

# TOTALTHEATRE

## MAGAZINE



**EUGENIO BARBA INTERVIEWED ON HOME TERRITORY IN HOSTELBRO**  
**TAKING TO THE STREETS OF LANCASTER WITH MAGGY AND BORIS HOWARTH**  
**BENEATH THE PAVEMENT, THE BEAT - PERIPLUM'S VOICES**  
**GOING UNDERGROUND - SHUNT LOUNGE HONOURED**  
**WOULD LIKE TO MEET: NON ZERO ONE AT THE BARBICAN**  
**IF PARADISE WERE HALF AS NICE AS... ICELAND - A LOVE STORY**  
**PLUS: ROYAL DE LUXE BRING GIANTS TO BERLIN, MIMBRE TAKE A TUMBLE AT THE LONDON INTERNATIONAL MIME**  
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# TOTAL THEATRE MAGAZINE

## Volume 22 Issue 01 Spring 2010

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Welcome to the Spring 2010 issue of Total Theatre, in which we herald the start of our third decade in print with a new design. You'll hopefully be pleased to hear that although we look a little different we remain dedicated, as always, to providing intelligent and accessible insight into contemporary theatre and performance.

There have been numerous occasions in recent times – for example in a discussion group that was part of Improbable's Devoted and Disgruntled 5: What are we doing about theatre? (see the report at [www.devotedanddisgruntled5.blogspot.com](http://www.devotedanddisgruntled5.blogspot.com)) – when issues have been raised about the purpose of theatre criticism, and the challenges of writing about 'theatre'. Often, points are made about the divide between critics and artists; about the fact that critics hold too much power; and about the need to find new ways to write about theatre, outside of the standard review format.

I feel I need to wave the flag for Total Theatre here, as we have been addressing those very issues over the past two decades.

The first point to note is that we do not agree with or support the traditional divide between artist and critic. Total Theatre's writers and reviewers are, for the most part, people who also create, produce, or present work themselves. This, we believe, makes Total Theatre the unique publication that it is.

Sometimes these artists critique other artists' work using the standard model of the 'review'. After much deliberation on the nature and purpose of 'reviews', we have decided that short reviews will now appear on our website at [www.totaltheatre.org.uk](http://www.totaltheatre.org.uk). This means that reviews will get written and posted soon after the show is seen, providing an instant snapshot of a performance witnessed; and that the pages of the magazine will be freed up for longer critiques, festival round-ups, and other forms of response. We feel that using a website and a print magazine in tandem is ideal, as web and print have different strengths and purposes.

It is also likely on the pages of Total Theatre that critique will be built into a feature article that takes as its starting point a theme, strand of practice, or geographical location (as in Alexander Roberts' article about Iceland's theatre scene) that serves as a way in to discussing a number of different pieces of work and issues around the creation of that work. In a very different approach to reportage, Alexander Eisenberg and Nick Wood bring us a centrepiece spread that is a visual/graphic response to Helsinki's ANTI festival.

Another way that we challenge the usual 'reviewing' format is through models of writing such as Being There, which in this issue offers a three-way view on Liz Aggiss's lecture-performance at British Dance Edition 2010. Liz offers her perspective from the centrepiece; manager/producer Lisa Wolfe reports from her insider viewpoint; and artist-critic Ed Rapley offers his outside eye response.

We see the making, presenting and witnessing of theatre work to be part of a multi-way creative process. Our article celebrating Shunt Lounge offers a fractured reflection in four voices – it would seem odd to us to take anything other than a multi-angled approach to the telling of the story of Shunt Lounge, a project in which the roles of artist, curator, presenter and witness have been allowed to mix and mingle merrily over the years.

The artist's voice is always to the fore in Total Theatre: no more so than in our Voices feature, with thoughts on Periplum's latest project, *1000 revolutions per moment* from the company's directors, Claire Raftery and Damian Wright. This issue also includes a self-penned feature from bright young things non zero one, who are hitting the big-time with a show in Barbican's 2010 bite season.

From the newcomers to the legendary theatre-maker: we are delighted to bring you an exclusive interview with Eugenio Barba, written by the multitasking theatre-maker, director and critic Cassie Werber.

In response to all those agonised and angry discussions about 'theatre critics' I'll say this: Total Theatre Magazine was set up by artists, for artists. It was set up because at the time, 1989, there was little or no reportage on forms such as performance art, experimental theatre, and new circus. We took the view that if you don't like what the published theatre critics are saying, then find a way to get your own words out there!

We hope that at least some of our words (and pictures) will have something to say to you, and as always welcome your proposals for something different next time round.

**Dorothy Max Prior**  
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## TOTAL THEATRE MAGAZINE

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# Prospero's Island

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## Cassie Werber meets Eugenio Barba and sails into new territory with Odin Teatret

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Odin Theatre is a long walk from the station. It's a *really* long walk.

Holstebro train station is a draughty Viking palace, and the commercial centre reminiscent of many small towns in Denmark, pedestrianised streets lined with recognisable stores, and punctuated by curious — sometimes striking — public art. Heading away from this hub, shop fronts quickly give way to residential streets and university buildings. Then garages, furniture shops. The ring road. Warehouses with less obvious functions. At some point on this trek I panic and call the theatre, convinced I am in the wrong place. But no; the warm voice on the telephone tells me to keep on going. For the rest of the walk I try to imagine the landscape of this unassuming conurbation when, 46 years ago, a troupe of young Norwegians arrived to set up their ideal theatre.

Eugenio Barba's study recalls the cabin of a ship, slant-roofed and full of wood. The walls are decorated — like many of the Odin spaces — with photographs and postcards, beads, masks and hangings. They could be called souvenirs, but in this context they look more like treasure which Barba, tanned and compact as a sea captain, has accumulated on voyages around the world. Travelling, bartering and discovery all spring to mind when Odin is mentioned; part of its mythology. But what is going on in the here and now of a wet September afternoon, at the idiosyncratic Odin homestead?

'At the moment we have the Odin Week, which,' Barba explains, 'is in reality about ten days. It's for people who want to study the Odin; we gather them for this period. They are university teachers, theatre school teachers, scholars, researchers, actors, young people who are trying to find a sort of meaning in their existence' — he smiles — 'a real mixture.

We take the first fifty who write to us, we don't choose them.'

At the moment they are seeing a work demonstration by one of our actors. At four they will be seeing a performance which I made with an Afro-Brazilian actor, Augusto Omolú. After that we will be talking about how it is to work with actors from a different style, a different convention, and I will show a fragment from the *Ur-Hamlet*, where there were Balinese actors, Noh actors from Japan, Afro-Brazilian actors — about 50 actors from 25 different countries.' The fragment turns out to be a short film which skilfully conveys something of the extraordinary *Ur-Hamlet* performance, made to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of Grotowski's theatre laboratory. Performed at Ellsinore it is, as Barba describes, spectacularly 'multicultural' as well as epic and playful — towards the death-stricken end, with gold-clad courtiers and masked warriors littering the stage, a pile of bodies is quietly removed by a modern forklift truck.

'In the evening,' Barba continues, 'the Odin Week participants watch the performances. In the morning they have training, so they get acquainted with some of the principles that we have been following, and each of the actors works with them individually... There isn't one common training for everybody; each actor has been developing his or her own training. This is important to understand; that the training is autonomous, a style that an actor develops, that must be extremely personal.'

It is striking, in a collective with such longevity and renown, to hear about the individual; clearly the Odin is no communist bloc. But is it a community?

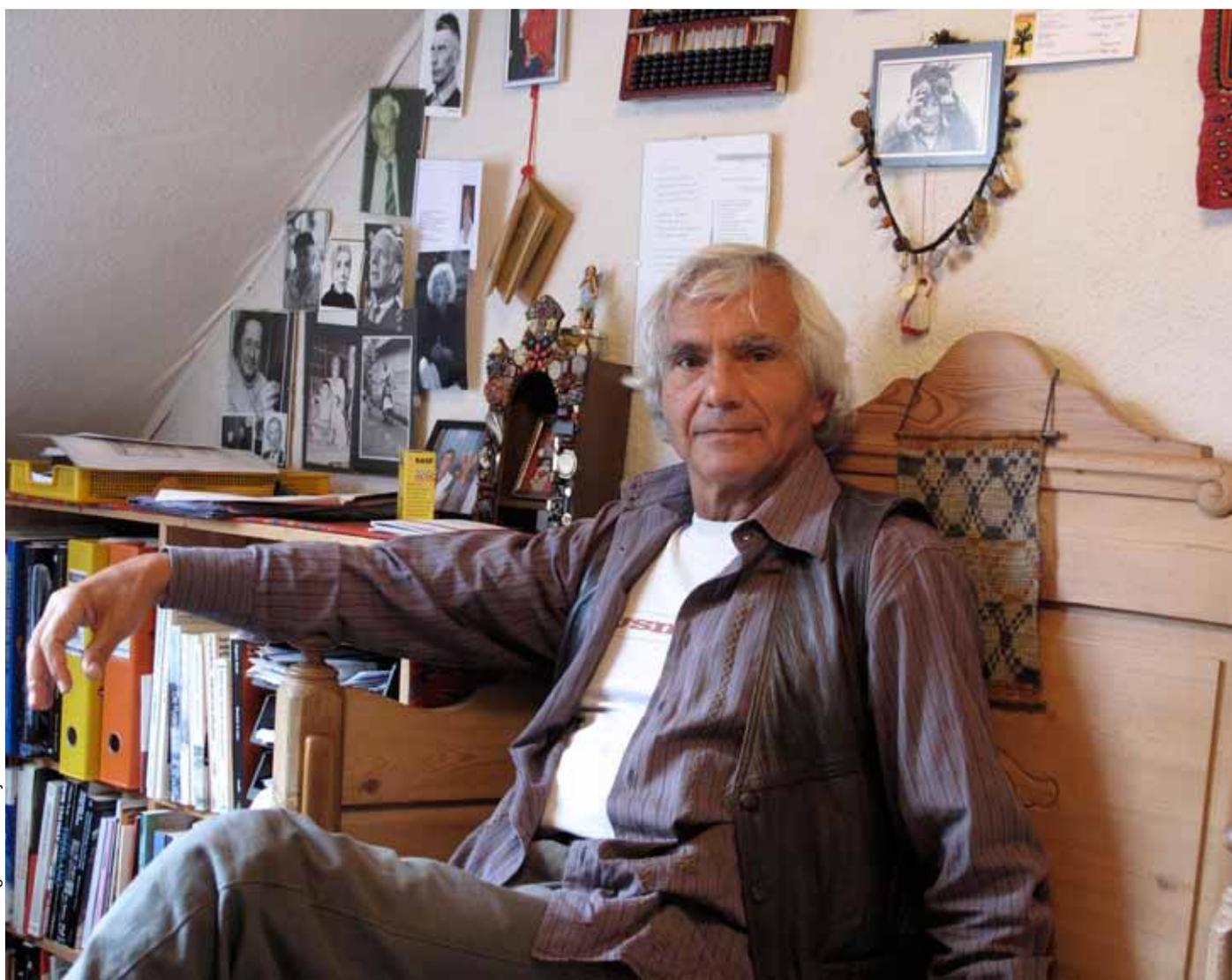
'It's a working community. We don't live together, each of us is rather ... individualistic, and with the years we have become even more individualistic. Most of us live in the country and come here. But we are a very strong working community.

'It's very important to understand the dynamics of a collective coming together for certain projects — like the International School of Theatre Anthropology — certain projects abroad, and at the same time individual projects, which can range from one man/woman performances — which makes them travel by themselves, autonomously, doing their own pedagogical activity — to big, big projects.'

And is this 'collective' integrated into the community of Holstebro? Barba confirms that Odin is 'a deeply engaged community theatre' — but admits that this was not always the case. In 1966, Holstebro boasted a mayor with progressive cultural policies, an empty farmhouse — and a resistant population. Barba tells the story of his company's initial invitation to take up residence:

A local nurse, interested in theatre and a member of an amateur company, saw Barba and his actors perform in another town, and heard about their desire to move out of the capital (Oslo), and establish themselves in a small town. 'She got so excited that she came back [to Holstebro] and called the mayor, whom she didn't know.' She suggested that they invite Barba's company. 'The mayor said, "well, call me in one hour", and when she did he said "give me the address".'

The group, uprooted from Norway, found itself in 'a small town with no theatrical tradition. We moved from a capital to a place which was not only provincial but also backward... We had to teach ourselves, first; to establish a training for actors. People reacted very strongly because they couldn't align all these strange exercises with the interpretation of Shakespeare or Ibsen.'



Portrait of Eugenio Barba by Cassie Werber

That the group has remained — with several of its original members — for so long is a testament to eventual success, as well as to determination.

‘All these circumstances explain the peculiarity of Odin. Also, I had very clear ideas, that I wanted to create an ensemble such as Stanislavski talked about, that goes *against the nature of theatre* – which is to be transient. For me it was more than that. These people should always be able to create the dynamics of reciprocal stimulation and remain, not abandon what they have created... This is one of the reasons why the Odin is against the nature of theatre. We have actors who have been here for 46 years.’

I’m realising that my initial metaphor of Barba as the captain of a ship — with the hermeticism and single direction that implies — is inaccurate. The members of Odin seem more like a castaway crew.

‘Our company is eleven actors, and 22 people altogether. Over the course of the years we’ve had about 50 actors. “Isn’t that a small number compared with the thousands who might pass through a commercial theatre in that time? This is what makes the Odin a sort of Galápagos. We don’t follow the evolution of the continents, we are able to separate ourselves and at the same time interact with the local.’

‘The local’ for Odin means Holstebro on one level. But the company has also engaged in more international ‘local’ interactions than most. As well as the members’ individual activities, ensemble productions are regularly translated into English, Spanish, Italian and French, or performed in a mixture of languages. The company has, over a long and diverse relationship, spent a total of five years in Latin America; it developed the idea of ‘theatre barter’ in Italy, encouraging local people to exchange fragments of their culture for the company’s own skills in what became *The Book of Dances*. Odin regularly returns to places where they have performed before.

‘We found interested milieu and went back to them. I like to meet again the same spectators, or their sons or daughters, and now even their grandchildren.’ It’s another kind of community, forming? ‘Absolutely. You find that you grow together with your spectators. It is very important that theatre grows...old, with them.’

There are different reasons for making theatre; does Barba see one as more important than the others?

‘I’d have answered differently when I began. And during the past 46 years, I’d have answered differently. Today I’d say it is first of all entertainment. But I want to achieve with my spectators simply... disorientation. Not scaring them; I believe security is important, because if you feel safe you start opening yourself. Like a child in an entertainment park – it should be thrilling.’ Barba asks the next question himself, and answers it: ‘So how do you reach this effect? It’s a very complex structure of subterfuges.’

‘It has to do with the deep language of the actor. The actor has a way of establishing a relationship to the spectator – or to the text, or to the past, to the story, to himself, or to the space. In order to establish this relationship he has three different languages: one is the verbal one – the words, the narrative one. Another is the sonorous one, the sound. So I can say something in a way which means exactly the opposite. Irony is this. And then there is the third language, which is all the physical reactions; which can also stress something else. The way these interact make the spectators face something which is not like the classical forms. Deep language is the result of the interlacing of these three different languages.’

Barba’s writings on theatre are studded with metaphor: paper canoes; the house with two doors; ships of stone. I wonder if their use stems from interest or from necessity – and how does metaphor figure in his performance work?



'Metaphor is the moment when you want to express an experience from reality and can't use normal words. How can you express your passion for a woman, for a man, the fact that you are experiencing your existence in a very different way? How do you express... certain feelings. That you could kill someone?

'Artistic language is a way of destroying language used in a simple way, and rebuilding it. It's not that I like metaphor, but that it's a necessity. When you refuse the normal way, it's the only option. The poet is one who is recreating the language. If you want to recreate a situation on the stage, which has to do with reality or can be an imagined reality, you have to make use of metaphor.

'This is especially true when you write. On stage, it's different. Because we are animals and the part of the brain which deals with conceptual processes is, in fact, very limited. Much of the performance that I do is directed to other parts of the brain, which are not conceptual – just like music, like dance, seeing a landscape, listening to the waves breaking on the beach, watching snowflakes.'

In *Theatre: Solitude, Craft, Revolt*, Barba writes of 'floating islands... that uncertain terrain which can disappear under your feet, but where personal limits can be overcome, and where encounters are possible'. The Danish archipelago; Odin as Galápagos; communities across the world linked by one performance; Prospero's island; metaphor and reality interlaced, and a new language, still evolving.

Having recently visited the Barbican, London to participate in February's HamletZar: Dissection conference, Odin will be performing *SALT*, *The Flying Carpet*, *The Echo of Silence*, and *The Dead Brother* in Taiwan 15–21 March before moving on to Costa Rica for the Festival Internacional de las Artes 2010 at the end of the month.

The company's own Odin Week Festival, held in Holstebro, Denmark, takes place 12–21 August and is a ten-day intensive introduction to Odin's training and working methods, as well as a festival of international performance. Deadline for applications is 29 June 2010.

Cassie Werber interviewed Eugenio Barba 25 September 2009.

[www.odinteatret.dk](http://www.odinteatret.dk)



Fríðgeir Einarsson, Margrét Bjarnadóttir, Ragnar Ísleifur Bragason Ókyrró

# If Paradise Were Half as Nice

Alexander Roberts finds there's a lot to love in Iceland

Nowhere is perfect, but it's certainly comforting to believe in a place that could be. Perhaps for a poor, newly-graduated artist who spent late 2009 surfing from one friend's sofa to another standards of perfection have lowered. I am not complaining, rather I am making a confession. It was 11 December 2009, I was leaving London, and I was delighted.

'Goodbye reality,' I thought. 'I am off to do some daydreaming, and I am off to do it in Reykjavik, Iceland for the next five-and-a-half sweet weeks.' As I stepped off the plane at Keflavik Airport, I was already on my way to paradise – ready to ignore the faults, exaggerate the positives, and indulge in some fantastical imaginings of a perfect Iceland.

Thankfully, however, I was not alone, and in recognition of my dangerously tourist-like, daydream state, I recruited the support of an unofficial tour guide and sidekick in the form of Ásgerður Gunnarsdóttir – one of the founding members and organisers of artFart, Reykjavik's largest live performance festival, and currently working as a dance critic for Iceland's second largest national paper. For the next month, I was to embark on a theatre attendance duet with a Reykjavik local far less susceptible to the charm of 'anything but London', and far more knowledgeable on what the city had to offer in the way of exciting work and interesting artists.

Our first event came from a text message tip-off sent to Ásgerður's phone. 'Come to the Nordic House this afternoon, for a mystery performance not to be missed.' The secrecy grabbed us and off we went. Knowing little of what to expect, we arrived to meet many others in a similar state of ignorance and anticipation. The secrecy was intentional. The Nordic House was running a season of afternoon performance events presented by a different mystery artist each day. Wonderfully, the events were free. The mystery surrounding each event appeared to provide an interesting age-diversity, with the audience ranging from tod-

dlers to the over-sixty. Each day, audiences would turn up hoping to get a pleasant surprise as the name of the artist was announced and the doors to the performance space were opened. So, what was our surprise to be?

'Erna Ómarsdóttir and Valdimar Jóhannsson's new band, *Lazy Blood!*' the Nordic House lady cheered, to the elation of all those in the crowd over the age of ten. Ásgerður filled me in: Erna Ómarsdóttir was a lucky pick – one of Iceland's biggest performance artists, she is well established both in Iceland and in contemporary dance circles across Europe. Ásgerður and I followed the excitement into the auditorium.

The performance opened with the entrance of a giant, twitching, two-masked figure, caped in a shimmering, golden cloak, and absorbing the attention and energy of the space, like an alien making its first landing on Earth. The costume was about as low-tech as one from a retro *Doctor Who* episode, but the movement and power that was erupting from within the cloak was explosive and primal. Our introduction to this golden beast was short as the human forms, hidden beneath, were released and revealed to be two figures, one male and one female. The long-haired male took to his Apple Mac and microKorg keyboard, and the volatile female grabbed the microphone and dominated centre-stage. The 15–20 minutes that followed was an unclassifiable merge of dance, drama and theatre – all compacted within the form of a rock band. With Valdimar Jóhannsson steering the sound through an electronic storm of electro-punk, metal, glam rock and Nordic folk, Erna Ómarsdóttir sculpted and ruptured the world she and Jóhannsson were building together with a body like a tornado in a music box, and a voice that danced between tones of the Northern Lights and the sound of a mother dragon protecting her young.



Ómarsdóttir and Jóhannsson were performing to an Icelandic audience of vastly differing age and cultural experience – bringing experimental performance art into a kind of mainstream and introducing new audiences to more complex performance languages

The audience appeared bemused, yet exhilarated. Ómarsdóttir and Jóhannsson were performing to an Icelandic audience of vastly differing age and cultural experience – bringing experimental performance art into a kind of mainstream and introducing new audiences to more complex performance languages. This is not uncommon in Reykjavik and many of the few venues that exist appear dedicated to providing rich and challenging seasons full of new work.

