

TOTALTHEATRE

MAGAZINE



DRIFT AWAY TO BRAZIL WITH ZECORA URA

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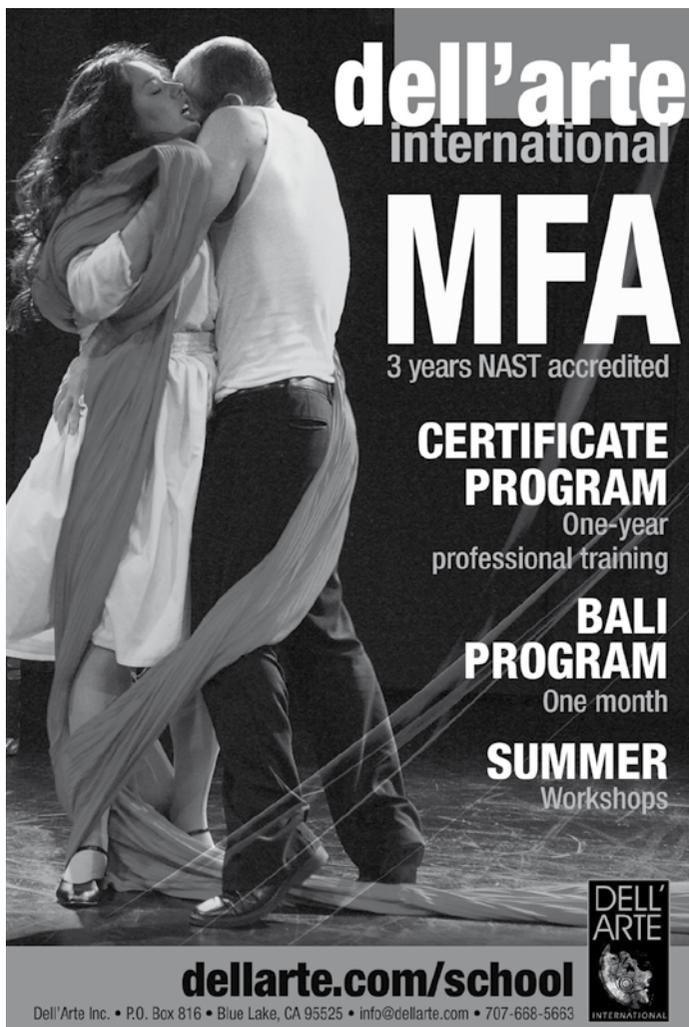


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TOTAL THEATRE MAGAZINE

Volume 23 Issue 02 Summer 2011

With summer comes the street arts season. The announcement of the new Arts Council National Portfolio, reported on in this edition, demonstrates that outdoor performance in public spaces is being taken reasonably seriously these days, with a number of key companies and projects coming onto the portfolio.

It's good to see established artists and initiatives receiving support, but an ongoing question for the street arts sector is: how do we train the next generation of artists? For most of the current high-profile names are, for the most part, self-taught, 'growing up in public' being the rule of thumb.

But for better or worse, this DIY ethos has been slowly shifting and regular readers will have noticed that we have been reporting on training and professional development opportunities for street artists over recent years. So we are pleased to be publishing a reflection on the Lakes Alive professional development initiative, the Mintfest International Summer School for Street Arts, now entering its second year as part of Mintfest, Kendal's festival of street arts.

News of these sorts of opportunities, where relative newcomers work alongside experienced artists, is always welcome. It's also good to note that this country's first BA in Street Arts, at University of Winchester, is now firmly established, and to learn of the university's support in setting up the Emerge showcase for budding street artists, which is linked to the very well established Hat Fair (which claims, probably rightly, to be the UK's first street arts festival).

Some might argue that it is vocational, rather than academic, training that is needed, but at the better university performing arts departments, the development and support of sound self-motivated and dedicated personal artistic training is at the heart of the education. For no matter what your chosen artform or mode of practice, to truly develop and grow as an artist you need tenacity – and an awareness that inspiration may be important but daily practice is equally so.

Yet theatre is by nature a collaborative form: how best to train and develop as a theatre-maker? And if you are not a newcomer, how best to challenge yourself in your practice, and find new ways of working?

The DRIFT International project is an artists' residency programme that moves from country to country, providing an opportunity for those working in theatre or performance to refuel and recharge, and to explore new ways of working and new collaborations. In this issue we bring you a reflection on one particular DRIFT which took place in Brazil earlier this year.

Elsewhere in the magazine, you'll find our usual eclectic mix of artist diaries and reflections on contemporary practice – including a feature by Terry O'Donovan of dANTE OR dIE, and the latest candidate for our Voices feature, Yael Karavan.

Another of our regular slots, The Works, focuses on Cornwall's finest, Kneehigh, and our Being There show, viewed from three different angles, is Sue MacLaine's Still Life: An Audience with Henrietta Moraes, seen at the Brighton Festival Fringe.

Our Reviews pages include work seen across the country, from The Mill in Bradford to Lepage in London and Benji Reid in Lancaster. There are also reports from SPILL Festival of Performance at the Barbican, Fierce! in Birmingham and the Coming Up event for emerging artists.

As always, comments on this issue and suggestions for future editions welcome.

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Front cover image: Zecora Ura / Persis-Jade Maravala *Hotel Medea*. Presented midnight to dawn each weekend in August as part of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2011. www.edfringe.com Photo Flávia Correia



Just Drifting

Dorothy Max Prior goes to Brazil and enjoys a very special international exchange of theatrical ideas



'With DRIFT we aim to create a temporary space in which we can discover new ways to relate to ourselves: first by examining our practice and the ways in which we work, asking ourselves what holds us back as well as what inspires us; and then by reinventing or reshaping our ways of working as a vehicle for action and reflection.' Persis-Jade Maravala and Jorge Lopes Ramos, co-directors

Brazil! I arrive at Rio airport late night, and get whisked away by a chauffeur in shades. Perched precariously in the backseat of a speeding car with tinted windows, I'm aware I'm heading up into the hills, but it's impossible to get much of an impression of where I am. Now and then the car slows down and we pass through a small town. It could be a film set: 'Brazil in the countryside – after dark'. A tangle of buildings old and new, sandstone yellow and concrete grey. Suicidal dogs leap into our path, and tired-looking palm trees lean on each other for support. Muscle-bound boys in green-and-yellow football shirts walk hand-in-hand with brown-eyed girls wearing very short shorts and the obligatory 'Havaianas' (flip-flops to you and me). Outside the few café-bars that are open, small children play by the side of the road, their mothers and grandmothers sitting chatting round rickety tables whilst the menfolk play cards and drink. There seems to be a petrol station every few hundred yards. Most are closed, but some are open – and these obviously the social centres of the towns as people are sitting around in clusters of primary-coloured plastic chairs set up right next to the pumps, drinking Antarctica beer in lurid blue cans. Eventually, we reach our destination – Arcozelo, a one-horse town at the end of the bus line which boasts the bus station, a petrol station, a supermarket – and the Aldeia de Arcozelo, a disused coffee plantation turned arts centre; the site of a historically significant slave revolt. Nowadays, the coffee farmers have moved elsewhere, and this is tomato country.

It's a stated intention for this DRIFT that we hold the idea of teaching and learning in a multiplicity of languages. Verbal and non-verbal. Physical, visual, and musical



In the morning I wake to glorious sunshine illuminating this beautiful site. 'Distressed colonial' is the overarching impression: shuttered windowless rooms; terracotta tiles; whitewashed walls; cracked blue-and-white mosaics, verandas with nut-brown wooden benches, blowy dog roses and sleeping dogs, ancient trees, a few stray remaining coffee bushes, cockerels and a rusty weather-vain cockerel, a bell tower, a chapel and – a bandstand!

I take all this in as I hurry to catch the start of the 7am 'morning session', held outdoors in the amphitheatre and led by DRIFT co-director Persis-Jade Maravala. This meditative movement session is led and held in silence. At the start of this residency, it has been proposed to the group that we start the day in a silence that is only broken once everyone is assembled for breakfast, and the meal opened (as are all our meals at this DRIFT) with a kind of secular grace or blessing. There are a few squeaks of resistance in the early days, as some participants feel that they will 'learn the moves' better if they have spoken instruction, but most quickly realise (if they didn't already know it) that learning to follow visually, and repeat daily, in silence can be as good if not better a way for the 'muscle memory' to kick in.

It is also in keeping with a stated intention for this DRIFT that we hold the idea of teaching and learning in a multiplicity of languages. Verbal and non-verbal. Physical, visual, and musical. We are an international group, (Brazilian, English, Greek, Italian, Chilean and Turkish Cypriot) and many of the workshops, directives, projects, and exercises of our ten days here are either conducted in both English and Portuguese; are conducted in a way that mostly bypasses verbal language; or are intentional plays upon 'communication issues'.



Thus, on the very first day, participants were asked to pair up and teach each other something without using words. Two of the group – Brazilian dance artist Thiago Souza and English physical theatre performer Matthew Lloyd, neither of whom speak the other's language – are so taken both with this way of working and with the brotherly personal relationship the exercise sparks, that they make it one of the projects of the residency to continue to teach-and-learn from each other daily – this culminating in a duet ultimately performed on the aforementioned bandstand, a touching and loveable piece of work that could be described as Ballet Boyz go Live Art.

For the most part, the structure of each day of the residency was similar, but within that structure were an infinitesimal number of possibilities of what to learn, how to learn it, who to work with, and what to further in one's own work.

So, following the opening session in the amphitheatre and the shared breakfast, there was a choice between a rigorous physical training session led by Persis-Jade Maravala or a theatre concepts and ideas-developing/troubleshooting session led by Jorge Lopes Ramos.

Jorge's morning sessions used a practice called Action Learning Sets – a way of working in small groups to solve specific problems. Each person wishing to participate 'pitches' a proposal – examples might include something very specific about the dramaturgy of a performance piece, or a general call for help on working methods – and one or two 'pitches' are chosen by the group to work on that morning. Jorge also leads or co-leads other sessions throughout DRIFT, using methods such as Open Space Technology (as popularised by Improbable in their ongoing Devoted & Disgruntled groups) or the GROW coaching model (in which one reflects on Goals, Reality, Options, Will in relation to a given, specific problem). If this all sounds rather cerebral, it should be noted that Jorge is also a Capoeira teacher and co-leader of the much enjoyed Tambor de Crioula song and dance sessions.

In the physical training sessions, led by Persis-Jade Maravala, you commit to being fully prepared (physically and mentally), coming properly equipped and on time, and lasting the course. If you get tired, you can drop out – but you can't wander off for a while then drop back in. If you're running late or have a hangover – best not to



bother. Some of the younger participants – perhaps used to a more lax approach – found the rules and regs a bit of a strain at first, but as the days went by, you could sense the collective energy rallying round in support of this way of working. You think twice about that extra glass of wine in the evening, and you set your alarm.

And talking of glasses of wine: a key element of this particular DRIFT was the decision to have an onsite bar run by participants who took turns (in twos or threes) of picking a theme, dressing the venue, organising activities (from viewing video works to learning samba dancing), and buying the booze. The advantages to this initiative were that the group stayed mostly onsite in the evenings, adding to the feeling of this being a special shared time, and that there was an opportunity for a more informal sharing of ideas, artistic exchange, and development of personal projects.

It is also important to note here that the co-directors and the Zecora Ura company meet nightly throughout the residency to reflect on and plan for each day, responding to the needs of the group and how the residency is progressing – each DRIFT therefore has a fluid form and is a unique experience. ‘Previous DRIFTS,’ says Jorge, ‘have featured overnight sessions, silent walks, and collaborative meals as models for work to be created and for reflection on one’s practice.’ Through the schedule of activities for each particular DRIFT, the residency leaders ‘seek to find the balance between provoking the body as an instrument for creativity exploring sessions that push the participant out of comfort zones and trying to inspire different modes of thinking to open a range of perspectives on one’s work’.

There are a number of ‘whole group sessions’ at this particular DRIFT and these take many forms, the content decided on as part of the ongoing assessment and planning process. There is, for example, the

day we spend fifteen minutes writing our own names in painful slow motion; the day we devise one-person performance pieces for each other; the day we swap clothes with someone else for the afternoon; the day we tell stories to each other and guess who is telling the truth.

In between all these organised slots of time are the ‘personal project’ sessions. ‘This,’ says Jorge, ‘is the whole reason why we do the DRIFT.’ It is a space for participants – and that includes Zecora Ura company members – to take the time to develop ideas and work on their own practice in a haven away from the usual pressures of daily life. Persis-Jade points out that DRIFT was set up ‘in response to a frustration with the notion of “instant training” through one-day or weekend theatre workshops’. At the core of the project is the notion of self-motivated professional development. ‘Our ongoing commitment,’ she says, is to opening up the boxes and allowing all our demons and angels out to play with each other’.

I came with a desire to work in a truly site-specific way – to feel the traces of the site; to hear the echoes of other lives lived here; to respond to what I could see, touch, and understand from exploring the site; and then to dig deeper...

So everyone comes to DRIFT with a proposal for the residency. For some, there is a theatre piece already in progress that needs work: there are scripts in development and devising ideas in process. We have, for example, a physical theatre interpretation of *Macbeth*, developed by a group of participants working collaboratively, and a solo work by Zecora Ura company member James Turpin which explores his relationship with his father. Then, there’s a pre-existing script about absence and presence that undergoes a radical shift when the piece gets sited outdoors, under an ancient tree near the gate, by performer Tania Grillo; and a visually stunning solo installation/performance work by Olga Lamas which is set on and around a neighbouring tree – the two pieces somehow becoming interweaved, the trees sacred holding-spaces of memories and dreams.

Some participants want to find new ways to use skills they already have – Brett Jackson of Swamp Circus builds his acrobatic skills into a surreal love-duet with an animated wheelbarrow, taking in some mambo dancing and pidgin-Portuguese poetry along the way. Others come with, or find, a desire to throw all previous knowledge and experience into the air and to tackle a different discipline or artform practice: writer and director Natasha Nixon finds herself unexpectedly making a site-specific solo clown show, predicated around the notion of being stranded. Samuel Evans is pursuing an idea he has come with, but an exercise we are given to set each other solo performance works to enact in an afternoon leads him to approach the piece from a very different angle, and it goes from being sited outdoors at night by a dry and disused fountain to being sited inside the dormitory bathrooms (with working showers!).

For my part, I came with a desire to work in a truly site-specific way. Tempting though it was to use the time to develop one of the numerous, pressing projects ‘back home’ I went with the idea of seeing where I was and what that suggested. To feel the traces of the site; to hear the echoes of other lives lived here; to respond to what I could see, touch, and understand from exploring the site; and then to dig deeper...

On my first day, I set myself on a meditative silent walk throughout the space, indoors and out, followed by a spell of free writing. On subsequent days, I searched the Internet or picked the brains of anyone who could help (including local dignitary Marcelo Basbus Mourão, who came to give us a guided tour of the Aldeia) to unearth the historical stories that were wedded to the site: specifically, the story



of the slave revolt and its heroes and heroines, most notably Manuel Congo and Marianna Creole, who are now honoured as national heroes in Brazil.

There were a million stories that could have been told, but I ended up focusing on one small aspect of the story: the fact that Marianna Creole, co-leader of the slave revolt, was chief seamstress to the 'lady of the manor' Baronesa da Soledade, and it was the baroness's intervention that led to Marianna's acquittal (although her husband Manuel was hanged, so hardly a 'get out jail free' card!). This small part of one story becomes the inspiration for a simple performance piece, set in the half-dark at sunset inside one of the cell-like whitewashed rooms, and viewed by the audience from outside the room through latticed shutters.

But for me it was also important not to see this 'product' as being the point of the residency – the research process rather than 'the performance' is what remains with me from this precious time at Arcozelo. My daily walks throughout this extraordinary site exposed me to stories written in and on the landscape: the ancient trees of the amphitheatre silent witnesses to the terrible yet ultimately liberating events that had unfolded here – the insurgents led away in irons to be tried and condemned to death (hung from trees, *'pena da morte para sempre/a sentence to death for ever'* as they were denied burial); the decaying late 18th century manor house clinging to the memory of grander days; the 20th century additions such as the swimming pool, now cracked and dry and occupied by a giant (dead) lizard; the fallen mangoes trodden underfoot by 21st century folks for whom food is in abundance; the last vestiges of the site's past life as a coffee plantation in the few stray bushes laden with green beans. A favourite spot is the tiny slave chapel bearing the names of the rebels scrolled on the whitewashed outer walls; the altar within adorned with vases of faded flowers, statues of Our Lady of Aparecida (the so-called black

Madonna of Brazil) and Anastasia, the African saint revered by the slaves, together with small baskets bearing handwritten prayers and apologies and (horribly) examples of instruments used to punish the slaves.

Elsewhere, there are the lovingly restored areas: as the site came under the patronage of artist and theatre-maker Paschoal Carlos Magno, it was opened as a gallery, theatre and artists' retreat in 1965 and although some areas later fell into disrepair, the mahogany-lined parlours decorated with oil portraits and fitted with brocade sofas remain intact. The theatre itself is a regular end-on tiered-seated and fully functioning space.

So a place rich in histories ripe for the telling: in my head and in my notes are the blueprints for an imagined performance: an extensive guide – or perhaps a 'misguide' – to the Aldeia de Arcozelo.

Although I was partly attending DRIFT for my own personal professional development, I was also on board to help facilitate the sharing sessions at the end of each day. Throughout the residency we developed a use of creative rather than critical responses to work seen, using a variety of devices that encouraged participants to be honest witnesses, and to learn to describe verbally what was seen/heard/felt; to express emotions felt in a clear and non-judgemental way; to use freeform writing to give a creative response; and even to make instant performance responses to work shared. One of my great pleasures at DRIFT was to see how readily participants took to these suggested processes.

A mention here also to the processes of documentation of the DRIFT project: documenters Flávio Rabelo and Raquel Aguilera coming up with numerous interesting devices to make documentation as creative

a process as any other element of the project. These devices included Flávio's daily morning photographing of participants holding their 'goal for the day', written on a slip of paper, to camera; and Raquel's lovingly intimate portraits of participants created by photographing the clothes and objects from home displayed in their rooms.

DRIFT concerned itself with process rather than product – and yet in theatre, audience is a crucial element of the work, so we were encouraged to share work as often as we dared (and asking for no feedback was also a valid option: just having people there is often enough!). There was also an option on the final weekend for participants to show work to a wider audience, as the doors (and grounds) of Arcozelo were thrown open to the local townspeople. A very full afternoon of installations and interventions, outdoor performances, one-on-one encounters and theatre show excerpts offered too many highlights to list, but included: a chilling piece of poetic text about schizophrenia, married to a mesmeric simple but effective physical performance by Chilean artist Liliana Garcia; a hauntingly beautiful and melancholy sung performance by Zecora Ura company member Lisa Lapidge, set in a cramped and candlelit bathroom; and a precocious, interactive version of *Don Quixote* by Brazilian theatre artist Mestre Urias De Oliveira (an associate artist of Zecora Ura) in which – having arrived singing wildly and demanding of all and sundry the whereabouts of his trusty steed, Rocinante – he shared bread with passers-by, dragged someone he claimed was his lost love Dulcinea into the small chapel for an impromptu wedding, got us all involved in a group photo session, and finally summoned up a horse from out of the blue and galloped into the sunset.

The morning after saw an intellectual debriefing, then an emotional leave-taking. Drums were banged, songs were sung, and the coach departed down the dusty road, taking most of the participants to the bright lights and carnival season noise and chaos of Rio city.

What was apparent as it all ended was that what had occurred could only have happened here: this group of people sharing this particular space, at this particular time – a truly site-specific experience.

Meanwhile, those of us that remained had a precious last day with the ancient trees and engrained memories of the Aldeia de Arcozelo.

