

PERFORMANCE MAGAZINE

THE REVIEW OF LIVE ART No.25

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PERFORMANCE

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For full information and entry forms apply to: The Film Officer, Arts Council of Great Britain, 105 Piccadilly, London W1V 0AU. Tel. 01 629 9495.

Closing date for return of completed application forms: September 5th 1983. Students are not eligible. Open to residents in England only.

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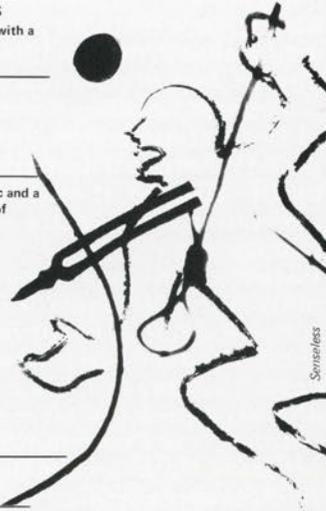
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ONWARDS TO THE GLORIOUS 50TH ISSUE!

These numerical targets are of course absolutely meaningless, and the publishing of 25 issues of Performance Magazine is no more a resounding achievement than publishing 24 or 26. Yet, as vast population upheavals and widespread rioting greeted the approach of the last millenium, (and the next no doubt) there is a certain psychological barrier crossed, if only with the sudden realisation that we are still, impossibly, in business.

Because, although it may seem perfectly natural to you regular readers and subscribers that Performance Magazine should appear every two months to cover the areas of live art, visual theatre and experiment in all areas of art and culture, it is a constant task, quite separate from the rigours of publishing, to maintain a unified vision of the terrain we are surveying.

This is because there is no recognised criteria of critical awareness capable of encompassing what we call Performance with any amount of ease. In a sense, we have been making it up as we go along.

When it comes to the crunch, even the most radical live artists have been known to dive for the safe cover of established art theory to justify their acts; likewise those on the theatre fringe have diluted experiment for the new pragmatism that requires big audiences at all costs; full houses every night with the possibility of TV appearances.

We have chosen to remain outside those worlds, in a sense attempting to maintain a holding zone: a safe house in which everyone is welcome, providing they want to take the same risks as we do, sharing our crisis of identity. For, to an extent, identity is what we have avoided, in order that we could become a focus for this new field without laying down dogmatic and partisan strictures.

But now, we think, it's time for a change. We intend to strike more attitudes, to rigorously provoke more debates. At the risk of becoming impossibly iconoclastic, in a political and social climate where the hatches of conventionality are once again being desperately tightened with a view to pacifying future, corporate sponsors, we simply have to fight for the new area we have carved out in the last four years. A new language has been written for live art and we are going to talk it!

PERFORMANCE

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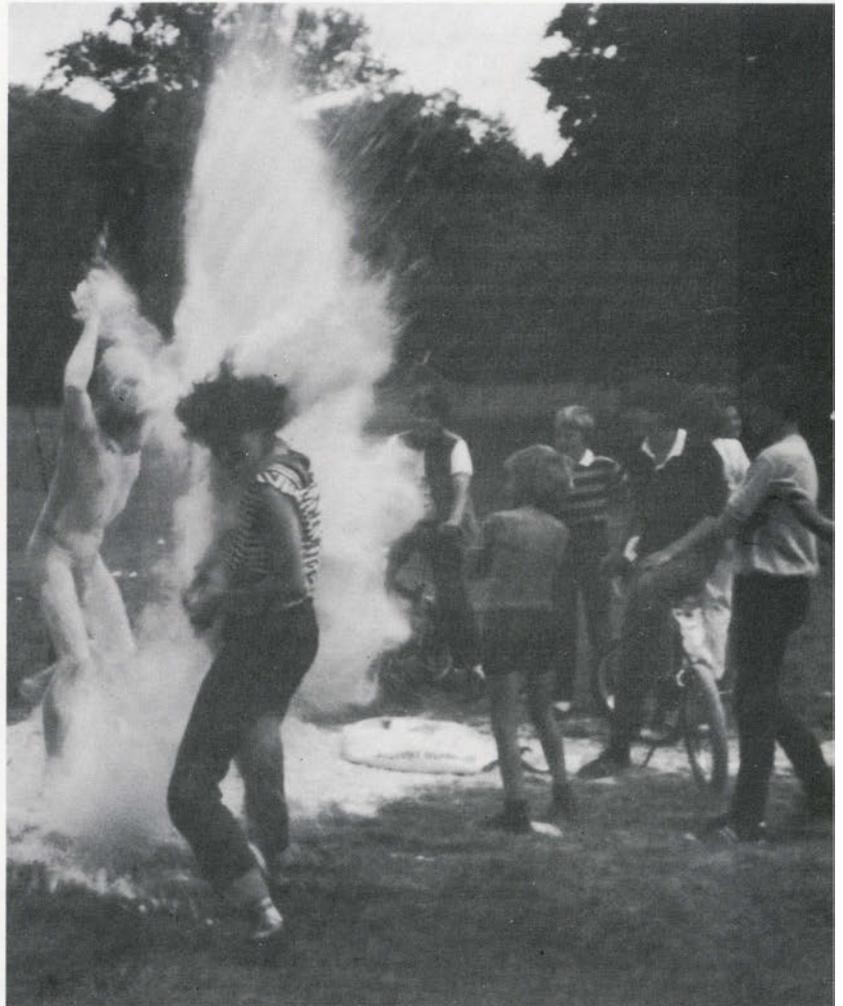
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Flying in the Face of the Media: While artist Franklin Aalders lay naked, face down in a heap of white lime at the Bracknell Performance Festival (reviewed this issue), this photographer encouraged children to poke him, to get a reaction. She did. The infuriated Aalders sprung to his feet and scattered lime at her, totally ruining the camera. The event caused much heated debate about whether these performance 'actions' must be protected from the whims of unwanted participants, or whether they are responsible only to the 'moment.' Would the kids have disturbed the piece without encouragement? Or was the photographer, as 'the media,' acting as provocateur?



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OF GREAT BRITAIN

'Babylon Has Indeed Erupted'

DURING THREE DAYS of hypnotic street theatre, the Bacchanal and Mas players of Carnival erupt on to the supreme stage of the streets of Notting Hill, Ladbroke Grove and Westbourne Park; never before has hedonism been so fully embraced.

The origins of the Notting Hill carnival can be traced as far back as Columbus' 'discovery' of Trinidad in 1498. In the chandeliered ballrooms of the French bourgeoisie, (who had been encouraged to settle in Trinidad after 3 centuries of Spanish rule) the more daring would indulge in masquerades and abandon during the period before Lent in the Christian calendar. Hence it was a time for Carnival—to say farewell to the flesh (*carne vale*) or, as others interpret it, to abstain from meat (*carnem le vare*).

The first carnival processions which shook loose the refinery and etiquette of the French settlers took shape with the freedom of the slaves in 1833. In celebration 'Ole Mas' was born as slaves wore their masters' clothes torn to shreds in ridicule. What before had simply been

costuming and revelry in the image of the masters' costume balls, became dosed with the essence and flavour of the slaves' African past.

And so Trinidad carnival grew and grew, becoming intrinsic to the Trinidadian population. In London, carnival was resurrected during early days of West Indian immigration when a group of 'home sick' musicians based in the Colherne pub in Earls Court, looked back to the traditions of home, finding solace, identity and artistic expression in carnival celebrations.

'Carnival', according to Ebony section leader Danny Holer, 'is the best damn party you have ever been to in your life'.

Its purpose was never as a spectator event, although now the by-standers far outnumber the mas players.

'Carnival is a thing where you may leave home to walk peacefully on the pavement and admire the costumes, but it is the type of thing which draws one in and in no time you find yourself doing just what's going on—you begin to dance

without knowing it.'

This spirited event also has darker undertones of the expression of the immigrant and his place in an alien society. Leslee Wills, founder of Lion Youth band:

'The continuity of the band and the carnival is like an expression of coping with the environment and being on top of the situation in Britain. Carnival is tied to our social emancipation—it is tied to us—to this generation of West Indians and our feelings of how we are coming to terms with integrating into this society.'

In playing mas, a collective psyche grabs at this opportunity to plunge headlong into the escapism of fantasy and role playing. For weeks prior to Carnival the mas camps build and shape myths, suspend reality, and create an army of characters rooted from the past and dragged from the imagination. Carnival slowly seeps into our lives, and on the morning of the Road March we are drowned in the explosion of its magic and mania.

Notting Hill Carnival



Nephertiti, proud Queen of the Egyptians comes face to face with the dazzling Sun King of El Dorado; Pink Unicorns and Green Gazelles from Fantasy Island prance amongst Mansa Musa's Guests at Regina's Feast; the blue Feathered Empress of Atlantis, the Fallen Angels of Paradise Lost 'jump-up' as 'Things with Wings' swoop amongst warring Amerindian Indians. Each lives his portrayal.

'He is no pretender, he is history reborn or fantasy in the flesh.'

Characters have traditionally been based on Carnivals from centuries past, stemming originally from Trinidadian mythology. Jab Jab, part clown part devil, guardian of the stinging whip, his crony Jab Molassi who daubs his body with stale molasses and threatens to soil the clothes of by-standers whose dues are not paid. The captive dragon with lumbering walk, bound in heavy chains. All reappear in the Road March.

Bands have become associated with particular themes. Race Today's Renegades use war conscious themes, originally inspired by the presence of the army and navy on the islands during slavery. Khaki camouflage and sailor suits, floats of tanks and army planes are all significantly historical, yet tied to their own relativity.

Lion Youth founded as an all woman Rastafarian band have maintained themes from African and Creole culture.

'Our band was originally based on the Lion Of Judah', explains Leslee Wills, 'Our themes are concentrated on Caribbean influenced traditions and on the themes of our African forefathers. We depicted Zulu Land and the bush negroes of Surinam who thought they could fly back to Africa on wings made of leaves.'

Our themes make up a chapter of a book—which is the history of the Caribbean as derived from Africa. We record living history from the parents and grandparents of people in the band'.

Roman, Greek and Egyptian are eras which will be paraded in Carnival '83; other themes are still guarded by a wall of secrecy around the mas camps, but will finally be divulged at the unveiling ceremony of the Kings and Queens (the most elaborate costumes to which the other sections provide a back drop).

Carnival may at its climax take flight into fantasy, but the problems of bureaucracy, organisation and finance are never far from sight. Costumes may cost anything from £20 to £400, and increasingly work is being allocated to outside professionals, as the pressures of struggling for one's own financial survival get heavier. In spite of the leaning to small scale 'mass production' of costumes, the scope for idiosyncrasy is never lost. It is the extra feather, glitter, some added jewellery, a whistle which becomes the distinguishing tattoo on the individuals's costume.

He 'got a cardboard box and tall grasses from behind his house. Then with an old tin of silver paint, a couple of Xmas tree decorations and some dog bones,

(scrubbed and dried in the sun), he painted the box, added grasses to it then made a skirt of coconut leaves, wrapped wire around his arms and strung several tin can lids and bones together, using animal charcoal for blackening.'

Minshall has since progressed into the advanced realms of costume design and wire-bending. His movement between the carnivals creates a constant flow and exchange of ideas. At Trinidad carnival '83 Minshall created a stir, and even uproar amongst the judges when the 3000 strong 'Band of the People's Choice' enacted a two-part epic on the Road March. It depicted human rivers, creatures of the lagoon, the rape of the virgin Washerwoman, and his Frankenstein, the giant mechanical Mancrab was unleashed. it was a masterpiece in mobile street theatre; spectators rose from their seats and clambered for viewing points to glimpse at the bizarre creations of their awesome designer.

'Babylon has indeed erupted and "de River come down" . . . reds, and greens and blues, and golden chartreuse, and a

shower of multi-coloured confetti is lavished as gifts on the River. 'Matrons and madonnas, who, the day before worried over specks of dust on their virginal white, now shriek in hysteria and abandon. Wet me. Wet me. Pelvises tilted to catch precious colour, and soak it up . . . When River has passed, the debris was colourful and colossal. The River people had soaked it up and spewed it forth'.

Minshall was beckoning to the bands of the future, both in Trinidad and Notting Hill, and some say even highlighting the bankruptcy of ideas in many bands. Notting Hill is yet to see such an ambitious spectacle—held back not by lack of imagination or foresight, but through limited financial independence.

Forever changing under social direction, yet dependable in its continuity, Carnival has at its heart both careful planning and spontaneity. It is loved as the play which requires no rehearsals; a free for all which, for one day at least has no barriers of time or space, where characterisation has no limit.

Isobel Appio

Notting Hill Carnival



The Way Of How

There are few exercises more exasperating and dubious than those attempts to describe in objective terms the nature of subjective perceptual experience. None the less, we engage in these activities frequently and always with less than a hundred per cent certainty that any degree of understanding has been achieved. :George Coates.

Already something of a legend in West Coast performance circles, George Coates' *The Way Of How* is arriving in Britain this month as part of the LIFT festival. Having seen performed at the Oakland Auditorium, California, last year, I can fully appreciate the significance of the above words and consequently feel discouraged from even attempting an objective description of the work. However, I was recently able to meet the performance's singer John Duykers on the way back from a run of the show in Copenhagen. Duykers told me how Coates's performance works evolved.

'The first thing that George said was that he'd like to start without any preconceived ideas, so we began by entering space and simply entering a space and watching each others gestures and movements. After a while we began to elaborate on what we found and started using props and other materials. We would make foraging expeditions to second-hand stores and came up with a whole lot of things: saw-blades, golf-club covers, PVC pipe and garbage-bags. We would always try and use things that were not immediately identifiable, so we would use the gold club covers but not the golf clubs.

'On any given day one of us would arrive early and start doing something with the materials, so there would be something there to stimulate us and then basically we would just play. Sometimes nothing would go on and we could spend two or three hours getting bored, but we would always give ourselves enough time to get through that boredom.

'Paul Drescher, the musician and composer was there all the time constantly experimenting and improvising. Paul used to play with a band called The Touchstones which had shows of Off-Off Broadway, he has studied Javanese and African music so he is very much a hybrid. On stage he works a tape-loop processor, this enables him to record and play back while he performs. He does not compose as he goes along. It's all set. It's not like jazz performance in that sense, although he will sometimes improvise on a theme for a few bars.

'The other aspects of the design of the show, the set and the lighting, we had to superimpose afterwards. Ideally, though, we want to develop every aspect of the production simultaneously. In spite of the problems, however, it is still a collaborative process in the largest sense.

'There are problems with calling what we do 'opera', 'theatre' or 'performance



The Way of How

art', because all these terms have baggage labels attached to them and what we do doesn't really fit any of those tags. We don't really fit into the twentieth-century concept of anything. We had this idea that we would create a whole new category of art called 'See Hear' so instead of going to a 'happening' we would go to a 'See hear' not a concert, a play or a ballet, but a 'See Hear', for it is this term which describes most aptly what we do'.

One of the most remarkable features of *The Way of How* is that it seeks to explore a common ground with its audience, in spite of the abstract nature of the role it evokes. It is the ordinary which is made extraordinary but through a visible and entirely accessible process. This 'demystification' of the creative act extends the sense of play to the audience and creates a strong bond between the actors explorations and the audience's excitement at their discoveries.

The essence of the show is simply contained in a shaping and re-shaping of atmospheres, of changing moods which manifest themselves through the music, the lighting and the images created by the performers. These are constantly changing, shifting, shrinking and expanding,

goaded into motion by the influence of the music. There are no static forms, stasis, in *The Way of How* is a certain death.

In discussing the aims of their work, Duykers went on to say, 'The work is trying to create something which is not yet here. In the West there is this tradition of the migration of discontents, the frontier spirit if you like, and this has led perhaps to a harder more independent exploration of understanding.

'I see our work as essentially ahistorical. I have worked in traditional theatre and I suppose that you could say that my influences are classical and based on the conceptions of character actors, directors and the cause and effect principles of artificial time. But what I am trying to do is to take the stuff from the classical world and create a new context for it. I want to dispose of those silly librettos of opera, but hang onto the incredible techniques of the singers and ballet dancers. I want to preserve the heroic way in which they deal with gravity, in spite of the pomposity of those silly stories.

'The trilogy that we are currently working on, of which *The Way of How* is only the first part, is not a narrative. There is no story. In *The way of How* four individuals come together, there are territorial battles, alliances are made and broken. In *Are Are*, the second show, there are no individuals, no traditional battles of people against people, but only the struggle of a group against the forces of gravity culminating in their final victory when they actually achieve lift-off at the end. In 'See Hear', the final work in the trilogy, the performers affect a re-entry into the world and a sixteen-piece chamber ensemble becomes the central character.

'We are trying to create a theatre which is not dependent upon strife where there are only winners and losers, but a drama of beauty and without violence where the only struggle is towards the perfect performance, which in concert must always be a collective effort.

'The principal aim of our work is to take the insitution of an evening concert, which does not traditionally accept responsibility for any visual reality, and create for that a proper relationship between sound and vision. Just what can be done with those music stands and that fixed dull house-lighting. The music is clearly very important, but there is a need to enhance the experience of sounds with visual gestures before we can raise the standards of concert practice and achieve a necessary re-association of the senses.

For anyone seeking a more definitive account of *The Way of How*, it's going to be necessary to see it. It will be at the Bloomsbury Theatre, London, for two weeks this August. (See LIFT listings this issue).

Gub Neal

The Realities of Rochdale

ROCHDALE ART GALLERY is overshadowed by a monstrous turreted chateau known as Rochdale Town Hall. This monument to all that is solid and unyielding in mill towns and industrial landscapes was coveted by Hitler as a prospective English base. These days a black glass tower looms over the Gothic spires, accomodating an overspill of officialdom that not even Hitler would have dreamed of.

Hardly the setting one would expect for a radical art gallery that has just hosted Britain's first Fellowship in Performance Art. Since Jill Morgan and Bev Bytheway took over two years ago, Victorian landscapes have given way to contemporary painting, sculpture and performance art, usually related to Rochdale's community but also of national interest—Rochdale as the only gallery outside London and Edinburgh to host Laurie Anderson's recent exhibition. Rochdale succeeds in being loyal to its demands as a provincial gallery without being provincial in the derogatory sense.

Jill Morgan defined their policies as accessibility and education. They favour installation work, and encourage artists to be around and talk about their work. 'I would like to see the relationship between artists and galleries becoming closer', commented Jill Morgan. 'We don't want to bring in the artist cold and plonk him in a studio space. Galleries should take on more of the fight of establishing the relationship between the artist and audience, as much as the artist does himself'.

Not all artists want to stand up and explain themselves. Creating a studio space for performance art has provided a solution. 'We were interested in performance to widen the range of the gallery, and to provide a centre for performance art in the North-West.' A spin-off is Rochdale Performance Collective—'a sort of pressure group on gallery awareness in the area'—who perform in the Manchester area, although there are pitifully few venues available to them.

In June, Rochdale Gallery mounted a month of Performance—visits from the Basement Group, Roberta Graham, Charlie Hooker, an informal introductory talk by Jill Morgan and Bev Bytheway, and *The Performance Art Show*—the culmination of Anne Wilson and Marty St. James' residency and fellowship.

Jill Morgan: 'Performance artists introduce another way of working, they'd demonstrate the possibilities.'

In this respect it is particularly appropriate that Wilson and St. James took on the fellowship. Their performances are structured in such a way that the audience is witnessing the creative process in



The Performance Art Show

action. Images, sounds and words coalesce into possibilities which are evolved before our eyes. Careful annunciation and precise use of objects and stylised gestures impart a formal structure to the development of ideas. There is a sense of *deja vu*, partly because the work deliberately draws on the audience's associative memories to inform the work—memories of both reality and fiction or film—since Wilson and St. James are particularly concerned with everyday reality.

