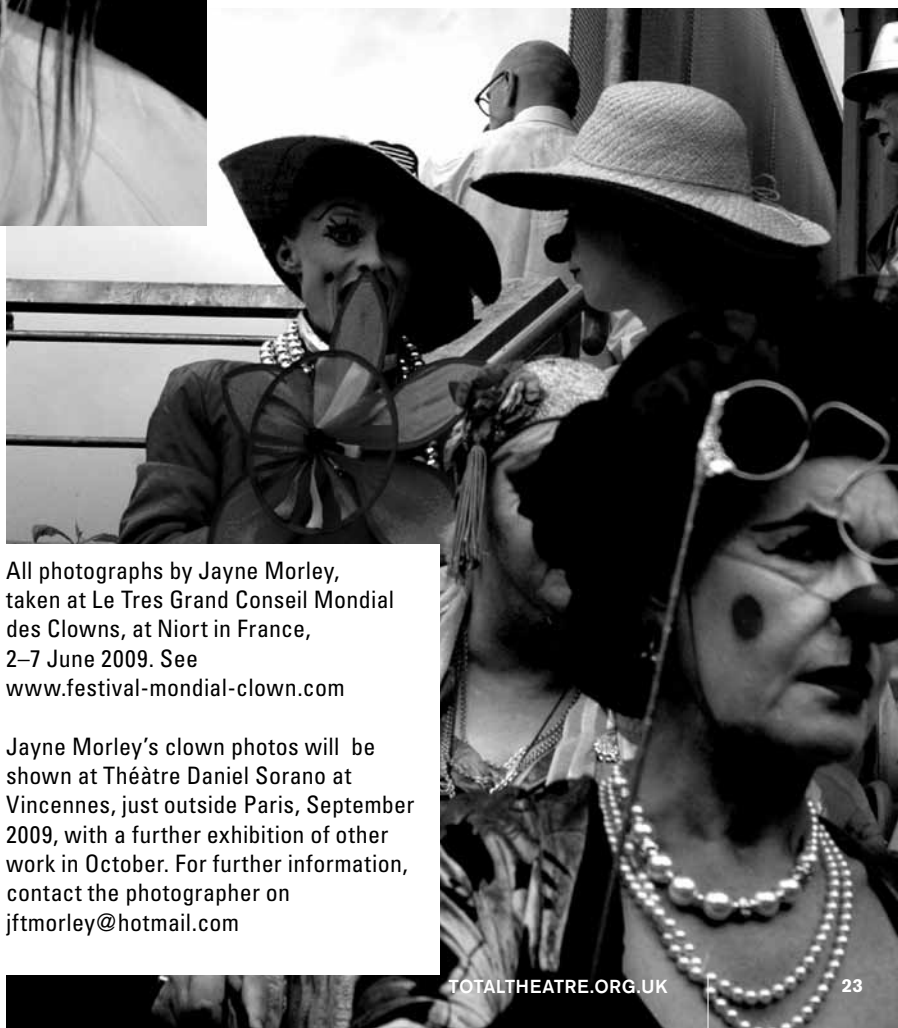
For more on the 2020 network, see www.2020network.eu



SEND IN THE CLOWNS

A PHOTO FEATURE
BY JAYNE MORLEY





All photographs by Jayne Morley, taken at Le Tres Grand Conseil Mondial des Clowns, at Niort in France, 2-7 June 2009. See www.festival-mondial-clown.com

Jayne Morley's clown photos will be shown at Théâtre Daniel Sorano at Vincennes, just outside Paris, September 2009, with a further exhibition of other work in October. For further information, contact the photographer on jftmorley@hotmail.com



BEING THERE

INFERNO

TWO DIFFERENT VIEWPOINTS OF PART ONE OF THE CASTELLUCI DIVINE COMEDY TRILOGY, SEEN AT THE BARBICAN AS PART OF SPILL FESTIVAL OF PERFORMANCE

Having for some years now turned my interest in performance into a job, I often find myself longing for the open pleasure of discovery and relaxed anonymity offered by early experiences in theatre and performance. Volunteering as an 'extra' (in Italian: *figurante*) in Romeo Castellucci's *Inferno* was just this kind of experience. The atmosphere amongst us extras, about 60 in total, was that of a holiday from performance-as-work: for a week we managed to leave behind any sense of personal artistic ambition (and consequent status anxiety) and instead enjoyed falling and rolling on the floor of the Barbican Theatre, curious to learn about this Italian company on its visit to the UK.

On the first of three rehearsal days Castellucci greeted us and said why he considered the extras to be an integral part of the show, as opposed to a mere ornamental presence: in Dante's poem *Inferno*, he explained, hell is described as a mass of people, huddled together. I couldn't help thinking of London (having just moved there) and the weeks I'd spent walking around the city, a vague sense of foreboding growing stronger the more I kept crashing into other people. With Castellucci, Hell has little to do with the literary description of an Italian 13th century poet: Hell is a thing of the present, and anyone living in a Western city in the 21st century knows its tortures.

Perhaps it was Castellucci's introductory statement which immediately drew me into this piece and made me feel somewhat responsible for it; I wouldn't have expected this given that in the past I'd been quick to dismiss his work as theatrical trickery of dubious relevance to our times. And indeed trickery, and a certain age-old idea of theatre, is at the very heart of it. Standing in the wings during the show at the Barbican, it became apparent how strong the separation is between the stage and the backstage areas: between what you see and what you don't see. The audience watches a world of slow moving actions, beings, and haunting images, but what happens in the wings is a separate performance in its own right: unseen by spectators there are several loud cues ('Go! Go! Go!'), choreographed signals, rope pulling, and – during those few scenes that don't involve the sudden appearance of a grand piano or a white horse – a relaxed chatting which is perfectly covered up by the show's ominous musical score. This is theatre as the precise art of inserting and removing things from a framed black space; and although the works are conceived by Castellucci himself in his notebook, it is his performing company (and family) who, like a circus troupe from another time, skilfully activate that visual machine from back stage.

Once the show was over on the opening night, we all went to celebrate in the Barbican Green Room; looking around, I couldn't help noticing that the main stars of the show weren't there: Apollo the white horse, the ten German Shepherd dogs, and the six toddlers, weren't drinking to a successful première of *Inferno*.

Augusto Corrieri

As the audience file in to see *Inferno*, the auditorium fills with jarring noises reminiscent of flies landing on electric executioners. From the first, the sound effects in the piece create a sense of anxiety that increases throughout the evening. We encounter an array of discordant, grating, and often disquieting noises, as everyday sounds escalate into a diabolical force. Bodies meeting destruction, barking dogs, crushed china, twisting metal. Hell is here on earth. A group of young children are drawn onstage enclosed in a huge glass cube; the sounds of them playing just quiet enough to create an eerie sort of white noise against the silence of the theatre.



Appropriately for an interpretation of the inferno, there is an emphasis on human bodies. They writhe, distorting themselves, but also achieve an ethereal elegance and an alarming fluidity in the group sequences; one cast member after the other embraces, then slaughters, another, creating a sea of bodies, continually dying and rejuvenating. We are presented with a series of hellish peep shows: a show-biz suicide leap compered by 'Andy Warhol' and repeated by each of the 60-strong extras; a disturbing vision of mothers who comfort, then throttle their children. Disconnected sequences lead to a sense of nightmarish displacement. As in a nightmare, you are forced to view a series of disturbing sequences endowed with a significance that eludes interpretation.

The first piece of Castellucci's trilogy(inspired by Dante's *The Divine Comedy*) pulls no punches, and Castellucci presents us with some genuinely beautiful and profoundly suggestive imagery.

Yet the images of pain and suffering come in a relentless stream that overwhelms and, eventually, desensitises the viewer. We are left admiring the art but wondering where the heart might be.

Emily Wallace / Dorothy Max Prior

IMAGES | ROMEO CASTELLUCCI *INFERNO*. PHOTOS LUCA DEL PIA

51 REASONS FOR LIVING – BAC BURST MAY 2009



ADRIAN HOWELL'S
FOOT WASHING
FOR THE SOLE



LUNDAHL AND SEIDL ROTATING IN A ROOM OF IMAGES

Burst festival is a wondrous thing: a kind of smorgasbord of contemporary performance and theatre experiments, all crammed into a few short weeks. I have just a day to relish the Burst experience, but it's a very full and satisfying day.

It starts, blissfully, with **Adrian Howells's** *Foot Washing for the Sole*, a performance work for an audience of one, invited to spend time with Adrian whilst having their feet lovingly attended to. Howells is a highly competent performer who exudes an air of confidence, trust and authority. It's very easy to put yourself in his care. Whilst my feet are washed and anointed I am asked to share thoughts about my relationship to them, and Adrian shares his thoughts on the symbolic relevance of feet washing, and the cultural resonances associated (the story of Christ washing his disciples' feet is referenced, unsurprisingly). It's a gem of a piece, small but perfectly formed.

From the sublime to – the supermarket. **Rotozaza's** *Wondermart* sends participants off in pairs, each with a shopping list and an MP3 player that issues instructions. There is a feeling of delicious subterfuge scurrying down the aisles stalking other shoppers, contemplating shoplifting, or rearranging items on the shelves as instructed. Where the piece falls down is in the instructions that involve interaction with the second participant – the logistics of it are such that meetings fail to materialise or encounters feel awkward. I believe that the company has, since Burst, rethought this aspect of the piece, and apparently improvements have been made. But even with these reservations, it is an excellent piece – genuinely subversive!

Someone who I'm sure would like to be thought of as subversive is American artist **Ann Liv Young**, whose work *Solo* is a kind of cross between a vintage Annie Sprinkle sex-art performance and extreme karaoke. It's loud and 'shocking', a kind of theatre of the senses I suppose. But I'm just not willing to be shocked – I've done my time performing with Genesis P-Orridge, Cozey Fanny Tutti and Psychic TV so there is nothing, nothing at all, in the way of wayward sexual imagery, personal exposure, extreme body art or raucous dissonant music that I haven't at some time created, witnessed or been party too. It raises a question that comes up with ever-increasing frequency as the years roll by: is something valid if it is new to a younger generation of artists and audience members who haven't encountered anything similar before? Are we 'old hands' just being churlish in our dismissal of things that are repeats of what we did thirty years ago? To my eyes this comes across as 'vintage avant garde', and I've lost interest in this sort of work, but others may well feel it has more relevance to them.



ANN LIV YOUNG SOLO

Of far greater interest to me is the **David Hoyle** performance / installation here seen, a work-in-progress piece (with, as yet, no name that I know of) which finds him ensconced in a garret room where, he claims, he lives day and night, being an artist. He is dressed divinely, his flowing polyester kaftan a fetching shade of blue, set off nicely by a bird's nest of hair, and panda eye make-up. A small table by the window has an assortment of interesting clutter – wine glasses, nail varnish, make-up, pencils and charcoal. In the corner is a dog food bowl and a pile of straw. Another audience member who has wandered in asks if he has a pet. 'No,' he answers, enigmatically. She leaves, a little bemused. I'm invited to share a glass of wine, have my portrait drawn, and to have my nails painted (in glitter black, which goes over the chipped gold already on them quite nicely, I feel). David Hoyle is (as always) outrageously entertaining, his banter satirically challenging cultural assumptions about life, sex, art and anything and everything else in this whole wide world. This intimate encounter feels like something to treasure; a special relationship just for one day.

My day ends with **Lundahl and Seidl's** *Rotating in a Room of Images*, another piece for an audience of one. It starts like that theatre game where you lead people around a space blindfolded, the masked person subjected to tiny whispers and flutters of parting curtains. It goes on to become a gently disturbing and disorientating game of hide-and-seek in which the space constantly reinvents itself, and ghostly figures appear and disappear in quick succession – a kind of walking dream that is a fitting end to a day of waking dreams taking many different forms. Did this all really happen?

Dorothy Max Prior

REVIEWS FROM QUEER UP NORTH

MANCHESTER MAY 2009

TOTAL THEATRE MAGAZINE | VOL 21 | ISSUE 01 | SPRING 2009



STEVEN COHEN *THREE SOLOS*

STEVEN COHEN *THREE SOLOS* JOHN THAW THEATRE

Queer Up North's introduction to the UK of South African artist-provocateur Steven Cohen was a retrospective trilogy that challenged definitions of dance and the boundaries of audience tolerance.

