

PERFORMANCE MAGAZINE

October/November

The Review of Live Art

No. 19 75p



Art On The Run

Cycling and Performance,
Neo-Naturism, New York Live,
Gangster Funeral, Cathy Berberian,
Nuovo Spettacolorita.

JAZZ TOURS Autumn 1982

PIANO FORTY

— four great improvising pianists

JAKI BYARD (USA)

ALEX VON SCHLIPPENBACH (W. Germany)

IRENE SCHWEIZER (Switzerland)

HOWARD RILEY (UK)

October

Sun 24 LONDON, Round House 7.30pm

Thu 28 MANCHESTER, Band on the Wall 9pm

Fri 29 BIRMINGHAM, B'ham and Midland Institute
7.45pm

November

Mon 1 COVENTRY, Warwick U. Arts Centre 7.45pm

Tue 2 LEICESTER, Phoenix Arts 8pm

Thu 4 LLANTWIT MAJOR, St Donat's Arts Centre
8pm

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Steve Lacey *soprano saxophone*, Steve Potts *alto saxophone*, Irene Aebi *voice*, violin, cello; Jean-Jacques Avenel *bass*, Bobby Few *piano*, Oliver Johnson *drums*.

November

Sun 7 LONDON, Round House 7.30pm

Thu 11 LEICESTER, Phoenix Arts 8pm

Fri 12 LLANTWIT MAJOR, St Donat's Arts Centre
8pm

Sat 13 BRISTOL, Arnolfini 8pm

Sun 14 SHEFFIELD, Crucible Theatre 7.30pm

Tue 16 NEWCASTLE, Corner House Hotel, Heaton
8pm

Wed 17 DARLINGTON, Arts Centre 8pm

Thu 18 MANCHESTER, Band on the Wall 9pm

Fri 19 LEEDS, Playhouse 11.15pm

Sat 20 KENDAL, Brewery Arts Centre 8.30pm

Sun 21 BIRMINGHAM, Strathallan Hotel 8pm

Mon 22 COVENTRY, Warwick U. Arts Centre
7.30pm



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PERFORMANCE MAGAZINE

The Review of Live Art

Performance Magazine
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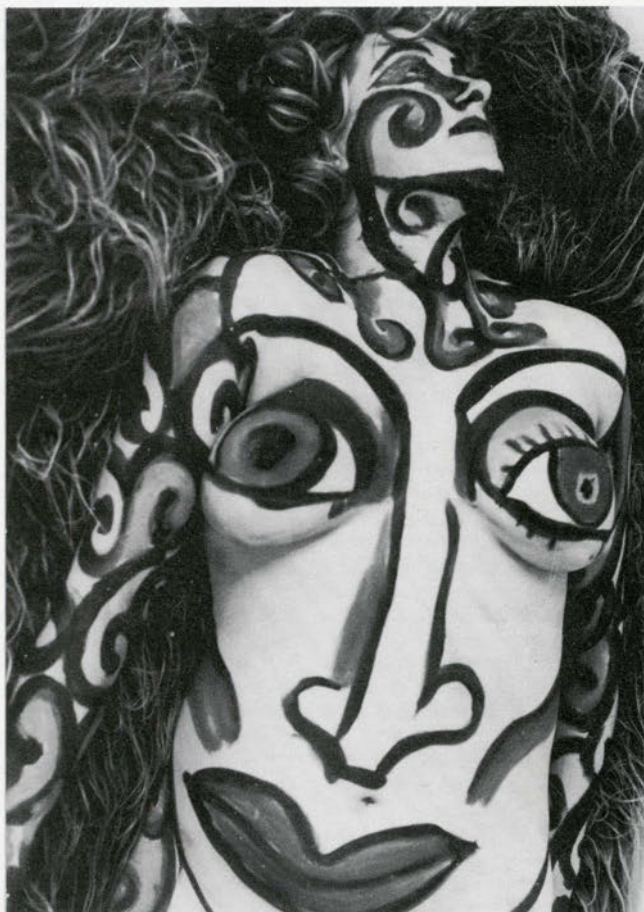
Publisher

Performance Magazine Ltd
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ISSN no 0144 5901

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Arts Council
OF GREAT BRITAIN

Performance Magazine welcomes articles, or ideas for articles, from new contributors. Please remember that we only print material on radical or experimental areas in visual art, theatre and music, which we pull together under the general label of Performance. Real life too; a performance can happen anywhere.

We'd also like your correspondence on anything in our pages. Feedback means support!



Neo Naturists at B2 Gallery, Wapping.

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Is Performance Art Dead?

The Midland Group's third Performance Art Platform will this year be incorporated into an expanded four days of events covering a wide range of art and performances that come under the general description of Performance Art.

Since holding a position at the forefront of experimentation in the visual arts in the 1960's the concept of performance art has had to expand and diversify to cover an ever widening range of experimental performers from all areas of performance including theatre, music, dance, popular entertainment and now video.

The thin lines of distinction drawn between these various areas and the increasing evidence of a crossing over between art and popular culture have both served to raise many questions about the nature of performance in relation to all the art forms.

From surreal cabaret comedy to New Wave video to 'performing' sculpture these four days of events will provide an exhilarating mix of performances that will serve to illustrate just some of the ground covered by performance artists today.

The following is a document submitted by Roland Miller, who will be leading the Performance Platform discussion this year.

The Polish author, Stefan Morawski, has written recently of a "creative self-consciousness" which may be regarded as art. He describes a "considerable section of the world's neo avant-garde" which is characterised either by a parasitic consciousness — "marauders and mannerists who have joined the pioneers of (this) movement and imitate them piteously; or by a narcissistic consciousness, which "is sometimes accompanied by unbearable gibberish or a trivial dullness of communicated "revelations".

In declaring the sterility and decadence of the neo avant-garde, Morawski adum-

brates the positive, "genuinely creative artists", whose work attempts to deal with "the basic problems of contemporary human existence". He mentions in this context (alongside Grotowski's 'Theatre of Sources') — "all the street theatres drawing chance spectators into a spectacle of vital resolutions". Characteristics of performance art in Europe that most identify it with a 'dead' neo avant-garde (according to Morawski's definitions) are, I think, both parasitic and narcissistic. Performances that are essentially no more than masochistic self-punishment echo the experiments of the earliest Dada-ists, (man throws himself from window) or attempt, shockingly, to reproduce 'real' suffering without comment. Deliberate obfuscation (through endless repetition, obscure theoreticising, trivial references) also exists in contemporary performance art.

If, and it is hypothesis, we accept Morawski's definition of genuinely new and inventive contemporary art — "creative self-consciousness" — an art that concerns itself with individual creativity in everyone, with the concerns of people in their daily lives, with the basic problems of human existence, then we should ask whether these qualities or not in performance art, as we know and use it.

One of the most useful distinctions I know can be drawn between art/theatre/film/literature that is spectacle and that which is a form or scenario for the alteration of the status quo.

This distinction was drawn, perhaps not originally, by Lee Baxendale in an American collection of essays entitled 'Radical Perspectives in the Arts', published in the early seventies (?). Ten or fifteen years ago the avant-garde — including performance art — was under pressure. The 'democratisation' and 'anarchism' of the sixties might have become politically potent, but notoriously did not. Morawski quotes from an essay by Helène Parmelin, "L'art

et les anartistes" which was published in 1969.

"Displaying of excrements, all sorts of clownish or fanciful gestures, even all the noisy Happenings which provided the setting for the Paris May 1968, are according to H. Parmelin, a manifestation of artistic independence as fruitless and spurious as Vasarely's geometric-and-illusionistic tricks or N. Schoffer's light towers. Creative self-consciousness of the neo avant-garde — concludes the writer — is either a reflection of the attitudes prevalent in a society of plenty and fever on the threshold of the post-industrial era... or a 'magic lantern' or a childish tomfoolery in which is expressed the impotence of individuals unfit for a bureaucratic world and their longing for another social reality."

In other words, the avant-garde, the neo avant-garde, had both become impotent spectacle by the end of the sixties, and the 'new' art of performance will surely 'die' along with them, unless...

Unless in our performances we demonstrate some of Morawski's 'creative self-consciousness' in its new, hopeful form. To do this, I believe, we should examine our own selves, our circumstances, and the problems of our existence; and our performance work should deal with this. We should make this examination not as exceptional individuals, not as 'artists', but as sexed human beings, living in post-industrial, class and race divided Europe, threatened by immediate nuclear destruction. And out of this, should come our living artform.

Roland Miller

* Stefan Morawski 'Art as a form of self-consciousness' published in 'Art and Thought' catalogue of the 2nd International Drawing Triennale, Wrocław, Poland, 1981.

This summer a new performance venue emerged in Wapping, London. — B2 gallery, attracting a new wave of younger performance and experimental artists, as well as hosting exhibitions of rock graphics and 'new image' painting. One of the more radical events was the week-long takeover of the space by the Neo-Naturist movement. David Dawson, the director and programmer, in conversation with Rob La Frenais, describes the events of that week, and throws out a few challenges to the art world.

Rob La Frenais: Who exactly are the Neo-Naturists?

David Dawson: The Neo-Naturists are a group formed around two women, Miss Binnie and Wilma and their striving for an honest revival of true sixties spirit — which involves living ones life more or less naked and occasionally manifesting it into a performance for which the main theme is body paint. Since they formed, around eighteen months, two years ago they've now gathered a remarkable entourage which, at its height of their season reached numbers of about 18-20. In the gallery they had a whole week to themselves and built environments and they made a huge bed where they slept in long lines and were occasionally visited by people as various as Mike De Ath, Bruce Lacey, Jimmie Trindie, now known as Trindie Gonk Aurora, and inmates of the Cha Cha Club including Scarlet, its hostess.

RL: When I came up to see the Neo-Naturists, they'd just been walking around the streets. What actually happened then?

DD: Which day?

RL: The second day, I think.

DD: So that day was Macbeth day. Well they'd been out to collect Dunsanay Woods, and they brought it into the gallery for their evenings performance, and they'd been generally trying to recruit an audience from the local population, both indigenous, and the Art community.

RL: How did the art community react to the Neo-Naturists walking around with no clothes and their bodies painted with gaudy colours?

DD: Yeah, well excepting a few very positive responses, they largely either resented them or loathed them; reviled them...

RL: Why do you think this was?

DD: Their particular...ah...I just think that their approach to art is just so alien to the painterly, gestural orthodoxy that you get in Wapping Studios. They were also in the middle of their open studio-week so...

RL: What sort of reaction from performance people — people who were used to wider forms?

DD: Generally they either enjoyed it or were amused. It was fairly unanimous, the response. From people who didn't have a prior conditioning in art it was fairly favourable as well.

RL: What did you think about all of it? I mean, how did you come to the point of wanting to put it on in your gallery? What attracted you to it? Some people could say

New Image and Neo- Naturism



Neo-Naturist in Soho

that you were looking for something really sensational to kick off your season, like 'We'll get all these nude women in and get them to paint their bodies.' What actually was it that got you interested?

DD: Well, I'd known a few of them for quite a long time, so it wasn't as though I'd sought them out, in fact I think somebody quite independent had probably suggested it in the first place. I think they probably cooked up the idea before I did. Really, when I was programming the performance season it seemed to be that it was very easy to end up with a period entirely booked with people who'd seen a lot before and had been given an opportunity to work with different environments and different spaces and this particular group of performers really are the new generation, for want of a better expression, and they hadn't really had much of an opportunity outside their particular social scene to try things out.

RL: So where would you place this, if you were trying to put it into conventional art historical ideas of... the latter part of the twentieth century... where would you put this, and the kind of activity you've been programming this summer?

DD: I suppose Neo-Naturists would become New Image performance or something.

RL: New Image performance?

DD: Well I can't really think of a parallel outside of painting, for them particularly. I mean there's a lot of historicist content, the sixties revival which is partially ironic and partially genuine.

RL: Does this interface with any new movements in music?

DD: Well, the kind of superficial tribal aspect of it, the ethnic dirtiness of it might be parallel to... jungle lyrics.

RL: Bowwowwow and Hazy Fantasy?

DD: Yes, I think they identify with those people, they're very much their generation, but I think they see themselves as being something a little less accessible, I mean you can't dance to them.

RL: Have any of them done any performance work before of a different kind?

DD: Yes, I think some of them have worked with people like Bruce Lacey, and they've performed in different friends' various films, John Maybury films, things like that. Trindie, who appeared on their punk evening and various times during the week has performed extensively as a transvestite cabaret star...

RL: How, in the ordinary sense of running a gallery, can events like the Neo-Naturists be assimilated? The way they decided to really take the place over 24 hours.

DD: Yes. Well it was assimilated eventually!

RL: It assimilated you.

DD: All but.

RL: Did you take your clothes off?

DD: No, never. I thought it was always an important aspect of the gallery/artist relationship that I should seem to be slightly more objective.

RL: Did they accept this?

DD: Yes, they enjoyed it really. Their invitations to take my clothes off or join in for the evening were always made in a slightly joking way.

RL: Would it have changed the relationship had you done so?

DD: I imagine it would have done, But... yes it was quite valuable to have art actually living in there all the time, and they were there with the same status as a painting or a sculpture, but with rather more presence than most paintings or sculptures. And demands as well.

RL: For example?

DD: Well, rather, impositions would perhaps be the expression, in terms of say the noise level, and degrees of deterioration imposed on bathroom facilities, things like that.

RL: On what?

DD: Bathroom facilities (Laughter).

RL: Who exactly was in the group?



DD: Binnie, Wilma, Hell Hell, Nico, that's all the christian names I can remember... oh Grayson, but Grayson was banished for one day.

RL: What had he done to become banished?

DD: He sulked too much, as far as I can make out.

RL: Exactly what crimes can one commit, if you're a neo-naturist?

DD: Binnie had made a policy decision, I think, on Macbeth Day that they shouldn't get stoned for the whole day, before the performance, so that Macbeth wouldn't suffer. Apparently all day they'd been sneaking out, getting stoned without her knowledge, and she caught them.

RL: Macbeth was a fairly chaotic event anyway.

DD: I think Binnie thought it could probably have been rather more polished if they weren't... (laughter).

RL: How can you consider such a thing as ever being polished? I mean the whole thing was completely entropic. The thing of it falling apart was surely part of the per-

formance, wasn't it? It seemed to be the main running joke. There was no way that it could become together. I'm interested to know whether in fact they were even trying. Or was it one of those things like, in the days of people like the Portsmouth Sinfonia, where to some extent you have chaos, but you're trying deliberately *not* to be chaotic, because otherwise it would seem phony.

DD: Yes I think probably if they hadn't been stoned... probably the concept behind the production was very similar to a Portsmouth Sinfonia production. Probably if they had handled it with a little more presence of mind it would have seemed more like Macbeth than it did, since all the formal elements had been decided in the morning. Specific things like having the electric oven on stage so that they could cook Macbeth's Scottish pancakes for him live. Particular lines that they were going to read... and there'd been quite a big row about the casting earlier, since all of them wanted to be witches and there could only be three.

RL: And this all happened while the public was wandering round the gallery?

DD: Yes, these sort of decisions were all made in front of the general public.

RL: One walked in, and there were sort of domestic scenes of the Neo-Naturists going on. Cooking, and obviously they spent a lot of time painting their bodies. Did you get anyone who came to the exhibition voluntarily who expressed dissension from the motif?

DD: I didn't really. A lot of people came from having read Time Out or something like that were captivated by the whole thing — just sat down and watched it, for a couple of hours sometimes.

RL: Did the Neo-Naturists come round to any sort of objective discussion of what their aims were, out of uniform so to speak?

DD: Well, the last couple of days were rather traumatic for them — they began to say this was going to be the end of Neo-Naturism (laughter). But I haven't heard anything of it since, and after they looked at the videotape of it they resolved to carry on, possible under another name.

RL: Have they attempted to engage in any analysis of what they're trying to do?

DD: I think analysis would be peripheral to, let's say their concern about their art.

RL: It would be.

DD: I don't think they see analysis as a useful diversion.

RL: So it is just a matter for action in a situation?

DD: Yes, and being artistic.

RL: How do you feel about that.

DD: Well, I thought they were very artistic.

RL: You don't find it frustrating having to interpret for the casual observer? Or GLAA (the funders)?

DD: No, I quite enjoy the opportunity to be oblique.

RL: What did GLAA think of it?

DD: I don't think they dared venture down. They were certainly aware of it.

“Some of the more interesting two-dimensional work is by people who are otherwise making films or doing performances.”

RL: Can you just remind me of what happened when they all went out to the pub?