My day was not over and next up was a trip to the City Theatre, to take a very privileged glimpse at Iceland's most revered independent theatre company, Vesturport. Described by founding member of the collective Víkingur Kristjánsson as taking a 'highly physical, circus approach to telling a story', the emphasis is on accessibility and finding what serves the story best. Their latest project was an adaptation of *Faust*, and I was curious to see how Vesturport were working. As I entered the large auditorium, I quickly realised I had been invited into a space harbouring a very special piece of work.

Iceland's most revered independent theatre company, Vesturport, take a highly physical, circus approach to telling a story. The emphasis is on accessibility and finding what serves the story

A giant net hung above the seats where the audience were to sit; the stage was covered in trapdoors, with hidden trampoline floors; the rig was laced with aerial ropes – swinging and rising left, right and centre; and actors were seen falling from the sky and bursting through the air – spat out from the fiery world beneath and the glowing stars above.

The director, Gisli Örn, had created a fictional reality that left my mouth 'wowing' and 'oh my God-ing' throughout what is best described as a gripping circus drama, and a modern day Meyerhold manifestation where the notion of accessibility has tied its heart to a well utilised understanding of archetype, gestural stage language and most of all space.

If you are searching for a British comparison then look no further than Kneehigh Theatre. The two companies, whilst retaining their own artistic identities, have many similar qualities, which is not surprising considering Vesturport's Gisli Örn and Nína Dögg Filippusdóttir have both worked with Kneehigh (on *Don John* and *Nights at the Circus*), and Kneehigh writer and performer Carl Grose wrote the English version of *Faust* from which the Icelandic adaptation was produced.

Both Vesturport and Erna Ómarsdóttir are enormously established in their fields – in Iceland and internationally. Vesturport are no strangers to touring; appearing at the Young Vic, the Barbican and the Lyric, they have also taken trips as far out as South Korea and Bogotá, Columbia. And based on the fact that I narrowly missed an accidental meeting with Young Vic's David Lan in the Vesturport rehearsal room, I don't imagine it will be long before London gets another visit.

Just as exciting for me as these big names, however, was what lay ahead. I was keen to get to know the artists that were just starting out, and to discover whether this five-hour highlight was reflective of a wider culture, or just flashes in a small pan. It was, as I was to discover, just the tip of the iceberg. I spoke with many enthusiastic young artists and others involved in the theatre scene in Reykjavik, and believe Iceland could be on the verge of an independent theatre-making boom.

Reykjavik's artFart festival, which takes place every August, saw the number of performances grow from eight in 2008, to a staggering 21 professional pieces in 2009 – an impressive leap for a city that has a population of just over 200,000 people. 'This is down to a number of factors,' explains Ásgerður, 'but particularly the recession seems to have had an impact as many artists have decided to use their unemployment as an opportunity to develop theatre pieces. Also the Iceland Academy of Arts, from which all but one of the artFart founding members graduated, and its Theatre Theory and Practice BA, has certainly had a big influence.'

The impact of the Theatre Theory and Practice BA was credited by many, a view given real credence by the fact that two of my highlight performances during the whole trip were pieces created by graduates from the course.

The first piece was *Ókyrrð*, a simple but well-executed three-hander that explored the many possibilities for translating human relationships into the animation of three plastic chairs. It had something of a Station House Opera feel, with the performers following rules of a physical reality they were developing themselves – live. The second standout was a show called *Endurómun*, a performance experiment that played with the audience's perception of light and sound, subtly drawing us to a heightened sense of what it is, physiologically, to be a witness.

These were the highlights, and after three weeks it was impossible not to be impressed. I started to perceive Reykjavik as some sort of theatre paradise — a playground of the artist — but something was not adding up. When I looked back over my notes, about the shows I had seen, and the people I had spoken to, I realised I needed to claw back some perspective. Almost all of the artists that I spoke to talked of the many problems and limitations that dog Iceland's theatre scene, yet somehow I still viewed it as paradise.

## Reykjavik is a paradox – the Icelandic recession is biting hard and people are nervous, but the level of live performance being created is experiencing a surge...

Iceland is in the middle of a terrible recession and under massive threat of funding cuts – that means less funding for artists, but equally as worrying according to Erling Jóhannesson, the director of Hafnarfjarðarleikhúsið, an independent theatre just outside Reykjavik, 'it means less funding for venues, a situation which is already far from satisfactory, with there being very few performance spaces already'. Added to this, the geographical obstacle of living on an island – with a tiny population, in the middle of the Atlantic ocean – makes it easy to wonder where, without decent financial support for international touring, these pieces that are performed for one or two-week runs can continue to be played? As such how is any artist to maintain any sort of momentum?

Reykjavik however is a paradox, because artists do find momentum, and work is made, shown and seen. The recession is biting hard and people are nervous, but the level of live performance being created is experiencing a surge. The reality is, of course, that there is never going to be that perfect place. Iceland is certainly not without its challenges, but seemingly there is a quality of practice, and an attitude to creative action and culture in Reykjavik that gives promise, regardless of their current crisis. Much of what is exciting in Reykjavik is the possibility of what might be – in the future. It is for this reason I claim not to tell it how it is, but rather how I see it. Artists, venues, and everyone I met who was involved with the creation and presentation of contemporary live performance in Reykjavik appeared united in recognition of the challenges they face – motivated and willing to do something about it, and committed to work with their audiences to develop and cultivate a sustainable theatre scene made up of diverse and challenging practices. This in my mind sounds like paradise.



Vesturport Faust

If Paradise Were Half as Nice | Alexander Robertis

artFart is an annual festival dedicated to providing a platform for contemporary performing arts in Iceland. 2009 saw a strong British presence with the inclusion of Mischa Twitchin, The Fiasco Division and Bottlefed. In 2010 the festival is seeking international proposals for work that takes place in unconventional spaces, and also launching a new festival within a festival, *The Reykjavik Public Space Programme*, placing specific focus on contemporary performance for public spaces. Email [artfart@artfart.is](mailto:artfart@artfart.is) or see [www.artfart.is](http://www.artfart.is)

For further information on Erna Ómarsdóttir and Valdimar Jóhannesson's *Lazy Blood*: [www.ernaomarsdottir.com](http://www.ernaomarsdottir.com)

Vesturport's *Faust* and Leifur Þór Þorvaldsson's *Endurómun* were both presented at the Reykjavik City Theatre (Borgarleikhúsið). See [www.vesturport.com](http://www.vesturport.com) and [www.borgarleikhus.is](http://www.borgarleikhus.is)

*Ókyrrð* was created collectively by theatre artist Friðgeir Einarsson, choreographer Margrét Bjarnadóttir, and playwright and performer Ragnar Ísleifur Bragason. [www.wix.com/freinarsson/Freinarsson](http://www.wix.com/freinarsson/Freinarsson)

*Endurómun* created by Leifur Þorvaldsson:  
<http://leifurthor.wordpress.com/>

Iceland Academy of Arts is based in Reykjavik and provides higher education in visual arts, theatre arts, music, design and architecture. [www.english.lhi.is](http://www.english.lhi.is)

# Would Like to Meet... non zero one



Meet *non zero one*, six good friends who formed a theatre company whilst studying at Royal Holloway, University of London. For their practical dissertation, they created an interactive audio piece called *Would Like To Meet*, which they then took to the Southwark Playhouse as part of the venue's *Secrets* programme. It was seen there by a producer from the Barbican and commissioned for BITE in spring 2010. Here, they document their emergence as a graduate theatre company...

## HERE AND NOW

We are new to this — to the professional 'theatre world' — and are learning as we go. We have been a company for less than a year; we were together in London at first, but then dispersed all over the country to new full-time jobs. In recent months we have been experimenting with the beginnings of a new show as part of BAC's Scratch Festival (autumn 2009), as well as creating a website, producing marketing images for the Barbican, and applying wherever we can for funding.

It is tough, tiring, expensive and scary, but definitely rewarding. We have ten-hour meetings, send approximately 30 emails a day and lose sleep at night, but the excitement and passion when we come together is worth it.

So here, in short diary installments, is what we, as a new theatre company, have been experiencing in the past few months.

## FROM: FRAN

### SUBJECT: SCRATCH - THE FEAR

We applied for BAC's Scratch Festival with the determination that it would be the starting point for our next piece. We got offered a slot to perform during the Reasons for Living, Democracy weekend on Saturday 26 September. So today, only thirteen days from performance day, we are trying to create the Scratch (it is also the only day beforehand that the entire company can meet).

We arrive in the BAC foyer at 10am, bright and hopeful, armed with laptops and notepads. We start by playing games based loosely on the theme of democracy to get us into the

spirit, and then sit mind-mapping and fantasising ideas of audience interaction, choice, and silent disco headphones. By the end of the day we need to have a title for the piece and a short description.

After a short twenty-minute lunch we experiment with some simple ideas using mobile phones, pieces of paper and a lot of chairs. By 5pm we sit staring at each other, eyes glazed slightly.

Before we leave at 8pm we still need to discuss Barbican marketing, funding applications and the website. And take a company photo. Oh — and write those 40 words. So we continue...

## FROM: CAT

### SUBJECT: BARBICAN MARKETING MEETING

Alex and I get to the Barbican, painfully punctual after texting each other our journey updates for the last hour. Today, as the designated Barbican non zero one spokesperson, we have the first marketing meeting.

As I shake hands with our producer, media relations officer and marketing officer I'm certain they can feel my heart booming. Relaxed Alex has met them before, but I get stumped by their first question: 'So Cat, what is your role in the company?' 'I guess it's... ahh... co-everything?' Performer, producer, techie, administrator — non zero one may as well call themselves the six musketeers; it's as good a title as any.

Luckily the images we started creating two days ago, taken by Sarah and John and frantically touched up, go down a storm and I relax. An hour and a half later and we are another step closer to seeing our work distributed in 50,000 BITE brochures...

## FROM: SARAH

### SUBJECT: WEB TO THE SITE

I sit glaring at Dreamweaver in front of my Mac, worried that my every tentative move may bring about the downfall of our website three months into the build. I'd begun working on it — mostly drawing boxes on paper, knowing what I wanted it to look like and how

I would like it to work — but I had no clue how to make it happen, or if my designs were even possible.

With me about to punch my laptop, or even better the persons behind Dreamweaver, Thom, an old friend of mine, came to the rescue after he received a message entitled 'Dreamweaver is ruining my life'. Thom is now teaching me how to make a website... in return for tea and home-cooked food.

Whatever I learn from Thom I'll try to pass on to the rest of the company. Growing collectively is important to us, and we make decisions as a group, consulting one another on everything from proofing website copy to trying out new creative ideas. This makes some things more time consuming as they have to go between the six of us, but it means that we are really cohesive, consistent and completely engaged in everything we do.

Separately we can be self-sufficient photographers, designers, administrators, producers, performers, etcetera, but it's even more exciting to be able to share our individual skills and interests to benefit the company. Most of us have full-time jobs or have done internships working in the arts in various areas — experiences that allow us to work together efficiently as a company. Most importantly though, our individual interests provide inspiration for our performance work. In *Would Like to Meet*, for example, there are video installations, movement pieces and interactions within the triangle of participant, performers and space. When we all come together our creativity comes alive — especially if there's a free sandwich in it for us somewhere.

## FROM: JOHN

### SUBJECT: NON ZERO ONE MUSIC

The bullet point 'Performing Rights??' is still there, at the bottom of the agenda. Now it's getting serious, we can no longer get away with the 'did-they-ask-if-they-could-use-that?' music clips that (may) have appeared in early versions of *Would Like To Meet*. We need our own music.



non zero one photo courtesy of the company

Treacherously flattering though it would be to think otherwise, we know that we can't do it all. Thus, I find myself emailing Robert Logan, the intimidatingly accomplished musician who had just finished composing for an Oscar-winning documentary. Um...*Would you be interested in working with us, Rob?* What this unknown, unproven group of six can offer Robert takes some thought to pitch. Nervous...

And yet, a month later, we are met in an awkward circle in the dark waiting room at BAC. Nobody quite knows how to begin, but I think Rob is expecting us to start. *Ready, steady... convince me!* Inevitably, we arrive at, *And of course, it would be great for you because...* Nobody's going to be winning any Oscars this time, but you know what? He's smiling...

**FROM: IVÁN**  
**SUBJECT: TECH-KNOWLEDGE-Y**

Alex has drafted quite a beautiful letter to a lovely major audio electronics manufacturer and I've taken it upon myself to create the ultimate shopping list of what we want from them (I'm a bit ashamed of my excitement).

It seems that we've accidentally let technology define our work. Not that we're complaining mind you – it's quite nice to be working on 'cutting edge participatory theatre', even if at times it means we spend hours on end creating work that only a few people will get to see. And it's fine because we've sought to make work that connects with our audiences, creating unique moments between each member, which was something we could not achieve with an audience of a hundred (or can't yet, at least).

Our use of technology comes from our passion to create something new for our audience to experience, and for the past two days I've also been chasing up Silent Disco kits for a possible live-broadcast performance. We've only got a couple of days to decide if we want them for the BAC Scratch or not, but the longer we take, the less time we have to find out how they work. We never intended to be

a technology-led theatre company, and there's still plenty of time for us to not be, but for now we're all about experimenting with what's out there in order to keep things fresh and exciting for both ourselves and our audience (all six of them).

**FROM: ALEX**  
**SUBJECT: RECEIPTS**

At our very first company meeting at university we appointed someone to the role of 'treasurer' to look after the £20 we had each decided to put into our exam piece. Despite being in the bottom set for maths at school, that person was me.

It's ten months later and I'm finding myself still collecting receipts and keeping track of how much money we spend. I'm currently sending another email to remind everyone to bring their receipts (with their names written clearly on the back) to our next meeting. I must admit that I'm enjoying managing our accounts (which I'm learning to do as we go along) as I'm quite the organised freak. I appear to be responsible for our company bank account too, which we opened to hold the grant money we were lucky enough to be awarded from Royal Holloway.

Money and funding is a challenge – particularly as we're all juggling non zero one with our real full-time jobs and earning money to live. Having totalled our draft budget for the Barbican, I'm shocked to work out that it costs us £59.95 every time we meet in London. And when we meet before 12.30pm it costs us £104.70... Oh dear.

**2010**

As you read this it is spring 2010 and non zero one are putting all their time and energy into writing and recording *Would Like To Meet* for the Barbican. We meet every weekend to work on the six individual journeys each audience member will take, holding conversations about telephones, rain and sunken bars.

Since BAC's Scratch Festival we have also had interest in developing Scratch performance and are going to work on the piece currently

named *They Vote With Their Feet* to take to festivals including the Edinburgh Fringe.

So if you happen to be at the Barbican and see six people walking around at a very steady speed, holding stop-watches with a look of concentration, then wave – it's non zero one, and we would like to meet you.

non zero one are: Sarah Butcher, Ivan Gonzalez, Cat Harrison, John Hunter, Fran Miller and Alex Turner. *Would Like to Meet* was performed in 2009 at Southwark Playhouse and in Royal Holloway's renovated Boilerhouse Complex. It will be performed as part of BITE 2010, 28 April – 16 May (excluding 3 & 10), with post-show talks 1 & 9 May. Box office: 0845 120 7550. See [www.barbican.org.uk](http://www.barbican.org.uk) [www.nonzeroone.com](http://www.nonzeroone.com) | [info@nonzeroone.com](mailto:info@nonzeroone.com) | [twitter.com/nonzeroone](https://twitter.com/nonzeroone)

Currently enjoying a period of intense activity, headphone theatre has actually been around for a decade or more. Total Theatre Magazine picks a few practitioners old and new:

**Back to Back:** Australian company whose production small metal objects seated the audience above a busy concourse (for the UK performance, Stratford Station), with the actors in among the crowd. [www.backtobacktheatre.com](http://www.backtobacktheatre.com)

**First Person Theatre:** Artist collective that's produced a two-person headphone piece, Waystation, as well as a downloadable podcast, Figurehead, to be experienced solo on your local park bench. [www.firstpersontheatre.wordpress.com](http://www.firstpersontheatre.wordpress.com)

**Rotozaza:** Company whose enormously successful piece *Etiquette* sat two people, friends or strangers, together for a short, oblique encounter directed by headphone instructions. Later shows *Wondermart* and *GuruGuru* took different approaches to the form. [www.rotoszaza.co.uk](http://www.rotoszaza.co.uk)

**Blast Theory:** Technology-inquisitive company whose work *Rider Spoke* saw participants cycling the city looking for the hiding places of previous participants – and the recordings they left there. [www.blasttheory.co.uk](http://www.blasttheory.co.uk)

**David Leddy:** Glasgow-based artist whose *Auricula Series* combines radio play and guided tour. Participants follow a map and listen to a patchwork of sounds and voices from which a narrative emerges. Three to date: *Tympanic*, *Sussurus*, and *Reekie*. [www.davidleddy.com](http://www.davidleddy.com)

# VOICES

## Beneath the Pavement, the Beat

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Damian Wright and Claire Raftery, co-artistic directors  
of Periplum, reflect on their latest site-responsive work,  
*1000 revolutions per moment*

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*1000 revolutions per moment* began as a journey into sound.

Periplum's work has always been influenced and inspired by music, driven by an underlying musicality. We often think of our works as compositions – looking for the emotional rise, the sense of timing, as we don't tend towards a strictly narrative theatrical form.

We relate our work to that of musicians and composers from lots of genres – Tom Waits, Ligeti, Public Enemy...

With *1000 revolutions* we decided to make this music fervour the subject of the work and began thinking of a site-specific piece set around a music venue - exploring the feeling of the life-changing live gig that you don't forget, that becomes part of the constellation of your most life-affirming experiences.

This was problematic because the task of representing the perfect gig is a lot to ask and music taste is a minefield of subjectivity, so it could be hard work to take an audience with us. So we started to think about the wider impact and associations of music in life – the actions and desires it can inspire, the moments in memory it can represent, experiences it accompanies, friendships it leads us to forge, the creative and destructive fire it breeds, and the blind aspirational force it can unleash.

The title *1000 Revolutions Per Moment* was originally inspired by thinking about Ian Curtis in the borderline state between ecstatic dancing and the point of fitting, but was also to draw on the social and sometimes political force of change that music can foster – music as a trigger. Since the name and the notion of *1000 revolutions per moment* first entered our minds in 2005, the project has spanned a wild medley of imaginary versions and themes – a fantastical biography of Ian Curtis, a multi-dimensional exploration of the 'perfect gig', an enactment of the alleged military coup on Harold Wilson's government, and a real revolution encompassing a city here and now as the show unfolds.

In the early versions, performed in Reading and Brighton in 2009, the show became a performance trail trawling the underside of the city. Indoor and outdoor social spaces, boats and bridges, car parks and parks, with music as a key: Beneath the pavement, the beat. This power of music to move us to get up and do something was the feeling that we wanted to evoke, and to allow the audience to feel that they could be protagonists in the action to a certain degree, to feed into the movement.

In the run-up to the show, we invited audience to nominate life-changing songs and many of these featured in the soundtrack. A busker along the trail also challenges the audience to name a 'truly great song', which led to the beginnings of a debate on the street. As the busker said, this question could start a war.

Music weaves the piece together – a roaming band, the busker (a devil-at-the-crossroads type character), a free party sound-system, mobile box amps, live string recitals on rooftops, guitar feedback/white noise from a passing van, and so on. The characters' journeys are also driven and accompanied by music. We use music as a vehicle to explore what fuels people and find out what their desires are for the future. We ask, what's the sound of a city? How does this reflect in individuals in the city, and how do people contribute to the city as a living, breathing symphony.

The show was devised through a series of performance experiments, almost in the nature of happenings – leading on the one hand to near-arrests and on the other to the making of friends. Then there was the social and cultural research into the identity of a locality, and going out onto the street to ask local people *Where's the heart of the city?* Plus, new musical collaborations between company artists and local musicians. Finally, developing visual representations – in Brighton, 50 placards carried by the audience celebrated independent organisations and local social identity; in Reading, the show's visual identity drew on waveforms taken from field recordings to try and capture the heartbeat of the city.



**On the social level, we worked with predominantly independent, even subterranean organisations, venues and artistic partners,** as these reflected a desire to dig beneath the monoculture of the high street and find the local heartbeat.

**Practically, 1000 revolutions is a journey through spaces and so we begin by piecing the trail together, trying to find exciting routes and installation spaces.** Key scenes in the piece are adaptable to happen in different orders. Again, we're looking at the performance with the sense of a music composition.

