RealTime

http://www.rtimearts.com/~opencity/

Australian bi-monthly arts on-line

Bad Taste, High Theatre
Karen De Perthuis at Australian Fashion Week

Archer's Adelaide Festival on Target
Prepare for your arts pilgrimage

Not So Common Knowledge
Jane McKemmish talks writing and teaching writing

Wi(c)ked
A personal view of Wik from Barbara Bolt

Marshall Maguire on playing commissions
Pam Kleemann and Sandy Edwards
How innovative is dance?

Illuminating Bill Culbert
New York performance
New Sydney galleries
Environmental arts
Magpie2

OnScreen

Mike Moore's First Movie
Peter Goldsworthy on The Castle

Adrian Martin on Wong Kar Wai
SFF/MIFF/BIFF
Waiting for Gonski
Performance Hysteria
Censorship
Bob Rafelson
Shock of the Ear
Video Positive
web grunge
Auteur TV
Cinesonic

about RealTime  contact RealTime  back issues  subscription  links  home
RealTime is celebrating three years of provocative coverage of the Australian arts. In 1994, the performance company Open City received a small seeding grant from the Australia Council to trial a national arts paper. The publisher’s vision for the paper was, as it remains today, to offer new approaches to critical writing on the arts; to provide an alternative focus to the mainstream media; to encourage intelligent and accessible writing giving voice to the diversity of Australia’s burgeoning arts scene.

RealTime celebrates this surge of creativity by providing a national forum where writers (including many practising artists) are encouraged to write about artistic creativity and to respond intimately to artworks while placing them in their social, political and cultural contexts.

Among the achievements of RealTime is its success over three years in delivering bi-monthly 25,000 copies free of charge to readers in capital cities and regional centres throughout Australia. This achievement is shared by all of the energetic team in Sydney and generous editorial committees across the country. The support of the Australia Council (New Media Arts Fund), the Australian Film Commission (Industry & Cultural Development Branch), the NSW Ministry for the Arts and our advertisers has been vital and sustained.

RealTime is embarking on its first international venture, covering the London International Festival of Theatre June 1–29. RealTime’s idiosyncratic and engaging on-site coverage of Barrie Kosky’s Adelaide Festival in 1996 attracted the attention of Lucy Neal, Director of the London International Festival of Theatre (LIFT). RealTime has been invited by LIFT to co-ordinate a team of six Australian writers—Richard Murphet (VIC), Wesley Enoch (QLD), Linda Marie Walker (SA), Zsuzsanna Soboslay (VIC), Keith Gallasch and Virginia Baxter (NSW)—and three British writers to create four special issues of RealTime at this significant and unusual international festival. LIFT will feature three Australian performances—The Geography of Haunted Places, 7 Stages of Grieving and The North—works from China, Israel, Palestine and many other countries. In Australia, the festival coverage can be read as it happens on RealTime’s new website. RealTime at LIFT is made possible through a partnership between LIFT and the Australia Council’s involvement in the newIMAGES program, part of a major cultural exchange between Britain and Australia in 1997. Open City’s expanded vision for RealTime over the next three years aims at broader and more frequent coverage of the invigorating contemporary Australian arts scene on-line. As we celebrate our first three years we premiere our new website http://rtimearts.com/opencycity/ Our thanks to our many readers, to our subscribers, to the artists and companies who advertise with us, to the funding bodies who support us, for all helping us create and sustain a vision.

3 Arts issues

6-7 International

8 Fashion

9-14 Visual arts

15-25 OnScreen

26-29 Dance

30-31 Literature

32-36 Performance

37-38 Music

39 Sports and Shorts
Wi(c)ked

Barbara Bolt sees dark contradictions in land, art and identity ownership issues in the Wik debate

SloPe-head. Gin. Cant face. Poofta. Such little words. Yet so expressive. Economical, even. Don't look at me like that. I'm not afraid of what you think. I am brave. I am proud of my dirty, mean, stinking little white mind. I will not be censured. I am an optimist. I am an Australian. Don't blame me. I was taught to look ahead.

Josephine Wilson

The Geography of Haunted Places

It is rumoured that there have been too many shows by Aborigines, gays and ethnic groups in public funded galleries in the 'City of Light', the 'State of Excitement'. The same is not said of the private commercial galleries, although Barbara Bean's commitment to Aboriginal art, at Artplace, might be perceived this way. And then there are those specialist galleries—Indigenous, Creative Native, Artists in Residence, but no-one really considers they are in contention. It has long been accepted that they cater mainly for tourists and as such are not the subject of critical interest, review or academic scholarship.

It is quite difficult to pinpoint the cause of growing disagreement amongst established artists, but there seem to be a number of themes circulating. The most frequently mentioned is that there is a need to keep packing them in, for a 'better' future.

The opportunity to talk about it, get it out of your system, talk about the hurt and the harm that has occurred is probably more benefit than anything else that will ever occur.

Federal Aboriginal Affairs Minister John Herron, The Australian October 7, 1996

But the hope for a 'talking cure' has receded rapidly and The Geography of Haunted Places has become prophetic. Was it fortuitous then, that the national tour of the performance coincided with Hansons's launch into the world of federal politics? Hanson keeps packing them in. In the meantime, apart from the promotional opening night, Geography has played to small clusters of the converted. (I wonder if it will be different when it is staged in London?)

And now its time for the lessons of history. You say I must go back. See what I never saw. Well quite frankly, I am mediocl. We are insulted. Of course we treated them badly. Very badly. Very very badly. Very fucking badly. But whot? Mif I don't owe them anything. Let me speak. Please. Get it out of your system. I will not be intimidated into silence. It is a free country. And I do love a sunburnt country.

Pauline Hanson quoted, The West Australian May 5, 1997

Hanson echoes Senator Herron's October 1996 statement in the Stolen Generation. "We shouldn't blame ourselves for the sins of our fathers and mothers. We can say they were terrible things but we can't blame ourselves because it wouldn't occur today. You can no more think of doing that than fly" (The Australian October 7, 1996). I'm experiencing a peculiar sense of vertigo. The ghost of the repressed returns.

Elizabeth Durack's confession to Robert Smith (Art Monthly March 1997) that Eddie Burrup was not an actual Aboriginal artist, but rather a creation of her own imagination, operates from the same logic as colonialism. Her gesture is as uninvited as the first landing. The coloniser takes what he/she wants and claim it under the pretext of cultural superiority.

In her article "The Incarnations of Eddie Burrup", Robert Smith claims, that Elizabeth Durack's assumption of Eddie Burrup as her alter ego was in fact a homage to Aboriginal Australia. As apologist for Elizabeth Durack, he suggests that her association with Aboriginal people prevents her from being sentimental, condescending or idealised, so that it "achieves true freedom from racial discrimination". She is "a concrete exemplar of reconciliation between two communities and two cultures" (Art Monthly, March 1997).

If by reconciliation Smith means Aborigines are reconciled to being represented by white Australians and have accepted the loss of their right to Native Title, I guess he has a point. But they haven't, and Elizabeth Durack's assumption of the persona of an Aboriginal male painter is antithetical to the spirit of reconciliation. To suggest otherwise is an absolute nonsense.

Moreover, what should be pointed out in this case is the link between the Durack family and the rights of pastoral leaseholders and Native Title. When Elizabeth Durack chose to exhibit Eddie Burrup's work in the 1996 Native Title Show exhibition at Tandanya in Adelaide, what was she thinking? How could she reconcile the contradiction between her own position as the daughter of one of the great pastoral lease holders in the Kimberleys and the aims of the exhibition? It is an irony that the Government should be in the process of extending the rights of pastoral leaseholders which will in effect eliminate Native Title, as Josephine Wilson points out, and Eddie Burrup, in Tandanya. Does she have no shame, or would the irony escape her? Perhaps she sees it as her birthright. After all her sister Mary's history of the Durack family's involvement in the Kimberley's is titled Kings in Grass Castles. Robert Smith is keen to tell us that "Aboriginal workers traversing other properties would let it be known...that they 'belonged' on the Durack's run" (Art Monthly March 1997). But who speaks for whom?

It comes down to a particular mechanism of silencing that is an aspectment of the other. A sense of what Aboriginal people feel about Elizabeth Durack's deceit can only be found in the letters to the editor in such newspapers as The Western Australian. This effacement of Aboriginal voices has been almost fully effected in the debate on Native Title, as Prime Minister John Howard slotted it out with the National Party. Wilson Tuckey is speaking for his electorate (have they evicted all Aboriginal people from his electorate of O'Connor?) and the Pastoralists and Graziers Association has pledged to fight for its members (obviously pastoralists and Aborigines are mutually exclusive categories). Howard's duty was to shed light on the matter, to clarify the principles set out in Wik, but in doing so he made his paramount concern very clear:

"I want to make it very clear to the farmers of Australia...I won't let you down...I can assure them I'm not going to sell them short. I'm not going to sell them out, I'm not going to let them down."

Prime Minister John Howard quoted, The Australian March 16, 1997

The prognosis for reconciliation does not appear optimistic. We are haunted by history. Viewing The Geography of Haunted Places against the backdrop of current events is unsettling. If I am not answerable for the actions of my father and mother, then am I answerable for my own actions? It seems that the self-reflexivity that can be achieved in art is totally lacking in the reductionistic rhetoric of politics. In this context, it is apt that Robert Smith has dubbed Elizabeth Durack a "concrete exemplar between two communities and two cultures", What he neglected to make clear was that the communities and cultures he was talking about were the Liberal party and the National Party. No-one else gets a guernsey.

Thanks to Josephine Wilson for allowing me access to the script of The Geography of Haunted Places, and to Estelle Barrett.

Stephen Smith

Eric Hefferon in The Geography of Haunted Places
Happy Third Birthday to all at RealTime.
May you 'real' in many more!
From all at LA MAMA, 30 years young in 1997.
...and congratulations on three years of adventurous, innovative and accessible writing on contemporary Australian arts
**Last rites and second comings**

In Beijing, Moscow and New York, Sally Sussman encounters the performative past in the present.

**Beijing**

The tightly structured performance piece ‘The Death of Deng’ dominates TV screens for the required 10 days of mourning, with endless replays of the heir apparent, Zhang Zemin, breaking down on national TV. (Echoes of Bob Hawke’s performance over the 1989 massacre, for which dearly departed Deng was responsible.) Every available piece of stock footage of Deng’s glorious past deeds is regurgitated to fill prime time television. Instructions are strict: there are to be no uplifting, amusing or happy programs during this period. It is a relief after the endless uplifting, amusing and happy programs during the pre-Deng’s death period, known as Chinese New Year. (I know this because most of the radical writers, directors and performers for theatre I knew are now working for TV, where they can earn big bucks working on soaps and serials.) The citizens of Beijing lock on in boredom. The upheaval that traditionally follows the end of an empire does not occur. Deng’s death has been anticipated for many months, perhaps even years. The only question discussed is how long Deng was actually dead before it became official. The citizen and happy program during the pre-Deng’s death period, known as Chinese New Year, seemed just that—a performance, a re-creation of another era, a curiosity, without the ideological heart of the original.

**Moscow**

A new museum, dedicated to hommage to Mayakovsky’s life and work has been built in the house where he committed suicide at the age of 32. Part walk-in installation, part Futurist theme-park, a Tardis-esque staircase leads the viewer to various chambers where Mayakovsky’s posters, poetic world, stage designs and life are displayed in strange 3D clusters. In a bright red chamber, a table, lavishly decorated and adorned with cutlery lies on its side as it is consumed by a machine—a recreation of a Mayakovsky poem on bourgeois consumption. I sidle up to this creation, wanting to photograph, when one of the plump, perfunctory middle-aged women who regulate all public spaces in Russia screams at me—can only photograph the installation if I photograph someone in front of it. I tramp up with a trio of unemployed young women and we manufacture scenarios in front of the pieces which are disassembled as soon as we are out of range. The last Chapman points to an alternate death scenarios for Mayakovsky and the final image, suggesting that the exhibition is continually updated. A photograph of the storming of the ‘Whitehouse’, the Russian parliament.

**New York**

From Mayakovsky’s museum to Richard Foreman’s theatre pieces, Pearl for Pigs, seems a short leap. Enter the blatantly deconstructive, self-reflexive world which seems to characterise much of New York contemporary theatre—a work, a world, an event, shifting directions and changing perceptions.

LIGHTS UP (In the audience’s eyes)

MUSIC IN (The same two bars repeated as needed)

ACTORS COME IN (Then leave and come in again)

MAESTRO: I don’t like the actors in this play.

PIERROT: I don’t like this play.

COLUMBINE enters, sidles up to Maestro and asks: "What’s this? A crude commodity artiste-fuck style fuck?"

MAESTRO: (to audience) Have you seen enough?

Pigs-crotch rubbing Old Dwarfs watch. They wear black conical spiral hats, sport padded bottoms, lacy stockings, aprons, full Edwardian ruffs, sideburns and flowery mantles. They are a crude dancing chorus, the props-masters, the masturbatory buffoons. By the time The Doctor arrives and asks Maestro: “Wait a minute, aren’t you an actor?” the hints are blatant: THIS IS A PHILOSOPHICAL PROGRESSION OF PERFORMANCE!

The mechanics and metaphors of theatrical artifice are literally subverted: a long bank of footlights is strung from the roof of the thrust stage and focused on the audience. Stage boundaries are marked by string. A baby prosthetic stage stands at the back of the space, its velvet curtains open, revealing a point to reveal a black board on which is scrawled “The Theatre of Disaster, The Theatre of False Starts, The Theatre of Misunderstanding”. Red velvet curtains on poles, like square-rigger sails are periodically brought on by the Old Dwarfs. Large hats, clapper boards, life-size picture frames are trained on the audience. Focus is literally pulled: the Old Dwarfs draw strings from pulleys attached to poles marking the perimeter of the stage towards the character or prop to be highlighted, like a Renaissance perspective drawing.

Foreman’s staging peccadilloes, I’m told, are all here: set pieces and props from past Ontological-Hysteric theatre pieces are recycled. Large white dies on poles are held behind performers heads like halos. Winding handles mounted on microphone stands known as ‘spinners’ are spun for effect. Everyone is miked. Structured like jazz riffs, the piece veers from the restrained to the profound with equal punch, punctuated by booming bangs, pings and pongs and abrupt lighting changes. The stage is rarely cleared; new props, ideas and artefacts are brought on at chaotic pace; the performance exist and then re召开, continuing where they left off. At one point The Doctor commands, "Make something shit happen!

and later, "There is no story in this". Decadence follows deconstruction as Maestro screams “MIND ATTACK!” and later, “Off with the false face!”: A guillotine is wheeled on and Maestro is duly beheaded. Bloody rubber head appears and dummies fly on. The final anti-climactic image of a dummy riding a carnival horse made with the legs of two performers, as Maestro looks on blankly.

A vast internal gyroscope seems to drive the piece. As David Patrick Kelly, who plays Maestro, says he is a last historical performer in many of Foreman’s pieces comments: "It’s a hard, hard way to work but when you’re on a stage it’s a very, very wonderful machine body...It’s as if Samuel Beckett decided to write a radio play for the Marx brothers."

Meanwhile, in another Downtown theatre, a Foreman protégé presents his crudely, joyously decaying world of references to current Downtown theatre concerns, including National Endowment for the Arts in the year 2000, conservative politics, the interrogation of the actor-audience relationship etc. For me, the highlight of this dreadful and navagatory show was the appearance of Rupert Murdoch, played with an accent suggesting Cockney, South African and New Zealand roots and wearing a grey suit and grey leather shoes. “Dingo slitme!”, yells one character.

As other New York artists wait for the demise of the big three white-males Richard Foreman, Robert Wilson and Lee Breuer who have dominated the avant-garde scene since the 70s—many wereCircle their ideas in cool Downtown colours.

**Another New York**

HAJI, Lee Breuer’s performance poem for one performer, three closed-circuit video cameras and Île de France formatted at the Public Theatre in 1983. The company, Mabou Mines, has been around since 1970, long enough to have accumulated a few regrets in performance. Fourteen years later, the technology which originally had to be “rehearsed” in performance now performs like liquid—a delicate dance of live and pre-recorded images slide, fragment and dissolve across three enormous screens, an extravagant dress table in front of which Ruth Maleczech performs her virtuosic journey through three generations.

I have nothing to hide," she quips to her image in the mirror and her filmed self underneath this, while applying thick makeup to construct a surface on which to build other identities. At the dab of a finger on her palette of make-up pots, Maleczech activates a computer program which directly hammers to hit the ornate glass bottles in front of her, which ring like cash registers or warning bells on a supermarket intercom. Her conversation on the checks and balances of relationships. The three cameras choreo the further progress of the episodes, like quare-rigger sails are details of monologue: "Cash & Carry. A pound of fleece at $2.19 a pound."

One camera pans her face as she repeatedly rings, another shows her wrinkled profile. while yet another focuses on a tissue in its box, on which is scrawled, “$2.19.”

Adding a scarf, she becomes the Child and interacts with memories of a significant journey with her father through Arizona, projected in three parts on the mirror. Over the video’s soundtrack, Arabic music is superimposed linking us with other mythic journeys. Haji is the Arabic word for the journey to Mecca which all Muslims must make at least once in their lifetime. Last, as Maleczech inserts her face into a rubber mask of the Father, there is a chilling moment: with the aid of eyebrowliner, her face becomes inscribed into the gravelly tones of the father while retaining the wispy upper registers of the Child. 

Texts, images, media and performances interact and resonate in a compelling and evolution of a social body and the layers of experience we inhabit. In Haji, we move beyond technology as a decorative, distracting or consistently cool surface. Maleczech here it has been honed to play an integral performative role: intimate, warm, humorous and visceral, as verse the virtuous live performer, the extraordinary Ruth Maleczech.

Sydney-based performance creator Sally Sussman is a resident artist with New York’s Mabou Mines Performance company.
Feasting on the body of art

Keith Gallash gets his first glimpse of the menu for the 1998 Adelaide Festival

Now's the time to start making those reservations for the 1998 Adelaide Festival. The first announcement of selected dishes from the festival menu suggests bold preparations by chef Robyn Archer, with fresh A-grade produce from arts shopping expeditions around the world.

There are impressive dishes on the menu and, as in the case with Adelaide, the names are not always well-known here but will be by the time they have been savoured and have left town. For those in the know, the interstial juices are ready and waiting to digest and taste their own Robert Le Page, Les Ballets C. de la B, Cloud Gate Dance Theatre, Heiner Goebel, and Sequenza.

It would also be the last time to feast in the Adelaide Festival manner. This is the gos of what Archer announces to a small group of journalists and arts writers over an intimate lunch in Sydney.

For the year 2000 she's cooking up something very different indeed and you sense that plans are well-advanced—and probably have to be given that there'll be lot cooking in the year of the Olympics. The classic menu served in an inner city setting will be re-stated in 1998, the model that came out of Edinburgh and which Adelaide in particular made its own. But Archer would like to ask audiences, why a festival, why this kind of festival, and her festival in 2000 will provoke responses and answers. She invokes a changing world, the mass concerts of the Three Tones, the meaningfulness of the concept of 2000 to a greater part of the world's population. What can she possibly have in mind?