The opening live performance *Dancing Inside Out* was a sequence of what felt like challenges to the audience, concerned with complicity in the Nazi persecution of the Jews, and physical repudiation of oppression. Cohen was sometimes clothed, provocatively advertising his Jewish identity wearing a Star of David as a headdress, or stuck to his genitals (a magnifying glass suspended over his circumcision); a prayer shawl; gas mask, and fascistic leather S&M gear; but was mostly naked – dancing loosely, acrobatically and exploring himself using medical amplifying cameras that fed live onto the large screens. The body was a contested site, teetering on grotesquely oversized leopard print heels, stamped by Nazi insignia and penetrated by cameras – a body celebrated inside and out.

The other two pieces allowed for a less problematic audience response, and as such, felt more successful. In the film *Maid in Africa*, striptease is subverted by the gradual revelation of the 70-year-old body of a South African maid. The erotic gaze is problematised by the camera's provocative upshots of pendulous breasts, nipple clamped, hanging over a toilet being scoured, and stiff knees in suspenders leaning to scrub the floor.

In *Chandelier* Cohen dons a crystal dress and after encountering the audience with his obvious discomfort, screens remarkable footage from his visit, in full chandelier character, to a Johannesburg slum in the hours between dusk and nightfall. Both are powerful excoriations of the racial inequalities of contemporary South Africa, intriguing and playful.

Cohen's work has caused controversy around the world and is uncomfortable, sometimes offensive, and in many ways naïve. Yet the direct challenge it issues, its integrity and its demand for response makes this important work that deserves to be seen.

Beccy Smith

URSULA MARTINEZ *MY STORIES, YOUR EMAILS*. PHOTO HUGH GLENDINNING



URSULA MARTINEZ *MY STORIES, YOUR EMAILS* LIBRARY THEATRE

In this latest work by the well-established partnership of Ursula Martinez (here performing solo) and director Mark Whitelaw, the murky waters of personal identity and public ownership are neatly entwined with the comical and playful mode of delivery that Martinez is renowned for. Dealing with an unexpected rise in popularity after her *Hanky Panky* routine (a striptease where a red handkerchief disappears and re-emerges in the unlikelyst of places) was posted on the Internet, she explores the difficulty in separating the 'real' Martinez from her fictional stage persona.

My Stories and *Your Emails* occur at opposite ends of the stage, with Martinez recalling personal anecdotes about her friends and family before moving on to ridicule a selection of the fan mail she received. This arbitrary mix of tales about Mars bars resembling cat poo, or her dad's refusal to change his underpants, against the more disturbing correspondences from people requesting her friendship and reflecting their own personal agendas, allows the audience to deliberate the role they both play in the construction of her identity. Although both sections offer an insight into the crazy world of Martinez, we are still subjected to the same misdirection employed in her disappearing hanky trick; our attention is cleverly focussed on the stories and emails of others (accompanied by some hilariously bad accents) in order to hide the more exposing material and personal judgements about herself. This playful deception and the slippage of classification between the real and the fictional is exemplified by her willingness to get naked at the close of the performance – as Martinez' ambivalent display of nudity reveals all and conceals everything at the same time...

Kevin Egan



TAYLOR MAC *THE YOUNG LADIES OF...*

TAYLOR MAC *THE YOUNG LADIES OF...* LIBRARY THEATRE

The flamboyant, charismatic Taylor Mac is on a mission to re-discover his late father in the delightful mix of poignant, surreal, and simply laughable moments that is *The Young Ladies of...* Through a carefully constructed space, complete with fairy lights, over-sized hanging letters, and the all-important smoke machine, there is an air of heavenly nostalgia that permeates this honest account of Mac's life and his obsession with knowing '2nd Lieutenant Robert Mac' who died when he was just eight years old. From the scattered remains of identical, unopened letters (a fictional representation of the many correspondences his father received after placing a personal ad in an Australian newspaper), Taylor Mac delves into the lives of these faceless characters in an attempt to re-evaluate the assumptions he makes about his place in Mac history, and subsequently reinvents the man he calls 'dad' through a dialogue between his own childhood experiences and the fictionalised lives of the women he encounters. Despite the autobiographical nature of this material, Mac manages to lead the audience through a myriad of questions relating to our own heritage and familial rituals with an accomplished use of character comedy, puppetry, ukulele playing, singing, personal slideshows, and audience participation. Led in a chorus of *What's the use in Wondering?* from the soul-searching musical *Carousel*, Mac plays with the futile nature of truly knowing someone, of distinguishing between memory and fiction – and he continually reminds us that the discoveries we make about the people in our lives will never be enough to understand the complexity of our own selves.

Kevin Egan

PROTOTYPE THEATER *VIRTUOSO (WORKING TITLE)*
**PROTOTYPE THEATER
VIRTUOSO (WORKING TITLE)
GREENROOM**

The latest production from New York / North West England company Prototype offers an immensely satisfying slice of cultural history – part fantasy-idyll, part disturbing analogy of a self-contained world on the brink of destruction. A *Brideshead Revisited*-esque couple (perhaps siblings, in matching preposterous curly wigs) are by turns naïve and predatory in their advances toward the unwary stranger who strays into their (fantasy?) home, pleasingly rendered by an on-stage scale model. Everyone here is pretending, and all is performed, often to camera – playing roles to mask their boredom, their fear and their identities, which draw from the rich context of early 1960s America on the eve of the Kennedy assassination, which would change it all.

The production's wit is both formal and aesthetic. Writer (and director) Peter S Petralia offers us a dynamic cut-up of parody pulp, cultural history and meta-theatrical angst whose linguistic and stylistic disorientation is mirrored and amplified by the shifting planes and angles of live-feed close ups on the flat screen monitors ranged between the live performance space and audience.

The staging comprises assertively two-dimensional corners of grass and carpet that transform into illusions of depth and field in the filmed frames. This is a production which plays with our sense of performance, and our sense of emotional as well as spatial depth. Its form – televisual, intertextual, parodic, anxiously shifting – is perfectly married to its themes. If there are moments when Petralia's script falters under the weight of its own self-consciousness the fascinating playfulness and astonishingly adroit performances from the cast, who bring their characters to humane and hilarious life even whilst constantly threatened by pastiche, ensure an exhilarating theatrical experience.

Beccy Smith

MOTUS *CRUEL TALES OF YOUTH*
**CHRIS GOODE THE ADVENTURES
OF WOUND MAN AND SHIRLEY**

**CHRIS GOODE
THE ADVENTURES OF
WOUND MAN AND SHIRLEY
CONTACT THEATRE**

The Adventures of Wound Man and Shirley is an elegantly-turned storytelling show that demonstrates the sweetness and catholicism of Goode's theatrical vision. A measured one-hander, Goode by turns narrates, and *almost* enacts the magical mundanity of teenage Shirley's coming-of-age fantasy. The beautifully written script treads the delicate line between pleasing familiarity, near-nostalgia, for schooldays and 90s hits, and flights of magical realism. It's a world in which you can spend your savings taxi-ing to the airport to try to tell your Medieval line-drawn hero what he has meant to you before he clanks off to struggle through security, but you'll still have to spend four hours trudging home in the middle of the night (your parents won't notice as they're on holiday).

It's a pleasingly uneasy mix, pulled off by Goode's compassionate, almost diffident delivery. He's a strange cuckoo in Janet Bird's lovingly recreated teenage-bedroom set, driven by a narrative compunction whose tone sometimes seems to be channelling the spirit of Oliver Postgate. There are hints of something more subversive in this storytelling role – the writing is at its most intriguing when it gently reminds us of its own theatricality, suggesting some greater significance in the story, and uses its magic realism to admit some ambiguous emotional truths. Conversely, sometimes it struggles with some of the specificity of Woundman's interactions and effects. This writerly form itself is so pervasive, however, that more theatrical elements, such as Adam Smith's enjoyable but underused animations, and Goode's always apt and elegant sound design, struggle to lift the piece beyond its narration.

More charming than challenging, this is nevertheless a hugely satisfying, warm and considered piece of work.

Beccy Smith & Dean Biddell

**MOTUS
CRUEL TALES OF YOUTH
CONTACT THEATRE**

With a sort of theatrical androgyny, German company Motus's: *Cruel Tales of Youth* escapes classification, creating inextricably connected physical, theatrical, phenomenological and digital languages, building meaning and style in multi-dimensional layers: a 'show-experiment' as director Enrico Casagrande calls it. The elaborate form mirrors its thematic concentration on complexes of identity, expression and youth within urban industrial landscapes – the frustrations and dangers of young people trying to find their place in a world of empty spaces created by adults. This experiment reflects what Casagrande calls, 'the openness to risk and the fragility of showing yourself' encapsulated by the performers themselves – all young people, untrained but found during filming in European cities and brought into the show to bring their world alive on stage.

The theatrical languages of the show – edgy performances, live music, dark animations, street dance and intense soundscapes – amplify its ideas, showcasing the raw, creative and dangerous talent of both the performers and the young people whom the show aims to represent. There are scenes of breathtaking visual sophistication – a game of car dodging where only the sounds of screeching tyres indicate close shaves, and a suicide simply staged but dramatised digitally onscreen as an endless fall into oblivion from the rooftops. Reality slips across film, animation and live performance; we are lost in this world like its skater protagonist handing out 'Missing' flyers with her own face on them. The autobiographical performances are exhilarating yet gentle and endearing, grounded in truth and humanity. *Cruel Tales of Youth* is theatrical poetry, condensed, intense and lyrical storytelling through multi-dimensional discourse – it left me breathless. An astonishing success for Motus and QUN.

Dean Biddell

SPILL FESTIVAL OF PERFORMANCE

LONDON
APRIL 2009

**RON ATHEY AND LEE ADAMS
(CURATORS) / VARIOUS ARTISTS
VISIONS OF EXCESS
SHUNT VAULTS**

'When horror is subject to the transfiguration of the authentic art, it becomes a pleasure, an intense pleasure, but a pleasure all the same.' Georges Batailles

It's not too often that an audience entering the Shunt Vaults find themselves dominated by experiences of performance rather than the magnitude of the space itself. Yet upon entering this 12-hour marathon of Batailles inspired curation by Lee Adams and Ron Athey, the sheer number of performances presented ensured that the space acted as gothic frame rather than devouring maw, the dark stone arches providing a stern backdrop to a varied host of performed artworks.

Of the performances present in this area, **Franko B's** variation of the new work *I'm Thinking of You* was one of the most striking. A different performer for each hour of the piece sat naked on a swing, swinging backwards and forwards to the recorded sounds of a plaintive piano composition by Helen Ottaway. By turns entrancing, melancholic and warm, the wonder of the work developed as the different performers inhabited the piece. Through simple repetition of the same action each person revealed something unique to them. Their nervousness, their beauty, their joy at being on the swing all combined into a poignant and honest presentation of personality set against the lingering traces of those whom we had already seen.

Dominic Johnson presented a three-hour durational performance in which a series of bodily invasions were made with objects of reflective material as he performed a controlled series of ritualistic movements on a pile of earth and rose petals. Whilst also very beautiful, the piece was less suited to the setup of the space. Little room was available for the audience to quietly engage with the piece in the manner that it needed; conversation and the traffic of people passing through became a distraction and forced our attention away from absorption in the work.

Beginning 12 hours before the start of Visions of Excess, and continuing for the duration of the event, **Julie Tolentino's** *A True Story About Two People* claimed its space much more completely. A one-to-one performance in a cube of glass mirrored on the inside, the audience were invited to have a conversation with a blindfolded Tolentino as they danced together barefoot on a small square of turf. One of the few pieces in the night that really allowed the audience to have total control over their experience, the intimacy here proved a calming respite from the tumult outside.

Zackary Drucker provided one of the most powerful pieces of the night. A feminine body was presented, lying face up on a table in the centre of the space, naked apart from panties. Directed by a voiceover speaking in a Californian drawl we, the eager to please live art audience, moved forward and first placed our hands on the body, and then took tweezers and began to pluck four or five days growth of body hair from it. Next came the confirmation that this was a transsexual body we were snatching hair from, and then we were asked to vent our frustrations upon it with our plucking.