Their work in the gallery comprised paintings, photographs, and several manifesto-like texts. Walking through two light, open rooms of this exhibition you reach the performance space—a white studio dimly lit, with rows of chairs facing a video screen and five white plinths, on which a bowl of vividly painted fruit, a wine bottle and glasses, a vase of black roses, a gold cane and a gold chair had been formally arranged. The hot colours poised against the cool interior with an imminent sense of celebration made me feel we were about to witness a Spanish wedding. He wore the suit of a youthful Hitchcock and she wore a little black number, and they introduced themselves politely.

After this the atmosphere relaxed into a direct dialogue with the audience,

performance pieces interspersed with discussion of the work, both activities energized by the personalities of the performers. 'This is real time, we are dealing with experience including our own, our aim is contact with other people'—St. James.

Private Moments having recently toured America, a preoccupation with the tension between celluloid fiction and mundane reality must have suddenly seemed very pertinent, because the artists literally stepped off a plane from Los Angeles into downtown Rochdale.

'What is this thing-theatre or art?' asked a man from the gloom of the studio. Perhaps not what they ask in L.A. 'Well it's not one I want to resolve verbally' explained Marty St. James. 'It's like saying is it ice-skating?—Why bracket things into theatre, cabaret, art, sculpture. We are interested in the triangle between Anne and me and you'.

In Rochdale, any qualms on the part of town hall committees as to the value of contemporary experimental work is counteracted by the obviously keen public response. A policy of artifacts as investments on walls has shifted to an unquantifiable value: that of resident artists creating a live dialogue with their audience. The artifacts themselves become the first stage in a chain of communication with the community, and the artist is seen as a necessary intermediary link.

'A Gallery like this has to work in a certain context, alongside a government policy' concluded Jill Morgan. Though at present the Council are very supportive of the progressive policy towards new work that is establishing Rochdale Art Gallery as one of national interest.

'Rochdale is controlled by predominantly male Methodist powers and moral restraint'. But this ethic also involves a strong civic pride in the Gallery, which has been positive for Jill and Bev—'Members of the Council are close to the public in a town like this, and they come to the Gallery and the previews.

How much can a gallery like this have a radical effect on its community? Certainly, the audience at the Performance Day were a complete mixture of students, townspeople and local schoolchildren.

'We are getting an audience of young, disaffected youth now', observed Jill. 'It began last year, and the Laurie Anderson exhibition helped to break down barriers—it involved the audience, without patronizing them. The adage of children being the audience of the future is particularly important to recognize here, where the generation gap is strong and the older generation tend to put children off the idea of art'.

Charlotte Keatley

Joseph Beuys

Joseph Beuys, the veteran performance artist who became a politician, co-founder of Germany's Green Party, has been lately turning his attentions toward Britain. As well he might. An unusually listened-to voice of sanity in Europe today, he arrived this month, lecturing across the country, with a major retrospective at the Victoria and Albert Museum. In anticipation of this, Performance Magazine spoke to him recently at his Dusseldorf home.

Lynn MacRitchie: *I first saw your work in 1970 in Edinburgh.*
Joseph Beuys: Strategy Get Arts . . .

Since then it seems as if the kinds of performances you were doing have changed. Have those live performances, very long, complex events, been superseded by your lecturing and your political involvement now, ten years later?

I think those actions I did from the beginning of the 60s until 1975 had, from their own nature, to change. Their own principles contained concepts of action. They had to come into contact with some real undertakings to bring about the consequences. If I had continued with such actions nobody would have understood them. After such actions in the 60s there were always long discussions, very controversial dialogue. This had to change into real undertakings. In the late 60s I founded the German Students Party and the Organisation for Direct Democracy evolved. In 1971 I founded the Free International University, and one of the consequences of this was becoming a co-founder of the Green Party. So now the character of the action has completely changed. The meaning of the action becomes the reality that complex enterprises are built up and that communities work towards such ideas. It has become a vital element of the discussion in West Germany. We have discussions on the next level of social order, on anthropology, on the spirit, on freedom, on democratic problems and most important on the economic order in highly developed societies: this is all the result of the actions I started at the beginning of the 60s which ended in actions of the character of those you saw in Edinburgh in '75. These have radically changed. Now the enterprise is working practically, being involved in ecological work like planting trees—the 7000 oaks in Kassel—and the other action I started last week in Hamburg, which could be one of the biggest ecological enterprises. So one of the things is 'doing things in the moment', with no long discussion because the ecological situation needs direct activity and on the other hand such actions carry the forms of the next stage of social order. One side is a compressed theoretical formulation, a dialogue on the economy and what is traditionally called the culture; and on the other side is real practical work in which a lot of people are involved and employed.

What is your project in Hamburg? Hamburg is a very big port and the River Elb comes to the sea there. There is an agglomeration of heavy industry and the eco-system is so polluted that every day they have to dredge slime out of the river. This lies like big fields of heavily polluted earth, with heavy metals like cadmium: they have asked us to start a pilot programme on this big problem. They've called in the Free International University which may mean that they trust us more than all the official scientific discussion. Millions invested in research, people talking and analysing but nothing being done. The other side of the action is developing the constellation of ideas of the social order.

What about the involvement of the Green Party with the Parliamentary system? What effect do you think that's going to have?

Yes, there is a danger and difficulty for the Green Party in the

Party system. Some of the Greens never wanted to become part of an official party and now they are on the way to becoming an official political party. I myself follow radically another line of development from the group which is sitting in Parliament. But, we will see. If they become a real official political party then another movement will appear because a lot of people are no longer content with a political party system. The ecological movement in West Germany is relatively far developed in comparison to England for example where there is nothing. From our point of view that is absurd.

One of the problems we all have when we are concerned with politics, with ideas and thinking about the future is the problem of language. For example, Margaret Thatcher in her political speeches talks again and again about freedom and individual rights which of course are the same things that you talk about and that I would talk about when discussing politics. But what she means is entirely different. We are using the same words but the things we mean are very different.

The thing is, we have movements such as the Green political party which we have had since the 60s. It was already clear then that the real goal of traditional Conservative Parties was freedom for free enterprise. Freedom to maintain the capitalistic system. They don't mean the freedom of the people. It is clear that all this speaking *ex cathedra* is a lie. A lie in comparison with the idea of freedom. The free market exploits humankind's labour. It's a kind of trick. Everybody knows this. They support the rich to make more investment and make the rich richer. That's what they understand by the freedom—free enterprise.

When Thatcher talks about freedom of course she never mentions things like free enterprise. She talks in a much more global way for example, thinking about the Falklands War. Those were the words she used to get people to support her in that. It was shocking to be in England and to see that there was no way that the people on the Left could oppose her.

People on the Left are as weak as the people on the Right—they belong to the same system, so we have no hope in people on the Left. This was already clear when the Green Party started its activities but now they're in danger of splitting their power into a Leftist thinking organ. Some members of the Green Party are now hoping to go over to the Left. I am proposing to my opposing stream in the Green Party in our daily discussions that there is no reason to despair about its potential.

Is your hope then (since you have mentioned despair) that society can be changed through the actions of individuals in the sort of ecological work you've been doing? Do you think that if enough people see that as important and join in that alone can affect the political body as it is constituted now?

It can only be done by single people but the single people have to be millions. It is impossible to develop from one point. There is also distrust of people who are developing their influence too highly—there is an anti-authoritarian element in the Greens and in the progressive movements—but only the changing of individuals can change the social structure. That is the only possibility. And as soon as enough single people have changed their understanding then the change will come, it has to come.

INTERVIEW

Everybody knows, even the rulers know it deep inside, that the systems are completely bankrupt. They only rule through tricks. Reagan, for example, serves American interests at the cost of all the people in the world. Now he tries to revitalise the US economy at the cost of every European country. It's all tricks, all power tricks.

I think a lot of people already realise that but I think they also feel quite helpless in the face of the weaponry that Reagan and Thatcher control. The Green Party wants to move towards a position of disarmament. In England recently we've had the Greenham Common Women, but despite an enormous amount of popular support they have not influenced Government policy at all.

It will grow. The influence will be there. Again it is a process—everything depends on the consciousness of a single people. Political systems which are basically bankrupt, but still flood the world with nonsense, depend on people's egotistical behaviour. It's very easy to get this with a little bit of a promise of money, for instance. If we speak of the most stupid class in the world, that is, the peasants, if you promise them a little bit of money they will betray anything. They will eradicate forests, rivers, lakes as soon as they see money. They will support everyone who is promising them money. They are no longer interested in ecology. This is why political parties like the Conservatives have success. They do the most simple thing. They appeal on the egotistic level. So as long as people are egotistical there will be no possibility of ever overcoming the system. We will see what opposition there will be to the nuclear installations we are facing in Germany in the near future and then we will see what will happen in the Netherlands and in Belgium where these things are also planned to be installed. As long as people are not free they connect the problem of nuclear weapons with their monetary interests and they are told that there is a big danger to freedom from the Soviet Union and it is all a lie. It is all not real. We have to face the almost hopeless situation of the people.

But people are understandably concerned about money and work because they have nothing else. If you're poor there's no other way of getting food. And it's hard to think about higher things when you're worrying about feeding your baby.

But they must understand that in such a system the poor get

From the action Titus/Iphigenia, Experimenta 3, 1969.



Demonstration of students against the dismissal of Beuys, Dusseldorf, 1973.

poorer and the rich get richer. The idea of politics is completely wrong. Politics is the play of power and money therefore I never use the idea of politics. I use only the idea of the new form of social order. I speak about form and Gestalt. We don't need political parties to shape the social form of the future. The more that people move away from primitive materialism they will see that the true quality of their living standards grows in the transformation of society but the majority of people still pin their hope on more money.

Some of the people who saw most quickly the problems you are describing with the Left were women because most of the women who were the initiators of the Women's Movement had been in left groupings of one kind or another. Do you see the Women's Movement as important to the change that we're discussing?

Yes. The women's problem is a very important problem. But it must develop one step further. The problem of the woman will only change with change in the social order. It is of no value just to be a woman, just as it is of no value just to be a man. Sex description is not a human evaluation, only a reality. We need the liberation of women, but justice for women goes together with emancipation from the old social system.

One of the problems is time. If you're involved in politics and the Women's Movement you're involved in it because you think things are wrong, you want things to change. People work very hard and commit themselves and change doesn't come and then you have the problem of despair, don't you?

Never. I never have a problem with despair because I try to work on the logic of the thing itself, moving radically away from the idea of politics. Then you can see every day a kind of success. If I were to have told people in 1970 when I was doing performances like you saw in Edinburgh and I founded the organisation for Direct Democracy that this grouping would in ten years be in Government they would have laughed at me and called me an idiot. To say that from this kind of action a social change could come, they would have called me irrational and an optimist. But since I work radically and logically on the truth of psychological change, working on people's self determination first towards changing the social body, I can at least give the proof that there has been some success. To the point that there is now a controlling group sitting in the Federal Parliament of Berlin. Now I want to get together all the people who are in government in a free forum in Europe, a kind of academy outside of the daily realities of politics, a kind of university to discuss the next social stage in Europe and Asia. We have to use a lot of different strategies to bring this thing into reality because it has to be reality within the next 20 years or that's it. If it isn't there's going to be a fantastic crisis.

It seems to me that you're most unusual as a person because you have followed through the implications of what you do. The art work you did led you to see that it was necessary to change the actions you were taking. Most people don't do that. Politicians, for example, are politicians and they follow their party line. It's similarly so with a lot of artists. They don't see their artwork as having any social function. This is obviously going to be a problem when you meet Thatcher

because there is a thread of truth through what you do and politicians don't have that truth.

Most people are very traditional. Artists too can be traditional and reactionary. It makes no sense to speak about freedom for artists, for their understanding of freedom can be nothing less than their own licence. Some artists think only of their own personal success, but for me this is nothing whatever to do with art: it is counter to creativity and the evolving of humankind's abilities. When I was involved with my students in all my years of teaching I used to say that without being deeply involved in the problems of the whole world it is impossible to make a painting. You might have superficial success in the art world but you will not have a deep-rooted understanding of art and it will be no use for the people. Art is the only remaining possibility for humankind. In order to unfold the rotten character of the old and create the new shape of society, only art makes sense, but it must be a wider understanding of art and not the traditional understanding of art. Some people cannot easily change their traditional views of what makes modern art and what art would be in a wider social context. Everybody's creativity, in every workplace, in every enterprise. They do not have the power of thought to think through the higher energy of art. For me, there's a big difference between modern art, which belongs to a tradition, and anthropological art.

In your lecture in Cambridge you were talking about 'old art' and by old art I assume you mean traditional art, bourgeois art from the 16th to the 19th century.

Yes, but also Egyptian art, Greek art and every art from the past.

So what's the difference between the art of the past and 'anthropological art'?

Every great art of the past was indoctrinated by a kind of leadership. It was given to people. It was not built upon freedom. It was the aggrandisement of a small group of intellectuals built on the slavery of the majority of people. Inspired by leaders, it didn't come from the people. Egyptian art wasn't even about life on earth, it was canonised and mediated through priests. Now with the appearance of freedom during the period of Modern art very individual concepts did appear and everybody can see there is no more collective culture. The Baroque style was the last collective style in Catholic countries. After that every concept of art was an individual concept. Every modern artist carried the character of a different culture. From the beginning of the last century in France, from Impressionism when painting was no longer used to imitate things, it became a kind of inner culture. This shows the appearance of freedom in art. Freedom is a reality now. It was already a kind of reality when Marx was writing but Marx did not see clearly—he never criticised the constellation of capital. He exactly followed the concept of capital as money. The vulgarisation of the understanding of Marx led to the concept of culture as a superstructure. This is completely the reverse of the only possibility of coming into real revolutionary power, which is of individuals as carriers of self-determination and creativity. People are carriers of ideas in spirit. As soon as this becomes clear then there will be a change of

understanding of capital. Capital will no longer be seen as money, but will change into justice, leading to an ability economy not a money economy. This will overcome the private capitalistic system and the communistic system because both these systems are the same. On one side you have the ownership of the means of the production in the hands of a few, and in the Eastern block the ownership lies with the politburo, the state. The ownership of the means of production is all the same. From this point of view the communistic revolution was a very conservative step, even some stages behind the capitalist order, because there too the freedom of the people is completely eradicated.

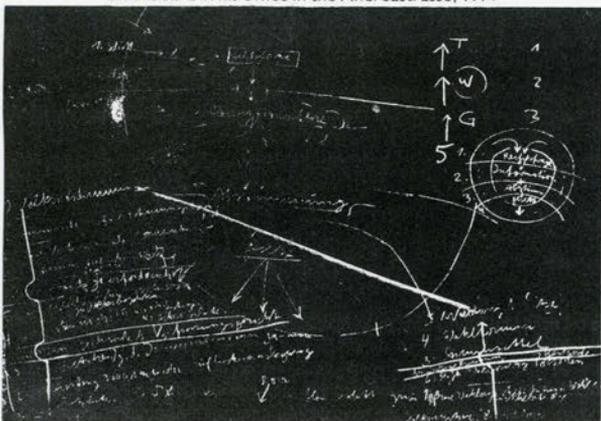
Even nowadays there are places where pockets of older forms of societies still exist. Can you think of an example amongst them which has a more just or free social order?

Sure, there are some pockets of older behaviour but they're all dying. As soon as they come in touch with Western culture they are completely helpless because their old structures and traditions are breaking down. They're more or less all decadent. What does exist and what I can give proof of is the alternative models that people have tried. William Morris in England did not meet with success but he was right to study all he tried to do. Ivan Illich in South America didn't meet with general success but demonstrated a lot of new principles about the state of a future culture. That's what I think—all that's old is completely decadent. Khomeini, for example, who's trying to bring back again the old authoritarian principles of the religion of the past, the rule of priests which immediately links with a kind of fanaticism. People are so much influenced by their own dependency that they cannot even find the point at which their own freedom starts. Most people are educated in schools which are no more than the extension of the power of the state. People are not educated anthropologically, they are not educated through art and creativity. They're educated to fulfill some function within the capitalistic system.

The notion of anthropology then is a very complex one because what you're actually saying is that the cohesion of old societies is something that we would now have to relearn. Our system has been so dynamic it has destroyed the older systems with which it has come in contact. What you were talking about was trying to rediscover those older values in a conscious way.

Yes, it's very important to say 'in a conscious way' because this means that we cannot go back. It's right to use the concept of cohesion but we must understand that this concept depends on trivial behaviour, on blood. There are rules for everybody in such communities. We can no longer have this kind of cohesion. The big contradiction is that the Western world, which goes against people's freedom in its forms of production, is none the less based on a certain kind of freedom. Aristotle had already begun an analysis of nature—there is a natural science implied in his philosophy. The struggle has always been around the idea of humankind's self determination and there are many contradictions in this. The appearance of Galileo, for example, was a very progressive step. The Renaissance, the French Revolution, the industrial revolutions even, was a very progressive step but it led to the slavery of the proletariat. But you cannot overcome the damage done by this stream of development by going back to older cultures. In a collective system or in tribal behaviour the free individual is unthinkable. This is very difficult to understand for those people who are trying to start anew with the idea of collectives because they mix up with the idea of collectivism the idea that it is only human to do things with other people. They cannot distinguish between what collectivism means in older cultures and what it means in modern cultures. We need a radical metamorphosis of the ideas of the past. The idea of art in the past is completely different from the idea of art now. Art now has to mean a wider thing. Every metamorphosis is related to the idea of freedom. Democracy can only generate from freedom. Democracy alone leads to a kind of mob culture, making everything equal with no regard for quality. Bringing democracy and freedom together with the economy into one radical system—that will lead to a kind of revolution.

Blackboard in his office in the Andrestasse, 1971



One of the problems within our society is the gap between the economy and culture. In a more simple society the gap between the productive group, the people who produce food, and what is done in terms of dancing and singing is much closer. One of the problems in our society is that people don't know how to get food. That connection has completely gone.

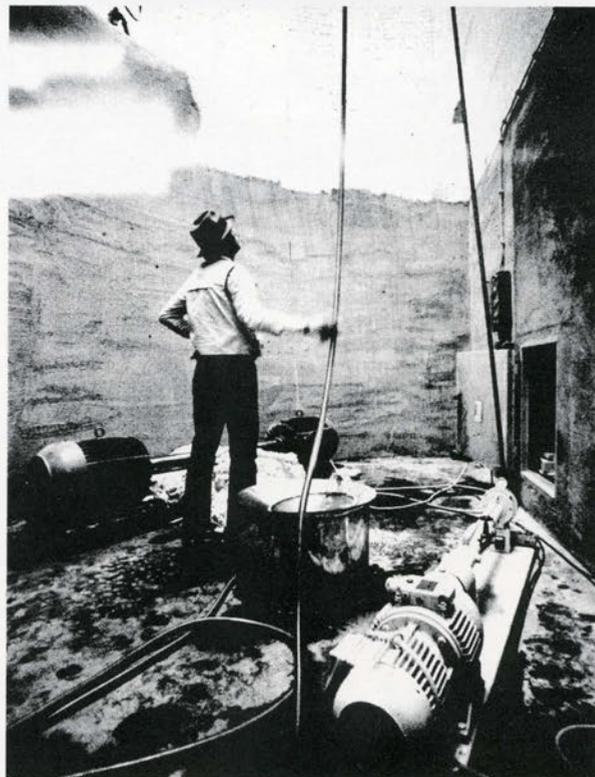
But it will not lead to success if you go back to the kind of culture like the aborigines where the women are looking for plants in the ground and in the evening the men have a corroboree. This makes no sense for us, for our lives. Our people want to have their own lives, to produce something. In tribal behaviour, the people seemingly care for others. They care for the continuity of their tribe. But one tribe will attack another tribe. So in the older culture this becomes an extension of the egotistical personality into a group egotism. This is also used now of family behaviour. This is my family but my neighbour is my enemy. The tribe looks as though it cares for others but they care only for their own blood. It is their blood culture. They fear others and remain unfree but in our social constellation no one is able to take care of all his needs. I would have no biography to speak of if I'd had to make my own shoes and plant potatoes and make my shirts and make this watch. We all take of the ability of other people. We are all takers receiving of the dignity of other people and therefore we have the duty to give our ability to others. Everyone is dependent on the care of others—this giving and taking is the elementary social structure, but the power of money and the state is destroying the elementary social context of taking and giving, of co-operation. Some ecologists mistakenly try to go back to self-sufficiency systems—they go far away to somewhere like Norway and try to make their own farms then they switch on the light and they are dependent on people who are working in Hamburg. They play records and they are using things which are produced in Japan. It is impossible to go out of this world. To try to do so is again a kind of egotistical behaviour.