In the meantime, she praises the Adelaide Festival as the one she's always admired for its intellectual underpinnings and promises us brain food—festival forums that transcend the "weird Art's syndrome," that "debate the arts, get the meat into it." She brings with her a "staging" with the eyes, seeing with the ears. Another shift in the sensory expectations and the promise of play with light that made the 1996 Festival's Orfeo so powerful. Of Orfeo, by the way, is set to appear in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra later this year and is not to be missed.

Hans Peter Kuhn, another up and famed dancer of German. Archer pays it was consciously planned at first and with her deep commitment to Eder and Weill's not at all surprising that it found its place on the menu by itself.

A major coup is German composer Heiner Goebel supported by the 18-strong Ensemble Modern and designer Jean Kalman (creating a space within the Festival Theatre). Goebel created a number of works with the late Heiner Muller (including a favorite of mine, Man in an Elevator, an ECM label CD), and in Black On White features poetry by Miller and Allen. It's described as a "theatrical shadow show." I particularly like the description of the dynamic of the work: "...the music forms the text of the piece, which is then seen by the staging: hearing with the eyes, seeing with the ears." Another shift in the sensory expectations and the promise of play with light that made the 1996 Festival's Orfeo so powerful. Of Orfeo, by the way, is set to appear in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra later this year and is not to be missed.

For further information on newIMAGES please call (02) 9328 2933.
**Bad taste, high theatre and performing absence**

Karen de Perthuis finds it's easier for fabric to be flawless as Australian Fashion Week in Sydney becomes a legitimate part of the cultural landscape.

Months of planning go into Australian Fashion Week. Coming up with a look that makes an original fashion statement involves choosing fabrics, styles, hem-lengths, accessories, footgear, hair, makeup, attitude. Then there's the networking, the thinking up of witty aphorisms for the interviews. And that's only the audience. God knows what it must be like for the designers.

The hype surrounding Fashion Week—now in its second year—that it was an unqualified success. Attended by influential overseas buyers and media (albeit, lured out here on all-expenses paid trips), given wide coverage by local newspapers and TV, the 'discovery' of a new fashion star, Akira Isogawa, the publicity provided by Linda Evangelista storming off in a huff, and with capacity crowds each day the organisers have reason to be satisfied. While it may be overly optimistic to expect that Sydney will eventually join Paris, London, New York and Milan as a fashion capital, Fashion Week itself does seem to become as integral a part of the local fashion scene as Jacqui O glasses. This is despite the fact that, in the short term at least, for most of those involved in financing the event a wiser fashion investment might have been a Prada bag.

For all the interest it projects, Fashion Week is not really much more than a glamorous trade fair. Held at the former Sydney Showground site under a cluster of white tents vaguely reminiscent of the Opera House sails, the space is dominated by an exhibition area where stall holders set up displays hoping to attract the attention of the much vaunted overseas buyers or, at the very least, more local ones. Entrance is limited to industry delegates and invited guests. The atmosphere is not unlike a well-dressed night at the Sydney Film Festival—lots of black, lots of would-be film-makers and the same sort of conversations about having slept in and missing the best show.

Country Road worked hard and failed to produce an atmosphere of eager anticipation whereas others could have shown a collection of paper bags and still have been the hottest ticket in town.

The staging, which consists of a central catwalk with spectators on three sides, means that the audience becomes a visual part of the show. Consequently, who is at a northern hemisphere trend away as what's on the models. In fact, until you get used to their presence, it is hard not to be distracted by the line-up in the front row which, along with the ubiquitous style gurus hiding behind dark glasses, consists of a collection of pop-stars, celebrities, very eligible bachelors and a generally glamorous which changes depending on whether, as a designer, you take your hat gold or black.

Judged by the mercy on the hip barometer, the coolest show was given by Peter Morrissey and Levina Edmondson, the designer team with more image than a mirror ball. Although only a relatively small label, they are probably the most recognisable designers in Australia due to their skill at self-promotion and ability to attract high profile clients. Each collection they produce is part of an ongoing narrative inspired by icons of popular culture and marketed via a series of postcards. On these cards the models are photographed in an established composition, always adopting the bold and sexually charged attitude which has become the Morrissey Edmondson signature. This attitude and composition was echoed in the show which, although following the standard format of models walking down the catwalk, turning and walking back again, nonetheless managed to excite the audience and live up to its over-hyped reputation.

The homogeneity of the shows was a problem addressed by few designers. With all the open-invitation participants showing in the same halls, many using the same models and often the same music, if the clothes or atmosphere were not extraordinary, it was difficult to create an individual identity and a memorable show. In an attempt to counter-act this, the Marc's label had 'real' people as models who chafted amongst themselves and to the audience. Lisa Ho altered the décor by carpeting the catwalk in grass and sending out bare-footed model and a generally more mysterious mood show was achieved by the under-rated New Zealand label Zambesi with the use of down beat music. The most interesting effect was achieved by the Melbourne label Saba which constructed a wall of video screens that flashed between the models on the catwalk and backstage.

Although the idea of a peek behind-the-scenes—outside the influence of Vegas, a coherent vision capable of operating outside the influence of overseas trends. While it may be too early to expect Fashion Week to parallel the successes of the Australian film industry in forging a national profile, it undoubtedly will become—with its atmosphere which combines theatre, dance party and the art gallery opening—a legitimate part of the cultural landscape.
New guard avant-garde

Jacqueline Millner scans recent developments in Sydney's alternative gallery scene.

The alternative gallery scene in Sydney has been heating and changing again of late. First Draft may have celebrated its tenth anniversary last year, but the average alternative space is not distinguished by such longevity. The last couple of years, have seen the loss of important and unique spaces such as Selenium (a beautiful, high-ceilinged room ideal for installations), as well as Airspace, Toast, and the short-lived Particle. However, in recent months a new confidence has emerged, marked by the opening of five new spaces committed to the promotion of fledgling practitioners, including two galleries catering to specific groups. One is 151 Regent Street which has been operating for around a year on the western edge of the city, the other, the new incarnation of Side-On Inc in Annandale, the establishment of Gallery 4A in the Haymarket and Room 35 in Darlinghurst. Together with Pendulum and CBD contemporary art spaces are now in force in the city.

Gallery 4A is enrobed in a commercial building in the heart of Chinatown, a small, bright room with grey linoleum floors and two windows looking over Oxford Street. Its location reflecting its founding rationale, for this gallery grew out of the Asian Australian Artists Association set up last year to promote formal links between arts professionals in Asia and Australia. The association has the patronage of some influential local Chinese, as well as the support of established Asian-Australian artists such as John Young, who sits on the gallery's management committee along with emerging artists including Felicia Kan and Emil Goj. The committee, in consultation with curator Melissa Chui, is responsible for programming the space. To date, this has been by invitation only, but the curator is now accepting proposals. This is not a commercial gallery; its goals are more altruistic, with much of the work hung here already in various collections, or exhibited courtesy of commercial galleries representing the artists. Yet, while the association has definite aims to nurture Asian-Australian artists, the gallery sees its scope in wider terms. It has featured Asian-Australian practitioners in the main, but it also positions itself within the alternative gallery scene as a whole, as its current, and this month's featured artist, Robert Nerve, is a charming and idiosyncratic group.
The GongHouse effect

Zsuzsanna Soboslay talks music, ritual and cultural survival with Neil McLachlan

Neil McLachlan lectures in acoustics theory at RMIT Melbourne, and was one of the founding members of GongHouse which was active in Melbourne between 1989 and 1993. GongHouse ran workshops in gamelan instrument-building and performance with schools, community groups, disabled children and indigenous peoples in Victoria and the Philippines. Some of this work included international collaborations with the Filipino theatre company Kaliwait in the Philippines in 1993 on Ground-Up, and in Victoria in 1996 on D1ce Place. GongHouse members worked with Indigenous Australians in Gippsland and the Western districts of Victoria between 1991 and 1996, culminating with Kaliwait members visiting Lake Tyers mission in Gippsland in 1996. This work was concerned with conceptions of time and space, and reconceptualising performance strategies with a strong socio-political focus on aspects of social and individual survival, the marking of territory and the utilisation of resources in social and artistic terms.

ZS You described to me a striking performance image from Ground-Up: a woman wounding bullets in a basket usually used to winnow grain. How was Ground-Up devised?

NM We visited tribal villagers whose survival depended on their ability to grow food, resist armed attack and maintain their cultural integrity in order to make land rights claims for their ancestral domain. This involved skills in farming, singing, dancing, and making houses, musical instruments and guns in politically hostile environments. Their lands were stripped of the forests which were their primary physical and cultural resource, making the continuance of their cultural traditions very difficult.

We made a collaborative performance in four sections. In the first, an imagined culture was performed within well-defined social/performance parameters. In the second, we performed the loss of this culture under the conditions of armed conflict, with each performer ritualising dysfunctional/independent behaviours. The transition between these sections was defined by a religious procession of clearly Spanish Christian origin. Each individual performance in section two was informed by our experiences with the villagers and their descriptions of their plight—"our people are like branches cut from a tree."

ZS A huge experience of loss...

NM Except that in this project, the final section was devised as a place reinstating itself—at the creation of a rituals integrating new economies and social forms, and utilising imported materials and methods to replace those lost.

ZS So this work emphasised a re-creative aspect. That's not how I remember some of GongHouse's earlier work, which also involved invasion, and fracturing. I'm thinking of Kaspar's Wake, performed outdoors at the Melbourne International Arts Festival in 1993. Perhaps this is because GongHouse, whilst politically concerned with invasion, was not yet working with the re-creative urgencies of a specified indigenous group.

NM Kaspar's Wake was a physical, music-theatre work first produced by GongHouse for performances in collaboration with the writer/director Andrew Lindsay and designer/sculptor Sally Marsden. In this piece, we illustrated the remnants of a militant band from an invaded culture attempt to bury a fallen comrade somewhere on the uniform, asphalt grid of a foreign city.

In the wake of this grid their rituals fail and the horrors of war are re-lived as group hallucinations, fracturing the spatio- temporal order of their ancient gamelan music. The performers eventually mimic their own death, and seamlessly rejoin the initial ritual, evoking an impression that these movements have been repeated endlessly, ritualised in the absence of resolution. The music ends, the performers repack the funeral pyre and leave in a funeral march as they arrived—drapes drifting across a featureless plain, hopelessly repeating themselves, testing locations to find a repository for their bones, a place worthy of memory.

ZS Is ritual a testing of, or being tested by a place?

NM Perhaps "place" is a vessel created for us and by us in dialogue with generations before. This vessel is a background or a subconscious layer within which other layers of self are folded. Changes in these layers occur as we age. Place can define social boundaries, creating territories of time. The importance of testing a place is to be able to discern some expectation of what may occur in the next repetition of some action or event...

ZS ...making adjustments in time within continuities of time. Certain [Levi-Staussan] anthropological views of ritual names it essentially a conservative force, a means of continuity with past practices and maintenance of survival and social strategies. Invasion and territorial decimation seem to exhaust every resource with which to enact ritual. This often happens for people faced with so-called interactive [computer] environments—a kind of blindside blighting the possibilities for performance...Your Port Phillip Bay proposal, however, links technology with the experiential "soft" arts of sound in environment.

NM Port Phillip may be identified as a bay by its system of water flows, or by its coastline, both of which are so large that they can only be recognised as a bay when charted or viewed from aircraft. But this fixed, distant and instanlising view destroys the temporal experience of place; the rituals of testing, identification and remembering.

ZS So the proposal sets out to be a cultural and sensory bio-feedback system?

NM And one, perhaps, creating, streamlining and contextualising information essential for survival.

ZS And this links back to your earlier work va...

NM ...a concern with the corporeality of sound, performance, and the experience of time—the devising of instruments to match this aspect, a convergence of art, information, and communal processes.

The Port Phillip Project: Geelong foreshore installations

transducer: A device for converting variations in one physical quantity, as pressure, brightness, etc., quantitatively into variations in another, as voltage, position, etc.: esp. a device for converting a non-electrical to an electrical signal.

The New Shorter Oxford Dictionary In The Phenomenology of Perception, Merleau-Ponty describes perception as the act which simultaneously creates clusters of data and the meaning which unites them. Therefore, the transducers we use to record and expand our environment, are themselves, measures of what we expect, or hope, to find them. Sculptural installations inspired by the instruments of science, music and the visual arts, will transcribe varying environmental forces into mathematical and poetic metaphors. To mention just a few ideas: sound installations such as floating bells moored across the expanse of the bay and wave organs along the board walks or peers will record wind, while drawing machines and anvil harps and flutes will record the wind. Ancient and modern forms of rain gauges, thermometers, barometers, chronometers etc. will be reflected in large and small works placed on sites relevant to their use at such times. Corio Bay may become an essential port of call for any-one fascinated with understanding relationships between culture and nature.

Neil McLachlan
Artspace & Multicultural Arts Alliance present

INTERZONE 7

culture + theory + performance

THURS 19 JUNE 7PM

performance by Debra Petrovitch

TESS DE QUINCEY
STUART LYNCH
CARMENT OLSSON

Solo³ + Inferno² + The Tinsel Devils

project by PEGGY WALLACH

With Joanne Assaf, Suhaila Amin-Rezaei, Linda Dement, Kathleen Mary Fallon, Wendy Harmer, Sapideh Kian, Lindy Morrison, Amanda Stewart, Tina Stephens, Malina Tsoutas, Ania Walwicz and women from the Bondi Senior Citizens Band

Conception Peggy Wallach & Nicholas Tsoutas

supported by the Theatre Fund of the Australia Council

COINCIDENCE - Video by VERA HONG

ONG KENG SEN LECTURE

Avant-garde performance director of the South East Asian Lab in Singapore will give a lecture on the Flying Circus Project which explores the complex questions of Asian identity through post-modern, interdisciplinary and cross-cultural approaches

Ong Keng Sen workshop - JULY 12 contact Ali Manesh MAA 9550 9259

a cross-cultural dialogue initiative by PARALLELO - in association with DOPPIO TEATRO

ARTSPACE

43-51 Cowper Wharf Rd Woolloomooloo NSW 2011 tel 9368 1899 fax 9368 1705 email artspace@merlin.com.au

INTERZONE 1 - 8 has been funded by the NSW Ministry for the Arts
Meeting Bill Culbert

Virginia Baxter speaks with the light man at Gitte Weise Gallery

Years ago I found a small black book with an embossed light globe on the cover and the name of the New Zealand born artist Bill Culbert. Ten years later I meet him in Sydney at Gitte Weise's Gallery in Oxford Street, Sydney. He's making a little something for tonight's exhibition opening. In Thailand, on the way here, he collected six plastic water bottles with blue writing. He's cutting out a box to hold the bottles and the fluorescent tube to illuminate them.

He tells me about the two exhibitions he's prepared for the Avignon Festival in July. One will be in Gallery Apollinaire, a derelict chateau converted to flats. Here he will exhibit 'An Incident in Marlowe's Office'. He'll remove one of the derelict chandeliers in the chateau and replace it with another made from the components of an office chair. The piece is inspired by a line from Raymond Chandler's Farewell My Lovely:

A wedge of sunlight slipped over the edge of the desk and fell noiselessly to the carpet

We talk about changing light and he shows me slides of his recent exhibition at the Serpentine Gallery in London: a neon cloud, two large tiptrucks discharging loads of blue light. In another installation, he's worked with an electronic engineer to make light imperceptibly shift between two large sailcloth containers. Light empties from one vessel as the other fills up. We look at earlier works from 1976: one lit globe, one dull, a black space—showing the empty space. Another work, from 1975: here the dead bulb has a shadow, the lid a reflection. Twenty years later the idea still takes him.

We walk through Stoplight, his new exhibition. He talks about Duchamp's door for three rooms, three spaces controlled by one door, about his own earlier work in which an open door, its shadow and the light beyond form three rooms. Here, light is embedded in six plywood doors leaning off the walls. We always think of light coming through things. Here, light is inside the door. The effect is elusive. These doors are not quite objects. This is not quite an installation. They're not sculptures. This is not furniture. These illuminated constructions are not lights. They're self-lighting installations.

In Bill Culbert's work, things grow larger as you move away, contradicting Renaissance ideas of perspective. Light travels through windows and floors—sometimes literally in shafts of neon tubes. Multiple tubes lie across highly reflective concrete floors that look like water. Which reminds him of another piece. We flip through my little black book. A displaced window leans on the ground. When he sees this work, he's excited again, "The adrenaline flows when you get an idea like this". The pleasure of ordinary objects.

"Where do you find things?" I ask. He tells me about his pursuit of a particular wine glass that got him thrown out of various shops—possibly because he carried with him a suitcase, a bottle of wine and a light on a chord.

My sense of the dramatic possibilities in his work compels me to ask Culbert about the effects of light? Blinding light? Tortuous light? But he's not interested in the emotiveness of light. The mystery of light is not in his own psyche. It can happen but it's not intense. "In the 20th century everything has been blown up. Everything freed. Now you can look at something like light." Spiritual ideas to do with light he finds depressing. He is interested in the physics, the logic of light. He started out as a painter. So, either he's taken with an idea of light and finds a way to demonstrate this quality or he's taken with an object that emits or transforms light and re-presents that object. Like meeting the man himself, encountering Bill Culbert's work is pure pleasure. In this room full of doors, I'm reminded of other possibilities. Light goes and comes back. No end is in sight. In the corner, the line of blue and white water bottles from Thailand emit their silent light.

WANTED.
EMERGING VISUAL ARTISTS

EVA has quickly become recognised as one of this country's most innovative opportunities for young artists.

The vision continues to encourage emerging visual artists aged 18-35 to submit their work in categories including painting, sculpture, ceramics, decorative art and works on paper. Artistic work will be selected for exhibition with a major prize of a return airfare to Paris, courtesy of Malaysia Airlines, and cash prizes will be awarded to category winners.

If you are interested in being part of EVA contact Chris Henshall for an application form.

Telephone: (08) 8216 5552
Facsimile: (08) 8216 5588

Entries close:
31st July 1997

Exhibition: 22nd August - 31st August 1997.
Where: Wyatt Hall, Pulteney Grammar School. 190 South Terrace, Adelaide.

Proudly sponsored by

STILLS ARTISTS ON VIEW

Part 1: June 5 to July 12 • Part 2: July 15 to August 30

A farewell exhibition before moving

Stills Gallery
16 Elizabeth Street, Paddington 2021
Wed - Sat 11.00 - 6.00 pm
Picturing vinyl and Babylon

Vikki Riley talks to New York bound Melbourne-based photographer and installation artist Pam Kleemann

VR You are currently working on two forthcoming exhibitions, No Place Like Babylon for the CCP in Melbourne in July and then in September a show at 17 Creations Gallery in New York City. No Place Like Babylon looks at cities and notions of architecture as social space but your New York show is a return to your experiments with vinyl records as a surface. How did the New York show come about?