As the voice continued, repeating claims that this body can never be a female body, that it can only ever grow more masculine, and that all art is derivative, a sense of violent and unnatural decline was conjured and, looking around at the hoard of vultures tearing this body apart, we became implicated in the brutality. The sudden switch of emotional states from gleeful engagement to self-loathing and disgust provoked feelings of genuine horror.

As the night progressed and the stunningly dressed crowd continued with their excessive desire to capture every vision on their camera phone, the space became more problematic.

Perhaps if I had been closer I could have engaged more with **Lee Adams** and **Dominic Johnson's** stage-based work, but too much of the time too much of the work remained a distant vision. Whilst there were exceptions – the opportunity provided by **L Gabrielle Penabaz** to 'marry myself' was refreshingly entertaining, and the multiple talents of compère **David Hoyle** were a joy to witness – it proved difficult to engage with some of the work on a level other than the spectacular.

Visions of Excess they might have been, but the best work of the night was that which was engaged in with something other than our eyes.

TIM JEEVES



JAN FABRE *ORGY OF TOLERANCE*.
PHOTO FREDERIK HEYMAN

JAN FABRE *ORGY OF TOLERANCE* QEH, SOUTH BANK CENTRE

The new work from Flemish multidisciplinary artist Jan Fabre explodes on to the QEH stage with the untroubled ardency of a novice and the visceral conviction of a fanatic. *Orgy of Tolerance* is a two-fingered theatrical salute to capitalism and the commodification of self (emotional, bodily, moral and sexual) concomitant with immersion of global culture in the tenets of the Chicago School. It is a political diatribe, whose singleness of vision is arguably variegated by a breadth of formal dexterity that carries you laughing, shocked and exhilarated through sequences packed with surprising imagery, flamboyant choreography and emotional conviction.

For, despite a certain naïveté, this is not the work of an inexperienced theatre-maker. With more than 20 years behind him creating award-winning original, sometimes infamous, performative and sculptural events, often through his Unesco-supported company Troubleyn ('remaining faithful'), the work is anchored in exhilarating and superlative stagecraft and a finely-tuned theatrical aesthetic that employs slick choreography, a strong sense of rhythm, great soundtrack, and some excellent performances to articulate its ideas.

Expertly choreographing the ebb and flow of wildly diverse scenes, Fabre moves his nine-strong cast between labour (prolonged, competitive and dropping hard-won new born products into a shopping trolley); a masturbation Olympics, that flicks slickly between ecstasy and agony; torture; and the consummation of a variety of 'desirable' objects.

It's not subtle, nor is it innovative, but its confidence and urgency are an inspiring and moving reminder of the unique and uncomfortable hybrids artists and politics can form. Stirring stuff.

BECCY SMITH

ROBIN DEACON *PROTOTYPES* SOHO THEATRE

Railway modelling and autobiographical performance might not have the most obvious of overlaps yet, in *Prototypes*, Robin Deacon demonstrates a competent ability to highlight a few. A touching interplay of longing for the past, recreations of earlier life and 'ostensible pedantry' are just a start; by expanding on these with the on-stage support of his father, Deacon creates a piece of work that touches on much bigger issues about our relationship to personal history.

Using childhood memories of trainspotting through the windows of a flat in Southall, and his adult yearning for this time in which nothing happened, Deacon takes us on a journey exploring the common desire for miniaturising our lives into manageable chunks. Along the way we are treated to video interviews with railway modellers and clips from the 1957 film *The Incredible Shrinking Man*.

At times, the laughter of the audience at the overly technical enthusiasm of those interviewed feels unsettlingly like that of the playground bully, but as the performance progresses and Deacon's earnest engagement with the subject matter is revealed, the audience themselves become one of the group. We too learn to appreciate the need for accurate modelling – in this case painting the skin of a figure representing Deacon brown – and, through clever mixing of video recordings taken through the flat window and a real-time feed of the model trains onstage, we too understand the satisfaction to be had from seeing trains run on schedule.

Most touching of all though is the genuine warmth between Deacon and his father – playful banter and xylophone accompaniment to a paternally penned poem about train scrap bring the piece to a heart-warming conclusion.

TIM JEEVES

FORCED ENTERTAINMENT *VOID STORY* SOHO THEATRE

At the rear of the stage is a large screen. On one side a console desk, on the other side two desks with chairs. Behind the desks seated actors read their scripts as if for a radio drama, the words accompanied by Foley-style live sound effects that provide the soundtrack for a procession of projected black-and-white photomontage images. So what we have is an audio story with pictures (the text and the images by Forced Entertainment's writer/director, Tim Etchells). The surreal, dark-fairytale effect is of a black-and-white British version of *Spirited Away*.

The first image shows a couple indoors looking out of a window – optimistic survivors in an apocalyptic nightmarish world, where there's a fright around every corner and carnage outside of every door. Our domestic everyday heroes, Kim and Jackson, are propelled into a dreadful sequence of environments, encountering such horrors as a lake of shit and a van full of decaying meat.

On the forsaken tower block estate there's an oddly menacing little girl holding a balloon, and a sobbing man. Then, a grim funfare with a fortune-teller who divines the future using drops of blood. A car stops. All we see of the driver are her eyes in the rear view mirror. She discusses her bleak life. There's the hotel from hell, and in the street, a human ear nailed to a door, and a dismembered hand in a puddle which also holds the reflection of a bare tree.

The dialogue is vivid and the visual collages fantastic, each one could be a stand-alone artwork. *Void Story* is a stunning piece of work – gruelling, yet hilarious – I laughed out loud throughout.

MIRIAM KING

PACITTI COMPANY *INTERMISSION* SOHO THEATRE / SPILL FESTIVAL APRIL 2009

On stage, arranged as in a 'noughts and crosses' game, are nine evenly spaced cloaked microphones on stands. Each microphone is unveiled, revealing a label: 'False Starts', 'High Horse', 'Fiction', 'Craft', 'Intermission', 'Glossary', 'Karaoke', 'Fact', 'Numbers'.

On stage one woman, Sheila Ghelani, moves purposefully from one to another. At the base of the central microphone, 'Intermission', sit five cans of Stella Artois.

Ghelani is casually dressed in jeans and a baggy jumper, with the determination of someone with something to say, and in the space between spaces that is this stage, at each microphone, she delivers thoughts, observations, and statements – some fact and some fiction – directly to us. Under 'Fiction', for example, she tells us about a child getting a day off school, lying on a sofa under a duvet feigning tummy ache. She then steps to one side of the microphone and takes a bucket of water, from which she wets a flannel that she dramatically places dripping onto her forehead.

She's such a strong, engaging and watchable performer. Her presence, her eyes, her manner, her deliverance. Covering issues ranging from immigration, politics, cannibalism, sex, and death, she's amusing and insightful. It's clear, it's funny, it's startling, it's direct. It's no messing about, it's 'listen to this!' At the end, she ignites the central 'Intermission' microphone. As the stage lights dim, the closing image of the burning flame sears into my mind.

MIRIAM KING

REVIEWS FROM BRIGHTON FESTIVAL MAY 2009



TEATER PATRASKET WIRELESS SALLIS BENNEY THEATRE

Wireless, the latest show from Danish children's theatre company Patrasket, is an ensemble clown show with dark edges – and like all good clown/mime work it has universal appeal. It is immensely funny and at times slightly nightmarish, with quite an adult take on the world (so not for the very young).

The show's byline is 'Five clowns on a shiny floor', and the premise is: how do clowns cope with the trappings of the 21st century? Impossible packaging that won't unwrap, the endless ringing of mobile phones, the constant flickering of the screen...

It's a modern take, yet all the tricks of the theatre clown trade are here. There's lots of setting out of chairs, with characters lining up to stare out the audience – this, post Forced Entertainment's *Bloody Mess*, seems almost to be a counter-ironic reclaiming of the ironic steal! Each clown character has their own repertoire of physical tics, and they are all marvellous, but I'm particularly taken with the petulant girl clown in white net skirt who has an obsession with watering cans (Guilia Pataro).

The visual design is excellent. As said, quite dark – literally at many points in the show as the action is illuminated by hand-held torchlights or eerie green beams that cut across the stage. There's beautiful shadowplay and clever object animation. The one element not yet mentioned is the soundscape – an inventive mix of composed and found sounds (tinkling music boxes that give way to menacing electronic hums) that is a vital element of the show.

Great to see mime / physical theatre programmed into the Brighton Festival. More please!

DOROTHY MAX PRIOR

LES BALLETS C DE LA B ASHES CORN EXCHANGE, BRIGHTON DOME

Well, what's going on here? Belgian 'new build' houses, a white beach hut, an orange parasol. A scattering of dancers, giving in to gravity, slithering; bodies broken, like angular fish out of water. A lady in blue with a very large and dynamically animated bottom. Beautiful live music (cello, violin, accordion) and two opera singers...

The main theme of *Ashes* is impermanence. Nothing is forever. How to deal with that? The beginning is chaos, disharmonic and apocalyptic – a cacophony of lost souls. Each dancer has a moment in the performance where they are tormented. The middle section is about relationships. The disenfranchised souls struggle. Attempts to make contact dissipate into frustration or fights. The two singers are the storytellers; songs of unresolved love, and death. The music brings hope and beauty.

Star of the piece is Gael Santisteva. My eyes kept going again and again to him. There is the surprise of a trampoline built into the balcony and an excellent acrobatic sequence. *Ashes* has so many performers, I question if some of them were superfluous to the piece – there's rather too much flapping around! The music (Handel) is so beautiful that at times I want the dancers to quit so that the space is still. The last section shows the characters attempting something together. I felt moved by the final beautiful floor pattern of rolling side to side. A tide, waves of humanity. Sometimes in unison, one breaks out, to then recapture the unison of rhythm. Mortality and how to find a resolution; an acceptance that something or somebody is lost; a sea of souls.

MIRIAM KING

HOFESH SHECHTER THE ART OF NOT LOOKING BACK / UNTITLED BRIGHTON DOME

Hofesh Shechter is the bright young thing of contemporary dance; and a supported artist of the Brighton Dome, so this was in some ways a home-coming – one of two Shechter shows programmed into the Festival (the other being an outdoor community dance piece, *Bangers and Mash*, that ended up being performed indoors due to worries about inclement weather).

The Art of Not Looking Back proved to be a controversial piece, dividing critical and audience opinion. The ferocity of the assault of sound, the full house lights that momentarily flooded the auditorium as Hofesh Shechter's programme began, were nothing to audience reactions to his spoken commentary, in which Shechter announced who he was in a preamble that wound itself up into a gabble of sped-up speech followed by the flat statement, of his mother, 'She left me when I was two'.

This allowed an interpretation (by some) of this all-women piece as somehow anti-women. Finely crafted and perfectly executed dance, no one disagreed – moments like the controlled mechanicality of the dance, set to JS Bach, which balled up tension and anger against this still beautiful music, while the wind of sound and fury of his composed scores were equally met and translated by each and every dancer on the stage.

The piece *untitled* presented before the main show sheds light on this – an ironic voiceover announces 'I am the choreographer, this is my dancer', as if to say 'if you can't make out my meaning then I'll give it all to you'. I think the same applies to *The Art of Not Looking Back*, which dances the pain of something, whilst knowing that the labels are uneasily applied. *The Art* had a willowy grace as well as moments of savagery, but personally I don't consider it to be an assault on the audience, just a shared battle.

BILL PARSLOW



DRUID THEATRE PLAYBOY OF THE WESTERN WORLD THEATRE ROYAL, BRIGHTON

'Wasn't I a foolish fellow not to kill my father in the years gone by?' There's nothing like a spot of patricide for bringing a father and son together.

In the early part of the 21st century it's hard to understand the rioting that greeted the premier of JM Synge's *Playboy of the Western World*. Killing your kin is the stuff of soaps from ancient Greece to Eastenders. But in 1907, in God-fearing Ireland, the people took umbrage at a play that champions a man who kills his father and refers openly to women's undergarments.

