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HAPPENINGS, CULTS, AND EVERYDAY LIFE. PERFORMANCE IN POLAND
INTERVIEW WITH GENESIS P. ORRIDGE. FESTIVAL REPORTS. VIDEO.



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Sleep. By the Performance Arts Company. Covent Garden Community Social Centre

With the strains of 'Release Me' by Englebert Humperdink filtering through drunken shouts from the bar next door a cosmic drama is enacted. A medieval frogman with lurex socks, a pair of celluloid nymphet roadsweepers and a sort of greek-god oversized dalek all proceed to depict what must be the Birth of Time, or something very much like it. This impression is fully confirmed by the appearance of a caveman. A large stone and a bit of sacking have been conveniently dropped by the frogman, this chap without any assistance from surrounding deities or slabs of wisdom etc. invents a weapon. Before he has any time to do any damage with this he is distracted by a saxophonist, then by the audience, and finally by the appearance of a pink crimplened Sloane Ranger caught in a spotlight. The entire essence of human aspirations thus summed up, the old boy in the medieval scuba gear appears dragging the sun after him. (He is clearly condemned to do this for the entire duration. . . signifying changes of scene.) When these chaps with long phalli on their noses appear hauling a teddy bear in a cage and engage in some rather nasty business involving a long knife, the bear, and lots of sawdust I can see we are in for a moral lesson, and want to shout out, "cut off his nose". But nobody does. Around comes old Lurex-socks again, this time preceding a rather pleasant little cafe scene involving secret messages and poisonings, while a pair of crepe-de-chined women with parasols conduct a twittery stockhausen-like conversation. (This is a play without words, incidentally). Things soon take on a rather different turn when someone tramples on some bits of cast-off symbolism dropped by Lurex-socks, who howls Yaaaaoow.



I'VE GOT A NOSE FOR THIS SORT OF THING, YOU KNOW'

thus invoking a rather moody glittery-black-cloaked fellow, a pair of fluffy futuresses and a Kings-road spaceman in radioactive green who are all being a bit silly with our natural resources. Some light bulbs and an electronic egg-timer are handed out, to the great delight of the fluffies, who seem to be destined for a sticky end. Sure enough, Lurex-socks strips down to his leotard and wraps everyone in celluloid. The lights come up and everyone gets burnt by the Sun, who seems to find this rather funny.

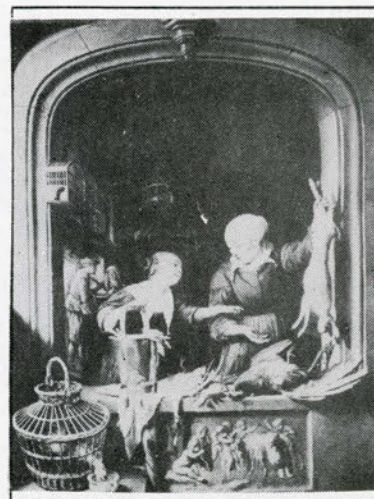
A banal, simple little tale, with piles of the corniest symbolism. I however enjoyed it in its entirety, mainly

because of the great care taken in producing props and costumes, with excellent percussion and 'neue musik'. Also a certain tongue in cheek feeling about everything mitigated what threatened to be a profound overseriousness by this new company who call themselves 'visual art theatre'. What we have are a group of painters, dancers and musicians, starting off with a fairly conventional attitude to their various skills, but are in the process of breaking away from this. I hope that, at least for the sake of variety, they do not tread exactly the same path as the veteran fringe and performance art groups.

Why Did The Chicken Cross The Road? By Alison Winkle. Acme Gallery.

It was Saturday afternoon every night at the Acme for a week. Video of a blue check tablecloth, kettle boiling, the football results droning on in the endless mantra—West Bromwich Albion one, Charlton Athletic three, Blackburn Rovers two, Queens Park Rangers nil. Back-garden pursuits, a chicken run, frozen chicken balanced on milk bottle, clocks, mirrors. Alison Winkle walks in, a mundane figure carrying a wine bottle wrapped in brown paper. Spectators shuffle round nervously realising performance is starting. Where do you go in performances? Sometimes they feel like a strictly private affair between performer, environment, and documenting camera. Alison Winkle is in the chicken run. She casually makes

her way through the sections already cut through and begins snipping her way into the next. Woman in a chicken run. Meanwhile a meal is being eaten on the video. The milk bottles, then the chicken is being moved into the next section. Each section gets smaller and smaller till barely room for a chicken and a half a performer. Tonight is Wednesday. The performance started on Monday; will end on Sunday. What will she do, I ask her afterwards, when she gets to the end. She doesn't know. Perhaps come back. Why did the chicken cross the road? There has never been any set answer to that. That's what the performance is about. I persist. She smiles. "Well, for some foul reason".



Spiderwoman

This is Spiderwoman, the chaotic, formidable, high-energy, unpredictable, difficult to pin down, 'flock of exotic birds just beginning to moult' (Village Voice), 'one angry bunch of women' (New York Post) and 'a very volatile group (themselves). They're back in Europe with their new show, 'An evening of Pukey Songs and Disgusting Images'. How would they describe themselves? "We are short, fat, skinny, blonde

and brown, straight and gay, young and old and wishywashy, and that's the way we are." They play around in the minefield of Romance and Stereotypes. Did they fear their audiences might make the wrong connections? "We don't fear anything. We are a group that takes many chances. We put our lives on the line. Risk is our business. This is very personal work in terms of things we want to say about ourselves as well as romance. The audience makes their own connections". And the

Disgusting images? "For us to turn around and take those images into our own hands—for me, that's the politics of power". After playing to packed houses at London's Oval House and York Arts Centre they now play the following European dates:

Brussels: Les Halles de Shaesbeck: 15-17 October;
Frankfurt, Sinkkasten: 20-21 October;
Zurich, Framamu: 2-3 November.



Bad Music Festival

Our sound is to be appreciated on two levels. 1) Amusement as we destroy traditional rock songs and standard riffs in one foul swell of ugly noise. 2) Realisation as you comprehend our underlying message Nothing matters. And it's true. We've proved that. (From the book of the tape of the tour of 200 cancellations by Danny and the Dressmakers.)

When I walked into the Bad Music Festival at Acklam Hall, a large proportion of the audience were lying on their backs kicking their legs in the air to the 'foul swell of ugly music' issued by *Danny and the Dressmakers*. There was this rather horsey woman in a kilt and ribbons in her hair giving her all to 'It's not Unusual' by Tom Jones accompanied by someone wrapped in a nylon sheet playing a bass guitar. There seemed to be a number of people in white tricol kaftans 'freaking out'. This was the grand finale of the Bad Music festival which had included the *Horrible*

Nurds, the *Instant Automaton*s and the *Drongo All Stars Blues Band*. I spoke to the organiser, Kif Kif Dobson Le Bather, (or Batter) about the festival. Unfortunately while writing down his answers I forgot to note what I actually had asked. His answers were as follows:

"Probably, I should like to think not"

"Who said we like them?"

"First I've ever seen of them".

This minor aberration in interviewing I have to put down to being 'high' from the music.

Associated with the 'Bad Music' movement is South Humberside based Deleted Records who provide a conduit from the Instant Automaton to the outside world. They advertise themselves as 'The World's most Unprofitable Record Company'. Among their releases are 'The Instant Automaton'—Eating People (Hints For The Housewife), Various Artists: Magnizat (The Least Worst of Deleted Records). They distribute via blank cassettes sent in by BM

Connoisseurs (See addresses).

What is the difference between Bad Music and the more throwaway aspects of new wave and systems music etc? I suppose BM can be distinguished by those who are incapable of doing so; whereas the latter is achieved by those who can play but try to pretend they can't. Like bad art; a feigned indifference to the product cuts no ice with those who have an affinity for awfulness.

As Danny and the Dressmakers finished a number of the audience jumped on the stage, grabbed the instruments and in defiance of the evening's canon, began to play actual music.

"Oh Dear" said Kif Kif le Dobson Batteur. "I was afraid of that." *Enquiries about 200 Cancellations by Danny and the Dressmakers Basement. 243 Lancaster Rd. London W. 11.*

For a copy of the Deleted Records mentioned, send sae and blank cassette to. Deleted Records, Low Farm, Brigg Rd, Messingham, Scunthorpe, South Humberside.

PERFORMANCE notes



Bored without ITV? Come off it, you moaners...

WHAT REMARKABLE arrogance was | lic broadcasting organisation is |
 own by your correspondents who | that it will be able to pay attention |

Woomph, woomph, thrum, thrum... "In the beginning there was... sex!" And so the Hummer Sisters hummed, wriggled and writhed their way onto the stage of the ICA for a re-hash of their Patty Hearst Re-hearsed show.

This bunch of nice Toronto college-girls wanted to do their tits and bums piece and see if they could offend us. But with a script someone found in a trash-can (and should have stayed there) boasting such startling attacks on taboo as "maybe if Princess Anne joined the IRA" it turned into the most effective way of clearing a theatre since the invention of the fire-alarm.

Now, it so happens that this company claim that they are a Video Cabaret—which is a rather fine way of saying that they are one of the few groups who specialise in video performance. Which is very interesting because video performance, though young and little seen, has established itself as a new art-form in its own right, and as such deserves more than a casual mention.

In the days before the silicon chip became a household name there were various examples of high technology which became readily available to anyone with a couple of thousand quid festering away in a bank account. (Who?—Ed.) Most prominent amongst these were devices for recording video. Inevitably this equipment fell into the hands of artists eager to transfer their static squiggles into all-action moving squiggles, but it also fell

into the hands of performers. And whilst many of these were prepared to sit back and admire themselves appearing on their own televisions, a few had a shot at trying to start up a relationship with the box. They would sit there for hours talking to the TV, and the damned thing started to talk back to them. Of course they had already told it what it was going to say, but this did nothing to spoil the science fiction fantasy of the TV coming to life. From these early flirtations things developed quickly. The TV rebelled against its master and refused to produce incessant images of him, choosing to rather present itself in its own spectacular ways—and then the monster got out of hand. It started developing its own characteristics, its own method of speaking, and a whole series of roles it wanted to perform. And so video performance came into being, with the television performing alongside the human variety of performer, and proving that it could give as good as it got.

From here the television set demonstrated its aptitude as an artist, musician and comic, and in theatre, after it had decided that it didn't always want to be depicted as supreme controller of the western world, it started to develop many subtle and often inconspicuous roles. These set a standard that the varied series of relationships, with apparently endless new relationships yet to be developed.

All of which I say in defence of video

performance. And after the Hummer Sisters the art-form needs defending, because they have all but buried it alive.