At the moment any kind of challenge to the overall political system is going to be full of contradictions and its also going to be experimental. Do you see art as it's practised now as having a useful role to play in this experimental testing process?

Yes. Art is a very important thing. It is around art that the discussion has to start about changing the social order because no other principle exists any more. It's no longer possible, for instance, to develop the discussion from the idea of democracy. As soon as people try to discuss the social order from the idea of democracy, they work against the idea of freedom. The idea and understanding of art is the clearest symbol for the idea of freedom. The element of art is the only point in the social discussion which still has a lot of revolutionary elements. It no longer makes sense to start the problem from economics or from law and democracy. The only organic point from which to consider the possibility of change and evolutionary developments and finally a revolution of the social order is from art. When I speak of art I mean the possibilities still embedded in this field, sleeping, dreaming undetected. If I look for art on the culture pages of the daily newspapers I find it completely anti-progressive, completely traditional and belonging to the capitalistic and communistic repression of the world. My idea of art is anthropological art. Not modern art. Some modern artists have asked for change, like Mondrian and Picasso—they were pushing towards change, they were pacifists opposed to war. Many important artists have guided the consciousness of the world with their visions of the future but they didn't develop a methodology. My understanding of anthropological art is where everyone is seen as an artist. We have to look for an artist in every human being. The idea of art is the most comprehensive one for the spiritual understanding which must be developed in all human production. The idea of art is the science of freedom in the world and contains the problem of creativity. No other idea is available any more. No other entrance is possible.

You think that art still has a certain amount of credibility for people?

No. We have to bring back its credibility. The majority of people have enough reason not to believe in art because traditional art didn't care for contact with people in other working conditions and artists have become too much like



Honey Pump at the Work Place 1977

private persons who thought of themselves as special, who slightly tended to divide humankind into able people and unable people. He himself was always able!

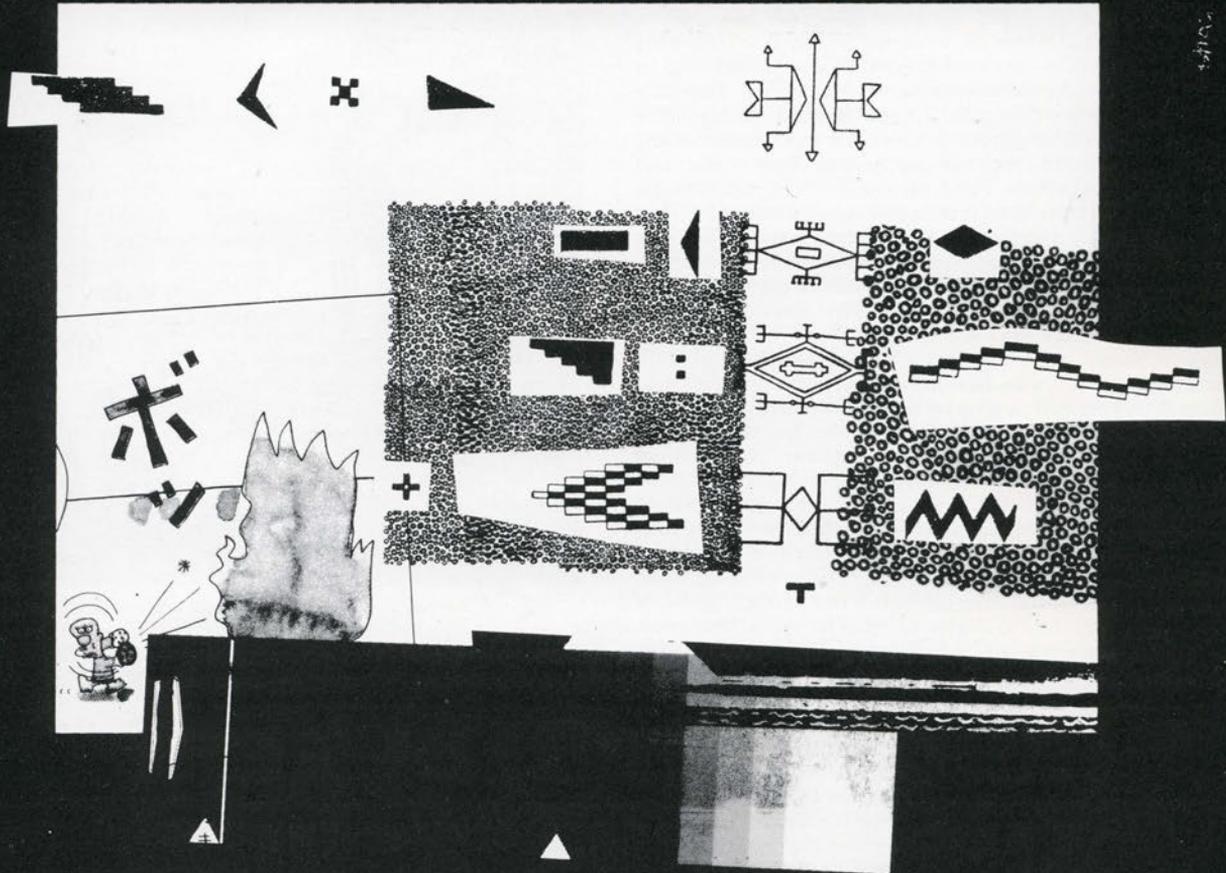
But art also played a specific social role, didn't it . . . at least since the 19th century. Artists are perceived as being slightly outside. They do these strange things that other people don't have the opportunity to do, thus taking away the creative principle that you were talking about. Because if everyone was doing these things then the social order would break down.

The systems of work which came down from the French Revolution and through the Industrial Revolution divided the people into privileged and non privileged and the artist was one of the most privileged. The artist was so completely outside most people's view that they didn't take any interest in him. Our culture is not carried by the idea of art, it's carried by the idea of the economy. Art is outside, just like it was in Egypt and when the economy is regulated then we will have another high culture. But for this we have to change the economic system. Politics is already completely dependent on the economy, politicians are slaves of the economic powers. We say in Germany 'Straw Men'—they are brought to power by the interests of high finance, not their own merit. We have to change this economy from a money economy to a people economy. If we don't succeed there will be an explosion.

What you're asking people to do is become responsible, to behave like decent human beings. But there are going to be people prepared to stop them doing that.

If there is opposition from the state then support for the movement grows. And if it continues to grow then Governments will have great difficulty in opposing it. The beginning of success of the Greens' election campaign was when the police were too brutal with people protesting against the installation of nuclear plant. It doesn't have to be a complete philosophy, there are many methods available and many abilities. It's a kind of network. This is what I think but I don't believe it. Believing means nothing. Believing is a kind of hope and when I look round there is no hope. When you see the situation there is no hope. If you're hoping you are making a metaphysical point. I don't believe in hope. I see possibilities: you have to be active, and then you see everyday a possibility. □

THE REGIME OF NOISE



Music has become the carrier signal for our society; easy to create and with maximum effect, it occupies your senses without actually saying anything to you. Post-pop and modernism have found themselves operating in a culture which has established that the easiest information to transmit is also the most meaningless. It is an international language precisely because it has nothing to say. For those who live in ignorance, there is, finally, music to commit suicide by . . .

The record company is now a cultural powerhouse, one which fascinates the post-modernist because it touches upon and supplies any number of current obsession: finance, mass-communication, technology, commercial art, advertising campaigns and very simple, cleanly defined concepts of consumption. At the same time, the pop industry has slowly been encircled by performance artists, painters, composers and tacticians, creating a new context for it. In an industry where identity is negligible but the event is all-important, post-modernism is defined by the acts it initiates: the chart successes of Laurie Anderson's *O Superman* and the Flying Lizards' *Money* have their immediate echoes in Philip Glass selling out the Danceteria, the Residents' dabbling in epic theatre, Glen Branca's batteries of deafening electric guitars, David Byrne writing for Twyla Tharp and Robert Wilson, and Throbbing Gristle's first five LPs packaged like the catalogue for some retrospective exhibition. There is no dominant ideology, no aesthetic programme; a fact which reflects the refreshingly discursive and complex issues involved. You can no longer remain deafened, nor simply refuse to listen.

'A Picaresque Tale of Small, Black, Furry Nice Guys'

WHO ARE THE RESIDENTS? Nobody knows. We do know that; there are four of them; they make records full of strange noises and danceable rhythms; they came from San Francisco; they are part of Ralph Records along with Snakefinger and Tuxedomoon. But we don't know who they are. They have no names, they are never photographed out of their eyeball head disguises and they never give interviews. Are they aliens from outer space, are they mad extremist empiricists, or just a bunch of lads with a highly marketable gimmick?

The Residents' whole show is a simple picaresque tale of small black furry nice guys who are forced by the destruction of their homeland to go into exile in the land of the 'Chubbs'. The Chubbs are a race of smiling, well-fed affluent, Thatcherite realists who offer the Moles a new home in exchange for their slavish acceptance of the Chubbs authority. The tale is told in comic strip fashion illustrated with a changing series of large graphic paintings and cut-outs manipulated and animated by dancing Moles. A loquacious narrator delivers a 'personal' voice over, including irreverent comments on the quality of the performance and relevance of the imagery. All this illustrates the music of the Residents who are visible in silhouette only behind a screen at the rear of the stage.

The message of the exploited outcast is given a reality within the performance itself when the narrator objects within the performance itself when the narrator objects to the use of violence, a twist in the plot he was not expecting. He turns on the Residents, accusing them of sensationalism in the interest of achieving rock stardom and wealth. He is quickly removed, gagged and bound into a wheelchair, wheeled centre stage as helpless victim. The protective screen is removed and the Residents, concealed in Walk-down frocks of rag coats and miner's helmets, move slowly forward pushing their instruments on wheels, as close as the audience get to guessing their true identity, for the finale with a guest 'appearance' by Snakefinger.

Despite the rather disingenuous presentation, such as the depiction of Snakefinger as a mutual friend of the performers and audience alike (he isn't that well known) the Residents are quite serious and genuine in what they are attempting to achieve. The use of rock music as a medium for political rhetoric is now almost a *sine qua non* for acceptability and

the Residents are not so quaint as to idealistically believe that they are going to change the world through this little romance. Rather the Mole show is far more a description of the Residents own response to being musicians in the 80s.

The Residents have produced more than a dozen records and become a known quantity in the rock world and yet they have really have succeeded in remaining outsiders. By keeping their personal identities secret they hope to protect themselves and their work from manipulative pressures of rock world notoriety. They wish to remain outsiders and not succumb to a slavish dependence on the whims of fashion and the demands of record companies and managers.

They are themselves the Moles, flushed into the open by the destruction of the underground in the new realism of the 70s and 80s. They too have a choice of acceptance into the 'Real' world if they will obey and be exploited but they rejected this option and preserved their privacy and freedom by disguising themselves like guerrilla freedom fighters.

Their music with its emphasis on found sounds, home-made instruments, and a reliance on simple rhythms, is a kind of expressionism which is decidedly anti-rockist. It is anti-slick, anti the current fashion for clean sounding synth-music, and above all, anti the rock virtuoso celebrity.

The appearance of this show was similarly low-tech, with hand-painted screens which, although cartoon-like illustrations, were expressionistic and evocative. The lighting and the changing of scenes was all simple by-hand stuff, giving the whole show a kind of intimate, down-home, local pub feel that defies the scale of the Hammersmith Odeon without ever feeling ostentatiously nostalgic and slick. It worked. The Mole show succeeded in

satisfying the audience's demand for a total entertainment without ever being arrogant and meretricious as most rock shows are, and without being anachronistically parochial as it so easily could have been. You couldn't sit there in innocent wonder or in cynical reproach point the finger at how much it must all have cost.

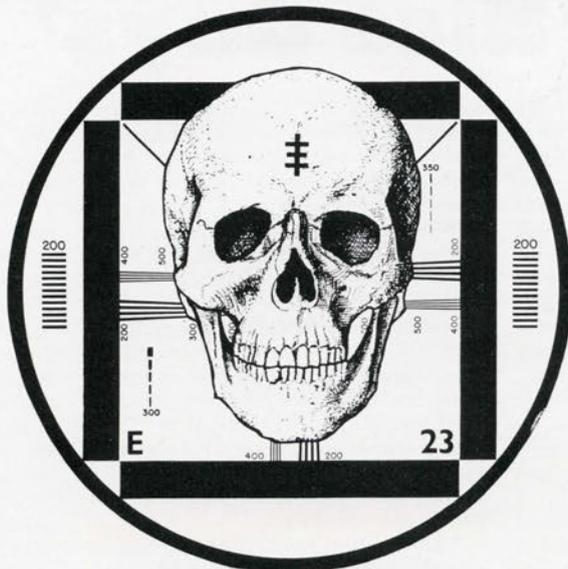
However, and it must be a big however, by producing the 'internal controversy' of the narrator accusing the Residents of selling out, the Residents raised the question of 'How can you expect your pose to be believed when you are up there on the stage of the Hammersmith Odeon before 1500 fans who have each paid £4 to get in, on a big European tour?' And then did not answer the question. As if by drawing attention to it themselves it somehow excuses it.

I am no die-hard who still believes that this is an important issue any more. What's more, everything that I know of their music, their record company Ralph Records, and the sincerity of feeling, the good humouredness, and, despite the disguise the communication of their nice-guy personalities in the Mole show, is convincingly genuine, but I suspect that greater forces than they can control are at work here. It was no easy matter for example, for this magazine to get tickets to review the show. The audience themselves at the end of the show imposed a rock convention on them by demanding an encore and shouting requests for their favourite numbers, which the Residents reluctantly complied with. To attempt a large European tour of major large-scale rock venues and still maintain your freedom, privacy and integrity is courageous but perhaps a little naive. 'I'll take a T-shirt and an I LOVE THE RESIDENTS bumper sticker please!

Steve Rogers



The Condition of Bankruptcy I.



'Total war has become information war, it is being fought now ...' —Genesis P-Orridge, Research 4/5 1982.

'Being signed to Warner Brothers in the United States, that's really exciting you know?' —Dieter Meir.

'Could a tall-story teller from the mid-west standing in front of giant flickering images persuade us that we are no longer in Kansas anymore? Or is she just telling us the truth ... that we really are in Kansas whether we like it or not' — PERFORMANCE 23, 'Laurie Anderson, Con Artist or Cultural Heroine?'

When the above review of Laurie Anderson's *United States I-IV* closed with that disquieting image of her audience as Frank L. Baum's small-town rubes taken in by a huckstering showman from Oz, it touched upon a nervous and disturbing condition. In collaborations between the artist and the major record label, what forces are actually being brought to bear? What is going on? What are we actually supporting by consuming the resultant products? The cross-over or exchange between the art-world, pop culture and big business does not take place in a vacuum, and ultimately we have to acknowledge that they are all participating in the real business of mass-communication; the industrialization of the image under corporate control. The work of artists like Laurie Anderson, Psychic TV and—to a lesser extent—Yello, represents an extraordinarily complete grasp of the technology behind the records, films and videos currently passing amongst us. At its most proficient, their work has the seamless complexity of the most convincing, all-embracing spectacle: eyes, ears and minds are engaged, occupied and divert-

ed. This quality is important within a culture where the flow of money is strongly equated with the flow of images, where the supply of information is regulated with these considerations. Money is nothing if it can't put on a show, and insolvency is now defined by the (un-thinkable) acknowledgement that the rube is no longer paying attention. As a final gift, the artists' readiness to involve themselves in the business negotiations and sales campaigns required to sell the product legitimizes the principles upon which the record and film companies have been operating for years. New, more efficient images are presented through old strategies.

However, there are two sides to any exchange, and if the communication industries are now regaining power over markets whose sophistication and levels of acceptance have undoubtedly altered over the past decade, then the artist is in turn granted a considerable amelioration in circumstances. Through collaboration with the major record companies, post-modernism can see its relationship to mass society in commercial, pragmatic terms rather than aesthetic or ideological ones. Involvement with the social body is now direct and intimate rather than discursive although, inevitably, that involvement maintains its elitist condition. Western 'Art Capital' has bankrupted itself because it has fundamentally refused to exercise whatever power it has. In the intellectual and political isolationism of the conceptual art practised in the 70s there existed a social impotence in which issues of power, knowledge or the function of image and language were rigorously examined but never directly confront-

ed. Such a confrontation would have denied the 'control' state of these examinations and removed the artist from the elitist status in which such experiments could be carried out. If, to give an example, Documenta 7 represented for many people last year a bankruptcy of theory and practice, it has as much to do with what had preceded it and less with what was actually occurring during that show. It was a manifestation that was very much measured against the past and not the present.

There are of course other, more specific factors. Performance art, as a practice, established the autonomy of individual artists and granted them an arena which existed outside the gallery world. It also required the use of new and ultimately capital-intensive machinery as the discipline of performance expanded and established itself. This posed problems of supply and demand, problems for which a company like Warner Brothers had immediate solutions. Finally, the intervention of big business removed mounting criticism of how well radical theories adapt themselves to artistic practice. There was simply no room for them any more.

In light of the above, the work of Laurie Anderson, Psychic TV and Yello over the past 18 months demand consideration in some detail. Yello will be dealt with separately, but it is worth noting here how much they have in common with Anderson and PTV. All three have moved, along various paths, onto a major label (each tied to Warner Brothers in one capacity or another via the growth in independent labels in the late 70s. All three seem convinced of the short-comings of their

A Warner Communications Co.

contemporaries and demand, as a result, enormous acts of faith from their audiences. Not to believe in them is to exclude yourself from what they are doing. Disbelief is betrayal, and they are all capable of testing your credulity to extreme limits.

It is very hard to ignore Laurie Anderson and PTV. Large-scale media attention and the quality of their work (which is not questioned here) mean they require close attention, especially in view of their recent low success rate. What is at issue in these cases is not censure of their involvement with large communications companies: the real issue is what exactly is brought to bed with them in such an involvement and how it affects their work.

For example, Laurie Anderson's *United I-IV* might have been a little more impressive if it had not come at the end of a series of desperate attempts by Warner Brothers to repeat the success of *O Superman*. Track after track was lifted off her LP *Big Science* and released as a single—each failed to sell. One of the oldest and most knuckle-headed record company strategies for following up on a hit merely emphasised the ironic fact that 'O Superman' was initiated and originally released by a New York independent label, 1-10 Records. Draw your own conclusions.