PK Quite inadvertently, I came across the 17 Creations Gallery opposite the biggest and busiest photo supplies outlet in New York City. It was showing an exhibition of Delta Blues photographs. I ventured down a short laneway, entered the gallery, looked at the work, met the photographer, we talked, he introduced me to the director, I made an appointment. An intimate space, showing photographs of musicians seemed a likely prospect. Several days later I returned with my Slim Whitman Story box full of my own photographic picture discs. Marianne Giona, the director, immediately loved the work and offered me an exhibition. It’s an extension of the show I had in Melbourne last year, Who Said Vinyl is Dead?, with more recent images added to it, many of which were shot in New York in ‘94 and ‘96.

VR Your work with vinyl records is the culmination of a long involvement with musicians and performers who are outside of the ‘white’ music mainstream—African stars like Manu Dibango and Majek Fashek. The unique photographic process you used gives each record its own ‘face’, personality. It is an extension of the way I work.

VR What then inspired your city photography which make up the No Place Like Babylon show? It seems like a huge leap from the intimate and subjective to a wider panorama you never get to see.

PK No Place Like Babylon will be a simulation of a darkroom with prints washing in trays side by side in a sink and strips of photos pegged to the walls. I’m really drawing a parallel here with the island of Manhattan being surrounded by waterways and also its subterranean aspect. Water is an integral part of many cities and the photographic process. In this way the installation reflects my initial awe in how such a small land mass could support such density of architecture and population—like a city drowning under the weight of itself—angles and cantilevers, crevices and concrete awash in a kind of photoslab. I want to impart a sense of revisiting a city where new buildings seem to magically materialise just like an image coming to life in a darkroom. Where empty space takes on texture and density and is transformed. Looking around the darkroom, strip-proofs form a panorama that could not possibly be taken in at one time from one viewpoint.

VR You get a sense from the pictures of being enveloped by both beauty and ugliness, mutated, repetitious. Some of the buildings are seen as harsh, others pristine and elegant. Why call the exhibition No Place Like Babylon?

PK What seems to have happened is post-industrial New York and indeed in many cities around the world, is that manufacturing is being displaced, without being replaced, so the city has become a centre of administration and commerce rather than production. This idea is discussed fully in Robert Fitch’s book The Assimilation Of New York. It is not dissimilar to how ancient cities worked. Fitch says that ancient cities were primarily places where elites lived, practised sacred rites, consumed and gave orders. In New York there would be no production within the city limits. The new urban establishment would live purely off surplus produced elsewhere. Babylon was like this. Commodity production took place in the countryside. It’s also about the city as a centre for bankers and merchants, where social ranking is determined by income.

VR The city as a monument of social inequality?

PK Babylon was the greatest city in the second millennium, and has long since taken on the symbol of human arrogance, of towering above the rest of the world, symbolising greatness, wealth, excess, technological advancement. It’s not hard to think of modern cities like this.

Pamela Kleemann, untitled, 1996/97, laminated photographs in water
Ear to the ground

Virginia Baxter absorbed in Incognito

Here in the Performance Space Gallery on a rainy Friday afternoon, the room is appropriately gloomy for reflection. The screens scattered through the space are like small hearths. Alone in the gallery, I move into Caroline Farmer's four-screen installation, *A girl jumps differently*. On one monitor, a woman's head and shoulders, her hair full of air. Above her, billowing parachute silk. On three screens opposite, identical electric fans blowing. It's a video stunt but suddenly, I feel the cold. Airhead! I should be thinking about the bifurcated nature of the female, the topography of the grotesque body. These ideas jump around as I wait to see what happens to the girl.

Meanwhile, my feet are moving to the next room where six floor monitors screen day-glo messages—"Don't" and "Stop", "The Flow". In her Queensland studio, Claire Fletcher was thinking pink, thinking purple, thinking Brisbane, city of theme parks, thinking conspicuous consumption and all that is beautiful in the everyday. Here in Sydney my downcast eyes register bland minimalism, and maybe too quickly, urge me on, glancing backwards at the jumping girl.

In Room 3. I step into the installation by Joy Hardman (*Alice Springs*) and decide to stay a while. I Spy is installed in a corner by a door. Here the artist sits crossedlegged inside a small monitor on the floor in a pile of red sand, surrounded by twigs and cans. She whispers and obscures her eyes with leaves, flecks of mica, feathers and bercans, then performs a sort of ritual blessing over a collection of ordinary objects on the sand in front of her. An aluminium teapot is magically altered.

One of the reasons I can't hear what she's saying is the insistent voice at the other end of the room coming from *Saying*, another Joy Hardman work. There, on another floor monitor, another personification of the artist earnestly belts out Christian hymns with accompanying gestures. Above, reflected in that same shiny teapot, she appears again performing a variety of indolent actions (counting money, dealing cards). Overlaying this screen is a circular frame projecting a ghostly film loop of arms gesturing out into the air. The puzzle of these images holds me until the voice drives me away. I poke my nose back into Room 2. "Go" "with the flow". I have already forgotten what I saw there a minute ago, which may have been what Claire Fletcher had in mind. Back to the corner. What is she saying down there in the dust? I get down on me knees and move my ear to the screen, one hand in the sand. Suddenly intimate, I catch:

I spy with my little eye something beginning with W... whitefella an blackfella bein careful about what they say about money an blackfella politics... Riddle me ree. Riddle me ree. Tell me somethin you can see blackfella watchin JanggaJang videos and eatin McDonalds in the McDonald Ranges. I spy with my little eye something beginning with W... whitefella thinkin they been specially chosen to learn blackfella' secrets.

Suddenly someone else enters the room. Caught screen hopping, I scramble up from the floor. Is that the time? Easily an hour has passed. I scuttle backwards through the exhibition, missing the colour messages, still pulsing a pink "Don't". Daring a parting glance at the still jumping girl with the fans, hair flying. I fall into the street.

In* Incognito*, The Performance Space Gallery May 7-24

A rare performative element in the first and immediately popular Sculpture by the Sea event was Venus Observes. It is the third piece in an on-going work, *Fragments from the Discourse of the Nude*, that explores desire and subjectivity from the position of the object, here the form of the female nude and artist's model. In this time-based sculpture, *The Birth of Venus* is reinterpreted with the intention of investing power with the objects of desire. Not only do they possess blackfellas watchi...
Love Action

Adrian Martin’s rapturous descent into the grace-noir of Wong Kar-Wai’s Fallen Angels

We all know that the cinema is obsessed with love, with romance, and most especially with the couple. The theorist Raymond Bellour captured the imagination of a generation of film students when he said something like: "the cinema is a machine for creating the couple". And he meant that pretty literally: no matter what intrigue twists and turns there are in a movie plot, we end up, a million times over, with the final clinch, the final kiss, the embrace, and the whole world of the film shrinks to that moment, that gesture, before the final fade-out.

It may have something to do with me as much as something to do with cinema, but I too have become obsessed with what it takes to get to that kind of final moment in a film. The idea of a "hot connection" in movies, the final, crowning, sublime kiss or whatever, is not a mystical or abstract or purely sentimental idea. It’s a very tangible, palpable, physical business. It’s a matter of getting two bodies into the same space; a matter of getting two pairs of eyes to lock together at exactly the right moment. Of course we’re in some particularly rarefied realm of romantic movie fantasy here, where everything leads to this singular second of love connection, a connection that does not have to go under the scrutiny of any further reality test. But every fantasy, if it’s a good fantasy, has its charge, and also its truth.

So, as I was saying, romantic movies are about getting two bodies together. Two bodies that are on separate courses, travelling on two separate paths. It’s a dance of sorts, lovely and sometimes agonising. The agony comes when those paths cross over, but still the lovers-to-be somehow do not recognise each other; their time has not yet come. I remember the plot of that strange Alan Rudolph film Made in Heaven, where two people who fall in love in the after-life are reincarnated back on earth, and then spend the rest of the movie wandering around before their great sparkling moment of destiny. I also think of the more down to earth romantic agony that you get in comedies. Here, the lovers might know each other already, they might even be married already, but things keep intervening that get in the way of their moment of physical union. Youngsters on their parents’ porch can’t get in their first kiss; newly marrieds can’t consummate their first night.

The first teacher of film studies I ever had, long ago, once said to the class: look at how many times kisses are interrupted in old Hollywood films. And he was dead right: ever since then, I have been chilled and nagged and frustrated by literally hundreds of glancing, incomplete, furtive pushes in cinema. Sometimes, it’s all I take away from certain films: that damn kiss that didn’t happen until the final shot. Now, you can call that "visual tension" if you like, and that’s part of it, but it’s not the whole story: it’s romantic tension in a full-blown way.

One of the things that most characterises the modern era in movies, as opposed to the Golden Days of Hollywood era, is the problem of how much harder it is these days to get to that final moment of kiss or union. I don’t only mean that the problems facing modern lovers seem infinitely more complex and neurotic. I mean that the films themselves, or their filmmakers, seem very tentative, wary, troubled by the prospect of ending a movie this way. They don’t want to seem too corny, and are leery of that "false" imagery, and that’s part of it, but it’s not the whole story: it’s romantic tension in a full-blown way.

And then there’s another kind of movie response to the difficulty of modern love. And that’s to stress the redemptive, magical, even miraculous aspect of a final kiss. It’s as if, after a film has shown so much contemporary-style confusion and despair and violence and emptiness, suddenly there comes along this singular moment of grace which is the kiss. The famous ending of Woody Allen’s Manhattan mixes the ironic and the miraculous—using, as so many modern romantic comedies do, that desperate run or dash to catch up with a departing lover. A more extreme example is Edward Yang’s recent Taiwanese film Mahjong, where a lacerating scene of murder and death is abruptly followed by one of the the sweetest snogs between young things in the street that I’ve ever seen.

And now we cut to a new movie, one of the truly great movies of the year: Hong Kong director Wong Kar-Wai’s Fallen Angels. Wong is a wildly acclaimed filmmaker whose work I didn’t take to straight away, but when I first saw his film Chungking Express. The droll, lazy, meandering feel of that film, the dwelling on the rather groovy surface of everything in sight, whether hairdos or tableware or LCD players, this all alienated me rather than drew me in. But with Fallen Angels, I just fell headlong into the fragile and sensual world of Wong Kar-Wai. It is truly a sad, sexy, hypnotic film. And the condition of modern love, the disputed passage towards unlikely or impossible moments of romantic union, that is the central, perhaps sole topic of this quietly obsessive masterpiece

We know this from the first dazzling moments of Fallen Angels: In a striking black and white conclusion, a man and woman are sitting, silent, languid, smoking. Nobody films the body-language of tiredness and languor like Wong Kar-Wai. Everyone in his films is at all times slumped and stretched out, the weight of the world is sending their emotional gravity straight down to the bottom of whatever space they are occupying, trainseat or bedsheet or barstool. This man and woman in the opening shot of the film are also shot somewhat kookily with an exaggerated wide angle lens. This lens distorts and distends space, making these people look a mile away from each other when they are in fact quite close. Virtually the whole of the film is shot in this way, which gives the film an almost psychedelic feel. Anyhow, we have this man and woman, and finally some desultory words that encapsulate their cool, modern relationship: “Are we still partners?

In truth, it is an odd partnership between these two, known as Agent (that’s her) and Killer (that’s him). It’s a professional partnership, of sorts: they share a living room office space, a seedy little cul-de-sac, but inhabit it at separate times, different hours. She cruises local locations for him, which he then shows up at, in order to kill people. The narrative whys and wherefores of this bizarre assassination game remain completely abstract and obscure. There’s death—sudden, senseless, a beautifully choreographed slow-motion mayhem—and then there’s love, unspoken, unrequited, filling every lonely, sad crevice of this eternal Hong Kong night. That’s the universe of Wong Kar-Wai, a universe of complete and utter disconnection, of ephemeral moments, of time forever wasting, and of a certain, voluptuous oblivion. All the characters here are fallen angels when we meet them, and they keep falling still further, unless a gesture of love can redeem them for a precious second.

But, for all the moroseness, there is an unusual lightness to Wong’s vision: he shows you disconnection without the usual dose of maudlin alienation, he gives you grunge without the usual component of revved-up angst. Instead, it’s just a great, floating world, with the characters floating through the most exquisitely realised and rendered spaces and places. Everything is corridors and stairways, squiggly, labyrinthine tunnels of passage in Fallen Angels, all cramped little corners and concentrated spaces. There’s a great gag, where a woman plonks herself next to a guy in a McDonalds, making as if the place is so crowded she has nowhere else to sit; the camera then swings around to show that it is cavernously empty. In another superb moment, the start of a one night stand is dramatised in a woman’s frenetic attempts to get her chosen man up the front steps of her apartment block; she caresses him, she keeps running up and down the steps, she tries to physically drag him up.

Almost everybody gets very lost and confused watching Wong’s films, even his most fervent fans. And I’ve finally realised why: he plots the paths of a lot of different characters, but he films them all in very similar settings, often the same settings, in a kind of rondo or progressive circulation. The different characters in Fallen Angels, like in Chungking Express tend to bleed into each other: they all have a ghastly, two-dimensional, shifting quality. There is in fact a sublime part in the film where one guy says in voice-over on the soundtrack: "some women are like water—some men, too." That dreamy statement is accompanied by a shot that goes on forever of this man and woman, a liquid image that seems streaked or even deformed by rain, and the man’s head keeps approaching the woman’s shoulder and withdrawing from it...And so these various watery characters might represent different aspects of one very disconnected human being, one very divided soul. Every character embodies a different kind of extreme: whereas Agent, for instance, is withdrawn, solitary and solipsistic, another character named Ho is a mute, but he gets by through an excess of contact, finding himself on everybody until they give him what he wants. The scenes involving Ho have an improvised, playful slapstick quality that is just hilarious.

Everyone in Fallen Angels is either too close, or too far apart. Lovers never meet, but strangers suddenly grasp each other in bars to rave, or wall and cry on a shoulder. They all search for a middle distance, a comfortable, shared ground, that they can never find... The pathos of Wong Kar-Wai’s films is very tense and new and particular. On the one hand his films are elegies to loneliness—Loneliness is ultimately the film's centrifugal force.
Features

Love Action

* From page 15

force*, as Tony Rayns has said of Fallen Angels. With reference to the extraordinarily compelling scenes of mutilation in this film, Larry Gross puts it even better: “Nothing is more typical of the world of Wong Kar-Wai than a sex scene where one of the participants isn’t present”. All his characters spend all their wasted, waking moments trying to mark the time, to mark their territory, as all lived meaning slips right through their fingers. And yet there is still some sort of longing for origins, for family, for the memory of some fragile community in this shattered world. Like Wim Wenders in the 1970s, Wong returns to the difficult theme of family ties, of lost young things finding and resolving some bond with their parents. Like romantic love, it’s not a very easy business, and its conclusions are never especially solid, but finally rather touching relationship with his father, a relationship mediated mainly through a video camera, that’s one of the surprisingly moving aspects of this film.

Above all, Fallen Angels communicates its intense feelings of yearning and paths through its extraordinary style. It’s hardly a narrative film; it is like one great, sustained tone poem. Every one of its feelings depends on the sustained intensity of colours and faces and gestures, of spaces and places that blur and streak into one another through the rapidity of its pace. It is sinister, macabre, at times even morbid: the rock video or MTV aesthetic raised to the highest form of cinema art. This is a film in which the rush of a train, the blur of shoes on pavement, the rain on a window or the tablecloth suffused with the sad eyes of a film lover on the moon above the skyscrapers in the Hong Kong sky. Don’t miss your fleeting, precious connection with this remarkable film.

This review was broadcast in edited form on The Week In Film, ABC Radio National, April 19, 1997

Mike Moore’s first movie

Peter Goldsworthy muses on the Frontline team’s foray into film with The Castle

It’s the only television I watch each week without fail, but how do they keep it up? With Frontline scripts now also set at Year 12 level on the Victorian VCE English syllabus, its penetration as a media critique gives it a reach far beyond that of Media Watch, whose obsessive snobbery on matters of spelling (albeit often hilarious) is too infrequently balanced by exposes of the calibre of the ‘Barcelona-Tonight’ fraud, or Son-Colostom harassment. (No doubt budgetary constraints keep Media Watch a little stunted.) A recent report in The Advertiser told of an Adelaide current affairs reporter, researching a story in Broken Hill on lead pollution, having an interview stopped by a Hillie with the line: “I’ve seen Frontline—I’m not having a bar of that!”

The cynicism of the commercial current affairs programs is sated to great comic effect on Frontline—but are programs like A Current Affair becoming too soft a target? Putting it another way, parody must find it increasingly difficult to compete with the self-parodying reality. Of course, Frontline has taught many to see A Current Affair and such-like as self-parodies. It may be that Frontline will eventually need to move in the direction of satirising the genuinely pious and sanctimonious rather than the merely cynically pious and sanctimonious—that is, to satirise ABC current affairs rather than the commercial variety. This is not to say Frontline has shifted the hard yards. The Pauline Hanson program was one such yard.

The program has the neatness and patness of commercial sitcom—the interleaving themes of any given program always tie up deftly, and usually hilariously, in twenty nine minutes flat. Leaving aside the Awesome Foursome of scriptwriters, the balance of the ensemble cast, as with a sitcom such as Seinfeld, is a great part of the success—recognisable cartoon types, but still human enough for us to identify with and feel for to some extent. There is also the sense of continuity. My own fear is that the wonderful Emma will end up in bed with the sleaze-bag Raylan—if only because Nick at Night keeps jumping on his wife like a shooting Bary-Sanders, and riding off into violent sunsets. To appear on Frontline as yourself—or at least as a slightly larger-than-life yourself—is becoming the true measure of celebrity in this country. Frontline’soods of fame or fortune import from Hollywood the image of a man on a mere Monday Show or 9PM—or even (best of all) Club Buggery. Murs and publicists must be falling over each other to try to influence the show’s producers—with, I guess, limited and much chance as it is to succeed. A lot of money and smoke.

Someone told me recently that she thought the recent programs had fallen off a bit, and wondered if this was because the team had been working too hard on their movie. I can’t see it myself. But what of the reverse? Have they had the time to make a decent move in the direction of satire, and how could that go? I’ve seen a lot of Bob Sitch, possibly direct a movie? Such is the iridant power of Sitch’s Frontline frontman personas that this stupid question actually crossed my mind, and lingered there for a microsecond longer than it should.

I can say that Mike Moore definitely didn’t direct this movie. It’s very funny, and very Feel Good, and the little guys win out over big business, although it doesn’t start out looking that way. It starts out looking like a rather cendessing satire of the middle lower-class working class wink-wink, nudge-nudge, isn’t the taste of the Westies terrible. Tow-truck operators, greyhound owners, and especially hairdressers must squirm every time they go the movies these days—at least since Muriet’s Wedding, and Strictly Ballroom. This style of satire is not far from Humaphrey’s Moonie Ponds; or, P. White’s Sarpanapa. But where that great bitch Patrick White’s comic vision of suburban Australia was fuelled mostly by great hate, and the dysfunctional families of Muriet’s Wedding and Strictly Ballroom have to help work the Kerrigans of The Castle are saved by the love they feel for each other. (Or their creators are saved from a charge of misanthropy by the love they give them.) Since they all love each other, we can’t help loving them too, cartoon dimensions notwithstanding. One review of my favourite movie of last year, Fargo, attacked the Coen brothers for their sending up of the Minnesotan accent in such a patronising way, perhaps, but surely it was a loving send-up. We know whose side we are on. Fargo, despite its violence, is also redeemed (unlike the shifty and shallow Pulp Fiction) by its immense heart and moral core. In The Castle, Bob Sitch and the broad Australian tongue strikes me as way more of the same. It’s your worst—but we finally don’t care. The Kerrigans, like A Current Affair, might also be too soft a target—but they are not, in the end, the target of this film, they are its heroes. They take a bit of arriving there, there are some questionable moments on route. The laughter of the audience when we learn that Darryl met Sal at the dog track struck me as a bit snobnish—but then I speak as a former (unsuccessful) greyhound owner. The shrieks when Darryl lumbers out in his Uggs—“look at those Uggs!” one patron actually shouted aloud in my Adelaide cinema—also seems to reflect some insecurity, or unexamined snobbery. I haven’t got a pair, but wouldn’t mind. Most of the patients in my general practice wear them to consultations—and they look mighty comfortable.