Except that gormless Christy Mahon – wonderfully played by Aaron Monaghan who convinces on his rise from sniveller to braggart – hasn't killed his father, isn't the man his adopted town believe him to be. Desperation has forced downtrodden Christy to fight his father, leaving him for dead, after he refuses to marry a widow twice his age at his father's behest. We marvel at his growing confidence, brought on by the attention of the townsfolk and the love of two women – barmaid Pegeen, played by Clare Dunne, and Widow Quinn, Derbhle Crotty.

It's not till Christy's father, Old Mahon, shows up alive that questions are raised on the authenticity of Christy's character. Pegeen brutally shuns him but later has reason to regret her decision.

Druid Ireland's production is a marvellous ensemble piece, each cast member at home within the skin of their character. Garry Hynes' production brings a whole community to life with sensitive detail and comic touches.

DEBBIE WALDON

A SORRY SITE

SITE-RESPONSIVE WORK AT BRIGHTON FESTIVAL 2009

The press launch for Brighton Festival saw 'guest artistic director' **Anish Kapoor** stating that he viewed the whole city as a potential site for art, so there were high hopes that despite the departure of certain key members of the Brighton team (including highly respected theatre programmer Jane McMorrow), we had a lot of good site-responsive work to look forward to. Sadly, those hopes were, for the most part, dashed.

Kapoor's own out-of-the-gallery work consisted of previously existing pieces re-sited. *Sky Mirror*, placed in Pavilion Gardens, was too small for the space and fenced in to boot, which seemed to defeat the point of public art – it wasn't long before it was being referred to locally as Kapoor's shaving mirror. *C-Curve* (another mirror piece) fared better – but the same South Downs site had been previously used to far better effect by Red Earth, so this piece suffered in the comparison.

So what of the theatre and performance? The opening weekend saw **Walk the Plank's** *Fire, Smoke and Mirrors* come to town. It's a typical WTP walk-through fire garden piece – a whimsical and gentle collection of fiery sculptures and installations, including a very lovely tree of chandeliers and a lake lit with floating flames. Yet in a park with big open spaces the sense of discovery is for the most part lost. Worse, it was sold to the public as the big festival opening night show, so the park was teeming with families and groups of teenagers wondering when the fireworks were going to start. The worst sin was the inappropriate placing of the **Sharmanka/Fittings Multimedia Arts** work *Sputnik* in the middle of all this – apart from the oddness of just bunging in another company's work into the site, it was not even credited accordingly in the publicity.

Another garden piece was *Alice in the Walled Garden*, a promenade children's music-theatre show. Although a pleasant enough experience, it was average work by a little-known company (directed by Jenny Lee). Had it been a Fringe show I'd have looked on it more favourably, but a show can only be judged in its context – and this show was not of the standard required for a major international festival. The management of the audience was lacking, and I was irritated by actors 'offstage' chatting to ushers.

Hubbert's Peak was at least by a company of some renown (French street arts veterans **Les Alama's Givrés**) and executed with professionalism and panache. It had a great set (a giant fairground carousel of vehicles), and the piece started with impressive physical gusto, but then got bogged down in a turgid story about environmental catastrophe. Too many words for an outdoor show, and the poor English was funny at first (I hope intentionally!) but became increasingly tiresome.

The kindest thing to say about *Kurva*, presented by **Reial Companyia de Teatre de Catalunya**, is that it doesn't translate. The audience are bussed to a cold and windy field outside Brighton for a story about roadside prostitution in Spain. Girls in hot pants squabble over parasols (to keep off the burning sun, you understand, as you sit there with a blanket over your knees, teeth chattering) and flag down the occasional car. That's about it. There's nothing that happens that isn't entirely predictable (rivalry between the girls, dodgy boyfriends, money stolen, violent clients, lots of bad sex) – no development of ideas, no satisfactory conclusion.

Hydrocracker's *Erpingham Camp*, sited on Brighton Pier, benefited from being seen straight after *Kurva*. It may not have been the most brilliant piece of site-responsive work ever, but it was damned good in comparison. Orton's play about a tyrannical holiday camp director, and the camp's descent into violent anarchy, is oozing with satire perhaps lost in our post-modern, post-Stars in their Eyes / X Factor world – the arty Brighton audience enjoyed the fish 'n' chips, knobbly knees competition, fairground rides, and camp sing-along in the karaoke bar – but the switch from jolly-good-fun to nastiness is handled well, and the site used to great effect (I particularly liked a confrontation on the Spinning Cups ride).

Another note of hope came in seeing *The Ocean's Skin*, a show devised and presented by students of dance, theatre and street arts at **Northbrook College**, working with directors Adrian Court and Claire Raftery. Perhaps odd to have student work programmed, but it was good work – a physical theatre homage to Melville's *Moby Dick*: dark, desolate, and dangerous. Feisty performances from the young ensemble, great soundscape, and really good to see young artists encouraged to make deep, bleak, disturbing street arts work with a cutting edge.

DOROTHY MAX PRIOR

HYDROCRACKER ERPHINGHAM CAMP.
PHOTO BY MATTHEW ANDREWS

WALK THE PLANK LE JARDIN FLAMBEE.
PHOTO BY NIC HOWDEN

REIAL COMPANYIA DE TEATRE
DE CATALUNYA KURVA



BRIGHTON FESTIVAL FRINGE MAY 2009

FESTIVAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY A *MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM* ST ANNE'S WELL GARDENS, HOVE

As a prelude to Wimbledon, strawberries and rain, you can't beat Brighton Fringe, Shakespeare in the park and... rain.

Slipping and sliding their way though this fairy feast, Festival Shakespeare Company, directed by Claire Raftery of Periplum, gave an imaginative performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

The highly stylised opening saw the cast make their entrance from different directions, genuflecting before their Lord and Lady. This gave way to an energetic show, with the cast running hither and thither, using bicycles and making use of the park to best advantage. There were wonderful performances from the young actors playing the Lovers / Rude Mechanicals – Tom Champ (Lysander), David Robson (Demetrius), Maria Pullen (Helena) and Kitty Newbury (Hermia) – with marvellous comic turns from Matt Beaumont as Bottom and a pair of Pucks (one dressed in black and one in white; one large, one slight, one male, one female). Unfortunately these energised performances left some of the other players overshadowed, and more could have been made of the characters of Titania and Oberon.

The cast had their umbrellas at the ready, used in wonderfully choreographed mock battles between Oberon and Titania's fairy aides, masked in coloured scarves; to hypnotise star-crossed lovers; and finally, as befits their original function, as shelter! Just into the second half, as the four lovers lay in a stupor brought on by our two Pucks, and Bottom gave into Titania's power, rain obliged the removal of the lights and possibly the end of our play.

But the audience cheer wildly – of course, we don't know the ending, the show must go on. Bravely it did so, in the semi-dark, for some time more, till torrential rain finally stopped play, and Theseus announced an early finale.

DEBBIE WALDON



COPPERDOLLAR WAKE THE DEAD THE BLACK LION, BRIGHTON

Copperdollar has grown out of the sleaze-glitz Lost Vagueness / Voodoo Vaudeville camp, and is the latest company to make its mark in the currently extremely popular genre of 'immersive theatre' in which the audience are no mere passive spectators – enter the affray and you become part of the action.

Wake the Dead is set in a lovely old-style pub in Brighton, the traditional wooden décor lending itself well to the Copperdollar make-over. First thing to namecheck is the beautiful artwork by Jim Sanders, which lovingly references Mexican Day of the Dead artefacts and Native American imagery, a rich assortment of wall hangings, sculptures and totem-pole structures. In the middle of all this finery we find a body laid out in a vibrantly painted wooden cart, and are asked if we'd like to pay our respects. Meanwhile, a posse of living dead saloon girls process across the dancefloor to the sounds of Latino lounge. There's a number of small-scale interactions (including zombie face-painting), set-piece performances (highlight being the wonderful moment when the corpse awakens), and a live swing band.

It's a great night out, and as winners of the Brighton Fringe cabaret award, the company could just rest on their laurels. But there is room for improvement! The choreography could be more challenging; and there's currently an obvious discrepancy between the level of performance skill from highly experienced artists like KT Simpson and 'corpse' Bruce Knight, and some other performers. And there are lessons to be learnt about staying absolutely in character all night long... zombies being a fag break and chatting to mates outside in the garden break the spell somewhat!

DOROTHY MAX PRIOR

SPRINT – HARRIET POOLE
THE (IN)VISIBLE EXCHANGE



VARIOUS ARTISTS SPRINT FESTIVAL CPT, LONDON JUNE 2009

In the foyer of Camden People's Theatre, plates of party food wear an expectant look. Audience members mill about, waiting for 'the event'. It's the first night of the Sprint Festival of new and experimental theatre, and we've been promised that teasing, will-it-be-awful incentive: a launch party. Before it gets underway, however, a woman I realise must be **Harriet Poole** asks me to join her for a photograph, which I see later, briefly, on the screen of her phone; two strangers smiling a little awkwardly at the lens. The little, intimate journey together which follows – *the (in)visible exchange* – is much more charming than I expected from reading the advertising copy. It's not that the highbrow references to Roland Barthes and 'pushing the temporal nature of performance through marrying with the temporal nature of photography' didn't make sense; after being part of the performance I can see where the artist is coming from. But it didn't sound much fun, and certainly wouldn't have inspired me to pay for the show. This bothers me because while our young performers learn how to make interesting work, it seems rarer to find someone who can describe it in terms which would make a person keen to be part of it. It's a skill we need to learn, and learn early.

Getting back to the performance: what I experienced was a gentle, thoughtful meditation on the nature of art and its brevity, described simply but with a wry edge which nudged it into delightful freshness. This – like the advertising copy – attempts to describe performance without saying what happens, but to tell more would be to ruin. Ah, now I see Poole's difficulty...

When the two of us emerge back into the foyer, we find ourselves in the middle of a celebration. Or an attempt at one. Taking another approach than Poole's to self-promotion, the first section of **Chloé Déchery's** *Showing Up* describes itself as 'a bad PR exercise'. Déchery and collaborator **Lucy Foster**, devising and improvising together, make a brave attempt at forcing the audience to have LOTS OF FUN, with special guests, brave balloons, the Sprint press release read aloud via a microphone, fancy dress. The culmination is a choreographed dance which, sadly, doesn't quite manage to get the audience gyrating. The likeable performers, however, do their damndest. Casting around their desperate handfuls of streamers, their cheap Cava and hopeful smiles, they get everyone laughing – at the show, at ourselves.

The final part of the evening is another beckoning: **Tom Marshman's** *The Invitation*. This is a performance made in response to the responses made to a previous performance. In other words, Marshman has played to groups of 'older people' and, gathering their reactions, made another show. It's a quiet and measured piece which seeks to give space and voice to what might seem – as in Poole's piece – ephemera: a faded and curling photograph, a pin-cushion pierced with memory. For me, the characters remained too abstract, and the delivery too monotone, to grasp the colour or the context of the fragments pieced together. They remained voices in the dark, fading quickly into silence. It made a fitting end to an evening of brief laughter, glimpses, anti-climax.

Maybe that's an odd way to open a festival. But then subversion is something that Sprint does very well.

CASSIE WERBER



SUPPER CLUB – SARA POPOWA *STICK PIECE*

SUPPER CLUB THE BASEMENT, BRIGHTON JUNE 2009

Supper Club has swiftly become a must-see for performance enthusiasts. Over the past few months, the curators – drawn from The Basement’s team of supported artists – have provided a series of truly varied and enjoyable nights of Live Art.

The June event, compered by the delightfully rude **The Two Wrongies**, began with *Stick Piece* by **Sara Popowa**, described as a ‘kind of reversed interpretation of Yoko Ono’s *Cut Piece*’. In silence and with composure, Sara spread paper swatches into a perfect circle on the floor. She then took her clothes off, stepped into the circle and sat down. Our turn. Soon she was being enthusiastically decorated with strips of brightly coloured sticky paper and became a splendid sculptural form. Sara gently folded forward, eased herself upright and exited. A perfect mix of good idea, elegant execution, and creative audience involvement.

Titles cannot be trusted. **Liz Aggiss**’s piece for **mapdance** *Don’t Put Your Daughter On The Stage*, should have every teenage girl with a bit of nous rushing to join a dance company. It delivers the combined joys of distinctive movement with humour, eclectic music and fine performance. Whilst paying homage to early twentieth-century dance in its styling and aesthetic it is totally modern, allowing the eleven dancers to work to their own strengths whilst maintaining the syncopation of a classic showgirl line-up. Inches from its audience, the troupe radiated energy. A sharp and pithy showcase for women dancers; rare to find and thrilling to watch.