**In Brighton, several audience members said the show was like a love song to the city.**

**Whilst having a framework for touring, the show is mainly site-specific** – from the local participants (up to 40 per city), musicians and venues we work with to the changing geography of the trail and local social and music history we draw on: in Reading, the town as a battleground for the British revolution of 1688 and in present times, its identity cast in the shadows, the town as a gateway to the capital or an extension of London; Brighton as a free party republic or a transient city.

**This touring/site-specific dichotomy is a real challenge – it's almost a case of making a brand new show when we go to a new place.** We try to find a similar series of spaces in close proximity to each other and adapt key scenes for these. A scene in Reading where we took the audience on a river barge was adapted to become a scene in an illicit speakeasy when the show went to Brighton. Simultaneously, the live river shanty that was sung on the boat was adapted by a chanteuse for the speakeasy.

**Always, music provides a continuum or a sound-clash that gives the piece its inner necessity.**

The research and development of *1000 revolutions per moment* (2009) was supported by John Luther and South Street, Reading, where the company was in residence in August 2009; and by Donna Close, producer of White Night Brighton, where the show was performed in October 2009. Periplum would like to thank these supporters and acknowledge 'the freedom granted to explore lots of creative ideas around the themes and lots of ways of engaging the public in the project'.

In 2010 the company are aiming to consolidate these ideas, whilst also ideally looking to add a little more spectacle. They have a smaller version of the project in Kings Cross as part of the Reveal Festival in April, and a larger version as part of Fuse Medway festival in Gillingham in June (see below for dates).

*1000 revolutions per moment* development supported by Arts Council England, Brighton & Hove Arts Commission and South Street Arts Centre, Reading.

Spring 2010 dates:  
Reveal Festival, Kings Cross, London 23–24 April  
2010 Fuse Festival, Gillingham, Kent 18–9 June 2010

For further information on these dates and on the company see [www.periplum.co.uk](http://www.periplum.co.uk)

# THE TRESTLE LEGACY

Trestle Theatre *The Glass Mountain*

## Trestle Unmasked

### Trestle Theatre's artistic director Emily Gray on her journey with the company and its current vision

When I came to Trestle in 2004, the company was approaching its 25th birthday as a touring Mask Theatre company, the last remaining founding artistic director (Toby Wilsher) had left, and it had recently acquired a new building, a refurbished 100-year-old chapel in St Albans, Hertfordshire.

While I had been charged (by Trestle's funders and Board) with re-imagining a new identity for Trestle, I was mindful of respecting the company's long history. I had inherited a script and idea from my predecessor for *The Smallest Person* (2004) and created another show *Beyond Midnight* (2005), both of which used masks but also incorporated text. It was vital for me to experience the ways of working that Trestle had been using over the past 25 years before I made any decisions about its future direction.

I believed that continuing to produce only mask theatre was not going to suit a building-based organisation with an expanding remit. It does not help contemporary practice to be pigeonholed into one working ethos, and having been led by a particular form for 25 years, it was time to experiment with different physical languages with which to tell stories. The task at hand was to convince the Trestle team that moving away from mask and embarking on a journey of discovery was a good idea, and in fact the only way that the company was going to survive.

Between 2006 and 2009 we embarked on a period of transformation during which a new way of working evolved, a rebrand occurred, and a new business model emerged. The touring work continued to be the artistic driving force of the company but we relaunched as a multi-discipline arts organisation with a performing arts venue, an extensive programme of participatory work, and a new process and style of work.

*Trestle Theatre, founded in 1981, developed a distinctive style using masks, puppets and music, and became one of Britain's leading touring companies.*

*A new era began in 2004 when co-founder Toby Wilsher left, and Emily Gray was appointed artistic director. Here we present reflections from Emily Gray on Trestle's recent work; from Trestle associate Anna-Helena McLean on her latest project, *Moon Fool*; and from Toby Wilsher on his new company, *Meta Morpho*.*

In order to find a strong identity, the work Trestle was doing had to have relevance on a local, national and international level. I looked to my own influences and interests (martial arts from India, dance from Spain and song from Poland) for inspiration and we have gone on to create a trilogy of internationally influenced storytelling-theatre pieces. Working with Indian theatre company Little Jasmine we created *Little India* (2007), a telling of a classic Indian love story for a contemporary audience, using the traditional Indian martial art kalaripayattu, music and storytelling. In 2008 we worked with Barcelona-based dance company Incepción Danza to develop a dance theatre fusion to tell the story of *Lola Montez*; the infamous 19th century Spanish dancer. In 2009 we collaborated with Polish vocal theatre artists formerly of Song of the Goat and Gardzienice (including Anna-Helena McLean) to develop *The Glass Mountain*, based on the Polish fable of the same name, which explored contemporary tales of migration.

By working with artists from different cultures and across different physical styles our own creative process has evolved. Each process began with an international workshop residency, bringing participants together at Trestle Arts Base to work intensively with our collaborators. From that initial skill sharing we worked to transform the physical form into a storytelling language, fusing the physicality with text and music. In every case the formality of Indian Kalari, Spanish Flamenco and Polish song had to be unravelled and a playful quality brought to devising with them. All three inspired popular workshops – Fighting Talk, Playing with Fire and Scaling the Heights – which work independently of the shows and in association with them.

Collaborations are demanding but the rewards are enriching and ongoing. Little Jasmine were galvanised by their experience at Trestle Arts Base to build a retreat for developing artists in Bangalore. Our relationship with Incepción Danza continues as we work in Barcelona with their dancers who are using text for the first time. The Polish collaboration has led to our latest co-production with emerging company Moon Fool.

Our aim is to create exciting and accessible physical theatre and explore different ways to tell stories; to continue to connect with diverse communities and with people of all ages at home and across the world.

Trestle's latest project in development, *Burn My Heart*, presented by Trestle in collaboration with Blindeye, will premiere 27 September – 30 November 2010. For further on this and on all of Trestle's work, see [www.trestle.org.uk](http://www.trestle.org.uk)



Moon Fool III Met by Moonlight

## These Foolish Things

Anna-Helena McLean reflects on the development of her new company, Moon Fool, who are supported by Trestle

I founded Moon Fool after almost ten years of working through international exchange, and collecting a team to devise physical storytelling performance based on musicality and classical text. On leaving, after seven years, the intense working conditions of Gardzienice, a village and theatre centre (directed by Włodzimierz Staniewski) on the South East border of Poland, I had to begin again; to choose a solo-driven path, running workshops to cultivate a new creative environment to find myself afresh as an independent actor, musician and teacher. Setting up a platform for international theatre exchange in 2004 was instrumental to everything I have done in the UK since.

Having worked with the Ancient Greek Dramas for the majority of my time in Poland, now wanting to further that insight but in my own vernacular, I chose to adapt my experience to Shakespeare's plays. I turned to a collaborator, Pamela Prather from Yale School of Drama, who had often voice-coached me while touring with Gardzienice in US. She mentored my first production project inspired by King Lear and we then co-created an education programme exploring archetypes in Shakespeare, running workshops in New York, France, England and Scotland until March 2008.

I met Norwegian born Christopher Sivertsen when I was invited to train with Song of the Goat in Poland, September 1999 although we did not practice theatre together until November 2007: work which led to The Queen and Fool workshop in New York last March, running Awake Youth Projects in Sweden & Scotland and the Awake Project: Studio Version which premiered in Sweden in September 2009.

Back in 2006, Peter Swaffer-Reynolds (musical director of NoFit State Circus) proposed we co-create Fire Music as a means for musicians like us to meet and play. This led to several further Fire Music events and ultimately served to feed ideas for his role as Puck in what is now our new show *Moon Fool – Ill met by moonlight*, directed by Ian Morgan, a current member of Song of the Goat. We met for the first time when we were both leading the Traces workshop for The British Grotowski Project in Kent, April 2008 and our paths have interwoven closely ever since.

On the basis of several years generating such practice, international exchange and development, as well as specific skills learning with the clown and mime artist and director, Nola Rae, I formed the company Moon Fool, following through work on the Queen and Fool archetypes and Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Trestle invited Christopher and I to lead an international workshop residency in November 2008, which led to their last piece, *The Glass Mountain*, and an invitation from Emily Gray for me to become an associate artist. Trestle took Moon Fool under their wing and gave us the support to bring our practice to production.

Peter, Christopher, Ian and I live as contemporary nomads, somewhere between theatre, computer, loved ones and airport. Trestle is the first place in the UK that we can finally come back to again and again to warm-hearted faces and the space and support necessary for us to be at home in creating the work we want to make. Emily has a special way of nurturing the artist's spirit at Trestle, carefully minding the conditions for creativity to flourish naturally. With such balance and composure Emily has been the most graceful and goading influence that one could wish for, as director on *The Glass Mountain*, producer for Moon Fool and creative consultant for the show itself.

Within the cosy and generous-spirited walls of Trestle we Moon Fools have been happily nesting for the while.

*Moon Fool – Ill met by moonlight* tours the UK until 30 March 2010. The Queen and Fool workshop takes place in New York 29 March – 3 April 2010. See [www.trestle.org.uk/pl262.html](http://www.trestle.org.uk/pl262.html)

## Metamorphosis

Trestle founder member Toby Wisher, now director of new company Meta Morpho, explains why he's sticking with mask theatre

When I left Trestle in 2004, after 23 years as actor, writer, director, designer, maker and composer, the intention was to spend more time with my young family and do less travelling. So I got a job writing and directing in Istanbul. And then another one. And then one in Erzurum. (That's in far-eastern Turkey, obviously. Almost Georgia!) But the draw to my five-year relationship with the State Theatres of Turkey has been that theatre is a relatively new medium there, following Ataturk's revolution of 1923, where the pursuit of western artistic tastes was a state tool to 'de-Islamise' the culture of the country. Theatre, opera, ballet and classical music are all massively funded, and endorsed by the military. It was a new experience sitting in the theatre in Istanbul at the premiere of my first show amongst over a hundred new army recruits. Indeed, the audience in Turkey is generally a young one, with theatre-going often akin to film-going. If they liked the show, they would come and see it several times.

The refreshing realisation working in Istanbul and Erzurum was that Mask Theatre was never seen as an avant-garde medium, a weird adjunct to proper theatre, despite sitting alongside text-based stalwarts such as Pirandello, Chekhov, Pinter and Shakespeare. It was just theatre...

The evident enthusiasm for theatre in Turkey, and the total acceptance of masks as a relevant and entertaining theatrical language, has rekindled my desire to make theatre in the UK, so it is with great excitement I now embark on a new journey in Britain, with the formation of a new company, Meta Morpho. My three productions in Turkey have all explored farce structure, using masks, text and dance. I'd like to continue this work with the new company. Britain has such a rich vein of theatrical farce, from Brian Rix to Alan Ayckbourn and Ben Travers.

The first thing that gets asked is: 'How is it going to be different from Trestle?' Hmmm. It's not. Under my stewardship, pre-2004, Trestle tried to tell a range of different stories using a range of presentation techniques, and whilst mask was the unifier, we also used text, live music, puppetry and choreography. With Meta Morpho, I shall be endeavouring to tell a range of stories about the human condition using whatever tools are in the toolbox. Yes, the mask will be a constant, but by no means the dominant language.



Our first piece, touring later in 2010, is *Devil in the Detail*. Written for the State theatre of Erzurum, it is loosely based on the Victorian one-act play *Box and Cox*, and is a manic black comedy about greed and deceit. Meta Morpho's second production will be a play (written by myself some years ago, based on Guy de Maupassant's *Boule de Suif*), with 11 songs – lyrics by Tim Knapman and music by Alex Silverman.

The masks are secondary tools, but are important nonetheless in a production that takes 'jumping form' seriously. An Arts Council-funded research and development period saw us putting the elements together, of text, song, mask and dance, working with choreographer Michael Popper.

The first principal of any work I make is to entertain and connect with the audience on several key levels. First, to engage them in their desire to have a story revealed to them. Secondly, to have their imaginations prodded in the way that we unfold the story, in the tools that we use and the structure we choose. And lastly, to engage the audience on an emotional level, both in terms of their connection with the characters and their playing of the game of theatre.

Just exactly what are the plays 'about'? Well, I'm never entirely sure of that until I've read a handful of reviews. But for me, that has always been the beauty of writing and performing with masks: so much is left to the imagination, intellect and emotional life of the audience, that the best we can do is present the action of the play to them, and let them be the final part of the jigsaw that makes the event complete.

*Devil in the Detail* tour dates for autumn 2010 so far include Portsmouth New Theatre Royal, 22–23 September; Jersey Arts Centre 28–29 September; Goole Junction 2 October; Exeter Northcott 4–6 October (all tbc, with further dates to come). For updates see [www.metamorpho.co.uk](http://www.metamorpho.co.uk)

# Home Truths

Nic Green *Trilogy*



## Total Theatre's Canny Granny takes a chisel and saw in hand and carves up the idea of workshops

'Anyone who uses the word "workshop" who isn't connected with light engineering is a wanker,' Alexei Sayle famously said. You can get this quote printed on one of those insulated mugs at [urbandictionary.com](http://urbandictionary.com), and take it into a drama workshop with you, if only to make people wonder what Alexei Sayle would call you then. Still, I should like this slogan embroidered on my tartan blanket.

Chris Goode recently took similar umbrage when someone used the word 'energy' in a workshop which he was running at Toynebee Studios. I personally went home on the first night and sulked over his use of the word 'matrix'. What newfangled language everyone's speaking these days! We made some theatre that suggested being 'at home', though for some of us the resulting performance suggested being *in* a home. Which confirms my suspicion that workshops are like day centres for lunatic dramatists.

Some friends did the workshop with Nic Green in preparation for the naked dance in *Trilogy* at the Barbican. One said she just needed 'a chance' to get her kit off, rather than 'a process'. I personally have got into a bit of a process with my tights recently, so I wish I'd been there. But the sessions helped build a community, and they came away galvanised.

The writer Octavia Butler describes a workshop as 'a great way of renting an audience'. Some workshop activities would be mad if nobody were watching. At least, I like to think my friend Richard would not try sexing up a raw chicken at home, as he did to hilarious and ghastly effect on Jonathan Young's Clown Through Mask course.

Some workshops are called masterclasses. These are drama workshops where virtuosos give the less gifted a two-day glimpse of the skills they have accrued throughout their lives, thus reminding the amateurs that as they haven't been juggling/using a trapeze/practising butoh/twirling nipple tassels since their early teens they can pretty much forget it.

Thanks to this process I have learned to leave breakdancing, capoeira, ballet, jazz singing, juggling, drumming, yoga, acting, and breathing to the professionals. Or at least, to the younger generation. The late great Ken Campbell is known to have devoted entire days to demonstrating how to walk on stage with maximum ham, though his entertaining digressions about parrots led him to be largely forgiven.

Of course, not all workshops are so hierarchical. Some, like Improbable's Devoted & Disgruntled, have democracy embedded within their very structure. And so it is that you find yourself talking with bigwigs and smalltoupes about everything from punk rock to live parenting. I was particularly taken with a discussion on 'honouring the elders' – you can read it on the D&D5 blog.

I like workshops which are philosophically enlightening – Lone Twin did a writing session at Chelsea Theatre as part of the Sacred season. Seeing participants' writing gain depth through the day was like looking at an MC Escher drawing and gradually perceiving the hidden dimensions.

As the child of a carpenter, I associate workshops with the smell of sawdust and the

sight of oily singlets. Now they more frequently invoke the smell of coffee and the sight of men in loose clothing. (They seem to be a rare chance for men to wear things without zips.)

One final note of warning: don't wear Lycra to a workshop, however young you are. If this even needs explanation, the YouTube clip entitled 'Bobsled runner Gillian Cooke splits her spandex' should suffice. There are some hidden dimensions that are best kept that way.

### Laura Lloyd is the Canny Granny

What was discussed at Devoted & Disgruntled 5: <http://devotedanddisgruntled5.blogspot.com> <http://devotedanddisgruntled.ning.com> and [www.improbable.co.uk/](http://www.improbable.co.uk/)

Nic Green's Trilogy: [www.nicgreen.org.uk](http://www.nicgreen.org.uk) and [www.makeyourownherstory.org](http://www.makeyourownherstory.org)

Bobsled runner Gillian Cooke splits her spandex: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=7DFytp51-r8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7DFytp51-r8)

Lone Twin: [www.lonetwin.com](http://www.lonetwin.com) Lone Twin's The Catastrophe Trilogy at Barbican 2–9 March, [www.barbican.org.uk/theatre/series.asp?ID=804](http://www.barbican.org.uk/theatre/series.asp?ID=804)

Chelsea Theatre's Sacred season: [www.chelseatheatre.org.uk](http://www.chelseatheatre.org.uk)

Jonathan Young (Shams Theatre) Clown Through Mask workshops: [www.shamstheatre.org.uk/page.php?id=6&type=content](http://www.shamstheatre.org.uk/page.php?id=6&type=content)

Currently touring new show Reykjavik

Chris Goode is an associate artist at ArtsAdmin: <http://www.artsadmin.co.uk/projects/associate-artist.php?id=32> He has published a book this autumn (The History of Airports) and blogs at <http://beescope.blogspot.com> – Thompson's Bank of Communicable Desire

# Beginnings

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Boris Howarth, a legendary artist whose work in the early decades of UK outdoor performance and celebration inspired many contemporary theatre-makers, died unexpectedly in 2009. He worked closely with his wife Maggy and together they are perhaps best known for the large-scale spectacles they created with Welfare State. But here Maggy Howarth recalls their less well-documented early work

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“When did we start? I met Boris when I was doing Fine Art at Reading University. There was a seminal event when John Arden and Margaretta D’Arcy lived in Kirby Moorside in Yorkshire in the 50s, where they had a month-long open session where shows were made. They were very hands-on and immediate in their approach to making theatre. I wasn’t there but Boris was there, John Fox was there, and that’s where they first met. They liked Boris because he was very good at folk music, including many ethnic styles. He was a useful person; he could improvise and make music for a lot of the writing that John Arden was doing – very much a ‘let’s do a show tonight’ sort of thing.

What we were going to do was make simple direct shows, and we were going to try things on the street

I worked with them because I was a useful art student who could make things. We helped with the first production of *The Royal Pardon* at the Beaford Centre in Devon. It was a very nice, privileged situation and great fun. Boris did the music and we met Maureen Lipman who was in it. We did two more shows with John and Margaretta, which for me was an incredible training and apprenticeship. We worked for practically nothing and learned one hell of a lot.

The music, the writing of songs and the attitude to performance was very direct and exaggerated for clarity. I had to make big props and masks. It was great as I was fed up with being a fine art student doing constipated paintings with too much agony – great to let rip and make big things. So Boris and I were a team.

When we went to Lancaster (where Boris went to university) in the 1960s we’d got a start into theatre and the kind of theatre that was very direct. At the time there was a lot of uptight theatre which didn’t appeal to us very much; OK for the initiated but otherwise too precious. The catalyst for us making the Lancaster Street Theatre were the shows we did with Adrian Mitchell, who was at that time the poet-in-residence at Lancaster University (and subsequently a life-long friend). He ran the Song Workshop where he got people writing songs and making music. Lots of people got involved and out of that came shows which were put on in Lancaster. One of these was called *The Hot Pot Saga*. It was about the Yorkshire/Lancashire wars but in a modern context. With Adrian being political and involved in protesting, a lot of stuff about the Vietnam War crept into it, which gave us an edge. The political edge was always important; to make comments and state the case for peace.

We went on to make a show, called *Lash me to the Mast*, which was a changing point for me. It happened at this nice old place called the Grand Theatre – a stone’s throw from where we lived in a backstreet terrace in a deprived area of Lancaster. We were very conscious of the social context of where we were – deprivation, problem families, and people having quite drab lives. The contrast between that and the show we were helping to put on was evident. It was a great show but had less edge, less reason to be. For some reason we decided that this should be a free show and the result was chaos. A fairly indulgent student review with some nice stuff in it with all these kids from the neighbourhood belting up and down the aisles. They loved it; they could get in for free and they watched it every night. They were running amok, not paying attention, and it was at this point that Boris and I thought we must make a different sort of theatre that works on the street.

There wasn’t much street theatre at that point. Bread and Puppet were there and I think Red Ladder were doing marches. What we





were going to do was make simple direct shows, and we were going to try things on the street. We had no money; Boris and I funded it completely. The question to answer was ‘In a rough neighbourhood how could we make a difference?’ We were trying to make new forms using loud street music, exciting drumming and performance. There was no one to teach us so we thought: let’s just try it, then come back and talk about what we thought went well, what was awful. And then we’d try to do another one. We did one every week – very quick and rough stuff. Not having any acting training was probably a good thing.