DD: Yes. They went down to two pubs, in fact, one of which they were banned for life from, the other, the Prospect of Whitby that is, the manager became quite enamoured, particularly of Wilma and he gave them free drinks and food and even bought lunch for them. He became quite a fan and brought quite a lot of his clients along to see the performances. Many of the other local residents took offence to them, resulting in three police visits, in the last two days; largely, I think, out of curiosity than anything else. The police advised us that it was better not to make a naked display in public. Since they were planning an open air picnic that evening they were somewhat chagrined at this. They arrived at a compromise, which was that they would be allowed to have their picnic naked on the beach, which was technically within the jurisdiction of the river police, but could arguably be classified as land, so the land police would turn a blind eye to it.

RL: And then there was the incident at the Wapping Open Studios.

DD: Yes. Trindie Gonk and some of his associates were guest appearing with the Neo-Naturists that day, and they went along to the Wapping Artists opening and were received rather badly. Trindie himself was assaulted, receiving a punch on the nose, and there was quite a lot of bad feeling. The Wapping artists weren't really disposed to displays of nakedness at their

event.

RL: It's interesting because there's really quite a lot of antipathy to third area work. I notice there's in some cases quite serious rivalry which climaxed with Peter Fuller writing his diatribe against performance art and installation work. In Wapping Studios there's a sign someone written up saying 'Marcel Duchamp is dead: Long live painting!' You get a sort of resentment from some painters that performance work has been getting too much attention, and incidents like the one you described tend to almost be symptomatic of that. They felt that there were these performance artists barging into their event.

DD: Yes. I think the Neo-Naturists to a good degree cut across the preciousness of the occasion and I'm sure a lot of the painters are aware of the tenuous level at which they operate in that particular circumstance, and so its bound to precipitate a good deal of anxiousness to say the least. That's quite an interesting point. I've found that the difficulty I have as an administrator and programmer is finding two dimensional work that I don't mind attaching my name to, rather than the reverse. From my point of view; this is subjective I suppose, but its more and more evident that the interesting contemporary work, which is actually somehow investigative as well, is not the first two areas, is not painting and sculpture. Often the most interesting static work emanates from people who are actually working in

other media.

RL: You're talking about people who've worked in performance and installation and they've decided to go back into two dimensional work?

DD: I think some of the more interesting two dimensional work is by people who are otherwise making films or doing performances as well.

RL: We seem to be fanning the flames of this particular little difference here.

DD: Well, I don't mind that. I don't mind being printed as upholding that particular end of the argument.

RL: At the last Midland Group Performance Platform, Marty St James stood up and said that Picasso should have been forced to perform in front of his paintings. The thing is we are bringing this (resentment) upon ourselves, by taking this extreme, those of us involved in performance work?

DD: No, I think the extreme is imposed upon us, rather than on the people working in the traditional media. They require us to seem extreme so that their work seems central, and I think it's that kind of shifting of the piece on the board. I think performance art is only seen as radical because it hasn't really been as visible as it might have been. It's been in existence certainly since the turn of the century, and happily it seems to be re-emerging after quite a long period of having assumed a low profile.



Neo Naturists at Fairy Fair, Norfolk.



Nuova Spettacolorita!

Polverigi is a little town on a hill in the middle of the Italian countryside, some six miles from the Adriatic coast. The Italian Tourist Board hasn't heard of it. There's one cafe, a couple of bars, a cinema, two schools, a dominating church at its centre; and there's a rambling, elegant but rough-hewn villa on the crest of the hill, once the property of the local land owner. The nearest hotel is in the next town, Agugliano, and no-one has heard of that either.

But once a year Polverigi has a theatre festival. It's an international festival of the avant-garde, supported by the curiosity and enthusiasm of the local people. Every space is pressed into service: the villa becomes the festival's centre, and the two major stages are in the open air.

This is its sixth year, and for the first time it has rained. Roberto Cimetta, its indefatigable director, passes us on the picturesque hill of the main street. He turns with a smile and a shrug of benign anxiety: 'My poor festival' he says, and hurries on.

He need not have been so worried. There is a magic about Polverigi which conquers the weather, conquers impossible performance spaces, conquers wrecked schedules. *Ariadone's* Italian premiere may have been rained off after they had worked round the clock for two

full days — but in the end it was OK, they would come back later in the week and that night the weather would be kind. *Hesitate and Demonstrate's* hearts may have sank when they found that their 'theatre' was a gym equipped only with wall-bars — but by fair means and foul they converted it into a near-perfect playing space for *Good-night Ladies* and became the hit of the festival. Relations between the festival organisers and *Magazzini Criminali* may have strained to breaking point — but the group managed to produce the most extraordinary cinemascope spectacle in a nearby quarry. *The Theatre of the Moon*, a spontaneous climactic one-off brought together by the technicians of a variety of companies, finally couldn't happen since rain stopped play again — but at least those people had the unique opportunity of working together. Theatre practitioners may have turned against the professors who dominated the series of formal meetings — but their presence provoked a debate about performance which was better informed and more articulate than could be had anywhere else in Europe.

For in Italy the avant-garde is taken seriously. It is not marginalised. Academics and critics bother to see the work, and they have developed the analytical tools and theoretical vocabulary with

which to argue about it constructively. They vie with each other to spot the new tendencies, to give the definitive name to the newest wave as it rolls towards the beach of public enthusiasm. Right now, it's the 'post-moderns' or, more accurately, 'nuova spettacolarita'. And it is spectacular. Much of it makes our performance work positively middle-aged.

Riding the crest of the latest wave is the group *Falso Movimento* with their hit show *Tango Glaciale*. The director is 23 years old, and the work has a brash self-assurance borne of the company's youth. Projected, reconsidered pop art and architectural graphics blend with an unerring, spare use of costume and objects, together with hard-edged choreographic movement — the whole bound up by an insistent, clear, loud, wholly musical sound track which the group regard as their text. Stills from the show would look more comfortable within the pages of *The Face* than *Plays and Players* (or even *Performance Magazine*). *Tango Glaciale* was a Mickey co-production; and when I saw it in Amsterdam, I feared only that it hit a moment of fashion so accurately that it wouldn't survive the summer. I was wrong. It'll last the winter. And then they'll do another one, even better. There's sterner stuff here than mere

Magazzini Criminali

Feature

fashion.

Antonio Sytzy is another young director who takes inter-disciplinary collaboration a step further than Falso Movimento and goes to fashion designers for his costumes for *Famiglia Horror*, to architects for settings, to sculptors for set pieces, and creates a show out of the sum of the commissions. The sound tape is again central, this time with a spoken track over the music, heard against carefully lit, five-woman, moving tableaux. A further name in the litany of major new companies is the Rome-based *Gaia Scienza*. Some of them are still students; but in Italy it seems that you can be a student for most of your life. They were unable to appear at Polverigi since they were touring Australia.

Back in Polverigi, there was a rare chance to see some visiting Americans. Winston Tong and Bruce Geduldig presented the premier of *The Birth and Death of Stars*. Winston Tong wore twenties horror film make-up and walked about; and Bruce Geduldig pointed film loop abstracts at him and almost everything else. A couple of good moments (film 'escaping' onto the wide screen after the lid of a black box was lifted; the birth of stars represented by black, back-lit, pin-pricked paper) didn't save the event from appearing aimless and ill-prepared, doubly disappointing after reports of the beauty and precision of their work in Cardiff, and the justified reputation of *Tuxedo Moon*, the band with whom they work. Perhaps they were putting all their energy into a *Ghost Sonata* with Tuxedo Moon; but we shall never know since that performance also suffered from the weather. Michael Kirby, professor and editor of *The Drama Review*, and his *Structuralist Workshop* presented a theatre piece called *Revolutionary Dance*. Exploring every light source except a conventional theatre lamp (wisely, given that his school venue was even less appropriate than He's and Dem's) the mosaic shards of shattered narrative were difficult and even irritating to watch, but the memory reconstructed them into something more than an arid, academic exercise.

So it was to the Italians to offer the ultimate illustration of the notion of 'spectacle' in the new avant-garde. *Magazzini Criminali* is the godfather of the current wave. Born in 1975 out of *Il Carrozzone*, their canvasses have become wider and wider. The site of their Polverigi performance, a vast quarry, was spiked with ten foot blue neons, an alien geometry which transformed topography into theatrical setting with stunning economy. Against a raucous electronic rock backing tape constructed in collaboration with John Hassell, a dangerous cavalcade of effects: a saloon car ballet, a gang led by alsatian dogs, four thundering horsemen (Apocalyptic vision), a figure in white suit with revolver, whining auto-cross jumps and wheelies, semaphore dancing, a drag racer kicking up a dust storm, the vocal fury of two women on a sand hill, and finally a couple of cars chucked over the quarry's cliff. There were loungeurs, unsur-

prising within what must have been a technical and communication nightmare; but also moments of pure sensual joy as *Magazzini Criminali* proved that art can be more exciting than sport. Out of the form of spectacle emerged a sense of urban alienation shared in Britain by — say — Siouxsie and the Banshees or The Birthday Party, rather than anyone working in theatre.

The Italians themselves would probably be the first to admit that their finest achievements do not lie in the area of arts administration. Polverigi illustrated this truth, for all its magic; and the attempt to include performance with *Arte Italiana 1960-82* in London is suffering from

similar difficulties. *Arte Italiana* is jointly presented by the Arts Council of Great Britain and the Comune di Milano. Painting and sculpture is at the Hayward Gallery; performance, film and video at the ICA. The four major companies invited to appear during the two week festival 12-24 October are *Magazzini Criminali*, Antonio Sytzy, *Falso Movimento* and *Gaia Scienza*, together with less elaborate work from *Dal Bosco/Varesco* and *Taroni/Cividin*. Even if they don't all turn up in the flesh, there will be video documentation of most of the new work happening in Italy. None of it has been seen in Britain before, and the combined onslaught could just provide the kind of kick we need. **John Ashford**





Cathy Berberian

"It's my artistic schizophrenia — part of me likes the bad taste — part of me comments on it." Interview By Lindsay Cooper

A hugely influential singer, Cathy Berberian pioneered many of the vocal techniques which are now commonplace not just in the classical/contemporary field in which she works, but also among improvising and rock singers. A number of composers have written works for her, notably Luciano Berio, with whom she collaborated for many years.

Although best known as an interpreter, she also composes, and includes some of her pieces in her 'From Monteverdi to the Beatles' programme. Her current selection of 'recitals', some on particular themes, actually use a much wider variety of vocal and theatrical styles than either her reputation as the doyenne of the avant garde or the traditions of the classical vocal recital would suggest. It was two of these programmes which she brought to the *Sound of Women* festival at the Bloomsbury Theatre, London, in August.

LC: How often do you do the salon programme you performed here last week?

CB: I do it a lot — mostly in Italy and France; this is the second time in London in the space of about ten years.

LC: How much do you vary the programme?

CB: The group of French songs is almost permanent. The second group can change — in Italy I'll do Italian instead of Russian songs. The German group is pretty stable and the English group is also permanent, but the encores can change — the encore I did here is a new one. It depends — sometimes on how I feel, sometimes on the audience, on reactions.

LC: What made you go for that particular style, that historical period, that particular character you're playing?

CB: The character created herself. It started out basically because I'm interested in Art Nouveau — it's been my passion now for about fifteen years. I collect bric a brac, I don't collect big items — I've got a few that I was able to find in Italy where I live, but I mean I don't go round sending huge things home. And I have costumes, real costumes from the period. I thought it would be nice to have a nostalgic evening that would give me an opportunity to make people laugh. Well, it was meant to be a mixed bag, it still is — there are some serious things, which I consider to be necessary because you cannot be funny continuously — the audience needs a respite because order to appreciate the next comic thing; like a rubber band, if you keep on stretching it without letting go it loses its elasticity. I think originally my programming was a bit more serious. There were more serious items in it because I have this mission which combines wanting to be slightly didactic as well as being entertaining, so the first version was a little bit more informative. Then she just sort of bloomed.

LC: It seems now that she's become rather ironic, a fairly light irony, but there is this sort of ironic distance to the material. The didacticism — what remains of it — is coming over through the irony. How did that grow?

CB: The fact is that the irony comes from the material itself. It's my artistic schizophrenia — part of me likes the bad taste, part of me comments on it. Whereas I find the two Russian songs are really very beautiful; I just cannot send them up. I'm very glad you say gentle irony because that's the feedback I've been getting — everyone says 'you never go beyond the limits of taste.' Where I'm standing I think I'm going way overboard — it's totally outrageous because my own personal feelings on how one should sing are completely different. But you see there are still some singers today who are very close to what I'm doing. There is the wife of Shostakovitch, Vishnevskya, who is a hundred times what I do. When we saw her at a recital, the musician I was with said 'my god, she's a caricature of your caricature.' And she was serious you see, she was doing the *Songs and Dances of Death* of Mussorgsky, and that's real serious. There are

many quirks which still exist in singing that one would generally associate with a past generation — and that's why it comes off as gentle irony. If all that were completely gone then it would seem like a completely outrageous comic performance.

LC: In fact at that time, contradictory though it was, salon music was one of the few areas where women were acknowledged as having musical skills and taken a bit seriously as performers — even though it was in that very upper class context.

CB: I'm not quite sure if that's completely true. Possibly toward the end, but certainly not in the middle of the nineteenth century — because women who were in the operatic and concert field were considered only one notch above prostitutes. They were obliged to do a lot of horizontal auditioning and many of them, for protection — like movie stars today marrying their producers — would marry the impressarii to save themselves from being shuttled from one person to another. And if it were true that women were more emancipated because of their profession, it's basically the luck of having a profession that a man can't take over. After all, during the period when the castrati were dominant, the women were taking a back seat. With the lack of castrati, women could not be substituted by men. Whenever a man can take over something successful a woman is doing, you can bet they're going to do it. I'm making an anthology of women composers and in my research I've discovered that the Kabuki theatre was invented by a woman in the 1500s. For a year and a half they had such enormous success that the men got together, declared it to be immoral, closed the Kabuki theatre and guess what! ... I leave it up to you. There are examples of that all through history... and then the men will say with a completely bland face 'how come there are no women geniuses?'

Composition is something where it's not enough to write things on paper. It has to be performed, it has to be appreciated. You have to be able to hear the music to work on it, to develop yourself. If you can't hear it very often, if it has a limited audience and limited reaction, it's stultifying — it's like writing a book and leaving it in your drawer, it doesn't make any sense. But that basically is the situation of all women composers, even the very best — and there were for example some very very wonderful ones in the 1600s. The reason why for a long time they came from families of the intelligentsia or aristocrats was that they were the only ones who would give musical education to women — it was considered necessary for them in order to hold a court and meet cultured people. But if it wasn't for that kind of cultural necessity, they would still be there with their embroidery hoops and playing silly songs on harps.

LC: How do you see your own composing in relation to that history of women composers?

CB: Oh... No. Basically I don't consider myself a serious composer. In both senses — because what I do are usually comic pieces. Though I have to have a parenthesis here. It's one of those things — you know, you hit on something and it's a lucky hit. Now this comic strip piece I invented; about five or six years ago a very very intellectual — but, you know, the hermetic type of intellectual — magazine in France called *Communication* came out with a 33 page analysis of my composition of which I understood only two words: *the* and *and*. I don't know what it's all about — I mean, if he says so then I'm sure it's true, but I have no conception of how I composed it. Certainly reading it I think 'I did? It is?' You know — I can't believe it.

But no, I don't really take myself seriously. I like to be in the catalogue of women composers, and I was terribly flattered when the international vocal contest they have every three years in Washington for American music included my work in the catalogue. That's a nice feeling — it doesn't have Leonard Bernstein for example — but I certainly don't take myself seriously.

LC: But isn't that the way women often feel about themselves?

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CB: No. There are lots of serious women composers and I know them; for example, there are two in America who've been accepted into the American Academy. There's Germaine Tailleferre, who was one of *Les Six* with Auric and Milhaud and Poulenc — she's still alive incidentally — and Nadia Boulanger; she was very important in forming many composers, American particularly. Unfortunately, because she was extremely conservative, very strict and very rigorous they all sound like they came out of the same mould.