Valediction by **Florence Peake** provided a quiet and fragile counterpoint. A moth dies; hands flutter and crash, chalk is drawn and blown across a board, a mirror flickers around the room, settling on an eye. Pared down, economically told, a thoughtful and well-made piece.

LISA WOLFE

HOODWINK LEAP OF FAITH FEAST / X.TRAX MANCHESTER JUNE 2009

Hoodwink are one of many unsung companies operating within the broad genre of visual theatre. They are best known for their outdoor shows but they have a track record in indoor work as well. *Leap of Faith* is their latest offering for the great outdoors. As the title might suggest, it takes a look at mankind’s desire to fly, the first reckless attempts to do so, and the enthusiasm that persists despite the failures.

We start off with a monk watching birds fly and becoming inspired to do likewise – his initial attempts are thwarted by lack of know-how and as he figures out how to take the first (as it were) step he is interrupted by the painful howling of one who has beaten him to it – and failed. A lovely street theatre moment as we hear the cries from a distance and a figure bursts through the crowd trailing smoke and sporting wings which are not what they were. His sandals are covered with dripping wax – a nice detail which gives a clue as to his identity.

The show develops as the two characters invent new ways to take to the air with the inevitable accompanying failures. Dramatically this could prove a problem, the low-tech aesthetic of the show means that no-one will really take off at the end but the performers are so engaging that you fail to worry about such things. The attempt to fly by a hot-air balloon ended with a bang and, by happy coincidence, as we looked up a real plane flying low overhead replaced the burst balloon.

The humour and high energy is sustained, and the show kept the attention of an audience of 250 people, despite poor weather.

EDWARD TAYLOR

CIRCA THE SPACE BETWEEN



REVIEWS

CIRCA THE SPACE BETWEEN SPIEGELTENT / NORFOLK & NORWICH FESTIVAL MAY 2009

At the Australian Performing Arts Market 2008 I saw one show excerpt that really stood out. A woman was thrown in the air repeatedly by two men. She then donned a pair of killer heels and walked across one bloke’s back, him writhing underneath – excruciating to watch, yet strangely alluring. The show was *By the Light of Stars That Are No Longer...* and the company was Circa. Now, good Australian circus is not rare – but the lyricism and edge that this company communicated in ten short minutes transcended the usual fabulous tricks and daring skill.

Fast-forward to the Norwich and Norfolk Festival 2009 and a different Circa show, *The Space Between*. This symphony of solos, duets and trios, presented on a small stage at close proximity in the Spiegeltent, brought the immense talent of the company into sharp relief. What distinguishes Circa is the fluid combination of dance and acrobatics, with ideas that transcend the circus form and take the viewer somewhere else. The bodies are lithe, strong and sensual but also raw and expressive. They speak of desire, disappointment, and yearning – all with a touch of typical Australian humour.

The show may have been a little long and the use of Jacques Brel seemed out of place, resonating very differently in Europe than it would in Oz. I missed the sharpness of the imagery I had seen in Adelaide, but was still absorbed by the poetic physical conversations. This is not traditional circus and there is no story, something colleagues at the same performance craved. This company’s work is contemporary, unique and pushing boundaries – definitely worth a look.

PIPPA BAILEY

L’A / RACHID OURAMDANE LOIN THE PROJECT ARTS CENTRE, DUBLIN / DUBLIN DANCE FESTIVAL 2009 MAY 2009

Loin... (Far...) investigates the notion of being a ‘foreigner’, violence, and the link between ourselves and our past. Rachid Ouramdane has been devising work since 1996 and is recognised as one of France’s most innovative practitioners, so this piece came with high expectations.

Based on Ouramdane’s travels in Vietnam and Cambodia it incorporates fragments of his combatant father’s Vietnam War journals, interviews and his own poetry. Through his use of dance, documentary footage and recorded sound he questions his Franco-Algerian identity and challenges the audience to look at their own roots.

When the lights came up shiny black revolving megaphones emerged from what appeared to be pools of blood. A tangle of indigo wires, connected to a microphone and foot pedals, snaked around the stage. The screen at the back flashed images of faces and abstract film. A striking setting, but it was a shame that the performance could not match this initial impression.

The subtitles to accompany the opening interview were too fast and detracted from Ouramdane’s presence and the ghostly apparition on the video screen. There was simply too much going on – an affliction that continued throughout.

Ouramdane’s movement was beautifully precise but at times its repetitions verged on the monotonous. The manic choreographic portrayal of violence began to look vaguely humorous, and lost much of the intended impact.

There were some engaging moments. The use of an interview with his mother gave poignancy to the piece as a personal struggle for the performer. The pedal-operated sound was particularly inventive. But I was disappointed that such a potentially innovative project failure to realise its potential.

LOUISE FINN

EDINBURGH FESTIVALS AUGUST 2009

NEWS

EDINBURGH IN AUGUST SEES A PLETHORA OF FESTIVAL EVENTS – THE FRINGE, THE INTERNATIONAL, THE FOREST FRINGE, AND OF COURSE THE TOTAL THEATRE AWARDS



ED FRINGE 7-31 AUGUST

As we go to print, the country's highways are no doubt teeming with transit vans carrying people and props to Edinburgh! Fringe 2009 runs from 7-31 August. It's the biggest arts festival in the world, and prides itself on its uncensored open-access ethos. For three weeks, every available space in the city is given over to a host of performances and events, covering theatre, circus, comedy, music, dance, live art and more. See the Performer & Company Updates in this magazine for details of 'total theatre friendly' shows going up. For the full programme, see www.edfringe.com

ESCALATOR EAST TO EDINBURGH

Escalator East to Edinburgh continues to build critical acclaim championing exceptional performing artists from the East of England who want to showcase work at the Edinburgh Festivals and benefit from wider exposure. This year the programme offers structured support for 21 shows, which include Darren Johnston (Array) *Ouisa*, Gecko's *The Overcoat*, Richard Dedomenici's new show *Plagiarismo* (one of two shows he presents this year), NIE's *My Life With the Dogs*, Analogue's *Beachy Head*, New Art Club, Hoipolloi, Miss High Leg Kick, Shitty Deal Puppets, Badac Theatre and more... The project is managed by The Junction in partnership with Colchester Arts Centre. www.easttoedinburgh.co.uk



THE ARCHES AT ST STEPHENS – GLASGOW MOVES TO EDINBURGH!

The Glasgow venue The Arches is taking residence in St Stephens, former home of the legendary Aurora Nova. The three centrepiece shows are Nic Green's *Trilogy*, a radical performance full of passion and beauty that will feature up to 100 female volunteer dancers; Adrian Howell's *Foot Washing for the Sole*, a one-to-one conversational encounter where Adrian allows you to take the weight off your feet and mind; and Dudendance Theatre's *Spaceman*, a stark and compelling contemporary dance that uses physical language to question the evolutionary process and what it is that makes us human. Alongside scheduled performances, The Arches will also host performative post shows, mutual 'scratching' and café bar activities, and provide ad hoc performance opportunities in late night unprogrammed slots. For dates and more see www.thearches.co.uk

PEGGY SHAW / CLOD ENSEMBLE *MUST*.
PHOTO MANUEL VASSON

FUEL SHOWS AT THE EDINBURGH FRINGE

There's a lot to be said for an uncensored festival – but it can be hard work wading through that brochure! Knowing which work is presented by producers who have a strong reputation for quality helps with choices of how to spend one's time in Edinburgh... Fuel are one such company; a partnership of two producers (Louise Blackwell and Kate McGrath) who are knowledgeable and passionate about 'new theatre'. Amongst other gems, they are, this year, promoting the Young Vic / Sound and Fury collaboration *Kursk*, Uninvited Guests' *Love Letters Straight From Your Heart*, and not one but two shows by Clod Ensemble – *Under Glass* and a collaboration with the legendary Split Britches co-founder Peggy Shaw, *MUST*. Alongside the shows, Fuel is also curating a series of lunch events where artists and audiences can meet, eat and chat about key topics that are affecting live performance in the UK today. See www.fueltheatre.com

BRIDGE MARKLAND / SCAMP THEATRE
FAUST IN THE BOX



BRITISH COUNCIL EDINBURGH SHOWCASE 24-29 AUGUST

The biennial Edinburgh Showcase is back for 2009. Curated by the British Council, it gathers together UK companies and artists for an audience of international venue programmers and festival directors. Among the more eclectic choices in this year's Showcase are Bootworks Theatre Collective who are bringing their *Black Box*, a five-minute show staged within a portable, fully functioning miniature theatre for an audience of one, and Blast Theory whose work *Rider Spoke* will take their audience on bicycles through the streets of Edinburgh to hidden locations where they can eavesdrop on the thoughts of other riders or commit their own secrets to tape. *Power Plant*, produced by Simon Chatterton, will transform the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh into a captivating nocturnal world, taking the audience on a journey through a strangely beautiful landscape and exploring the relationship between sound, light and the garden environment; and Richard Dedomenici whets our palette with his *Plane Food Café*. See www.britishcouncil.org/arts-drama-edinburgh.htm



NEW ART CLUB THIS IS NOW

FOREST FRINGE 17-30 AUGUST

After last year's phenomenal success, the breakaway mini-fest Forest Fringe is back, again at the Forest Café, 17-30 August – although this year, the festival also bursts out of the venue and into Edinburgh's streets and public spaces. The strong line-up includes *GuruGuru*, a new work by Ant Hampton with Joji Koyama and Isambard Khroustaliou in which five participants are led by a sixth on-screen, animated character whose twin roles of marketing and spiritual Guru are confused by his reliance on untested and accident-prone technologies; *Wondermart*, an interactive audio tour that takes you on a magical journey of rediscovery through the familiar surroundings of the supermarket; and work in progress showings of Curious' new performance installation *the moment I saw you I knew I could love you*. There's also work by Action Hero, Third Angel, Bill Aitchison, Bootworks and many more, and an edition of Improbable's Devoted & Disgruntled open forum.

See www.forestfringe.co.uk



HOIPOLLOI THE DOUBTFUL GUEST

HANDSPRING AT EIF

Famous for their work on *War Horse*, Handspring Puppet Company are at Edinburgh International Festival this year with *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*, a version of Monteverdi's opera using half life-sized puppets and animated film to retell the Ulysses myth. The production is a collaboration between Handspring and Philippe Pierlot and his Belgium based ensemble the Ricercar Consort, plus visual artist and director William Kentridge, renowned for his video animations of charcoal drawings. Shows on 23, 25 & 26 August. See www.eif.co.uk

CLOD ENSEMBLE UNDER GLASS.
PHOTO MANUEL VASSON

TOTAL THEATRE AWARDS 2009

Since 1987 the Total Theatre Awards have honoured the best theatre-makers performing at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. A dedicated team of assessors see all of the registered shows; then, an esteemed panel of critics, producers, programmers, academics and artists judge the Total Theatre Awards. The rigorous process uniquely includes discussions about excellence and innovation. Although there are an increasing number of awards in Edinburgh, the Total Theatre Awards seem to hold a special place in artists' hearts – recognised beyond the Fringe, success acknowledged year-round in programmes and marketing material.

This year the Total Theatre Awards are proud to announce a new cash bursary of £800 for each winning company to help them document the months following their win. Provided by the Centre of Excellence in Theatre Training (CETT) at the Central School of Speech and Drama, this money will contribute to artists and companies being better able to capture and develop their work. Their reflections will also help emerging companies address the joys and trials of making new work.

The 2009 Total Theatre Awards are proudly supported by barbicanbite09, Central School of Speech and Drama – Centre for Excellence in Training for Theatre (CETT), London International Mime Festival, Norfolk and Norwich Festival, Royal & Derngate Northampton, University of Chichester (MA Theatre Collectives) and University of Winchester.

Registration for the Awards closed 31 July, but for general or press enquiries email Pippa Bailey or Jo Mackie on: totaltheatreaward@btinternet.com

Total Theatre office in Edinburgh: (+44) 0 7912 179 197
The Awards shortlist will be announced 20 August (following a meeting on 19th). The Judges meeting will take place 27 August, and the Total Theatre Awards Ceremony will be on 28 August (by invitation only).