There’s a running Frontline gag about Adelaide being some kind of Eastern Front, or Siberia, to which people are transferred as punishment. It popped up again in the movie: some poor sod ends up digging post-holes in Adelaide. No laughs in Adelaide, but a target—but they are not, in the end, the target of this film, they are its heroes. They take a bit of arriving there, there are some questionable moments on route. The laughter of the audience when we learn that Darryl met Sal at the dog track struck me as a bit snobnish—but then I speak as a former (unsuccessful) greyhound owner. The shrieks when Darryl lumbers out in his Uggs—“look at those Uggs!” one patron actually shouted aloud in my Adelaide cinema—also seems to reflect some insecurity, or unexamined snobbery. I haven’t got a pair, but wouldn’t mind. Most of the patients in my general practice wear them to consultations—and they look mighty comfortable.

There’s a running Frontline gag about Adelaide being some kind of Eastern Front, or Siberia, to which people are transferred as punishment. It popped up again in the movie: some poor sod ends up digging post-holes in Adelaide. No laughs in Adelaide, but a

image without frontiers (a cultural consultancy directed by Hunter Corda and Kari Hanet) is pleased to announce a new network promoting the arts, *education and cultural exchange in the Pacific Rim.*

**Frontline**

Artspacific Network is an alliance involving galleries & exhibition spaces; artists & photographers; musicians & performers; film & video makers; archives and festivals; publishers & writers; cultural organisations, planners & policy makers; school & university arts courses.

**Network subscribers receive**

* an exclusive arts address in the Pacific
* a free web page at your Network address (up to 1mb)
* exclusive access to the Network arts bulletin board

**Annual subscriptions to Arts Pacific Network cost A$275-00**

http://www.arts pacific.com/ - Subscription Forms and further information available at:

http://www.arts pacific.com/ iwf - e-mail: iwf@arts pacific.com

Tel/Fax: (61-2) 93-57-26-95

PO Box 912 Potts Point, Sydney 2011.
Primal scenes

Against the grain of acclaim, Rolando Caputo presents a dissenting view of SBS' "Auteur TV"

This is not at all to deny the role of the auteur, but to restore to it the preposition without which the noun is only a lame concept. "Auteur", without doubt, but of what?

André Bazin

The 13-week series "Auteur TV" currently screening on SBS is somewhat of a curatorial cautionary to film-making, once a polaite within film criticism centred on the vexing issue of assigning authorship in a collective art form, is here reduced to little more than empty logo. In the late 1950s, that is, in the hey day of the French politique des auteurs, André Bazin, with real foresight, cautioned that ed of its polaite, or a strong theoretical framework, auterism would, in time, become little more than a label, a means of naming a product rather than a genuine critical enterprise.

The medium of television has rarely allowed audio-visual objects to flow freely, that is, unencumbered by a supplementary te levision frame that detains the object's plurality. In this regard, Auteur TV continues what seems a growing trend at SBS to codify films in ever discrete units and definable packages. The station has been a great outlet for films, and one does not dispute the valuable access it's given to local film culture to mainly non-English language cinema. Yet, it also plays a heavy hand as intermediary between viewer and film through its clear demarcations in movie programs. Hosts are one means to promote such divisions, think P. Stratton's Cinema Classics slot, Margaret Pomeranz's Monday night presentation, and Des Mangan's Cult Movie on Saturday nights. The individual worth of the respective hosts is not an issue, but willingly or not they impose an artificial tone, prescribe a mode of experience for the viewer. Mangan is most blatant in playing the role of arbitrator of taste for the new pop culture elites. And then there is Eat Carpet, SBS's ghetto for experimental, quirky or generally less classifiable short films.

The principal goal of Auteur TV seems to be to allure, wherever possible, first short films by now established 'name' directors. For the most part it succeeds in its aims, throwing up a real pot-pourri of short films—early works by directors who went on to reinvent themselves as darlings of the art-house circuit: Peter Greenaway (Intimيات, 1968), Mike Leigh (The Game of My Life, 197A Cup, 1975). Early films by directors whose styles remain as aesthetically threadbare and intellectually superficial as ever: Atom Egoyan (Peep Shou, 1981), Sally Potter (The London Story, Clara Law (A Woman Like Me, 1989). Late works made for television by established and esteemed directors: Ingmar Bergman (Karin's Face, 1963), Youssef Chahine (Cairo, 1991). Early, amateurish film school works by directors who went on to outwit avant-stardom: Roman Polanski (We'll Wreck the Party, 1957), Martin Scorsese (Give Me Ten, You, Murray, 1964). What's a Nice Girl Like You Doing in a Place Like This?, 1963). Genuinely surprising early work by filmmakers who continued to surprise throughout: Agnes Varda (Opera Nouveau), R.W. Fassbinder (Das Klere Chaos/ A Little Chaos, 1967).

Others are on a long as to what to make of this motley collection.

Yet over weeks of viewing, the occasional gem does surface. P.A Pennebaker's Daybreak Express (1953) is in the 'city symphony' genre as found in the avant-garde and documentary traditions of the 1920s. It shares with them a constructivist and abstract impulse to visualise the city as a geometry of shapes and planes, at times creating grid and box-like patterns that evoke the hard-edged, streamlined modernist style of a Mondrian canvas. Though equally so, a change in camera angle or focal lens will make of the urban landscape a curvilinear or spiral shape. Unlike the symphonic grace of its predecessors its editing rhythm is driven by a pulsating jazz score by Duke Ellington. Pennebaker's style makes for an interesting contrast with another, though more recent, city film. Chahine's documentary cum essay film Cairo presents a city captured in arabesque flourishes. Orientalism is precisely the issue here. Commissioned by French television, Chahine himself poses this question to a class of film students: "French TV sent me a fax to make a film on Cairo, what do you think they expect?" Given their replies, and much more, Chahine fashions a fascinating mosaic that blends Western cliches about the Orient and a reflection on the very nature of how to tell the story of a city from all its myriad angles.

Unsurprisingly, most short films now seem like blue-prints for debut features—most evidently as in Mathieu Kassovitz's comi-tragic film on racism on the very nature of how to tell the story of a city from all its myriad angles.

Yet over weeks of viewing, the occasional gem does surface. P.A Pennebaker's Daybreak Express (1953) is in the 'city symphony' genre as found in the avant-garde and documentary traditions of the 1920s. It shares with them a constructivist and abstract impulse to visualise the city as a geometry of shapes and planes, at times creating grid and box-like patterns that evoke the hard-edged, streamlined modernist style of a Mondrian canvas. Though equally so, a change in camera angle or focal lens will make of the urban landscape a curvilinear or spiral shape. Unlike the symphonic grace of its predecessors its editing rhythm is driven by a pulsating jazz score by Duke Ellington. Pennebaker's style

Against the grain of acclaim, Rolando Caputo presents a dissenting view of SBS' "Auteur TV"

This is not at all to deny the role of the auteur, but to restore to it the preposition without which the noun is only a lame concept. "Auteur", without doubt, but of what?

André Bazin

The 13-week series "Auteur TV" currently screening on SBS is somewhat of a curatorial cautionary to film-making, once a polaite within film criticism centred on the vexing issue of assigning authorship in a collective art form, is here reduced to little more than empty logo. In the late 1950s, that is, in the hey day of the French politique des auteurs, André Bazin, with real foresight, cautioned that ed of its polaite, or a strong theoretical framework, auterism would, in time, become little more than a label, a means of naming a product rather than a genuine critical enterprise.

The medium of television has rarely allowed audio-visual objects to flow freely, that is, unencumbered by a supplementary te levision frame that detains the object's plurality. In this regard, Auteur TV continues what seems a growing trend at SBS to codify films in ever discrete units and definable packages. The station has been a great outlet for films, and one does not dispute the valuable access it's given to local film culture to mainly non-English language cinema. Yet, it also plays a heavy hand as intermediary between viewer and film through its clear demarcations in movie programs. Hosts are one means to promote such divisions, think P. Stratton's Cinema Classics slot, Margaret Pomeranz's Monday night presentation, and Des Mangan's Cult Movie on Saturday nights. The individual worth of the respective hosts is not an issue, but willingly or not they impose an artificial tone, prescribe a mode of experience for the viewer. Mangan is most blatant in playing the role of arbitrator of taste for the new pop culture elites. And then there is Eat Carpet, SBS's ghetto for experimental, quirky or generally less classifiable short films.

The principal goal of Auteur TV seems to be to allure, wherever possible, first short films by now established 'name' directors. For the most part it succeeds in its aims, throwing up a real pot-pourri of short films—early works by directors who went on to reinvent themselves as darlings of the art-house circuit: Peter Greenaway (Intimيات, 1968), Mike Leigh (The Game of My Life, 197A Cup, 1975). Early films by directors whose styles remain as aesthetically threadbare and intellectually superficial as ever: Atom Egoyan (Peep Shou, 1981), Sally Potter (The London Story, Clara Law (A Woman Like Me, 1989). Late works made for television by established and esteemed directors: Ingmar Bergman (Karin's Face, 1963), Youssef Chahine (Cairo, 1991). Early, amateurish film school works by directors who went on to outwit avant-stardom: Roman Polanski (We'll Wreck the Party, 1957), Martin Scorsese (Give Me Ten, You, Murray, 1964). What's a Nice Girl Like You Doing in a Place Like This?, 1963). Genuinely surprising early work by filmmakers who continued to surprise throughout: Agnes Varda (Opera Nouveau), R.W. Fassbinder (Das Klere Chaos/ A Little Chaos, 1967).

Others are on a long as to what to make of this motley collection.

Yet over weeks of viewing, the occasional gem does surface. P.A Pennebaker's Daybreak Express (1953) is in the 'city symphony' genre as found in the avant-garde and documentary traditions of the 1920s. It shares with them a constructivist and abstract impulse to visualise the city as a geometry of shapes and planes, at times creating grid and box-like patterns that evoke the hard-edged, streamlined modernist style of a Mondrian canvas. Though equally so, a change in camera angle or focal lens will make of the urban landscape a curvilinear or spiral shape. Unlike the symphonic grace of its predecessors its editing rhythm is driven by a pulsating jazz score by Duke Ellington. Pennebaker's style makes for an interesting contrast with another, though more recent, city film. Chahine's documentary cum essay film Cairo presents a city captured in arabesque flourishes. Orientalism is precisely the issue here. Commissioned by French television, Chahine himself poses this question to a class of film students: "French TV sent me a fax to make a film on Cairo, what do you think they expect?" Given their replies, and much more, Chahine fashions a fascinating mosaic that blends Western cliches about the Orient and a reflection on the very nature of how to tell the story of a city from all its myriad angles.

Unsurprisingly, most short films now seem like blue-prints for debut features—most evidently as in Mathieu Kassovitz's comi-tragic film on racism

The Night of the Flood

(Canada) Bernard Hebert's visually stunning dance feature with the ten dancers of Montreal's distinguished O Vertigo company

films, dates times of special events weekday 3-film flexi-pass + subscription info

film festival special event
sydney film festival
sunday 8 june
7pm pit centre

tickets $16 FirstCall 9320 9000

NEW daily guide out now!

44th sydney film festival
6-20 june 1997

festival guides & bookings
the state theatre & pit centre
& all FirstCall outlets 9320 9000
Festival 9600 3844

Suzanne Jarroll Elusive Muse (USA) Suzanne Jarroll became the last great muse of the world-famous choreographer, George Balanchine. The relationship almost destroyed them both. A moving doca, packed with rare footage of her finest performances.

The Night of the Flood

(Canada) Bernard Hebert's visually stunning dance feature with the ten dancers of Montreal's distinguished O Vertigo company

films, dates times of special events weekday 3-film flexi-pass + subscription info

film festival special event
sydney film festival
sunday 8 june
7pm pit centre

tickets $16 FirstCall 9320 9000

NEW daily guide out now!
Breaking the girl

George Kouvaros on Emily Watson, masochism and martyrdom in Lars von Trier's Breaking the Waves

In an interview published in the October 1996 issue of Sight and Sound, Lars von Trier describes his desire to make a film about 'goodness.' What also emerges in this interview, and even more strongly from a viewing of Breaking the Waves, is that for von Trier goodness is also equated with the figure of female martyrdom. Despite being lauded for its originality and boldness of vision, the central premise in Breaking the Waves relies upon a number of very familiar cinematic stereotypes which centre around the equation of female desire and martyrdom. On the surface, the issue the film seems to struggle with certainly seem ambitious in scope—the power of faith and religion, self destruction and love. Yet, looked at more closely, this ambition serves as something of an alibi for a film which has at its heart a view of female desire that treads over very problematic ground. The contradictory nature of the film reveals itself most clearly when we focus on Emily Watson's performance of Bess.

In the Chicago Reader, Jonathan Rosenbaum recounts how, as preparation for her role, Watson was directed by von Trier to study the performances of Renee Falconetti in Carl Dreyer's The Passion of Joan of Arc and Giulietta Masina in Fellini's La Strada. Of these two predecessors, it is Falconetti's performance that seems to have left the most significant trace on Watson and von Trier. This influence is visible in the attention paid by the camera to the surface of child-like Watson's face. Her face reflects an innocence of spirit which is never contextualised or explained but remains immanent to both the story and the character. For the majority of the film, a heavy woolen cap and scarf cover Watson's head and neck. These garments serve as framing devices which draw attention to the space between her eyes and her chin. And in this over invested region is Watson's lips and mouth which carry the greatest responsibility for conveying emotion. She struggles to come to terms with Jan's request that she find other lovers, Watson turns her lips into incredibly expressive instruments of confusion. In her dialogues with God the camera focuses intently upon Watson's mouth as she speaks her own part in her normal high voice and God's in a patriarchal low tone.

Traces of Falconetti's presence are also evident towards the end of the film when Bess's devotion to the task of saving her ailing husband has left her completely isolated from her strict religious community. When Bess returns to the frigate containing the sadistic sailors, she is filmed from front-on and below standing at the helm of the small boat taking her to her inevitable death. Watson's intense but detached gaze at these moments reminds one of Falconetti's Joan and also highlights the self-enclosed nature of her performance. Instead of investing the world with a particular emotion or desire, Watson's stare into the distance is largely directed inward.

This self-regard points to a broader problem. Although the film places enormous significance on Bess's love for Jan, very little time is spent exploring the relationship or establishing a sense of intimacy between the performers. The camera, which continually isolates the performers' expressions in close up, does not allow them the space or the time to establish a physical or emotional connection.

The performances of Watson and Falconetti require from the audience a certain leap of faith, a willingness to not only accept the extreme behaviour of these heroines as guided by a faith that is destined to remain at least partially inaccessible but to also accept in their movements and expressions, a traffic between the material world and what escapes it, between what we can see and what remains out of bounds or beyond our vision. However, the more one considers the two performances and the differing nature of the emotional obsession that each character has, the less possible it becomes to sustain a meaningful comparison. In the case of Falconetti, the struggle which she manifests is based around her commitment to her faith. In a film which invests so much in the power of religious faith, Falconetti's performance is marked by its intense physicality. Her performance creates a strong link between her struggle with herself and the spectator.

In the case of Watson's performance, the situation is quite different. For a start, Breaking the Waves is asking us to respond to not just a connection with the divine but also the local and emotional. The spectator is asked to identify with Watson's masochistic actions and love. Yet, looked at more closely, this ambition serves as something of an alibi for a film which explains away the connection with the divine through masochistic action. In narrative terms this masochism stems from Bess's last view that we have of Bess is on a hospital trolley, her body covered in cuts and bruises. Her face reflects an innocence of spirit which is never contextualised or explained but remains immanent to both the story and the character. For the majority of the film, a heavy woolen cap and scarf cover Watson's head and neck. These garments serve as framing devices which draw attention to the space between her eyes and her chin. And in this over invested region is Watson's lips and mouth which carry the greatest responsibility for conveying emotion. She struggles to come to terms with Jan's request that she find other lovers, Watson turns her lips into incredibly expressive instruments of confusion. In her dialogues with God the camera focuses intently upon Watson's mouth as she speaks her own part in her normal high voice and God's in a patriarchal low tone.

Traces of Falconetti's presence are also evident towards the end of the film when Bess's devotion to the task of saving her ailing husband has left her completely isolated from her strict religious community. When Bess returns to the frigate containing the sadistic sailors, she is filmed from front-on and below standing at the helm of the small boat taking her to her inevitable death. Watson's intense but detached gaze at these moments reminds one of Falconetti's Joan and also highlights the self-enclosed nature of her performance. Instead of investing the world with a particular emotion or desire, Watson's stare into the distance is largely directed inward.

This self-regard points to a broader problem. Although the film places enormous significance on Bess's love for Jan, very little time is spent exploring the relationship or establishing a sense of intimacy between the performers. The camera, which continually isolates the performers' expressions in close up, does not allow them the space or the time to establish a physical or emotional connection.

The performances of Watson and Falconetti require from the audience a certain leap of faith, a willingness to not only accept the extreme behaviour of these heroines as guided by a faith that is destined to remain at least partially inaccessible but to also accept in their movements and expressions, a traffic between the material world and what escapes it, between what we can see and what remains out of bounds or beyond our vision. However, the more one considers the two performances and the differing nature of the emotional obsession that each character has, the less possible it becomes to sustain a meaningful comparison. In the case of Falconetti, the struggle which she manifests is based around her commitment to her faith. In a film which invests so much in the power of religious faith, Falconetti's performance is marked by its intense physicality. Her performance creates a strong link between her struggle with herself and the spectator.

In the case of Watson's performance, the situation is quite different. For a start, Breaking the Waves is asking us to respond to not just a connection with the divine but also the local and emotional. The spectator is asked to identify with Watson's masochistic actions and love. Yet, looked at more closely, this ambition serves as something of an alibi for a film which explains away the connection with the divine through masochistic action. In narrative terms this masochism stems from Bess's last view that we have of Bess is on a hospital trolley, her body covered in cuts and bruises. Her face reflects an innocence of spirit which is never contextualised or explained but remains immanent to both the story and the character. For the majority of the film, a heavy woolen cap and scarf cover Watson's head and neck. These garments serve as framing devices which draw attention to the space between her eyes and her chin. And in this over invested region is Watson's lips and mouth which carry the greatest responsibility for conveying emotion. She struggles to come to terms with Jan's request that she find other lovers, Watson turns her lips into incredibly expressive instruments of confusion. In her dialogues with God the camera focuses intently upon Watson's mouth as she speaks her own part in her normal high voice and God's in a patriarchal low tone.