The extent of their involvement with video equipment seemed to be limited to masturbating with cameras and flagellating television sets. Meanwhile, surrounding the stage, were a giant video projector and roughly thirty TVs, plus enough video odds and ends to keep the Beeb running in an emergency, and yet, somehow, they managed to disregard it entirely. At no point did it contribute towards the goings-on on stage, it rarely showed anything relevant to what was being said, and more importantly, they seemed to be oblivious of the fact that the TVs could be anything beyond set decoration.

Dare I suggest that realising that their show was so awful they employed a band, the televisions, and an army of technicians in the hope that the audience would be seduced by their megalomania into ignoring their total lack of material and skill as performers? Surely not.

By comparison the first half of the double-bill presented under the Video Cabaret banner seemed relatively good. On its own it would appear too much like an exercise in "well here's the book, now let's see what we can do if we use video". But in comparison, they at least acknowledged that they were using video and had thought about how they would use it.

The book in question was '1984', and the group undertaking it the

Theatre Passe Muraille, with the technology and technicians as used by the Hummer Sisters.

There is a way in which '1984' was the first book to lend itself to performance in conjunction with video. The concepts of telescreens and 'Big Brother is watching you' offer themselves immediately for treatment. In this production the action was set entirely in a 'room 101' whose walls were plastered with telescreens, and the action being the interrogation and manipulation of Winston Smith by a technocratic Mr. O'Brien who had at his disposal flashbacks of Winston's life, the Bon-mots of Big Brother and a variety of video delights he could flash up in front of Winston's eyes. So far so good.

Where the whole idea came unstuck was the lack of the video material carving out its own slot, creating sur-

prises, showing different ways of looking at obvious material. Indeed this was a fault of the whole production, which followed the book so closely that a law-suit should follow.

They went some way towards covering up this lack by the sheer strength of the acting, particularly by Alan Bridle in the role of O'Brien. Quite apart from his ability to command the stage with an endless series of very economical gestures and perfectly gauged comments, questions and his ability to use his voice like a carving-knife in the back of Winston Smith's head, he also succeeded in mastering his video material. Not only was he able to compensate for aching gaps in it, he had also done his homework so well that there were a few moments when it was possible to believe that he could give the TV a little tickle



and it would say just what he wanted. Had the video been just a little bit freer in the way it treated its material Alan Bridle would have had a ball. And so would we.

In any event, the bit with the rats was quite fun. Pete Shelton

Sex War in Elsinore



Photo Maggie Lennon.

Action Space has at long last opened their large hall as a theatre and marked the event with the first full-length performance by Hormone Imbalance in their production 'Ophelia'.

Hormone Imbalance is a collection of women from other fringe groups united in the search for more experimental and stylistic productions containing a lesbian feminist perspective. The idea for a female Hamlet arose from a popular satire in their Gay Pride Week review in which it is discovered that Ophelia has not drowned but run away with her female lover. The group had already been questioning the status quo of what has become the established gay mode of agit-prop presen-

tation, feeling that the 'movement' was in a rut, and they thus embraced the idea of a period piece epic.

The production is an ambitious one written in blank verse ranging from merely clever parody of Shakespeare to cutting repartee reflecting an Elsinore fraught with the conflicts of sex war (as well as that of a totalitarian state system). The concept of the working class parts speaking modern English is interesting but the effect is lost amid plots, sub-plots and the unfortunate echo of actors in knee-high boots striding round the set—a problem of the Action Space hall deservedly in need of more adequate funding.

The stark white set, although visually promising caused interminable entrances and exits. The chess board floor, especially peopled with figures all dressed in black, begged for more imaginative stage movement to the complex text.

Characterisation in the main was weak, there existed an impression that the figures on stage existed only as elements in a dramatic process grinding towards a pre-destined end without actual thought and motivation. The audience was asked to

know too much about traditional Shakespearian motivation, although all the actresses display enormous energy and effort. Quite often especially in the first half of the play where the situations and inter-relationships are established this lack of fleshing out causes an almost androgynous impression of the cast. Rather than a belief that the characters are men and women, one almost needed reminding that Hamlet, for example, was not being played as an effeminate male but was being played by a woman. This confusion was aided by the all-black costumes and the use of earrings only in the 'male' characters. The plot takes over to suspend any disbelief and encourages involvement with the larger-than-life plights of these tragic figures of our collective cultural heritage seen finally through female eyes.

One of the most interesting variations on the five-hundred year old theme in the relationship between Gertrude and Polonius with striking performances given respectively by Siobhan Lennon and Madeleine Mac-Namara. Ms Lennon's Gertrude holds the audience by sheer strength of character and commanding use of

gesture and expression.

The relationship between Sara Hardy's Hamlet and Sandy Lester's Laertes was sadly one-dimensional considering the potential possibilities written into the play itself. Laertes fatal complicity in the corrupt government Ophelia flees is never enacted by the character his(her) self but is gathered by the audience from the reactions of his sister and his Queen,

The only 'love interest' in the play is woodenly acted between Steph Pugsley's Ophelia and her servant Branwen, Laurel Marks. This seems somewhat ironic in an all-lesbian production and yet the lesbian element in the play is almost incidental, although it provides an interesting complication of motives.

Hormone Imbalance is to be praised in the overall production which moves so rapidly through the second half that the conclusion has an impact of surprising strength and courage. A sequel would be intriguing considering the transformation of Ophelia from mere pawn to revolutionary individual in this in all admirable production.

Marguerite McLaughlin

Men's Beano

R.S.C. Warehouse.

Men's Beano by Nigel Baldwin is not a bad play, but you can't get very excited about it. You probably wouldn't feel robbed if you'd been to see it; it's decently acted and staged, and it's not pretentious. But I doubt if you'd go out of your way to persuade your friends to go.

It's about a group of men on a pub-outing to Brighton. Most of the action takes place in and around their glossy egg-yolk-yellow Transit van, which when we first see it is awaiting an AA tow back to London at the end of a punishing day. The driver, as participating chorus, takes us in flashback through the day's quest for sun, sea and pussy. The fun starts with beer and bawdy songs, gets more complicated when a girl hitchhiker en route for Europe is taken aboard and finally turns, by the seaside, into bitter frustration and violence.

It seems as if there could have been something in all this, but at the end one feels flat. It's a bit like going to the theatre to watch TV: the experience is competent, standardised and dispensable. The characters are well observed enough to be recognisable, but remain typical rather than archetypal or idiosyncratic. The events presented

are neither specific enough to seem like a particular daytrip to Brighton, nor monstrous enough to be the daytrip to end all daytrips to Brighton. The dialogue lapses at times into that mannered low-key terseness which a number of contemporary playwrights use to indicate authentic gritty lower-middle-or-working-class speech: a habit which seems to come from sixties TV drama and results in the irritating spectacle of actors ceasing to relate to each other

and just hitting their cues deadpan, as if to the staccato beat of an invisible baton.

All these factors mean that the play's flashes of observation get lost in its general lack of character, and that what it says about the behaviour of all-male groups, or women in the midst of them, or the grating sterility of urban life, we feel we have heard many times before.

Though these problems would not vanish if the play were presented on television as a documentary-style drama, they would matter less. But one doesn't go out to the theatre to observe a slice of something that passes as life. Jarry was right to assert that only with the higher level of energy and conviction was a playwright justified in bringing a character on to the stage.

Steve Thorne.



Photo John Haynes

Festival of Fools

What is a 'clown'? A 'clown' is a marge-minded wimp of either sex with striped socks, a red pingpong ball stuck in the middle of his/her face and an unshatterable conviction that she/he is a 'clown'. Stuffed with pseudo-meaningful '68 hogmanure about 'the timeless appeal of the fool' a 'clown' can juggle three balls, walk on stilts without falling over, make children cry while attempting to make them laugh and cock up the trombone part of 'Blaydon Races'. Macdonald's use a 'clown' in their telly ads, and most 'clowns' are like that, except the occasional one who thinks he's Pagliacci, which is marginally worse or not quite as bad, depending on your outlook. I had a badge made at Exeter saying 'Kill a Clown', which I gave to Doc Shiels when I left.

Doc Shiels deserves some kind of medal for the Festival of Fools. If the event was about anything, it had to be about energy. Not the kind of energy that produced slick rehearsed entertainment, or esoteric movement workshops, or vast parades of motley morons blowing brass instruments out of tune, but the kind of energy that, clutching a pint of Guinness, attempted and succeeded in encouraging odd and often inspiringly eccentric members of the general public to get up there and do it too; the kind of energy that transcended the carping one-upmanship and status-jockeying that so many performers and companies, myself and mine included, were guilty of; the kind of energy that bulldozed through the 'What's on next?' structure of the Festival. Friend's Roadshow's indescribably hideous inflatable condom arena deserves a medal too, and I wish I could be the one to pin it on.

Woolacombe was a hoot. The site was a vast pasture on the Exmoor tundra, with wall-to-wall clouds grazing the hedgetops and horizontal rain. 'You can see the sea' someone remarked cheerfully; it felt like we were in the bloody middle of it. Some genius had situated the beer tent at the top of a glutinous slope 200 yards away from everything else, and the bogs were like something out of Dante. Does anyone remember the Bickershaw Festival? Woolacombe wasn't as bad as that.

Up to her skull in anti-biotics and unable to combat the elements with alcohol, Patti Bee, probably the best street-theatre performer I've had the pleasure to work with, consoled herself by undertaking a mammoth 12-hour portrayal of an aristocratic drunk. Towards the end of this marathon she was approached by a Joyce Grenfell look-alike and accused of 'denigrating her sex'. Makes you think twice, don't it?

The funniest show of the Festival was Cliffhanger's idiotic 'Dark Secret'. This is an indisputably biased opinion of course, and I know a lot of people who don't like to laugh unless they're thinking at the same time, but if you've ever tried sneezing with your mouth shut, you'll realise the futility of trying to do two things at once. Jeremy Thorpe watched Cliffhanger at Woolacombe and smiled twice.

The Festival brought home to me very clearly exactly which companies and individuals knew what they were doing, and to be fair, there were some very tight, polished and entertaining shows. The general standard of spontaneous performance was dismal, however, with very little of interest 'happen-

ing' around the site, and next to no instances of performers collaborating on the spur of the moment. If musicians can do it, as they did all through the Festival with varying degrees of mellifluousness, then why not actors? Fucked if I know, John.

Some geezer got beaten up with a starting-handle at Exeter and Doc injured his foot trying to kick someone who'd stolen his tobacco. Ian Hinchliffe arrived, drank, sneered and left. We considered leaving but were glad we didn't, I suppose. The Phantom Orchestra played some fine tunes. A kind man sold me a dozen dexies. Tim got the shits. The organisers lost several thousand pounds.

One could find a great deal to criticise in the Festival, and Allen Saddler's review in the Guardian did. 'Redundant '60's tat' was his general drift, and he has a point. But points are like arseholes; everyone's got one. Here's mine: given all the clueless, irritating, self-indulgent, complacent irrelevance of much of what was going on, a lot of the people involved are on to the right idea. Get theatre (or performance or whatever) out of Art Centres and theatres and in front of Joe Public and provided that the performers don't patronise or fanny about, there's a good chance that a genuine Popular Theatre might emerge. It happens when Fooksbarn perform in a Cornish village hall, when Cliffhanger play in a Liverpool boozier, when the Forkbeards take their squaredance out anywhere. There were some moments when it happened in the Festival.

I had a good time. I think it was a 'good thing'. I hope it happens again and that we're invited. I'm glad I'm at home now.

Paddy Fletcher

Footsbarn's Arthur



Footsbarn's Arthur is a pantomime in the sense that seven actors play about thirty parts. Wisecracks abound, accompanied throughout by a musical pastiche of brass and drums, fast action and versatility in acrobatics and clowning. Quick changes just seem to happen with their adaptable and colourful costumes. Using Steinbeck as a main source, their interpretation is innovative enough to appeal to audiences in London, while also going down a bomb in their native Cornwall and on the 'European Circuit'. In Ireland, whole villages turned out to see the show. A troupe of jesters performing at the court of the Great Public, they allegorise the troubled mind of Arthur, who seeks to cleanse his mind of sin, portraying a sorry Camelot (oh what?) with the arrival of Sir Lancelot (He's so Pure He's so Clean, a Remarkable Fighting Machine.) The purgative quests of the Fellowship of Worthy Knights

Edinburgh Fringe

With Scotland's two leading 'alternative' theatres—the Traverse and Glasgow Citizens—in the official programme along with major theatrical excitements from abroad, the 'fringe' of this year's Edinburgh Festival, all 700 productions of it, seemed somehow insignificant. Most of it was drivel but with so many performances and a soaring pound frightening off the tourists, even the worthwhile shows, and there were a few, found difficulty in attracting audiences.

Most of the fringe is amateur. The Fringe Club, a dismal place with all the subtle ambience of a school canteen, lurched day and night with drunken undergraduates fresh from the dubious pleasures of their college revues and revivals of Ayckbourn and Coward. The hub of the professional fringe is the Traverse which dispensed booze and jollity into the early hours and provided a fertile meeting ground for performers, writers and directors. For the Fringe now functions very much as a trade fair, giving an out of town showcase for opening new shows and winding up old ones, meeting friends and colleagues and seeing what everyone else has been doing in the past twelve months. For the amateur it is, if they are lucky and a little talented, a chance to be taken with flattering and probably undeserved seriousness, possibly even to attract a little fame. Though this latter was difficult this year with most of the national newspapers giving scant coverage of the festival events.

But what of the poor punter fretting his hours amidst this bewildering mass of performances? How can anyone have hoped to have discerned what was really worth seeing amongst all that was

are enacted in a variety of ways, from the graceful stag's mime of death, the hilarious buffonery of the bucolic brothers Brian and Sorearse, who, in response to the discovery "But if all the world were Brothers" reply in squeaky unison "Then we'd all have the same mummy", All of it is accompanied by a Brass Band, a wind machine and a saxophonist on stilts (he turns out to be a giant from the 'Age of Marbles') Maggie, the only woman in the company at present, is excellent as the boy Arthur. She goes on to play all three female parts, Guinivere, Nyneve, and the fey, Questing Maiden. Her coyness and wetness here is a parody that clearly contrasts the ridiculous manliness of the male roles. Going through her questing-bag with it's hand cremes, ointments and bread and cheese—a bundle of niceties—is indispensable to the collage. Not such a hit for the women though.

Dunkette

on offer? What not to see presented fewer problems. It was not difficult to avoid Cambridge Footlights in *Brown Rice with Everything*, 'a macrobiotic comedy', the paedophilic pleasures of 'an entertaining and searching new musical played entirely by children under 12', or *Lily Pad Launch*, a fantasy musical for all ages by Cyndi Turtle-dove (sic) in which 'Poly Wog searches for a proper frog job'. True, *Golda—a light musical tribute to a wonderful lady* by the Jewish Community Players had its temptations but along with The Flying Lombardos from Australia in *Errol Flynn's Great Big Adventure Book for Boys and Froots*, *One Woman's Search for her Oranges*, I doubt whether the performances could have matched the delights of the billings.

Those of you who spent the summer in London looking desperately through the barren listings of Time Out in search of a show to see can take comfort from the knowledge that you missed little in Edinburgh that has not already played in London or will be on its way South over the next few months. Heartache and Sorrow, ATC, Alan Pope and Alex Harding, the Crystals, Steve Berkoff, Spiderwoman, Neil Cunningham, Gay Sweatshop, Phantom Captain, Nancy Cole and Ken Campbell's Science Fiction Theatre, who between them provided the best of the performances on the fringe, are all familiar to London audiences.

What you will have missed were two extraordinary companies from abroad. Opernstudio Nurnberg provided the

most outrageous offering in the festival. Late night at the Traverse they performed Heinrich Marschner's gothic German opera, *Der Vampyr*, in a production that was musically very accomplished, the more so for being scaled down to fit the tiny Traverse space, and visually as startling as anything seen from the likes of Lumiere and Son or People Show. It may have lacked dramatic polish but the frenzied succession of rapes, blood-sucking, dismembered corpses, nudity, transvestitism, incense, sweat and good fun, released everything repressed in Marschner's century-old opera.

The Rustaveli Company from Georgia in the Soviet Union, were one of the troupes invited by the new festival director John Drummond into the official programme. Until now virtually unknown in Britain they proved to be one of the world's great companies reaffirming one's faith in theatre after the body blows dealt it by some of the other events in the city. The ensemble playing in *Richard III* (they also gave *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*) was immaculate with a towering central performance from R. Chkhivadze that took one's breath away and had the audience on its feet with acclaim. The stunningly imaginative approach to a familiar text (even in Georgian 'A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse' was unmistakable) shamed the National Theatre while the visual imagery (Richard and Richmond fought up to their armpits in an antique map of the world that billowed over the entire stage) tore through the self-regarding parochialism of British theatre. That performance alone justified the journey north and swept away the rampant comicism generated by a week on the 'fringe'.

Luke Dixon

**NEW SPACE
OLD FACES**

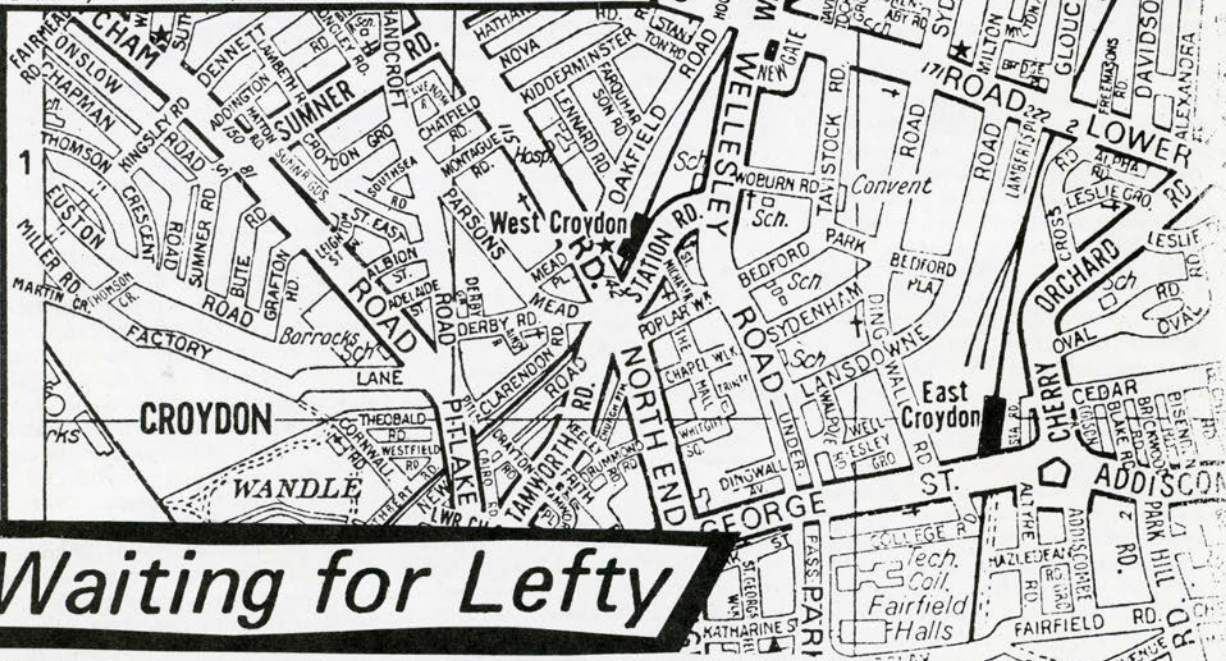
OCT 15—NOV 10

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**BELT & BRACES
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COVENT GDN.COM.TH.**

Notes on the 6.40 from Victoria. Originally a lunchtime venue, the Croydon Warehouse recently opened as an evening venue with an exciting programme and late-night cabaret, attracting the more adventurous inner-cityites as well as locals. We sampled a couple of recent performances: a first by CAST/N.W.Spanner and the Sadistas new show.



With a straight face, the delegate formed the union meeting that when he got home the previous night he'd smelt burning in his room. Then he noticed his jacket hanging on the door. 'Comrades, my union button was on fire. It was blushing with shame.' The meeting burst into uproar, hired thugs swept the speaker off his feet, and the smoke-filled air echoed with shouts of "siddown!" and "shuddyamouth!". About a couple of thousand miles and forty-five years away from Blackpool is the setting for Clifford Odet's classic labour play 'Waiting for Lefty' revived by CAST and North West Spanner at the Croydon Warehouse. The two companies have joined forces to set up a new circuit for left-wing theatre, Union Circuit Promotions, and this is their first enterprise.

So why are we waiting for Lefty? And why are two theatre companies in 1979 Britain waiting for him? Lefty is the union leader who has spoken out against the union machine which is busy defending the bosses' interests, branding activists as 'dirty reds' and generally making life difficult for the lads. They pull dirty tricks like employing professional worker stooges to calm down the calls by the assembled Chicago taxi-drivers for 'strike', and of course it is they who ensure that the apocryphal 'Lefty' never arrives; by the simple expedient of a bullet in the head. The whole scene is dominated by the corpulent seated figure of Harry Fatt, (Harry Persey) embodying the complacency of the taxi-drivers union. This gentleman is very good at snapping his braces and gives the wink to the hired

hoods. Unfortunately, Mr. Persey is without exception the only member of the cast who is capable of preventing his Depression Chicago accent from wandering merrily across the Yorkshire Moors, or echoing through the odd Welsh valley. Life was all too frequently not a "boonch of roses" etc. The only remedy for this would perhaps have been to drag the poor play kicking and screaming to provincial Britain. But if one could avoid being distracted by the Welsh the play turns out as a pretty reasonable guided tour of several bits of depression society USA 1935 ranging from the City Hospital to the Casting Couch. At the core of the play is the union meeting, depicted in situ with the cast in the front row and the discontented Croydonite theatregoers, fresh from the latest typhoid scare, in the back. There are several domestic scenes, some touching, some not, all accompanied by lots of breast-beating, desperation, considerable golly and goshing and phrases like 'I'm at the bottom of the ocean'. There is the Clark-Kentish Clive Crotty as the unemployed actor being kicked out of the ruthless producer Grady's office; after applying for a job with the rather unlikely credentials as having a wife and two kids to support. Not before, however, the smart-broad receptionist (Claire Muldoon) has given him a dollar for his membership subscription to the Communist Party. (This scene actually got the play banned from the BBC in 1937 under pressure from the National Listeners Association.)

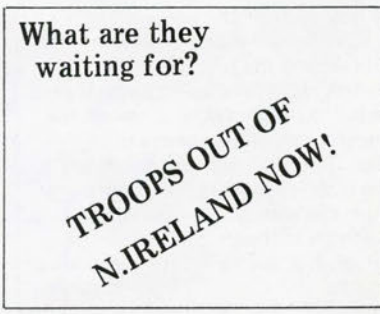
The companies say that 'Waiting for Lefty' was the obvious choice for the

launching of Union Circuit as the play that was there at the beginning of the workers theatre movement". It was first performed in 1935 by the Group Theatre in New York, and more recently the Unity Theatre Glasgow, with Claire and Ronald Muldoon, Harry Persey and Michael Kay coming on from the Unity to produce the present revival.

This is an idealistic play, and must be judged as such. The choked desperation of Clifford Odet's lines are conveyed quite adequately by the company to an audience, painfully aware of the uselessness of the political forces that are supposed to represent them. In other words, a smugly impotent Labour Party who have spent the last few years carefully preparing the ground for a Tory government.

The production connects the '30s with today and asks "are we still waiting for Lefty?" Clifford Odet's play says, during a revealing piece of chaos previous to Lefty's demise, "No, let's get on with it without him!"

Rob La Frenais





Curiouser and curiouser", said Alice; and I concur. Watching the Sadista Sisters' new rock 'n' roll cabaret 'Duchess' made me listen, laugh, frown and then leave at the end in such an unclear mind that I couldn't help wondering what it is they are saying nowadays. It is not a strong show, using often repeated but well-performed stereotypes. The writing is, at best, unclear and, at worst, messy and, in parts, offensive.

Barbara, a 13-year-old girl gets pregnant while still at school and her child is farmed out for adoption while Barbara goes through the tawdry mill of social traps available to women—the disco scene, secretarial jobs, the DHSS, the clandestine relationship with her boss (a good cameo) until she meets a nice man with whom she decides to settle down in respectable domesticity to make a home for her daughter Verity. When the husband sees Verity for the first time he realises that she is a 'darkie' and a punk who challenges the respectability that her mum has built for her. The husband tries to rape her, she goes off to join 'the movement' (we are not told which one) and mother and daughter turn against the husband and commit themselves to fight for freedom. Talking with one of the Sadistas after the show I discovered that the movement Verity joined was the WRP. Why weren't we told this in the play?

The music throughout the show is patchy. There are some good songs like 'The Man at the Top' and 'I'm a Self-Made Man' and they seem at their best when parodying obvious male oppressors. But some feminists who were there on the night I saw it described the music as 'pure cock-

rock', played by three men who, very phallically, I thought leaped around and thrust their pelvises in a manner never seen amongst Sadistas' previous work.

Much of the humour is based on 'funny' images of oppressive and oppressed women—with jokes like "trying to avoid wolf whistles I now limp past men and pretend to be a polio victim". But is a woman being examined by a gynaecologist thrusting equipment between her legs and being played for *laughs* (and a woman gynaecologist, at that) what the Sadistas' audiences expect after their wonderful previous shows? After songs, very memorable and strong, like 'Ma Ma Madonna' and 'Sister Amazonian' are people really to treat so favourably a song saying "You and he were fated for mutual rape, mutual rape, mutual rape"?

The Sadistas perform as well and as strongly as they ever did but I imagine they need to be a bit clearer in their writing so what they are saying is not so easily misinterpreted. A show as ambiguous as this one is probably very easily misinterpreted, at best, and very easily cause offence, at worst. As a woman I spoke to after the show who has a black daughter said, all the while she was thinking of her daughter while racist

jokes were being made without any proper redress being made within the script.

But the Sadistas maintain that offensive or not, unclear or not the play deals realistically with the problems of 'women in the streets', for whom they are writing and to whom they wish to speak—not to political elites.

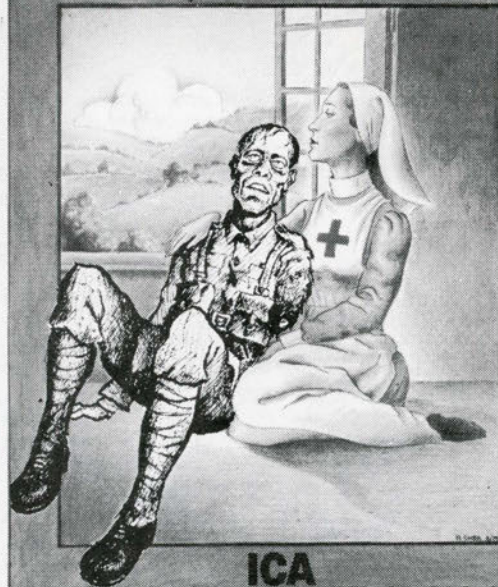
Apart from all this I'm sure some of the local Croydon people enjoyed the show—as their almost constant laughter evidenced. But the question still remains—what are the Sadistas really saying nowadays?

Bruce Bayley



JOINT STOCK THE HOUSE

by David Halliwell



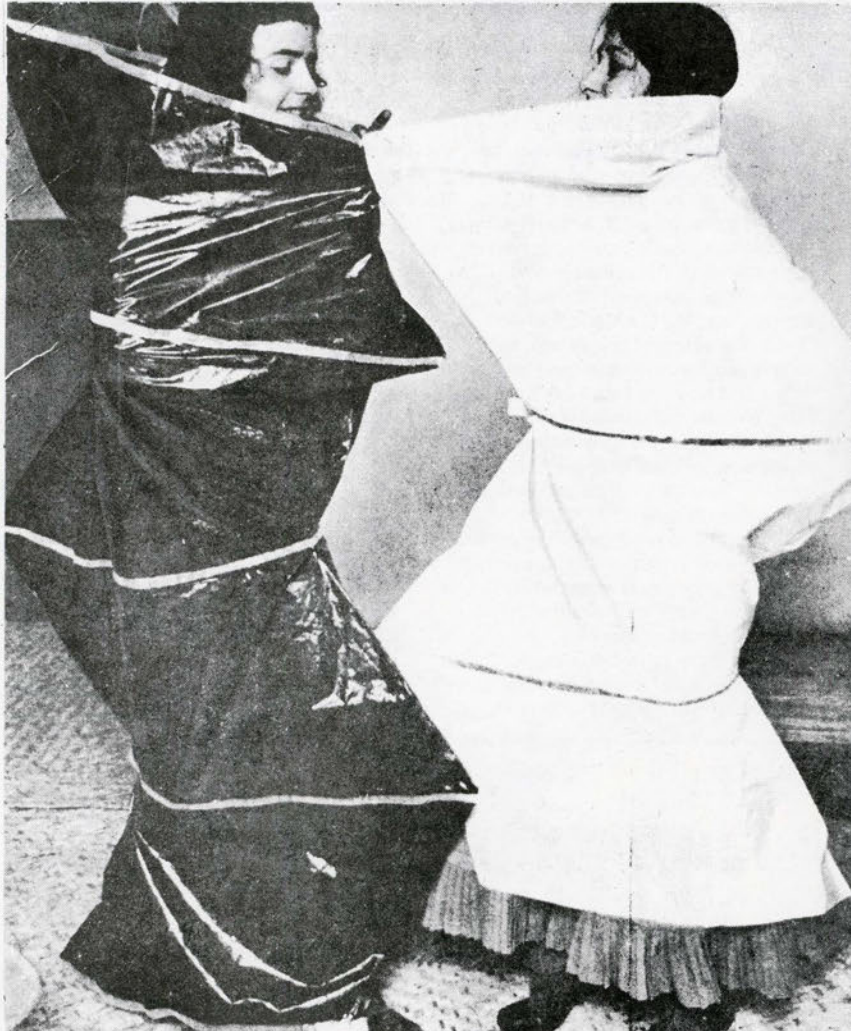
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HAPPENINGS, CULTS



An old man, illuminated in the moonlight under the railway bridge, holding a bottle of fortified wine and singing to the trains, is he giving his last and finest performance? When the true performance artist knows he just isn't acting any more, does he believe in himself any less than the Protein for Passion man? Who is a performer anyway? What is the distancing factor? It is a documented fact that performers have been removed by means of ambulance from public places because someone thought they were genuinely mad. It seems likely that we should see a transformation from conscious performance activities to simply BEHAVING. Is there any difference between the artist who has started to live an ordinary life, and regards it as a performance, and the ordinary person who makes a performance in everyday life? The answer must be economic and political, in the end. The latter does not get paid for it (although the

protein man will sell his booklet for 9p). Those who have, or had the legitimacy of being artists sometimes get paid for it. They are documented, get looked at. Take away the money and the gap will close.

Happenings

"Happenings are occurring in England, in France, in America, in Japan, they are precisely speaking, a real event taking place. There is no stage, it happens in a room, in the middle of the room, or in the street or by the sea, between the spectators and the people we no longer call actors but agents, there is but an ephemeral difference. The agents actually do things (never mind what), they provoke events and make something, anything happen." Jean-Paul Sartre. *Le Point*, 1967. "Ooooooooh Oooh. Let it happen." The Supremes. (The Happening.) Shocking the public, 'epater le bourgeois!' art actions, provocations, auto-destruction, anti-art—all these and

more are associated with the sixties rediscovery of dadaism. To the newspapers the 'happening' speedily became an endless vision of chanting hippies in circles holding joss sticks, nude women covered with whipped cream, smoking of banana skins de rigueur, naturally. Among intellectuals artists, and actors, there was the opportunity for much seriousness; analysis and redefinition. Peter Brook picked up the new ideas and went off to persuade the RSC to use them . . . years too late. Poetry readings in the basement of Better Books turned into happenings, a coffin was carried on the the Central line, chickens were slaughtered in public, everyone, especially the police could make a happening. The idea of 'making an action', involving the passer-by, insulting the audience was here in a flash. Now what?

Paris, Grosvenor square. The happening on a larger scale. At the end of the turbulence the long slow haul of the seventies. What happened



and everyday life

By Rob La Frenais

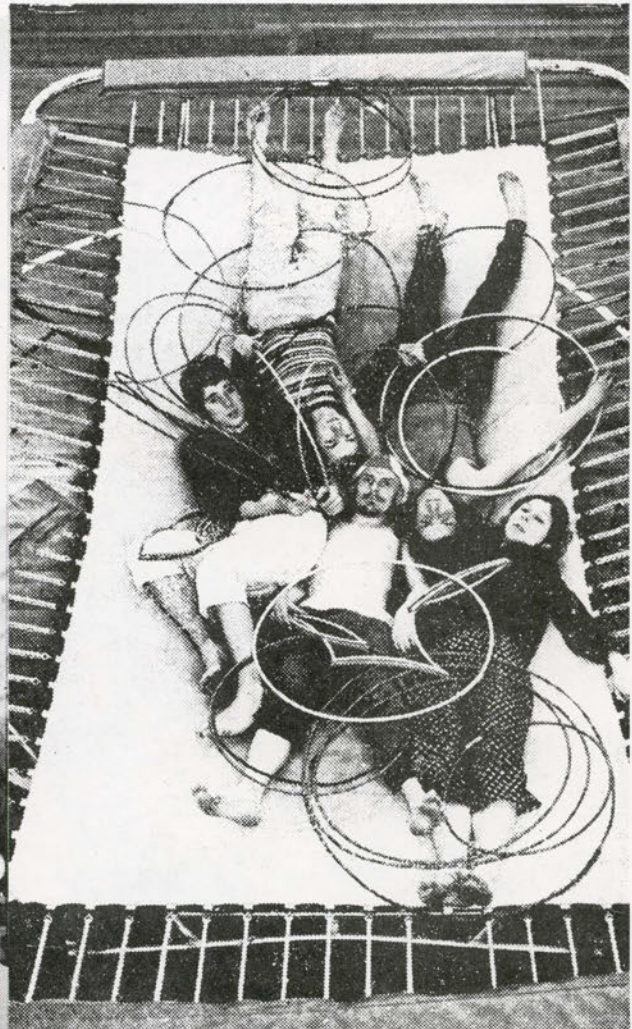
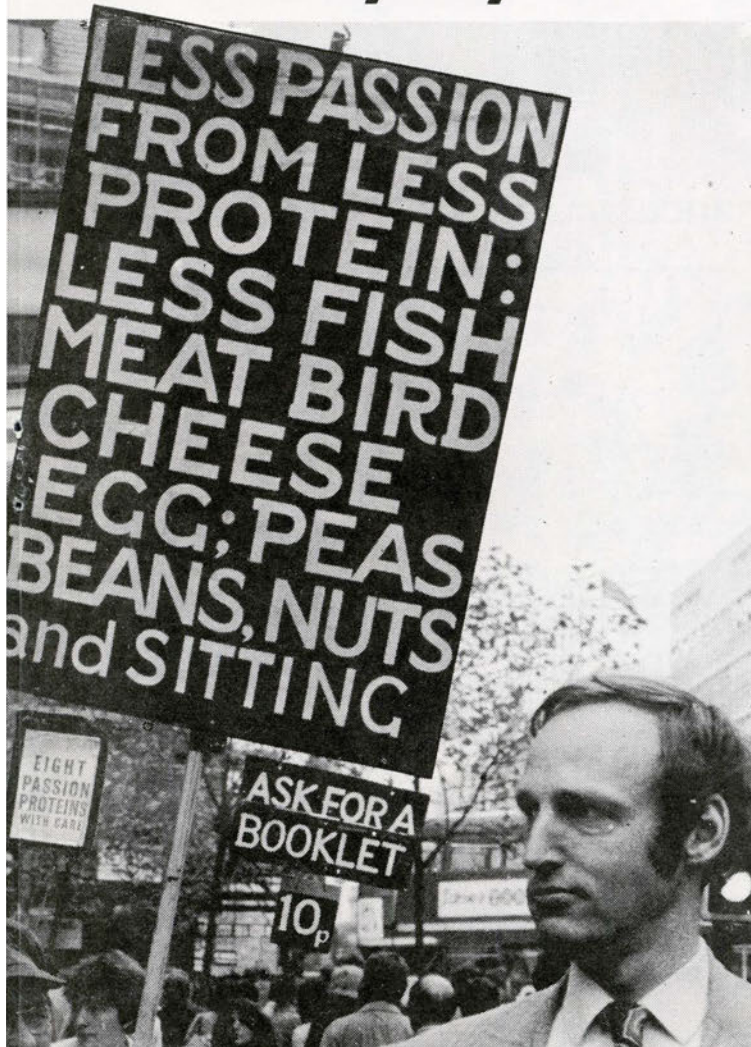


Photo Tom Castle

to the happenings? Well no one really knew what one was, except for the American publishers of *The Book of Happenings* which gave detailed instructions on what to do on one, where to have one etc. The Situationists went off with what they learned; the death of art, the death of culture, no more spectacle. Others, sculptors, visual artists wanted more spectacle: and got it. Giant inflatables; explosions; processions, music, rituals, circuses. Welfare State, Action Space, The People Show; all in hot pursuit of spectacle.

Cults

Others formed cults. The Exploding galaxy, an early Happening group had split off to form a company called Transmedia Explorations. When you joined this group, according to a former member, you had to give all your clothes and money into a central pool. You were not allowed to sleep in the same place twice, moving somewhere different every

night. You took a new name and your whole life was involved in the group's performance. They invented their own food, with names like 'density bread' etc. and their own alphabet. They designed a PVC garment known as a 'Rainshell Sleepwalker' which they intended to sell as a product. Their performance involved more or less exhibiting their way of life in public. Anything that was two-dimensional was bad, so books and handwriting were out and they were trying to invent three-dimensional handwriting. "It was an extension of hippiedom, mixed up with strange theatrical and artistic concepts. It was a good discipline, because it made you strip everything down."

Unfortunately the old story prevailed. Some people were more equal than others, notably the two founders, Paella and Fitz, who could sleep where they wanted, could use the money how they wanted. Leaving could be traumatic. "Paella

ended up chasing me around the hosue with a great big pair of sewing scissors, trying to stab me." "Why?" "Because she said Fitz talked to me more than he did to her. She was jealous. I had to jump out of a second-floor window." Another member, Lemon, it is widely rumoured financed the whole group for a number of years, and finally left after he had been forced to sign over the deeds of a house to them. The group still exists, under another name, and is quietly doing community arts work at neighbourhood festivals; rumours no longer abound as they circulate with their trampolines, music and bright costumes. Why were people attracted to them? "That's like saying why did somebody go and join Charles Manson isn't it? It seemed a good thing at the time".

Our informant, Genesis P.Orridge, whose extreme lifestyle still continues as a performance, is interviewed elsewhere on these pages.

PERFORMANCE FROM POLAND

Angela Carter on two performance artists visiting Britain



Andres Beres and Zbigniew Wapechowski are the two most exciting artists working in the field of performance in Poland, perhaps in the whole of Eastern Europe, at the moment. Their work is very different—Beres has a rare quality of tranquil lyricism while Wapechowski is harsher, barbed, satiric—but both share an extraordinarily unselfconscious use of the imagery of Christianity which, in Poland, remains a vital cultural fact. Both have a dynamism and a freshness that makes them unusually accessible, together with an emotionally direct **straightforwardness**.

Beres, also a distinguished sculptor, tends to organise his work around themes of procession and ritual. He will process, naked, through a part, pausing at small altars he has built— an altar for birds, an altar for children, an altar for small animals. Or he will transform an art

gallery into the venue for a sacramental meal—not of wine and bread but of vodka—“because vodka makes you glad”—and cake, “because people expect something special at a party”. Before he breaks the cake and pours the drink, he will paint himself with flowers; haven’t they come to see painting? Though Beres often incorporates his woodcarvings into the events he creates with such luminous simplicity, his work itself is always performed in the first person and involves an exposition of the inherent beauty, dignity and infinite fragility of the human body. The naïf element in his work relates it to certain Slavonic traditions of the holiness of innocence yet his underlying themes concern the nature of art itself.

Wapechowski is much younger. He utilises elements that verge on the grotesque, often starting from analogies between sport and religion,

using the imagery of the cross and of Golgotha, the place of skulls. His performances involve ironic commentaries on the culture of the long distance cycle race, the epiphany of the footballer. He has been profoundly influenced by the Russian suprematist, Malevich.

Performances by Andres Beres and Zbigniew Wapechowski at the Galerie Labyrinth, Lublin, Poland, October, 1978.

Beres, a frail old man with long, grey hair, is clad in a cache-sexe made out of newspaper. He chops wood with an axe and lays a fire on a stone hearth.

He removes his cache-sexe and dons a tunic with the words: PHILOSOPHIC STONE written on the front in English, on the back in Polish. He wraps a large stone in his newspaper cache-sexe. He lays the parcel on the fire. He lights the fire.

He sits cross-legged in front of the fire until it has burned down to charred sticks. The room is full of bitter woodsmoke. He takes a jug of water and douses the smouldering remains of the fire.

He removes the stone, takes a bush, dips it in a jar of paint and signs his name on the stone with it.

Wapecowski's performance took place in the courtyard outside the gallery. Low steps lead upwards to a small garden with beautiful trees.

The audience group themselves expectantly at the foot of the steps. A man goes round the audience, squirting their hands with perfumed deodorant from an aerosol.

Wapecowski takes off his clothes. Beneath, he wears satin shorts. His torso, legs and arms are covered with newspaper clippings; prominent among them, a headline: KULTUR.

He dons a leather American footballer's helmet.

From the sports bag, he produces a series of metal rods that bolt together in a cruciform. From a plastic bag in his holdall, he takes a number of crimson tags and attaches them to the palms of his gloves and the front of his plimsolls. Equipped with stigmata, he now carries his cross up the steps and inserts it into a stable base already set up under the trees.

His cross has a footrest. On one side of the footrest is painted the slogan: CHAMPION: on the other side, NOTHING ZONE. There are also loops of string hanging from the cross-means. He inserts his hands into these loops and mounts the cross.

He smiles, as if for photographers.

His sidekick approaches and offers him a bottle of coca-cola (now produced under licence in Poland). Wapecowski descends the cross and empties the bottle at one draught.

He throws the bottle over his shoulder. It shatters on the paving stones, under the beautiful trees.

Tour Dates

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13th & 14th October

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16th October

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Oval House, London SE11.

*Introduction by Roland
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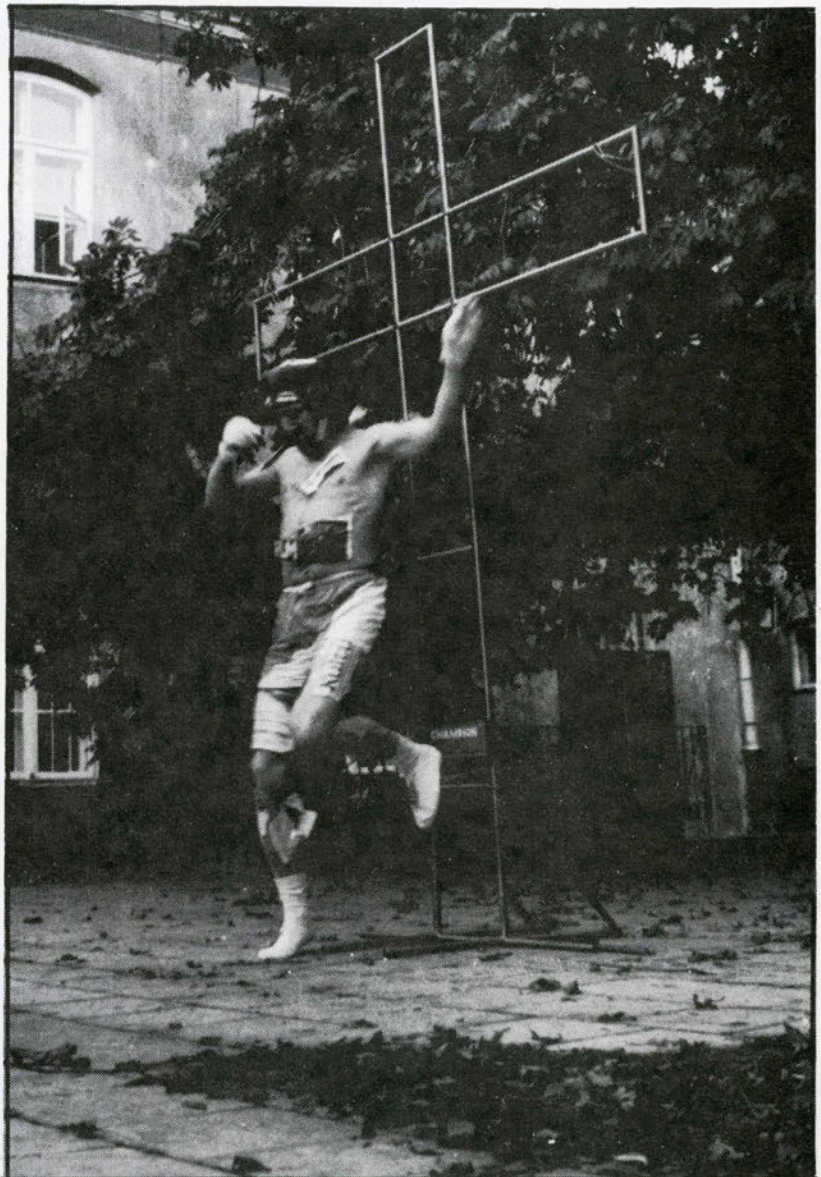


Photo Worc



TRIBAL ESSEX

To the untrained eye a youth orchestra concert must be strictly for the Mums and Dads. But the standards and diversity of youth music have constantly increased. Youth music can no longer be simply equated with mere amateur pleasure, while its amateur and educational status creates opportunities for projects which no professional group can afford to take on. The National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain has set the pace for levels of technical proficiency, but it is an occasional orchestra. Its stringent demands are an exciting stimulus to those other youth orchestras which feed it. The work 'Essex—Xingu' commissioned and featured by the Essex Orchestra at the Riverside Studios on 30 September allowed this exciting and well disciplined bunch to extend the process one stage further. Not only was the work a taxing piece of writing for symphony orchestra, making no concessions to the frailty of youth, but its concept as an elaborate piece of music theatre involved the participation of 150 singing and acting schoolchildren.

A dizzying array of spaceage tribesmen, monkeys, snakes, owls—all manner of beast and fowl—was set upon and inquisitively played with orchestra and audience alike. And at the core of the piece a giant, illuminated blue

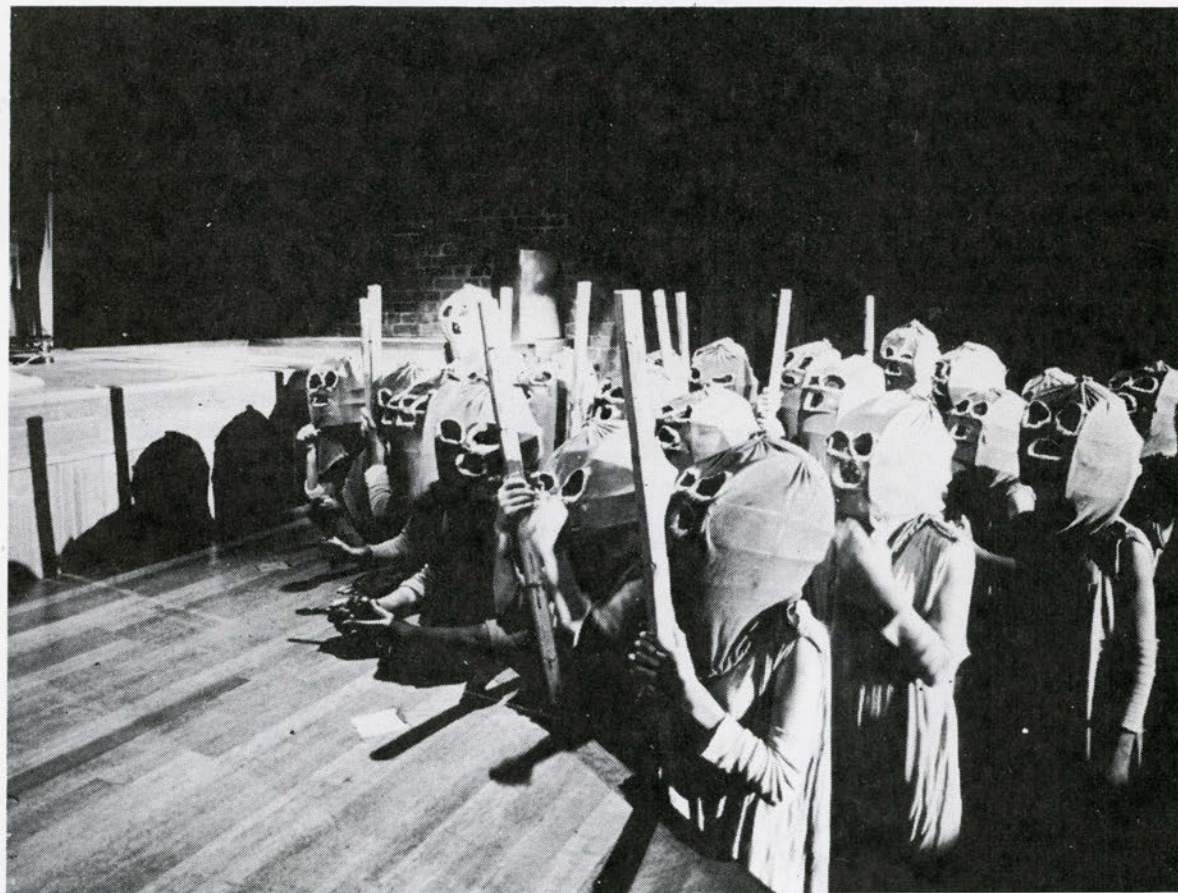
butterfly spread its irridescence over the whole proceedings. A celebration of the vitality and integrity of the Savage Mind, the work took the myths and hunting rituals of the tribe called Xingu, located in one tiny square of the Amazon jungle, and set them to the music of the modern symphony orchestra.

But the composer, Victor Hoyland, has patronised no one. No allowances were made to relative performance abilities, nor were the Indians presented as exotic idiosyncracies—ethnic titillation for jaded Western palettes. Whilst maintaining their own cultural reference points, the tongue clicks and other extraordinary vocal events the Indians perform are interesting as purely sonic material for compositional transformation. The transformational processes employed within in the piece at all levels point to the inherent musicality in Structuralist thinking. Benjamin Britten or David Fanshaw may inadvertently create glorious Kitsch, but Hoyland has taken the notion of kitsch as point of entry.

A hitherto largely ignored aspect in the presentation of ethnic art to a Western audience is the cultural tension such a presentation generates. Accusations of cultural imperialism are a grave danger to all who set foot outside the well defended bastions of bourgeois art. For Hoyland the inherent Kitsch in the notion of a tribe of pigmy Indians discovering an

orchestra becomes the vehicle for a new understanding of style. Eclectic quotation sees its apotheosis in the magical descent of the blue butterfly as the orchestra breaks into Wagner's 'Forest Murmurs'. But this symbolic representation of the sounds of the jungle is further intensified. The pigmies stand in costumes recalling the Mud men of New Guinea, awesomely beating the floor with their rhythm poles and chanting their songs. The jungle is full of bird song as the wooddove tells Siegfried where to find Brunnhilde, interrupted by the animals from Ravel's 'L'Enfant et les Sortilèges', come to talk to the dreaming child. Schoenberg's wooddove from 'Gurrelieder' flits past, pursued by Stravinsky's 'Rossignol'. A technical tour de force leaves a mesmerised audience to resolve cultural confusions for itself. Aggressive and dextrous orchestral writing of the 'difficult' kind of new music provokes the songs of the Indians transformed into equally aggressive choral attacks. This direct challenge demands some kind of vocal response from the orchestra. One could imagine the Musicians Union having cause for complaint over this—it's up to singers to sing. The otherwise admirable attitude of the orchestra shows them already making tentative distinctions between what was real and not-real music. Half hearted singing was not.

The obviousness of the whole idea receives its own parody in the piece as





one of the Indians burlesques the antics of the white gloved conductor in conducting his own travesty orchestra. At the climax the Indians have somehow laid hands on Western cultural artefacts – saucepans, coke tins, trombone tubes – and clamorously challenge the real orchestra for the last word, before the final bar of 'The Rite of Spring' sets the seal on the entertainment.

Ultimately industry was wooed into sponsoring production costs. But it cannot be easy to find backers for an idea whose uncompromising integrity and sophistication are its only selling points. The project took four years from conception to fruition. Fifteen months were taken up by production and nine of these to shipping 200 schoolchildren to and from

rehearsals.

Finally, to quote from the glossy souvenir programme brochure, "while the Indians have inevitably been affected by contemporary civilisation . . . they have so far been able to integrate modern influences as they integrate the natural environment, into the resilient structure of their society".

Simon Thorne

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PORRIDGE for breakfast PORRIDGE for lunch PORRIDGE for tea

Born Nigel Megson in 1950 Genesis P. Orridge has been making news with his performances since he was 15, when a local vicar preached a sermon about him. Rob La Frenais asks him why.

RL: Genesis, when did you become Genesis?

GPO: 1965, when some friends at school had a party, and I didn't go to the party, and it turned out the next day that they started calling me Genesis. I asked them why, and they said they'd made a list of all the people that they knew on a bit of paper and given them biblical names on the other side of the paper. They'd written Genesis next to my name. They never said why. But it just stuck, you know how some nicknames do and some don't. And after a while I started signing poems and paintings with it.

RL: And P. Orridge?

GPO: That came in 1968-9, when I'd left university, and I only ate porridge because I'd no money, so I had porridge for breakfast, porridge for lunch, porridge for tea for a few months. So people started calling me porridge as well. So I decided I might as well be that completely and change it legally, because it would be more fun. It was the idea of not just thinking about things, doing them, taking them right through and making them part of your whole life, not just doing them as events or something. That every detail should be part of the whole thing.

RL: So what do you think about performance?

GPO: What, Performance Art?

RL: Performance, or Art, or whatever. Have you given it up?

GPO: Not performance, because I perform in Throbbing Gristle, the group. And then sometimes, I perform



Photo Cossey Fanni Tutti

in private, if I have a tantrum (laughter). I still do; I mean, but I don't do what the COUM Transmissions type performances were, in public.

RL: Why do you think the media became so interested in you?

GPO: What, 1976, or earlier?

RL: I think, circa Evening News.

GPO: That's '76. The ICA show.

RL: Is it that long ago?

GPO: Yes, just before punk really got going. Well, it was inevitable that they would one day, with the things we were doing, I suppose. At least there was always a good chance. I guess it was the right kind of show at a time when the mood for outrage and hysteria was ripe too. It's one of those strange historical things. It could have been somebody else, but we were around with the right kind of newsworthy attributes.

RL: A lot of people said it was deliberate.

GPO: No that's bullshit. You can't set something like that up. You can't make people in New York and Hong Kong and Australia and Florence and Brazil and Canada all instantly interested in what you're doing by a calculated move. If that was true people could do it all the time. And they don't. That's just people who think that careers or fame is what they want, are just jealous. And they're even more annoyed because they know we don't want it and don't care.

RL: How has it affected you though?

GPO: It means that I still can't go to Canada or Australia, I'm still banned by the foreign office, that we have our mail opened, even now, at random—I can't post mail in Hackney because it gets opened—that our studio sometimes gets raided by the police, that I get stopped and searched in the street, whenever I go out of England I get stopped and checked by the British police. . .

RL: Any incidents like that on your last visit to the States?

GPO: I don't want to go into that;

RL: Ah, OK'

GPO: It's a bit of a sensitive area. I can go into things generally but I don't want to go into specific details. Suffice it to say that it's very very hard for me to travel out of England. I can, but they make things as difficult as possible. And I'm watched.

RL: It's extraordinary really. . .

GPO: Oh it is, yeah.

RL: Actually. I mean for doing an extreme art event or something. . .

GPO: But it's not just from the one. That was the one that focussed them on us finally, but we'd been involved with the police, the political police in Britain for a long time. They've had files on us for a long time.

RL: Why? Why would they bother?

GPO: Because I know a lot of people involved in extreme political areas and they've just got a very one directional view of things. If people know certain people, they assume it means you are involved in it. They can't believe that

you just know somebody. In fact they've always found that we're not doing anything particularly threatening; but they can't just get out of their minds that we don't fit in. Therefore we must be doing something wrong. It's just a matter of their way of interpreting the world being very singleminded and basically stupid.

RL: So you have to balance out being a scapegoat and being infamous. If you're infamous enough, they can't afford to make you too much of a scapegoat, because otherwise their stupidity might be exposed.

GPO: It's a tightrope, that's exactly it. In a sense you do so many disparate things that they can't focus on one.

RL: But if you weren't quite so . . . for example in the Persons Unknown trial, they focused on people that knew people that knew people.

GPO: What's Persons Unknown?

RL: (Explains about the trial of six anarchists on charges of conspiring with 'persons unknown')

GPO: Well they did that with us. When we did our Queen postcards. Bulldozed a case through prosecuting me for sending indecent mail. The definition of indecent mail is that just one person has to say that they were offended by it, not that it's obscene, but that they personally were offended by it. It can be a policeman. And if they say that, it's proof, even if the rest of the world don't agree. So there is no way you can win the case. I could have got 12 months in jail for that. I would get it straight away if they ever get me again for that. They didn't need to use it against me. What they've done is that it's the first time they've used the Post Office act in that manner, and it's now a precedent. Because they can also open your mail, which is illegal, but if they then find that they're offended by what's inside, they can prosecute you for sending indecent mail although they should never have seen it.

A discussion then ensued on the subject of the music business, cut for reasons of space. Genesis, talking about his record company, Industrial records, and group, Throbbing Gristle, continues.

GPO: You should always aim to be as skilful as the most professional of the government agencies. That doesn't mean that you have to be a technical musician, but the way you structure and market and conceive of what you do should be as well thought out as the CIA, FBI or whoever. It's a campaign, it's nothing to do with art.

RL: What's your attitude to pain?

GPO: I don't have one. You mean, because I've hurt myself at times? I don't like going to the dentist because you'd have to have injections and yet I can stick hypodermic needles in my arms without thinking about it in a performance.

RL: What about public manifestations

of pain? War, punishment, the death penalty?

GPO: I haven't thought of those things as pain. I've thought of them as manifestations of human stupidity.

RL: Why is a lot of your work concerned with those things?

GPO: Because it shows how stupid people are. I'm just amazed that 90% of the human race might just as well not exist. Because they're so stupid. The way they treat each other is so stupid and it's so unnecessary because if they only stopped for a few seconds and thought about things they'd realise that it's just wasting everybody's time and they don't need to keep on perpetuating that way of life. Part of the reason that they don't look is because most of them are conditioned not to look obviously, so that's why you need people around who are trying to decondition everyone, or break the standard social routines. Which is what we try to do in our own small area.

RL: You seem to highlight the most anal and repressive aspects of life.

GPO: That's what I see most. I just saw Apocalypse Now on Saturday, and I said that I didn't think it was a very good war film, but it was exactly how the world looks to me all the time. That's what I see, in front of my eyes. It's a real shithole. I can't think of very much that makes this planet worthwhile. Certainly not the human race. The planet's OK. You can't blame a planet. But I certainly think there'd be no harm done if America and Russia were completely obliterated tomorrow. In fact most things. I don't mind if I go with it. I don't think anyone really deserves to survive. Quite honestly. I can't think of any logic or any value to the human race that means that we should stay here. Just because a few of the people have been nice doesn't mean we should stay. I think it's a disgusting race. Really disgusting.

RL: What do you have for breakfast now?

GPO: I have porridge. Or museli, which is like dry porridge.



FUTUREPERFORM

PROBABLY NOT TO BE MISSED



ICA Theatre 9-13 October
THE BEAST by Snoo Wilson
 Public Spirit Theatre, Manchester.
 Details 930 0493.

Conjures the life and outrages of Aleister Crowley. Magus extraordinaire, 'the wickedest man th
 'The Wickedest Man in the World' (Sunday Express) who 'bridged the gap between Oscar Wilde and Hitler (Sunday Times) and who spent 12 years as an old age pensioner in Hastings apparently living on nothing more than a bottle of gin and 11 grains of heroin a day-enough to kill a room-full of people. Public Spirit's new revival eschews polish in favour of a heady lunacy which the Beast 666 has surely blessed. They bring with them part of Manchester's burgeoning new wave scene, a group called The Mothmen.



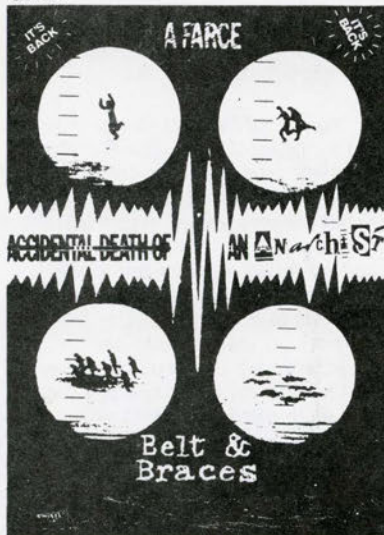
Also at the ICA, **THE WILD BOYS**, from the book by William Burroughs. The Lovely and Talented Theatre Band. 16th-21st October 8pm. An overflow from North African cities the Wild Boys start one spring in Marrakesh. With the ease of a Zen Master they perfect skills that ensure their survival, developing strange weapons like virus words that eat the brain. With incredible stamina a pack of Wild Boys can cover 50 miles a day-a handful of dates and a lump of brown sugar keep them moving. From Tangier to Tokyo their mutation spreads like a plague.. They are indifferent to the world's fuzzy charades, emotional confusion, soft egos and state control. The words

'love and 'hate' mean nothing at all. Disguise isn't dyed hair or plastic surgery, it is behavior that leaves no question unanswered. The wild boys have no problems. Designed by Paul Dart, scripted by Peter Richardson, music by Furious Pig.



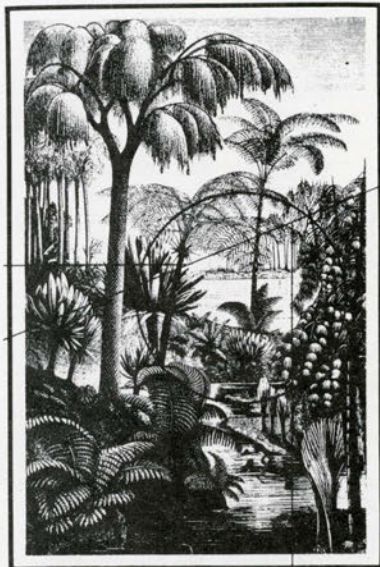
New Half Moon. October 12th-November 17th.
HAMLET directed by Robert Walker. Details 489 6726.

The first production to be staged in the Half Moon's new 'Peoples Palace' in the Mile End Rd, it will be a promenade performance, with action taking place all round the building, and Frances De La Tour as a female Hamlet, in the grand tradition of Mrs Siddons, Sarah Bernhardt etc. Frances De La Tour- "I'll be a Hamlet of today, whatever that means; women did it many times, but in each era it would be a different Hamlet.....the audience are in the middle, standing.....they'll be shifted, brought into the intrigue of the tragedy, intrigue of the court."



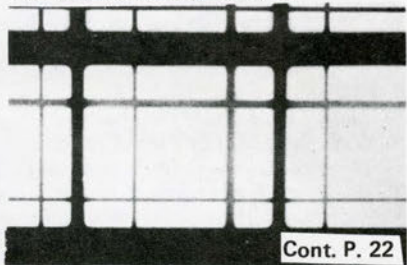
Old Half Moon October 15th-Nov 17th.

ACCIDENTAL DEATH OF AN ANARCHIST by Dario Fo. Presented by Belt and Braces. The return of a brilliant production, this is based on the true story of an anarchist who died while in police custody, set in the police headquarters in Milan.. It tell the story of how a lunatic regularly arrested for impersonation decides to clear the anarchist's name and expose the extent of police corruption. Builds up to a hysterical climax of slammed doors, mistaken identities a wooden hand, fights and a lost glass eye.



Oval House. 24th October-4th November
JEAN POOL by Lumiere and Son. Jean Pool and Max Cope are investigators. They spend their life in hotels. One night two air tickets for Greenland are left in Max's pigeon hole. The duo head north. Thus commences a global odyssey involving suicide in the Arctic, murder in the Black Forest, submarine tragedy off the coast of England and bloody massacre in the Congo Basin.

Are the crimes connected? Is there a shaping sensibility behind the senseless slaughter? Max insists that each incident can be explained in isolation, but Jean Pool, with her lynx-like eye for links is of the conspiracy persuasion.



Cont. P. 22

Deep in the bowels of that pit behind the silent Times building that is called 'Mount' Pleasant, the editors of the Performance Magazine decide to enter the world of gossip, tittle-tattle, etc. But who shall do the deed? A phone is lifted and the silvery tones of that doyenne of the Fringe Betty Martin come tinkling down the line. "But of course darlings....."

Proof of the advantage of having several fingers in several pies, Mr Bradwell of Hull Truck seems to have cracked American Equity, and they'll be going back there next year. Our fellow columnist Mr Hinchliffe is also to leave for the States accompanied by various chums, Brighton's very own Mr Ely, editor of our most deadly rival, P.S., amongst them.

On the subject of rivals, we hear that another group of scribblers are joining the great performing publishing boom. Called Platform, it is edited by Cathy Itzin, late of the Tribune and Theatre Quarterly (whatever happened to that). The question is, which shall I tell my friends to buy?

We hear Mr Gale of Lumiere and Son is having difficulties getting his new cast to turn up on time to his little warm-ups. For those of you not in theatre, these are strange, exotic-seeming, muscle-ripping rites often adopted by directors who have too much time and too little imagination. Like being called 'Love', 'Ducks' and 'Heart' they are

Lies...

designed to demoralise actors.

The two last ladies of the Incubus theatre, Ms Bee (buzz buzz buzz I wonder who she does) and Ms Elliott ('I can talk about myself for *hours* and *never* get bored') met face to face recently, both smiling fixedly at each other like two piranhas sharing a social conscience and both being *terribly* interested in each other. So important for these small groups to all get on, isn't it?

We see the provinces are cocking snooks at us in struggling London in the shape of the new Wolsey theatre in Ipswich. A superb building—perhaps it's only us weak-stomached sticklers who balk at its lime-green and rose-pink colour scheme. At the recent opening the only bad thing about the ceremony was the play—actors coping with incompetent direction—even the erudite Mr Nunn was hard pressed to say anything nice about it, so he didn't.

Yet another fellow columnist, Ms Lavery is writing what must be the 47th rewrite of 'Gentlemen Prefer Blondes' for the Enormous Regiment. The dear innocents tried to write it *collectively* when Ms Churchill got blocked. We hear their new performers—sorry, group members were chosen with care to fit into the group. Don't worry darlings,



Gossip

we don't believe it for a *moment*.

The cuts will start soon, don't let's worry about *that*. Why wait till the new financial year, already they've chopped a huge chunk out of Nottingham funds—the next thing they'll do is cut RAA money so *they* can't afford to pay companies—much wiler than cutting the companies themselves. Or they'll do both and you won't have the ITV to fall back on. Don't mind the tear stains.

▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ Betty Martin.

Advertisement

In between the acts.....



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FUTUREPERFORM



Cunning Stunts

Action Space October 18th-20th. **THE DESERT' OR WHAT'S FOR AFTERS?** by Cunning Stunts
The intrigues, expectations & romance of holidays are revealed as the Stunts visit Egypt's answer to Whitley Bay.. This musical and visual extravaganza has a full supporting cast including 'The Pharoahs', an academic dinosaur and an urban ostrich.

Also at Action Space- the companies own **FUTURE OF THE PAST-** a culmination of three years work on the Edwardian era from which the modern age sprang fully armed. November 8th-10th. All details 637 8270.

MAN IN TUBE GETS OFF

'If you're stupid enough to sit in a tube for five days, that's OK by me.' Those were the words that got the case dismissed against the nineteenth member of the Demolition Decorators to be charged with obstructing whilst performing. An impressive total of nineteen acquittals against twenty-two charged so far. In this case, the Man in the Tube, as reported in the last issue, was demonstrating against the frogmarching of buskers from the corridors and platforms of the tube. This involved living in an actual tube for five days outside London Transport HQ, and incidentally nearby New Scotland Yard. The above statement was uttered by a senior officer at the start of the event. Unfortunately, this was forgotten by the rest of the chaps at the yard, who were receiving some provincial brass when the Decorator started to put his washing out. Chagrined, they arrested him on the spot minutes to go before the end of the five day event. Red faces in court when the original statement was recalled. The next case comes up in Brighton. Charges including large scale -motion crossings of zebra crossings are said to be involved.



Photo Frank Bren

HINCHLIFFE LASHES OUT ON THE ROAD

The 'Road' can either be a delight or a complete pain in the nether regions.

A couple of weeks ago I was to appear in Leeds at one of the small venues which has sprung up in the past few years. I have worked this place before and was bounding in expectancy of not only the event but seeing some of the old friends and die-hards that I knew would come along. As I usually get a fair turnout in Leeds, I was choked when not a soul showed up. The organiser claimed that she had had my posters plastered all around the place and she was also dismayed at the lack of support. Not wanting to be too 'over the top' I subdued my depression and accepted only the expenses and told them to keep the fee as they hadn't had a performance. I left the premises before my now boiling temper erupted.

First stop was an establishment for some medicinal assistance. "What are you doing in town", enquired several familiar faces. On telling them, they retorted that they would have come along had they seen it advertised!!! Further enquiries produced the same results. I suspect it was another case of expensive publicity shoved in the bottom of a dusty drawer; they had the posters a good 2 months before the event. . . shits!!!

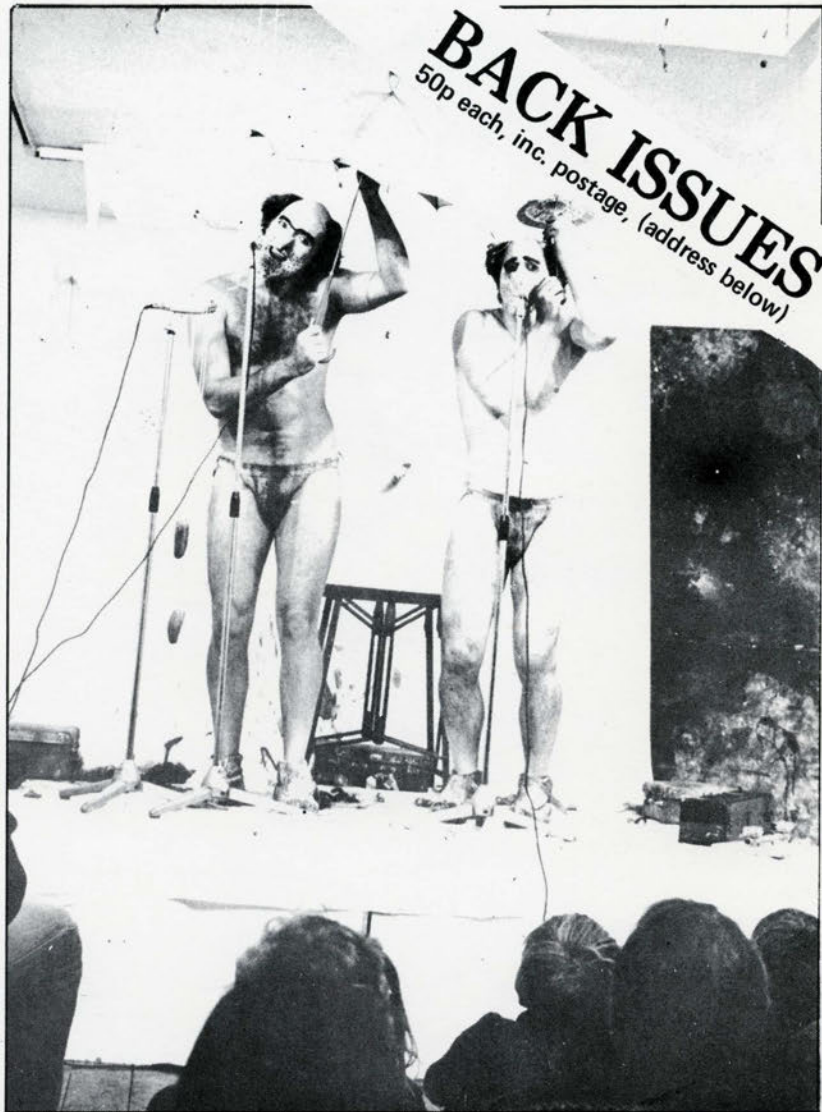
Next stop Liverpool. It was a gloomy old Dave Stephens who greeted me. I

was to perform our two-man show with him here. He told me the 'phenomena' of this venue is that they never fix you up with a kip nor care if you haven't got one. . . don't believe me? Ask Rob Con, Roger Ely and more I can think of. Neither do the staff of this place seem to have interest enough to bother attending events. We were lucky one staff member came (he was doing the gate) and fortune had it that Stephen's lady came from Liverpool and found us accommodation. I have slept in a School-yard in torrential rain in Liverpool even though I know quite a few compatriots in the same business who reside there. They have an uncanny knack of avoiding you when the question of accommodation is brought up.

Stop No. 3—"God, do they come in 3s", I was thinking as we sped North to Glasgow. We oiled ourselves British Railways style in anticipation of the worst.

We arrived and were bowled over with an enormous welcome, fed, 'watered', well advertised, well attended, had a good blow and put up in an excellent hotel.

Well, there you go. That was the last bit of road. What next? Perhaps someone will issue a book called 'A Guide to Good Giggeries'. The way things are at the moment though, I doubt if it would be a very thick volume.



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Photo R. Harris

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