Boris got a samba band together – there was a guy called John Hall who had lived in São Paulo who taught us the basics. We had loads of drums, acquired through scrounging, and Boris used to run music evenings where everyone bashed the hell out of these drums. Then we got disciplined and started to put the breaks into the rhythms. So we would march around the streets with this very noisy band – cowbells, shakers and drums. It was pure rhythm and so was like the Pied Piper, attracting kids from far and wide. We never intended it to be children’s theatre, but we were immediately engaged in trying to keep their attention. We would tell stories which involved simple messages about how things could be better.

We would have a circuit of about four venues and go from one to another performing a 30-minute show comprising two or three little playlets. The shows used words – Boris was responsible for them, though sometimes we’d improvise and at other times they’d be written down. There was a lot of music, slapstick and tumbling (for those who could do it). We’d get to a piece of waste ground, defend our space, park the instruments, make the kids sit down if we could, try and get rid of the dogs, and start the show. We used a lot of material in those days – I remember making body heads which were like a Punch and Judy show with large heads that came down to the knees. Very photogenic as they went along the streets. The programme of work fitted into the summer holidays as the people doing it were students – those who had time and who could live on little money.

## People still come up to me and say ‘I remember when Boris drove the burning car into the river’

We were very popular and became what I call ‘social elastoplast’, so the council gave us money to run New Planet City. They gave us £6000 a year, so we moved into a building which was an old engine shed. It was enough for one wage, which we both lived on. We ran week-long sessions for kids and anyone in the community. All day long and then we’d do a show in the evening with the kids in it. I can’t imagine how we managed it because it was killing. We didn’t do this alone – there were about fifteen other people helping us. Funding for community theatre, or indeed any kind of community art, did not exist at the time so we were pioneering a whole change of focus with no money to do it. Pretty groundbreaking stuff. We weren’t sure how far we were trying

We got away with murder in those days. Health and safety? We did have something to fish the kids out of the water with when they fell in

to change society or make art, and trying to do two at the same time was difficult. We did have a concept of participation in the shows, but wanted to make the shows worth watching in an artistic way, not just to keep the kids happy.

People still come up to me and say ‘I remember when Boris drove the burning car into the river’. It was an event for New Year’s Day. We discovered a local stuntman who told Boris how to do it. We got an old banger – there were petrol cans in the boot, so the flames would trail out the back – and with the fire raging he had to hit the ramp at 50mph in order to shoot the car right out into the river. It was weighted so that the car would hit the water flat-on instead of nose-first. He was strapped in and had to undo the straps when he was underwater and get out. There was no rehearsal – he hadn’t even tested the bloody straps and it was only when he was revving up that he realised how insubstantial the ramp was. Someone had been detailed to make the ramp and that was what he got. Fortunately he hit the ramp (he was a bit lucky was Boris... most of the time) and it worked and was very spectacular. People were screaming in anticipation!

That was the Old Year and after all the fire and smoke a beautiful white raft came across from the other side of the river. I seem to remember making a silvery costume for this gorgeous young blonde teenager who was the New Year. There was a lovely New Year song that we did as a round to accompany this.

Another event was a battle on the river with big boats that we got from the army. We had a battle between the Sun God and a Demon King. Loads of kids had been helping to make all this stuff, painting up the boats and shields and then there was a real battle. We got away with murder in those days. Health and safety? All these tough little kids – we did have something to fish them out of the water when they fell in. These events were exciting, daring and naughty which appealed to the roughneck little kids – and not so little either; you could count on some big naughty boy to do some daring things for you.

The energy consumed was huge and it had to come to an end as our spirits were broken by it all. We took on a big ruined building which needed a lot of money and it was too much trouble. There was a YMCA and a lad’s club in the town, but otherwise nothing else so we became a honeypot for all sorts of problem people. We were always open; we didn’t have a closed-door policy. Hopeless idealism! We tried, but when you’re artists at heart, to try to turn yourselves into fundraisers and administrators is soul-destroying. It needed to change and we left,

The next stage was joining Welfare State – but that’s another story....”

Maggy Howarth was interviewed by Edward Taylor on 21 November 2009. Boris Howarth died on 11 April 2009. His work with Welfare State can be found on their archives [www.welfare-state.org](http://www.welfare-state.org). His work as a stone-carver can be seen on [www.borishowarth.co.uk](http://www.borishowarth.co.uk). Maggy Howarth’s recent mosaic work can be found on [www.maggyhowarth.co.uk](http://www.maggyhowarth.co.uk)

# Out & About

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## Pippa Bailey reports from India

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Delhi, India, January 2010. Every year the National Drama School brings together shows from across the subcontinent together with theatre from abroad. Barat Rang Mahotsav is the only festival in India to reflect such a diverse range of theatrical work. I was in Delhi to run a workshop with students from the National Film Institute, as theatre is the foundation of their acting technique. These two institutions are the only professional training available to the vast Indian population. Many have their sights set on Bollywood or continuing their study in the UK or USA. By all accounts the theatre scene is small, struggling to find its place in the crowded culture.

But I am getting ahead of myself... India! The culture shock lives up to its name with all the wealth, poverty and complexity imaginable. My strange adventure began by taxi, through crowded streets, shanty dwellings and rich street life, dwarfed by construction sites and multinational billboards, influencing the development of this 'developing' nation.

At the festival I saw eight Indian productions. The variety of style and form was a salutary reminder of how big and diverse the country is. Two really stood out: *Sex, Morality & Censorship* – written by women playwrights Shanta Gokhale and Irawati Karnik, directed by Sunil Shanbag, one of India's foremost directors – tackles these vital issues head on. The play flashes back to the 1970s when classic text *Sakbaram Binder* by Vijay Tendulkar came under attack from censors and factions of society. This show was in Hindi (official language of India) and Marathi (spoken in western and central India), and mostly beyond my comprehension – so I took my lead from the actors and the crowd. The orator was charismatic and clearly funny, scenes were intimate and crisp, the dance was beautiful, and pleasure pulsed from the stage. Yes, I think you can definitely tell whether you are watching quality performance – even if you don't speak the language.

The second piece was *Hamlet – the clown prince*, directed by Rajat Kapoor and devised by the cast. The star of this show and director of The Company Theatre is Atul Kumar. He is currently undertaking the Clore Leadership programme in the UK.

In this version of *Hamlet*, delivered in a mix of gibberish and English, a group of clowns decide to stage the tragedy, 'making a complete mess of it'. The range of clowning presented in this piece makes it highly entertaining, from the sublime to the ridiculous with insightful commentary and measured pathos. I was astonished to learn that this type of clown is not performed at all in India and many of the cast had never even seen a clown. The company will be touring this work to Europe this autumn – watch out for it.

The curious drama of my trip included the journey from the hotel to the NSD every day. Of course I understand that foreigners are desirable passengers as we can pay more, part of the strange negotiation between eastern and western cultures. Every day I told the driver the destination. If he didn't know the way, as was often the case, he stopped and asked. Directions seem to be offered in bite-size chunks as drivers often stopped two or three times to secure the short route. When asking directions on the street, I was directed to the next corner and instructed to 'ask someone there'. This reliance on strangers and imperative to communicate really struck me as different to what I am accustomed to.

Amongst the international work I saw two beautiful shows; ISH Theater from Israel produced a wonderful *Odysseus Chaoticus* (like the above-mentioned *Hamlet*, a clown show using gibberish). A man, living with his wife, baby and demanding demented father dreams of escape and adventure, conjuring the *Odyssey*. The performers were masterful, funny and incredibly versatile. *Kiosk*, by Arica Performance Company from Japan, is a one-woman show using little text and much ingenious engineering of basic materials – water bottles, string pulleys. It reflects on the repetitive futility of work from the point of view of a kiosk worker.

One night after a show, I travelled back to the hotel by car in the thick fog that fills the city on winter nights. The driver was lost and for once found little help as he meandered through the nearly deserted streets. Then, out of the fog, came not one but three elephants, ghostly and majestic, another small miracle in the theatre of this extraordinary city.

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## An ANTI Introduction

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Taking place in Kuopio, Finland, ANTI is an international contemporary arts festival presenting site-specific works made for public spaces. Collecting live, sonic, visual and text-based work, ANTI gives audience members a map and sends them walking across the city from artwork to artwork – a set-up which in 2009 the festival foregrounded by presenting a series of projects and artworks that responded explicitly to journeys on-foot. The 2009 festival was held 23–27 September, while the 2010 iteration is set for 29 September – 3 October and will invite textual, written and language-based responses to the challenges of site-specific theatre.

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

Now turn the page, where you will find: 'Footfalls: Walking and Contemporary Practice – Anti Festival 2009' – a visual feature article authored and designed by Alex Eisenberg, one of the founding members of the UK collective Present Attempt, and Nick Wood, senior lecturer at the Central School of Speech and Drama and course leader of the university's MA Advanced Theatre Practice. [www.cssd.ac.uk](http://www.cssd.ac.uk)

Words, photographs and artwork by the article's authors. Maps taken from ANTI festival's programme/marketing.

Subject: RE: Total Theatre  
 Monday, 4 January 2010 06:19  
 Nick Wood <Nick.Wood@cssd.ac.uk>  
 Alex Eisenberg <alex@presentattempt.co.uk>, <venla@presentattempt.co.uk>

your point that this is an email correspondence. I'll try to write more quickly and directly, concentrating on the key moments of the Festival – as I remember them at this distance in time.

particularly strong experience for me was climbing the small steep hill next to town – through the fir trees – as part of Rachel Eisen's work 'Flickers'. I think one of the points to be made here is how much care and attention the artists involved gave to their work, and to each participant in their work. For 'Flickers' a short walk from the town led us to a rendez-vous point at the bottom of the hill, where we were carefully briefed and sent off at twenty-minute intervals with a specially prepared knapsack containing flickbooks (instead of maps) of the journey ahead. There was a particular emphasis here on quietly taking the walker aside – encouraging them to slow down and enter a particular frame of mind. Like much of the work at the Festival, there was a deliberate attempt to encourage the participant to enter a space in many ways opposite to the more crowded one in which most of us habitually spend our time.

I suppose this is one of the notable things about the work from anywhere – a characteristic which the work of each participant.

This theme of the individual experience extends for example, frequently referenced by speaking to Pilkington reported on her retracing of an early journey to Aberystwyth on the West coast of Wales – a number of different modes of giving an account of the experience both in the literature and in the current practice. 'Practice' successfully redressed this balance. Wrights&Sites member Cathy Turner had a similar experience.

Can't write any more at this point.

Nick

I remember mainly colors and some random details. Reaching the top of Puijo hill, breathing fresh air above me (sound of metal, some oiling noise) opening. below me a view of lakes, streets, a man appears, sitting on the ski-lift, slowly getting closer. My little son, Veikko (weight in my stomach) woke up. I must attend-

the feeling of being isolated – a long way from the individual experience

Hi,  
 Thinking about the town as very important in our experience the festival being 'walking' the experience it and since the different locations around your way became an important part of the agenda a little bit?

Whilst I was in Kuopio I saw the particular the intersection of the grid and the lake. I see the grid-ness of the town joining with another, all. I have these photos which elucidate this further. These are the places (in a way)



> of help to  
 > I can't help thinking in international (and see)  
 > the moment - it's all the UN/COP 15 stuff that I have been involved in  
 > Copenhagen, you did feel the internationality of the whole event. For me it  
 > was something about meeting LOTS of people from LOTS of different places. In  
 > Kuopio, it felt more familiar, like we were on safer, more known ground.  
 > Perhaps that was because we were with a Fin.

> I am in a bit of a rush now, I am supposed to be going to visit the Darwin Centre at the Natural History Museum. So I might press send now – even though I have lots more to say and even though I can't be quiet sure what I should say. The initial point was that this is definitely an email. I don't want to see ourselves to be more casual, but I think it's important to be clear. I don't want to see ourselves to be more casual, but I think it's important to be clear. I don't want to see ourselves to be more casual, but I think it's important to be clear.

How to cope with this tension?  
 Tim Knowles's piece, Live Windwalks, was where a group of participants assembled in the main square of Kuopio – the centre of the grid and where we could participate by donning what were ostensibly ski helmets onto which were affixed very large wind vanes. Tim informed us that we should bring back the helmets after an hour or so (we had to leave something as collateral) and that we should let the wind dictate our direction.

Ah...I have just realised that I have been doing this for a while. It's so easy to get caught by your own confidence. I don't want to write in one attempt! (more or less)

Alex  
 Thanks for agreeing to help put some thoughts on the festival. I'll cc this to Venla as well. I think the first thing I'd want to remark on is the rather extraordinary place in which this Festival takes place. It's a city which has become an outpost – a place far from anywhere, encountered as a place full of surprises and apparent contradictions around every corner. Quite sizeable ships moored alongside one side of the town, a feature of the place played neatly alongside the concepts of the work SLaaristokaupunki – exploring the relationship of everyday life in a world in which many spend significant portions of their lives. I think each participant met with a shared experience.

a frame, the place/site of Anti was of course  
 ence of the festival and the work. The theme  
 gave us a further frame from which to  
 e various pieces in the festival took place in  
 the town, wandering, getting lost and finding  
 ortant part of being there.

to consider the time between performances, to  
 hat are so easily hidden - the backstage?) up the

I became fascinated by town's grid layout and in  
 tions - the places where it felt like you could best  
 town - important places. One part of the grid  
 can feel the straight-ness of it

> Festival is taking place.  
 > frame which the town of Kuopio itself provided  
 > was carefully and deliberately embedded in that particular  
 > that one of the works performed at an earlier Festival related to the history  
 > of a particular street (in quite an orthodox site-specific way quite  
 > possibly), and the Festival has continued to play with this relationship  
 > between the work and the place in which it is shown in various deliberate and  
 > chosen ways.  
 > It's actually there in the website mission statement -

> 'A truly international festival and Finland's foremost presenter of Live Art,  
 > ANTI is a meeting place for artists and audiences fascinated by how art shapes  
 > and responds to the places and spaces of everyday life.'  
 > This porosity of the work shown to the particular environment of course throws  
 > constant surprises and textural interest. Visiting the small covered  
 > to see 'La Pocha Nostra' performance intervention brigade, for  
 > the atmosphere of licensed  
 > exuding a presence seemingly  
 > particularly drawn to certain 'performing'

om the festival - who were sort of an audience  
 e in this work?).  
 on to boating (my father) and as such developed  
 he wind. Used to love wind socks, vanes and  
 nd teen, have a knowledge of the Beaufort scale  
 ping forecast means etc. Wind is, as I am sure y  
 he boater - especially if we are talking sails. BU  
 wind.

wind and the body - and lets not forget the urba  
 n - WIND - BODY - CITY (Kuopio was not a city  
 n because it was a grid). Setting off I was kidded  
 nknowledge of the wind would hold me in good st  
 out the sail - and in this case the big arrow on  
 s especially not the sort of sail I am used to. Hac  
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- 1 Aloituspaiikka Satamassa Satamarevintolan ja rannan välissä / Starting point: the Harbour between Restaurant Satamarevintola and waterfront; Matkustajasatama Stephen Hodge (s.4 / p.4)
- 2 Satamatori / Harbour market; Kauppakatu 1 Gwendoline Robin (s.8 / p.8)
- 3 ANTI-Contemporary Art Festival - toimisto / office Kaljoniemenkatu 2, 2.krs / 2nd floor
- 4 Sokos Hotel Puijonsarvi; Minna Canthinkatu 16
- 5 YB valokuvakeskus / YB Photographic Centre; Kininkankatu 14-16 Gwendoline Robin (s.8 / p.8), Essi Kausalainen (s.30 / p.30)
- 6 Oikopelku / Desire path; Kuopionlahti Stephanie Nadeau (s.12 / p.12)
- 7 Rautatieasema / Railway Station; Asemakatu 1 La Pocha Nostra (s.13 / p.13)
- 8 Intro baari & grilli / Intro bar & grilli; Kauppakatu 20 Alexis O'Hara (s.14 / p.14), Sarah Ross (s.15 / p.15), Don Walsh (s.16 / p.16)
- 9 K-supermarket Yeljmies / K-supermarket Yeljmies; Puijonkatu 19 Rotozaza (s.17 / p.17)
- 10 Aloituspaiikka Puijonkadun ja Maljalahdenkadun risteys / Starting point: at the crossing of Puijonkatu and Maljalahdenkatu; BodyCartography (s.18 / p.18)
- 11 Aloituspaiikka Yeljmies-patsaalla Terilla / Starting point at the Yeljmies statue at the market place Tim Knowles (s.19 / p.19)
- 12 Kaupungintalo / City Hall; Tulliportinkatu 31 Flow Productions & Rialto Fabrik Nomade (s.20 / p.20)

- 13 Sisätyttö-patsas torin laidella / Statue of Sisätyttö in the Market Place La Pocha Nostra (s.13 / p.13)
- 14 Tukikohta, Ison hautausmaan vieressä / Base Camp next to Grand Cemetery; Puijonkatu Regin Igloria (s.21 / p.21)
- 15 Aloituspaiikka Yhva Puijon koulu / Starting point at the Old School of Puijo Rachel Hanson (s.22 / p.22)
- 16 Aloituspaiikka Kahvila Freda, kauppakeskus Aapeli / Starting point: at the Café Freda, Shopping Centre Aapeli; Kauppakatu 28 Tam Marshall (s.23 / p.23)
- 17 Kahvila Burt ja Marimekko, H-Talo / Café Burt and Marimekko, H - Shopping Centre; Kauppakatu 32 Adele Prince (s.26 / p.26), Cindy Baker (s.27 / p.27)
- 18 Sokoksen kangas / The Sokos underpass; Haapaniemenkatu 26 Sama Gosarić (s.28 / p.28)
- 19 Ajurinkadun ja Kauppakadun risteys / At the crossing of Ajurinkatu and Kauppakatu KuvanNaiset (s.29 / p.29)
- 20 Musiikkikeskus / Music Center; Kuopionlahdenkatu 23 La Pocha Nostra (s.13 / p.13)
- 21 Kuopion kansalaisopisto / Kuopio Community College; Puistokatu 20 Lasten työpaja, Workshop for Children (s.9 / p.9)
- 22 Yläkeisen sairaala / Yläkeinen Hospital; Sairaalaakatu 2 Essi Kausalainen (s.30 / p.30)
- 23 Tähtiterminien kivi / Tähtiterminmäki Boulder Andy Whall (s.32 / p.32)
- 24 Lentokenttiä / Airport; Lentokentäntie 275, Toivala La Pocha Nostra (s.13 / p.13)

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# Going Underground



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The Shunt Lounge ran for three years, ending in November 2009. It grew from the gentle squeak of hand-washed tumblers to the non-stop clanking of four overstretched industrial glass washers. Shunt are now starting a new project and here, in the space between the old and the new, Shunt Lounge regulars reflect on what has been and gone

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## THE VISITOR'S STORY

A nondescript door opens onto a dark void. It is apparent such a thing has no business being in London Bridge Station. Some catch a fleeting, hazy, glimpse of something in the distance, unimaginable, almost certainly a mirage, but most don't even break step. Those whose curiosity leads them on may well wonder if they've stumbled down a rabbit hole into some kind of fantasy world, a timeless place where rules of rationality and purpose no longer apply, a space like some kind of abandoned, industrial cathedral.

Inside, slightly dazed people wander about the dark recesses experiencing anything from theatre, trapeze, circus and freak shows to contemplative artworks, delightfully frivolous vanities, binaural book readings, music and noise, sometimes ridiculous, occasionally sublime.

It's so much about space and context that listings are superfluous. People pay their meagre sum to be entertained, surprised, shocked or enlightened, but if whatever unfolds doesn't grab their attention they are more than happy to head to the bar and drink. This freedom of expectation and movement allows Shunt to embrace the weird, the unmarketable, the uncategorisable, the unknown and is what stops it going stale and keeps people coming back.

**Christopher Fraser**



Going Underground | Shunt

### THE GLASS COLLECTOR'S STORY

I am one of three Friday and Saturday night glass collectors. It's around 12am and the night is almost in full swing. The place is intoxicated. It's difficult to find anyone beyond the security staff who hasn't been drinking. The bar has a smile on its face and I am dancing my feet through the crowds, in search for empties.

I am carrying a giant, grey plastic box, twice the length and breadth of my back, and a third of the height of my legs. It reminds me of a toy box I had as a kid. The box is filled to the brim with empty beer cans, glasses and bottles, and destined for Shunt's glass collecting HQ (a dishwasher, a bottle bin and a rubbish bag situated behind the busy bar).

It's busy. I am travelling at quite a pace through the hordes of Shunt visitors – ducking and diving, imagining I am some kind of glass collecting stunt man – twisting and winding as I try to maintain a pace and rhythm to the bass line of some rock 'n' roll tune.

I'm heading for the bar. I have just stopped by one of a number of dance areas to check out a group performing a synchronised dance routine. Its quality convinces me it's a curated event, when suddenly the random joining and dispersing of partaking members indicates that, in actual fact, this is a group of paying visitors; constructing their own, self-initiated happening; motivated more by alcohol and having fun than a desire to create a well-constructed spectacle. I have a suspicion some of the performers may not even remember doing it. I walk away, admittedly still mildly unsure as to whether the dance piece was or wasn't a curated event.

