

REVIEWS + NEWS + FEATURES + INFORMATION APR/MAY No 34

£1.20/\$3.50

PERFORMANCE



WAR THERAPY!

SPALDING GRAY IN THE KILLING FIELDS



JOHN JESURUN INTERVIEWED

PERFORMANCE ADVANCE SOAPO PIERA



+ART MUSIC FOR NOW PEOPLE > MONEY + THE AVANT GARDE

THE SHOW WITHIN THE SHOW

Performance Festival May 29-June 2

SOUTHAMPTON ART GALLERY

Live Performances by:

ROSE FINN-KELCEY:

Elevation IV

ANTHONY HOWELL:

Table Moves I & II

ALASTAIR McLENNAN:

Lies in Weight (96 Hr non-stop performance/
installation)

STATION HOUSE OPERA:

Sex and Death

STEPHEN TAYLOR WOODROW:

Triptych Ballet

For further details please contact Southampton
Art Gallery on 0703 223855

THE BRITISH ART SHOW runs in
Southampton from May 23-June 30

AN ARTS COUNCIL TOURING EXHIBITION

Sponsored by British Petroleum

the British art show

I
T
H
E
A
T
R
E

Impact Theatre Co - operative
SONGS OF THE CLAY PEOPLE
to 20 April

Vals Bloed Dance Co

SHE SAID

23 - 27 April

GABBY AGIS

3 - 5 May

LAURIE BOOTH

F
I
L
M
S

Paul Ruiz'

CITY OF PIRATES

19 April - 9 May

FEVERHOUSE

Dir. by Howard Walmsley

Written by Ken Hollings

Music by Biting Tongues

plus Teinosuke Kinugasa

A PAGE OF MADNESS

17 - 28 April

I
C
A
:
U
S
A

FRANK STELLA

New Work and Graphics

17 May - 7 July

AMERICAN PERFORMANCE

Palermo Jerusalem: Bill Raymond 30 April - 4 May

Beth Lapidès 30 April - 2 May

Spalding Gray: Swimming to Cambodia 21 - 25 May

John Jesurun: Red House 28 May - 1 June

THE MALL LONDON SW1 01 930 3647



LABAN CENTRE

DANCE THEATRE TRAINING COURSES

3 YEARS FULL TIME

For young women and men, leading to a Certificate in Dance or a B.A. Hons. Degree (prerequisite two A levels). Training in both courses includes contemporary technique and ballet, choreography and production (costume, lighting and sound).

For details of these, postgraduate and evening classes write to:

**The Administrator,
Laban Centre for Movement and Dance at
University of London Goldsmiths' College,
New Cross, London SE14 6NW
Tel: 01-691 5750/692 4070.**



MIDLAND GROUP

CARLTON ST, NOTTINGHAM

Arts Centre for Nottingham
and the East Midlands

SPRING PERFORMANCES

- 18 April BORIS GERRETS (Holland)
21 IVOR CUTLER/POOKIESNACKENBURGER
25/26 MARY LONGFORD INC.
2 May EARTHCALL
3 RON GEES IN/P.D.BURWELL
9 MANACT
10 KATHY ACKER (U.S)/LA BOUCHE
14/15 LISA KRAUS & STEPHANIE SKURA (U.S.)
23 NICO/FRAN LANDESMAN
30 LINTON KWESI JOHNSON
31 & PREMIERE OF NEW SHOW BY
1 June THEATRE DE COMPLICITE
4/5 THEATRE X (U.S.)
8 ROSE ENGLISH

BOX OFFICE (0602) 586100

PERFORMANCE P.L.A.T.F.O.R.M

There's a NEW approach to selection of the Performance Art Platform for this year's '4 DAYS OF PERFORMANCE ART' - at the Midland Group and the Zap Club, Brighton in October.

4 regional 'mini-platforms' will be held in the summer - from which the final 12 performances will be chosen for October.

The Platform is designed to provide the opportunity for public performance at leading venues by individuals and groups who have only recently become involved in Performance, and are currently not receiving subsidy.

Applicants should apply to one of the following venues AT LEAST 2 WEEKS before the Platform dates:

CHAPTER, MARKET RD, CANTON, CARDIFF
(Platform date: 1 May)

ZAP CLUB, 191-193 KINGS RD ARCHES,
BRIGHTON (Platform date: 21,22 May)

MIDLAND GROUP, CARLTON ST, NOTTINGHAM
(Platform date: 12 June)

LEADMILL, 6-7 LEADMILL RD, SHEFFIELD
(Platform date: 4 July)

SO GET THOSE APPLICATIONS IN AS SOON AS
YOU CAN!!!

AMAZING OPPORTUNITY!!!

Following the departure of Ken Gill, Projects UK is looking for a young and enthusiastic person with an intimate knowledge of current visual art activity, to engage on a one year contract of employment to initiate new projects with artists in Performance, Installation, Video, and unclassifiables.

The successful applicant should have a track record in creative administration: curating shows, initiating ventures, organising galleries, etc.

An adequate working budget is available, but an ability to gain new funding and a sound 'board room' technique are essential.

An amount of international travel will form an important element of the job, and the new worker will be on equal terms with Jon Bewley to initiate and carry through new projects.

Wage: £8000 per year.

Please write or 'phone for further details.

Also coming up over the next year:

GUEST CURATORSHIPS

From May 85 for one year, as an experiment, Projects UK will be offering up to three guest curatorships.

The details of this initiative have not been yet formalised, but will probably be of approximately 3 months duration, and will be to give individuals the opportunity and budget to bring to fruition a project of their own choosing.

Watch this space . . .

And . . .

THEMATIC COMMISSIONS

Projects UK has recently become one of the three Arts Council franchised promoters of Performance Art, along with Midland Group, Nottingham and Zap Club, Brighton.

Projects will be programming occasional events, but the main thrust of their policy will be to commission new work in Performance.

The thematic commissions will be in a multitude of visual art media, and will be advertised as an open submission to artists to make work on a particular theme; say for example 'The North' work would then be made and exhibited, before being toured nationally and hopefully internationally.

Apply to:

Projects UK, 5 Saville Place, Newcastle-Tyne
NE1 8DQ

Telephone: 0632 614527

LETTERS

'If Underhand,' Edinburgh

Photo: Antonia Reeve



DEAD FISH

Dear Performance,
I wish to point out a mistake passed onto, and printed in the last two issues of your magazine. The title of my (four) performance/installations for the British Art Show is *not* 'Buried Alive'. The first is entitled 'Buried Error', the second 'If Underhand', the third 'Body Break', and the fourth, 'Lies in Weight'.

Misinformation may accumulate and run riot over fact. During my second presentation two members of the gutter press stormed in, eyes agog, looking for the man '... buried alive for a hundred and forty hours under a ton of dead fish'. No doubt they'll find him.

Alastair McLennan
Department of Fine Art
University of Ulster at Belfast

PERFORMANCE

*Vital Information . . .
. . . Live Art Now*

SUBSCRIBE

Come on, now's the time to ensure your delivery of the most vital, risk-taking cultural magazine in Britain. Worth it alone for its exclusive interviews, telling you what internationally known artists are saying **today** not ten years later. Performance magazine tackles topics you just won't find in ordinary art magazines. Why do people vandalise artworks? What would Freud have made of Performance art? What is neo-naturism? Are there performance artists in outer space? Does Laurie Anderson own a dog? Find out about the answers to these as well as addressing the somewhat more serious concerns of today's post-modern radical artist. **Do it now.** Tick the following as appropriate:

- 1) Send me the next six issues
- 2) Send me the last six issues
- 3) To my home address in the UK (£8.50)
- 4) To the following College, library or institution in the UK (£14.50)
- 5) To the following address outside the UK, in Europe (£14.50)
- 6) To the following address outside Europe (\$25)
(Double these amounts if you tick both 1. and 2.)

Name

Address

Please make cheques payable to Performance Magazine Ltd. and send this form to: **Arts Ex-press PO Box 129 London WC2 9RU England (Enquiries 01-836 6225)**

C O N T E N T S

EDITOR: Rob La Frenais

CONTRIBUTORS: Isobel Appio/Robert Ayers/David Briers/Cathy Courtney/Catherine Elwes/Ken Hollings/Chrissie Iles/Charlotte Keatley/Richard Layzell/Marguerite McLaughlin/Lynn MacRitchie/Robin Morley/Anna Moszynska/Liz Rideal/Steve Rogers/Pete Shelton/John Stalin/Gray Watson

DESIGN: Jerry Arron

PRINTING/TYPESSETTING: Bookmag, Inverness

DISTRIBUTION: Arts Ex-Press (Bookshops) J F Ansell (Newsagents) Total Circulation (US)

PUBLISHER: Performance Magazine Ltd

COPYRIGHT © 1985 ISSN No. 0144 5901

PERFORMANCE MAGAZINE
Editorial and Advertising:
14 Peto Place London NW1
England
01 935 2714

Subscriptions and Distribution:
Arts Ex-Press PO Box 633
London SE7 7HE
01 853 0750

SUBSIDISED BY THE
Arts Council
OF GREAT BRITAIN

PERF: Recent performances and previews	6
THE FILM EDITOR IN YOUR HEAD: Interview with John Jesurun	14
WAR THERAPY: Spalding Gray of NY's Wooster Group on the making of a war movie	22
ROUGH SEAS INSIDE A CAVE HOME: Susan Hiller's postcard art	30
ART MUSIC FOR NOW PEOPLE: Avant garde musicians are striking it rich. Why?	33
NEWS: Backstairs revolution in performance art funding	40

Spalding Gray — See War Therapy!

PERF



Ceremonies —
uncertain position
between violence
and love

CEREMONIES (THE PLACE)

The French imagination has been possessed by a chance encounter flamboyantly enacted in a hotel lobby or dance hall. Anyone who like me has seen Greta Chute Libre's *Ceremonies*; a *Melodrama* and *La Bal* within the span of several weeks can be forgiven for leaping to this hasty conclusion. For *La Bal*, a mimetic voyage through 40 years of dance hall music, fashion and style is based on a performance by the French theatre group Le Compagnole in which Greta Chute Libre actors Denis Loubaton and Rio Cortez took part. *Ceremonies*, described in its publicity as an Anglo-French collaboration, owes a far greater debt to the Latin side, both financially, since the Arts Council failed to come up with the goods and as drama.

Ceremonies resonated in more than its art-deco stage sets, designed by the 'Anglo' element of the production, Wimbledon School of Art, with the 1920's and 1930's. Quaintly and nostalgically avant-garde, it suspended the theatrical devices of dialogue, narrative and plot in favour of immaculate characterisation, symbolic action, gesture and music. The result was essential drama at once florid and temporal, effervescent and nihilistic.

Reflecting the multi-media experience of director Dominique Leconte, it synthesised movement, movement and imagery. Violently contrasting music ruled the opening and closing of scenes, changes in guests behaviour and the tempo of events. Song became speech and speech became mumbo-jumbo. The story was told in images; celebratory flowers strewn across the stage, an albatross on the back of the abducted stranger, a bundle of love letters cast to the ground; an incompleting chess game and in wild gestures; rapturous embraces, incomprehensible speeches and dance drills.

An anonymous hotel lobby provided a fitting setting for

an assortment of European diaspora so engrossed in their personal obsessions, that failing to comprehend each other, they failed even to be alarmed. Incidental contact between these individuals, orchestrated by a manipulative receptionist whose power lay in knowing the rules, exposed a subjectivity rendered absurd by its own excess.

A subjectivity which intensified as the plot, handed out like programme notes for use as a map in terra incognita, folded the cacophony of atomised destinies into a coherent exchange. The guests, disturbed by the entry of a distraught young man and an unexpected stranger, learnt to remember, dream and love from them and in return abandoned them brutalised and exhausted in the hotel lobby. Subjectivity was all the closer to the surface for the lack of dialogue and narrative.

Trevor Smith, the other 'Anglo' input, ex-RSC, had to set aside his Stanislavskian training when he became the pianist in *Ceremonies*. A rational and motivational approach brought him up against a brick wall; he could enter into the performance only when he approached it technically as a piece of movement.

But restrained production made way for some very professional characterisation. Mimi Satre as the Opera Star in Hiding wore her role with the ease that only 'la cosa vera' could attain. Phillipe Caulet's Hotel Habitude oozed provincial Frenchman, Rio Cortez' Hotel Connoisseur was an immaculate Wildean Englishman abroad and Trevor Smith's pianist, an irresistible oddball composer.

Ceremonies was a rich celebration of style but one cognisant of its own transience and its uncertain position between violence and love. The meanings were there, like the figures in a dream to be fished for. But like the figures in a dream if you try to hold on to them too tightly they faded away.

Greta Chute Libre are going on to perform a *Ceremonies* in Brussels, Liege, Copenhagen and at drama festivals in Italy and France. ■

ELIZABETH HERON

BURNT BRIDGES (MIDLAND GROUP)



Burnt Bridges —
opportunities lost?

Photo: Simon English

There's a kind of performance doing the small theatre and studio circuit just now that's becoming oh-so familiar. The setting is domestic or day-to-day; the subject matter, quite obviously, is Life with a capital L and its exasperations and frustrations; often there's a suggestion of derangement or unhealthy fantasy in at least one of the characters; and the language, of which there's usually quite a lot, is oblique and studied and full of little innuendos.

Burnt Bridges' latest effort, *The Time of their Lives* — even the title gave it away — was a recent example of the type. For the first few minutes I wanted to think I'd just caught Burnt Bridges on a bad night, or that they were simply physically weary — they were, after all, in the middle of a remarkably over-ambitious twenty four venue tour — but as this often boring, often just technically unsatisfactory piece wore on, I realised that the problem lay somewhere deeper.

The Time of their Lives just lacked that basic connection between appearance and meaning, or form and content if you like, that good performance, or good art of any sort has to have. So, unable to sustain itself for the just-over-an-hour that the piece lasted, the narrative of three sad fantasising waitresses tidying up after the nightclub has closed, gradually sank under a piling-on of effects — a bit of dancing, a quick blow on the saxophone, some acrobatics, maybe a burst of recorded music — that came to seem more and more inconsequential.

Only once in the whole piece did one of these snatches of talent actually manage to impress: finally enraged by her more dreamy colleague, one of the waitresses chases her around the tiny playing space by noisily somersaulting after her. It was a nice moment, but it didn't really have much impact, as it was by then weighed down by so many others that almost came off or just fell flat. Because, to be frank, there was some pretty awful acting in *The Time of their Lives*, and some lighting effects that were so simple and crude that they should have been thrown out in the first week of rehearsal, and some dancing that was so inept as to be embarrassing. When the three members of the cast sit in centre stage and tie on tap shoes, then given the whole package of expectations that tap shoes carry with them, they only have two alternatives: either they're going to tap dance slickly and well, or they're going to do it very badly for comic effect. (Or, I suppose, as a third possibility, they don't dance at all for a rather limper comic effect). What Burnt Bridges did was to tap dance not very well. It was excruciating.

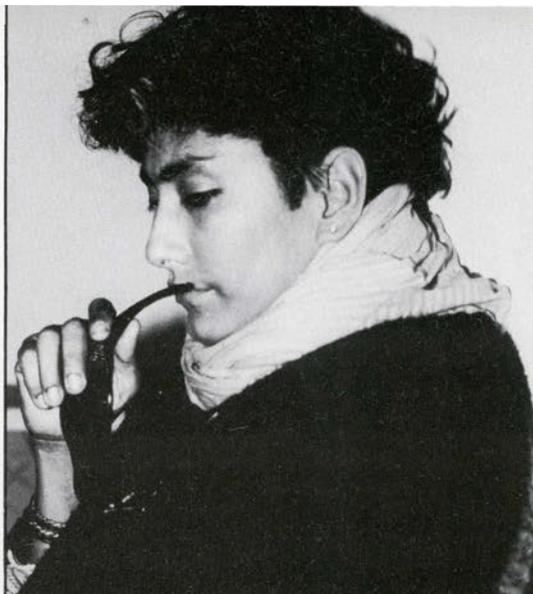
So perhaps the problem wasn't, as I'd first thought, the tiredness of the performers, but rather the dreadful weariness of the play itself. A sort of gloomy and bitter middle-agedness which perhaps explains the air of familiarity that hung around *The Time of their Lives* and also its lack of success. For if a performance like this attempts metaphors but, in falling short of them, presents us merely with its makers' lives transposed, then the result is going to be pretty tiresome.

So, I'm afraid that if 'Burnt Bridges' as a name for a company is meant to suggest something to do with opportunities lost, or things turned sour, then, on the strength of this show, it seems perfectly appropriate. ■

ROBERT AYERS

JUAN LOYOLA

In Northern Europe and America there is much argument as to whether art can influence or even inform politics, such are the social organisations and institutions of the



Juan Loyola —
prison sentence
for performance

cities. In Latin America where the divisions between the state and the people and the rich and poor are so much greater, the opportunities for exposing the idiosyncracies in the social structures are many, though not without their incumbent risks.

In Venezuela it is common to find wrecked cars rusting in inner city precincts with nobody much inclined to remove them. A sense of urban decay and a strong police presence are amongst the factors which led Juan Loyola, performance artist and social activist, to paint one such car with the colours of the Venezuelan flag, thus connecting the corruption of the inner cities with the national identity. Such an action might pass almost unnoticed in a European capital but in Caracas it earned Loyola a prison sentence and a great deal of publicity. Already notorious for similar actions in Venezuela, Loyola was released a week later through a public petition which he had partly prepared himself, in advance.

Much of Loyola's work seeks to direct public attention to the activities of the authorities, and it is his forte to invent such strategies. On this account he is frequently referred to in the national press both in prose and in cartoons. After the devaluation of the Bolivar in 1983, Loyola manufactured a giant Bolivar coin almost two metres in diameter and inscribed with his own head, which he proceeded to roll through the streets of Caracas. It was his intention to roll the coin to other towns in Venezuela and to draw as much publicity to the event as possible, but the police intervened once again and he was arrested again in September of that year.

The scene of the next major public action was in October '83 at the inauguration of the Salon Nacional de Jovenes, attended by the president of Venezuela and art critics from Europe and America. Fearing some scandal the organisers had not invited Loyola to participate, which was a conspicuous omission, but when he arrived at the opening immaculately dressed in a white suit bandishing a programme they welcomed him back to the fold with open arms. However, Loyola had four assistants amongst the crowd and when the president was known to have entered the building they began to spray-paint the white suit the colours of the Venezuelan flag and to wrap barbed wire around his shoulders. The climax of the event occurred as the president was entering the gallery, and naturally all the press photographers were fully occupied with Loyola. Not wishing to present an ugly scene to the international press the security personnel were powerless to act, and Loyola remained as close to the president as possible throughout the opening.

Loyola was not arrested on this occasion, but fearing for his safety, left the country for Brazil where he performed in a gallery in Sao Paulo. A Venezuelan official who was present at the performance, snatched a prose poem which Loyola was about to read and read it himself as if to identify with the cultural life of his country.

Juan Loyola is currently touring Europe and America with a collection of his films and videotapes. ■

PERF

BABES IN THE WOOD (CHISENHALE)

'A coffee table fable for those who wish to eat cake' (according to the programme) was obviously taken literally by the audience who at the end of this piece only very reluctantly left, laughing and giggling in their seats in gentle rebellion until (I do not lie) they were plied with all the consumable props, i.e. the cakes — and, having eaten their way through several tins of fairy cakes only then felt they had done justice to the show and it was time to go. A surprising conclusion to this surprising post-modern pantomime — based very loosely on 'Babes in the Wood' but more a series of sketches many of which are essentially vehicles for solo performances.

Despite an awkward start of up-tempo music hall pastiche interspersed by the very mordant Jester (Mary Susan Yankovitch), the narrative gathered momentum like a roller coaster which at the peak of its climb flew straight into mid air with moments of pure over-the-top lunacy rejoining the plot after some brilliant pieces of fantasy. From the very minimal to the very hammy, the cast combines a group of people from both 'straight' theatre and performance who have first worked together as a group in this show.

The deadpan Jester challenges the outrageous and very wicked Baron (Stefan Szczelkun). The gormless 'babes' (Caroline Holbrook and Ian Sherman) occasionally zap and crackle. There is an exquisite 'Night in the Forest' tableau with mythical birds and beasts set to eldritch music. 'Tree,' also 'faithful retainer' (Ian Hinchcliffe) shakes the narrative wildly off course with a seamless piece of solo performance poetry and wordplay before joining Jester and Butler (the man of many disguises, Giles Collins) in the dungeon. An Asgardian Fairy (Mortimer Ribbons), looking like Thor in a dirty raincoat also loses his directions, this time up the M1, and therefore neglects to save the 'Babes,' who now have to find themselves and release the other prisoners from Baron Stefan. Children screeched, adults refused to leave.