O Superman is ancient history now, but it continues to attract attention because neither Warner Brothers nor Anderson herself have been able to produce something which could replace it. Those who were not in London marvelling at *United States* might have been wondering what was going on. To coincide with the show, crudely redesigned posters, based on the

Big Science front cover, appeared to sell product already over a year old (and that's old in the record business). That image of the frail-looking Anderson blinded by white spectacles and feeling her way forward began to take on a different meaning. The corporate nightmare to which individuals respond so passively in *United States* seems to have its parallel in the definite fractures which must inevitably exist between individual artists and the business operation: 'There is no pilot. You are not alone'.

Psychic TV tried to stun us late last year with a new brand of crisis politics that failed to impress. Manifestoes, dark rumours, uniforms, insignia and labels spread across London and into the media space. Speaking as someone who spends most of his time in the West End of London (which is about the furthest away from reality you can get in this country) this proliferation was quite exciting. You really couldn't tell whether there was going to be an LP release or a government coup. Sadly PTV's resources only ran to an LP release: an injured, limping dog of a record which, despite its excellent pedigree, floated belly-up in the lower reaches of the charts before sinking without trace. Foisted onto critics who were too intimidated to really say anything about it and bloated with gifts for the potential convert, *Force the Hand of Chance* should never have existed. The promotion campaign was far more stimulating and potentially deviant than the actual—rather bland—product, the perfect illustration of the themes under discussion. However, in attempting to take on several different markets at once, it ended up pleasing no

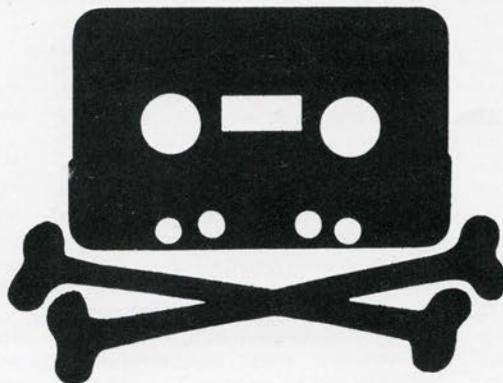
one, least of all PTV and WEA. Recrimination was rife—'Ah Pook Is Here and he's brought his accountants'—and it is interesting to note that this mutual antagonism seems to find its initial focus on the LP's packaging. Described as a 'fund raising activity', the LP is also 'abusing WEA' by its very existence.

This lumbering truculence contrasts neatly with the way in which the PTV fetish for skulls is sent up (inadvertently) by the inner sleeve's cassette and crossbones anti-home-taping flash. Despite these little touches, what started out as a potential full-scale attack upon and subversion of the consumer market became the heavy-handed pitch of a Moonie trying to sell you one of their crummy LPs 'for a donation' in the high street.

That having been said, divisions and strategies have been marked out and established. The creation of massive public spectacles and the promised exploitation of TV have been hinted at but are still before us. The resources for such projects are still on offer to artists from companies like Warner Brothers. Whether the policies and schedules attendant to that offer are still viable from the point of view of the artist's intentions is still open to question. The potential here is still undoubtedly enormous but it has to be treated with something more than the blinkered optimism which is common currency amongst performers and critics alike. Received ideas develop most easily into the most unbreakable habits. Such habits deny us a real future much more rapidly than the blunders of established performers like Anderson and PTV ever could.

Ken Hollings

HOME TAPING IS KILLING MUSIC



The Condition of Bankruptcy 2.

Welcome Back To Kansas

Suddenly the press officer at Stiff Records is on the phone asking if PERFORMANCE MAGAZINE is interested in doing a feature on Yello. An interview can be arranged, and copies of their latest LP, along with press kits and photos will be with us within 48 hours. I agree to the proposal more out of curiosity than excitement. The mainstream pop press had already expressed its delight in Yello's pop/performance dabbling, and I was fascinated by the manner in which Stiff took the whole project seriously enough to solicit some kind of approval from 'more obscure magazines like yours . . . ha ha, you know what I mean?' I think I knew what he meant.

Sitting in reception at Stiff a few weeks later, waiting to conduct the interview, the picture I had of Yello by then was of a light-weight colourful disco outfit who had two things going very hard against them: the first was Stiff's promotional campaign and the other was the overbearing presence of their front-man, Dieter Meier.

Stiff have always been associated with the kind of sales pitches which Colonel Parker would have applauded. Their use of balloons, stickers, badges, giveaway comics, cardboard instore displays, picture discs etc. have forced the pace in the aggressive marketing of recent pop product. In the case of Yello, they came up with the most classic piece of 80s tack I have seen so far: a car bumper sticker with the legend 'I love Yello' upon it in which the word 'love' is replaced by a large red valentine. This device has been used and re-used by car salesmen, newspapers, tourist boards, religious cults and T-shirt manufacturers to the point of overload. This simple black, white and red design clashed violently with the black and gold tasteful smears which constitute the sleeve and poster art for the actual Yello LP. In fact the whole packaging and presentation of Yello's *You Gotta Say Yes to Another Excess* is one confused mass of stark contrasts, contradictions, conflicts of interest and lapses in thinking. Many of these aberrations are not the fault of an enthusiastic if heavy-handed record company misunderstanding their product but are actually centred upon the thoughts, actions and opinions of Dieter Meier.

Meier, supposedly Yello's strongest sales point, has a substantial career behind him as performance artist working in European and American galleries during the late 60s and throughout the 70s. Much of his work focusses upon the conceptual bricolage with themes, of money, language, information and meaning which

were very popular at the time. Inevitably these themes finally emerged as a consideration of 'the artist's role in society': the point at which such solipsism and sterility become pure onanism. Meier's work does not differ much from any of the other series of pointless acts, repeated gestures, absurdities and non-events which characterize this particular aspect of performance art. Meier himself sees no essential break between these earlier activities and his involvement with Yello. He sees himself primarily as a writer who has moved from one set of linguistic activities to a new one as lyricist and spokesman for a techno-pop outfit. Actually the real continuity lies in his continued obsession with the limits and excesses of the 'artist's role in society.' Whether he is sorting piles of metal objects in a Zurich public square or arguing for some new kind of commercial heroism from artists in the pop press, that obsession remains constant.

Taken at face value it threatens to overwhelm Yello with an intellectual framework which their actual products can never support. Examined more closely it reveals a dangerous naivety, drawing as it does upon role models which are socially and historically inappropriate to the times. As a result the discussion of how commercial conditions influence artistic production quickly degenerates into absurdity when the examples drawn upon by Meier are Mozart, Shakespeare, Moliere and Houdini. The discussion becomes an absolute non-issue when the best he can concretely offer to back up his arguments is an eccentric press bio, and the music and lyrical trivialities of Yello's *You gotta Say Yes*.

Dreaming in the Studio

Boris Blank, the creator with Carlos Peron of Yello's music responds happily to the description of him by another journalist as some kind of experimental scientist. He agrees with it, going on to define himself as 'an egomaniac' locked away in his recording studio. His overall attitude towards making music is summarised by him as being one of a small boy dreaming of exotic countries which remain forever out of reach. He seems fully aware of how these images all relate to a condition of isolation and withdrawal, something which is in stark contrast to the aggressive visibility which Yello claim for themselves. He also acknowledges that these are both faces of the same coin: the freedom to experiment found in withdrawal is defined in economic terms. To build their own 24-track studio in Switzerland, Yello had to raise a lot of credit which the new

LP only goes some of the way towards paying off. Boris Blank understands the business well and probably has a better grasp of record production than most. He is capable of responding to the pressure of creating the techno-pop product: an elaborate confection built up from different recording and composition processes. However his work is greatly restricted by being forced into a standard 45-rpm format in which the limit of four and half minutes running time is hardly ever exceeded. Consequently many interesting ideas are never developed and are instead cut to fit the piece's short duration, making each song sound surprisingly like another. Unfortunately, the other thing that doesn't vary from song to song is Dieter Meier's embarrassingly poor delivery of what must be the most appalling set of lyrics a mature human adult ever put his name to.

When I first heard them, I thought Meier's texts were a parody of pop banalities taken to some post-Devo extreme. However, his own description of them as 'scenarios' designed to create pictures which interact with Boris Blank's 'sound painting' showed that I was not only wrong but also far too charitable. My impression of Boris was also at variance with Meier's. Someone I took to be a competent, aware recording professional was now presented to me as an untutored primitive artist working directly onto 24-track tape. This view was taken to annoying extremes once the issue was raised (by Meier) of Yello recordings being original and individual works of art: 'You cannot ask Boris to repeat what he does. That is like asking an artist who has done a good drawing to repeat what he has just done'. I cannot seriously believe that anyone would; most of us being aware to some degree of how the work of art exists in the age of mechanical reproduction. Just who *is* the untutored primitive around here?

Bank Music

Dieter says he likes talking to leftists, because he can measure his anarchism against them'.— *Face* interview, March 1983.

'If I become just another fucked-up musician working for a big record company, it will not be the fault of the record company'—Dieter Meier, Camden Palace, May 1983.

Apparently Yello were not responsible for the 'Swiss Bank Corporation' logo which appears on the back of the LP sleeve, something which embarrasses them and makes me wonder how much actual control they can exercise over their

The Buying, Selling (and Loving) of Yello

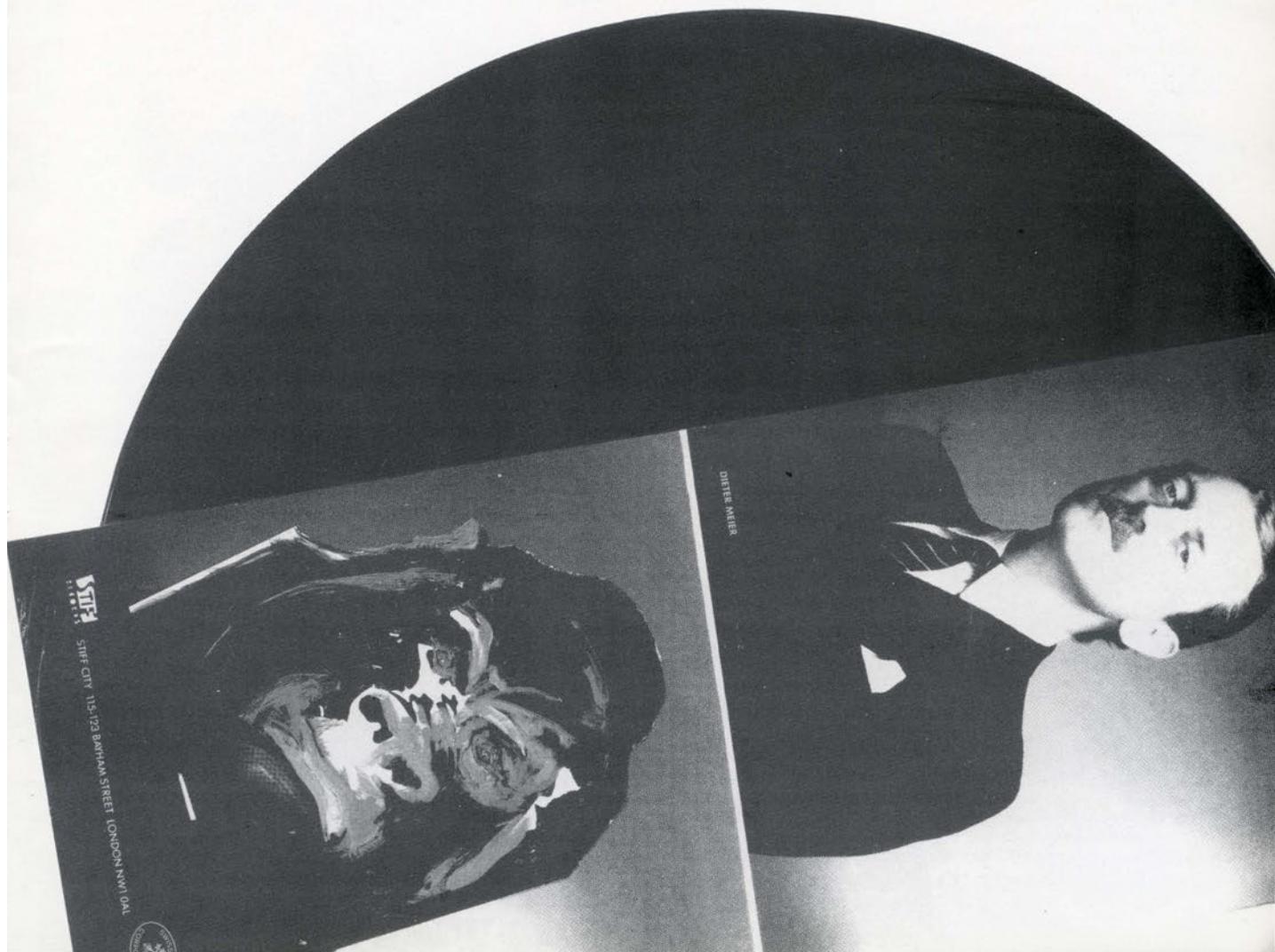
licensed-out products. Boris had been asked some hard questions about the logo on a Swiss TV interview and he was unhappy enough about it to ask that the subject be dropped from the broadcast interview. Both Boris and Carlos muttered something about 'expecting trouble from it—it's a real bank logo you see'. Carlos told me about a popular piece of graffiti in Zurich. 'They write 'Swiss National Punk' . . .but it's Bank Music now, not Punk'. Meier is very keen on business. He wants to finance movies in Hollywood and there are plans for Yello to present an advertising campaign for a brand of lager. Meier himself looks and dresses the part of an international executive, makes decisive gestures, mistakes me for his hair dresser and sends Rusty Egan off into the depths of Camden Palace to find him a towel. The fact that Meier forgot to bring his own towel confirms me in my suspicion that he has the standard businessman's equip-

ment in his overnight bag: a pocket calculator, a best-selling paperback and a pair of fur-lined handcuffs. Unfortunately I didn't get close enough to establish this completely during the interview. Meier is in his element when it comes to conducting an interview. He paces up and down, making long, rambling and impassioned speeches which never actually answer the questions. He takes the whole show seriously. His determination to succeed has a kind of middle-class heroism about it which makes for a good contrast to his attacks on 'bourgeois' definitions of art severed from the commercial realism of modern mass society. He expresses a disgust for artists who lock themselves away with their work, turning their back on the hard facts of life. I think he ought to have a long talk with Boris about this because those seem to be precisely the circumstances under which the Yello LP was made.

It is therefore not surprising that a recent gallery exhibition by Meier consisted of a series of fake photographs of him supposedly performing acts of magic. The phony magician, the illusionist is an appropriate role for someone obsessed with role-playing to the point where he is ultimately in danger of deluding himself. Accept him then as such and ask him about the responsibilities of an illusionist working with the machinery that film, video and record companies can give him. He backs down, stating lamely that 'we just make crazy music, you know?'

Such a statement at so late a stage is simply not acceptable. If Yello are, after all, serious about what they are doing, then they should get Dieter Meier to shut up for a while and help him think about it long and hard before anything is allowed to go any further. Either that or they should just stop wasting our time.

Ken Hollings



b a s e m e n t g r o u p



they're all, by definition, children

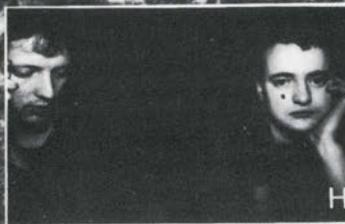
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l o g o r r h o e a



you can sing along too!

An Artist cannot speak about his art, any more than a plant can discuss horticulture
 Crumbs
 I met her at the Palace and I said what I did, and she went yes you're one of the few
 Lets see you perform, so we took to the dancefloor, stepping it out in sensible shoes
 Oh you're so awfully desirable, a good job and superannuation too
 Gosh
 Such a healthy bank account, and a house upon the heath, and you'll look after me just
 like you look after you
 Flipping heck now
 gave up the art game cos there's no money in it, we love hi-tech yes we really do
 Its because you're true blue that I'm depending on ending with you
 Because you're good to me, so fearfully good to me, and I'd just rather be in love with you
 ooh crikey
 Just bought a brief case and a hundred pound suit, walking around in sensible shoes
 It seems so terribly obvious, well we're such a super match
 Thats super
 She's so handsome she must be a feminist trying the galleries and making it too
 When you take me out to dinner, or on a sunday to brands Hatch
 Yours so fearfully good to me, so awfully good to me
 lummy
 I'd just rather be in love with you
 crumbs
 kicks in the eye and using the telephone taking it all on sensible shoes
 Huh
 The artistic impulse seems not to wish to produce finished work, it certainly deserts
 us halfway, after the idea is born, and if we go on, art is labour.
 I see as realism whatever is genuinely begotten by life and moves the human spirit
 even if there are no images of people, houses and trees
 ooh dee ooh dee aah day oh da day ooh lummy
 Tells me I'm just a coversion piece, we talk all night about sensible shoes
 Art does not reproduce the visible, rather it makes visible
 Sometimes when you take me home, we have a cup of tea, and you sit and put your hand
 upon my knee
 Good Gosh now
 Every artist writes his own autobiography
 That twinkle in your eye says you're going to have a try
 Ugh
 And you turn, take a look and smile at me, it doesn't seem very rude
 The artist is the child of his time, but woe to him if he is also its disciple, or even
 its favourite
 kicks in the eye and using the telephone, taking it all on sensible shoes
 crumbs crikey
 And you know that I'm not a prude
 The basic unit for contemporary art is not the idea, but the analysis and extension
 of sensations
 Because you're good to me, so fearfully good to me
 Thats smashing
 And I'd just rather be in love with you
 Good grief now
 The true artist will let his wife starve, his children go barefoot, his mother drudge for
 his living, sooner than work at anything except his art
 Good artists exist simply in what they make, and consequently are perfectly uninteresting
 in what they are
 To speak of morals in art is to speak of legislature in sex; art is the sex of the imagination
 oooooo heck
 As to the artist, we do not know that he only of them whom love inspires has the light of
 fame; he whom love touches not, walks in darkness
 Gosh
 They are all by definition children

1983 BASONGS

Logorrhoea was written by committee using the eight track recording studio at Spectro Sound in Newcastle upon Tyne.
 Tracks 1 & 2 carried an agreed backing of synthesiser and drum machine.
 Each member of the Basement Group was allocated a track to record their composition on. This was done without
 ever hearing what any of the others had recorded on theirs.
 The whole cacophonous row was then mixed down by a seventh person, Paul Gilby, the engineer. It is this mix you
 hear on the record.



Michael Nyman

IN THE PAST MONTH the music of Michael Nyman has been twice broadcast by Channel 4. In this way Nyman's music is reaching huge audiences and yet he remains one of the least praised and least understood composers in Britain today. Throughout the ten years he has been writing music, he has consistently been rejected by the music establishment as 'trivial'. Even the serious music press whilst being intrigued and supportive has never been able to come to terms with the music. Yet despite all this Nyman has established himself as an important figure with an enthusiastic, loyal and growing audience.

Nyman seems to almost enjoy and even to pursue this kind of controversial and precarious position. Before starting writing music he was well known as a music critic. As music editor for the *Spectator*, as a regular contributor to *Studio International* and as the author of an excellent survey on experimental music *Cage & Beyond* he was the most audible and articulate proponent of the radical new music from across the Atlantic and of the small group of young British experimenters.

It was perhaps partly a love of controversy that persuaded him to give up the surely more secure job of being a respected music critic and historian, even if he did support radical music, to become himself a creator of radical music. His more cynical critics have accused him of meretriciously seeking notoriety through his non-conformity and his various collaborations and alliances with many of the best known experimental artists in other media. He has written scores for the films of Peter Greenaway. He has collaborated with Bruce Maclean, David Cunningham of Flying Lizards, Brian Eno (whom Nyman advised on the *Obscure Records* series) and Philip Glass. It certainly reads like a who's who of fashionable avant gardists of the past decade.