Then, later on that night, I meet someone enjoying a similar confusion. He tells me he'd been sat watching an installation for about an hour and still was not sure what he was watching. It was a chair placed under a spotlight on a stage. Typically, the combination of light and chair attracted visitors, and the man I was talking to had been watching people come and go from this chair for the last hour. He was convinced that he had been watching a planned performance. I knew otherwise, but failed to convince him.

This confusion became very familiar to me and I started to really cherish these moments, in which the boundaries between art and life became so severely blurred. They characterised a fundamental part of what made the Shunt Lounge so extraordinary.

In the case of the 'empty' chair (and the queues), the performances in this installation were unplanned; the performers most likely did not know they were performing; but the construction and presence of a platform that could lead visitors to frame reality in such a way that it had the possibility of creating fantasy, drama and narratives, made this a type of theatre machine. I would argue that the Shunt Lounge as a whole had this quality to it; where the visitors were continually exposed to the possibility of perceiving reality as art, and conversely art as reality.

The Shunt Collective constructed an informal laboratory for the live event, exploring the vast and profound possibilities that open up as a consequence of bringing people together to play amongst the art, and each other. For me this was the most interesting quality of the Lounge, and a characteristic that in London, at least, could only be attributed to this unique and special place.

**Alexander Roberts**



## THE ARTIST'S STORY

Before the Lounge, Shunt were just like all the others companies that I like – I went to see their shows a lot and felt I knew them all well, even though they had no idea I existed. Then the Lounge began but for several weeks it passed me by. *Klamm's Dream*, by Shunt member Mischa Twitchin, finally lured me in – a Kafka-collage double-act which got me all fired up and fascinated, despite the bizarre audience behaviour. Before the show began I sensed trouble when the ten other audience members cracked open a bottle of bubbly and started chanting happy birthday. It seemed the Shunt audience, like the company, do what they like. They too are sussing out a new set of rules for their own relationship with art.

Fast forward several months and I'm in the Traverse in Edinburgh, and by chance I'm sat next to Mischa, staring and smiling like an imbecile because he's just said "would you like to do something at the Lounge in September?" and I say "but how do you know I'll be any good? It's a bit of a gamble isn't it?" and he points to the stage and says "well, we've just bought our tickets for this, it could be rubbish; that's the same sort of gamble isn't it?"

Fair enough. And so, after a month of long rehearsals in my kitchen I am now in the Shunt Lounge's Studio 65. It is my birthday and I am in a lovely dress talking about worries and blackouts, and serving Belizean cuisine and thinking, "life is looking pretty sweet right about now". And I'm so touched that many of the Shunt Collective and the similarly life-affirming volunteers have squeezed into this little room during my four day run to snack on plantain and hear me out.

Fast forward two months and I've upgraded to the Arena space, performing Gertrude Stein's *Reread Another* with some friends. Other Shunt members are there as well, and when one of them, Louise Mari, asks "would you like to take part in our Halloween show?" I think "oh yes, oh yes..!" So two weeks later I'm dimly lit on the roof of some sort of shed, naked but for the many layers of tights which cover me like a second skin and bind me to Nigel Barrett – the Mudman! Walter Raleigh! The One Man Show himself! – as though I were his gammy Siamese twin. Photograph me now and send it to Grandma and tell her I've arrived!

Shortly after this I became a member of the newly formed company Little Bulb Theatre. And just as Shunt had helped me find my feet as an eager performer, so they continued to nurture our company. They provided the space, an audience, money, drinks tokens, sandwiches, and honest feedback, coupled with boundless enthusiasm for whatever we were trying to do.

And so it was at Shunt that we revamped *Crocsmia* from a university performance into the Edinburgh success story it became (winning a Total Theatre Award, amongst other accolades). And it was at Shunt that we began a cabaret project which later, under the enthusiasm of Andy Field, became the Forest Fringe's flagship show, *Sporadical*.

This history flashed before my eyes when I was dressed as a mermaid on the penultimate night of the Shunt Lounge, performing to a crowd of drunken enthusiasts ranging from stockbrokers to students and everything in between. We were performing our homecoming run of *Sporadical* and I couldn't help but wonder where else in this big, big city would small companies be given free rein with space, drink, a blank invoice for expenses, an enthusiastic team of technicians, and a lively audience, to share with so many other artists?

**Dominic Conway**

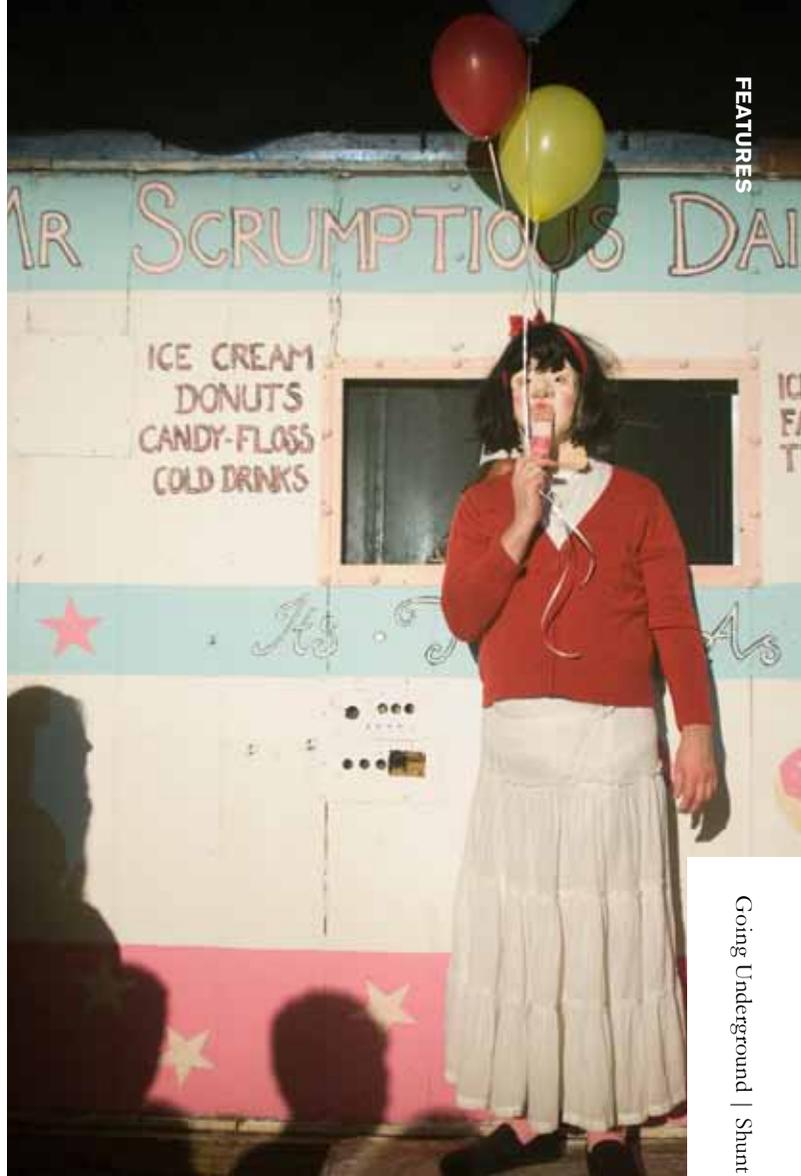
## THE SHUNT FOUNDER MEMBER'S STORY

On any particular evening it always seemed that at least half of those coming into the Shunt Lounge were discovering it for the first time. Brought in by friends or through word of mouth, as there was never any advertising of it, by the end over two thousand people a week were visiting the cavernous vaults beneath London Bridge station. Begun after two exhausting big company shows in the space – *Tropicana* (which ran for nine months) and *Amato Saltone* (which ran for six months) – the Lounge project drew its inspiration from the cabaret evenings that have always been part of Shunt's work. With a bar at the start made up simply of a few planks, some stray furniture, with flickering candles the only suggestion of dancing, and a handful of friends and curious public, no one anticipated what a popular success it would become.

The range of work presented there over three years – from aerial to fortune telling, from lutes to Theremins, puppet workshops to poetry readings, abstract dance to plays, underwater tango to electronica, films to paintings, installations to surprise interventions in the bar, and performers from the legendary 'theatre of engineering' company Akhe to simply the adventurous passerby with an intriguing proposal – all was sustained by a dedicated team whose commitment allowed artists a freedom to try things out that few other spaces could support. With the public simply paying to enter the space – and all the work then free to see – an artistic licence, without the need to sell tickets, was given to both the work and audiences. Neither a theatre nor a cinema, neither a club nor a gallery, the Lounge offered a social space where people could, nonetheless, encounter performances and films, bands and installations – and much more besides – without the expectations of when they are segregated by venue, and when audiences are 'targeted', rather than invited simply to engage with the unexpected. Programmed by Shunt artists rather than by producers, the Lounge also offered a space for people to experiment, without concern for either a future commission or a past reputation.

Wonderfully, there proved to be an audience for the Lounge itself – not simply the atmospheric railway arches, but the space as it was re-imagined each week through an incredible range of installations and interventions: a pirate ship and a skateboard park; the 'death slide'; a water-filled tunnel, with a boatman offering scientific commentary on the interaction of neutrinos; a perspective picture of a tapering series of suspended wooden frames; a setting for Sharmanka's *Gothic Circus*; an empty space with just a door at one end, or just a grand piano standing in the middle of it; an exhibition space filled with paintings, photographs, or objects animated by the presence of spectators; a multi-media 'meta-hub' for a weeklong festival of digital-meets-live performances... And the ever-changing pattern of the public itself made the Lounge perhaps the most vibrant performance space in London of recent years. With a fortunate reprieve on the space, the Lounge may be gone but the Vaults are about to open again with a new project – whether it means being re-discovered, or to be discovered for the first time.

### Mischa Twitchin



Going Underground | Shunt

Shunt have announced that due to 'immense support' from Network Rail, Thameslink, Turner & Townsend and Southwark Council they are able to remain in their current location underneath London Bridge Station for another year. Shunt are reopening the Vaults to experiment with creating something different from the Lounge. They aim to start this new project from scratch using the early nights to create a more relaxed and snug-like atmosphere, and to be able in the longterm to focus on supporting 'more delicate work and experimental work'. See [www.shunt.co.uk](http://www.shunt.co.uk)

Meanwhile, the company's large-scale show *Money* has extended its run until end of March 2010 at a site in Bermondsey Street, just around the corner from the Vaults at London Bridge station. For more information or to book tickets visit [www.shuntmoney.co.uk](http://www.shuntmoney.co.uk)

Little Bulb Theatre perform *Sporadical – An Epic Folk Opera* at Battersea Arts Centre 2–20 March 2010 (Tuesday to Saturday, 9.30pm). See [www.bac.co.uk](http://www.bac.co.uk)

# Until Now

**Pippa Bailey:** How was it for you?

**Lina Johansson:** Monday [the opening night] we were nerved out; it's scary bringing an outdoor show inside, the focus is more intense. We enjoyed it a lot more last night. It's the first indoor show after ten years outdoors. We were more nervous than usual.

**P.B.** When it's performed outdoors it borrows context from wherever it is performed. How did you imagine the setting for the theatre show?

**L.J.** The setting is a crossroads, which makes sense outside as you have a vista. There is real distance, which is lacking indoors. Outside we have to work harder to claim the space but concentrate less on the world beyond the stage. This is something like acting and we are learning.

**P.B.** It must be very different, having people pass by [outdoors] compared with a fixed audience in a theatre.

**L.J.** It's quite nice knowing the audience won't move. Indoors we were keen to push those theatrical moments of stillness that you struggle to find outdoors. We have also been able to include tricks we haven't done before.

**P.B.** Suitcases and clotheslines have been used a lot in shows – what was your approach?

**L.J.** We have always done very big shows with big structures. They are difficult to tour and this is something of a joke on the street arts circuit. This was our turn to do a suitcase show, which can travel light. We had to be disciplined as the number of suitcases kept growing. The cases are sculptural and practical, for balancing and helping us find our way across the space. The clothes are a natural comment when you are on the road: they are beautiful, plus they carve through to help define and fill the space.

**P.B.** I wanted more information or detail from the clothes that I probably wouldn't expect or need outside as they are not under as much scrutiny.

**L.J.** As with any show, ideas have been lost and simplified along the way. The show is about saying goodbye, going different ways, and this version is taking us out of our comfort zone.

*Until Now*, Mimbres' acrobatic adventure about travelling and parting, started as an outdoor show in 2009 before being taken indoors and reworked for theatres. After seeing the premiere of the new version at the London International Mime Festival, Pippa Bailey spoke to Lina Johansson, Mimbres' performer and joint artistic director



Mimbres *Until Now*

**P.B.** I never felt sad

**L.J.** We wanted to keep it light, especially last night, after the tense experience of opening. P.B. The tea break [which happens approximately two thirds through the show] was a wonderful relief. Why do you think that is?

**L.J.** The physical tension of complex routines builds and our director [Leandre Ribera] decided everyone needed a break. So we break the fourth wall and offer tea and cakes. When the lights come up we are delighted to see the audience. We miss them in the dark.

**P.B.** You handled the audience so well; it was charming and immediately engaging. The fourth wall broke effortlessly, as I would expect from seasoned street performers.

**L.J.** You might not have said that on Monday – we were really thrown by the audience, but last night it really worked. And as we handed out cakes, people were so complimentary. Although I think some thought it was the end.

**P.B.** Mimbres is a company of three acrobatic women, which is unusual in outdoor arts, whereas on stage it is pretty ordinary, as dance and theatre are dominated by women.

**L.J.** It has been a big inspiration for us, being three women, and it has also been a bonus working outdoors. Although we fall into the usual roles of main base, middle base and flyer, we play with this dynamic so we all have a chance to play different roles. When you have companies of men and women it is so difficult to resist the narrative being about couples. We can express tenderness, power, and other things that are not reduced to male / female relationship dynamics. Although it may be more usual to see women performers indoors – we are acrobats and that is part of what makes us special.

Pippa Bailey saw Mimbres' *Until Now* at the Purcell Room, Southbank Centre on 26 January 2010. The show was presented as part of the London International Mime Festival. See [www.mimefest.co.uk](http://www.mimefest.co.uk) and, for more on the company, [www.mimbres.co.uk](http://www.mimbres.co.uk)

Looking at the programme for this year's London International Mime Festival, it would seem that the sound design was central to several shows. Charlotte Smith sees, hears, and reports back

# Make Mime Music



Zimmermann & de Perrot's *Öper Öpis*. Photo Mario del Curto

Zimmermann & de Perrot's *Öper Öpis* has a frenetic soundtrack. Dimitri de Perrot makes mixing into a new sort of mime, throwing vinyl like flying saucers and using the bright, triangular wedges of the set on his turntable. At one point he even gets trapped in his own wires, dancing upside-down with them wrapped around him. The audio includes jagged beats, scratching, a waltz, seagulls, laughter, a few seconds of a torch song, bells, timpani and a traffic jam. De Perrot holds a mic to capture sounds that are then remixed and replayed, such as Eugénie Rebetez slapping her thighs as she gyrates in a deep pink dress.

So although *Öper Öpis* is said to be driven by the sound, it's hard to say exactly who's driving whom. The interplay definitely works well, with Martin Zimmermann undulating like a bendy record, lithely in tune. Even the furniture follows suit, as chairs, a table and bodies slide and collide, or a speaker is used as an object. And the simple things are effective, such as when some of the five circus artists collaborating with Zimmermann and de Perrot dance and nod rhythmically.

But *Öper Öpis*, translated as 'something someone', also goes further. The sound may fade into the background as you watch breathtaking acrobatics, with the performers swung, balanced, thrown and pretending to wobble. Gentle clowning uses body shapes such as concave and convex bellies, and there are physical jokes with mirrors and a painted replica of a performer. No single story thread emerges, but a vivid, zany aesthetic and possibly a sense of alienation. It's an electric mix.

*Kefar Nabum* by *Compagnie Mossoux-Bonté* is much more sombre. Inspired by the artist Henri Michaux, it shows a deity who distorts his own creation. That's with the programme notes... Without the programme notes, there's a vaguer sense of menace, metamorphosis, an *Edward Scissorhands*-style nightmare. Puppets suggesting unformed or unknown animals fight with their puppeteer. An orange watering can starts to look like a Black & Decker power tool that the performer then seems to kiss.

The on-stage sound is apt and synchronised, suggesting everything from cicadas to an underground car park. It's created live with a laptop, keyboard and mixing deck by Thomas Turine of the Belgian rock group Major Deluxe. The noise could be interference, a clattering train, electronic birdsong, a frenzied heartbeat, or a swarm of mad mosquitoes. However, despite the agile puppetry and distinct mood, *Kefar Nabum* sometimes lost momentum, becoming oppressive and slightly monotonous.

Sture Ericson's score for *Rankefod* by **Kitt Johnson** is similar in some of its buzzing insect, crackling, gurgling and gathering storm sounds. The audio is integral to the piece, but offstage and less prominent; it functions effectively in a conventional way. Instead, the intense corporeality dominates, a physical language of rapid movements, semi-naked, to tell the story of evolution. The effect is uncomfortable if impressive: a body wriggling out as if from a chrysalis, trying to break free, with flapping wings, grasshopper awkwardness, wobbly limbs and fluttering hamstrings.

**Collectif Petit Travers** combine classical elegance and dark humour in *Pan-Pot*, a piece for three jugglers and a pianist. At its height, it's a firework display, with flurries of small white balls cascading and exploding. But along the way there have been many teasing details: a single, outstretched hand, sideways glances and throws, balls dropped on purpose, and a man who becomes a mannequin with frightening precision. Three Frenchmen in black suits juggle with moving symmetry, then things suddenly switch and a single man is left stranded or horizontal ('travers' means both foible or quirk and askew or across). *Pan-Pot* is dextrous and lucid, taking you back to childhood while giving a glimpse of death.

A concert pianist, Aline Piboule, plays live on stage. Bursts of sound are interspersed with silence. The juggling and music can come together perfectly, like a quartet, or be more at odds. Some pieces are familiar, such as the Mozart variations now known as 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star', and others elusive, from composers including Bach, Beethoven, Dutilleux, Ligeti and Liszt. The accompaniment is both original, and traditional (like the piano playing to silent films).

Zimmermann & de Perrot's *Öper Öpis* was seen at Barbican Theatre; Mossoux-Bonté's *Kefar Nabum* at Barbican Pit; Collectif Petit Travers' *Pan-Pot* at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, Southbank Centre; Kitt Johnson's *Rankefod* at ICA. All shows seen January 2010 as part of the London International Mime Festival. [www.mimefest.co.uk](http://www.mimefest.co.uk)

*Öper Öpis* and *Kefar Nabum* were presented in association with Barbican bite 2010. [www.barbican.org.uk/theatre](http://www.barbican.org.uk/theatre)

Alexander Roberts goes live at  
Chelsea Theatre's Sacred Season

# The Here and Now



Sacred 2009, the fourth Sacred season of live art to be organised by Chelsea Theatre, brought together a packed programme of contemporary performance from across the UK and Europe. Attending a selection of works – Gob Squad's *Live Long and Prosper*; Stacy Makishi's *Stay*; and Action Hero's *A Western* – I came away captivated by the cross-fertilisation of ideas glimpsed through the Sacred frame.

The three pieces that I saw were three very different performance events, but when placed together, it was their use of the live moment that became fascinatingly pronounced, with the whole practice of what it is to perform and present work in a shared and live space brought to the fore.

**Stacy Makishi's *Stay*** is a brutal two-hander that appears to tell the story of two performers who live in a black box studio, living out a sadomasochistic ritual of dominance, dependence and subversion. The live dimension is crucial to the piece's power; a point that Makishi goes to great lengths to emphasise. She talks constantly to and about the audience, describes the performers as artists and at one point, one of the performers justifies her crap acting by the fact that she's 'an artist, not an actor'. This emphasis serves as an unnerving reminder that the play could be real, and therefore the proximate threat, the violence and the torture in its seemingly sanitised frame before us, could also be happening for real.

**Action Hero's *A Western*** is also a two-hander, but the shared space between audience and performer is used very differently, with a completely different impact. We, the audience, are placed at its heart and our presence fully utilised. Set within the casual location of the Chelsea Theatre bar, the concept is straightforward. Two performers guide the audience through a series of scenes – making attempts, with the little they have, to create a cowboy film. With the help of the audience playing extras, the Action Heroes, with a dry smirk, deconstruct a series of easily recognisable Spaghetti Western trademarks.