These artists are redefining the limits of pantomime with its traditional characters and classic themes of the mummies' plays combined with music hall slap and tickle. This 'post-art' Babes re-writes the set pieces, interrupting the inexorable flow to a well known and comfortable climax and; moving in new directions, challenges the audiences' willingness to believe in fairy tales. ■

SUE WOLFF

LIFE INTO ART (RIVERSIDE STUDIOS)

The portrayal of the continuous discourse between artist and subject, the life-modelling class, is the most classic form of performance of all and was harnessed recently by performance artist Anthony Howell, at Riverside, when an audience was invited to draw, paint, photograph, video, or simply observe 6 nightly sessions over a period of two weeks.

The main visual theme was a nude model standing on a chair pouring water from one bucket to another on the floor, then moving the buckets to another position on the grid taking the chair and placing it next to the suitcases. After dressing with two items of clothing taken from the suitcase the model transferred the water from one bucket to the other, altered their position on the grid and undressed to repeat the sequence. This time five items of clothing were put on, eventually by the end of the

sequence the model was wearing a heavy overcoat. An additive system was used of two plus three, plus four. Finally the model picked up the suitcases and interrupted another model who had been sitting cross-legged on the chair beside the easel, fully clothed and reading the Financial Times.

The action continued with two other nude models standing on the table pouring water from one dustbin to the other on the floor below them. Only one model would move at a time except in the case of the dustbin bearers, who worked together because of the weight of the water. This allowed artists to focus on an arrested scene or to capture the actions of a moving model.

The signal to change roles came with the use of percussive phrases when the working model interrupted the reader on the chair. 'Time's up!', 'It won't do I'm afraid', 'How far did you get?', 'All the way' with 'What!' coming as a response, sometimes sharp with annoyance, at others laconic or derisive.

The artist/observers gradually became aware of the multiple images contained in basic movements.

Full frontal, oblique, profile and back views of arms, legs, elbows, lifting, kneeling, bending, became complex issues of foreshortening as each 'little act' shifted through a ninety degree angle. While the body of water falling towards the viewer or arcing out in a side cascade presented its own problems.

Each tableau triggered off a vast resonance of historical references; sometimes hinted at in one view to be resolved in another. Corbet in the rounded 'behind' of a nude with bucket as urn, Matisse in the angles of a relaxed seated nude. Then shades of Nagritte in a coat hanging on the back of a chair, later to shroud the head of a figure as he raised his arms to put it on. And not without humour, as in this awkward struggle there was a hint of Expressionism, (neo, of course).

The small contours of the scene of a nymph pouring water from a bucket prefiguring the larger tableau of two nudes curved over the cascade of water was a tilt at the classicism of the Romantics, reinforced as it were by the fluted sides of the dustbins, like sections of toppled columns.

Howell's modernist approach was apparent in the grey-suited figure with the pink-paged paper out-strewn and hard-edged trouser creases in relief against the plane of the canvas on the easel. This image brought to the fore the major role of the canvas itself as it framed or hid a pose as it was moved from grid to grid. Its provocative angles took the work away from the figurative towards abstraction.

At another level it was the metaphor for the complete work as it remained blank while framing a vast array of images.

In the overall view the artist/voyeur was as much a part of the content as the models. Tiers of closely packed easels ranged upward from the square. The artists worked constantly to capture the relatively fleeting pose. Each static pose was held for about two minutes which often caused a sigh of regret as a scene was interrupted. For those involved in drawing the time went quickly. One onlooker voiced the opinion that it went on too long (1½ hours) another left after a few changes, but those visually glued to the shifts were continually surprised by the revelation to eye and mind.

The involvement of the artists with the models developed over an evening of drawing, growing in intensity as the effort to realise the scenes increased. With no objective perspective the image created its own

space with the result that the images that survived in the artist's eye crowded their drawing board, very much in the Cubist manner.

The tension created in the artists then drew them into the dynamic area of the legitimate performers. The audience became part of the dramatic action linked to the artist inherent within the play.

The performance attracted art students and amateurs, professional photographers and artists as well as viewers interested in seeing it as a performance. Judging by the numbers in attendance it seems that life drawing is still seen as a valuable area.

One artist said that it forced you to have a strategy of drawing. Each part of the picture was laying the ground for the next part: "I felt at times it formed a recognisable picture, then at others it seemed to be a suggestion of becoming — rather than arriving."

The drawings were exhibited over the period of the performance and for a week afterward. They remain as a testament to the event and raise one of the finer points on the question of Performance: where does the Art lie? Not in the market place and not in a drawing, painting or video of the event, at least not in the original sense. Perhaps it lies in the Futurist's sense of simultaneity — the concept that a picture must be a synthesis of what is remembered and what has been seen, a synthetic visual impression. ■

ANN BERRIMAN

TAKING THE MOUNTAIN TO MOHAMMED — THE TRAVELS OF —Δt (THE HIMALAYAS)

In March 1983 a five and a half ton Welsh granite boulder arrived at its destination in New Delhi with its transporters and mentors Minus Delta t. Since its loading on the 1st of May 1982 from a South Wales quarry, the rock had toured Europe, been exhibited in shows and festivals, blessed by the Pope, impounded by Turkish customs and ferried through Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Iran, Pakistan and part of India.

Originally the group were hoping to abduct part of Stonehenge but "security was too tight" and they had to be content with something from a site where such megaliths were thought to have been quarried. The rock is literally a touch stone for the activities which surround it, and it is felt to develop both power and status from receiving the public attention which is focussed on it. Minus Delta t manipulates this attention sometimes finding that they have to adapt themselves to



bizarre situations in foreign countries.

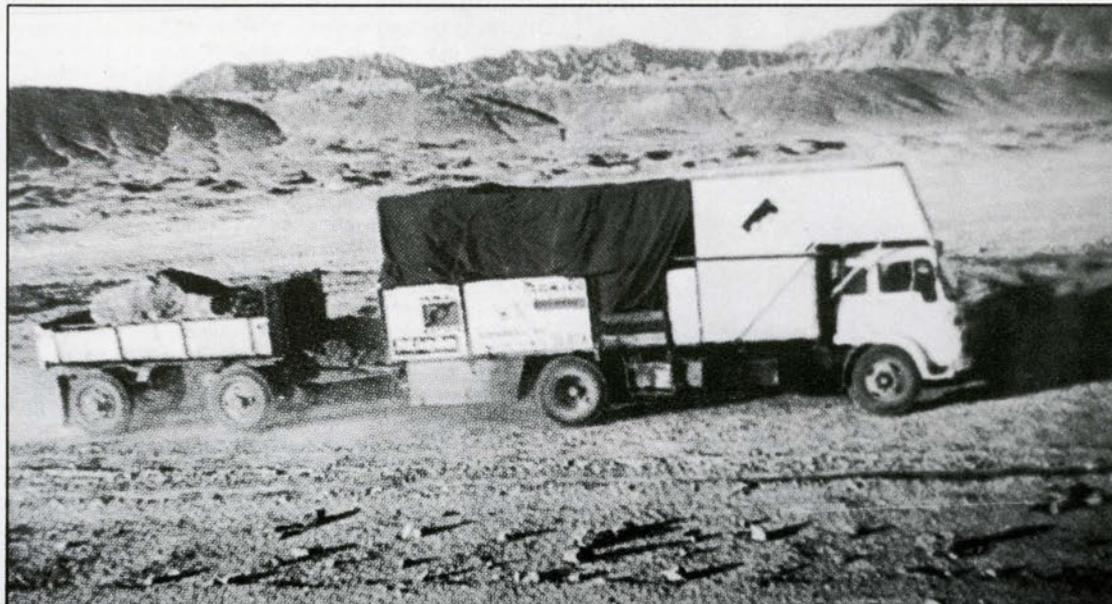
The group has a nucleus of four; Gérard Couty (France), Mike Hentz (USA) and Karel Dudesec and Bernhard Muller who are both Austrians. The Austrians are the original members of the group and have helped to establish the predominantly Germanic flavour of their activities. The financial planning and preparation began in 1981 and during this time it was decided to make the rock part of the international art market. This was achieved by selling a limited number of shares in the rock which correspond to the distance the rock was expected to travel in Kilometres, (19967). Thus the shareholders would have a say in its future and to some extent in the activities of Minus Delta t.

A major pre-occupation of Minus Delta t is the transfer of social and cultural information across borders and the rock serves as a catalyst to this end. In addition to this they have established what they describe as 'cultural archives' for both Europe and Asia. These archives contain material largely collected and created by themselves, resulting from their observations and actions in these different cultures. Amongst the spinoff products from their work are videos, a book, cassettes and a record soon to be available through Rough Trade. The record amounts to a kind of travelogue and many of the recordings are both atmospheric and incisive; a member of the group plays a piano in a hotel lobby in Tripoli to the sound of intermittent gunfire from the streets . . . a Turkish bou sings his favourite folksongs — a near hysterical American woman tells a Moslem audience of her conversion to Islam . . .

Not all the activities are confined to the shadows of the rock. In June of 1984 Minus Delta t assembled in the Himalayas for the construction of the first 'Philosophical Databank'. The Databank is a computer installed in a safe which can be operated and/or programmed by anyone with one of the several hundred keys issued by Minus Delta t, which presumably comes complete with a set of directions of how to get there.

Later this year it is planned to transport the rock through China to Peking where the Europeans hope to set up a workers and artists commune which can be visited by other Westerners and Chinese alike. The details of these schemes are outlined and documented in numerous publicity and information printouts (see address)

The Pope blesses the rock



The rock speeding across the desert

PERF

which also contain much ideology and are liberally sprinkled with slogans; "WE KNOW OUR PAST AND HAVE NO FEAR OF OUR FUTURE!"

Brave new world that has such people in it. ■

ALAN PARKER

Minus Delta 1
51 Rue st. Michel
69002 LYON
078 72 46 10

THREE IN THIRD AREA (KETTLES YARD)

In an enlightened move by director Hilary Gresty, Kettles Yard, noted more for its Gill's and Brezowska's than for its slide-tape and video, recently played host to three installations by Steve Hawley, Holly Warburton and Anthony Wilson, accompanied by an open forum chaired by Michael O'Pray in which all three artists discussed their work.

The compactness of the gallery space provided a challenge for both venue and artists. For those who have experienced the impact of the scale and complexity of Holly Warburton's 'Reflected Portrait' this new small piece 'Roses of Dead Essences' provoked the inevitable question would she be able to create the same magic on a small scale? The haunting soundtrack of slow breathing mingled with opera and diffusing slides on a single screen evoked the same richness of beauty and opulence, but the single screen imagery contained different references which in their relative simplicity retained a sense of distillation and strength. The piece is a cameo, a sketchbook for a much larger project currently in production, and must be viewed as a presentation of fluid ideas rather than as an end in itself.

Holly Warburton —
luscious and
romantic content

Photo: Holly Warburton



The frustration I experienced in Anthony Wilson's 'Version' was, as I discovered at the open forum, something shared by many. It was precipitated by the presentation of a series of images onto three walls, flashing so quickly that it was impossible to retain any impression of the images, and reinforced by a jarring soundtrack of loud carousel music.

Steve Hawley's serene soundless video installation *On and Off the Maps* succeeded where so many static quiet videos fail, by holding the audience's attention through his sophisticated examination of objects and their relationship to video and space, with characteristic openness and precision.

In the discussion, all three artists gave very different reasons for their choice to work in the 'third area'.

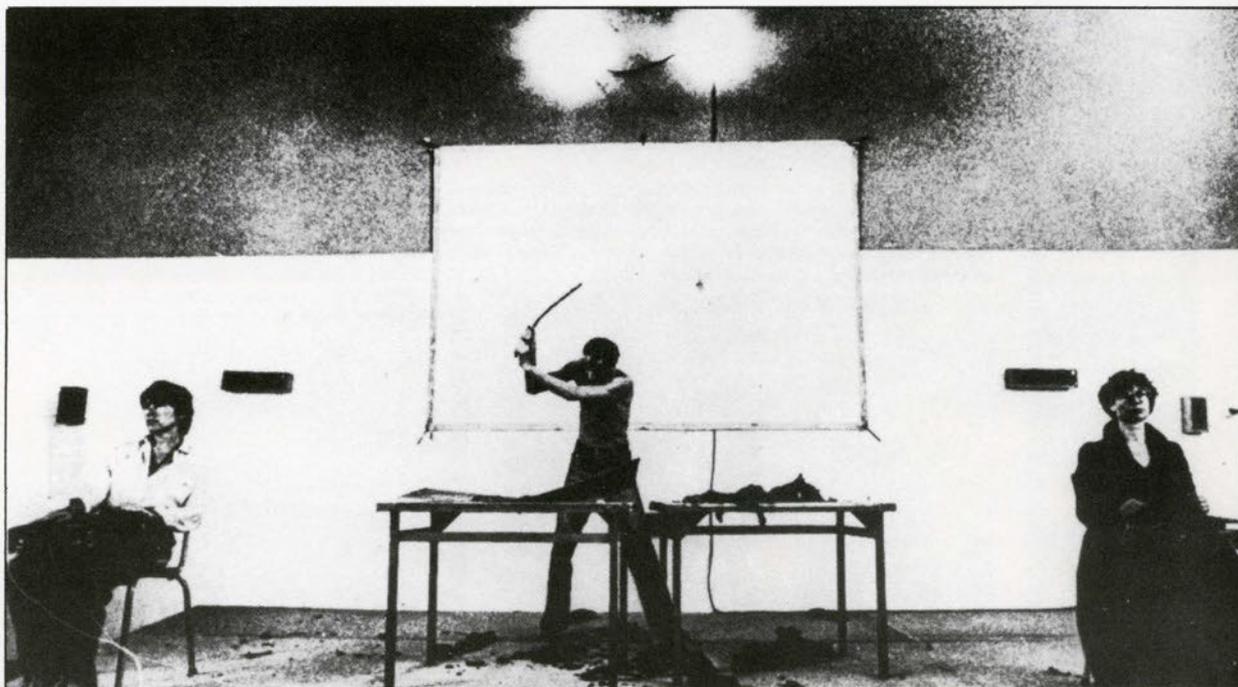
For Holly Warburton, the use of multi-screen installations rather than painting and sculpture as a vehicle for her ideas gives her greater freedom to suggest an atmosphere and create a specific environment in which her work can be experienced, through the use of darkness and space, objects — candles, flowers, busts — sound, and sometimes smell, all of which, in most people, elicit a powerful response. Anthony Wilson cited early film as a strong influence on his use of silent flickering images; the use of multi-screen imagery also provides him with the opportunity to control the environment and, to some extent, the audience, although he felt, as did the other two artists, that there was no 'perfect' audience; everyone should and does take away different ideas, reactions and interpretations of the work. Steve Hawley recalled the excitement of the realisation that television could be re-appropriated and used in different ways by himself to present his ideas. In short, the appropriation of space to control an environment in order to present ideas was a common denominator in each artist's work. So, interestingly, was the strong influence of the past; Holly Warburton's references to Greek mythology and art history, Anthony Wilson's influence of early cinema and Steve Hawley's fascination with early television.

The audience, impressively large for Cambridge, a city not noted for its interest in the avant-garde though reserved in their questioning, were not inhibited in coming forward when it came to questions about the content of the work, but none of the artists would be drawn on explanation. To the question of the luscious and romantic content and whether the beauty of the images which reinforced each other could be seen as rather a backward rather than forward-looking view Holly Warburton replied that she did not consider it her duty as an artist necessarily to deal with the harsh realities of 1985 (a view which I would support wholeheartedly) and Anthony Wilson would not enlighten us as to the content of the imagery which had flashed before our eyes so quickly as to prompt accusations of subliminality.

Problems of finance were discussed, though with such 'non-saleable work' the idea that gallery dealers could be persuaded to market installations for sales was patently absurd. Steve Hawley saw his rejection of the fine art market as an integral part of his working methods. Yet installations are usually seen presented in a gallery context, and therefore inaccessible to other potential sources of sponsorship and funding. It was surely rather a question of finding more appropriate sources in order to be able to present installations in such a way as to reach the maximum number of people; there were no suggestions as to where this funding should come from however.

More such debate and exchange of ideas must take place, and Kettles Yard must be praised for tackling a difficult area of work and for attempting to bring the issues surrounding it into the public arena. However, if this kind of work is to survive, fundamental questions not raised at the forum must be asked. How can artists making installations obtain the funding and resources needed even to stage existing pieces let alone work on future projects? In a disinterested art world is it appropriate to carry on presenting such work in a fine art environment? Why do other countries, Italy, France, Australia, Canada and the USA find it easier to accept mixed media alongside established art activity? Is the way forward through more commercial channels? If so, will the nature and content of the work have to change? If work like that at Kettles Yard and much larger more demanding projects (such as Warburton's unfinished new multi-screen *The Chimera*) are not preserved, protected, nourished and supported, it will rapidly be forced to change and adapt to the limitations placed upon it by a seemingly uncaring art world, and will eventually be lost. Mixed media artists cannot continue working under such adverse conditions — something *must* be done. ■

CHRISIE ILES



BEING AND DOING (ICA)

All behaviour is Performance. This is the fundamental battle cry of those artists who work on the extremes of the art, of those who believe that nothing should stand between subject and object. It is the opening phrase of Stuart Brisley and Ken McMullen's film *Being and Doing* and is a tenet that characterised the third area movements of the seventies. That film is not exactly a history of performance, more a series of recorded fragments and memories, and it is in the essence of this form that it is possible to chart the progress of Brisley's work from that didactic and historic starting point to his activities at the time of writing.

Throughout the film, which attempts to link English folk memories, performance during the political upheavals in Eastern Europe, and the strongly physical risk based discipline of Brisley's work, the word disconnection is flashed up on the screen, almost subliminally. It is a key word, and also refers strongly to his recent slide-tape and installation work, which seems to deal primarily with images of disease, both within and without the human organism. The disconnection of the individual from what was a more communally-based society, the failure of socialist societies to maintain cultural momentum, the breakdown of the syndrome, cellular disorder, are all linked in an intertwining fashion between Brisley's tapes and the film. The half-life of radiation, the fading memory of a sexual encounter, the attempt to describe a performance, the meanings of these colliding to form a questioning dynamic. As he puts it in the film — Performances are 'ghost-dances in the dying culture'.

Oooh Shaggy nooo! rollicks a gruff English male voice as the pub warms up with the singing of 'To be a Farmer's boy'. Later, the jollity takes on a sinister turn, as the assembled men tumble out onto a patch of desolate ground to unquestioningly enact a pre-Christian ritual, the Haxey Hood. 'As a social action,' says Brisley, 'the Haxey Hood doesn't know itself in the heat of the moment'. 'The coat is red,' says a participant of his attire, 'depicting blood. I don't know why blood — there could be a drop spill'. The interviewed locals think it goes back to a gallant but subservient gesture to the Lady of the Manor, historians think it goes back to a drainage dispute, we are left in no doubt by Brisley and the film that this is a dark echo of a ritual sacrifice. As darkness falls, the men scrum together, throwing in the air a symbolic 'hood' made of rope and leather, when caught as many men as possible try to make contact. The 'ancient game' of Haxey Hood is a ghost of the pre-industrial past, the ritual sinister but an essential communal contact through the mystical power of blood — what are the symptoms of disconnection from this power in society? Religion? Disease? War?

What is the role of the witness to rituals? In Britain there still exists rituals that resist intrusion. Intrusion produces self-consciousness, which destroys the very sense of the ritual. Certainly, the Haxey Hood still seems to go on almost with the aura of illegality, unfettered by folkloric kitsch. Others have just died out and are on the way to simply becoming memories of memories. What happens to the memory of contemporary performance? This is a question that Brisley now seems

very closely concerned with, using the memories of radiation victims, victims of a great catastrophe and the passing of these memories into history and myth. Brisley is in a sense acting as an intercessor or a communicant between these memories and their recipients. At the last exhibition at the ICA he carefully brought items of debris from a derelict site near his home and arranged them on tables around the clinical space — the items were records, of a forgotten and historical past, the old clothes, letters, discarded food links between various life-paths.

He has, of course become a myth of his own, and others making, himself. Say the name Stuart Brisley in the average mixed and partially informed circles and the reply will come back quick as a flash — 'Baths of bull's blood and entrails!' The dervish-like, risk-taking, pain-enduring, nature of a lot of seventies performance led to the forming of another myth — the performer as hero/ine. Brisley himself claims that he has heard accounts of performances he was supposed to have done in the seventies which never even took place. In the films he describes the feelings of a performer while working as 'Excitement, fever, alertness, a state of complete ignorance — splendid but fearful time passing! . . . from this moment on I'm free-free.' Preparing for it seems almost sounds like preparing for death — 'When I think about it I'm afraid, but I know that on a certain day, at a certain place, at a certain time — I'll be ready'.

While rather narrow in a historical sense, I personally found both the film and tapes successful in the sense that they were able to awake obscure, scrambled memories in myself. The brutality of the Haxey scramble on frozen ground brings memories as a child, playing with other children on wasteground. The performance shown in the film by Brisley and Ian Robertson, where the one slowly walks round the other then suddenly, randomly strikes him hard on the back of the head is almost an exact replica of a game I remember being made to play as a boy scout, where you stood in a circle with eyes closed while one boy circled round and randomly whacked one of you after five or ten minutes of tense waiting. (Probably invented in the twenties by Baden-Powell and could easily go back to some tribal initiation ritual witnessed by some imperialist predecessor).