Nyman's journalistic career culminated with the *Studio Vista* publication of *Cage & Beyond*. This involvement with the new music had already expanded beyond journalism to include performing with the Scratch Orchestra, and the Portsmouth Sinfonia, (a piece of avant garde history shrouded in legend) and to helping Brian Eno select the *Obscure Records*. His compositions which date from this time clearly reflect the then current interest in the systemic works of the American minimal school of Riley, Reich and Glass. These early works were of a severely mechanical kind, and almost indistinguishable from the music of many other young composers. Nyman's first recorded work, *Decay Music*, is an uninspired piece of systemic writing. Nyman was performing as a member of the Philip Glass ensemble, and had been a straggling supporter of his work, but *Decay Music* despite the



obvious influence of Riley and Glass, lacks the spark of rhythmic and hypnotic beauty which characterises the work of the Americans. It is tempting to detect a feeling that even in the writing of *Decay Music* Nyman was already dissatisfied by the mechanical forms it employs. It was soon after this demonstration of his mastery of manipulation of rhythmic structures that he started to explore a reconciliation of these learnt lessons with his own witty and eclectic musical imagination.

His distinctive sound first appeared with the formation of the Campiello Band to play incidental music for the opening production of the National Theatre in 1976. Despite the practical and financial difficulties of working with a nine-piece amplified band it has proved to be the perfect vehicle for the development of his writing. The eccentric line up of electric guitar and bass, sax, clarinet, french horn, trombone, tuba, banjo, recorder, rebec, violin and piano gives him a range of sounds and musical references that no existing ensemble could provide.

Much of Nyman's music since the formation of the band follows a similar pattern. Take a familiar sounding melody or theme and rework it in as many styles as possible, sometimes layering them on top of each other, sometimes juxtaposing them in surprising and witty combinations. For example, the *Masterwork*, recently revised for solo piano, takes a series of eight chords, with associated melodies and themes, and puts it through a whole catalogue of music historical treatments. At times it sounds like Purcell, at others like 50s beat music. During the course of the 45 minute piece there are more than half a dozen such treatments. This juxtaposition of styles, whilst undeniably witty, is more than mere fancy footwork. This long work based on repet-

itive structures, yet rich in humour and theatre is quite deliberately an ironic comment on the similarly long and repetitive yet totally humourless and mechanically rigid works of Glass and Reich.

The kind of cataloguing of musical styles that is so clear in the *Masterwork* is an important key to Nyman's imagination. Many other works are also overtly musical catalogues, such as the *Bird List*, *Melody List*, *Plotting for the Shopkeeper* and *In Re Don Giovanni*. Nyman is writing musical equivalents of a familiar techniques in absurdist and satirical literature of making lists.

Lists are often used to find in the ordinary and banal a surprising and disconcertingly unfamiliar poetry. In Nyman's music a bizarre collection of musical items are listed to give new life and meaning to music we thought we already knew. It also, and more importantly rejects any notion of causal, historical development of music in favour of a musical contiguity. Nyman's music reflects our fragmented world where all music, past and present, western and non-western, are readily available to us and it shows us how they can all co-exist without denying the uniqueness of each. Yet such a condition is necessarily absurd, we cannot fully enter into any culture other than our own, and without running the risk of exploiting 'primitive' cultures.

If Nyman rejects any single perspective on musical culture, he also has no single unified response to this absurdity. His multi-perspective responses range from nostalgia to violence. Much of the recent music for *The Draughtsman's Contract* has a nostalgic longing for a bygone, golden age when culture was harmonious and Man's place at the centre of the universe was unquestioned. *The Draughtsmans Contract* exposes the myth of this harmony and shows the exploitation of the innocent by the intelligent and so the nostalgia is tempered by a sense of unease. This unease sometimes explodes in violent rage as in *Two Violins* or *Bird List Song* where the fragmentation is seen as an opportunity for tyrannical domination. In *Bird List* the names of birds are screamed at the same pitch. The names become distorted and unrecognisable as they are fitted into the tyrannical rhythms. Nyman's latest work for the TV drama *Nellys version* is a perfect accompaniment to a tale of schizophrenic alienation an anecdote of the fragmentation becoming too much.

In his pluralist range of reactions to the fragmentation Nyman seems curiously English. The nostalgia, the wit and humor in the face of imminent destruction, the perception of the absurd comedy of the modern world, and outbursts of violent rage remind me of the English satirical traditions of Pope and Swift. It is no mere

whim that Nyman's current project is an opera based on the absurdist classic 'Tristram Shandy'.

Nyman is often referred to as a 'systems' composer or sometimes a 'crossover' composer. He is clearly not a 'systems' composer in the Glass mould. If by 'crossover' is meant an attempt to reconcile 'high art' with 'popular culture' then for Nyman that is only part of the story. He is not content to hypnotically repeat pretty phrases and play it like disco as some of his so-called colleagues. To use an over-used term, Nyman adheres quite instinctively to the theory and spirit of 'post-modernism'.

Post-modernism is a reaction against causal and linear theories of time, life and art. It argues that all cultural contributions are valuable and viable whether they are modern or pre-modern, high or low tech, frivolous or profound. It rejects the notion of the finished 'work of art' in favour of the unfinished 'text' which is

constantly added to by constant reinterpretation.

Nyman's music follows all these tenets. The manipulation of rhythmic structures underlying his work was learnt from Glass who in turn learnt it from studying non-western, non-harmonic, polyphonic music. Whereas Nyman's harmonies are drawn from the history of modern Western music from Purcell, to Webern, to Cole Porter and Donna Summer. Latterly he even seems to have abandoned the pursuit of a structural goal. The music doesn't need to build to a final crescendo and instead just starts and stops as the occasion demands. In that way it is akin to Gamelan which is music in stasis. Finally Nyman clearly demonstrates the 'text' over the 'work'. He treats his own music, along with all music, as 'texts' available for interpretation and will happily take a piece of his own, which may already be a reworking from Mozart, and re-submit it as a source for a new piece.

His ability to examine his own music without any overriding theoretical prejudice, his refusal to attempt any definition of the music, is one of his greatest strengths and makes him a willing and easy collaborator with other artists, which is a natural feature of the post-modern spirit.

I make no apologies for this homage to the work of Michael Nyman. He is a brave and brilliant composer who has pursued a unique vision with very little support from the timid bodies whose job it should be to help develop his kind of talent. When the Arts Council commissioned him to write a piece for the Contemporary Music Network tour of Hoeketus it did so reluctantly and made no attempt to disguise its regret for having done so. The Hoeketus piece was not his best but it is sad that he should be judged in this way when it is with his own band that he so obviously needs to work.

Steve Rogers

Regular Music

AT THE END OF REGULAR Music's last intense set at the Cockpit, London, I reflected on one concrete certainty of the evening. In the process of reaching out towards a definition of Regular Music's output, one thing it most certainly wasn't was what the name suggests—identifiable style or form. Anyway, the ensemble's is a suspicious name dangled as a carrot to catch you unaware, to subvert your tastes, your expectations, your sensibilities. This is exactly what they proceeded to do in an aural crescendo consisting of 6 pieces knitted together by Jeremy Peyton-Jones and Jon Parry from a complex, colourful fabric of influences; modern, classical, jazz & rock rhythms coupled to an avant garde mould of composition.

The music is a narrative of tension and reconciliation, rough and smooth surfaces, empty spaces and sounds colliding then cunningly trapped into collusion. This is perhaps what you might hopefully hear but so often don't from ambitious 'new' music: music which lays a tantalising yet little developed trail of eclectic influence. Regular Music use influences not for inspiration but more as markers, as constraints on structure. Their exchanges are never without purpose and yet maintain the fluid originality which must define the avant garde. Amid their influences, the classical leanings of the American school of composition—Steve Reich, John Cage and Philip Glass—come through. So does the post-modern harmonic melodic jazz of Anthony Braxton and the Air ensemble, and the softer side of new wave's loosening of rock's stranglehold on rhythm.

Regular Music's personnel reflect these various influences: the systems music background of Peyton Jones, Geoff War-

ren (Psychic TV), Charles Hayward (This Heat) and Maria Lamburn (Virginia Astley's violinist). Jon Parry's pieces *Neapolitan Sixth parts 1 & 3* are short: the first a closely repetitive keyboard melody and the second, contrastingly, a furious hurtling of the full ensemble (two saxes, a tuba, viola, violin, two keyboards, drums and guitar) into a race of pitch and speed; where horns lead, percussion underlies their dominance, and keyboards hold the melody, locking restraints around the strings' shrill pirouettes. The horns and strings reach the zenith of their spiralling combat and the piano signals the end.

What is lacking in this piece is the interlocking humorous conversations between keyboards, strings and horns, which I found to be the innovative core of Peyton Jones' compositions and Regular Music's singular idiomatic framework.

Idyllic Rhythms, Purcell Manoeuvres, Music For Film, and The Third Dream all illustrate that the essence of this music which spans so many sources is to do with communication rather than narcissism, complementation not digressive improvisation, melodic fusion and reconciled argument rather than dissonant fury with edges left sharp or unresolved.

In all these pieces Regular Music have kept improvisation to a minimum—brevity is the criterion—avoiding the extravagance of the jazz solo, or the clearly defined compositional structure of classical music. Each section of each piece is no more than three minutes long, borrowing a minimalism from pop and encapsulating in this short form complex dialogues which teasingly communicate.

Charles Ledesma

Regular Music



The New American Woman

THERE IS A NEW breed of female American solo artists who have been a phenomenon in the States for some time. Here they are known to a much smaller audience but each in her own way is breaking traditional boundaries and suggesting new directions within her chosen field. Molissa Fenley, who came to Riverside in June with her British premiere of *Eureka* is doing this with dance; Lisa Lyon who became the subject of a new book by Robert Mapplethorpe: *Lady* (published in Britain by Blond & Briggs) and has been pioneering the muscular female in body-building; and Cindy Sherman in a recent touring exhibition of her work in Europe is creating a new role for art photography. Given the diversity of their

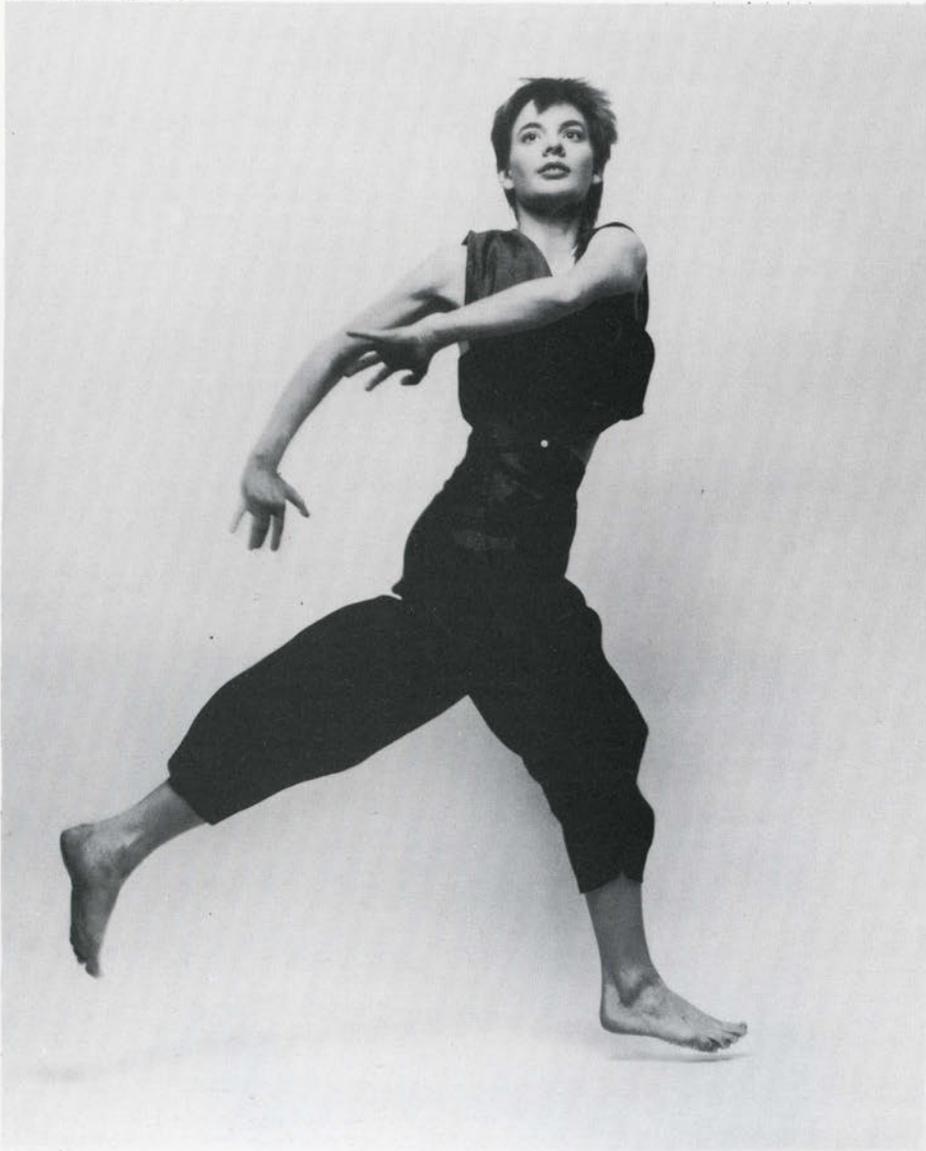
Molissa Fenley Jack Mitchell

pursuits, these three women have an interesting factor in common. Each uses her own body both as a starting point and as the basic material with which to work.

Molissa Fenley trained at a Californian college to be a dancer but then eschewed the barre and took instead to the gym to help create her particular form of dance. She subjects herself to a rigorous daily training of swimming, weightlifting, five-mile runs, cycling and stretching exercises. The point of all this effort is to train herself for the tremendously taxing, self-choreographed dances which she performs, often solo. *Eureka*, her latest piece, is no exception. It involves Fenley alone, moving at great speed across the stage for an hour with scant pause to the

accompaniment of a jazz/rock score written by Peter Gordon. Her movements depend on speed, grace and apparent effortlessness to carry the audience through to the end. The variations come with costume and tempo as there is no sense of the work being comprised of different pieces. On the contrary, Fenley feels that dance should be 'one choreographic concept from beginning to end' and she stresses the aspect of 'pure dance' at the expense of worrying about 'meaning'. This makes for mesmeric watching at the time while one is drawn by the rhythms but there is a resultant retrospective vacuum when one tries to reconstruct the experience. Not only are the steps themselves similar throughout but there is

Cindy Sherman, Untitled 1982



nothing to vary the routine.

The one thing that does stick from watching Fenley in performance is her physical appearance. Her attention to exercise really has affected the shape of her body and her back is a ripple of muscles. She cultivates this for a further deliberate purpose: 'I have an athlete's rather than a dancer's body and I want to keep it that way. Looking at muscles on stage is a very sensual experience, much more sensual than looking at an anorexic ballet dancer'.

It is in this respect that Fenley has affinities with the female body builder Lisa Lyon who describes her own muscular body as 'neither masculine nor feminine but feline'. In the remarkable collection of photographs by Mapplethorpe, Lyon's body is seen in a gamut of poses, clothes and guises from traditional nude to fashion model. In some of the most extraordinary of these, certain limbs or parts of the torso are seen in isolation: a leg with pointed foot turned skywards, a

pair of shoulders with neck back-stretched, two muscular thighs seen tapering down towards the ankles, and so on. This is a body tuned to peak condition and recorded with every attention to sensual sleekness (a particular characteristic of Mapplethorpe's photography as are the images of bondage). However in these fragmented, fetishistic close-ups, Lyon's body also appears disarmingly asexual. The leg could equally well belong to a man when seen in isolation and the classic hand-grip pose to display biceps and chest used by muscle-men seems strangely incongruous on a bare breasted woman. Between them, Lyon and Mapplethorpe are deliberately flouting conventional ideas of sexual stereotypes.

Apart from being photographed, Lyon sees her act of body building to be a ritual and the enactment of that ritual, art. Like Fenley, the way to perpetuate her chosen art form is to keep to a gruelling routine traditionally associated with the male world.

Cindy Sherman does not actually follow

the lead of of Lyon and Fenley through body-building but she does use her own body as the subject/raw material for her creative work. Dressing up and playing a gallery of parts, Sherman creates fantasy film stills with herself always playing solo lead. In each colour photograph she projects herself into a new role; the tired daily pausing for a rest while mopping the floor; the agonized teenager waiting for the phone to ring; the American girl in a haunting, deserted city; the glamorous Hollywood star. Every image suggests a further aspect of womanhood while real and mythological merge. It is extraordinary to see how the same person can be made to look so different by a change of costume and a varied context. As with Fenley and Lyon, the sensuality inherent in the situations is exploited and not covert. The American woman is hatching from the minimalist shell of feminism in a strikingly novel way.

Anna Moszynska

Lisa Lyon Robert Mapplethorpe



Bracknell Festival of Performance: Two Views

AT THE EXPENSE of sounding naive, there was a generous atmosphere at the Park. Specific reasons seemed to be, the variety of available spaces within the old house and grounds, the length of time spent together by performers and audience, a flexible programme allowing for impromptus; above all the sheer number over 30—of performances.

Beyond physical influences, there was generosity of another kind too. It was a feeling of accessibility, borne of the impulsive, intuitive, sensual basis of much of the work. If there was a gap, it was didacticism, obviously-stated politics, formalism. But whatever the reason—intentional avoidance or a reflection of the 'state-of-art-now'—Bracknell emerged vital, affirmative.

Anne Bean and Paul Burwell's work fits precisely that bound of impulse, sensitivity to environment, objects, and meaning oblique—unconscious. They say: 'Our work . . . is a sharing, a slice of life intersecting with what is encountered on the way and at the time'. Familiarity with each other's working methods, and an acute mutual awareness of mood and timing meant that their untitled, unrehearsed performance in the small cellar bar on the Friday night appeared smooth, controlled, perfectly wrought.

Dressed in a kind of Roman army officer pastiche, Paul Burwell entered the stage, then discarded helmet and cloak, confessing: 'I have no message, no proph-

esy . . . I have nothing at all. I feel awful most of the time.' For the rest, he produced an epic barrage of sound from a typically elaborate drumset. During this, Anne Bean went through a complex series of ritual actions—to which the drumming sounds were an active, essential part, not accompaniment.

She's an insect, receiving honey into her mouth from a reluctantly pouring funnel. She smears it onto her hair, her arms, goes behind a glass window, holds up a black and yellow striped cloth, a vibrator. She's a trapped bee. And from here we were treated to one of the many spectacular moments of the festival. Two bags of minute squares of coloured crepe paper—orange, yellow, turquoise, were released onto the blades of an electric fan. A cloud of colour exploded—we all gasped. The paper squares settle, pollen sticking to Anne's bee-body. But there's a terrible, 'victimness' about it all, fuelled for me by uncomfortably powerful resonances of sexual domination. The dripping honey as sperm, gagging her. And the text, poignant, adding to the sense of helplessness: 'All social insects, if placed in isolation die, usually within two hours, even through other circumstances may be perfect.'

Slides alternate images of her, of insects. She cuts herself with a switchblade, draws blood. The performance was unforgettable. But total abandonment to such intuitively gathered and presented imag-

ery presents a problem. Meanings, are of course, not absolute. But I feel that Anne Bean and Paul Burwell come close to rejecting the importance of general current references, in favour of less easily defined, chance resonances. A vibrator connotes sexual use/activity for me—not the buzzing of a bee.