But because I don't consider myself seriously, that doesn't mean that women composers don't and shouldn't. It's very hard for us — I mean we have *token* women composers just the way companies have token women executives. But by god those token women composers don't get to the Scala, they don't get to Covent Garden, they don't get to the Metropolitan Opera and they don't get to the Philharmonic orchestra except maybe once every six years — the same as token women executives never get beyond 'C' category. I mean, I'm not a cudgel-bearer, I just hate all kinds of injustice no matter who the victim is, especially when they're helpless and innocent... naturally, when it comes to women, since I have in my own life suffered for being a woman, I know what their problems are and identify with them. I'm more liberated because of my profession, that's obvious, and also because being now a bachelor woman I can do what the hell I want. Whereas when you are involved with a man — even a so-called intelligent and open man who with his tongue will profess comprehension of the feminist movement — when it comes to the nitty-gritty, you know, it's the woman who's got to knuckle under. In my anthology of women composers there's an item which my editor wanted to cut out but which I was very adamant about. I started out by saying that in the dawn of civilisation there was a matriarchy because of the mystery of birth. Men thought it was the wind that did it, or gods... The minute they found out, that was it. And of course he said 'What has that to do with music?' I said it has everything to do with it because that sets the basis for the treatment of women. The persecution, the masculine persecution of women in music, starts early. I mean, a woman can be very talented, she'll go to conservatory — and now she is accepted in composition classes. But by the most insidious treatment — giving her all sorts of silly assignments, not giving her the right kind of attention then naturally giving her low marks — she is weeded out very early. Even if there were three women in the first year of composition class, by the third year there are none. And that doesn't mean that they're worse than the worst of the men. It's just this natural inclination to get rid of them because they don't know what to do with them. Whereas with the men students, they can tell dirty jokes... and after all he's a man he's got to support a family — of course the fact that a woman might have to support a family is not important. And I don't know what that's got to do with whether a person is talented or not. I mean we have lousy women composers and they're better than some lousy men composers. We haven't even had a chance to be lousy on our own terms.

LC: As a performer, do you see yourself primarily as an entertainer?

CB: Well... no, thank god. But that's because of the information part.

LC: But does that take it away from being entertainment?

CB: No. As a matter of fact that's not it. The word entertainment has come to mean just light entertainment (of which I'm actually a propagator because I do a programme of American popular music which has been an absolute smash in Italy). I don't consider light music to be insignificant — my conception of music is good and bad, not serious and light. So the word entertainment for me is all in the eye of the beholder. Even serious music should bring joy, and if you enjoy something it's entertaining, whether it's serious or funny. Naturally, my nature is to be funny. First of all because it helps me to be healthy — the more you laugh the fewer tensions you carry. Secondly, the more you make people laugh the more you're giving them the contagion of health and joy — and the satisfaction of making people laugh is really hundredfold. But I think people really *need* entertainment at the moment — not bread and circuses so much as something for the inner self.

LC: When you're doing your other shows, do you have as much of a strongly developed sense of character as you do in the salon show?

CB: No, this is the only show where she is a character — in all the other things I do it's me. It's more difficult actually when it's in character because there are so many things I would have wanted to

say but she would never have said them. All the things I say have come out spontaneously — and then I've thought 'Ok, that goes', so it stays.

LC: That's a sort of improvisation — do you do much improvisation with your voice, with singing?

CB: Not really, not any more. I used to with the kind of things that were required of me in contemporary music. I do a very little when I do Monteverdi, which is necessary — it's important to be able to do those little embellishments. Of course, in 'Sequenza' by Berio there are moments when there is controlled improvisation, but I don't do it much now. I feel as if I've done my bit for contemporary music — I've actually begun a new style of singing in a way, using the voice in a different way that even pop singers are using. But it's time for the younger people to come out and do their own things and do the music of their own generation of composers — of which there are unfortunately not many interesting ones at the moment.

LC: What sort of vocal developments interest you — of any style?

CB: I'm always open to listening to new things.

I find that there are many who are inventing new uses of the voice, particularly Americans, but these same American women — they're mostly women — can't do any other singing but that. They can't do Mozart, they can't do Handel, they're stuck on their own particular kind of singing so I don't consider that valid.

But being as busy as I am there are handicaps because I'm not able to hear the amount of performers that I would be interested in. I have these little rituals which I've established which I find protect my voice — I don't go out the night before a performance and the day of a performance I speak as little as possible. With that kind of thing, even if I'm at a festival, the chances of my hearing someone that I'm really interested in are pretty low.

LC: Have you ever heard the British singer Maggie Nicols, who also probably couldn't do Mozart, but who has a long history in jazz and improvisation, and out of that tradition — which is of course equally skilled — does a lot of experimental vocal work, and is actually sometimes quite close to what people who come from the classical end of music are doing?

CB: I haven't, but I admire Cleo Laine enormously. A jazz singer doesn't have to justify herself to me. I think Streisand has the most wonderful voice — though it's unfortunate she does such dreadful songs — and I'm a great Sarah Vaughan fan. I have a daughter by Berio who played small percussion for Sarah Vaughan's group — she also sings and composes. She lives in Brazil now with her husband and three children. I visit her about every two years.

LC: Do you listen to much music in Brazil?

CB: How can you not! Every store has a loudspeaker with a batucada group playing. I mean, one batucada is very fascinating, but by the third I start to become hysterical. Actually you know what I think, I think it's really a political plot. They keep these people really insensible, numbed by music so they don't think. They're in the direst poverty and their whole lives are based on the carnival. They finish one carnival and they've already begun the costume designs, saving money to buy all those spangles, and working on the floats for the next one. It's just not to be believed, it's brainwashing on the highest level.

LC: But don't you think that happens to a greater or lesser extent everywhere, that there's a kind of political dimension to how music is played or listened to?

CB: No, I think it's mostly commercial. Everywhere else it's commercial, down there I think it's political. It's like the church used to brainwash the poor people by telling them 'never mind — so you're starving, you're unhappy, you've got twenty kids — your happiness is not of this earth...'

LC: Are you happier with what you're doing now than when you were seen much more as a specialist experimental vocalist?

CB: Oh yes. Because I found that very stifling — there I was always being labelled as the high priestess of contemporary music when I had a lot more — as we say in Italian — a lot more arrows to shoot than just that. It was *infuriating* — it still is; people always precede reviews, particularly in England, by saying 'Cathy Berberian is mostly well-known...' — shit! I mean, I've done, I think, several remarkable performances of Monteverdi — Orfeo, The Coronation of Popea and so on — and I do a lot of things that aren't contemporary any more. Actually the only contemporary music I do now is Berio — he's the only one that I find congenial to my particular

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talents, aside from the fact that the pieces were written to suit me and to bring out the best in me as well as the best in him.

LC: What else are you doing now?

CB: There's been a big boom in Italy of my work and in France I've become almost French. In Paris they've created a special class for me at the conservatoire and I'm also going to be teaching American musical comedy at the School for Varieté next year. In Paris too, there's a women's movement called Mouvement Liberation des Femmes and I've become their sort of musical mascot. They've asked me to start a school for amateur women singers. The minister of culture has said fine, so we're going to start working on it. I shall be its director, but I won't teach in the beginning — I have an assistant who will do all the elementary work and then when they arrive at a certain stage I can help them.

I've got my recitals — there are five or six that I do. I do the *Chansons de Billitis* of Debussy in its different forms — the reciting and the singing — I do Satie, I do *Pierrot Lunaire* in various

languages. I do *Facade* a lot — Walton adores the way I did it and he wrote *Facade* number two for me and that was recorded. So — I have to learn to say no more often because I find I have almost no time to think and to study. Of course the big thing for me at the moment is that I have a miniscule part in a film by Alain Resnais. It's the only singing part, it's a dying scene and I sing as I die — which ought to get me an Oscar sometime or other if they don't cut it out of the film. I'm in a very up moment, I'm very happy with everything that I'm doing.

1. The anthology will be published in America early next year. Cathy Berberian is also planning a recital programme of songs by women composers.

2. 'Stripsody' is a collage of the onomatopoeic words of comic strips, and its sections present typical cartoon scenarios with vocal effects and gestures.



Cathy the Great

As others worship at the shrines of Marlene Dietrich and Judy Garland, so, years ago, was I captivated by Cathy Berberian. It all started in 1965 when I happened to see on television an extraordinary apparition: a gaunt hook-nosed lady with a mass of (dyed?) blonde hair was singing a Beatles song in the manner of Mozart. An exquisite bizarrely funny performance fusion. Who was this garish-looking harridan with the voice of an angel? Then I came across her record-

ings of works written for her by Luciano Berio: 'Sequenza III', a nine-minute unaccompanied solo going through virtuoso extremes of vocalisation and rapid staccato speech; 'Visage', the voice struggling out of some guttural primordial condition, modulating through cycles of laughter and pain, birth and rebirth, amorous, croakingly witch-like, tragically wailing, a kind of compendium of female vocal archetypes; and 'Thema', a homage to James Joyce based on the musically structured 'Sirens'

section in 'Ulysses'. These works — you could classify them as 'Berberio' scores — were influential tributaries in a current of vocal experiment that also included the work of the Living Theatre, La Mama and Open Theatre; Frank Zappa and the Mothers of Invention in their 'Freak Out!' phase, and Stomu Yamash'ta's 'Red Buddha Theatre'.

In due course I acquired her Baroque Beatles LP, still one of my all-time faves, and a sure test of mutual musical taste

(anyone who doesn't like it is refused admission to my Desert Island Disco and banished forever to the Asylum for the Musically Insane).

So it was a real treat to catch up with Ms. Berberian in the flesh, at long last, at the Bloomsbury Theatre, in her Recital, 'From Monteverdi to the Beatles'. Well, it's called 'A Recital' in the programme but, perhaps in deference to her avant-garde pedigree, Ms. Berberian makes a point of denying it during the performance. Nevertheless, that's what it is: a friendly but formal Recital, accompanied by a suitably intent young man at piano-forte and harpsichord, of music by Monteverdi, Debussy, Weill, Stravinsky, Berio, John Cage and, of course, Lennon and McCartney. The programme's sub-title, 'A Panorama of Revolutions in Music' is also a shade misleading. Because, although Ms. Berberian provides some informative introductions, the programme is less about radical innovation in vocal composition than a discreetly served panorama of the glorious musicality, versatility and humour of Cathy Berberian.

She is stouter now and the hair looks naturally white, but Berberian has lost nothing in vocal purity, serenity and wit, as, feet planted sturdily apart (before beginning a number she seems to earth herself), she demonstrates her amazing range in what Berio calls 'the new vocality'.

She begins with Monteverdi and Debussy, works to be heard in any conventional repertoire and, for my taste, a little on the tedious side. But, by establishing Berberian's total command of classical idioms, they serve a useful function in setting off the jewels of the more wayward pieces that follow. Four sprightly musical cartoons, 'Children's Stories', reveal Stravinsky in enjoyably playful spirits. Equally unfamiliar are John Cage's 'A Flower' and 'Wonderful Widow of 18 Springs'. Comes 'Yesterday' and 'Ticket to Ride' and she explains that she first sang these arrangements at partly to win over those music-lovers who couldn't see any merit in the Beatles. It's good to hear them sung live, and it's also interesting to notice that her interpretation of 'Yesterday' has changed since the missionary days of 1965. Of all the Beatles songs of that period, 'Yesterday' was the one least transformed by the Baroque treatment, since McCartney's original, with its chamber-like string accompaniment, is already distinctly classical in style. Now Berberian sends it up something awful, adding another stylistic layer by giving it the flat nasal twang of Joan Baez.

Her versions of 'Le Grand Lustucru' and 'Surabaya Johnny' reveal her to be a consummate interpreter of Kurt Weill, perhaps the best after Lotte Lenya herself. Berberian's personal creative touch is especially evident in 'Surabaya Johnny' — it's her own translation, tougher and grittier than any I've heard. Berio is well represented. She begins her second half with a reading from 'Ulysses', then plays us the recording of 'Thema' (it has a special electronic accompaniment). 'Sequenza III', that unsettling vocal collage, is,

happily, given live, and remains one of her most dynamic pieces.

But for me the real bonus of the evening is Berberian's own composition, 'Stripsody' which I've wanted to hear ever since I saw the wildly idiosyncratic printed score. 'Stripsody', a 'divertimento' dating from 1966, is a collage of comic-strip onomatopoeia interspersed with well-known comic-strip quotations and shot scenes consisting only of vocal sound effects. Wowie-zowie, it's great stuff!

The mode changes yet again for her encore, a bluesy rendering of Gershwin's 'Summertime' which really does wonders for this over-familiar standard. Is there anything she *can't* sing?

But long before this final ear-opener the truth has become blatantly obvious. Cathy Berberian is not simply a brilliant interpretive singer. She is a mimic of genius. The strain of satire in her 'act' links her with such performers as Joan Turner and Anna Russell who, also possessing an unusual vocal range, went in for tongue-in-cheek lecture formats parodying various song styles. But whereas Anna Russell's humorous style comes over today (on recordings) as rather obvious and laboured, Berberian is less concerned to be funny at all costs than — a Cagier impulse — to broaden the base of acceptable Recital practice by restoring humour as a proper and positive dimension. In this, her declared aim, her present bulk and profile work to great comic advantage. When adopting the stances of the traditional operatic Diva she looks uncannily like one of Ronald Searle's melancholy cartoon contraltos. Not that she needs to rely on humour and contrasting musical styles to hold her audience — I could happily have listened to her singing Kurt Weill all evening.

Cathy Berberian's virtuoso technique and eclectic taste, then, are bewitching. It's only afterwards, when the pleasure has subsided, that you start to wonder: what is she sharpening her teeth on these days? Her performance is so self-assured, so well-oiled, that it almost comes as a relief when she forgets the words of 'Surabaya Johnny' in mid-performance and has to take a few moments to recall them. It humanizes her formidable gift, introduces a welcome whiff of danger in a performance otherwise notable for its smooth facility. My earlier comparison with Marlene Dietrich was not entirely whimsical. Towards the end of her Concert career, Dietrich was functioning like an Ikon, displaying herself and her personal repertoire like a Holy Relic before her adoring fans. If Berberian is not to become a Holy Relic of Modern Music — however adorable — maybe she should be exploring further, ditching the Recital format, for instance, for something a little less cosy, explaining a little less, applying her unique sensibility to some of the music that's emerging now, in the eighties. Who, one wonders, is composing for that matchless voice today? A singer so at home in any style and any period should have many a hey-day still to come.

Neil Hornick

ART ON

THE RUN

It is said that the British countryside provokes the most dramatic number of apparent changes of character per square mile than any other in the world. To see it is to believe it when you happen to cycle down the backbone of this island, particularly if any coherent vision of the landscape is being subtly contorted, thematically supplemented and occasionally totally transformed by a team of environmental performers called Art On The Run, a working alias of Natural Theatre from Bath.

A crocodile of tired cyclists grindingly perspire up Garsdale Tor in North Yorkshire. Overtaking a well dressed lady proceeding on all fours from John O' Groats to Lands End, they continue up to what must count as one of the loneliest spots in England. Awaiting them is a man with a working wash-basin strapped to his front, a towel machine to his back, and a mirror dangling from his neck; who obsequiously enquires 'Wash and Brush, Sir? Madam?' And they get one. Approaching the fastness of the Scottish Highlands from the dreamlike peninsulars of Caithness two statuesque figures wearing suits the colour of the distant rock they adorn mask their faces with plastic flowers. As the cyclists pass they turn slowly, like accusing gargoyles. Descending into Northumberland, a quagmire of literary references, stone churches and fast-flowing streams through dark green valleys, a jilted bride constantly tries to throw herself off a bridge.

Pagans sternly demand roadside worship, fairies hang from trees, angry motorists hold up placards, streakers are pursued by policemen, absurdist performance art rules the hedgerow as the Great British Bike Ride continues its progress along the B roads and C roads and even totally unmarked roads that lead from John O' Groats to Land End. Can a three week performance for the same 200 people with perfidious Albion as the main inspiration and backdrop really work? First, a look at the whole venture, then a personal reminiscence.





The John O'Groats - Lands End ride (to raise money for Friends of the Earth) is the second organised by Bike Events, a Bath-based organisation originally formed to organise the London - Brighton Bike Ride, a yearly celebration of the bicycle which now attracts tens of thousands of riders. The antecedents to Bike Events, and indeed the London to Brighton, date less to sportive milk racers than to community and performance artists with a campaigning bent. The London to Brighton, first run in 1976 by maverick poet, performer and instigator of European Theatre of War, Robert Stredder; had always been 'started' by Bath Arts Workshops Smart Party, a performing group of all-purpose functioning, semi-alcoholic aristocrats and industrialists, who formed the base of what became Natural Theatre, now an Arts Council funded touring company in its own right. When the ride itself started getting out of hand, the organisation was taken on John Potter of Johns Bikes, himself an ex-Bath Arts workshop member. The Arts workshop has, according to Natural Theatre's Ralph Oswick, spawned at least 30 different spin-offs since its formation in 1971. So the development of participatory cycle events like the London-Brighton and the John O'Groats - Lands End has naturally gone hand in hand with environmental and street performance, from the grass roots level upwards, the performance not being simply icing to an event, but a basic premise. Even

so, it was a radical move for Natural Theatre, with normally heavy summer touring commitments, to devote an entire three weeks to travelling with and performing to 200 cyclists. In fact, the whole ride became a performance, in a wider sense, as 200 cyclists *plus* performance descending on a small community, invading pubs, shops and cafes, meant that Natural Theatre was able to work up one of those ridiculously massive audience figures that are useful to throw at the Arts Council. (Their figure is 53 performances to an approximate audience total of 24,350.) It was an interesting laboratory situation for a team of performers, in that they were giving daily attention to a group of people, many of whom had not seen experimental or outdoor work of this kind, and were undergoing the various pressures involved in sharing elementary camping facilities with 199 people, many of whom had little more in common than the shared ordeal of 80 miles of stiff, hilly, cycling a day.