Traces of Falconetti's presence are also evident towards the end of the film when Bess's devotion to the task of saving her ailing husband has left her completely isolated from her strict religious community. When Bess returns to the frigate containing the sadistic sailors, she is filmed from front-on and below standing at the helm of the small boat taking her to her inevitable death. Watson's intense but detached gaze at these moments reminds one of Falconetti's Joan and also highlights the self-enclosed nature of her performance. Instead of investing the world with a particular emotion or desire, Watson's stare into the distance is largely directed inward.
Chaucer in Miami
Noel King on Bob Rafelson, Jack Nicholson and Blood and Wine.

I really like working with him. The guy is very caring, committed, driven, and ultimately very very smart. He’s a singular moviemaker, and to me that’s the best thing anybody can be. I like Rafelson as an actor. We seemed to make interesting projects together. Among other things, we both care a lot about whimsy. I don’t like his having had rather a rougher road than I have. There is no reason for it.

Jack Nicholson on Bob Rafelson (Film Comment May/July, 1981)

Bob Rafelson tells how he first met Jack Nicholson in the mid 1960s at Los Angeles Writer’s Guild film screenings. "I was always very friendly, and I was always yelling at the screen. There was always this one other voice screaming" (Stephen Farber,‘Rafelson’s Return’, New West, March 1981). Eventually, after a showing of W.C. Fields’ Never Give a Sucker an Even Break (1941) it was always very typecast, and this screen reaction was noted on the screenplay for Rafelson’s first feature, Head (1968). That mix of The Monkees, drugs and Marshall McLuhan’s media theories debunked the manufacturedness of the Beat Generation, and the film was a huge success. From Black Widow (1980) to Five Easy Pieces (1972), Rafelson has been a major player in American cinema. From his association with Nicholson on The King of Marvin Gardens (1972), The Postman Always Rings Twice (1981), and Man Trouble (1992), to his latest work, Five Easy Pieces, Rafelson’s interest in character and the human condition has been consistent. Rafelson’s ability to work well with actors is highlighted in Boyer’s study. Nicholson moved to Los Angeles to work with Rafelson on Head. "I really like working with him. The guy is very caring, committed, driven, and ultimately very very smart. He’s a singular moviemaker, and to me that’s the best thing anybody can be. I like Rafelson as an actor. We seemed to make interesting projects together. Among other things, we both care a lot about whimsy. I don’t like his having had rather a rougher road than I have. There is no reason for it."

Jack Nicholson on Bob Rafelson (Film Comment May/July, 1981)

Blood and Wine (1997) is Rafelson’s ninth film in almost 30 years of filmmaking, so he’s really been at this for a long time and this is a major career high point. Blood and Wine is the film that would get him into Heaven) . It seems clear that, for some time, Bob Rafelson has been working on a project that could sight a project has helped Rafelson continue to make big-budget Hollywood movies.

"Aurelian" assisted the Australian Network for Art, Technology and Deep Immersion: Creative Collaborations

Proposals are invited from individual artists and artist groups to undertake online residencies as part of a curated program exploring social and political implications of online communication networks.

The overall intention is to facilitate relationships whereby artists can come together to generate and hothouse their ideas, test their hypotheses, develop new processes and create new works. It is a form of creative hydronomy where ideas are seeded, tested, mutated, replicated and disseminated. The online environment is currently a site of some of the most politically challenging and aesthetically innovative art projects. It is a context where traditional platforms meld and/or mutate, and where traditional notions of authorship, exhibition and publishing dissolve into and out of each other.

The pilot year of deep immersion: creative collaboration will initiate a number of online residencies/research projects for Australian artists hosted by cultural internet organisations. The new organisation will provide server space, some technical support and a social context of an online media community.

Submissions due: July 5, 1997

Contact ANAT for guidelines and submission details

tel: 08 8231 9037 /fax: 08 82117223
email: anat@camtech.net.au

http://www.anat.org.au

ANAT is assisted by the Australia Council
See no evil

Jane Mills considers the implications of the Senate Select Committee on Community Standards' Report on the Portrayal of Violence in the Electronic Media.

The screen has long been accused of being a medium of dangerous, subversive influence. And ever since 1903 when The Great Train Robbery depicted its potent image of a gun turned towards the camera and fired straight at the audience, screen violence has been accused of inciting audiences to action.

Until recently screen censorship in Australia has, on the whole, focused on the end product, the completed film. Notwithstanding the effects of market forces, writers mostly got to write what they wanted to write; all those in the production process mostly got to make the film they wanted to make. But the Senate Select Committee's Standards' Report on the Portrayal of Violence in the Electronic Media (February, 1997) signals a significant shift in censorship—from the end product to the creative process of production. The committee's report, which has gone on since the very very beginning of film making is increasingly considered of little relevance. Last year Australia's Minister for the Arts spoke about the failure of the experts to provide him with a convenient scapegoat for societal violence, noting that "there is no conclusive evidence" for a causal link between screen and actual violence, and that the effects of on-screen violence are "not quantifiable" (Sydney Morning Herald August 1996).

But the Senate Select Committee is less convinced. Their Report takes a significant step towards claiming there is a causal connection; indeed, the notion that screen or fantasy violence is causally related to societal violence is implicit in all their recommendations: "rather than concentrating on a largely inconclusive cause and effect debate, the Senate Committee's view is that action should be taken on the basis of consensus among researchers that there are possible adverse effects from watching violence..." [my emphasis]. The Report cites, but ignores, the findings of the far more comprehensive National Committee on Violence whose chair, Professor Duncan Campbell, came to radically different conclusions: "The causes of violence are extremely complex and we are not going to find any single answers, even though many early theories about why we watch violence in the first place and generate a result of desperately searching around for something to pin the blame on". This 1991 Committee found it impossible to isolate one cause from another and listed many possible factors including poverty, alcohol and drug abuse and social and cultural disintegration, it put screen violence second to bottom of all other contributory factors.

The recent Senate Select Committee's recommendations should cause alarm bells to ring in the arts and heeded by screen practitioners as well as the general public for the community—for the audience's role in the creative process, that of making meaning from what is depicted on the screen, is no less important.

The Committee's recommendation that seminars are to be held by organisations such as Young Media Australia, the ABA, and the Australian Film, Television and Radio School for script writers and producers "aimed at highlighting the need for a more balanced and realistic portrayal of violence". How do we reconcile the commonsense of this? Sam Peckinpah's The Wild Bunch, Arthur Penn's Bonnie and Clyde and Quentin Tarantino's Reservoir Dogs, prime candidates for banning or recategorisation, depicted, realised portraits of the callous, the tortured and torture resolved in death. Any shooting that results in a bloody and painful screen death certainly contains more realism than, say, the screen world of The Lone Ranger where men were killed and maimed not only without drawing blood but equally miraculously without damaging clothes. Are writers to be sent to these re-education camps in order to come up with scripts in which only the badies get killed? Or perhaps only 50% of the badies get killed? Or might it mean writers are to be stopped from penning parts for all those deadly dolls and murdering molls who have stalked our screens in recent years because, in real life, few women kill or are even responsible for killing? Do we really want a screen culture in which writers have to curb their imaginations and base their stories on actual criminal statistics? What sense is there in permitting Heavenly Creatures, a deeply disturbing story of matricide based on a real event, but banning an obvious fantasy like Basic Instinct? What is the logic behind this? Should it be a teacher's job to impose their own values on their students? Surely it's the role of the teacher to assist the student in the creative process to use their imaginations—not to indoctrinate them to adopt a formulaic-state-imposed view of what the world ought to be like. And to encourage public debate.

Recommendation 10 proposes an increase in the "levels of fees imposed by the Office of Film and Literature Classification for classification if the material is classified to be contained for example within high level violence". This can only lead to the commissioning of fewer films that deal with one of the major concerns of society. The committee, and if the provisions get pushed back to the beginning—to the writer. The smaller production and distribution companies will find it too financially risky to make films which would attract the attention of the audience. The controls at the end of the process will get more people to start thinking about the fact that the film industry needs investors to stay in business. And they will be given further consideration with input from the industry, and a formal response made at the end of the year. The Minister's Office has also informed the screen culture sector that "support for the screen culture sector will continue its input into the Commonwealth government's deliberations on film industry funding policy. AFC, media groups, particularly the Screen Culture sector would be involved in the important budget consultations process". The outcome was revealed, at least for the short term, in the May Federal Budget: the screen culture sector was announced. The Senate Select Committee's Report has determined that the Goski Report recommendations will be considered as part of the budget, and a formal response made at the end of the year. The Minister's Office has also informed the screen culture sector that "support for the screen culture sector will continue its input into the Commonwealth government's deliberations on film industry funding policy. AFC, media groups, particularly the Screen Culture sector would be involved in the important budget consultations process". The outcome was revealed, at least for the short term, in the May Federal Budget: the screen culture sector was announced. The Senate Select Committee's Report has determined that the Goski Report recommendations will be considered as part of the budget, and a formal response made at the end of the year. The Minister's Office has also informed the screen culture sector that "support for the screen culture sector will continue its input into the Commonwealth government's deliberations on film industry funding policy. AFC, media groups, particularly the Screen Culture sector would be involved in the important budget consultations process". The outcome was revealed, at least for the short term, in the May Federal Budget: the screen culture sector was announced. The Senate Select Committee's Report has determined that the Goski Report recommendations will be considered as part of the budget, and a formal response made at the end of the year. The Minister's Office has also informed the screen culture sector that "support for the screen culture sector will continue its input into the Commonwealth government's deliberations on film industry funding policy. AFC, media groups, particularly the Screen Culture sector would be involved in the important budget consultations process". The outcome was revealed, at least for the short term, in the May Federal Budget: the screen culture sector was announced. The Senate Select Committee's Report has determined that the Goski Report recommendations will be considered as part of the budget, and a formal response made at the end of the year. The Minister's Office has also informed the screen culture sector that "support for the screen culture sector will continue its input into the Commonwealth government's deliberations on film industry funding policy. AFC, media groups, particularly the Screen Culture sector would be involved in the important budget consultations process". The outcome was revealed, at least for the short term, in the May Federal Budget: the screen culture sector was announced. The Senate Select Committee's Report has determined that the Goski Report recommendations will be considered as part of the budget, and a formal response made at the end of the year. The Minister's Office has also informed the screen culture sector that "support for the screen culture sector will continue its input into the Commonwealth government's deliberations on film industry funding policy. AFC, media groups, particularly the Screen Culture sector would be involved in the important budget consultations process". The outcome was revealed, at least for the short term, in the May Federal Budget: the screen culture sector was announced. The Senate Select Committee's Report has determined that the Goski Report recommendations will be considered as part of the budget, and a formal response made at the end of the year. The Minister's Office has also informed the screen culture sector that "support for the screen culture sector will continue its input into the Commonwealth government's deliberations on film industry funding policy. AFC, media groups, particularly the Screen Culture sector would be involved in the important budget consultations process". The outcome was revealed, at least for the short term, in the May Federal Budget: the screen culture sector was announced. The Senate Select Committee's Report has determined that the Goski Report recommendations...
Wing your way to $2000

The BIFF Fast Film Competition is on again. You have just 50 days in which to write, shoot and edit a short film, and submit it for judging at a public screening. Any format, any subject, any genre.

FIRST PRIZE $2000 • SECOND PRIZE $1000

There are only three rules:

1. Your film must be less than five minutes long.
2. Your film must include a set of wings (bird, plane, butterfly - any wings will do) other than in the opening and closing credits.
3. You must be the copyright holder and/or have all the necessary copyright permissions.

You have 50 days - from the 22nd May 1997 to 10 July 1997 - to make your film. Contact the Festival office on (07) 3229 0444 to obtain an entry form.
Stop frame

Robyn Evans reports on the progress towards a Queensland Film Commission

The consultation process between the Queensland film industry and the state government on the formation of the new Queensland Film Commission came under threat following a disruptive incident last month. State Treasurer, Doug McTaggart, warned all facets of industry in Queensland that the Minister was considering calling off the merger altogether.

The hard-won consultation process was due to begin in late April. The industry elected five representatives to sit on a working party with the implementation leader, a senior arts adviser, and representatives of both the Pacific Film and Television Commission (PFTC) and Film Queensland (FQ), and reached consensus on five key recommendations to put to government:

1. That the Commission represent a new entity committed to the further development of the Queensland film industry, and that the merger will not diminish existing opportunities.

2. That all schemes, projects and programs of service to the film and television industry be contained in and administered by the new Commission.

3. That the Commission's board of management truly represent the interests of the total film and television industry.

4. That the CEO position be advertised nationally and/or internationally, and that at least two independent industry representatives sit on the selection panel.

5. That the policies of the new Commission recognise national industry codes and practice, and be linked to the national industry. These recommendations, which have been endorsed at national level by Australian Writers Guild, Screen Producers Association of Australia and Australian Screen Directors Association, are expected to concern the Minister's original plans for the merger, which proposed that investment functions of both existing organisations be taken on by the new Commission, with development functions to be handled within the Arts Office.

Comment

Web crud

Ian Haig digs the dirt on the www

www.jodi.org understands the notion of 'noise' on the web, putting back which is normally left out or relegated to the trashcan. www.jodi.org also manages to take things way beyond the notion of 'browsing', a metaphor with problematic connotations at the best of times. You don't so much browse these pages, you are infiltrated them taken over by them and consumed. Here, there are some similarities with the acclaimed work of egret (www.egret.com), Kyle Signer (Spunik meets Mundo 2000) but, ultimately, www.jodi.org is more inventive and deftly attaching of the medium, and manages to explode so many of the clichés associated with producing work for the web, in particular the notion of reinventing the control to the interactive 'user', Sure, you're free to explore www.jodi.org through its mass of images, broken hypertext and data refusal, which is an interesting enterprise, but essentially you get the feeling that there is some other force at work, directing your every surveillance. This territory which many interactively navigate into-territory where the user is not 'in control', but 'out of control' of the web.

The scrambled error messages moving across your monitor recall much of what the web is really about: those spaces between web sites, the files not loading correctly, the error messages, files not found and 'error 404's which constitute so much of the experience of using this medium. Here, Netscape frames the work as a self-reflexive cultural interface, and, apart from the occasional user interface link and tooltip, the notion of interface design is done away with, as something which simply gets in the way of the work. Interface is superfluous, dressing, surface detail obscuring what lies below. In a very real way, www.jodi.org is the underside of the glossy veneer of the web, the underground trash and grunge, discarded and left to fester and hopefully mutate into something even more compelling. When Tim Berners Lee, in the early days of the medium, was thinking about what the web could possibly become www.jodi.org was probably the furthest thing from his mind; and in many ways www.jodi.org is about as far away from what you get from the layered buttons of corporate web hell, or yet another 'virtual gallery'. For that alone it should demand our attention as one of the most interesting web arts to ever come down the pipe.

One of the more interesting aspects of the web is the phenomenon of the useless web pages. Sites like the Rotting Food Home Page, or The Virtual Tour of the Gas Station Toilet come to mind, the question: Why? Why ever did someone even produce such a web page? For me these are some of the highlights of the web, for me they are where the web crosses over into a kind of reality television and touches the lives of real people. The web is the perfect medium for working with weirdos to actually say something to the world, no matter how inane or stupid they might be, as long as they got the rest of us. I try to dismiss such pages just as ugly examples of HTML grunge, the better ones are complex, fucked up messes of desires and opinions— perfect web crud.

If you buy into the hype which invokes this medium as the great democratising, utopian delivery system, the useless web page is probably a far more accurate realisation of such hyperbole than, say, www.xong.com. And as the experience of browsing the web increasingly becomes about as compelling as flapping through the yellow pages, the useless web page took over, web sites, the files not found and 'error 404's which constitute so much of the experience of using this medium. Here, Netscape frames the work as a self-reflexive cultural interface, and, apart from the occasional user interface link and tooltip, the notion of interface design is done away with, as something which simply gets in the way of the work. Interface is superfluous, dressing, surface detail obscuring what lies below. In a very real way, www.jodi.org is the underside of the glossy veneer of the web, the underground trash and grunge, discarded and left to fester and hopefully mutate into something even more compelling. When Tim Berners Lee, in the early days of the medium, was thinking about what the web could possibly become www.jodi.org was probably the furthest thing from his mind; and

invited to a meeting with Doug McTaggart to discuss the government's position. Sir Llew Edwards and Robin James were also invited to the meeting to be held later this month. According to a general letter to the industry published by the industry representatives, Mr McTaggart expressed his alarm about the incident involving the PFTC, and his disappointment that they had not attended the meeting. He instructed the industry not to take any further unscheduled meetings to ‘forget everything we’ve been told to date’ and ‘start again from scratch with him’. He then outlined a plan to re-start the consultation process, emphasising that the Minister is preparing to approach the merger with an open mind. On May 13 his office released an issues paper for response by industry within one week. When the responses have been collated, he will meet with the working party to discuss the restructuring.

The issues paper outlines four points, the primary structure and composition of the Commission board, and the process of appointment of the new CEO. Clearly, there will be at least one dissenting voice on this issue. The industry representatives will continue to endorse the four key recommendations, which have very strong support across the industry. The outcome of the consultation process will be a major session at the annual QScreen conference in June.
There is a story—one of many—about how Disney and Pixar designed the character of Rex, a dinosauroid. If you can make your way through any of the sections of the long and winding operations divisions concealed underground, you can navigate some long, reverent corridors. Within, the architects of impatience, envy and competition were told to be highly reverent because children would be more frightened by the booming sound of their own voices than the dark alone. I can’t remember where I heard this story, but it is true, it’s another indication of how Disney and Pixar design environments of sublime invention and perceptual precision.

David Lynch embodies the Disneyland effect of combining and manipulating a carnival obviousness with perceptual hucksterism. In a demure architecture of postmodern pulp, he folds the fake into the real in the name of pleasure and terror.

Postmodernism unfortunately has become a taster, a nibbler, more than slum for the intelligentsia. Yet most po-mo art figures like Lynch are designing in modernist and metaphorically Eurocentric. However, Lynch knows sound.

And since he has been doing his own sound design in films like The Elephant Man (and even before O Lucky One, his death in the early 90s) he has realized a series of cinematic moments which open up the complexity of his cinema. His design is not only magically effective but also his visual symbolism alone has the potential to define any moment.

Lost Highway (1997) has such a moment—possibly the best Lynch has ever directed. Here Fred Madison (Bill Pullman) walks into darkness. He stands in front of an perceptually undefined space: it could be a corridor in aCACHE or simply a room. The white wall could be a flat wall lit only at the extreme edges of the frame. Foreground, background, depth, curvature, all can be subverted by sound and the screen's disorienting flatness. As Madison walks forward (away from us, with his back to us), the sound vanishes and reappears itself. (We will return to this scene later.)

This intensely quiet moment happens, from what you see, after the viewer has entered the film. The twenty minutes before this moment are probably even more important; twenty minutes of sound-driven mutes leads to the sono-narratological world—a designed space that animates the environment as a filmic narrative. Lost Highway is a Disneyland—across which Lost Highway loops.