The effect, beyond giving everyone a lot of laughs, is to place a tightly-focused emphasis on what it is for us as an audience to be at the Chelsea Theatre sharing in this activity – the audience are totally conscious of their role. The same effect is achieved by *Stay*. In both pieces our presence is not only acknowledged, but pronounced as fundamental. The event becomes consciously owned by the audience.

**Gob Squad's** offering was a piece whose inclusion in the programme excited me from the off. *Live Long and Prosper* is a film installation – two films, played simultaneously and projected onto two different screens. Gob Squad take seven famous death scenes from cinema and presents them alongside their own remakes – versions that were filmed in social spaces, in front of unsuspecting public audiences across Berlin.

The original films remove all sense of the surrounding sets, exclusively framing the fiction of each film's narrative. In Gob Squad's versions, on the other hand, their social landscapes are joyfully revealed: there are members of the public walking around in the back of shots, staring at the performances that are being filmed. As a consequence, the contextual setting and the public audience become fundamental dimensions to the interpretation of the remakes and the film installation as a whole.

The filmed events that Gob Squad engineered become clearly defined as documented happenings that were performed live, in front of a live public audience. The film installation then places these parallel versions side by side, drawing comparisons between the differing natures of fiction constructed live and fiction constructed through film. It explores the limits of the live event by exposing the difficulties or potential impossibilities that come with trying to make death appear real in live performance. Once again we find ourselves, the audience, positioned as the central subject in this installation piece, moving it from contemplation of different fictional frameworks to a focus very specifically on us and consequently onto the nature of the live event itself.

Each of these pieces, when seen independently of the others, of course contains its own autonomous meanings. But, in bringing them together, Sacred generated a fascinating exploration of the nature of live performance and the audience's role within it.

Stacy Makishi's *Stay*, Action Hero's *A Western*, and Gob Squad's *Live Long and Prosper* were all presented as part of the Sacred season at Chelsea Theatre, October – November 2009. [www.chelseatheatre.org.uk/sacred2009.htm](http://www.chelseatheatre.org.uk/sacred2009.htm)

For further reviews from Sacred see the Total Theatre website: [www.totaltheatre.org.uk/reviews](http://www.totaltheatre.org.uk/reviews)

Marie Kenny dives into the world of puppetry and animation, as witnessed at London's first festival of adult puppetry in over twenty-five years

# Suspense

Images left to right: Touched Theatre *Human Remains* Green Ginger *Rust* The Empty Space *Heartbreak Soup*



Suspense, spearheaded by the Little Angel Theatre's director Peter Glanville, took place over ten days in October 2009. With an aim to demonstrate the growing range and pull of adult puppetry, 24 UK and international companies brought a huge variety of contemporary puppet performance to London. Suspense also featured a programme of talks and symposia – including an event hosted by the Puppet Centre Trust called Puppetry in the UK, which took a long hard look at the state of the art – and an impressive number of workshops, including a week-long masterclass from the lauded Compagnie Philippe Genty.

The traditional and the experimental sat happily side-by-side, with on the one hand, PuppetCraft's *Persus and the Gorgon's Head* and on the other hand, a puppetry of hands, light and sound from Tom Duggan, Tom Lyall, & Mischa Twitchin, who presented *I wonder Sometimes Who I Am* (reviewed in Total Theatre Magazine Volume 21 Issue 4).

A wide variety of animation techniques and materials were brought together for the festival: everything from paper (*Romeo and Juliet* by Compagnie Papier theatre) to household objects (Dutch company TAMTAM) to raw clay (Indefinite Articles, *Let us Pray*). A range of emerging companies were showcased at the Pleasance Theatre – including Bric a Brac, Unpacked and Soap Soup – whilst the festival also brought us national puppetry treasures Faulty Optic, Green Ginger, Horse and Bamboo, and Movingstage.

I took myself to four of the shows on offer, all of which cast an intriguing light on the breadth of puppetry and animation that can be used as a storytelling medium or metaphor.

Full Beam Visual Theatre's *My Baby Just Cares for Me* is a touching tribute to the sacrifices and the hard work involved in looking after an elderly relative. A daughter cares for her father, a man who once prided himself on knowing the name of every musician in his album collection. We see his decline and the impact caring for him has on his daughter, Catherine. Adam Fuller presents the father as a series of puppets: as they become smaller and frailer, from human-sized figures at the beginning to small handheld puppets by the end, they are used to show the father's declining health. As a stark contrast to the fading puppets, film footage is used to emphasise the change, giving visual evidence of the happy memories Catherine has of the younger, lively, dancing man her father used to be. The play focuses heavily on Catherine's frustrations which are dealt with sensitively through her restless physicality: she's unable to find peace. At times these physical devices seem repetitive, I wanted her to talk about how she was feeling, but the show makes the point that it's not an easy subject to talk about.

The Empty Space's *Heartbreak Soup* similarly uses puppets to explore difficult emotional territory. Cuddy is an eleven-year-old boy awaiting his second heart transplant. He spends a lot of time in hospital beds and this is where his imagination comes to life – the bed itself is filled with multi-coloured drawers containing objects that evoke memories, and simple cloth puppets are cleverly used to demonstrate his physical and emotional journey through pain. It's a funny and deeply moving piece which tackles a difficult subject in a way that's both accessible and enjoyable for children and adults.

Touched Theatre's *Human Remains* was inspired by the real-life story of James Tunstall, a northern troublemaker turned African adventurer. His life is encountered through an examination of his belongings: objects collected on his various travels that tell stories of their own – a map, a bow tie, a mug. There are times when the dialogue between the two performers seems slightly awkward, but there are some emotion-filled moments brought about by the manipulation of the objects (whose onstage life is enhanced by the sound design by James Foster) and the images evoked of the entire life that they symbolise.

The most light-hearted of the four, Green Ginger's *Rust* is a production bursting with energy – featuring likeable, engaging characters (even the baddie!), gorgeously grotesque puppets, and a surprisingly versatile set which characters and objects burst through, over and around. *Rust* really puts the fun into innovative and accessible puppetry.

All-in-all the festival was a great success, with such a broad range of work on offer it has provoked much enthusiastic debate about the future of puppetry in theatre. We can excitedly look forward to another Suspense festival in just two years time.

Suspense took place 30 October – 8 November 2009 and was produced by the Little Angel Theatre. Venues presenting work were: The Little Angel, Jacksons Lane, The Nave, the Pleasance Theatre, the Puppet Theatre Barge, Rosemary Branch Theatre, and the Central School of Speech and Drama. [www.suspensefestival.com](http://www.suspensefestival.com)

A three-way view of *Survival Tactics for the Anarchic Dancer* by Professor Liz Aggiss, as seen at British Dance Edition, Birmingham, January 2010

# Being There

*Before:* The Victorian Debating Chamber, Birmingham Council House. The space is grandly intimate. The stakes are high with a competitive schedule. This is not a fully functioning theatre. I have only a follow spot and a big voice. The technician sits in a cupboard unable to see me. The performing space is snug. The audience will sink into plush leather and seek diversions of marble, wood, plinths, drawers and hidden speakers and from the knee down I am obscured. I have multiple narratives, asides, and a legion of technical cues to remember.

*During:* I am on red alert. Ovation on entrance. I navigate the script, multiple costumes and props; go on- and off-piste; and time the asides with room to manoeuvre. I see full audience commitment with only two non-starters. I make no attempt to reel them in. I air my professorial research and all that academically sails in her. I acknowledge the tensions of being both Professor and Liz Aggiss. I am not thinking. It is intuition, reflex and experience that gives space. They say I am a 'one-off' with 'grand dame' status. After 30 maverick dance years this mature, fleshy, subversive body has a reputation to sustain and a will to survive. Ovation on exit. Survival fulfilled.

**Liz Aggiss**

## Heidi Dzinkowska's Dance Commandments

1. *Never run around the stage in circles for no apparent reason. Nobody wishes to see that.*
2. *Thou shalt not improvise, keep your improvising for the bathroom.*
3. *Thou shalt not wear white unitards.....ever!*
4. *Look your audience in the eye. Dancers who only look at each other have something to hide.*
5. *Say what you have to say and then stop. If you have nothing to say don't even start.*



# Professor Liz Aggiss: Survival Tactics for the Anarchic Dancer

## A Performance Lecture



At about the time I was getting born, a 28-year-old Liz Aggiss was discovering dance. About the same age she was then, I'm now discovering dance myself. Making this a wonderfully circular kind of experience.

I saw many shows during my weekend at British Dance Edition and Liz Aggiss stood out for a number of reasons. Her practice rejects something which seems to be an unquestioned aspect of most other dance work I have seen, and embraces a humour which seems elsewhere to be missing. The thing she rejects is beauty for its own sake: so much dance involves being beautiful and being seen to be beautiful. You demonstrate your ability, your athletic skill and your grace; the audience duly gazes upon you with admiration (unless they are dancers themselves in which case they are busy finding fault with your technique).

With this performance lecture, delivered through numerous costume changes, video homages to her dance mentors (real and imagined), amidst spoken sections and guerrilla dances which re-create 'mercifully short' dance works from the early twentieth century, Liz Aggiss rejects both superficial beauty and the gaze which consumes and cheapens. Instead she opts for the playful savagery of the true bouffon who embraces faults, failures and discordance, and whose aim is to make her audience laugh until they realise that they have been lying to themselves. With a litany of injuries, grimaces, awkward poses, alternating between self-aggrandisement and self-deprecation, she is pointing towards the hollowness of the work and the audience which seeks only beauty without truth – and to the true power of dance to embody and communicate.

### Ed Rapley

For further information on the artist see [www.lizaggiss.com](http://www.lizaggiss.com)

British Dance Edition 2010 took place in Birmingham 3–6 February 2010. [www.bde2010.co.uk](http://www.bde2010.co.uk)

We know it is a showcase, we know the limitations of the space (from photos and discussion), we know the fee and have seen the delegate list and the programme. It was an invitation to attend; we will work it like the old troopers (and troupers) that we both are.

We arrive at 10am as scheduled. The Council technician had arrived at 8am and is now gone. BDE's people do sterling work on the set-up. There could be great opportunities to play with this space; with the in-house speaker system, chair-side amplification, the balcony and the thrones. The table mic is useful, and we put our little hand-made booklets in the drawers for a late surprise. They are free. They took hours to make. They are not cost-effective. We hope they will be treasured.

Delegates are bleeped in through bar-codes on the tickets. This gives me time to read their names, spot who might be useful – the one from Ireland, Brussels, the Italians?

We are in daylight, but it's dark enough for the films to be seen. The sun moving across the high windows distracts a little, but Liz keeps the audience focused. The two new film sequences go down well. As does the new song with the washboard tie. There is laughter. There are some who just don't get it and sit with their heads in their hands.

As the weekend progresses, talk permeates and word goes round that *Survival Tactics* was unlike anything else on offer. Liz is invited to do a range of things: choreograph youth dance companies, give her Performance Lecture at Stormont Castle, go to Damascus.

Opportunities will grow from this outing. We have navigated Birmingham.

### Lisa Wolfe (Manager)

Lucy Frost sees Royal de Luxe mark the fall of the wall

# The Giants Arrive: A Fairytale for Berlin



Royal de Luxe *The Giants Arrive: A Fairytale for Berlin*.  
Photos courtesy of the company

In October 2009 Royal de Luxe helped the population of Berlin celebrate the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall with a new theatre spectacle, *The Giants Arrive: A Fairytale for Berlin*. The puppets themselves have been seen across the world, from Barcelona to Reykjavik to London, in previous performances *Le Géant Tombé du Ciel* and *The Sultan's Elephant*. But even though the characters and some of their actions have been seen elsewhere I would suggest that their work has never been so relevant to a city or celebration.

Tag der Deutschen Einheit (the day of German unity) is celebrated 3 October, the day when East and West Germany were formally reunited. Royal de Luxe created the story of a niece (the little giantess) and her uncle (the diver) who spent two days travelling independently through the city, finally meeting at Brandenburg Gate for a heartfelt reunion. The little giantess was lifted over the Gate by two cranes, aided by a daring member of the Royal de Luxe team (who manipulate the puppets and are known as Lilliputians). Tears were brought to the spectators' eyes, not only for the visual beauty of the moment, but the way that it resonated with their own experiences. The giantess was put to sleep at night in a deck chair, animated in every detail, from the sound of breathing to the rise and fall of her chest.

For a performance on such a large scale the sense of intimacy was incredible: between audience and giant, audience and Lilliputian, and finally audience member and audience member. Tessa Jowell talked about this feeling of a shared experience in her description of *The Sultan's Elephant* in London 2006: 'Everyone felt a sense of kinship and connectedness. Part of a single life changing experience. And all in a single city.' How much more poignant that thought is when the city is Berlin.

The arrival of the giants was something that took over the whole city. The company left visual clues such as a giant anchor by Pariser Platz, but for the most part the vast crowds and media coverage meant that the residents of Berlin were engaging with the performance without even seeing the giants themselves. It became the talking point of the city.

I was intrigued to discover how well local people felt the performance represented their stories. When I discussed this with fellow audience members one family described it as an unusually creative response to the theme of German unity, saying: 'The French are artists, creatives, and for them to show such an interest in our story is an honour.'

Seeing Royal de Luxe's performance in Berlin has enriched my own understanding of the division and reunion of a country. The excitement over that weekend was electric – one could sense it in the air.

I now feel I am part of a larger community of people who were there. Fellow onlooker Bianka Kaver confirmed that for her it was 'a once in a lifetime experience'.

We embraced the almost wintry air on the streets of Berlin in the spirit of togetherness. We shared stories of the giants. We exclaimed at their enormity together. Out loud. In ways one would be embarrassed to in 'real life'. Older generations explained to younger ones the narrative of uncle and niece. There were often tears in our eyes and goose-bumps on our skin. For the German population who had experienced the rise and fall of the Berlin Wall it acknowledged and highlighted their stories, personal tragedies and the return of their freedom.

Royal de Luxe's *The Giants Arrive: A Fairytale for Berlin* took place in the city 1 – 4 Oct 2009

Jonathan Lovett sounds out a season of Chris Goode's solo work

# Lean Upstream



Chris Goode Lean Upstream season, Photo Malcolm Phillips

Previous adventures in text and sound underscore an overdue mini-season celebrating the art of Chris Goode.

*Hippo World Guest Book* and the aural attack of *Ursonate* take starring roles in *Lean Upstream* – a series of performances inviting one of our more interesting practitioners to step up to the mic in a treat for Goode groupies everywhere.

Not that the unassuming, avuncular figure in front of us, cradling a mug of something hot, would ever dream of courting hero worship as he gently leads us into the world of hippo lovers, ensuring the same good-natured, egalitarian atmosphere is created that hallmarked the early days of the internet site *Hippo World's* guest book. Started in 2000 and running until 2006, when it expired due to entry overdose, the site was not just a hilarious, sometimes poignant, text in its own right but a microcosm of the epic narrative that is the 'world wide web', quickly morphing from innocence to experience all too rapidly.

At pains to point out that he never edited the entries chosen from 400 printed-off pages of the guest book, Goode reflects the wide-eyed wonder of early entrants through his dreamy delivery, brilliantly juxtaposed by SHOUTING any words written in CAPITALS by web users, before – inevitably – the barbarians infiltrate the halcyon land of hippo, epitomised in Jade the Hippo Hater who is going to, 'Mount all their heads on my wall and drink Scotch from their skulls', while the last act of the show sees junk mail swamp the lovers' landscape.

Naturally Goode had to make choices in reducing the reams of material to a one-hour show, but what impresses is his integrity as writer and performer, always reading the entry in full, even if this means reading a deluge of spam nonsense – although this does, at times turn it into a form of surreal poetry – while his loyalty to the multitude of authors ensures he is never patronising, just faintly bemused at some of the more ridiculous entries, especially when the inevitable sexual element invades the guest book.

While Goode the artist wisely takes a slight step back to ensure the stars of this show are those anonymous contributors who are never normally celebrated, the showman comes to the fore later in the week in his 40-minute wrestle with Kurt Schwitters' controversial sound poem, *Ursonate*.

'I don't want to do it... it seemed like a really good idea at the time,' joked Goode before launching into the extraordinary verbal challenge that, like the spam section in *Hippo World*, starts off seemingly chaotic and ugly – as if machines or dogs were trying to speak human but were constantly thwarted – before the repetition and rhythm of sounds transform it into a hypnotic rhapsody, thanks in no small part to Goode's confidence and mastery of the material.

I speak for myself, of course, as the woman next to me spent most of the time shaking her head in disbelief while staring incredulously at my note-taking, while a man in front was nodding his head with eyes closed in almost religious fervour.

Such a fractured response to Schwitters' destruction of words, in itself a Dadaist reaction to the deceitfulness of language, formed an intriguing companion piece to our unified pleasure in *Hippo World*, proving that – with the right voice – sounds and words can provide as much a spectacle and forum for debate in the theatre as action.

*Lean Upstream* was a month-long season of work (3 –29 November 2009) by Chris Goode which aimed to spotlight just a small part of what's happening 'upstream' in contemporary performance work 'whose influence gradually flows into the mainstream, shaping tomorrow's theatrical language and performance culture'.

*Hippo World Guest Book* was seen at Camden People's Theatre, 3 November 2009; *Ursonate* at Toynbee Studios Theatre, 7 November 2009.

Chris Goode's new book, *The History of Airports* (see Books section of this magazine) was launched on 29 November 2009 at the third participating venue, Stoke Newington International Airport. [www.leanupstream.info](http://www.leanupstream.info)

Lean Upstream | Jonathan Lovett

Cassie Werber sees Odin Teatret perform at their home territory in Denmark

# Othello Revisited and Brecht Embraced



Odin Teatret Oro De Otelo. Photo courtesy of the company

There are many branches to Odin's activity, from pedagogy to poetry reading, and from individual performances to large-scale touring productions. The performances on the night I visit make an interesting contrast.

First is *Oró de Otelo* (*Ceremony of Othello*) created through a collaboration between Barba and Afro-Brazilian dancer Augusto Omolú, with input from company member Julia Varley. The dance piece draws on both Shakespeare's text and the Verdi opera, and, as the programme states, is 'based exclusively on the codification of the Orixá dances; all gestures, steps and movements originate from the dances of the saints and gods of the Candomblé religion.'

On a stage bare but for drums surrounded by fresh leaves and candles, Omolú performs the long piece alone, dancing to Verdi's opera or to the traditional drum rhythms which regularly creep into and overwhelm it. Omolú's stage-presence is a bewitching mixture of calm and seething energy, and his movement is joyful – both to witness and, it seems, to perform. Describing his discovery of the Orixá dances, Barba has recalled: 'to me, they were very, very beautiful. And not only beautiful but one of the best examples of what an actor's training should be – they work with rhythm, with different energies, with precision, with sign.' In making the performance, however,

both Omolú and Barba found difficulties in trying to fit their methods and their mediums together. The final piece looks both to Omolú's upbringing in the Brazilian coastal city of Salvador, and to Barba's childhood, when brass bands would visit the Italian province and play opera arias. While the ambition of experimentation in the piece is admirable, and the performance magnetic, I did not feel in watching it that the dialogue was complete. For me, Verdi did not add enough to explain his presence, and the storytelling – though carefully detailed in the accompanying literature – did not have enough clarity to be read without it.

Omolú performs again in the night's second piece, and here, while less 'in his element', he is nevertheless fully embedded in a work which knows exactly what it is doing. *Great Cities Under the Moon* is 'a concert in the spirit of Bertolt Brecht'. Barba has described it as 'a sitting performance', explaining that because the Odin ensemble is so used to being physical, the challenge of the piece was to remain as static as possible. When there is movement, it is deliberate and often filled with symbolism; a mute girl's explanation of her story in sign language; her subsequent rape, performed in solitude while the rest of the performers continue to sit in a quiet semi-circle; a wine glass, smashed. The ensemble – seated,

seasoned, and consummately familiar with Brecht's confrontation techniques – seems filled with an expansive energy, constant and powerful as an ocean. For me, this was the chief pleasure of watching this performance, told from the viewpoint of the moon passing uncritically over the burning cities of the world below. Voices rich with experience take turns to sing; bodies grounded in the certitude of years spent inhabiting the present moment are presented to us, openly, full-face. When a bare foot takes a step on a stage scattered with shards of glass, the audience winces. A goldfish becomes the ludicrous symbol of violence against innocence. Dust – ashes of a city, a body; from the corner of a dirty room – is thrown to the ground, swept into the shape of a swastika, and makes the front rows cough. It is perfect Brecht: we are pissed off by the performance, but it gets inside us. This piece might not be groundbreaking, but it knows exactly how to handle its tools of juxtaposition, silliness, offence and simple heartbreak.