Richard Layzell's *Zangst* contained the most direct political engagement of work I saw. Adopting a cabaret-compere identity he attacks, from within and with delicate, scarcely veiled behemence, notions of collective, consumerist accord without which the *Sun* would collapse, and Terry Wogan would cease to be the most popular man in Britain.

His method is spoken language; 'We all want a video, don't we?'; gesture—from thumbs-up signs to queasily insane facial movements; and video—constant, fragmented reflection of on-stage reality. The effect is startling, scaring. The laughter uneasy. At first, the repetition of 'are you with me?' sits skillfully between send-up and the feeling that he may be being serious. But the venue, a crowded lunch-time bar in dead conservative Bracknell, stifled ambiguity. The question shifts into the here-and-now. Yes we do want a video, a second car. Is someone going to hit him? Then there's the newspaper, 'real news'. 'I'm not a bitch' (says Joan Collins). 'I'm not a bitch'. He reads eventually, the story. Things are less comfortable. The idiocy is the reality. Confronted with it, laughter changes to numb panic.

Carol de Vaughan's dance-piece *Memory Portrait* was pitched at an altogether quieter level, although carefully controlled speech and gesture were essential components. She is fascinated by the relationship between words, word-fragments, the ways they can inspire movement—as well as how that movement can feed itself without the 'distraction' of music. And if the sound-tape was verbally complex, there was a lucidity about the whole piece suggesting that an instinctive, automatic response to the stream of parts was appropriate, rather than a conscious analysis of detail. *Memory portrait* is an assemblage of diaphanous particles which choose to dance around a set of focal points or features which surface according to an overall interior design'. I was strongly reminded of the recent photomat portrait work of Susan Hiller. In a more specifically personal way—related to a time-based body involvement—De Vaughan is operating, convincingly, in the same area: the ordering of memory, the role of automatic response to verbal and visual fragments.

Nigel Pollitt





Paul Burwell and Ann Bean

It has been my experience that long, drawn-out events of this kind can seldom sustain the impetus necessary to gain a truly successful 'festival' atmosphere. Performance events that is. My experience of Bracknell was limited to one day, however, so remains one-sided and probably a little unfair. Many of my criticisms arise from general observations, of such boringly practical issues as the lack of catering facilities during the long afternoon of no less than five performances on the trot. I would also question the validity of some of the programming, however, as the overall feeling gained from the day was that much of the work seemed to be tired restatements of ideas initiated twenty years ago. Why in addition, was the gallery turned over to a single reconstruction of an old performance by Dennis Masi, when it could have formed the focal point of an examination of new performance work by younger artists, and for documentation, of which there is much that is interesting, which cannot usually be displayed in venues hosting one-off events? There were moments of great enjoyment however. By far the most outstanding piece of the day was Anthony Howells *Table Moves*. The same criticism I would apply to much of the work—repetition of old pieces or old ideas to a tiny audience mainly consisting of other performance artists and critics and friends—applies here, but the quality of the piece over-rode all my misgivings. A collection of everyday furniture and objects is systematically turned through an angle of ninety degrees by a performer, on the axis of the centre of the performance space, so that the initial set-up presented to the audience is re-examined and re-presented to show all possible aspects.

The piece was beautifully performed. What began as a logical, systematic series of movements developed into a seemingly anarchic, complex and surprising variation on the theme, as the 'floor' of the piece was shown. During the stage the

furniture seemed to take on almost a life of its own. Howell himself, in a long, technical and succinct explanation of the methods used to create the piece likens it to performance cubism. The objects are moved in order to present different planes to a fixed point (the audience). The objects are presented from every angle. This composition of multi-faceted movements does not demand the distortion of reality required by painting, because it comprises the very elements painting seeks to create by illusion. In this sense it is much more successful.

What I liked about this piece was its timelessness. It does not rely on cultural or social phenomena specific to the moment, or even the decade, but had a universal quality which made it approachable and very enjoyable, on many different levels, from that of pure entertainment to that of intellectual analysis. This is the secret of

Boris Gerrets



truly successful performance; that it does not totally rely on a conversance with a specific kind of language in order to be enjoyed or understood.

Susan Carpenter, by contrast, presented what I felt was an eminently superficial performance. *Moving Structures* consisted of a collection of coloured fluorescent painted wooden structures placed in various positions around a darkened room. The performers, conspicuous in their black-clothed 'invisibility' tied rows of long fluorescent painted sticks to their waists and shoulders and whirled round the room. The effect of a luminous coloured kaleidoscope was pretty but hardly spectacular. The various wooden structures were then activated, and a large heavy metal wheel, heavily disguised in black, and onto which were attached various luminously painted shapes in a wheel formation, was rolled round the floor. The presence of so many children seemed appropriate. Ooh! aah! was all one could say really. The shapes were pleasing to the eye; it was rather like watching an army of large fluorescent grasshoppers, but not so much fun.

Stephen Taylor Woodrow and the two other members of Club Boring provided the best entertainment of the day, terrorising various small children in the gardens at lunchtime (nothing else was happening). sewn together in black suits with gold painted hair and black faces, their only way of moving was to jump simultaneously, a kind of bizarre six-legged monster silent and menacing, unsmiling, quite ferocious really, jumping with some force towards the unsuspecting families on the lawn, causing much suspicion consternation then tears. For me it appeared to be a day out for refugees from the sixties generation, wandering about in stark contrast to the local Bracknell estate families. A distinct lack of anyone over six and under thirty was the most depressing thing of all.

Chrissy Iles

The Water Station



Tenkei at the ICA

TO CREATE A THEATRE in which silence exists 'as a means of expression' raises key questions of reduction and exclusion. In imposing silence upon performance, what is removed? In a brief biographical note on the Theatre Tenkei Gekijo this basic definition of their work is supplemented: their performances 'investigate the significance of silence as a means of perceiving the reality of language in a society overloaded with verbal information'. Silence, which has always denoted some impossible physical absolute, is clearly defined within *The Water Station* as an abstract, rarified—almost artificial—condition: a conceptual state in which all words, all speech acts have been erased. For the entire 140 minutes of the play's duration, not one word is spoken between the twenty or more characters who pass across the stage. This absence is strongly felt, not as a lack or deficiency, but by the strength of those things which replace language in the tremendous austerity of this production.

The Water Station takes place on a raised platform upon which a broken iron faucet releases a continual trickle of water, throughout the performance, into a small open pool. At one side of the platform there is a dark ramp for each of the members of the cast to make their entrance and a similar ramp opposite at the other side of the stage for their exit. The only other permanent feature of the set is an enormous mountain of old, battered shoes which rises up at the back of the platform. A series of travellers—sometimes alone and sometimes in groups—moves across the stage, stopping by the faucet to drink, wash, fight, make love or just rest. Each action and every facial expression used by the performers is slowed down to a point where movement is sometimes almost imperceptible but in which each gesture or movement has a

stark beauty. The prolonged and systematic use of slow motion has a number of effects, both immediate and accumulative. What is at first unnerving, gradually becomes familiar, so much so that many members of the audience were noticeably shaken when leaving the theatre, by the now feverish pace of 'normal' life outside. This reduced speed gave even the simplest gesture a presence which seemed to fill the silent stage, something enhanced by the strange unpredictability which slow motion gives to any event. It was virtually impossible to know how any one course of action would turn out, and this was heavily exploited: a determined action would slowly dissolve into vacillation or an abrupt change of direction, a smile became a snarl, and what began as a blow to the face ended up as a caress. Drawing upon some of the resources which this technique produced, individual members of the company created some extraordinary and powerful performances. Kazumi Kobari's chillingly ambiguous depiction of a mentally disturbed woman continually shifted between extreme states of sanity and delirium, Seiko Kitamura managed a silent scream which had her entire body convulsed in painfully slow spasms while her face was put through a sequence of contortions which lasted well over five minutes. These two examples are worth mentioning (although it should be stated that the entire company is excellent, without exception) because they represent individual instances where a genuine theatre of silence existed, something which is not always apparent in the overall conception and execution of this piece. At times it showed a lack of coherence and rigour, both of which are important in a work intent on pushing performance to such extremes. For example, the overall drabness of the set, the grubby destitute nature of the characters denied the work a

whole spectrum of colours, lines, textures and lighting techniques which could easily have been exploited, and which would have greatly enhanced the raw physical power of the performance. It was almost as if some unconscious assumption had been made which equated a universe deprived of language with one drained of colour and vibrancy. Furthermore this kind of muffled greyness has been driven into the ground by over-use in the past three decades or so. The music—two passages on tape endlessly repeated—had a definite detrimental effect. Even where their use seemed to work, it still seemed superfluous—why, when you have actors working as hard and determinedly as these, bring in music to project emotional forces which are already in full play on stage? The highly structured nature of the musical excerpts also jarred with the flow of actions and gestures—absolute silence would have been preferable. If you are going for extremes, there should be no half-measures.

On a much more positive level, what the Theatre Tenkeigekijyo has established in relation to a silent theatre is a new kind of proscenium arch, one which has strong affinities with the perspectives and perceptual boundaries of Renaissance painting. The kind of dynamics which this brings into operation is well illustrated by a stunning ensemble sequence utilizing about eight or nine performers (it was impossible to say exactly how many, so dense and complex were the various actions on stage) where the visual space was very carefully delineated. Within the frame of the stage the many simultaneous actions guided the spectator's eye through the group of people from one striking detail to another. The audience's reaction was fixed and worked upon throughout. It appeared as if nothing was missing even though it was physically impossible to take in the whole of the space. This was balanced by the fact that all the characters seemed in turn to be responding to some huge apocalyptic event happening off-stage but which only they could see. They stared horrified, screamed, or tried to look away as this stark invisible event unfolded outside the frame of the space. The tensions between these two states of perception—the audience's and the performer's—coupled with the different ways in which the eye is allowed to work suggests the real basis for a silent theatre. Here, the power of the regard—its intensity and its passivity—is not there to replace language or to cover up an absence of any kind. It doesn't represent a reduction either—it is a pure discipline and one that the Theatre Tenkei Gekijyo, given their obvious strengths as performers, could easily use to build upon. Their next London presentation could be really something.

Ken Hollings

Serpentine Summer Show: Growing Pains, Caught Unawares and Others.

THE MOST STRIKING THING about this show is the contrast between approaches and the fact that this contrast is sharply divided by gender.

Charles Garrad, Brian McCann and Dick Jewell all deal with the influence and power of the media, in television, magazines, cinematic culture and in the creation of certain social types. These issues are examined from an objective stance, taking a factual, documentary kind of approach.

The work of all three women artists is also socially motivated, but ideas are presented through specific personal experiences. Hence Helen Chadwick's installation *Growing Pains* presents ten plywood shapes, each of which represents a crucial stage in the development of the artists' life. The basic shapes of an incubator, font, wigwam, bed, vaulting horse, school boards, are imprinted with soft, impressionistic photographic images of what the object represents, and of the artist's body at various stages. The sequence can be added to until death; it is, in effect, work in progress.

This most recent work is an attempt to create a stronger link between the general and the specific/personal, which she felt has been lost in her earlier, more theoretical work. This piece is not merely a personal documentation, however; it explores the idea of the way our lives form an absolute pattern, through individual experiences, and the way in which the body is socialised (seen in the way the image of the body adapts to the shape of the wooden object) through a series of immediately recognisable and powerful social rituals.

Walking from the softness of Chadwick's beautifully made objects into Alison Winckle's dark, tense and introspective film installation *Caught Unawares*, the mood changes. Winckle has also arrived at the personal from a strong formalist structuralist base, through a dissatisfaction with the purely theoretical. The autobiographical nature of their piece however is concentrated onto one of the most painful of personal experiences, the death of her mother.

The piece is compact, almost minimal in its simplicity. A film loop of herself, her mother and sisters is projected onto three large clear plastic sheets in semi-darkness, and a tape muses on death and happier moments.

An important consideration in the work of many women artists using mixed media has been the dilemma of distancing oneself from the work, and the consequent need to place the self in the work and build a relationship between the self and others in the outside world. Winckle sees her activity as aiming to do this, and it is particularly evident in this piece, during which she comments 'that everyone must die makes it fairer. That at least is some comfort'.

This sense, not only of the narrative, personal and autobiographical, but of mortality, continues as one enters the section containing *Lumieres Noires*. Roberta Graham's interest is in exposing taboos, making the spectator confront things considered intolerable and difficult by society in this case, death. Images of death and destruction—a lightning fork, a sheep's heart—are juxtaposed onto photographs of the artist's naked body, creating a disturbing and morbid mixture of violence and eroticism, intensified by the

method of their presentation in brightly illuminated light boxes surrounded by complete darkness. The personal aspect appears here in the use of the artist's own image in the work.

In contrast to the minimalism of Winckle's piece, these works have a strong atmospheric, almost gothic sense of the grotesque. The light boxes possess the dark, silent, oppressive religiosity of Catholic shrines, and the associated intensity and passion contained in such concentrated presentations.

After these dark, intense, personal explorations it is a relief to walk back into the pieces which introduce the show, by Dick Jewell, Brian McCann, and, round the corner, an installation by Charles Garrad. What immediately strikes the spectator is the objectivity with which these artists explore their ideas. These works seem to have emerged via a completely opposite process. Personal thoughts and ideas about certain issues are developed and presented within a rational,

Brian McCann



structured framework. All three artists deal with messages from the media. Dick Jewell's work involves a collaging of cultural fragments rearranged to present new meaning and to expose the falseness of the images as used in their original context. It comments on the intrusion of stereotypes into our society, and on the gap they create between personal fantasies and the public expectations.

In *It's a Thin Line Between Love and Hate* conventionalism is turned on its head by a collage of women brandishing guns grouped together communicating a feeling of solidarity which is far from the original intentions of the magazine images when individually photographed. The unusual image of women in poses of aggression and violence also questions accepted male role-playing usually associated with such situations.

In *The Box*, Jewell uses the media of television in exposing its visual insensitivity by covering a wall with life-sized photographed TV stills. The unreality of these images, usually instantaneous but here trapped and fixed, becomes apparent, and the numbing effect of the TV, which Jewell compares to watching flames in a fire, or a magnet, renders us passive in its grip.

If Dick Jewell explores the effect of media images on the individual, Brian McCann expresses the inability of the individual who seeks to change his conditions to break away. McCann's work is concerned with the presentation of social types, made at once sinister and comic by his use of the irreverent and improvisational elements of the 'New Sculpture'. The images he produces are disconcerting, in the way that all images of power are when given comic exaggeration. Like Jewell, McCann uses reassembled fragments to create new, often completely reversed statements, in this case about the human condition and social types.

Charles Garrad's installation is more atmospheric and romantic than the work of the other two artists, but is still objective in its approach. His concerns are with the way cinematic culture affects the way we perceive the world, specifically how imagination and memory are evoked in cinematic terms. He explores this by the use of various props and devices constructed in a tableau which the spectator is only allowed to observe through a peephole in the wall. In *Cinema* we see a bleak hotel room whose atmosphere evokes the memories of any hotel room. It is a collection of fragments of interiors. But

the features are presented to us in a cinematic way, to form a kind of narrative, but of objectified, totally opposite to that used by Winckle or Chadwick. Similarly the urban romanticism implied could not be more different to the romanticism of Graham's work. On walking round the corner the set is exposed, and the illusion is shattered, much as daydreams are.

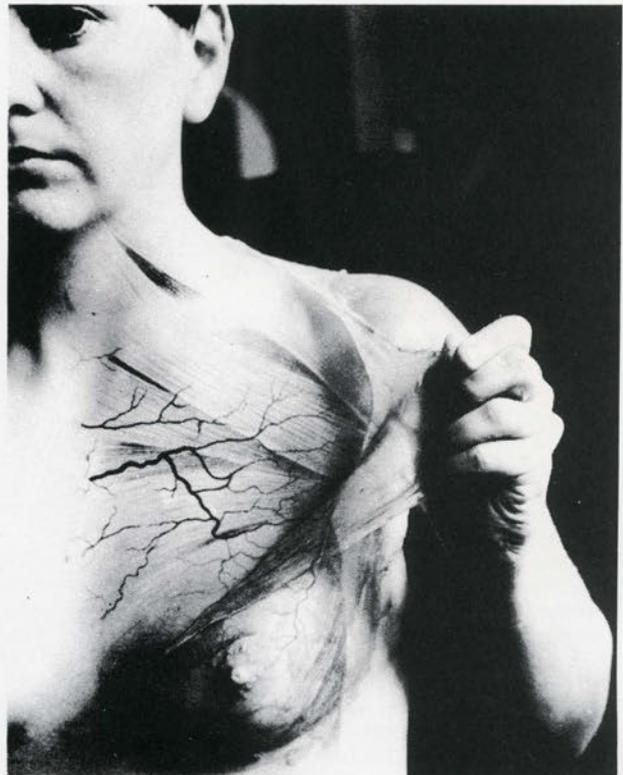
The contrast between the two approaches to social and cultural issues in this show underlines what has become a general division between the traditional method of detached observation, the belief in the reduction of experience into quantifiable boundaries to gain clarity of meaning, and the conscious placing of the self back into the work, acknowledging responsibility, and extending the parameters which constrict the creative expression of the self. The use of mixed media probably provides the clearest expression of these two polarities—the intuitive versus the analytical. It is to the credit of the conscientious approach of John Roberts, critic and selector of this year's Summer Show 1, that we have a major exhibition of such work in the context of such public accessibility, one of London's most establishment galleries.

Chrissie Iles

Helen Chadwick



Roberta Graham



Radical Bingo

AT LAST—AN OPPORTUNITY for me to catch up on 'the best of New Cabaret', on show at the ICA, different acts each night presented by ranting 'caller', Seething Wells.

The Bouncing Czecks, Fatima the Fantastic, 3 Mustaphas 3, Attila the Stockbroker, Slade the Leveller, Tommy Toilet Humour, Surfing Dave, Mark Miwurdz, The Poison Girls—if names alone were a guarantee of delivery, how could 'Radical Bingo' fail?

I'd seen the Three Mustaphas before, actually an excellent pseudo-ethnic dance band; also (on T.V.) the formidable Terri Rogers and her rabidly sexist dummy. Slade the Leveller apparently wears a nun's habit and brandishes an axe. Then there's Tim Batt, reputed to juggle six burning pocket calculators; the People Show, sole representatives of the Old Wave . . . and tonight, unbilled because forbidden to venture within five miles of Buckingham Palace—Michael Fagan, the intruder who fondled a Broken Ash-Tray While Chatting to the Queen in Her Bedroom! Fagan has a manager these days and has just brought out a Single, his own version of—wait for it—'God Save the Queen'. Shades of Ronnie Biggs and the Sex Pistols. Before the show I was introduced in the I.C.A. bar to Fagan's support band, The Bollock brothers, who are making it in their own right abroad. 'The Bollocks are big in Chicago', I was assured by no less a personage than the Director of the I.C.A. himself. Yes, the right-hand Bollock confirmed, they were 'charting' all over the world except in England which won't air their music on account of their awkward name. They refuse to change it. 'You've got to draw the line somewhere', the left-hand Bollock asserted with the quietly martyred air of integrity of a Solzhenitsyn.

My expectations now high as a flaming calculator, I enter the auditorium. Bingo notices on the walls. Tables set out in informal come-and-go-as-you-please cafe atmosphere. And newcomers heckled from the stage by Seething Wells, an emcee who favours the complete tough-guy Skinhead look.