The sound, by David Cunningham, effectively enhances the shock and dislocation of both the performances and the deep and disturbing closeness of fire, sacrifice and fertility-based rituals.

So in a sense, what Brisley has done is to remove himself as subject of a performance action, with all the sense of personal catharsis that entails, and transfer the focus to that of the witness. Albeit by artificial means, like manipulating found images and sounds, deconstructing film, tape, memory. He constructs environments for the 'absent' performer, takes the stuff of seventies performance myth and reworks it into a more enduring form. As we become more isolated within society, these artifices, these mementoes of the shock tactics of the seventies are intended by Brisley to sustain us until the 'next' cultural upheaval. As an intention it could be arrogant. Or it could be the right step. ■

ROB LA FREN AIS

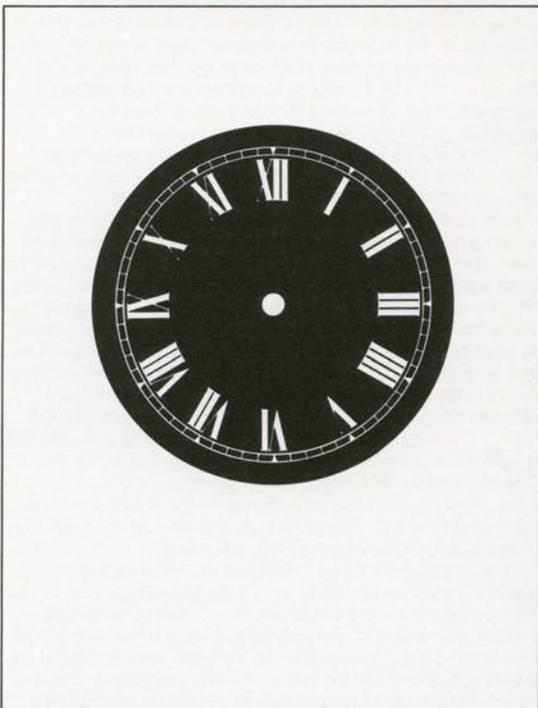
Being & Doing — performance as 'ghost dances in the dying culture'

PREVIEW

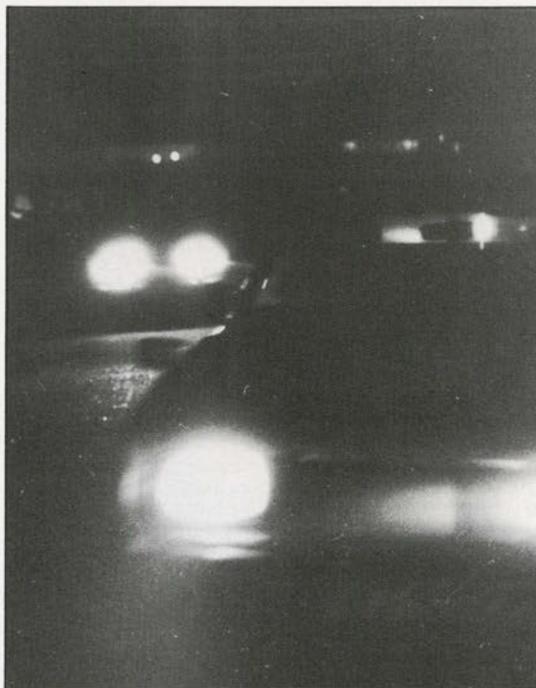
Roland Miller is one of the many artists performing in the Brighton Festival/Zap Club Performance Programme in May. Along with the Midland Group Performance Festival, it's set to become one of the big events on the calendar (See article: Backstairs Revolution in Performance Art). Check back cover advert this issue for full details. ●



Death Valley Days, hilarious scratch video cut-ups of Reagan's visit to London, and *Calling the shots*, by Mark Wilcox (pictured) are part of a touring package, *Deconstruction*, concerned with video art engaging with mainstream film and TV, Metro Cinema Derby. (Info 01 751 4763). Also touring is the *Network 1* video package, which can be seen at Arnolfini, Midland Group, and Newcastle Media Workshops. (Info 0822 468271) ●

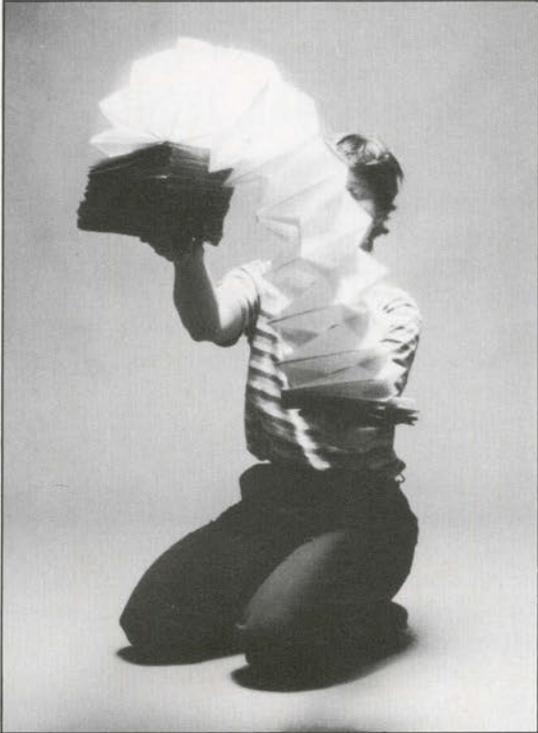


Silent pubs, train compartments, waiting rooms and uncrowded galleries are some of the increasingly rare urban locations conducive to reverie, says Ian Breakwell in an introduction to his new diptych painting installations with sound, *The Waiting Room*, at Matts Gallery, April 15-21. Info 01 849 3799 ●



Want to put on performances in car parks (See Charlie Hooker's work above) swimming pools, pizza huts, laundrettes, reservoirs, motorways etc. etc? Then the ideal and unique opportunity is open to you at Projects UK: (See their ad this issue). They need a person to do all this and more, and are waiting to be shocked by your audacious suggestions for projects undertaken in this full-time job. Info: 0652 614827 ●

And now — Book Performance. Susan Share, from New York performs *Unfolding Books* and other book structures lending themselves to performance at Bookworks in May (date unconfirmed. Info 01 378 6799) ●



At Nicholas Treadwell's Gothic pile/gallery in Kent, Denne Hill; comes news of a performance, *Bringing the House Down* to celebrate the opening of the west wing. By Emotional Play and Derek Derek Productions, promises to divulge 'the decadent demise and dismal declivitous downfall from decency and dignity of the divinely depraved and dandified Denne Hillious domicile of disrepute' At Womenswold, near Canterbury. Info 0227 851488 ●



High kicks Pina Bausch style from Dutch all-woman group Vals Blood in *She Said* at the IGA from April 25-27. Also in the IGA Theatre May/June are Impact Theatre's *Songs of the Claypeople*, Laurie Booth's *Beyond Zero*, Spalding Gray's *Swimming to Cambodia* (See extract this issue), Beth Lapides, Bill Raymond, and John Jesurun's *Red House* (See interview this issue. A good 2 months at the IGA. Info 01 950 0493, or look at their ad. ●



Last time Mary Longford was at the Midland Group, Nottingham, she produced the visually spectacular *Dancing with Denis* (see photo). Now she's bringing the product of her latest, long word-in-progress. Should be unmissable. See their ad for dates and times, and details of many other performances in their programme. Also: remember now's the time for putting in those applications for the Midland Group Performance Platform. Open to all live artists, but particularly those starting out on their career, the Midland Group are mounting a series of 'auditions' around the country. Info: 0608 568656 ●



Over 20 artists, including Sarah Jane Edge (pictured), Jeff Nuttall, Roland Miller Sister Seven and the organisers, Bros Ceptix are taking part in a 'Celebration of Poverty' at the Diorama, London, May 17-20. Titled *A Tale of 13 cities*, it will consist of presentations of images and attitudes to 'poverty', both physical, economic, artistic and spiritual. They call it a 'publish and be damned' weekend of doing in the arts. Info 01 783 9401 ●

PREVIEW

THE FILM IN YOUR

Barbara Lehmann meets John Jesurun

The creator of *Chang in a Void Moon* is coming to London. In May of this year, director John Jesurun brings his new production *Red House* to the ICA. Two years ago *Performance Magazine* had this to say about Jesurun's cult live soap opera which had run for 33 weeks in New York: '*Chang*, written by ex-TV scriptwriter John Jesurun, is a crazy idea which has, as things sometimes do in this city, actually worked. Using a combination of actors, performance artists and ordinary people, each episode entwines itself, sometimes laterally, sometimes directly, around a byzantine plot which takes place simultaneously at several periods in this century, and which principally involves diamonds, a Contessa, drug addicts, maids, an Infanta, and numerous dubious and exotic relatives, all with names like Svetlana, Picablo, Sabartes and Coahuila. The characters are arranged before the audience in positions that simulate camera angles, on stairways, from above, down wells. The dialogue is delivered in a quiet, stilted, fashion that emphasises the heavy absurdity of the situations, while actually contriving to sound like a bad soap. A packed, enthusiastic regular audience has made *Chang in a Void Moon* an exacting weekly experiment that Jesurun is finding difficult to stop. "I feel as if those characters are taking me over, slowly getting into my head," he says.' Recently, our New York correspondent BARBARA LEHMANN (below) crossed town from 'the fashionable East Village' to find out more about him:



M EDITOR R HEAD

BARBARA LEHMANN: Where are you from?

JOHN JESURUN: OK, I'm an Army Brat, which means I travelled everywhere as a child. All over the US, Europe, 4 years in Germany, I did a lot of travelling.

BL: With your family.

JJ: Yeah. My father's family is from Curacao and my mother's family is from Puerto Rico.

BL: What kind of a name is Jesurun?

JJ: It's an old Spanish name and I recently found out it is also an old Sephardic Jewish name even though I grew up very, very Catholic. Altar Boy, the whole bit.

BL: Boy, the whole bit. Was your family very close because you travelled so much?

JJ: Yeah, I guess every kid left the house by 17, but I slowly realized that a lot of people haven't done that. A lot of people stay around their families much longer.

BL: Where's your family now?

JJ: They're in Texas. We basically grew up, I guess, as American kids or whatever, with this background which I realize now is rather an odd background.

BL: Sure, it forces you to have a sense of yourself unrelated to where you are.

JJ: Exactly. Every couple of years we'd move someplace else.

BL: Did you like that?

JJ: I liked it a lot. I think it is not a great thing for some people, and I think for me in a sense it didn't particularly matter because I was artistically oriented and I could stay in my room and paint, you know, which is what I started doing, and do that. You were always the new kid on the block, so in a sense that could be lonely in the beginning, but it could also give you a feeling of being special in a certain way which is something that every Army Brat feels. You're pulled out and sort of dropped in again. You're special for a while and then you get pulled out again.

BL: You also probably have to define your self over and over again to new people.

JJ: Yeah, you're constantly having to explain where you were, or whatever, you know.

BL: How did you get here.

JJ: Exactly. How did you get here.

BL: So, at 17 you left and went to college.

JJ: Yeah.

BL: And where did you go to college?

JJ: To Philadelphia College of Art and started studying painting, but went into sculpture right away, started making sculpture, and then I went to Yale for graduate school where I started making films.

BL: Uh-huh. Did you always write?

JJ: *NO!* I never, I started writing these little scripts for these films that I made in college, some were 16mm and some were Super 8, and I wrote those couple of films, and I didn't really start writing until *Chang* started. That was like my education in writing.

BL: That's amazing.

JJ: I never particularly was interested, I mean, I like to read, but I was never interested in writing.

BL: What do you like to read?

JJ: Oh, well, I like to read a lot of non-fiction.

BL: Any particular subject?

JJ: Oh, history, a lot of American History, World History, Archaeological type of stuff.

BL: What do you read to relax?

JJ: Actually, you know what I like to read to relax, it's hard to find something really good to read to relax. I like to look at picture books. A lot of different types of pictures. And all kinds of books really.

BL: And then you came out in *Chang* with such a strong new voice. I mean, your voice is really fresh.

JJ: Hmm. It's weird. Because I never thought of writing particularly, and then I thought, well, if I'm going to make these films and there's going to be people talking, somebody has to

write it. It wasn't until I started seeing films that I thought, well, there's some kind of translation going on between the writing, the acting and the filming, and then the presentation of it. And that sort of made sense to me. I really enjoy putting everything together, having the visuals locked into the verbal stuff. Which is actually the way I write. I write with a typewriter on one side and a notepad on the other side so that I can make drawings, and they sort of go one off each other. Sometimes a scene will come from a drawing, and sometimes a physical set up will come from writing, or they come together.

BL: So, from there, how did you get to theatre?

JJ: Well, the funny thing is that I never wanted . . . the theatre is like the last place that I would have ended up. And the other thing is that I guess it's not what I pictured theatre would be, since I didn't know anything about theatre. I was doing sculpture and I guess that wasn't really enough to satisfy me, so I started making moving sculptures and then I started filming them, and then eventually started using people and writing scripts, and using people for my films, and then it was just too expensive to do films, you know, work 3 years on a 20 minute film and then show it at a couple of places. And that was a big bore so, then I just decided that I would . . . I had all these people who'd acted in my films and wanted to work. I would write a short film every week and then we would perform it and we wouldn't film it.

BL: You wouldn't film it?

JJ: Yeah, it was like making a film without filming it, without bothering for the, you know, the last thing. Just skip the last thing because that was impossible to do anyway, so why don't we just take everything else, which in a sense is really . . . that's what film is, just a bunch of performances put together in a certain way. But this way, we'd ►

John Jesurun,
creator of *Chang in a
Void Moon*

Photo: Irene Young

have no record of it, you know, it would just happen and then we'd go on to the next one. So that's what I did. And that's how *Chang* started. I just started doing an episode each week, I thought we'd just keep working it each week. And then I worked in a lot of the kind of film techniques into the presentation of it, you know, the edits, the cuts, and the way the acting is not particularly theatrically connected.

BL: And you had this group of performers?

JJ: I had about 4 or 5 people that I liked working with, that I'd worked with on these short films that I made, and from there it just grew. I started using . . .

BL: It certainly grew because *Chang* uses about 30 people!

JJ: About 30, yeah. So it slowly started growing. And people would come to me, or I'd audition them. But in the beginning there were 5 performers that I had. And I think 3 of them had never been on the stage before, and had not particularly studied acting, or weren't oriented like that, and, uh, want a match?

BL: Thanks, I'd love a match.

JJ: And so we just started that way. And I was very anti-theatrical anyway because I thought, Oh I can't stand these theatrical types. I'd be at a party and I'd go, Oh God, I can't stand these people, how can anybody want to work with them?

BL: And yet your work is very theatrical.

JJ: I guess it is in a way. It's very theatrical in some ways but it's . . . it leaves out all the things I hate about theatre which is maybe why other people like it too, you know, because it's not . . .

BL: Right. What would you say that is, what you leave out? What really bugs you about theatre?

JJ: Ummm, I guess I sense a lot of times a lot of conscious attempts to put on a show. Like a phoney type of show. That always bothered me about theatre. The fact that these people were visibly preparing something behind a curtain, you know, and then they were going to come out and do this thing which is a total fake, you know, and then present it. And then people would pretend and go

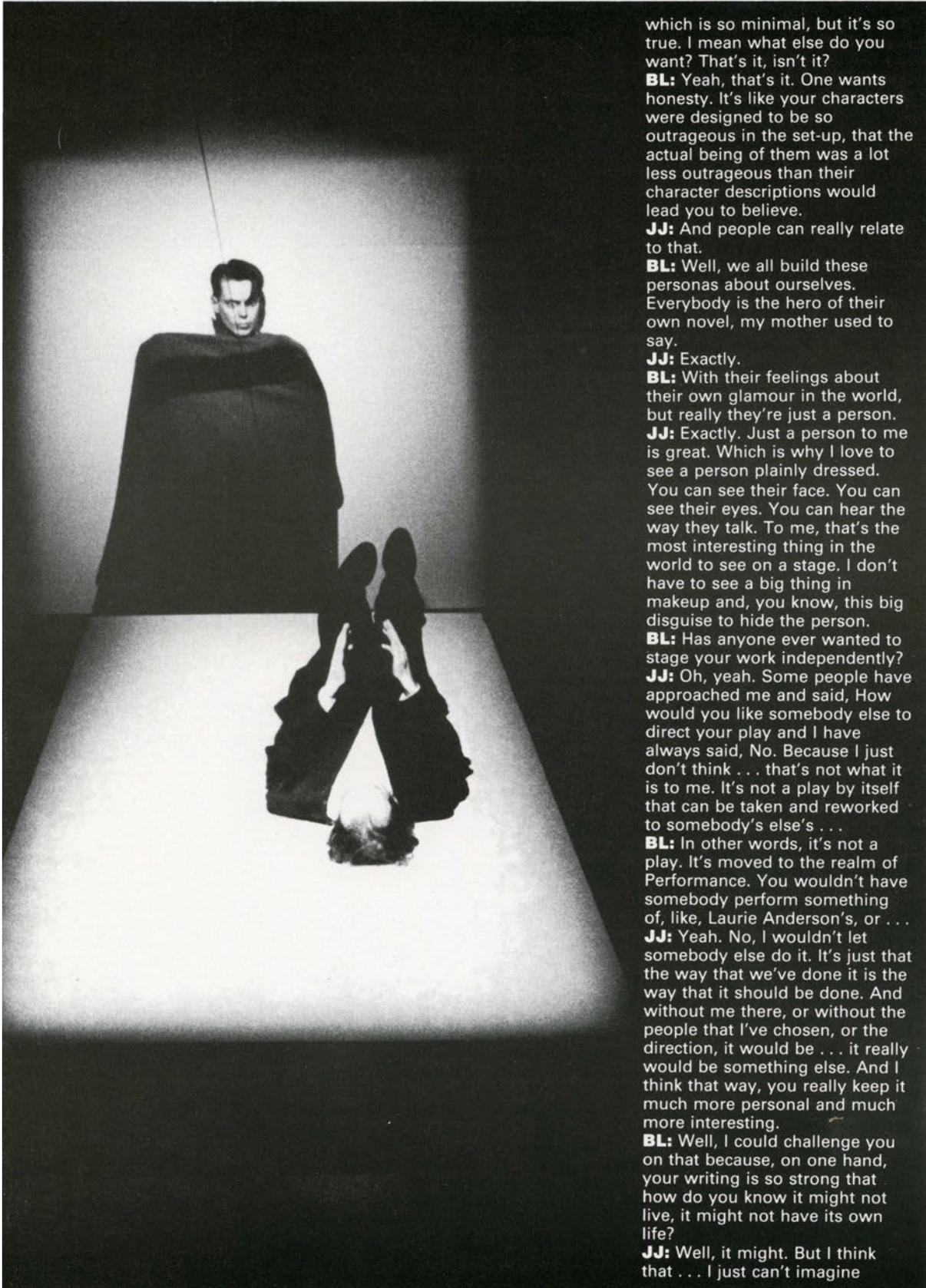
along with it and pretend that it was really happening in front of them and believe it. And then it would end. And people would leave. And the reason that I liked film was that it sort of encompasses all those phoney elements and yet, because you know that the final product is just projection, you know what I mean, it's like the ultimate piece of illusion. You know it's a piece of celluloid with light running through it and everybody really knows that. And they can sort of get lost in it and stuff. But in the end it just goes into a can and that's what it is. It's like an object. And what I hated about the theatre was that everybody was just . . . they wanted to pull people in this kind of way that was just . . . I would go to plays and think, Oh you can't ask me to sit here and believe this, this, you know, *thing*, whatever, these people getting up and memorising their lines and putting one over on you.

BL: Did you ever have trouble with any actors?

JJ: Yeah, I have had some trouble. I've been really lucky and I've been careful with the people I've chosen, but I've had, not a lot of trouble, but I have gotten a couple of people that I don't think were particularly tuned in to what we were doing.

BL: How did you deal with them?

JJ: Well, I would just . . . it's so hard to get somebody like that to calm themselves down to the point where they can just read a line, you know, and just say it. Because they keep thinking they have to perform, you know what I mean, and I'm saying, Just pretend you're in a film or something. And if you're in a film, you're just . . . you're not sort of doing all this. You're being filmed, so the camera is watching you, so just cool it and pull the people in without having to over-emote. A lot of those type of actors don't realize that the power they have is just . . . is just as a human being. People will listen to you if you just talk. You don't have to put on a big show for them. I think that's why people really liked a lot of the *Chang* characters, because they weren't always these wild crazy things. They were just a person standing there saying something



which is so minimal, but it's so true. I mean what else do you want? That's it, isn't it?

BL: Yeah, that's it. One wants honesty. It's like your characters were designed to be so outrageous in the set-up, that the actual being of them was a lot less outrageous than their character descriptions would lead you to believe.

JJ: And people can really relate to that.

BL: Well, we all build these personas about ourselves. Everybody is the hero of their own novel, my mother used to say.

