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WOMEN'S PERFORMANCE



PLUS

PIP SIMMONS INTERVIEW

REVIEWS

LISTINGS

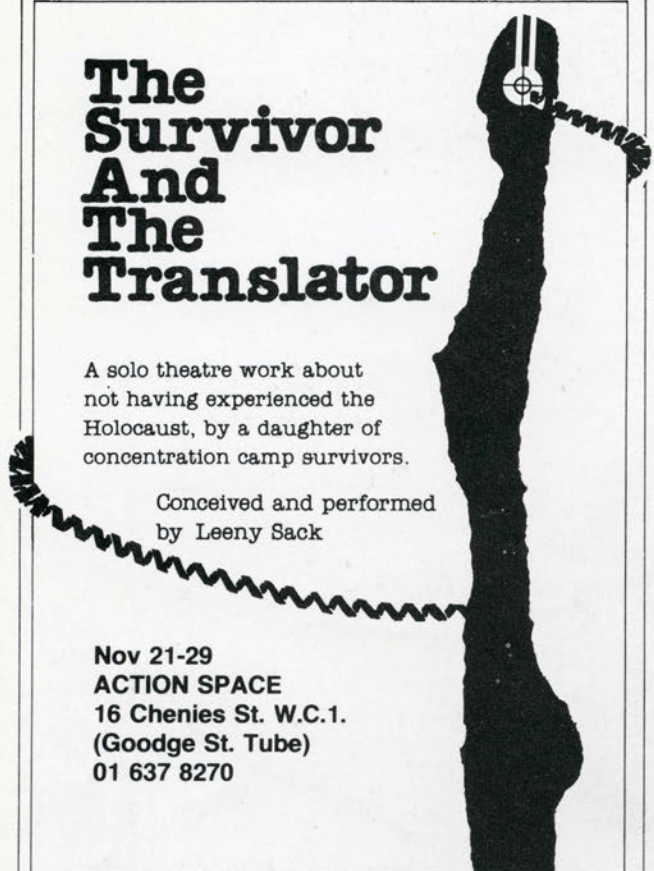
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Dreams and Deconstructions

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in Britain
Editor: Sandy Craig



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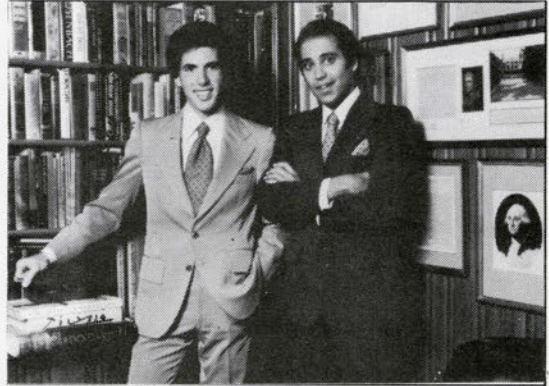
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Is Mary Longford to be allowed to perform on the roof of the ICA or not? As the Mall, London, is the street with the highest concentration of military and surveillance hardware this side of the Irish Sea, there have in the past been certain setbacks in getting permission for this, and other performance assaults on the exterior of Nash House. But now, after three years of relative 'good behaviour' in the eyes of the sensation-seeking media and the authorities, it seems that this, and more is going to happen, and the ICA are going full steam ahead with a major performance art season in the new year. (Sighs the petulant Mary Longford, "I've been waiting for years for this. I can't believe it's really going to happen.") The season includes, along with Mary Longford inc. Hesitate and Demonstrate, the Phantom Captain, and many others. John Ashford, the Theatre Director, who has been building up to the instigation of these events, will be in Japan on sabbatical, but is reputedly to be sent videotapes of events as they happen by Tim Albery, his replacement for the duration. You too can watch your arts centre being stormed by the SAS in the comfort of your armchair 9000 miles away!

The collapse of the Seven Arts group (Art & Artists, Dance & Dancers, Plays & Players etc.) leave others wondering just how big a hole in the market has been left. While not suggesting the idea of Performance and Performers, one can't help feel that there are a lot of ex-subscribers out there. Who ever you are... forget about the other stuff — it was all redundant anyway. There are a lot of small struggling art magazines needing your support. Like us, for example. And like Primary Sources, our nearest competitor. And like *it's* new competitor ZG, formed out of a thwarted takeover bid for PS. Edited and produced by Rosetta Brooks, Juliet Ash and Garrad Martin, it has an interview with Duggie Fields, a pin-up of Silvia Ziranek and a survey of 'Blitz Culture' (you know — the ones who go to the

Blitz). It also manages to mention the word situationism 13 times, and quotes Guy Debord at various intervals. As one example of spectacular cultural packaging to another, we ask — is this wise?

On the subject of situationists, we noticed in 'Anarchist Weekly' an interesting little item that has escaped further documentation. It seems that there was an ad in the agitprop columns of Time Out for a showing of a 'film of Guy Debord's Society of the Spectacle'. It gave a phone number to ring, which the writer did, who was directed to an empty house in Finsbury Park, London. (Others, apparently, were sent to completely different locations where nothing happened.) After a while, a few people turned up and they all went in to find a room adorned with a number of found objects with notes attached to them, mostly of a situationist nature.

Then, according to the writer — 'a number of autonomists turned up, looking for a certain well known situationist' and the 'film' ended with the entire audience being physically threatened. Of course there was no film, and never would be, and the exercise was presumably a lesson to those who still believed in a spectacular society enough to imagine that there might be.

More new performance venues sprouting up around London. An old building in Islington previously owned by Becks Carnival Novelities until the locally notorious murder of Mr Beck (it was a funny business) is becoming the Almeida Theatre, and will be specialising in performances from abroad.

Meanwhile, an Existentialist Cafe Theatre opens in Leicester Place, Soho, masterminded by the Artaud Company, who will be performing adaptations of lesser known work by Camus, Sartre etc. Get out the black jumpers and cigarette holders and see you there. I'm the one with the dead carnation and the copy of *Le Monde*. The Comic Strip, also in that area, opens at the Boulevard Theatre and feature all the cult comics

that have been kicking off at the Comedy Store plus groups like The Outer Limits, Furious Pig, Twentieth Century Coyote etc.

Existing venues are having their share of the excitement. The Bush Theatre, London was recently the scene of a police raid during the Phantom Captains Abracadabra Honeymoon. They were not present to call a halt to the explicit scenes of carnal passion in the theatre up-stairs but to remove all the beer in the pub. It is alleged, apparently, that it was all stolen. The absurdity of this possibility was wasted on the management of the theatre, (separate from the pub's) when it was realised that the police wanted to close the show and prevent any more customers going around with stolen property in their digestive systems. They were however persuaded not to do this, and resorted instead to removing the Burton (if such it was) from the pub. How this was done was not entirely clear, as our informant was '100 floors up in a Love Hotel' (the venue of the environmentalists latest endeavour) at the time.

Further excitement of a more horrific nature. Lumiere and Son, (reviewed in the last issue) in their highly successful 'Circus Lumiere' experienced a touch of grim irony that almost led to disaster in their handling of the 'unfunny' aspects of clowning. A magician ends his act by handing a note to one of the audience (a plant, luckily) indicating that they should do what is written on the note. This ends with words to the effect 'now stab me', with which the member of the audience complies highly realistically. Until the blood appeared, the audience were still treating it as a joke. However the usual precautions protecting the performer had gone wrong and the all-too-real knife had penetrated his body. The show was stopped, and the company was faced with rehearsing very fast for the rest of the run. 'Clown Stabbed As Joke Misfires' was the headline in the Daily Mirror the following

day, luckily treating it as a 'silly story' as opposed to an 'art-shock' story. The performer was quite seriously hurt, but is now recovering. A sobering event, and a real as well as symbolic reminder of the genuine risks taken in performances that go beyond the normal limits.

To the Kings Head, Islington for an Indian Banquet with Cabaret, organised and cooked by Roger Ely, founder of PS and now visual arts correspondent of 'Where To Go' (where indeed?) The compere was Lol Coxhill who, carried away by his latest recording venture 'Slow Music' on Pipe Records (see music feature) droned on and on until it became apparent that he was attempting to produce 'vocal muzak'. In other words, words to provide a soothing background for other words. As was explained at length by Mr Coxhill, the honorary guest, Rob Con had not turned up, but there were presently announced guest artists, who had more or less to force the compere off the stage to take their turn. There was Bert Smarts' Theatre of Jellyfish (slow but moving), Ivor Cutler and Phyllis April King (both equally and magnificently inscrutable) a very dapper Ian Hinchcliffe, G.F. Fitzgerald on guitar, and Dave Stephens whose solo performances are getting better and better and who could cause Benny Hill to die of embarrassment. A profusely sweating Roger Ely emerged shattered from the kitchens of the Kings Head after sending before him several different courses originating from various regions of the sub-continent. The meal was party to the presence of that rare British Event: A large Performance Art Audience Not Entirely Composed Of Other Artists. The other British Event was Mick Banks, as Bert Smart and his Jellyfish, named Antidisestablishmentarianism 'after the Welsh Railway Station,' and Arts Council of Great Britain, 'because of its spinelessness.' They did everything but wobble to the tune of 'The Dambusters'. For risking not only heavy losses but also vats of uneaten dahl, Ely is to be congratulated, and it is to be hoped that similar initiatives follow.

It is often difficult to see just what, if any, is the connection between art and politics. In *Performance*, however, women have produced over the last ten years or so some of the most daring and innovative work around. The conjunction of this body of work with feminism and the women's movement provides a positive example of such a connection. The genre's lack of formal restriction, its opposition to hierarchy and systems have proved useful to women struggling to articulate their own opposition to oppressive structures in art and life. Performance art has traditionally been the art worlds medium of social confrontation. 'About Time' is a ten-day show of performance, video, installation, tape-slide and film work, part of the series of three womens shows being held at the ICA, London. It provides a rare opportunity to look at current work in this field. It is especially interesting to be able to consider live work in the context of painting, sculpture, and photography by women, (Womens images of Men, and the exhibition 'Eight Artists, Women, and the Acme Gallery) and political questions. 'Issues' exhibition and conference.)

The whole history of women as artists has been a history of oppression through the total suppression of their work. Even as a token, the appearance of woman on the pages of art history is rare. And then it is not expressed in terms of equality in tackling common problems of form and content, but as a remarkable feat of 'holding her own' against the inevitably superior work of men. To illustrate, it is rarely the formal qualities of a woman artists' work which are considered — the use of light and colour of Berthe Morisot, the heavily modelled figures of Paula Mohderson Becker — but their subject matter — domestic interiors, or scenes with mothers and children, cited as illustrative of women's prime interest in offspring and the home. That, in the 19th and early 20th century this was all women were allowed to be interested in, is not mentioned. The male Impressionists use of cabaret and park scenes is considered to have brought in a whole new range of subject matter. All that was really new about it however, was the way it was painted. Male recreation — hunting, fighting, lovemaking and war — have been the subjects of paintings for all time. Even though much work has now been done by women art historians to make known work by women and begin to redress the balance, the subject of women's contribution to art is still not an easy one to tackle.

A show such as 'About Time' is thus to be welcomed, for it must of necessity challenge the status quo. In it, 21 women artists will be presenting work in live performance, installation, video and film. The emergence of women as strongly represented in the field of live work has an interesting history. Women have always made art work — of that there can be little doubt, even if its proper appreciation requires a little stretching of the boundaries of the subject to make room for tapestry, embroidery, or patchwork quilts. The last decade however, has seen women move out from these 'marginalised' areas to a position which consciously challenges the art world hierarchy which makes such distinctions initially possible. The seizure of live or performance art by committed feminist artists has played a vital part in this process. The first Women's Art programme was founded by Judy Chicago at Fresno State College, California, in 1970. Here, women turned to performance. As Judy Chicago put it 'Performance can be fueled by rage in a way painting and sculpture can't. The women at Fresno did performances with almost no skills, but they were powerful performances because they came out of authentic feelings.' The work of Fresno and later at Cal Arts and Womanhouse had an immediate resonance for women, and the possibilities of live and mixed media work

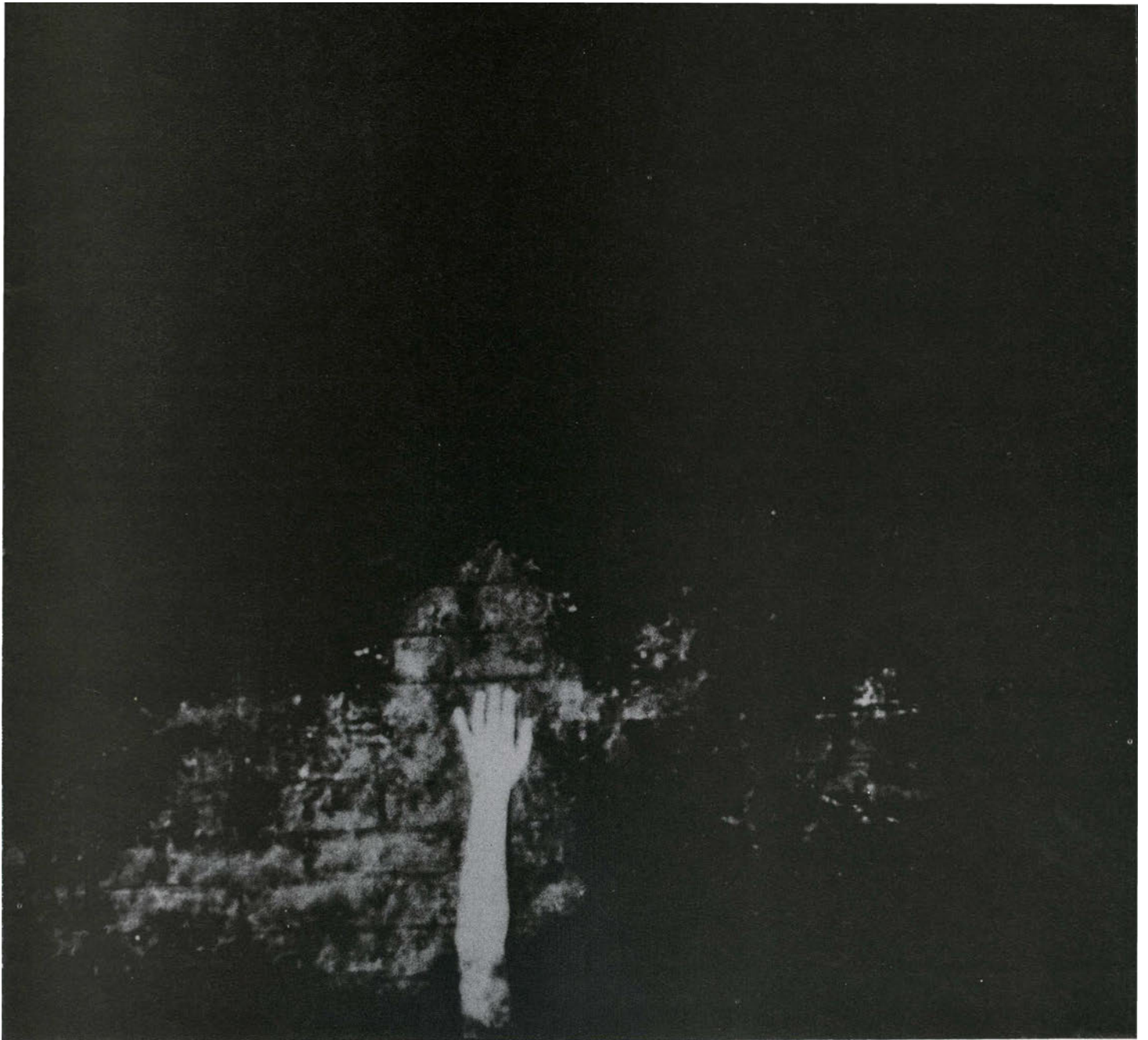
Womens Performance 1

ABOUT TIME

**“Performance Can
Be Fueled By Rage
In A Way That Painting
And Sculpture Cannot”
—Judy Chicago.**

Judith Higinbottom 1980

were eagerly utilised as womens work and the number of women artists flourished throughout the decade. The importance of the Womens Movement for this development cannot be underestimated. It was only within an atmosphere of shared struggle and mutual understanding that some of the painful self exploration and revelation that women undertook in their art work and their lives (indicative of their commitment to the personal as political) could have been possible. Indeed, so successful were some of those works in epitomising the experience of all women in a sexist society, that some younger women seem to feel that such material has been 'done'. Thus, while acknowledging the impact and importance of the Women's Movement, they feel that the battle is won, and that they really do function as equals with men. Such an optimistic view is understandable. After all, as Jacky Lansley points out later, it gets boring always dealing with the same issues, of sexism, oppression and the rest. However, there can be little doubt that the issues which made the emergence and struggles of the womens movement so vital for all womens lives are with us still.



At a Press conference at the ICA to introduce its series of womens shows, Margaret Harrison read out a statement from the Artists Union. This made quite clear that the position of women artists has in fact declined first demonstration for parity held at the Hayward 'Condition of Sculpture' exhibition in 1975. That exhibition had 36 men and four women taking part. This years Hayward Annual has two women out of 35 exhibitors. The short list for Arts Council Visual Arts Awards has no women on it, although 22% of applicants were women. The selection committee was composed entirely of men, among them the notoriously sexist Allen Jones.

It is always hard to keep a struggle going. No-one wants to be angry for ten years. But women, having made clear to the benefit of all the way class, politics and sexism combine to bruise all our lives, must not be pushed once more into the background. The appropriation of the language of feminism as a metaphor of oppression for all (the recent use of the term 'sexism' by men to describe their own difficulties within a repressive culture, for example) is a subtle tactic on the part of those who have yet to admit just how

much that oppression works to their benefit.

'About Time' is not a survey show. Neither does it offer a history of women in performance. The show was selected, by Rose Garrard and Kate Elwes, with Sandy Nairn from the ICA, from an open submission, widely advertised to encourag as many entries as possible. The criterion of selection was that the works should show 'an awareness of the situation of women under the patriarchy'. Most of the work in the show, which includes live work, performance with video, video itself, tape slide, film and installation is concerned with the issues of identity and imge which existence in another culture — male culture — makes crucial for women. The opportunity to consider work on this theme over the ten days allotted to it at the ICA is an exciting opportunity to begin to get some measure of its strength and range.

However, the very decision to submit or not to submit work for the show has been a question for some of its contributors, and also some who have decided not to take part

The nature of performance itself has often served to make it difficult to keep track of and assess its develop-



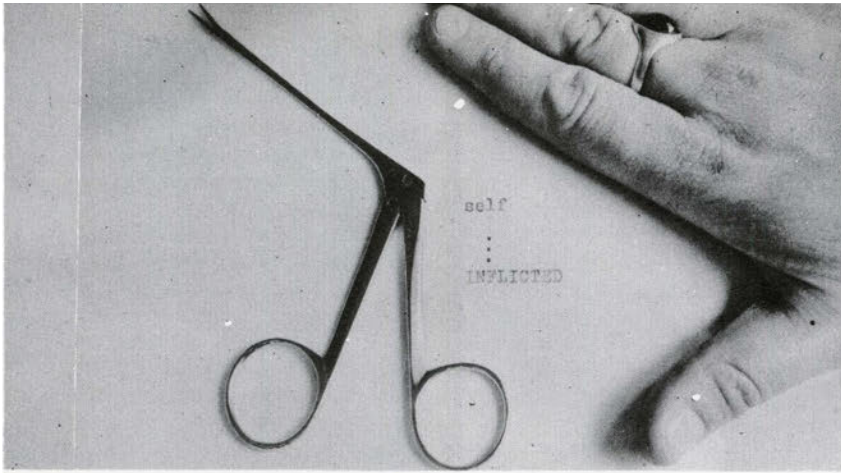
Rose Garrard 'Surveillance'

Marceline Mori 'Andro-Gyne'

ment. Many artists, fearful of inclusion in a system they despise, do not like to have their work documented. Carlyle Reedy, for example, a pioneer of the performance form in London, who appears in 'About Time', has no record of much of her early work. Many other women have only fragments, chance photographs, or planning notes of early pieces. Live work is, by its very nature, easy to miss, and women, carefully conditioned into invisibility are often expert at keeping their work out of sight. However, for some there is another, political dimension to this notion of 'absence'. For several of the women represented in the present show have spent considerable time in questioning the role and relevance of the gallery as a suitable place to show their or indeed any womens work. Thus some 'absence' is a direct result of a decision not to be seen — seen that is in the context of an art world which many women artists have decided to reject as destructive to their own creativity. Performance Art has long been involved in this questioning of the art world dependence on the gallery system. It has often seen as part of its task the direct questioning of this relation by presenting work in non-

artworld contexts — the street, unusual locations such as an agricultural Show or an Ideal Home exhibition. Bobby Baker, who has tried to deal with this problem in her own work, described a recent experience of performing in the Exhibition Centre at Birmingham. Here her piece 'Packed Lunch' (also presented at the Hayward Annual', found a receptive and aware audience, happy to settle down and enjoy the free lunch she had prepared, but quick also to appreciate its underlying questions. Bobby's piece in 'About Time' will question the role of competition in the art world, and indeed in the exhibition itself. For those who have suffered in their work and in their lives the effects of a sexist system, an opportunity to make use of one of its facilities — the exhibition gallery at the ICA — must be approached with a caution born of experience.

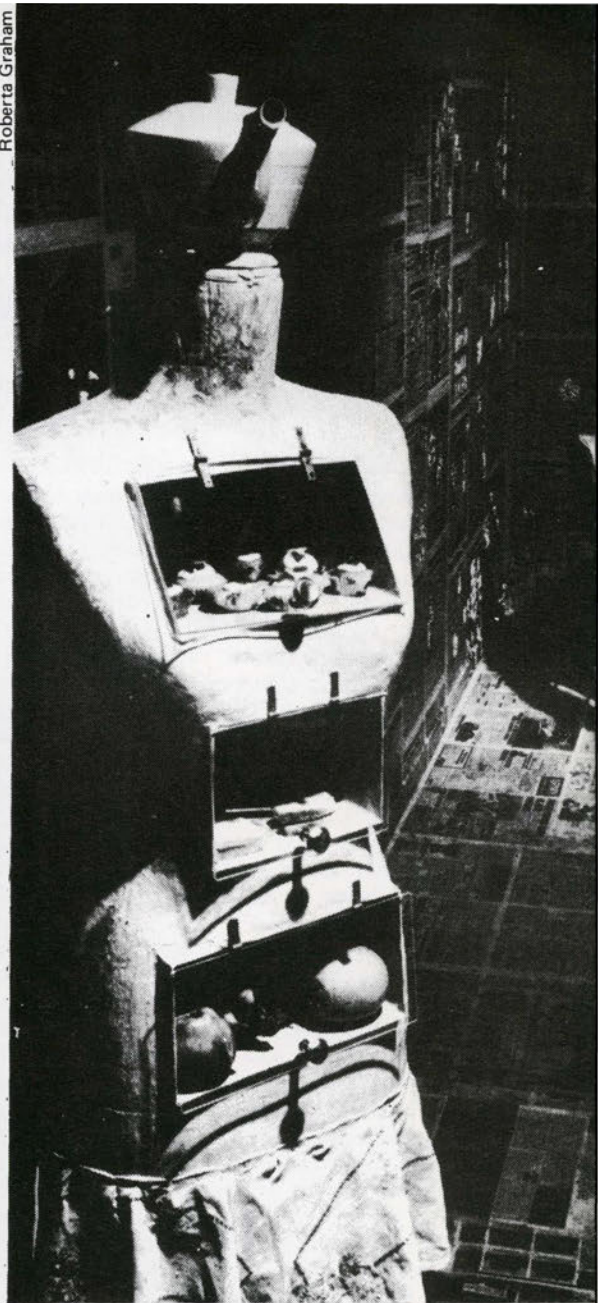
Some women have organised a separate show, at the Bakehouse Gallery, Blackheath, which under the title 'Extended images of men' also includes some performance work. Shirley Cameron presented a piece there which dealt humourously with some of the 'men in her life', father, lovers, husband, work partner and gallery director.



Roberta Graham



Belinda Williams 'The Way We Are'



Bobby Baker 'An Edible Family in a Mobile Home'

Both the ICA and the Bakehouse show raise the other more general question of the danger of 'Ghettoising' women's art as such, a category which can be dealt with as separate, and by implication, not to be taken seriously, safely dismissed after ten days. A reluctance to take part in any such self marginalisation was frequently expressed by contributors to the ICA show.

Thus the situation faced by women artists is neither comfortable nor easy. But, through their own struggles to be both seen and heard, there is beginning to come together a considerable body of work which will make it possible to begin to look at women's work on its own terms. Within this context, it is possible to view 'About Time' as indeed a step forward. For the next struggle is to have women accepted as primary image makers, as innovators and conceptualisers of depth and power, whom it is necessary both to heed and to understand. The women taking part in 'About Time' are well aware of their part in that struggle.

Lyn MacRitchie

Programme 12.00-9.00pm each day excepting Monday

INSTALLATION

Sarah Bradpiece	Wall, Film and Video	
Susan Hiller	Soap Service	30 Oct - 9 Nov
Tina Keane	10 Months	30 Oct - 9 Nov
Jane Rigby	See-Saw	30 Oct - 2 Nov
Alex Meigh	Counter Poise	30 Oct - 2 Nov
	What do you think happened to Liz?	4 Nov - 9 Nov

VIDEO

Marceline Mori	Andro-gyne	30 Oct - 9 Nov
Julie Sheppard	This moment is different	each day at intervals

TAPE/SLIDE

Sharon Morris	Family Portrait	30 and 31 Oct
Pat Whiteread	Journey of Human Error	1 and 2 Nov
Belinda Williams	The Way We Are	4 and 5 Nov
Judith Higginbottom	Water into Wine	6 and 7 Nov
Roberta M. Graham	Short Cuts to Sharp Looks	8 and 9 Nov

PERFORMANCE

Rose Garrard	Beyond Still Life	7.00pm 30 Oct
Catherine Elwes	Ech Fine Strand	7.00pm 31 Oct
Silvia Ziranek	Rubbergloverama Drama	1.00 & 7.00pm 1 Nov
Rose Finn-Kelcey	Mind the Gap	1.00 & 7.00pm 2 Nov
Celia Garbutt	Supermarket	1.00 & 7.00pm 4 Nov
Sonia Knox	Spring 1980	7.00pm 5 Nov
Bobby Baker	My Cooking Competes...	1.00 & 7.00pm 6 Nov
Carlyle Reedy	Woman One	7.00pm 7 Nov & 1.00pm 9 Nov

Hannah O'Shea

'A VISUAL TIME-SPAN' 1.00 & 7.00pm 8 Nov
(A Visual Diary)
TOWARDS A SOUND TRACK

I GISELLE



Jacky Lansley has been working for most of this year on a radical remake of the ballet 'Giselle'. Working in collaboration with Fergus Early in what is now a company of five, they have tackled this 19th century mammoth, still a stalwart of the Covent Garden repertoire. Indeed, a production of the original 'Giselle' is scheduled in one such venue at the same time as the new version is to open in London. A direct comparison will thus be possible, for those with the time to visit Action Space and the money for Covent Garden. I questioned Jacky about the new piece, and our discussion attempted to follow through the political implications of such an endeavour. But first the story.....

The story of the original 'Giselle' was written by Theophile Gautier, and the ballet, with choreography by Jean Coralli and music by Adolphe Adam, was first presented at the Paris Opera in 1841. It is a strange story, mixing archetype and folk tale in a melodrama of curious power. Giselle lives with her mother in a Rhineland village. She loves to dance, but she has a weak heart, and has been warned that she may die and become a Wili. Wilis were the ghosts of young women who had died before their wedding night. They rise up at midnight to dance together. If a young man should cross their path at this hour, he will be surrounded and compelled to join in their frenzied dancing until he falls dead. Giselle had fallen in love with Albrecht, a prince disguised as a peasant. Hilarion, a game keeper in love with Giselle himself, exposes Albrecht's deception to her. Giselle goes mad, and dies of a broken heart. In the second act, the scene shifts to the dark forest around Giselle's grave. Here Myrtha, Queen of the Wilis, dances alone, using a magic evocation to make the Wilis appear. Hilarion arrives, searching for Giselle's grave. He is surrounded by the Wilis and forced to his death. Albrecht, also mourning Giselle, appears, and is commanded by Myrtha to dance to his death. But Giselle intervenes to save him, telling him to go to the cross over her grave. The power of the cross is greater than the power of the Queen of the Wilis, and Albrecht is saved.

Jacky agreed that the ballet most obviously seemed to provide a clear metaphor for the sexual oppression of women, employing a full range of 19th century double-think to do so. Giselle is young, beautiful, sexually ready — her love of dancing is metaphor enough for this. But she is assuredly pure — the dread of the Wilis takes care of that. Her betrayal by Albrecht and her immediate retreat into madness are proof of her purity, while the mad scene showing her dancing frenziedly with flowing hair, provided confirmation of her sexual potential in an erotic spectacle for the 19th century audience. The Wilis, safely dead, can symbolise the extent and depth of female sexual potential, but they cannot win. Allowed one victim, the frustrated (and possibly virgin — after all he was really in love, not like the dallying prince) — Hilarion, they meet

their comeuppance in Albrecht, whom class, true love and religion combine to save from their clutches. The status quo, threatened by the group identity and power of the Wilis, is restored.

The combination of such powerful archetypes with stunning displays of technique and theatricality had ensured the ballet's continuing success as a vehicle of bourgeois ideology well worth its government subsidy.

'I, Giselle' attempts to deconstruct the original's implicit assumptions about class and sexuality. Jacky is most concerned with the transformation of the character of Giselle herself. The new piece for example, rounds out her relationship with her mother, showing it as one of learning and support. It implies that there is a strong link between Giselle's mother and the Queen of the Wilis, that they might be one and the same woman, full of knowledge and skill. In the new piece, Giselle is not taken in by the handsome prince. She knows what he is up to, and taxes him with it, exposing his soft white hands, betrayers of his class origins in a clever piece of mime. In the climatic mad scene, kept from the original, it is not Giselle who goes mad, but the rest, presented as her class mates in a ballet scene, driven mad by their increasingly frantic efforts to conform. The new Giselle questions the 'female as victim' role, and tries to expose it. Just why does Giselle go mad at the moment of awareness, just as her anger at Albrecht's deception breaks out? Jacky is anxious to show that Giselle's anger and its cause should be clearly seen — the anger a positive and justified response which the original 'Giselle' is not allowed to make.

The new Giselle utilises a formidable range of dance and theatre techniques and the integrated use of audio visual material. The work has evolved through workshops and exercises in which all five of the cast attempted to grapple with the questions the piece raised. Their varied personal skills have all contributed to the final form. Giselle, for example, played by Susie Gilmore, has written the songs which enable her to literally 'find a voice'. To set the scene, the new work retains an 'overture' where aspects of the music are explored and combined, and slides of the original and later productions of the ballet are used between scenes to give the 'context of exploration'. Slides of the present piece are cut in to these to make the point quite clear. Jacky feels that the new production says strongly that such combination of apparently disparate elements is indeed possible, and may even be almost necessary if the complexities of the issues raised are to be even approached.

The classical ballet is often considered to be an alien, elite, form, of interest only to a certain audience already quite secure in their right of access to cultural consumption (indeed clearly expressing notions of ownership through the tradition of gifts to the ballerina — today's bouquets were originally diamond tiaras). 'I, Giselle' makes clear that the 'living museum' qualities of a standard per-

formance still fulfil the same social function that ballet has always done. Jacky is quick to point out the human suffering that such shows involve in terms of training and mental and physical discipline for the women involved. 'Going to a ballet is very much like going to a museum — but real people have to act it out every night! You don't have to have fifty women going through the pain and agony of dancing 'Swan Lake' every night to get that kind of dramatic effect.' Jacky also emphasised the link between that sort of performance and money. Classical ballet soaked up funds which could be shared out to help new work in dance. 'I, Giselle', a full length production, had been made for £2,000. And, as Jacky suggested, 'perhaps it is a better "Giselle"!'

The replacement of the old stereotypes raised many questions. In one sense, this could be done simply enough, by a process of reversal. Giselle could be shown as strong and aware, Albrecht as weak and deceiving. But did the piece attempt any deeper examination of the male/female relationships presented by the ballet? Jacky explained that the company had done a lot of work with the idea of role reversal. This had an interesting historical precedent in that some of ballets famous female roles were originally played by men. The mother in 'La Fille Mal Gardée' was one such, while Franz, the hero of 'Coppelia' had originally been danced by a woman. In the present piece, however, initial experiments with role reversal had been abandoned. Fergus had danced Giselle's mother at an early preview of the piece. Both men had taken the role of Wilis in an exercise (as much a necessity to make up numbers). It had been necessary to keep them veiled, disguised in the scene. Their undisguised eruption into a female domain had seemed wrong. The seemingly simple experiment of role reversal had in practice proved unworkable. The initial premise, that of making Giselle a strong character, had seemed simple enough. But if men were shown in collaboration with such an enterprise, presumably supporting it by participation, what role did it suggest for them? In the original, one watched active male characters going about their business, chasing women, dallying, earning a living. 'I, Giselle' showed up the weakness of these men — the prince's lily white hands and his duplicity, his clumsiness even in deception. Hilarion, the peasant, is filled with class hatred as well as sexual jealousy of the prince. It was certainly good to make these contradictions plain. But was there any possible way to deal with these male roles, their

inter relation with each other and with the female roles? Jacky felt that the notion of the men as supporting of the emergence of a strong female character should be present in the piece. 'Giselle' did indeed represent a simple vehicle for the representation of female oppression, for ballet in no way attempted to deal with complex social or psychological issues. But there was the danger of making any attempt to do this also too simple; that was the crux of the problem. It was too easy simply to show the other side of oppressive coin. It was necessary to look much more deeply at the implications of the ballet, so that its exploration did not merely trigger off one-dimensional images.

What was the way forward? did Jacky see any possibility for women themselves to become prime instigators or archetypes? She was hopeful that such could be a possibility, and cited the work of women already working in this area in dance and performance. She also made the important point that it was not only the images or archetypes themselves which were important, but what happened between them. For example, the digging up of an ancient image of oppression, the persecution of witches, could be represented as a fresh image of a lone woman with dangerous knowledge.

Our discussion was lengthy and at times quite difficult. It is not easy to keep a clear head when discussing oppositional work. For the generalisation of oppression represented by some cultural artefacts such as 'Giselle' runs very deep, and at present there are few positive role models to turn to for guidance. However, the function of a piece such as 'I, Giselle,' could only be exemplary. Jacky had hit on the particular power of performance, long valued by the bourgeoisie — its ability to influence by example through pleasure — when she made the following apposite and hopeful summary... 'I always feel that, particularly in performance, the new, exciting, vibrant thing is not necessarily the images you are showing, or the archetypes, but what is happening in between. It is the behaviour. Its seeing not misbehave, through performance behaving in ways in which in society I am not allowed to. The more women can make spaces for themselves to do that, the more they will be able to create those new archetypes....'.