Odin Teatret's *Oró de Otelo* and *Great Cities Under the Moon* were seen at Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium, Holstebro, Denmark, 25 September 2009. See also the features section of this magazine for Cassie Werber's interview with Eugenio Barba

Having first seen the show at the Edinburgh Fringe 2008, Dorothy Max Prior re-views The TEAM's award-winning *Architecting*, this time presented at the BITE season in London; and Marie Kenny offers her first-timer perspective

# Architecting Re-Viewed



The Team and National Theatre of Scotland *Architecting*

Architecting Re-Viewed | Dorothy Max Prior / Marie Kenny

## Re-View:

Margaret Mitchell's epic novel *Gone with the Wind* – which presents the story of the American Civil War (from a southern white perspective) – serves as starting point, central theme, and metaphorical touchstone for *Architecting*.

In my first review of this 'exploding at the seams' show (Total Theatre Volume 20 Issue 4) I described it as 'complicated, messy – and must-see'. Originally planned as four interlinked pieces, *Architecting* is an exploration of the American psyche that weaves together numerous strands of investigation: urban planning, the desecration of communities through natural disaster and/or human greed, the pivotal moment in US history that was the American Civil War, the heritage of Scarlett O'Hara and the abiding love of *Gone with the Wind*, the legacy of racism, the oppression of gender-assigned roles, the impact of 9/11, beauty pageants, the lure of reality TV, and the pursuit of fame. I referred to its 'everything-including-the-kitchen-sink' approach to staging and dramaturgy – a great structure of a set, the constantly morphing characters, the use of moving image, the inter-textuality with *Gone with the Wind* that requires a pretty solid knowledge of both book and film to make sense... and I expressed a desire to see the show again.

More than a year on comes my chance when this New York based company return to the UK, having spent a considerable amount of time redeveloping the show with support from the National Theatre of Scotland. On second

viewing I feel less generous in my assessment. The 'reworking' has led to an even longer, messier and self-indulgent work. There are indeed at least two or three, and probably four, theatre shows that could be made from this amount of material. But where is the heart? What do they really want to say? I find myself wishing that they had kept to their original plan of four inter-linked pieces. A novel can hold concurrent narratives, for example by alternating chapters in different voices, and a film can use the camera and the editing process to exploit point-of-view possibilities. But here on stage, with so much happening for so much of the time in so many different styles of presentation, we struggle to get any sort of a grip on what we are experiencing.

On second viewing of this show, which since the first presentation in the UK in 2008 has subsequently had time and money spent on its redevelopment, I am even less clear about what I am seeing and what it all might mean.

## Dorothy Max Prior

### First View:

A problem arises with plays based on books or films when you aren't too familiar with the book or film. You spend a lot of time puzzling over references which don't make sense to you, wishing that you had done more research beforehand. [Editor's note: But should you need to? An interesting discussion point! See [www.totaltheatre.org.uk](http://www.totaltheatre.org.uk) for further.]

*Architecting* is based on *Gone with the Wind*, but also has several simultaneous subplots. A

politically correct remake of the film is used to compare the devastation of the American Civil War with the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. There's the story of a grieving architect desperate to create her father's vision of building a development after Katrina's destruction. And then there's the story of a petrol station attendant who decides to go on a road trip with a young woman who has her heart set on winning a Scarlett O'Hara beauty contest – he then becomes a contender himself (cross-dressing is something of a feature of this show).

*Architecting* was devised by the TEAM, and at times I felt like they'd tried to cram too much in: all the loaded metaphors were too much to keep up with. The play opens in a bar, where we are told to make ourselves feel at home; it starts light and funny and switches to serious and sombre and back again – another constantly changing aspect to try to assimilate.

The company are an extremely tight ensemble though, and the piece flows well, despite its complexities. Ultimately, all the subplots and characterisations come together to show that after disaster communities and individuals have an amazing ability to rebuild and regenerate. We find the strength to keep going.

## Marie Kenny

The TEAM and National Theatre of Scotland's *Architecting* was seen November 2009 at Barbican Pit, London as part of bite 2010

For further reviews from the past quarter, and for the opportunity to respond to this 're-view', see the Total Theatre website: [www.totaltheatre.org.uk](http://www.totaltheatre.org.uk)

## UPDATE FESTIVAL NEWS

Kicking things off in Glasgow in March, the international live art festival **New Territories** enters its tenth year with choreographer Catherine Diverrès, Slovenian company Via Negativa, and multimedia butoh breakdancer Hiroaki Umeda among the featured artists. As usual the festival incorporates the infamous durational queuing experience known as the **National Review of Live Art**, which in 2010 is celebrating its thirtieth edition by inviting back some of the artists that have shaped the festival over the years – La Ribot, Ron Athey, Robyn Archer, Curious, David Gale to name a few. The combined brochure, really more of a catalogue, for the two festivals is a fascinating and richly contextual document – you can download it from the website of the festival producers, New Moves International.

Back in London, Camden People's Theatre's **Sprint** festival has moved to an earlier March slot this year, and once again will present a line-up of work strongly committed to young and emerging practitioners (but with some old hands too). Among those programmed are live and film artist Sheila Ghelani (lately in residence with tech-theatre company Blast Theory); experimental performance duo Zoo Indigo; Michael Pinchbeck; Rotozaza; and Idle Motion, who were nominated for a Total Theatre Award in '09 for a biography play, *Borges and I*, which by all accounts fully exhausted the possible uses of books as stage props.



Akademi Sufi Zen at Lakes Alive

Heading into April, the Roundhouse's new festival of contemporary circus, **CircusFest**, opens with *Trash City*, a large-scale collaborative project fusing the talents of the legendary scrapyard art collective Mutoid Waste Co., burlesque performer/director Ruby Blues, and what Roundhouse circus producer Leila James describes to TT as 'the cream of the UK cabaret scene'. Later in the season, famously uncompromising Australian troupe Acrobat return to the Roundhouse with *Propaganda*, a family circus with an ethical conscience; the photogenic Compagnie XY show us how the French do it (large ensembles, high skill, impressionism); and there's a double-bill of two young companies that will make an interesting contrast: on one side *Urban*, a piece from students of the Columbian national circus school Circo Para Todos about the realities of life in the city Santiago de Cali; on the other *Narvissus*, the first show from the Roundhouse's own youth company. There's also a slot for the very fine Sugar Beast Circus double bill which last year visited Jacksons Lane, new work from Marisa Carnesky, and a small run of circus-related exhibitions and talks. A film season screens circus features from *Dumbo* to *Wings of Desire* to James Marsh's brilliant documentary about Philippe Petit's World Trade Centre wirewalk, *Man on Wire*.

May is the busiest month of the season, with **Brighton Festival** and its **Fringe** counterpart both opening on the first day. Nominally directed by a guesting Brian Eno, the main festival takes place in and out of Brighton's theatres, with this year's most enticing items a new site-responsive promenade piece from dreamthinkspeak; Tim Crouch's *I, Malvolio* (a follow-on from previous pieces *I, Peaseblossom* and *I, Banquo*) which gets four school performances as well as a late-night, uncensored version for adults; and a UK premiere for German company Rimini Protokoll's *Best Before*, a theatre interpretation of the multiplayer video game where each member of the audience is given a controller and an avatar (actor). (Extensive research could not reveal the depth or exact nature of audience involvement for that last one.)

Rather more analogue, a great success last year, **Lakes Alive**, the outdoor season for the Lake District and Cumbria, is back in 2010 with a fresh schedule of performance and spectacle – some of it imported, some of it homegrown, most of it free. Beginning in April, the season runs outside the purview of this TT issue, ending somewhere in September, but in the April-May period there'll be a South Asian dance piece, *Sufi Zen*, in the ruins of Furness Abbey, and a mini-festival of outdoor animation in the harbour town of Whitehaven. In the first week of June and in danger of falling between Total Theatre issues, there's Zircus Plus, another mini-festival, this one in Barrow and for UK and international circus. (See the Training news for info on the street arts summer school being arranged for Mintfest, the September festival that rounds off Lakes Alive.)



Taking place on opposite sides of the country, opening and closing on the exact same dates in May, there's Bristol's finest theatre festival, the **Mayfest**, in the West, and the ever-growing **Norfolk and Norwich Festival** in the East. NNF has moved a long way from its former identity as primarily a jazz/music festival since Jonathan Holloway came on board as artistic director, and the 2010 incarnation has the wide spread of outdoor and total theatre we've come to expect. In circus there's *La Vie*, a new piece from Les 7 Doigts de la Main (some original Fingers this time, plus new additions), made specially for Spiegeltents and described by Holloway as 'dark, burlesque, sexy' and 'less straight-lined than *Traces*'; plus Circus Ronaldo's split piece, *Circenses*, reviewed in our last issue by Edward Taylor. Forced Entertainment will be reshaping their classic six-hour *Quizoola!*, a marathon of questions and answers between three seated performers, and there's a new work from Tim Etchells, *Short Message Spectacle (An SMS)*, for which the audience sign up to have the show delivered to them piecemeal by text message – according to Holloway it's the 'best show you've never seen – an extraordinary, massive-scale durational epic'. Also to look out for are *Suburban Counterpoint: Music for Seven Ice Cream Vans*, co-commissioned by NNF and LIFT, for which you can successfully extrapolate (though not experience) the performance from the title; an appearance from German brother-sister pop-rock duo Die Roten Punkte ('all about the pose' and 'too enjoyable to really be given an award'); and a visit from NoFit State Circus' roaming park residency project *Parklife*.

Moving then to the distantly visible mid- and late-May starters, **Queer Up North** haven't released their full programme at the time of writing, but already confirmed for Manchester Library Theatre is *Must – The Inside Story*, Peggy Shaw's autobiographical collaboration with Clod Ensemble – and doubtless the festival will once again be an essential date in Manchester's cultural calendar (and doubly so in 2010, a fallow year for the biennial Manchester International Festival). Also falling at the outer edges of the 22.01 catchment, Ipswich's **Pulse Festival** is a diversely programmed multi-venue offering which last year saw work from Chris Goode, El Toro, Top of the World and plenty of others. May/June item **Salisbury International Arts Festival** has announced a Russian theme for 2010, though to Total Theatre eyes the most interesting item on the programme is the production *Stones* by Israeli theatre group Orto-Da, which uses clown, mime, music and dance to 'tell the sometimes dark myth of victory in WWII'. Salisbury tends to attract street artists, invited or not, though after its first week it will have to compete with **Bath Fringe Festival**, just an hour's drive away. Lastly, bookending May, there are two festivals from the Central School of Speech and Drama: in the first week, the **4th International Student Puppet Festival**, a showcase for work in puppetry by students, recent graduates and emerging practitioners; and, in the final days of the month, **The Accidental Festival**, a three-day event produced by students on the Performance Arts Pathway of the BA Theatre Practice. Having visited the Roundhouse last year, in 2010 the Accidental Festival will be at Battersea Arts Centre for three days of international exchange, emerging and professional artists, free events and low cost scratch work.

**New Territories / National Review of Live Art**, Glasgow | 2-21 March [www.newmoves.co.uk](http://www.newmoves.co.uk)

**Sprint, Camden People's Theatre**, London | 4-28 March [www.cpttheatre.co.uk](http://www.cpttheatre.co.uk)

**Roundhouse CircusFest**, London | 7 April – 16 May [www.roundhouse.org.uk](http://www.roundhouse.org.uk)

**Lakes Alive**, Cumbria | 29 April – 5 September [www.lakesalive.org](http://www.lakesalive.org)

**Brighton Festival & Fringe** | 1-23 May [www.brightonfestival.org](http://www.brightonfestival.org) & [www.brightonfestivalfringe.org.uk](http://www.brightonfestivalfringe.org.uk)

**4th International Student Puppet Festival**, London | 5-8 May [www.cssd.ac.uk](http://www.cssd.ac.uk)

**Norwich and Norfolk Festival** | 7-22 May [www.nnfestival.org.uk](http://www.nnfestival.org.uk)

**Mayfest**, Bristol | 7-22 May [www.mayfestbristol.co.uk](http://www.mayfestbristol.co.uk)

**Queer Up North**, Manchester | 12-25 May [www.queerupnorth.com](http://www.queerupnorth.com)

**Salisbury International Arts Festival** | 21 May – 5 June [www.salisburyfestival.co.uk](http://www.salisburyfestival.co.uk)

**Pulse Festival**, Ipswich | 27 May – 12 June [www.pulsefringe.com](http://www.pulsefringe.com)

**The Accidental Festival**, London | 28-30 May [www.accidentalfestival.com](http://www.accidentalfestival.com)

**Bath Fringe Festival** | 28 May – 13 June [www.bathfringe.co.uk](http://www.bathfringe.co.uk)

Stuff and Nonsense Theatre Company *The Enormous Turnip*

Mixing Bowl Theatre



## UPDATE ORGANISATIONS + VENUES

**Mixing Bowl:** The Mixing Bowl is a new Birmingham venue, set in the Custard Factory Complex, that programmes a mix of traditional and genre-crossing work. It's managed by theatre company RoguePlay, who recently performed a site-sensitive promenade interpretation of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* at the venue, and who are now gearing up to tour heritage sites and festivals over the summer with *Ultima Censura*, a one-to-one performance comprising ten linked texts. [www.custardfactory.co.uk](http://www.custardfactory.co.uk) | [www.rogueplay.co.uk](http://www.rogueplay.co.uk)

**PANeK:** 26 March PANeK will be hosting a workshop with Manchester-based company Quarantine at The Old Exchange in Deal. Starting with an overview of Quarantine's work, the workshop will be tailored to the needs of its participants and allow plenty of opportunities for questions and conversation. PANeK are also pleased to announce they have received an ACE award of £36,000 to fund a new programme of work up to 2011. The organisation is now based in Deal with support from Future Creative. [www.panek.org.uk](http://www.panek.org.uk)

**International Centre for Voice:** The ICV is based at Central School of Speech and Drama and has recently relaunched to serve the professional development of teachers of voice and speech. ICV's 2010 training programme launches 27 March with a workshop delivered by ICV patron Cicely Berry. Also coming up is a two-part course in voice and text teacher training from internationally-renowned Professor of Voice Kristin Linklater, to be held at Central August 2010 and August 2011. [www.cssd.ac.uk](http://www.cssd.ac.uk)

**BITE:** Highlights at bite running up to May include: a visit from Australian company Circa with their greatest hits mixtape and Edinburgh hit *Circa*, 9-14 March; Cheek by Jowl's stripped-back adaptation of *Macbeth*, 18 March – 20 April; and a visit from the polymathic Laurie Anderson with *Delusion*, a story about longing, memory and identity fusing violin, 'electronic puppetry' and music. For the full programme: [www.barbican.org.uk](http://www.barbican.org.uk)

**The Laurel & Hardy Palace of Varieties:** London's magnificent Hoxton Hall will for Easter host a double bill of rarely seen silent classics in a recreation of a 1920s picture palace, with period décor and refreshments. Starring Laurel & Hardy in *Habeas Corpus* (1929) and *Wrong Again* (1929), with live piano accompaniment by Lillian Henley (of 1927 Theatre Company). Plus! Miles Gallant's acclaimed play *One Night: Stan* gives a touching insight into the life and character of Stan Laurel. Not to be missed! 2-4 April; 7.30pm Friday & Saturday; matinees 2.30pm Saturday and 4.00pm on Easter Sunday. [www.ticketweb.co.uk](http://www.ticketweb.co.uk)

**Jacksons Lane:** Continuing as London's best venue for contemporary circus, Jacksons Lane invite back the Finnish aerialist Ilona Jäntti 16 & 17 April for a second showing of her double-bill *Muualla/Elsenhere* alongside new work *Polar*. 21, 22 & 24 April Mimbire perform their piece *Until Now* (last seen at the Mimefest), and then 28 April – 1 May new UK tightwire company From the Inky Deep present *Dizzy O'Dare*, a piece that draws its inspiration from old myths of the Selkie – seals that can become human by shedding their skins. Check out full details on Jacksons Lane's new site: [www.jacksonslane.org.uk](http://www.jacksonslane.org.uk)

**Theatre Sandbox** is a national commissioning scheme to support the production of six new experimental pieces of theatre performance that utilise pervasive media technologies. It will link theatre companies and artists to cutting-edge research to push forward the understanding and usage of digital technology in theatre. Commissions will be selected by a team of leading theatre producers and technologists. Theatre Sandbox launches this month with a series of workshops nationwide. [www.theatresandbox.co.uk](http://www.theatresandbox.co.uk)

**Forest Fringe Travelling Sounds Library:** is a new project bringing together audio pieces by some of the most exciting artists in the UK: sound collages, sonic art, instruction-based encounters, storytelling – essentially, anything that can exist as an MP3 file. [www.forestfringe.co.uk](http://www.forestfringe.co.uk)

**The Greenhouse:** Amidst growing economic concerns regarding funding for artists, Activate Performing Arts – the theatre and dance development agency for Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole – have created The Greenhouse, a scheme to distribute £8500 in funding to support new theatre/dance work. Beneficiaries of funding include site-based Dorset artist Sally Watkins for her *Sail With Me* project; movement artist and researcher Sandra Reeve for her project *Absence*; and Theatre Orb's new playwrights' festival at Poole Lighthouse, April 2010. Niki McCretton and Marc Parrett from Stuff and Nonsense Theatre Company have also benefited from the funding. [www.activateperformingarts.org.uk](http://www.activateperformingarts.org.uk)

**Oval House:** Award-winning African physical theatre company Magnet are at Oval House until 13 March with *Every Year, Every Day, I Am Walking*, the story of a young girl and her mother fleeing from their central African village to the safety of metropolitan Cape Town. Then 10-27 March the venue hosts Sarah Leaver's *Memoirs of a Hermaphrodite*, a dramatisation of the incredible life of Herculin Barbin, a hermaphrodite living on the edges of society in nineteenth-century Paris. [www.ovalhouse.com](http://www.ovalhouse.com)

**mac:** Long dormant, Birmingham's Midlands Arts Centre is reopening 1 May after two years of refurbishment with a rebuilt main theatre, a new studio space, a visual arts education suite, dedicated audio and visual media studio, and a purpose designed gallery. See the website for their summer/autumn programme of events: [www.macarts.co.uk](http://www.macarts.co.uk)



## UPDATE TRAINING + PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Au Brana Summer Residency:** Au Brana's Summer Residency offers four weeks of intensive theatre training with five different practitioners, culminating in a public presentation at the organisation's centre. This is a unique opportunity for artists to plunge into their creative practice – working in an ensemble and guided by highly regarded practitioners in an environment purpose-built to support total immersion. Ted Hughes' narrative poem 'Gaudete' will serve as a creative springboard. Running 12 July – 7 August, the total cost of the residency is €1250, which includes both workshop and accommodation costs. [www.aubrana.com](http://www.aubrana.com)

**Hotel Medea Workshops:** Zecora Ura / Urban Dolls are running Physical Performer Workshops that bring together the diverse abilities of the Hotel Medea group – capoeira, butoh, ritualised movement forms, and vibratory song are among the skills trained. The group are keen to meet and exchange with disciplined potential collaborators who may wish to join the *Hotel Medea* project. To participate contact Nwando: [nwando@para-active.com](mailto:nwando@para-active.com) | [www.medea.tv](http://www.medea.tv)

**Mick Barnfather** is giving his annual Easter workshop this year 5-9 April in London (St Luke's Hall, Penn Road). The five day Clown and Comedy course will concentrate mainly on the clown and the pleasure of being ridiculous in a space. £180 (concessions £150). Mick will also be running two workshops, on clown and character, in New York 13 & 14, 19-21 March and 16-18 March. [www.mickbarnfather.com](http://www.mickbarnfather.com)



Zecora Ura

**Mintfest Street Arts School:** Budding street artists are being offered the opportunity to learn from some of the best in the business at the new Mintfest International Summer School for Street Arts, in Kendal in Cumbria 29 August – 5 September 2010. The week-long residential course will culminate in a chance for students to show off their skills at Mintfest, one of the largest street arts festivals in the country. Open to both UK and international students; £200. Deadline for applications is 26 March. Contact Jenny Graham: [jenny@kendalartsinternational.com](mailto:jenny@kendalartsinternational.com) | [www.lakesalive.org](http://www.lakesalive.org)

**Dance Consciousness Model:** A unique opportunity to work with Dr Karla Shacklock (choreographer, performer and former co-artistic director of Precarious) in a five-day workshop exploring her Dance Consciousness Model. Each day will begin with intensive mind/body training, followed by a huge range of exploratory tasks, where participants will experiment with states of inattention (moving with absolute awareness of self and other) and non-inattention (moving intuitively and spontaneously). At the Main Dance Studio, Bath Spa University (Newton Park Campus), 29 March – 2 April, 10am-6pm; £200 (£175 concessions). [info@karlashacklock.com](mailto:info@karlashacklock.com)