JJ: Exactly.

BL: With their feelings about their own glamour in the world, but really they're just a person.

JJ: Exactly. Just a person to me is great. Which is why I love to see a person plainly dressed.

You can see their face. You can see their eyes. You can hear the way they talk. To me, that's the most interesting thing in the world to see on a stage. I don't have to see a big thing in makeup and, you know, this big disguise to hide the person.

BL: Has anyone ever wanted to stage your work independently?

JJ: Oh, yeah. Some people have approached me and said, How would you like somebody else to direct your play and I have always said, No. Because I just don't think . . . that's not what it is to me. It's not a play by itself that can be taken and reworked to somebody's else's . . .

BL: In other words, it's not a play. It's moved to the realm of Performance. You wouldn't have somebody perform something of, like, Laurie Anderson's, or . . .

JJ: Yeah. No, I wouldn't let somebody else do it. It's just that the way that we've done it is the way that it should be done. And without me there, or without the people that I've chosen, or the direction, it would be . . . it really would be something else. And I think that way, you really keep it much more personal and much more interesting.

BL: Well, I could challenge you on that because, on one hand, your writing is so strong that how do you know it might not live, it might not have its own life?

JJ: Well, it might. But I think that . . . I just can't imagine

' . . . the reason I liked film was that it sort of encompassed all those phoney elements . . . it's like the ultimate piece of illusion'

somebody else taking . . . I mean, everybody's free to read in whatever they want. But having somebody read that in and then having to reimpose it in directing a play would not be so good for me.

BL: Why not?

JJ: Because, it's like if I paint a picture — I always relate myself back to being a painter or sculptor — if I paint a picture and somebody wants to copy it, they can copy it or whatever, but I'm certainly not going to take my picture and say to somebody, Well, would you like to repaint this picture for me . . .

BL: Reinterpret my vision.

JJ: Yeah, repaint it. Like paint over it, or fix up the trees or the leaves into a way that you think might be better. It doesn't work like that, you know what I mean. Or a sculpture. Would you like to resculpt it for me? To me, I still have that feeling of being an artist or a painter. That my thing is complete as it is. Why redo it another way.

BL: What about Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* being reinterpreted by the Wooster Group in their piece, *LSD*, and all the trouble over that?

JJ: (Laugh) That was the best . . . it was probably . . . I mean, it will never ever be done so well! But, see, he's not particularly his own director, or the person that stages things, or that picks all the people. He's a playwright in the old sense of the word. Like you write the words and you're stuck to the words. And then you give it to somebody else and then, like, they do it. Which is a different thing. Because to me, the writing can be very strong, but the work isn't done yet, once I've written it. That's like a beginning. You know, there's like the other 50% which is directing it, and working with the people, and you know, doing the setups for everything, the lighting. That's the last of the writing, you know what I mean. I guess some people might tend to think that that might be embellishing what you've done, but I like to think of it as the whole thing. If somebody wants to read the play, that's great. They can take it for the words, but always know that these are just the words and the words are not the whole play, you know. So that's

why I think I've always felt . . . I think I would feel creepy if someone . . . unless it was someone I thought was just . . . I think would be real interesting.

BL: Is there someone that you have in mind as you say that?

JJ: I would say, someone like, Jean Luc Goddard. I wouldn't mind if he made a film out of something. Because he's someone that I think is great. But he could also wreck something. But I think that would be wonderful. Somebody like that.

BL: Do you feel more comfortable working with the performers that you've broken in to your style of working?

JJ: Yeah. Because some performers just have a lot of trouble. They're worried about how they should say the line, and I'm just, you know, just say it.

BL: Well, now you've been criticised for that. You've had criticism that the delivery of the text is very non-emotional, very . . .

JJ: Yeah, I know. But to me, it's really different than that. It's so much more through-out. I think a really traditional type of critic would say that it's non-emotional. But to me, in my plays, and a lot of people say it, there's some very emotional parts.

BL: Yes. Very passionate.

JJ: Passionate, or hysterical, or you know what I mean. To me, what I really enjoy about being human is that that's the range you run through. You run through things where you're just talking, and you talk that way, and why beef it up? It has to be: 'Push the gas pedal'. But there really is a tremendous range, I think. And it's not just this unemotional thing. Also, there's a lot of emotion to me in the very unemotional readings of my work. A lot of it is this juxtaposition of somebody saying this very emotional thing, but saying it in a very flat tone.

BL: The way a sentence will be in one segment, and then reoccur, and then all of a sudden you might catch the end of it and know what it means. That's very interesting. It's very unusual. It makes your mind work. It catches you off guard.

JJ: That's how we live. Non-sequiturs, pieces of things that aren't particularly finished. You

'To me, I still have the feeling of being an artist or a painter . . .'

pick them up 3 years later, like a phrase will mean something to you that somebody once said. To me, I always say this, that's sort of the way I experience life. And the way a lot of people experience what their reality is. You walk down the street and you hear pieces of things, and none of them particularly make any sense, and yet somehow you're walking down this street and it's obviously making some kind of sense to you because it enables you to continue walking. You see what's ahead of you. You hear things. You're able to edit them yourself so you can make it down the street, or in the subway. That's the way, to me, a lot of people's minds work even though they don't know they're working like that. It's like a real sophisticated type of understanding. It's like, if you took somebody from a small . . . which is what happens . . . you come from a small town, you come to NY, you absolutely do not know what is going on around you at all. You don't understand it.

BL: Do you think your work is very 'NY-y'?

JJ: One review that we got thought we were very NY-y. I mean, they thought, Oh yeah, this must be what they all do down there. I mean, it's from the East Village. You know, we got branded with East Village stuff. Which was a bad thing to say because at that time, people all thought, You know these East Village people, they're all on drugs and they're running around in all these clubs and they don't know what they're doing. There's no intelligence behind it.

BL: But that's so wrong!

JJ: It's very wrong. But they just see these costumes and the hair colours and all that kind of stuff. They just can't imagine that there's anything beyond that. A lot of people in NY think that.

BL: Well, yes, in NY particularly.

JJ: Yeah, they think, This is just, you know, just another mess. But a lot of people really got into it because I think that, I keep saying it, I think that's how a lot of people exist now. And they can understand that type of language which is fragmented. It's not, you know, you don't live in a town all your life anymore.

You don't keep getting the same letters from the post office, and the phone rings, and you see all your friends, and you live and die in the same town. I mean, now, it's really a reflection of what life is now. Which is, like, everything popping up everywhere and you have to decipher it.

BL: Maybe you've had more of a clue about that growing up the way you did.

JJ: Well, I think I did. I think I could see already that this is the way it's going to be from now on. There was no turning back, you know. I think people have to start realizing that that's how things are now. You get on a plane and you go somewhere and you never go back there. But I guess when I was growing up, that was very very strange. I think for kids nowadays, so many kids, their parents get a job somewhere, they move to Houston or some weird place. They never used to do that. And now they do. And then now, there's all these Europeans in NY. That never, I mean, God!

BL: You've certainly made use of them!

JJ: Yeah! (Laugh) I flipped out when I thought, God there's all these people that talk like . . . 'cause I loved different languages. I used as many different languages as I can. I thought. This is great. It's like a gold mine. There's all these people from everywhere. Isn't that great. Who cares if they can be understood or not? I mean, just the variety of . . .

BL: Of experience.

JJ: Yeah, it's incredible. Also the whole way that we've been, you know, affected by the media. I think maybe, people in their early 20s might just be beginning to understand it, but somebody a little older may not realize what has happened to the world yet. I mean, we can read about it, and say we understand it, but just the idea of growing up on television and on films and having things brought to you . . .

BL: The amount of information that's accessible.

JJ: Information! There's just, like, so much information that it's unbelievable. What do you do with it?

BL: What *do* you do with it? ►





JJ: How do you make sense out of it? How do you use it? Some people are saying, We can't handle anymore. It's like a mind overload. What are you going to . . . you can go anywhere, you can do anything, you can get information from all over the world. How are you ever going to handle it. I think people are slowly beginning to handle it and it's sort of reflecting itself in the art. Art is coming to us in that way. It's sort of multi-media things, pieces of information. Things that have to be deciphered and decoded. And all the real sophistication about language. Because people are used to plays and movies where somebody says something, they mean what they say, and that's what they're saying. But now, you have, at least in my work, you see people say something, but they also mean 10 other things. Which doesn't mean that you're trying to be obscure, it only means that you've opened yourself up. And the audience

has opened themselves up to realize that you can say 10 things in one sentence. Because that's how much there is to say.

(The doors opens)

JJ: This is Frank Maya, my roommate. Barbara Lehmann.

BL: Hi.

JJ: Hi. Nice to meet you.

BL: Nice to meet you.

FM: Any calls?

JJ: Helena. And that's it.

FM: Thank you. See you later.

JJ: Yeah. I think NY right now is a great place to be. It's a lot more social than when I first came here. You know, when I first came here, the atmosphere was very bad, I thought. The theatre people stayed by themselves and the film people stayed by themselves and the artists stayed way downtown and there was no mixture of anything. And then, now, when we started doing *Chang* at the Pyramid was the beginning of this great cross-cultural thing of all these people mixing together. Painters and sculptors and

theatre people all mixing together. People from uptown and downtown and music people. Because when I came here, the music was separate, you know, it was like the punk stuff going on at CBGBs and then the cabaret stuff, you know. And then, now, you go to the Pyramid, or any of those clubs, and you can see everything. And everybody. Which is great. I mean, you never would have had that. You never would have even met anybody back then.

BL: Well, performance was in the galleries and theatre was in the theatres.

JJ: Oh, it was totally separated.

BL: The clubs have really helped that. The club scene has changed that.

JJ: Yeah, and I think it happened for a good reason. Things were . . . had dried up. Nothing exciting was happening and people just felt like they had to get together somehow.

BL: The clubs have given us a community. I feel that.

JJ: Well, it does have its bad points.

BL: But in any communicative art, you do need people. You need your audience.

JJ: That's why I think it's great that it opened up. I even remember the beginning of the Pyramid. There was just this tremendous bad reaction towards downtown avantgarde stuff. Soho, all those white walls. Can't they get a little dirty? You know what I mean. And then some of them started coming to see *Chang* and stuff. There was this sort of thing, Well, what are you doing here?

BL: They need a place to hang out!

JJ: Yeah. And you couldn't get in to certain places. I think that's a reason why all these clubs started up with all these creative people. They come to NY, they go to anywhere, The Kitchen, all those places, and they can't get in. Because they don't look right,

or they don't have the right artistic credentials. There was a lot of that separation. And so they finally said, Well, fuck, we'll just have to do it ourselves. And I think the clubs ended up taking in a lot of those people.

BL: That's what makes the club scene very vibrant. But after performing in clubs for 5 years, then what?

JJ: What I think, I hope the clubs will continue because it's always great to go back to the clubs and do stuff. It should be this double thing. People should be able to perform in a theatre space or a clean white space, and then go to a club and be able to do the same thing, or something different, and feel comfortable in both. Rather than this separation of being branded as a club act or a museum act or an avantgarde act. The other way was no good. Plus, you couldn't get a big enough audience. People didn't want to

mix audiences. They didn't want to mix their minds up! (Laugh) It's true! And a lot of it, to me what's wonderful about the Pyramid, what helped all these people do their work was that it wasn't an art place. You know, it wasn't being funded by anybody. It was a bar where they sold drinks and people danced and they charged money at the door and that's what kept everything going. A real simple business thing. Nobody planned it, but it fed everything. It paid the artists, it kept the people that owned the bar happy, people could dance, they could have fun, they could hang out. They could do everything they wanted and art could be presented. Which is a great idea. Instead of having to go begging to like, NYSCA or something. When you think about it, it's how a lot of people are being seen now.

BL: Definitely. ■

'Art is coming to us in that way. It's sort of multi-media things, pieces of information. Things that have to be deciphered and decoded'



WAR THERAPY

SPALDING GRAY IS SWIMMING TO CAMBODIA

You may have spotted SPALDING GRAY, founder member of New York's Wooster Group and performance monologist recently stonewalling as a diplomat and jumping into helicopters while Old Glory is hurriedly evacuated to the melodramatic strains of Mike Oldfield's music in the David Putnam mega-epic, the *Killing Fields*. The appearance of luminaries of NY's downtown art community in blockbusters is probably not surprising, as there are said to be over 200 full length features being shot on the streets of New York each day, but the interesting thing about Gray is that he's turned his larger-than-bit part into the subject of another performance. Gray brings his account of 'War Therapy' movie-making to London's ICA in May; we preview an extract of his dialogue. Is this history or just another take?

It was a day off, and about 130 of us were trying to get some rest and relaxation out around the pool. It was very hot, and the hotel was kind of like a big, very modern prison — a pleasure prison — a hotel down below Bangkok on the Gulf of Siam. If you were taking a package tour, maybe you would go there in a chartered bus, but you would probably never leave the grounds because of bandits in the area. There's barbed wire and guards are around with shotguns, and there are dogs on the beach, some of them rabid. The dogs tend to intimidate you, drive you up against the wall, the pack of them. But if you get hold of your senses and grab a little seaweed, shake it at them, then everything is hunky dory. They go their way. Occasionally you hear the guards fire a shotgun, killing one of the dogs.

So we tend to stay on the grounds by the pool, 130 of us, all trying to relax. The Thai waiters are running around bringing us beer, and everyone is having fun, everyone is smiling. The Thais are the most beautiful, smiling people I've ever seen. Beautiful, beautiful people. I never saw a fat Thai. If you saw two Thais coming at you from a distance, you couldn't tell if they were men or women until they get close to you, and even then it would be hard to tell and it wouldn't matter. Beautiful androgyny, and wonderful food and a wonderful smile. It's a deep smile, it's a profound smile. It's not just an idiotic smile, because the Thais don't do anything that isn't fun. They have a special word for fun, "sanug." They ask before they do anything if it's "sanug." If it isn't "sanug," they wouldn't touch it with a 10-foot pole. It probably has something to do with their kind of Buddhism in that area which has made them very pleasure-loving and permissive and laughing — and you can't get in on it! I'm always trying to get in on the circle of laughter, in on all the fun they're having. Here in the West we have an idea that if we work hard, then we can have fun as a relaxation, as an antithesis, as a reaction to the work. But there they just have fun having fun. They pursue fun in a fun way. There's also another very radical idea: They don't feel they have to be punished for it.

Last February when I was in New York City, I got called up to do an audition for this incredible director, Roland Joffe, a documentary filmmaker from Britain who had been hired by David Putnam to do the film *The Killing Fields*. It was his first feature film. And it was a very strange audition. He was very intense, a combination of Zorro, Jesus and Rasputin — body of Zorro, heart of Jesus, eyes of Rasputin. He didn't read me, he just sat down and talked for about 40 minutes. He told me that the film was based on a story by Sidney Schanberg, a reporter for *The New York Times* who was covering the secret bombing of Cambodia in the late '60s and early '70s. He had a sidekick, Dith Pran, a Cambodian photographer who worked with him. They both decided to stay to cover the story of the Khmer Rouge coming in from the north in 1975. When the American embassy was evacuated in Phnom Penh, the two of them fled to the French embassy. And when the Khmer Rouge arrived there, they said, "All Cambodians out or everyone dies." So Dith Pran had to be thrown out, and Sidney spent the next four years searching for him. Finally he found Dith Pran in a Thai refugee camp. They had this wonderful reunion, he brought him to America, and now he's working for *The New York Times*.

Great story. I said, "Sounds fantastic." I said, "I would love to be in this film, but you may have the wrong man. I know nothing about politics, I've never voted in my life." Roland says, "Perfect. You're supposed to play the role of the American ambassador's aide."

Along about this time, I went to Hollywood. I'd never been there before. Some people call it "L.A." or "Los Angeles." I like to call it "Hollywood." I went there to do one of my monologues. And I was called in by Warner Brothers, because I got some good press there, to audition for a sit-com for television. I said, "Well, why did you call me?" And they said, "Well, we saw the press on the monologue." So I said, "Well, come up and see the monologue. It's just up the street at the Mark Taper Forum." They said, "We haven't got time."

In come the helicopters as the Cambodian tragedy is re-enacted

Y!



What they gave me to read was a sit-com that had been “axed” or cut, I don’t know the technical word for it, but it was something they had on the shelf, and I had to say:

“But I don’t want to spend my Sundays eating mixed nuts in the company of your sister and her jerky husband.”

And my wife says: “Oh, come on, you know you really like Norman.”

And I say: “I’m sorry Harriet, but the idea of Norman doesn’t put a smile on any part of my body.”

And she says: “Please! Get ready! Put your shoes on.”

I say: “Why? They know I have feet.”

She says: “Howard, you know it’s become a tradition to have them over on Sundays.”

And I say: “Tradition? Now listen, Harriet. Decorating a Christmas tree is a tradition. Fireworks on the Fourth is a tradition. But having your sister and her half-wit husband park their carcasses on my sofa, watch my TV and scarf down all the cashews from the mixed nut bowl, is not my idea of a tradition.”

So I didn’t get the role. I think I took the reading too seriously. But across the hall, it turns out that Roland Joffe was back, he was in Hollywood, our paths had crossed, and he wanted to meet and talk again, across from the audition for the mixed nuts. He started in on me again, this time talking about Cambodia, about which I knew really nothing. He told me how this little country had been Shangri-La. That the people had such an uninhibited enjoyment of pleasure, and not in any materialistic way. That they were still poor, but 90 percent of the people once owned their own land, and they had a good time, they still laughed, they knew how to fall in love, raise children, bury people. The only problem was that they had lost track of . . . evil. It was out there, but they didn’t have it operating in their culture — no evil or pain.

I didn’t know where Cambodia was. I couldn’t get an idea of it. *[Rolls down classroom map and extends telescopic pointer]*. There it is, about the size of the state of Missouri. In the early ’60s, there were 7 ▶

million people, 600,000 in the capital, Phnom Penh. That's a big lake right in the middle, where there were lots of fresh fish. Then Roland went on to tell me that in 1966, Prince Sihanouk allowed the Vietnamese to put some little "sanctuaries" (we called them) along the border, and General Creighton Abrams got upset about this and had an idea that there was a big central headquarters — something about the size of the Pentagon — here in the jungles. If he could just send over a few B-52 bombers, the General said, and bomb in that area, that would take care of that, and there was no need to tell the American public about it. Just a few bombing raids. So there was a secret meeting at the Pentagon at breakfast. They called the raids "Operation Breakfast," and they called the bombing plan "The Menu."

But instead of driving the Viet Cong back into Vietnam, Operation Breakfast drove them farther into the Cambodian jungles, where they hitched up with this weird band of Communists, the Khmer Rouge, run by Pol Pot. Pol Pot had been educated in Paris in Maoist doctrine, strict Maoist doctrine, except someone threw a perverse little bit into the soup, a touch of Rousseau.

This made for a weird band of bandits, hanging out, living on bugs and bark, with a pure race idea beyond anything that Hitler had ever dreamed of. Then, Roland went on to tell me, while Prince Sihanouk was out of the country there was an uprising and General Lon Nol, the prime minister, took over Cambodia.

Now no one knew anything about Lon Nol in Amer-

He told me that he was working on a nuclear battleship, and that he was stationed in a waterproof chamber, handcuffed, for five hours a day next to a green button, wearing earphones . . .

ica. The only thing the press knew was that Lon Nol backwards spelt Lon Nol. Then Roland went on to tell me about Kent State, which I had forgotten about. I had always associated it with Vietnam, but it was a direct reaction to American troops going into Cambodia. A hundred thousand protesters came to Washington, and Alexander Haig had troops in the bottom of the White House. Four people were shot at Kent State because the Ohio National Guard was using real bullets — most states weren't allowing live ammunition, but the kids who were killed were just onlookers and didn't know that the bullets were real until they were dead. When the American public was questioned, most people said the students deserved to die.

Nixon was going through enormous upset, practically having a nervous breakdown. At the time, he was developing his Madman Theory on the beach at Key Biscayne with Bob Haldeman, saying: "Bob, let it be known that I've gone crazy. That will scare the Viet Cong, because they know how much I hate Communists and I might push the botton any minute." And at the same time, he was watching reruns of George C. Scott's movie *Patton*, trying to run his policy off of that. On the night that the protesters laid siege to the White House, Roland said that Nixon made 50 phone calls: eight to Kissinger, seven to Haldeman, one to Norman Vincent Peale, one to Billy Graham. Then after one hour of sleep, he got up and put on Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 1, and with his Cuban valet, Manolo Sanchez, he went down to talk to the

protesters at the Lincoln Memorial. He talked to them about surfing, football and how travel broadens the mind.