More about DRIFT:

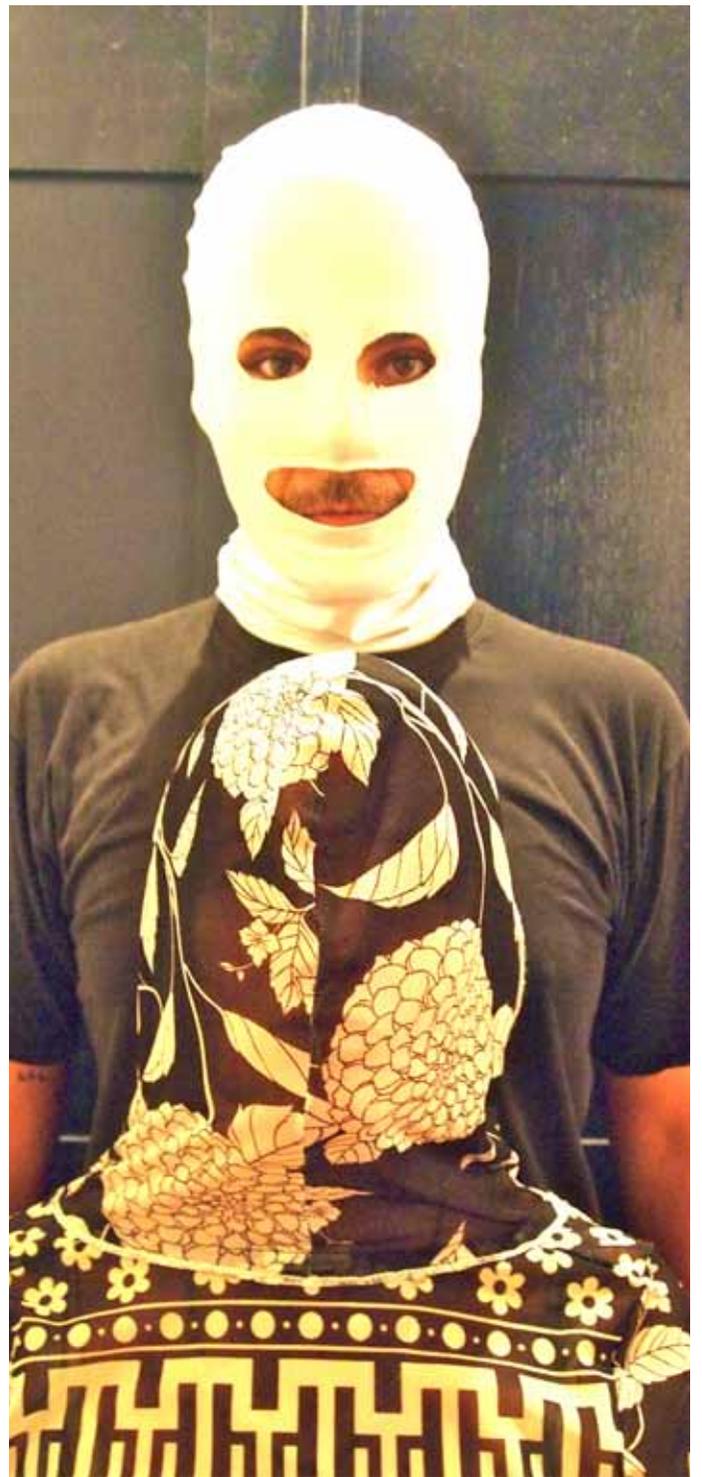
DRIFT International is an intensive residency programme for people with careers in theatre and performance, who spend their time sharing work and styles with each other as well as in guided discussions with other artists and performers, uninterrupted by the normal constraints of space, time or lack of other artists with whom to work. Past DRIFT residencies have taken place in: UK, Brazil, France, Austria, Norway, Italy, Spain and Australia.

DRIFT International was set up in 2006. The first DRIFT to be held in Brazil (December 2006) took place at CPC Gargarullo theatre and the project has returned to the arts centre a number of times. In 2011, the DRIFT Symposium was hosted by CPC Gargarullo.

See: www.gargarullo.com/br/

The DRIFT International Residency (Brazil 2012) is now open for applications and will happen in March 2012 in the weeks following the Rio Carnival. The process is open to anybody who wishes to explore their work and practice in relation to performance in the broadest sense. Please write a statement of interest to thedriftproject@gmail.com that describes your practice and what you would like to achieve through this residency.

See <http://driftprojectinternational.wordpress.com/>



DRIFT 2011 took place at Aldeia de Arcozelo, Paty do Alferes, Rio de Janeiro state, Brazil, 17–27 February 2011. The residency was led by *Hotel Medea* directors Persis-Jade Maravala and Jorge Lopes Ramos.

Aldeia de Arcozelo is engaged in fundraising in order to improve the facilities and develop the site into an international base for residencies and workshops. For more information, contact Marcelo Basbus Mourão, president of Sociedade de Amigos de Aldeia de Arcozelo: www.amigosaldeiadearcozelo.wordpress.com

DRIFT 2011 is a collaborative research project of Zecora Ura, in association with IPAD and the University of East London (UK); in collaboration with LUME and UNICAMP (Brazil).

Incorporated into this DRIFT International residency was a two-day symposium (19–20 February 2011) which included lecture-demonstrations and workshops led by guests from Brazilian companies LUME and TAANTEATRO. The symposium will be reported on more fully in the Autumn 2011 edition of *Total Theatre Magazine*, which will also reflect on other Anglo-Brazilian collaborations and exchanges.



Zecora Ura and Hotel Medea

Anglo-Brazilian company Zecora Ura was founded in 2001 by Jorge Lopes Ramos – then a precociously young theatre director, performer and producer, just 18 years of age – in partnership with a group of fellow students from Rose Bruford's European Theatre course. Jorge, it is no surprise to learn, comes from an artistically vibrant Brazilian family, who (amongst many other endeavours) own and manage the CPC Gargarullo theatre and *Ponto de Cultura*, which has given enormous support to Zecora Ura and its associated projects, such as the international DRIFT residencies, over the past decade.

After three years of international touring to ten countries (including Spain and Iceland), others fell by the wayside as the difficulties in keeping an international company together post-graduation became apparent, leaving Jorge as sole founder member of Zecora Ura. After a six-month retreat to his native Brazil, researching material for his version of *The Tempest* in the (mostly African heritage) northern part of the country, he registered the company in both London and Brazil – and it has since then operated in both countries simultaneously, with performers and associate artists in both.

Zecora Ura's stated aim is to create international, multicultural theatre that 'provokes active encounters which are set out to de-construct rigid views of theatre-making'. Committed to the (very un-English!) notion of lengthy, intense theatrical research and longevity, Zecora Ura have sometimes fought to survive in an artistic culture dominated by annual 'premieres' and venues geared towards regular 90min shows. But now the Brazilian branch of the company has five permanent company members (Jorge Lopes Ramos, Raquel Aguilera, Flávio Rabelo, James Turpin and Carlos Rezende), and the London branch two (Jorge and company manager/performer Lisa Lapidge).

Zecora Ura's work entered an extraordinary new phase with the creation of the *Hotel Medea* project, initially a collaboration with Para Active's Urban Dolls Project, founded/directed by Persis Jade Maravala who is now operating as a solo performer/director and is co-director of *Hotel Medea*.

The ongoing and ever-growing *Hotel Medea* is, on one level, a show (albeit a very unusual one) – a trilogy that runs from midnight till dawn, based on the dark revenge myth of *Medea*. It was originally co-commissioned by Salisbury International Arts Festival and CPC Gargarullo. Earlier versions have already played at LIFT, and it will be shown in its full glory this August at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. But its directors have resisted the notion of a 'completed' show, constantly researching and reworking elements in the UK and in Brazil, in an ongoing spirit of collaboration, challenging given theatrical mores. The first part, *Zero Hour Market*, is the setting for the meeting and marriage of Jason and Medea as the company create a 'frenzied maze of food, blood and dance', featuring live Brazilian rhythms and the talents of DJ Dolores. Part two, *Drylands*, was presented recently (April 2011) at GLAZ performing arts and digital media festival. This is the chapter that, when the trilogy is presented together, comes in the dead of night, after the partying. The audience are divided into groups, and witness the degenerating relationship of Medea and Jason (who is cast as a cynical contemporary politician) from myriad viewpoints. At

one stage, we are Medea's confidants, treated to slugs of gin (mother's ruin!) and invited to share our thoughts on love and loss; or we are her children, tucked into bed with hot chocolate in a room strewn with teddy bears, listening to the anguished clicking of our nurse's knitting needles as Medea's privacy is invaded by paparazzi and mobile calls from her husband's lover; or we are 'members of the public' bussed in for a photo-shoot with the ambitious politician, Jason; and then again, passive receivers of a barrage of information on a bank of monitors as we are formed into a 'focus group'. The third part is called *Feast of Dawn*. As first light approaches Medea and her Maid are finally alone. In the aftermath a new side to Medea emerges...

But as said, *Hotel Medea* is more, much more, than a show – its five-year process has included ongoing training, residencies across the globe, and collaborations not only with international artists but also with audiences. A crucial aspect of *Hotel Medea* is the Audience as Document project, in which people who have witnessed the trilogy and people who haven't are brought together, most recently (March 2011) at the Victoria & Albert museum in London.

Hotel Medea was undertaken with a desire to create theatre that stretches beyond usual boundaries of time and place, of audience participation and interaction – and in its five years of existence to date it has provided an exemplary model of multicultural theatre practice and international collaboration.

Company profile by Dorothy Max Prior

Hotel Medea is presented at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2011, performed each Friday and Saturday throughout August at Summerhall, with an additional show on Thursday 25th. From 23:45 every night – the show finishes at dawn and includes breakfast. Zecora Ura will also be hosting a number of debates, performances and workshops at Summerhall as part of the ROUTE BRAZIL-116 project launch (further details of this below). To book tickets, see www.edfringe.com

ROUTE BRAZIL-116 is a new model of international performance and research festival to be produced bi-annually from 2011, in partnership with LIFT and a number of London venues and which aims to create an imaginary artistic bridge between global cities and London. The first edition of the event in September 2011 will focus on links between Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Edinburgh and London. It will include artistic interventions, practice-led-research sessions, performance, and debates between festival directors, policy-makers, producers, artists and audiences from Brazil and the UK. The project will be launched at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2011.

Dorothy Max Prior saw *Hotel Medea: Drylands* at Trinity Buoy Wharf, London, on 22 April 2011. It was presented as part of GLAZ performing arts and digital media festival: www.glaz.co.uk

For more on Zecora Ura and the *Hotel Medea* project see www.zecora.com

P8 top: Mestre Urias De Oliveira and audience member **A Solida o do Don Quixote**. Photo Flávio Rabelo
 P8 bottom: Olga Lamas **Silencio**. Photo Flávio Rabelo
 P9 left: Tania Grillo. Photo Raquel Aguilera
 P9 right: Thiago Souza and Matthew Lloyd
 P10: Giovanna Lo Conte. Photo Flávio Rabelo
 P11: DRIFT 2011 documentation and evaluation
 P12: Flávio Rabelo and Liliana Garcia. Photo Jorge Lopes Ramos
 P13: Zecora Ura/Persis-Jade Maravala **Hotel Medea**. Photo Flávia Correia

Side Effects

What's in your medicine cabinet? Terry O'Donovan, performer and associate director of dANTE OR dIE Theatre, opens the pill box and tells us all about the company's new show



Side Effects is a dance-theatre production which playfully explores society's relationship with medicine. Working with a cast of dancers between the ages of 21 and 73, the show dips in and out of daily routines, magnifying the significance and effects of tablets, creams and prescriptions on our lives and relationships.

The Beginning

In the summer of 2009, my colleague Daphna Attias (the director of the piece) and I saw the exhibition *Cradle to Grave*, created by the Pharmacopeia collective, at the British Museum. The stunning installation presents the lifetime supply of prescribed drugs knitted into two lengths of fabric, illustrating the medical stories of one woman and one man. This included over 14,000 pills for each person – representing the amount of prescription drugs the average UK citizen consumes during their life. We were intrigued and amazed by this figure (which jumps to about 40,000 if you include over the counter meds).

Daphna and I immediately began asking everyone around us how many tablets they took. It was clear that most people had no idea about the amount of medication they took – which led us to question our own medical histories. I got in touch with my childhood GP and began piecing together my life through medicine – childhood asthma, warts which had been frozen off, dozens of anesthetic injections for my bugged-up teeth...



We were intrigued by the idea of charting life through the medicine we had taken, and how much memory, place and emotion were intertwined with all of our pill popping. Narratives seemed to tumble out of the medicine packets.

September 2009 to November 2010

We began researching the theme in terms of the theatrical and choreographic possibilities using four performers' medical diaries. We thought it was integral to explore the subject matter with performers of varying ages and so recruited Betsy Field, a dancer in her 70s. She was a perfect fit for the company, having led a professional life as a pharmacist until she retired and joined Sadler's Wells Company of Elders. She joined myself and two younger dancers as we began experimenting with choreographic responses to our own medical histories, and developing theatrical stories based on the effects of medicine in our lives.

The title *Side Effects* was born during this R&D phase: the psychological and emotional side effects of taking medicine were what interested us as we continued our explorations – just as much, if not more so, than the physical effects of taking medicine. One of Betsy's earliest memories was being put to sleep with chloroform and having nightmares of German soldiers chasing her (it was around the time of World War Two). Twenty-one year old Gareth recalled taking hundreds and hundreds of extremely powerful tablets called Minocycline to treat his teenage acne. Despite the incredibly severe side effects, all he cared about was getting rid of his spots, so never considered what he was putting into his body and how that affected him. Dipping into embarrassing medication taken, I created a sequence that connected watching *Fraggle Rock* with Ventolin, pubic lice with my first love, and paracetamol with hangovers galore.

Our research period yielded a twenty-minute performance entitled *Initial Side Effects* which was performed at The Place in London and went on to be performed at The Linbury Studio at the Royal Opera House as part of their Firsts Season. Concurrently, we began collaborating with The London School of Pharmacy who were intrigued by the idea of exploring issues facing social pharmacy through dance and theatre. Professor Ian Banks and Doctor Laura Obiols joined us in rehearsals and fuelled us with knowledge in

exploratory meetings. In a fortunate coincidence, Laura Obiols happened to be training in dance at The Place so was an intuitive collaborator. Susie Freeman, one of the artists from the Pharmacopeia collective whose installation inspired the work, also joined us to share her artistic experience of working with medicine.

In autumn 2010, we began an intergenerational workshop programme that mirrored our creative process thus far. Working with young dancers and theatre students alongside over 55s in the Queen's Park area of London, we created a sixteen-week programme that explored the participants' relationships with medicine through storytelling, dance, costume and music. These sessions have been incredibly fruitful, and inspired the continuation of the project.

November 2010 to March 2011

Having reflected upon our R&D we decided to move away from the personal histories of the cast and instead fictionalise a theatrical narrative to create a full-length production, in order to more specifically focus on the 'average' person. We took the nebulae of a family to investigate the dramatic possibilities of medicine at different ages in our lives, and to reflect that recruited two performers in their forties. Mark Down of Blind Summit, (who was a GP before he gave it up to work as a performer and theatre director) joined us as a dramaturge.

Being interested in people's day-to-day relationships with meds, we set the action in an outline of a house. Characters were created from the medicine they take – the father figure takes Temazepam at night to battle his insomnia alongside Pro Plus throughout the day to stay awake. One scene represents the continued use of 'The Pill' over many years in parallel with the young woman's sex and love life. The mother takes continued herbal remedies to treat her menopausal symptoms, and Betsy's grandmother character ingests a long list of tablets typical to a woman in her seventies who is reliant on a cocktail of drugs to keep ticking away.

It is integral to the work of dANTE OR dIE to find the emotional response of people within the work we create. This informed the work considerably, and the final production is rooted in the humorous, tender and heart-wrenching consequences of taking medicine. The piece strives to ask its audience to consider how they've been affected by tablets and how much we think – or don't think – about how many pills we pop throughout our lives.

dANTE OR dIE make dance-theatre performances 'which tiptoe under your skin and caress the back of your neck'. Since forming in 2004, directors Daphna Attias and Terry O'Donovan have taken trumpets and tubas, dancers and actors, writers and visual artists to a disused aircraft hanger, a ski-lift, and a ship on the Thames for their productions, which combine physical theatre with dance and music.

Side Effects premiered at Rich Mix, East London (10 February 2011), followed by performances at The Lillian Baylis Theatre at Sadler's Wells, The School of Pharmacy and Laban Theatre.

Initial Side Effects was performed at the Linbury Studio at the Royal Opera House and The Place, London (18 February 2010).

The production was funded by a Wellcome Trust Arts Award and Arts Council England. It is a collaboration with the London School of Pharmacy and supported by The Royal Pharmaceutical Society, Laban Theatre, and Central School of Speech and Drama.

The show will embark on a national tour in Autumn 2011 and Spring 2012.

www.danteordie.com

All images: dANTE OR dIE *Side Effects*. Photos Tim Mitchell



Streetwise

Jenny Graham from Lakes Alive reports on the annual Mintfest International Summer School for Street Arts

The idea was simple: take a group of aspiring performers, give them a week's boot camp in street theatre, and then unleash them on a global audience. It was a daring experiment and one that produced equally daring results with a series of innovative outdoor performances at last year's Mintfest, Kendal's international festival of street arts (2010).

One group of students made a big splash with a torch-lit dinner held amid the flowing River Kent; another formed a sect and took to the streets in a blaze of yellow to spread love and joy through the Lakeland town. All impressed with their verve, imagination and daring.

One of the saffron-clad members of the imaginary sect believes the experience has given her the fresh incentive needed to pursue her dream of becoming a full-time artist. Chloe Osbourne, an arts administrator from London, says: 'The Mintfest summer school has totally reinvigorated me. It was a chance to explore the potential of street performance without any of the limitations of real-life responsibilities. It was incredible and continues to inspire me in my work now.'

The brainchild of Lakes Alive's artistic director Jeremy Shine, the Mintfest International Summer School for Street Arts (MISSSA) is an innovative new venture that gives students from across the UK and beyond the chance to gain a first-class lesson in the art of performance. Although there have, in the past, been other street arts 'professional development' initiatives in the UK (such as the Carnival Caravan project which ran throughout the 1990s, hosted by Bodily Functions, supported by Zap Arts, and funded by Arts Council England); and although there have been recent initiatives to bring

Mintfest has brought some of the best artists from across the world to Kendal, a small town on the edge of the Lake District. But this was the first time that relative unknowns were given the chance to take centrestage

training in street arts into the higher education sector (including the new BA Street Arts at University of Winchester, which has links to Hat Fair), the Lakes Alive initiative is currently the only course of its kind in the UK – an ongoing, vocational, street-arts-specific summer school linked to a successful international festival.

The first collection of students overwhelmingly judged it a hit. Jeff Wallcock, theatre practitioner for Storytree at Theatre by the Lake in Keswick, says: 'I would recommend it to anyone as a great learning experience and confidence builder. It's definitely strengthened my resolve to do what I love doing.'

In just a few years Mintfest has established itself as one of Europe's most important street arts events. The festival has brought some of the best artists from across the UK and overseas to Kendal, a small town on the edge of the Lake District. But this was the first time that relative unknowns were given the chance to take centrestage.



After a nationwide advertising campaign, a total of nineteen students were selected to join the Summer School. Their skills sets were as diverse as their age-range, which stretched from 21 to 57. They included two international participants from the USA and Canada, six full-time students and a professional dancer.

Speaking to the people who took part in the course, the word that crops up time after time is ‘inspiring’. And much of the source of this inspiration came from the four tutors who led the training.

On the first day of the course each of the tutors – Jon Beedell from Desperate Men, Doug Dougal of Surreal McCoy, Jean-Luc Prévost from Les Goulus and Richard Stamp aka Stompy from Dot Comedy – presented their shows and ideas to the students who then chose which performer they would most like to work with.

Jean-Luc Prévost admits: ‘It was a huge challenge! You have to realise that most street theatre artists have experimented by themselves in the streets and didn’t go to university to learn it. So the first challenge was to see if street theatre could be taught.’

‘The second challenge was to push the students to choose the experience which could really suit them and encourage them to dare to do something different. And the biggest challenge was to do this all in one week.’

‘You have to realise that most street theatre artists have experimented by themselves in the streets and didn’t go to university to learn it. So the first challenge was to see if street theatre could be taught.’ Jean-Luc Prévost, artist and tutor

Once the four groups were selected the countdown to the final shows began. With just six days until the main event the pressure was on to create a piece of work that would be performed as part of Mintfest 2010.

In the realm of street arts there are no limits – the students were given free rein to perform wherever, whenever and however they chose. The theme of the week was ‘to dare’.

Chloe says: ‘It was terrifying and fun at the same time! We were all really pushed as performers by a tutor that we trusted and respected.’

‘My previous experience in performing was always dwarfed a little by the enormity of the challenge. But guided by a tutor with serious experience we went out there to really push ourselves, to test our abilities, our capacity to think on our feet and to let it go and not worry about it!’

It was an intense experience for all. Not only did the students work together, they also shared accommodation in the local youth hostel and socialised together in the evenings. Few deny there were some fraught moments. Bringing such a diverse mix of people together – all with varying degrees of experience – meant sparks did fly.

As Jeff says: ‘Yes there were clashes – everyone had different expectations, different skills and different desires. Some people were more interested in the aesthetics of the piece; others in making it more risky and in-depth. But in the end we all came together and submerged ourselves in the performance.’

Quite literally in Jeff’s case as he was a member of the group who found themselves knee deep in cold water in the River Kent. It was a memorable experience for both the artists and the audiences.

The feedback to the Summer School performances was excellent and generated much discussion with videos and photos of the performances featuring extensively on Flickr and Facebook.

Following the success of the pilot, the Mintfest Summer School will return in 2011 and some of the original students will return to share their new-found experience and confidence.

Also returning is tutor Jean-Luc who says: ‘The best gift for me was to see these students proud of themselves and very fond of each other. All of them want to go on, which means the experiment was successful. The masterclass is now an integral part of Mintfest and will hopefully create its headline performers of the future.’

Lakes Alive and Mintfest

Mintfest, Kendal’s international festival of street arts will return for its fifth triumphant year 2–4 September 2011. An array of the world’s finest outdoor artists will descend on the Cumbrian town for a weekend of dazzling performances.

For full details of Mintfest 2011 and the rest of the Lakes Alive programme across Cumbria in the summer months see www.lakesalive.org

Mintfest International Summer School for Street Arts 2011

The Summer School 2011 will run for a total of 10 days from 27 August until 5 September.

Tutors will be: Lina Johansson from mimbre, Brian Popay from Fine Artistes and Les Goulus’s Jean-Luc Prévost. A few of last year’s students will also be returning as paid performers and working on one of the shows.

The successful applicants will be given a chance to work with these talented teachers before performing their own show to Mintfest’s international audiences.

For all the latest information on the school go to www.lakesalive.org/mintfest-summer-school

Anyone who would like to participate in the Mintfest International Summer School for Street Arts should email jenny@kendalartsinternational.com

Jenny Graham is Marketing and Summer School co-ordinator for Kendal Arts International (who produce Mintfest and the Lakes Alive programme in partnership with Manchester International Arts). Jenny has worked with Kendal Arts for two years, working on Mintfest and the broader Lakes Alive project.

P16: Red Herring *That’s The Way To Do It*. Photo Pau Ross
P17: Mintfest International Summer School for Street Arts 2010: River Kent dinner



Voices

Performer, dancer, director Yael Karavan – in her own words

My first big inspiration was the circus. The energy, emotions, laughter, fear, animals, danger, excitement, beauty, poetry...

I loved Marcel Marceau as a child and collected a repertoire of sketches I'd studied and would perform for family and friends. When I was a child we used to travel a lot and lived in various countries. During this time I met lots of people who didn't speak my language, so miming and body language became my main tool of communication.

I was arrested in Paris for my first street performance, aged eight. My father (a sculptor) had a studio in front of the Centre Pompidou in Paris. I would spend hours watching the street performers until I became the assistant of a few, and eventually did my own solo show. The police obviously realised I was too young...

When I was 12 I was diagnosed with a rather impressive scoliosis – my spine is in the shape of an 's'. I had to stop my acrobatic circus training. The doctor insisted I have an operation in which they'd put a stick rapped along my spine and leave it there – forever! My mother was a Feldenkrais therapist – she studied with Feldenkrais himself – she saved my body and sanity, and I had eight years of intense classes

and treatments instead. It was a very hard transition from big energetic physical risks to tiny conscious movements, but with time I've realised how much it has given me when it comes to my relationship with and understanding of the body.

Later on I discovered the work of Philippe Genty – the magic and the illusion of lights, the puppets and the objects, totally charmed my senses. Pina Bausch's work fascinated me when emotions were so clearly translated into movement with humour and melancholia. The aesthetic and extreme physical expression of Butoh dance took me to Japan, and led to seven inspiring years working with Tadashi Endo.

When I first saw the work of Complicite I decided to move to London in order to study with them at Ecole Philippe Gaulier. It was a very inspiring time. At the school I met Naomi Silman and Ricardo Pucceti from LUME Teatro in Brazil. That encounter started many visits to Brazil and opened a new source of exploration in my work. Naomi later directed one of my solos (the award-winning *The Way Home*).

In 1997 I performed in Edinburgh for the first time and saw *Red Zone* by Derevo. That was mind-blowing – as if they'd combined all of my previous experiences and fascinations into one body of work. It was alive, full of contrasting emotions – powerful, exciting, mad and magical all at the same time. There were elements of circus, Butoh, illusion, extreme physicality – the whole package really. I joined their 'School on Wheels' in Dresden and eventually, six years later, joined the company. Tanya Khabarova from Derevo has been a great inspiration to my work, a wonderful dancer and an incredible performer.

I realise I am not an interpreter but rather have the basic need for a creative say, or a deep connection from within to the work. I have met lots of people through my touring and felt I was a part of a wider global performers' community, but with time I felt I could only work with companies that allowed me a creative collaborative space.



My work is a mixture of dance, Butoh, clown, mime, physical theatre, visual theatre and live performance often in a site-specific context. I guess it is just like my identity, which is a mix of various nationalities, cultural upbringings and spoken languages.

Solo work is an introspection, like writing a poem. The process goes first inward, and then I have to be inside and outside at the same time, which can be extremely challenging. But it's also a freedom, like a child sitting in his room and playing/creating his imaginary world.

I started to have a creative relationship with objects when I started to work as a solo performer. Being alone on stage, the objects became my partners. Objects have a life of their own – they just need some help from us to manifest it. In English objects are an 'it', while in the languages I was brought up with objects have a gender. It takes us a lot of time as babies to understand a chair is a chair, but what happens once we get it? I like to challenge this notion of normality and the reality we have chosen to accept, re-awakening our childlike naivety and openness. Philosophically I believe that everything is possible, it only depends on what we chose to believe in.

Yagon, my male character from my solo show *In-Between*, was born many years ago. He is a tragic-comic physical clown incorporating my loneliness and inability to make choices between the different fragments of life. For a long time I've felt I am training my body as an instrument, making it ready to receive and give life to the different characters that might emerge from my process. Physically he is very demanding; Yagon really knows how to take advantage of my body and I often end the show with minor injuries...

Working as a solo performer and working as director of an ensemble are very different experiences which complete and nourish one another. When I stopped working with other companies I created The Karavan Ensemble which enables me to share and develop my working methods, and research into elaborate creations with a group of performers from various disciplines and nationalities.

When I direct I need another level of alertness: it's like composing music or sculpting. Shaping life into forms and rhythms. It's all there in front of me and there's like an invisible bridge between me and the work created. It's a very intuitive process, giving the Ensemble a direction; leading them into another reality or state and then being attentive to the life that emerges; facilitating multiple layers of experiences, atmospheres and compositions. My role is to be an instigator, an outside eye, a hunter and collector of magical moments and a midwife of unexpected characters.

When I start devising and directing, I usually come with a clear concept and proposition, especially regarding the atmosphere of the work, characters, moods, inspirations and themes. I then get them going, exploring ways to let them into the world we are creating and from there on in, there is much room for a creative dialogue, mainly through improvisations. So it goes both ways and we thus nourish each other and the work. After three projects together I feel I know them and their possibilities quite well so I thrive on developing characters and situations that can bring their strength and beauty into the work and/or challenge them.

What has been the hardest for me as a director so far is to watch the shows when I don't take part in them actively. I sit on the audience side twitching and itching, it's a nerve-racking experience. It made me think about Tadeusz Kantor's presence on the stage during the performances he created. At times, he is there as a silent observer; at other times as an active activator, a *chef d'orchestre*.

I find working with light design an extremely important part of my work, but usually I avoid creating a set on the stage. I would much rather work on site with what a space can offer, urban or natural, indoors or outdoors – it excites me.

Recently the audience has become a major part of the work.

When making *A Ship of Fools*, I felt the need to find ways to bring the surrounding community into the space and share our work with them. It was our first work as an ensemble and it was nearly four hours long! Starting on the Big Lemon Bus bringing audiences from central Brighton to Coachwerks (an artist-led space outside the centre); then the site-specific part at the venue, followed by a concert by 88-year-old Renee Ansell, the Queen of the Blues, culminating in a full-length dance-theatre performance; rolling out into a dinner with the audience on a long table laden with wood-smoked pizzas fresh from the stone oven. When the audience didn't want to go home at the end and asked to become fools, it made it all worthwhile. I want to take the audience through an experience.

Anima, which Karavan Ensemble presented in Brighton Festival Fringe 2011, is a performance about life itself as an archetype; a journey through life's memories and dreams. It builds on *A Light through the Night*, a 25-minute-long piece illuminated only by lamps, LED lights and candles donated from local people's households, as well as stories related to light and darkness, created for White Night (Brighton's all-night performance marathon held to mark the end of British Summer Time in October).

Coincidences, serendipity – little signs that make you feel

connected to something bigger. I had already coined the name *Anima* for our new show when a friend lent me Jung's book about the Anima. Reading Jung's interpretation of the Anima, I was amazed to find such strong parallels with our show for White Night. Now it's all intertwined. I can relate to people saying that at times their work is like their religion: well, if we consider the creative to be life's force, I would not disagree.

Yael Karavan was born in Israel and grew up in Florence, Paris and London. At the age of 13 she began a successful acting career in the National Theatre, television, radio, and film in Israel. Since 1995 she has travelled throughout Europe, Russia, Brazil and Japan studying and working with masters such as Anton Adasinski from Derevo, Nigel Charnock from DV8, Philippe Genty, Philippe Gaulier, Jerzy Winnicki (Grotowski Centre), Ricardo Puccetti (LUME Teatro, Brazil), Monica Pagneux (Feldenkrais in performance), Sue Morrison (North American Clown through Mask), and Butoh masters Kazuo Ohno, Tadashi Endo, Carlotta Ikeda, Yumiko Yoshioka, Akiko Motofuji, Ko Murobushi, Katsura Kan and more – searching to create an elaborate method of physical training for the performer and to develop a contemporary physical language of expression bridging between East and West, dance and acting.

Yael has created and performed seven solo shows, touring worldwide, and in 2006 was awarded the TEATRONETO prize for best performance with her solo *The Way Home*. She has been a member of Russian company Derevo, of Tadashi Endo's Mamu Dance Theatre, of Yumiko Yoshioka's Ten-Pen Chi, and was a founding member of the site-specific international company Adapt-Theatre Picture Collision.

In 2009 she founded The Karavan Ensemble, an international dance and performance company based in Brighton, with whom she devised and directed *A Ship of Fools* for the Brighton Festival Fringe 2010, *A Light through the Night* for White Night 2010, and *The Dressing Room* for Brighton Dome 2010.

The Karavan Ensemble's latest work *Anima* was made with support from by Arts Council England and was presented at West Hill Community Hall Brighton on various dates during May as part of the Brighton Festival Fringe 2011.

Yael Karavan is currently supported by South East Dance through their Creative and Business Development programme.

www.yaelkaravan.com

P18: Karavan Ensemble *Anima*
P19: Yael Karavan. Photo 48billion atom

Being There

A threeway view of *Still Life: An Audience with Henrietta Moraes*, as seen at the Brighton Festival 2011



I am at the Phoenix Gallery about to enter a life-drawing room, charcoal and paper in hand, to engage with Henrietta Moraes – muse, model, writer, mother, lover – as interpreted by theatre-maker Sue MacLaine. I am not an artist, I very rarely ‘draw’, and so I enter with some trepidation. Confronted by a pensive figure in gown and slippers, perched on the edge of a rostrum, I take my seat and my drawing board and draw a deep breath.

Henrietta stands, sheds her gown to stand naked on it (because ‘studios are usually filthy’) and strikes a series of poses, one to each wall. She looks instantly at ease and puts me in a similar frame of mind by quoting ‘draw with your hand what your eye sees’. My senses are immediately heightened. I concentrate hard and find myself also listening with my eyes. This is not a gimmick. I feel I have been invited into the perfect context to experience this remarkable woman through her most public persona.

Henrietta Moraes was the uncrowned queen of Bohemian Soho in the 1950s, living ‘an itinerant and rackety life, sustained by the tolerance of friends, oiled by alcohol and fuelled by an astonishing variety of drugs’. Her tale is told in prose, in conversation, in her writings and through a seamless series of drawing-poses which MacLaine illuminates with poise, humour and an unselfconscious reflection.

There is space to embrace this tale, and not just in the timed poses (between one and five minutes) where I am encouraged to continue to explore my place as viewer by drawing. Confronted by this new way of ‘seeing and hearing’ I tire but I have been nourished, challenged and enthralled during a wonderful theatrical journey.

Steven Brett, theatre manager, Nightingale Theatre, Brighton

Amazing! 75 minutes just flashed by. I wasn’t sure what to expect, but Sue MacLaine’s portrayal of Henrietta Moraes was wonderful, and her supreme confidence with her body and with the audience was impressive.

As an artist and someone who has taught life-drawing in the past, it was fascinating to see how the audience engaged with the experience. I particularly liked it when Henrietta came into the audience to see the drawings people had been doing and the reaction of the audience to this. Often when teaching life-drawing the model would like to have a nose around and take a peek at what the students had made of them. It was sometimes difficult to concentrate on the dialogue, as it felt natural to be drawing, but she made definite prompts as to when we should be drawing the pose and not. I just felt the need to draw more. The poses were often beautiful and some were quite tricky to draw, but I didn’t feel at all uneasy about the situation. I think everybody had a great experience and perhaps learned something about the relationship between artist/student and model.

Henrietta was famously the model of Francis Bacon and Lucian Freud, two of Britain’s greatest artists. ‘If you want to be an artist you have to be prepared to make a fool of yourself,’ said Francis Bacon, and by this I am sure he meant that you have to do things that would perhaps not be considered the norm. If you are prepared to take on a sheet of white paper with a pencil and rubber, then go for it! Make a fool of yourself? Maybe, but I think not. Truly inspirational!

Colin Kennedy, artist and graphic designer

The performance has no smoke and mirrors, there is nowhere to hide: just the words I have written and my body. Will it be enough? Beginning in the base of my spine: a judder of energy streaks through my body and shoots out the top of my head. This always happens at the beginning of a performance and I know when that process is complete it is time to speak.

A sea of expectant faces look at me. I have to see the audience. They have to see me. Every performer’s recurring nightmare: stepping onto stage without any clothes on. Except of course I haven’t forgotten my costume, there is none to forget.

As the performance progresses, a communion of shared concentration develops. The sound of pencils on paper represents the concentration as the audience attempts, and succeeds, in drawing me. The space shifts between performance space and fully functioning life drawing studio. I have a great sense of excitement, a sense that the piece is working, when I observe fresh pieces of paper being asked for. Performing this show demands I be in the moment, right in the moment and utterly present. I think it demands that of its audience too. I had a strong sense of the audience last night joining me, that sense of communion again, reciprocity.

Sue MacLaine, writer and performer



Still Life: An Audience with Henrietta Moraes was written and performed by Sue MacLaine and presented at Phoenix Galleries, Brighton as part of HOUSE 2011, a curated partner festival to the Brighton Festival Artists Open Houses, taking place in small galleries and domestic sites throughout the city. The performance reviewed here took place 9 May 2011.

Drawing together contemporary, experimental artists, HOUSE brings a rich mix of diverse and innovative new work to the Brighton Festival season, aiming to challenge preconceptions of what visual art can be.

See www.aoh.org.uk/house-festival

For further on Brighton Festival, which takes place annually each May, see www.brightonfestival.org

For more on the affiliated Brighton Fringe see www.brightonfestivalfringe.org.uk

P20: Life drawing by Colin Kennedy
 P21 top: Sue MacLaine as Henrietta Moraes
 P21 bottom left: Colin Kennedy and audience members
 P21 bottom right: Steven Brett drawing 'Henrietta'

All photos Lisa Wolfe / Peter Chrisp

Home Truths

The Canny Granny Takes a Trip – to the Summer Festivals!

Pulling aside the edge of my beige velvet drapes I spy several bottoms wiggling down the road in the kind of shorts people only wear at festivals. Like the first swallow of summer, the cut-off jeans mark a new season of outdoor fun. Though my legs still look smashing in shorts they are not, alas, so steady for standing on any more, so I'm off to Latitude this year with my fold-out chair slung over my shoulder. The main disadvantage of sitting down in the crowd (which is quite the thing at Latitude, everyone does it) is that I won't be able to see Suede – which some might say is a blessing. I shall need sedentary entertainment. I'm talking about theatre.

Luckily, curtain-twitching features at Latitude this year, as 1927 will perform *The Animals and Children Took to the Streets*, which combines animation, live music and a woman after my own heart peering from her window. Richard DeDomenici is making a piece called *Dogging for Gold*, which makes me relieved I shall be staying in a bed and breakfast rather than camped near the car park.

If you want to peer in on something utterly mysterious, this year's Secret Garden Party has Tax Deductible curating their performance area. They promise 'Ruckus', which they have trademarked, leading me to suspect that it's some kind of self-improvement scheme like Scientology. If you find out what it is, let me know, providing the elders don't drag you to a desert prison for revealing it. Talking of prisons, Tax Deductible's last gig was to create a tequila-tasting penitentiary at Fluid State Festival, a food-centred festival in East London. They dressed punters in prison jumpsuits, photographed them, plied them with fine tequilas and sent them out to the yard to lift weights and get washable tattoos. Well, that's certainly one way to stop an audience leaving.

The other way to stop people leaving is to make the festival so vast you lose the will to

get back to your tent, let alone your home. I'm talking about Glastonbury of course – not that I've been there, I've never quite plucked up the courage, but my dear friend Dorothy tells me that it boasts a plethora of theatre, circus and cabaret fields. They know the theatre that does well at a giant music festival: things that are brash and visually spectacular. NoFit State are headlining, along with acts like firework-fizzling water-drizzling (as if Glastonbury needs more water!) Avanti Display and acrobatic Mimbre.

But if it's you who feels twitchy and not your curtains, not all festival theatre has to be overwhelming. Pieces which fit with a mind-altered state also go down well. Who could fail to be delighted by The Two Wrongs' naked synchronised swimming, or Phil Kay smoking belly-button fluff, or Natural Theatre Company's League of Pessimists while you wait for the peyote milkshake to take effect?

There are also those shows that make zonked-out parents/grandparents and children feel cultured and comforted – these principally involve projections, which tents (though torture to sleep in) are very well suited for. The wordless drift of The Paper Cinema, the vivid re-scored silent films of Minima music or the Cabinet of Living Cinema, or the dazzling illustrative beauty of Matthew Robins with his distinctive dark silhouettes of Flyboy and Mothboy, come to mind.

A few festivals are slow to pick up on the theatrical input: All Tomorrow's Parties (known to us cognoscenti as ATP), with its Butlins and Pontins settings seems aching for some theatre – I think some live art would go perfectly with Autechre or God Speed You Black Emperor! And you can sleep in a chalet! Bliss. Green Man festival has a comedy tent, but nothing of the visual variety if you exclude the Morris Dancers (weirdos) and the spectacular (and silent!) firework

display and giant green-man-burning on the last night, which is not quite theatre, but certainly dramatic. But the toilets are a work of art in themselves.

And if you are truly prepared to leave your home comforts behind in favour of fire, then go to Nowhere, Spain's answer to Burning Man, out in the Zaragoza desert. People take all their food, drink, arts construction materials and wind turbines with them to create such structures as a spiral staircase into the sky, a giant head, or a network of fake phone booths. The festival even gives grants for arts projects to be brought to them. I've seen the pictures of people naked in the dust, reader. It did not tempt me. But then I looked at my cut-off jeans, and said to myself: what you really need, dear, is a camper van.

Laura Eades is the Canny Granny

Get thee to a festival this summer!

Latitude 14–17 July 2011:
www.latitudefestival.co.uk
 Glastonbury Festival of Performing Arts
 22–26 June 2011 (sold out):
www.glastonburyfestivals.co.uk
 Secret Garden Party 21–24 July 2011:
www.secretgardenparty.com
 All Tomorrow's Parties, various weekenders
 throughout 2011: www.atpfestival.com
 Nowhere festival, Spain, 5–10 July 2011:
www.goingnowhere.org
www.greenman.net

Artists and theatre companies mentioned:

www.19-27.co.uk
www.dedomenici.co.uk
www.taxdeductible.co.uk
www.thetwowrongs.co.uk
www.avantidisplay.co.uk
www.mimbre.co.uk
www.naturaltheatre.co.uk
www.philkay.co.uk
www.sadlucy.com (Matthew Robins)



The Works

A personal view of the works of Kneehigh by Charlotte Smith



The Works | Charlotte Smith

Quizzical looks, a raised eyebrow... who's watching who? Shaved heads, in white vests and pants, the odd tattoo. A bit suspicious, curious, but willing to meet your gaze.

Willing to throw a pail of water over you too, but they decide against it. Are these people prisoners of war? Workers? Athletes? Toys? Kneehigh suck you into *The Red Shoes* in a matter of seconds. It's a show they have performed before and revived this year at Battersea Arts Centre, so a cornerstone of their work, but also a new piece of magic. They take the bare bones of the story, from the fairytale by Hans Christian Andersen, famously retold in Powell and Pressburger's lavish film of 1948. But the reworking is thorough, with its own hallmark physical vocabulary.

Sometimes you could be watching mime. Physical jokes include when the girl takes a shower behind closed doors and two helpers chip in with brooms and a watering can from above. Or when a handful of performers become a multilingual Mercedes.

The physicality is painful. Every time the girl slams her huge clogs into the stage, you feel bones fracturing, nerves snapping, frustration, despair. And in a sinewy denouement, the butcher chops off her feet like an animal, using just a tourniquet and saw, while sweet-talking her like a petal. The scraps of flesh live on as flying dragons. There's plenty of love in a Kneehigh show. You just reach the point of wanting the soldier to dance with the girl almost more than anything else, when they finally start. But the dance flips back into horror when he returns shellshocked from war.

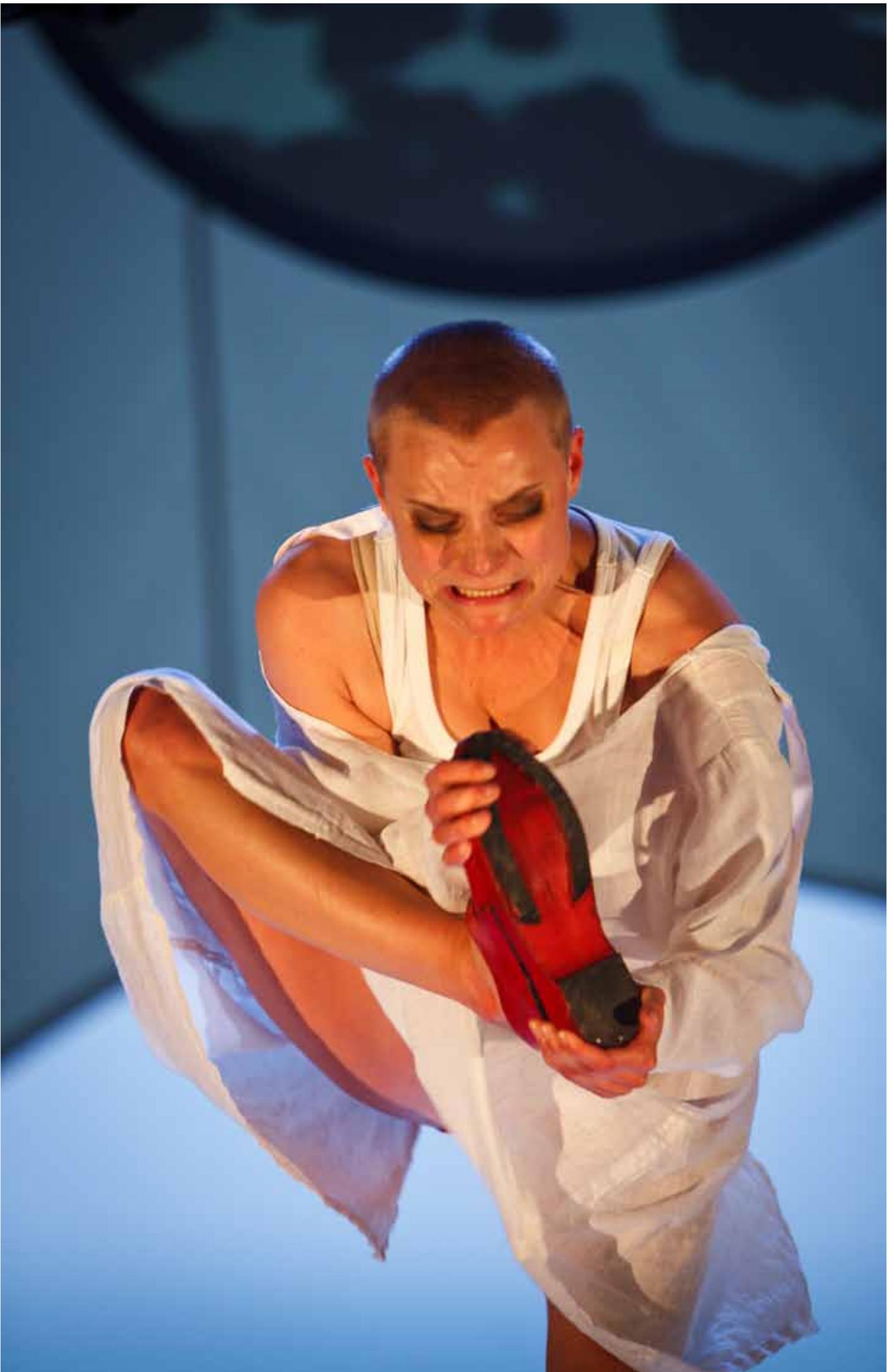
Trombones, harmonica and clarinet played live are part of a soundtrack that spans classical bravura and contemporary beats. It spawns incongruous combinations like a jig to drum and bass, or an over-the-top, gently atrocious Can-Can.

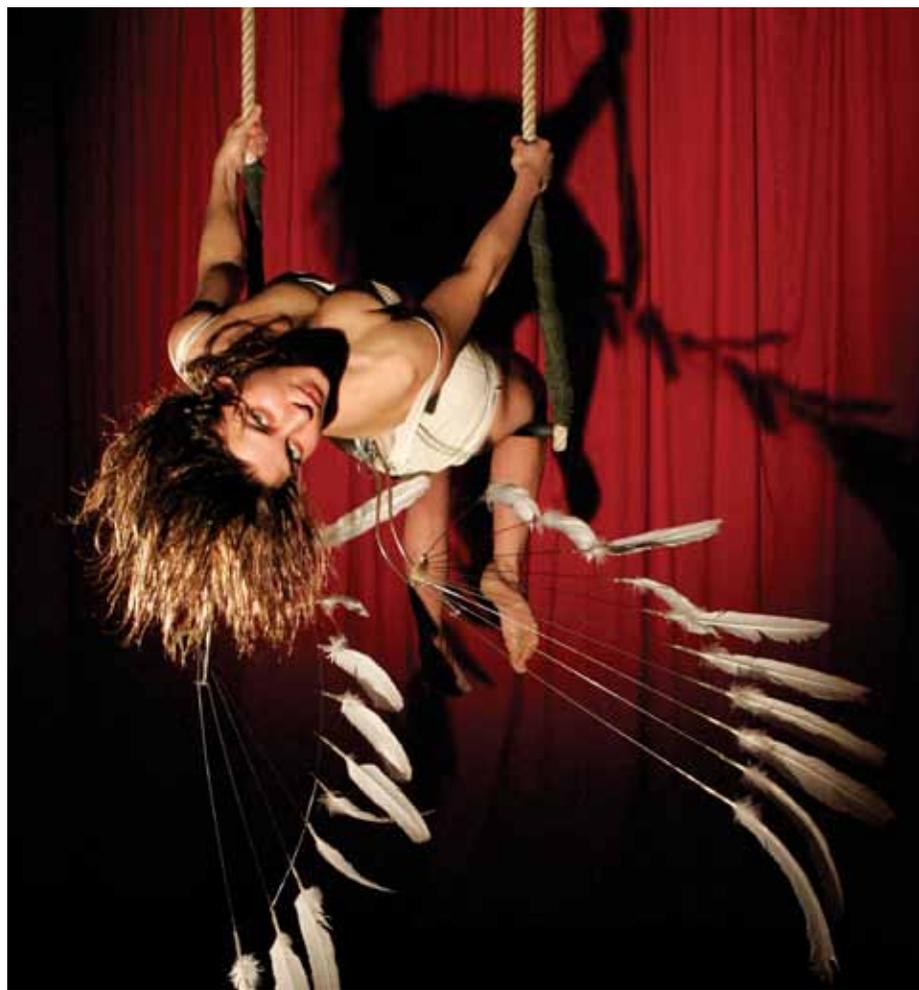
The theatricality is self-aware, in a way which could be described as Brechtian. The actors are given boxes labelled 'The Old Lady' or 'Hat' as they squabble over roles in a live casting session.

So, is this the recipe of Kneehigh success – tough physicality, love potions, live brass, cerebral theatricality, bold narrators, slippery genders, with perhaps some cinematic references thrown in for good measure?

Genders are twisted and obscured, both subtly and blatantly. The proceedings are conducted by Lady Lydia, a man in drag with a huge, extendable fishing rod and shag-pile wizard's coat, who describes herself as 'your host and hostess, your fisher of fun'.

So, is this the recipe of Kneehigh success – tough physicality, love potions, live brass, cerebral theatricality, bold narrators, slippery genders, with perhaps some cinematic





references thrown in for good measure? Wait a moment... Emma Rice, who shares the mantle of artistic director with Mike Shepherd, says: 'There is no formula to the way we make theatre. However, it always starts with the story. No, it starts before then. It starts with an itch, a need, an instinct.'

Kneehigh was founded in Cornwall about 30 years ago, and began by making children's theatre. They still share childhood snapshots or memories of first love in programme notes. But the company is also now successful in the mainstream and Arts Council England (National Portfolio) funded, playing major international venues and collaborating with the Royal Shakespeare Company. It has nonetheless kept a stable core including designer Bill Mitchell and composer Stu Barker.

Kneehigh are overt in their use of fairytales. There's not only *The Red Shoes* but also *Hansel and Gretel*, *Rapunzel*, *Cry Wolf*, a reworking of *Little Red Riding Hood*, and *The Wooden Frock*, an interpretation of one of the many variations of the *Cinderella* story.

They are equally overt in their use of film. The company used Noel Coward's *Brief Encounter* (1945) for their own smash-hit theatrical production of the same name. *A Matter of Life and Death* (1946) was also a Powell and Pressburger film, and Jacques Demy directed Catherine Deneuve in *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* (1964).

However, any production must stand on its own two feet, so detailed comparisons

of play and film are not always helpful, whether these are aesthetically close (as in *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg*) or distant (*The Red Shoes*). Kneehigh have also drawn on sources ranging from Angela Carter (*Nights at the Circus*) to Euripides (*The Bacchae*) via Jules Verne (*Journey to the Centre of the Earth*). Emma Rice says she had never seen or read Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* before she agreed to produce it.

Kneehigh keep grounded by performing outdoor work in Cornwall. They work in barns – with a multi-fuel burner but no mobile-phone reception or cappuccinos

Kneehigh keep grounded by performing outdoor work in Cornwall. They work in barns – with a multi-fuel burner but no mobile-phone reception or cappuccinos – but resist the image of 'hippies', saying they are pretty serious about what they do. The company wants to provide a 'good night out' at their new base, *The Asylum*, for people who may not usually go to the theatre.

Things can go wrong. *Don John* seems to have had seasoned theatre professionals – people who greet night after night of flaccid fringe productions with unwavering enthusiasm

or at least an open critical mind – recoil in horror. The Evening Standard critic, Fiona Mountford, said: 'With his long black woolly jumper and knee-length boots, Gisli Örn Gardarsson looks like a wannabe New Romantic poet and acts like a man thinking about bus timetables. He is tedious, pretentious and entirely charisma-free, the sort of guy anyone over the age of 18 would studiously avoid at parties.'

Total Theatre Magazine's Alexander Roberts was more enthusiastic, enjoying the visual smorgasbord the show presented: 'The theatre [Battersea Arts Centre, longtime supporters of Kneehigh's work] had burst out onto the street – the company of actors sporting tank-tops and flares, to the flicker of tacky fairy lights and the pong of scampi and chips. The chosen site for Kneehigh's story was the Grand Hall, which had been totally transformed and split into two, the space converted into a 1970s lounge bar, and an end-on stage and auditorium.'

Well, each to their own... Personally, I like a bit of failure (albeit of necessity not choice). I didn't see *Don John*. However, *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg*, at the time of writing running at the Gielgud Theatre in the West End, is also receiving mixed reviews. This is more of a conundrum, as it ostensibly has some of Kneehigh's trademark strengths, but slightly misses the mark.

There's a slide (possibly once part of a rollercoaster) of love, which is erratically illuminated. The Cherbourg set, umbrellas, costumes are all nicely done, and there are



strong performances from the leading lady Geneviève (Carly Bawden), who exudes muddled hormones, to supporting roles like the postman/sailor/ animator (Aki Omoshaybi).

Is the narrator Maîtresse (Meow Meow) just too hammy in her Frenchness? Or the central love story both too saccharine and then swept under the carpet too quickly, with less convincing romantic substitutes than in the film? Has the company tried too hard for the West End (tempting fate by producing a fridge magnet set, keyring and latte mug)?

Tristan & Yseult was the first Kneehigh show I saw, at the National Theatre. Like *Cymbeline*, it was developed outdoors and performed at venues including Rufford Abbey in Nottinghamshire, the Minack Theatre on the cliff in Cornwall and the Eden Project. Mike Shepherd says both shows became 'deeper and darker' as they moved indoors.

The first performances of *Tristan & Yseult* were in summer 2003 and the following May, the lead actor, Tristan Sturrock, fell off a wall in Padstow and broke his neck in three places. Anecdotal, you may say, but perhaps it gives a flavour of the work involved. He was back to *Tristan* at the Cottesloe in spring 2005. *Tristan* is a medieval romance, the tale of a Cornish knight and Irish princess. Their illicit love has been chronicled from Gottfried von Strassburg to Richard Wagner. It's a Cornish legend, with some French courtly love, as well as Nordic, Welsh, Spanish and Czech versions...

Emma Rice describes *Tristan & Yseult* as her 'letter to love'. I remember the lonely figures with binoculars (the 'lovespotters'), a ship, the agony and the music. Perhaps the tricky, hit-and-miss subject of love helps explain why Kneehigh's work is poised between brilliance and sentimentality, connection and disconnect.

Kneehigh remain one of the most successful companies today. They've moved on and stayed true to their roots. If you sometimes imagine running away to join the theatre, where would be better than their Cornish barn? And a company motto is: 'Hold your nerve'.

Charlotte Smith saw *The Red Shoes* at BAC, London, 7 April 2011, and *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* at the Gielgud Theatre, London, 12 April 2011.

Quotes by Emma Rice and Mike Shepherd are from the company's website and programmes.

Further information on Kneehigh:

Kneehigh are a regionally-based theatre company with a local, national and international profile. In 2009/10 they played to more than 189,000 people worldwide, of which 89,000 were in the UK and over 13,000 in their home county of Cornwall. In 2010 Kneehigh launched the Asylum, a touring theatre space, and 'a venue to call home'.

For further details and for news on touring theatre shows, site-specific and local work in Cornwall, and events at The Asylum, see the company website: www.kneehigh.co.uk.



P23 & 24: Kneehigh *The Red Shoes*. Photos Steve Tanner
 P25 left: Kneehigh *Tristan & Yseult*. Photo Steve Tanner
 P25 right: Kneehigh *A Night at the Circus*. Photo Keith Pattison
 P26 top: Kneehigh's portable venue, Asylum. Photo Steve Tanner
 P26 bottom: Kneehigh *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg*. Photo Steve Tanner

Beccy Smith reflects on a spin-off from *The Dragons' Trilogy* by Robert Lepage / Ex Machina

The Blue Dragon



Robert Lepage / Ex Machina *The Blue Dragon*. Photo Louise Leblanc

illuminate the height of the enormous stage. But there are times when this profoundly humane story felt it warranted greater accessibility. A large-scale screen-based staging is inevitably alienating and the remove of the action maintained a critical distance that didn't always seem to serve the story. Dealing with such monumental machinery, the writing sometimes felt like it was hefting its weight to keep things moving – time lapses and easy narrative shortcuts didn't do justice to the depth of the three characters within the play.

Lepage has described cinematic storytelling as a necessary future language for performance. In this production, bodies in a landscape have much to suggest about Lepage's themes of figures questing for meaning in a globalised world where other cultures undermine the subjects' centrality and seem to symbolise threats to the self. But these huge canvases, which act in his solo works as partners in performance, as other characters with whom Lepage can push against and interact, here dwarf and diminish more conventional dramatic interactions onstage. In the climactic scene between Lamontagne and Claire (when she accuses him of intellectual cowardice and he her of alcoholism), the staging device of placing their exchange during a power cut in a to-scale house set metres back from the forestage serves to dilute the scene's own electricity. The storytelling has no choice but to roll over, relinquishing such difficult and real conflict almost as soon as it had appeared in favour of a more schematic, straightforward interaction. A miraculously reformed Claire returns months later to find Xiao Li and her baby – Xiao Li herself an alcoholic, ignoring the baby's pathetic cries for help as she prostitutes her creativity to ironically reproductive art. The images she's copying out may be conjured pleasingly enough onstage by clever digital canvases but, as storytelling, this ellipsis cheapens the complexity of its characters to binary forms.

If this is a new theatre, what *The Blue Dragon* seems, disappointingly, to be suggesting is a triumph of style over substance. The production's multiple endings, while theatrically intriguing and a great showcase of this tiny troupe of three's multiple talents, evade any conclusive dramatic closure for the characters, simply allowing the company to sidestep the real human issues the story claims to explore.

Beccy Smith saw *The Blue Dragon* at The Barbican Theatre, 18 February 2011, where it was presented as part of BITE 2011.

Robert Lepage's return after more than twenty years to his seminal work *The Dragons' Trilogy* immediately sets up a commentary on how times have transformed both cultural projections of China and art (which the original work explored) and the aesthetic and approach of Lepage's work itself.

Described as a 'spin off' to Lepage's breakthrough show *The Dragons' Trilogy*, his company Ex Machina's *The Blue Dragon* sees Lepage revisiting his alter ego, Québécois artist Pierre Lamontagne, to explore themes pertinent to them both in later life – legacy, cross-culturalism, creative courage. He returns too, as the title suggests, to China, no longer as a projected, psychological place but a real one, with its concomitant disappointments and compromises.

Now living in Shanghai, in an old industrial quarter facing demolition as part of the regime's reinvention of the area for its own brand of consumer capitalism, Lamontagne has substituted a focus on his own artistic creativity with the curation of others. His relationship with young conceptual artist Xiao Li is interrupted by a visit from former lover, Claire, now concerned for her own creative output in her urgent hunt for an adoptive child. When Xiao Li, whose photographic works mirror her own emotional elusiveness, discovers she is pregnant with Pierre's child, will this child offer the solution to Pierre's creative impotence or for Claire's thirst for meaningfulness?

The piece excavates rich emotional and metaphorical territory – cultural and emotional connection, the mutual suspicion of East and West, and personal and creative fecundity. The world has turned since Lepage's first imaginative forays into this subject matter, and the deep anxieties that seem to underpin the work reflect this.

For Lamontagne, the realities of China, as opposed to his youthful fantasies of the 80s, have been stifling. His domestic and artistic experiences both suggest emasculation by this harsher political and ruthless economic climate. He is suspended in a fantasy version of China, a historical house in which he is stubbornly resisting plans for regeneration. Aesthetically, with its nods to Herge's graphic novels and calligraphic texts, the production sympathises with his atavistic leanings. The censure of modern China's inexorable rise and rise, represented in the destructive portrayal of Xiao Li's unwillingness to compromise, is implicit but strong.

As in much of Lepage's work, the cinematic frame and human interaction with large-scale digital projections dominate the staging aesthetic. The more abstract, imagistic sequences are where Lepage's theatrical powers really come into their own, richly communicating idea, tone and story through light, colour and bodies in space. The military dance of a lone female figure with the Chinese flag shadowed in deep scarlet; a romantic couple cycling through the imagined (remembered?) flurries of the first snowfall whose white digitised flakes

Emily Ayres immerses herself in Birmingham's week-long live art extravaganza

Fierce!

For what felt like the first time in a long time, there was a buzz around art in Birmingham. After a two year hiatus Fierce!, the famously esoteric blood-letting festival of love-hate live art, burst into the city at the same time as the first sunny week of 2011.

The festival began with 'The Irrepressibles', a ten-piece 'performance orchestra' who glide and jazz about the stage playing impressively theatrical songs, fronted by Jamie McDermott who has the voice of some dark angel that you hope might visit your deathbed. The orchestra's choreographed lunges and twitches work nicely with the rhythm of the songs and are sumptuously reflected by the mirrors behind – the Town Hall is by far the most grand of the festival's venues.

Live artist and academic Dominic Johnson presented two linked works at Fierce!. *Departure* was made in collaboration with renowned artist/tattooist Alex Binnie, continuing Johnson's 'ongoing exploration of the politics of body modification'. We witness Johnson's left hand being tattooed and the procedure is accompanied by a commissioned sound design. That's it. For me, it was a bit of a non-event: too clean and predictable – yet to others, as I discovered in conversation afterwards: 'it was enough to see something beautiful happen live, to be part of that live event'.

The performance ends with a procession to *Human Salvage*, a performance party co-curated by Dominic Johnson and Fierce!, set in Stan's Cafe HQ, the AE Harris factory building. The atmosphere was a bit 'shy', creating a sense that you had to go to the live art, rather than it coming to you. However, there was the most wonderfully obnoxious performance by Lauren Barri Holstein, who popped eggs in condoms up her vagina and squeezed them out into a bowl whilst singing American teen-angst pop songs halfway up a ladder. It was obscene, fearless and marvellous.

Over at the refurbished mac (Midlands Arts Centre), Sheila Ghelani's poetic piece *Rat Rose Bird* is a story of loss told through objects and wordplay which is clinical, soft and controlled (no theatrical excess to be seen here). She handles her material well, staying firmly in performance art mode – rather as a poet doing a reading than an actor conjuring atmosphere.

The following evening we sauntered along to the Rainbow warehouse space in Digbeth for Action Hero's *Frontman*, a thoroughly



Sheila-Ghelani *Rat Rose Bird*. Photo Daniel Martin

modern piece about iconic frontmen from past and present, the atmosphere of which was greatly heightened by the packed out and grimy venue. The audience was mixed too, and I enjoyed watching some youths trying to work out why this was not quite what they had expected, as the *Frontman* character, played by a woman, slowly disintegrated into embarrassing arrogance and childish dependency and flung herself into the audience during a scrap with her pissed-off technician. An imperfect show with attitude.

Of course, festivals are about atmosphere. With events spread at disparate venues across the city, Fierce did well to create a sense of communality with their chill-out venue *The Dirty End*, housed at VIVID's space, in partnership with Flatpack Film Festival. Good coffee, good food, good dancing and good conversations were had here over the duration of the festival. There was also a hog roast on Eastside Green in Digbeth on the Saturday night as part of EXYZT Birmingham's Fierce! offering which had a nice vibe: their Birmingham trailer could be seen from the train as you came into the city, which was a good invitation to the festival.

Highlight of the festival for me was Lundahl & Seidl's *Symphony of a Missing Room*, an audio piece set in Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery. This was by the far the furthest-reaching piece I saw in terms of elegance, joy and imagination.

The premise is to imagine what the 'unseen' or 'imagined' architecture of the gallery might be, after first experiencing its physical reality. The architecture created by the paintings and artefacts themselves, by their history and the stories they can tell, added to by the wildness of your own imagination when your sight is taken from you (with the donning of futuristic headsets), is the material for this show. And it is very affecting, making you highly aware of your physicality, balance, reactions and responses as you put your faith in the person leading you. You are told you are in a magnificent 'missing room' which is so vast it is almost frightening, and contains characters, whole landscapes such as a wood, as well as objects and histories that would go unnoticed by the other museum visitors that day. The effect is exhausting. It ends when you 'wake' on a carpet in one of the museum's many display spaces, wondering where that missing room might be.

So that was Fierce 2011 – a fun week! As a newly minted National Portfolio organisation, Fierce! promises us an even bigger, better festival next year. The festival's co-directors, Laura McDermott and Harun Morrison, have taken the live art bull by the horns and are making Fierce! their own... it'll be exciting to see what they come up with next.

The Fierce! Festival took place 22–27 March 2011 at various venues across Birmingham.
www.wearefierce.org

Dorothy Max Prior gets an earful of sensational sounds at SPILL

Twist and Shout



see an expanding Milky Way, or a game of Battleships, or a medical chart monitoring a patient in the dead of night. Then, as quickly as they arrive, the pictures leave, and we return to a trance-like state of just – receiving. Like all great art, Ikeda's work takes us out of ourselves and into a state of ecstatic, wordless appreciation of all that is 'more than us'. A holy communion: art, science and spirituality merging in holistic harmony. Hallelujah!

With superficial similarities to Ikeda's work – monochrome moving image with the occasional touch of primary red; earsplitting sound in an extraordinary range of notes and tones – *Schrei 27*, a film by Davide Pepe and Diamanda Galás, in fact works in the completely opposite direction to *datamatics*:

it is rooted in the intensely human and visceral, but this somehow pans out and away into a detached set of sounds and images of the body that get closer and closer to abstraction. Had I read the programme notes before entering the cinema, I may well have stayed out: *Schrei 27* is 'an aria of pain... an unrelenting portrait of a body suffering torture within a medical faculty'. Yet it somehow, oddly, isn't disturbing: the end result is something that has the deep and dark beauty of a Passion play, appropriately enough for Good Friday. I suppose I didn't find it disturbing because I didn't know what I was supposed to be viewing/hearing, so I wasn't hearing the screams of a tortured person, I was hearing the extraordinary sonic possibilities of Diamanda Galás's voice. It also – within the context of a festival of performance – raises interesting questions about how we interpret sound and image: just where are the differences between the scream of torture, the scream of childbirth, the scream of ecstasy – and a 'pure' scream? On a visual level: Davide Pepe's film has the chiaroscuro beauty of a Caravaggio painting. Again, it may have been disturbing subject matter, but I found myself entranced by the qualities of light upon the body, or the emergence of a highlighted body part from the darkness. In my response, I am somehow reminded of the story of the small boy in the Second World War looking at the bombing of Coventry and seeing only a beautiful fireworks display.

Both of these SPILL shows highlight not only the awesome power of sound, but also point out that we see what we want to see...

Dorothy Max Prior saw Ryoji Ikeda's *datamatics [ver.2.0]* on 18 April 2011, and *Schrei 27*, a film by Davide Pepe and Diamanda Galás, on 22 April 2011. Both were presented at the Barbican, London as part of the SPILL Festival of Performance 2011.

Schrei 27 – a film by Diamanda Galás and Davide Pepe

Twist and Shout | Dorothy Max Prior

Opening the SPILL Festival of Performance 2011 is an artist known for his reticence: if you catch a glimpse of Ryoji Ikeda during one of his shows, you are doing well: he'll be the unassuming guy in the black turtleneck sweater behind the mixing desk. At the end of *datamatics [ver.2.0]* he did, after a great deal of applause from an appreciative Barbican Concert Hall audience, come out to take a bow, but it was a fleeting moment. Ryoji Ikeda – electronic musician, visual artist, and a former member of legendary Japanese performance company Dumb Type – seems to fit the stereotype of a man fascinated by mathematics: neat, precise, reserved, more interested in machinery and numbers than in people.

His compositions in sound and light assemble and organise pure electronic data into patterns – sine waves and white noise, matrices of numbers, thousands of thin lines parallel or converging – an endless stream of electronic noise and fast-moving monochrome images that defy our powers of cognition and perception, resulting in

a mantra-and-mandala-like effect. Unable to make sense, we give in, and enter into a different level of appreciation.

In the programme notes we learn that Ikeda pushes his computers almost to breaking point: 'They start crying, but if you push more and more, patterns emerge.' He's a hard taskmaster, but we're grateful for it. There's theatre in them there codes and crucibles!

From his methodologies and their outcome come some fascinating teasers on our interpretation of such concepts as 'abstract' and the theatrical notion of 'transformation'. For this raw material is abstracted from sources such as the emails he has downloaded onto his computer – the texts transformed back into their pure binary code of zeroes and ones. Words become numbers; all is nothing or one – a nice thought! And out of this mass of mathematical systems, pictures emerge – yes, constructed by our brains, but isn't that always the way? Is it so different to the fire casting shadows on the walls of Plato's cave? Thus, we suddenly

Go Viral! Tom Wilson catches the SPILL bug

On Infection

Infections occur on a microscopic level, operating out of sight of our conscious perception, only being felt after the event as an echo, a tangible laceration of our being. Thus, the third biennial SPILL Festival of Performance takes as a theme this biological trauma, and in doing so firmly marks its artistic operating territory. Unashamedly principled and provocative, SPILL has in previous years inhabited a number of venues in London for the duration of the festival, but this year's SPILL is a more contained event. Created and curated by performance-maker Robert Pacitti, produced by Pacitti Company, and hosted exclusively by the Barbican (other than a weekend's worth of emerging artists showcased at the National Theatre Studio under the auspices of the National Platform), SPILL has cultivated a more intimate feel – spreading across the halls and rooms of this venue, giving a density to the activities despite the reduced scale. Equally, the spirit of a 'festival,' often hard to create within a single building, lurks around a number of corners, specifically through the choice to inhabit the public space of the Barbican with a number of breakout events. That this near counter-cultural event is ensconced in the venue that takes its name from the now defunct defensive perimeter of London brings a juicy paradox to the festival's avowed socio-political agenda.

Like an infection, the performances throughout the festival work not only on the surface of the audience but more importantly beneath the surface. Helen Cole's *We See Fireworks* is a case in point. Within a pitch-dark room in a far corner of the Barbican, with only a few scattered, barely-lit light bulbs for company, voices speak of performances they have witnessed. Between the darkness and the story, like some bacterial reaction, the listener's memory feeds on other people's memories – our images flesh out Cole's recordings, creating a rich resonance within the imagination. Like the kinesthetics of a cold, they play on the chest and breath; like the echoes of feverish dreams, they paint the shimmering outline of moments we have never seen, but feel nonetheless. What is also foregrounded by these almost private relationships with the voices is the way your responses change when you're joined by other audience members. In the half-dark there is a frisson of connection with these strangers who like you have stumbled upon this room of secrets.

Adjacent to Helen Cole's work and echoing the second SPILL festival (2009) is the SPILL Tarot. This is a specially conceived Tarot deck fusing live art practices with the symbolism and mythology of the Tarot's



Romeo Castellucci. Photo SRS

Major Arcana. Blown-up to A1, these richly coloured images of performers and artists (photographed by Manuel Vason; designed by Justin Weyers) have a dark coherence with the psycho-geography of the Tarot: Marisa Carnesky is the Wheel of Fortune, referencing the artist's ongoing fascination with fairground paraphernalia; multimedia artist, performer and filmmaker Helena Hunter is The Magician; renegade Catholic Franko B is the Pope; and Robert Pacitti himself is Death, the card that signifies transformation, change, and the instigation of new ways of working. But mounted as they are on columns within a small space, the images have an unnecessarily claustrophobic feel, and it is hard to absorb the full weight of the image when forced to stand so close. There is much to be said for the placement of the spectator in art work and in some ways handling the actual SPILL Tarot deck might allow for a more personal and affecting relationship with the images and their provocations. Here as display pieces their existence shifts into more monolithic statements of presence and in some ways they vie against each other in the cramped space, rather than activating each other as a Tarot spread in front of you might do.

Romeo Castellucci / Societas Raffaello Sanzio, Italian maestros of experimental and challenging theatre, and longstanding SPILL associates, were billed as presenting *The Minister's Black Veil*, but a late decision meant that they instead brought *On the Concept of the Face, Regarding the Son of God* to the Barbican. The show operates in a similar manner to Helen Cole's work. Firmly in the camp of artists who resist categorisation or

authorial meaning, Castellucci presents a minimal staging of a Father and Son: The Father shitting himself and sobbing, The Son dutifully and resignedly cleaning it up. All the while, a large-scale reproduction of Antonello de Messina's painting of Christ (Salvator Mundi) looks across this scene into the audience. Managing to be both theatrical and anti-theatrical, this work feels both gossamer-thin and deeply affecting. Scott Gibbon's thrumming score manages to find a discordant harmony with the personal resonances of the paternal-filial relationship. Much was written in the press in advance of the scatological quality of the work, but this belies the two principle counterpoints – the clinical environs of the 'characters' and the rich luscious colours of de Messini's painting. This focus on the faeces also suggests that the power of this work is in its shock value, which is not the case. Instead it is the verisimilitude within the work that connects the audience with the emotional landscape of the action. Opening on Maundy Thursday gave this piece additional resonances, alluding to the inversion of power-relationships and the humility encoded in the action of washing another being.

SPILL's artistic director Robert Pacitti often talks of the 'agency' of work, and the attendant dialogue and archiving projects surrounding the main events are as important as the art work itself. These take a number of forms including SPILL TV (available on the website) and SPILL Talks, taking the form of curated interviews and dialogues. One medium of these talks is the CD interview stations, where contributing artists speak in response to the festival's themes. These



Rajni Shah *Glorious*



discrete doorways into the agenda of the artist are, as expected, home to both complex reflections on the nature of infection and more mundane discussions of the role of tea in a process. With time to kill between shows it is an intriguing diversion, particularly when listening in to artists who have made shows that you won't be seeing. Most endearing of these that I caught were *Get in the Back of the Van* (a young company, currently in residence at Arnolfini Bristol, whose piece *External* was programmed as part of the National Platform) who grabbed me with their light and fresh discussions of their work.

Another key discussion strategy is the SPILL Salon events, hosted by Thinker-in-Residence Oreet Ashery. The Salons recall the cultural 'conclaves' of the 17th and 18th centuries, rather than the 'cut and blow dry' variety, and like their historical counterparts bring degrees both of entertainment and information. Ashery hosted with a calm enquiry, allowing her guests scope and space to range through the chosen topic. The salon with Patricia MacCormack and John Cussan in conversation with Ashery proved to be a cheekily anarchic and intellectual discussion of zombies and 1950s horror, conversational in tone whilst also carrying a seam of cultural and social resistance.

Instigated at the first festival in 2007, SPILL Feasts continue the nature of cultural activism in a small way by attempting to open dialogues between artists and audiences. This year's Feast (for 90 people) took place in the backstage area of the Barbican Theatre, along a single banquet table. Vegetarian and simple fare, but with a spicy thread, the food proved that conversation is much easier when your mouth gives you time to think. With no agenda and only the structure of the courses, the Feast is what you make of it and proved a convivial way to spend an afternoon, though hard to gauge the overall impact because of the individual experience. The Feast was rounded up with a short address from Professor Martin Jones



Sylvia Rimat *Never Forget Me*. Photo Laura Montag

On Infection | Tom Wilson

(Cambridge University, specialist in the archaeology of food) with a brief reflection on the cultural significance of the elements of the meal – reflecting, for example, that the word 'company' derives from the Old French phrase for 'with bread', and explaining the relationship between the use of spices and social power and hierarchy.

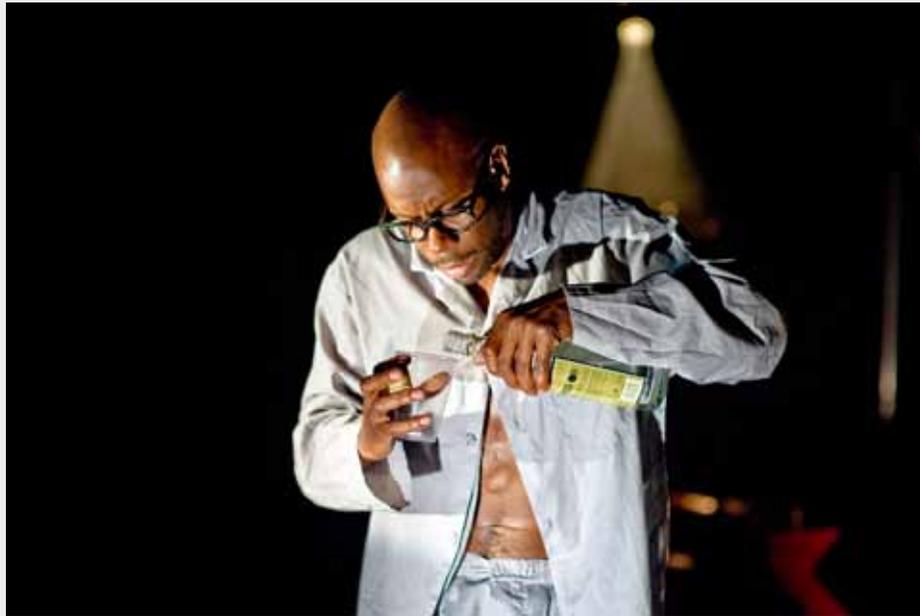
The Feast in many ways serves as a microcosm of what the festival stands for in respect of the community of artists and audience, and as Professor Jones pointed out, the significance of sharing bread around a table is not to be missed. As we firmly arrive in uncertain times, with the principles of austerity and society the subject of current dialogue, SPILL continues to be a site

of challenging agendas and the youthful audience across the events suggests that The Pacitti Company are continuing to extend and cement the reach of contemporary performance. The next challenge will be for Pacitti to extend this beyond the capital and begin to infect culture at large. And with the recent news that ACE will now support SPILL to shift to an annual cycle with festivals alternating between London and the East of England we could be about to see a much wider embracing of the work that SPILL profiles.

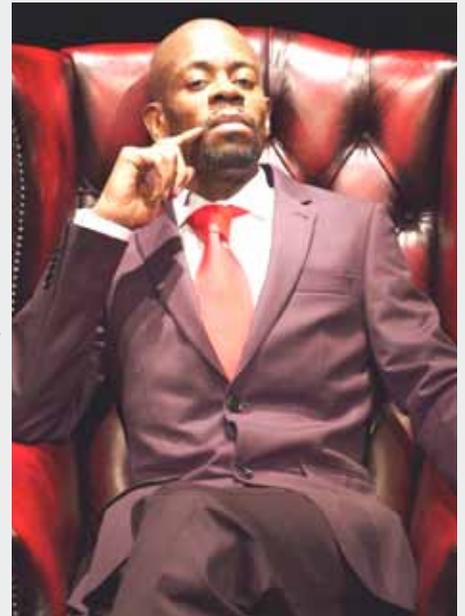
The SPILL Festival took place at Barbican, London 18–23 April 2011. The National Platform took place at the National Theatre Studios 23–24 April 2011. www.spillfestival.com

Paul Allender witnesses Benji Reid's devilishly delicious new show

The Devil Has Quentin's Heart



Benji Reid *The Devil Has Quentin's Heart*



Benji Reid *The Devil Has Quentin's Heart*

Benji Reid has an eclectic history. He trained as a dancer with the Northern School of Contemporary Dance and as a physical actor with Philippe Gaulier, going on to work with the David Glass Ensemble and Black Mime Theatre. But for many people, he will always be known best as the charismatic breakdancer with legendary soul/rap group Soul II Soul. He has, since then, become a creative producer, deviser and director – and a pioneer of ‘hip hop theatre’ through his company Breaking Cycles, who were recently (shamefully) disinvested in by Arts Council England – a previous ‘regularly funded organisation’ (RFO) that was not taken on to the new National Portfolio.

The Devil Has Quentin's Heart is, perhaps, closer to regular ‘narrative theatre’ than one might expect of this heritage. It is the story of an alcoholic man who has sold his heart to the devil in exchange for ‘ultra-success’ as a Wall Street Trader. Shades of Bret Easton Ellis’ *American Psycho* as well as of *Faust* – although apparently the source and main reference for Breaking Cycles is Ray Shell’s novel *Iced* (and Ray Shell is credited as co-writer/deviser of the show, along with Reid and director Peadar Kirk).

The show takes place in the last hour of the last day of Quentin Forrest’s life. Quentin knows the Devil is coming for his soul (he already has his heart) and is terrified. He is trying to find ways of making amends so that it doesn’t happen. All of this is set within the context of Quentin desperately wanting to please his absent father.

Benji Reid’s dance and physical theatre heritage is key to the work’s success. I was very taken by Benji’s physical presence onstage. His slow, easy movements are complemented by dark, threatening lighting (courtesy of lighting designer Paul Colley) and spiky electronic music from DJ Andrew Wong. From the beginning, with the lights coming up on our anti-hero Quentin sitting in a very grand leather chair, his presence onstage was astounding. His posture, movements and verbal statements were all spellbinding. I could only take my eyes off him very briefly to look at the DJ (the only other person onstage) who was conjuring amazingly varied and contrasting sounds out of his laptop – jagged noises and atmospheric wails permeating the backing tracks.

Reid is both an extraordinary dancer and a compelling storyteller. Whenever Quentin drank the alcohol out of various bottles on the stage, it was as if he were drinking nectar: he savoured the drink so much that I felt I wanted to try it (even though I don’t drink alcohol). Reid’s performance was full of richness, warmth and giving (this perhaps a difficult feat when playing a ruthless, alcoholic Wall Street trader).

Reid plays all the characters in the story, and highlight moments included a conversation with his Dad, who was represented onstage as a sinister portrait. In these love-torn exchanges between father and son, it sometimes wasn’t possible to tell which one was talking. Then there’s the moment where Quentin is invited to ‘have a dump’ on someone’s grave to summon up the devil’s

presence by the Green Gypsy, a wrecked, seductive drug addict he happened across in a drunken stupor. And my personal favourite: Quentin singing along to Al Green’s *Let’s Stay Together* while trying to get his hands on the Green Gypsy, whom he had just met. The ending is also spectacular, as the Devil takes up arms, and we find ourselves at the end of the barrel of a gun...

Some critical points: some of the dancing, particularly when Quentin was drunk, seemed superfluous to the show to me – I felt that Benji Reid was just showing us what he can do (although my companion, a dancer, felt the opposite – so this is a reminder that witnessing theatre is a subjective experience). The piece was political and anti-capitalist, but I wondered if this could have been delivered in a more abstract, open way with less of a literal narrative. Hints and suggestions can, for me, be more engaging than full stories. Again, this is perhaps reflecting my own views on theatre-making.

But this aside, *The Devil Has Quentin's Heart* was an amazing theatrical experience. The lighting, sounds and set were so wonderfully appropriate for both the story and the performance.

I thought that this show wasn’t going to be ‘my kind of thing’ – but I loved it.

Paul Allender saw *The Devil Has Quentin's Heart* by Breaking Cycles, performed by Benji Reid, at Nuffield Theatre, Lancaster University on 4 March 2011. Additional material by Dorothy Max Prior.

Simon Benson finds a lot to admire in *The Mill*

A City of Faded Dreams



Freedom Studios *The Mill – City of Dreams*



Freedom Studios *The Mill – City of Dreams*

once mighty industry it helped create – to say nothing of the communities it birthed.

After an hour and a half, the audience finds itself suddenly outside, in the cold, next to the entrance and a row of smelly portaloos. It takes some time for us to realise that, yes, this is the end. But that is exactly how it should be – uneasy, uncertain, unexpectedly dropped by a production that has worked so hard to make us feel and experience something powerful. Just as those countless individuals from Italy, Pakistan, Ukraine and elsewhere who gave up all to come here were to be eventually turned out by an industry that had either closed down or moved on, so we too are left at the end with just memories and feelings, contemplating the journeys we have just made.

This exceptional and powerful piece of theatre works like archaeology, it scrapes away at the present to reveal a past available only through its decaying remains. The past cannot be recreated, and this production does not attempt that. What it does, though, is evocative and thoughtful: it offers absences, fragments, partiality, a sense of something, and asks us to engage with and feel this as presence. An exploration of what is left behind when the world moves on, *The Mill – City of Dreams* evokes an absent past as seen through the torn shreds of the present – in doing so it also reminds us that, whoever else Britain belongs to, there are many millions from around the world who have a stake in it.

With its roots in the Asian Theatre School that sought to provide creative vision for young Asian people in Yorkshire, Bradford-based theatre company Freedom Studios aims to ‘challenge form, aesthetic and language’ through creative projects that respond to the question: ‘Whose Britain?’. *The Mill – City of Dreams*, set in a specially re-opened former mill, is a multi-disciplinary production performed by a mix of professional actors and performers drawn from the local community which engages head-on with this question. Challenging our preconceptions of immigrant communities and their contributions to British identity, in its celebration of their struggles and achievements (and of a building and industry that could only have existed because of them), *The Mill* offers a moving testimony to generations whose lives have been lived under the shadow of Bradford’s Drummond Mill.

Waiting in a large hall, we sip hot tea and chat as a video presents a glossy developer’s view of urban Bradford transformed for the modern age (it could almost be science fiction). Music washes over us, trance-like. A sleek, Swedish property developer calls us together and, with great humour, forms us into an audience of potential investors in a refurbished and yuppified Drummond Mill complex. As he leaves, Frank (the caretaker) enters and so begins the journey – through his memories, we encounter the mill, its history and the lives of its workers.

What follows becomes an increasingly powerful experience as we move, en masse,

through the vast echoing halls which, once teeming with life, were also once filled with hundreds of noisy looms, bobbins and miles of the Bradford yarn that found its way into one-third of the world’s woollen fabric. Director Madani Younis’s production takes us through halls and sheds, up stairs, along corridors, and into loft spaces. Later, we encounter characters from around the world – each with a tale of how they came here, what they brought with them, what they left behind, their hopes and expectations.

Initially, *The Mill* presents us with spaces: cameo pieces of beautifully staged (and designed) performance art that enable us simply to absorb the enormity of the building against the human scale of those who worked it and the global reach of Bradford’s woollen industry. Eventually, another narrative emerges: we move upstairs into the loft space and become increasingly aware of other pressures on the mill, its workers and their future – it is now a more recent past and a woman’s voice (echoing through the mill’s tannoy system) threatens reduced weeks, redundancy.

The characters are thinly drawn, but this is what makes them so successful. Yes, they are caricatures, but that is precisely what enables them to speak of something beyond themselves – of those they represent, of industrial and economic systems that have little time for those caught up in them. If the characters seem incomplete, they are no less effective ciphers to the great events they participated in than the now disused, peeling and crumbling Drummond Mill is to the

Simon Benson saw Freedom Studios’ *The Mill – City of Dreams* at Drummond Mill, Bradford, Yorkshire 31 March 2011. The show was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Honour Bayes samples the Coming Up festival for emerging theatre-makers

Making Their Debut



Kindle Theatre *Eat Your Heart Out*. Photo Steven Davies

For the Coming Up Festival six theatre-makers were given a total of £75,000 to create adventurous projects with no constraints. All under 25 years old, this dreamlike commission was made possible through a partnership with IdeasTap and Old Vic New Voices, two institutions dedicated to the development of emerging artists. In any circumstances, this was a golden opportunity; in the middle of the recession, it was a fairytale moment for these new (or newish) artists.

Taking place over two weeks and encompassing eight main performances and a peppering of side events and evenings, the eclectic programme certainly hinted at unrestrained imaginations. Opera sat next to politically charged drama, tastes of new writing, a wrestling extravaganza and an apocalyptic feast. Spoken word performance was mixed with rap and folk (in Cherry Franklin's *Old Roots/New Routes*); and the cavernous underground tunnels of festival venue Debut were transformed (by Preethi Mavahalli) into an underground cinema to showcase new talent. Conventional performance structures were thrown to the wind, but in the void left behind was what they filled it with worth it?

My first encounter of the festival, Kindle Theatre's *Eat Your Heart Out*, is a theatrical banquet at the end of the world. Long tables fade away into the smoke; deranged cooks dance and sing on tables. A maniacal narrator (Nina Smith) weaves tales of lost civilisations

and global natural disasters that have left humans an endangered species; a species hiding out underground, starving and wild.

We who have found our way to the final few are promised asteroid ash, coal bread and edible pansies. But disappointment dogs this decaying dinner party. Theatrical wares and gypsy bombast mean that promise and possibility abound; you really can't fault Nina Smith's grotesque tick-ridden Aide who conducts the proceeds with great gusto. But whilst the dramatics at play here begin with bloody curdling delight, they quickly dissipate as the prosaic logistical requirements of this banquet take over: you can't feed a party of over 100 people and do speeches in an hour; any wedding planner worth their salt knows that. It's a pity that Kindle Theatre seem to have bitten off more than they can chew by attempting to do just this; in the end both food and drama lose out.

Each artist on the programme has curated their event within underground nightclub Debut. This uber-cool venue under London Bridge station, full of cavernous arches and atmospheric lighting, was used to create a myriad of worlds from a city in civil unrest (in the aptly named *Civil Unrest*, another theatrical dining experience written by Ben Ellis and presented by Spike Laurie) to a wrestling ring in the apparently bombastic if slightly underbaked *BritWres-Fest* by Jamie Lewis Hadley. There is a palpable sense that, if nothing else, the Coming Up gang have fully taken on the potential of this potent space.

But perhaps the most isolated from this venue's dank glamour is another of the festival's offerings – *Silent Opera*. Fringe opera seems to be in the midst of a renaissance with London's Little Opera House bringing pared down versions to the masses. But for Daisy Evans, the brain behind *Silent Opera*, this stripping away of the 'essentials' is not an option. Instead she's looking to plug into the iPod generation and give us a duality of live singing to a recorded score, played just for us using the Silent Disco 'individual headphone experience in a shared space' technology.

We are a generation for whom a personalised soundtrack is the norm, we are used to receiving our music in surround sound, blocking out the noise of the external world, the coughing and spluttering of the commuters packed in too tightly next to us. But herein lies the rub; isn't the opera, or the theatre, supposed to be a communal event? Is purity of sound at the expense of a shared experience too high a price to pay? In *Silent Opera's Dido and Aeneas* the alchemy seems to have eluded a terribly well-meaning production. Trendy hipsters stand around, bunched together in a group but with arms crossed, nonchalantly leaning on one foot, chewing lips, listening to the soaring melodies of Henry Purcell through bits of plastic attached to their ears. Performers desperate for some connection writhe against this distanced crowd, handing out flowers, staring into eyes but we remain in our bubble of sound, untouchable. The whole thing feels very lonely and the quality of sound just isn't there to transport you into this passionate story.

A month on and the disparity between what was promised and delivered from this festival seems to have been its resounding legacy. Jam-packed with oodles of potential, but lacking the experience to match that in its production values, the success of the investment in *Coming Up* seems to rest on what happens next. These are young artists who have dreamt big: as we follow them into the future, it will be interesting to see if they hatch their golden egg opportunity into a golden goose, because as the storm clouds roll in this may have been a once in a lifetime moment to learn such lessons.

The *Coming Up* festival took place at Debut, London Bridge, 21 February – 4 March 2011. Creative directors were: Spike Laurie, Jamie Lewis Hadley, Cherry Franklin, Daisy Evans (*Silent Opera*), Nina Smith (Kindle Theatre) and Preethi Mavahalli (Underground Cinema). There were additional commissions by Rachel Tyson (Coalition Theatre Company) and Alex Le Roux (Electric Tunnels).

BOOKS AND OTHER MEDIA PUBLICATIONS + RELEASES

Books and Print Publications

Setting the Streets Alive

A Guide to Producing Street Arts Events

£10 pb

ISBN 978-0-9544892-2-5

Safety Guidance

For street arts, carnival, processions and large-scale performance

£12.50 pb

ISBN 978-0-9544892-5-0

ISAN

www.isanuk.org

Planning risk assessment, assembling an events team, consultation and liaison with the relevant authorities, stewarding, special effects... does it all make you want to run sobbing into the corner, a rug over your head? Fear not, ISAN (Independent Street Arts Network) are here to help! *Safety Guidance*, a compact, colourful, concise and clearly written booklet on safety in the great outdoors is a must for anyone programming, producing, presenting, or performing street theatre and outdoor events. Mostly written by David Bilton (who knows this subject inside out and back-to-front), with contributions from key festival directors, producers and production managers including Bill Gee, Jon Linstrum, Jeremy Shine and Julian Rudd. Lots of nice images too. Total Theatre recommends immediate purchase!

Setting the Streets Alive (by Bill Gee, Ann Tucker, and Edward Taylor) is more of a general guide to the whole topic of putting on work in the streets and other public spaces. It has a strong emphasis on case studies, and incorporates much of the information in the above (newer) publication, although in less detail. A great intro guide to the subject for festivals, producers, or companies thinking about taking their first tentative steps outdoors!

Film & DVD

Pina – A Film for Pina Bausch

Dir. Wim Wenders, 2011

General Release, UK cert. U

www.wim-wenders.com/movies/movies_spec/pina/pina.htm

Total Theatre Magazine doesn't often review feature films – but *Pina*, Wim Wenders' cinematic homage to the late great Pina Bausch, godmother of experimental dance-theatre and director of the Tanztheater Wuppertal, is no ordinary film. More than documentation, more than a tribute, it is an exploration of Bausch's work that marries dance and film artfully and beautifully.

It was planned as a collaboration between these two extraordinary artists – an exploration of how dance-for-screen or dance-to-camera (pick your favourite label) could move out of the 'experimental shorts' ghetto and into mainstream cinema as a full-length feature. Wenders' wonderful *Buena Vista Social Club* had raised the benchmark for film that documented live performance, and Pina Bausch, his friend of more than two decades, saw him as the perfect collaborator. A plan was hatched to focus on a number of key Tanztheater Wuppertal works – including *Café Mueller*, *Rites of Spring*, and *Kontakthof* – and to make the film in 3D. Plans proceeded, then two days into the shoot Pina died. The film was at first abandoned, then resurrected, and what has been described as 'the first 3D arthouse documentary' eventually emerged.

The bereavement is raw and upfront. Interviews with longterm company members are transposed to voiceovers expressing shock or paying tribute, played over solemnly held shots of silent faces full of sorrow and confusion. The dance works are as cleverly filmed as you'd expect from Wenders: live footage of Pina herself performing in *Café Mueller* is weaved into footage from the most recent version of the show; and the editing cuts in the *Kontakthof* sections are a witty play on Bausch's remaking and remodelling of this seminal work, shifting us from teens to elders and back again with giddy confusion. The 3D is hyped as a key element,

and certainly in the big ensemble scenes of *Rites of Spring* the stage depth is captured very well, but it isn't the most interesting aspect of the film. By far and away the best scenes are those shot on location in Wuppertal. Solo, or in extraordinary and poignant duets, the dancers (more often than not dressed in 'trademark' Bausch evening wear) move into, through, over and along the landscape, taking in flyovers, el-trains, dual carriageways, parks, ponds, and hilltops in a series of eerily beautiful and surreal moments that are an homage both to Bausch's choreography, and to the city to which she remained ever-loyal. Last word goes to Wenders: 'Pina had trained her eyes to what the soul can teach us through the body.' Whether you're a longterm admirer or new to Bausch's work – this is a film to be seen.

DMP

Online

Bellyflop: Operating with a DIY ethic through voluntary contributions from various artists, Bellyflop Magazine is an online London-based dance & performance magazine. In the format of features, interviews and reviews you get everything from musings on the everyday life of the artist to reflections on popular culture. Their latest issue features interviews with Rajni Shah, Nigel Charnock, Liz Lerman and Anat Eisenberg, plus a musical crossword, plus all you need to know about the top of the pops in the dance world. Bellyflop Magazine will be publishing their next issue in June 2011. www.bellyflopmag.com

Books & Other Media compiled by John Ellingsworth & Dorothy Max Prior

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UPDATE THE NATIONAL PORTFOLIO



Dreamthinkspeak



Clod Ensemble

At the end of March Arts Council England announced its National Portfolio, a three-year funding scheme replacing the old portfolio of Regularly Funded Organisations (RFOs) and reflecting a reduction of their grant-in-aid budget of 14.9%. The number of organisations funded dropped from 849 to 695, and in the process ACE took onboard 110 new organisations and dropped 206 previous RFOs.

First, then, as evidence that Total Theatre is always ahead of the curve, some Total Theatre Award winners who've come on stream with regular funding: Gecko, who back in 2006 won a TT Award for *The Race* and who are currently working on a new project, *Missing*, get £230,000 p/a. Clod Ensemble, who won an Award in 2009 for *Under Glass*, receive £120,000. Dreamthinkspeak, who were given an Award in 2005 for *Don't Look Back* and who, more recently, were one of the great successes of the 2010 Brighton Festival with *Before I Sleep*, will pull in £157,500.

Also new on the books are theatrical game-makers and game-players Coney (£122,120); Cornish outdoor and site-specific theatre company Wildworks (£205,000); Imagineer Productions Limited, who are working on the massive *Godiva Awakes* project as part of the Cultural Olympiad (£100,000 to supplement the funding they have already received from the Artists Taking the Lead initiative); Slung Low, winners of the Oxford Samuel Beckett Theatre Trust Award in 2008 for their piece *Helium* (£99,000); and Red Earth Theatre, who develop participatory projects for young people, primarily in the East Midlands (£100,000).

NoFit State Circus will receive regular funding for the first time in their 25-year history, with £200,000 that they've

earmarked for an apprenticeship project aimed at artists and producers. Blind Summit, one of the UK's most successful and prolific puppetry companies (who've recently collaborated with Complicite on *A Dog's Heart* and *Shun-kin*, and before that with the ENO and Anthony Minghella on *Madam Butterfly*) have been recognised with £75,000. ACE have also chosen to endorse and support silly ideas with £40,000 going to street arts company The Bureau of Silly Ideas.

New festivals include Kendal Arts International, who organise the outdoor festival Mintfest and the Lakes Alive season of outdoor work (£290,000); Manchester International Festival (£500,000); and Inbetween Time (£190,000), a festival of live art at Bristol's Arnolfini that is beginning to create offshoot projects. Bristol has done well, altogether. Theatre Bristol – an organisation that supports artists with three producers specialising in live art and experimental theatre, circus and outdoor arts, and physical and visual theatre, plus runs a directory/network website and plans other events – will receive £106,308 p/a, and the Tobacco Factory Theatre is down for £60,000.

Alongside the new kids (or the old new kids), there are also many RFOs who transitioned to National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) status and wrangled an upgrade in the process. Hoipolloi, best known perhaps for their association with the emerging artist Hugh Hughes (aka Shon Dale-Jones), have a 72% increase putting them at £230,000 p/a. Carnesky Productions Ltd, preacher and showwoman and general carnie Marisa Carnesky's company, rises 23.9% to £115,622. Long-time TT associates Fevered Sleep receive a 16.7% increase which will bring them to £200,000; Ridiculusmus, inventors and chief proponents of the working

method ARSEFLOP, get a 27.7% increase to £98,859; Told by an Idiot get a 26.9% increase to £167,245; and site-specific theatre phenomenon Punchdrunk are up 141% to £225,000.

Stan's Cafe, who would probably never use the word 'innovative' in relation to their work but who've been getting on with the business of experimenting and reinventing for about two decades now, receive a 37.8% increase to £160,000. The unclassifiable performance company Quarantine, who have most recently worked on the mother/son dance duet *Susan & Darren* and the military karaoke installation *The Soldier's Song*, are up 32.6% to £160,000. Creative producers Fuel, who work with a stable of artists including such lusty thoroughbreds as Uninvited Guests, Melanie Wilson and David Adamsdale, are up 203.5% to £200,000. Serial commissioners Artangel get a 19.3% boost, putting them at £754,000. Hope Street, a training and creation centre in Liverpool that has begun the career of many an established artist, rises 94.4% to £81,500.

The outdoor arts sector has done well, with several key players retaining even funding, while the formerly seafaring Walk the Plank are up 126.5% to £152,000, Whalley Range All Stars 20.2% to £91,500, and Faceless, an outdoor arts company doing a lot of work with mask, 166.3% to £60,000. The UK's oldest street arts festival, Winchester Hat Fair, goes up 51.8% to £140,000; Greenwich + Docklands International Festival's funding will rise 33.4% to £250,000; and Activate Performing Arts, a strategic organisation supporting performing arts in the South West and producing the biennial (outdoor) Inside Out festival, is up 440.7% to £337,703.

Circus is also ascendant. Upswing, who produce (mostly wired) aerial theatre and are vigorously active in running apprenticeship and education programmes, are up 74.5% to £115,000; Crying Out Loud, a production company working in physical/visual and experimental performance (with a lot of circus) and theatre for young people, is up 158.2% to £210,000; Greentop, who offer intensive and community circus training,



Faulty Optic



Gecko



Punchdrunk



get a 210.6% increase to £70,000. Acrobatic troupe Membre are up 26.5% to £125,048; and aerial theatre group Ockham's Razor get a very significant 173.2% hike, bringing them to £180,000. Circomedia and Circus Space, the UK's two schools offering accredited circus degrees, both retain their RFO funding with small adjustments.

In live art, the Live Art Development Agency is up 19.6% to £234,487 (though fellow umbrella organisation New Work Network had its RFO funding, £78,240 in 2011/12, cut completely), and Pacitti Company, who as well as producing their own artistic work organise London's SPILL festival, increase 34.2% to £281,940.

Other festivals with an interest in 'total theatre' getting a boost are Norfolk and Norwich Festival, continuing their rapid expansion with an 87.2% increase to £850,000; London International Festival of Theatre (LIFT), up 17.1% to £450,000; Brighton Dome and Festival, who Hoover up a good portion of the South East region funding, going up 13% to £1,200,000; Birmingham's excellent, hyperlocal Fierce! Festival, whose 49.4% rise still puts them at a fairly meagre £100,000; and the London International Mime Festival, the tallest total theatre festival, rising 7% to £200,000.

Among venues with cause for celebration are the Barbican, who following a 108.7% increase are at £570,000 (though the majority of their funding still comes from the City of London Corporation); Oval House, rising 14.4% to £472,787; Farnham Maltings, who get a 244.4% uplift, putting them at £562,071; Exeter Phoenix, up 26.4% to £125,000; and Stratford Circus, who have increased their funding a massive 554.8% to £300,000.

The RFOs who have become NPOs but with (sometimes substantial) cuts are mostly large, high-profile venues. So The Institute of Contemporary Arts, which has lately been trying to change its spots, has had a massive 42.5% cut to £900,000, and Rich Mix, the East London performance venue and creative complex, has been slashed 59.1% to £300,000. The National Theatre, Royal Opera House and South Bank Centre all receive cuts of approximately 15%, pulling

them down to £17,462,920, £25,208,100 and £20,167,887 respectively. Sadler's Wells falls 5% to £2,442,000, and the Roundhouse 11% to £969,097.

There are, then, the total disinvestments: former RFOs who have received 100% cuts to their funding. Greenroom, a venue for experimental work in Manchester, loses annual funding of £295,308 and has already announced that it will close at the end of May this year. A 100% cut of ACE funding to Croydon Clocktower (which previously received £94,037 p/a) combined with total disinvestment from the local council, and the venue closed 22 April. Norden Farm in Maidenhead has lost £133,559; Riverside Studios in East London £476,626; and The Hat Factory in Luton 114,639. Dartington Hall, which has an interesting events programme and offers residencies to artists (particularly those engaging with ideas of participation or social justice) loses £635,623, and Lanternhouse, a residency centre in Ulverston set up by Welfare State International, £284,666.

Organisations who have been cut and now face an uncertain future are Theatre Is, who produce, commission and curate work for young people in the East of England (and who previously received £171,077 p/a); Visiting Arts, who do diverse work to increase intercultural exchange (£350,577); and the travelling outdoor arts showcase X.trax (£44,552). Audiences Central, London, North East and South West have all been cut, for about £700,000 in total, though they will perhaps receive similar funding through other streams.

The companies who've had their funding 100% cut are many of those who were there when total theatre was beginning to emerge

in the UK as an attitude (if not a style) of work: Trestle Theatre Company, known for their mask performances in the 80s and 90s and now making new work and running a venue/base in St Albans, Hertfordshire (who lose £242,872 p/a); Third Angel, who've been making work tirelessly since 1995 (£33,733); Metro-Boulot-Dodo, who won the TT Best Newcomer Award way back in 1999 (£58,624); Faulty Optic, a company who in two decades have never really left the forefront of adult puppetry (£84,749); mixed-media pioneers Forkbeard Fantasy (£233,061); Foursight Theatre Company, who've been making multidisciplinary work for over twenty years (£162,136); Benji Reid's interdisciplinary but movement-led company Breaking Cycles (£97,800); street theatre maestros Natural Theatre Company, who were founded in 1970 (144,689); the Brighton-based community arts charity Same Sky (£95,343 p/a); and Reckless Sleepers, who since 1988 have been working across performance, visual art, live art, dance and everything else (£87,933).

For the full National Portfolio see <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/national-portfolio-funding/>

In the above text the 2011/12 figures are given as a rough indication of RFO annual funding, and the 2012/13 figures for NPO funding. In both cases, funding is usually split equally over the three years with inflationary increases. Where a percentage change is given, this is the percentage change in real terms after an adjustment against estimated inflation.

Separate from the portfolio, there are fourteen Bridge Delivery Organisations (fudge the acronym a bit and they can be BROs) who have been selected to connect the work of arts organisations with schools and communities. Norfolk and Norwich, The Roundhouse, Sadler's Wells, the ROH and the Lyric Hammersmith are among the list.

UPDATE PERFORMER + COMPANY



Canopy

Dreamthinkspeak are working on a large-scale site-responsive project specially created for Somerset House in London, in collaboration with King's College London. *In The Beginning Was The End* is inspired by universal visions of the apocalypse. These myths are awe-inspiring and visionary in the theatricality of their imagery and reveal a surprising harmony between religions and cultures as well as an unexpected sense of optimism. The visual launching pad for the piece is Leonardo's surreal drawing 'A Cloudburst of Material Possessions', which depicts a bank of clouds out of which a multitude of material objects are falling. The production is supported by Arts Council England and Tipping Point, in collaboration with Somerset House and King's College London, sponsored by Bloomberg, and will premiere November 2011. www.dreamthinkspeak.com

Analogue: Following the earlier success of their pieces *Mile End* and *Beachy Head*, Analogue are gearing up to premiere their brand new project *2401 Objects* at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe this August. The new piece is based on the startling true life story of Henry Molaison, the world's most famous amnesiac patient who lived his life eternally in the present, and is made in collaboration with Dr Jacopo Annese of The Brain Observatory, California. *2401 Objects* is a co-production with Oldenburg Staatstheater and New Wolsey Theatre, with support from Farnham Maltings, Jacksons Lane and National Theatre Studio. The show previews in Oldenburg, Germany and in the UK before opening at the Pleasance in August. www.analogueproductions.blogspot.com

Bottledfed will take time off performing this summer to concentrate on researching (including an extensive dance research trip across Argentina), writing and preparing for upcoming projects. Their next public appearances will be in Germany and Switzerland: Bottledfed have been invited to deliver a lecture on their work at the German Dramaturges Society and the Institute for Theatre Management at the Ludwig Maximilians University in Munich. Swiss art institutions 'Tuchlaube' and 'Stapferhaus' have also commissioned Bottledfed to devise a performance based on the gallery's 'digital life' exhibition for September 2011. For more take a look at Bottledfed's new website: www.bottledfed.org

Canopy: Throughout the summer Canopy is touring *The Preeners* to various festivals including Kendal Mintfest. The company are also delighted to announce that preparations for their first expedition performance are under way. *Search Party* will see groups of willing volunteers on a mission into the unknown, in search of a missing woman. Their efforts to conduct a thorough investigation lead them through dark woods, under bridges, across windswept hillsides – no stone will go unturned! However difficult the way, they must not be misguided by the strangers they meet on their path. For dates, details and progress reports see: www.canopyintheorchard.com

Company FZ took the bold decision not to apply for the National Portfolio with the Arts Council this year. They have been a Regularly Funded Organisation for eight years and after thirteen years of creating shows for touring, collaborating with some inspirational artists, and mentoring many young artists, the company will be closing their doors in April 2012. Flick Ferdinando and John-Paul Zaccarini will continue to work as freelance artists and directors. *Horse*, their most recent show, will continue to tour beyond this time, and they are collaborating with Greenwich + Docklands International Festival and Tarrega Festival in creating a piece for their festivals this summer. *Horse* can be seen at the Transform Festival, West Yorkshire Playhouse 18 June, and Kinsale Arts Festival 11-13 July. It will also be at various UK venues throughout the autumn and winter. www.companyfz.com | companyfzhorse.squarespace.com



Flick Ferdinando

Flick Ferdinando

Inspired by folk she meets, travelling in her campervan down the highways and byways, Caroline Carter brings you her songs, stories and anecdotes full of love, loss and revenge. Expect guests, her devoted guitar man, some dancing and – well, it's Caroline so anything can happen! This new show from Flick Ferdinando (Company FZ) brings a fresh new look to the Great British Public and their stories. Songs have been written, original stories will be told, and it will never be far away from the delightfully darker edge of theatre! With direction from David Bernstein of Strangelings and musical direction by Craig Byrne, *The Caroline Carter Show* appears at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe 5–29 August 2011 at The Aviary at Zoo, Pleasance. Anyone with an act or a strange thing they like to do is invited to 'give Caroline a holler' on caroline@thecarolinecartershow.co.uk See the website for updated previews. www.thecarolinecartershow.co.uk



Foster & Déchery



Hoodwink



Ragroot Theatre

Foster & Déchery: *Epic* is a new show created by Foster & Déchery which tours the UK during May and June 2011. The show was conceived when Chloe Déchery and Lucy Foster wanted to make something big, something epic – a piece exploring the 20th century. Bringing on board the solo performers Edward Rapley and Pedro Inês, the company have created a playful and experimental journey through the past hundred years, combining personal stories, video interaction, fanciful re-enactments of key 20th century events, and a cameo from Bertolt Brecht. *Epic* creates moments of intimacy while also connecting us to the bigger picture. The company are touring twelve venues in Summer 2011 including North Wall Arts Centre 2 June; New Wolsey Theatre at the PULSE Fringe Festival 5 June; and Colchester Arts Centre 6 June. They hope to add further UK and European dates in late 2011 and early 2012 so keep an eye on the website for updates: www.epictheshow.com

Hoodwink's *Where's Constable?* is a site-specific performance bringing to life aspects of the work of John Constable, featuring Jon Hicks, haywains, runaway sheep from the water meadows, dancing Constables, and chocolate box visual spectacle! Look out for Constable on the streets of Salisbury in the morning, and paint your own version of the cathedral after the show. Commissioned as part of Salisbury city's celebrations of John Constable, and accompanying a major exhibition of his work at Salisbury Museum, *Where's Constable?* will be performed 11 June 2011 on Salisbury Cathedral Green. www.hoodwinktheatre.co.uk

Laura Mugridge: Award-winning storyteller Laura Mugridge takes her one-woman show *Running On Air* on a major UK tour this summer. The show is performed for five audience members at a time in the back of Laura's vintage VW campervan, and is a gentle, quirky storytelling show that explores marriage, domesticity and Laura's love of *The Good Life*. *Running On Air* won a Fringe First and critical acclaim at Edinburgh last year, and is now set to travel the UK between April and August – from Kendal to Plymouth, Ipswich to Cardiff – where it will be performed outside theatres, on the seafront, up a mountain and even in a graveyard. www.lauramugridge.co.uk

Nola Rae: If music be the food of love, is opera love's indigestion? George Biscuit is mad about Tosca. Nellie Pasta is just mad. An ardent fan and a murderous dresser meet backstage. Did Pasta murder Tosca? Will Biscuit meet his diva, or his end? A farce of operatic proportions ensues as Pasta strives to hide herself and Biscuit follows a high C to destruction. *Nellie Pasta's Opera Cocktail* is the new show from Nola Rae, made in collaboration with contemporary dancer / choreographer / opera singer Michael Popper and directed by John Mowat. For more on the development of the show and dates for Nola's touring pieces *Mozart Preposterous* and *Exit Napoleon Pursued by Rabbits* see: www.nolarae.com

Pickled Image: Meet Grandad, eccentric traveller and storyteller extraordinaire. Enter his battered Bedouin tent to hear magical tales of adventure in real and imaginary worlds. 'The Clock That Stopped Time', 'The Violin Princess' and 'The Most Beautiful Thing in The World' are brand new old-fashioned fairytales crafted by Toby Hulse from the imaginations of the children of Bristol for Pickled Image's new production *Travels with Grandad*. Evocative sound, light and exquisite puppetry create a classic performance, enthralling and delighting the whole family. An optional interactive workshop is also available for the audience in which they can create a brand new story with the aid of one of the bizarre objects in Grandad's tent. For ages 3+. At Norwich Puppet Theatre 1 & 2 June 2011. www.pickledimage.co.uk

Platform 4 are currently presenting a piece for The Point, Eastleigh's Without Borders Exhibition, launched 9 May and running till 28 July 2011. The piece is a collaboration between Su Houser from P4, the animator Gerry White and Pete Flood from Bellowhead, and is an offshoot of the company's main project *MEMORY Point (S)* in collaboration with Southampton Alzheimer's Society. The final *Point (S)* project will be shown in spring 2012 with headphone walks and installations for the general public. These will be based in some of The Point's unseen spaces and will be inspired by all the people P4 have met through the project. www.platform4.org

Ragroof Theatre have an exceptionally busy summer with new show *Bridges* – inspired by tango, telling stories of migration, and site specific to car parks or other similar urban spaces – launched (in its research and development incarnation) at Mulhouse, France in July and Stockton International Riverside Festival in August. Meanwhile, *Shall We Dance? Encore!*, a reworked version of one of the company's most popular shows, was showcased at Atelier 231 in Rouen earlier this year and has subsequently been booked for Amiens street arts festival in June; and the company's successful programme of Ragroof Tea Dances continues apace. *Gloves On*, which explores boxing and its place in the British psyche, a success at last year's LIFT, returns to London as part of the National Theatre's outdoor arts programme, Watch This Space. Full details and dates on the website. www.ragrooftheatre.co.uk

Red Earth: How do we really get to know a place? We can drive to it; take a bus, walk, cycle, ride or run. But how would it feel to travel through layers of geological and archaeological time, to feel and taste the ecology of the land, uncover its hidden worlds through sound and performance? What would it feel like to be truly immersed in the landscape? Red Earth invite you to become collaborators with the land: walking it, navigating it, building, singing and performing it, leading to new encounters with the natural world and the forces that shape it. In September and October 2011 the company will be leading two performance journeys, at Harting Down and Wolstonbury Hill, with the collaboration of Japanese butoh artist Atsushi Takenouchi, Mongolian Longsong singer Badamkhorol Sandandamba, UK pyrotechnician/installation artist Mark Anderson, and UK composer/musician Dirk Campbell. www.redearth.co.uk

RoguePlay Theatre are currently in the final development stage of their new physical theatre performance, *Climbing The Walls*. Developed with Birmingham's rock climbing community, *Climbing The Walls* is a site-responsive piece which involves aerial and rope work. The piece explores the relationship between four childhood friends growing up together, experiencing life and all its constraints. The four are taken on a journey that leads them through the search for freedom and the understanding of something greater, and our sense of will, passion and the world that keeps us trapped. The piece is touring this July at regional climbing centres. For tour dates see: www.rogueplay.co.uk



Rogueplay



Scarabeus



Theatre ad Infinitum

Scarabeus: Scarabeus Theatre with Candoco Dance Company and author Nicky Singer are touring their latest production *Heartland* in Summer 2011. Imprisoned by swathes of fabric within a giant dome, two performers act out a breathless duet. Intertwined, then separate, they fly together and pull apart in an emotionally charged aerial encounter. The Minotaur rages against her cage; Icarus ascends to fly. But ultimately each is doomed to share the other's fate. A cry for freedom and the longing for homeland are at the heart of this aerial dance theatre show inspired by the Minotaur and Icarus legends. Fusing myth, music, text and integrated aerial dance, *Heartland* retells the oldest of tales in a dynamic new language. The piece has been commissioned by Without Walls and was originally commissioned by the Liberty Festival 2010. At Brighton Festival, Greenwich + Docklands, Winchester Hat Fair, Circus Plus, Bristol Do and Manchester X.trax. www.scarabeus.co.uk / www.candoco.co.uk

Sue MacLaine: Following a residency at BAC in June, Sue MacLaine has begun developing a new piece exploring the subject of teeth – our personal and historical relationship with them and to them. Her current piece *Still Life: An Audience with Henrietta Moraes* is available for booking, ideally into art studios within colleges or arts centres. Sue is also performing *Sid Lester's Big Night In* at The Nuffield, Southampton on 10 October and hopes that Sid will have other boards to tread over the coming months. In July she will be a participant in a research and development week with Vincent Dance Theatre. She is continuing to work on a sitcom with Stephen Clark. www.suemaclaine.com

The Devil's Violin Company's *The Singing Bones* spins music and words together to create a richly evocative landscape – a place where the story spirits live, where heroes learn fear, a beautiful bird sings of a dark secret, and Death is imprisoned within the shell of a nut. Charming and chilling by turns, *The Singing Bones* is a heady concoction of tall tales with epic themes laced with soul-stirring music inspired by folk traditions from across the world. At the Forest Arts Centre, Hampshire 18 June. www.remprojects.com



Theatre Sans Frontières

The Frequency D'ici: The Frequency D'ici is the new name for the collaboration between Tom Frankland, Sebastien Lawson and Jamie Wood, who together made the Fringe First winner *Paperweight* in 2008. Throughout 2010-11 they have been developing their second production, *Free Time Radical*, a co-production with New Wolsey Theatre which tells the story of two men caught in their flat as a giant wave breaks: as biblical floods rage, they hide from the noise. The show opens at the Pleasance in August for the Edinburgh Festival Fringe before touring the UK in 2012.
www.thefrequencydici.co.uk

The Other Way Works: Birmingham-based company The Other Way Works have begun work on a new project, following artistic director Katie Day's secondment to run the Theatre Sandbox scheme at iShed, Bristol. *Avon Calling* is a performance for audiences' homes that explores the cultural phenomenon that is Avon Cosmetics. Audiences can host their own Avon Party in their living room, try samples, share their memories of Avon and find out a little too much about their local Avon Lady. The piece has been commissioned by mac and is performing around Birmingham in June.
www.theotherwayworks.co.uk

Theatre Ad Infinitum: *Translunar Paradise*, Theatre Ad Infinitum's new production, is a tale of old age, loss, love, grief, and the vast landscape of memory. Taking its inspiration from *The Tower* by WB Yeats, it tells the story of an old man who loses his wife to cancer. Overcome with loneliness he is unable to accept that she is gone. He lives as if she were still alive and relives old memories. From across the frontier between life and death, his wife watches his struggle and tries to find ways of helping him let her go. *Translunar Paradise* will premiere at the PULSE Festival, Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich on 31 May, then is at the BE Festival, West Midlands 4 & 5 July, and the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Pleasance King Dome 3-29 August. See:
www.theatreadinfinitum.co.uk



Théâtre Sans Frontières: Following a very successful spring tour of UK schools, TSF is retouring its new production in simple French for 8 to 12 year olds, *Les Aventures de Lapin (The Adventures of Rabbit)*, in May and June 2011. *Lipsynch*, the nine-hour epic celebration of language and voice co-produced with Robert Lepage and Ex Machina, will be appearing at the Aréna Patrick-Poulin 3-5 June as part of Quebec's Carrefour International de Théâtre festival.
www.tsf.org.uk

Tim Crouch: *I, Malvolio*, Tim Crouch's adaptation of *Twelfth Night*, is on tour, from Latitude and Edinburgh's Traverse Theatre (16-28 August) to UK venues until the end of November, then again next spring. Tim is also directing *The Taming of the Shrew* for the RSC's Young People's Season at Stratford 24 September – 15 October, and in January and February next year he goes to Thailand and the Philippines to perform *An Oak Tree* and *My Arm*, respectively. He is working towards a production of *The Author* in New York in early 2012. A new website can be found at www.timcrouchtheatre.co.uk – a change from the previous production company name News From Nowhere, which is now nowhere.

Walk the Plank are working on two large-scale events this summer. On 19 June they'll be running Manchester Day Parade, which, with the theme 'A Voyage of Discovery', is designed to give participating community groups and individuals the chance to explore the historical, political, scientific, digital and personal stories of their city, taking them on a Voyage of Discovery that starts in their own streets and ends in the city centre with a massive Parade. The company will then head south to Portsmouth to work with local schools and community groups on an aeronautically-themed carnival procession that will be presented 26 June as part of the finale for the city's Lift Off! festivities.
www.walktheplank.co.uk

Nola Rae



The Devil's Violin Company



Tim Crouch



Walk the Plank

Wet Picnic: This summer Wet Picnic are taking their acclaimed show *The Dinner Table out* for its third year of touring, as well as their brand new piece *Time For Tea*. The company's fabulous Tea Ladies arrive to help everyone take some time out from the daily grind, have a rest, share a moment and celebrate the simple things in life, like a nice hot cup of tea! Wet Picnic are also pleased to announce that they have been awarded Grants for the Arts funding by ACE for their next two shows, *Death and Gardening* and *The Birthday Party*. Keep checking their website to read all about upcoming performances this summer:
www.wetpicnic.com

UPDATE VENUES + ORGANISATIONS

Duckie *Lullaby* at Barbican BITE

Trashing Performance

Venues

Jacksons Lane: Postcards is a brand new mini-festival at Jacksons Lane featuring work from new and established circus artists with scratch, solo and short performances. Audiences will pay £10 for a night of entertainment including triple-bills, double-bills, special guests, site-specific performances and surprise acts. Some performances are two minutes long, others are just under an hour. 8 June – 31 July. www.jacksonslane.org.uk

Barbican: After performing their medley piece *Circa!* at the venue last year Australian contemporary circus company Circa return to the Barbican's main theatre 19-24 July 2011 with their new show *Wunderkammer*, a breathless cocktail of new circus, cabaret and vaudeville. Meanwhile, Duckie's sleeper show *Lullaby* will transform the Pit into a tranquil communal bedroom for an audience of dreamers 24 June – 24 July. www.barbican.org.uk

The Basement, Brighton: May/June sees a flurry of live art and experimental theatre action at The Basement, starting with The Three (Dis)Graces for Brighton Festival in May, comprising: Victoria Melody's new show *Northern Soul*; Ursula Martinez with *My Stories, Your E-mails*; and the legendary Liz Aggiss with *Survival Tactics*. Later in the month sees a collection of intimate performance encounters called *5 X 5 (Loud & Clear)*; Ed Rapley's *10 Ways To Die Onstage*; Jos Houben's *The Art of Laughter*; Michael Pinchbeck's *The End*; and the eagerly anticipated new work from award-winning young company Me and the Machine, *I Came By Myself to a Crowded Place*. There's the UK Premiere of *Tiburón Tigre* (Tiger Shark) by Quim Pujol (Spain) in May, leading into a June mini-fest of new performance from Spain. Regular Basement events such as the Scratch night (8 June), Super Club (28 May), and Are You Sitting Comfortably? (21 June) continue as always. The Basement also announces the arrival of new supported artists Brain Lobal and Non Zero One. www.thebasement.uk.com

West Yorkshire Playhouse: Transform is a two-week festival of work at West Yorkshire Playhouse 6-18 June which schedules a selection of shows to see, spaces to explore, and conversations to be had, with audiences buying day passes. Among the line-up of performances are Melanie Wilson's *Simple Girl*, Quarantine's *The Soldier's Song*, Peepolykus' *Little Gems*, and Lemn Sissay's *Something Dark*. Chris Goode will be using one of the Playhouse's rehearsal spaces for a new durational work, *Open House*. www.wyp.org.uk

Organisations & Projects

Applause Outdoors presents four companies at 35 outdoor events between May and the end of August 2011: Acrojou (*The Wheel House*), Dizzy O' Dare (*The Tiny Travelling Tightwire Show*), What's Coming Out of the Box (*Take The Pose*), and the Galloping Cuckoos ("*Hug*") will be at summer fetes and festivals in villages and towns across Kent and East Sussex. All performances are free, encourage audience participation and allow people to watch and leave as they please. Applause Outdoors is produced by Applause Rural Touring and PANeK (Performing Arts Network Kent). www.applause.org.uk | www.panek.org.uk

Trashing Performance is the second themed year of the Performance Matters creative research project, a collaboration between the Live Art Development Agency, Goldsmiths and Roehampton University. Focusing upon strategies of 'trashing' adopted by practitioners in performance, film, and visual art, Trashing Performance explores the worth of creative expression which wilfully debunks, or ignores, cultural ideals and hierarchies of critical value. Save the date! The Trashing Performance public programme will take place across various venues in London 24-30 October 2011, featuring specially commissioned dialogue and workshop projects involving artists, performers, and writers. www.thisisperformancematters.co.uk

UPDATE TRAINING + PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mintfest International Summer School for Street Arts is an intensive ten-day residential course for new and emerging, aspiring, or more experienced outdoor artists wishing to refresh themselves and their practice by trying something new. A unique opportunity to work with, learn from and receive critical feedback and support from a leading national or international artist, participants work on a show that they then perform at the end of the course as part of Mintfest, one of the UK's leading street arts festivals. Cost: £400 to include all tuition, accommodation, materials and meals. 27 August – 5 September in Kendal, Cumbria.
www.lakesalive.org/mintfest-summer-school | jenny@kendalartsinternational.com

Physical Fest, Liverpool's international physical theatre festival has its seventh edition this year. With workshops, classes, performances and events, at this year's Fest there are opportunities to train with Pas de Dieux (Barba/Decroux inspired training from Paris), Dawn Crandall (mixed movement), Gey Pin Ang (a former member of the Grotowski Workcenter), Theatre of Now (fooling), Nigel Charnock (physical theatre), and Theatre Ad Infinitum (Lecoq). There are also performances, a jam, a cabaret and an open platform for new physical work. 28 May – 4 June 2011.
www.physicalfest.com

Making for Performance is a five-day workshop led by Horse + Bamboo artistic directors Alison Duddle and Bob Frith. Exploring Horse + Bamboo's process for creating new work, the masterclass will look at how masks, puppets and stage design grow and develop out of the scripting process, and how an appropriate visual aesthetic is generated as a central component of each production. Horse + Bamboo's productions utilise masks, shadow puppetry, rod puppets, ultra-violet and projected puppetry. The design and making of these will be explored and related back to their part in developing a visual narrative. The course is intended to provide a toolbox for visual theatre practitioners wishing to develop their own productions. 4–8 July 2011 at The Boo, Waterfoot; £300.
www.horseandbamboo.org

Taking the Leap is an opportunity to train with Horse + Bamboo's Associate Artists Loz Kaye and Mark Whitaker. This intensive performance-based week-long course was a great success in 2010 and will introduce participants to Horse + Bamboo's current working practices and give a behind the scenes look at how the show *Little Leap Forward* was put together. The work will have three areas of focus: mask, puppetry and space. Participants will explore performance techniques for Horse + Bamboo's characteristic helmet masks characterisation, the reveal, energy, tempo, internal monologue. A rich variety of puppetry techniques will be worked with: multiple-person-operated tabletop puppets, Chinese-style hand puppets, and whole-body shadow puppetry. Participants will also get to grips with some of the fundamental principles of object theatre, the relationship of the puppeteer to the object, and the notion of animation and the transfer of energy. 11-15 July 2011 at The Boo, Waterfoot; £300.
www.horseandbamboo.org

How Does Your Garden Grow: What can be done to help innovative theatre and performance flourish? Is it important, or relevant, to the communities in which it is made? How does making theatre relate to the education, health, youth and community sectors? Join Barbara Matthews, Richard Schechner, Lyn Gardner, Edward Hall, Vicky Ireland, Judith Knight, Jane McMorrow, Gavin Stride, David Woods and Jon Haynes (Ridiculusmus), Anthony Dean and many others for creative conversations at the conference and showcase *How Does Your Garden Grow?* Cultivating Theatre and Performance. At University of Kent, Canterbury 3 & 4 June 2011; £100.
www.panek.org.uk

Clown and Comedy Course with Mick Barnfather: A five-day workshop looking at what it is that makes us laugh and how we can be funny. There are many confusions and disasters in a clown show but there are never any doubts. The clown is joyful, playful, mischievous and full of fantasy. The workshop isn't related to a specific style, but instead very much looks to find what is uniquely funny about each person and how they can make that accessible to an audience. At a London venue, 29 August – 2 September 2011.
www.mickbarnfather.com



Nigel Charnock at Physical Fest
UPDATE



Talking Shop

Talking Shop: Led by the Live Art Advisory Network (LAAN), Talking Shop is a free event for recent graduates and early career artists (up to three years making work) working in the areas of live art and interdisciplinary performance practices that consists of fifteen-minute advice sessions, break-out dialogues and Q&A sessions. The next event, held at Toynbee Studios on 9 June 2011, will include a presentation by Forest Fringe, mavericks breathing new life into the Edinburgh Fringe. This event is free, but places for one-to-one advisory sessions are limited.
www.thisisliveart.co.uk

Freeing Shakespeare's Voice: Birmingham School of Acting is offering the opportunity to attend an intensive programme in Freeing Shakespeare's Voice. This course is an exploration of Kristin Linklater's approach to Shakespeare and is designed for students with a detailed interest in Shakespearean performance on stage. Teaching will be by Christine Adaire, who was trained by Linklater and has worked as an actor, voice coach and director in US regional theatres, along with Simon Ratcliffe, who is also a Linklater-trained teacher. 1-5 August 2011. For more information:
www.bcu.ac.uk/bsa | simon.ratcliffe@bcu.ac.uk

DIY: Supported by the Live Art Development Agency, DIY offers artists working in live art the chance to conceive and run professional development projects for other artists. DIY projects may take many forms, from immersive workshops and urban orienteering, to choir singing and public writing, and in the past have covered such diverse subjects as activism through analysis of local history, open discussions of art and disability, and explorations of endurance and survival. Each lead artist will receive £1,000 to cover their fee and all direct project costs including venue hire, travel, materials and hospitality.
www.thisisliveart.co.uk

UPDATE FESTIVALS



Greenwich + Docklands

Greenwich + Docklands International Festival: This year GDIF opens with a festival within a festival: the Greenwich Fair, a three-day showcase of UK and international outdoor arts with performances from, amongst others, Tangled Feet, Graeae, Candoco/Scarabeus, and Gandini, plus a jointly co-curated programme presented in association with Fira Tarrega. In the main programme, receiving its London premiere, Wired Aerial Theatre's *As the World Tipped* will be a pioneering political spectacle in which aerial performers battle with the effects of climate change in a production directed by Nigel Jamieson, whilst the return of *Girafes*, last seen at GDIF in 2003, combines life-sized crimson giraffes, a ringmaster and an opera diva.

24 June – 2 July 2011
www.festival.org



Watch This Space



Lakes Alive Harmonic Fields

Watch This Space: Held outside the National Theatre on London's South Bank, Watch This Space is an immense two and a half month outdoor festival with two strands: a free programme sited in the square outside the NT, with a couple of circus, music, dance or theatre performances scheduled almost every day, and then, just around the corner, Square², a ticketed venue taking in longer and more technically demanding shows. In previous years a key feature of the festival has been week-long residencies where artists can create in-progress work to be shown alongside their repertoire of older pieces.

1 July – 11 September
www.nationaltheatre.org.uk

Lakes Alive: Spread across four months and all of Cumbria, Lakes Alive is technically a season of outdoor work which incorporates two standalone festivals. So in 2011, there's Zircus Plus, a circus festival in Barrow (15-17 July), and the outdoor festival Mintfest (2-4 September), alongside a roaming programme of large-scale outdoor work. One of the highlights of this will be *Harmonic Fields*, by French company Lieux Publics, which will see the mass installation of Aeolian (wind-played) instruments at Birkrigg Common, near Ulverston, to form an interactive musical landscape.

3 May – 4 September
www.lakesalive.org

BE Festival: Taking place primarily at AE Harris, an enormous old factory space in the centre of Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter, BE Festival has a unique format for its main programme: each night audiences see four 30-minute shows, followed by music from Birmingham-based musicians and DJs, and each afternoon there's a Feedback Café where the performances of the previous evening are discussed. This year there are also a few offshoot events at mac: Little BE, an international programme of performances, workshops and happenings for children aged 6-12; BE-mix, a scratch night of work-in-progress performances; and two performances of Theatre Ad Infinitum's *Translunar Paradise*.

5-10 July
www.befestival.org



BE Festival

Manchester International Festival:

Alongside Snoop Dogg, Sinéad O'Connor, Candi Staton and other music luminaries, Manchester International Festival has an interesting and fresh programme of live and theatre performance. Among the standouts are *Audio Obscura*, a headphone piece sited in Manchester's Piccadilly Station and written by the poet and novelist Lavinia Greenlaw; *Infinite Freedom Exercise*, by John Gerrard, an outdoor digital 24hr dance piece that reflects on modernity, portraiture and history in the context of the Iranian military; and *11 Rooms*, a group show that will invite eleven artists to create durational experiences for spaces in Manchester Art Gallery. Not to mention a new show from Punchdrunk, *The Crash of The Elysium*, and *The Life and Death of Marina Abramovic* featuring the legend herself in collaboration with three other legends: director Robert Wilson, Willem Dafoe of 'The Wooster Group (and Hollywood!) fame, and singer Antony (of Antony and The Johnsons fame).

30 June – 17 July
www.mif.co.uk

Winchester Hat Fair: A winner in the recent National Portfolio, the Hat Fair is one of the UK's oldest street festivals – three days of performances on the streets and around the grounds of the city cathedral, with confirmed companies for 2011 including Scarabeus/Candoco, Ragroof Theatre, NoFit State Circus, Red Herring, Plunge Boom, Les Apostrophés, Cie Beau Geste, and Wet Picnic.

1-3 July 2011
www.hatfair.co.uk

Bristol Harbour Festival: Bristol Harbour Festival has grown massively in recent years, to the point now where it takes about 45 minutes to push through the crowds to get from one end of the Harbour to the other. The festival basically has a series of sites or stages offering a certain kind of performance – dance, circus, poetry, music, etcetera. The circus stage is a particularly good choice – drawing from Bristol's deep well of performers it's a densely-packed two days of (often nerdy / technically very interesting) short acts and pieces. This year The Bristol Do, which is in the process of restructuring itself, will be collaborating with Harbour Festival and working on some of the programme.

29-31 July
www.bristolharbourfestival.co.uk



Manchester International Festival Infinite Freedom



Forest Fringe artist Gary McNair

Glastonbury & Latitude: Glastonbury is one of the best places to see short and act-based circus and outdoor performance, though they do programme the odd longer show – this year NoFit State Circus will be performing their new outdoor piece *Barricade*, and Russian physical theatre company Blackskywhite will be at the festival again to give everyone nightmares. Latitude is a similar deal, being a big field (or park) music festival with an interest in programming performing arts, though its own tastes are a little broader, covering traditional, devised, site-specific and physical theatre.

Glastonbury: 22-26 June
Latitude: 14-17 July
www.glastonburyfestivals.co.uk |
www.latitudefestival.co.uk

Edinburgh International Festival & Fringe: Edinburgh International Festival this year themes its work around the cultures of Asia, with performers from China, India, Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Vietnam, plus a series of surprisingly business-led 'Continental Shifts' talks in association with the British Council. Among the artistic programme, Total Theatre's interest is piqued by Stephen Earnhart and Greg Pierce's interdisciplinary adaptation of Haruki Murakami's *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, a one-man *King Lear* interpreted by Chinese actor Wu Hsing-Kuo that uses martial arts, contemporary dance, traditional live music and song; a two-part *One Thousand and One Nights* directed by Tim Supple (whose acrobatic, multi-language *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was a big hit at EIF 2007); and a work-in-progress performance from the cabaret artist Meow Meow, winner of the 2010 Edinburgh International Festival Fringe Prize. The Edinburgh Fringe, the rude, sprawling rebuttal to EIF, will as usual take over the city for most of the month. At time of writing the directory-size programme is a long way off release, but check Theatre Ad Infinitum, Analogue, The Frequency D'ici and Tim Crouch in the Company and Performer Updates for news of a few shows that'll be visiting.

EIF: 12 August – 4 September
Fringe: 5-29 August
www.eif.co.uk | www.edfringe.com

Forest Fringe: In order to better embody the collaborative ideals they believe in, the Forest Fringe are this year changing the way they're run. The Festival has chosen a small group of artists and offered them the chance not just to show their work at Forest but to collaborate with the organisers to make the festival happen. These artists are: Bristol-based duo Action Hero; social gaming organisation Hide&Seek collaborating with performance poet Ross Sutherland; Sharon Smith (of Gob Squad) working with musician Tom Parkinson; innovative young company Non Zero One; Bristol-based dancer Dan Canham; Glasgow's award-winning writer/performer Gary McNair; Lebanese performance artist Tania El Houry; and artist, performer and activist Lucy Ellinson. Each will present one headline piece that will run across the two weeks of the festival. This imaginative range of work incorporates dance, theatre, poetry, a performance lecture, a daredevil stunt and a pervasive game played out on the streets of the city. Alongside this, the artists will have the opportunity to create their own events as part of the Forest Fringe programme – to host workshops and residencies, curate performance nights, and explore new ideas and new collaborations of their own. Additionally, these artists will be integral to the running of Forest Fringe. They will work with the core team and the Forest Café to look after the venue and manage the festival. The Forest Fringe's Edinburgh home, the Forest Café, is presently in the midst of a campaign to save its premises on Bristo Place after its previous landlords, Edinburgh University Settlement, went into administration. At the moment it's unclear whether or not the Café will close, and Forest have a very, very big and exciting event planned for their last night of the festival, on 27 August, in anticipation that it could either mark their last night in the present building, or, alternatively, celebrate the success of a long campaign to keep it open.

15-27 August
www.forestfringe.co.uk

Out & About



Pippa Bailey

2010 was globally the hottest year on record. 2011 already looks set to beat this record and the warm spring has provided welcome relief after a harsh winter.

The 30th of March was a chill day for many arts companies in England. In November last year Arts Council England launched an unprecedented open call for companies to apply to become regularly funded and join the newly titled National Portfolio Organisations. 1,333 organisations applied and following a two-month wait these decisions were announced. The National portfolio of 695 organisations replaces the previous RFO portfolio of 849 with 110 new organisations brought onto the scheme (see the special news item in the Update section of this issue for further details). You don't have to be a mathematics genius to work out that this meant a substantial change in the funded arts ecology.

These decisions are part of a new ten-year plan for ACE and are made in the light of 29% cuts to their funding over the next four years. It is impossible to ascertain the impact on the sector until there are more details of local authority cuts which fund a substantial collection of work outside of the Arts Council stable. Some local authorities, such as Somerset, have already announced a 100% cut to arts funding but I understand many are still to make their decisions following the May local authority elections and subsequent changes in council leaderships.

The creative response to the funding climate warms the heart. UK Uncut is a political movement using imaginative and (dare I say) theatrical tactics to highlight and oppose the cuts to public services proposed by Britain's Tory government. It is a widespread self-organising movement of people harnessing creative power and taking action, with some simple points of agreement: UK Uncut claim the brutal cuts to services about to

be inflicted by the current Government are unnecessary, unfair and ideologically motivated. Not since the 1980s has there been such effective collective activism. This is participatory theatre at its most exciting, with activists turning banks into libraries and pharmacies into hospitals, particularly targeting big companies not paying sufficient tax and the banks. I am keen to put this movement into a theatre context because so many artists are involved and because of the manner of many of the demonstrations, which lack a confrontational or adversarial threat. Instead, these actions are creative performances, disarming the 'opposition' and entertaining their 'audience' of passers-by. Another creative response to the cuts has come in the form of Theatre Uncut, a more self-consciously artistic reaction. Meeting Point Theatre organised a selection of writers (including Mark Ravenhill, Lucy Kirkwood and David Grieg) to create plays in response to the cuts and renounce their rights for a limited time so that the plays could be read and performed freely by schools and youth groups as part of the National Uncut response. Although focusing on writer-based theatre, it is worth mentioning here as it created a nationwide event, spearheaded in London at Southwark Playhouse, hoping to create a theatrical uprising and encouraging people to play their part in the anti-cuts movement.

The sun smiled for the first time this year in Stockholm in April as the 30th anniversary of IETM (Informal European Theatre Meeting) was celebrated. Arts consultant Rose Fenton, previously director of London International Festival of Theatre (LIFT) and Judith Knight, director of Arts Admin, have been involved in IETM since the early days and were in Stockholm to help celebrate. I was there to speak on a panel about women in the performing arts as consciousness is growing about the lack of equality in the sector across Europe. After doing a little

research I was genuinely shocked to find that on average 12% of women hold the most senior jobs in the UK's public and private sectors. This may be a little higher in the arts and certainly there are many women in arts management but given the national averages we are clearly not having much impact on the wider culture. I am particularly curious about how we can imagine new roles for women on and off stage. Women in Swedish Performing Arts (WISP) is a group of wonderful women helping raise awareness about these issues.

Another memorable-session was hosted by Josette Bushell-Mingo, a British performer/director who played in the original *Lion King* and went on to run the Push festival in association with the Young Vic before relocating to Sweden as artistic director of Tyst Teater (National Swedish Theatre for the Deaf). Josette led a passionate panel on the subject of new horizons and issues of diversity in Scandinavia. It seems that in this area the British are streets ahead and that our efforts to increase diversity in the performing arts are a beacon for our European neighbours. With cultural cohesion now off the agenda for schools let's hope the chilled climate does not overshadow or erode these important developments.

Pippa Bailey is director of Total Theatre, producers of the annual Total Theatre Awards, which return this August to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. For more details on the Total Theatre Awards 2011 see announcements on the website www.totaltheatre.org.uk/awards

Images: winners and losers in the National Portfolio lottery: Marisa Carnesky (top left) whose company Carnesky Productions Ltd joined the ACE portfolio with a 23.9% uplift; Natural Theatre Company (top right), previously a regularly funded organisation who were unsuccessful in their portfolio funding bid and thus will have their funding cut by 100%.

Lakes Alive

2011 PROGRAMME

Inspirational outdoor events and festivals across Cumbria



3-5 June: Harmonic Fields

An evocative walk-through musical sound-scape from Lieux Publics (France) on Birkrigg Common, near Ulverston, featuring 500 aeolian instruments each powered only by the wind.

15-17 July: Zircus Plus, Barrow

Barrow's international contemporary circus festival featuring artists from across Europe.

Arts professionals register at www.xtrax.org.uk

23 July: Lakes Alive Whitehaven

Transe Express (France) present Maudit Sonnants (Celestial Carillon). A bewitching orchestra of bell-ringers and aerialists is lifted skywards to perform a magical concert.

29 August: Lakes Alive Maryport

Groupa Puja (Spain/Argentina) present K@osmos, a high-octane show featuring live music, dance, circus and bungee acrobatics followed by a firework finale.

2-4 September: Mintfest, Kendal's International Festival of Street Arts

The flagship festival of Lakes Alive, a kaleidoscope of international performers take over the whole town.

Arts professionals register at www.xtrax.org.uk

For full details see

lakesalive.org



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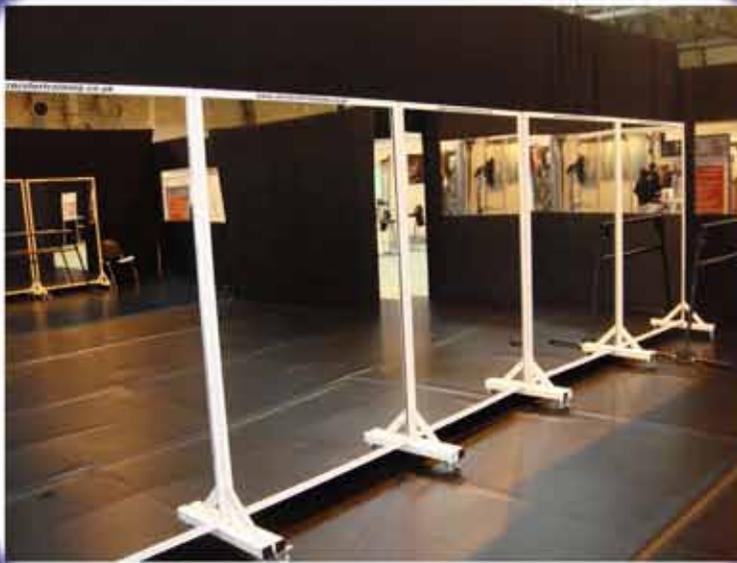


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