There's a half-hearted attempt to get some token Bingo going, with the help of an on-stage ball selector machine, but the convention is ditched and forgotten once the acts start appearing. As for Seething Wells' patter, how about this for laughs: 'There's nothing wrong with Americans that a good bath and shock therapy wouldn't cure'. Or this rib-tickling put-down of the venue: 'That's what the ICA's all about—shit they couldn't put on anywhere else they put on here.'

Well, you can say that again, pal. First on the bill is Eddie Chippington. Eddie is a deadpan comic who succeeds all too effectively in being genuinely unfunny as a deliberately unfunny deadpan comic



Michael Fagan at the ICA

(his recurring catch-phrase: 'Pretty good joke that'). Eddie long overstays his welcome, but his successor, Surfing Dave from Leeds, offers scant relief. Surfing Dave, like Eddie Chippington making his first appearance in London, sports a close-cropped balding pate and Buddy Holly/Elvis Costello glasses, and accompanies himself on electric guitar as he bellows a series of ear-splitting rockabilly numbers to a notably chilly audience reception. Can anything be worse than this? Bring on the next act, anything to stop this torture! Ah, at last Surfing Dave has finished his interminable set to make way for . . . 'the thinking man's foreskins—all the way from Birmingham—The Nightingales'.

Surfing Dave sounds like Julian Bream on trunks compared to the combined accoutrements of this dire combo whose massively head-searing sound is so powerful that it propels a group of lads down front into a frenzied bout of pogoing (pogoing? still?—that's right!) and your correspondent straight out of the auditorium. This is metal so heavy as to be insupportable. My head bursting, I stagger away from the ICA into the relative serenity of the Trafalgar Square traffic, never to return. Sorry, The Three Johns, I wasn't able to stay and catch your act. Sorry, Tommy Toilet Humour—maybe

you'd have supplied that missing touch of sophistication.

At one point during the hour that I managed to stay with the show, Seething Wells delivered a ranting poem based on Shock-Horror headlines from the Sun newspaper. It was the only moment of possible artistry in an evening of otherwise stunning mediocrity. Of course, considered as some kind of neo-Dadaist anti-entertainment, one should scarcely complain if *Radical Bingo* fulfilled its declared intention (in the Press Release) of deliriously 'many unpleasant surprises'. But I can't help regretting the sad waste of the Bingo format—after all Bingo is a strong cultural ritual with excellent dramatic potential. Nobody had bothered to think it through as a linking device.

As for Fagan, he didn't show up, owing to a bit of a cock-up. Seems he thought he was appearing on Sunday night so he went fishing today. Pity about that, though. They were trying to arrange for him to arrive at the gig in a carriage-and-horses attended by dwarf flunkies.

Neo-Dadist, neo-Schmadaist, who cares? If this is 'The Best of New Cabaret' the mind curdles at what else might be limbering up with megatonic axes in the backwoods.

Neil Hornick

Everything Television Touches...

IT MAY SEEM that the past few months' television has been obliterated by silly season specials, Wimbledon and the Election. In the case of the latter that might just be some kind of omen. But way back in May there was a little flurry of independent video broadcasting. Too late to catch the last issue, it deserves a mention here.

For ten days the discriminating viewer was bombarded with announcements for this or that video programme to the extent that you couldn't help wondering whether BBC2 and Channel 4 had got together and decided that it was time they had a video mini-festival. Not that they seem to share a view of video, which is interesting if only because of the authoritative definitions television gives for anything it touches.

The innocent viewer could be forgiven for a spot of confusion—after all a video's something you record the tennis on while you're watching the cricket, er... or is it film you hire from a shop for three quid a night? In the BBC2 dictionary that, or rather those, are something like what video means, though, of course, it's all to do with frightfully clever technology

which you (poor viewer) don't really understand... Mercifully, and not surprisingly, Channel 4's definition is a little more mature. They define by the nature of production; so television is something made by television companies, video by video producers, and film by film directors. Of course, all three eventually become television, but the nature of the equipment used to produce each does lead to a marked qualitative difference, just as the approach to working with each leads to a radically different type of content.

BBC2's Arena blockbuster special on video was so unremittingly bad that it seems perverse to deride it further. Taking (it claimed) as its theme the effects the video revolution (what?) would have on our lives in the future, and with more than a hint of 'will video take over the world' (yawn), it was in fact only a survey of the way video is already used, with a hint of some obvious technological developments. Its gloating interest in Japanese love hotels—where lovers leave with a video-tape record of their cavorting, gives some indication of the level of the programme.

Worse than that, its supposed presentations of what can be done with video equipment which leap into the future (and remember that this is authoritative) proved, at best, to be only the kind of thing that would accompany a rock concert, and, at worst, the kind of amusing games people were playing with Sony portapaks back in the early 70s. It failed to take any account of any innovative video in the last ten years—and you suspect that is because they didn't know it existed.

If the BBC are capable of learning a lesson, maybe they should consider this; video is a medium which lends itself to making statements of great personal clarity. It can be produced by a no more megalithic organisation than a pirate radio station, or a neighbourhood printshop. If they are able to remember this it would spare us being presented with a hotchpotch of poor broadcasting masquerading as video. But maybe I've got their definition of video wrong—it couldn't perhaps mean something they produce which is too bad to call television, could it?

Pete Shelton

Mary Lucier, NY

MY INITIAL IMPRESSION of NY art in general and video in particular is of rank commercialism and inflated American self-esteem parading in brash neo-expressionist paintings or hi-tech videotapes that happily reproduce the banalities of popular culture. Irony is reduced to locker-room humour, machismo trumpets from 20 foot canvasses and desperately intricate special effects compensating for the necessity of working on the small screen. However, while a lot of NY art is superficial and market-orientated, a substantial group of artists continue to produce interesting work in spite of current trends. Mary Lucier is one of those artists. Her video installation at the Whitney Biennale re-introduces old-fashioned painterly concerns with form, and a poetic search for spiritual significance in the beauty of landscape.

The NY art press, no less starved of genuine content than their gallery-going readership, joined in a hymn of praise to *Ohio at Giverny*. What made this communal sigh of relief possible was the presence

of advanced technology.

A similar enterprise in paint would have been dismissed as retrogressive. This might turn out to be the great advantage of video—you can re-work age-old themes without freaking the novelty art merchants.

Mary Lucier's installation consists of 2 tapes showing alternately on 7 different-sized monitors arranged in an arc across a white wall. The time-based, gestural aspect of this configuration is often reiterated as the two tapes diverge into different views of the same subject and then synchronise once again, re-drawing the arc. A sense of movement, of shifting from one place, one state to another is a central theme of the video imagery. The work begins with exploratory sequences in a Victorian house in Ohio. The camera, hand-held, pans across heavy furniture and sunlit windows; the image periodically bleaches out in direct light. (In earlier work, Mary Lucier has literally burnt light into the camera tube creating permanent traces in transient video images).

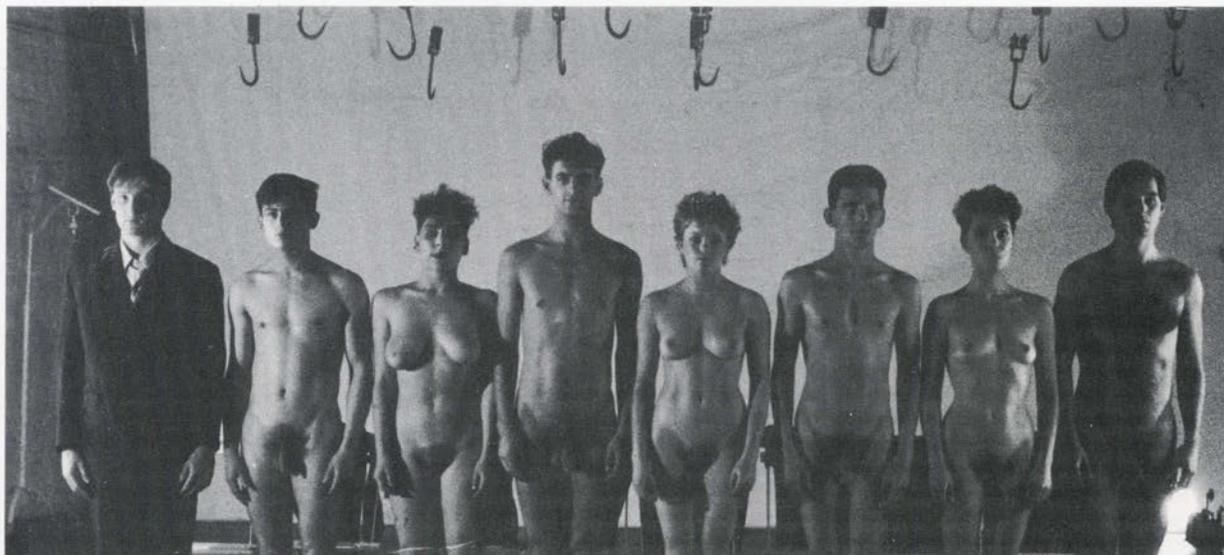
Diffused light and slow dissolves suggest the imprecise workings of memory, the past recreated with a vague sense of regret. Images sharpen as the scene shifts from America to France. Rooftops, fields, flowers, brooks bathed in sunlight, lovingly recorded and set to ambient sound that Earl Howard periodically synthesises into highly visual interpretations of the landscape. And finally, Monet's garden at Giverny. Here the familiar views of paths and water-lilies are re-worked in slow motion, the images breaking up into impressionistic mosaics.

Mary Lucier's video is technically faultless and unlike many of her compatriots, her use of special effects is never gratuitous. The perfection of her imagery at times leans the work towards travelogue and the dangers of sentimentality—but the integration of form and content, the musical precision of her video-composition and the far-reaching implications of her themes make this installation one of the most satisfying works I have seen in New York.

Catherine Elwes

A Generation Without Affection

Jan Fabre



EIGHT HOURS IS a long time for a performance. Not the longest though—that record still rests with Ken Campbell and his twenty four hour production of *The Warp*. But whereas stunt, gimmick and sensation are part of Campbell's stock-in-trade, Jan Fabre's *This Is Theatre As It Was To Be Expected And Forseen* has a serious, even sober basis for its demanding time scale.

For two weekends in May, Fabre's company of eight performed continuously between 2 and 10pm, casting their piece around the rigours and rhythms of the eight hour working day. 'Work fascinates me, I can watch it all day!'—so the old joke goes. With this performance, you get precisely that opportunity. But not many people jumped at the chance. Despite good previews in the London listings magazines and a hefty imprimatur from Ritsaert ten Cate, artistic director of the Mickery Theatre ('Jan Fabre's *This Is Theatre*... should be as important to the 1980s as Robert Wilson's *Deafman Glance* was to the 1970s.') the ICA auditorium was only ever patchily filled. Caution, conservatism, possibly even a doubt that a show could be sustained over such a period, all conspired to keep even the cognoscenti away. A pity because Jan Fabre will definitely be taking a place alongside Laurie Anderson as one of the acknowledged instigators of the decade.

'The good performance artists are still also visual artists', he says, 'But for me, making theatre had a social basis. I was doing well in the art world but I was always dealing with older people. It was interesting but I lost my own generation. I believe in making theatre in friendship whereas the art world on a particular level

gets colder and colder with more and more business.'

Fabre's company is drawn from all walks of life and the first month of rehearsal was spent on discussion of personal experiences and outlooks because as he says, 'first the human values, then the formal values'. These 'ethics' of the group's findings were then built into the 'aesthetics' of a scenario which Fabre had written one and a half years previously around images drawn from the work of Kounellis, Marcel Broodthaers and Robert Longo.

The mis-en-scene is self-explanatory. If you've no cash, you can't afford a lot. Hence the setting is minimum—a simple cloth backdrop, a dozen chairs—with the only untoward items being an armoury of butcher's hooks hanging from the ceiling. The performers are barefoot and dressed in jumble sale shirts and trousers. But would it have been any different had funding been available? It's doubtful. This 'poor' setting is a perfect match for the company's findings.

'We are a generation without affection' says Fabre and this implicit toughness appears a hallmark as the company soldier on through the demands of the piece. Their energy flows out turning on one hand into aggression railing at bourgeois niceties and cultural monopolies and on the other into a striving to find a breathing space for their own psyches, a taming of this energy to capture it as fuel for mental self-sufficiency. But themes are not so much preponderant as a mentality, an attitude. As the hours tick by, the simple actions choreographed around human ability to act under stress and privation, takes on the appearance of a cabaret for a

concrete bunker and this underground retreat, cast in perpetual night and relieved only by candle or 100 watt bulb, becomes a stamping ground for a group of people frustrated in their experience of each other and of the sensual world. To tell 'the story of the loneliness of a single soul' is the aim of Jannis Kounellis' performance tableau and Fabre is close indeed to his mentor.

So what exactly were these stories? Obviously a lot happens in eight hours but here are three of the episodes from this modernist melodrama:

Enter five performers, shuffling and with their eyes masked with black tape. they each have a budgie on a string which flaps furiously. A sense of cacophony and protest. Electronic music whirrs in the background. The budgies are released and hop cheerfully around the floor. The performers, are blinded, isolated, impotent. They remove their shirts and track the budgies relying only on their hearing. Finally, they recapture the budgies by lightly dropping their shirts over them.

Fourteen long sausage-like plastic bags of milk are brought in one by one and hung in a circle from the hooks. Six are bitten through so that the contents splash over the floor. Six performers stand outlined by the flicker of a Super 8 projector. Sinking to their knees, they laboriously lick the floor clean, an task which has at least one performer gagging in distaste.

A man and a woman, both naked to the waist, run on the spot. As they gasp and sweat, they repeat phrases drawn from the trivia of everyday living.

Man: Masturbation, nein keine zeit,



shave, cornflakes, merde! Plus de lait, arbeit und gehen, date with my girlfriend, zum abend, allez au cinema, making love, she goes back home.

Woman: Oh, ces chats! Coffee setter, back in bed, une cigarette, chanel, ma douche and feed the cats. Just a minute, what shall I wear? Quelle chassures? Fitzen, repetiren. Un cafe, what shall I eat? Fourniez une disque, slappen.

Behind the two runners, three figures pose gargoyle-like behind three candles. In this halfight, the scene could be a mini-Olympic games staged as an evening's entertainment in Gormenghast. After some twenty minutes, these absurd athletes collapse exhausted and dig out a couple of Marlboros to revive themselves.

To this contribution, Fabre has added a conception that uses a quasi-painterly language. Through the use of repetition, film loops and the unhurried use of the time scale, the spectator is given sufficient opportunity to be able to linger on details, pick out formal relationships, appreciate lectures—in short, to use the means by which a painting might be surveyed. This is a challenge to one's perception that has been blunted by the bland patter of the TV screen and the and the split-second declamation of the advertising hoarding.

Apart from an understanding of the formal processes at work in a visual art form, Fabre seems to follow on a major theme in 20th century art. In a world which is driven by material rapacity and immured in its spiritual poverty, the individual is further bereft of any absolute reference point and consciousness naturally ocuses on the self as the one last truth. At an extreme level narcissism and solipsism predominate and block any coherent action. At any level words become ego opinion and the prime image of this state is the body. Clothed or unclothed, whole or violated, it is its own image and its own deportment tells of its survival in a shifting world of physical and moral assaults. In this work, the prevalent image of the butcher's hook is a reminder of artists such as Francis Bacon and Hermann Nitsch whose paintings and events respectively utilise flayed and truncated carcasses. Like Damocles' sword, the hook is an aide-memoire to mortality and it's honed steel barb an instrument that can bring in at a moment the mechanised lunacy of the 20th century.

But here there are no cadavers. This company of eight are very much alive and kicking and their dogged liveliness exudes a furtive optimism. To this austere presentation, they bring a richness that is almost overshadowed by the scale of the event and its immediate ambience. It is simply themselves and their lives as gigolo, gambler, childnurse, social worker, make-up artist, accountant, actress and hostess—all brought together as a constellation of personalities until Jan Fabre calls time and throws up some new shooting stars into his own night sky.

Phil Hyde



Richard Layzell at the Academy, Bournemouth

WHY PERFORM IN NIGHT CLUBS? Why not? The business of hoping or praying for a reasonable sized audience at the ICA, small galleries or wherever, is an issue that I imagine most performers would rather not have to deal with. So why not go to where there's an already established audience. I have been planning a new performance for some weeks, called *Zangst*, when the Basement Group suggested a Newcastle pub as a venue in May. The next I heard was that Dingwalls had been chosen and I was to appear on the same billing as a reggae band.

Dingwalls, Newcastle

Confrontation seems to be a recurring theme of my performances and I'd already planned *Zangst* to be a gradually overwhelming and confusing combination of behaviour, sounds and information. I had also intended to question conformity, pointing to unwritten rules and codes i.e. house, car, money, success etc., which would have been angled at an 'art' audience, so now the emphasis could be changed towards a younger more grassroots audience. The unwritten rules here could be—having a good time, drinking, smoking, clothes, listening to music, ignoring wider issues. So, I continued preparations, including two videotapes, two sound tapes, some visual devices, a magic trick and various ideas of audience participation.

Seeing Dingwalls for the first time on the Saturday afternoon in question was a big surprise. A very large, low stage projected into the centre of an extensive black space, with a vibrant PA system. It was Cup Final afternoon, the club organisers were in a side room having a party and watching the match on TV, disco sounds filled the empty dance space. I'd pictured somewhere smaller, with a stage at one end and less sophisticated equipment. This was a big rock club, no more or

less. Finding a Dingwalls programme, there it was 'Richard Layzell. Video art performance. Breathtaking images from a man on the edge of madness'. (they had put two quotes together, out of context, but that's showbiz). Top of the bill was 'Natural Roots, the very best of roots reggae'. It was only at this point that I realised that, in this context, I was to be the support band for the evening.

The video equipment arrived. We put monitors on stage, at what seemed a reasonable height. Lengths of brightly-coloured cloth were hung across the front of the stage, cut-out shapes of rip stop (kite material) and two paper screens were suspended behind, to break up the flat space. This provoked quite a bit of comment from the club employees. I guess bands don't usually warm up with a needle and cotton.

I hid away in the small, squalid dressing room backstage, feeling quite good. Members of the Basement Group were giving me reports of queues forming outside. I thought they were having me on. In a previous performance, *Song Song*, I had developed a slightly obnoxious, flashy, comper character, which seemed quite successful, so I decided to come on in this role, very bouncily, swinging a cassette recorder. When the time eventually came for my entry, the bounce had to work hard to cover what felt like a heavy blow to the chest. This was the effect of confronting a mass of over 500 people, stretching as far as I could see, in all directions. The shock was three-fold; firstly, I realised that only about a quarter of the audience could see the video monitors; secondly, they were not going to be remotely silent; thirdly, my chosen style of entry had opened myself to derision and I was being heckled. Oh, for the safe white bourgeois walls at London's ICA! A girl at the front, shouted at me 'You're not a reggae band, you're not a reggae band'. She was right. There were a few familiar faces towards

'Breathtaking Images from a Man on the Edge of Madness'



Richard Layzell at Dingwalls, Newcastle

Sue Collins

the front, but they weren't going to turn the tide. There was only one way forward, to persevere. The provocative questions about conformity were vigorously received, 'You read the Sun, don't you ... you like to read about royals, don't you, 'Fascist pig' was one of the replies. To some extent, I was getting what I wanted, but it was rough going. Making full use of the audience aggression, I said 'What's this?' (pointing to a piece of hanging cloth 'I said, what's this? What's the matter with you, tell me what it is', there was no answer to this, it was a demand which couldn't be fulfilled, but they were more responsive to this approach than most others. Then, inviting some of the audience on stage, they were asked to do very little, just stand and pose. This, again questioned the audience's expectations, their limits were being pushed. I think it was enough to achieve this much and to make them see that other kinds of performance were possible, even if they categorised my behaviour as 'crazy'. Though the contrast between my fragmented attempts to provoke and communicate and the main act couldn't have been greater, there was at least a sense of pioneering here at Dingwalls on reggae night.