Roland told me that it was about this time that the Cooper-Church Amendment went in (limiting the power of the President in undeclared wars), but it was completely impotent because the President was commander-in-chief of the Army and he just ordered the bombing to go on anyway. And Roland told me that it was at this time that Haig went overseas to break it to Lon Nol that we could no longer have any ground support troops with his troops, and Lon Nol turned to the window and wept, because he foresaw the downfall of Cambodia. Then Haig went back and told the U.S. government that Lon Nol cried in front of him, and they sent over a government psychiatrist to investigate Lon Nol, to do research on him. They came back and said he was "an unstructured, vague individual." The report said he used astrological and folkloric and occultist references in all of his speeches. (If you can imagine, "My fellow Americans, I'm not going out today because my moon is in Gemini," something like that.) He carried a talisman, and he practised very strange rituals of cutting open the flesh of the soldiers to let the spirit of Buddah in. His government was also changing the direction of all statues, so they wouldn't face China but would face back into Phnom Penh, to give more power to the city. They were also considering whether to copy the old Khmer Warrior Magical Markings from museums on the soldiers' outfits — the markings were meant to stop spears and arrows, but there was a debate as to whether they would stop bullets.

The Supreme Court never voted on the legality of the bombing in Cambodia, and to this day most generals speak of it with pride, because it killed 16,000 of the enemy, or 25 percent of the enemy. By then, you have to realise, the enemy was made up of the Vietnamese, the Khmer Rouge and the Cambodian peasants, who were pouring down from the jungle to Phnom Penh. The city swelled from 600,000 to 2 million. There is a military rule that units cannot sustain losses of more than 10 percent without suffering irreversible psychic damage. So the bombing, five years of it, along with Pol Pot's Marxist education in the environs of Paris, with a little Rousseau thrown in, set the Khmer Rouge up to execute actions unprecedented in modern history.

Whenever I travel, if I have the time I go by train. I love to hang out in the lounge cars because people come and tell me stories they would never tell if they thought they'd ever see me again. It's kind of a big rolling confessional. I was going out to Chicago last winter, and this guy came up and said, "Hi, I'm Jim Beam, can I sit down?"

I said, "Sure, why not. What's up?"

He said, "Oh, not much."

I said, "What do you do?"

He said, "I'm in the Navy." He was in civvies so I didn't know it.

I said, "Oh, you're in the Navy. Where are you stationed?"

He said, "Guantanamo Bay."

I said, "Where's that?"

He said, "Cuba."

I said, "What's Cuba like?"

He said, "Oh, we can't go into Cuba."

Spalding Gray remonstrating with the errant journo

I said, "What do you do?"

He said, "They fly us down to the Virgin Islands on leave, you know. We get flown down for free."

I said, "Oh, I suppose you go down there to get laid?"

He said, "No, I never bought sex in my life. Couples pick me up. I swing a lot with them. I'm into threesomes, uh, triangles, uh, pyramids. There's power in that."

And I could see how he could do it. He was cute enough. The only demented thing about him was that his ears hadn't grown. The rest of his body had, and his ears were like these little pasta shells and they hadn't caught up with his body yet. We went on talking, and I said:

"Now, where are you coming from?"

He said, "Well, I'm stationed in Philadelphia now."

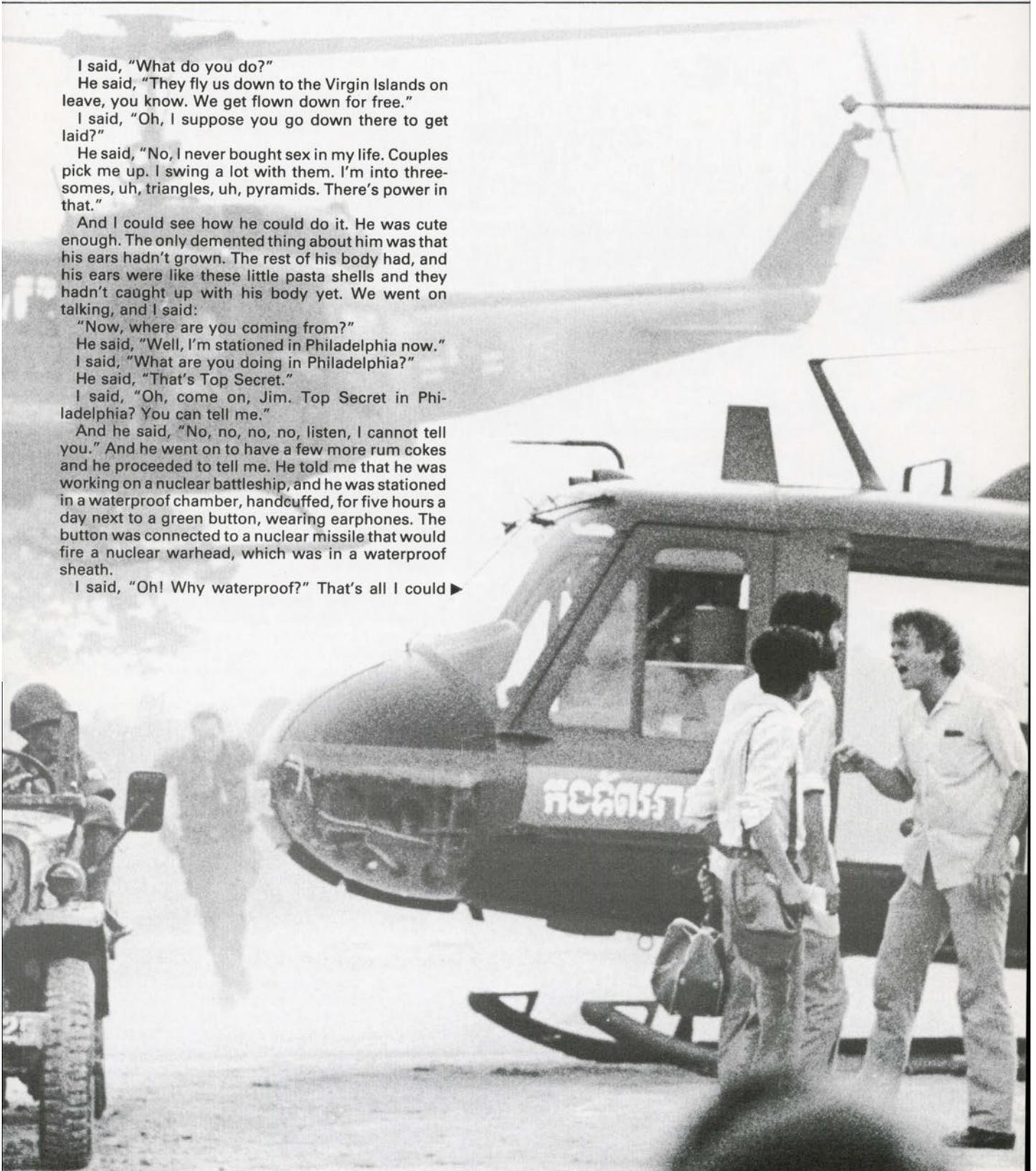
I said, "What are you doing in Philadelphia?"

He said, "That's Top Secret."

I said, "Oh, come on, Jim. Top Secret in Philadelphia? You can tell me."

And he said, "No, no, no, no, listen, I cannot tell you." And he went on to have a few more rum cokes and he proceeded to tell me. He told me that he was working on a nuclear battleship, and he was stationed in a waterproof chamber, handcuffed, for five hours a day next to a green button, wearing earphones. The button was connected to a nuclear missile that would fire a nuclear warhead, which was in a waterproof sheath.

I said, "Oh! Why waterproof?" That's all I could ▶



The movie war had taken over about 20 square miles of jungle (left)
The ambassador makes his getaway (right)



think of asking at that point. I just wanted to start with the details and work out.

He said, "Because if the ship is sinking, I can still fire off the rockets. I fucking hate those Russians, I fucking get an erection every time I think of shooting my rocket. And up, up, up it goes . . ." And he said, "My favourite drug is Blue Flake Cocaine, coming up from South America (sniff, sniff)." And he said, "I (sniff, mmm) snort up on the Blue Flake Cocaine, get up there with a lot of coffee and wait. Just wait for the directive to push that button. You see," he said, "marijuana's no good. They can test you. Ten days after you smoke a joint, they have a marijuana test. But they can't test for Blue Flake Cocaine. I fuckin' like the Navy, man. I like it because I can travel. I've been to Africa, India, Sweden. I don't like Africa, though. It has nothing to do with prejudice. I mean, I'm not prejudiced, but — I don't know why, it's a mystery to me — black women just don't turn me on."

Now here's a guy who can go to a foreign country, and if he's not turned on by the women, he doesn't see the country. He misses the entire landscape.

He said, "Those Russkies are so dumb! They're so stupid. Do you know that they don't have electric intercoms on their ships? They still talk through tubes."

And suddenly I had this enormous fondness for the Russian Navy. For the whole of Russia, the thought of them speaking like little children through empty paper towel rolls, toilet paper rolls, where you could still hear compassion in their voices, or doubt or love, or anger. All those ambivalent human vibes coming through the tubes.

I said, "Look . . . look . . ." I felt I was looking my death in the face. I figured, even if he was lying — and I'm not lying, all those stories are true — even if he was lying, he has the desire to get where he wants to be in the world. He was very patriotic. We went by Three-Mile Island and he got up and saluted. So I started on him. I said:

"Look, aren't you afraid of going mad? I mean, look what happened to the guy who dropped the bomb on Hiroshima."

He said, "That asshole was not properly brainwashed. I," he said proudly, "have been properly brainwashed. Also, I am not alone, there's a Nuclear Destruct Club. You think I'm the only one that's going to push the button? There's going to be a bunch of us."

I said, "All right, all right. But . . . you don't want to die. Think of the Blue Flake Cocaine, the swinging threesomes. There's so much to live for."

He said, "I'm not going to die, because we have PUBS."

I said, "What are those?" He was always talking in abbreviations.

He said, "Navy publications that tell us where to go, you see, after the bomb goes off."

And I pictured him, after we have all been incinerated, down in New Zealand, starting a new humanoid, pea-brained, small-eared, red-faced new race. And I thought that maybe, if we're lucky, because the world could use a rest, he'll end up in Africa.

So meanwhile, he's beginning to realize I'm not being my old liberal fly-on-the-wall, the old passive receiver, but I am slightly challenging him, just slightly, by asking these questions. So he turns on me and says:

"Listen Mr. Spalding." By then I think he was calling me Gary Spalding. "If I weren't protecting you, you wouldn't be doing your talking and your theatre, and having all the lovely things you have, because I am protecting you from the Russians."

And I thought, "Wait a minute, maybe he's right. Maybe the Russians are trying to take over the world. Maybe I've been hanging out with liberals too long. Maybe I'm the one who's brainwashed. Maybe I should listen to this guy." I mean any good liberal should question everything.

So I got the role, and I went to Bangkok. I didn't know anything about Bangkok except that Thomas Merton died there. Thomas Merton had been studying Buddhism. He was a Trappist Monk, and at last he got permission to go to Bangkok to explore Buddhism, and he stepped out of his tub and touched an electric fan. A short circuit, and he died instantly. Judith Malina said it was a CIA plot. I don't know.

Bangkok was built on a swamp. It's 110 degrees and sinking. I arrived at the hotel and the first thing I got was a letter under the door from Enigma Films, with the A upside-down at the end. It said:

"Spalding Gray, Esquire —"

The British are incredible to work for. They call you "Esquire" and they refer to actors as "Artists." They will get you to do anything that way. The letter also said:

"*The Killing Fields* is one of those few movies by which all of our careers will undoubtedly be judged."

... we were headed for the Sikorsky helicopter which does not exist because the American Airforce has not given the Thai Air Force a Sikorsky yet. So we were imagining there's a Sikorsky there ...

My first Big Scene was the evacuation of the American Embassy. It was a re-enactment. Remember that we're in Thailand (I often got confused myself), in Bangkok, re-enacting scenes that took place in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, in 1975. The evacuation scene took place at 110 degrees on a football field.

Ira Wheeler was playing the American Ambassador, John Gunther Deane. Ira is an interesting man. He used to be the vice president of American Celanese Chemical, and he was just coming to films at 63 years old. Also, it turned out — small world — that he fought in World War II with my Uncle Tinky. They were on an L.S.T. together.

In the scene, Ira carries an American flag over his arm and we run together to a Cadillac limousine on the football field. The limo was being driven by an American ex-patriate from San Francisco who said he'd moved to Thailand because he had gone mad. He said America had gone to the dogs. It had "gone to the wow-wow's." It was a decadent culture. He had gone to Thailand to live in the jungle and count elephants for the Thai Agricultural Commission. Now he had a very bad limp, and he told me that at any point, elephants might stampede him, because if you frighten elephants in the bush, they tend to charge. He was afraid that he was going to die soon.

Meanwhile, Ira (who's just starting out acting) was studying all of the Stanislavsky books, *To the Actor* and *An Actor Prepares*. Roland told him to look like he was on the verge of tears. So he was in the back of the Cadillac, and it was hot. By then the Cadillac air ▶



conditioning had broken, and Ira's one of those men who sweats like a bull. In fact, he claims he beats people at squash because they slip in his puddles. So they were changing his shirt, and he was trying to get in character, and the electric windows were broken and it was cooler outside than in, and I was talking away to the elephant expert, trying to keep my sanity, and finally Ira said:

"Stop! Stop! I'm trying to get into character. I'm trying to have an emotional memory."

I said, "Ira! Look at this guy. He's about to be killed by an elephant. Think of *that*."

So we were driving through this black smoke. There was a line of Marines, and we were headed for the Sikorsky helicopter which doesn't exist yet because the American Air Force has not given the Thai Air Force a Sikorsky yet. So we were imagining there's a Sikorsky there, and we were all straining, and driving through this black smoke, and by the end of the day the muffler had fallen off, it was dragging, and the air conditioner was broken, and the radiator's boiled over and the limousine was steaming through lines of Marines.

The scene wasn't finished until five months later, after the filming in Thailand was over. They took us to the Marine Base in San Diego, California, where they finally found Sikorskies. It was the day after the Beirut

... and all the technicians are pulling around burning rubber tyres. By now they're wearing T-shirts that say, 'Skip the Dialogue, Let's Blow Something Up.'

Massacre. The Marines at Camp Pendleton weren't talking about Beirut at all, they were so excited about the film. In fact, the flag wasn't even at half mast. I figured it couldn't be. It was the largest American flag I've ever seen in the world. If they put it at half mast, it would drag on the ground.

Suddenly the Sikorskies come over the horizon. And they are so big. They're coming in for a landing, and all of the Marines start to sing Wagner, together, "Ba-ba-ba," you know, the theme from *Apocalypse Now*. The Sikorskies are coming in, and all the same people are there from Thailand, and the technicians are pulling around burning rubber tyres. By now they're wearing T-shirts that say, "Skip the Dialogue, Let's Blow Something Up." The smoke is pouring out, and the little Thai kids are there, the ones representing Dith Pran's children who were evacuated. Then all of a sudden the smoke blows away, and all of Thailand is lifted, and we're right there in the California fog. A Marine comes up to Ira and says that all of them know us — they've seen us in the movies before, they're convinced:

"*Big Chill*. I know it. I saw you last week, man. *Big Chill*. Don't say no." They all want our autographs.

So this guy comes up with a picture of himself helping Ira and me onto the Sikorsky, and he says, "Would you sign this? 'Cause I'm going to send it to my folks in North Carolina. If I never do anything else in my life, at least I can say I've done this."

April 17, 1975. Year Zero. The Khmer Rouge marched in and started their new "history". Lon Nol's troops thought that there might be a union of all Cambodians after all — they were all brothers, it was one country, and they threw down their guns and rushed to embrace the Khmer Rouge, who came in in

their black pyjamas. But the Khmer Rouge were not smiling. They took strategic points in the city and began to empty it out. They evacuated two million people in 24 hours, in incredible Darwinian fashion. They went into the hospitals, and if the people couldn't walk, they simply threw them out the windows. They told the people, "The Americans are going to bomb the city. Go out to the country where it's safe. Start making your farms again, we're going to live off the land." The Khmer Rouge began to kill all artists, civil servants, teachers, doctors, people who wore glasses. Every one of us here would probably be killed. People were killed for having their own cooking pot, because you weren't supposed to cook except in a communal situation.

"Better to kill an innocent person than to leave an enemy alive" was their slogan. Not like the Holocaust at all, not in any way methodical or clinical — it was much more a barbaric butchery, in which they were tearing apart children in front of their mothers, disembowling pregnant women, gouging out eyes. Because there was not enough ammunition, they had to use ploughs and axe-handles. It was a kind of hell on earth — it wasn't like a metaphor, it was actually a visitation of hell on earth. Eyewitnesses said they killed with a demented glee, that they laughed as they were cracking skulls, and took bets on how many cracks it would take to knock a skull in.

Roars of laughter, and two million people were killed, either directly or starved as a result. And no one has really figured out how all this happened, partly because there's a language problem. The Vietnamese who came in in 1979 are certainly not going to give the Americans a proper history of what they found there. They're rewriting the history, like any good Communist regime. No one can figure out what drove these people mad, no one speaks enough Khmer to understand Pol Pot. People can research Hitler, but no one has distance on Pol Pot because he's still alive. And he's still recognized by the Red Cross and the United Nations, and he's up there on the Thai-Cambodian border, waiting.

We were re-enacting the landing of helicopters in the strategic Cambodian town of Neak Luong, where there was a radio beacon and the bombs had dropped on the main street and wiped out 200 people. I was playing the American official coming in. I thought they were just going to go up a little in the helicopter, 10 feet or so. They said, "Will the Artists please get on the helicopter?"

You know, I'll do it, if they call me an Artist. I got on the helicopter. And up it went, "Zhuuuup!" And suddenly it's like *Apocalypse Now*, and we're up over this jungle, and the door is open, and I have no fear of flying because it's being filmed. Somehow the camera eroticizes and protects the space, and I think, "Even if it crashes, at least my friends will see it," raw footage on New Year's Eve, or *something*.

From the air I could see how the movie-war had taken over about 20 square miles of jungle outside Bangkok. For miles around, and all the way up the Chao Phraya River, I could see black smoke as Thai peasants, employed by the film, piled rubber tyres on fires. And I suddenly realized . . . yes, of course . . . WAR THERAPY! That was the way out of actual war! Every country should produce a major war film once a year to get all their aggression out, and also provide

general employment for the masses.

In we fly, and there are all these Thai peasants, lying in the 110-degree heat with chicken giblets and fake blood all over them, and they have been paid \$5 to lie there all day, and if they're amputees, they get \$7.50. So it was very much like the actual situation in Neak Luong.

You didn't have to act. All you had to do was look down at them, or if you had to yell, you had to shout over the sound of the helicopter blades. No worry about any kind of method acting.

It was amazing what some people would go through to get in character. There was one British actor who was playing a reporter, and he thought it would be like his character to fall in love with a Mama San, who ran one of the whorehouses. And he did. He fell in love with her, and he had this wild, tempestuous love affair, and then he began to think that he ran the club, and then he was going to open his own club and stay in Pot Pong. He was from a very middle-class suburb of London, and his wife was calling, asking where he was, because the film was already over. It took three people to get him on the plane back to London, and it wasn't until he was halfway home that he realized he'd gone mad.

After the helicopter sequence was filmed, the private driver took me and Renee back to the pleasure prison, and I thought, "God! Why do I feel as though I've worked so hard? I've been here eight weeks, and I've worked eight days. Those peasants have been working 15-hour days in the hot sun."

So I began to think that I was getting spoiled, that I was getting inflated. And I got a little worried, but I knew I was going to miss it. I'd really loved it, the luxury, and I was starting to say:

Farewell to the driver with the tinted glasses and the tinted windows.

Farewell to the private car.

Farewell to the three maids and the fresh cotton sheets, and the infinitely endless fresh pineapple and fresh papaya.

Farewell to the Thai table, the British table, the hot roast lamb, American meat sent over every day according to British Equity rules.

Farewell to the fresh rose in the glass every morning.

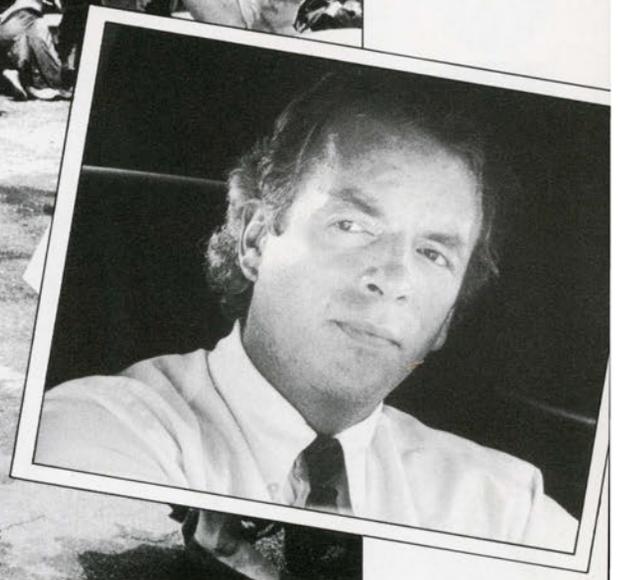
And just before going to sleep I had a flash of what it was that killed Marilyn Monroe. ■

Copyright © 1984 by Spalding Gray. First published in American Theatre, February 1985.



**Making War Films —
the way out of actual
war?**

**Spalding Gray as the
Ambassador's aide**



INSIDE A

SEAS

ROUGH

Susan Hiller is an anthropologist-turned-visual artist whose fascination lies in the phenomena surrounding communication. The Tate gallery have recently purchased her video installation *Belshazzar's feast/The Writing on your wall*, in which she considers the substitution of the TV set for the ancient hearth, in front of which people fell asleep and dreamt. Her earlier experiments with automatic writing produced some powerful visual effects — and she does not draw the line between credibility and incredulity. This article by IAN WALKER concentrates on her work with an earlier but no less immediate form of communication, postcards, and finds a key to the 'collective unconscious' of our age:



All around us there are ephemera that reflect our lives more truly than all the artifacts of High Art, High Culture. From them we can build up a history, a sociology, a psychology — and a set of aesthetic models. This piece starts with one such ephemeral object — a postcard — and one contemporary artist — Susan Hiller — and goes backwards and outwards at high speed to suggest how far one can go with such an investigation.

Last year, Interim Art in Hackney exhibited a series by Susan Hiller entitled *Inside a Cave Home*. Its basic image came from a postcard found in the mining settlement of Coober Pedy in the Australian outback; it depicted the dining-room of a cave-house built underground to escape the extreme climate above the surface.

Susan Hiller's exhibition *Dedicated to the Unknown Artists* (1976) had featured a collection of three hundred postcards of 'Rough Seas' from around the coast of Britain. Here, in this room in the middle of the desert, there was hung on the wall a reproduction of a painting of a rough sea. She has commented, "There was something poignant about these waves hundreds of miles from any ocean"¹. In fact, it seems that such pictures (often originally painted to be used on 'Rough Sea' postcards in this country) were shipped by the thousand to the colonies in the early years of this century.

A complex set of meanings can be developed from this image as suggested by the artist: "The combination of symbols in the Coober Pedy post-

card — desert, cave and sea — led me to muse on deeper psychological issues and wider cultural themes, while the two sorts of 'art' — decor and reproduction — suggested other kinds of relationships. What was the meaning of this siting of a generalized and 'foreign' image in a specific, personalized home environment?"². As with a set of Chinese boxes, nature (the sea) sits inside culture (the room) inside nature (the desert cave) inside culture (the postcard).

Back in England, Hiller had the postcard enlarged twelve times and hand-painted the rough sea on to the photograph in twelve different ways. References are there to the way the original picture would have been painted, the way that postcards of such images were usually re-touched, to the whole tradition of the romantic seascape from Turner onwards and lastly to an 'Expressionist' painting style that is now newly fashionable. The sea literally starts to come out of its frame, spilling into the polite, well-organised room. The paint spills across the photograph, violating its smooth, discreet surface.

The artist has referred to this as a returning of the image "to some kind of original state, completing the cycle"³. Another cycle was completed when Interim Art had one of the twelve pictures reprinted as a postcard, and the painting was ironically taken back into the arms of photography.

Susan Hiller's work seems very various. She has worked with a range of media, with various combinations of

CAVE HOME



'There was something poignant about these waves hundreds of miles from any ocean'

Photo: Edward Woodman

words and images, with mass-produced and individualised objects. Almost every piece she has made has *looked* quite different. Yet within her work, there is a fundamental set of concerns which revolve, echo each other and, like the rough seas, spill out of whatever framework we would like to keep them in.

One of these concerns has been with cultural artefacts, an involvement obviously linked with her previous work as an anthropologist. So various pieces have dealt with Pueblo Indian pottery (*Fragments*, 1977), Victorian memorial tablets (*Monument*, 1981), photomat portraits (in various works since 1972) and postcards. In 1972, she found her first 'Rough Sea' postcard in Brighton, and between then and the first showing of *Dedicated to the Unknown Artists* at the Gardner Centre in that town in 1976, she collected and collated many such cards. As well as the exhibition, her work with this subject included a small book *Rough Seas* and a file of notes which exhaustively catalogued and discussed the postcards.

Looking back, *Dedicated to the Unknown Artists* seems in many ways to be very much of its time. The postcards were arranged in rigorously minimalist grid formations, scrupulously backed up by documentation in the form of text and diagrams. Moreover, as in much work from the seventies, the exact role of the artist became blurred: "There may not be any distinction between discovery and creation, for although it is quite clear that I did not

produce the individual cards, the set does not seem to have existed previously"⁴. The artist was thus both creator and curator.

Yet there were aspects of this piece that were very different from the mainstream of conceptualist/minimalist work. It was, above all, an accessible show, revealing depths and complications in a subject that everyone knew about. It spoke seriously but with tongue in cheek (for the best thing about the study of popular culture is that one can have fun while doing it). And the use of postcards was more than just another sub-Duchampian exploitation of 'readymade' material. The title of the piece was to be taken quite literally to suggest that art may be, is being made all the time outside the confines of what we like to call Art. Indeed, judging from the evidence to be found on postcards themselves, it may well benefit from *not* being thought of as Art.

Susan Hiller's recent work has become more openly physical and personal; the evidence of her hand is now more apparent. She covers her own face with automatic writing in the recent Photomat portraits and repaints the rough sea in *Inside a Cave Home*. Another recent work that derived from postcard sources was *Towards an Autobiography of Night* (1983). Twelve of the 'rough sea' postcards were blown up to 20 x 30 ins. and then certain details emphasised in gold paint. The gold picks out the illuminated elements within the scenes — the moon, the light it casts, lights in houses and flying birds (traditionally symbols

for the 'illumination' of the spirit). The gold is laid in swift, simple gestures, like those of the original postcard re-touchers. And then the final literal mark of personalisation has been added — a handprint, also in gold.

Towards an Autobiography of Night, with its evocation of supposedly feminine elements such as night, sea and birds, has both personal and cultural implications. 'In this series, I'm simply saying "this is my territory", if anyone has a right to claim it, it's me, a woman . . . I want to show how one can claim a position of *speaking* from the side of darkness, the side of the unknown, while not reducing oneself to darkness and the unknowable"⁵. It is a delicate but essential balancing act: on the one hand echoing Barbara Kruger's recent slogan 'We won't play Nature to Your Culture', on the other, asserting that the values traditionally considered as 'feminine' are not therefore to be rejected, but rather to be celebrated.

One can go back to the 'Rough Sea' postcards themselves and re-read them in a context provided by feminism. Certainly, on one level, the dedication 'to the unknown artists' should remind one of another slogan: 'Anonymous was a Woman' (and indeed, re-touching postcards has traditionally been a woman's job). On a second level, one can read the postcards symbolically, though the symbolism remains rather ambiguous. John Roberts has referred to the 'conflict between a primal male power (the sea) and a passive female shoreline"⁶. I would have thought that the symbols ►



should be reversed, with the sea as the female principle, emotional and ever changing, crashing down on the unmoving solid of the male land. But the real point here is that there is an undoubted 'frisson' in the image of the 'Rough Sea' (otherwise why were so many postcards produced of the subject?) and that one way to explain this thrill is as a metaphor for an orgasmic release of sexual tension.

And what does the picture of the sea embody for the inhabitants of the desert cave? Is it nourishment and plenitude in a dry hard land (just as in this country we use landscape reproductions to escape from the sterility of the cultural 'Waste Land' that surrounds us)? Is it nostalgia, on one level for the Mother-Country (colonial nostalgia), on another, for the fluid security of the Mother's womb (biological nostalgia)? Is it again sexual, the representation of a constant flux within this womb of a home? Is it simply Life, raging impotently against the living Death of the desert?

I go too far, of course, and claim too much for this ephemeral image on its little piece of card. But, in another sense, one can never go far enough. Indeed, postcards are trivial, they are conservative and looking at them should involve a recognition both of their inherent banality and of the colonial attitudes that they often represent. But they are more than that. Within postcards, one can find aesthetic devices of great sophistication, for which one need make no allowances in the name of 'kitsch'. And on a wider level, it is not, I think, going too far to claim that it is within the postcard and allied forms of popular culture that one will find the 'collective unconscious' of our age.

One of Susan Hiller's themes has been the linking and reconciliation of exterior and interior — nature and the individual mind. A recent photomat self-portrait was entitled *Bad Dreams*. Maybe the 'Rough Sea' is Nature's equivalent of the 'Bad Dream'; maybe something like that explains the fascination of the genre. For, to quote Tom Phillips: "The postcard is to the world as the dream is to the individual"⁷. ■

NOTES

- 1 Susan Hiller — Unpublished notes on *Inside a Cave Home*, 1983.
 - 2 Ibid.
 - 3 Ibid.
 - 4 Susan Hiller — Notes on *Dedicated to the Unknown Artists*, 1976.
 - 5 Interview with Rozsika Parker, in *Susan Hiller 1973-1983: The Muse My Sister*, exhibition catalogue, 1984, p.26.
 - 6 John Roberts — *Lucid Dreams*, *ibid*, p.38.
 - 7 Tom Phillips — 'The Postcard Vision' in *Works, Texts to 1974*, p.233.
- Ian Walker last year organised an exhibition Postcard Views for Chapter, Cardiff.*

ART MUSIC FOR



Robert Ashley's
Perfect Lives: Music
by Peter Gordon

NOW

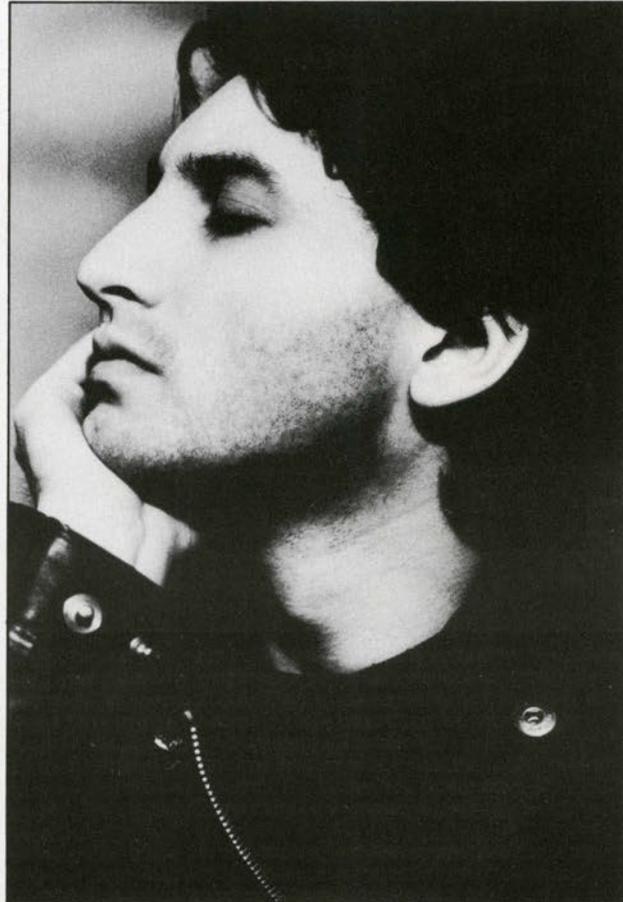
PEOPLE?

The late Cornelius Cardew, after his spectacular conversion to Maoist revolutionary politics, almost could be said to have summed up the spirit of the mid-seventies in new music when he delivered this tirade: 'The pop music of the last twenty years in particular has been a powerful weapon of US and British imperialism on a near-global scale; it is not 'our' music. And it's not the kind of weapon that we can seize and turn against our enemies, because its ideological heart is slavery and degradation.' His comments were recorded at a 'Music For Socialism' event by the seminal but defunct journal *Musics* — and it was Punk he was denouncing, but he surely could not have predicted the absorption by leaps and bounds of the British avant-garde into the mainstream record business during the mid-eighties. PETER CULSHAW takes a deep breath and tackles the implications of it all.

Taking on the beast of the market: are these men being compromised or just in tune with the times?

This is getting to be a trend. In the wake of CBS's success with Philip Glass, they've now signed Peter Gordon (of the Love Of Life Orchestra, who's worked with Laurie Anderson, Robert Ashley and Twyla Tharp among others). Meanwhile other labels seem to be quietly falling over themselves to sign an art musician: Andrew Poppy is on ZTT, Michael Nyman has been snapped up by E.G., Orlando Gough as part of Man Jumping is on Cocteau, while Wim Mertens of the Belgian group Soft Verdict (he was responsible for the impressive non-operatic parts of Jan Fabre's *The Power Of Theatrical Madness*) has been dropping hints that he's about to sign on the dotted line with a major label. At the same time, more originally mainstream musicians are coming in the other direction — David Byrne is working with Robert Wilson, Brian Eno is getting written up in *Flash Art*, and loveable old rogue Malcolm McLaren has, of course, got opera. Classical music and opera are decidedly fashionable, and besides McLaren's borrowings from Puccini, Michael Nyman is selling well with cod Purcell, Peter Gordon's version of Verdi's *Otello* helped bring him wider recognition, Simon Jeffes of the Penguin Cafe Orchestra has produced some 'deconstructions' of Vivaldi, and Mozart has hit the bottom end of the charts with the soundtrack to *Amadeus*.

The obvious theory is that it's all part of the post-modern obsession with ransacking the past in art, writing and theatre. Certainly it's a complete turnaround from the experimental and minimal music of the 70s — these days the more grandiose the better, in general. Musical guru of the mid-70s John Cage was prone to saying things like 'What Zen teaches is: if something bores you after two minutes, try it for four. If it still bores you try it for 8, 16, 32 and so on. Eventually you discover that it's not boring at all, but very interesting'. Unfortunately, too many experimental pieces were still boring after several hours, and attention spans are getting less by the year. 'My attention span used to be 40 minutes, now it's



A N D R E W P O P P Y M I C

4,' says Michael Nyman. The best of the new art music doesn't go to the other extreme of instant gratification, but works on several different levels, still offering up secrets after several listenings.

Crucial in this musical sea-change has been Philip Glass. Someone like David Byrne could point to Glass's early systems music as an influence on the Talking Heads in their CBGBs days, while his interest in larger scale operatic works was triggered in part by *Einstein On The Beach*. Post-systems music has little to do with systems music; as Glass said in this very organ a couple of years back 'Describing my music as systems wouldn't prepare someone for the richness of, say, *Koyaanisquaatsi*.' Glass occasionally lapses into nostalgia, which, like patriotism, is the last refuge of the scoundrel. Some recent Glass (bits of *'the Photographer'* and *'Glassworks'*) is uncomfortably close to kitsch. Already, there's an ad on TV for cordless phones using Glass music, and Nyman

was used for the Milton Keynes ad with balloons in it. The length of time a new artistic idea takes to end up in advertising (Mondrian shopping bags took 20 years, hip-hop jeans ads took less than 20 months) is shortening all the time.

Actually, some of this has an element of *Deja Vu* from the early 70s. In those dim and distant days, Curved Air were 'doing' Vivaldi, Emerson, Lake and Palmer ripped off (incredibly, without a credit) large chunks of Janacek and Bartok, Rick Wakeman did Brahms, there was Walter Carlos's 'Switched On Bach', and Jon Lord of Deep Purple was releasing works with orchestras. Many of today's followers of art music probably listened to ELP in their teens, but claim that they were soul boys or fans of Gary Glitter in the early 70s. There is a slight difference between the two generations, in style as well as intention. To start with Keith Emerson, Jon Lord, and Rick Wakeman drunk Real Ale (lots of it) and collected big cars. The 80s artmusos are nice,

Photo: Anton Corbijn

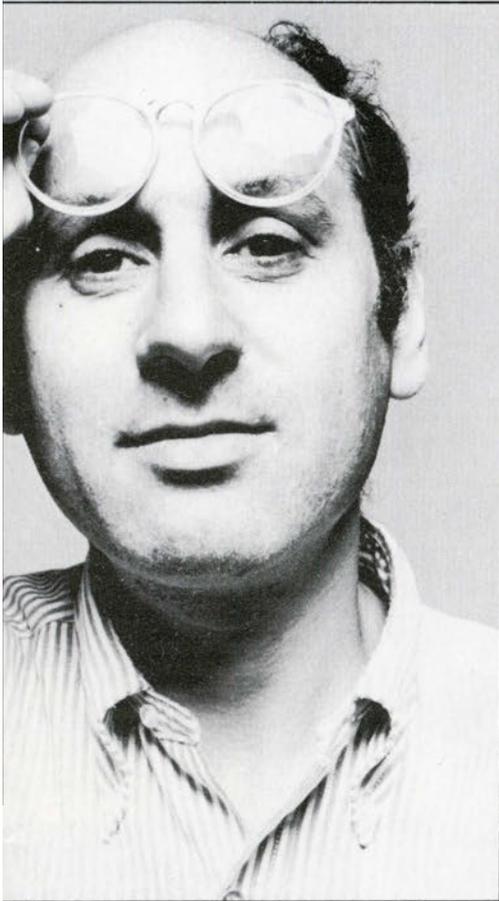


Photo: Babette Mangolte

H A E L N Y M A N

P H I L I P G L A S S

intellectual, introverted boys (plus the occasional girl like Meredith Monk and Laurie Anderson) who you could invite to tea without the danger that they would honk up over your hi-tech coffee table or molest your little sister.

There was a phase in the 70s when many musicians were reluctant to sign with the major labels, as they represented part of the 'military-industrial complex', but this shyness has vanished. The most spectacular leap from the London Musicians Co-op to mega-hype are the world's most tedious band, the Thompson Twins. Even LMC stalwarts like David Toop and Steve Beresford are likely to find themselves in the charts this year as musicians for the Frank Chickens, (David Cunningham was there with The Flying Lizards) and Andrew Poppy, Philip Glass and the others seem to have few qualms about being turned into a commodity.

Perhaps they are just in tune with the times — the Saatchis walked over the opposition at the last election, and the only

answer in many peoples' view is to out-Saatchi the Saatchis. Is it worth letting Michael Foot keep his duffel coat if it loses Labour a million votes? 'The only problem with all this is that it becomes a battle between ad agencies' says Michael Nyman, referring to both politics and music. 'When I made records for Obscure and for David Cunningham's Piano Label I had complete control. As soon as you sign with a larger company, you have to expect that as you are spending their money they will want a say in decisions.' So far, Nyman hasn't felt that his first record for EG due out in May has involved compromise 'If anything, I've avoided putting things in which make it look like I'm courting a wider audience. For one piece I wanted to add drums, but decided that it would be seen in the wrong way. However, I'm sure there is an unconscious, if nothing more, desire among some composers to write the sort of commercial music the record companies want. That's perhaps happened to Glass.' He feels in his work for advertising

he's managed to tread the difficult line between being satisfied with the music as music and pleasing his employers. The business of fame can also distort the music and perceptions of the listeners. 'Because Philip Glass is so well known now, every time I use arpeggios in a piece, which he uses the whole time, reviewers mention that I'm heavily influenced by Glass. I'm resisting the temptation not to use arpeggios for that reason. I can also imagine that if Andrew Poppy sells a lot of records people will think I'm following in his footsteps, when in fact it's the other way round. He's using my musicians and telling them to sound like they do when they play with my band.'

Nyman says he feels happier with EG than we would on ZTT. One way of looking at the ZTT phenomenon from Frankie Goes to Hollywood to Paul Morley's initially striking ads is precisely that it's subversion turned kitsch, radical chic revisited, without threat.

It may be that EG's lower key approach, will ensure a steady ►

Cage (right): 'If something bores you after 2 minutes try it for 4, if it still bores you, try it for 8, 16, 32 and so on'

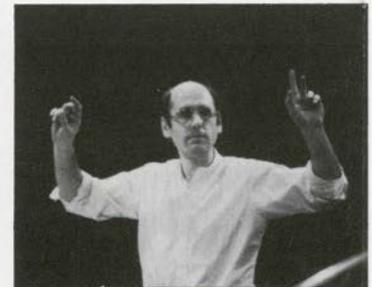
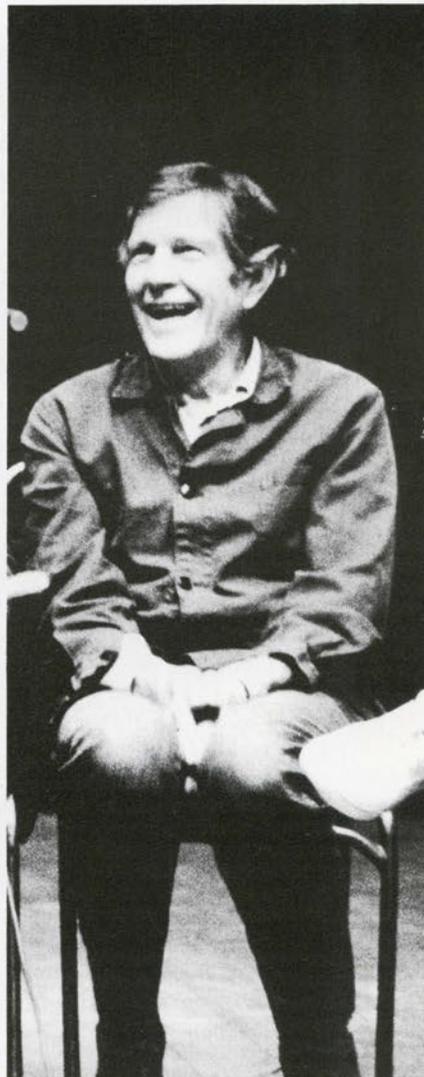
Nyman (centre), now producing ads for Milton Keynes: 'My attention span used to be 40 minutes, now it's 4'

sales for Nyman over the years than a big hype followed by a backlash when music that is fashionable one year is inevitably right out the year after.

There is undoubtedly a gap in the market spotted by record companies — specifically people in their late 20s and 30s who still like to be trendy but for whom pop music is either too loud or too banal. Improvised music is too chaotic and usually loses impact on record, as the music is emphatically part of a performance, but post-systems music is perfect for the video age when going out is too much effort and you might get mugged or catch a nasty disease. Art music is in some ways more ideal for videos than pop music — even die-hard fans find it difficult to sit through pop promos more than a few times, whereas videos with artmusic accompaniment like Jarman's *Imagining October* (with some of Genesis P Orridge's best music on the soundtrack), *Koyaanisquaatsi* with Glass's soundtrack, or *The Draughtsmans Contract* with Nyman's score bear repeated listening and viewing. Spotting the reference in *The Draughtsman's Contract* was for a while a major dinner party occupation before the invasion of 'Trivial Pursuits'.

The art world in general reflects this more 'realistic' attitude towards business and 70s buzzwords like 'alternative', 'radical' or 'careerist' are rarely mentioned without a wince or at least the implied use of inverted commas. Mean is Chic and everyone watches *Dallas* and *Dynasty* with their simple propaganda that *money is fun, business is sexy and power is exciting*.

There are some rather odd links between the art and music worlds — Penck has played with Glenn Branca and Dokoupil is reputedly a wizard on the Casio, but a more important link is the similar prevailing ethos. While figuration is back, the musicians have rediscovered tunes, and both pilfer from the ikons of the past. Art dealers like Tony Shafrazi are as sharp as any music biz manager, and Willi Bongards has compiled a list of the Top 100 artists, a list which



has been compiled in the same spirit as the Financial Times Share Index, as an investment aid. The art world has always been as fashion conscious as the fashion world and sometimes even more sheep-like than politicians (it was ever thus, from the Third Reich to Steve Reich).

It would be too easy to adopt a knee-jerk reaction against the merchandising of art — but the process means some decent money for artists is not to be easily dismissed. Starving in a garret loses its appeal after a while, and it's probably better to take on the beast of the market than reject it because of half-baked ideas of ideological purity. There are dangers, but in the words of the Chinese Proverb 'Gold is tested by fire, but men are tested by money'. If the price is sometimes kitsch and artists discussing real estate at openings that has to be weighed

against good old socialist maxims about redistribution of wealth. It's about time artists got their hands on some filthy lucre. (Overheard at a recent exhibition — Robert Mapplethorpe complaining that although he had 2 million dollars to spend, he still couldn't find the right loft).

Most 80s art musicians have at least some integrity, and the reason why this type of music has arisen was described by the Penguin Cafe Orchestra's leader Simon Jeffes: 'As a composer, I have found the existing categories of music uncomfortably limiting. Contemporary developments in 'classical' music are generally so intellectual and difficult that very few people are able to respond to it. Pop and rock lack real musical interest and the feeling of it recently seems negative or banal (or both). Jazz seems over-



mannerist and English Folk Music lacks power and seems irrelevant and archaic. I have been endeavouring to continue the development of my own musical language drawing not on national but global influences. An attempt at creating a contemporary music for the heart of our own time and culture.' Jeffes music seems innocuous enough at first, but has considerable subtlety and power, especially when performed live, and his sentiments would probably be shared by many post-systems composers (I'd explain my own attempts to write film and dance music in similar terms.) The different strands of art music from ambient music, from post-systems music to found music is likely to continue to influence the mainstream, to, as they say, 'combat noise pollution'.

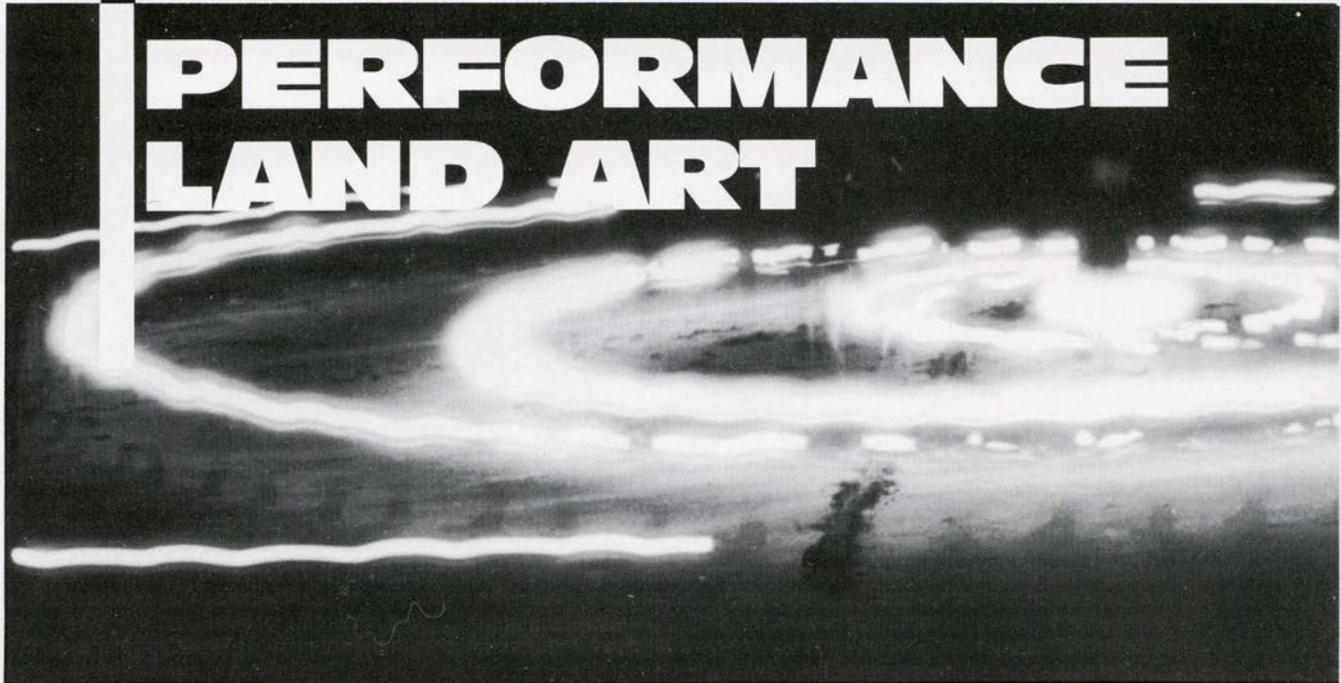
They have a difficult job. As

Carl Maria Von Weber said in 1802 (150 years before Muzak) 'Times are getting harder for the composer. There is so much music making nowadays; from its youth the public is over-accustomed to music, so that its sensitivity declines. That very piece of music which leaves people unmoved today would affect them greatly if they heard no music for a whole year.' The majority of composers working away in places like the London Musicians Collective won't of course be whisked away to fortune and fame. But just as the US space programme justified the expense by pointing to useful technological spinoffs like the non-stick frying pan, record companies should invest more in the pure avant-garde and recognise its importance in feeding new ideas into the ever-voracious world of pop music. ■

'Gold is tested by fire, but men are tested by money'
(Above: In Venice Money Grows on Trees, by Chris Burden)

Continued from last issue, performance artist ANTHONY HOWELL'S log of an expedition to the dry lakes of the Australian goldfields to research, and use, the largest available performance spaces in the region:

PERFORMANCE LAND ART



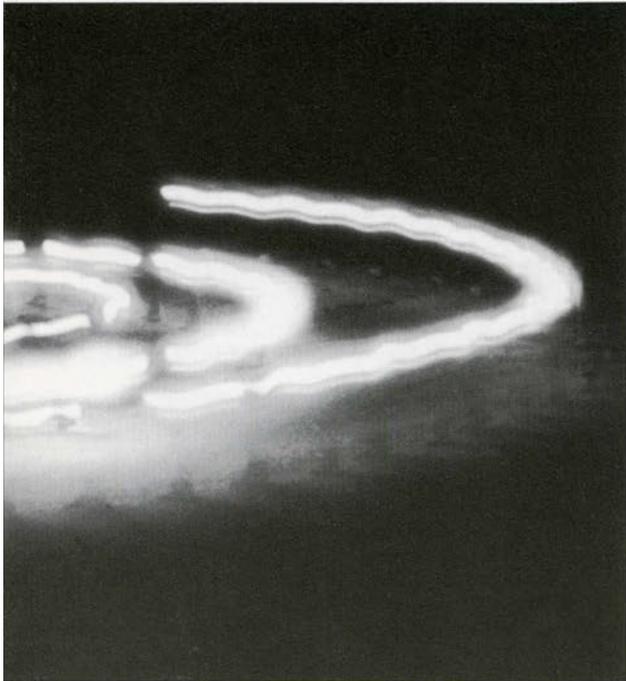
WEDNESDAY, MAY 26 — DAY 4

I wake up at 7.30, having slept well, with my head resting on Martin's spare pillow. Martin himself has slept outside, by the dying embers of our campfire. After a cup of tea, I set off on a two hour walk along the ridge above and to the left of our inlet. I'm dying to see a real live kangaroo in the bush — so far, I've only seen them in zoos — and here the ground is littered with 'roo tracks and droppings. I'm equipped with compass and binoculars, and I head slightly inland. Various birds flutter or glide past me, but otherwise I see nothing but trees: Eucalyptus, olive-leaved with the recent rains, paper-barks, and various low acacias. I climb into the boughs of a gumtree and remain completely silent; scanning the bush with my binoculars. Nothing — only the sound of dangling strips of bark knocking against the trunk in the breeze. The low ceiling strips of bark knocking against the trunk in the breeze. The low ceiling of clouds stretches forever over the low bushland. Each day we have looked up at the sky anxiously. Sometimes it has been blue. Sometimes high cirrus cloud has passed across. With each alteration in the sky the surface of the dry lake changes. Sometimes vanishing into mirage; at other times so clear one can make out the line of the far shore. I think about what we have achieved and about what we have failed to achieve. We've not managed to examine how far apart one has to stand before vanishing from sight, or before being unable to hear each other shout. The far reaches of the lake are still too quaggy to be played on. These experiments will have to be carried out on another trip — on Lake Marmion, if we ever get there.

I descend the tree and make my own way down to the lake's edge, walking back to the camp over its surface. My shoes still sink beneath me on the lake proper, but most of our inlet is now dry and firm. The clouds are clearing — if it remains windy and sunlit, an even larger amount of its surface may dry out; and we could get a decent game of Active Circles by the afternoon. I reach the tents in time for bacon and eggs at about 9 a.m.

After breakfast, I teach my performers a "Table Move without Furniture" on the sand lagoon — we need a change from the circles which we'll perform for the last time after lunch. In this re-arrangement performance, the performers are themselves the objects that shift through 90 degrees on the axis of the centre of a performance square. We mark out a square 40 feet by 40 feet on the sand, and then bisect each of its sides — giving a square composed of four smaller squares. This is a larger area than I usually use for a Table Move — about twice the size of that used in Table Move solos — but it works well given the enormity of the lake.

First, we try entering the square one at a time, adopting a position, moving through 90 degrees — thus shifting from one of the smaller squares to the next — before another performer enters to take up a position. When all the performers are working in the square, the first one to enter it leaves, and so on — the last to enter becoming the last to leave. People move one at a time, their positions standing out starkly against the far horizon of the flat surface. We attempt the moves again; this time adopting "armature" positions for one cycle, then changing to "supported" positions for a further cycle; one performer serving as the armature supporting another's position — an armature which will collapse when that supporting performer moves on through 90 degrees, to disintegrate altogether when the armature is abandoned for a supported position. There are some wonderful mo-



ments, and since the additive/subtractive nature of the piece allows performers to be their own audience, Allan manages to get some photographs of the culminating moments.

We break for lunch. Lindsay and Martin set off on a walk across the lake, while others sleep and I write up the log.

Afterwards, I set out on another stroll, and meet Lindsay and Martin returning — Martin carrying a ladder they've found down the shaft of an abandoned mine. There are several of those dotted over the spit of land several ks away — between the lake and the Kalgoorlie/Menzies road. Their names are evocative: Happy Jack, Lake View, Gladsome, Comet Vale, Sand Queen . . . Mines are marked on the map with crossed pick-axes. Because of their names the goldfields' maps read like poems. First Hit, the Teutonic Bore, Lake Disappointment, White Quartz Dam, Deadman Soak, Cracky Jack Rockhole — what a country!

We go out onto the lake for our last session of circling, with a seven-person line-out and no witnesses — I haven't seen humans other than our party since we got here, and I've only heard civilization in the far distance — the rare lorry on the road beyond the mines.

During this last session we get one wonderful vortex audible line; performed without my needing to shout corrections.

What are we doing, out here in the wilderness, performing for ourselves alone, unable even to document the most exciting moments because all are engaged in the attempt? Is it art? I am reminded of Willa Cather's remarks in 'Death Comes for the Archbishop':

'When they left the rock or tree or sand-dune that had sheltered them for the night, the Navajo was careful to obliterate every trace of their temporary occupation. He buried the embers of the fire and the remnants of food, unplied any stones he had piled

together, filled up the holes he had scooped in the sand . . . Just as it was the white man's way to assert himself in any landscape, to change it, make it over a little (at least to leave some mark of memorial of his sojourn), it was the Indian's way to pass through a country without disturbing anything; to pass and leave no trace, like fish through the water, or birds through the air.'

A fine audible line gives us the radius of a circle so large that performing it takes several of us off the lake into the bush; almost achieving that entropy needed to conclude our game, which ends 'when players perform a circle so large they remain neither within sight nor sound of each other.' At least some of us have vanished into the thickets, and our last calls and last glimpses of each other fade as the sun sets over our tents pitched on the outcrop.

Over tea, Lyn suggests that semaphore would be a good way of getting across signals, messages concerning the circle to be performed next, corrections, suggestions and so on — all of which prove necessary to the game but which interrupt the silence of its rotations, and which would become confusing, if not inaudible, when performers were a kilometer or so apart from each other on the widest of dry lakes. Active Circles still has a long way to go. But we've finished our performances for this trip; and after supper we drive into Menzies for beers and baths in the one pub. I play '8-ball' with Lindsay and lose miserably (twice). An unsteady gentleman across the bar is playing 'How much is that doggy in the window' on a squeaky mouth-organ. The women wander back into the bar, glowingly refreshed, with wet hair. The drinking continues. Somebody strums a guitar. We sing a dirty version of 'Daisy' — all about Daniel. Martin offers the clientele a solo of 'The Bald-Headed End of the Broom'. Then, as the drinks get downed as fast as they're shouted, the whole pub starts singing — 'Halleluyah, I'm a bum', 'The Boy from Tunera', 'Tiperary', 'The Ballad of Ned Kelly', 'Irene, Good-night', 'A Lovable Lad', 'The Goldmine in the sky', 'Duncan'. The evening is rounded off by Gene Merwin, the publican and, like Allan, an American, reciting word-perfect the entire ballad of 'Dirty Dan Magroo'. As he recites he seems to me to have turned into a solemnly intense bullfrog. His eyes bulge. He croaks out the last lines with a sincerity terrible to hear. I've not come across a publican who recited poetry before. Western Australia is a fine place for surprises. Here, people must create their own culture if they are to have any at all. 'You've been a great audience', says Gene, pumping my hand as we leave.

The bus lurches off towards the campsite and oblivion, and now I realise that I've forgotten to mention what was perhaps the day's most felicitous incident — at least, from my own point of view. As we rattled towards the Menzies road on the red track leading to it from our inlet, the most stupendous grey kangaroo bounded across our headlamps.

THURSDAY, MAY 27 — DAY 5

We break camp in the morning, pack the bus, and head on beyond Menzies, another 100 ks or so. Gum-► cont. 42

Active Circles at night

Allan Vizents

NEWS

BACKSTAIRS REVOLUTION IN PERFORMANCE ART

A new promotion scheme has been set up which could significantly change the face of performance art funding in Britain. ROB LA FRENAIS examines the implications:

Schedule 1
Arts Council of Great Britain

£	£		£	£
3,700	754,209	<i>Brought forward</i>	333,183	12,375
		London: Institute of Contemporary Arts Limited	356,400	
595		The Riverside Trust	101,000	
900		National Association of Arts Centres	3,120	
				793,703
		Community Arts		
1,210		Action Space Mobile	4,000	
		Aklowa Association	17,000	
750		Arts and Technology Laboratory Limited	20,000	
		Charivari	12,000	
1,400		Ekome Dance Company	37,000	
		Fantasy Factory Video Limited	13,400	
1,298		Free Form Arts Trust Limited	81,000	
	9,853	Lanzel Co-operative	8,000	
		Major Mustard's Travelling Show	7,200	
		National Association for Asian Youth	17,000	
		Shelton Trust	6,000	
		Steel an' skin (Arts) Limited	38,400	
		Suitcase Circus	1,000	
		Tara Arts Group	8,000	
		Word and Action (Dorset) Limited	5,000	
				275,000
		Minorities Arts Advisory Service Limited		20,790
		Shape Limited		15,840
		Special applications		
	2,800	Centre Ocean Stream	7,250	
	58,000	Horse and Bamboo	10,000	
	£825,862	Intermedia	800	
		Mary Longford Inc	2,000	
		Sue MacLennan	1,000	
		Kate Owen	1,400	
	12,375	Performance Magazine	9,000	
		Station House Opera	750	
		Miranda Tufnell	1,350	
				33,550
		Carnival		
		Ballisaye		500
209,040				
124,143				
		<i>Carried forward</i>	500	1,151,258
333,183	12,375			

It is ironic that while the battle lines are being drawn between the Arts Council and their drama clients, a quiet, backstairs revolution is taking place with the funding of performance art. Jeni Walwin, the Combined Arts Officer, has set up a national scheme for promoting performance art, a move that should once and for all legitimise this mercurial but fast-growing artform.

The Arts Council has always given out small sums of money in an ad hoc manner to performance artists, but since the occasional media scandal in the seventies, it has tried to keep a low profile on this aspect. The departments responsible for this filtering out of funds have been almost as difficult to pin down as the work itself, moving from department to department under such bureaucratically creative titles as 'New Activities', 'Special Applications' and now 'Combined Arts'. This department also funds this magazine, although we are not exclusively devoted to performance art. Until recently, these departments have really been a kind of marshalling yard for the administratively unacceptable, those with nowhere else to go. This latest move by Walwin, herself experienced in promoting performance art, should have a number of overall positive effects on this situation: performance art itself will become

Marshalling yard for the administratively unacceptable? (figures from Arts Council Report 1983/4)

recognised, visible, while the nowhere-to-goes, the far end of the fringes of theatre, music, and dance should be in a better position to lobby for acceptance by the main departments.

As with many things connected with 105 Picadilly, there's bound to be a down-side, but first an explanation of how the scheme is to work. Three regional centres, with experience of, and sympathy for, performance art, will be allocated sums of money to commission work, organise tours, and arrange their regular programmes. These are to be Projects UK, Newcastle, The Midland Group, Nottingham, and a consortium of the Zap Club and the Brighton Festival. As well as being geographically different, they will also be different in approach. The Zap will use their existing unique links with a regular club-going audience to widen the cross-section of people exposed to performance 'doing what we already do, but better' as the Zap's Neil Butler puts it. The Midland Group will expand their Performance Art Platform to form a more ambitious event, and possibly tour it around the country as well as using the established resource of their building and gallery, while Projects UK will be more commission-based — 'to spread the possibilities further', as programmer Ken Gill says, and consider work not so easily put into a nightclub, or cabaret setting.

What does this mean for the performance artist in the street? Obvious advantages include: a built-in audience, dealing with a sympathetic promoter (and all these certainly are) and a clearer idea of what projects are available and who to go to for them. The disadvantage is the fact that this will now be the only method by which performance artists can get national project funding (there will also be initiatives to encourage regional arts associations to participate) which means that those who have had money by the old, ad-hoc method of project funding could be cut out, especially if the new promoter doesn't fancy them.

The most direct casualty of this factor is likely to be the touring group, Centre Ocean Stream, whose funding over the last few years has reached a higher level than money available for promoters to hand out without wiping out the rest of their programme. This is exacerbated by a less-than-

friendly arts association, Southern Arts, which has prevented them from taking the same devolved route as the other large performance art project client, Horse and Bamboo. There has also been some private criticism of the undeveloping nature of their work, but if this is so, a formal and open procedure of evaluation should really have taken place, something that doesn't often happen in the unelected and confused committee structure of the Arts Council. Their case is a classic one — the informal procedures of Arts Council funding have led to high expectations on their part for continued subsidy which are then dashed because they happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, regardless of the quality of their work.

However, blame for this situation should not be laid directly at the door of Walwin, who inherited them as a client, and has been given a very limited budget to do anything with at all. Arts Council officers are not well known for their great strength of character, and her outspoken and determined stance in changing the face of performance funding is to be admired. She is someone who has worked with performance artists, understands their problems and has seen a lot of work. She should be given the chance to put her experience into action.

However, that does naturally lead to the next question — which is how is the scheme to be evaluated, and will it survive beyond the tenure of whoever set it up? There is to be a monitoring group of 'experts' to see it through the first year, and hopefully lobby for further funding (the amounts concerned, compared with the principle are presently hardly dramatic — totalling around £25,000). Whether it will survive in the same form will depend on its success, and more importantly its popularity with the artists it promotes, on whom it will stand and fall. Reaction among the art community has been so far mixed, but one artist did privately express some resentment about 'having to go to Neil Butler, or whoever, for my Arts Council funding'. One natural fear should be allayed, though. The promoters are restricted from spending more than ten per cent of the money on administration. And all the promoters, to a greater or lesser extent, are already sup-

ported heavily by their regional arts association (or in the Zap's case, a successful commercial set-up); so we should be getting good value for money.

Other points that are bound to come up — what about London, where probably 50% of performance artists could be said to live and work? Well, if you go along with the basic principles (if not the practice) of the 'Glory of the Garden', that London has traditionally had more than its fair share of the cake, you'll go along with this scheme. It will certainly force this magazine to pay for some train fares out of its non-existent budget. It could also be said that working artists are pretty much used to the vagrant lifestyle anyway, with the inevitable tours of far-flung arts centres, and more important the scattered part-time teaching essential to basic financial existence.

Which finally brings us to a fundamental innovation, which is the inclusion of an educational context to projects under the scheme. This ranges from work with schools at both the Zap club (which has strong ties through Butler, who recently left teaching to start the Zap) and also at the Midland Group, to the automatic inclusion of an Art College lecture circuit in the North to artists accepted for commission by Projects UK. This is absolutely vital, given the recent upsurge in interest in performance art by audiences and media. We are missing a whole new generation of performance artists, because of the effect of the so-called 'return to painting' in the art schools, and this must be remedied, fast. The scheme should be able to intervene here by showing students the example of working artists who persist in their calling, despite the difficulties.

Initiatives of this sort always provide rich food for cynics, and there are certain to be those who see this as just another example of the farming-out of responsibilities, a privatisation of performance art. This need not be the case. The scheme should be watched, criticised, and if successful, lobbied for. In the current atmosphere when despite its tiny proportion of government spending, the arts have become a national issue, it's time for live artists to become visible and raise their voices among the furore. ■

The promoters are:
Nikki Millican,
Midland Group
24-32 Carlton St.
Nottingham
(0602 582636)

Ken Gill and
John Bewley
Projects UK
Saville Place
Newcastle upon
Tyne NE1 8PQ
(0632 614527)

Neil Butler
Zap Club
191-193 Kings Arches
Between the Piers
Brighton, Sussex
(0273 671547)

Gavin Henderson
Brighton Festival
Marlborough House
54 Old Steine
Brighton BN1 1EQ
(0273 29801)



The Australian performers

trees dwindle to Mulgar scrub. The straight road travels from one long, low rise to the next. Tracts of turquoise landscape give way to tracts of grey tussocks. We pass an eagle perched on a kangaroo's carcass, tearing at it, oblivious of the lorry lurching past it, a few inches away. We reach Leonora — a series of humps culminating in one big hump emerging from the middle of a plain covered with low bushes which stretches in all directions — with a few distant hills, like blue smudges, sporadically along the horizon. This particular hump, Mount Leonora, was discovered by the party which set out from Perth in search of Leichardt's ill-fated expedition (upon which Patrick White's 'Voss' is based).

Nearby is Gwalia, a ghost town surrounding the 'Sons of Gwalia' Mine, once the largest after Kal's Golden Mile, now a series of broken down incidents in the clinker of its own rubble. There's a Eucalyptus which has grown up through a rusted oil-drum. Perhaps it originally arrived in this barren place as a sapling inside that oil-drum. The drum is older than it; but the tree will survive the drum, which has practically rusted away already. Herbert Hoover erected the towering headframe at the pithead, where the skips once poured out their ore, dragged up 37 levels by a steam winder which is probably the most gigantic piece of period machinery that I've ever seen.

Everywhere, there's red slag, the natural colour of the innards of the earth here, mixed with the dust of rusted things — things fashioned out of corrugated iron mostly — walls, awnings, verandahs, roofs — all coming apart at the seams, reached into by the tendrils of plants. Windows with cross-cross wooden lattices now lie falt on the ground among Agave cactus and pickly pear. There's an empty concrete swimming-pool, once luxurious, now clogged with junk and weeds, which overlooks the unsafe timbers of the headframe; and beyond that, a closed-up hotel and a railway track and the endless miles of the bush fading into the distance.

After yesterday's considerations — the idea of man being imperceptible in the landscape, of vanishing into it rather than imposing upon it — all this ravaging of the ecology, this upheaval of landscape, should arouse feelings of antipathy and revulsion. Strangely enough, it fails to do so. It's fascinating. Beauty is operating here too. It's the beauty of pathos and decay. One's sensibility becomes attuned to the ingenuity of rust — which can turn a child's broken toy, a battered clockwork car, into a relic precious as any in

P. Bradbury

a crypt — an object transformed by exposure to a thousand thousand miles of wind and sky. But against the burnt umber of the rust can be seen the beauty of brash silveriness and corrugated flexibility. There's a sculptor living here — Al Doss is the name above his door knocker — he creates shiny fantasias out of this material which seems somehow particularly vulgar to the European.

Then there's the beauty of details — of the million and one man-made things brought into this wild place: thermos and saucepan; a pair of furnace bellows; wheel-barrows, churns, tweezers, tanks, gears, jack-hammers, pumps, engine-blocks, sieves and sifters, carburettors, intake manifolds, klaxons, spoon-tools, bosses and fillets, pinion patterns, train brake blocks, vacuum cleaners, cash-boxes, curling tongs, scales and mincers, vegetable slicers and irons for various purposes — even one for ironing the billiard table. Knife-sharpener and polishers, percolaters, and, possibly my favourite — the Beehive Sock-Knitting machine.

Just as the Australian Bower-Bird makes a bower of blue objects — from pen-tops to snatches of blue wool — the Australian Homo-Sapiens, both Aboriginal and Caucasian, seem to take pride in gathering a bower of rusted junk about their 'humpies' — overwinds, detachable car-bonnets with vintage fluted vents — all seemingly accidental, yet somehow strategically placed. Broken jalopies like beetles unable to right themselves are balanced upside down on their roofs. Perhaps it's to get at their differentials — the necessity is a happy eventuality. They look better that way.

There are certainly more possibilities of beauty than have yet been imagined. The hunter, admiring the wild animal, makes as little sound as possible, and leaves little evidence of his passing — for this appeals to an aesthetic sense which has roots in qualities which ensure survival — silence, invisibility, stealth. The prospector stakes out his prospect, thumps with his pneumatic drill, twists and bends his rippling sheet or iron to build a shanty — and this appeals to another aesthetic sense, developed from a need to ensure survival in a money society; valuing ownership, property and exchangeable objects. Both aesthetics have a validity in their own terms. As do artworks which are paintings and artworks which are simply activities.

At last we tire of wandering in this waste-land and head for the flesh-and-blood town of Lonora, where, after a hamburger and coffee, we pile back into the bus and start the long drive home to Perth. Back past jeedamya, and the dirt-road turn off for Lake Marmion, back through Menzies, past Comet Mine and a glimpse of Lake Goongarrie, through Kalgoorlie to Boulder, where we drop off Andrew's compasses, maps and shovel. Then we continue past Coolgardie, through Yellowdine with its wallaby cafe, now flaunting a sulphur-crested cockatoo on a perch outside its door, and on towards Perth — towards hamburger franchises, supermarkets and office blocks — 'slabs of business' as John Ashbery calls them — entering the world of suburbs and dual carriageways.

We arrive at about 2 a.m., separate, travel to our homes and collapse into our civilised beds. The built-up area surrounding us still seems remote — somehow more alien than the outback.

I dream of the road. ■

THE BYAM SHAW DIPLOMA

is a full-time 3-year course in fine art which is accepted at University level for post-graduate studies.

Short-term, extra mural and post-graduate/post-diploma

courses also available.

Entry to all courses is by work and interview.

Over 70% of UK students receive Local Authority grants.

**Apply now for a prospectus to
Byam Shaw School of Art
70 Campden Street, London W8 7EN
(or'phone 01-727 4711 – 24 hour service).**



WHITE LIGHT

57 FILMER ROAD LONDON SW6
TELEPHONE 01 731 3291

Theatre lighting design, control,
equipment and hire

Audio-Visual presentation,
design and projection

Equipment maintenance and refurbishing

Installation, distribution systems,
special effects

OUR PRICES ARE COMPETITIVE –
PLEASE RING US FOR A PRICE LIST OR QUOTE



arVideo

01 - 251 3623

SPECIALIST VIDEO SERVICE FOR ARTISTS

Economical and sensitive presentation
of all your work on video. Broadcast
trained cameraman ACTT. Call Janusz.

(01) 251 3623 – 24hr answer service.

HIGH EXPOSURE: LOW RATES

Try an advert in

PERFORMANCE MAGAZINE

You could get unexpected results.

Call 01 935 2714 (24 hrs) and we'll
talk to you about our plans for future
issues and how that could affect
YOUR event or service.



Brighton
Festival

+

The
Zap Club

present

A FESTIVAL OF PERFORMANCE

May 3rd – 27th 1985

- FRIDAY, 3 Festival Opening Party. Zap Awards Music.
3-10 MAY Desperate Men Residency. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Workshops.
SATURDAY, 4 Cabaret including Desperate Men. Ian Miller – Instant Exhibition. Rose English.
SUNDAY, 5 Trio Elan. Noon-2 p.m. Classical.
TUESDAY, 7 ZAP Awards for Comedy/Speciality/Performance.
WEDNESDAY, 8 Stefan Szczelkun. Anne Seagrave. Zen Zen Mime Company. Noon and 7.30 p.m. outside.
8-11 MAY Industrial and Domestic Theatre Contractors performing around the town.
THURSDAY, 9 Desperate Men Show. Simon Herbert Video. Kiosk Video.
FRIDAY, 10 ZAP Awards Music.
SATURDAY, 11 Cabaret including Roland Miller. Peri Macintosh. Oscar McLennan. Vicious Boys.
11-17 MAY Roland Miller Residency. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Workshops.
SUNDAY, 12 Printers Measure. Noon-2 p.m. Folk Poetry Reading – Sydney Carter and Charles Thompson – 2.30 p.m.
TUESDAY, 14 ZAP Awards for Comedy/Speciality/Performance.
WEDNESDAY, 15 Ivor Cutler. Sexton Ming.
THURSDAY, 16 Roland Miller Show. Kiosk Video.
FRIDAY, 17 ZAP Awards Music.
SATURDAY, 18 Jeremy Hardy. Phil Gunderson. Bow Gamelan Ensemble Outside & in Cabaret. Ann Bean. Paul Burwell.
18-25 MAY Performance Surfing Residency/Convention 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Workshops.
SUNDAY, 19 Paul Gregory and Sean O'Connell. Noon-2 p.m. Classical.
TUESDAY, 21 & WEDNESDAY, 22 Performance Art Platform. Applications welcome – £1.50/£1.00.
WEDNESDAY, 22 Drum Festival. Noon. All aspiring and actual drummers welcome. Outside.
THURSDAY, 23 Roy Hutchins. Alan Denman. AdaD. Kiosk.
FRIDAY, 24 ZAP Awards Music.
SATURDAY, 25 Cabaret with Performance Surfing 8 p.m. Outside and at sea. ZAP Awards for Comedy/Speciality/Performance. Ex-Zap Presentation.
SUNDAY, 26 Rita James & Guests. Noon-2 p.m. BUSKING FESTIVAL. All day in and outside. ZAP Awards Presentation.
MONDAY, 27 BUSKING FESTIVAL – Judging 10 a.m. Live Radio Broadcast 2 p.m.

Evening Performances from 8 p.m. Dinner from £2.00. Bar.
"Best of the Festival" slot most evenings from 10 p.m.-midnight.
Contact ZAP CLUB for details of ZAP AWARDS.
ZAP DISCO Every night except Sundays or Mondays. Midnight-2 a.m.

Applications now being considered for 8 Days – A review of Live Art 1985.
Telephone: ZAP CLUB: 0273/775987 or MIDLAND GROUP: 0602/586236.

Video Retrospective – showing some of the 1000 Performances that have taken place since the Zap Club opened in November 1984. 6.30 p.m.-8 p.m.
New Video Work every Thursday 9/16/23 May. Midnight-2 a.m.

All day/Evening Tickets £2.50/£2.00.
TICKETS: FESTIVAL BOX OFFICE Tel. 0273/682127.
Zap Club 191 Seafront Arches, Brighton. Tel. 0273/775987.

SUBSIDISED BY THE
Arts Council
OF GREAT BRITAIN

The Artists Directory

**Richard Layzell
Heather Waddell**

**London Art and
Artists Guide**

Paris Art Guide

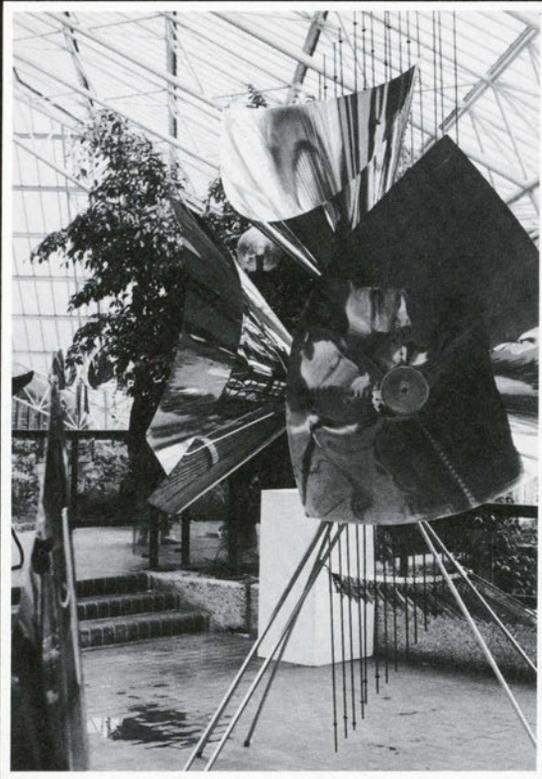
Australian Arts Guide

New York Art Guide

Art Diary

Flash Art International

The Artists Directory



**Art Guide Publications
London, England**



**Art Guide Publications
London, England**

Paris Art Guide
London Art and Artists Guide
Australian Arts Guide
New York Art Guide
Amsterdam Arts Guide April 1985
Berlin Arts Guide May 1985
Art Diary Photo Diary 1985
Flash Art International magazine
The Artists Directory

The **Paris Art Guide** (2nd edition), a new, enlarged, revised edition contains details of art galleries, museums, print studios, art and photography classes, art suppliers, bookshops, art organisations, summer festivals as well as restaurants, café-théâtres, music places, parks and markets and general information on Paris. 128pp, 14 photographs, 2 art maps. A French edition is published by Librairie Gründ, Paris.

The **London Art and Artists Guide** (3rd edition) is a comprehensive pocket art guide to London. The guide covers 500 galleries divided into five sections: museums, galleries dealing in 1900 art, contemporary art galleries, national centres and institutes and alternative art spaces. Useful art addresses, studios, workshops, evening classes, art supply shops, artists groups, art magazines and art bookshops are also included. The London information covers transport, restaurants area by area, pubs, tea places, parks, markets, music places and sport. There are 25 b/w photographs, 4 maps.

The **Australian Arts Guide** covers galleries, theatres, music venues and other arts information in all the major Australian cities. It also covers restaurants, travel within Australia, useful information and addresses, making it a useful guide for both Australians and visitors to Australia. 30 b/w photographs and maps. (2nd edition now available).

The **New York Art Guide** contains similar information to the London guide but relating directly to New York (Manhattan), the world's contemporary art capital, covering galleries Uptown, Midtown, and Downtown. Other information covers restaurants, travel, transport, and useful information for visitors. 30 b/w photographs and maps. 2nd edition.

Art Diary is published by Flash Art magazine in Milan, Italy and Art Guide Publications acts as UK distributor for both Art Diary and **Flash Art International magazine**. Art Diary covers 38 countries listing professional artists, art critics, galleries and cheap hotels and restaurants. Flash Art International magazine is published quarterly and covers art exhibitions in UK, Europe, the USA and Australia with colour photographs.

Paris Art Guide Editor Fiona Dunlop Price £3.50 \$6.95

ISBN 0 9507160 65, 128 pages 14 b/w photos

London Art and Artists Guide Editor Heather Waddell Price £3.95 \$6.95

ISBN 0 9507160 73, 132 pages 25 b/w photos

Australian Arts Guide Editor Roslyn Kean Price £3.95 \$6.95

ISBN 0 9507160 8 1, 132 pages 30 b/w photos

New York Art Guide Editor Deborah Gardner Price £3.95 \$6.95

ISBN 0 9507160 9 X, 140 pages 30 b/w photos

Art Diary Publisher Flash Art Milan, Italy **Photo Diary** both Price £12.00

Flash Art International magazine Price £2.50 per issue

Published five times a year Price £15 p.a. sub.

The Artists Directory 160 pages 12 b/w photos, ISBN 0 9507160 05

(a handbook to the contemporary British Art World) Price £6.95 \$14.00

UK Bookshops should order direct from Ken Dickson Marketing Ltd.

Telephone 0990 25421 or through BIBLIOS.

ORDER FORM To: The Address below. Please send me

.....copies of London Art and Artists Guide	£3.95+50p postage	\$6.95+\$1.25
.....copies of Paris Art Guide	£3.50+50p postage	\$6.95+\$1.25
.....copies of Australian Arts Guide	£3.95+50p postage	\$6.95+\$1.25
.....copies of New York Art Guide	£3.95+50p postage	\$6.95+\$1.25
.....copies of Art Diary or Photo Diary	£12.00+50p postage	\$20.00+\$1.25
.....copies of Flash Art International	annual sub	£15.00
.....copies of The Artists Directory	£6.95+50p postage	\$14.00+\$1.25
.....copies of Toronto Art and Artists Guide	£3.95+50p postage	\$6.95+\$1.25
.....copies of Amsterdam Art Guide	£3.95+50p postage	\$6.95+\$1.25
.....copies of Berlin Arts Guide	£3.95+50p postage	\$6.95+\$1.25

Name

Address.....

Signature..... Date

Cheques should be made payable to Art Guide Publications and sent to the address below. Once the cheque is received books will be sent by return of post.

ART GUIDE PUBLICATIONS, 28 COLVILLE ROAD, LONDON W11 2BS 01-229 4669

The Artists Directory

2nd edition 1985

Richard Layzell
 Heather Waddell

The **Artist's Directory** is a comprehensive art handbook for artists, art world people, arts administrators, Arts Councils and the interested art public. It covers advice for artists about exhibiting, useful art addresses, gallery information throughout Britain (divided regionally), art supply shops, bookshops, magazines, art schools, awards, competitions and studios. It also has sections on tax and artlaw, sponsorship, art in public places, the role of the British Council and Arts Councils, an international section for art travellers and a useful art bibliography.

The **Artist's Directory** is aimed at the contemporary art world and is essential reading matter for everyone involved in the contemporary art world in Britain. The main emphasis is to provide artists with useful and essential information but the book will also prove invaluable for its extensive listings of contemporary art galleries and art information throughout Britain.

ISBN 0 9507160 05 £6.95 \$14.00

180 pages 30 b/w photographs 2nd edition

ORDER FORM

To: The address below

Please send me.....copies of **The Artist's Directory** £6.95+50p postage (UK)
 \$14.00+\$1.25 postage (USA/AUS)

For overseas postage add 75p (Europe) surface
 £1.00 (USA and Canada) surface
 £1.50 (elsewhere) surface

Reduced price for artists and students £5.00+50p postage

Also available from Art Guide Publications UK CAN
 Please send me.....copies **London Art and Artists Guide** USA, AUS

.....copies Paris Art Guide	£3.95+50p postage	\$6.95
.....copies Australian Arts Guide	£3.50+50p postage	+
.....copies New York Art Guide	£3.95+50p postage	postage
.....copies Art Diary	£3.95+50p postage	\$1.25
.....copies Flash Art International magazine	£15.00 p.a. sub.	
.....copies Amsterdam Arts Guide	£3.95+50p postage	
.....copies Berlin Arts Guide	£3.95+50p postage	

Name

Address.....

Signature..... Date.....85/86

Cheques should be made payable to Art Guide Publications and sent to the address below.

ART GUIDE PUBLICATIONS LTD
 28 COLVILLE ROAD, LONDON W11 2BS

01-229 4669