BRISTOL FESTIVAL OF PUPPETRY

In partnership with the Tobacco Factory, Bristol City Council and Aardman Animations, Puppet Place is launching Bristol's first ever festival dedicated to puppetry in all its forms, from socks to latex, street theatre to celluloid. The festival offers something for everyone with a range of performances, workshops, films and exhibitions featuring the best of local, national and international talent. The Tobacco Factory, a hub for most of the festival's events, will be taken over and transformed by Bristol's animators, animatronic engineers, puppet builders and artists. The building's public spaces will be transformed into a Puppet Place, filled with installations, shows and events all designed to inspire, provoke, educate and entertain. 28 August – 6 September. See www.tobaccofactorytheatre.com/shows/detail/bristol_festival_of_puppetry

**WITHOUT WALLS**

This year seven companies were commissioned to create outdoor work for the Without Walls consortium of eight major festivals. The artists commissioned were Mancunian Steam & Pressure Navigation Company, Balletboyz II, Punchdrunk, Marc Brew Company, stopGAP, NoFit State and Fittings Multimedia. Also supported were UK tours of Bootworks' *Little Box of Horrors* and Metro Boulot Dodo's *Hansel and Gretel*. Without Walls this year received £399,975 from Arts Council England to support their work. See www.withoutwalls.uk.com

**LONDON BUTOH FESTIVAL**

2009 sees the anniversary of Butoh founder Hijikata Tatsumi's first performance. To celebrate this Theatre Training Initiative is presenting a series of workshops with some of the leading figures in Butoh's development. To compliment the programme TTI will also be screening archive footage of leading artists, including Hijikata, together with accompanying talks. Workshops will be held at the Courtyard Theatre near Old Street Tube in central London. No experience is necessary, but some workshops can be physically challenging. 18 September – 15 November. See www.theatretraining.org.uk Email info@theatretraining.org.uk

LAKES ALIVE

The streets of Cumbria's towns and villages will come alive with a host of entertainment including acrobatics, circus skills and dance this season. On 15 August *Once Upon a Summer's Eve* will see a giant compost heap come to life and a panto dame set loose on the shores of Derwentwater, with a concert finale performed by Tres (an artist from Barcelona) and a group of Tuba players from boats on the lake. Lakes Alive has also commissioned new work from Artizani – *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* will visit five locations across the county, before going on tour to other parts of the UK and Europe. Lakes Alive culminates in the flagship festival Mintfest in Kendal, 27–30 August. A highlight will be the UK premiere of a new show from Belgium's Circus Ronaldo. There'll also be a fire garden installation from Carabosse; performances from Slovenia's Zapik Puppet Theatre; and five-minute peepshows provided by Bootworks. See www.lakesalive.org

SUSPENSE

Suspense London Puppetry Festival, running 30 October – 8 November '09, is the first festival of puppetry to take place in London for over 25 years. All the work programmed is for adults. Over ten days a range of performances, masterclasses and symposia will take place at seven venues across the capital. Suspense will showcase a diverse range of contemporary work from UK and international practitioners, including work by Faulty Optic, Indefinite Articles and Horse+Bamboo.

**BAC SCRATCH FESTIVAL 2009**

BAC is currently accepting proposals for The Scratch Festival, a series of Scratch Weekends each including several Freshly Scratched Nights for artists and companies whose work has never been programmed at BAC before. Happening 10–12, 17–19 & 24–26 September, each of the Festival's three long weekends will have a loose theme: Reasons for Living, David Lynch, and Democracy. For more info and an application pack email scratch@bac.org.uk or see www.bac.org.uk

WATCH THIS SPACE

The Watch This Space festival at the National Theatre enters its second-half with a week of Family Fun, 12–16 August (companies including The Whalley Range All Stars, Corpus, Les Grooms, Pif-Paf and The Chipolatas), and ticketed Square2 performances of Markelife's *Carbón Club* (12–15 August) and Gaitzerdi Teatro's *Otsoko* (19–22 August). September 11–13, in the last few weeks of the festival, Les Studios de Cirque de Marseille will be presenting a narrative trilogy on wheel of death, *La Roue de la Mort: La Trilogie du Temps*. See www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/wts

NEW LYRIC HAMMERSMITH ROOF GARDEN

The Lyric Hammersmith and Hammersmith London are thrilled to open the theatre's new roof garden. Environmental charity Groundwork, London has transformed the Lyric's roof terrace into a garden for the whole community, and not just theatre ticket holders, to enjoy. The garden is the brain child of the Lyric Hammersmith and Hammersmith London Business Improvement District (BID), and is also the first project in London to have benefited from retailer Marks & Spencer's 5p charge for carrier bags, introduced to encourage customers to reduce the amount of plastic bags they use. All proceeds from the charge are distributed to environmental projects. See www.lyric.co.uk

CAMDEN PEOPLE'S THEATRE IS 15

To celebrate turning 15, CPT returns to Edinburgh for the first time since 2003, with a new work from current Artistic Director Matt Ball. *Icarus 2.0*, which has been made in collaboration with Sebastien Lawson, Jamie Wood and Susannah Henry, will be at the Pleasance Courtyard throughout the festival before returning to CPT in the autumn as part of a birthday season. The 15th anniversary festival will include works by CPT faces old and new, celebrating the venue's history and pointing the way forward into the next decade, which will begin with a specially commissioned new work. See www.cpttheatre.co.uk

CPT ICARUS 2.0**BARBICAN BITE**

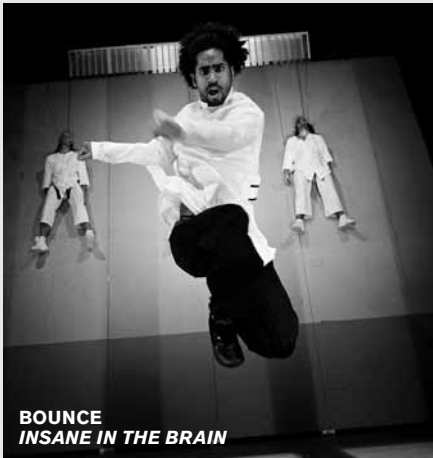
As part of Polska! Year, a festival presenting over 200 Polish cultural projects in Britain, bite brings Polish theatre collective Teatr ZAR to the UK for the first time. Its *Gospels of Childhood* triptych (24 September – 2 October), a ritualistic lamentation on birth and death told through song, chanting and movement is performed in one evening, with Parts I and III in St Giles (the medieval church set in the heart of the Barbican's modern estate) and Part II in the Pit. More dates for the calendar are the UK premiere of circus genius James Thiérree's new solo, *Raoul*, 13–24 October; Levantes Dance Theatre's OSBTT Award-winning *Room Temperature Romance*; and a site-specific promenade performance in one of the Barbican's car parks courtesy of Slung Low. See www.barbican.org.uk



NEWS FROM ARTS ORGANISATIONS

SADLER'S WELLS

Alongside the usual array of Royal and National ballets, Sadler's Wells' massive autumn season this year incorporates mime, slapstick, and circus. Bounce's *Insane in the Brain* is a street dance version of Ken Kesey's classic novel *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. Launching a UK tour, it returns to the Peacock Theatre 15 September – 3 October. Lotte van den Berg's *Stillen*, a wordless meditation on the silent games people play, and a work that lies between mime, dance and theatre, is at the Lilian Baylis Studio 24 & 25 September; there's a fairly rare chance to see Swedish company Cirkus Cirkör with their new show *Inside Out* at the Peacock Theatre, 14–31 October; and, also at the Peacock, Korean martial arts farce *Jump* is playing 3–21 November. Check the Sadler's Wells website for the full programme, which includes new commissioned work by Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, Javier De Frutos, Russell Maliphant and Wayne McGregor: www.sadlerswells.com



BOUNCE
INSANE IN THE BRAIN

ARTS CENTRE WASHINGTON

Three puppet productions at the Arts Centre Washington this season. Clydebuilt Puppet Theatre present *The Three Bears*, a version of the nursery story where Goldilocks lives above a sweet shop and has never known the delights of porridge (7 October; for ages 3–7 years); A Red Ladder's *Forgotten Things* fuses puppetry with a surreal visual style to tell the stories of Toby, who is losing the will to live, and his Grandma Lilly, who's just losing her mind (8 October; ages 14+); and Empty Space present *Heartbreak Soup*, a kaleidoscope of live action, puppetry and humour that conjures its tales from the drawers under a hospital bed (22 October; ages 9+). See www.artscentrewashington.co.uk

PANEK

Performing Arts Network Kent are organising two events this autumn. On 5 October Estelle Rosenfeld will be leading a professional workshop, Puppets and Dolls, followed by a public performance at Quarterhouse, Folkestone. On 29 October PANeK is organising a forum to debate issues surrounding making, presenting and working internationally, with Pippa Bailey as guest speaker. The Forum is part of Canterbury's Festival Fringe and will be followed by a performance of *Steffin* by Amber Glass. See www.panek.org.uk

SOAPBOX – CHESTER PERFORMS

SOAPBOX is Chester Performs' regular programme of contemporary performance and film. The programme presents work by professional companies in venues not normally used for theatre, creating a virtual arts centre in a city lacking permanent performance spaces. An eclectic mix of artforms, SOAPBOX will showcase dance, theatre, music, film, spoken word, physical theatre and live art. The diverse programme's

venues will encompass Chester's architectural and maritime heritage and Chester Performs' aim to position Chester as a growing centre for creative experiment. For autumn programme details and information about Up The Wall (23 & 24 October), an evening happening of live art, intervention, installation and new media works, see www.chesterperforms.com

RESIDENCE

Residence is a group of artists, performance companies, directors and producers. Together they share social, rehearsal and office space at Bridewell Island in Broadmead, Bristol. They are Action Hero, Edward Rapley, Jo Bannon, Kate Yedigiaroff, Saini Manninen, Search Party, Sita Calvert-Ennals, The Special Guests, Tom Marshman, Tom Wainwright, Tinned Fingers and The Wonder Club. 11 & 12 September, Residence will be moving into the Tobacco Factory Theatre for two days of lively discussion, chat, performance and, most importantly, some delicious food and drink. For full details see www.residence.org.uk

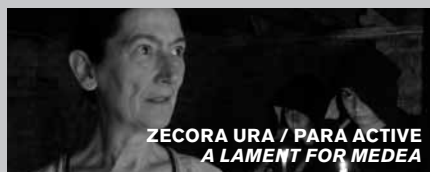
TRAINING

THEATRE 0

This August award-winning Theatre 0 will be running an exclusive two-week workshop in partnership with Central School of Speech and Drama and the Centre for Excellence in Training for Theatre. The workshop will focus on the discovery, practice, sharing and defining of the theatrical creative and devising process. For more information see www.theatre0.co.uk

ZECORA URA AND PARA ACTIVE

Hotel Medea presents two training opportunities: a week-long Training in Intercultural Theatre, featuring Afro-Brazilian dance, Capoeira, Butoh dance and intensive work on voice; and two overnight workshops, From Midnight until Dawn, focusing on inviting participants to understand their psycho-physical potential in an opposing rhythm to the one normally worked on. Both workshops will be opportunities to meet new collaborators for future projects which include a tour of Brazil in Autumn 2009 and a UK tour in Spring 2010. For more information about these opportunities contact becca@para-active.com and keep updated through www.medeatv



ZECORA URA / PARA ACTIVE
A LAMENT FOR MEDEA

DANCE RESEARCH STUDIO

The Speaking Dancer: Interdisciplinary Performance Training is a professional development programme directed by Jacky Lansley and open to dancers, actors and performance artists with a graduate or postgraduate qualification,

and / or three years professional experience in one of the performing arts (can be combined with visual practice). For more info on the programme and also on hiring the Studio see www.jackylansley.com

CSSD SUSPENSE TRAINING: TWO-DAY WORKSHOPS

As part of the new Suspense Festival, the Centre for Excellence in Training for Theatre and the Puppetry course at The Central School of Speech and Drama will be hosting two workshops on puppetry / object theatre: 30 & 31 October, Ephemeral Animation is a two-day workshop run by Nenagh Watson (Barking Dog Theatre and Creative Fellow at CSSD) that kicks off from an appreciation of the animation of discarded objects by natural elements and enters into an exploration of Kantor's fascination of objects and 'puppetry without ego'; also on 30 & 31 October, painter and filmmaker Maria Dominguez Alba will lead a workshop focusing practically and theoretically on the relationship between the object and new technology, covering virtual reality, fiction, the idea of presence, the concept of real time, tele-presence, and the fragility of the technological medium and interaction. See www.cssd.ac.uk or email cariad.astles@cssd.ac.uk

PHILIPPE GENTY MASTERCLASS

Also organised by CSSD, 2–5 November there's an opportunity to join a four-day masterclass with Philippe Genty Company led by Eric de Sarria and Simon Rann and concentrating on tools central to the artistic process of the Genty company, including the manipulation of materials nourished by personal memory. For more information and for workshop application/fees see www.cssd.ac.uk or email cariad.astles@cssd.ac.uk

PERFORMER & COMPANY UPDATES



RIVER PEOPLE



THEATRE AD INFINITUM



TILTED PRODUCTIONS

EDINBURGH FESTIVAL UPDATES

CHOTTO OOKII

Chotto Ookii Theatre Company present their latest physical theatre delight entitled *Sweet*, a cynical anti-rom-com told through puppetry, clowning, dance, mime and shadow. As their third full-scale production *Sweet* marks the next stage in the development of the company's eclectic mix of physical and visual styles with a gorgeous soundtrack and a bizarre world to become engrossed in. *Sweet* is being performed in C+3 in C Main on Chambers Street at 3.15pm every day of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and will subsequently be touring the UK in the autumn of 2009 and spring / summer of 2010.