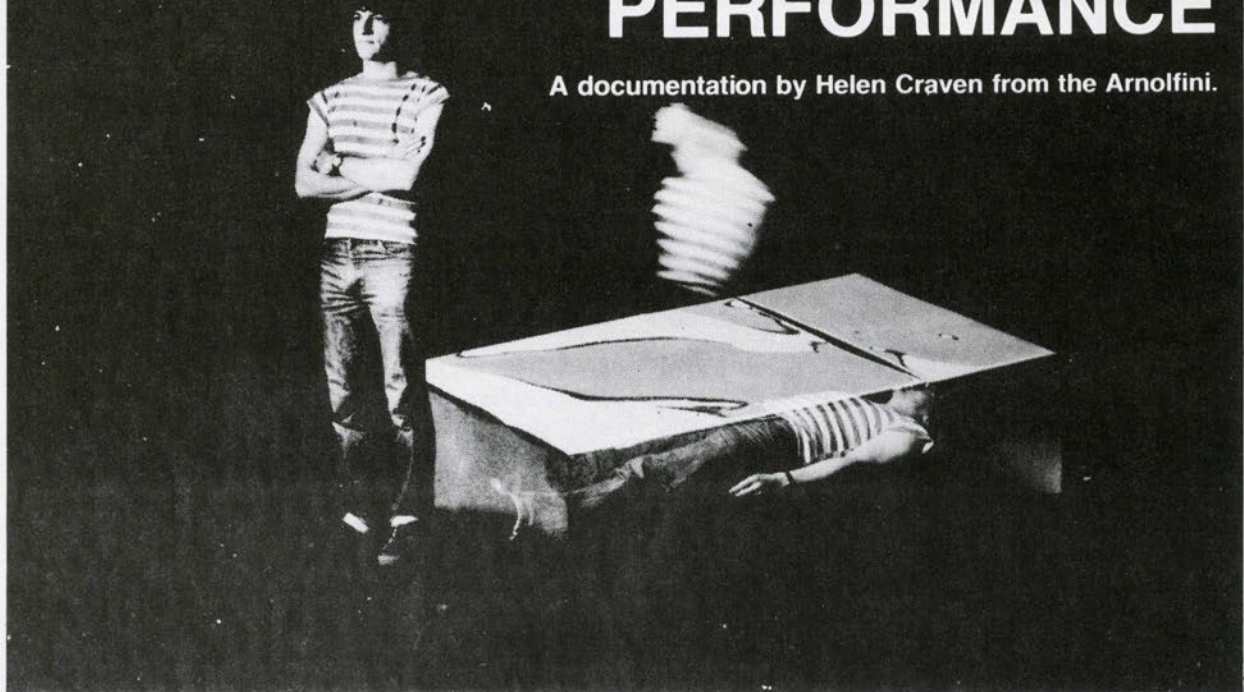
Lyn MacRitchie

'I, Giselle' plays at Action Space, 16 Chenies St, WC1, from 17th October — 1st November, and will be touring Britain between November and February. Details and bookings from Jacky Lansley or Fergus Early, 01-515 4279.



Tom Saddington — CIGARETTE PACKAGE PERFORMANCE

A documentation by Helen Craven from the Arnolfini.



Antony Spinks

The lights in the auditorium are dim. Passers-by sense a hush of anticipation, then a grinding, whirring, screaming noise that builds to a crescendo...

- "No no — don't run away — it's Tom Saddington — he's a jeweller."

- "A jeweller!"

- "Yes, he's trying to make people view jewellery in a different way and..." by the reaction I realise he has a long way to go.

Tom Saddington's Cigarette Package Performance took place on Saturday 27 September 1980 at the Brewhouse theatre, Taunton, where he was welded into a giant stainless steel, 'flip top', cigarette-type packet made from a seventeen foot blank — cut and bent. He was then transported by road to the Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol. British Rail would not, at the last moment, carry him.

Radios 1, 4 and Bristol gave a Friday morning plug but not having personally heard them I was somewhat bewildered to find Tom, Ian Watson (director of South West Arts) and myself involved in a phone-in Radio Bristol programme later in the morning which invited the following.

- "The Arts Council waste their money on such silly things — piles of bricks, cigarette packets..."

- "But Tom Saddington hasn't had a grant. It's entirely self financed."

- "What a waste of his money — shouldn't be allowed."

- "...but think what is spent on holidays, alcohol, cigarettes, Defence..."

I invite the dissenters to come along and judge the event for themselves.

There is no way of knowing if they did, but the auditorium was full and applause rang out as the shining object of controversy was manhandled into position.

At this point in time I cease to worry about putting my job in jeopardy, the grant which pays my wages being swiftly withdrawn and my knuckles being severely rapped with broken bricks. I am awed by the beautiful spotlight sculpture, made all the more stunning by the knowledge that a human being is inside and I look for a faint movement. (A steel membrane — the umbilical cord of a microphone — am I feeling maternal?) The light reflects from the container onto the black drapes in a delicate filigree of green and orange.

The microphone is plugged in and Tom's disembodied voice explains the journey and the welding which shone shafts of light through

the edges giving very bright reflections — colours on the shimmering surfaces — like neon. I feel jealous that I can't express this too. We are then made aware of the panel of three people sitting behind a large desk, which is labelled so that we shall know their significance — The Experts. Who are these Experts? Art critics? Crafts Council assessors? Nuclear physicists...? They confer, observe the audience, peer over at the package, make and receive notes and sip their beverages.

All around there is constant but subdued activity, from helpers and photographers, audience and organisers, adding gently to the atmosphere and interest. Then the package is turned on its side and the cutting process is ready to start. A grinder is carefully applied to the cutting line and a huge ejaculation of sparks flies roofwards.

It takes approximately forty minutes to complete the cutting operation. Moments of growing impatience are quashed by yet another spectacular shower of sparks. The 'Voice' gives instructions to Bill Evans, the 'cutter' and occasionally descriptions of conditions inside the container — the

heat and dust — the need to support the walls while cutting takes place to steady them and himself. - "Yes I'm alright..." the voice now sounds faint and distant.

At last the packet is standing upright and the final weld is cut. A pair of hands wriggle through the front slit looking like small subterranean creatures against the hard, shiny steel. Then with surprisingly little effort the top 'flips' back revealing head and shoulders.

The scene for me at that point changed completely. The heavy, cold, forbidding object was suddenly brought into a new perspective now it was open and a person visible inside. It became somehow smaller and 'friendly'. Tom escaped with merely a grazed elbow amidst applause from all, commenting - "It was like being inside a firework display."

perhaps at this point I should describe Tom Saddington's work. He has long been fascinated with used packaging, making small silver cans, bags, sweet papers and 'wrapper various', which he then partially crushes and makes into brooches, immortalising 'rubbish'. Tom looks to the day when people will pick up old bus tickets and sweet wrappers that take their fancy and pin them to lapels and tee-shirts. Edible jewellery is another fetish. Apple crumble brooches, banana jelly adornments — mould commending transience and ingenuity. How about one stage further? — clothes designed with food stains in mind.

Tom wanted to make his point and performance seemed a natural progression. In 1978, again at Arnolfini, he was welded into a five foot high steel can. He transmitted commentaries every fifteen minutes and after two hours was released with the aid of a giant tin opener.

Tom argues that getting inside the can and packet is tantamount to getting inside a piece of jewellery to wear it. Perhaps complete immersion in jewellery will be our next status symbol — a show of affluence — a therapy for the wealthy introvert.

Bearing all this in mind we return to the escapologist. He has asked the experts to use their skill and judgement in choosing three volunteers from the audience to help crush the packet.

They pull a top hat full of pieces of paper from the depths of their barricade and take out the top three. Three names are called out. Two women, one man. They are issued with special wooden mal-

lets. Tom directs the use of the mallets and although a few flinch as the booming starts the noise is not unpleasant. The man swings positively and exudes expertise — the women might too if gave them a chance. Tom intervenes. A curious tribal rhythm of mallet blows develops. The audience seems more empathetic at this stage — a considerable number had volunteered.

Buzzers and bells start ringing and we realise it is the Experts. The booming subsides. Tom announces,

- "The Experts want our attention." Anticipatory pause.

- "Right they've had enough attention." And the crushing proceeds. Another buzzing interruption, and an Expert takes a photograph.

When the crushing seems to be sufficient, the hammering ceases and Tom throws a pot of blue paint over the pack. This final desecra-

tion marks the completion of the performance.

The packet's temporary resting place is the upper bar area of the Arnolfini, Bristol. Catalogues and posters produced by Tom Saddington are available from the bookshop.

EPILOGUE

I admit I'm a sucker for theatrical atmospheres — darkened rooms and a feeling of suspense and am just an old sensualist when it comes to coloured lights and flying sparks — but I don't think I'm alone. Performance Art can be entertaining and stimulating on many levels and I found it refreshing that the source was not strictly 'fine' art or theatre. There is much talent lurking around the field of jewellery at the moment. Its barriers are being broken as fast as a young pugilists proboscis. So look out for the punches.

Helen Craven

Performance Books 1

A LONG FOOTNOTE ON ROBERT WILSON

**ROBERT WILSON:
THE THEATRE OF VISIONS
STEFAN BRECHT
Suhrkamp**

It is one of the teasing perversities of life that the son of a man who is idolised by State and dissident alike as the father of social realistic theatre should be totally devoted to studying the work of one of the most famous exponents of that subjective, some may say decadent discipline, Performance Art.

Stefan Brecht, son and reluctant custodian of the estate of Bertolt Brecht resides in New York where, while sending away with fleas in their ear the many who pursue him concerning the furtherance of his father's legend; he has been embroiled in the making of a legend of a very different kind... that surrounding the instigator of *The Life and Times of Sigmund Freud*, *A Letter for Queen Victoria*, *Einstein on the Beach*, and I was sitting on my patio when this guy appeared I thought I was hallucinating, Robert Wilson.

Stefan Brecht has been engaged on a writing project that can only be described as sprawling, *The Original Theatre of the City of New York* — From the mid-60s to the mid-70s' a ten

part series of which we will consider and quote from Book 1 'The Theatre of Visions: Robert Wilson'. The first thing that has to be noticed is that this book is both inaccessible and strangely un-noticed in this country, as has to some extent the work of Wilson. It is published in English by a German publisher, Suhrkamp, unpriced and in paperback. Yet this book, and many of the others contain a wealth of source material concerning the making of Performance, and although slightly turgid and esoteric, no more so than Jeff Nuttall's *Performance Art Memoirs* and scripts would seem to be a native of New York.

Indeed, where Nuttall's books make one feel that the only and most important developments in Performance worldwide were being born among a small network of friends stretching from obscure northern towns to Better Books basement, *The Theatre of Visions* generates a similar illusion about, say, the YMHA on E. 14th St. or a loft in Spring St.

The book itself is a cluster of production notes, recollections, interviews, and personal interpretations by Brecht. They all combine to show a passion for every single facet, every

sidetrack, obsession, stammer and stutter associated with the life and work of Wilson, that which, in any case is known, for there is also much uncertainty.

The book begins: 'It seems that Robert Wilson was born in Waco, Texas, on October 4th 1941, that his family was white, middle-class, Protestant and Southern, and that from 1959 to 1962, having graduated from high school, and having been more or less cured of a speech impediment by a dancer, Mrs Byrd Hoffman, he studied at the university of Texas, where he did theatre work with children.'

By this point there are already four footnotes, which does not seem too extreme, until one realises that this is more or less the rate per sentence for the rest of the book. In fact this is the only book I have encountered, though there are probably others, where the footnotes exceed the main text in volume. The Theatre of Visions is not so much littered with footnotes, it is buried up to the neck in them.

Most of them consist of long relevant quotes, which have been included *entirely* verbatim, so one is in the position of appreciating fully the circuitous juddering flow of Wilson's speech, complete with the remains of his impediment.

The Mrs Byrd Hoffman became later immortalised in Wilson's work, when his entire company of performers, including autistic, deaf and dumb personnel, was to be named the Byrd Hoffman School of Byrds. Stefan Brecht himself causes initial confusion to the reader by casually referring to the performers as byrds, so immersed is he in his intimate description of the work.

Wilson is followed through the fairly unremarkable experience of applying liberal educational principles in obscure American High schools. It is in his description of certain events, however that lead us, through the modulations of his speech, and his empathy with the potential for absurd interpretations of adult expectations by children to a foretaste of the visionary power he is to tap.

He was having problems with one girl who was in his class to whom he had given a final ultimatum to produce a painting by the end of term. was like, the next to the last day. I said "where is your painting?" "I don't have it" (Uhum) "Okay" I said, "we have just one more class and you better have it" and the kids thought I was very — sort of, yah, they — I was afraid to think, well I told her "well you-you-you won't pass my class if you

don't have it," I was very strict (laughter) so came (laughter) the last class I had and she wasn't there. And I said "Where is Sandra?" (laughter) She's her- she's here- I said "well, why isn't she in the class?" "We don't know- we don't know-" So about twenty minutes, late, she comes in and she-she was fantastic-she's real- (laughter) When she came in it was like really theatre, she just knew that everyone would sort of look at her and all the guys were sort of going AHHHHHH! (laughter) And all the girls hated her because she was good looking — so she comes in and sits down in her seat — then there's a lot of giggling, then it's very quiet and I said "Okay, where is your painting?" She said "well...." She starts telling me the story, and then she, for thirty minutes she tells the story, and the whole spacing of her wor- of her language, like, ah.... she'd say two words and then maybe she'd pause and then, it wasn't like with the periods and the commas and the semi-colons, no, it's it's and the whole phrasing of the words as well, it almost took on another sort of thing when she talked... she'd, she says, "Well, Bird" she says, "I'm gonna tell you a story..." So she s-s-started — she's got the whole class just like this listening to her. And she tells this story, she says, I was in my room and I-I was thinking — I've got to do a painting for Bird's class." And- and everything she- was very- structurally- so she says, "and I couldn't think of what to do so I took my clothes off." And everyone goes AHHHHHH! Sandra took her clothes off! — (laughter) So she says "and then I got some jars of paint" You know she tell this whole story, about how she got paint, and, ah, she got paint all over her and she'd, ah, she jumps in her bed, and she pulled the sheets in her bed off, and she was rolling all over the floor, it was like it takes her thirty minutes to tell the story. Incredible story, can't can't even- describe, how fantastic it is, how she- how she started.... and everyone just like this- the whole time listening (short pause) and then, (laugh) she says " and I've got the mattress on the floor, and I got the sheets all over the floor, and I've paint all over me, and all over the mattress and all over the floor, and all over the sheets," and she says "and my mother walks in" (laughter) And she says, "Sandra, what are you doing?" "Oh I'm doing a painting for Bird's class." And then there's this long pause. The she says, "And then, Bird, my mother confiscated the sheets," (laughter) So, anyway "You get an A-plus" I said. "That's fantastic!"

(laughter.)'

From this extract it can be seen how Wilson savours the semantics of the girl's excuse/story, and how his work is built up from detailed observation of those who differ from the mainstream of behaviour.

Stefan Brecht details many of these sort of anecdotes in his profuse footnotes. He also carefully describes the various 'visions' that embody the work, and how they are achieved. He gives clues, buried keys to the doors Wilsons swings open and shut with such ease. — 'If they are not outright fantastic.... the activities are only in the most superficial sense everyday.... partying, dining, fishing, watching animals in a cage, running on a beach. In fact they are decidedly *odd*, when not out of the ordinary.... they are odd by some detail or accumulation of details, by a context of setting or of other activities, or simply by prolongation or repetition, or else odd, i.e. inexplicable, not making sense, in themselves (taking snapshots of a hole in the ground, listening to wires, using a magnifying glass as lorgnette, carrying rocks or panes of glass, covering a ladder with hay) in the context of this general quiet madness, some perfectly reasonable natural things that are done, — sipping tea, telling about one's childhood, — seem odd too.'

In short this is a book for Wilson aficionados rather than those who want a clear critical vision of the work. It is for those who want to be eased into a world where the so-called abnormal becomes super-normal 'verging on the supra-normal'.

Even so, to the outside world, where it can be deciphered, it strings together the fragments of what is, on the face of it, a rather out-of-the-ordinary history. A man, who cured of a speech defect, goes on to work with others defective in some shape or form, and somehow redirects the concentrated faculties of those lacking in other areas to create an art-form that has grabbed the attention of both the art and theatre world in almost equal proportions. That in New York, where artistic sectarianism is probably even fiercer than in London.

A man, the son of one who has become elevated as Shakespeare to the inhabitants of East Germany and whose plays have been performed badly in numerous venues on the 'quiche belt' of this country, who was exiled to New York with his father, from whose shadow he seeks to escape, finds himself swept into the maelstrom of activity surrounding the birth of that artform that attracts *the* most criticisms of obscurity and esoteric frivol-

ity, contemporary performance art.

This man becomes the diarist, the recording angel of all the various modes of thought that go to make up a Robert Wilson Performance. He clearly feels it important to get down every single detail, every clue, every lead in a trail that leads to the source of the Theatre of visions.

Born out of a historical context, Brecht is out to rewrite history for himself.

Stefan Brecht Let me ask you for a favor — it may be sort of painful, but would you mind saying what was in the play — go through the contents for me, tell me like the individual things that happened?

Robert Wilson I can tell you and it will be like a very mechanical thing

SB That's all I want

RW But I can tell you what happens. Uh, what happens is — first of all I know that I'm in an opera house, I'm not in a law firm or anything like that — and I know that. I'm using an opera house — And, — I know that I want to keep the audience attracted so- so- I wanted to be viewed at a distance.

SB That struck me as strange relative to your wanting to expose people — The individuals.

RW I felt — I felt that you could still look at the people and also the larger stage picture was always very important — everything happened together — and if you got too close, if you got in one area then you missed the overall and that — I-I went in the theatre and I sat down and that's what happened and — I went to the performances there to- to see what, I kept looking and that bothered me about-about my piece, and I felt that it was most important in seeing all of them — and all the stuff together-so-also I liked the idea of not, — of having little things and being far way from them — I thought just, structurally, that that would bring you closer into the little things. — I mean, really, I think that worked.

While describing a performance further, we get the close depiction of these details, that in fact characterises the whole book.

Robert Wilson The King of Spain is already seated, but we don't see so much of him, he's just, — maybe a piece of his *hair* or something. Uhum, there's a *game* table started here, — and, that game is played throughout, it's like *nucleus*, of the piece, and that, — coming out in *here* — Uhum someone comes to make a drink, and sits on a chair here, — someone mixes a drink, there's a chair here, — this chair is miked. There are *all* sorts of little things like, — that we like see it — you

can *hear* the sound. — But, a lot, *all* people didn't realise it. It's like, — maybe, maybe you *sensed* it, — like something is a little *strange* (short laugh) but I didn't want 'em to say "Oh, they've got that chair miked," it wasn't that but — the reality was slightly off, was like, — sort of *barely*, you know, and it was just that I didn't want it to — and also I had a mike on

the *ice* cubes here too.

Would Bertolt have recognized this as theatre of Alienation?....

Rob La Frenais

Robert Wilson: The Theatre of Visions can be ordered by Frenches Theatre Bookshop, and may soon be on sale at the I.C.A. Bookshop, London. Price unknown.

Venues

Hoxton Hall

We are always on the lookout for new performance venues or bring to light some of those that tend to be neglected by the Press. Hoxton Hall, one of London's original old Music Halls is just such a venue. It began life in 1863, when the theatre boom arrived in Mid-Victorian Shoreditch. Once surrounded by much loved theatres and Halls such as the Britannia, the Standard, the Varieties in Pitfield Street (now derelict but still standing bearing the name 'Raymonds' and threatened with demolition) and the London Music Hall in Shoreditch High Street, Hoxton Hall remains the sole survivor.

Since it was built by John Mortimer for 'the specific object of affording to the humbler classes entertainment that shall combine instruction with amusement', Hoxton Hall has had many incarnations. In 1866, James McDonald bought it and it became known as McDonald's Music Hall till competition and 'police complaining' brought that incarnation to a shadowy end. It then became reborn as the home of the Blue Ribbon Gospel Temperance Mission in 1879 though its reputation was none too acceptable to these good people at first. It was referred to as 'a Music Hall in Hoxton Street, a place of low repute having lost its licence. At first even the thought of it was not to be countenanced'. However, a Quaker bought it and it became the Blue Ribbon Army's Headquarters, where one could purchase Blue 'Ribbon Badges, Blue Ribbon Tea, Blue Ribbon Coffee and The Blue Ribbon Gazette. Along with these Mission activities the Music Hall continued for social occasions, meetings and services and became a centre for The Girl's Guild of Good Life and held classes for teenage girls in subjects such as chair-caning and elocution.

In 1893, the owner, Mr Palmer left the Hall to the Bedford Institute for recreational activities — youth work, football teams, 'art designing and dramatics'.

The basic structure of the Hall has not changed and with the exception of the stage area which was substantially altered in 1910 it is pretty much as McDonald left it.

On Fridays and Saturdays and occasional Wednesdays the Hall functions as a venue for visiting companies;

recent performances have been given by Common Stöck, The Women's Theatre Group, Jail Warehouse, Gavin Briars and Major Chorlton-cum-Hardy's Majestic Music Hall and the resident performance company.

The members of the team differ in their preferences, attitudes and biases as to what their work should consist of. Another team member, David Urie said, 'Ours is the theatre of values not the theatre of causes'. When I asked him what he meant, he defined the 'theatre of values' as being that where human experiences and feeling are predominant and that which 'enhances the imagination' and the 'theatre of causes' as being didactic theatre, political theatre, feminist theatre etc. When I asked why he didn't support political theatre he said 'That's all rubbish. We're here to entertain.'

Jim Dunk, a newer member of the team and an ex-teacher, agrees that theatre need not be didactic but is more committed to the values of socialism. He would like to see an end to complacency in the theatre. 'I do not believe in the myth that the working class has no tradition of theatre,' he said, 'It is important for local people to see a theatre company alive and performing in their neighbourhoods and at the same time to see the same people being active doing other things in the community besides 'theatre work'.'

Iris McCann, herself a local mother, would like to see more local people using the Centre for their own creative activities than there are at present. 'Not long ago, I was just a mum. Now I work here part-time and I would like more people to come in and do what they want here creatively. It's our Hall. We need to use it,' she said.

'You see,' David Urie clarified, 'we're here to look after the social welfare of the people in hoxton and we happen to be a group of people interested in theatre and drama so we have chosen to do this via the means theatre and drama. Before it used to be done through the Temperance organisations. If and when this particular group changes or ends, the work will still presumably be carried on but not necessarily through the medium of theatre, other people may choose to do the same work via a different medium.'

To these ends Hoxton Hall is financed by the Arts Council, The Greater London Arts Association and the Borough of Hackney and may be booked by any performance group who wish to perform in Hoxton's Old Music Hall.

Bruce Bayley

Interview with Pip Simmons

FROM REACTORS TO ROULETTE

Gillian Clark: The two pieces you have done recently, 'Towards a Nuclear Future', and the piece that you have just opened here, 'Rien ne va Plus', (a show about a French casino in Nice) seem to me to be made very much for touring. Is that correct?

Pip Simmons: 'Nuclear Future' was a Mickery project. It was based on talks I had been having for years, very academic ones in a sense, about the possibilities of using different realistic facts and constructing a play from actual material, newspaper interviews etc. Everything, every word spoken in it is 'for real', in the sense, that its taken from interviews with men from the industry, and anti-nuclear organisations. Unfortunately when people looked at it they did not, when they saw it on stage believe it.

GC: I felt that it came over very strongly, that it was real speeches.

PS: It was a notion of using a research process that was available at the Mickery using a computer data bank which provided information daily. Over the six weeks we were there, the information which came off this, in the paper form, was enough to cover the four walls of a rather large foyer. This was just incidents relating to nuclear plants, conversations, discussions in Europe, nothing to do with America, Harrisburg anything like that, only what appeared in the daily press.

GC: You have just said that there was enough information to cover the walls of a foyer. Did you ever think of touring this with photographs as an exhibition, or extending the theatre piece out in some way?

PS: We did this at the Mickery where facilities allowed but wherever we went we contacted Anti-nuclear groups, and also the industry itself. The only thing I can say was that two or three hundred people a night would come because they were interested in the title of the show. A lot of the groups involved were slightly offended that one was making theatre about this, because it was too apparently serious to turn into theatre. We got an awful lot of snotty replies, especially from the Anti-nuclear groups. The industry itself took great care of us in many ways, and provided us with piles of information. They were very concerned that we would see their side of it. They made it their business to know what kind of group we were and who we were likely to speak to. I had letters from Vienna, from the Atomic Energy Authority there, and the Chief there phoned me and said that we would like to make sure you know our side of the story, and they sent people from public relations down to talk to us. Through another connection I met a gentleman who has now died, called Otto Frisch, who was one of the original creators of nuclear fission, and was at Los Alamos during the war, during the construction of the nuclear bomb. He was a very nice, gentle old Austrian man and he confirmed more or less what we were thinking; that the debate was pathetic because the facts were clear, that there were too many commercial pressures on the industry itself forcing it to cut corners, and that the anti-nuclear groups had seized all the wrong points, that they didn't have their right evidence in the right public focus.

GC: When I saw the show I felt it came out as a very clear statement that whichever side you were on you were caught in a trap: that if you supported the industry that was no



Bob Van Dantzig

We



Bob Van Dantzig

Rein ne va plus



Bob Van Dantzig

Rein ne va plus



Rein ne va plus



Alexander Agor

Dracula



Rein ne va plus



The Tempest 1978



Towards a Nuclear Future



Gorm Valentin

Woyzeck

solution, and if you were in one of the anti-nuclear groups then that was going down by-roads that were just not feasible any longer. This is something I have felt about several of your shows: that they don't take up a political stance that is didactic but are very much about the ambiguities and contradictions of human experience.

PS: More than that with 'Nuclear Future' I hope. It was about a debate and at what point is there contact between the two languages. In this case there was none at all. There are two processes of manipulation, one for one set of reasons — economic, political — for a way of life that obviously the anti-nuclearists would not support, which is for the support of an industrialised West. And the other, which talked about the fears that people have in a language that most people don't understand, and relate to the environmentalists of the sixties.

In that sense there are two processes of manipulation which are diametrically opposed and which reach nobody, the industry because its public relations is pathetic, and the anti-nuclear lobby because it is so split within its own minority terms that it can have no effect. Both public relations systems treat their public like idiots, avoiding communication of facts, preferring to manipulate them for their own didactic convenience.

GC: Manipulation is something that appears to be a theme in 'Rien ne va plus'. Manipulation of people by different circumstances, politics etc. Can you say something about the way in which 'Rien ne va plus' was developed and has been researched, because research appears to be very important in the growth of your shows?

PS: Research. If the Mayor of Nice says something he speaks in a language which is not an approximation of the writer to the Mayor of Nice, but is the actual words of the Mayor of Nice. No, I don't think one can improve on the way in which he makes a fool of himself. The same goes for anybody involved in this situation, the English, the Mafia, or the croupiers. There are theatrical re-adjustments of that language but its essentially the language of those people. 'Rien ne va plus' has a subject that is very difficult to explain in England in some ways, because I think apart from the real incidents like the Poulson case in Newcastle, that people are disinclined to see corruption, local corruption which has national, political, economic implications. Funnily enough, the involvements in the case of this Nice casino have focused practically everything that's happening in France in terms of what people consider to be French corruption. It touches on local corruption, on high finance, it involves people like Khashoggi, the arms dealer, Giscard, the OAS, the Mafia, and the French people's basic acceptance of the corrupt mechanics of their daily lives. The intellectual's response to that, which always remains an intellectual response is a detached criticism, or even an anarchic criticism of life but it refuses to go beyond that into life itself.

GC: Having seen the show I felt very detached from the issues that were being presented and unable to relate them to the wider issues you mention. Do you feel that it's a very particular show about a particular issue and that one shouldn't make those wider relationships, or is it just that it is a very new show and you are still working on it and maybe the performances aren't as pointed in certain directions as they are going to become?

PS: That's certainly true. Essentially, it is a very new show. These first two weeks on tour are trying the show out, trying to adjust the theatrical mechanics of the show. It is crucial to us how it all works. I'm sure in my own mind that in France nobody will have any problems about understanding it — because the events have been daily news for the last three or four years. If we could have contained all

the events in the story then perhaps it would have become clearer, but in order to do that one would have to explain as far up to date as now — its still hitting the headlines in France. The Mafia — the guy who used to run the other casino in Nice making a run for the Antilles in the West Indies, and the lawyer who is at the boyfriend of the daughter who was killed, now becoming his lawyer in the West Indies etc. To try to connect everything together is virtually impossible, it has too many threads. The Mayor of Nice, for example, attained his job in the Ministry of Tourism by providing ex OAS bodyguards for Giscard, and the manifestations go from top to bottom. It's a good story which makes a good piece of theatre and has repercussions; it has repercussions if you want to identify them. Essentially one is obliged to communicate what one does through theatre and theatricality, and it's this which creates the ambiguity of a live performance. There are other groups who are more inclined to demonstrate where they stand politically. I've tried to have views about politics rather than to support one tendency or another. What is vital is that people are able to present what is happening and allow the audience a choice, to view a vision, an imaginative picture of the facts, and then allow the dialectic to develop from their experience of that. Perhaps the croupiers in the casino don't matter politically, but in fact what they have done is unprecedented in their own world. It's not a facile strike, it's a very difficult one, it has caused them human, political, economic problems. To try to relate that to people in England one has to say that any kind of strike is meaningful, because it's against the powers of manipulation and corruption, it's against all the things that put a working person in a situation where they don't have control over their own existence. To me, that is as real in a casino as in a car factory. I was interested in it, in particular, because I thought people would not have much sympathy for it. It is stated in the show, OK perhaps you don't care for any of these things, but isn't there some aspect of your town for which you care, is it threatened by forces beyond your control, and not just beyond your control, but beyond your blasé necessity to even think about?

GC: Something that over the years that I have seen your work has always struck me, and which has come out of this conversation is that your work is very political, and I find it strange that you are never seen as being one of the political theatre companies. When I first saw, for instance, 'Dracula' in York, years ago, I found that a very clear statement about areas of sexual politics and repression. I find it strange that this was not identified. I thought that even your version of 'The Tempest' had certain political implications. Somebody said to me today, 'Oh well, you know, the Pip magic wasn't there in the show, it was alright, but I don't really know what politics has got to do with Pip's work' and I saw that as a fundamental misunderstanding of your work.

PS: It's also a fundamental failing in a lot of what we've done, that over the years we have ended up in spaces in the British Isles inhabited by a very intellectual, avant-gardist audience, so that one is inevitably judged by people who have very strong opinions as to what theatre should be. There have been people who have come here this week who are completely non-theatrical people, who have been amazed and very saddened by the story — that's because they don't have any pre-conceptions about theatre, what it ought to be, and what it ought to do. One can move in a direction where one can not only ignore the converted and the opinionated, but one can surprise people who have not got any theatrical expectations. Some groups have been doing that, John Fox and I.O.U. have created this experience imaginative pictures, as Odin Theatre have been doing

in Wales. There are no surprises left in converted audiences any more.

GC: I would agree with that completely. It's one of the problems of running a venue, as well, trying to get your audiences to be the unconverted rather than the converted. This show is touring to York, then to France and possible Holland, and then you are back in London and this country for a while. What are your plans after that?

PS: Well, at the moment, after having spent the last three months putting it together, I have not had a lot of time to think about it. It is clear that the group will take a break: the break is again to do with the fact that we have been on the road a long time. The problems, especially in these times, mean that some sort of re-examination of what one's trying to do in theatre is necessary, or even whether one's interested in theatre at all. I'm not a theatre freak. I don't have any great inherent love for it: it's a job which enables the company to sort out certain ideas, musically, theatrically, with a lighting designer or a costume designer. There are problems to be solved and one spends six months or so trying to solve those problems trying to crack them after you have begun the show. This puts a terrific strain on people's ability to come up with anything different. I think we need the break to think, not just in altruistic terms about what the meaning of what we do is, but in real terms to consider what our place is, or what place we want to create for ourselves, within the context of a rather stagnant scene.

GC: You have done a number of projects over the past couple of years haven't you? Did they arise just because of the constraints of touring, or were they primarily something that you wanted to develop as an artist.

PS: They arose out of, especially after I disbanded the first group in 1973, and grew out of, a desire to do the work better. We were performing shows in those days over 300 times — in the shows like 'Do it' 'Alice in Wonderland', and 'George Jackson' we performed over 300 times. So I disbanded, and I was offered a project in Rotterdam. The idea of projects started in Rotterdam: this was funding for a concept, for an idea, which would be in some way manifested by the group. Since then I have pursued the project idea as often as I can, mostly in relation to conversations I have had with Ritsaert ten Cate we have discussed what is the best way to manifest what one is doing rather than spend one's time complying with a rather abstract administrative impositions made by the Arts Council. I'm still arguing with the Arts Council about this and have been arguing about it for years. It is in the nature of the theatre that groups like ours commit themselves to an attempt to produce a different kind of theatre — needs a longer period of preparation and performance and is generally seen by fewer people. But it has had its own influence; even if you measure it in the conventional terms of the writers or actors who have moved on into more important political positions, for example, the David Edgars and Howard Brentons of the world who came out of this jungle.

GC: The whole concept of projects and residencies has been difficult for venues to pursue as well, because of the same sort of funding restrictions. Do you feel that venues, and companies like yours, that have been trying to open out this type of theatre work have had any sort of success or....

PS: Very much so... Sadly, the number of venues who will support that kind of idea are very few and far between and tend to be same ones, Birmingham Arts Lab and Chapter Arts Centre in Cardiff. There are other people who are now starting to think about it. More groups are interested in the possibility of residencies simply because in that situation one has the benefit of the trained and expert staff at a venue who wish to expand their repetitive function in only administering for incoming groups, groups which are bought for a

number of performances. What we are interested in, what we have tried in each situation when we have had a project, is to involve ourselves in the place and the possibilities offered by its technical awareness and by the breadth of the place's ambition.

GC: You've touched on battles you've had about the amount of work you do in this country, battles, you've had about doing residencies, and problems about your taking time off. How do you view future funding of your work, and the area as a whole, and the way in which the development of this area of work is restricted by lack of funding?

PS: The area of work has almost certainly closed down into groups that have been working anywhere between twelve, and five or six years. The Arts Council seem to have determined what they consider excellence, artistic excellence. What is called the fringe is financed as irrelevantly as any other source of theatre, it doesn't depend on excellence or anything else, but on being able to survive at a minimal level and to continue to survive at a minimal level. Some groups have survived at a more minimal level than we have. There are perhaps a dozen groups that have been going a long time that are the hard core, even the hard porn, of fringe theatre. There are a lot of theatres in London which have a certain popularity because they have an attraction to people coming into London. Those people don't tend to be people from the provinces, they tend to be foreigners, or a hard section of London supporters for each venue. London is a town of twelve to fourteen million people, which is the equivalent of the whole of Holland, or the whole of Belgium, and bigger than Sweden, Norway or Denmark. It should be able to support twice as many theatres as it does. Paris, does certainly, and that is a much smaller town. A theatre company must be able to survive in its own terms up to a point. That's not the judgement of the Arts Council, that's the judgement of the people that come to see you, not the critics although critical acclaim is important. What is important in any town is word of mouth. 'I went to a theatre show last night, it was interesting to me for various reasons' — not opinionation 'I went to a theatre show last night, it wasn't as politically profound as the last one I saw, or Irving Wardle or James Fenton said this or that'. You know the people go because its an event, not just for theatre aficionados. The attempts of all the people working on the fringe for years, has been to say what we are doing is accessible to normal people. But in the process it has cut itself off from normal people, because it plays in venues that 'normal people' would never go within a thousand miles of. It's so intense and ugly in the way it explains itself: one can explain what one does in an ugly way but in the end one finds it slightly ridiculous. The challenge is not in proving what we, or anybody else does, to you, or to somebody who knows about theatre. The problem is that if you have got something important to say, why doesn't anybody come to see it who might be influenced by what you are thinking, who might be amazed by a little bit of magic, or music, or theatricality, other than a bunch of self-opinionated people who are only trying to impress each other. You can't blame the Arts Council for what is happening, you can only blame the vision of people who can't see beyond the end of where the audience come in, the space, and who can come into that space. Public relations is something that is handled very badly in all areas of the fringe. Success depends on all the things they hate, which is acceptance by critics, or by word of mouth that will draw a wider audience. You can do the most perverse show you like, and you'll get people, you can do whatever you like, and you'll get people, but you have to work to get them in there. Once the show's there you need a space to work on your behalf, not to just satisfy it's own relation to funding.

Performance Books 2

DREAMS AND DECONSTRUCTIONS,

Alternative theatre in Britain

Editor: Sandy Craig

Amber Lane Press /4.95

Dreams and Deconstructions is a book of collected essays by various writers on fringe or alternative theatre. 5 of the 10 contributors are or have been associated with *TIME OUT* as editors or writers, and the sight of this information on the reverse of the contents page gives us a premonition of the prevailing tone to come: competent but not brilliant, journalistic rather than critical, political but not perverse, and stylistically matter of fact, i.e. no good jokes. The odd original (or at least sufficiently explored) argument stands in danger of being struck down in its prime by received ideas, clichés, tacit understandings and assumptions, and other pest-infested blooms. In too many chapters the enemies are named but not given full reckoning of their sins so that the layperson (such as myself) is in a condition of knowing the inside story but not the relevant background information. In other words, full priming is given for chit chat at alternative literati gatherings and fringe first nights, but materials for more subtle discourse are not provided.

However, facts there are in abundance, along with chronologies, histories, and descriptions of funding difficulties. Sandy Craig's opening article ('Reflexes of the Future — the Beginnings of Fringe') and his closing one ('The Bitten Hand — Patronage and Alternative Theatre') give the most enlightening and least boring outline of how public funding works and what problems it faces that I have ever read. He starts at the simplest level of describing the structure of the Arts Council and the Regional Arts Associations, how they relate, how they don't relate (all information that everyone ought to know but which is easy to forget or get confused about), defines 'quango' and other elementary but essential notions, and then swings into more controversial issues which the reader is now in a position of sufficiently sophisticated knowledge to enjoy. The tightrope the Arts Council walks between financial and artistic accountability, the reasons for its avoidance of controversy (and why they're not shared by the RAA's), its assimilation or rejection of alternative work, its tendency to see the many activities of theatre 'in terms of a spectral continuum shading indivisibly from the ultra-violet to the infra-red'

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are all important things to know about. (And in general Craig's contributions follow this pattern of information laced with insight.) But the repeated insistence in many chapters on recounting the funding history of children's theatre, community theatre, lunch-time theatre, educational theatre, though interesting enough I suppose (actually it's a bloody bore), or if not interesting is one of those hidden factors which has more bearing than may be supposed on the nature of the work; in this case just one indication among many of the book's bureaucracy-mindedness. Other indications are the preoccupation with the curriculum vitae of the various companies (first they did this and then they did that), the identifying of organisers/directors/theorists far more often than writers or, astonishingly, performers, and a whole chapter on venues. Not once did I come across an interesting remark **about a particular piece of work** (well maybe there were one or two in Steve Grant's chapter on the new writers, 'Voicing the Protest').

But back to my point about the performers. Take the chapter called 'Product into Process — Actor-based Workshops' by Colin Chambers. Wouldn't you think that this, at least, would be about actors? It starts off by saying 'an actor's lot is not a happy one' (too true, if this book is anything to go by), and then a few paragraphs on says that after the development of the fringe actors were 'no longer disposable cheap commodities' and that 'it was the notion and practice of the collective that allowed the individual to flower... radical egalitarian cooperation allowed the individual actor to be expressive and creative'. That is the last we hear of an individual actor — the rest of the essay is devoted to companies and their structure, descriptions of workshops, venues and productions. But when it comes to the crunch, when you are sitting in a chair (or on the floor) and watching something happen (or participating in making it happen) what actually brings it alive is not the director or the venue or the sodding Arts Council or even the writer, but the actor. Communication between person in audience and person in performance is initiated and sustained and made real by the performer. Good actors can redeem a multitude of faults in text and production, bad actors can make a mess of the best thing ever written. Ignoring this fact leads to performances which are a good idea but an appalling reality. And it's no good blaming the audience either; however much they cooperate it's not their baby and not their responsibility to enjoy, respond to, or

learn from a production where the vital communicative link is missing. So why are there no performers discussed in this book, when they are so important. Is it that the fringe has no good actors — or is there some other reason for their neglect? Perhaps they have bad breath.

The chapter on performance art ('The Jazz of Dreams' by John Ashford) has to concern us most in the context of this magazine. Amongst aficionados and practitioners of this art there is said to be a division in performance between the theatrical wing and the fine art wing; the fact that such a division does in fact exist is proved by this article. Not simply because it provides a list of 5 influences each from the theatre and from the fine arts, but because all the examples chosen are definitely on the theatrical side. Hesitate and Demonstrate, Welfare State, the John Bull Puncture Repair Kit, and the People Show (who every single person in the world except me seems to love to distraction). It was fine as far as it went — the explanation for critics' incomprehension of a performance art lying in performance's abandonment of the traditionally supreme text and the adoption of visual imagery for its own sake, rang particularly true. The history of what motivated performance is likewise informative, but there are too many large gaps — though perhaps appropriately left unfilled in the context of a book on theatre. There is a whole dance aspect to performance which is not mentioned and which provided many abstract and conceptual works, there is performance which is much wilder in its structure than anything mentioned here, there is musical performance and so forth.

Just one more thing we need to worry about — and that is the generality of the term 'naturalism' which is used all over the place in this book. I am assuming that to those knowledgeable about the theatre this word has some explainable meaning, or if not a meaning exactly than an implication; I'm further assuming that it is used in something like the same way the word 'representation' or 'figuration' is used in the visual arts — as a catch-all for everything which isn't something else. It's representational if it isn't abstract, expressionist, conceptual, systematic. Perhaps in the same way something is naturalistic if it isn't one of the alternatives provided by the fringe. Though the order is the other way around of course — naturalism came first in time with the alternatives its responses. I've got no gripe against the problem of naturalism, I just wish somebody would explain what it is.

Andrea Hill

Performed Music

ACTUAL MUSIC FESTIVAL

The Festival lasted five days, with two afternoon performances and two seminars, and presented a dense survey of improvised music. It was well publicised and well attended, with capacity audiences for all events and derisory coverage from the weekly (weakly) Musical Press, with reviews being cut by half or illustrated by photos of people who weren't even in the country.

The festival opened with a short solo from Roger Turner who over the last few years has developed into a highly skilled subtle free percussionist, followed by short solos from Mike Johns (sop. sax) and John Russell (Guitar), after which they played as a trio. This opening concert set my thoughts into a pattern that stayed with me for the rest of the Festival. First off, I was familiar with the work of most of the performers from my own involvement in improvised music, and had seen a lot of them playing several times in less formal presentations to more casual audiences. To see the same people performing on a lit proscenium stage to a capacity festival audience made me see them differently. A stage has a focussing effect, every gesture or mannerism gets amplified and invested with 'dramatic' meaning that, seen in different contexts, one doesn't ascribe to them to the same extent. The point I want to make is that everyone projects a persona in a more or less contrived manner. Everyone has a stage act. It might be the same as on the street, but it is magnified by a stage, and gets read by the audience as meaningful utterance — as communication.

I thought that the quality of the music throughout the Festival was high. Technical skills of the instrumental and improvisational were displayed by I think, everyone that I saw. The audience were appreciative and were able to follow the development of the improvisations — they were able to understand what the musicians were doing... they enjoyed the music. Free improvised music is now an accepted, accessible music form. The radical ideas of the last ten to twenty years have been absorbed by player and listener and musicians have honed, refined and extended the ground breaking ideas and working them into what could almost be called a style. As with all developments in the arts, once the rush of energy that demands its own (new) form of expression is over and things become fixed the work becomes recognisable by repeated similarities and starts to build up an audience. Career wise, the contemporary artist is in a similar position to the ante electric media theatre performer who with limited access to audiences could re-use the same material over and over again and by doing so build up a reputation. Not very creative, but eventually your name gets around, critics and the public start to take notice of you,

you start to get offered places in festivals, teaching jobs and so on.

So it seems this is happening (has happened) in Improvised Music. Work that ten or fifteen years ago would have been thought-provoking, stimulating, challenging — maybe even controversial; now seems to be polite and innocuous; the music seems to have become more about music for music's sake — aesthetics — rather than a medium through which ideas are expressed and developed.

The current work seems to be read and judged by the same criteria as a string quartet say, or the way that hip intellectuals used to listen to Jazz improvisations. (Am I talking about myself or other people? Since the Festival, I have talked to several musicians and artists who attended the festival for whom a lot of the performances were challenging and exciting, which was reassuring to hear).

Some musicians are, however, discussing very seriously among themselves the state of the art, their reactions to it and

work would be the development of a synthesis, where music and movement skills were utilised to the full, but not in isolation, as always seems to be the case. There seems to be a new interest in Improvised music/Dance combinations, I recently saw a workshop performance at X6 by Still Mauve, a four-dancer three-musician company who are producing good work at the moment although along what I would describe as traditional modern dance/music lines, but who show strong signs of breaking through to new forms, and there are several others starting to apply themselves to this set of problems.

I was pleased for the opportunity to see so much work, although all festivals can be a little overwhelming, and everyone should be aware of the work going on within our area of music, which has been greatly and consistently ignored by the media and other artists. It is an especial shame that there has been so much of value that has been overlooked, and lessons to be learnt that could be of real benefit to performance artists and dancers that have started to delve into the area of improvised art.

The paradox is that within the music there are signs of restlessness and indications that the work will be moving on into new areas at the very point at which the present work is starting to be understood, appreciated and supported. I think that we may be approaching an exciting time to be a musician and a member of the audience.

In future issues of the Performance Magazine I hope to be reviewing and discussing the new work going on from this new music, and to provide an involved, informed critical context.

Paul Burwell



Yolande Snaith

how they see it. These discussions are difficult because as one is talking about a living, changing, improvised work of a heterogeneous nature generalisations (very useful for helping to form one's ideas) are possibly even more nonsensical than they usually are. Some of the discussion is happening through the work itself... some people are starting to do odd things...

I avoid writing about what I liked or disliked in the Festival on the premise that a family album, whilst of interest and a source of enjoyment to the owner isn't necessarily of interest to a stranger.

Yolanda Snaith and Richard Coldman by performing Dance/Guitar improvisations looked to be located outside the mainstream of the Festival, and performed very well, creating a different atmosphere from the other performances, including that of the awkward silence, which was quite refreshing. In a way what they did was close to improvising a performance with the curious balance of being both aware and unaware of the audience. What I would dearly like to see in music/dance

TODAY'S THOUGHT
Musical innovation is full of danger to the State, for when modes of music change, the laws of the State always change with them. — PLATO (428-327 B.C).

From old Daily Mirror

LEEDS FUTURAMA

Futura 2 was described to me by the organiser John Keenan as 'the most important underground event of the year', it was a rock festival, an indoor rock festival. Keenan announced that 30 - 40 bands would be playing over two days, that there would be stalls, sideshows, theatre companies, happenings, video, films and lasers. Last year the festival, called Futurama, was also subtitled a 'Science Fiction Festival', and was reported a success due to appearances of Cabaret Voltaire and Public Image Ltd. No doubt it had some element of a Sci-Fi festival, in that the images adopted by the bands, and their supporting fans could be seen as 'futuristic', add films, stalls, inflatables and lasers and there you have it. As for this years event, the only thing that's anywhere near a Sci-Fi image that can be applied to

Futurama 2 is a black hole.

My role as performer at this festival came about accidentally when a friend, a rock musician told me that John Keenan wanted non-musical groups for the festival. I'm a member of a music/performance company called the Event Group. If reports from last year were anything to go by we were likely to fit in well so after some haggling and stalling contracts were signed and we were ready for a challenging weekend.

The music? Much of it I remember as, at first an irritant then just a background grey-blur, the ostensible reason for us all being there. To get anything out of the occasion one had to apply a filter, the punters were out of their heads on anything they could get their various orifices around, asleep during the groups not seen as relevant to the life style chosen, indeed asleep or out of it almost continuously for some. It was a place to be out of it, not seen but tripped over.

I was surprised by the presence of so many punks, as I live in London where the breed is fast becoming extinct and being cornered into sanctuaries whose boundaries are shrinking due to predators of a more short-haired variety. The Queen's Hall was full of them, it was a pilgrimage, it was Siouxsie And The Banshees. Generally it was black and white clothing, mostly adolescent males, with Siouxsie look-a-like girlfriends. There were no men with male lovers no women with female lovers, it was the left-overs of an exciting experiment with aggression and outrage, the images 'en masse' were frightening and pathetic. It was the most repressed set of people I've seen at a rock music gig EVER.

It finally transpired that there were only two non-musical performance groups booked, ourselves and a group of clowns, who, no sooner than they had gone on stage, were forced to leave due to the canning from the audience. The audience was not particularly tolerant, although the Event Group successfully performed on Saturday and created our own crowd and interest. Our Sunday performance was a different matter. We were asked to contribute to a film being made about the festival. In order to do this large flood lights were turned on us. An announcement was made across the P.A. We were to perform at the same time as a group called the Durrutti Column; their softer more experimental approach was thought to be more apt for our work. The hoards, hungry for mind-blowing musical experiences, came to visit our stage.... we lasted as long as we could bare it. It wasn't disinterest I gather. They called us perverts, sick. They didn't like the images they saw. Their outrage surprised me. We were canned; missiles came from every direction. The film camera man ducked to the side of the stage for safety. In true spirit we continued. I had a rubber mask on my face and could withstand most direct hits. The final straw was being dragged off the stage not once but twice by a bemused skinhead who didn't seem to know what to do with me when he had done so. After the second time he eventually removed part of my

false face which seemed to bother him. It was then they began to remove cables, lights, props and pieces of the stage. We retired hurt. I apologise to the Durutti Column if they should ever get to read this, in the heat and spite of the moment I let off a rather loud theatre maroon, in the middle of the fracas and their set.

In total contrast, after the carnage was cleared up and we'd been out to drink, eat and laugh, we came back to the last few hours of this monstrous occasion. Usually I hate Gary Glitter, but on that Sunday he was a pleasure to watch. He had those outraged, outrageous kids totally under control, they lapped up his posturing, camp behaviour and costumes, they wanted to touch him, they called him beautiful, they loved his fat and glitter, he squeezed every last ounce of adoration out of them, a good joke to go back on the road with at 4.00 in the morning. The music? Not even the most sober of the music press could keep their minds on that.

Tom Castle

I SAY, JUST A MINUTE!

Dr Mgn

I wd lk to cntrbt to yr prjct v. much.

I hp to snd tp in nxt fw wks.

I am, yrs etc

Frd Frth.

Thank you,

dear Mr Morgan,

for your letter. I have sent it to my agent Mr Gollner; I will do whatever he says but I fear that you have become the victim of one of Mr Hornick's jokes. He knows perfectly well that I detest music. For this reason I have no means of playing the tape you so kindly sent me nor is there any possible way I can return it. I do hope that you did not expect that I would. In spite of all this, I wish you and your venture every success.

Quentin Crisp.

An ex-pop star named Morgan-Fisher a little while ago sent out invitations to a number of extremely diverse people to contribute a minute each to a record he was preparing. Most complied in one way or another (even Quentin Crisp eventually) and the album-Minatures was born. This record is one of those artefacts of our time that would qualify on anyone's shortlist for a buried time-capsule. You know — the cast-iron surrounded by reinforced concrete caskets they bury hundreds of feet below new buildings. They contain some micro-filmed Shakespeare, a daily paper, a picture of the Queen, a mars-bar, pair of socks, that sort of thing. The idea is that when the denizens of a future civilization dig up our remains they won't just find the odd discarded chamberpot but will be more or less guided to what *we* want them to think of us. Well, I would put Minatures by Morgan Fisher and fifty other artists, one a minute, down there with everything else. Morgan Fisher has pulled together many of Britain's notable eccentrics along with its systems musicians, jazz types, performance artists, cartoonists, sound poets, psychiatrists and plain

lunatics, and recorded what must be a monument to the ephemeral civilization, the one never was quite there when you turned round to study it. In fact, if the capsule was ever dug up, it would drive people mad, such would be its fiendish mystery.

Anyway, the way to review such an LP would be to write one word which summed up each track (premonitory, epistemological, wrecked, stirring etc.) but such short-windedness would easily be outshone by the various endeavours undertaken by minatures artists — (One minute in the life of Ivan Denisovich) the entire works of Henry Cow in one minute, and a twenty second history of Rock and Roll. There exist among the fifty one tracks not only proclaimed and closet minaturists, but also reformed gargantuans — a condensation of Neil Oram and Ken Campbell's The Warp, the longest play ever written (Guinness Book of Records) into the rigorously applied minute limit.

This limit is personally applied by the previously mentioned pipe-smoking Morgan-Fisher, founder of Pipe records "I only had to look 3 inches for a title". He recorded the various artists under pianos, on windowledges, and on lawns in the pouring rain. When the record was finally finished, he invited them all to a tea-party in Maida Vale where, regaled by the music of the Nordic Reverie Trio, lectured by Ken Ellis (Tube Theatre) as Pipe Records PR, and squirted at by Bert Smart's Theatre of Jellyfish, one could enjoy the spectacle of various absolutely disassociated people (R.D. Laing, Robert Fripp, the Phantom Captain, a classically dishevelled reporter from the Earls Court Times) all attempting to find some sort of common ground (without being drunk).

Morgan Fisher's previous record, Slow Music, made with Lol Coxhill, is precisely that, and it's hypnotic and ethereal strains wafted around the hotel room recently inhabited by the amorous couple in the Phantom Captain's Abracadabra Honey-moon. After twenty years playing keyboards Morgan became disaffected "with the idea of continually striving to become an instrumental virtuoso" Slow Music was created "in the manner of a film editor", and Morgan's track on Minatures is the apotheosis of this approach. It is an extremely impressive rendition of "Jerusalem" composed entirely of single notes spliced together, all from 'found' sound material.

In the same way, with Minatures, Morgan Fisher has knotted together strands of creativity, made connections that none of us knew were there. From Herbert Distel (the Swiss minaturist who created the 'Museum of Drawers') to Neil Innes' son, from George Melly yelling an infamous Kurt Schwitters dada poem to Mary Longford discussing her anatomy, this jerky, twittering, spluttering disc (not exactly for dancing) is the ultimate in succinct samplers of the subculture. (Phew, made it. In a concession to the Minatures ethic, this review, if read at the speed Roger McGough reads 'the wreck of the Hesperus' lasts exactly one minute).

Rob La Frenais

REVIEWS

Moby Dick Oval House

The performance started the moment I got off the bus; swaying outside the theatre doors a guitarist, far too strangely dressed even for the most eccentric of buskers in south London, collected coins from the punters as they filed by, laid their money on the box office and were then escorted into the coffee bar. All right; not a coffee bar but a dockside tavern, complete with hostess and assistants, musicians and an itinerant tale teller. Patti Bee and friends kept up a good pace, distributing chowder and bread, insults, banter and fun to a willing audience. The evening I was there — Friday, their first night of three, audience participation was lively. When Ronnie Wathen played the bagpipes, people from Camden, being heduicated persons threw themselves into the nineteenth century with a vengeance and started dancing some very authentic looking jig.

Moby Dick grew out of a conversation between Ian Hinchcliffe and two people involved with the Oval House Theatre club, Martin Humphries and Alfie Pritchard. The idea snowballed. They decided to involve other forces, a combination of professional, experienced performers and others, especially members of the Oval House workshop groups. The result was an Oval House spectacular, the like of which occurs but a couple of times a year, notably at Christmas. They wanted to use all possible resources and all available spaces within and outside the building, engaging the participants in a creative process, which they considered as important as the end product. By the opening night, after ten days work, the sets were ready, and very effective too, though looking highly inflammable, and organization efficient, everyone present and not a speech rehearsed.

Into the dockside tavern burst Ishmael (Cameron Izors), the boy sailor, narrator of the book. He screws up the Ancient Mariner style a bit, counterbalanced by comments from Patti Bee, still dishing out soup 'Its not every day yer hear yer husband's been swallowed by a whale. I think I'll go out an celebrate tonight.' The whistle was blown, literally and earpiercingly on the scene by Lorraine McDonald. She's young black and very good. 'Ere pin back your lug oles and listen you orrible lot Sergeant-Major style cut the air deftly. As our stewardess she wielded an invisible whip over her audience, transferring it from one scenario to the next throughout the evening. As she played a message from the flight captain (a mixture of instructions and abuse in a calculatedly incomprehensible thick accent) we had time to study her attire. Whose idea, I wondered, was that superb throw-away touch, that six inches of red plastic toy train embedded in her hair? Then off we

trotted like willing lambs, fumbling our way up the stairs and into chairs. First port of call was the room in the hostelry where Ishmael had been put, sharing a bunk with reluctant room mate Queequeg, harpoonist extraordinaire, but alas a heathen. They reappear later in the plot still together signing up for Ahab's final disastrous voyage. Lol Coxhill's midnight appearance to Queequeg, as a prefiguration of impending doom, or as his votive idol, or as whatever he was ambiguously representing was visually controlled, far more powerful than the acting framing it. He should have been given more attention too when he reappeared in the next section. Amongst a tableau vivant of a bread baking, fish grilling, seaweeds strewn, smokey, smelly nineteenth century fishing village he warns Ishmael 'You'd better get ussed and get sussed quickly'.

The character of the stewardess depended on its incongruity for its success. So too did the next experience the audience was made to undergo — passport control.



Lol Coxhill

'Reason for travelling? Business or pleasure? May I check your bag, sir?' But then, the remainder of the performance became fragmented. Continuity gave way to unexplained complexities; what should have been a collage of vignettes, images piling up to form a complete picture, became a sequence of sometimes fine individual performances bridging uncertain gaps in a disjointed non-narrative.

Pastor Mather (Jeff Nuttall) fronted this final section. He read from Melville's text, paraphrasing the sermon on Jonah and the Whale 'In all his tormented attitudes in the God fugitive seen' Nuttall's feeling for language is assured, his delivery expert, his humour never far beneath the surface. The sermon is the finest prose in the book and for me Nuttall's piece, the high point of the performance.

Finally, Captain Ahab (Ian Hinchcliffe) appears. From Nuttall to Hinchcliffe, stylistically, is to travel, in this context, 'from the sublime to the absurd. Where he should have had one a half legs he had two, one of which was firmly stuck in a tin

bucket: he improvised leg over jokes. He spewed beer over his crew and played sadistic games on them, the latter authentic Melville. When Pip the cabin boy, played by Doreen Brown, (adding gender confusion at the outset) jumps overboard driven by his tormentors, we're not given enough information to understand what is happening, when he reappears. Doreen Brown's involvement in her part was clear, even if its significance was not. Conventionally, if a man went overboard whilst a whaling boat was chasing its prey, it would not turn back. Exceptionally, Ahab did go back for Pip, alive still but mad.

Technical fuck-ups don't bother Hinchcliffe. Nailing a bounty to the mast 'not a doubloon but a nicker' (produces a pair of black lace panties) to go to the first to sight the white monster, the nail goes flying and Hinchcliffe shakes his thumb. Apparently on the Sunday, his trousers exploded shedding the burdensome paraphenalia he was carrying. Am I to believe that the incisive psychological reading of Moby Dick, as a metaphor for the obsessive, all consuming, ultimately destructive nature of sexual passion is to be reduced to a pun, and a bad one at that? Apparently so. I was just thinking something along these lines when 'There She Blew', together with a final climax pulling out all theatrical stops. The captive audience went down with all hands as a fiendish device sent wet fish and seaweed hurtling past its ears.

Charles Hustwick

Acme Acting Anywhere

It was a day much like any other at the Performance Magazine. The guys from the newsroom were idly drinking tea and watching 'Crown Court' as they waited for a story to break. Elsewhere in the building the editor could be heard softly barking 'Hallo, City Desk!' into imaginary phones. Suddenly a sound rang out. It was the unmistakable chime of the front door bell breaking the calm. 'It's a little early for the Avon lady,' smirked a cub reporter, his jocularly quenched by a glare from the Review Editor who eased himself from his comfy chair to open the door.

The harsh glare of late summer sunlight tore through the doorway silhouetting the lissom form of Blanche du Bois as she swept in, cases in hand, the perspiration dripping from her brow. From the inner recesses of one of her bags a jazz band vamped away, the opening lines of Tennessee Williams' 'A Streetcar Named Desire' rising sluggishly in the foetid air.

'Why didn't you write me that you have to live in these conditions?' Blanche called to her sister Stella and the scribes rushed to cluster around her, their fingers already scribbling at the scent of a scoop. In a moment we were all flies on the wall of that famous New Orleans tenement buzzing after the action as it shifted from room to room. Watermelon sellers hammered on the windows, Stanley Kawalski that survivor of the stone age famously impersonated by a mumbling Marlon Brando in

the movie of the play, watched the TV, played cards with his cronies, sweated and, when the time came, raped Blanche in a upstairs room, evicting his audience before he did so, in a moment of rare restraint.

What can be going on I hear the bemused reader asking. Why, this was Acme Acting — “kitchen sink drama in the comfort of your own kitchen” — performing at the Performance Magazine office in downtown, (*very* down-town) Hampstead.

Dreamed up by three ex-Central School students, Louis Miller, Jim Herb and Tim Potter, Acme Acting began life with a performance of that prototype kitchen sink drama ‘Look Back in Anger’, ad a promise to enact any famous play, book or film in any place at any time. A rash promise indeed and the lads soon found themselves up all night hastily devising ways to fulfill last minute orders. After a few months their basic repertoire has settled down to a handful of move-derived performances from ‘The Fall of the House of Usher’ and ‘Psycho’ to ‘Last Tango in Paris’ and a ten minute encapsulation of ‘Apocalypse Now’ all in steady demand for every kind of gathering from trendy parties to family get togethers. (The preoccupation with Brando movies is, I am told, mere coincidence.)

Forget Bill Bryden’s work at the National Theatre, this is the ultimate in promenade performance, the amazed audience rushing from room to room as the action proceeds, the cast of three impersonating all the main characters and plenty of incidental ones. The all male company add a certain Genetesque quality to Williams’ script that is not wholly out of place, and, though the incongruity of the setting made for a good deal of amusement, one was constantly surprised to find the original robustly coming through. True, the rather seedy premises in which this magazine has as an office are well suited to this particular story — quite what they would have done with ‘Apocalypse Now’ I leave you to discover for yourselves — but the idea of staging movies set in houses in real homes seems only sensible and when done with the tact and skill that the chaps at Acme Acting bring to bear on their task, and the results are never less than extraordinary.

The acting was stylish enough to accommodate lines as marvellous and dated as: ‘Don’t you just love these long afternoons in New Orleans when an hour is not just an hour but a brief piece of eternity?’ and the use of drag added a bizarre enhancement to the goings on. Always reconnoitering their venue beforehand the group exploit every possibility of the space available to them and have a seemingly effortless technique for handling the movement of their audiences. Great care is taken with the assemblage of props, the condensation of the dialogue and the use of sounds. Wherever the action goes music accompanies it, even disembodied recorded voices sometimes intruding into the dialogue.

It is, as the song in the show has it, a Barnum and Bailey world, and at around forty quid a throw for a performance unlike any other, this three man circus

certainly carry the Performance Magazine Office Party Seal of Approval. The rambling seediness of this hive of journalistic activity in the heart of Fleet Road (the Camden end of Fleet St.) has not been the same since Blanche du Bois, a creature at once alive with passion yet strangely ethereal, disappeared as if in reverie towards Belsize Park.

Gradually life in the office returned to its mundane normality. Yet the hacks were curiously subdued. In a while a voice broke the silence. ‘Sir,’ it said, ‘shouldn’t we do something about that?’ It took the Editor only a moment to frame his reply: ‘Write about it!’

ACME ACTING can be contacted on 985 6732

Luke Dixon

Abracadabra Honeymoon Bush Theatre



We all knew it would happen sooner or later, and now here it is. The complete unexpurgated guide to every imaginable sexual fantasy you might ever have, presented live on stage. A true magical tour of what you get up to, or rather would like to get up to, every night when you turn off the light. You name it — they do it. All you have to do is just sit back and wait for your favourite hidden perversion to appear in the flesh, and, hey presto, there it is, not more than a few feet from your popping eyes.

Just before you assume that this is a description of a particularly wild evening at Raymond’s Revuebar, I should point out that the perpetrators of this steamy stuff are none other than the Phantom Captain.

But why is a nice group like the Phantom Captain getting involved in things like *this*?

Never to be found with their trousers down, you can imagine the joint artistic directors of the Phantom Captain (Neil Hornick and Joel Cutrara) sitting like a couple of Wise Owls on a tree, waiting for

just this criticism to fly their way. The point is that this production does precisely what every one of their best productions have, namely, to bring us eyeball to eyeball with ourselves. The techniques they use to make this happen are a source of fascination, but more of that later.

What’s ‘Abracadabra Honeymoon’ (seen at the Bush Theatre) all about? Imagine yourself on a ‘more than your ordinary whims catered for’ cruise around somewhere that sounds like the most exotic place on earth, and even if you are subjected to a high dose of ‘knows a bit too much to be trusted’ interference from the middle-European voiced reception-desk, there you are with the most extraordinary lover, and what do you do? Well, everything you would never dare to do in an overpriced rented apartment in middle suburbia with nosy neighbours. And whilst you’re wafting off on clouds nine, ten, and eleven, just imagine the power you have — you’re making the impossible happen time after time. It’s magic. And blow me if the next moment you couldn’t say ‘shazam’ and vanish into thin air — and it would really happen. That’s roughly the garden path the Phantom Captain lead you up. Why they should want to do this we shall come onto in a moment, but first, there is another ingredient that must be looked into.

In the last issue of *Performance* Andrea Hill portrayed this company as one which is renowned for its absurdist intrusions into the streets and into the lives of the unexpected public. It is certainly true that their reputation rests more on this work than their productions for the theatre. Even when they are to be found working in the theatre we can expect some strange and challenging encounters before we are allowed to sit down and watch. We have taken this to be an integral part of their work, equally important as the sit-down performance. But with ‘Abracadabra Honeymoon’ we were just allowed in to take our seats. Gone too were the Phantom Captain’s famous Irregulars, replaced by hired-in actors. This was going to be a SHOW on a scale we had never seen them do before. And whilst they are the kind of group that you want to see succeed, the thought that they were going to get out of their depth preyed heavily on the mind. As it transpired, they not only didn’t sink, they also swam the Channel.

But to return to the questions already raised: what were the Phantom Captain really showing us? What did they hope to do to us, and why did they use the format of a show to do it?

As the company proclaim that they are working at the meeting point of theatre and Encounter, the last two questions are inextricably linked. We should not expect such a company to be bound by theatrical traditions. Obviously, it is essential that they choose the format that will best assist their aims, be theatrical, or not. So that we must assume that if we are to be asked to sit down and watch a spectacle, it is because this has been selected as the best medium for their material. And that’s a very different story from watching a play by a com-

pany that produces plays. They are not principally using the time we spend with them to develop an argument, or expound an idea, but to work on us as surely as if they caught us unawares on the street. It is important to note here that the Phantom Captain knows its target audience very well — we are going to be treated as the sophisticated people we are, for they are one of the very few companies who are unashamed of a theatre-full of middle class theatre goers. They know that's what we are, and they know exactly how to deal with us. Although 'Abracadabra Honeymoon' was seen by many as a bold and straightforward celebration of heterosexual love, that relegates the production to being merely a play. I believe there was another process going on during the performance, a process that was both true to the Phantom Captain's avowed aims, and yet also so subtle that you could wonder why you left the theatre with a beaming smile.

Unless I am mistaken, the process went something like this: A series of sexual fantasies rise, bubble-like, on the horizon and float gently towards us, only to be popped just in front of our eyes. These fantasies are carefully and persuasively drawn, in such a way as they feel they have been delicately pilfered from each of our 'Top Secret' hideaways, and then waved gently, but tantalizingly, before our eyes. They may have us on a spot, but we are treated with the utmost care and respect to avoid letting us become embarrassed. They know we use role-playing as an erotic stimulant, they know about our appropriations from romantic movies which find their way to our bedrooms (and which they parody excellently), they know as much about our secrets as the prying 'Reception' which interrupts the privacy of the actors on stage through the intercom system. The clues are signposted for anyone who wants to follow them, right up to a genuine Phantom Captain appearing at intervals to place vital objects in the path of the actors.

This still leaves the question of why they should want to explode our sexual fantasies for us in the first place. I believe the reason is disarmingly simple: if we lock away these untellable secrets in the dark for too long they are going to start to fester. The Phantom Captain, like a benevolent doctor, gives us a very thorough examination, take a good long look at anything that could be worrying us, and dispatch us from the surgery with a cheery smile, a pat on the back, and a genuine reassurance of: 'You're fine, couldn't be in better shape'. And that's exactly how you feel.

Whilst the end may sound simple, the means has been painstakingly thought out and meticulously engineered. The craft of creating material which will manipulate us gently through the performance to the desired end is probably more important than the art which makes the performance worth watching. It requires a script (by Hornick and Cutrara) that lays every idea with clarity, but also a script with real wit to keep us alert and interested. It requires performances that are sufficiently symbolic for us to see a little of ourselves in them,

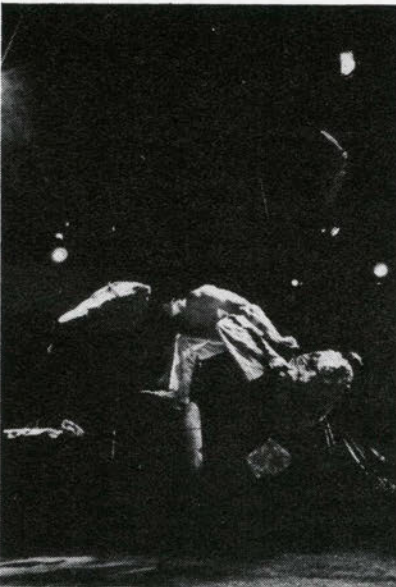
and yet performances that are not off-puttingly cold and lifeless. The cast of four were uniformly good, as was the only rarely quirky script.

The Phantom Captain have a saying that they want their audience to slip up on the banana skin only to find themselves eating the banana. This is precisely the process they achieve in this production — a remarkable achievement, especially when one takes into account that the subject they were dealing with is littered with pit-falls so deep that many who have tried to tackle it before have disappeared, never to be seen again.

Pete Shelton

Alex Mavro The Garage

Battling your way through the land of blue rinse, mohican punks and tourists staring helplessly at their maps of central London, you'd be lucky to find the Royal Court



Garage, a mere stone's throw distant from Sloane Square tube station. Here, in the middle weeks of September, Alex Mavro was exhibiting his installation 'Monologue with Hanging Rocks', a piece hovering between sculpture and performance. The gallery is more of a barn than a garage, remote from that bustle outside, rustic like some outhouse on a country estate, with the wind blowing noisily through the rafters. It's a simple rectangular space, 30 by 45 feet, whose walls Mavro had covered with black plastic. Between the beams supporting the roof, he built in extra beams from which he suspended around 60 rocks, on dark nylon ropes. They were collected from several locations — Devon, Dartmoor Forest, the Brecon Beacons, Minehead, the Fane Estuary, and are all forms of red sandstone. Some are rugged, dug out of the ground, some from the sea or riverbed, shaped and smoothed by the action of the water, and varying in size from chunky boulders 3 or 4 feet across to pebbles you can hold in your hand. The majority were suspended below eye level whilst the rest

hung at or above it. They were gathered in a cluster in a group that stopped a few inches short of the ground — mostly small ones these, whilst others hung much more individually elsewhere and at variable heights. My immediate reaction was to circle round the edge, especially as when I first entered the lighting was very dim. I soon found I had to negotiate the full space if I wanted to explore further. I experienced several things; a thrill — several times I nearly bumped into large boulders; when I pushed one, it moved surprisingly easily in contradiction of its mass — I could spin it around with no trouble. I could create my own experiences — lying on the ground looking up I could feel like the not so dumb blonde under the elephant's foot at the Circus. I could have climbed up on some and swung around (I didn't, but some kids did). Gradually I had been enticed to move into the piece, discovering that it was possible to negotiate the space and alter its conditions. In this I thought that Mavro had successfully gone beyond sculptural experience — the experience of weight, mass, of physicality through visual language, to an oblique form of participatory performance within a charged space.

'Would you like a cup of tea?' came a dissociated voice from the rafters. I'd already noticed the control platform above and evidence of human habitation — a walking stick and a pair of old boots neatly laid at the foot of a knotted rope leading up to the platform. Mavro used this ploy, and others, changing the lighting as the viewer moves about, playing music softly to create a meditative mood, to make introductory signals to those below or merely lighting their way of seeing. He describes himself as a 'caretaker' of his creation, working receptively to his audiences responses and guiding them to further modes of exploration rather than controlling their experiences. Looking somewhat like a latter day Robinson Crusoe with access to a razor, he descended from his perch and we talked. He feels the sculptural element of the piece was in this context quite well resolved, but wants to introduce a more structured element into the performance aspect to increase audience involvement. He's hoping to work with a dancer when he takes the work to the Gallery, Brixton (Acme's new No. 2 gallery) in December.

As I was leaving a gaggle of grey uniformed schoolgirls came in. They demanded verbal explanations before they were prepared to experience for themselves — its amazing how many people do. Gradually they put more intelligible questions, about geology, about how the piece was conceived. Mavro answered obliquely, supplying just enough intrigue to promote further investigation. 'Oh Mrs. Stricken would love this, she's our drama teacher, she makes us be a candle inside a tree an things. I'll tell her about this and get her to come, eh?' I hope they did.

Charles Hustwick

Side Show International Student Centre

Three of the six players are confined to wheelchairs. Will Kennen lost his legs when he contracted gangrene after falling off a bus ten years ago. In a coma for two months, he suffered brain damage which has left him subject to epileptic fits. Nabil Shaban, unmistakably the star of the show, doesn't have any legs either — his twisted feet start where his calves ought to be. His affliction is osteogenesis imperfecta, or brittle bones. Two more players get about on crutches. One of them, Jag Plah, is a spastic whose speech is slurred and sometimes indistinct. The sixth player can actually walk without the aid of crutches. Only she is virtually blind. She can't see the edge of the stage but, so I was assured later, she has never yet fallen off it. They are all members of 'The Graeae' a theatre company which derives its name from the three old women of Greek mythology who shared between them one eye, one tooth and one leg.

Our first sight of them, ranged silently across the stage dressed in circus finery, is, shall we say, somewhat arresting. With one notable exception, they are not very polished actors — but they sure have presence. And conviction. And a style and a show all their own.

The first half of their play locates them in that traditional haven of the physically stigmatized, a circus Sideshow, presided over by 'Uncle Sydne', a personification of liberal patronage, and a sort of disabled's equivalent of Mister Charlie. When Nabil starts inciting the others to break out of the side-show into the world outside, Uncle Sydney is aggrieved: 'We've always seen you get supplies of the Reader's Digest', he reasons. One of the inmates, afraid to leave, cautions the others to 'Be grateful for being appreciated'.

The Side-show members perform several Daydreams for our delectation. 'Miss Crippled Universe 1980', with its prize of two tickets for Lourdes, is, believe me, a beauty contest sketch with a difference. 'The Bank Robbery' involves three handicapped crooks holding up a handicapped bank manager (It's not so far-fetched — in the USA a cripple was recently caught attempting the same crime). 'The Great American Musical' is another daydream. Until you've seen 'Chattanooga Choo-Choo' sung and danced by the Graeae you ain't seen nothin'. And by the time Marion Saunders launches into her funky wheel-chair-bound version of 'I Wanna be Evil', the joint is, so to speak, really jumping.

In Part Two they break out into the 'normal' world, dressed now in their own clothes. We see them dealing with a visit home, a couple of parents who overdo the protective sympathy; with work, merrily singing as they weave baskets at the 'Happy Day Sheltered Workshop'. There's a trial scene in which Jag Plah has trouble making himself understood. 'We've got to get an interpreter', someone declares, 'Does anybody here speak spas-

tic?' Sure enough, a volunteer comes forward. The ensuing interpretation scene defies my powers of description.

Sex rears its ugly head in a version of 'Beauty and the Beast' which has its blind Beauty taken aback when, having finally brought herself to kiss Nabil Shaban's beady-eyed Beast, he disappointingly fails to turn into a handsome prince. Nabil speculates how much more advantageously disadvantaged he might have been if he also belonged to a few more minority groups: 'I'm blind, crippled and black', he sings lustily, 'I've got everything I need.'

'Side-show' comes at you from the bottom line, no holds barred. But it is merciful to its audience — it is eschewal of anguish and in its (almost) total lack of sentimentality. Better yet, it has a blisteringly sardonic humour which hits your funny-bone where it hurts. 'Don't be so spineless' Nabil accuses one reluctant rebel. 'My toes never get cold in winter' quips Will Kennan. 'Ah, it's only the metal fatigue that gets you down' retorts Nabil. All the more heart-breaking when, later, under disdainful interrogation by his fellows, Will gives it to us straight about the terrible consequences of his road accident.

'Sick' humour, performed by its usual victims, here turns into a bitter medicine which is plainly doing everyone some good, players and audience alike. Genuinely cathartic agit-prop, I'd say, awkward, scathing, but also canny enough to recognise that in leaving their Side-show they have merely joined another — ours. Tod Browning's film, 'Freaks' visited vengeful mutilation upon the nasty 'normals' who torment them. 'Side-show' is more moral and more humane. It acknowledges the deformity in all of us and extends a fraternal hand. It's only a pity that at the end it does it so explicitly, inviting us to clap and sing along with them in a number extolling the Brotherhood of Man. The soggy finale is not necessary. They had already made their human connection.

Afterwards I talked to the writer and director of the show, the completely able-bodied Richard Tomlinson. 'Side-show' grew out of work he was doing at Coventry's Hereward College for Physically Handicapped School-leavers (he is now at the Open University). Nabil Shaban was one of his students. They advertised for disabled performers to join them in this their first show, and, out of the fifty or so who came along, five have remained to tour the show with them, not only in England but for one month also in the USA. An amateur company, at present they operate under the auspices of RADAR — not, as you might think, an eccentric relation of the well-known Drama School but the Royal Association of Disability and Rehabilitation. Audiences of the handicapped, Richard told me, laugh more heartily than the able-bodied whose chuckles tend to be a bit more guarded. And now the real challenge is what to do next, for they intend to expand their repertoire to include plays not specifically about the plight of the disabled. He is thinking of

attempting 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' with a blind Ariel conversing with a brittle-boned Caliban. Beckett's 'End Game' suggests itself as a promising subject. But perhaps there's someone out there who might fancy writing something especially for the company...

In Nabil Shaban they have a leading performer of chismatic quality. Of part-Jordanian, part-Russian extraction, this extraordinary crafty-looking performer gives off an authentic whiff of danger: an almost mediaeval — or Buenuelian — figure, black-bearded, shaggy-haired, hook-nosed, glittering-eyed, he restlessly wheels his stunted body to and fro across the stage, by turns importunate, wheedling, infectiously energetic, devastatingly funny. See him, and this uniquely unsettling show, if you can.

Neil Honick

The Undersea World of Eric Satie ICA

In a quintessentially French 'Café des Artistes' a strange little man acts out the lonely obsessive behaviour of the neurotic. The place is *fin de siècle* Paris, the man Eric Satie. Through one of the café's windows a waiter can be seen engrossed in watching the latest televised exploits of mariner Jacques Cousteau. As we watch — for yes this is a performance — the windows become the glass sides of an aquarium and the waiter begins a silent, deadly battle with a giant squid. Then the aquarium is reversed and the interior of the café becomes the observed aquatic world. All manner of strange things begin the take place. Hands appear in firegrates a ballet dancer exercises in the street outside. Unable to take any more pretentious twaddle a disgruntled audience member, his temper no doubt already frayed by the outrageous prices in the ICA restaurant, sighs with annoyance and stomps out only to return with a saxophone, occupying the centre stage and jamming away until the waiter, with no little difficulty, his English unable to stretch to a suitable response to the single blunt phrase 'Fuck Off!', manages to throw him out.

This, should you be wondering, is 'The Undersea World of Eric Satie' and if you detected an echo or two of our old friends the People Show or the Crystal Theatre, you are not too much mistaken. But it is the Leeds-based collective of artists, musicians and performers, Impact Theatre, who are the perpetrators of this bizarre, surrealist hodgepodge to all that is French. The crazed genius of Eric Satie and the sub-aquatic Jacques Cousteau are merely touchstones around which the show is concocted, the one an excuse for an evocative 1890s setting, the other an opportunity for 1980s references.

The visual imagery — such as the transplant operation on a pair of pickled cucumbers accompanied by the dinner table chat of the Satie household is completely off the wall. Celebrating all one's romantic notions of France and the French, con-

Despatches

Some Uses of the term.....

Performance Art 1.

Any creative or imaginative form that involves performance, that is to say any such form which reaches the public through the behaviour and/or speech and/or song of a live human being who appears in a public situation in order to function as the medium of the creative imagination. Thus musicians, actors, playwrights, comedians, circus performers, gymnasts, preachers, even performance artists, are all included. As theatre, indeed most forms of entertainment, are obviously included here, the work may be motivated by the wish to serve, please or instruct the audience and may therefore only tenuously may claim to the description of 'art'.

Performance Art 2.

An extension of non-figurative visual art, i.e. painting and sculpture, particularly in those areas where such work is influenced by John Cage. Here the live human body of the artist, or someone appointed by the artist, has no more function than to form part of an overall composition of which other elements may be sound, space, other objects, coloured or moulded shapes and surfaces. Whilst bodies, objects and sounds are recognisably themselves in this idiom their function is aesthetic, which is to say that their effect in the composition arises out of their interaction, one upon the other, as colour, shape, texture, sound, space and time without reference to psychological, social, erotic, or moral connotations.

Performance Art 3

Human performance which may include poetry, prose, theatre, dance, music, sculpture, painting, or behaviour, whose purpose is to realise exactly and nothing else but the uncensored and unconditioned imaginative notion of the artist who may or may not be the performer. Called performance art to distinguish it from theatre which has been compromised by audience requirements.

Performance Art 4

A number of creating actions and organisations existent in 1970 when Roland Miller was asked by the Arts Council to define some criterion to be applied to these activities after having repeatedly protested that the usual criteria of theatre, that is clarity of communication, avoidance of boredom, the provision of recreation, pleasure and instruction, did not apply to these activities. When asked what these activities were if they were not theatre Miller, after consultation with myself, came up with the term performance art. The Performance Art panel was then formed and bureaucrats began to argue about whether or not applicants were true performance artists.

Performance Art 5

Self expression in spontaneous action of and by any individual. Here the individual represents himself and nothing

and nobody else, the merit of the act being gauged by its very truth to the deepest psychological impulses of the performer.

Performance Art 6

The incorporation of eccentric or imaginative behaviour into the day-to-day routine of an individual. Here the work may be judged according to the imaginative inventiveness of the performer who will depict some thing or person which he is not but which may nonetheless metaphorically represent him.

Usually the performance scene works destructively at cross-purposes because performers from any of these separate areas are attempting to work together, believing themselves to be interested in the same idiom. The issue isn't helped by artists like myself who are apt to flit like gad-flies from idiom to idiom without announcing their shift in technique and applied criteria. My recent 'Performance Art: Memoirs and Scripts' was intended to clear up a little of this confusion but I was so close to the problem myself when I wrote it that I'm afraid I didn't achieve the necessary cool perspective. Neither is the issue helped by the fact that Calder never sent me proofs of the book which now carries an average of two misprints to a page, thus enabling emasculated media-lackeys like Paul Bailey to dub me illiterate.

Jeff Nuttall

CO*STAR

A question for movie buffs: what is it that I have in common with Robert Taylor, Fred Astaire, James Mason, Ray Milland, Fernando Lamas, Sidney James, Jack Hawkins, Bob Hope, David Kossoff and Sir Cedric Hardwicke?

Answer: we have all played opposite Hollywood film star *Arlene Dahl*. How has this come about? Because I have taken part in 'Co*Star — the Record Acting Game' in which 'You act scenes opposite your favourite star'. Ms. Dahl speaks her lines on the record; and you slip in to the silent pauses with dialogue from a complete script supplied with the album.

Arlene Dahl and I played eight revamped scenes from the classic 1943 movie, 'Casablanca'. She plays the Ingrid Bergman role of love-torn Ilse Lund, and I played the Humphrey Bogart part of Rick, disenchanted owner of the legendary 'Rick's Caf-e'. And not only Rick. I also got to play two characters strangely absent from the original screenplay, Rick's peevish mistress, Yvonne, plus — and it's a big plus — 'Tante Bonheur, seemingly a harmless old crone who haunts the streets of Casablanca'.

Playing fraught love scenes opposite Arlene Dahl is a heady, if sometimes awkward, affair. Ms. Dahl is a real trouper with the authentic fatalistic forties enunciation. And we are both assisted by a narrator, atmospheric music, and such plentifully recurring sound cues as opening doors, shifting chairs and poured drinks. Yet despite all this, I have to report

that Arlene has a tendency either to jump her cues or to be late on them, frequently interrupting some of my best lines. I must also confess that my performance was somewhat inhibited by the outsize shade of Humphrey Bogart, though it was certainly a thrill to be able to utter the immortal line 'Here's looking at you, kid' — twice!

There seems to have been some tampering with the plot of 'Casablanca', but being less familiar with the oeuvre of Grace Metalious, I can't tell what liberties they've taken with their version of 'Peyton Place', in which I went on to Co*Star with nobody less than a former Mrs. Charlie Chaplin — *Paulette Goddard*. Ms. Goddard plays Constance MacKenzie, 'one of the town's most attractive residents, who spends her busy life running a dress shop and bringing up her teenage daughter, Allison'. In 'Peyton Place' I got to play an even broader range of parts: Allison herself; Mike Rossi, 'the handsome very masculine new high-school principal' who daringly invites Constance for a midnight swim; Evelyn Page, 'the strait-laced widowed mother' of Allison's boyfriend, Norman; Selena Cross, 'a beautiful 19 year old shop assistant' accused of killing her step-father; and — for me, perhaps, the most satisfying role of all — upright Lieutenant John Adams of the U.S. Navy.

Ms. Goddard is much more reliable on her cues than Arlene Dahl. She never interrupts — though, like Ms. Dahl, she sometimes departs slightly, but disconcertingly, from the printed script. But she makes up for her superior timing by going well over the top with a fruitily over-inflected style of acting that often left me feeling hopelessly up-staged. However, despite difficulties with the American accent, I thought I acquitted myself well, my only major lapse occurring when, as Mike Rossi, I badly muffed the wolf-whistle I was supposed to deliver when Constance appears in her bathing-costume. Never could whistle. Between ourselves, that's why I never actually made it with Lauren Bacall.

For those interested in playing this game, other albums are available. As well as Fernando Lamas (Ms. Dahl's husband) and Sir Cedric Hardwicke (my contender for the most boring actor on celluloid), you can play opposite Cesar Romero, Virginia Mayo, George Raft, Tallulah Bankhead, Vincent Price, Jimmie Rodgers, Don Ameche and 'Slapsie' Maxie Rosenbloom. I strongly recommend the experience to all lovers of dramatic kitsch and to intrepid explorers of the farther reaches of audience participation theatre. But why stop there, in the Hollywood forties and fifties? Some enterprising British entrepreneur ought to market an even more adventurous series in which, for example, 'You act scenes opposite some of your favourite fringe theatre personalities.' Think of the possibilities: you, too, could be the ferret in Sylveste McCoy's trousers! Here's looking at you, kids.

Neil Hornick

By All Accounts Stunning

Events like the 1980 Penzance 'Festival of Fools' are a focus for a certain kind of performance and an excuse for a certain type of performer.

But what about the punters? There are a smattering of bewildered emmets to be sure, but what about the beaming, bearded, baby-festooned majority? Where do they come from? Where do they go for the rest of the year? What do they do when they're not herding into leaky tents to watch alternative entertainment, or queuing cheerfully to deposit their firm healthy vegetarian turds in the chemical loos? And most important of all, because a lot of the time you really can't tell, are they having a good time?

A local (and dimly recalled) acquaintance from last year introduced me to his elderly mother in the beer-tent one night. Stoned immaculate, her features smeared with clown make-up, she radiated goodwill and vodka fumes. 'Don't go making a noise, son,' she advised, patting my hand. 'Promise me you won't go shouting.' I promised. Half an hour later she was on her feet, haranguing the assembly. 'Kids without shoes!' she accused. 'Where I come from they'd be shot!' A confused but refreshing observation that punctured the Aquarian complacency of at least one punter. 'These people are enjoying themselves!' he pointed out indignantly, but she wasn't convinced.

The general consensus of conviction regarding Cliffhanger's new show is that it is an improvement on their last. This consensus is reinforced by the company themselves and it would be churlish of me to challenge such a convincing mandate, so I will content myself by admitting that the Mills and Boone slush meet High Gothic idiocy flavour of the sublime 'Bumsrush House' was more instantly to my taste, confess that 'Dig For Victory' is going to repay and second and third visit and leave comparisons at that for this paragraph. Always redeemed by the excellence of their performances and the inspiration behind most of their bewildering plot developments, Cliffhanger are a genuinely 'commercial' company, one of

a rare breed alas; you pay your money and you piss yourself.

Constant things of beauty throughout the whole event were the incomparable open-air and cabaret performances of Natural Theatre. Their sheer visual impact made everything else on the site look pathetically tatty (give me a well-heeled British eccentric any day, preferably in dowager drag).

Footsbarn's 'Hamlet' was by all accounts stunning and is coming to the Riverside soon, though I'd rather see it at Stratford East (or anywhere rather than Quiche Lorraine-on-Thames for that matter). They are setting off next year for an indefinite stay in South America, silly noses and all, so I'd like to take this opportunity to say 'thank you' for the mushrooms.

There were over twenty companies and performers at the festival, all of them presumably dedicated to providing entertainment, with varying levels of Art-content, to a large popular audience. A percentage of the performance on display probably would not work in any other context, if indeed they worked here. There was a lot of tat and wimpery, and I for one would have been pleased to have seen 'Lumiere and Son' or 'The People Show' in Penzance. But where were they? The groups committed to 'Popular' theatre badly need more guts, imagination and commitment, but at least they've grasped the fact that theatres and Art-centres are where performance, as a living part of society, has crashlanded.

Thrusting my ruptured head out of the tent one morning I was greeted by the close-up rear view of a rather plump person doing what I fervently hoped were Tai Chi exercises. Horrific experiences like this, and recollections of the stench and misery of last year's Andersonville Riviera, prompt one to observe that nothing has changed. But of course everything does. Despite the usual incidental irritations (still no Draught Guinness on the site, too many sadhis playing bongoes, not enough animal flesh for sale, and the inevitable 'our show was better than their's' syndrome), the bogs were surprisingly habitable if you didn't mind queueing, there was an increased choice of stimulants and fewer 'clowns'

around to mess up the trip, and the lads who used to sit outside the beer-tent strumming 'Da Doo Ron Ron' now have a stage act, climaxing in explosions, strobe-lighting and the smashing of polystyrene guitars (Kiss it wasn't, but progress nonetheless). Ad astra, Reg.

Events like the 1980 Penzance 'Festival of Fools' are a focus and an excuse.

Paddy Fletcher

LETTERS

Dear Performance,

I have recently acquired no. 7 of your magazine and I have only one gripe which I regret I lack the time to argue coherently but it is respect of the "Controlled Attack" review on page 26. I have recently taken over as 'co-ordinator of Expressive Arts' within a 12-18 comprehensive school and although trained as a painter I am attempting to implement a number of new ideas based on a growing conviction that the areas of performance, video, sound, gesture etc. have as much to offer art education as the world of art activities while the traditional demarcations between artistic activities are increasingly redundant. I therefore regret Rob La Frenais' contention that "there is something... off-putting about the combination of the word education with a description of any arts activity." I also regret his stereotyped, convenient image of modern schooling and his clichéd view of teachers. I am convinced that accurate observation is essential to significant art activity and it was not evident in that review. I wonder how he feels about the activities at Black Mountain College since World War II?

The arts get a bad enough hammering in schools from so many sources — have you ever seen them mentioned in models for a core curriculum? — that they can do without that sort of attack. I recently attended an Exeter University Summer School on the Creative Arts in Education and believe me there are many people involved in Arts Education working very hard to establish new methods of working in this field who deserve your support and encouragement. Yours sincerely,

David Allen 138 Francis Avenue Southsea

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FUTUREPERFORM

Selected National Performance Listings

BIRMINGHAM

Birmingham Arts Lab. Info 021 359 4192
November 26, 27. Dance Performance by Tara Rajkumal.
December 1, 2, 3. Beryl and The Perils. (Special event at the Star Club, Essex St.)
December 10. Poetry by Roy Fisher and Gail Turnbull, with Lol Coxhill.
December 19, 20. Performance by Diz Willis. "His costumes, images, sculptures are those of the demolition site meths drinker... He is master of the barely audible aside built into which will be the exactly accurate historic reference or topical jab." — Jeff Nuttall.
Ikona Gallery. Info 021 643 0708
November 6. Performance by Keith Frake.
November 20. Performance by Catherine Elwes, followed by a lecture by Rosie Parker.
December 4, 5, 6. Performance by Miranda Tufnell and Dennis Greenwood.

BRISTOL

Arnolfini Gallery. Info 0272 299191
Arnolfini Gallery. Info 0272 299191
November 1. New show by Moving Being 'Body Politic' (See Touring).
November 14. Dance Performance by Maedee Dupres. Includes new work 'Move that Piano!' and 'Crowd Scenes'.
November 21. 'Dreamtiger' Music performance.

BATH

Bath Arts Workshop. Info 0225 31054
November 5-24. Natural Theatre Co. Spectacular. (Walcot Village Hall).
November 27-29. Natural Theatre Co. Blood Weekend. (Walcot Village Hall).

CARDIFF

Chapter Arts Centre. Info 0222 396061
November 3-15 (exc. Nov. 9) Hesitate and Demonstrate — 'Do Not Disturb'.
November 17-22. Jill Bruce and Bruce Lacy. Special week-long performance.
December 1-5. Paupers Carnival-Narendans, A study of the fool in British legends and myth.
December 11, 12, 13. (Start of Chapter's Solo Work Season, to continue in the New Year) Dave Stephens — Run With The Fox, Ride With The Hounds, Is Reality Enough Or Is It More Than Enough?
December 15-20. New show by Moving Being 'Body Politic' (See Touring).

NOTTINGHAM

Midland Group Gallery. Info 0602 582636
November 14. Performance by Lizzie Cox — 'Somerset'. The year of the life of a field in Somerset. The field is constructed from fabrics which are contained in an eight foot square box.
November 21. Centre Ocean Stream — 'Forces of the Small'.

NEWCASTLE

The Basement Group, Spectro Arts. Info 0632 614527/733686
November 7th. (All day) Basement Group Show. John Adams, Ken Gill, Dick Grayson, John Bewlay and Belinda Williams, all members of the Basement Group, will each be showing a piece of work, including tape, slide and video installations, film and performance.
November 29. Films by Jeanette Ijon, John Kippin and Alison Winckle (a performer whose work 'Why did the Chicken Cross The Road?' was reviewed in issue no 3 of Performance Magazine).

GLASGOW

Third Eye Centre. Info 041 332 7521
November 8. 7-84 (Scotland) in 'Blood Red Roses'.
November 14. Moving Picture Mime Show — 'Seven Samurai'.
November 15. Kevin Coyne — Music Performance.
November 29. Dave Stephens.

LONDON

ICA. Info 01 930 0493
October 30-November 9. About Time. Womens Performance season including video, slide, film, installation and live work. See cover feature for details of all events.
November 1-5. Epic Theatre — Guy Fawkes' Big Night Out.
November 7-15. Moving Being — Body Politic (See Touring).
November 18-29. Parallax Productions — Musicians Crossing a Bridge without their instruments.
December 2-20. Monstrous Regiment — Shakespeare's Sister.
Plus. November 19 — Dan Graham introducing video work from US artists Judith Barry, Vivienne Dick, Dara Birnbaum and Martha Rosler.

Oval House. Info 01 735 2786

November 5-23. Bohemian Rhapsody — a feminist farce. Set in Bohemia where women, tired of war and famine, leave the men, and set up their own community in the hills.
November 11-16. Pure Monkeys — Death by Kissing. An entertainment based on the images of film noir.
November 26-30. Polish Theatr Naja — A Twittering of Dead Nestlings.
November 6. The Graae- Sideshow.
November 10-23. Oval House Christmas Show — Hell is Empty. All the Devils are with us. Entirely set in black and white (including the lighting)!

Action Space. Info 01 637 8270

November 4-8. The New York Labor Theatre — Jack London, The Man From Eden's Grove. Chuck Portz recreates the images and ideas that drove Jack London to become America's most read and thwarted popular writer. (Showing on the day Carter loses to Reagan!)



Leeny Sack

November 21-29. Leeny Sack — The Survivor and the Translator. Renowned women performer. This show about the holocaust and a second generation survivor.
December 2-31. Act of Union — By Seamus Finnegan. Goes beyond easy answers and explores the complexity of the situation in Northern Ireland, the inextricable mixture of politics, religion, history, and cultural identity.

Theatre Space. Info 01 836 2035

November 28-December 1. Monstrous Regiment — Dialogue Between a Prostitute and One of her Clients.
November 3-5. Shadowfax — Hack.
November 17-22. Passion — a new performance group from Germany with a strong visual element. Performance-Gegen.
December 1-7. The Phantom Captain — Our Boys Town. A new show performed by Neil Hornick and Joel Cutrara.
Plus (late) Public Spirit from Manchester — Frankenstein, a complete fabrication.

Albany Empire. Info 01 692 0765

November 6-16. The Combination — Benefits, from the book by Zoe Fairbairns.
November 18-19. Spare Tyre — How Do I Look?
November 20-30. The Combination — Benefits.

Cafe Theatre. Info 01 240 0794

Thursday, Friday, Saturday throughout November & December. The Artaud Company — The Misunderstanding by Camus. The Room by Sartre.

London Film Co-op Performances.

Info 01 348 8648
November 3. Martin Lecks — Rubbish

Is it Art? Is it Theatre?
Is it Political? Can Anyone do it?

Yes, yes, yes and yes. But no, Performance cannot be fitted into any one of these categories. The Performance Magazine is the first accessible guide to the new live art activities happening in galleries, small theatres, streets and fields all over Britain. Published bi-monthly, written by people active in the field, it challenges your attitudes to spectacle and entertainment, while providing a running report on all recent developments in experimental theatre,

performance art, video, and new music. If you are interested in any of those areas, the Performance Magazine is compulsory reading!

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Slides.

November 10. Mary Steele — Performance. This space is interested in meeting artists who want to put on their work here. Please contact Roberta Graham at the above number.

Riverside Studios. Info 01 741 2251

November 26, 29, 30. Ian Spink Company — dance performance.

December 2-7. Meredith Monk — Voice and Movement Performance. Michael Nyman - Paul Richards. New performance by two of the collaborators in 'The Masterwork'.
December 16-29. Le Cirque Imaginaire — Christmas Show.

Bush Theatre. Info 01 602 3703

November 4-December 6. Hull Truck — New performance — Mean Streaks.

City University. Info 01 253 4399

November 6. Mircea Ardeleanu — Solo percussion performance.

November 27. Maedee Dupres — Dance and Live Music. (Choreographed by Sally Potter & Richard Alston, music by Lindsay Cooper) Both events lunchtime.

Air Gallery. Info 01 378 7751

End November/December (dates unconfirmed). Halpern Dileva (from U.S.) — Performance — Put your \$ £ 1 dm fS F £ \$ = on your soul for a solution of TOTAL ART now. Week-long event.

TOURING

Forkbeard Fantasy. Info 01 250 1474

The Clone Show — Within their (Forkbeard Fantasy's) world of non human morality, predatory ritual, exquisite life-forms, and

deranged inventors, cloning is just one of the everyday stories of half-life in the mixture of farmyard, laboratory and aquarium that is their normal habitat. — Performance no. 7. October 28. York Arts Centre.
November 2. Bath Place Venture, Leamington Spa.
November 7, 8. Bath Arts Workshop.
November 14. Bridgewater Arts Centre.

Moving Being Info 0222 28741

Body Politic — A new performance bringing Moving Being's established mixed media techniques (performers plus music, video, slides, film, electronics) forward into the action itself, rather than employing them as an animated background. Body Politic itself is about the 'state' we live in, both internally and externally.

October 31-November 1. Arnolfini, Bristol.
November 3-4. Barn Theatre, Aberystwyth.
November 7-15. ICA, London.
November 28-29. Theatr Ardudwy, Harlech.
December 2-3. Theatr Gwynedd, Bangor.
December 8-10. Phoenix Arts, Leicester.
December 12-13. Wyeside Arts Centre, Builtth Wells.
December 15-20. Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff.

Les Oeufs Malades. Info 01 636 6226

Family Album — About Families. Les Oeufs Malades — '...who else gets droves of confused French tourists in their audience expecting a piece of performance art? Who else gets not only their plays reviewed but their name?... the only whiff of rancid omelette about them is their name! AARGHH!' Bryony Lavery, LOM director in Performance no. 2. November 1. Taunton Brewhouse Theatre.
November 6-7. Whitehaven Rosehill Theatre.

November 17-19. Swindon Wyvern Theatre.
November 20-22. Cardiff Sherman Theatre.
December 1-6. Horsham Capitol Theatre.

Gay Sweatshop. Info 01 250 1762

Blood Green — Set in an England that might yet exist; where genetic engineering is no longer a spin-off from the medical research world, but is itself a growth industry; where control over the sex of children has become the basis of the militarised state; where sexuality which differs from the strict male/female stereotypes is treated with the surgeon's knife.
November 3. Carnegie Arts Centre, Workington.
November 5-8. Gulbenkian Arts Centre, Newcastle.
November 10-11. McRobert Arts Centre, Stirling.

Matchbox Purveyors. Info 01 422 9653

Ian Hinchcliffe in:
Spud Havalone II — A science fiction piece taking place in the colonies. A man and his servant argue about cult. The action includes a cutlery dance and space suits which are self amplified. Comedy, music and absurdity.
October 28. Barn Theatre, Ambleside, Cumbria.
October 31. Harbour Arts Centre, Irvine.
November 1-7. Somewhere in Scotland.
November 13. Riverstreet Hall, Portsmouth.
November 14. Chesil Theatre, Winchester.

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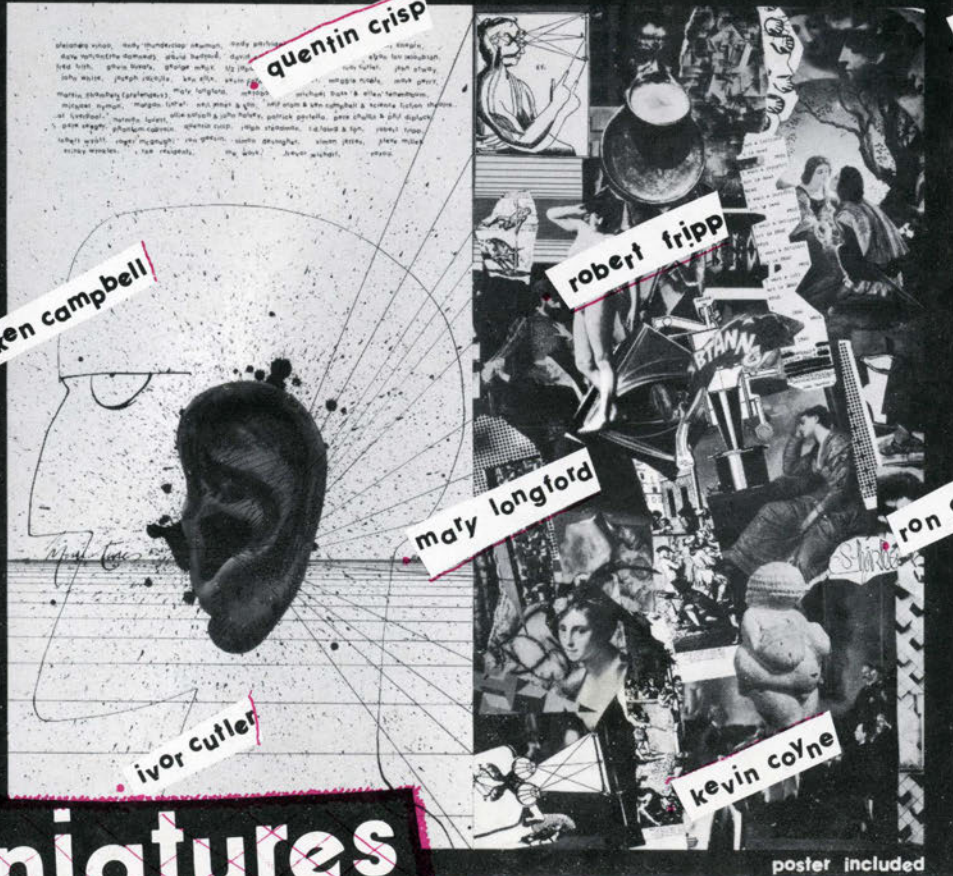
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