Perhaps the best way to describe the three weeks of performances would be to give a rough personal sketch of the three weeks, from the cyclists point of view.

"Arriving at Euston Station I am met by a relaxed, almost whimsical John Potter, who enquires whether I want a sleeper. I decline, in the spirit of one who is, initially at least, determined to dwell at the rough end of things. Loading bikes on

the train there is an atmosphere of setting off on a thirties ocean cruise. Everyone is looking at each other curiously and realising that they've got to spend the next three weeks with this or that person. Immediately overawed by the host of sleek, well equipped machines, I wonder if it was such a good idea to bring my rusty old single-speed. I settle in a compartment with a pair of silent Boy Racers, a community worker and a silversmith. A bearded Australian hippie blunders in asking to borrow a 'Karrymat', whatever that is. More doubts about the next three weeks ensue."

"The journey up is hell. Now I understand why John Potter found my rejection of his sleeper so amusing. A brace of train-spotters spend the *entire* night pacing up and down the corridor bawling out diesel engine numbers and arcane details of rolling stock. The only way to beat them is to join them, so I lean out of the window and try to engage ancient railwaymen in conversation about the weather. (The last three weeks have been marvellous but its about to take a turn for the worse, naturally). At Thurso I gingerly mount my bike and nearly collide with a Scottish wedding procession, bagpipes and all. Up the road John Potter is leading a party of cyclists into a cafe to engage in Bacon Sandwiches, an item of food he never seems to stop referring to, unusually, considering the diet to be provided on the ride is entirely vegetarian. Food will occupy a large space in the psyche in the days to follow."

"I am the first person on the ride to have a puncture! I will not mention any more of them as it will be boring. I mend it, watching the tail end of the ride disappearing slowly, a sight with which I will become familiar. Arriving at John O' Groats, the sun is setting across the peninsula that fades, dreamlike, into the Orkneys."

"First thing in the morning, a green and silver Ford Granada lumbers across the campsite, the familiar form of Ralph Oswick squeezed up through the sunroof, fussily ticking off names and numbers. Many cyclists think he is a real official. The Granada is something of a coup, having been lent by the Ford Motor company no strings attached, for the occasion. It lends instant authenticity to their 'smart events' and no one seems to mind the inappropriateness of such sponsorship. More controversial among the cyclists is the sponsorship by the travel company Transalpino of the entire event, and the T shirts and various marketing devices distributed for press events become objects of high humour and derision later in the ride. Personally, I can see no harm in it, as everyday participation in a consumer society involves many more insidious compromises than letting a cut-price tour operator help promote cycling. Still, there are a few bizarre moments, not in the immediate course of duty, posing as a group of happy, smiling cyclists for the Dalwhinnie Enquirer or whatever, with the words 'Get the Transalpino Travel Bug!' emblazoned on one's chest."

"John O' Groats to Lands End is of course a Great British Institution, and the achievement of the distance by various means was a media obsession in the late fifties and early sixties. As a result, there is always some lunatic doing it pushing a pea with his/her nose or backwards in a rowing boat, and Natural Theatre correctly paid homage to this by having a team of crawlers at the start, dress immaculately inappropriate, and in another outrageous sponsorship coup, called the Amey Roadstone crawling marathon. At this point I begin to have misgivings that we are going to get a three week long procession of Smart Parties, the novelty of which can wear off, but I am proved wrong."

"Leaving the crawlers behind, I set off to the first lunch stop, a pub where I discover, to my horror, it is necessary to queue for a drink. First experience of the effect of 200 cyclists on small isolated community. Arrive at first camp site to find cleaning ladies and old Scottish nurse in attendance. The nurse, (Jaqui Popay) is excellent, and it is extremely amusing to see some of the 'keener' cyclists being sorely embarrassed by a forcible examination and treatment of their chamois covered posteriors. I'm not so sure about cleaning ladies. I find this sort of thing a bit condescending and stereotyped, however professionally carried out. The site is excellently situated by a beach and the food is of a good standard, but things begin to

take a down-turn when there is a cringingly embarrassing 'sing-song' around a camp fire, during which people are clearly wondering whether they have misguidedly embarked on a sort of upmarket Butlins cum Outward Bound."

"Next day we begin to get a taste of the breadth of disciplines that Natural Theatre actually can cover. Fairies dangling in trees in a remote section of woodland provide a perfect visual spectacle, and their sense of position and place is shown to be quite aesthetically accurate. Much later, Ralph Oswick tells me that a major part of their planning involves searching the countryside for natural thematic cues. Further along the road are hunters in tropical kit which shoot bicycles — a good idea, but in execution, a bit too much of a touch of the Monty Pythons, like the cleaning ladies. In the evening there is a fairly riotous event in the local pub, which is supplanted by part of Natural Theatres revival of the revival of their classic Rocky Ricketts show. The liberal Scottish licensing laws and the enthusiastic participation of local residents make this a true antidote to the pre-

vious evening. The next day, the first conflict between art and life. I have been sweating for seeming hours up a monstrous hill, listening to suitably elevating and heroic music on my Personal Stereo, when I am suddenly accosted by a Danish psychiatric nurse and given the full performance treatment. Decidedly caught off guard I succumb to the therapy, and continue feeling slightly discriminated against up the hill, only to be faced with one of the best visual images of the whole ride, the statues holding plastic flowers. After the therapeutic encounter, I am caught up with the theme so much that they really do seem like a hallucination suffered by the obsessional marathon cyclist. Art on the Run now seems to be seriously delivering the goods."

"Leaving Inverness the next day, I feel impelled to make a detour to Loch Ness. Not only does the road pass Boleskine, the old stamping ground of Aleister Crowley, the infamous thirties occultist, but it is also possible to visit the Loch Ness Information Centre, a caravan where Frank Searle holds court to the curious and potential



Nessie-watchers, and which is a veritable mine of source material for students of absurdist national obsessions. (This is not to add ridicule to Searle's cause, however, as all the evidence does seem to point to the Monsters existence.) On arrival at the site, which is past Aviemore, a grotesque ski resort, I am informed that Art on the Run had provided a pit stop, where tired cyclists had been gently relieved of their machines and taken for rides in the Ford Granada, in which they were plied with flowers and chocolates. Many had shown strong consumer resistance to this, being of the hard core cycle touring faction referred to by others as the 'Odometer Club', and chiefly concerned with mileages and gear ratios. The reversal of ordinary cyclists to these peer groups will be discussed later."

"The next day I am also to miss Art on the Run due to certain pneumatic difficulties. They were said to have performed a druidic piece in what has now become the Scottish Highlands Sun Worshipers invited cyclists to drain a chalice filled with brown ale. In the morning, one of most devoted acts of environmental art I have ever witnessed. At approximately 7.15 AM, Natural Theatre serve all of us tea in our tents. Semi dazed, I and several others cannot believe this is happening, but indeed, several elderly retainers and a bored teaboy, perfectly done by Joe Hobbs, go from tent to tent armed with teapots and milk, and provide early morning tea for 200 cyclists. This act certainly wins over any previous cynics and critics as followers, and in the words of the slightly bemused Guardian review of the event "The cyclists clearly have a great affection for the theatre company. They tell of dying on hills and being given the kiss of life by some daft stunt dreamed up by this inventive bunch of dedicated theatre anarchists' (Allen Saddler 21/8/82) On to the Forth Bridge where we encounter the crawling team, well on the way. Coincidentally, the previous day I had passed a man pushing a pram on a deserted stretch of highland road. He was a real one! He had pushed it to Land End thirteen times previously, for charity. He kept going day and night, taking the odd nap by the roadside. It might seem cliched to say it, but its incongruity certainly eclipsed anything Art on the Run had done, (though several cyclists were seriously convinced it was Art not Life.)"

"Into elegantly dour pre-festival Edinburgh where, horror of horrors, the campsite is at the airport, in a field surrounded by barbed wire and a blockhouse at the end with showers of the tepid variety. After five days on the road, we all feel like displaced persons, refugees hounded from pillar to post. An escape committee is quickly formed, and we go and haunt the city, like lost souls in shorts, nervously lighting up at the sight of other cyclists, scuttling in and out of launderettes and feeding an insatiable desire for food. That evening at the disco organised by Scottish Friends of the Earth, Natural Theatre provide sweaty bouncers, ageing Rock and

Rollers, and wait a minute... there's too many of them! Some cyclists of appropriate visual appearance have been lured into the Art on the Run van and dressed and made up impeccably, thus heightening the 'natural' effect. By behaving minimally, ordinary cyclists are immediately mistaken for the performers. One becomes aware of the effect of the use of a performance 'uniform'. In Natural Theatre's case it is smart but anachronistic clothing coupled with an artificial heightening of stereotype, like pencil thin moustaches."

"Mass ride through Edinburgh next day a good demonstration of cycle power. T-shirt slogans 'You're overtaking — We're taking over!' start sprouting. At the Empire Pool for a big send-off the Can I Help you? team appear in white overalls and little bags, and enthusiastically check tyres, polish saddles and are generally cheerful in a way that blends oddly with the fact that this is another Transalpine press occasion, and everyone is dressed in the green and white promotional T-shirts, with ghastly 'travelbugs' attached to their cycles. The Can I Help You team later go into a cafe crowded with cyclists and whiz around cleaning tables and collecting cups. To the total amazement of the staff, who try to offer them money for it. They then spend the morning doing all the washing up."

"Into Coldstream, a rough, boozy border town, where the cyclists and the theatre company take part in the local carnival. I am late for this, and wander around the debris of papier mache dinosaurs, dragons and ocean liners trying to get a drink among jostling inebriated Scotsmen in coloured tights and chain-mail. Next morning we are piped across the border by burly townsmen in full highland dress. 'Awright lads — Scotland the Brave' shouts one and they all march threateningly across the border in battle formation towards the group of smocked, bowler-hatted English who are carrying large banners with pictures of cups of tea and brown ale bearing the mottos 'Ad Nauseum' etc. The local Scots cheer as the performance artists are driven back across the border, and are reduced to dancing the Morris and shouting 'Ye old bugger, m'dear' in broad west country accents. There were no English about, but it would have been interesting to have seen local reaction to this self-administered national insult by the Bath company."

"The next few days are lost in a haze of punctures, getting lost, and late arrivals on to site, but tales involving jilted brides, nuns, streakers, policemen and vicars tea parties filter through until finally, in Yorkshire I am faced by the wash-basin man (tower donated by the Initial Tower Company) and beyond him (Pete Allerhamd) the 'Cyclists Rest', essentially a parody of all those cafes and pubs on the route where they 'don't know what's happening, there's been hundred of cyclists through already: we've run out of tea/food/beer and what's it all in aid of anyway?' Ralph Oswick presides over an establishment where the wind howls in





Peter Allerhand

through the back door and we are served orange juice and asked to leave because 'we should have shut five minutes ago already.' Entering Liverpool, the first really built up area we hit, is like entering a post-holocaust civilisation after decades of wandering on the fringes. The streets seem totally deserted, as are the magnificent ornate Philharmonia Rooms, my first port of call before going on to the site at the Technical College. After cruising down through Sefton Park, I find I have inadvertently avoided Toxteth, about which there are tales of cyclists being pelted by stones and being held up by gangs of young highwaymen on track bikes. A couple even refuse to cycle through, and phone for the back up van to come and get them! Somewhat ridiculous, however it does feel rather exposed camping out in the centre of Liverpool. Our wind-burned healthiness and numbers make us feel inordinately middle-class and privileged in the centre of such urban deprivation as Merseyside. I think it was a good idea to route us through here — it brings the dazed collective elation that has been building up healthily down to earth."

"Next day, down to the Mersey Ferry, where we are greeted by the Anti-Cycling Lobby — Natural Theatre as angry motorists with placards. This is a good example of one of their best strengths — to use a very basic, almost cliched idea — and bring it off through sheer attention to detail — the clothes, the hairstyles, even the deliberate misspelling of the Go Home Great British Bik Ride' placard take their work beyond mere street theatre. As Ralph Oswick says when asked what kind of people join Natural Theatre: 'People who are good at pretending.' Unfortunately the visual spectacle is spoilt by an 'angry' speech which raises laughs, but which takes away from the effective simplicity of the spectacle. Perhaps it is the heightened familiarity with their two week old audience that makes them feel a need to do this."

"On to Shrewsbury where a Wild West evening is washed out by rain. Going into Wales there is a border crossing event staged by Robert Stredder, which is somewhat curtailed by the fact that, in revenge for a similar event involving water last year, he has been soaked by a vast tureen of it thrown by a pair of ride organisers from the back of the van. People have long memories for this sort of thing."

"Further into Wales Helie Keel and Barbara Vaughan are at the roadside viciously chopping oranges — the one a malevolently tart mistress of the kitchen, who looks prepared to mutilate cyclists if necessary, the other a starry-eyed YOP who is equally psychopathic with her sharp instrument. A very Welsh spectacle, I decide, not really liking Wales at the time."

"Crawlers again, now covered by blood and bandages, at the Severn Bridge and later in a pub in Bristol drinking G and T's on hands and knees. In Bath, Art on the Run celebrate arrival at home base by mounting a spectacle the cyclists agree is

their best yet. As Regency dandies, with Ralph Oswick in a bath-chair they meet cyclists who have been racing round Bath in a celebratory cyclecade, with a box containing a gruesome mutant kept as a pet. It is so lifelike as to cause considerable debate about how it is done. In the evening there is a performance by British Events, another Bath Arts Workshop offshoot. We see their new film, which is quite good."

"Next stop a cider farm at Kingsbury Episcopi, Somerset, and it is time to take stock of the by now developed social strata of the 200 cyclists, amateur anthropology being quite as interesting as the Art. At one end of the spectrum are the 'Carnation Club' the heavy pub-crawling and loud, riotous behaviour crowd. This starts out by being bearded, folky and generally boringly male, but is taken over by an equal number of spirited women, who are determined to outdo the former in general raucousness, compulsive pub-attendance and late arrival on site. Next come the 'Lounge Lizards' who are also enthusiastic drinkers, eaters and enjoyers of night life, but whose reasons for delay are more varied, including the riding of unsuitable cycles, getting lost, visiting ancient monuments, picking wild raspberries and herding lost sheep. Then there are the Detour Club, who enjoy extending the already gruelling distances by cycling tens of miles off the route to visit distant relatives, testing the resources of the Ordnance Survey to the limits. And finally, the really keen ones; the 'Odometer Club' who wear black low wind-resistance skin-tight shorts and vests with the names of some cycling product, 'Huret' or 'Campagnolo', and the ever-present little cycling cap. Rumour has it that the 'Odometer Club' is a cruel invention of the Carnations, but no-one can confirm or deny it. They spend the end of each day counting their mileages."



Helie Keel

"Across Dartmoor in a hailstorm to a tea stop where two characters from a late Forties radio play emerge — a large woman, no doubt on the way to a country house-party, is walking across the middle of the moors followed by a perspiring, railway porter, who, though it is miles from the nearest station, cannot simply put down her voluminous luggage. 'I only asked you for your ticket,' he protests feebly. Meanwhile, Joe Hobbs, in his spiv role, is giving the man from the Guardian a run around in his 'motor'. Further along the road there is a police landrover bristling with equipment and in it a uniformed policewoman urgently speaking into a radio telephone. Opposite, a smartly turned out young woman in a black business suit, raincoat and sunglasses is pretending to read a newspaper, and occasionally glancing furtively at her opposite number. It is very near the prison. More landrovers appear in the distance. I keep going, not wanting to feel obliged to explain about theatre, art, and life to passing police persons."

"Soon the land starts to run out. The end is near, and our suspicions are confirmed by a group of roadside prophets of doom who urge us to lay down our bicycles

and Give Up. Further along there is a wartime recruiting post. The images flash past; we are too tired to perceive them as art any more. Spirits wildly veer from low to high as we begin to realise it's nearly over. Water can be seen on both sides, and we all feel a bit crazy at the thought of waking up in the morning and having nowhere to cycle. Half a mile away, a last drink and regroup for mass run down to the spot where Dr Barbara Moore, the celebrated walker, and thousands of other eccentrics and enthusiasts have arrived using a million and one zany modes of travel, (usually to be told by smart-alec locals that it's been done before). I'm asked to take part in a streak, but before I have a chance to decide, my lunch arrives. Agonising pangs of hunger take precedence over any desire to be in the News of the World. Of course the crawlers have beaten us to it, and continue down the rocks to the sea. Friends of the Earth sparkling wine is thrown around and there is much making of whoopee. We have our photos taken by the famous signpost, have cream teas in a replica motorway cafe only feet away from the rocks, fall about and generally go through the motions of ecstatic self-satisfied heroic achievement.