When we first enter Madison's apartment, a story is occupied: the cinema is the sound of nothing, the texture of silence. That haunting tone that says nothing is occurring; that ringing space of self is annihilated by sound. Location sound succeeds in calling an absolute state of limbo. Like room temperature, it is a palpable nothingness. It’s the texture that has to be heard as it resounds for the audience. If constructed fictiously to contain; listening to 'be' the dialogue, the dreamlike effect; you hear the dialogue hushing with room atmosphere cutting in and out, framed by non-hushed silence. Dialogue as traditionally, must traduce the fact that a real room exists—paradoxically by ensuring that you can't relate its sonic nature to silence actual to silence.

But the strangeness of the nothingness which is the sound of nothing. To fill Madison's apartment is thick, pregnant, alive. Perversely, Lynch has layered an expanse of nothingness, to build a dense and moody and bustling tone whichlugubriously bleeds into the air conditioned atmosphere of the cinema. Standard practice in music for films and television sounds is to add a flat mix against a simulated distant traffic rumble to replicate the urban theatre environment so one can hear the soundtrack dialogue effect: you hear the Lynch's sound design privileges the very substance which the soundtrack figures as noises, the realness of the surrounding, rooms, chambers and corridors in Lost Highway breathe and heave this nothingness throughout the entire mazes of rooms vibrating with noisy silence: the tensile ringing of fluorescent tubes, the baritone chorus of central heating, the rushing traffic and the road, the distant rumble, circuitry, the dissonant harmonics of air vents. The on-screen world is effectively turned inside out in a psychological level. It is Lynch's sound design that perfectly fits a film whose project is to loop back on itself in an unending nightmare; a spook show.

Contrary to Lynch's fawing of filtering of art's history's radically chic icons, his sound design is as logical and logical. He has magically emptied Madison's apartment in tres neo- Antonioni style, he makes one aware of the absence of objects and the sparseness of a space only an architect could inhabit (or a thirty-something musician still living in the design). Put simply, that space is a humbling hole, a place where most sounds are void. Lynch's sound design and camera work extend this logic, giving us that sublime moment when all space is sound. His sound becomes a map and a shadow of invisibility as Madison walks into the black hole of cent-frame. In this scene, Lynch employed the perceptual design logic in order to convey an existential void—yet he doesn’t do it in a literary mode by referencing Sartre or Camus. He makes his void as a trap that results in a moment, born of the audio-visual void.

I'm being overly precise about this, because if you're going to talk about something so dynamically dramatic, a sound that dramatically punctuate a point within the narrative; drums take the vertical energy of those big booms, 90s music has taken a horizontal spread of de-dramatized continuum. Monotonic drums always create tension, globally place a character in a room. 90s music is used in a way to 'music' seems to be standing still. It's like the gears are locked and something is stuck. Lynch turns the music into a roar, a crash into a torrent, a sonar tempus which coats the dialogue and all and all. Lost Highway turns the orchestral bells into a detonations caused by his students tapping pencils on a desk and chewing gum. The infamous Chinese Water Torture induces a subsonic tone that says nothing is occurring: that each drop of water falling on the forehead is a subsonic tone, all in all, when the cinema employs the big, the bad boom, it is resorting to cheap carnabiville manipulation—which always is. As an inheritor of Disneyland's postmodern apparatus of apparat, David Lynch's sound design is working in concert with a specifically generated dramatic scenario that in the end gives us no clear insight to any character's psychosis. Most 'Lynchian' copies try and render their scenarios meaningful and explicative—which goes counter to the big booms and rumbles they employ purely for stylistic effect. Their 'otherness' is thus is an unconvincing. Ironically, Lynch's postmodern effect is clarified when copies pale next to his own authentic sound design.

Comparatively, those copies are safely illuminated walkways running along cul-de-sacs. Where Lynch's aura and lyrical atmospheric, his realism is the source for all that sound design is working in concert with a specifically generated dramatic scenario that in the end gives us no clear insight to any character’s psychosis. Most ‘Lynchian’ copies try and render their scenarios meaningful and explicative—which goes counter to the big booms and rumbles they employ purely for stylistic effect. Their ‘otherness’ is thus is an unconvincing. Ironically, Lynch’s postmodern effect is clarified when copies pale next to his own authentic sound design.

Comparatively, those copies are safely illuminated walkways running along cul-de-sacs. Where Lynch’s aura and lyrical atmospheric, his realism is the source for all that
Japanese Gen X, Jazz, Spaghetti Westerns, and...  
Anna Dzieni anticipates the Melbourne International Film Festival

This year's Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF) is the inaugural festival for recently appointed director Sandra Sdraulig, who says that the revitalisation of the Film Theatre, MIFF promises to bring its audiences compelling and provocative works from the international festival circuit—from London, Sundance, Berlin and Cannes.

Amongst the titles are a range of features by Japanese director Shohei Imamura, whose work in other mediums such as video and photography. Many of his most worked on, including Confrontation of Pheasant by Czech animator Jan Svankmajer, who teams his hand to the art of this medium, with Eastwood’s last western, The Outlaw Josey Wales.

The widely titled Killer Condom, directed by Martin Webb, is described as a disrespectful metaphor for AIDS, and is based on the comic book by infamous New York comic-stript artist, Ralph Kipon, Japanese Generation X features include Ghibli's Coraline, featuring the work of Studio Ghibli.

The festival will premiere its most recent work from Studio Ghibli. Formed in 1983 by Hayao Miyazaki, one of Japan's pre-eminent animators, Shiho Ghibli's reputation of consistently matching box office figures with live-action releases, Miyazaki's fantasy narratives are generally based on teenage girls and the ecological plight of the earth. In his book on Japanese and American animation, Professor Jon Brophy profiles Miyazaki and describes him thus: "Miyazaki redefines Tezuka by adapting the sensibilities of his subjects and characters, effectively draining them of Disney-esque inflections, while retaining a peculiarly Japanese post-nuclear mode of imagining other worlds. If Tezuka is nostalgic, Miyazaki is elegiac". For a decade he has been making movies on screen time, and he is regarded as a celebration of a century and an insight into the Chinese context.

Other regular MIFF events will include The Australian Shortcouse, the best of recent Australian feature films, an enormous range of shorts in competition for The City of Melbourne Awards, and the latest in digital technologies, which also connects to multimedia products, works on CD-ROM and MFF's own web site. And of course, as with all festivals, there are features just awaiting final confirmation.

46th Sydney International Film Festival, July 6–30
The tyranny of duration

Clare Stewart on the short and short of it at the 14th St Kilda Film Festival

The positioning of short films in collective cinema is a precarious and contingent, that is to say it is not based on canonical ‘necessity’ but subject to the accidental (personal and utilitarian). If I say that Jackie Frears’ The Illustrated Aushoottor or the Cantirills’ Waterfall are my favourite Australian films of all time, it’s a paradox of an identifiable National cinema which subjects these choices to debate, but the prevalent understanding that the form itself does not sustain, is fleeting and does not belong in the same value system as the feature film. This refusal to treat the short film as a truly independent form is often reflected in the films themselves, the culture of reception infiltrating and conspiring against the potential of the form. The local short film arena is defined by the politics of this ‘play’, often privileging irrelevant modes (Melbourne’s other key short film events Cafe Provincial and Spike Silver (vex a comedic emphasis) or operating as a ‘playground’ for would-be feature filmmakers. While the funding agencies and film schools continue to contribute to the breadth of short filmmaking, they too measure success by the numbers. By their definition they have nurtured or jump started, and retrospectives of the ‘early works’ form the rubric for an historical account of the short film in Australia.

The St Kilda Film Festival is subject to this (or you could read melodrama) in that it wants (quite rightly) to take itself and the short film form seriously but shrouds this intention in the language of frivolity (hence Peter Rauffmann’s repeated emphasis on the word ‘enjoyment’, in the Director’s Welcome and the wise-cracking program titles). The pluralistic identity of St Kilda itself (cheekily underscored by Jackiek Shult’s festival trailer, a long track across variously filled jocks and knickers) where differences is not only accommodated but insisted upon, is in part quite comfortably permits the Festival’s annual reshaping. While not always positive (it’s difficult to justify a substantial reduction in the length of the festival when it simultaneously involves the introduction of an international component) this flexibility does allow for the development of new programming strategies.

The retrospective ‘Confessions of a Filmmaker’, curated by Lawrence Johnstone, provided a context for reflecting on the preoccupations emerging in some of the new works and defined an alternative approach to historicising the short film. Comprised of films with strong formal elements and evocative themes, this private canon included Werner Herzog and Paul Bertin’s Lessons of Darkness, a magisterial film blurring its documentary form to produce a rich and despairing world in the burning aftermath of the Gulf War. Even moving now that the situation in Kuwait has ‘retired’ from the headlines, it stands as a film which demands return and reassessment. Laurence Green’s ‘traumatic’ relocation to the territory of family in Reconstruction, a film whose use of stock and technique represents the grain of things remembered and forgotten. What the films in ‘Confessions of a Filmmaker’ share is ‘a fit between the form and the concept, between idea and substance’, an aesthetic economy which acknowledges the short film as ‘a very condensed and crystalline form’. Adrian Martin’s introduction to ‘The Future of Short Film Production’ forum stressed the importance of developing a critical and aesthetic awareness of those modalities specific to the short work. Indeed, those films which resonated in this years festival took decep tively simple formal premises and pushed them to the brink—not orientally but with assurance and verve: Sue Ford’s Faces 1976-1996 (Best Film) juxtaposed and pushed portraits twenty years ago with contemporary images of the same faces, matching street and grain to capture the passage of time; Lucy Lehmann’s seamless Super 8 ‘capturing’ of bush terrain and the suburban home oscillating between a bristling and lilting evocation of lost places in Five Hundred Acres (Film Victoria Craft Award); the causticophobic play on window as screen in Nicky Roller’s AFTRS production A Snag in Palm Door (Best Achievement in Video Production); and Anna Hmitz’s VCA production Once Underpass (Best Feature Film). These works were able to secure for the artists. A pool of sponsorship deals .

The success of the exhibition installations was due in no small part to the impressive array of equipment the organisers of the festival, Film Victoria (Foundation for Art & Creative Technology), based in Liverpool, were able to secure for the artists. A pool of exhibition deals with MIFES (Moving Image Tourism & Exhibition Service)—including 25 video projectors as well as computers and laser disc players—made up appropriately half of the equipment used, with the remainder secured through various sponsorship deals.

Kathleen Cleland reports on Video Positive 97

Video Positive 97: Escaping Gravity (V97), billed as the UK’s biggest event of video art and programming, spanned three cities (Liverpool and Manchester) and 12 venues. With approximately two hundred artists including on-screen exhibits, installations, film and video programmes, festival activities needed serious planning and commitment to dedicate experience all that was on offer. The festival also included three conferences (LEAP (Local and national arts policy; society and technology from an east-European perspective) Cosmopolis: Encountering Invisible Cities (investigating the transition from the post-industrial to the digital city) and Escaping Gravity: The Student Conference. As well as presenting work at standard festival venues such as galleries and theatres, V97 also placed work in less traditional venues including Cream at Nation, a popular nightclub venue in Liverpool, cafés, and the Museum of Science and Technology in Manchester. The Liverpool exhibition space was the site for Bill Viola’s video installation The Messenger, a mesmerising work showing a submerged, almost invisible human figure slowly rising to the surface and gasping air before again descending to repeat the sequence. The Messenger is a work of terror which held as an eerie experience for viewers who became aware, as their eyes got used to the dark, that they were standing amongst lifeless stone statues. The Viacalli Video at Wade Smith, a sports store in Liverpool, was another imaginative but somewhat problematic foray out of the art institutions into the ‘real’ world. Audiences trying to view George Barber’s Video High Volume 2 were just as likely to be greeted with a half hour Nike ad which was alternated with Barber’s work.

There was a strong Australian presence at V97 in the form of the aliens.au program curated by Linda Wallis, which was financially supported by the Australian Film Commission. Jon McCormack’s startling and poetic ‘artificial life’ program was exhibited in his Turbulence installations in the Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester. In Lyndal Jones’ From the Danlins, an installation was too quiet the audience experience as audiences wandered between the video computer terminals.

Other highlights of the festival were Jaap de Jonge’s (Netherlands) Crystal Ball, a magical kaleidoscope eye mounted into the wall of the Cornerhouse Gallery in Manchester. Viewers responding to the message touch mir were rewarded with fragmentary images of TV and cable broadcasts scanned from the mediasea. Liverpool at the Open Eye gallery, Kristina Shchepinov’s (Canada) Bodymaps:: Artefacts of Touch incorporated scanners under a white velvet surface. A near life-sized figure projected onto the surface twisted, turned and moved in response to audience members contacting and stroking the velvet. Jane Prophets (England) high-tech fibreglass sculptures of white clouds animated by the audience passing their hands over different ‘body’ zones—head, heart and genital. As in all the projects, animating images representing biological and informational systems. The success of the exhibition installations was due in no small part to the impressive array of equipment the organisers of the festival, Film Victoria (Foundation for Art & Creative Technology), based in Liverpool, were able to secure for the artists. A pool of exhibition deals with MIFES (Moving Image Tourism & Exhibition Service)—including 25 video projectors as well as computers and laser disc players—made up appropriately half of the equipment used, with the remainder secured through various sponsorship deals.

ISEA\98 (themed ‘revolutions’) is set to build on the more appropriate and sophisticated between Liverpool and Manchester and is being organised by FACT (Foundation for Art & Creative Technology), based in Liverpool, and the University of Liverpool, with the support of local councils which are demonstrating clear commitment to the cultural and economic opportunities presented by new digital technologies. More information on the artists can be found online at: http://www.isea98.org

Also included in the aliens.au program were two video projects and five CD-ROMs: Martin Croop’s The Culp Machine, Josephine Stans and Leon Crimewell’s User Unfriendly Interface, Brad Miller’s Po’Diosk, Louis Shabb and Patricia Piccinini’s Genetic Manipulation Simulator. These works were presented as part of a CD-ROM ‘Forest’ in the Museum for Science and Technology; inexplicably, the sound was turned down very low on these works creating a somewhat barren experience as audiences wandered between the video computer terminals.

Our society doesn’t seem to want us to look. They are forced to repress their emotions.

From Video Positive 97: Escaping Gravity

Kathleen Cleland is a Sydney based writer and curator. Her attendance at Video Positive 97 and the Cosmopolis Conference was arranged as part of the aliens.au program curated by Linda Wallis, and financially assisted by the Australian Film Commission.

Video Positive 97, Liverpool and Manchester, April 11-May 18
Outside outward display: tradition and the derivative

Eleanor Brickhill re-thinks tradition in Australian dance and surveys performances and debate at The Performance Space's antistatic

The Sydney Morning Herald’s dance writer, Jill Sykes, in her odd and entertaining comments about the performance programs in The Performance Space’s antistatic festival must have known she was poking a stick in a hornet’s nest. Perhaps she was emphasising her desire (Performance Space Quarterly, Autumn 1997) to express ‘one person’s view’ in what should be—ideally, but is not—in our economic rationalist climate, a widely diverse debate about innovative dance. The early practice and attitude expressed in Jill Sykes’ review reveals the easy with which alternative discourse is effectively silenced. Different notions of the body have engendered much innovative dance practice, but in Australia, these differences seem doomed to invisibility within the larger public discourse.

To wit, the National Library of Australia is currently host to a travelling exhibition, Dance People Dance, curated by Dr. Michelle Potter. Despite the Director-General’s comment that the exhibition “examines how theatrical dance in Australia has moved from its strongly Western European beginnings to now also reflect an ethnically diverse society”, this exhibition tells a story of Australian dance shaped entirely by its relationship to European tradition. Max Dupain’s photographs bring to life the early tours of Pavlova and the Ballet Russe which were so influential in developing our national ballet.

The Performance Space’s antistatic festival was the three-day workshop conducted by guests Jennifer Monson (NY), Julyen Hamilton (Spain via UK) and Gary Rowe (UK), designed to develop choreographic and improvisational practice and performance—the very practices evident in the performances which feature in Jill Sykes’ review.

If Valerie Lawson sees the cult of the creative personality as ‘unhealthy’, to be discouraged in favour of ‘creative de- and re-constructed idea, within the performance frame’.

Lucy Christos, commenting on funding problems for independent artists, equated ‘independent’ with ‘emerging’, conveying the idea that once artists have ‘emerged’ they will no longer be ‘independent’. Further, he implied these artists must be unwillingly ‘independent’ of funding bodies’ financial assistance. Either alternative misunderstands a more pertinent notion of independence, or mature, willfully artistically independent choreographic artists deliberately seeking to develop practices which speak diversely of the body—not as a well-oiled culturally ‘international’ machine, or couched in pre-defined terms which devalue difference. Such artists engage in a dialogue about practice that acknowledges Australia’s monogamous relationship with its Western European cultural referents, at the same time setting about widening cultural precepts and creating a truly independent identity.

To this end, perhaps, the antistatic festival’s centrepiece was the ten-day workshop conducted by guests Jennifer Monson (NY), Julyen Hamilton (Spain via UK) and Gary Rowe (UK), designed to develop choreographic and improvisational practice and performance—the very practices evident in the performances which feature in Jill Sykes’ review.

If a choreographer makes work to which only a specific audience can relate, is that grounds for dismissal? Such was Gary Rowe’s ‘A Distance Between Them, in which the iconography may well have related to an audience (HW positive men?)’ which did not attend. Indeed, the images remained static, distant and difficult: right in a circular frame a woman singing Doris Day love songs, a sparse film showing a mother’s pregnant belly, a man’s throat. A tortured dancer, pinned in a hard-edged ‘international’ mentality, contemporary dance forever on a readily arguable assumption. Helen Lohr pin-

A Distance Between Them, in which the iconography may well have related to an audience (HW positive men?)’ which did not attend. Indeed, the images remained static, distant and difficult: right in a circular frame a woman singing Doris Day love songs, a sparse film showing a mother’s pregnant belly, a man’s throat. A tortured dancer, pinned in a hard-edged ‘international’ mentality, contemporary dance forever on a readily arguable assumption. Helen Lohr pin-

It’s a big ask of any one artist to delve into totally unknown material, as Tony Osborne may have tried to do in the velvet ca. The results, for an audience expecting refinement at least, could be construed as... continued next page
The Performance Union

Heidrun Libhr

The Performan
ani ulate m vement, made eh · work cotaJally
gangly fashionably nerclish but charming
confinement produced, the
en mble of oloi c (dancer Ro lind ri p,
revealed in le sympacheti light (and
from her full-length
bole in the middle.
fini hed a funny and m ving; but fell int
and ab urd human in what tarted and
branch dry reptilian kin, and a l t, alien
Hi movem nt ptured par; hed, twi red
life in a du
to make vi ible hi gnarl d and in pli ble
wacchable . ln
ac ompaniment
about household applian ro th
kind of guy, wh e under ated-yet-se chat
wander a lone.
and coh ive phy iJ relation hip that
thi avemous pace as it did in it more
unknown, like rocking oothe a baby.
difficult tran iri n from the familiar to the
text. The ound
almo t di appearing in an e ea
two-footed rearure can be, her m vement
yukk a the dan er dredged up hi p
advenrurou if undeveloped and fairly
form d a par e and elegant quartet, an ·
intimate home venue. There per£ rmers
Cars 1Vs and Telephones

Duet from Trio
Variations

\[\text{Variations} \quad 01\]

\[\text{LJ,}//aby\]

In Schacher, working in ari acure rried
in Schacher, working in ari acure rried
characteri ed the riginal

Leyline ' ommenc on the facade of

Duma ' intention wa not to d rid

Dance People Dance, National Library of
Australia, curator Dr. Michelle Potter;
N ational Dance Critics Forum: Dance:
What Next? Who Says So? April 26;
antistatic, The Performance Space, Sydney
March 21-April 4
A third force

Murray Bramwell on Simone Clifford’s Fast Editing

Adelaide based Simone Clifford’s current program of work, Fast Editing, is part of the Festival of Dance to Move to season. Formerly a dancer with ADT (Australian Dance Theatre) during Jonathan Taylor’s tenure, Simone works in the early 80s, Cliff went on to work in Jiri Kylian’s Nederlands Dans Theater for five years.