ZOO INDIGO

Zoo Indigo will premiere their new show *Under the Covers* at the Forest Fringe, Edinburgh, 24 & 25 August. An interactive media performance where the spectators become virtual babysitters of two real-life infants via Skype, in *Under the Covers* two mothers struggle to stay glamorous as they step from glad rags to nappy bags and two flat pack daddies don't know what to do. Touring from November. Also, in September the company will be devising *Somewhere Between Me and You*, a co-production with a team of German artists to be premiered during Nottdance, Nottingham in October. See www.zooindigo.co.uk

THE RIVER PEOPLE

2007 Total Theatre Award shortlisted company The River People are heading for the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in 2009 with their show *Lilly Through the Dark*, a magical tale of the macabre about a girl who loses her father and goes searching for him in the Land of the Dead. The River People use puppetry, poetic storytelling, live music and a touch of gothic style to tell this touching tale which will be running 9–29 August at the Bedlam Theatre. The company will also be taking *Lilly* to the Tristan Bates Theatre in London for three weeks at the end of November.

BEADY EYE / KRISTIN FREDRICKSSON

After working with some of the world's most innovative theatre artists — including Ken Campbell, Teatro Bruto, Romeo Castellucci and Peepolykus — Kristin Fredricksson came home to make a show with her Dad — athlete, artist, piss-artist — for this year's Fringe. Then he died. *Everything Must Go* is an exploration of a father by a daughter, using cinefilm, clowning, dance, puppetry, and hurdling to explore Dad's life from music hall to dancing on graves. Augustine's, 7–31 August (not 17 or 24).

TALL STORIES

Following highly successful adaptations of Julia Donaldson's *The Gruffalo* and *The Gruffalo's Child*, Tall Stories presents another enchanting tale from this best-selling author set to charm and entertain audiences worldwide. *Room on the Broom* is brought to life with vibrant storytelling, charming puppetry and upbeat songs, plus a dynamic cast and of course a touch of magic. Suitable for ages 3+. Pleasance One, 5 August – 31 August (except 12, 19 & 20). See www.tallstories.org.uk

ANALOGUE

Analogue premiere their second show *Beachy Head* at Pleasance Kingdome during the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, 5–30 August, the follow up to the award-winning *Mile End* and a co-production with New Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich. Post-festival, *Beachy Head* will tour the UK in spring 2010, and internationally throughout the rest of 2010. In autumn 2009, the company go back into the rehearsal room to start development work on a handful of new ideas for a series of new productions between 2010 and 2012, and also begin developing their new educational programme, working with schools and universities throughout the South East. See www.analogueproductions.co.uk

TRESTLE

Following a successful UK tour Trestle is taking its collaboration with Incepción *Danza, Lola: The Life of Lola Montez*, to this year's Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Lola is at the Universal Arts New Town Theatre 9–30 August. Trestle's latest production *The Glass Mountain* also tours nationally 24 September – 14 November, including dates at the Tobacco Factory, Bristol (28–30 September); Hat Factory, Luton (1 October); Unity Theatre, Liverpool (9 & 10 October); Salisbury Arts Centre (14 October); Theatre Royal Wakefield (29 October); Jersey Arts Centre (3 & 4 November); Mercury Theatre, Colchester (12–14 November). See www.trestle.org.uk

THE PAPER BIRDS

The Paper Birds will be performing their award-winning show *In a Thousand Pieces* at The Edinburgh Fringe 23–31 August at The Pleasance. Following this the company will be performing at The Amsterdam Fringe in September as winners of The Best of the Prague Fringe for the second year running. The company will then undertake an R&D period in association with Sheffield Theatres before beginning work on a new production to open in 2010. For more information see www.thepaperbirds.com or email jemma@thepaperbirds.com

THE SPECIAL GUESTS

Something Got a Hold of Me is a performance about religious cults, charismatic leaders, power, persuasion, weakness and how everyone is really just looking for something, a little something to make them happy. From charismatic leaders, their persuasive rhetoric and illusory 'miracles',

to the sense of community and togetherness that cults create, *Something Got a Hold of Me* creates a sinister but inviting world, where the audience are at once in a cult and taking part in a strange theatrical game being played out in front of them. Forest Fringe, Edinburgh, 23 & 24 August. Also showing in Bristol in October 2009 and in Dusseldorf and Wuppertal, Germany, November 2009. See www.thespecialguests.co.uk

SUITCASE CIRCUS

A threadbare ringmaster's sock heads a spectacular parade of excessively talented and delinquent everyday objects. Puppeteer Oliver Smart collaborates with musician Matt Short who provides a weird and bizarre instrumentation to accompany this peculiar extravaganza. Suitcase Circus features within The Puppet Grinder Cabaret at The Assembly Rooms, 8.30pm throughout the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. See www.olyppuppet.co.uk or email olyppuppet@gmail.com

UNPACKED

Gorgonzola! Jumping Mouse is at the Pleasance Two, 11.30am at the Edinburgh Fringe this August before touring the rest of Scotland including a week at the Tron, Glasgow with previous show *No Obvious Trauma*. Then, after touring England with *Jumping Mouse* and *Funeral Games*, in November the company premieres the first version of the as-yet-un-named new work at the Suspense London Festival of Puppetry. A new piece will emerge from their 'shed' in Brighton soon. See unpacked.org or call 07903 018310.

THEATRE AD INFINITUM

The company have had a fantastic year: receiving Arts Council funding for a spring tour of *Behind the Mirror*, and for the research and development of *The War Project* (working title) to be premiered in 2010. Additionally, out of 400 applications, Ad Infinitum were chosen to represent the United Kingdom by New York's Exchange Theatre Orchard Project Residency Program and began *The War Project R+D* in the USA. Ad Infinitum return to Pleasance at the Edinburgh Fringe this summer to reinvent Homer's timeless Greek myth with *Odyssey*. Passionate, highly physical, and poignant storytelling brings this breathtaking adventure to life. To book for touring in 2009 / 2010 email info@theatretheadinfinitum.co.uk

GECKO

A fantasy of love, greed and desire using comedy, cinematic imagery, movement and evocative music, *The Overcoat* is Gecko's new show based on Gogol's irreverent masterpiece. A downbeat draughtsman is fixated on a new coat and, ultimately, the unobtainable girl at the desk next to him. His thoughts spill out into everyday life, blurring reality with grotesque fantasy to present a love story and a vivid critique of modern consumption. *The Overcoat* has been selected for British Council Showcase and Escalator East to Edinburgh 2009. It plays at the Pleasance Courtyard, 13–29 August. See www.pleasance.co.uk/edinburgh and www.geckotheatre.com



THE PAPER BIRDS

RICH RUSK

The Lamplighter's Lament creates a world where stories wait in the shadows for their time to shine. Under a single hanging stage light, three men gather to tell fantastical, poignant and beautiful stories in a unique visual style merging junk puppetry, physical theatre and storytelling. *The Lamplighter's Lament* is directed by Rich Rusk and devised by a company of experienced fringe performers. Supported by Escalator East. 10–29 August, Bedlam Theatre. See www.richrusk.co.uk and www.gomito.co.uk

TILTED PRODUCTIONS

TRAPPED is a piece about the old GDR and its parallels with the CCTV laden world we live in today using striking choreography, original Germanic sounding electro music, spoken word and contemporary mime. Imagine a place where thoughts are overheard and dreams are monitored; where intimate letters are scanned and a warped sense of reality rules over reason. Unfolding like a film, *TRAPPED* tells the story of five characters who become caught up in a nightmarish, Kafkaesque world. A new production from award-winning choreographer Maresa von Stockert. Zoo Southside, 23–31 August. See www.tilted.org.uk

PRECARIOUS

Precarious have an outstanding new cast and a 30 venue autumn tour of flagship show *anomie* booked. A hypnotic and surreal journey, *anomie* traces the fractured pathways and phantom connections between six characters, all inhabiting the same apartment building, yet unaware of each other's deviant behaviour. After their run at Edinburgh (Zoo Southside, 7–31 August), Precarious will be on the road until the end of November. They will be running workshops alongside many of the shows. Due to popular demand they will also be touring *anomie* in spring 2010 in the UK and Ireland. Get in touch if you are interested via www.precarious.org.uk



PRECARIOUS

ANGEL EXIT THEATRE



PERFORMER & COMPANY UPDATES

TIM CROUCH

Settle back into the warmth of the Jerwood Theatre Upstairs. Relax as the story unfolds. For you. With you. Of you. A story of hope, violence and exploitation. Laugh with the actors, tap your feet to the music, turn to your neighbour. You're here. Tim Crouch's new play, *The Author*, is about the abuse carried out in the name of the spectator. His previous plays include *England, An Oak Tree* and *My Arm*. Directed by Karl James and a smith; the cast is Tim Crouch, Adrian Howells, Vic Llewellyn and Esther Smith. Royal Court Theatre, 23 September – 24 October. See www.royalcourttheatre.com

PROTEUS THEATRE COMPANY

Following the huge success of two UK tours of *The Elephant Man*, as well as a run at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2008, Proteus have plans to pack their bags for New York at the invitation of the Brits off Broadway Festival at the 59E59 theatre, New York. *The Elephant Man* portrays the life of John Merrick, who went from an object of curiosity and social revulsion to a celebrity. Proteus' one-man version has received rave reviews and will be performed for three weeks 24 November – 13 December 2009 at the Brits off Broadway Festival. See www.proteustheatre.com

DAEDALUS

Following a successful run at Camden People's Theatre of *A Place at the Table*, Daedalus is now expanding its core team and planning a small tour. *A Place at the Table* is Daedalus's first venture into politically engaged theatre. Its fusion of verbatim text, physical theatre and African politics got a lot of interest from Black audiences and media and its structure (audience and cast sat round a massive table with food and drink) always led to long and often inspiring post-show discussions. The next challenge is to find venues beyond CPT to facilitate this. See www.daedalus-theatre.co.uk

FITTINGS MULTIMEDIA ARTS

Sputnik: A Project of Possibilities tells the story of a young woman who wants to live away from Earth and enlists the help of a watchmaker to build her a beautiful machine that fuses with her body and soul and spirits her away on a magical journey. Liverpool-based Fittings Multimedia Arts director Garry Robson has joined forces with Russian kinetic sculpture artist Sharmanka, musician Leigh Stirling, choreographer Mish Weaver plus performer and dancer, Claire Cunningham, to create this unique installation. Stockton International Riverside Festival (1 & 2 August), DECIBEL, Manchester (15–18 September), The Bristol Do (26–27 September). See www.fittings.org.uk

PANTS ON FIRE

Pants on Fire will premiere their fifth show, *Metamorphoses*, in the final week of September in the Barn Theatre at Rose Bruford College. The new production, directed by Peter Bramley, is the culmination of a year-long devising project in collaboration with newly graduated Acting and Actor-Musicianship students. Ovid's collection of Greek myths blends into the world of 1940s war-time London, with original live music, film and puppetry. Adventures in Space, Pants on Fire's unique intensive training course based on the principles of Jacques Lecoq is now in its ninth year and will take place this autumn in London. See www.pantsonfiretheatre.com

ANGEL EXIT THEATRE

Angel Exit Theatre's new show *Moonfleet* is inspired by J Meade Falkner's classic smuggling novel of the same name. A gang of straggling bufoons are washed up amongst the flotsam onto Dorset's wild shores, and conspire to tell a tale of smuggling, shipwrecks and hidden treasure. The show is a co-production with Dorchester Arts Centre and uses striking physicality, puppetry and shanty-inspired music. For ages 8+. Venues include: New Greenham Arts; Lawrence Batley Theatre; Byre Theatre, Scotland; Maltings Theatre, St Albans; Rose Theatre, Ormskirk; Lighthouse, Poole; Rondo Theatre, Bath; and Bridport Arts Centre. Full information is available at www.angelexit.co.uk

BOUNCE

Insane in the Brain is Swedish company Bounce's street dance reworking of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. In the confines of a psychiatric hospital, breakdance becomes a way of expressing freedom and rebelling against the iron rule of Nurse Ratched – who happens to be a ballet fan. *Insane in the Brain* features a pulsating soundtrack with cuts from Missy Elliot, Dizzee Rascal, Gotan Project, David Holmes and Cypress Hill. Inventive set design and choreography are mixed with film and multimedia sequences to produce a fast-paced show that is funny, moving and packed with high-octane dance. At the Peacock Theatre, London 15 September – 21 November, then touring nationally. See www.sadlerswells.com/show/Insane-in-the-Brain-Bounce

DESPERATE MEN

Desperate Men have been producing *Severn Mud Larks*, a large-scale outdoor arts project, in conjunction with Gloucestershire County Council and community arts groups in Gloucestershire. *Severn Mud Larks* is part of the Severn Project, a three-year outdoor arts project animating the history and landscape of the River Severn. Meanwhile, Desperate Men's production *Darwin and the Dodo*, created to mark the bicentenary of Charles Darwin's birth, has been extremely busy touring the UK, and will visit Portugal in June and China in September. The company will also continue to work with Cirque Bijou on the Quest, a Cultural Olympiad project in the SouthWest. See www.desperatemen.com or email ursula@desperatemen.com



BOTTLEFED

Bottlefed will take *Hold Me Until You Break*, their current performance, to Iceland, Idno, Reykjavik on 26 & 27 August '09 and Switzerland, Schlachthaus Theater, Bern on 17 & 18 September. To complement their performances with outreach work, they will be running masterclasses / workshops for theatre professionals and students at the Arts Academy of Iceland and with the Schlachthaus youth theatre at Vidmarhallen Bern. From October until December 2009 Bottlefed will collaborate with Ewan Campbell (cello/double bass) and Matias Hancke (laptop/electronics), two improvising musicians from King's College London, on a new R&D project. Planned performance dates including Southwark Playhouse Secrets are tbc. See www.bottlefed.org or email info@bottlefed.org

NOLA RAE

In late August, Nola will begin rehearsing with Footsbarn Travelling Theatre on a special Shakespeare Winter Celebration to be performed at the Globe Theatre in London over the Christmas holiday period. Mozart Preposterous has been invited to play at Esse Monte de Mulher Palhaça – Festival Internacional de Comicidade Feminina in Rio de Janeiro, 22–30 September. Nola will also be a delegate at The World Parliament of Clowns in Dresden 9–11 October and performing in a gala evening at Theater Wechselbad on 9 October. She is invited to play Mozart Preposterous for the International Puppet Festival Guant in Valls, Spain and at the FIT Festival in Lugano, Switzerland. Exit Napoleon Pursued by Rabbits plays the 3rd edition of International Puppet and Mime Festival in Latsia, Cyprus on 30 & 31 October. A West Country tour of Elizabeth's Last Stand is being arranged for November. Some dates tbc. See www.nolarae.com

JONNY DIXON

Muzzle takes the classic tale of Peter and the Wolf and turns the tables with a gleefully dark twist! Featuring a dazzling blend of visual, physically-charged storytelling, Muzzle collides strange characters, startling masks, wonky puppetry, animated set and atmospheric sound. The show is designed, created and performed by Lecoq-trained actor Jonny Dixon, is directed by Amy Rose, produced by Farnham Maltings, and developed in collaboration with Green Ginger. Farnham Maltings, 23 July; Bristol Puppetry Festival, 2 & 3 September; The Hub, Hayward's Heath, 30 September; The Capitol, Horsham, 1 October; Central Studio, Basingstoke, 2 October; The Showroom, Chichester, 8 October; Pamphilon Theatre, Uckfield, 9 October.

LONE TWIN

Lone Twin bring their extraordinary project *Speeches* to Bath following its success at the Barbican. Members of the community living and working around Kensington Meadows have been recruited to develop a speech to be given in public. With the help of professional speechwriter Helen Mackintosh and Lone Twin, participants create proclamations based on their experience

of the area. Kensington Meadows, Bath, 11–13 September. See www.bath.ac.uk/icia

MEM MORRISON

Mem Morrison requests the pleasure of your company at the Guildhall, Bath. Take a front row seat, join the family and meet the many potential brides at his long overdue wedding reception. From behind the big hair and a seven-tier wedding cake a flicker of hope peers. An intimate attempt to belong to a culture, to a family and to someone, Ringside draws on a lifetime of remembered Turkish Cypriot family weddings, testing traditional values by breaking the silence and changing history forever. Will it be Mem's turn next? 27 November, Guildhall, Bath. See www.artsadmin.co.uk

ORGANIC THEATRE

Organic Theatre is currently engaged with its Elementary Carbon project, in collaboration with Malcolm Heggie, Professor of Theoretical Chemistry at University of Sussex. The resulting performance will premiere at Brighton Science Festival 2009, followed by a national tour. This pilot project, funded by EPSRC, takes as a starting point the extraordinary properties of carbon, from graphite to nanotubes, and explores the boundaries between art and science in performance. See www.organictheatre.co.uk

GREEN EYED ZERO

Green Eyed Zero are touring nationally this autumn with their performance *In the shadow of picture frames*. Fusing daring contemporary circus, innovative digital media and beautiful physical performance, the audience enter a world where the characters dance with objects, climb, swing and suspend off a steel structure, pushing their physical limits. A dark and playful exploration of the fragility of human emotion. For tour dates and more information see www.greeneyedzero.com

HELENA HUNTER

Helena Hunter will lead a DIY 6 project, Practice-based Research for Emerging Artists, 15–17 & 21–23 August. DIY 6 is a series of professional development projects by artists for artists and is a Live Art Development Agency initiative developed in collaboration with Artsadmin, New Work Network, The Basement, Colchester Arts Centre, Nuffield Theatre and LANWest, and PLATFORM. Helena will be artist in residence at Queen Mary, University of London in September, where she will research and develop new work. Helena will perform the new work at Chelsea Theatre's *Sacred: Performing The Real Season*, 21 October – 14 November. See www.helenahunter.com

PLATFORM 4

Platform 4 is as you read this touring their latest piece – an adaptation of *The Tempest* – whilst doing research on a devised version of *King John*. Catch the company's *Tempest* at SW/SE venues through to mid November '09 – with a visit to Jackson's Lane, London 20 & 21 October. More info on the website. Platform have also just



GREEN EYED ZERO

finished their *Midsummer Soirees* in association with Nuffield Theatre, Southampton – creating installations for Connections Club with the Alheimers Society. An exhibition of images from these very special events can be seen at Southampton Civic Centre 31 August–18 September. See www.platform4.org

THÉÂTRE SANS FRONTIÈRES

Autumn 2009 sees the return of one of TSF's most popular productions, *Les Trois Mousquetaires*. Performed in French for adults and young people aged 14+ the show will be touring theatres from September to November 2009. Also touring: *Contes Dorés*, two golden tales performed in simple French, visiting schools in 2010; and *Lipsynch*, an epic celebration of language and voice co-produced with Robert Lepage / Ex Machina, touring internationally in 2009. See www.tsf.org.uk

SPYMONKEY

Spymonkey's latest show, *Moby Dick – An Unreliable Version*, is a glorious mis-telling of Melville's epic novel. Four actors find themselves trapped in the belly of a literary monster, and as they ponder the irony of their fate they recount a story of Moby Dick, embellished with their own fantastical flourishes. The novel's examination of good, evil, fate and obsession is lost on them. And then, mysteriously, found on them again. Spymonkey's award-winning comedy is a mix of Monty Python and the Marx Brothers, overflowing with visual and slapstick humour, and has earned them a huge international following. Theatre Royal, 5–7 October. See www.spymonkey.co.uk

BRIC A BRAC PRODUCTIONS

Bric a Brac Productions is a blossoming new company from Bristol combining strong physicality and striking imagery. Their debut show *Richard's Love* is a tale of love, hope, isolation and betrayal in a world where mermaids can be seduced out of the sea and gnomes might be called upon to leave the garden. Playing this autumn at the Tobacco Factory, Bristol (30 August); Chisendale Dance Space (25 September); Pleasance Studio Theatre, London (3 November). See www.bricabracproductions.co.uk



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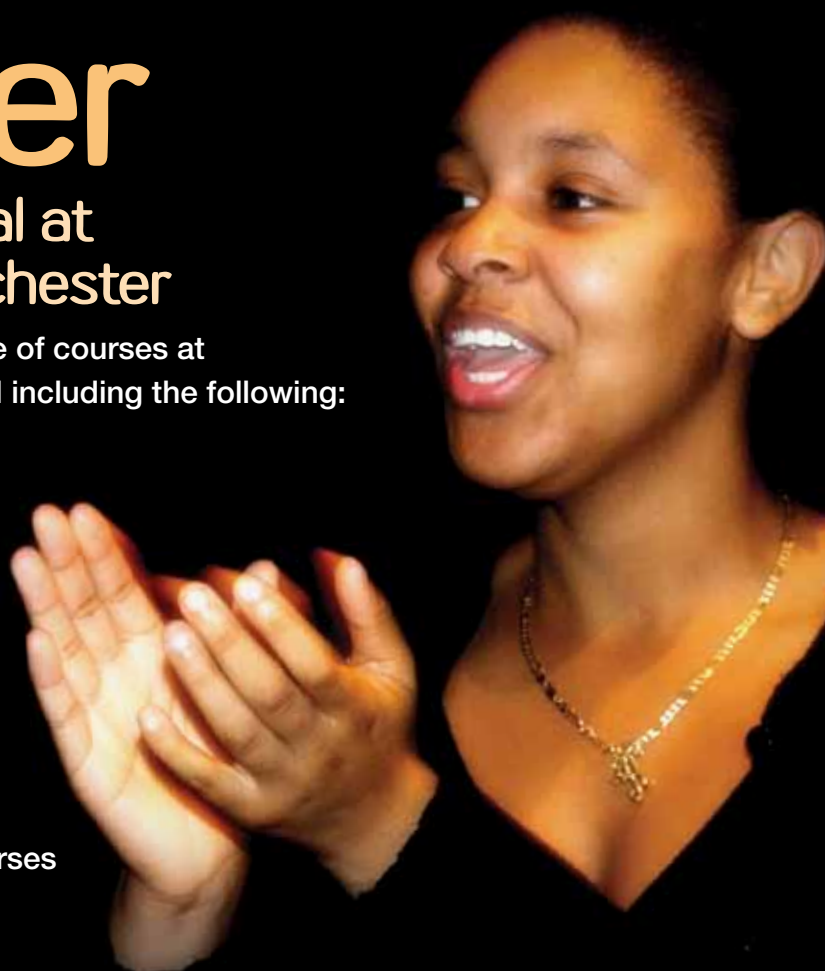
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