And that's that!"

The Oberammagau Passion, the Magical Mystery Tour, The Ghost Train, the Paperchase; moving spectacle is a whole area of performance that ought to get proper consideration somewhere along the line. Art on the Run gave Natural Theatre a considerable chance to explore the genre, and they did it pretty thoroughly, and with a lot of confidence. It is quite important that experiments like this should be taken seriously, and not written off as an oddity. Though glances at the work might have been fleeting, though absorption in cycling from time to time overshadowed the art, though participants attitudes varied from seeing it as a giant prank to a damned nuisance, though some images were rather fresher than others, the whole thing was clearly vital to an essential, pioneering mainstream of performance activity. It is important that Natural Theatre, who might have been accused in the past of resting on their laurels as one of the pioneers of subversive street performance, should keep up such forays into the difficult and extreme, and be supported for it. The Art must keep Running.

Rob La Frenais



Photos by various cyclists

In Chingford Mount Cemetery on the eleventh of August, London saw one of the last classic gangland farewells take place. The mother of the notorious Kray twins, Violet, seventy three years old, was laid to rest witnessed by some three hundred mourners and many more hundreds of spectators. It was not simply the public wanting a glimpse of Ronnie and Reggie Kray. Violet was a popular and well loved woman in Shoreditch and a shining example of the East End's most prized virtue — loyalty. Violet was much admired for her steadfast and unflinching devotion as a mother, having continued to support her sons throughout their lives; no less through the last fourteen years, during which she has travelled an estimated 50000 miles to visit them (Ronnie in Broadmoor, Reggie in prison on the Isle of Wight) than when she brought them up in Vallance Road and Hoxton. 'A mother in a million', said Charlie Kray in his autobiography.

The event was about as dignified as funerals can be, but definitely had a theatrical flavour about it. In viewing the procession of mourners I had difficulty in distinguishing between former business colleagues, some of whom were obvious members of the Kray 'Firm' come to pay their last respects to the family; and the plain clothes police in their regulation C.I.A. style dark suits and sunglasses, there to 'protect' the twins from possible attack. The tough guy images are impossibly confused. Another group of coffin bearers/undertakers wearing the black leather gloves that have replaced the tall hats of their profession looked as if they were 'on the job' too, no fingerprints thank you...

Although the twins did arrive and were permitted to take part in the service at All Saint's Church, they were not allowed to attend the actual burial to the disappointment of a flock of photographers who had to content themselves with shots of the other celebrities including Diana Dors, Terry Downes and John McVicar — other more infamous names were legion. On arrival at the plot several hours before the party was due, there had just been a deep, oblong hole in the appropriate place and excavated earth piled up in a heap next to it. Violet occupies the space next to Reggie's late wife, Frances. She also was buried by family friend, Father Richard Hethrington.

A strange method of softening the hard realities of internment was employed by the gravediggers before the commencement of the actual burial. Sheets of fake grass were laid around the edges of the hole in the ground and on top of the mound of soil so a carpet of green plastic covered the 'earth' to earth etc. and remained there until the service was over and the last journalist and cameraman had retreated. It seemed a rather sad and impotent gesture of disguise and taste when at funerals, what we are faced with is having to accommodate the bare facts of mortality.

The social function of the funeral is to acknowledge the meaning of the past life of



A Firm Undertaking.

By Roberta M. Graham



the individual and to help to bring home the reality of the death of a loved one to the bereaved. But somehow in the performance of this rite the sincerity often gets lost and the futility of pillow shaped wreaths; wreaths of flowers in the forms of chairs, horseshoes, hearts and open books lend a black humour to the event.

To quote Joe Orton's 'Loot'—
McEAVY ENTERS CARRYING A LARGE WREATH MARKED INTO NUMBERED SQUARES. McEAVY: 'The friends of Bingo have sent a wreath, the blooms are breathtaking'.

At Violet's funeral the most touching was a single rose thrown down onto the coffin. Genet writes in 'Funeral Rites'— 'I bought armfuls of flowers... they had been stuck in a roll of straw and formed,



with the oak or ivy leaves that had been added, ridiculous wreaths. I had got my money's worth but the fervour with which I myself would have strewn the roses was lacking.'

'It was indeed roses I had wanted for their petals are sensitive enough to register every sorrow and then convey them to the corpse, which is aware of everything.'

There has been much written on the career of the Kray twins but to put the performance of the funeral into perspective it may be useful to examine some of the reasons why the subject of the Kray family is still of very much interest and why the brothers themselves have become in many ways a legend of our times.

The first book of importance to appear and by far the most popular is John Pearson's 'The Profession of Violence'. Although not published until 1972, the twins had collaborated with Pearson on their unrealised 'official' biography in 1967. The choice of Pearson to chronicle their activities explains itself on reference to his earlier book — 'The Life of Ian Fleming', published in 1966. Fleming was another man, living beyond his means; pushing his fantasy as far into reality as he could persuade it to go. In his creation of the James Bond character, many of the more believable adventures and descriptions of exotic locations and events come from Fleming's own search for more extreme variety of experience. A companion of his noted, 'There was something desperate in his eagerness to feel and understand everything through the eyes of James Bond.'

Ronnie in particular would have enjoyed his excursions to hot baths in Japan and a volcano 'for suicides'.

'Creating is not a somewhat frivolous game. The creator has committed himself to the fearful adventure of taking upon himself, to the very end, the perils risked by his creatures. Every creator must thus shoulder — the expression seems feeble — must make his own, to the point of knowing it to be his very substance, circulating in his arteries, the evil given by him, which his heroes must choose freely.' (Genet).

Fleming, unable to maintain the pace he set his own hero, propelled himself toward death.

Pearson suggests that a self destructive mechanism seems to go hand in hand with those who try to realise their fantasy. His elaborate version of the Kray twins fuels their mythology but did not invent it; they themselves chose their own image and manipulated their own destiny. They modelled themselves on the cinematic image of the gangster in the style of George Raft, Cagney and their real life equivalent — Al Capone. Their gaming clubs and billiard halls were never far from the dark, smoky interiors that were familiar, filmic stereotypes.

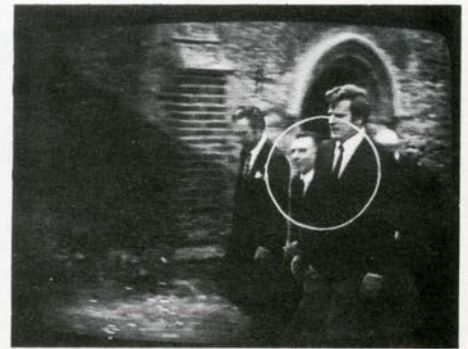
The twins wore the classic uniform of the gangster — dark double breasted suits; gold bracelets and cufflinks — a style with an authority of its own. This glamorous image was difficult to maintain and often inconsistent — the failure of a gun to fire at a critical, dramatic entrance or some murderous gadget concealed in a briefcase not injecting its poison in the right spot (these never fail in James Bond novels) but they usually found some way of turning the situation to their advantage and instilling enough fear to remain in control. It is difficult to gauge how much their twinship, this projection of their 'mirror image'



influenced their powers of persuasiveness. The condition still inspires a superstitious distrust and wariness in many people. Pearson has embroidered them with a flamboyant and eccentric behaviour and the David Bailey portrait of them from the early 60's has the unnerving sensation of 'Seeing double'.

'How does one analyse it, this presence of theirs? Was it simply that they were identical twins — one person in two bodies, which is what in a sense they were. With their telepathy and uncanny similarity their effect was quite literally double that of a normal individual and this certainly explains part of their effectiveness'.

Pearson does take liberties with a rather too brief description of some out-



dated theories on criminal twins and the laws of heredity. In using this as the introduction to the whole Kray story he provides a convenient explanation for deviant behaviour as something mystical — the speaking of inner voices. In refuting the choice of the individual to shape his own world and future, he misunderstands their systematic exploitation of circumstances to manufacture and make concrete their dream. Twins do have the advantage of being able to be in two places at one time and therefore possess the ability to cause confusion and provide each other with an alibi. Ronnie and Reggie used this technique many times including one successful escape from a prison hospital. There is much information and speculation on criminal twins, but apart from the fact that they seem slightly more prone to deviation than a normal individual, little of the proof appears conclusive.

Of the other books concerned with the twins, Charlie Kray's 'Me and My Brothers' lends the most insight into their attitudes and character. Written in cockney 'Minder' speak, it's humour does not disguise their activities but lends a sinister edge by it's very presence. Of the homicides of George Cornell, shot in the Blind Beggar pub; Jack 'the Hat' McVitie, stabbed in a basement in Evering Road, Stoke Newington or the 'white shotgun' murder of Frank Mitchell, we learn little. According to Charlie, 'Cornell was well known to the twins as flash and loud-mouthed and had threatened to usher

Ronnie into the next world as soon as a possible opportunity presented itself. McVitie is down as 'a drunken bum who had lost his bottle years ago... a fetcher and carrier who rated for nothing more than a mixture of pity and contempt'.

Charlie is vague and non committal when it comes to the disposal of McVitie's body and considering he had seven years to think about it in Chelmsford and the Top Security wing on the Isle of Wight. Pearson and 'Nipper' Read, the detective who finally bagged the Krays, speculate on a range of methods — an additional body being slipped into an occupied coffin before the lid was screwed down; being fed to pigs or alternatively built into the concrete support of a flyover. Charlie, in an interview in 1976 on the Russell Hart show states — McVitie's body was put in a sack and dropped from an aeroplane into the English Channel — probably'.

So where did the dream go wrong?

Charlie writes 'My brothers in their early manhood selected the stage on which to play out their roles. I've no doubt they were aware that their day of retribution would come but power comes with money, and power breeds a reckless disregard of consequences. Both Ronnie and Reggie had reached a point when they FIRMLY believed nobody and nothing could touch them, which is a dangerous state of mind.' It did seem as if they had exhausted the possibilities and the need for constant stimulation proved too difficult to fulfil — reality would not submit to the fantasy. In a recent interview with fellow legend turned journalist, McVicar, Ronnie's Je Ne Regrete Rien was worthy of the Penguin book of Quotations. 'You've got to take the good with the bad in life, John, ain't you? And we had a good long run and it had to come to an end sometime. Things could have been a lot worse for us you know. There are kids born crippled and things like that.' It is unlikely that another gang could ever take up the position vacated by the Krays Firm. More modern types of crime consist of smaller specialized gangs working in such areas as kidnapping and fraud. As Nipper Read says 'It's easier to open a bank account than a bank'.

Violet now too is about to take her place in the legend. Rumours were rife in the press after the funeral that Diana Dors had been asked as someone who knew Violet well and a sympathetic family friend, to play the part of the twins mother in a forthcoming film.

There was predictable contrast in the press coverage of the funeral. The Sun, in at the deep end as ever — 'a sickening exercise in vulgarity... a million rose petals could never hide the stench of perversion murder and cruelty that surrounded the borthers from the moment they realised muscle could make money from the weak'.

A noticeably different tune whistled by The East London Advertiser — 'KRAYS BURY DEAR MUM — It was the first time they had been reunited as a family and it was grief that brought them

together. It was grief that showed on the faces of two of the toughest men the East End had ever known'. They also printed Reggie's own specially penned tribute, littered with showbiz names. To mention but a few — 'Charles Boyer kissed her hand when he met her backstage, she dined with George Raft, Eddie Calvert and Billy Daniels. She drank with Lord Effingham and Tom Driberg. M.P... Judy Garland was among her friends.' What more can you say? A great lady....

Father Hethrington showed the usual flexible face of Christianity, whilst hinting the twins may have been some cause for concern to Violet over the years — 'I have no doubt that she is finding a greater rest than she has known for a long time', he also pointed out on television that evening, that they only killed their own kind.

That much for the Krays themselves.

But, apart from their actual story, they have had another, greater effect on our mythology. From it's first coherent airing in the film 'Performance', with it's complexity of Kray references, a new screen image of the *Cockney Criminal* was with us. No longer the cosy venality of the world of the *Tea Leaf*, the *Fence* and the *Cat Burglar* that Constable Dixon and Inspector Lockhart had plodded their way through, Ron and Reg had shown it could be done, Britain had it's own home brewed Gangsters and the age of the *Villain* was with us.

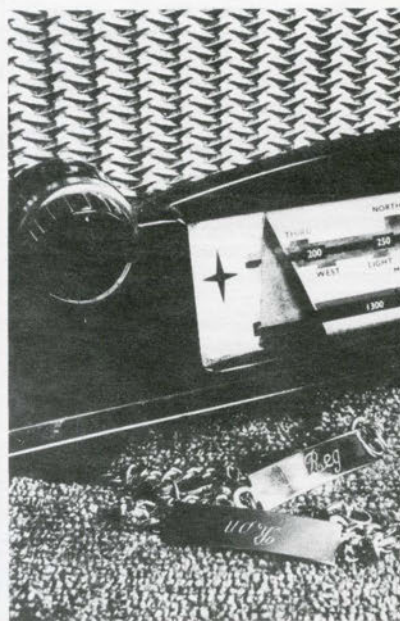
Throughout the seventies this image was refined and recycled in the likes of 'The Sweeney', 'Hazzell' and 'Out' and came to a turning point perhaps in the central gangster character of 'The Long Good Friday'. He (Reg without the excessive influence of Ron's madness?) is shown as an anachronism, unable to come to terms with either a mafia run by accountants or an I.R.A. which does not play murder by the book. The ironic culmination is in 'Minder'; the background is there — the boxing, the nightclubs, the rackets — but basically... e's alright. With the screen myth defused the process can come full reverse and the models themselves have the same treatment. 'A Spent Force' McVicar tells us of the twins, encouraging the lobby for a premature release (less than the recommended 30 years) for them, or at least for Reg. But in some places the name still means something. While making a piece of work about the twins a few years ago, I became a regular of one particular East End bar which suffered repeated burglaries and raids on the till. As the manager had been kind enough to let me use the bar for photographs, I gave him an old print of the twins in their boxing days, with a forged affectionate greeting from Ron and Reg, to put among the glass poodles and Guinness lamps at the back of the bar. He never had another break-in.

'And now in book and film and song
Their tale is told today
Hackneyed villain hero lords
Whose dreams were locked away'

Roberta M. Graham



References and further reading —
The Profession of Violence — John Pearson
The Life of Ian Fleming — John Pearson.
Me and My Brothers — Charlie Kray.
The Thief's Journal — Jean Genet.
Funeral Rites — Jean Genet.
Soft City — Jonathan Raban.
Loot — Joe Orton.
Interview with Nipper Read — Radio 4 (1977)
Interview with Charlie Kray — Russell Harty Show (1976)
'Hit and Myth' — Bob Graham Four. Audio Arts 'Live to Air' cassette vol.3 Nos. 3 & 4.
Funeral photographs — John Stewart & R.M. Graham, with thanks to Patrick Christopher.



New York Live

The ICA in October hosts a host of performers, artists, musicians, filmmakers, television productions and much more from the essential city of New York, where the ultimate urban experience is the fabric of everyday life. Part of the season will include a conference about performance. Richard Schechner's papers 'The Decline and Fall of the America Avant-Garde' published in two parts in *Performance Art Journal* issues 14 and 15 forms the theoretical basis for part of the conference. The papers were controversial, and answering papers by Matthew Maguire, Ruth Maleczek, Elizabeth Le Compte, Bonnie Marranca were subsequently printed by PAJ as 'Backtalk.'

The debate is perhaps the first time that the considerable body of performance work of the sixties and early seventies has been looked back on, its strengths and failings assessed. Lynn McRitchie's paper was originally going to be two parts — a history of works and performers and an outline of Schechner's points. It has emerged rather as her own contribution to the polemic, not stopping to look for contexts, but plunging in and trying through her own reactions to the Schechner paper to pinpoint areas of the debate that his text tends to subsume in its concern for a particular historicity, a particular set of circumstance. We hope it will provide a stimulating appetiser for the conference date.

The avant garde has been with us now for a hundred years and still its existence is controversial. The avant garde is the place where artists go when they want to be seen as sincere, emotional, committed to change. The formulas of change change. This is what we need to recognise.

Richard Schechner's two articles in PAJ which will form the basis for the debate on performance held on 20 November as part of the ILA's New York season, caused controversy. The language he uses to talk about performance is useful, but the tone is one of disappointment. He is disappointed, in the way a father is inevitably disappointed in his children — sad that they did not take up 'his' ideas, he is also afraid that if they do, they may be better than he was. The advances he chronicles in performance work in America in the sixties and seventies works only were real enough, just as the work today is inevitably of them. This is what he cannot see. Why? Because the concerns of the children are necessarily different from the concerns of the parents. The doctrines of liberation (for such they became) of the late sixties and seventies have become questionable to a new generation. The ways of perceiving the world previously regarded as somehow the

preserve of artists are now being recognised to exist for others and in equally self-determined forms (graffiti, music, dancing, play). Schechner wants a monopoly on wisdom and culture. Wants his work and the work of those he regards as peers to be wisdom and culture. The impossibility of achieving such a desire in emerges in the language of disappointment.

Laurie Anderson was not top of the charts when Schechner wrote his articles. The fact that she now has been is significant of his inability to see how the wind was blowing. It is also indicative of the ability of peoples to accept, empathise with, desire complex ideas if the initial presentation is sufficiently familiar to allow further steps to be taken.

Theatre is often cited as one of the original impulses of mankind (sic). It has thus a sort of sacred aura for many of its practitioners — the place where things are allowed, where things can be spoken and explored in a way that no other space allows. But theatre has conventions of its own and it is these that performance — also seeking that space where all becomes available — denies, distrust, wants no truck with. Schechner accepts and described this well. He talks of the movement away from direction of actors. First, directors such as himself Grotowski, others allowed their actors to 'remove the masks of character' and appear as 'themselves'. Then, and this he records with some chagrin, the actors moved a step further and ceased to be actors, but became performers, rejecting ensemble playing — in which the excellence of each individual becomes the excellence of the whole — in favour of a singular exploration of personal obsession. This he dismisses: while it may allow for the display of particular performance skills (Leeny Sack, Spalding Gray) he argues that it is somehow not 'sufficient'. But he does not look in any detail at why it came about, at why 'actors' found such a process essential.

The notions of political involvement and action that were the climate in which sixties and seventies theatre/performance work was developed were grounded in a belief that there was a last a place for personal liberation in a world with resources enough to give to each according to his (sic) needs. The trouble was that the nature of those needs was not examined carefully. Rather, it was assumed, some pioneers of the movement (Burroughs, Kerouac) recognised this. They spent their whole time engaged in the struggle to recognise, meet and fulfill desire... following it through drink, drugs, travel, sex. The end result was for Burroughs a kind of wisdom and wonderful writing, now widely recognised as such, for

Kerouac collapse into reaction (Jew hating, Vietnam war supporting)... here is a parable, a parable, a parable for the children of the eighties — know thyself. But how to find out?...

Schechner talks of theatre as having a responsibility to the people, the polis, which he claims can only be fully met in ensemble work. Solo performers he claims cannot meet this necessity for accountability. The work of Laurie Anderson is surely the most obvious contradiction to this criticism. Deeply grounded in individual experience as well as the tenets of the avant garde — reliance on the meaning of a moment, the validity of the most banal, mundane experience or object — she transforms these by her own contribution of grace and care into parables of our time. Her work is presented through an amalgam of the sophisticated and the home made which is most peoples experience of technology.

What do you do with all that equipment when you get it home? And you can't afford to buy a new one every year, anyway... We live surrounded by electronic obsolescence.

We also live surrounded by a spectacle of death greater because universal, different from the experience of those Vietnam vets or dropouts who so informed the political consciousness of the period in theatre Schechner is concerned with. But theirs too was a contribution of individual experience. The notion of the collective, the group endeavour is after all no less than the combination of the individual experience of the many.

Anderson is a good example of how individuals can become universal because of her own admission that she loves to tell stories. She recognises that language, the instrument of our betrayal is also the instrument of our salvation, and acts accordingly. She becomes once more the teller of tales, her own and other peoples.

Schechner recognises the importance of language. But he laments the distrust of words which led actors and directors to do away with scripts, to improvise, to 'workshop' (in that American way of making a verb of a noun)... Real experience — lived experience in real time — became included in the repertory of performance. These innovations were revolutionary, important, and I believe, understood. They now inform the work of others, rather than being vaunted, flaunted for themselves. They are there, unspoken in a performance memory which does exist, not just for its professional practitioners but for those who watch with interest. What about watching a man spinning plates on a pole or balancing on a wire. How long? then becomes a vital criteria for the audience — their experience of real time is almost



What about watching a man spinning plates on a pole or balancing on a wire?

unbearably enhanced. Real time does not have to be long or laboured to be there.

Lumbered with professionalism and professional concerns — with funding, grants, teaching — Schechner fails to consider the audience. Locked in the specific problems of his set — for all artistic activity takes place in groupings who come together as much for practical as aesthetic ends — he forgets the audience. Remembering and criticising the critics for not bothering to find out specific histories of performance groups or individuals, he forgets the punter, the bum on the seat. Is the audience too expected to come to the theatre informed? Is the audience then to be issued with the necessary historical information before being permitted to the spectacle. Why not ask rather what it is that theatre has to say? What can performance offer people? How can it be of use?

Some of the questions performance and

theatre dealt with in the sixties and seventies were those of form — and relationships. The relation of company to script, of actors to directors, of artists to gallery, of art to politics. In exploring those and foregrounding them as much of the content of work, the question became paramount. Finding answers was much more difficult. Schechner writes like a man who cannot believe that answers have not been found.

I believe they have been found — but in the form of a change in the questions. Points about form are useful, they open up possibilities of new ways of seeing, a question the fixed parameters of experience. But ultimately when the questions have been raised, the next step remains to be taken. And that step has to do with the self.

We cannot take part in a 'global culture' Schechner's wish for the future of choice if we do not know how to make

choices because we do not know what we want. Individual performers by making memory and experience the basis of their work are not shirking their duty to the populace — Rather they are reminding us of our duty, too, to understand the self, ourselves. Other notions of liberation and communality showed up just how far we are from being able to let each other live. The battle against structured politics in street confrontation showed how easy it is to be locked into form, a ritualised conflict which merely states a case rather than takes a step forward. If we are in our 'mu' period — of quiet, germination, pregnancy — as Schechner suggests, it is certainly not a quiet stretch of contemplation. Rather the artists now working and preoccupied with memory and desire are bringing forth disturbing images of self and the world which challenge us to face up to ourselves.

Lynn MacRitchie

ReviewsReviewsReviews

London Roundup

A strange quiet descends on London during the summer months. While the West End has long ceased to have anything remotely resembling a 'season' life on the fringes is as much dictated by seasonality as that of Shaftesbury Avenue ever was. Cavernous theatres echo to the sounds of musicals opening and closing, armies troop across the stages of the Barbican and the South Bank, but in the hinterland an unusual calm descends. Edinburgh is the big excuse, though these days with the Scottish beanfeast a shadow, if a growing shadow, of what it once was, it is far from being the cause. The great outdoors is also a factor. The fairs and bike rides have found new life this year out in the sticks and there are still big binges in Europe that attract those British performers eager for some street work without the vagaries of the weather. And of course some performers simply up and away on holiday.

So the performance scene left behind by those who have legged it to Edinburgh, Hood Fair, the Vienna Street Theatre Festival, Bridlington or Butlins, is unlike anything the capital sees outside of August. And often more interesting. With the pressure off, the venues that do remain open can be a little more daring in what they offer without being seen to disrupt their normal programming too much. The ICA is busy reshaping policy for its theatre and in the interim had a series of musical offerings that read like an index to the Performance Magazine: Ivor Cutler, the Penguin Café Orchestra and Lindsay Cooper were all there.

The Soho Poly, that sedate little theatre in a basement of what is hardly Soho is under new directorship and attracted some attention for itself by climbing out of the obscurity of being London's oldest surviving lunchtime theatre, to burst into the street with a galimurphy of events and festivities in and around the theatre. It was even cheeky enough to manifest itself in Edinburgh at the same time with a new play by Tony Marchant. Of great interest there were The Deluxe Puppet Company ('luxury you can afford') making their debut with a short piece by Tony Allen, 'See it all come down', which made up for the repetitive weaknesses of its script, with some brilliant life size puppetry amidst a setting of broken lavatory pans and patchwork sheeting that would not have disgraced the most imaginative of performance art groups. Puppetry for adults is a rarity in Britain and this company with their shrewd mix of theatricality and traditional puppet technique is to be watched.

But of all the places that bloom into little summer festivals none does so with quite the determination of Theatrespace. The Windmill Theatre of alternative performance, even down to the tastefully lit nipples when occasion demands. Theatrespace never closes. A last refuge for those turned away elsewhere, a valuable forcing ground of new talent, a wierd underground labyrinth that, around the clock, houses some of the most exciting, interesting, extreme, even it must be said boring and incompetent of performances. Theatrespace is, as it always has been, invaluable to London. For some few summers now the venue has crawled out into the sunshine for festivities in association with the nearby church of St Martin in the Fields on Trafalgar Square. This year the religious connection seems to have been severed and Theatrespace came out 'Cruising' — as it named its jamboree.

There were a couple of other events of note during August and both were at the Royal Court. Caryl Churchill's 'Top Girls' in the main house was one of the most assured and brilliant pieces of writing seen on a London stage for many a long month and with a stunningly performed production to match. Its opening scene, where a successful businesswoman invites six famous women from history out to lunch was directed in bravura fashion with all the disregard for vocal coherence of an Altman movie and the scenes which followed, with the hostess at work in her Top Girls Em-

ployment Agency, and at the home of her estranged family, took its audience on the sort of switchback ride between hilarity and the agonies of emotional truth that again I can only parallel with Altman.

Upstairs at the Court 'Salonika' by Louise Page was a no less enthralling affair. Ghosts rose from the sand which covered the performance area. Nakedness, pathos and geriatric sex all made their appearances in this tale of an elderly woman taking her naturally even more elderly mother back to the beach in Greece where the father of the one and the husband of the other was killed in the first world war. The encounters with his ghostly form, with an indolent youth of similar age living by selling his own blood and spunk, and the discovery of the true nature of the soldier's death, made for an extraordinary evening. Chris Fulford's all too corporeal shad was surely the stuff of which awards are made.

But that the summer is now over, whatever the weather might say, is all too obvious from the wretched phalanx of survivors of the festivities in the Scottish capital that has already begun to limp home as if from the Falklands, to parade before the admiring gaze of the London public. Given that London is, for much of the year, one long Edinburgh Festival all its own, most will be lost to view. But a few no doubt will be worth the seeking out and of these more next issue.

Luke Dixon





Out and About — Hood Fair

Hood Fair is unusual among the country/craft/medieval/post-hippie fairs in that it has developed into an almost exclusively performance-oriented format. Without shaking off the trappings, it has meant that there is a unique opportunity for artists to work with a broad section of the rural public without the problems of dealing with temperamental rock groups, their stragglers, and the usual over-indulgence in dope and early seventies festival nostalgia disease. Not that it isn't a healthy lesson for performance artists to come up against these trifles once in a while, it is just good to see at least one step in the right direction. This step has been taken by the Hood Fair committee at the urging of one Mike Freeman, and this year there was an ambitious programme of spectacular, entertaining, bizarre and generally provocative live work. Centrepiece of the festival, at least visually, was the veteran but recently shaken-up touring visual arts team Action Space Mobile. Years of searching for an identity through pneumatics, rigorous touring, a big London venue (now operated by another wing) and an Arts Council cut have brought them to this, their new performance/participation event 'Alphonso's Games', which take place in a large arena at the top of the field, a focus of attention with brightly coloured flags, totems, towers and pinnacles, most of which managed to stay up throughout the weekend. They had clearly done a lot of research, as well as physical preparation for this, as well they might, as it was the start of a national tour which would take them from festival to tough urban playground and vice versa all summer. Definitely in the front line of action between the visual arts and the public, it

would be interesting to see what they had cooked up. In the event it was a mixture of powerful effect and damp squib, between peculiar fascination and *longeur*. Partly, this was due to the performance/workshop method they chose to use, but also it comes from an inability to initially hold and maintain a concentrated atmosphere in the context they chose to use — in this case the development of games in medieval Spain. The initial procession, a party of courtiers, appropriately attired in harlequinade, playing-card regality and inquisitorial cloaks, bearing the miniature Alphonso on a palaquin, was stunning, as was the following explosion of the dwarf causing a giant version to loom menacingly behind the screen. A spectacular effect of correct proportions was obtained and the crowd waited expectantly for more. The moment the performers opened their mouths, the effect was lost: they sounded like playleaders or teachers. So what's needed here?

Not acting skills — they would just sound like any other street theatre company. What they have not developed sufficiently is the ability to *code* their visual images with appropriate words — and less of them! However they regained control of the situation and the workshops took off, revealing the immense fascination for a subject that this company can develop. They have researched their subject to the hilt, and continued for up to three hours playing obscure games, dancing round-dances, arranging battles, tests of skill and strength, torturing, terrifying and generally drawing the public into a spell that they momentarily lost in the initial performance. And if they get that bit right (they may have done so by now) they will

have the most stimulating touring art spectacle of the year.

The other big event was IOU, and I must confess to extremely mixed feelings about them. The first night was the first time I had ever seen them, and I was impressed. They had chosen a perfect environment... an island in the middle of the fast-flowing River Dart, and had erected a decrepit shack in the middle, swaying unsteadily on stilts, with a live television inside. A procession of strongly rustic images associated with hunting and fishing, life and death struggles on the edge of civilisation were played out with a visual intensity that was at the same time so directly anthropomorphic as to be cartoon-like, such as a man with a fish for a head; a hunter and his semi human dog. The musicians manipulated the sound skilfully, capturing the mood of the image perfectly, and using the aural resonance of the wooded space... but I could not help but feel uneasy about it... a feeling which was compounded the next night when I started to realise that they were relying very much on 'stock IOU effects and images. Even though I had not seen their work before, the feeling was quite strong that they were using very much 'tried and tested' material, at the end of their final show, the reaction of some of the many other working performers there seemed to be universal... that there was a clear case of free-wheeling — even backpedalling from a company that had secured easily the largest budget in the festival. However, I was glad to see their work at last, and I particularly appreciated the music.

Some of the best events were the simplest... like British events venturing down an appallingly muddy field in

immaculate evening dress covered with polythene wrappings. While everyone was wading, slithering and falling flat on their faces in the treacherous mire, they were able to enact extravagant scenes of protest at the slightest splash on a shirt-cuff. Their polythene costumes actually *worked*, at least until someone dropped the keys to the 'Austin'.

They were on their way to the Saturday night spectacular — produced by Jim Carfrae, with fireworks by Miklos Menis (some of the best seen for a long time), and special effects by some of the other companies. This was an epic procession in the grand Welfare State style — but such things have long passed on to the many others who've developed and perfected the ritual since mass celebrations all over the country in the past decade. This was a good one — rendered particularly authentic by the fact that the revellers and dragon bearer etc. had to wind their way over exactly the sort of urban terrain that you might find in some dark ages settlement on a particularly nasty wet night. Because of the way the path wound round and round, there were particular traffic problems that only a rugged festival-goer or time traveller

would know about. All you needed was the stench of horse manure and a few lepers: but for some reason Incubus were not invited this year.

Desmond Fairbreath was there, however, and together with his amenuensis Dorothy conducted some rivetting poetry readings, almost as a side effect neatly satirising the fishing smock set who reside in the environs of nearby Dartington. In their other incarnation as Forkbeard Fantasy they performed a scorchingly funny 'Cold Frame' (their recent work) late at night in a little wire-mesh prison camp exercise yard constructed in a corner of the site. Unfortunately their new work, done last thing in the festival fell a bit flat because frankly they seemed too tired to do it. Not surprisingly really, as they packed a lot into the three days.

Many more things kept me on the move up and down between sites too numerous to remember/find words to describe. I hope that Mike Freeman can continue to push his policy through and that he gets some decent regional funding to make this an absolute must on the calendar next year.

Rob La Frenais

Sonia Knox

Tate Gallery

A new mood of adventure is stirring in the work of performers who were previously contained by the dictates of their political affiliations or the conventions of a formalist art training. This is particularly striking among women artists. Of course, many younger women by-passed the austerity of the '70s and explored narrative, fantasy, and the sensuality of spectacle under a celebratory feminist banner. It was the more academic Marxist feminists who regarded the use of the female form and all its sexual trappings as an inevitable re-inforcement of patriarchal values. Even political works that emphatically captioned their examples from Playboy with "Look how patriarchy turns us into sexual commodities" were accused of inadvertently colluding with the image. (When men bought the work, it certainly wasn't for the caption). If the image of woman is so overdetermined that even the artist's stated intentions can't shift its meaning, then we are condemned to remain physically invisible in our work — and of course, that leaves the stage clear for our male colleagues.

With a large number of artists New Image means anything goes and bugger the political implications, but a new relaxation of rules, the breaking of one or two feminist taboos in performance can be a considered development from what we learnt in the '70s. Sonia Knox's performance was indicative of these changes. Dressed simply in black, her lips and eyes exentuated with uncharacteristic touches of make-up, she performed a measured

routine of actions with a few carefully chosen objects and a battery of technological props. Two closed-circuit video cameras relayed her movements to three monitors facing the audience. One camera periodically picked up a series of slides being projected onto the wall. These pictures of modern cityscapes sometimes filtered through the artist's video image with the help of Mick Hartney and a vision mixer. Another helper manned the sound while a further two operated the cameras. Sonia stood in the centre of this factory of man-handled technology like a quiet mannequin about to be processed into a million media images of predictable poses. But Sonia was neither quiet nor predictable. Both live and on tape she explored the whole range of her voice. Electronic gargles, urgently whispered childish phrases, quavering pronouncements — "Imperialism, dualism, industrialisation..." all these counterpointed the sound of running water, American TV dialogue, canned musak, fragmented Anderson-style rhythms and "Have you finished in the bathroom dear?" sung sweet and simple into the microphone. In between, Sonia and the cameras selected various objects from a tantalising collection gathered around her feet. A silver fan and mask, silver roses, slick pink plastic shades, a gaudy peacock with a jewelled tail, a silver gun... Posing in her pink glasses, the artist was transformed by the camera from a fragile live presence into a powerful representation of contemporary glamour. That image became twisted when she donned a black boxing glove — with an inverted sting in its tail. The glove she thrust at the camera was covered in black sequins.

All these sounds and images combined and clashed, came and went in complex layers that finally cleared for the closing image. A small pan of coloured popcorn filled the screens and the room was quiet. The heat went on and gradually as the corn began to stir and then leap out of its container, the sounds were amplified to fill the space with absurdly emphatic snap, crackle and pop. The most delicious smell wafted across and I felt that only my sense of touch had been left undistrubed.

The performance played with the surface delights of objects, images, sounds and associations explored for their own sake, for their particular qualities and potencies. Although this sensual approach produced an enjoyable experience, some unifying concern, some concentration of ideas or perhaps just a grain of passion was missing. But maybe portentous meanings were just what the work set out to avoid so as to free those simple pleasures we have come to profoundly mistrust. In this respect, Sonia Knox succeeded very well.

Catherine Elwes

Cameron and Miller

Caddes Hill

Caddes Hill at Lyng, west of Norwich, is an ancient monument. These days it's also a scramble track and a venue for daredevil biking enthusiasts. Once a year it hosts the Faerie Fair which, in deference to the little Folk, firmly discourages the use of electricity and the internal combustion engine. Life, during the Fair's weekend, had a certain basic quality. Bathroom and lavatory were respectively a standpipe and hole in the ground while wind and rain gave a most thorough examination to the tented accommodation of fairgoers. Unfortunately more than a few were found lacking.

Consequently a change of weather on Saturday afternoon gave a welcome boost to fairgoer's spirits. While ceilidh bands played, trade began to pick up at the beer tent as people gathered to sit in the sun. When Shirley Cameron and Roland Miller, accompanied by their two children, Lois and Colette, began their processional performance, they made a complete contrast to the unavoidable bedraggled and grubby ambience of field and fairgoers.

First came Cameron picking a steady course through spreadeagled punters. She wears a full length gown of immaculate red and silver shoes. Around her neck is a large hooped neck piece on which hangs white streamers reaching to the ground. On her head is a head-dress of a pyramid formed from wire netting interlaced with more streamers. Behind her follows Miller dressed in a red suit with Face, neck and hands painted red to match. His pyramid head-dress has red streamers in it. Between them they carry a simple stretcher holding an extraordinary object — a pyramid made from highly polished mirrors that seems to

encapsulate within its form the reflected images of sky and bystanders. Following behind are their two children, dressed in silver costumes and carrying a wire pyramid half full of silver paper triangles. The immaculate costuming makes for a commanding presence but the relaxed and natural manner of the procession saves it from becoming stilted. Eventually the procession reaches an open area of the field. A quietly appreciative crowd gathers as the pyramids are carefully put down. Opposite sides of the mirrored pyramid open up on hinges to reveal an interior lined with red velvet and having all the qualities of a jeweller's case. Inside is a collection of silver paper triangles. Cameron and Miller take one each and holding them in front of them move backwards away from each other across the field — a risky business in a situation which invites the intervention of a prankster's foot. The group of spectators remain around the open pyramid looking either way at the two performers retreating into the distance. The rapport between the two stretches out like a thread while people on other business cross to and fro, oblivious of their interruption of the two performers. The distance between these two fantastic figures, now separated by a hundred yards, creates a feeling of nostalgia as they gaze at each other's tiny image, a lonely sight against the comings and goings of the fair. Finally they can retreat no further, turn around and fasten their silver triangles to the obstacle blocking their backward retreat. They retrace their steps along the line that has been marked out by their performance and close up their pyramid. The stretcher is picked up and the procession moves off to another part of the fair to perform again this ritual of retreat and reunion.

This was a captivating piece making a fascinating contrast with the rural atmosphere of a country fair. The precise costuming and sculptured objects suggested an influence of Oscar Schlemmer rather than the fantasy world of science fiction. A spectacle of geometry and colour combined with elusive emotional overtones to create a piece of pure form made alive through human animation.

Phil Hyde

Selwa Rajaa Assembly Rooms

It is not surprising to notice that the same culture that has been practicing the notorious clitoris' circumcision, the purpose of which is depriving women of the joy of and appetite for sex, has also created erotic female dance forms such as *Raks Sharki*, one of the Middle East (mainly Egypt) oldest dance traditions. These two phenomena, after all, are made for the benefit of the male members of the Middle East societies.

Nevertheless, the programme performed by *Selwa Rajaa* (promoted as



'Britain's foremost dancer of Raks Sharki') is of a highly stimulating and entertaining nature. Being aware of the thin border-line between eroticism and vulgarity — the latter has born such perversions as the cheap night-club belly dance — Rajaa's show is carefully programmed and balanced. She establishes audiences' trust in her art-form by starting with dances in the purest classical style — *Saidi*, from Upper Egypt and *Balady*, which is Raks Sharki in its Egyptian popular folk form. Her first costumes (costumes by Katrina Robinson and Jennifer Carmen) are long, loose, modest robes and her face is almost clear of make-up. So, later on, when she performs bare belly — it has nothing cheap or obvious about it but it becomes a celebration of her skill and mastery of every single muscle.

The Middle East cultures have always been exposed to outside influences and remains of both the Spanish conquest of most of the area and the Far East neighbour cultures are the easiest to trace — the former has introduced the finger

cymbals, (*Sagat*), primarily used in Flamenco, indicating tempo and providing music; the latter has offered such elements as head movement to and fro and occasional rhythmical strokes of foot on the stage's floor.

Nevertheless, many characteristics are typical of Arab cultures. The range of colours, for example, used for the dancer's costumes is of significance within Middle East societies — Black, the basic colour of clothes, Gold, for festive decoration and shocking Turquoise, against evil-eye.

Being a celebration of the beauty and sensuality of the female body — the emphasis is, naturally, put on the pelvis, hips, belly. The whole spirit projected from this dance form is somewhat round and fairly abstract. Often, there is no synchronization between the torso and the arms movements.

The extensive use of large scarves has also to do with the feminine aspect as the plastic qualities of the material, (soft, thin, transparent), and its relation to the rounded movements of the female body,

produce an erotic air.

The different dances in Rajaa's programme evoke moods mainly then of festivity or eroticism. One dance was rather different, *Bedouin Eyes* (Oyoun El Badawia). The dance, a very strong, compulsive, almost wild expression of ritual trance practised to drive away evil spirits, indicates and hints at one of the other faces of Middle East societies — the tribal culture with its pagan roots.

Meira Eliash

Perfect Moments

Waterloo Gallery

Marty St. James and Anne Wilson stand by the door, dressed formally in black, greeting members of the audience as they arrive and offering each one a glass of wine. This unexpected and disarming contact with the performers only minutes before they move into their positions to begin the piece is a deliberate attempt by the artists to create a relationship between the performer and spectator.

The artists have said that 'Perfect Moments' is to do with relationships and that it was initially inspired by 'Mills & Boon' pulp romance novels along with the ideas that we create about ourselves and each other; fact/fictional, ideal/archetypal, media orientated/personal.

The piece contains a strong formal structure within which improvisation is allowed to occur. This structure could be seen in terms of a series of tableaux, similar to the construction of a 'Mills & Boon' romance. The performers sustain an expressionless stare throughout never achieving eye contact. All the actions which take place and the objects, for example the glass of wine, the roses and the garish green apple — (forbidden fruit) — are linked to images occurring on the video screen and therefore occur in both real and unreal planes of time.

The piece begins; Anne Wilson stands in front of the video screen, responding to a female body moving from side to side by echoing her movements slowly, both in and out of time. A pair of staring eyes appears on the screen, watching Wilson's movements. Moments later St. James appears, glass of wine in hand, walking pensively around a vase of black roses. Eye to object contact follows; focus on a glass of wine placed on the plinth, circular actions by both performers around it, retreating and advancing.

Then — the biting of the glossy painted green apple, the crushing of grapes into the wine glass and the drinking of the wine; a polite cough from St. James taking up a blue felt square — a marking of territory (blue for a boy), coughs into it and places it over the video screen then coughs into each rose in the vase.

Wilson reaches for a pink felt square on the floor; a pas de deux of St. James stepping on and off the piece of material as Wilson attempts to remove it. St. James drops an apple on to the floor, which smashes into many pieces. On the video, a two figure tableau, including a soundless ripping of newspaper; unreal, disguised.

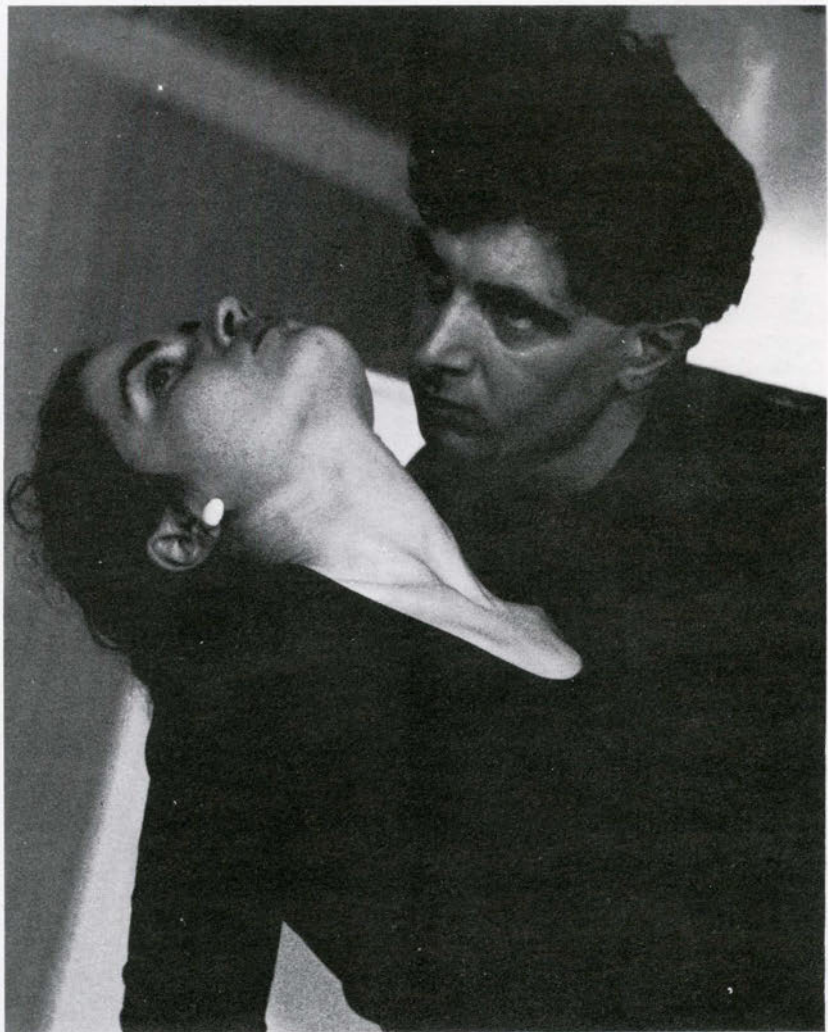
A series of close sculptural actions occur between the two performers, passing faces, missing eyes, lips apart, never meeting, around and across. On the video, close up figures mouth words noiselessly. Finally, a physical encounter. St. James is dragged slowly across the floor clinging to Wilson's ankles, she in turn is lifted off her feet and thrown across his back. Weight on weight, figure on figure, expressionless stares, the performance ends with the two artists amongst the audience.

Despite its strong structure, each performance of the piece is different, and involves a risk. It could collapse every time, yet it is not so much a question of success and failure as the fact that the performance has occurred. Without that risk, the activity would be futile.

The title 'Perfect Moments' comes from a quote by Sartre in 'Nausea'. The artists were attracted by the existential idea of time and the idea that one can never have a 'Perfect Moment'. Locked in time, trying to make sense of it, that experience of time on ones own and the first step beyond it — communication with another person and thence between both the performers and the audience. St. James and Wilson's working relationship is an important element within the performance, feeling as they do that by speaking about their own situation they can hopefully talk about other peoples and illustrate wider, universal concerns.

Words are rarely used, when they do occur they are isolated and pertinent and never within a particular narrative context. At its best this piece is to be experienced and not understood. It is this directness which reaches the spectator and is the key to the piece's success.

Chrissy Iles



Paul Delve

Here To Go/Planet R101

Brion Gysin interviewed by Terry Wilson. Published by Re/Search publications. On sale at Compendium Bookshop Camden, Pan Bookshop Fulham Road, Duck Soup Shop Holborn, and many other bookshops.

First a little history....

1965 and Brion Gysin assembled a book with William Burroughs in New York called 'The Third Mind'. A series of interviews, essays, texts, strange gridlike cabalistic drawings from Gysin incorporating bits of newspaper and photographs, pages from Burrough's famous notebooks, all intended as a statement of the collaboration between the two since 1958, the days of the Beat Hotel in Paris, where they had applied Gysin's ideas of Cut Ups and permutations on everything written they could lay their hands in (especially Burroughs's vast and mouldy manuscript out of which he had already culled 'The Naked Lunch' and which would provide material for several more novels).

But 'The Third Mind' was really *too* innovative a book. It fitted none of the usual categories — being a sort of painting or spell, in places — and it was another 13 years before John Calder published it in English. Meanwhile, 1967, Gysin had returned to his Morocco, a place he has lived in for over a third of his life, where he took Brian Jones of The Rolling Stones up into the hills of Jajouka, and generally indulged his penchant for Magic.

It was in Tangiers, about this time, that he started a novel called 'The Process', one of the two really brilliant novels about North Africa and the Sahara (the other being Paul Bowles's 'The Sheltering Sky', published 1949).

'The Process' is largely presented in the form of taperecorded voices, each character speaking his or her version of the story into the main character's Uher tape recorder and he playing little bits back when he feels stoned enough to like it. The whole book is about Rubbing Out The Word — all the uses for tape recorders described by Gysin in 'The Third Mind'.

Maybe it was because the book didn't sell too well — Burroughs said 'Few books have sold fewer copies and been more enthusiastically read. Perhaps the basic message of the book is too disquieting to receive wide acceptance as yet...' Anyway, Gysin dried up. He spent the next few years wandering from city to city, working on a film scenario of 'The Naked Lunch' and starting a new novel — then called 'Beat Hotel' — which didn't go too well.

Finally Burroughs suggested that Terry Wilson — a young British writer friend who had just finished a novel called 'Dreams of Green Base' — should visit Gysin at home in Paris where he had retreated after a near disastrous cancer operation. This was 1976 and the two writers — both exhausted — decided to



Brion Gysin and Terry Wilson

collaborate on a new book called 'Here To Go: Planet R-101'.

As Terry Wilson says: 'It seemed to me that if Brion wasn't going to *write* another book he could *speak* one and it would be presented as tape transcriptions in the same manner as 'The Process', setting down first the voice of one, and then the voice of the other, as the dervishes desired...'

And that's exactly what the book is — a long and fluent discourse about life in Morocco, magic, psychic acquaintances, meeting Burroughs, amongst many other fascinating subjects and opinions on Life and what Art is for. Cut into the book are hundreds of photos and cabalistic drawings by Gysin, many directly designed as *spells*. (You can see one in the photo of Terry Wilson). Also included are various rare and unpublished texts:

'Interzone', for instance, an extract from a very early version of 'The Naked Lunch' filmscript, plus an introduction from Burroughs himself.

'Here To Go: Planet R 101' is very much designed as a companion volume to 'The Third Mind' and 'The Process' (also 'Bardo Hotel', I am told, which is Gysin's forthcoming novel). And why not? as the man himself would say. All these books fit neatly into their own tradition, the tradition of Gysin's voice speaking directly off the page, urging the reader not just to be a reader, but listen to his 'special knowledge' and learn how to Rub Out The Word.

It's a hard thing to explain, especially when he does it so well. Read this book and you'll see what I mean yourself.

David Darby

The Final Academy



As we go to press the Final Academy is taking place, centred around a rare visit by Burroughs (above) and will include performances and readings by Brion Gysin, John Giorno, Terry Wilson, Psychic TV, etc. etc. To be reviewed in the next issue.

National Performance Listings

Bristol

Arnolfini

Info: 0272 299191

Until October 16: Prophecy and Vision. Expressions of the Spirit in Contemporary Art (exhibition).
October 8: Mychael Nyman Band
October 28: Nexus
November 13: Steve Lacy Sextet
November 30: Uroboros
Dance Umbrella events until
November 11: Steve Paxton, Sally Barnes, Tim Miller, Jim Self, Freelancers, Laurie Booth, Anne Therese.

Cardiff

Chapter Arts Centre

Info 0222 396061

October 9: Civilisation 11: Music, Fashion and cabaret from Autotone Afrique, John Silva, Janek Alexander.
October 15-16: Flying Pickets with Howard Jones
October 22-30: Dance Umbrella events, Tim Miller, Jim Self and Dance Wales.
October 31: Eric Bogosian
November 12-20: Grotowski's Theatre Laboratorium, including a series of intensive workshops.
November 9-13: Lumiere and Son - Son of Circus Lumiere.

London

Air Gallery

Info 01 278 7751

October 6: Peter Lloyd Jones and Michael Upton in Dialogue 2
October 13: Mino Ayagushi in Here-Now and Space
October 20: Janet Davis in The Native at the Target Organ Produces Fragments Such As These.
October 30: Stephen Cochrane and Lol Coxhill.
LVA at Air. London Video Arts have now taken over the running of the Air performance basement as a regular venue for video and other time-based media.
October 30: Kevin Atherton's 'Monitor Minder'. (new concept in TV and video viewing) with tapes by Penny Dedman, David Hall, Tom Hickmore and Ian Breakwell.
October 12: 'Air Your Views'. Seminar.
October 14: Video/Music collaboration, Chris Rushton and Tony Mono. Performance, Denzil Everett.
October 19: Installation/Performance by Polish Artist Janusz.
October 21: Video/Performance by Tom Castle, formerly of Event Group. Performance, Denzil Everett.
October 28: LVA Group Show.
November 4: Performance, Arnaud-Labelle Rojoux.
LVA and Air are accepting proposals for a three week video installation exhibition in January

1983. Works should not have been shown in London before.

Proposals by November 1.

Apples and Snakes

Info 01 223 7031

New poetry cabaret on Saturdays at the Adams Arms, Conway St, London W1. Performances in October include Attila the Stockbroker, Fran Landesman, Staunch Poets and Players, Controlled Attack and many others.

Almeida

Info 01 359 4404

October 5-10: Meredith Monk, a pioneer of multi media performance, with Music Concert with film.

October 12-18: Dance Umbrella events.

October 19-31: Peter Brook's International Centre with 2 performances, The Bone by Birag Diop and A Dybuck For Two People, by Bruce Myers.

October 24: Philip Glass. (At Sadlers Wells).

November 8: Stephen Montague, Philip Mead and Maedee Dupres.

B2

Info 01 481 2574

Until October 24: The Final Academy, the first exhibition to concentrate on the visual work of William Burroughs, plus exhibits from Brion Gysin including the legendary kinetic sculpture the Dream Machine. (See book review etc this issue, and interview in Performance 11).

October 30: Witches Fly South. All night Halloween Ball Party plus, Silvia Ziranek, Sonia Knox, Event Group, The Original Flying Lizards etc., organised by Waldemar Januszczak, Richard Strange and Janetta Loretta.

Date unconfirmed: The Yellow Door, performance by Sharon Kirland and Maureen O'Paley.

Battersea Arts Centre

Info 01 223 8413

October 24: Comique Cabaret, with Sharon Landau, Andy De La Tour, Lynn Thomas, Roy Hutchins, Simon Fanshawe.
October 21-22: Staunch Poets and Players.

October 27-30: Black Theatre Co-op in Fingers Only.

Cockpit Theatre

Info 01 402 5081

Until October 9: The Silver Veil - by Aspazija, Latvian feminist, poetess and politician, and In The Jungle of Cities by Brecht. 1982 Company.

October 12-23: Optik in Short Sighted. New performance by visual company.

Drill Hall

Info 01 637 8270

November 9-27: Alisons House, by Mrs Worthingtons Daughters. Based on the story of Emily Dickinson.

Dance Umbrella

Info 01 437 2616

At venues all over London and nationally. From USA: Nina Wiener and Dancers, Steve Paxton, Ellen Kogan, Rosalind Newman and Dancers, Jim Self, Tim Miller, Kei Takei's Moving Earth, Laura Glenn and Gary Lund. From Germany: Susanne Linke. From France: Francois Verret and Company. From Belgium: Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker. From Canada: Dance-makers. From Britain: Spiral Dance Company, Nin Dance Company, Sue MacLennan and Kirstie Simson, Mary Fulkerson, Ilana Snyder, British Independents, Laurie Booth, Extemporary Dance, Rosemary Butcher company, Julyen Hamilton, Janet Smith and Dancers, Stewart Arnold and Paul Henry, Tamara McLorg, Inge Lonroth, Richard Sikes, Michael Clark, Mantis Dance Company, Basic Space.

Eccentric Enterprises

Info 01 969 2019

October 25: Bob Cobbing, Ian Hinchliffe, John Dowie, Silly Boy Lemon, Ruxton Hayward, in A Tribute to Robert Forrest McKay, winner of 1982 William McGonagle prize, at the Colonel's Room, Tuscott Arms, London W9.

ICA

Info 01 930 0493

Arte Italiana 1960-82. (See article this issue). Nuova Spettacolorita (post-modern) performance.
October 12-14: Tango Glaciale by Falso Movimento.

October 16-17: Gli Insetti Preferiscono Le Ortiche by Gaia Scienza.

October 19-20: Interference by Taroni/Cividin.

October 21-22: Mi Chiamo Pearl by Dal Bosco/Varesco.

October 23-24: Famiglia Horror by Antonio Syxty. Imagine Sonora (Sound Poetry).

October 16: Arrigo Lora Totino, Guiliano Zosi, Giuseppe Chiari, Adriano Spatola.

October 17: Giuseppe Chiari, Adriano Spatola, Arrigo Lora Totino, Guiliano Zosi.

All week: videotapes of the New Italian Theatre, including Magazzini Criminali, introduced by Giuseppe Bartolucci and Georgio Veronese. Also: Artists Film and Video from Italy, selected by Vittorio Fagone.

New York Season:

October 14-November 21. 2 exhibitions. Urban Kisses - John Ahearn, Mike Glier, Ken Goodman, Keith Haring, Robert Longo, Judy Rifka, Cindy Sherman. Laurie Anderson Artworks. First ever British show of Laurie Anderson's gallery works includes

collages, drawings, photographs and sound sculptures.

New York Live:

October 26-27: Split Bitches (Ex-Spiderwoman) Ellen Fisher in Figurines.

October 28-27: Eric Bogosian in Men Inside and Voices of America.

October 30: Rhys Chatham and Band plus Tuxedomoon Event with Winston Tong.

Video: October 26-31: Advanced Television - New Wave, New Music, New Video, New York. The Kitchen: Video/Music. November 16-28: The TV-Teria, 5 NY Breakfast TV stations simultaneously relayed in the friendly setting of a soda fountain. Also New York Cable TV selected by Advanced Television. Also a Video Jukebox in the bar. Our own little global village in the Mall!

Oval House

Info 01 735 2786

October 6-10: The Farndale Housing Estate Townswomen's Guild in Chase Me Up The Garden S'Il Vous Plait.

October 7-10: Archway Theatre Company in The Real King Kong.

October 13-17: Leslie Felbain in Gullibles Travels.

Also: Fay Prendergast in Magic. October 20-24: That's Not It in By George. First performance of new piece about George Sand,

19th century novelist, philosopher, mother, puppeteer, and onetime spokeswoman of the French Revolution.

October 21-31: Split Britches in Beauty and the Beast.

October 27-31: Fair Stage in The Bridle Path.

November 3-6: The Bronte Brothers.

November 6-7: Centre Ocean Stream in Theatre of Colour.

November 10-21: Women's Theatre Group in Double Vision.

November 24-28: Red Shift in Duchess of Malfi (Red Shift style).

London Musicians Collective

Info 01 722 0456

Regular events:

Fridays: The Early Club (Unconfirmed).

Sundays: Communication Club.

Thursdays: The famous LMC Club Club Night, featuring various performance artists, musicians, theatre shows: variety guaranteed every week.

October 2 and 23: Benefits for hostel to help victims of racial attacks in East London.

October 9: Kang (Chris and Andy Davies).

October 16: Greenham Common Peace Camp Benefit.

October 30: Animal Aid Benefit.



Eric Bogosian, from NY, appearing at ICA, Chapter + Midland Group

November 4: LMC Amenities Fund Benefit.
 November 6: Roger Turner, Alan Tomplinson, Tony Wren and friends.
 November 20: The Paramedic Squad etc.
Riverside Studios
 Info 01 748 3354
 October 11-November 14: Dance Umbrella events.

South Hill Park
 Info 0344 27272
 September 25: Voyages and Somersaults of the Pilgrim Monkey. A synoptic-realist performance by David Medalla.
Theatre Space
 Info 01 836 2035
 October 11-16: Epiglottis Theatre Co. in Wednesday Matinee Plus Lorna McDoone in A Taste of

Scotland.
 October 19-23: Dog Company in The Secret Life of Cartoons.
 October 18-November 16: Temba.

Manchester
Radiator-Amazing Tales
 Info 061 224 0020
 Various venues in Manchester.
 October 7-9: Spare Tyre in On The Shelf.

October 14-16: Split Britches in Beauty and the Beast.
 October 30: Forkbeard Fantasy and Ian Dagger in An Eccentric Evening.
 November 11-13: Publick Spirit in The Munster Play.
 November 26: Theatre Exchange in No Waiting.
 November 27: Pretty Disgusting Things in Trust Me.

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Back issues:

No 4 Academia Ruchu, Mary Longford, The Masterwork, Gay Sweatshop.
 No 5 Cardiff, Stuart Brisley, Silvia Ziranek, Sonia Knox, Charlie Drake (interview).
 No 6 Midlands, Naked Art, Drag, Steve Cripps, Point Blank Dartington Dance.
 No 7 John Cage (Interview), Merce Cunningham, Street Performance, Tadeusz Kantor, Lumiere and Son, Forkbeard Fantasy.
 No 8 About Time, I Giselle, Tom Saóington, Stefan Brecht, Pip Simmons (Interview).
 No 9 Entertainment Special, (Showbiz, TV, Tourism, Bingo, Waxworks, Discothques), Ivor Cutler (Interview).
 No 10 Chris Burden, Station House Opera, Cameron and Miller (Interview), Video Festival, Belgian Performance.
 No 11 Lizzie Cox, Brion Gysin (Interview), Stuart Brisley, Artworks, Riverside Dance, European Theatre of War.
 No 12 State Performance (Analysis of Royal Wedding) British Events, Richard Layzell, Critics and Doormats Show Trial, Cabaret Futura.

No 13 Gay Culture and Performance, Synoptic Realists, Mitzi Wildebeeste, Theatre of the Eighth Day, Provisorium, Gilbert and George, Roland Muldoon (Interview), Lyon Performance Festival.

No 14 Interview with Laurie Anderson, Jonathan Borofsky, Performance Art Platform, Tate Performance, The Acme 1976-81, Miranda Tufnell.

No 15 Magic and Performance, Yoshi Oida, The Art of Social Change, Station House Opera, Dance Umbrella.

No 16 Disband, Video Libraries, Bruce Maclean, Andre Stitt, Lumiere and Son, Forkbeard Fantasy.

No 17 Irish Performance, Women and Jazz, Geraldine Pilgrim, Hesitate and Demonstrate, Londons Dance Crisis.

No 18 Radical Americans, Laurie Anderson, Video Festival, Robyn Archer, Vivien Lisle, IOU, Japan Report.
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Dear Peter,

I've been trying to think of a way of writing about myself and the work I've been doing at art school. I have written about my work many times for myself and I am used to stating my thoughts. Indeed, the thoughts are usually what I call my work anyway. The trouble is, I can never find words and labels that I ever want to use twice and the only constant thing that I can find to say about the work I do, is that my ideas are always changing, and remaining the same, which, admittedly, is a little vague. The point of nearly everything I become involved in doing, is an experience of 'new', basically, the philosophy of living for the moment, and trying to communicate this to others. Up until fairly recently, at the art school, all my projects have really been about communicating this 'new' idea directly to people, personally. Recently, however, for the purposes of assessment at the end of my course, I have been making an attempt to record these 'new' moments with the aid of photography, so that people might still witness the experience after the event. I only started to manage this quite successfully when I realised that it was impossible. What I mean is, that my earlier theories about the experience being impossible to record were correct and that the thing I could do was distill a new, different experience from the original one, so that, the experience was now looking at a photograph, a composed picture, of a man and his plinth doing various things together, instead of being there at the time, experiencing the cold, the embarrassment, the togetherness and the uniqueness of any of the moments I recorded. I know this

is the ideal behind a lot of Performance Artists work, that the experience of doing the action or just feeling the moment, is the reason why it should be performed as opposed to painted or drawn, but what I wanted to do was extend this idea to the notion of recording a performance. I felt that the experience of looking at the photographs of a performance should be as important as the experience of the performance itself. The reaction I got from the photographs was generally just one of amusement, in varying degrees, at either the ludicrousness of the actions or the situations. Some fellow students would be more deeply interested in my reasons and intentions, and some were not really interested at all. In fact, the range of reactions of everybody that looked at the photographs was the same as the reactions I would have got to a public performance, and, indeed, the same as the range of reactions I have received to anything I have done.

At the moment I am sitting in the sun, with my shirt off, and my belly-button is sticky with sweat. I do not want you to try and feel what it is like for me to sit here in this situation or even what it might be like for you to sit in the sun, with your shirt off, and a sticky belly-button. What I want you to try and imagine is why I felt I had to write the first sentence in this paragraph of this letter. If not, go and sit in the sun, with your shirt off, until your belly-button is sticky and forget I ever wrote you a letter, until I meet you in a pub somewhere.

Yours 'now'
Tim Dalling



National Performance Listings

Newcastle

Basement Group
Info 0632 614527
October 2-16: : Live to Air and Revolutions Per Minute - an exhibition of sound works by 60 international artists.
From October 6: Film by American Artists.
October 16: New York Video.

Nottingham

Midland Group
Info 0602 582636
Performance Art Festival and Platform October 21-24. Major event on performance calendar. See 'Is Performance Art Dead' article this issue.
October 21: Marty St. James and Anne Wilson in Perfect Moments.
October 21-22: Eric Bogosian performs Men Inside.
October 22: Jim Whiting will be performing the final stages of Purgatory culminating in the stru structure being set in motion until November 12.
Also: Six short performances by the Basement Group, Newcastle.
October 23: Platform Performances: from a selection of open submissions. London Video Arts showings, plus Sex and Death by Station House Opera.
October 24: Platform performances, discussion chaired by Roland Miller, and The Cold Frame by Forkbeard Fantasy.
November 5-6: Bill T. Jones and Arnie Zane in Rotary Action.
November 11-13: TNT in Oops.
November 26-27: Impact Theatre in Useful Vices.

Touring

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October 13: Swansea Fringe Festival, October 9 St Donats Arts Centre, Wales.
November 4: Leeds Polytechnic, November 5 Basement Group, November 6 Darlington Arts Centre. November 8-19 Plymouth College of Art.
Info 0788 84 6233.
Optik... Second Spectacle.
October 6 Hull University, October 8 Brewery Arts, Kendal, October 12-23 Cockpit, London, October 27-29 Alsager Arts Centre, November 11 West End Centre, Aldershot, November 20 Newbury Arts Centre.
Info 01 582 5105
Forkbeard Fantasy... October 1-8 Cinema City, Norwich (Film-Night of the Gnat), October 11-21 Matlock College, October 22-23 Milton Keynes Open University, October 24 Midland Group, November 12-13 Tower Centre, Winchester, (Special Event).
Info Droxford 605
Centre Ocean Stream... Theatre of Colour. October 15 Darlington Arts Centre, October 16 Brewery Arts Centre, Kendal, October 18 Dovecote Arts Centre, Stockton, October 19, Sunderland Polytechnic, October 21 Cumbria College of Art, October 22 Biddick Farm Arts Centre.
Info 0962 714367

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Michael Upton
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Wednesday 13th October at 7.30pm
Mineo Aayamaguchi
"Here-Now" & "Space"
Admission £1

Wednesday 20th October at 7.30pm
Janet Davies
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TIM MILLER 5 — 7 November
KEI TAKEI 9 — 11 November

NEW YORK WRITES

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