The Academy Bournemouth

The week following the Dingwalls

experience I was asked to appear with Strawberry Five at the Academy Discotheque in Bournemouth. Why not? I'd be more prepared and this could be an easier context - 'alternatives night' at the Academy, with a dance troupe and an experimental eight piece band (the Strawberry Five).

Bournemouth isn't the most likely place to break the bounds of entertainment, but who's to tell. On arrival at the Academy, it was a good deal larger than expected and bore a strong resemblance to the Camden Palace, with videos, lasers, etc. The club manager, Kelly, certainly had his ear to the ground.

I was keen not to be the first act of the evening, but Kelly was insistent 'They'll be more receptive early on, they'll listen to you talking, you go on at 9.30, right, 'Later, at our backstage briefing, I had to admire his hard-headed approach, at least you knew where you stood. He was organising a show aimed at keeping the kids happy and interested, no room for boredom here. The assembled performers and three DJ's were each given a slip of paper with name and time of appearance, in case you forgot. There was something vaguely reassuring about this. You felt like part of a team—the greater aim was to make the evening a success. We were the individual parts—you almost felt you were doing it for Kelly.

Quite prepared to be the support band

this time, I thought that how you come on stage, with this kind of audience, must be crucial. At Dingwalls, I'd made it immediately possible for them to laugh at me. This time, I'd start by moving very slowly, saying very little, so they couldn't predict what was to follow. This should draw them in.

When my time actually came, I was a little unnerved by an earlier incident with my trouser turn-ups, but re-assured by one of the audience, 'They look fine, I should know, I'm a fashion student'. I waited in the wings for a nod from Kelly, as he and the first of the DJs descended slowly, in their console, below stage level. I looked down at him and waited while he forgot my name, '... a special guest, Richard Lay ... Lay ...' he looked at me, 'Zel' I shouted, 'Richard Layborn' he said, with the appendage 'The thing about this guy is he's very UN ... PRE ... DIC ... TA ... BLE'. I cringed and headed on slowly, as planned, trying to deal with a backdrop which was mistakenly rising, revealing things which the Strawberry Five didn't want seen until later. Kelly and the DJ, who had pressed the wrong button, didn't pick up on my cue for them to lower it again, although admittedly I was gesturing in slow-motion. OK, let's head for the front of the stage slowly and see how long I can hold their attention without doing much. I reached centre-stage, facing them squarely and trying to hold a balance of tension between us. As at Dingwalls, the reaction was unpredictable and I didn't seem to have any tension at my disposal. Subtleties of movement don't seem to work in an environment where the main medium of communication is amplified sound. So, I asked for volunteers, asked who was cool, told them they read the Sun, had fun, had voted Conservative and generally got a bit heavy with them, which seemed to get through much more.

By the end, there was sufficient tension to be able to hold their attention with gesture and movement, then to make a slow, dignified exit. Despite some sticky moments, I felt that this performance had been fairly successful on my terms and that working in clubs has a lot of potential. The smooth transition immediately back to disco music and people dancing quite suited what I'd been trying to point at. It was also good to be able to join the dancers on the floor and have a good time with them, be cool and all the rest of it. I like nightclubs.

Richard Layzell

NATIONAL PERFORMANCE LISTINGS

Brighton

Zap Club

Info: (0273) 506471
Continuing with highly varied programme of performance, cabaret, music etc. Details unavailable: phone above no.

Bristol

Arnolfini

Info: (0272) 299191
Until *September 3*: David Humphrey: One person show of conceptual jewellery.
Dance Panorama:
September 22-24 Second Stride
Then from *October 1* performances by: Dance Tales, Lisa Kraus, Sue MacLennan and Dancers, Tara Rajkumar, Gamelan, & David Gordon
Pick-up Company.
Music:
October 6 Alterations
October 9 Uroboros

Berkshire

South Hill Park

Info: (0344) 27272
No details available. Phone above no.

Cardiff

Chapter Arts

Info: (0222) 396061
No details available. Phone above no.

Edinburgh

Edinburgh Fringe

Info: (031) 226 2878
The Edinburgh Fringe runs from *August 21-September 10* and many theatrical performance companies can be seen among the hundreds of productions. We've listed those who sent us a press release in time.

August 21-27: Insideout Productions in 'Binoculars' which '...takes two lives and scrutinises aspects of these through binoculars. The focussing of childhood—encyclopedias of information—words an language—women and men—fantasies, games and rituals—the banal becomes the bizarre.' ◇

August 21-September 10: Red Shift Theatre Company in 'The Duchess of Malfi' and 'X Equals Murder'. Gothic horror, 'murder, madness and the struggle for personal identity.

August 22-September 2: Trickster Theatre Company in 'Mantu' a 'myth of an imaginary race, following the Mantu's story from birth to final self-destruction, set in a chameleon-like world of huge articulated fans, strange larval shapes and reptilian creatures, and related through acrobatics, mime, dance, martial sequences, percussion and design.

London

Air Gallery (London Video Arts)

Info (01) 734 7410
Until *August 5* Once upon the Idea of Two: An installation by Noel Harding.

August 11 Doobie Eylath: Recent video tapes including Fauvrite, Shallow Throat, 4,000 Great American Abstracts, Square Dance.

August 18: The Triptych Ballet, performance by Stephen Taylor Woodrow with the Kreutzer Quintet.

August 25: Videotapes: Space Invaders by Judith Barry, The

End Of The World by Ian Bourn, The Extent Of Three Bells by Steve Hawley, Audio Mutant by Auto Awac, Image Is Virus by Dalibor Martinis. The sources for these tapes include video games, pocket calculators, digital watches, television and video technology itself.

Almeida Theatre

Info (01) 226 7432
August 14 EMAS Electronic Music: Simon Waters, Alejandro Vinao, Hugh Davies, Richard Attree.
August 15-29: Jozef Van Den Berg. LIFT event.

Chisenhale Project

Info 901) 981 6617
Regular Wednesday night performances.
August 21-27: The 'Skills' of Performance: Workshop led by Paul Burwell. An investigation into the skills we use in performance, and how to develop, extend and apply them.

Drill Hall

Info (01) 637 8270
August 9-21 Sistren Theatre Collective. (See LIFT listing)
August 8-21 At LIFT Festival centre the Drill Hall, late night cabaret including The Joeys, Natural Theatre, Peter Wear and Justin Case, Tabule, Theatre De La Complicite, Desperate Men, The Kosh, Brian Patten and Roger McGough etc. etc.

ICA

Info (01) 930 3647
Until *September 4*: Exhibition by Bruce Mclean.

Until *August 6* Rational Theatre in Rococco.

August 9-August: Cardiff Laboratory Theatre in The Wedding and The Heart of the Mirror (LIFT event, see listing)

August 16-21: Music Machines by Martin Riches: Installation and music performances.

August 23-28: Actual 83 festival (see our back page ad for full details) now in its fourth year, extends its range to other performance-related areas of improvisation including voice, dance, poetry, performance art. Particularly interesting to not is the inclusion of poet Brion Gysin, and Dutch performance artist Moniek Toebosch.

In the cinematheque there is a season of Beatnik films (*August 4-8*) including Anthony Balch/William Burroughs' Cut Ups ad Towers Open Fire. Video showings include Framed Youth's Revenge Of The Teenage Perverts (*August 9*) and Mitchell Kreigman's Can't Stop Dancing, Heart to Heart, Someone's Hiding in My Apartment, The Marshall Klugman Show. (*August 16*)
Coming in October: Lumiere and Son's long-planned Performance opera: Senseless.

London Musicians Collective

Info (01) 722 0456
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August 15 New Town School, Middlesborough.
 August 16 Endeavour School, Stockton. August 18-19 Central Park, Wisbech.
 August 26 Ford Adventure Playground, Sunderland.
 September 5-6 Prospect House, Farnwoth, Bolton.
 September 8-9 Bryn Alyn Community School, Wrexham. 1884-1984: Residency at Canklowe Estate, Rotherham, August 29-September 3

Horse and Bamboo
 Info (6642) 070682
 This summer Horse and Bamboo make their longest journey ever, a three hundred mile horse drawn journey from St. Andrews to Darlington, performing their new show, Needles in a Candle Flame, including 'the tricks of the early cinema, a legend from ancient China, and some very unusual musical instruments,' at the following places on the way:
 (Phone for exact details)
 August 6-8 : Alnwick district.
 August 11-12 : Ashington, Northumberland.
 August 17-22 : Saltwell Park, Gateshead.
 August 24-26 : Bede Gallery, Jarrow.
 September 5-20 : Cleveland area.
 September 23-29 : Darlington Arts Centre.

The London Ghosts
 Info (01) 895 3443
 The Village of the Night, words

and music on a nightly occurrence.
 August 1 : The Centre, Adelaide St. London WC2
 August 5 : Unit One, Uxbridge.
 August 11 : Brunel University, Uxbridge.

Matchbox Purveyors
 Info (01) 422 9653
 Brass Tacks, by Ian Hinchliffe. 'A situation in the trap of life in societies dumping ground...exploring the worlds worst hangover, Hinchliffe writes off his potentials in a Walter Mitty like inspiration. If you can hang a piece of meat on a hook, why not a carrot...or a man?'

August 4-13 East Anglian venues (Phone for details)
 Special Events and Daymare-Dognap:
 August 19-21 Midsummer Dream Fair, Norfolk.
 August 26-28 East London CND Canal Event (to be confirmed).

Natural Theatre Company
 Info (0225) 310154
 Outdoor environmental theatre.
 August 8-13 : LIFT events around London.
 August 1-21 : Great British Bike Ride. (See PERFORMANCE 19 for description of last years events.

IF YOU WANT YOUR PERFORMANCE LISTED HERE IN THE NEXT ISSUE PLEASE SEND WRITTEN COPY TO US AT 14 PETO PLACE LONDON NW1 BY SEPTEMBER 15.

We apologise for the absence of the scheduled article on Performance Journeys. This has been delayed because active research on it is still going on. The author assures us the journey will be completed in time for the next issue.

Dear Performance Magazine,
 I would like to disclaim the remark attributed to me in my review of Nottingham Feminist Arts Group's performances at the Midland Group (PERFORMANCE 24): 'Some performance art (by men) uses techniques of threat, unease, dominance, violence and embarrassment to make its point.'

The erratic editing has totally transformed my original comment into a blanket criticism of male performance artists. It should have read as follows; 'Some performance art (by men? Think about it) uses techniques of threat', etc. etc. I intended to provoke thoughtful consideration of certain modes of expression, which we have all experienced, that (in my opinion) are more frequently characteristic of male artists but which are by no means unknown in women's work. From the review it appears that I am allocating the above-mentioned traits to men only and, by implication, absolving women from them. I would consider such a gross generalization not only foolish but dangerously narrow-minded, seeming to be informed by an ultra-separatist feminism to which I most certainly do not subscribe.

I would be grateful if you would print this, since I do not want my name associated with the separatist 'All men are mindless aggressive misogynists and I hate to be in the same room as one' politics of radical feminism.

Ann Cullis

PERFORMANCE

Performance Magazine isn't staying in the shops long these days, and if you're slow you might find yourself without the latest copy. They are expensive to produce, and we can't afford to throw them around town. Why not guarantee your regular copy by subscribing? You'll get the Review of Live Art regularly every two months and be in the know about the most important events before anyone else has even had a chance to see it. You'll also be supporting us...with advertising and sales barely covering our costs, your cheque will be part of the daily miracle that keeps us alive!

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ALTERATIONS Plus Friends

Thursday 25th August

THE TIPPET PROJECT

With Keith Tippett, Elton Dean, Mark
Charig, Larry Stabbins, Nick Evans, Tony
Levin

**TRISTAN HONSINGER, KATY DUCK,
TOSHINORI KONDO, SEAN BERGIN**

Friday 26th August 3pm

**THE TIPPET PROJECT—OVARY LODGE
AUGMENTED** With Keith Tippett, Julie
Tippetts, Frank Perry, Marcio Mattos,
David Toop, Phil Waschman
SPONTANEOUS MUSIC ENSEMBLE

Friday 26th August 8pm

**TALISKER with FRANKIE ARMSTRONG
ISKRA 1903
CATALOGUE**

Saturday 27th August 3pm

**POETRY-SOUND-MOVEMENT:
BRION GYSIN & STEVE LACY
VIOLETTA FERRER & RAYMOND BONI
ANNICK NAZATI, IRENE SCHWEIZER,
JOELLE LEANDRE
MONIEK TOEBOSCH**

Saturday 27th August 8pm

THE TIPPETT PROJECT

With Keith Tippett, Harry Becket, Mark
Charig, Dave Defries, Jon Corbett, Dave
Holdsworth, Howard Riley
**PETER KOWALD & JOELLE LEANDRE
STEVE LACY & ELSA WOLLIASTON
(dancer)**

Sunday 28th August 3pm

FRED FRITH SPECIAL:

Skeleton Crew & Duck & Cover
With Tom Cora, Dagmar Krause, Chris
Cutler etc.

Sunday 28th August 8pm

**STEVE LACY, STEVE POTTS, MAL
WALDRON**

**TICKETS: £3.25 plus ICA membership.
SEASON TICKET £25**
Available from ICA Box Office phone 01
930 3647

Fridays and Saturdays. Phone their ansaphone for details.

Oval House

Info (01) 735 2786
No details available. Phone above number

Riverside Studios

Info: (01) 741 3354
September 6-11 : Nastassia (adapted from Dostoyevsky's *The Idiot*) directed by Andrzej Wadja (!) and designed by Krystyna Zachwatowicz.
September 13-October 2 : Grillparzer's *Medea*, directed by Barney Simon.
September 28 : Silvia C. Ziranek in *Chez Z (She Said)*. New work by Ziranek, essential occasion.

Theatre Space

Info (01) 836 2035
The temporarily spaceless space is continuing it's regular outdoor festival of outdoor performance, with over sixty groups and artists taking part. Phone for details.



The month of August is dominated, in London, by the LIFT '83 festival, an exciting mixture of international avant-garde, musical and theatrical performance. Our guide to the two weeks (*August 8-21*) of LIFT '83 lists the main performances, the week no. and the venue. For further details phone (01) 637 9521.

Urban Sax (France) :

Opening event in Covent Garden Piazza (*August 7*)
Previewed last issue, 30 radio-controlled saxophonists slowly invade the area playing in unison. A highly spectacular 'experiment in acoustical town planning'—unmissable.

Welfare State International ◊

(England) in *The Raising of the Titanic*: Weeks 1 & 2
Regent's Canal Lock. Combines 'symbolic pantomime and technological spectacle with son et lumiere. A real market with performers', buskers and ranters precede the raising of the 100 foot wreck—reconstructed by Tim Hunkin by cranes and hydraulic devices. Performances recreating life and decor aboard the Titanic in April 1912 are revealed in huge 30 foot containers, ferried in by fork lift. Tableaux include the 'Floating Pool of the Drowned Gamblers' and the

'Stinking Nomadic Camp of the Palm Room Fresco' before the hulk is returned to the depths in a ballet of the elements, and far off the final 'Metamorphosis of the Ship of Fools' is glimpsed. ◊

George Coates Performance Works (US) in *The Way of How*: Weeks 1 & 2 at the Bloomsbury Theatre. See Preview this issue.

Naya Theatre (India) in *Bahadur Kalarin*: Weeks 1 & 2 at the Lyric, Hammersmith.

'...It's pop art using the vocabulary of natural fun' Peter Brook. Unfolds the Oedipal tragedy of a winemaker and a son who kill his father and marries 126 women before realising the only woman he can love is his mother. A combination of folk forms and contemporary ideas results in a visually explosive, energetic and original style.

Natsu Nakajima (Japan) in *Niwa (The Garden) Buto Dance*: Week 2 at the Lyric Studio. She describes Niwa as 'a forgotten garden, very small and very Japanese, this is the garden of my memory, my childhood...I created this work to see my own life, I placed myself as a woman sitting in the garden, looking at it grow old and fade away.

Cardiff Laboratory Theatre (Wales) in *The Wedding and The Heart of the Mirror*: Weeks 1 & 2, ICA. See last issue (Spaces) for description of the Lab's work. *The Heart of The*

Mirror is a new work which 'asserts the hidden history of female myth through the ages, from Ishtar to Joan of Arc. Adam's first wife, Lilith, left him when he insisted on violent supremacy. Must man's inhumanity to woman be perpetuated endlessly? Can a balance of energies be restored?'

Sistren Theatre Collective (Jamaica) in *QPH*: Weeks 1 & 2 at the Drill Hall. 'Sistren's theatre is energetic, fast-paced and humorous, yet never loses its analytical purpose. Their work gives voice to the experience of poverty without ever submitting to a feeling of powerlessness.'

IVT: International Visual Theatre (France) in *La Boule*: Week 1 at the Lyric Studio.

La Compagnia del Collettivo in *Hamlet, Macbeth, Henry IV*: Weeks 1 & 2 at Riverside Studios.

La Theatre de la Marmaille (Canada) in *Taller Than Tears & L'Umiak*: Week 1 at Battersea Arts Centre, Week 2 at Jackson's Lane Community Centre.

Jozef Van Den Berg (Holland) in *Mother and the Fool & Message from One-Eye*: Week 2 at the Almeida Theatre.

Tabule Theatre (Sierra Leone) in *Bohboh Lef (Boy, Be Careful!)*, Week 1 Battersea Arts Centre, Week 2 Bloomsbury Theatre.

Maitu Njugira (Mother Sing

for Me). (Kenya and UK) Special LIFT production by Ngugi wa Thiong'o which 'relies entirely on music, song, dance mime and visual effects to dramatise a history of the colonial labour laws during the '30s...a celebration of traditional African cultural forms injected with contemporary content...a study of organised repression and in the development of organised resistance.

LIFT also has a wide-ranging programme of outdoor events, taking place in Covent Garden Piazza, Trafalgar Square, NT terrace, Barbican Terrace and Paternoster square. Week 1: Natural Theatre Company, 2 Reel Company, Zippo and co., Pookiesnackenburg, Sistren and Tabule. Week 2: Teatro Titeres La Tartana, Theatre de la Complicite, Jozef Van Den Berg, Cardiff Laboratory Theatre.

Also LIFT workshops, forums, exhibitions and festival centre entertainment at the Drill Hall (See separate listing.)

Liverpool

Bluecoat Gallery
Info (051) 709 5297
Until *August 6* Sound Sculptures by Max Eastley.
August 5 : Whirled Music—Max Eastley, Steve Beresford, Paul Burwell, David Toop.

Manchester

PAT (various venues)
Info (061) 224 0020
Green Room performance space opening soon. No details available at present.

Newcastle

Basement Group
Info (0632) 614527
On holiday. Instead, place our free flexidisc produced by them on your Dansette and close your eyes.

Nottingham

Midland Group
Info (0602) 582636/7
Autumn Performance Season opens *September 29* with The Shona People of Zimbabwe: Mbira Music.
Forthcoming events: People Show, '4 Days of Performance Art', TNT, Dance Umbrella events, Festival of Visual Theatre and more.

Rochdale

Rochdale Art Gallery
Dates unconfirmed. Phone for details.

Touring

Action Space Mobile
Info (0742) 643593
Residency with special production of *The Tempest* at Garston Adventure Playground, Liverpool. *August 8-13*
Society of Victorian Time Travel:

