REVIEWS + NEWS + FEATURES + INFORMATION JUN/JUL No35

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PERFORMANCE

LIFT SPECIAL

ELS COMEDIANTS
LA GAIA SCIENZA
FOURTH PEKING OPERA TROUPE
ALBERTO VIDAL
BOW GAMELAN ENSEMBLE

WITH FESTIVAL GUIDE

30 PAGE SUPPLEMENT OF INTERVIEWS, EXTRACTS AND PROFILES FROM THE LONDON INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF THEATRE

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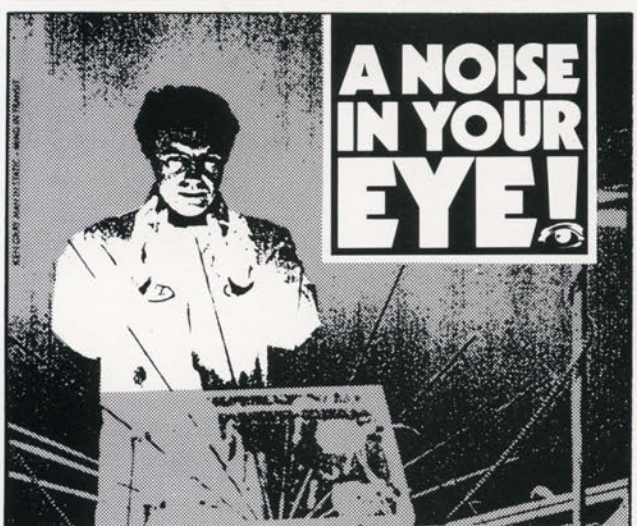

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TO OUR NEW READERS: If you're reading this magazine for the first time, because of our extensive coverage of the LIFT festival, welcome to our pages. We hope you will find in them a refreshing and informative view of contemporary live performance — the focus of everything that is exciting and new in the arts today. We have produced this special LIFT issue to give you a detailed background to the work and lives of many of the groups, but we also hope to widen our readership. We hope you will stay with us in the future.

TO OUR REGULAR READERS: Don't touch that dial! We're not moving over to just covering theatre. In fact we hope that by now you've got used to the fact that *Performance* widely embraces all the disciplines to cover what we consider the most vital activities going on — whether they be in the visual or performing arts. The next issue will be a theme issue on identity, and will contain a strong visual art element. The one after that will feature New Music. And we'll always keep you informed about the ephemeral world of performance art. But we think the LIFT Festival is of considerable interest to the art public everywhere — whether it be the rampant futurism of La Gaia Scienza, the Zoo life-performance of Alberto Vidal, the visual pyrotechnics of Els Commediants or the cultural importance of the Fourth Peking Opera Troupe.

TO OLD AND NEW READERS ALIKE: Look out! You are holding in your hands *the* multi-disciplinary cultural artefact of the future. Stay with it!

Two apologies: One for the price increase, because of rising costs and an expansion of size (Subscriptions remain the same until July 31 — so subscribe now) and the other for the lack of a preview section in this issue. We hope to get that service back up to scratch for the next issue.

ELS COMEDIANTS

Spain is in the grips of an enormous popular artistic renaissance, where combinations of avant-garde forms, and open air spectacle attract huge crowds of ordinary people. Spearheading this has been the Catalan company, Els Comediants, who animate material from Spanish history and legends with giant puppets, dragons, fireworks, and spontaneous pagan rituals. At LIFT they will perform *The Devils, A Night in Hell* outdoors, as well as their latest work *Alé* at Sadlers Wells. They live and work together in the Catalan countryside, and TERESA WHITFIELD went there recently to discuss their work:

ANTS

LIFT SPECIAL

From Canet de Mar, a village in Catalonia, Els Comediants bring '*The Devils, a Night in Hell*' an outdoor extravaganza of pagan activity whose performance lives and dies with the fire and fireworks at its centre, and *Alé* (Breath) 'that which elevates man from mud', which purports to be no less than the story of our humanity. But all this seems very far from a sunny April day in the idyllic Mediterranean 'finca' (the nearest Spain comes to a country house) where the company live and work.

Here the stable blocks have been converted into a music studio and workshops bulging with giant heads, masks, and carnival costumery. Outside, the extensive garden combines rehearsal space — an old circus tent, relic of the days when two of the company ran a travelling circus — with larder, as lines of vegetables give way to laden fruit trees. 'Vila Soledad', or Solitude, once housed only an octogenerian Señora who liked to grow her own carp in the pond; Els Comediants moved in and the solitude went with the carp. In their place, a swimming pool, tucked in behind the hens and geese. Over beers and 'Tapas' I talked to two of the company, Paca and Megga, both snatching time from a day-long meeting marking the end of months of work on their latest film, and preparing for the summer's touring ahead.

TW: Have you always been so tied up in this house?

Paca: This house, let's see, is our one, two, three, our fourth house. We've been in this village for ten years. The first was smaller — then so was the company. Since then we've been constantly growing in numbers and possibilities. Thirty people are a lot stronger than eight or twelve. In the end we found this house, which is really marvellous. We didn't have the capital to buy it, but we can enjoy it while paying off the loan for years to come. We have all our workshops here — well, everything really.

TW: Do you all live together?

Paca: Yes, we live together — well, not all in the same house because we don't fit any more. Some live in that little house you can see over there by the gates and others, who form part of the company but have work of a more 'satellite' kind live in our old house in the centre of the village.

TW: You work collectively too, don't you?

Paca: We always work collectively but various areas of our work get divided up as turns out to be necessary — the person who is at one time administering our performances won't at the same time perform; in the same way the director of the film doesn't actually appear in it.

TW: I've noticed that in the workshops all your things are in a very specific syle — huge masks and exaggerated features . . .

Paca: Most of the things we use could be said to have developed from Catalan folklore — as could the ways in which we use them — but, on the other hand, the syle of the company is also a sort of exaggerated Baroque — yes we're like Baroque carnival players and characters. It is this Baroque carnival that, together with the folkloric elements, manifests itself in our giants and monsters, music, dance and fireworks to create a whole very rich in spectacle of one kind or another.

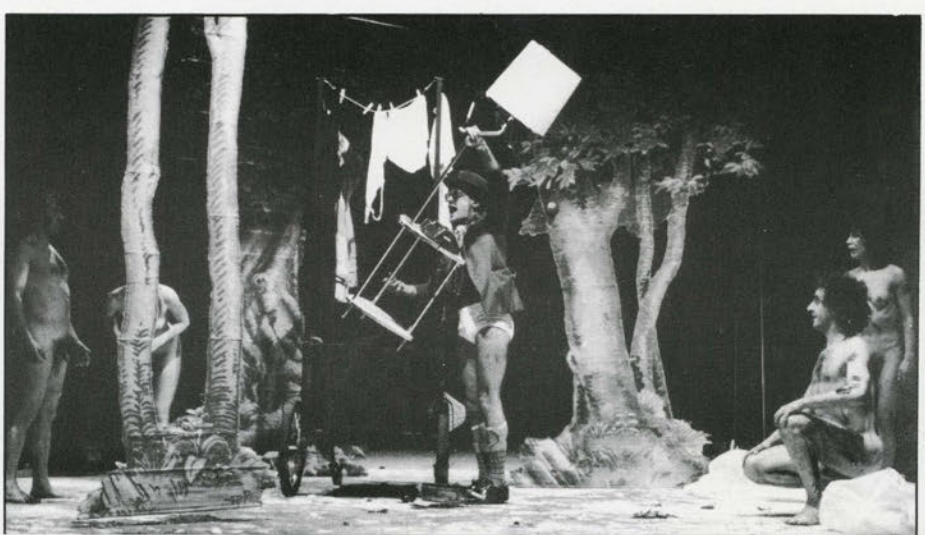
TW: Has this spectacular style been particularly adapted for the streets?

Paca: Yes, well all the elements of our style are basically from and for the street. In the street you can loose dramatic gestures, whereas images last. A giant, even if he can't talk, or a dwarf with a huge head, is always visually powerful. These are folkloric figures that come out of a country where you can be — and are — in the street on ninety per cent of the days of the year.

TW: This form of theatre, then, of the street and of people, is one of communication in its most general sense.

Paca: Well, it's very difficult to define the kind of ▶

Remaking humanity in 'Alé'



'The Devils' — performed in most outdoor spaces to crowds of 10,000

theatre we present.
TW: Yes, of course.
Paca: But as our starting point for doing theatre at all is to communicate to the maximum level possible. We can say that the focus of our communication is towards the majority. We present our shows thinking of all ages and all kinds of public — we certainly aren't minority-orientated in this respect. But it's always very difficult to define because the scope of our work varies — and not only from one medium to another. Within our general norms, marked differences appear in our productions — differences that reflect the shifting perspectives within the company, whether on an ascetic or a philosophical level. For example what we ended up with in *Alé* has practically nothing to do with *Serau*, a show we presented a short time before.
TW: Why, what was that like?
Paca: A dance — we wanted to make the public dance throughout the performance, to make them dance to the rhythms of the music that we were playing. Quite different from *Alé* in which we tell the story of humanity and the audience stay seated throughout — watching and listening. Whereas *Serau* was devised so that people couldn't stay still for a minute.
TW: What do you mean by the story of humanity? The story of human life?
Paca: Starting from the creation we explain our vision of man — not *a* man — how we see him. How we think of him. It's something fairly personal — even a bit scientific.
TW: Is this vision optimistic?
Paca: Yes, in the end, always. Life's there to be lived. But we're not as optimistic in *Alé* as we were in another, earlier show, *Sol, Solet* in which we were so *very* optimistic that we were forced to rise above a realistic level to the level of magic. Because reality couldn't contain us. We put on a show so magical that it was . . . it was perfect, but it was not real. *Alé* has something more real about it. It has something — well obviously when you talk of humanity, however optimistic you may be, there is a level of deception, of blackness in there. It's very difficult to say that everything's fine.
TW: With the audience sitting, watching and listening, is *Alé* specifically a show for the theatre?
Paca: Well, for a closed space, I'd rather say. We've performed it in squares, in theatres, and in halls. The problem is more one of creating the atmosphere, more or less intimate, that the show demands. When I say 'intimate' I should stress that our intimacy has nothing to do with 'standard' intimacy. For us, having the audience more or less still and quiet is intimacy. Normally, we're bombarding the poor public.
TW: Would you agree with that Megga?
Megga: Well, I don't know — though I suppose it's true of 'The Devils' where fire and fireworks play such a crucial role.
TW: Ah yes, *The Devils* is the other show you're bringing. Performed in vast outdoor spaces to crowds of 10,000, it sounds anything but intimate.
Megga: It's difficult to explain *The Devils*, I'd say that it's more of a special event than a normal performance. Usually we present it either in parks or in the streets when, moving along, bringing the audience with us, we end up in the main square.
TW: The show must vary enormously as do your venues.
Megga: Yes it does, but what remains constant is the atmosphere created by our fire, dancing and drumming. It's like a contemporary ritual made for

'Normally we're bombarding the poor public'

Photo: Kim Manresa

LIFT SPECIAL

Hell on the streets

and by the audience — in that they participate. Our experience has been that the public engage very easily in the atmosphere we try to create. We're inviting people to participate in Hell on the street.

TW: Sounds like it'll be popular with the London police. These devils that you use to create and celebrate the Night in Hell, do they go back to the folkloric traditions that Paca was talking about earlier? The whole things sounds rather like some of the medieval celebrations in England.

Megga: Well, yes, *The Devils* is based on an old tradition from — I'm not sure when. Here in Catalonia on certain days and feasts in the year some villages still follow the tradition and have twelve or twenty people dressed up like devils, running through the streets and letting off fireworks. This is a ritual that existed before christianity. It was left over from the times when people worshipped the sun.

TW: This hell, it's for whom?

Megga: Everybody, it's not a place for the evil or wicked. The devils are tricksters, playing with the people, and have nothing to do with the Devil of Christian tradition.

TW: So everybody goes to Hell for a night of wild revelry — infinitely preferable to eternal brimstone.

Megga: That's it, nothing to do with terror or torture. We present a more pagan atmosphere where Hell is a kind of fiesta.

TW: *The Devils* has been performed a lot outside Spain, hasn't it?

Megga: Yes, it works very well as it has nothing to do with the understanding of languages. To understand this show, the audience enters it and goes with it.

TW: Is travel for you a two way process, of communication in both directions?

Paca: For us it's fundamental — even though our identity is firmly rooted in this country, in that this is where we have our cultural background? As a company we're lovers of travel and need to encounter new things, new people. If we were established, quiet and still in one place, it would virtually be our death. Our story, our adventure, is that of the journey we have made together — and this includes the physical journeys we have made to new countries. From these we learn — every time something more. ■

LA GAIA SCIEN

La Gaia Scienza is part of the *Nuova Spettacolorita* movement which emerged in Italy a few years back, defined by Godfather/critic Guiseppe Bartolucci as 'a collective sensibility . . . having an interest in surfaces of reality: fashions, musical rhythms, frenzied movements, technological devices'. Our writer at the time found 'this combination of non-theatre lights,' found them 'like a tribe of demented ants performing some strange demonic ritual, (which) became hypnotically fascinating in the way that physical deformities of the rotting carcass of a dead animal can be.' *Ladro di Anime* (Thief of the Soul) is their latest piece, and JOHN ASHFORD, former Theatre Director of the ICA went to Italy to have a look, and weigh up their new work:

At the airport:

The Malpensa airport in Milan is newly decorated. The colours are grey, black, and yellow. The shapes are oblong and triangular. I am wearing grey trousers, black shoes, and yellow socks. I pass inconspicuously.

On the train:

The Italian countryside seen from the window is familiar: horizontal in the foreground, vertical in the distance against a flat plane of sky. The colours are brown, dusty green (despite the recent rain), terra cotta, and blue. The people are in their houses.

In the street:

On the many popular news stands in Rome, usually at the front, are copies of the magazine *Domus*. It is a monthly Italian review of architecture, interiors, fashion, design and art. Some parts are translated into French and English. There is no equivalent British specialist magazine which unites these interests. Gilbert and George are on the cover. The shape is thick and heavy. The colours are glossy. It costs 6000 lire.

'People stride and fly and stand at angles which defy gravity'

Photo: Jessica Carroll

In the room:

The shapes are rectangular, cool, modern, stylish; the colour of the brick is white. It is the small office of a young video company. Giorgio Barberio Corsetti, director of the Rome-based theatre group La Gaia Scienza, shows me a videotape of their most recent show: *Il ladro di anime* (Thief of the soul).

On the videotape:

Two men in a double great coat — head to tail — do battle for gravitational supremacy. Two women wear flowing steel dresses. A man's suit is made of the plaster of the wall of the house. A man is a porcupine. Another suit gets bigger and bigger and bigger. Now the three women just wear shirts. Hands emerge from the drawer of a wardrobe. It becomes a costume. The sofas are soft. People slide and fly and stand at angles which defy gravity. People speak: 'I cannot speak for I would tell lies'. A palm tree grows from a man's back. Floors collapse. Carpets turn vertical at will. The thief walks from one side of the stage to the other, upside-down, treading the top of the proscenium arch. He wears a black suit and carries the soul under his arm. The shape of the soul is human. The colour is pink.

In the Piazza Farnese:

A stray mother cat keeps a casual eye on her kitten who plays with a broken egg shell. If the Siamese cat in Milan was called Citröen, then this kitten in Rome I name Cinque Cento. It forgets the shell for a moment, distracted by the human movement around the square. The eyes of a distracted animal.

Outside the bar:

Giorgio and I sit at a small table. People, children, cars, animals cross the small square. A man opposite tries to repair his car radio. I switch on the cassette recorder. Music suddenly blares out from the car radio. We laugh. I switch off the cassette recorder. As if in response, the man's music is cut off. I switch on again. The music starts again. We laugh and shout at each other about art. Giorgio, in an expressive gesture, knocks over his glass. The shape of the spillage is triangular on the round table. The colours are orange and white.

On the audiotape:

Giorgio explains that after university he entered the school of dramatic art in Rome. He rejected literary theatre and studied improvisation, Tai Chi, and acrobatics. He thought it necessary to destroy the language of the theatre, to reduce it to a minimum in order to create something new. For his final project he presented a text-less work with

IZA

a title borrowed from Nietsche: 'La Gaia Scienza'. The notion of 'The Merry Science' also related to the troubadour tradition as a description of Love. Later, he met Marco and Alessandra, and the three formed the core of the group for the next six years. They were all performers, designers, devisers, with no differentiated roles. They looked for a new model for the production of theatre, and the model was that of free jazz improvisation. The performers' instruments were their own bodies, and their individualities formed the basis of the work. They were influenced by post-modern choreography — Steve Paxton and Tricia Brown in particular. But since they were not trained as dancers, the influence was more of an attitude to performance which emanated from The Grand Union, a quality they perceived as real 'being' on the stage. They were working in no tradition, so they were free to choose their own from Meyerhold and Mayakovsky to the Peking Opera. The performances, illuminated by anything but conventional theatre lighting, took place in open squares, gymnasia, caves, clubs and parks as often as in theatres.

Flashback — at the ICA Theatre, 1982:

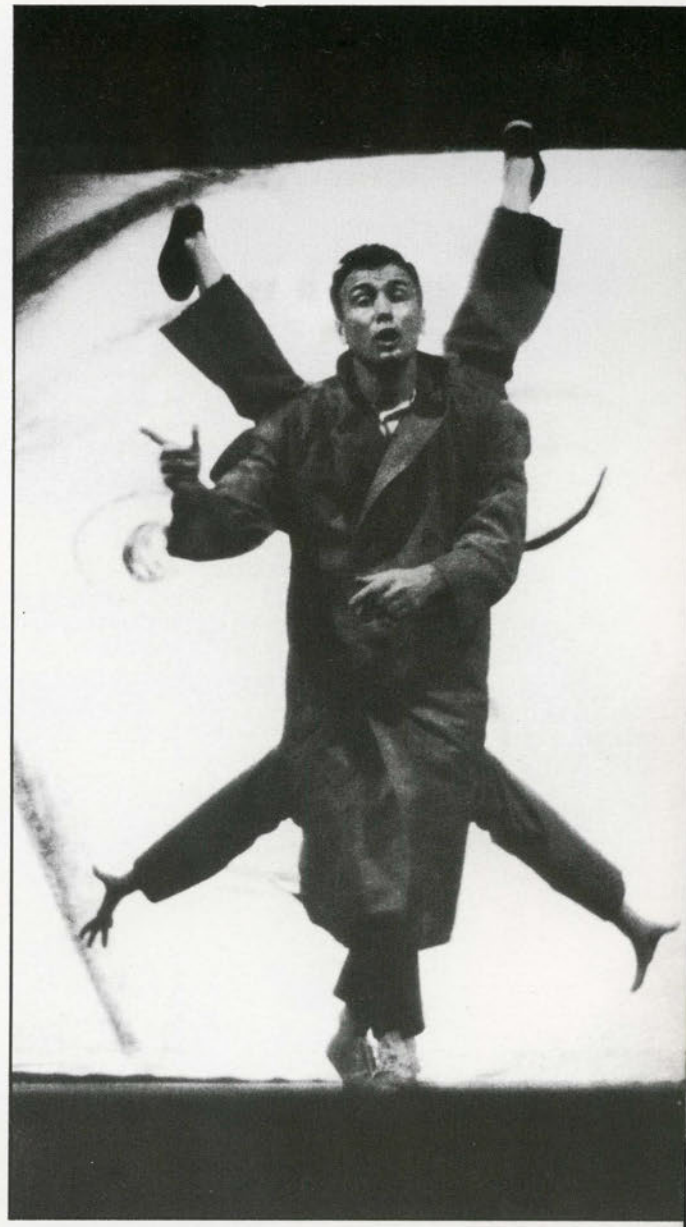
As director, I have to force a company into a compromised performance. The Arte Italiana festival has permitted two showings of *Gli insetti preferiscono les ortiche* (Insects prefer nettles) by La Gaia Scienza, their first visit to Britain. I also learn a word of Italian I shall never forget: 'lapilli'. It means sparks. The company cook up charcoal outside the theatre. The eight foot flames attract the attention of the police. The company enter the theatre whirling the burning charcoal around their heads in wire mesh bags. Lapilli fly everywhere. It is a beautiful effect. But the set ignites. It is not a problem. It's usual. The fire is easily extinguished within five minutes. But it cannot happen again. The shapes were triangular, the colours were orange, green, and yellow.

In Rome:

The architecture continually and surprisingly confuses interior and exterior. Against the shaded grey street, the archway of an apparently impenetrable edifice reveals an open square of bright sunlit vegetation. The shapes are severely monumental, relieved by baroque detail. The colour is uniformly stone, aged with grime. The people scurry transient against the historical presence of the buildings.

On the videotape:

The movement is continually undulating, baroque, like wind brushed water. And this evolves continuously, one image melding swiftly and organically into the next. There is also a choreography of gesture, a codification of Italian conversational gesticulation. As it repeats, develops, clarifies, strengthens, so it becomes like a kind of foreign sign language. The effect is exact, but fluid, the sustained mood one of gentle ecstacy. The performance is moved by a refreshing seasonal breeze of the post-modern. In the eye of the performer is the look of a distracted animal.



'In the eye of the performer is the look of a distracted animal'

Photo: Jessica Carroll

On the record sleeve:

Some of the words spoken during *Il ladro di anime* are in an invented language. Some are in Italian, and a translation appears on the cover of the soundtrack recording:
'If I dance, I trance expance and stance,
repeat and turn back
turn sideways I cannot stop
talking and talking I can't shut up.'

On the audiotape:

I challenge Giorgio about content. He says that content arises from form. If an outline of an idea becomes clearly etched, then it must be diffused by irony. That is after all, he says, how we experience the reality of everyday life. I used to agree. Now I wonder. Strip away the metaphor,and doesn't this approach put us back in the trap with naturalism? Doesn't the artist have a greater philosophical responsibility? But I decide to make an experiment. I decide to try and write about La Gaia Scienza in a form which attempts to emulate their apparent process.

LIFT SPECIAL

Dissecting the 'Merry Science'

Photo: Jessica Carroll

At the Palazzo Spada:

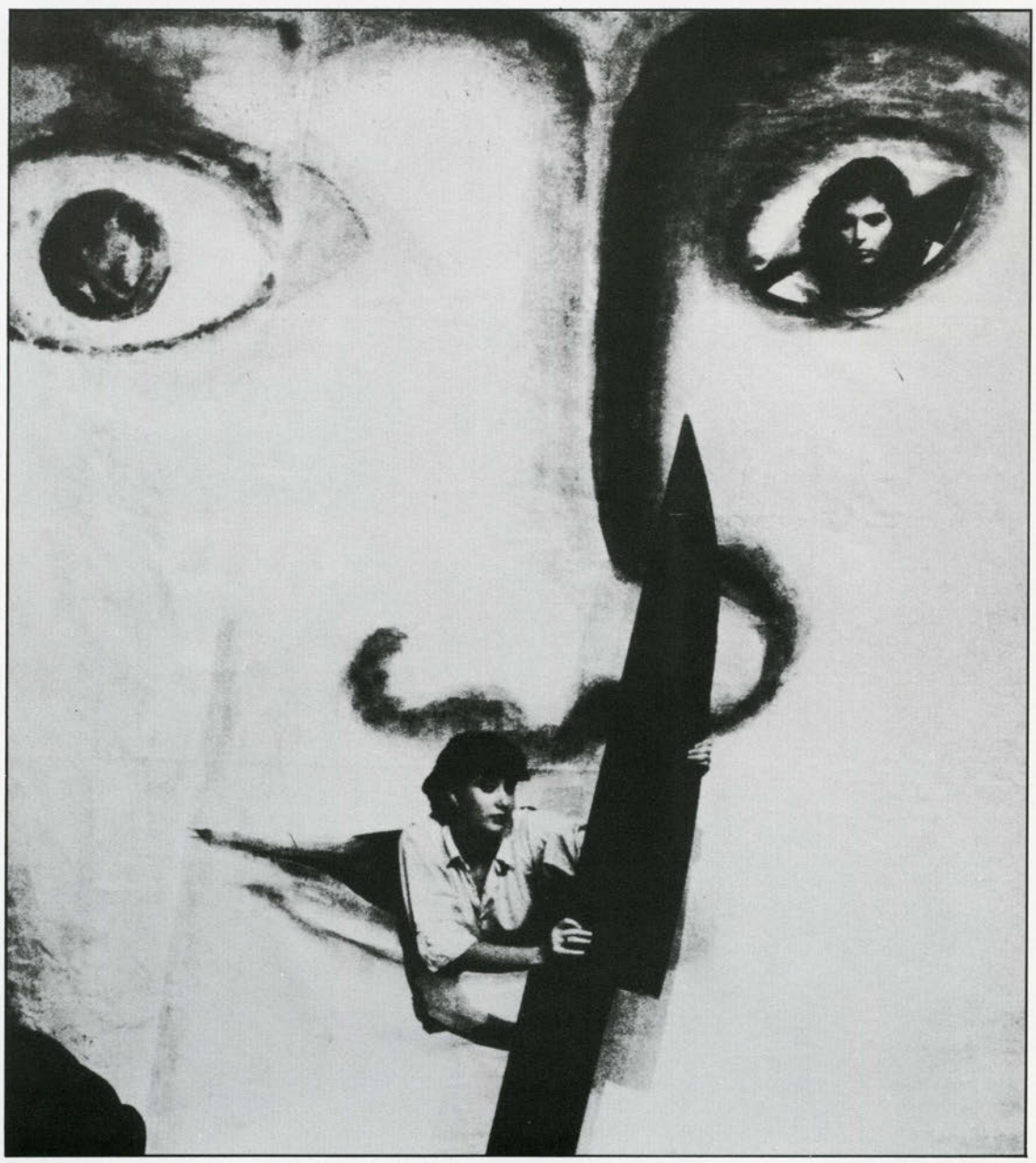
Through a glazed archway, a perfect seventeenth century study. Opposite, through another archway, a covered colonnade stretches away. At the end, a large figure on a pedestal. Walk around the building and a trick is revealed. The colonnade is only a few metres long. The floor rises, the ceiling slopes, the stone columns narrow in a perfect false perspective. The figure on its diminutive pedestal is now barely a metre high.

On the soundtrack:

The music of Daniel Bacalov, composed in parallel with the rehearsals. Gentle, lapping guitars and percussion. Light, salsa rhythms which speak of the composer's South American origin. African tribal voices set amongst these rhythms. Hints of Miles Davis, Pat Metheny and Chuck Berry. The whole woven into a shifting texture of ineffable gaity. It is the music which endows the performance with its warmth, its sensual pleasure, its ecstatic serenity, and finally its dynamic.

Outside the bar:

People come up and greet Giorgio as we talk: a fashion designer, a couple of actors, a painter 'from the second generation of the trans-avant-garde' who had worked earlier with the company. A child playing near our table is called Giorgio.



'a momentary lapse in concentration, and a void opens up'

Photo: Jessica Carroll

Flashback — at the Polverigi Festival, 1983:

La Gaia Scienza perform *Cuori Strappati* (Torn Hearts); a ballet of false architectural appearances, moving walls and staircases, baroque semaphore dancing, all in a state of constant agitation. Curiously, I recall the shapes, the surface beauty, but not the colours.

On the audiotape:

After *Cuori Strappati*, Giorgio found that the evolved style of La Gaia Scienza had become its own straight-jacket. He now rejected improvisation in performance, however assured, preferring exactitude through long and disciplined rehearsal. Some of this had been achieved with *Cuori Strappati*; but now he wanted to work with new people, to devise, design, structure, edit, and cut. Now the strength of the new form was fully developed, it was possible to take what was useful from the more traditional theatre, and to attempt its assimilation. Giorgio wanted to be the director of a group which had rejected such a role. Marco and Allesandra began to work separately. Giorgio's open workshops produced a new company. Preparing *Il ladro di anime* over four months, he stitched the choreography on to the individuality of each new performer, then entered the piece himself as a connecting force and controlling consciousness.

At the restoration project:

High up on the seventh level of scaffolding, a naked man gazes down into the courtyard below. He holds a coat of arms. He is of stone, half set into the wall. His hands are enormous, the perspective distorted, for he should be seen from below. There is a sound of gentle scrubbing from the scaffold above. The colour is grey but it will gleam white. The shape is human but without movement.

On the audiotape:

Giorgio insists on the absolute concentration required in the performance of *Il ladro di anime*. Each performer must be constantly aware of the whole, like a single mind. A momentary lapse in concentration, and a void opens up. Giorgio's calm is disrupted by a glimpse of the horror of the void, when the lines of movement in the city cease to make any coherent, discernible pattern. The void has no shape. The void has no colour. The void has no soul.

On the video tape:

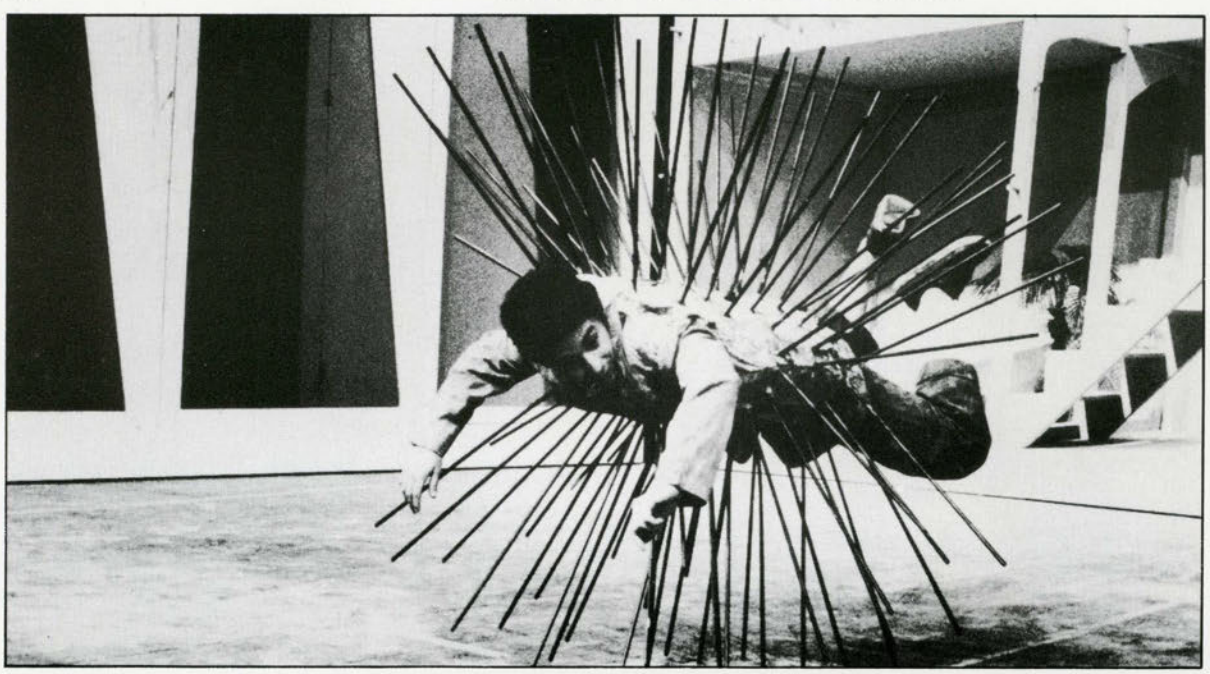
The performers are: Irene Grazioli (23), Anna Paola Bacalov (19), Monica Vannucchi (22), Giorgio Barberio Corsetti (34), Franco Ripa Di Meana (23), Philippe Barbut (25). Few have had previous stage experience or training, although Irene was in *Cuori Strappati*. They are immensely attractive as a group, ingenuously seductive.

In the Piazza di Popolo:

The tall obelisk points incontrovertibly at the sky, defining gravity. Four stone lions doze their centuries at its base. Their eyes dream, undistracted. The colours are not important. Giorgio arrives on his motorbike. I get on the back and together we complete the pattern of human movement in the city.

On the videotape:

The structure of *Il ladro di anime* has become clear. The first front cloth is a painting of a city's port. Four figures face it. They wear suits which are painted so that they blend in with the scene, like a bas-relief. They are differentiated only when they begin slow, gentle movements. The cloth rises to reveal a second, a painting of the interior of the city. Suited figures, confused initially with their painted selves, emerge through high level slits in the cloth. This moves to the right, the



In the 'trenches'

Photo: Jessica Carroll

reverse forming a structural colonnade. Revealed: the third cloth, a painting of a huge face. The zoom into close-up is completed. Figures enter through the eye, the mouth. This cloth moves to the left, the reverse forming a second colonnade. Revealed: a flat painted to represent a three storey house. It falls forward, dramatically, then is raised. Revealed: a section through the house. There are seven rooms with two staircases and a roof. Finally, the back wall falls away. Revealed: a dark void into which the inhabitants of the house retreat now against a bright light as the frame of the house rolls towards the audience. The moving skeleton of the house against the colonnades is monumental. These are the shapes. The colours are yellow ochre, pastel blue, and pink.

On the audiotape:

I suggest that the reason Italian new theatre is so spectacular, so accessible, is because there is no touring circuit of cramped, 100-seat studios. The companies are forced to create work of a scale, colour and ambition that will fill the large Italian stage, if only for a few nights. Giorgio agrees. La Gaia Scienza played to 4000 people over three nights at the Olympico in Rome. But he says that there are some studio theatres, and talks with affection of Beat 72 as a generating space for his generation. He refers to such spaces as 'the trenches' (as on a battlefield), and connects the work done in them with the '70s. In the '80s, the new Italian companies are out in the danger of the open field. It's now necessary to create work which takes greater account of the audience, which seeks to engage a wider public. He also suggests that since there's little good indigenous rock music in Italy, theatre groups in some way fulfill that role — say of a band like Tuxedo Moon, with whom La Gaia Scienza has worked.

On the videotape:

Six figures dance before a backcloth, each throwing an exaggerated shadow against it. The shape of the shadow is human. The colour of the shadow is white.

On the walls:

'Vota Comunista' urge the posters. They didn't. Italy's local elections — the important ones — are just over. Control in many regions has moved to the centre, making life more difficult for Italian new theatre. Rome, for instance, is now in the hands of a five party centrist coalition which, it is thought, will favour the large institutions. The elections also lead indirectly to the cancellation of the performance of *Il ladro di anime* which I should have seen in Bologna. The shape is sickle and hammer. The colours are red and yellow.

On the record sleeve:

Some more words spoken in Italian during the performance:
'I always speak out what I think
if I think I don't say what I think
speaking without limits of time
in a hurry without fright I confess
where am I now: here I am.'

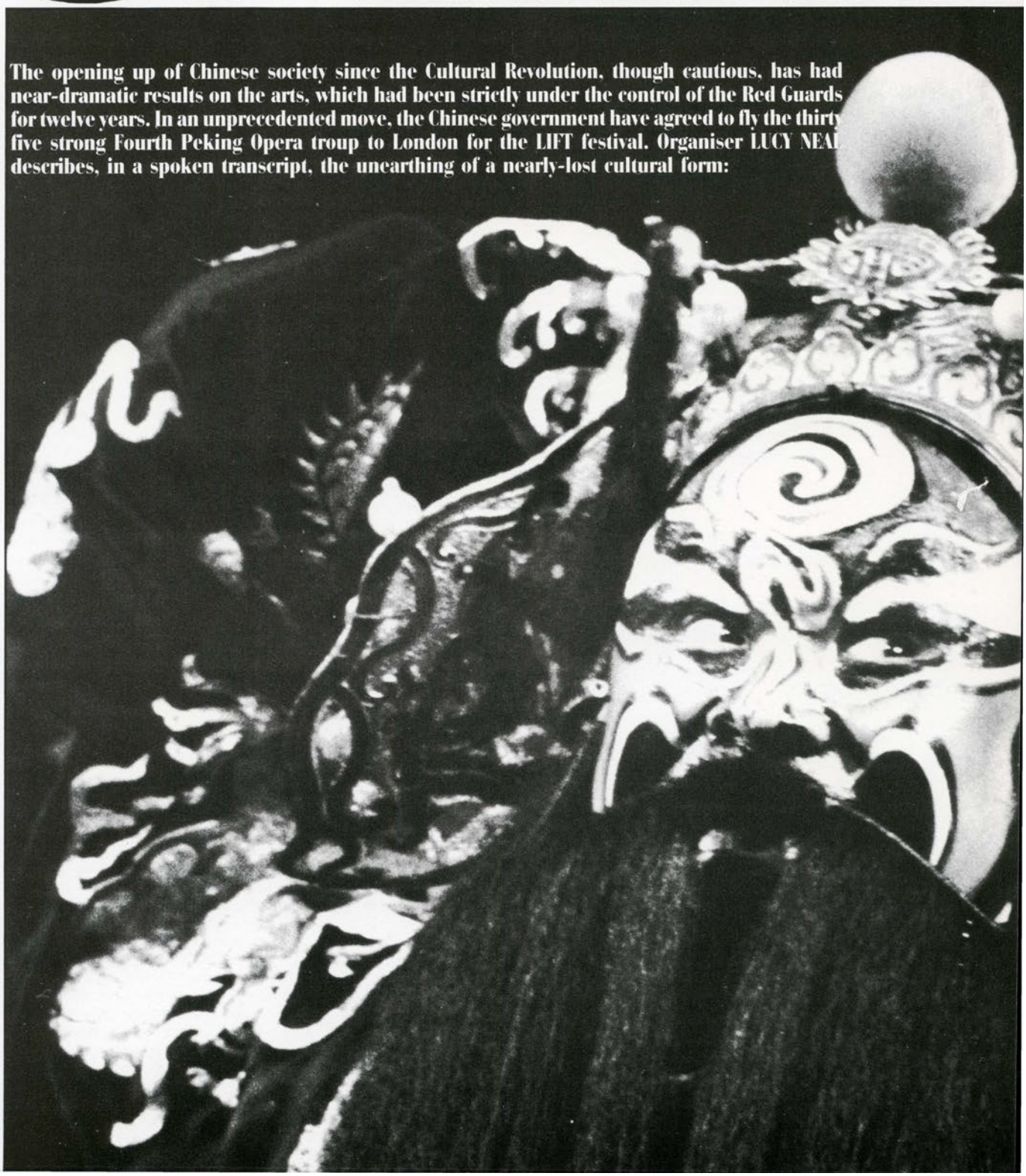
On the paper:

This was written whilst moving; on the bus, at the airport, on the plane, on the train. And finally beneath a yellow triangle of light in a black London night. ●

PEKING OPERA

LIFT SPECIAL

The opening up of Chinese society since the Cultural Revolution, though cautious, has had near-dramatic results on the arts, which had been strictly under the control of the Red Guards for twelve years. In an unprecedented move, the Chinese government have agreed to fly the thirty five strong Fourth Peking Opera troup to London for the LIFT festival. Organiser LUCY NEAL describes, in a spoken transcript, the unearthing of a nearly-lost cultural form:



PEK
OPE

'Peking Opera is not opera in the way that we understand opera. It is a form of theatre which is total theatre. Apparently Brecht took a lot of his ideas from Peking Opera. It's about a very stylised form of presentation where characters can sometimes be three characters at once, simply by doing a rotation on stage. So you can have two people performing, actually playing four or five roles between them. It is a very sophisticated form of theatre where the stage is literally the world, and you don't need props, just the performer, who conjures up whatever the opera is, with singing, very colourful costumes, and very disciplined movements, with extraordinarily complex detail behind every single gesture. Performers never stand at right angles, never stand face on to the audience. They will always break the line between the audience and them, never crossing the stage straight, but always moving in a zig zag pattern. Layer upon layer upon layer of movement and detail.'

●

'Every different district in China has its own style of opera. Peking Opera, Shanghai Opera, Local Opera, all influenced by the different dialects, all influenced by the different styles and traditions, so that every type of opera has absorbed all the cultural, folkloric and social aspects of the area. Because this style of performance is so entrenched in the performing arts, the concept of Western theatre is totally and utterly alien to the Chinese.'

●

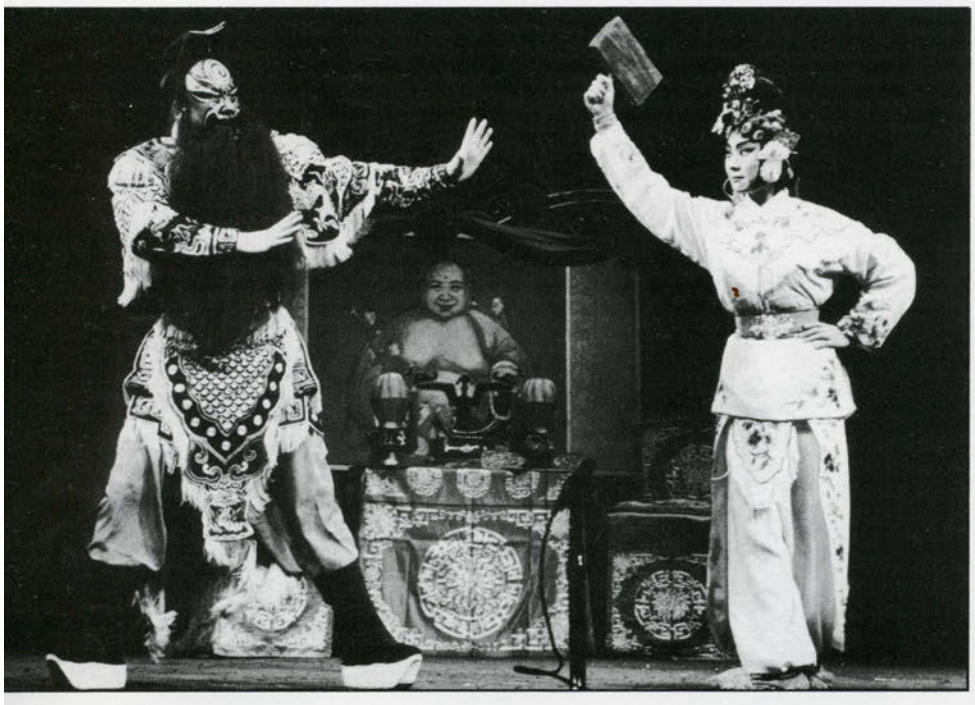
'In the twenties and thirties, influence finally started coming in from the West, and Stanislawski and Ibsen the two major influences on Chinese modern drama, and decade by decade it was developing. But during the Cultural Revolution, all that came to a complete halt. Not only was all modern drama banned, but all variations of opera were as well. What happened was that you had revolutionary operas, imposed by the Red Guards. Only eight were allowed to be performed, and the eight chosen by the Gang of Four. Everybody had to go — there were tannoy announcements in the streets — go to the opera. At three o'clock everyone had to go to the opera. What these operas did was to use all the sophisticated traditions of the opera to get across the revolutionary message. It was very clever, in that it infused the traditional form with socialism. So the traditional elements (the modern influences from the thirties had gone out of the window) were stamped with these rather crude revolutionary messages.'

●

'So of course everyone got bored to death with these bloody revolutionary operas! You knew what would happen: good guy comes on, bad guy comes on — bad guy seems to get the upper hand, gets kicked in the face, good triumphs, Socialism triumphs. So if you got somebody who was slacking off work, their come-uppance would occur by the end of the day!

●

'Literally it was illegal not to go to the operas. The result was that nobody listened to them. Everyone was knitting, and talking — it became a social event — everyone met in a square and chattered away. To a certain extent, the opera has maintained that. If you go to the opera now, in Peking, people chat the whole way through. It goes on for four or five hours, grannies come with children for an hour, take them out, people eat sweets, talk much, spit, generally carry on. It's really like bear-baiting in Shakespeare's plays, it really is a popular form of entertainment.'



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'Emerging from the cultural revolution in the late seventies, the arts tried to come back to life. People who were locked up for writing modern drama reverted to writing plays again, with increasing openness, followed by sudden, complete purges. For example, in November 1983 there was an 'anti-spiritual-pollution' campaign which stopped a lot of people writing for a year. As in 'democracy wall' in the late seventies, when everyone was allowed to speak openly for a time there was a complete clampdown, disastrous idea, keep everyone much more under control . . . '

●

ING ERA

LIFT SPECIAL

'After the cultural revolution there was a natural falling off of attendances, once people were no longer being dragooned into going. They had always developed in the past as genuine entertainment for the people, and apparently the greater part of the audience for Peking Opera nowadays is older people, who remember what Peking Opera was all about. But people of our age wouldn't go to it, because it just doesn't appeal to them. And partly because the Cultural Revolution really put the cat among the pigeons. Everything was scattered, everything became diffused, scripts were burnt, instruments were smashed. It's going to take a long time in China to repiece any sort of cultural identity. It's not that they lost twelve years of creative work — it will take about fifty years to regain the point at which they were in the fifties. Now the danger is that everything will revert to capitalist values. A lot of the acrobatics now are really naff, rather insipid, very kitsch stuff, unappetising tinsel. Although they're very talented acrobats, the best in the world, the lower end is devoted to this sickly stuff.'

●

'The thirties and forties were an extraordinary heyday of the arts in China. If the artistic creativity, of the arrivals of modern drama and the making of films in the thirties and forties had been allowed to continue to the present day, China would be a formidable cultural force, but because it had this complete clampdown, a complete blackout for twelve years, not one single artist was allowed to produce any individual work at all, it has been very difficult to pick up again.'

●

'When a Peking Opera star hits a good note, the audience will shout something like the word 'Ma' which means 'good'. It means they are appreciating the fact that the performer has hit the note right. If you can imagine in the opera house here, everybody going yeah! The tones are just *so* close, such a range. The women squeak so high, they're like cats. Nobody here could do it at all.'

●

'I think the Chinese during the cultural revolution *did* seriously try to change society, and I'm sure there are some benefits from it, but the stories one hears seem to be universally diabolical. On the cultural front, to systematically herd, torture and imprison every artist in the land, more or less, does a great deal of damage to a genuine cultural life in a country. China is lost culturally. The young people just don't know what is peculiarly Chinese in their culture. It is interesting to talk to Westerners who went out in the early seventies, who were really ardent Maoists, and who went to meet the people, and get involved with this incredible revolution — a revolution that should be happening all over the world — and then slowly realised, month by month, what was happening. Realising the savagery, the shootings and the torture that were going on, and how it was going horribly, horribly wrong.'

●

'Now the signs are that yes there is an opening up, yes there is a freedom. A year ago they were not allowed to write — now they're coming to the West! One just hopes that the authorities don't suddenly panic, with too much Western influences creeping in.'

●

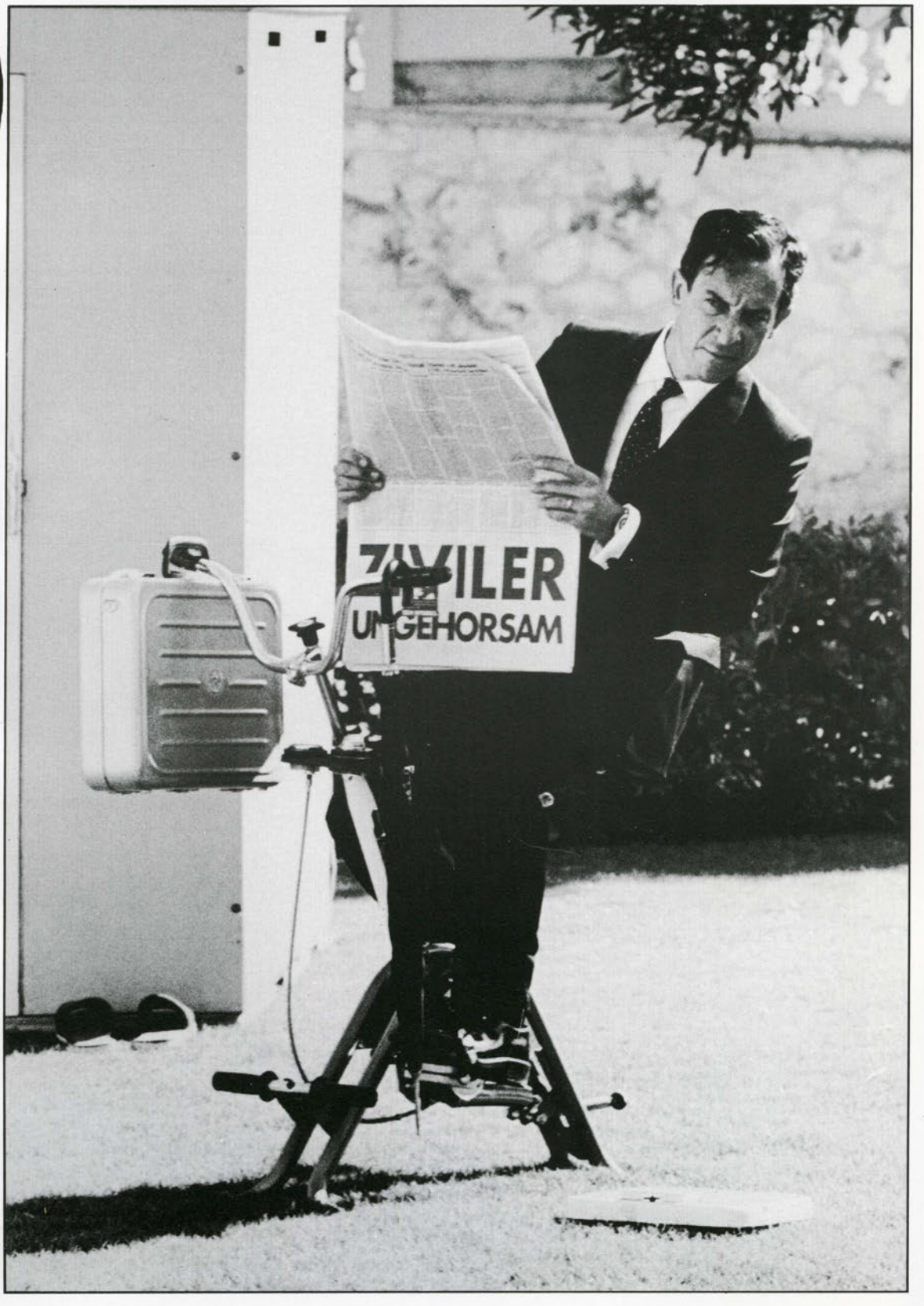
'They tend to be in large auditoriums, and last a long time.'

●

'*The Three Beatings of Tao San Chun* appears to be preoccupied by the whole business of spinsterhood in China, which is a huge social problem, at the moment. The people that they most want to marry off are perhaps the more educated women who have been to university studying nuclear physics or whatever. Of course they're the women who are least likely to want to marry some berk who just wants them to wash up all day. She's just too clever, she doesn't want to get married, she wants to go on working, therefore she's not going to have children, therefore, to produce the state with the children that they'd like to have. So there's a real social stigma attached to being a spinster. The Chinese are obsessed with male-female relationships. Everything is about love. Pictures of men and women with birds over their heads, falling in love in the spring — all the films depict 'boy meets girl — marries'. So the idea of being gay, or not being attracted to the opposite sex is strictly out of bounds. It's love and it's marriage — and of course it's not, because most young people are forced into marriages. Which is probably why they're so obsessed with love. In the *Three Beatings* the woman takes the whole world to task — she defies the emperor, she defies her husband, she *wants her way*. It's a very entertaining, engaging piece.'

ALBERTO VIDAL

LIVE ART NOW



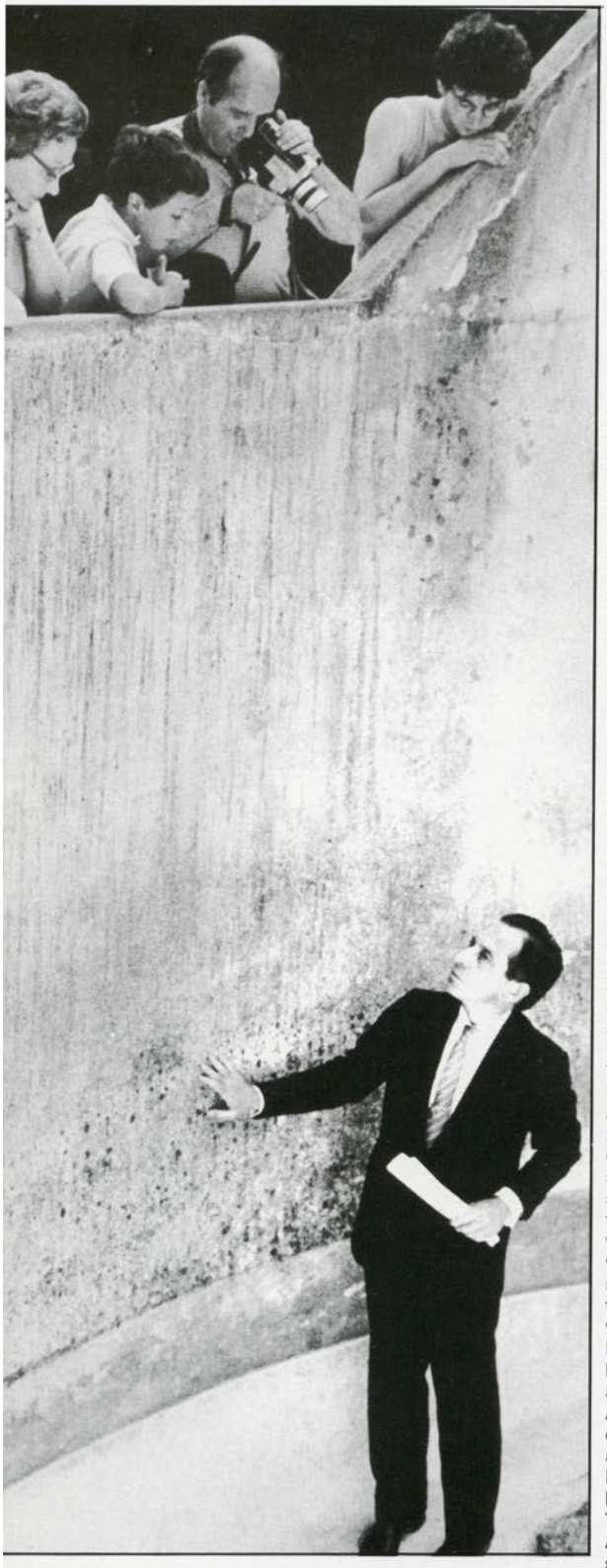
LIFT SPECIAL

ZOO MAN SPEAKS

After performing/exhibiting/behaving as the *Urban Man* in zoos all over the world, from Miami to Madrid, Albert Vidal, from Spain, looks set to being captured by London's Regents Park zoo as part of the LIFT festival. Eat, sleep, work or play, Vidal, who sees himself as a composite of all businessmen around the capitalist world, will be under constant surveillance by the public. ROB LA FRENAIS asked him about life under the spotlight and found it had some unusual philosophical side-effects:

Rob La Frenais: How did the *Urban Man* project come about?
Alberto Vidal: For about fifteen years the rituals of life have been at the centre of my work. At the end of my last piece, *Aperitif*, I wanted to perform life, just as itself. The first idea was to show daily life in a city, and the public would be following the action, in places where they knew I would be living. They were supposed to come to my house, and see me go out into the street . . .
RL: This was the original idea?
AV: Yes, the original idea was showing life in itself. Then, we say, it's going to be very difficult for the public to go as far away to see the piece for twenty-four hours (Vidal's house is in a remote location in Catalonia), why don't we do this in an enclosure? So they can see all the rituals, and keep the same naturalism. We started in the Sitges festival in October 1983, and we got the festival prize. I was very surprised. Afterwards came the invitation to exhibit it in Barcelon Zoo. So all this came very naturally, and we had invitations to go all around the world with this 'slice of life'. By doing the performance for nearly two years, there has developed another aspect, of not only showing daily life, but of being hours and hours — the first time in Sitges was forty-two hours non-stop — the Zoo is not so demanding because they close at 6 pm and I stay sleeping there . . .
RL: You still sleep there?
AV: Always, one of the conditions is that I do not leave the Zoo, and the day before, in preparation, I enter and sleep.
RL: Are you free to come and go at night?
AV: Yes, because the public is not there. This is an exhibition for the public, and anything that will aid the concentration when the public comes — I will do it. But when the public is not there, I will not perform. It is not a naturalistic performance of Albert Vital! I try to be naturalistic in a theatrical dimension, without playing theatre. It's like playing theatre, without playing theatre. Refusing the theatre to rediscover the theatre. It's like starting from zero.
RL: But you observe a theatrical convention in that when the audience is not there, you're not performing.
AV: I'm still keeping the concentration, but I don't need to be as highly concentrated as when I am being sensitive to any little reaction of the public. When I am in the exhibition I have to be 100% present.
RL: Has doing the zoo work affected the way you carry out your daily life?
AV: A little bit.
RL: In what way?
AV: I have become very interested in the way animals use the space. I observe the animals in my house in the Pyrenees. I live with some cows, sheep, and peacocks, and because I live alone there in a very isolated place — just after eight years of living with candles, no electricity, with a well of water inside the house, living a very ancient style of life; which I'm going to break now, because it's very difficult to read with the candles — when I wake up and it's totally isolated, I don't have to justify my rhythm or my time to any convention, and I realise that this work in the zoos has motivated a way of living at a rhythm more according to the essential nature of my body, and so that's a kind of investigation and research that I do there. I walk many miles in the mountains instead of doing exercises in a closed room, just to fortify the body, to have the body awake.
RL: What are the psychological effects of being under observation during the Zoo piece?
AV: I try not to do performances that have a psychological influence on my daily life; I try to keep a distance and a sense of humour — otherwise I could go in the wrong direction. Like when I did the Funeral piece, all the preparation was in order not to be affected by being enclosed inside a coffin.
RL: Tell me more about the Funeral piece.
AV: The funeral was at a period in my life that I wanted to perform my own funeral. It was very true at that moment. The public was summoned, not many people, nearly 500 came to assist with the funeral.
RL: 500!
AV: Well, if you compare with the Zoo piece, there are ten thousand people . . . And it was announced in the newspaper 'Intierdo de Albert Vidal' — Funeral of Albert Vidal. So it was even confused whether I was dead or not. But when the people came they say: 'OK, that's one more of Vidal's. They know me a little bit in Spain and will accept anything now.
RL: It seems that in Spain there is more of a popular consciousness of art in that tens of thousands will have heard of you there. In this country, if you were to do some thing like that — maybe the newspapers would make a big thing of it for a short time, but then it would be forgotten.
AV: Well, in fact in Spain I have been presenting most of my work, so the people get a knowledge of the type and style of it. I've presented *The Fool, Cos, Aperitif*, the funeral . . .
RL: But you are known outside the art/theatrical world.
AV: Oh yes, it's very popular, my work in Spain. It's good, because through the performance, without making any concessions, I am really doing what *I* want to do — not even working with subventions but refusing any political pressure on my work. I have reached a popular audience. That's very nice in a way.
RL: I'm interested to see how it will be accepted here. For example, this morning you were talking to the *Daily Express*. What was it like?
AV: I don't feel a special difference when I talk about my work, between here and anywhere else. They want the basic information. And I always talk in the tone of the interviewer. I never try to press a deeper level on them. I like to improvise in life. I just react to the interviewer.
RL: What aspects do you think the *Express* would have been interested in?
AV: It was a very short interview. Of course there are many aspects of this exhibition that look very unusual. I mean, it's unusual to see someone performing in a zoo. But I would like the public to go through this unusual aspect, because it's like the vase, it's so important you don't see the flowers.
RL: But the popular newspapers will only emphasise the unusual aspects.
AV: I don't know. Let them do what they want . . . Why not? Everyone takes from the reality the aspect that reflects most their inner attitude. I let go and try not to press any attitude, because it's very nice if a work has many degrees of perception. I would like to satisfy both a popular, spontaneous, immediate view of the work, at the same time a very conscious and profound view. That's the dream of any good artist, to be able to respond to any approach. If you want to take a sportive approach to it, you can find a reply. If you ▶

Working out in the enclosure



I'm very interested in communication

want to take a metaphysical approach to the work, there *is* a reply. If you want to take an intellectual approach, there *is* an explanation. If you want to take an entertainment approach, there *is* a reply for it. I think that avant-garde and new experiences have to leave their enclosure, because art should be able to communicate to a larger view of these aspects. Because, if it's founded on life, if it's founded on essential motives, it *has* to work. In interviews they ask me what is the difference between the Italian public and the German public, the Spanish and the American, and really, I have to be sincere, I see the journalists pressing me so much to give a reply that I force myself to find a difference, but in fact, I don't find much difference. It's just a human approach to the public, because I'm not playing to any reference. It's just human beings looking at another human being exposed.

RL: Do you speak to the public?

AV: If one of the public talks to me and waits for an answer, what I do is to try and reply with the energy of the answer, but silently with a smile presenting a business card, on which is written *Urban Man*.

RL: What happens if someone tries to break into your enclosure?

AV: One of the rules of the game — as in football there are rules — is written on a noticeboard, 'Life exhibition of a citizen. Please do not enter. Thank you, Anthropological Park.' And I have two Anthropological park attendants, who will explain that it's not allowed to enter the space.

RL: So you have two keepers.

AV: I have two keepers that are supposed to be the keepers of the Anthropological Park, that shows the specimen of the human race around the world.

RL: Why not an *Urban Woman*?

AV: Because it would be a performance about the problem of couples. Is she serving the tea? Is he serving the tea? Is he sitting first? Is she sitting first? Who decides which television programme? Is he going to work while she's at home doing the work? Is he doing the work while she's going to the office? It will be too complicated, and the essence of what I want to do is just with the lone body.

RL: What are your views on putting animals in zoos?

AV: I'm not a critic. I just let it be. I cannot be a critic, because the zoos are inviting me to exhibit the human being.

RL: But animals are not invited. They're captured.

AV: I prefer not to go into that subject. I'm not critical.

RL: The classic 'no comment'!

AV: Yes, no comment!

RL: Why did you choose the businessman persona?

AV: I can comment on that. Although I was born in Barcelona, and consider myself of Catalan origin, in my family I have a Dutch grandfather, many of my family were living in Paris, and London, and I have myself been living in Paris for six years, New York a year, Tokyo nine months, Rome and Milan three years. I've been living all around the world, and the most synthetic character, the most universal for me, is the businessman. In all the countries they have to have the same way of moving. I mean this hotel (The Holiday Inn, Swiss Cottage) you could find in any place. You see (gestures) *there* is some oriental reference, we could now be in Singapore, or Madrid, or New York, and it wouldn't change much, and I am interested in this aspect of the universal culture.

RL: Is that why when you come from your isolated house to this situation, you like to stay in this kind of hotel?

AV: Yes, that is part of my training for the *Urban Man*. I am now dressed as the *Urban Man*. I observe very much both people and animals, and try to make a synthesis of this organic communication, as if I was one more being in exposition. So, I try to *be* and not to represent. I try to exist in the space through this being, not to think that I exist through my thinking. To translate through the being, I am researching the thinking body, not separating the brain. I consider the brain has a form which is the whole body. That's what I call the thinking body. I will say, not 'I think, then I exist', but, 'I exist, then I'm able to think'. And you exist only when you are.

RL: So you've built up a kind of philosophy of behaviour in performance?

AV: Yes.

RL: And has that been significantly affected by the *Urban Man* work?

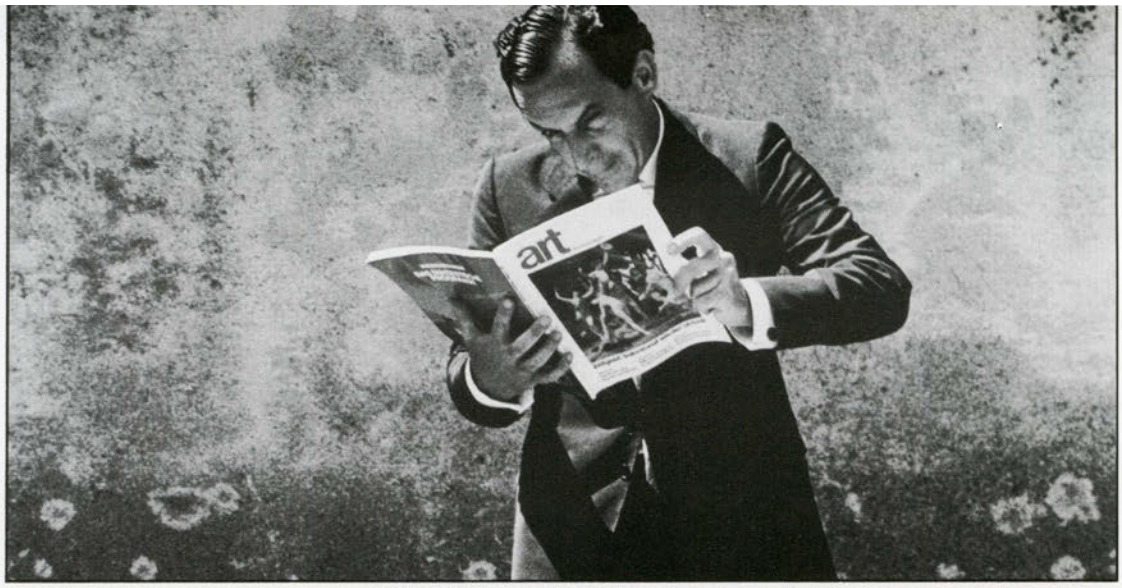
AV: *Very* significantly affected. Indeed, it's even affecting my next work.

RL: Which is?

AV: The one I am hoping to do in London as well as the *Urban Man* is *Kinesis*. It refers to the association between photographed perception and life perception. In this action I present two photographs of the Urban Man sitting in an armchair and the photograph is taken at the same time, with the same light in the same space in the same position with the same person, and the same size. One is to the right and the other to the left. In the middle of these two photographs is an image of life, and I will be playing the life of an image.

RL: You'll be sitting between the two photographs?

AV: Meticulously the same. So that if you look from far away you'll see three photographs the inspiration



came from: when you see the illusion of movement that is created in the cinema. It's the time between two photographs that gives you the illusion of movement. I try to make a trick, to make a journey, between these two attitudes, that creates the illusion of movement.

RL: So they are slightly dissimilar? There is a movement between the two photos?

AV: Yes, the arm moves, so. And I do this movement in twenty-five minutes. And this will be the miniscule part that you don't see in the cinema, when you see two photographs, one after the other.

RL: Catching, so to speak, what happens between the two frames of the film.

AV: But giving the illusion that it is the photo that is moving.

RL: What is the difference between what you're doing and what is called performance art?

AV: Should I reply to this? Or should a critic? I don't know. I just do what I feel, and I present my research. I don't feel concerned about if it is or if it's not performance art.

RL: Well, a performance artist might consider that it was necessary to continue the performance of *Urban Man* even while the public was not there. But that is not to say that the space between performance art and theatre is not an interesting one.

AV: I will tell you, I think it's very necessary to the idea, that it cannot go through if there is not the emotion. In a way, if I am not accepted by the public the exhibition will not be accepted. So, I do the exhibition *for* the public. In that way, theatre has to please. If not, there is no communication. I work not in theatre, not in performance art, but with communication. The definitions will come afterwards. I'm very interested in communication. Maybe that's a reply. But it doesn't mean that I argue against performance art. I just explain how I feel doing the work.

RL: But why do you actually *perform* in Urban Man, rather than just behave?

AV: The theatrical elements are display. They are part of an ethnological observation in which the animal practices display.

RL: This is strict zoological theory, that animals display?

AV: Display, and they joke and why not? I want to show that in life that there are some very solitary moments, some very tragic moments, excited moments, ludic moments; and life is not only one colour. So I present in this slice of life all the ups and downs of a human being.

RL: What kind of reactions have you had from professional zoologists?

AV: Before doing the performance, very suspicious. After doing the performance, many letters of recommendation. The early attitude is suspicious, always, because they think I'm going to argue about one thing or another. But afterwards even the ethnologists and the biologists are giving me suggestions, from a scientific viewpoint.

RL: Presumably you feel that the kind of preparation you've done is necessary. I mean you couldn't just put anybody into a cage.

AV: I don't think so, no. It would be wrong. What I do is a result of twenty years of work in movement, and I try to present it without showing it. I never pretend to show to the public that I have worked it this way. But I pretent to show the public what's going on. If you show that you have worked, that's different. When I work in cities where people don't know who Albert Vidal is, it's better.

RL: How do you feel after finishing a performance?

AV: Well, that's a personal question. I feel very open towards the people. For example, after finishing the performance recently in Brussels, we went to see Steve Paxton's performance at midnight, and when we came back we were stopped by police vans at a roadblock because of CCC and Action Directe, terrorism, these things, and I didn't have any papers. I start making the policemen laugh, and making jokes, and he let us all go. Maybe because it was that after the performance I felt very open. Sometimes I feel as if I'd like to move like the *Urban Man* exhibit in real life, but I doubt whether I would be allowed to. Can you imagine if I start moving in the exhibit in the hotel lobby now, what would happen? Something I should try one day? Maybe; that's a performance, without saying anything.

RL: It would show up very well the difference between what you do and the way people do move, in that it's based on your observations but more . . .

AV: It's transferred, in a way. It's a kind of naturalism in that it's not showing that you are being naturalistic. That's where I reject the theatre. I'm very interested in the mixture between reality and representation. This is very ambiguous in the exhibit. For example if I read a newspaper article while I am playing the *Urban Man* and I am caught by an interest in the article, as Alberto, the *Urban Man* disappears. So, what do I have to play when I am in front of a newspaper? I play the *reading* of a newspaper. Without doing anything, just having the newspaper in front of me. But if *I* am reading the newspaper itself, it's boring.

RL: The image that you have built up has disappeared. Really?

AV: I have had this experience, yes, and I realised that it would be very natural if I read what was written there, but no, I have to be conscious that so many people are watching. Because I think that nothing is so unsimilar to a camel than a camel on a stage. ■

Conducting his own funeral

The Bow Gamelan Ensemble have been the hottest (literally) thing around Britain this year, and it is to their credit that LIFT have found a suitably unusual canal-side venue for this adventurous and intrepid trio. All practising artists of some pedigree, they had the idea of the Bow Gamelan while floating up Bow Creek in a converted lifeboat. CHRISSIE ILES profiles the avant-garde East End scrap metal merchants:

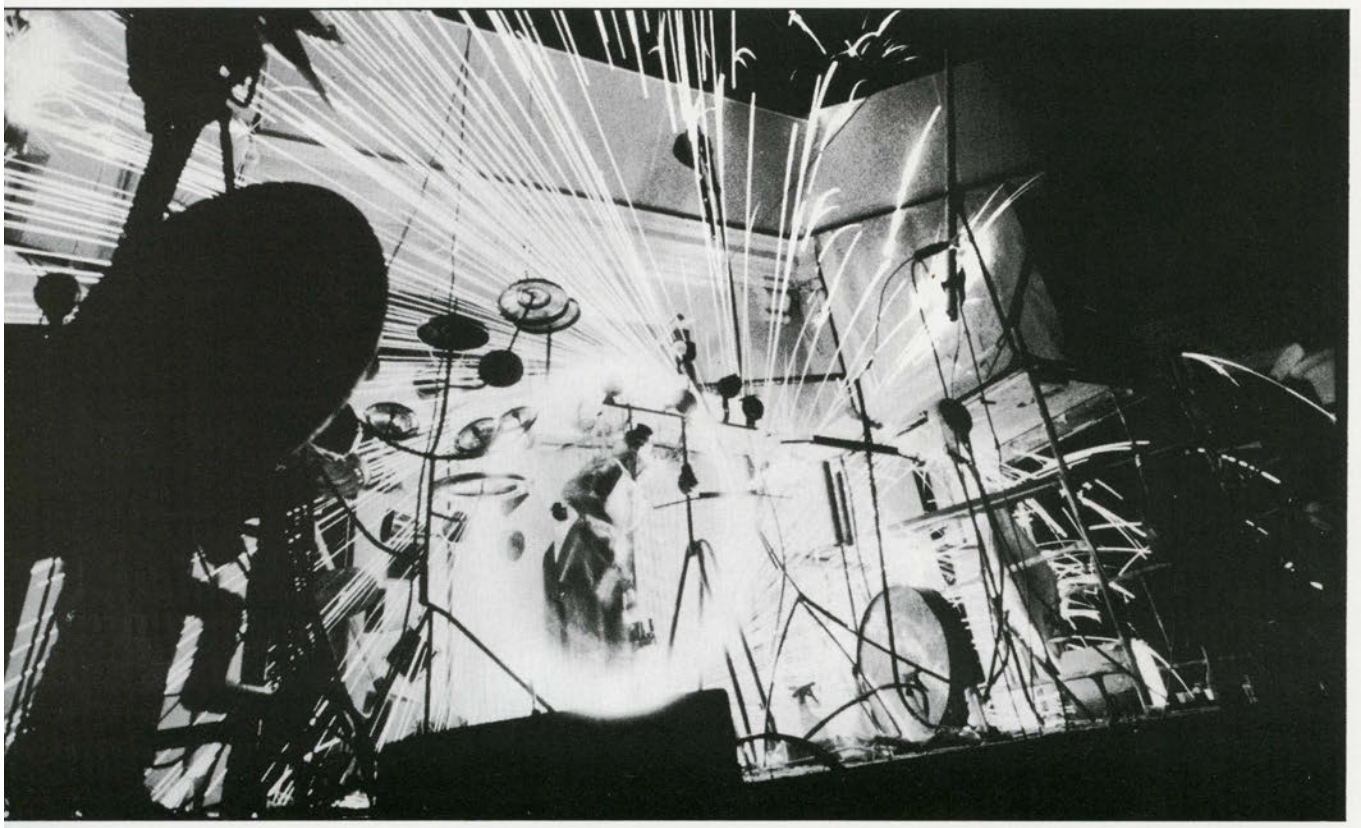
BOW GAMELAN ENSEMBLE

'Within the conservative realms of Western art culture there have always been artists who have sought to stimulate and indicate change by inclusion — by admitting into their work elements (ideas and materials) that were generally considered "noise" rather than "meaningfull utterance". The territory that the Bow Gamelan have set out to explore can be seen within this inclusive tradition' (P.D. Burwell).

The Bow Gamelan Ensemble was formed in 1983, when Paul Burwell, interested in returning to the building and playing of self-made instruments for which he had become well known in the early seventies, was seeking a sculptor with whom to collaborate on a new project. Richard Wilson, a sculptor whose work has always dealt with impermanence, change, and 'anti-sculpture' ideas, was approached, while Burwell's long time collaboration with Anne Bean, whose prolific work with performance, cabaret, music, paintings and sculpture, both solo, and with various artists is legendary, completed the trio. Thus the Bow (the Bow referring to the area to the area

Sparks fly at a recent performance at London's Diorama

Photo: Richard Waite



in East London in which the group live and from which most of their instruments derive) Gamelan (pointing to similarities with the metal percussion orchestras of Indonesia) was born.

For inspiration, ideas and material. the group looked to their immediate environment. In an old working barge part-owned by Richard Wilson they would traverse Bow Creek, a stretch of water lined by scrapyards, timberyards, boatyards and a functioning paint factory, all of which provided a rich source of discarded objects and machinery as well as a highly evocative atmosphere born of urban industrial activity alongside the overall decay of London's river life.

Broken machinery, equipment, metal objects and other debris were amassed, and out of these and other similarly discarded objects an 'orchestra' was created, with a complete range of instruments. The group see it rather as a single, organic instrument which all three artists activate simultaneously.

The instruments are of approximately three types: percussive and rhythmic — electric motors, fans, oil drums, metal objects, splintering glass; melodic — sirens, electric horns and bells, steam whistles, bagpipes, whirled bunches of rope, Pyrophones; and pyrotechnics — blow torches, wax tapers, an electric arc welder, fireworks, gun caps and burning wire wool, which are activated either as instruments in their own right or to play other instruments, as when, for example, the blow torch is used to splinter glass or activate the steam whistles, or the arc welder to create flashes of white light and a shower of sparks.

In the building of 'junk instruments' and in the use of throwaway materials there is a concern by the group that the work should not reinforce the idea of a peripheral status in relation to the art establishment — in which the artists are seen as rag-pickers in a shanty-town environment, in stark contrast to the vast amounts of money spent on technology and 'high' art. The work produced by the Bow Gamelan is deliberately and directly in contrast to the dominant cultural form and ideas of 'music'. Yet the use of such materials is essential to the kind of change and development which the Bow Gamelan seek. Their instruments have no history, so their use has no connotations or pre-conceptions. It is impossible to play an arc welder 'wrongly'. What matters is the quality of the expression produced. It is the ideas which are important, and through unlocking sounds from the materials, the ideas are reproduced. The objects' ephemerality is of vital importance. Where they once had a particular function, now they have another, and are invested with an almost infinite potential, for which the decision lies always with the artists.

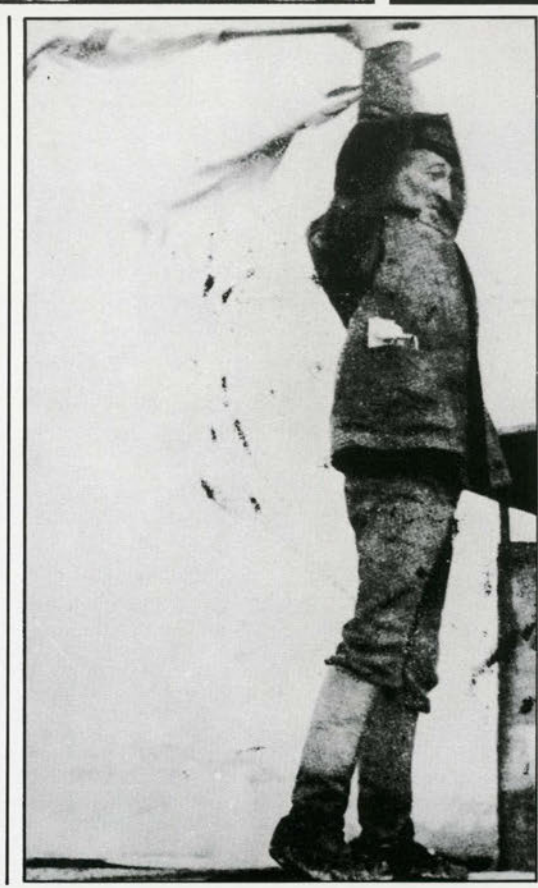
Souwesters on! Inspiration for the Gamelan's uniform?

Early influences — the conductor of Factory Sirens and Steam Whistles, USSR 1922

Because the instruments are not 'precious' objects, they can be cut up, altered and used for some completely different purpose; parts can be exchanged and new bits added, so that they grow and develop organically. The only limitations upon the orchestra, apart from those of transportability, are self-imposed. The Bow Gamelan have made a conscious decision not to use electronically generated sounds, amplified sound — all instruments are acoustic — or traditional musical instruments, including the human voice. The only words one may find in a Bow Gamelan performance are those written in fireworks, on glass or on heat-sensitive paper, onto which 'Bow Gamelan' is traced with a blow torch.

The use of machinery and old equipment is significant, in that the objects were originally designed to make similar sounds to those evoked by the Bow Gamelan. Production, work and machinery are essentially rhythmic, as are work songs, and syncopation and loudness/softness have always been features of both machinery and music.

Pyrotechnics are also an important element in Bow Gamelan work, for several reasons. Paul Burwell has had a long-standing involvement with pyrotechnics, both in his collaborative work with Stephen Cripps and in his solo performances. Anne Bean has also used fire in her work. Fire, the most mutable element, effects change



in substances, and is associated with rebirth, re-creation and new life. It is strongly linked to many of the concerns of time-based performance and installation work, such as change and ephemerality. Fire also creates energy, in the same way as does sound, forming a visual and aural parallel. Pyrotehnics are also used by Bow Gamelan to provide their own special lighting effects and to create a sense a sense of drama through the use of shadows, explosions, flashes, sparks and candles.

The extraordinary range of at once haunting, comic, evocative, aggressive, delightful and strange sounds and visual effects which Bow Gamelan produce does have a historical precedent, in an obscure but important and fascinating history of found and constructed instruments. These include Edgar Varese's 'Ionisation', recorded in 1933, the first piece ever written solely for percussion, which uses 37 percussion instruments including hand-held klaxons and other 'non' instruments; the Pyrophone, a long tube which produces a haunting, mournful sound when a flame is introduced into it, which is actually an eighteenth century instrument, and most spectacular of all, the Concert of Factory Siren and Steam Whistles, which took place in Russia in 1922. This symphony incorporated factory whistles, foghorns of the entire Caspian fleet, two battles of artillery, hydroplanes, a machine gun section, several infantry regiments and a choir of thousands. The Bow Gamelan claim to have not been directly influenced by the extraordinary groups of musical experimentation (too numerous for discussion here, but also including John Cage, Bongo Joe, and Harry Partch), but rather see themselves as operating from a similar stance and viewpoint.

The group's work has been extremely well received by a broad range of people, for whom it has a strange fascination; some have likened it to watching workers on a building site or stoking the boilers on a ship, the noise, sparks and uniforms evoking scenes of industrial activity. The use of souwesters as working outfits was adopted initially as a practical aid to enable the group to see each other in the dark, rather than, as is usually thought, as protective clothing. It also, in the words of Anne Bean, makes the group 'synonymous and anonymous'. People are often

'Some have likened it to watching workers on a building site or stoking boilers on a ship'

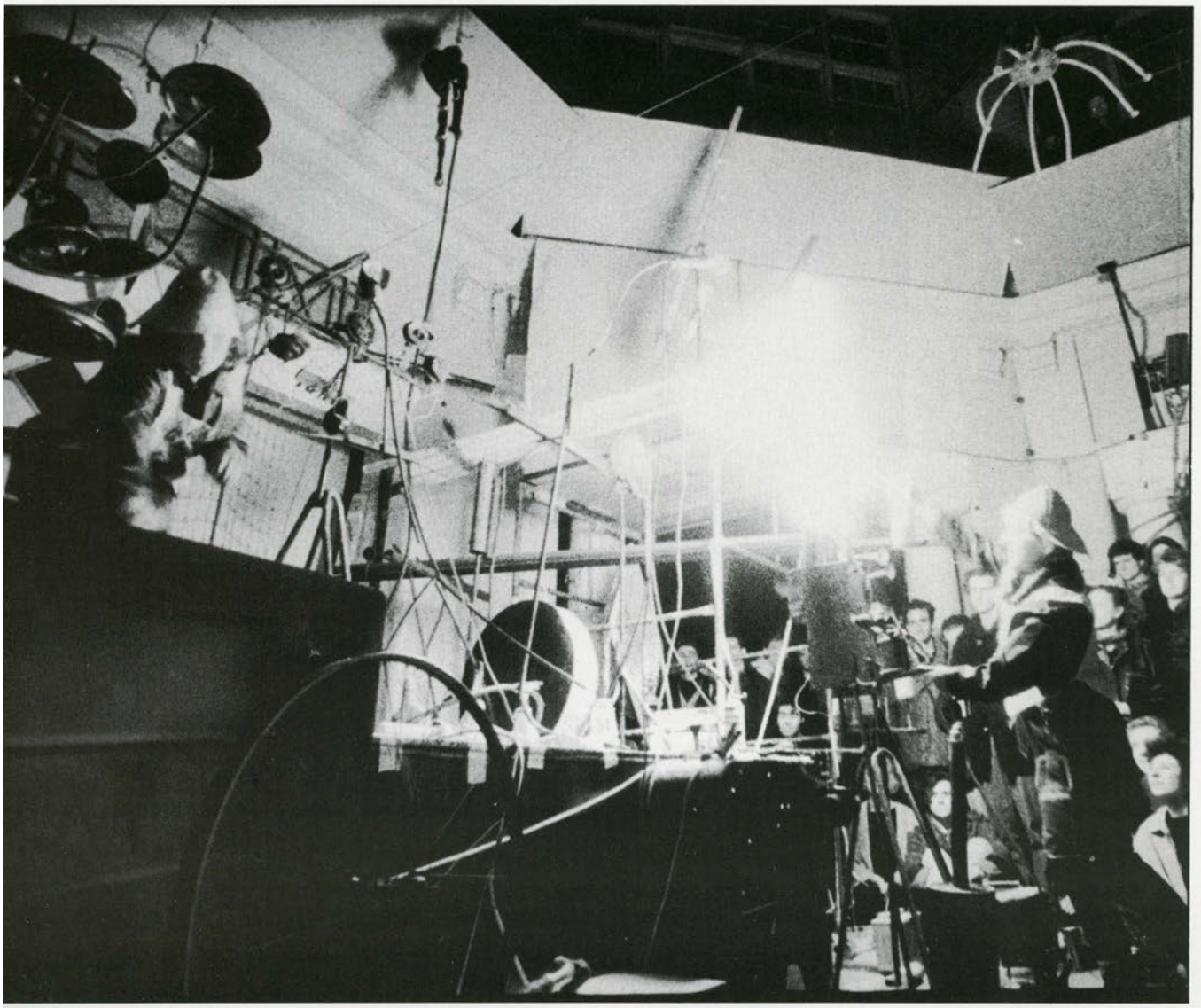
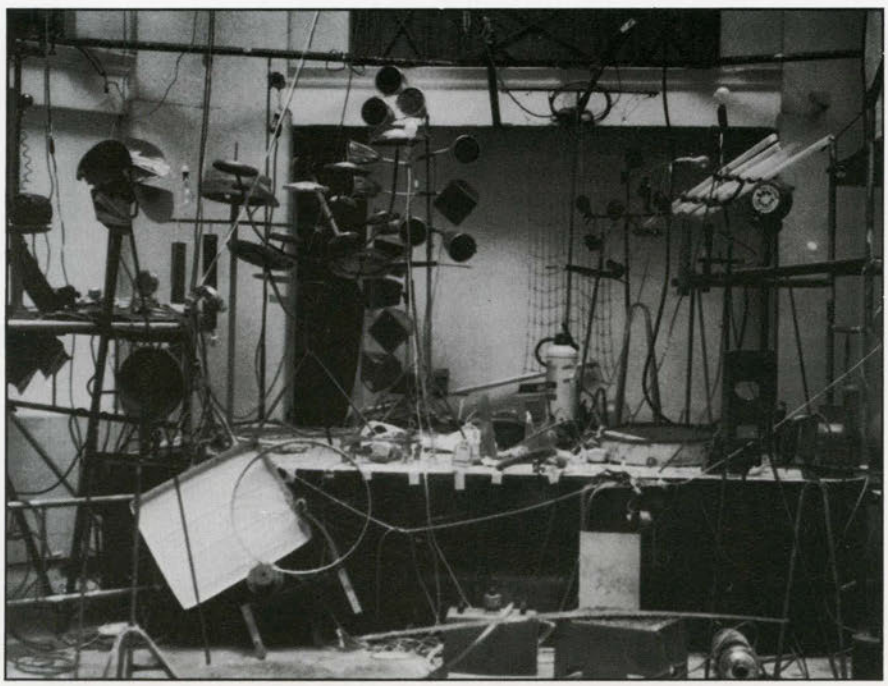
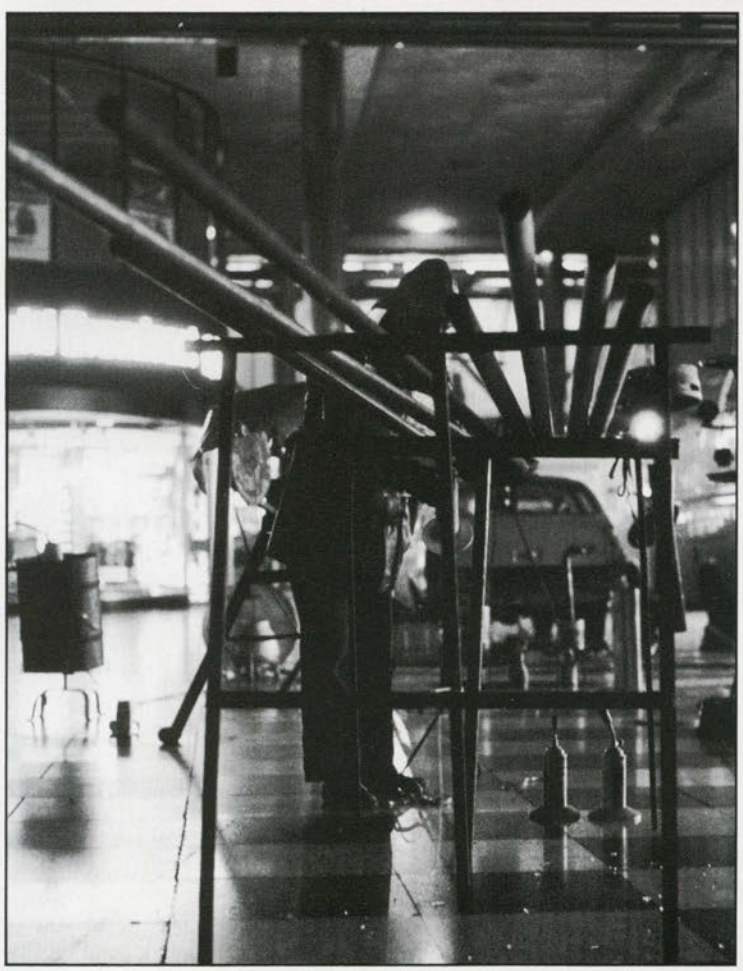


Photo: Richard Waite



The instruments after the show



surprised to discover at the end of a performance, as she takes off her souwester hat and shakes out her hair in a blur of sparks, smoke and noise, that she is a woman. This subordination of the individual personality to a group activity is an important feature of the Bow Gamelan's work. All three artists' work otherwise draws on more internal sources and has a more personal expression of an individual statement. In a Bow Gamelan performance however, one is unaware of the artists as individuals; the attention is focussed on the orchestra as a whole, with the artists as activators of something larger.

The Gamelan Ensemble can expand ad infinitum. This summer, after their tour of Belgium, Ireland and the USA, they hope to experiment with spectacular, large-scale steam effects during a performance scheduled for the South Bank. There seems no limit to the potential of the group; it will, it seems, be a wish to concentrate on individual projects which will affect their output rather than a running-out of enthusiasm, ideas and commitment. Meanwhile, they espouse the sentiments expressed by Harry Partch:

'Music . . . has only two ingredients that may be called God-given — the capacity of a body to vibrate and produce sound, and the mechanism of the human ear that registers it . . . all else in the art of music, which may be studied and analysed, was created by man or is implicit in human acts and therefore subject to fiercest scrutiny — and ultimately to approval, indifference or contempt. All else is subject to change.' ■

Performing in Swindon shopping precinct

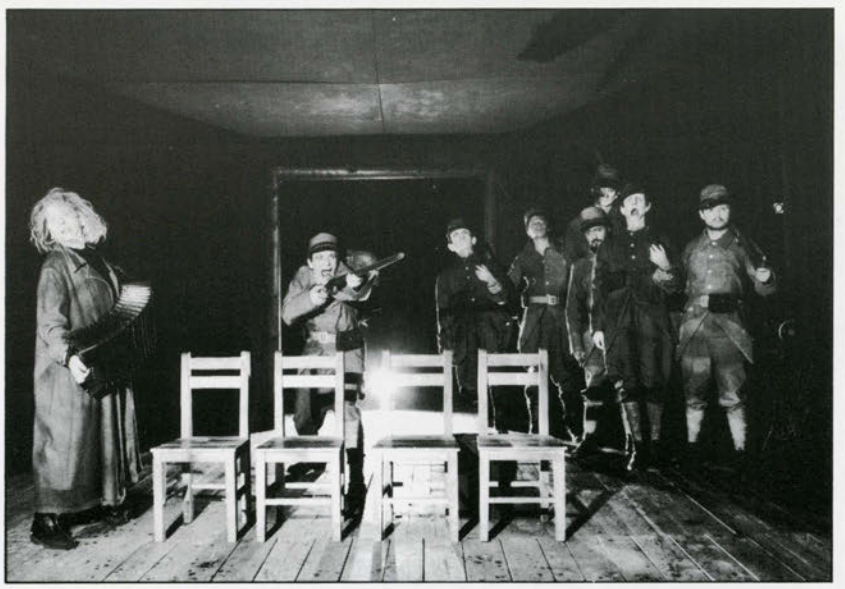
Photo: Alex Fraser

TEATR NOWY

POLAND

'Janusz Wisniewskis's force of expression is the result of his strictly formal approach; his capacity to enclose within a narrow limit-of-time and space-his turbulent imagination full of rich seams, grotesque images, animated mannequins and strange masks. Wisniewski situates his harbingers of the new apocalypse in a storm of catastrophic events impregnated with panic and destruction. The mad, feverish events are in his hands conveyed to the audience by means of the conventions of the circus, the variety hall, and the silent film. They are balanced and animated by the funeral rythms of the music of Jerzy Satanowski.'

Dragan Klaić: Polytyka, Belgrade



'The end of Europe has come! Cultural archetypes and ethics have finally lost all sense. The fascination of the old world has gone, it is impossible to live. Europe (read: the culture, even the civilisation) has no longer any reason to exist. Apocalypse? And yet so joyous, an optimistic apocalypse. Because, in the end it's the end of Europe and not the end of the world! Because in this spectacle one is not crying, but one is shouting the word of 'hope', AMERICA! So the greater the joy on the faces of the characters in this drama, the greater is the sadness of Wisniewski, because he has this decadent habit you see; undercutting genuine emotion with laughter and adding to real tears the red nose of the clown.'

Tomasz Raczek: Theatre of Joyous Apocalypse

(These are two rather confused but descriptive extracts translated from Polish to French to English! We hope they give you the general idea of the apocalyptic work of Teatr Nowy — Ed.)

MAISHE MAPONYA, a Black South African writer, wrote *Dirty Work* — which we extract here — for the Bahamutsi Theatre Company, and made history by being the first African in South Africa to write for and direct a white performer. This absurdist satire is performed with military paraphernalia such as sandbags, machine guns, and various uniforms, and opens with a lecture by 'Pieter Hannekom' the newly installed director of security:

DIRTY WORK

GOOD MORNING, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, WELCOME, DAMES EN HERE EK HET U WELKOM; and I see that we have some black delegates from our neighbouring states — so MANENE NA MANENEKA-ZI, SI YA NI BULISA. I hope I got that right. I've been practising for weeks. My first and very pleasant duty is to welcome you all here on behalf of our first citizen, the honourable Prime Minister and his No. 1 assistant, the honourable Minister of Defence, to what we hope will be a very exciting, very advanced, very informative and most historical session. You know, ladies and gentlemen, I am sure that when historians come to write about this time, they will regard this conference as a waterhut in the Post-Carleton era maar ons sal die geskiedenis laat besluit nê. Both our honoured patrons send their greetings and their apologies. They had hoped to be here, but as you might know, their South American tour has been extended, you see the British government has given them permission to visit the Falkland Islands in order to lay a wreathe on behalf of the Boer Women and Children who died there in concentration camps. I would like to ask you all please to remain silent for 15 seconds in their memory.

Thank you. Well ladies and gentlemen, the newspapers have been speculating for weeks as to who would head the newly formed Department of Security. It gives me great pleasure to lay that speculation to rest. I am that man. My name is Pieter Hannekom and I was appointed Director of Security with specific instructions to reorganize the department along modern technical lines, I was also instructed to restructure the department so as to insure that all the citizens of this wonderful country can live in peace and security and prosperity and in stability and of course in their own group areas. (Laughter) I was also instructed to establish a functional relationship between the department of security, defence and the business sector, hence this conference the first concrete achievement of my department, but I assure you not the last.

Now, you are probably all sitting there wondering, and quite correctly too, who is this man and what given him the right to stand up there and lecture us about security? Well my name as I said before, is Pieter Hannekom and I have a long history of interest in security affairs, which dates back, if I may be forgiven a personal reminiscence, to the age of five. You know, I was in my little kamer en ek het met my . . . well how I shall put this — I was examining my anatomy in a way that little children do when my mother came in, called me, and most definitely did not approve en ek het 'n vreeslike *pakslae gekry* I can still feel it (laugh, laugh) but the point of that little anecdote is that my little mind realised there and then

that if one wished to live a peaceful and prosperous life, one had to have controlled access to premises — in other words — one had to have SECURITY. This interest in security affairs continued during school. My favourite subjects were science and metalwork and in my matric year, I designed a number of locks one of which, my own particular favourite, was one which spurted out poison gas if a fail-safe mechanism wasn't activated before trying to open the lock. This lock was reported by out local newspaper, the Senekal Advertiser — one of the few remaining patriotic newspapers in the Land — and it brought me to the attention of a group of men, who have asked to remain anonymous, and they shall do so; and they sponsored my further career which included training in Rhodesia, Israel, Paraguay and Taiwan and a few other Friendly countries, which for security reasons must remain unnamed, and brought me here eventually talking to you. By the way, if any of you are interested in finding out more about my locks, my cousin Sarel runs a very good lock factory, the address is in the conference folders you have all been given. Phone Sarel, mention my name and you're sure of a good price. I have a vast reservoir of knowledge and experience and am almost bursting with enthusiasm to install a tough and effective security department in this, our beloved land. I am sure that at the end of this conference which, will last as planned, for 72 hours non-stop, you will share my enthusiasm, some of my knowledge and you will all be able to pronounce my name — Hannekom.

The title of our session is IN HOUSE TRAINING SCHEME, which we felt was innocuous enough to deceive even the most suspicious-minded of the liberal newspapers and the object of the session is to transfer ideas and knowledge from me to you. I am sure that you all agree that the encouragement of co-operation between industry members and security agencies will result in a better future for us all. You know, ladies and gentlemen, if you go into the offices and workplaces to-day, you will find that when the people are not working, they are not talking about how Zola will do at the Olympics or whether NAAS will be readmitted to amateur rugby — what they are talking about is strikes and boycotts. Strikes and boycotts, my cousin Koos, who runs a very good market research agency which you might like to make use of — the address is in your folders — well Koos has just completed a survey which shows that 86.4% of average white South Africans talk about the strikes and boycotts for an average of 17.6 minutes on an average day. Now that means, that quite apart from the money lost from the strikes and boycotts themselves, this country loses 300 million rand every year in wasted man hours. The economic aspects of the business are of course well known to you. Now with the exchange rate of the rand and the price of gold being where they are today that is a lot of money! Perhaps what you are less aware of is the link between industrial action on the one hand and terrorist action on the other. You know when Mr Slogun and his comrades sit there in their London offices (what the Nkomati accord really means is that they no longer have headquarters on the subcontinent — a wonderful security measure that accord) planning their strategies, they don't only plan where to plant a bomb, they also plan where to plant a subversive thought — and this conference will give us ways and means of combatting these terror tactics — to allow us all to fulfil the motto of the security department which is:

causa bella hic haec hoc Risski excreta
Terra firma pro patria belli securita

which, for those of you who we are not versed in the classical languages roughly translates as

Let us resist the Communist thought manure
Let us fight for our land and be secure!

(Lights flicker and go out). Ons is in die donker. Ligte Man! ladies and gentlemen, there seems to be some small electrical problem. I am sorry but I'm alive, why not have a broad smile, I shall soon have the current working again. You just listen to the music. I'll be back with you in a moment.

Well here I am again. You know ladies and gentlement the black youths of today don't have quite the same respect for education that we used to have. The little buggers have set fire to the distribution board at their school hence the electricity problem. But they've learned a different kind of lesson today and even if they won't be able to sit down for a while, they are back at school.

Oh, perhaps I should tell you about this. It's a very useful security accessory. The lappie is just an ordinary one that you can buy at the OK or Pick 'n Pay and there are moves afoot to have them made G.S.T. — exempt. And it comes in a range of twelve very fashionable colours. What makes it special is the fluid which was invented by Professor Gert and his team called tri-chloro polymethutoluene baked bean or some such thing; and if there is an industrial unrest at your plant, then you put it on and its stops teargas from getting at you. So what you do is, you put the fluid over the lappie and put the lappie over your nose and put your nose over the steering wheel of an R.P. and you're all fine. Of course you don't know what an R.P. is? I'm sorry I should have told you. An R.P. is a vehicle, it stands for Riot Pacifier and is very useful in controlling labour problems . . . And we get it from the United States — America I beg your pardon? Why? Well because they are our friends, like us, they have Russia as their enemy I was also instructed to restructure the department and so they want to help us stop the Russians from transforming this land into chaos! Anyway these machines have a kind of P.A. system on top with which you can tell the rioters to shut up, and if this doesn't work you've got machines that fire rubber bullets and a sort of pod which farts out — I beg your pardon, it poeps oh I'm sorry which emits a very powerful tear gas and then all the rioters run around like headless chickens (LAUGHTER). Seriously though if you have any unrest in your factories or whatever, these machines will sort it out quickly enough. Of course they can only be bought with a permit but I have a cousin in the permit department and there should be no problem. You might well need these machines, ladies and gentlemen, because rest assured, you have communists in your businesses. And if he belongs to a union, take double care because we have incontrovertible proof that unions are nothing other than fronts for banned organisations.

If any of you think that the enemy is still in Russia you are walking in your sleep — I repeat you are walking in your sleep. The enemy is all AROUND! THE ENEMY IS ALL AROUND. ■

LIFT SPECIAL

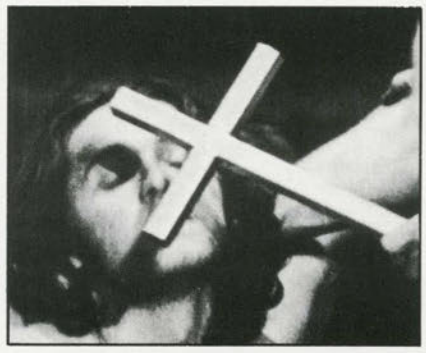
The Mladinsko Theatre of Ljubliana, Yugoslavia, bring a performance of LIFT based on a novel by DANILO KIS, entitled *Mass in A Minor*. They perform this political thriller in actions on all sides of an audience who are seated in the centre of the theatre. We print an extract from the novel on which it's based, translated by Dŭska Mikić-Mitchell:

A TOMB FOR BORIS DAVIDOVICH

'History recorded him as Novsky, which is only a pseudonym (or, more precisely, one of his pseudonyms). But what immediately spawns doubt is the question: did history really *record* him? In the index of the *Granat Encyclopedia*, among the 246 authorized biographies and autobiographies of great men and participants in the Revolution, his name is missing. In his commentary on this encyclopedia, Haupt notes that all the important figures of the Revolution are represented, and laments only the "surprising and inexplicable absence of Podvoysky." Even he fails to make an allusion to Novsky, whose role in the Revolution was more significant than that of Podvoysky. So in a "surprising and inexplicable" way this man whose political principles gave validity to a rigourous ethic, this vehement internationalist, appears in the revolutionary chronicles as a character without a face or a voice.'

'The ancient Greeks had an admirable custom: for anyone who perished by fire, was swallowed by a volcano, buried by lava, torn to pieces by beasts, devoured by sharks, or whose corpse was scattered by vultures in the desert, they built so-called cenotaphs, or empty tombs, in their homelands; for the body is only fire, water, or earth, whereas the soul is the Alpha and the Omega, to which a shrine should be erected.'

'Right after Christmas of 1885, the Czar's Second Cavalry Regiment halted on the west bank of the Dnieper to catch their breath and celebrate the feast of the epiphany. Prince Vyazemsky, a cavalry colonel, emerged from the icy water with the symbol of Christ in the form of a silver cross. Prior to that, the soldiers had shattered the thick crust of ice for some twenty metres around with dynamite; the water was the colour of steel. The young Prince Vyazemsky had refused to let them tie a rope around his waist. He crossed himself, his blue eyes gazing at the clear winter sky, and jumped into the water. His emergence from the icy whirlpools was first celebrated with salvos, and then with the popping of the corks of champagne bottles in the improvised officers' canteen set up in an elementary school building. The soldiers received their holiday ration of seven hundred grams of Russian cognac each: the personal gift of Prince Vyazemsky to the Second Cavalry. Drinking began right after the religious service in the village church and continued until late in the afternoon. David Ambramovich was the only soldier not present at the service. They say that during that time he was lying in the warm manger of the stables, reading the Talmud, which, given the profusion of associations, seems dubious to me. One of the soldiers noticed his absence and a search began. They found him in the shed (in the stables, according to some) with the untouched bottle of cognac beside him. They forced him to drink the liquor given him by the grace of the Czar, stripped him to the waist so as not to desecrate the uniform, and set about flogging him with a knout. Finally, when he was unconscious, they tied him to a horse and dragged him to the Dnieper. A thin crust had already formed where they had previously broken the ice. Having tied him around the waist with horse whips so he wouldn't drown, they pushed him into the ice water. When they finally pulled him out, blue and ▶



A TOMB FOR BORIS DAVIDOVICH

The violent beginnings of Boris Davidovich

half dead, they poured the remainder of the cognac down his throat and then, holding the silver cross over his forehead, sang in chorus "The Fruit of Thy Womb". In the evening, while he was burning with fever, they transferred him from the stables to the house of Solomon Malmud, the village teacher. Malamud's sixteen-year-old daughter coated the wounds on the back of the unfortunate private with cod-liver oil. Before leaving with his regiment, which was being dispatched that morning to crush an uprising, David Abramovich, still feverish, swore to her that he would come back. He kept his promise. From this romantic encounter, whose authenticity we have no reason to doubt, Boris Davidovich was born, he who would go down in history under the name of Novsky, B.D. Novsky.'

'At the age of four he was already able to read and write; at nine his father took him along to the Saratov Tavern near the Jewish market, where at a corner table, by the porcelain spittoon, his father practiced his trade as a lawyer.'

'Since he was already more literate than his father, little Boris Davidovich recorded their complaints. In the evening, they say, his mother read the Psalms to him, chanting them. When he was ten, an old estate overseer told him about the peasant uprisings of 1846: a harsh tale in which the knout, sabre, and gallows dealt out both justice and injustice. at thirteen, under the influence of Vladimir Soloviev's Antichrist, he ran away from home, but was brought back, escorted by police from a distant station.'

His biography does not lack information; what is puzzling is the chronology (which his aliases and the dizzying succession of places make only more difficult). In February 1913 we find him in Baku as a fireman's helper on a steam engine; in September of the same year, among the leaders of a strike in a wallpaper factory in Ivanovo-Voznesensk; in October, among the organizers of the street demonstrations in St. Petersburg. Nor are details lacking: the police on horses scattering the demonstrators with sabres and black leather whips, the Junker variation of a knout. Boris Davidovich, then known as Bezrabotny, managed to escape through the side entrance of a brothel on Dolgorukovska Street.

In the spring of 1912, in elegant St. Petersburg salons, where talk of Rasputin was growing ever more anxious, a young engineer named Zemlyanikov appeared, dressed in a light-coloured suit in the latest fashion, with a dark orchid pinned to his lapel, a dandy's hat, a walking stick, and a monocle. This dandy, with his fine bearing, broad shoulders, small, trim beard, and thick dark hair, boasted of his connections, talked of Rasputin with derision, and claimed to be a personal acquaintance of Leonid Andreyev.

So the ghost of Engineer Zemlyanikov had returned again to the salons, and briefly threatened to undermine the fame of Rasputin. It was not too difficult to establish certain facts: Zemlyanikov had used his frequent trips abroad for thoroughly disloyal purposes; on his last return from Berlin, under the silk shirts and expensive suits in his black leather suitcases, the border police had discovered some fifty Brownings of German make.

After an obvious gap in our sources, we find him in an insane asylum in Malinovsk, among severely disturbed and dangerous lunatics, from which, disguised as a high school student, he escaped on a bicycle to Batum. Undoubtedly he faked his madness, its certification by two eminent doctors notwithstanding; even the police were aware of this, retaining the two doctors as sympathizers of the Revolution. His later whereabouts are more or less known: one early September morning in 1913, just before dawn, Novsky boarded a ship and, hidden among tons of eggs, headed for Paris via Constantinople. There, during the day we find him in the Russian Library on the Avenue des Gobelins and the Musée Guimet, where he studied the philosophy of history and religion; and in the evening, in La Rotonde in Montparnasse with a glass of beer, wearing 'the most elegant hat to be found in all Paris.'

On a bright autumn day, while lunching at the salon of the famous Basel Sanatorium in Davos, where he was undergoing treatment for his nerves and his slightly tubercular lungs, Novsky was visited by one of the members of the International named Levin. Dr Drünwald approached them; he was Swiss, a disciple and friend of Jung, an authority in his field. According to Levin's testimony, the conversation was about the weather (the sunny October), about music (a recent concert given by a woman patient), about death (her musical soul had expired the night before). Between the meat and quince compote, served them by a waiter wearing a uniform and white gloves, Dr Grüwald, losing the thread of the conversation, said in his nasal voice (only to fill an awkward silence): 'There's some kind of revolution in St. Petersburg.'

Some documents lead us to conclude that Novsky, swept away by a wave of nationalism and bitterness, received the news of the truce, in spite of everything, as a blow. Levin speaks of a nervous crisis, and Meisnerova passes over this period with the haste of an accomplice. It seemed, however, that without great resistance Novsky dropped his Mauser and, as a sign of remorse, burned the plans of his assault bombs and his 70-metre flame throwers, and joined the ranks of the Internationalists. Soon we find him, tireless and ubiquitous, among the supporters of the Brest-Litovsk peace, distributing anti-war propaganda leaflets, and, as a fiery agitator among the soldiers, standing on boxes of artillery shells, erect as a statue. In this quick and, so to speak, painless transformation of Novsky, a certain woman appears to have played a major role. In the chronicles of the Revolution, her name is recorded: Zinaida Mihailovna Maysner.

A letter from those years, written in Novsky's hand, remains the only authentic document that combines, deeply and mysteriously, revolutionary passion with sensual love: '. . . As soon as I entered the university I found myself in prison. I was arrested exactly thirteen times. Of the twelve years that followed my first arrest, I spent more than half at hard labour. In addition, three times I walked the painful road of exile, a road that took three years of my life. During the brief periods of my "freedom" I watched, as in a movie theatre, the passing of sad Russian villages, towns, people and events, but I was always in flight — on a horse, on a boat, in a cart. I never slept in the same bed for more than a month. I've come to know the horror of Russian reality in the long tedious winter evenings when the pale lights of Vasilevsky Island barely blink, and a Russian village emerges in the moonlight in a false and deceptive beauty. My only passion was this arduous, rapturous, and mysterious profession of revolutionary . . . Forgive me, Zina, and carry me in your heart; it will be as painful as a kidney stone.'

The wedding ceremony was performed on December 27, 1919, on the torpedo boat *Spartacus*, which was anchored in Kronstadt harbour.

The torpedo boat greeted them with whistles and the cheers of the crew. The breathless radioman brought to the commander's bridge, where the young married couple had taken shelter, uncoded cables with congratulations from all the Soviet ports from Astrakhan to Enzeli: 'Long live the newlyweds!' 'Long live the Red fleet!' 'Hurrah for the brave crew of the *Spartacus!*' The Revolutionary Council of Kronstadt sent armored cars with nine cases of French champagne seized from the anarchists the day before. Kronstadt's brass band climbed up the gangplank and onto the deck

playing marches. Because of the temperature, 22° below zero (Fahrenheit), the instruments had a strange, cracked sound, as if made of ice. Patrol boats swarmed around, greeting the crew with signals. Three times stern trios of Chekists came on deck, their guns drawn, demanding that the celebration be stopped for security reasons; three times they returned their guns to their holsters at the mention of Novsky's name, and joined the officers' chorus in its shouts of 'Bittter! Bitter! . . . Sweet! Sweet!'

This marriage was dissolved after eighteen months, and Zinaida Mihailovna, during an illegal excursion to Europe, became the companion of the Soviet diplomat A.D. Karamazov. As far as her brief marriage to Novsky is concerned, some documents tell of tormented scene of jealousy and passionate reconciliations. The claim that Novsky used to whip Zinaida Mihailovna in his jealous fits, however, may well be the fruit of another jealous imagination — that of Mikulin. In her autobiographical book *Wave After Wave*, Zinaida Mihailovna passes over her personal memories as if writing them on water: the whip appears here only in its historical and metaphorical context as the 'knout' that mercilessly whips the face of the Russian people.

As far as we know, he held his last position in Kazakhstan, in the Central Office for Communications and Liaisons. He was bored; and in his office he again behan to draw plans to make calculations: a bomb the size of a walnut, with tremendous destructive power, obsessed him until the end of his life.

B.D. Novsky, the representative of the People's Commissariat for Communications and Liaisons, was arrested in Kazakhstan on December 23, 1930, at two o'clock in the morning. His arrest was much less dramatic than reported in the West. According to the reliable testimony of his sister, there was no armed resistance and fighting on the stairs. Novsky was asked urgently over the telephone to come to the Central Office. The voice was probably that of the engineer on duty: Butenko.

At dawn the next day he was taken out of his cell and sent to Suzdal. When the car arrived at the railroad station on that icy morning, the platform was deserted. A single cattle car stood on a siding, and it was to this car that they took Novsky. Fedukin, the tall, pock-marked, and unbending interrogator, spent some five hours alone with Novsky in this cattle car (the doors were locked from the outside), trying to persuade him of the moral obligation of making a false confession. These negotiations failed entirely. Then followed long nights without days spent in solitary confinement in Suzdal Prison, in a damp stone-walled cell known as the doghouse, which had the major architectural advantage of making a man feel as if he were buried alive, so that he experienced his mortal being, in comparison with the eternity of stone and time, as a speck of dust in the ocean of timelessness.

On the night of January 28-29, they led from his cell a man who still bore the name Novsky, though he was now only the empty shell of a being, a heap of decayed and ever-tortured flesh. In Novsky's dull gaze one could read, as the only sign of soul and life, the decision to endure, to write the last page of his biography according to his own will and fully conscious, as one writes a last testament. He formulated his thought like this: 'I've reached my mature year — why spoil my biography?'

In the middle of April, the trial of the saboteurs, now involving twenty members, was conducted behind closed doors. According to the testimony of a certain Snaserov, Novsky, despite his occasional obliviousness, spoke with a passion that Snaserov attributed to high fever. 'It was his best political speech yet,' he adds, not without malice (clearly alluding to those false rumours that Novsky was a poor speaker: the first premature sign of the destruction of the myth known as Novsky.)

As a sign of gratitude — and probably convinced that he had got out of death the most a living man could — Novsky insisted in his final speech that his crimes fully deserved the death sentence as the only just punishment, that he did not find the decision of the prosecutor too severe, and would not appeal the case to save his life. Since he managed to avoid the noose of the shameful gallows, he considered death before a firing squad a happy and fitting ending; even outside this moral context, he must have felt that some higher justice demanded that he die by steel and lead.

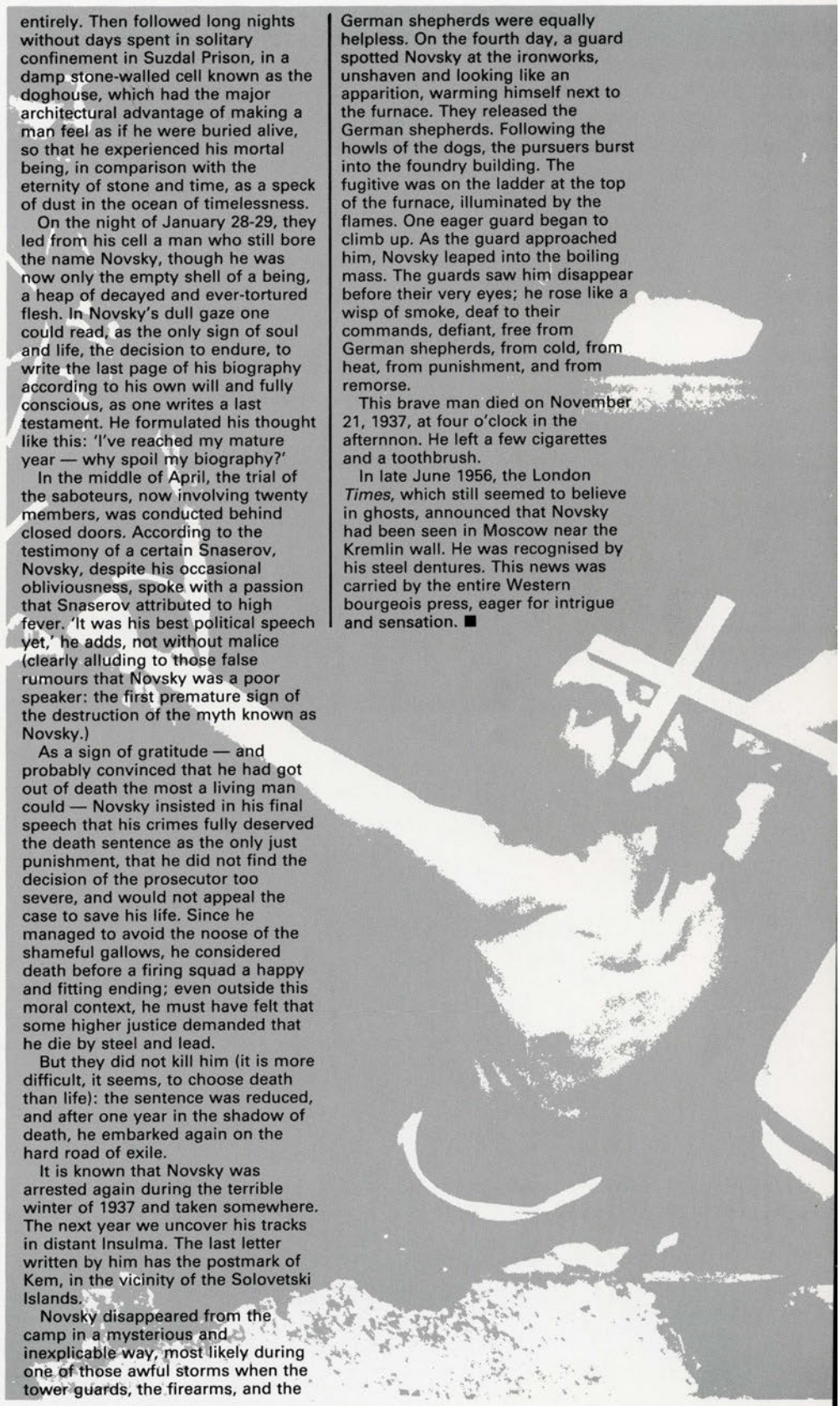
But they did not kill him (it is more difficult, it seems, to choose death than life): the sentence was reduced, and after one year in the shadow of death, he embarked again on the hard road of exile.

It is known that Novsky was arrested again during the terrible winter of 1937 and taken somewhere. The next year we uncover his tracks in distant Insulma. The last letter written by him has the postmark of Kem, in the vicinity of the Solovetski Islands.

Novsky disappeared from the camp in a mysterious and inexplicable way, most likely during one of those awful storms when the tower guards, the firearms, and the German shepherds were equally helpless. On the fourth day, a guard spotted Novsky at the ironworks, unshaven and looking like an apparition, warming himself next to the furnace. They released the German shepherds. Following the howls of the dogs, the pursuers burst into the foundry building. The fugitive was on the ladder at the top of the furnace, illuminated by the flames. One eager guard began to climb up. As the guard approached him, Novsky leaped into the boiling mass. The guards saw him disappear before their very eyes; he rose like a wisp of smoke, deaf to their commands, defiant, free from German shepherds, from cold, from heat, from punishment, and from remorse.

This brave man died on November 21, 1937, at four o'clock in the afternnon. He left a few cigarettes and a toothbrush.

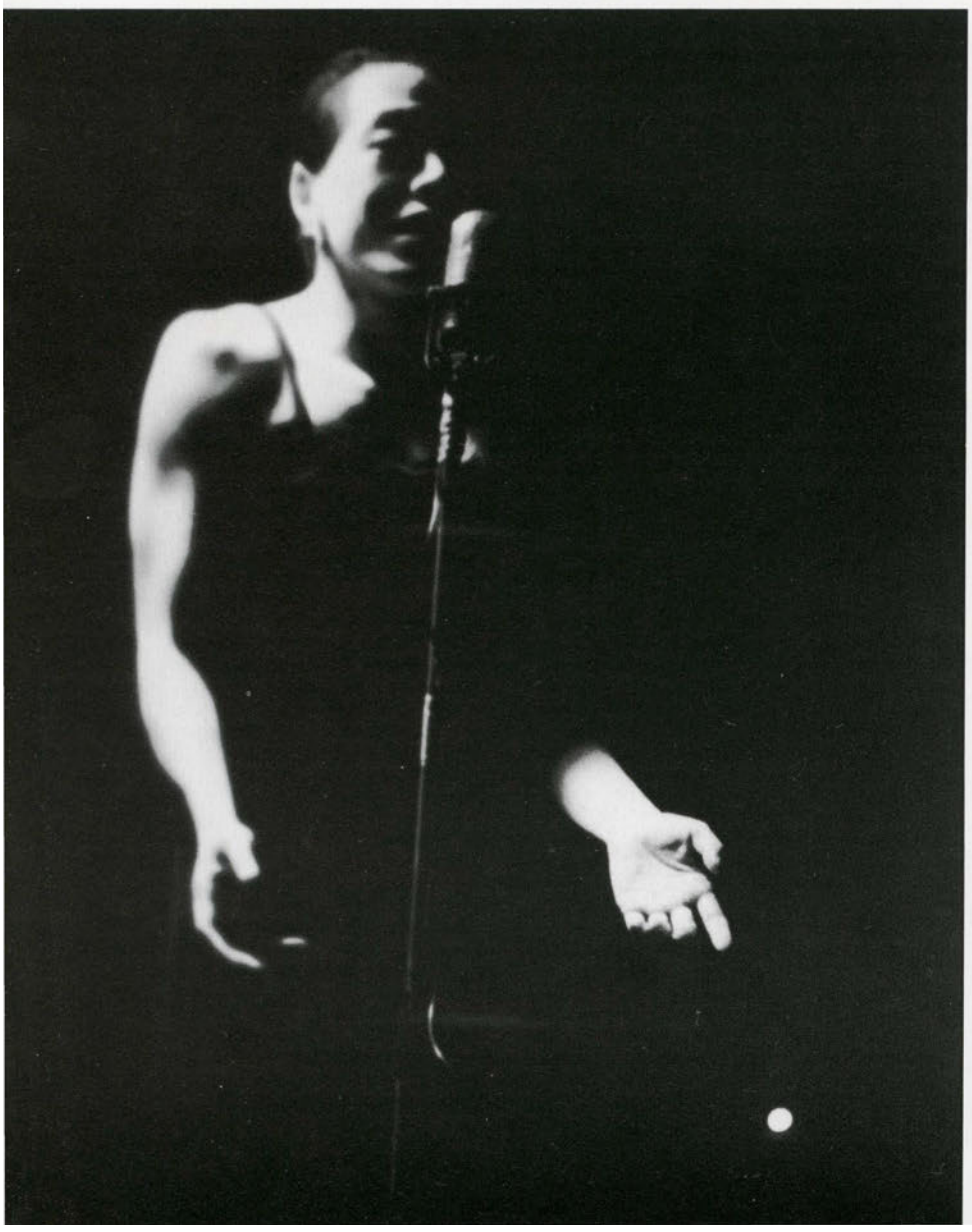
In late June 1956, the London *Times*, which still seemed to believe in ghosts, announced that Novsky had been seen in Moscow near the Kremlin wall. He was recognised by his steel dentures. This news was carried by the entire Western bourgeois press, eager for intrigue and sensation. ■



LIFT SPECIAL

WINSTON TONG

BARBARA LEHMANN, our New York correspondent, just *loves* a good wild-goose-chase, and she was luckily on the spot when it was announced that the legendary and elusive Winston Tong, present whereabouts unknown, *might* just be appearing in LIFT, and *might* just be traceable via a certain San Francisco telephone number. Now read on:



You reach a certain stage and there becomes no such thing as vacation. I woke up my first morning in SF to the panoramic vista of the Golden Gate and the ringing of a telephone that did not belong to me. I answered it anyway. There was the familiar click of a long distance connection and suddenly, I was greeted by the cheerful tones of my Fearless Editor.

'How's the weather in SF?' he asked.

Gazing out the windows of my mother's photographic studio, it was sunny and clear all the way to Marin County. I couldn't complain.

'Listen,' he continued, 'how would you like to track down Winston Tong for me. He's performing this summer in the LIFT Festival and maybe you can collect a few quotes.'

Winston Tong. Though I have never seen him or TuxedoMoon, the band he used to perform with, his name was no stranger to me. Starting in 1977, he was part of the new wave of performance artists that lit up the West Coast. Mariana Trench says that he was one of the first people in SF to sport Light Blue Hair. In 1978, after his first performance at LaMama, Ellen Stewart called him up to say, 'Honey, you just won an OBIE. Get yourself out to NY.' Currently, he resides in Belgium taking in the European influences. He released a single, THEORETICAL CHINA, made with English musicians on Island Records, that is #2 on the Pop Charts in Paris.

LIFT SPECIAL

'Well,' I said, feeling not adverse to a little reportage, 'Could be interesting. Got his phone number?'

'This is the interesting thing,' said the Editor. 'He may be difficult to get hold of. I can give you the number of his sister, Moochie. I'm sure she'll be able to steer you in the right direction.'

'No problem,' said I, having just returned from a sojourn in LA with my own brother, the baby movie mogul. There is no stronger institution than the family. Or so I have been led to believe.

At 10:30 that morning, I telephoned Moochie. Her voice at the other end was heavy with sleep. She took my message and promised to relay it to her brother. I felt secure that by dinner time there would be some form of communication from him. This was not the case.

After dinner at Sam's Grill a la Dashiell Hammett, I discovered that I had misplaced Moochie's number in the abyss of my mother's house. Since there was no listing in the directory for a Moochie, I dialed every M. Tong in the book but to no avail.

Finally, I called my friend, Marian Gray, Photographer of Bay Area Performance Art At Large. She referred me to Barbie via a maternity shop called Japanese Weekend. Barbie's boyfriend had recently collaborated with Winston as a part of Voice Farm.

The next morning I called Barbie, but she was in a meeting and would be unavailable until 2:00.

Meanwhile, on a walk over Russian Hill (my birthplace), I stopped at the Art Institute just to have a look around. There, I ran into Kathy Bruh who promised to make a few phone calls for me.

After an Italian lunch at the Cafe Sport in North Beach (home of the Beats), I called Barbie back but she was still unavailable. So I made my case to the man who answered. He seemed to know all about me (was this the boyfriend?) and suggested I call the Stone, a rock club on Broadway, where Winston and Voice Farm had performed. I thanked him and dialed information.

Unfortunately, the one listed phone number for The Stone plugged into a taped announcement. You can imagine my frustration.

That night Marian and Kathy came over for dinner at my parents to look at the video tape of my latest performance, *Physical Education*. Kathy brought two phone numbers with her. She said, 'As a matter of fact, Winston telephoned the Art Institute this afternoon.' She informed him that I was looking for him and even gave him my phone number.

Still he hadn't called.

The next morning at 10:00, armed with Kathy's numbers, I took to the telephone. Again, whoever it was answered it was filled with sleep. I began to feel guilty barking up all these sleeping trees. The voice assured me that Winston was not there but would be checking in later in the day. Again, I left my message.

I decided not to ring the next number (who knows, it might have even been Moochie's) simply because I was now worried that too much hounding might scare my man away. So, like many other women before me, I decided to wait by the telephone for 'him to call'.

Happily, phone machines are a great source of liberation. When I returned from a sumptuous lunch in Berkeley at Chez Panisse followed by a stroll around the Jonathan Borofsky show at the Berkeley Art Museum, there it was in digital display: One Call Received. All it takes is one. And sure enough, it was he.

He had left a number for me to call between 6:30 and 7:30 that evening. At 6:45, an older Chinese woman answered my ring and then handed the receiver to her son, Winston.

His soft voice welcomed my solicitation. He had tried to call me before but Moochie had taken down the wrong number. And what was this English Performance Magazine anyway?

As we were both scheduled to flee SF on Tuesday (today was Friday), we arranged to meet on Monday at 1:00 in my mother's garden.

After climbing the 26 steps from the street to the front door (the house is built on a hill), Winston Tong greeted me with a shy, friendly smile. He was dressed in the *de rigeur* black garb that identifies artists and his handshake was warm. Later he would refer to some of his character as ambisexual.

I led him into the garden which just happened to be in bloom. It was very soothing out in the almost sun.

Lately Winston has been reading about Alexander the Great. 'I have an Alexander Complex,' he said. 'I am very loyal and devoted to my friends and I expect the same thing in return.'

Like myself, Winston is a first generation San Franciscan who was nurtured on Herb Blau and Jules Irving's Actor's Studio and the early American Conservatory Theatre. He studied acting at the California Institute of the Arts with Blau's wife, Beatrice Manley. Out of school, he discovered the sad reality of type-casting in the American Theatre, finding himself eligible for roles such as The Chinese Houseboy. This kind of racism pushed him out of theatre into performance where he could play anyone he pleased to play. He has cast himself as Rimbaud, Wilhelm Reich and Billie Holliday to name a few.

'I examined the art that healed me, inspired me, brought me out of my misery and gave me something to live for,' he said. 'I felt like I must come to theatre via the Back Door.'

We sat amongst the irises and false jasmine sipping black currant tea. At 3:00 the sun came out. You could smell the ocean in the air. It was very relaxing.

'Bruce Connor put forth the Ten Year Theory about SF,' he said. 'And it's true. It seems to pick up here every 10 years. In 1957 we had the Beat Generation, in 1967 it was the Summer of Love, in 1977 the New Wave Explosion, and 1987 will be the New Time. I want to return and open a gallery for performers and artists.'

It may be two years before I get to see the work of Winston Tong, but you can bet for sure I'll be in SF, 1987, for this coming of age. See you there! ■

LONDON INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF THEATRE 85

The 3rd London International Festival of Theatre takes place all over London from 15 July-4 August, presenting a more colourful and varied programme than ever before.

Firmly established as a major theatrical event in Britain, the LIFT Festival brings together companies of international acclaim to reflect the best of contemporary theatre from around the world.

Over a three week period, LIFT presents a programme of international plays, dance, opera, outdoor spectacle, music, workshops, discussions and cabaret from 12 countries as culturally and politically diverse as Spain, South Korea, China, Yugoslavia and the USA.

From Peking Opera to Polish farce, from solo dance to outdoor extravaganzas and fireworks, the LIFT Festival promises audiences a rare opportunity to enjoy a wealth of theatrical activity.

The social focus of the Festival will be De Spiegeltent, a beautifully renovated 1920s Dance Salon from Holland, which will be suspended over the water at Camden Lock. A fine selection of food and refreshments will be available throughout the day, together with a varied programme of lunchtime music and late-night cabaret.

This year a new **TICKET VOUCHER SCHEME** is in operation. If you intend to make several visits, you can purchase a book of vouchers and save yourself £10.

Bringing a burst of theatrical energy and colour to British shores, visually exciting and full of new challenges, LIFT shows are guaranteed to invigorate the spirit of any theatregoer in London this summer.

GLC funded

Financially assisted by Greater London Arts Association

LIFT gratefully acknowledge assistance from:
Anglo-American Chairman's Fund
The British Council
Camden Lock
Chinese Ministry of Culture
The European Community
Greater London Arts
Greater London Council
The Gulbenkian Foundation
IBM United Kingdom Trust
Italian Ministry of Culture
Jugotours
The London Borough of Camden
PAGART – Polish Ministry of Culture
The Queen's Silver Jubilee Trust
Spanish Ministry of Culture
The Standard Bank Investment Corp. Ltd
Time Out
The Visiting Arts Unit of Great Britain

ADVANCE BOOKING FORM – ALL LIFT EVENTS

This form is to be returned to the Central LIFT Box Office, Unit 33, 44 Earlham Street, London WC2H 9LA.

Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope. Cheques should be left with the amount blank but should state a maximum upper limit.

NAME ____________

ADDRESS ____________

DAY TIME ☎ ____________

VENUE	DATE & TIME	COMPANY	NO. OF TICKETS	PRICE*	TOTAL	VOUCHERS No. to be Exchanged	VOUCHERS Value (£2 Each)	BOX OFFICE USE
			TOTAL TICKET VALUE					
			IF APPLICABLE DEDUCT VALUE OF VOUCHERS					
			TOTAL TO PAY					

*If applying for a concession please list concessionary price above, delete the following as applicable and complete card number: Student/Equity/UB40/Senior Citizen

Card No. ____________

LIFT VOUCHERS

Please supply ____ book(s) of 10 vouchers at £10 each (value £20)

Delete as applicable: 1. Please deduct the value of the appropriate number of vouchers as indicated above – maximum 1 voucher per ticket, 2 per performance. (Any remaining vouchers in your book will be sent to you with the tickets.)

or 2. At this stage I only wish to purchase vouchers. I enclose a cheque/PO for £______ total

N.B. Vouchers cannot be exchanged for tickets at concessionary rates

LIFT DISCUSSIONS

Tickets: £2.00
A series of open discussions led by UK specialists and members of the participating LIFT companies.

Saturday 20 July / 2.30pm
I.C.A.
BRITAIN AND THE WORLD OF THEATRE: SPLENDID ISOLATION OR CULTURAL VACUUM?

Saturday 27 July / 2.30pm
ROYAL COURT THEATRE
THE IDENTITY OF CHINESE THEATRE TODAY
in association with the Great Britain-China Centre.

Sunday 28 July / 2.30pm
RIVERSIDE STUDIOS
THE ROLE OF THEATRE IN EASTERN EUROPEAN SOCIETY. POLAND AND YUGOSLVIA: A CONTRAST

Saturday 3 August / 2.30pm
RIVERSIDE STUDIOS
THEATRE AND THE STATE

LIFT WORKSHOPS

The following companies are offering a series of workshops based on their training, skills and creative methods.

Teatr Nowy
Alberto Vidal
Pelican Players
Ko Oku Jin
The 4th Peking Opera Troupe

Please note that these workshops are aimed at those with some experience in the performing arts.

For further details and application forms please write to **LIFT WORKSHOPS,** Unit 33, 44 Earlham Street, London WC2H 9LA.

BOOKING INFORMATION

Tickets for all performances can be obtained from the respective venues and by post from the central LIFT Box Office. In addition tickets are available from all branches of **KEITH PROWSE** (except I.C.A.) and on the KP telephone line **01-741 9999** (credit cards).

LIFT CENTRAL BOX OFFICE: Booking, **by post** only, from Monday June 10.
Send in the attached booking form to LIFT Bookings, Unit 33, 44 Earlham Street, London WC2H 9LA.
Sorry, no personal callers.

LIFT INFORMATION LINE: Information on all LIFT shows and events is available on **01-240 9439,** 10am to 6pm. Also see *Time Out, City Limits* or the LIFT programme magazine (available from the venues) for details nearer the Festival. There will be an information service operating at De Spiegeltent during the Festival **(01-482 2323),** and reservations will be taken for all other venues.

SAVE £10!!

Buy a book of 10 vouchers and get £10 worth of tickets free!

Books containing 10 vouchers are available for sale at **£10 per book** (£1.00 per voucher). Each voucher has a face value of **£2.00** and can be redeemed against the full price of a ticket for any performance during the festival.

Only one voucher can be used per ticket and not more than two vouchers for any one performance. Vouchers cannot be used for tickets at concessionary rates. Money cannot be refunded when the festival is over.

The voucher books can be bought from any of the LIFT venues and by post from the LIFT Central Box Office. When applying on the attached booking form you may choose to cash in your vouchers at the same time as booking if you wish.

LIFT VENUES AND HOW TO GET AROUND

Concessions where stated apply to students, UB40s, Equity members and Senior Citizens.

ALBANY EMPIRE, Douglas Way, London SE8 4AG
Box Office: 691-3333
Opening hours 10am-6pm Mon to Fri / 11am-3pm Sat / until 9pm on perf. days.
Tickets: Wed, Thurs £3.00 / £2.00 concessions
Fri, Sat £3.50 / £2.50 concessions
Membership: £1.00
Tube station: New Cross
British Rail: New Cross, Deptford
Buses: 1, 21, 47, 53, 70, 171, 177

BATTERSEA ARTS CENTRE, Old Town Hall, Lavender Hill, London SW11 5TF
Box Office: 223-8413
Opening hours Mon & Tue 10am-2.30pm / Wed-Sun 10am-9.30pm.
Tickets: *PELICAN PLAYERS* £3.75 / £2.50 concessions
TRACI WILLIAMS £2.50 / £2.00 concessions
Membership: £1.00
Tube station: Clapham Common & 45 bus
British Rail: Clapham Junction
Buses: 19, 37, 39, 45, 48, 49, 77, 77A, 156, 170, 249

BATTERSEA PARK, London SW11 4NJ
British Rail: Battersea Park
Buses: 19, 39, 44, 45, 49, 137 (from Sloane Square Tube station), 170

I.C.A., Nash House, Carlton Terrace, The Mall, London SW1Y 5AH
Box Office: 930-3647
Opening hours: Tues-Sun 12 noon-8.30pm.
Tickets: £4.00/£2.00 concessions (Weds & Suns only)
Membership: 50p
Tube station: Charing Cross (Trafalgar Square exit) Piccadilly
British Rail: Charing Cross
Buses: All routes to Trafalgar Square

LONDON ZOO, Regent's Park, London NW1 4RY
Tube stations: Camden Town, Baker Street
Buses: 3, 53, 74

LYRIC THEATRE, HAMMERSMITH, King Street, London W6 0QL
Box Office: 741-2311
Opening hours: Mon-Sat 10am-8pm.
Tickets: *TEATR NOWY:* £7.50, £6.50, £5.50, £4.50 / £4.00 concessions and Lyric Friends.
BAHAMUTSI THEATRE COMPANY: £4.25 / £3.00 concessions and Lyric Friends.
Tube station: Hammmersmith
Buses: 9, 11, 27, 33, 72, 73, 91, 220, 260, 266, 267, 290, 295

RIVERSIDE STUDIOS, Crisp Road, Hammersmith, London W6 9RL
Box Office: 748-3354/CC: 379-6433
Opening hours: Tue-Sat 10am-8.30pm / Sun 12 noon-8.30pm
Tickets: £6.00 / £4.00 concessions
Tube station: Hammersmith
Buses: 9, 9A, 11, 33, 73, 220, 266, 267, 290

ROYAL COURT THEATRE, Sloane Square, London SW1W 8AS
Box Office: 730-1745
Opening hours: Mon-Sat 10am-7pm
Tickets: Mon all seats £3.00/Tues-Thurs £8.50, £7.00, £5.50, £4.00, £3.00, £2.00/Fri-Sat £9.00, £7.50, £6.00, £4.50, £3.00, £2.00 / Sat Mat £5.00, £3.00
Tube station: Sloane Square
Buses: 11, 19, 22, 137

SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE, Rosebery Avenue, London EC1R 4TN
Box Office: 278-8916
Opening hours: Mon-Sat 10.30am-7.30pm
Party booking: 278-6853
Recorded Information (24 hrs) 278-5450
Tickets: All seats £6.00 / no concessions
Tube station: Angel
British Rail: Kings Cross, Euston, St Pancras, Old Street
Buses: 19, 30, 38, 43, 73, 104, 171, 214, 277, 279
Also Sadler's Wells own Central London Stage Coach service – ring 278 0855 for details

SHAW THEATRE, 100 Euston Road, London NW1 2AJ
Box Office: 388-1394/CC: 387-6293
Opening hours: Mon-Sat 10am-6pm
Tickets: £5.00 / £3.00 concessions
Tube stations: Euston, Kings Cross, St Pancras
British Rail: Euston, Kings Cross, St Pancras
Buses: 14, 18, 30, 73, 77A, 188, 555

DE SPIEGELTENT, Camden Lock Market, Camden High Street, London NW1 8AF
Box Office:
Personal bookings only: 10am-6pm, 29,30 June, 6, 7 July, 13 July-4 August
Information line: 482-2323
Tickets: £4.00, £3.50 late-night / £1.50 lunchtime.
Plus membership: £3.00 whole Festival, £1 full day, 50p lunchtime or evening.
Tube station: Camden Town, Chalk Farm
Buses: 24, 27, 29, 31, 68, 74, 134, 214, 718

LIFT DAILY CALENDAR

JULY	Sunday 14	*	*De Spiegeltent*	NATURAL THEATRE COMPANY
	Monday 15	7pm	*Lyric Studio*	BAHAMUTSI THEATRE COMPANY
		*	*De Spiegeltent*	BOW – GAMALAN
	Tuesday 16	7pm	*Riverside Studios*	KO OKU JIN
		8pm	*Lyric Studio*	BAHAMUTSI THEATRE COMPANY
		*	*De Spiegeltent*	RA-RA-ZOO
	Wednesday 17	8pm	*Riverside Studios*	KO OKU JIN
		8pm	*Lyric Studio*	BAHAMUTSI THEATRE COMPANY
		*	*De Spiegeltent*	LOL COXHILL & DAVE HOLLAND
	Thursday 18	7pm	*Shaw Theatre*	LA GAIA SCIENZA
		8pm	*Albany Empire*	DR HOT AND NEON
		8pm	*Riverside Studios*	KO OKU JIN
		8pm	*Lyric Studio*	BAHAMUTSI THEATRE COMPANY
		*	*De Spiegeltent*	HARVEY AND THE WALLBANGERS
	Friday 19	8pm	*Shaw Theatre*	LA GAIA SCIENZA
		8pm	*Albany Empire*	DR HOT AND NEON
		8pm	*Riverside Studios*	KO OKU JIN
		8pm	*Lyric Studio*	BAHAMUTSI THEATRE COMPANY
		*	*De Spiegeltent*	CABARET ALL-SORTS
	Saturday 20	9am-6pm	*London Zoo*	ALBERTO VIDAL
		8pm	*Shaw Theatre*	LA GAIA SCIENZA
		8pm	*Albany Empire*	DR HOT AND NEON
		8pm	*Riverside Studios*	KO OKU JIN
		8pm	*Lyric Studio*	BAHAMUTSI THEATRE COMPANY
		2.30pm	*I.C.A.*	OPEN DISCUSSION
		*	*De Spiegeltent*	CLIFFHANGER
	Sunday 21	9am-6pm	*London Zoo*	ALBERTO VIDAL
		8pm	*Shaw Theatre*	LA GAIA SCIENZA
		8pm	*Riverside Studios*	KO OKU JIN
		*	*De Spiegeltent*	MIKE WESTBROOK
	Monday 22	8pm	*Shaw Theatre*	LA GAIA SCIENZA
		8pm	*Lyric Studio*	BAHAMUTSI THEATRE COMPANY
		*	*De Spiegeltent*	MAGNIFICENT SEVEN
	Tuesday 23	7pm	*Riverside Studios*	MLADINSKO THEATRE
		8pm	*I.C.A.*	WINSTON TONG
		8pm	*Shaw Theatre*	LA GAIA SCIENZA
		8pm	*Lyric Studio*	BAHAMUTSI THEATRE COMPANY
		*	*De Spiegeltent*	DR HOT AND NEON
	Wednesday 24	8pm	*Royal Court Theatre*	THE 4th PEKING OPERA TROUPE
		8pm	*Battersea Arts Centre*	PELICAN PLAYERS
		8.30pm	*Battersea Arts Centre (Studio)*	TRACI WILLIAMS
		8pm	*Riverside Studios*	MLADINSKO THEATRE
		8pm	*I.C.A.*	WINSTON TONG
		8pm	*Lyric Studio*	BAHAMUTSI THEATRE COMPANY
		*	*De Spiegeltent*	LOL COXHILL & DAVE HOLLAND
	Thursday 25	8pm	*Royal Court Theatre*	THE 4th PEKING OPERA TROUPE
		8pm	*Battersea Arts Centre*	PELICAN PLAYERS
		8.30pm	*Battersea Arts Centre (Studio)*	TRACI WILLIAMS
		8pm	*Riverside Studios*	MLADINSKO THEATRE
		8pm	*I.C.A.*	WINSTON TONG
		8pm	*Shaw Theatre*	LA GAIA SCIENZA
		8pm	*Albany Empire*	DR HOT AND NEON
		8pm	*Lyric Studio*	BAHAMUTSI THEATRE COMPANY
		*	*De Spiegeltent*	ROSE ENGLISH
	Friday 26	8pm	*Royal Court Theatre*	THE 4th PEKING OPERA TROUPE
		8pm	*Battersea Arts Centre*	PELICAN PLAYERS
		8.30pm	*Battersea Arts Centre (Studio)*	TRACI WILLIAMS
		8pm	*Riverside Studios*	MLADINSKO THEATRE
		8pm	*I.C.A.*	WINSTON TONG
		8pm	*Shaw Theatre*	LA GAIA SCIENZA
		8pm	*Albany Empire*	DR HOT AND NEON
		8pm	*Lyric Studio*	BAHAMUTSI THEATRE COMPANY
		*	*De Spiegeltent*	CABARET ALLSORTS
	Saturday 27	8pm	*Royal Court Theatre*	THE 4th PEKING OPERA TROUPE
		8pm	*Battersea Arts Centre*	PELICAN PLAYERS
		8.30pm	*Battersea Arts Centre (Studio)*	TRACI WILLIAMS
		8pm	*Riverside Studios*	MLADINSKO THEATRE
		8pm	*I.C.A.*	WINSTON TONG
		8pm	*Shaw Theatre*	LA GAIA SCIENZA
		8pm	*Albany Empire*	DR HOT AND NEON
		8pm	*Lyric Studio*	BAHAMUTSI THEATRE COMPANY
		2.30pm	*Royal Court Theatre*	OPEN DISCUSSION
		*	*De Spiegeltent*	TO BE ANNOUNCED
	Sunday 28	8.30pm	*Battersea Park*	ELS COMEDIANTS
		8pm	*Battersea Arts Centre*	PELICAN PLAYERS
		8.30pm	*Battersea Arts Centre (Studio)*	TRACI WILLIAMS
		8pm	*Riverside Studios*	MLADINSKO THEATRE
		8pm	*Shaw Theatre*	LA GAIA SCIENZA
		2.30pm	*Riverside Studios*	OPEN DISCUSSION
		*	*De Spiegeltent*	TO BE ANNOUNCED
	Monday 29	8pm	*Royal Court Theatre*	THE 4th PEKING OPERA TROUPE
		*	*De Spiegeltent*	TO BE ANNOUNCED
	Tuesday 30	7.30pm	*Sadler's Wells Theatre*	ELS COMEDIANTS
		8pm	*Royal Court Theatre*	THE 4th PEKING OPERA TROUPE
		8pm	*Riverside Studios*	MLADINSKO THEATRE
		*	*De Spiegeltent*	TO BE ANNOUNCED
	Wednesday 31	7pm & 9pm	*Lyric Theatre*	TEATR NOWY
		8pm	*I.C.A.*	CARBONE 14
		7.30pm	*Sadler's Wells Theatre*	ELS COMEDIANTS
		8pm	*Royal Court Theatre*	THE 4th PEKING OPERA TROUPE
		8pm	*Riverside Studios*	MLADINSKO THEATRE
		8pm	*Albany Empire*	BAHAMUTSI THEATRE COMPANY
		8pm	*Battersea Arts Centre*	PELICAN PLAYERS
		*	*De Spiegeltent*	POOKIESNACKENBURGER
AUGUST	Thursday 1	7pm & 9pm	*Lyric Theatre*	TEATR NOWY
		8pm	*I.C.A.*	CARBONE 14
		7.30pm	*Sadler's Wells Theatre*	ELS COMEDIANTS
		8pm	*Royal Court Theatre*	THE 4th PEKING OPERA TROUPE
		8pm	*Riverside Studios*	MLADINSKO THEATRE
		8pm	*Albany Empire*	BAHAMUTSI THEATRE COMPANY
		8pm	*Battersea Arts Centre*	PELICAN PLAYERS
		*	*De Spiegeltent*	OMELETTE BROADCASTING COMPANY
	Friday 2	7.30 & 9.30pm	*Lyric Theatre*	TEATR NOWY
		8pm	*I.C.A.*	CARBONE 14
		7.30pm	*Sadler's Wells Theatre*	ELS COMEDIANTS
		8pm	*Royal Court Theatre*	THE 4th PEKING OPERA TROUPE
		8pm	*Riverside Studios*	MLADINSKO THEATRE
		8pm	*Albany Empire*	BAHAMUTSI THEATRE COMPANY
		8pm	*Battersea Arts Centre*	PELICAN PLAYERS
		*	*De Spiegeltent*	MAGNIFICENT SEVEN
	Saturday 3	7.30 & 9.30pm	*Lyric Theatre*	TEATR NOWY
		8pm	*I.C.A.*	CARBONE 14
		7.30pm	*Sadler's Wells Theatre*	ELS COMEDIANTS
		4pm & 8pm	*Royal Court Theatre*	THE 4th PEKING OPERA TROUPE
		8pm	*Riverside Studios*	MLADINSKO THEATRE
		8pm	*Albany Empire*	BAHAMUTSI THEATRE COMPANY
		8pm	*Battersea Arts Centre*	PELICAN PLAYERS
		2.30pm	*Riverside Studios*	OPEN DISCUSSION
		*	*De Spiegeltent*	TO BE ANNOUNCED
	Sunday 4	7pm & 9pm	*Lyric Theatre*	TEATR NOWY
		8pm	*I.C.A.*	CARBONE 14
		8pm	*Battersea Arts Centre*	PELICAN PLAYERS
		*	*De Spiegeltent*	THE BRASS BAND
	Monday 5–Wednesday 7	7pm & 9pm	*Lyric Theatre*	TEATR NOWY

* De Spiegeltent late night performances will begin after 10pm. See LIFT programme or listings for exact times and other events. All details are correct at the time of printing. LIFT reserves the right to make last minute changes in the programme should this prove necessary.

LONDON INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF THEATRE 85

15 JULY – 4 AUGUST

NEWS

THE WOOSTER GROUP VS. MI

CEASE DESIS'

By CATHERINE BUSH

The Wooster Group's *L.S.D.* (. . . Just the High Points . . .) was/is a dense, dizzying theatre piece about hallucination, hysteria, authority and the subversion of it. Perhaps it was only fitting that the response it engendered included some of the same.

In its final form, the four-part *L.S.D.* juxtaposed material drawn from the life and writings of Timothy Leary, guru of the psychedelic '60s, and his gang, all tripping woozily toward countercultural revolution, and from Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible* about the Salem witch trials but written in the '50s at the time of the McCarthy Communist-hunting hearings — another episode of hysteria, hallucination and conflict between individual freedom and institutional authority. It was with *The Crucible* that the Wooster Group ran into its own conflicts with authority, namely the author himself.

Unable to obtain New York City performing rights through the play's publisher, Elizabeth LeCompte, artistic director of the Group, approached Miller for special permission. What ensued was a two-year history of refusals, attempted negotiations on the Group's part, cease and desist orders (American legalese for 'injunctions') on Miller's, and repeated closings. *L.S.D.* (in its most recent incarnation) closed for good in January of this year. As far as LeCompte, the Group and its lawyer are concerned, however, the case isn't entirely laid to rest. They'd still like to resurrect the piece in some form and so are keeping their bases covered. After agreeing to talk with me, LeCompte asked when we met that the interview be off the books. We finally decided that LeCompte and the Group's lawyer would have a chance to read this piece and clear all comments she is quoted as making before they appeared in print.

Strictly speaking, Miller's play is Miller's property. The issue of ownership has two faces, though; there's not only the legal issue of copyright but also questions of aesthetic rights. At what point does interpretation become violation? The root of the controversy between Miller and the Wooster Group really lies in their antithetical approaches to theatre. A multidisciplinary New York-based collective, the Group appropriates all varieties of text into its productions, fragmenting and redefining them. Miller, author of such sombre, naturalistic American '50s masterpieces as *Death of a Salesman*, believes the playright to be the often-abused crux of the art.

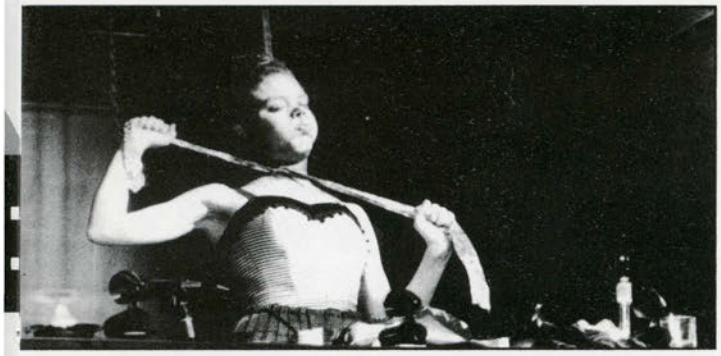
Initially, the Group was performing what amounted to a separate 45-minute, fiendishly compressed version of *The Crucible*, set interrogation-style at a long, raised conference table equipped with mikes and buzzers, some performers in Puritan, some in contemporary dress. Miller in fact saw this version in October 1983 before advising his agent to refuse approval. Subsequent letters sent by LeCompte to Miller, requesting that he reconsider, emphasizing her respect for the play, the seriousness of the Group's theatrical intentions, and charting the development of *The Crucible* material within the complete piece, were met with silence.

'I felt he wanted to ignore the situation,' says LeCompte. 'He didn't want to come down and say, "I don't want you to do this." He didn't want to give approval because it would set a precedent of some sort.' Yet she and the Group hoped that the sheer lack of response or intervention would amount to a form of 'tacit approval.'

The controversy re-emerged a year later in the fall of 1984, when *L.S.D.* finally opened to the New York press. The 45-minute version of *The Crucible* had now been reduced to a 20-minute segment, the second of four parts, framed by Leary material. Although *L.S.D.* had played to the Boston press in the spring, it was only after a pan in *The New York Times*, describing *The Crucible* section as a parody, that the Group received, not a warning call but, bang, a cease and desist order from Miller's lawyers. They performed through that upcoming weekend, turning Miller's lines into fast-forward 'gibberish,' keeping the same tempo, cues and physical gestures.

After the closing, Miller, perhaps guiltily, called in person to apologize for the way the situation had been handled. With his agreement, LeCompte then sent him a copy of the portions of his script that she wanted to use, which now amounted to no more than *two pages*, or four minutes, of text. Once again no response. The Miller passages were primarily needed not for 'Salem,' as *The Crucible* section had been called, but for the part which followed, 'Millbrook,' a drugged-out party sequence structurally dependent on visual allusions to and key lines from Miller's play. Excising these was actually far more problematic than removing Miller from Part 2, although there LeCompte wanted her original blocking intact.

For Part 2, LeCompte had



Fast-forward gibberish — not yet good enough for Miller and his lawyers

LLER: JUST THE HIGH POINTS

AND T!

Group-associate Michael Kirby write a parallel script to the Group's rendering of the Miller text, changing all names but fitting exactly into the metre of the original. 'I wanted words to be heard,' LeCompte said, 'to overlay the Miller words, to obscure them. I didn't care what words, or whether there was any narrative line. In fact, I'd always imagined, right from the beginning, that we might end up with something like this.' A copyright lawyer seemed confident this current version would pass in court as fair usage.

When the new and improved *L.S.D.* reopened in January 1985, it was enhanced not only by the Kirby script but by 60 to 70 copies of *The Crucible* strategically placed on the backs of the audiences' chairs — 'like hymnbooks' — with the Group's originally performed sections marked, although without any instructions to audience members as to what they should do with them.

Perhaps ingenuously, LeCompte believed that since the Miller lines had been phased off stage, simply having copies of the play in the room would be legally OK. On the other hand the visible scripts had an air of asking for trouble. But maybe no amount of 'good-books' behaviour would have stopped Miller's lawyers, who slapped the Group with another cease and desist order. In essence, it was blackmail. The group was as good as told that if it didn't close down the whole piece it would be sued for the 45 minutes of *The Crucible* performed the year before. Miller and his lawyers seemed ready to go to any lengths just to shut the group up altogether. The Group felt that they did not have the resources to take the case to court. 'That's not what I want to spend my life doing,' adds LeCompte. The show closed.

Miller's objections seemed to stem increasingly from what he described to *The Village Voice* as the Group's 'mangling' of his play. He never saw the completed *L.S.D.*, however, just gained his information from reviews and secondhand reports. And LeCompte herself attests to the difficulty of describing what the Group does on stage without making it sound as though they're making light of *The Crucible*.

A solution which LeCompte would like to have seen would have been the inclusion of programme notes stating both director's and playwright's positions; a solution reached in a similar controversy over interpretive rights that arose about the same time between experimental director Joanne Akalaitis and Samuel Beckett's American representatives over a production of *Endgame* which Akalaitis set (contrary to Beckett's visually precise stage directions) in a subway station.

'The playwright should be allowed to say, "This isn't how I conceived my play visually",' LeCompte says. 'I feel strongly that people should understand this is an adaptation, in case someone didn't know the original wasn't 20 minutes long. We stated this in our programme. We also quoted Mr Miller from his essay on adaptations, where he argues that an adaptation cannot be used adequately to represent or substitute for the original.'

LeCompte is quick to acknowledge Miller's legal rights and that he was within them to stop the production. Yet who knows how many productions of *The Crucible* are going on at this time which violate the integrity of Miller's text? LeCompte and the Group were (un)lucky enough to be singled out as symbolic targets, used by Miller and his lawyers to demonstrate exactly what power was at their disposal. Wham! The great hand of authority comes down.

What's ironic, of course, is that Miller has a history as a liberal and a radical, of which *The Crucible* is a leading statement, and sees himself as the defender of the little guy, like the beleagured playwright. Now here's this radical man, defending not only his freedom but his rights to private property and basically attempting to suppress a vision that doesn't accord with his into the bargain. 'The issue here is very simple,' Miller has said. 'I don't want my play produced except in total agreement with the way I wrote it.'

The playwright's claims to his property become complicated, in this case, by *The Crucible's* status as a contemporary classic, which LeCompte would like to claim that it is. The play's entry into public consciousness, the almost mythic status it gains from the wealth of association most Americans bring to it, accounts in part for LeCompte's interest in the text. In addition, *The Crucible* is based on actual transcripts of historical events which could be deemed public property. The ironies mount: LeCompte believes Miller's lawyers may have mistaken passages she pulled from the original transcripts for the Miller lines they were intended to replace. And the names which the Kirby rewrite changed weren't Miller's names but actual historical ones. ▶

CEASE DESIST

The authoritarianism and paranoia which this kind of turf protection reveals depress rather than frighten LeCompte. 'It's not a healthy attitude for the theatre. Really new interpretations of plays by living playwrights are just not going to be done.'

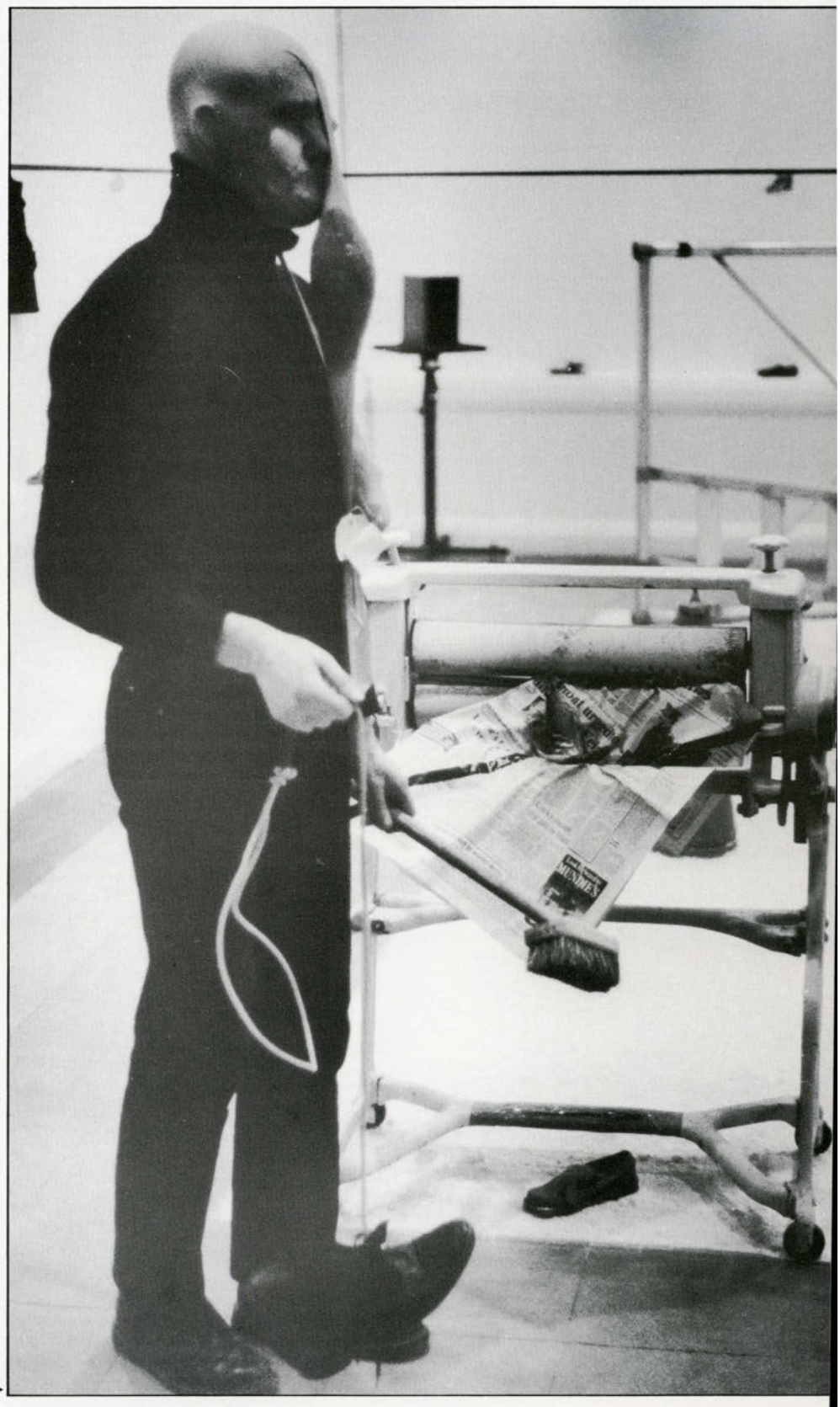
'I just wish this kind of thing weren't so threatening. I'm not trying to convince [Miller] that my way of doing his play is the correct way. I would love to have entered a dialogue with him, even to have lost, but at least had a chance to show the piece, to talk in a more open forum.'

On the other hand, the Miller controversy is just one more episode in the Wooster Group's ongoing history of confrontation with cultural icons and authorities. That handy guru Timothy Leary neatly sums up their position in their L.S.D. (Manifesto 2), which they papered all over downtown streets: 'The more government and professional establishment dynamism that is set off against what we're doing is just a sign to us that we're doing fine.' ■

Establishment 1, Wooster Group 0 . . . for now

LIVE WORK AT THE BRITISH ART SHOW

ROBERT AYERS saw the British Art Show in Sheffield. This is what he thought of it:



Alistair Maclennan — 'great and frightening and poetic'

Photo: Mike Tooby

The British Art Show, which is still touring the country, is on the one hand 'an introduction to some of the most interesting'* art produced in Britain over the last five years, and on the other a celebration of it. Performance (like video and film) is, the Arts Council organisers claim, 'an integral part' of this Best-of-British survey, but its actual representation is tiny. In a catalogue that lists eighty one paintings and forty eight sculptures, there are only six performances.

If you'd been one of those members of the Birmingham, Edinburgh, Sheffield, or Southampton public hoping to find in The British Art Show that 'introduction' to what's going on in contemporary British art making, then, unless you'd been very lucky, you wouldn't get any sense of what performance has got to do with it. What you'd very probably find, among all the pictures and objects, would be odd little plinths, surrogates for the real performances, and bearing photographs and brief descriptions and the time and place where you might find the actual thing.

'As they are not static works we are showing them separately from the other works in the exhibition' was the rationalisation put forward, but, whatever the reasons, The British Art Show pushed performance out even further into the cold than those catalogue figures suggest: whereas (in Sheffield) you could enjoy sculptures by Tony Caro or Anish Kapoor, or paintings by Howard Hodgkin or Steven Campbell any time you happened into the Mappin Gallery between mid March and early May, to see Station House Opera, for example, you had to get yourself along to the Leadmill (and pay a £1 admission charge) during the right forty five minutes on the right Sunday evening.

Hardly surprisingly, few of the Sheffield public thought it worth the effort: whereas in the first six weeks of its run at the Mappin, the exhibition proper — it seems fair enough to call it that — had 22,775 visitors (a *daily* average of more than 500, and a 20 per cent increase on its usual attendance figures) only fifty people turned up for Station House Opera, and only forty five for Anthony Howell.

Even those who were there found the Leadmill in a very restrained mood: none of the live music that's part of the Leadmill's regular fare, and instead what might have been intended as a suitably reverential atmosphere for looking at art, but what for me was almost like being there when the place was closed. Perhaps this contributed to the rather gloomy sense that I had on both of those nights at the Leadmill that the ▶

LIVE WORK AT THE BRITISH ART SHOW

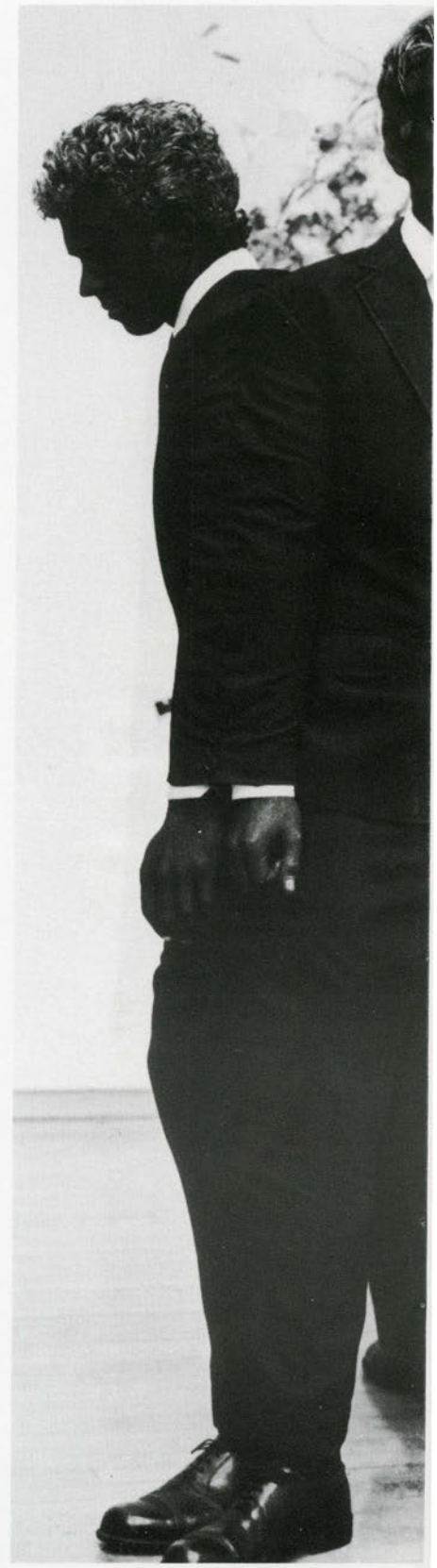
artists involved shared some unspoken agreement with the British Art Show's organisers that performance might withdraw itself from the rest of the show, and certainly from its introductory function.

It's got little to do with the live work being any more difficult than the stuff on the walls and floor of the Mappin, or any further from what the British public expects or wants art to consist of. (Though one disgruntled gent assured me that Anthony Howell 'would be locked up under any other circumstances', this was matched by comments that I overheard in front of Tim Head's *State of the Art* or even — *still* — Richard Long's *Winter Circle*). What did seem to be the case though was that, while the exhibition looked bright and lively and entertaining at the Mappin, with friendly, helpful young people actually employed as 'lecturer-guides' just to talk to you about the pieces, and to maybe say a few useful things about them, the work at the Leadmill — and it's not the easiest place to find, nor when you've found it, the most inviting place to enter — the work at the Leadmill seemed to know very much who its audience was, and what their expectations were, and, with this understanding assumed, it went rather creakily through the motions.

This seemed particularly true of Station House Opera. Their *Sex & Death* is, like some of their other recent work, about lack of connections, particularly the connections that one might expect to find between language and action (in life, and in performance as well). But, on the evening that I saw it, this was rather clouded by a sense that other connections that weren't being made were those between the appearances of the work and what they were intended to mean (as though the performers had forgotten them) and between the piece as it had been conceived, written and rehearsed, and what was actually being performed. In other words, I had the impression of a company on a bad night, of a performance not coming off. Little tricks that ought to have worked slickly and amusingly — at one point the head and shoulders of one performer stick out of one end of a long carpet, the legs and feet of another out of the other, and we're encouraged to believe they're parts of same, absurdly stretched body — these were fluffed; and though *Sex & Death* had a couple of strong images, like the moment when three performers, squirted water from their mouths like some living baroque garden fountain, I found it tedious that night in Sheffield, overlong by about two thirds its length.

Anthony Howell also made that worst performer's mistake, overstretching his audience's patience — he may have started the evening with forty five watching him, but he finished up with only twenty six — though in fairness I should say that I enjoyed the second half of his programme rather more than the first. His *Table Move I* and *Table Move II* are in fact technically very similar pieces, choreographies for Anthony Howell and a small number of objects and items of furniture. The moods of the two works are oddly dissimilar, however. In *Table Move I* the repeated changing of a blue jacket for a beige one, and the repeated changing of white pumps for polished black dress-shoes by the bow-tied Anthony Howell, the two large de-mob suitcases and flimsy guest house wardrobe, and the fact that Anthony Howell eventually hides in or behind these things, gives the piece a rather limp comic, vaudeville air, suggesting a small time comedian or escape artist and his dreary night-after-night spent in digs. *Table Move II*, on the other hand, has an elegance and romance that I feel make it a much more successful piece, better able to suggest how the objects that it's composed around — another wardrobe, a couple of old leather-bound books, two galvanized buckets and the water that's poured between them, and, most striking of all, a pair of portable gas lamps providing the piece's only illumination — how these things can be transformed into something more than just props.

If Anthony Howell and Station House Opera's performances — and their presentation — were less than successful, and if this was due in some measure to their pieces' excessive length and insufficient incident, then Alastair MacLennan's *Body Break* (the third of what the British Art Show catalogue calls *Four Related Performance Installations* 1984-85) came as a poignant reminder not only that there is a strength to be found in enormous length (*Body Break* was 72 hours long) but also that it's a strength that can help make performance combative and arresting: far from being complacent about its audience, *Body Break* (which was performed in a small upstairs room in the Mappin) lured people up from the galleries with its hypnotic tape-loop soundtrack of helicopters and wailing bagpipes, and once it had them up there, it either disgusted them — in some cases quite literally, the stink of rotting fish got so bad — or, at least as often it intrigued them with its at first apparently peculiar assortment of objects — a basket of earth with Alastair MacLennan's life-mask lying on it, a pig's head split in half, an old washing mangle with a crumpled newspaper and crushed fish caught between its rollers, the



square of creamy-white flour that they were all set out upon — then it drew them in as the resonances of more and more of the objects seemed to relate to the fact that these were Irish newspapers, and finally it mesmerised them with Alastair MacLennan's painfully slow, repeated, apparently ritualistic actions. Again and again he brushed around the square of flour, tidying up its edges; or slowly, as though measuring, he'd run his finger in from the edge of the flour, continuing the squaring of the cork floor tiles into his own larger, more important square. And even if they left after a few minutes — and I have to admit, with some regret, that I was only able to watch for a couple of hours — *Boby Break* continued to work in the minds of its spectators. What happened at night? Did he just continue? Did he sleep? I found it a great and frightening and poetic lament of a performance.

So what's the difference? Why did Alastair MacLennan succeed where Station House Opera failed? It obviously isn't the case that Alastair MacLennan is more populist. (Among the British Art Show's performance I think that word only fits Stephen Taylor Woodrow's *Triptych Ballet*, though I don't suppose any of us would want an introduction to performance to depend on that work.) What I think it does have something to do with is that, whereas Station House Opera and Anthony Howell's contributions to the British Art Show were done virtually as one night stands, Alastair MacLennan made his piece specifically for the place and the occasion, spending a week in the gallery before the actual performance. (Rose Finn-Kelcey had planned to do this as well; unfortunately she was prevented by illness from performing.) I think it also mattered that Alastair MacLennan's performance took place in the gallery, breathing the same air, as it were, as the paintings and sculptures, fighting for the same attention. The fact that performances are not 'static works' isn't a sufficient reason to drag them off across town and put them into what is effectively a small theatre space. Neither *Sex & Death* nor *Table Move I and II* made technical requirements that could not have been met with a little effort in a gallery-type space. There was certainly nothing un-gallery about them.

Putting performance into exhibitions that are really geared to the showing of painting and sculpture has never been easy. Now that performance is much less fashionable than it once was, many people have stopped trying to do it. It's become easier to say that performance doesn't have enough in common with painting or sculpture to try to show them side by side, or that art galleries are somehow improper places to make performances. The British Art Show took on an almost nostalgic air by even attempting it. But I think that, having taken the task on, the organisers ought to have thought longer and harder, and with more sympathy, about the requirements of performance and about the problems that its presentation can pose. The reason why many of us make performances in the first place is because it can encompass more than things that hang on the wall or stand on the floor. It can do more things at the same time, it can drag in all of a spectator's senses and their emotions along with them, and it can claim the time and place as well. But what this means is that far more of what surrounds the performance is rendered active. There's far more to go wrong around performance's vulnerable edges.

The British Art Show's selectors evidently took performance seriously. They saw a lot of work, and they looked at some of it very hard. Where things went wrong, I think, was when, having decided to include it but having realized that its needs were different to most of the stuff in the show, they made it less important. To show Station House Opera in the Mappin Gallery (and more than once, surely) would have made great demands on the rest of the show, and on a lot of the work that it included. But in any mixed show things encroach upon one another, and if you accept, as the British Art Show's organisers seem to have done — that performance often shares many of the assumptions of painting and sculpture and in fact overlaps those activities at their limits and that it can carry similar meanings in the same sort of languages, then you have to treat it better than they did at Sheffield.

For Southampton, the strategy has been changed and the Arts Council are advertising a 'Performance Festival . . . The Show within a Show' consisting of the same performers as appeared in Sheffield and staged at Southampton Art Gallery. As I write this, it's yet to happen. I hope it works. ■

*This and the other quotations are taken from *The BP Guide to the British Art Show*, ten pence from the Mappin Gallery.

Steven Taylor Woodrow's Triptyoh Ballet

Photo: Sheffield Morning Telegraph

THE SEVERN BRIDGE AND BEYOND:

More Notes from Cardiff by DAVID BRIERS

FEBRUARY: I had not seen Ivor Cutler perform for more years than I care to remember. But I had heard him on the radio, of course, as presumably had most of the large and very young audience who came to see him at Chapter (or has he become an O Level set book?) He was the star billing in an evening of performance and poetry called *Tall Tales*. I hate poetry readings, and shun them like the plague. It only dawned on me later that Ivor Cutler had been doing nothing but read (and sing) his published poems. How good they were, and how they affected me. Accept no substitute for the *live* Ivor Cutler. He is as avuncular and as eccentric as ever, and better than ever he was, I'm sure of it.

Pip Simmons has a loyal and sizeable following at Chapter, including not a few people who support no other form of 'alternative theatre'. *In the Penal Colony* began like a gallery private view — you were handed a glass of wine and invited to inspect Alex Mavro's dangerous *Ballista* sculpture. A member of the cast pretending to be a TV commentator with a microphone, followed by a video cameraman, came round asking us what we thought of the sculpture, and made us feel silly, because we were not pretending to be anyone other than ourselves. A bit later another member of the cast, playing 'woman in the audience', started berating the sculpture and its maker, and pretended to perform an agit-prop action involving a doll and lots of 'blood'. Then we were allowed to sit in our seats and be the audience.

The problem with such old fashioned 'audience participation' is that it offers an open invitation for critical disruption which is never taken up because we're British (even in Wales). Supposing when the 'TV commentator' asked me what I thought of the sculpture, I had said, 'It's OK. How do you feel about pretending to be someone you're not and asking me damn fool questions? Would you rather be working for Lumiere & Son?' Suppose someone else had felt so sympathetic to the acted anger of the 'woman in audience' as to join her and smash the sculpture? *In the Penal Colony* seemed too tightly scripted to encompass such eventualities, but they were unlikely to happen anyway, because the main body of the piece was completely flat, banal and ineffectual, despite torture, rude words, video & songs. Trevor Stuart deserved better. I don't know if Pip Simmons has been going for as long as Status Quo, but it certainly felt like it. Thank goodness Ivor Cutler had been around to prove that getting older has nothing to do with it.

'Where do new performers come from, daddy?'

MARCH: Within a week at Chapter in March you could see a pleasantly instructive recital of Bharata Natyam Indian classical dance by Kiran Ratna (who just happens to be an electrical engineer in Cardiff docks), followed the next night, to a completely different audience, by the Samul Nori Korean drum ensemble, whose particular brand of 'farmers band music' is little known in this country. The meshing of drum and gong sounds reached such heights of frenetic virtuosity in the first half that the brain occasionally gave up and registered only a blur between Steve Reich's *Drumming* and Sandy Nelson's *Teenbeat*. In the second half the four performers treated us to a village entertainment, with dance as well as drumming, wearing hats with long streamer attachments, prancing and whirling like Laputian Morris dancers. A good reminder that low-tech musicmaking can still quicken the adrenalin and provide positive enjoyment.

And then there was *buto*, because this was Japan Week in Wales, and it was cockles and *sake* all round. I do not know what *buto* is, though I am fascinated by the concept of modern Japanese art forms which are not traditional but which proceed quite separately from Western models. I did not attend Ko Murobishi's workshops at Chapter, so all I had to go on was the suitably inscrutable text he produced to accompany his solo *buto* performance, plus a short rider statement that 'Murobishi wants to deconstruct Buto to make something more simple and direct.'

The American Henry Flynt invented the word *brend* to signify the purely subjective experiences that each individual already has 'prior to art' — like shifting the weight from one foot to another for no particular reason. It seems to me that there is a lot of *brend* in *buto*. Murobishi's performance began with his 'mummy' (his body partially encased in decomposing plaster and bandages) sitting, wearing a dress and hat, and moving very slowly.

Those few Japanese performances I have seen have proceeded, like ice dancing, to tapes of commercially available recorded music, rather than specially synthesized scores, as is the trend here. The beginning of Murobishi's performance was accompanied by the repeated introductory passage of a piece of piano music of such disarming simplicity and charm that it has been on my brain for days (it could be anything from Keith Tippett to *A Walk in the Black Forest*). To less compelling electronic music, Murobishi's 'mummy' 'travelled on the borderline of a figure 8' to transform, with the help of good lighting, into an old man, a beast, a stone (?), an animal, and finally into a leaping spirit, to the return of *that* piano music — I'm still trying to find out what it was.

I looked forward to Murobishi's performance, and I look back on it with fascinated memories, but at the time I felt I had seen this sort of thing before, and it wasn't called *buto*. I didn't know what it was trying *not* to be, so perhaps now is the time for an extended festival of Japanese performance in this country, rather than occasional tantalising one-offs.

APRIL: Where do new performers come from, daddy? Well, in most parts of the country these days you might as well look under a gooseberry bush if you want to find a new generation of performers. As the arts centres implode, their theatres stick to the fairly well-established performance groups, while the strangulated budgets of the galleries make such relatively expensive luxuries as performance art weekends unaffordable. So it came as a bit of a surprise to encounter a flurry of activity at Chapter last month devoted to new or hardly-used performers.

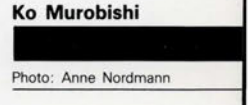
One of the reasons for this activity will already be known to *Performance* readers, for Chapter was one of the regional audition venues for this year's *Eight Days* Review of Live Art, split between the Midland Group and Zap Club. It's the first time the Midland Group have selected performers for their annual *Performance Platform* by audition, rather than by postal application, so it will be interesting to see what transpires.

As far as the Cardiff auditions were concerned, performers did not (despite what you may hear) come from far and wide. In fact, they were *all* Cardiff College of Art students, and their presence — or so I am given to understand — was largely due to the efforts of Rose English, teaching in the college at the moment. The art colleges are, after all, the only seedbeds of performance art around here — but why was nobody there from nearby Newport College of Art, why were there no spin-offs from Cardiff's fertile theatre-based activities, and why was nobody tempted from the South West over the border to Cardiff? (To get anybody from Bristol to come the few miles over the Severn Bridge into Wales is like getting a white taxi driver to go into Harlem). Next year, ignore this opportunity at your peril.

That being said, what the auditioners saw in Cardiff was quite enough to be getting on with — a videotape, some very physical audience manipulation, a sound piece based on Russolo, a funky performance duo, a dialogue about art which eventually criticised itself out of existence, a pleasingly brief and economical performance involving the revealing and discarding of several masks by the light of a hand-held torch, and an hour-long slide installation which had been showing for a week in one of Chapter's gallery spaces. And Chapter's gallery organised, quite separately, *Compilation*, a public day of 'mixed media events' a few days later, running almost continuously from 11am to 10pm, with performances, video and film by 22 Cardiff students, who won't be students for much longer, and then what?

Back on the theatre side of things, we had a chance recently to see the third production of *Appeal Products*, a fledgling small-scale company from Leeds, being a young and entirely new endeavour, not even a spin-off from Leeds' Impact Theatre. Lack of time and space forbids (or excuses) me from properly reviewing *Palazzo Mendaccio*, so I will only damn it with the very faint praise of saying that the company's advance publicity sounded so tempting, the technical side of the production (and particularly the set) was so impressive, and the performance was so competent, that it was disappointing not to be able to locate very much at the centre of it all, or to use Gertrude Stein's useful phrase — when you got there, there was no *there* there, and though it all went at a cracking pace, it also seemed remarkably flat. This may have had to do with the difficulty of performing before a miniscule audience (how to resolve the difficult balance between everybody's reluctance to pay full ticket price for a complete unknown, and the exploitation of 'vanity performing'?) It may also have had to do with making inevitable comparisons with Waste of Time's *The Family Pescue*, seen at Chapter recently, on an almost identical theme (both related to Chapter's ongoing *Family Project*). But I suspect that it had most to do with the continuing problem of cooperative productions where everybody has their little spot to show off, and overall identity suffers.

The last thing I would want to do is put you off going to see Appeal Products' next production, but if I say that they are 'promising', am I really just avoiding saying that *Palazzo Mendaccio* came across like a compendium in quick succession of as many ideas as you could think of from the work of more established companies, and is this as inevitable in a young theatre company as it is in a young painter or sculptor? ■

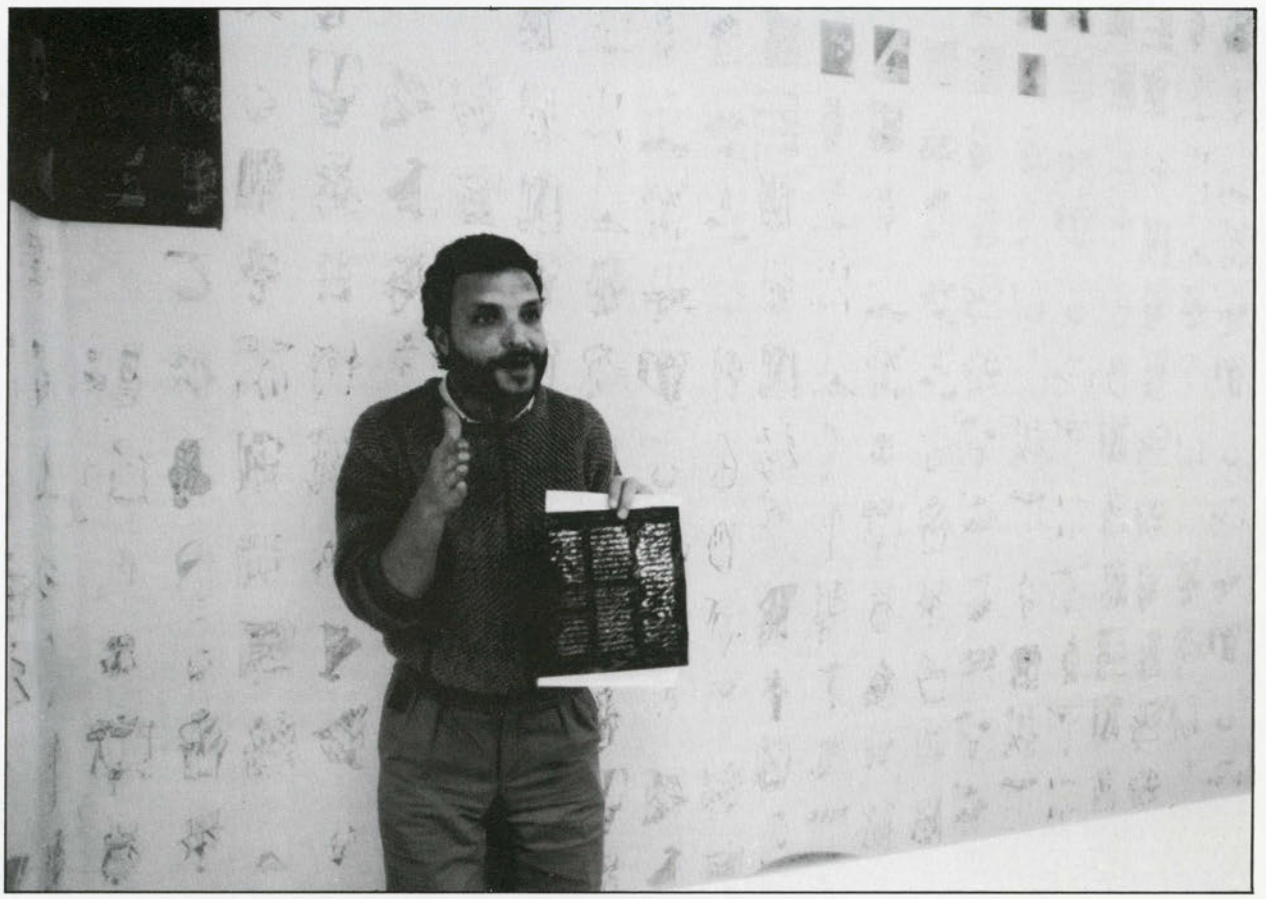


Ko Murobishi

Photo: Anne Nordmann

EXPERIMENTAL ART ON THE BANKS OF THE NILE AND BEYOND

CATHY COURTNEY notes the stirrings of contemporary art in Egypt, including installation work, book art, and performance, and follows a trail that leads her via New York to a 'book performance' in the shadow of Southwark Cathedral:



Mohammed Allan

Photo: Cathy Courtney

March 6-10, Cairo & Fayoum
Part of each day is spent trying to get the 'phones to work to contact various actors. I have been told about them, including Jenny Leimert who will be showing at Book Works in May. Leave numerous messages, not much progress. We visit the City of the Dead, a vast area of tombs above which, because the city is so overcrowded, hundreds of people are now living.

Getting up early we go the Pyramids before anyone else has got there. We drive through the desert for two hours until an irrigated area appears like a mirage. This is Fayoum where we have friends and we spend hours sitting under palm trees, surrounded by donkeys and children talking with the farmer about their working methods. We witness a field being watered, the process works beautifully, all crafted without machinery and using a plough share dragged by water buffalo. We return to the Pyramids at dusk.

We visit the main museum to see the ancient art before resuming our search for living artists. In the rooms relating to Akhenaton's reign when there were great changes in the method of representing figure and when domestic details began to be included, we see the Amarna letters — compact stone tablets on which the cuneiform script is perfectly formed. In another room are portraits which have survived hundreds of years, painted on mummies. There are several of young men from Fayoum, looking exactly as the men we saw yesterday.

We discover the Museum of Modern Art which many people interested in painting and living in Cairo are unaware exists. Our arrival creates a stir and we are invited to drink tea with the management. According to the catalogue great things are expected, 'We have great hopes that we may pass through a period of flourishing for our modern arts . . .' The painting are badly hung but there are some interesting finds. We are allowed to photograph only one painting. Work from the first two decades of this century shows a strong French influence, many of the titles are in French, mostly they are portraits. One is 'La Bourse a Paris', 1949, a satire showing weasel-like stockbrokers in their money-grabbing frenzy, inviting comparison with the gentler chaos of the Cairo streets. Many of the painters have political aspirations, Mahmond Saied believed he was a prophet by the end of his life. Hossain Bekar is the head of Baha'i, the movement which believes in the unity of world religions and has been heavily persecuted.

Most of the work is traditional, but there are a few surprises — a cube sculpture using mirrors and electric light, (Mazzgy 1984); one painting of a madonna has its glass intentionally smashed.

We visit the Akhnaton Gallery which exists entirely out of context; the kind of space you would find in Soho amid the crowded, dusty, undeveloped Cairo streets. The artist is Ramzi Mostafa who has lived abroad, including spending time in London at the Royal College in 1956. It is curious to find his installation, sculptures and paintings in Cairo. The exhibition opened with Mastaf's 'Performance' involving music and readings. The installation is of seven huge discs before each of which is an empty black shoe. In front of all these is a platform leading to a full-length mirror. Before confronting his image the veiwer's way is barred by a large axe. Mostafa explains the piece as a metaphor for mankind's self-destructive vanity. His sculptures are intriguing; they seem modern,

but are firmly based on ancient Egyptian forms. One is a white metal chair upon which pose a pair of legs and at the top of which a hand is poised, apparently holding a cigarette. It looks a bit like an Allen Jones, but the chair and the fragments of the body are all 'lifted' from ancient paintings in the Museum.

March 11, Cairo

We attend the opening of Mohammed Allam's exhibition at the Goethe-Institute. It is in 'uptown' Cairo. We arrive on time, but rather battered, to find the smartly dressed ensemble syphoned into the courtyard at the back of the building. Egyptian couture and jewellery in sharp contrast to the clothing of the overcrowded streets in the other parts of the city. The population of Cairo rises by 1,000 a day.

Apparently we are waiting for the State Minister of Culture to 'inaugurate' the exhibition. Eventually he arrives and, without undue ceremony, cuts the ribbon which has barred the entrance way until now. We are now allowed in to see Allam's abstract paintings on silk. On a table by the door are copies of his two books. Small men scurry round with trays bearing cakes and a choice of coke or lemonade. There are about one hundred people present; some red stickers go up. I notice it is like a private view in London, everyone is talking with their backs to the work and no-one is looking at the paintings.

March 12, Cairo

Unlike any other country I have been to, artists here do not necessarily know of one another; One artist does not always lead to many others. Allem grew up in Ismalia on the Suez Canal and left when Israel occupied the Gaza Strip and Sinai up to the Suez Canal. Some of his work has been done in response to the shock of Israel's attack on Lebanon, and like every Egyptian artist I met he spoke of wanting his work to be 'for Egypt'. Mostly this was voiced as a peaceful nationalism, aware of the social and economic needs of the country. Allem explores the form of his language in the books. Letters are elongated, bloated, repeated, shrunk. As language has long been present in Egyptian paintings, particularly the word for God, this is a shocking thing for many Egyptians. By allusion he has been able to indict Sadat; everybody knows who is accussed, but since Sadat is unnamed Allem has escaped persecution. The second book is the story of a pebble which has lain 7,000 years in the Sahara before a boy picks it up and it is kicked and passed on from one person to another. He is planning a performance based on this.

March 13, Cairo

Mostafa Ebid's doorbell rings with the sound of birdsong. We are ushered into his front room via a display of his wife's weaving, his wife does not appear. Mostafa has prepared all his press cuttings for us. His work has been purchased by The Ministry of High Education and The Ministry of Culture and Information amongst others and he is a lecturer in painting at Helwan University. He is bursting to talk about his work. We become aware that his wife and young daughter are just outside the door trying to attract his attention. They have prepared a trolley with tea and cake and are edging it through the door and retreating again when he does not notice. Eventually one of them goes outside and rings the doorbell to interrupt his flow and he pulls the trolley in. He gives us our tea and resumes his talk, forgetting the cake. Every now and then his wife peeks in, worried that we have not been offered anything to eat, but he is too carried away to notice. It is too formal a gathering for us to help ourselves and ease his wife's anxiety. When we have commented on each press cutting he brings out photographs of his work. It is in a variety of styles. Some photographs are of a large mural he has done stretching across several buildings. Some parts representational, others not. At each abstract, colourful section he leans close to me and says, *'This is modern art'*, anxious that we might not recognise it.

Jenny Leimert

We make our way to Jenny Leimert's room. Describing herself as from the only Democrat family in the whole of Republican Lake Forest, Illinois, she has been working in Egypt as an archeological draughtsman. In New York Richard Minsky taught her the basics of making books and she had found the form practical whilst she travels. She has been studying the Egyptian palatte for two years and one of the books is a colour chart based on nine tombs. Egyptian blues and greens are different because they are made from oxide ores found in the desert which have already gone through all possible chemical changes and have become impervious to sunlight and so will last forever. Leimert says that the subtelty of the tombs is incidental and the result of lack of resources; if neon had been invented she's sure the ancients would have filled the tombs with it. She shows us a proposal for *'Tomb Mockette'* which she hopes to make in the centre of Cairo. A prefabricated portable mud plaster tomb that ties together with rope, using the same materials as the ancients but reflecting the present. It will be made by local craftsmen as an installation piece for people to walk through, measuring 7' × 9' × 4'. The hieroglyphics will be in the form of a comic strip frieze, telling of American economic interests in Egypt and commenting on Arab unity. The tomb will then be transported to America and installed there. Later the frescoes will be chipped away and sold in the same way as Egyptian tombs have been rifled and sold to museums.

Leimert was recently arrested at a road block the police set up for her, and driven back to Luxor at the centre of a motorcade. She'd been learning the art of the forgers, who produce work good enough to fool the museums. All her high-powered Egyptian friends who could have rescued her from the grasp of the police were on a pilgrimage to Mecca. The police were polite. Three men unpacked all her luggage and three more packed it again. She had nothing with her that is illegal. After seven hours they let her go.

March 15

Jenny Leimert takes us to see Hassan Fathy who lives in Old Cairo with a roof view of the Citadel. Now eighty-seven he is frail but still working. The author of 'Architecture for the Poor', he is more revered abroad than in Egypt. The government is still opposed to his drive to build houses for the thousands of homeless poor from local materials, predominantly mud, and by traditional means. These make economic sense and comply with his commitment that the scale of the buildings must be human. We glimpsed his beautiful village at Qurna when we went to Luxor. Instead the government continues to slowly construct badly-made high rise housing out of materials that need to be imported, that do not last.

Fathy speaks of his building at Qurna, acknowledging that there were problems; he talks about the house he built at Santa Fé, and then moves on to discuss the prisoner of war camps and the news of the Lebanon.

Phillip Johnson is an old friend of his. When I ask him what he thinks of Johnson's glass house he pauses for a while and then says simply,

'It is not possible.'

As we sit others join us, coming to listen to Fathy. He is handing on his methods to several architectural students.

March 22, New York

I go to Richard Minsky's show, 'The Book as Architecture' at the Metropolitan Museum. At the centre of the show is Minsky's model of Buckminster Fuller's *Tetrascroll*, folding out into still green triangles to form joined pyramids. Each page

(continued page 46)

PERF

INVISIBLE WORK

When artists working with experimental forms start looking at traditional artforms for development of their work it is often a sign that they have run out of steam. At first hearing, the idea of a performance artist taking the music hall 'double-act' sounds like a return to populism, and the latest venture by Station House Opera's Gary Stevens, with Julian Maynard-Smith, set all the alarm bells sounding. But as with many predetermined expectations they were not fulfilled.

Invisible Work is 'difficult' but stimulating. We are thrown into a room, intimately alone with two men who, while acutely sensitive to each other's movements, are playing what would have been called in the sixties, 'mind games' on one another. Each is given the miraculous power of creating images in the other's mind. Thus Maynard-Smith can create, and exploit in Steven's consciousness a deep fear of the *clink* of teacup and saucer. When this is performed, Stevens rushes in fear to grasp tightly a vase for comfort (also a notion suggested by Maynard-Smith). As in all double acts, there is a Tom and Jerry scenario of attack and reprisal, and Stevens viciously cuts off Maynard-Smith's hands, while creating for him a brilliant former career as a concert pianist.

Taking the thesis further, a large sofa is introduced, behind which a rabbit resides, which grows larger or smaller, depending on how close it is being regarded. Introducing themes of perception here, Stevens extends his powers by describing the sensation of being able to penetrate the walls of his house, layer by layer, finally enable to swank around in front of his neighbours, invisible.

There is an over-riding irony to this double-act. As a member of Maynard-Smith's gravity-defying Station House Opera, Gary Stevens has been put in some extremely physically uncomfortable positions — fifty feet up in the air. Now, by way of return, his performance puts Maynard-Smith in what are in a sense even more risky and exposed psychological positions. While not actually playing for laughs, it is extremely and nervously funny, and the spectators are held in rigid, quivering fascination. ▲

ROB LA FRENAIS

TO:DO

Alex X Fraser's Theatre of Didactic Observance (TO:DO) performed *The Nine O'clock Muse* on the 9th of March at 9pm on a Saturday night on Swindon Bandstand. Open to the elements (as well as risk) the bandstand is situated opposite the Swindon Arts Theatre on a wide pedestrian precinct. The event was organised by the enterprising Alistair Snow, late of Bracknell Performance Festival, who performed earlier that evening in the Town Hall. Morris Minamoto, that afternoon, completed this day of performance.

A sizeable audience for such a cold night heard the recorded chimes of Big Ben at 9 o'clock as Fraser appeared 'dressed to the nines'. Our MC welcomed us nine times in English and then in nine other languages. There were nine sections to the *Nine O'clock Muse*, utilising slides, shadow-play, live action and recorded sound, as well as live percussion throughout from the aptly named Frankie Bell.

During the performance we were informed of the nine Greek muses as well as the nine planets. Cue for Pluto from the planet suite, a sound collage composed by Fraser. (Pluto was discovered after Holst composed his opus). At one point, behind the screen, Fraser enacted a striptease in silhouette, afforded by the light from an overhead projector. 'A stitch in time', 'without a stitch', and '9 orifices' read the accompanying slides, as Fraser divested himself of nine garments and hung them on butchers hooks. Such are the 'happy accidents' of performing in public areas that a policemen and policewoman happened by as Fraser was dressing again.

The *Nine O'clock Muse* was Fraser's most ambitious work to date. A member of the audience commented 'I didn't know there was so much about the number nine!'. But the performance was not so much about numerology: more

about the peg on which to hang a number of observations about language, space and time, and change. A constellation of elements which Fraser constantly links, cross-references and re-duplicates in all his performances.

Nearer home, Fraser was also to be seen in Covent Garden Piazza during the 'Performers for Peace' Easter weekend. He contrived a low-key piece which he repeated at intervals daily. Bravely staking out a small space to perform in, Fraser became a quiet meditative point amidst the busy entertainment-orientated street scene.

While donkey rides passed by, and tables of an outdoor cafe were set up behind him, Fraser went through a slow 13-part ritual. Car mirrors with words written on them (eg order, sense, change), were placed around him, and quietly he swept his chosen square yard. Then he lit candles, while offerings of red, yellow and blue sugar lumps in like-coloured bowls were placed in front of square mirrors. On one was written 'If repeating the name of God can bring salvation, then repeating the word sugar must bring sweetness to the mouth'.

A final remark; where were the other 'performers for peace' amongst other 'fine art' performance artists, who could have supplied, like Fraser, a counterpoint to the usual touristy ambiance of Covent Garden? ▲

DAVID DYE

FEVERHOUSE

In *Feverhouse*, 'the house of blood and bones', a succession of images unfolds in the dimly lit maze of hospital corridors, lined with faded glazed tiles and endless service ducts. Like glimpses caught in the most depressed 'special' clinic, three characters perform ritualistic motions in front of the camera, the harsh lighting staring into unblinking faces.

A draped body lies on a trolley outside in the hospital yard in the dark unnoticed, the wind tugging at its loose covering. The three performers: the Thief rifles the pockets of a body on the ground and then, sitting behind a desk, gently fingers his hoard, moving the detritus around the table in front of him. The Blind man is led round consulting rooms. The Nurse inspects a series of slides, the long slow movements of her arms become mesmeric. The Blind man falls on the stairs, the room shakes, the Thief runs.

In the background a soundtrack like a worn file squeaks and frets away (Biting Tongues). The camera from time to time concentrates on surfaces — the paint blister on the wall which drips when pricked — is dwelt on at length.

The development of the three characters in *Feverhouse* (written by writer/artist Ken Hollings) can be seen as an exploration of the 'modes of objectification which transform human beings into subjects' (Michael Foucault, 'The Subject and Power') since, in structuralist terms the film is about the exercise of power, between the characters, the Nurse and Blind man, for example, and the conditions which give rise to the labels as Thief, Blind man or Nurse'. However, film itself is an abstraction of the transformations which take place between/within individuals in 'real' life and the question which must be answered by this review is whether this particular selection of images is interesting or illuminating.

As a live performance the rituals may have had some interest but through the telescoping effect of the camera they have become merely bland. More seriously perhaps, the technical possibilities of film seem to have been ignored, and the style which emerges is wooden and 'documentary' in character. A fairly sparse concept is therefore unredeemed by visual interest. ▲

SUE WOLFF

BLOOD GROUP

Blood Group's new piece, *Clam* is an exciting event: a genuine fusion of words, movement and visual images to express serious ideas and arouse challenging emotions. Not something that happens very often in the theatre these days. That it veered towards indulgent obscurity I blame not so much on Blood Group itself, but on the lack of a wider audience for visual theatre. More serious attention would, I'm sure, force its writers and performers into using their immense talents to reach out more coherently, and to consider whether the demands they make on their audience are made in the best possible way.

A 'feminist peace play', *Clam* takes place in England and Russia, where similar couples are undergoing similar problems. In England the woman's demands are scorned by her husband as irrational to the point of mental illness and she is despatched into the care of a brutally unsympathetic male doctor, who sticks a needle in her forehead and puts electric shocks through her brain. The woman is trying to break through on the level of positivist reality. He rigidly adheres to the supremacy of science, mouths hackneyed revolutionary cliches which manifestly do not serve the present purpose, and refuses to attend to any of her demands. Yet what Alice (for so she is called) demands is 'not even love', but a moment of passion and imagination. She gives expression to this in a vivid dance, and her husband's reaction is that she is mad.

'The Third World War will be the war between men and women', cries Alice, and the rapidly moving scenes in the piece are as various as conflict itself. They range from discussions, attempts to define terms and angry exchanges, to fierce physical confrontation and self destruction. No one wins this war — but both sides will be, and are, the losers.

The reasons this came through so strongly, perhaps, was the way it was linked in the play with another area of conflict: walking along a radioactive beach, and seeing the remains of all sorts of creatures 'who shouldn't be there' — animals which belong at the North Pole or in the tropics litter the shore, grotesquely distorted and mutilated. As she speaks, these creatures turn into the savaged corpses of the countries of eastern Europe (poor Poland, the Ukraine) and she is joined by others on the beach who slowly reach out to touch the wreckage.

Her doctor calls her 'bitter and twisted', and dismisses her pain as neurosis. In belittling her grief, both the doctor and her husband dismiss her whole response to life, including her 'maddening' awareness of the greatest madness of all: the threat of nuclear destruction. In a man-dominated world, such weapons can seem part of the logical scheme of things, but if you alter the perspective . . .

What emerges towards the end of the piece is the powerfully felt realisation that some sort of resolution must be found in both conflicts if anyone is to be saved. As with the war between the sexes, there is no winner in a nuclear war — only losers.

Both performers, Mine Kaylan and Andrzej Borkowski, are excellent, giving their all to the poetry and humour in some of the speeches, and turning the human body into an amazingly flexible instrument. I found much of serious interest in *Clam*, but I feel that a lot of the effort was dissipated, like a voice speaking from far away. You are intrigued by the sound, and even catch a few beautiful phrases, but the weight of meaning stays hermetically sealed within its own frame of reference. Like the feathers which covered the stage, *Clam* did look beautiful, but at moments it got up my nose. ▲

CAZ ROYDS

Invisible Work — 'risky and exposed'

FASHIONABLE SACRIFICE

The recent slide-tape collaboration between visual artist Roberta Graham and Ken Hollings, premiered at the Bloomsbury Theatre's Georges Bataille festival, provoked fierce controversy, was praised in these pages, and culminated in their being given a recent exhibition and performance at London's ICA. The row over whether or not they had been censored by the festival dominated our letters page for two issues, but amid the fuss, there has been no serious critique of the work and its implications. SOTIRIS KYRIACOU attempts to place it in context, and strikes a note of dissent:

In order to develop a critique of the ideological saturation of all artistic practices which would work towards producing social change, it is necessary to understand representation as a political issue and promote a constant denial of the perpetuation of current predetermined social and sexual relations.

Roberta Graham and Ken Hollings' writings and tape-slide presentations locate the realisation of desire in the context of the sexual act. They call for a 'voluntary human sacrifice' on the altar of passion; 'penetration, sacrifice and murder' are grouped together because they 'do not place any limit on action . . . stripped of the identity imposed upon you by social and cultural discourse, there is nothing which you can obtain or preserve yourself.' This supposed release from the symbolic exposes the body as a biological manifestation of desire itself: 'A liquefied flux of blood, urine, tears, sperm, sweat and excrement'. Body becomes text, ahistorized, as if a partiarchal world based on sexual difference never existed.

The temporary nature of the sexual act betrays an impotent escape from the reality of everyday experience rather than an attempt at a radical revision of social conventions. After all, what happens when you've had your orgasm?

Graham and Hollings' rather dyonysian view of sexual activity claims to eliminate one's sense of identity, as the body dissolves into anonymous flesh, melted 'into a storm of sensations', its secretions acting as testaments of desire. There is a striking similarity of approach with the French right-wing intellectual Julia Kristeva who has brought language back into vogue, presenting it as an ideologically innocent tool with which to articulate desire. She uses a rather seductive and viscous vocabulary of elision and contradiction in which sounds fluctuate as quickly as meaning, in an effort to create 'heterogenity'; rather like an unstable, uncertain attempt to cross a swamp, sinking knee-deep in mud in the process, while just making it to the other side. Kristeva advocates complete representation of both positive and negative desire, be it love or hate, a self catharsis of loathing and prejudices through abjection: If, for example, you have strong anti-semitic feelings, you should, according to Kristeva, rid your hatred by reading Celine's outbursts of excessive, raging insults aimed against Jews, and then you'll be cleansed, for a while, until your hatred is regenerated. Such treatment should be taken regularly, rather like Graham's and Hollings' implicit need for violent sex or to refer to their erotic scenarios as soon as they feel restrained by 'social discourse'. In short, both artists and writer site representation as being able to take care of all our problems. While the trademark of all Roberta Graham's photography-based pieces has become the naked body, usually female (her own), without even considering the consequences of perpetuating the presentation of woman as spectacle, Kristeva openly detests those whom she calls 'exasperated, frigid young women confined within groups where what they take for lesbianism leads them into seclusion from society', ignoring the collective cause, i.e. oppression, which motivates feminist activity:

'. . . art, somehow, for (Kristeva), can take care of the political and is not in itself political. It is not a material practice and it is not in contradiction to life outside. It becomes simply to do with the referent as a stand in for reality . . . The signifier does not problematize representation for (Kristeva).'

Peter Gidal, 'On Julia Kristeva', Undercut 10/11

For (Kristeva), also read (Graham/Hollings) thus, they do not confine themselves to sexual enactment, which demands and affords disregard for consequence when outside of representation, in its quest for climactic completion. They stretch their inquiries into activities such as war and murder, which, despite being charged with a mixture of fear and ecstasy because of their resolute and deliberate nature, should be seen in their entirety and not just as the fulfilment of their executor; what about the corpse?

They quote Baudelaire's poem *Une Chargnogne*, in which the cadaver, riddled with insects which 'both bite and kiss as they burrow into the corpse', becomes a metaphor for 'an erotic excess in which the body, fertile but doomed, is laid bare.' Death is presented as sexual stimulus by being sited as other, as text, void of original cause, loaded with post-suffering effect. ■

References

— *Roberta Graham and Ken Hollings, 'In the Slaughterhouse of Love — Bataille, the Sexual Act and Beyond', Performance, Issue 33.*
— *Julia Kristeva, 'Desire in Language', McMillan.*

(continued from page 43) is to be a three foot equalateral triangle opening to a total of 42 feet. It is Buckminster's first illustrated book, at the age of eighty one, and the illustrations are done using lithographic stones. Other books use plastic dolls, tiny revolvers, a plastic seahorse, sinister black leather, a red polka dot bikini and quilt blocks. The black leather is from Nat Dean's *Knot* (1980). Inside the cover are diagrams of limbs being bandaged and a picture of a man with his eyes blacked out and his head bandaged. It reminds me of a sketch book I was once shown belonging to Idi Amin, showing anatomical drawings in readiness for the tortures he carried out.

One of Jenny Leimert's Egyptian books is in the show, 'Untitled' 1983. Also book performance artist Susan Share's *Vivian's Photos* 1984, a 3-D architectural book whose linked elements fold up and build rearrangable patterns like bricks. There's also a memorial book for the President of the Front for Liberation of Mozambique who was killed aged forty-nine.

Book Works, London May 8th (Stop Press)

The opening of 'Three American Book Artists', the work of Jenny Leimert, Susan Share and Kay Hines. All three are over for the show. Jenny has done a massive amount of work since we last met. Her section includes 'An Architect's House', a folio of her paintings of buildings designed by Fathy; these are housed in a container bound by Leimert.

Outside Susan Share gives a performance, in the shadow of Southwark Cathedral. Starting with a cube she gradually unfolds its sections to make a rearrangeable sculpture on the floor, ingeniously reshaping and moving the colours as she works. Once formed the piece is fully extended, she works backwards, folding the flaps back into their tight cube. It is a pleasingly simple performance and one feels a child's sense of loss as the circus disappears into the box once more. ■