**Street Arts Meetings:** Lakes Alive are hosting two meetings for street arts professionals in March: on 11 March the Independent Street Arts Network (ISAN) will be holding its spring meeting at the Brewery Arts Centre, Kendal; and 12 March Fool's Paradise will be putting on a showcase of the country's best acts for event organisers/programmers. Anyone attending either event can also catch *Welcoming the Light* in Carlisle on the 13<sup>th</sup>: a torchlit parade as part of Lakes Alive's project to illuminate the whole of Hadrian's Wall for the first time in over 1600 years. [www.lakesalive.org](http://www.lakesalive.org)

**Honk Project:** To coincide with a performance of *To Have and to Honk* at Farnham Maltings 24 March at 8pm, there's a Honk workshop, How to be a Clown, on the same day at 5.30pm. Expert clown guides will take participants into the world of clown, and help them find out more about their inner idiot. [www.farnhammaltings.com](http://www.farnhammaltings.com)

**Explorative Arts 2010** is a four-phase programme to bring performance company Sukosta's theatre laboratory to the diverse communities of Wiltshire and beyond. Celebrating cutting-edge performance practice, EA 2010 will comprise: Panic/Proposal (concerning the creation of short film studies), spring 2010; Explore (a professional residential workshop), 20-22 April; and Our Time (creative workshop residencies for elderly people) and Messing Around (challenging demonstration-workshops for young people), spring and summer 2010. Explore workshop open to all performance practitioners; £135. Join the company on 29 April for the Explorative Arts 2010 Celebration Evening at the Tithe Barn Complex, Bradford-on-Avon. [www.sukosta.com](http://www.sukosta.com)



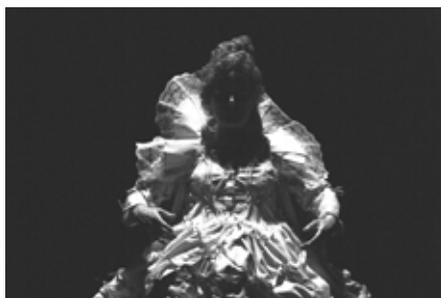
Fran Barbe of Theatre Training Initiative

**Theatre Training Initiative** – 'developing the art of live performance through challenging practice' – have announced details of their first two workshops for 2010: Preparing Performers with Butoh and Suzuki with Fran Barbe, 21 March; and The Actor's Impulse with Natalia Fedorova, 27 & 28 March. Natalia Fedorova, from the Moscow Arts Theatre School, is a new face to TTI for 2010. The programme will also welcome back some of their most popular teachers, including Lorna Marshall and Frank Theatre, later in the year. Also new this year are regular monthly sessions with Lukas Angelini. For further information or to book email: [info@theatretraining.org.uk](mailto:info@theatretraining.org.uk) [www.theatretraining.org.uk](http://www.theatretraining.org.uk)

**Theatre Applications:** Theatre Applications is a three-day international conference, hosted by Central School of Speech and Drama, concerning the uses and purposes of theatre and performance in education, community, therapeutic and institutional settings. Confirmed keynote speakers include director and cultural critic Rustom Bharucha, and Jan Cohen-Cruz, practitioner and teacher of grassroots, socially-grounded, and activist art. 21-23 April 2010. [www.theatreapplications.org.uk](http://www.theatreapplications.org.uk)



Bottlefed



Nola Rae



Tmesis Theatre

## UPDATE PERFORMER + COMPANY



Théâtre sans Frontières



Multimedia Fittings

**Bash Street Theatre's** new village hall touring show *The Lion Tamer* is drawing to a close with a short tour of Wales 9-13 March. Shortly after this the Penzance-based company is re-rehearsing their award winning, outdoor silent movie show *Cliffhanger!* to perform at the Macau Festival in China 21-23 May, and then again in Porsgrunn in Norway at the end of June. Meanwhile the third silent comedy show in the Bash Street repertoire, *The Station*, will begin touring in France in early May as the start of a 35-date European tour that will also visit Spain, Germany and Poland this summer. [www.bashstreet.co.uk](http://www.bashstreet.co.uk)

**Bottlefed's** performance installation *Hold Me Until You Break* will be shown 7 March 2010 at 100° Berlin, a performance festival at HAU and Sophiensaele, Berlin. The ensemble are then back in the studio in June/July to work on their new project, *ex-stasis*, with possible performances in London and Reykjavik (artFart festival) in July/August. Bottlefed will also be in residence at Centre Duerrenmatt Neuchatel, Switzerland for an improv collaboration with Swiss musicians – *concerts resonances*, premiering 5 December 2010. The company are currently running a Creative Partnerships project at Cippenham Junior School, focusing on dance and literacy. [info@bottlefed.org](mailto:info@bottlefed.org) | [www.bottlefed.org](http://www.bottlefed.org)

**Ed Rapley:** After performances in Bristol and London, *The Middle Bit* is now going on tour, and Ed Rapley is working on the third part of his 'self' trilogy – currently titled *Who Knows Where*. He is also developing *The God Fish Bow*, with a script by the fine artist John Lawrence. This summer will see Ed touring various street theatre festivals as one third of *The Tragic and Disturbing Tale of Little Lupin*, and if all goes well he will be taking a break from public performance towards the end of the year to train with Philippe Gaulier. [www.edwardrapley.co.uk](http://www.edwardrapley.co.uk)

**Fittings:** Liverpool company Fittings are joining forces with Tron Theatre and Sounds of Progress Glasgow to co-produce *Raspberry*, a brand new piece of work inspired by the life and songs of Ian Dury. Musing on the idea of perfection and perfectibility, this juicily gothic piece of music theatre opens at the Tron Theatre 1 April, then tours the country with dates including Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh 1-10 April; Contact Theatre, Manchester 23 & 24 April; Bluecoat, Liverpool 30 April – 1 May; and Croydon Clocktower 14 May. [info@fittings.org.uk](mailto:info@fittings.org.uk) | [www.fittings.org.uk](http://www.fittings.org.uk)

**Fool's Proof Theatre:** In *Je Suis Dead* three strangers are thrown together in the aftermath of a near-fatal train collision. Emily, a dreamy teacher, is exposed to the brutal side of life; James, the ruthless businessman, is losing control; and Helen, deeply private and alone, starts to reach out and engage with the world. *Je Suis Dead* is Fool's Proof Theatre's second piece in a proposed trilogy about identity and the invisible ties that bind us. Conceived and directed by the company in collaboration with Gey Pin Ang, formerly of the Workcentre of Jerzy Grotowski, and Thomas Richards in Italy. Tour dates include: Washington Arts Centre, Tyneside 15 April; The Lowry, Salford 19 April; and The Unity Theatre, Liverpool 20 April. [www.foolprooftheatre.com](http://www.foolprooftheatre.com)

**Foursight Theatre** embark on a national tour this March with their latest piece *Forever in Your Debt*, a co-production with Coventry-based Talking Birds. *Forever in Your Debt* is a cautionary tale of fiscal failure, debt and despair that pulls our heartstrings, pricks our consciences, and prods the old pathos bone. Stark, absurd and anarchic, this co-production between the companies that created *Thatcher the Musical!* and *Trevor Goose* combines Foursight's straight-to-the-heart humanity with Talking Birds' reckless musical abandon. Tour listings on: [www.foursighttheatre.co.uk](http://www.foursighttheatre.co.uk)

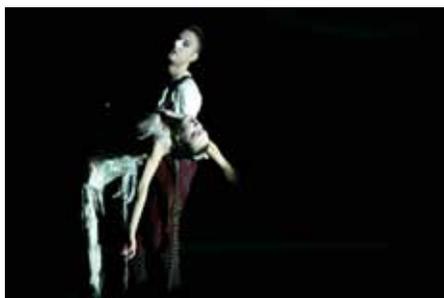
**Lost Dog:** Having accepted a residency at Corn Exchange Newbury and moved their base of operations to the South East, Lost Dog are currently touring their new piece *Salvage*. Combining the company's trademark visual and physical storytelling style with a subtle folkloric narrative, the piece draws on the legend of the Fisher King, and will be the largest work created by Lost Dog to date. The show is touring until May with dates at Laban, Hextable Dance Centre, The Place, and a spot in the Brighton Festival 2010 Caravan showcase. [www.lostdogtheatre.com](http://www.lostdogtheatre.com)

**Mimbre's** new show *Until Now* is touring indoors and outside throughout the spring and summer after an indoor premiere at the London International Mime Festival. The show is a beautifully improbable acrobatic adventure, full of laughter and surprises. Dates include: New Wolsey, Ipswich 31 March; Laban Theatre, Greenwich 19 & 20 April; Jacksons Lane, London 21-24 April. Full schedule on: [www.mimbre.co.uk](http://www.mimbre.co.uk)

**Mime the Gap:** *The Magician's Nightmare* is the first solo show from Mime The Gap, performed on the streets of Edinburgh Festival last August by Richard Knight. Although the show is intended for the theatre, it was and is still being performed as a street show to develop its core foundations. *Magician's Nightmare* will be visiting Adelaide Fringe in March, where it will be performed within a tented cabaret. The aim again will be to thrash out what works in all kinds of environments for all kinds of people. [richard@mimethegap.com](mailto:richard@mimethegap.com) | [www.mimethegap.com](http://www.mimethegap.com)

**Nola Rae:** Though as yet unconfirmed, Nola Rae's projected clowning projects in 2010 include work at the Opera House in Lyons with the tenor Rolando Villazon, and a visit to Stockholm to direct a clown version of *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Nola will continue to tour her repertoire pieces, with dates including *Elizabeth's Last Stand* at Teatro Rifredi, Florence 8-11 April and *Chapito*, Lisbon 5-9 May; and *Homemade Shakespeare* (with Lasse Akerlund) at the Ustinov Theatre, Bath 4-6 March. [www.nolarae.com](http://www.nolarae.com)

Teatro Kismet



Bash Street Theatre Company



The Paper Birds



Plasticine Men



Shams Theatre



**Shams:** Throughout May, Shams will be touring across the South-East with *Reykjavik*, their new installation performance, supported by the Wellcome Trust and Arts Council England. Part travelogue, part forensic reconstruction, *Reykjavik* is a journey through a city of extremes in search of a half-forgotten love affair. Created collaboratively with a team of designers/artists and neuroscientist Hugo Spiers, this intimate, multi-sensory performance immerses its audience in the architecture of memory. Tour starts 5 May and includes South Street, Reading, Colchester Arts Centre, South Hill Park, Newbury Greenham Arts and the Pulse Festival, Ipswich. [www.shamstheatre.org.uk](http://www.shamstheatre.org.uk)

**Teatro Kismet:** Following the critical success of *The Snow Queen*, Italy's Teatro Kismet return to the UK with *The Mermaid Princess*, the third and final work in their trilogy of pieces adapted from Hans Christian Andersen stories. This new English-speaking production, adapted and directed by Teresa Ludovico, combines evocative imagery, magical drama and poetic text to tell the story of a mermaid who rescues a shipwrecked prince. Tour dates include: Curve, Leicester 24-27 March; Lighthouse, Poole 31 March – 3 April; Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds 7-10 April; New Wolsey, Ipswich 14-17 April; and Warwick Arts Centre 12-14 June. [www.teatrokismet.org](http://www.teatrokismet.org)

**Theatre Ad Infinitum:** Following an extraordinarily successful sell-out run at the Edinburgh Fringe 2009, Theatre Ad Infinitum's award-winning *Odyssey* is touring the UK January - June 2010, Canada in autumn 2010, and Norway in February 2011. One actor. One hour. One man's epic quest to reunite with his family and seek bloody revenge. This passionate retelling of Homer's timeless Greek myth has received four and five star reviews across the board, and George Mann was presented with The Stage 'Best Solo Performer Award' 2009. [www.theatreadinfinitum.co.uk](http://www.theatreadinfinitum.co.uk)

**The Paper Birds** are currently continuing their UK tour of *In a Thousand Pieces* while developing a new production. The company will be devising and performing work-in-progress scratch nights throughout the year at The Junction, Cambridge; Sheffield Theatres; Camden People's Theatre; and Theatre Royal and Chichester Showroom. The company plan to premiere the new work at The Edinburgh Festival Fringe in the summer. [elle@thepaperbirds.com](mailto:elle@thepaperbirds.com) | [www.thepaperbirds.com](http://www.thepaperbirds.com)

**The Plasticine Men** are a new collective of theatre-smiths scouring the land for stories that beg to be told on stage. The company's new show, *Keepers*, is set over two hundred years ago, twenty miles out to sea on the infamous Smalls Lighthouse. As associate artists of New Greenham Arts, and with the support of The Nightingale Theatre, Brighton and Prototype, Plasticine Men have been busy developing the piece. After sharing glimpses at a number of work-in-progress platforms across the country, they are now ready to unveil the finished show in all its stormy detail. For full details keep an eye on [www.theplasticinememen.co.uk](http://www.theplasticinememen.co.uk)

**Théâtre sans Frontières:** Based on the company's experiences over five years of collaboration with Robert Lepage, TSF is now developing *Islands*, a new multilingual European production of similar style and imagination with Teatro Tamaska (Canary Islands), Persona Theatre Company (Cyprus) and Theater Wahlverwandte (Germany). The show premieres at the Queen's Hall, Hexham on 22 April, followed by a tour of venues in North England before going to the Canaries, Cyprus and Germany. Also touring: *Contes Dorés*, two golden tales performed in simple French, visiting schools January-March; and *Lipsynch*, an epic celebration of language and voice co-produced with Robert Lepage and Ex Machina, touring internationally in 2010. [www.tsf.org.uk](http://www.tsf.org.uk)

**Tmesis Theatre:** Combining Tmesis Theatre's trademark physicality with new writing from acclaimed Northwest playwright Chris Fittock, *The Dreadful Hours* is a darkly comic drama exploring the quiet disintegration of love's first bloom through the lifetime of one couple's relationship. Peepolykus' master of the ridiculous Javier Marzan directs this wonderfully inventive production full of dark humour and striking visuals. After the premiere in February at the Liverpool Everyman the show goes to RET Studio, Manchester 3-6 March; John Moore Theatre, Worcester 22 March; and Tristan Bates Theatre, London 11-16 May. [www.tmesistheatre.com](http://www.tmesistheatre.com)

**Travelling Light Theatre:** Having enjoyed successful Christmas runs of *How Cold My Toes* at Bristol Old Vic and *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* at the Tobacco Factory, Travelling Light are now embarking on two new projects: *Bob the Man on the Moon*, a new co-production with Sixth Sense Theatre Company aimed at children aged 3-7, which will tour nationally from the end of March; and *Celebration*, a festival of sixteen short plays for families produced in tandem with Show Of Strength, which will take place in various locations all over the Create Centre in Bristol during the weekend of 10 & 11 April. [www.travellinglighttheatre.org.uk](http://www.travellinglighttheatre.org.uk)

**Wet Picnic** had a busy and excitable 2009, with highlights including the start of a two-year residency as associate artists in the Home from Home project at The Point Theatre, Eastleigh. In 2010 *The Dinner Table* is making its first international appearance at The Fish and Chips Festival in Rouen, bringing English etiquette and decent dining to the wonderful people of France (Bon Appetit!). The company will also be working with The British Council this coming autumn to create work over two months in Shanghai. [www.wetpicnic.com](http://www.wetpicnic.com)

## BOOKS AND OTHER MEDIA PUBLICATIONS + RELEASES

Compiled by Dorothy Max Prior  
and John Ellingsworth

### BOOKS

#### *The History of Airports: selected texts for performance 1995–2009*

Chris Goode

Ganzfeld

ISBN 978-0-9563706-0-0

Paperback £12 +p&p (£1.95 UK; £3.95 rest of world)

Order online from <http://beescope.blogspot.com>

In his intro to the splendid potpourri of Goode words that make up *History of Airports*, our author muses on the strangeness – for someone who has for years railed against the dominance of literary-based theatre – to be publishing a collection of ‘performance texts’. But fear not, this collection is about as far removed from the normal play script as one could hope for. Thus we encounter cod-scientific papers, graphic scores, love letters, stand-up routines, imagined quotations, picture poems... Some pieces, such as *Presidential Address to the Little Ducks* and *Alien Interrogation*, look like plays (you know, characters, dialogue etc) but don't be deceived: they are, essentially, surreal poetry. So what we have here is in fact the 21st century reinvention of Poetic Drama. Roll over, TS Eliot. An essential purchase – buy yours today.

#### *Theatre Materials*

Ed. Eleanor Margolies

The Centre for Excellence in Training for Theatre

ISBN: 978-0-9539501-5-7

Paperback £10

[www.cssd.ac.uk](http://www.cssd.ac.uk)

What is theatre made of? *Theatre Materials* gets to grips with the physical objects and ‘properties’ that are used in the making of theatre: from the simple and everyday (a flowery dress, a till receipt) to the large-scale (Kinetika's street arts tigers; Tim Hunkin's automata). There's an eloquent chapter on scenography by Pamela Howard; a fascinating chapter on the puppet as teacher of acting by Rene Baker; and a lovely piece by Sean Myatt called *Instinctive Object Ramblings* in which a childhood is re-evaluated through the examination of a series of household objects. Linked to a conference held at Central School, the publication is full of lively illustrations, and also features reports from conference sessions. A radical new approach to the notion of ‘theatre design’, and a great addition to any library.

#### *The DbD Experience: chance knows what it's doing*

Rachel Rosenthal / Ed. Kate Noonan

Routledge

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DbD stand for ‘doing by doing’ and this book is part manual, part manifesto, and part memoir of the life and work of Rachel Rosenthal, a Los Angeles-based free improvisation practitioner and teacher, and purveyor of Instant Theatre. Rosenthal's methods are very much her own, but some of the exercises are reminiscent of Augusto Boal's work on rhythm, sound, mask and ritual. A picture tells a thousand stories, and the photos in this volume show a wonderful array of visual images, from a man with a giant bauble round his neck playing a musical saw, to a woman seemingly ironing broken dolls, to a colourful ensemble re-enactment of a masked Mayan ceremony. Sold!

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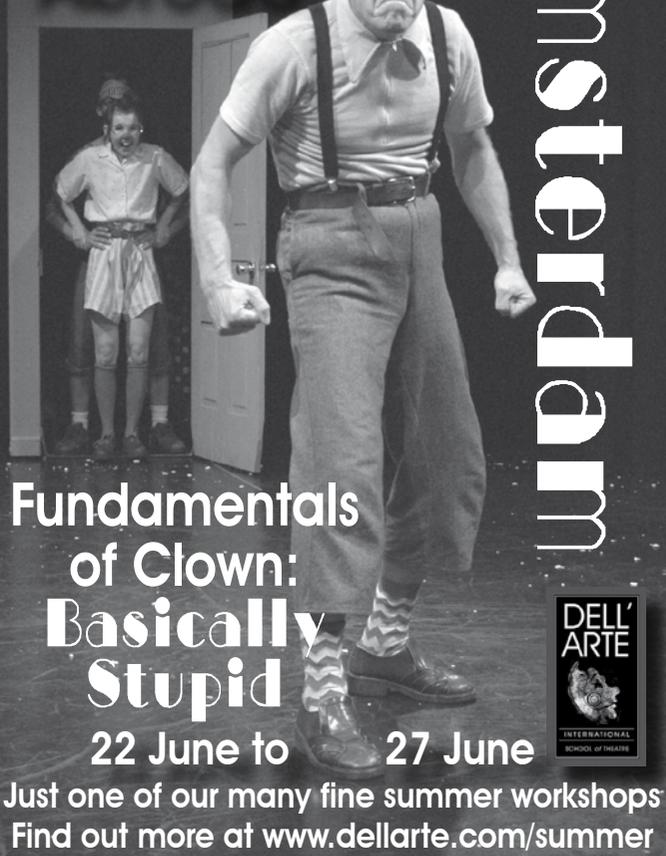
David Krut Publishing and Handspring (South Africa)

ISBN: 978-0-9814328-3-0

Can be purchased online: [www.davidkrutpublishing.com](http://www.davidkrutpublishing.com)

A weighty A4 collection of photos and articles covering the work of South African company Handspring. Most famous in the UK for their work on the National Theatre production *War Horse*, Handspring have

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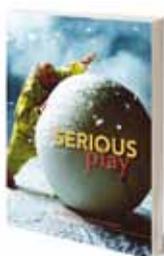
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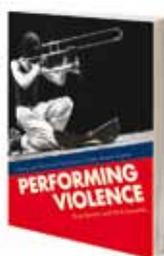
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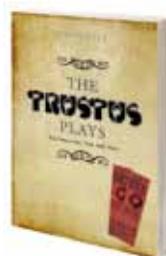
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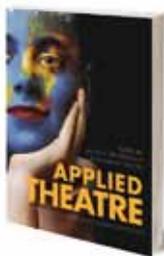
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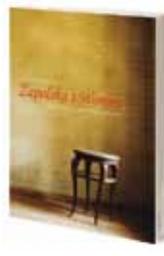
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