Fast Editing consists of two works: a new piece titled Reluctant Relics, created in October and November, and Chasing Chambers, a work begun in London in 1994 and completed with ArtsWA’s development assistance.

Working with a group of seven dancer/six females and one male), a number of whom have come through the Centre for The Performing Arts dance program in Adelaide, Clifford has brought together what promises to be a third force in dance in a city already graced with the talents of Meryl Tankard’s ADT and Leigh Warren’s company. Clifford’s work is not only distinctive but sufficiently dynamic and accessible to engage young audiences—like the crowd who responded enthusiastically to the Alastair Winter’s hip hop movement I experienced.

The opening piece, Reluctant Relics, begins in complete silence with a solo dancer standing on one leg, raising the other to waist level, clasping it in her hands and swivelling around. Her arms are raised and then lowered along with her whole body. It requires an acute sensitivity in the dancer as she appears not quite to possess and it lends the movement an oddly poignant violence. In another segment, the dancer drops to the floor, raising her legs gaily before turning to her stomach and raising her rump to inch slowly across the stage. It is, again, unguarded, a stolen moment, erotic but innocent. We are invited out of the gathering of spectators. We have caught a human glimpse, literally an unthinking moment.

The silence continues as the soloist joins the male dancer for a classically inflected duet. Then, like emergent chrysalises, the remaining company members stand across the stage on their backs, propelled by raising their knees and sliding in unison like strange reptilian figures in those George Tooker paintings where human figures yearn to connect but are separated by cells and compartments like so many pale bees in a hive.

The work strengthens as Catherine Oates’ percussion, performed live on the stage, begins to dominate into our hearing. The tentative sprocks and cymbal strokes give way to a steadier beat and with it the performers develop a fluency and harmony of movement—like stepping from a distracted inner world into a socially ordered one. Oates’ beat grows more insistent and seizes into a mesmeric barrage from New York ensemble Bang on a Can.

If strongly from the wings in Geoff Cobham’s design, the dancers are momentarily soaked in a stripe of white light overhead settling and shoulders only to have the signature reds and blues resume. The rite ends abruptly and soloist Alissa Brusa (who also initiates the opening figures to the haunting sounds of Evan Ziporyn’s work for bass clarinet, Tangent Chamber).

Simone Clifford describes Reluctant Relics as a pivotal work in her development, suggesting it is “a work about perspective and perceptions of mind”. Her comments are cryptic, but she elaborates: “I kept saying to the dancers, ‘You don’t need to try to perform the work to the audience, but rather concentrate on your own commitment and meaning and the audience will then observe you.’”

Chasing Chambers is a more external work but also a pleasing counterpart, an exhilarating second course in Fast Editing’s appealingly succinct 34-minute running time. Built around a small chamber’s work for strings and voice, Different Trains, Chasing Chambers is lit with a row of white spots set low along the back of the stage, the performers dressed in black pedal pants and black ankle socks. Moving in staccato fashion they could be a eurhythmics class in 30s Berlin, the white light licking over them as triumphs of physical culture. But as Richardson’s light mellowes, so the movement becomes more playful and humanised. Just as suddenly the vigorous strings in Reich’s infectious composition create a flurry of Chattanooga choo-chooing, enduried by a row of vertical spots side-tracking the dancers as they take their seats near Track 29.

Simone Clifford’s work is an interesting mix of classical fluency and idiosyncratic personal expression. The contrast between the self-conscious, almost ungainly Reluctant Relics and the resonant facility of Chasing Chambers is refreshing. The choice of accompaniment is also interesting. Reich’s work may be, for some, not just last year’s model but a rather unfashionable exhumation. Perhaps it is the refreshing youthfulness of both the dancers and their audiance that reminds me that everything is always new to those who are coming along next. Clifford’s work has integrity and wit and it is building valuable bridges. I hope her plans for a regional tour come to pass.

Fast Editing, choreographed by Simone Clifford, The Space, Adelaide Festival Centre, May 1-10

A full dance card

Virginia Baxter previews a new life for One Extra and Sue Healey’s Suite Slip’d

One Extra Company, Suite Slip’d

The institutional architecture of the York Theatre was transformed into an unusually moody and intimate setting for the launch in which the audience, arts bureaucrats and well-wishers shuffled conversationally to light lounges. Director of the Company spoke from the seats accompanied by backing vocals and video clips. She quoted from Culture, Difference and the Arts—”Innovation is a dialogue between tradition and possibility”—before elaborating on plans to build on the twenty-one year history of the One Extra Company founded by Kai Tai Chan with a season of works by some of our brightest choreographic sparks.

Reflecting her own background, Robertson sees the featured work as being highly theatrical and speaks passionately of One Extra’s firm commitment to dance that questions and reflects Australian culture.

The season begins in June-July at The Performance Space with Sue Healey choreographing a new version of her work Suite Slip’d which premiered in Canberra when she was with Dance House of Sydney. One Extra’s invitation offers her a rare opportunity to re-think and extend a work. In October/November her company presents Tao, a double bill of two new works from Lucy Guerin and Garry Stewart to conclude her tour of the York Theatre at the Seymour Centre.

In Suite Slip’d, Sue Healey begins with the movements of two women in the 17th century French courtly dance—“but don’t expect a period piece”, says Janet.

The dance suit sets up a series of contemporary explorations. Rather than using a conventional theatrical framework, Sue Healey is creating a work in which performance structure and character spring from the movement itself. The dancers, Philip Adams, Michelle Heaven, Nicole Johnson, Luke Smiles and Sue Healey move from tightly interwoven ensembles into spacious solos and duets. Music by Darren Verhagen is as slippery as the movement, veering from Handel to noise. Costumes and design are by recent NIDA graduates Michelle Fallon and Damien Cooper.

One Extra has plans for a tour of Suite Slip’d to regional New South Wales in 1998. One Extra will also take the work to Auckland and in February to the Dance Space Project in New Zealand.

One Extra’s main program is supplemented by an Affiliate Artists program which invites artists to use the resources of the Centre as a place to work with other artists and as a venue to show new work in development. The impressive list of affiliates includes choreographers Kate Champion, Rosetta Cook, Bernadette Walong and Garry Stewart, lighting designer Damien Cooper, dancers Lisa French and Felice Burns and stage designer Eamonn D’Arcy. As well as supporting new companies, the Centre for Performance Studies at Sydney University and the University of New South Wales, the Department, the company will institute a series of schools-based workshops. Importantly, One Extra is in the final stages of securing a home base as company-in-residence at The Seymour Centre.

Formalities over, Annette Shun Wah, Chair of the Board of the One Extra Company, believes the secret of longevity is adaptability. As she stepped into the spotlight at the very showbiz launch of the company’s new season at The Seymour Centre, she announced that the Board had taken a long hard look at the way the company serves the dance community and meets audience expectations and consequently adapted the position of Artistic Director to Executive Producer. This decision follows a trend in senior appointees in performing arts companies under Eleanor Beckill in (RealTime 17). This Board’s brief to their EP is “to guide the artistic vision of the company in a program which offers possibilities to a range of independent artists—choreographers and dancers as well as designers, musicians and visual artists, brings in new audiences and presents attractive opportunities for new funding partners”. A very full dance card indeed even for the energetic and confident EP, Janet Robertson.

Fieldworks works the room

What I wanted, more than anything, for this piece of work was a clearer commitment to abstraction in its own terms. All of the elements of the work—the dancers, the choreography, the engagement of music to movement—sitting there in an implausible performance space, were diminished to a rhythm of narrative. I wanted to honour these parts of the sum, to follow the lines offered up through the dancing bodies, through the very idea of that hotel dining room being the space to have generated the work. I have been in enough buildings made into museum sites to know how these have become clouded. I wanted to be allowed to do some of that work of interpretation myself without the impediment of storying.

Aside from that interpretative work I learned for the work with all of its learning, its subtlety and potential of its inventions. To start with how noise the music works. It is a mixture of field recording, making dramatic the otherwise prosaic space. Paul O’Dullivan, Setafeto Tale, Jane Diamond, Shelly Mardon is one of the very few relationships, the register of parallel and contrasting sound, the intransigent, engaging as long as it wasn’t trying to illustrate words (ban the words!). There was some deeply sexy choreography here, bodies slamming around in quite a charge. An encounter between the two men was a particularly satisfying, physical dialogue.

I don’t want to deny dancers their voices, but I think the movement of their surpressed all story lines offered here. Fieldworks continues to attract fine performers, and the collaborative approach of making work is also to be admired. The inclusion of blues musician Ivan Zar to provide what sounded like an incongruent guitar and harmonica track was another delicacy.

I lean on You, You Lean on Me, directed by Jim Hughes, Fieldworks Performance Group. Old Peninsula Hotel, Maylands, Perth April 1997
Photographer Sandy Edwards was invited to Indonesia by Russell Dumas, an Australian choreographer who has a long association with the distinguished Balinese choreographer and musician, I Made Djimat, a master in the classical Batuan style of Balinese dance. In the village of Batuan, the most treasured classical dance—Gambuh, Topeng, Calonarang and Wayang Wong—still flourishes and is an integral part of temple ceremonies. In preparation for a forthcoming film on I Made Djimat, Sandy photographed the master preparing a young pupil for his first public performance in which he would play an old man.

On another night, under a full moon, she photographed the Rejang, a dance performed by women each night over three to four months of the year to ward off illnesses associated with the rainy season. In the public square at Batuan village, the women dance in lines, moving slowly in elegant, tai-chi like movement towards the male gamelan orchestra. Children move through the space, life goes on around the dancing.

Some of the photographs were exhibited during The Performance Space’s antistatic festival in the Dance Exchange Sydney studio. Some made small dances on the wall. Others were displayed on drying racks, some spilled onto the floor, awaiting assemblage, in progress. In another part of the room, videos showed the dances in more complete form. The audience entered the white studio through an ornate Balinese stage curtain.

Virginia Baxter
A season of solos about dance and spirit

"Endeavour to live in truth, simplicity and spirituality"

Choreographers/Performers: Ian Ferguson, Trevor Patrick, Ros Warby
Cello: Helen Mountford

THE WESLEYAN HALL
2-36 Cardigan Place • Albert Park (Melways Map 2J Ref K6)
• WED 25TH-SAT 28TH JUNE 8.15PM • TUE 1ST-SUN 6TH JULY AT 8.15PM • TICKETS: $22 full/$15 concessions • BOOKINGS: 03 9696 1702

A unconventional saga of family, farming and love

An unconventional saga of family, farming and love

with storytelling, history, coincidence and revelation

Despite being a glory box stuffed with relationships and weddings, there is surprisingly little romance or passion in Common Knowledge. All of the narrators seem like relatives who come from the same pragmatic stock. "Love. How did it go...? Something about her, which I know is only availability and particular physical attributes." The novel is populated by stoical, taciturn men and sturdy-legged women, braving the elements and shutting down the more sensitive nerve endings of their personalities. Their stories are told through barely opened mouths, they squint at each other. They do everything to shut out the vastness about them, the infinity that threatens chaos. Making themselves hard, they also become brittle; murder and madness hover like vultures at the borders of their histories.

My journey through Common Knowledge was not as bleak as I had predicted. It had a lightness and pace that was surprising. It had a generosity. I felt like I had been invited into people's houses for cups of strong milky tea and slices of pink-and-white Chelsea bun. I enjoyed listening to the blunt accents of taciturn men and the good humour of the women with sturdy legs. I admired them for finding peace in passionless moments. I felt my neck prickle at the presence of a brutal sexuality alongside their tender domesticity. But I knew I couldn't stay long or a latitudine would creep over me. I had had enough provincial hospitality to last me for a while. I get my kicks from champagne. 

Annemarie Lopez
Imagine a broad Australian accent slowed down to a drawl. Picture a window through which one can see a wide river coursing its way from delta to ocean, its waters rippling, a razor-sharp mind. This is the residence of Jan McKenmish, contemporary writer of novels and short stories, a writer who has penned stories in the many places she has called home.

McKenmish, who also runs the MA in Creative Writing at the University of Queensland, is a tricky person to pin down on 'home'. Most of her work explores its possible meanings in terms of personal, social and (at times) national identity and in a setting that is always changing. It can draw its sense from the Australian continent, both as construct and geographical feature. "Through formulating an image, the use of such 'incidental' documentation of everyday life as shopping lists and postcards, and the intransigent presence of the past," McKenmish has written out various configurations of contemporary Australian experience. Her work has been called postmodern but is not easily categorisable, as our discussion about her latest work, Common Knowledge (HarperCollins, 1996), and other matters revealed.

ML: I see your work as inquiring into national, social and personal identity, and very much about language. Which doesn't mean you can't engage with yourself. But I'm interested in identity that is social. I'm not so interested in the personal identity, it seems to be a diminishing idea. I've always been interested in the interplay, the relationship of places and ideas, of literatures.

JM: I'm not primarily interested in myself in writing. Or the self. I am interested in myself in the world and in a sort of writing that engages with the world and the world that is in the world. Which doesn't mean you can't engage with yourself. But I'm interested in identity that is social. I'm not so interested in the personal identity, it seems to be a diminishing idea. I've always been interested in the interplay, the relationship of places and ideas, of literatures.

ML: For me, psychological narrative is often unconscious part of a larger ideology about individualism in Western society. Not that there's no validity in it, but...

JM: I've always been writing in opposition to that idea. I'm not interested in psychological narrative being the only thing that writing can be. And it started off partly in response to the sort of dominance in early feminist writing of personal stories, of identity politics. Although it was those early feminist actions, those recuperations of the social into the personal, that actually allowed the intervention I've attempted, I was probably fairly fortunate in writing against a dominant feminism and yet trying to write within a feminism.

What I'm really interested in is how writing tells stories about how and it is possible to tell things that are based on the 'I' or fitted within conventional modes of storytelling. If you tell a conventional story conventionally, the room within that story tends to get cramped. I'm interested in finding other ways of narrating things so that what gets written about, how it is told, moves the social into the personal, shifts between central

and marginal positions (often within the one character), and inhabits contradictions (the many, not the one).

In Common Knowledge the narrators are people, sometimes lovemaking, generally marginal, but they own the telling of the narrative and they travel through their own minds and inner worlds that include managerial positions. Their lesbianism is not the main story, just a fact, almost coincidence, but it is this coincidence that allows the stories to be told. Their identities are not structured primarily through their sex life, because the book is about place and family and memory and storytelling. Their identities are only revealed as much as they reveal themselves in the telling of the story of the book, which is partly about how stories are told.

ML: Can you identify some common features in your writing? I see a preoccupation with knowledge, power, languages, and as well as the refusal of the centrality of the 'I'.

JM: In the last two novels (Common Knowledge and Only Lawyers Dancing, Angus and Robertson, 1992) you can see the use of the dual narrator. It's an attempt at least to allow the ability to move into that space of showing how stories are gathered, collected, read, reflected upon. The first novel [A Gap in the Record, Sybilla, 1985] has a fairly unconventional heroic figuring in the structure. The other two novels are more conventional but the intention's the same.

ML: There seems to be a layering of information, detail, the grand and the inconsiderational, in an almost detached, yet carefully constructed way.

JM: There are three elements to this strategy. One is how you make the reader aware of what you're writing—what you're attempting to actually invite them in to the text. If you do that, it's fairly obvious that the reader has to say, 'I wonder why I have nothing about writing'. The second thing I always want to give space to the domestic detail—the daily life. In the first book it was theoretical, the idea that daily life and the accumulation of things, the scenery, will throw up multiple narratives. There are different layers of different events. Different words and different actions. The third thing about that is the level of detail at which you build up in prose fiction stories that don't harken to nostalgia or romance, or the ugly side. In Common Knowledge, a book about the rural and thus prey to just such an either/or, I wanted to step away from these two types of fiction. I actually attempted to reach that narrative 'coolness' to make some other fiction possible.

ML: You obviously are informed by various discourses about writing about narrative, and yet I feel your concern about the materiality of 'things' and your participation in a social politics.

JM: I'm really interested in finding out how things are and work, and what I call 'their consequences' are, and then trying to write about—and this is something I'm more interested in now—it's the unforeseen consequences of things that are the core interest in and finding. With Common Knowledge, the unforeseen consequence of a whole host of decisions and lives and everything is the destruction of the farming land. And it was all done for various ideological and other good and bad reasons, but this happens—things occur and we have to know about them. And this is true of feminism and writing and politics and the intervention I've attempted. I was interested in and this is what I'm calling my next collection of writing—Unforeseen Consequences.

ML: Speaking of unforeseen consequences, it seems like there has been much exchange between your writing praxis and your teaching.

JM: Yes. I have a very privileged teaching job. The people I work with are close to being my peers in a number of aspects. Every single week I can go up to my classroom and tell them about writing. I work on my students' manuscripts—and I work quite intensively on big manuscripts over several drafts so it means I have to keep revising and rethinking and being able to restate ideas about structure (each work has its own structure) and have to articulate over and over again for my students the idea that the structure must derive content. And having to engage with the arseneque and overwriting on other people's writing is very informative of my own.

On the other hand, I find that my own writing I keep quite separate from the teaching. I never show it to the students. I never—or very rarely—talk about it. You never get the sort of discussion going about your own work that you can get going about another person's work. However, I'm not adverse to saying "When I wrote this..." or "My experience of writing is this".

ML: What is your approach to take your course?

JM: I take a very structured approach to it. I set up a structure of seminars and workshops and writing exercises and reading, and I make them all do it and they all do, in some way or another, and they all produce great stuff, and it's always a real surprise. We don't read a huge amount of fiction as exemplary text; we read a lot of essays and articles and bits and pieces. The philosophy that underlies the course is that writers learn from writing and from other writers. The majority of students find fellow writers in that group that they work with—they work on each other's work; they share readings; they ring each other up and talk; they meet outside of classes—which is really important because that is what they have to take away from the university. Some sense of being a writing community.

ML: Did you create the course?

JM: I had a total free hand. The only thing that was imposed upon me was the requirement that the students also write a 15,000-word critical essay, and I actually approve of that. You're in a university for a particular set of reasons which have to do with getting a deeper way, a deeper knowledge. And I think it's good that the students come out with at least two sorts of writing...
Youth festival makeover

Mary Anne Hunter engages with the ambitions of Adelaide’s Take Over 97

"A massive party. A 17-day celebration. Theatre, music, dance, technology, cyber arts, film, comedy, politics, dance parties, visual arts, performance, literature, fiction, film, music..." Programs with names like Arts Madd, Allwirtz, Convoy, 1st Site. "A platform for young people to express themselves and the world they live in." For people aged 3 to 26. The slick program promised it all: a festival for every "turning point" for youth arts both in South Australia and nationally.

There were many individual performance-based highlights to Take Over 97, particularly for young adults: Linda Marie Walker’s account of Doppio Teatro’s 1971 ‘magical theatre’.. So, too, Arena Theatre's Autopsy was an overwhelmingly popular performance with its intended audience (14 years and up) and succeeded where many others have faltered—suffice to say, it’s easy to do bad internet theatre. Autopsy dealt with the experience of electronically-based communication in an intelligent, street-smart way. Directed by Rosemary Myers and Bruce Gladwin, Autopsy’s visual, aural and emotional onslaught left no room for a quiet think—both its Blair-devoted company and its intended audience—but had me punting on a return viewing.

The 1st Site program for emerging artists looked exciting, with the right verbal prompt, unseen and deadly. That aspects of the program were deadly in both senses of the word meant the program was a success. Risky and innovative. The finite cabinet night I attended did not pull the crowds, but perhaps a daffy circus tent on a chilly Adelaide evening had something to do with it.

Respectable Shoes by Patch Theatre
Company featured the impressive voice of 17-year-old Heather Frain and the musical talents of Mel Watson and Marty Wilson in a collaborative work about ‘youth culture and identity, grief and rock’n’roll’. Devised by Dave Brown, Richard Stelch, Ian McDonald and Lisa Philip-Harbut, this was contemporary music theatre performed by young people. More concert than theatre event, Respectable Shoes canonised the Doc Marten and Razer and used the audience as a score with irreverent tracks like Daddy’s a Wanker. It may be a time-honoured tradition for polliwogs and bare-assed to periodically rave about young people as the vital future of the cultural industry. This production demonstrated that young people are also the now of that cultural industry—many are already competent and experienced artists in their own right.

There was also impressive performance programming for younger audiences such as The Hw by Booteater and Teater TT from Denmark, a country renowned for its consistently impressive professional theatres for young people; and Company Skylark’s Wake Baby, commissioned for the 1996 Out of the Box Festival. Wake Baby’s wondrous elements of visual fantasy entranced its all-age audience, but it was particularly dismaying to see this Canberra-based company playing to an almost empty house. Even bribes could not get me a ticket for its season in Brisbane last year.

But the performance program was just one small aspect. Take Over 97 was a grand organisational feat, and a big ask for artistic director Nigel Jamieson, the creative strength behind Red Square, the 1996 Adelaide Festival’s outrageously successful ‘Theatre of the World’ that opened in the vital heart of Adelaide Festival territory (both conceptually and geographically). Yet, what Take Over 97 offered did not reflect so much strike a blow to Australian cultural central nerve. Spread over many days, many attractors, many ages and many programs, this national festival (with underwhelming national representation) struggled to generate a core vibe. Despite the individual gems, Take Over 97 all fell short for the elusive ‘festival experience’, the environment where, in general manager Peter Hill’s words, "you just go to the show—you do a whole lot of other things, you’re totally immersed" (interview with Paul Champion, Lowdown January, 1997).

Maybe I was simply at the wrong place at the wrong time, or perhaps the right place at the wrong time. But at I loitered with intent amongst the fete-like circus tents and teepees in Elder Park at various times during the day and night, I seemed to keep missing the party and maybe the point. But I was sure something was about to happen—the program was teeming with fun. The entirely convincing hype lured me to Capital city—the place where thousands of young people were to “take over” Adelaide—only to experience entirely unconvincing gado gado and repeated capture by earnest market researchers seeking my age, my stereotype and my projected economic worth to the great Festival State. These researchers’ recurring surprise that I should be an interstate visitor for this festival became a little unnerving—wasn’t this meant to be the hot event on the Australian and international youth arts calendars: the Australian Festival For Young People? Even a scheduled companion event, the National Festival on Youth Performing Arts—the first since 1994—was cancelled due to lack of interest...or was it lack of time?

Perhaps the clearest Take Over came to generating the ‘festival experience’ was between the daylight hours of 10 and 2 when primary school-aged children snaked amongst the tent city, and on the occasional nights when Blink, the 1st Site Festival’s poster child for Black Night when young Indigenous bands ‘took over’.

To make months of innovative arts processes and creativity invested in this festival by young Southerners and by artists and artworkers. This makes Take Over an integral part of the Australian arts calendar; a vital opportunity for artists to showcase their work nation-wide. Take Over’s programming, publicity and collaborations with educational institutions were impressive, as were many individual events. But in attempting to establish an identity distinct from its community-based forebears, Take Over perhaps the size, scope and ambition of Take Over 97 overshadowed the mark. In an environment where many programs were finally being recognised as the diverse artists, participants and audiences they are, it will only become more difficult to be everything to everybody.

Mary Ann Hunter is a Brisbane-based arts researcher, director and tutor in performance.

Welcome a bright world

Murray Bramwell attends Magpie2’s opening in Adelaide, with the double header Future Tense

Magpie has returned. It now has a series number—like a software package, or an engine: Magpie2. Reconfigured by former State Theatre Company Executive Producer, Chris Westwood, the company has set aside its theatre in schools charter to provide theatre works with 18 to 26-year-old custodianship. Magpie now has an identity—a bit of a creation, a barely-defined group and they are often unified by what they don’t like, and not the other way round.

Director Benedict Andrews and his creative associates have made a bold bid—not to please their peers by second guessing them—but by doing what all serious young insects should do: please themselves first. For this they have set up at the Queen’s Theatre, historic relic of the colonial drama which, with its flaked lime walls and long use as an inner city car park, passes very respectably as an industrial rain as well.

Andrews has also arranged for Dirty House and Mistress Siren, high profile artists in the club-scene avante garde. The Bunker for the duration of the Future Tense season. This is not an opportunism—blueprint for the festival. Andrews has a strong recognition by the young director that the aesthetics (and the chemicals) of rave culture can combine streams of influence from film, from postmodern text and from new media that are evident in contemporary performance. Magpie2 is interested in renewing the claim for theatre as part of this cultural cudescence. The director has ‘fashioned’ a space that is uncompromising, uncovering two works any company in the country would be hard-

pushed to make a fist of. Mercedes by German playwright Thomas Brash is a fractured narrative which echoes some of the themes of Beckett. He sets a stage that is a murder of Hanns-Martin Schleyer in Cologne in 1977. But the exact chronology of the events is unclear. In the foreground, a delivery driver for Mercedes Benz, is not so much downized by the younger generation of young people. Mercedes from a street corner. Oh, a young woman, co-compositor, lost soul, succubus—who knows what—stains and tempts him; shares a sacrament of datura with him and helps him drive nails into the temples and kidnap the women. Designer Imogen Thomas uses the large performance space with cinematic flair.

lit with huge sprays of sidelights by Geoff Coghlan and Mark Penkwitt. The performers, assisted by astutely managed voice mixes, maintain a stillness of expectation that is a rare dissonance which is riveting. The landlord is like that of a crummy Western—castle bones and scrub, with bits of Meces sticking out of the ground. Downstage right is one full size model, hood down, lights flashing, all hood cons for the Berlin balllanders.

As Sacco, Nathan Page, is a suitable case for treatment—the narrative is framed by the naming of 16 experiments with fugacious performance venues such as “The Experimental Subject: First Dialogue” and so on. He also convinces at a more naturalistic level. Realism of the modern against the dustheap of Australian suburban trash and American movie cliche. Affectionate and disturbing the provokes the audience to feel her less fierce comrade. As the unnamed hostage, Frank Whitten radiates a terrible despair. His death speech—just as the last nail goes in—is startling and incendiary as Breughel’s fall of Icarus.

Carrell Dondi’s work, by French writer Bernard-Marie Koltes has the iconic title In the Solitude of the Cotton Fields. It is a dialogue between two strangers—one known as the Client, the other, the Dealer. As Andrews writes in his program notes, “Each speaks in vast aria like speeches about what it means to deal with each other, to fear each other and to need each other...language is used as a weapon, to probe, to protect, to seduce, to bargain, to lie, to betray and to strip”. Frank Whitten is hypnotic as the Dealer, unctuously conciliatory, templatologically at times kindly and menacing. As the Client, Nathan Page is a match for the game, except his character keeps watching the goal points move. The two players circle and stalk each other across the vast stage, their voices muted but completely audible, Heuzenroeder’s soundtrack lightly agitating the exchange. Imogen Thomas’s decor still includes the Mercs, now parked in rows. At the back of the stage is a large clock which captures silhouettes of the actors.

Koltes’ writing is poetic and compressed, the situation could be something from David Mamet or ‘My Messing Chance Meeting with Andre’. Benedict Andrews has found a way to do it here. The Dealer says, like some mysterious tempter, “Speak it as though you were speaking to a tree or facing the horizon of a prison or in the solitude of the cotton fields where you are out walking naked at night. Tell me without meeting my eye”.

Future Tense is a creditable beginning for Magpie2 and for Benedict Andrews. It stakes a claim for new theatre in Adelaide that has hitherto lacked accessibility and those fugitive fears about drama being too brainy. But Andrews has done his homework. He has been his usual ingenious self, but his choices. It’s not its fault if the future is tense. But we can think him for making it bright.

Future Tense, two plays directed by Benedict Andrews for Magpie2, Queen’s Theatre, Adelaide, May 23-June 7
Fleshing out

Keith Gallasch questions performance principles in The Party Line's What Flesh with comments from director Gail Kelly

**Narrative**

The Party Line's What Flesh combines an elaborate physical telling with an investigator’s voice-over that film-notoriously (with glorious stage techno-colour) evokes mystery. The search for an an-turned life and death artefact. An initial exchange of bodily fluids, immediately symbolised by the spilled drinks and a pair setting (disembodied arms, hands, glasses), takes a group of visually sensual women into a nightmare of invasive and caretless medical experimentation that can kill. Individuals fight back, the artefact object of medical science is named. This is a performance work (a series of dynamically juxtaposed images) but it is also a sustained narrative. Other performance works you might let seep in, wash over, reflect on later. You feel compelled in What Flesh to tell the story to yourself because so many cues are narrational. But the images are discursive, often sustained long beyond the narrative momentum of performances. But sometimes it’s just plain discomfort. However, between first and last performances in a short season, the gap is reduced, images are sharper, brisker, voice-over more audible, performers manifest personality defined beyond the merely sensual and the fearful, and the noticeably young audience is more fascinated than distracted.

**Text and similarity**

Peta Tait was the writer for What Flesh. This is a collaborative work and performance has marked itself out by being all those things that conventional theatre is not, including not serving the solo visions of playwrights. Doubtless she wrote the voice-over, which finally announces that the “artifact” is the Body. This was not news and certainly didn’t meet the considerable narrative or intellectual expectations that had been built up—including the complexities offered by Linda Dement’s project. Male au naturel one of the performers tentatively engages with. Despite occasionally strong images, Tait’s voice-over never felt quite as rarefied as meant to be in serious need of dramaturgical sharpening, but it was delivered almost deadpan with the speaker facing away from the audience. In this big traverse of a performing space who knew where the voice-over was coming from? The investigator’s engagement with a bank of computer graphics (like vivid ray, mappings of women’s bodies inside and out) that should have otherwise been critical to the show’s meanings was blunted, even if she addressed them, climbed up and across them. In a highly choreographed show the climb seemed curiously unfocussed (for an experienced performer) and had to compete with other stage action. Equally, the images were devalued—the refusal to give them real focus might have been true to performance notion of simulacrum, but it denied them, yes, theatrical power and refused them a potential link with the voice-over. Juxtaposition without dialectic.

**Gail Kelly**

I think Peta would say as I would, the tendency to treat the performance. In the same way the performer playing the investigator needs to meet the bank of screens. In fairness to her she only had a day to work with it before the show went on. I sat there for ten nights seeing where the show could be sharper and faster. As for simultaneity, it’s been a part of my week. I like to have to make choices and I’ll keep doing it. But there are moments in What Flesh where I’d drop it now for the sake of the narrative and to give more space to the investigator.

**Personae**

The physical assuredness of the performers—some of Australia’s physical theatre best—was entirely appropriate. Their strength becomes the very strength that is threatened by science as they are reduced to laboratory specimens on a frightening glass and chrome table (repletes with running water and gas burners), and one of their number is closed within it—an image of repugnant beauty. The strength is also lyrical as they dance on and over the table in acts of emotional and physical empathy that magically revised the sleeper within. However, narrative expectations were complicated by performer doublings (even triplets), especially late in the narrative where it was not clear who was who and why—a performer in saviour moment, an oppressor, or the next. Nonetheless, Angus Strathie’s costuming helped distinguish between ‘real’ bodies (an impressively painterly latticed nakedness) and the scientists in their stiff plastic smocks. And more defined personalities, more grotesques, but thing but problematic when too many episodes looked dangerously like set pieces and their sustained duration outweighed the intensity required of the dramatic moment. The best moments were those when a remarkable action flowed from the shape and telling of a scene rather than from overwrought choreographing or routine-based episodes (like the tossing of a body from one person to another too many times). Save for the ‘live’ voice-over, no-one speaks, the focus is on bodies, the context is musical—again an over-abundance, non-stop wrap-around riches, though tempered by delicate passages and some distinctive scoring for live cello, glass, glass (a red-working sound artist Liberty Kerr. The music had its own physicality, not only in a driving pulse and melodramatic surge, but in a bank of striking computer-graphic images from Rea, Linda Dement, Jane Becker, Dement’s projected virtual woman). But any relationship between bodies and technology is uncertain. What does the virtual woman mean for these women—another technological threat? Whose creation is it in the narrative—a mad scientist’s or a radical technofeminist’s? Well, it wasn’t played as threat—rather as one of three simultaneous erotic couplings. The virutal woman is a powerful image and a witty one but its role is difficult to place. What Flesh oscillates between blunt didacticism and curious complexities.

**Gail Kelly**

We were trying to create ambivalent feelings about technology—the images on the screens are beautiful, they suggest a beautiful virtual world. More important, we were saying that containment, that sterility is a fantasy, the body is not containable by science. So we presented a world soaked in disease and desire. We’re not rejecting science, we’re putting the body and sexuality back into it. And it’s not a show about AIDS.

**Process**

What Flesh is an impressive and wildly ambitious work. It would be tragic for its creators and potential audiences if it were to disappear from The Party Line repertoire. The artistic investment has been considerable and there is much that works, including some very funny material—dodgy lab work, a party turning into an all-in wrestling match. But it is one of those works that you ‘re-write’ as you watch and that tells you something is wrong. This is the work of mature artists. We worked over a period of a mere six weeks. The short season was just enough to show its potential for tighter, reflective performance, of personal space and real audience appeal. The problem of the relationship between performance and narrative is in fact the work’s future strength.

**Gail Kelly**

I watched Club Swing’s Appetite for three weeks in Edinburgh, so we had a long time to work on the emerging narrative. Similarly with The Dark for Rock ‘n’roll Circus. So I’ve developed high expectations of having the time to develop a work in performance. With What Flesh we’ve only begun.

**Open City administered What Flesh but Keith Gallasch was not involved in the creation of the performance in any way.**


Barbara Clare (below) and Simone O’Brien

Jane Becker
CorpoREAL CHAOS

Theatre engaging with academic discourse can leave me a bit cold; sometimes before you can say “gee whiz” you’ve been transported out of the theatre and into a rather irritating classroom. In Kaos World (a collaboration with scientist David Blair), Phil Morle and his Kaos crew managed to avoid the lecture by poetically hinting at complex scientific ideas via the dilemmas of characters. Morle problematizes technological notions such as the “artificial intelligence” will lead to a sort of redundancy of the flesh by engaging with ideas surrounding Einstein’s theory of relativity. In Kaos World it is suggested that the nature, form and extent of consciousness is a question of faith. The human condition is more about corporeal chaos than mathematical form–video—a theme personified eloquently by the virtual Alex (Scott Koehler) and Julia (Karen Roberts). The considerable physical talents of Marty Cunningham as Simon were a little under-utilised and I would have enjoyed more textually integrated physicality as displayed by Kaos UK to Caligula last February. There were many nice touches though, such as Alex’s haunting presence (nothing virtual about Koehler’s androgynous performance) displayed by a video-only view; the large suspended bowls of water refracting light and a superbly integrated soundscape by Tony Bonney and Michael Shrapnel. “We are all script writing, forming the illusion of life” posits ‘read science fiction’ Simon who is counterset in his polemic by a confused David (Ben Laden), “A man in what he believes”. True but access to this consciousness is only available via the visceral complexities of the body–fibre optics, zeroes and ones can only ever imitate the human condition not replace it.

Tony Osborne

Kaos World: A Millennial Tale, Kaos Theatre, Perib Institute of Contemporary Art, April 16–26

The performer and the video screen

Beth Jackson speaks with video-makers about performance

Beth Jackson in conversation with John Gilles (Sydney), Ellen Pau (Hong Kong) and Eden Santos (Brazil), guest artists with the teleVISION project, Metro Arts + Experimetro, Brisbane, April

BJ Let’s discuss the difference between video that is made for screen, and video that is made as part of performance.

ES My first video-performance work used live performers and musicians behind large screens, like Chinese shadow theatre, with projections onto the screens. Pre-edited tape was mixed with live performance from behind the screen, and there was also live mixing and switching that I was doing during the performance. However, at the end of the performance the audience thought it was all filmed. They couldn’t realise it was live, even the sound!

BJ So the audience went into a practice that’s familiar to them, fulfilling a pre-given set of expectations.

ES Ellen said to me that perhaps video was not being used as a tool for performance, but rather performance was being used to enhance video.

BJ Did that mean that the work somehow failed?

ES Yes. In the second performance of the work we decided to open the screen at the end so the audience could see all the performers.

JG People forget that film was originally a performance event with live music and sound. In Japan, benihiki stood at the side of the stage and did all of the voices from the film and it’s a fantastic performance. There are still a few benshi left. The space of cinema is theatrical.

ES It’s important that performance is not lost in the middle of image and technology. But for me it’s difficult to think of performance as actors with pre-programmed scripts, because for me performance is also a thing that happens. In my work I place everybody in a ‘net’, and they stay looking at it, and in the end you have something.

BJ Of all your works address, in a self-reflexive way, the technologies that you’re using and the references that you draw upon. Is self-reflexivity an effective strategy in making work? Is it important to declare yourself as a video artist?

JG I think self-reflexivity for me is just there. It’s just part of the way that we make things. It’s not the only element, but it’s one among many in the work. Self-reflexivity is important, but it’s not the only strategy in the work.

BJ In an ethical sense do you think?

JG More as a question of representation. I want work to be something in itself rather than to represent something else, so it has self-reflexivity built into it.

ES Whether I work in video-performance, video installation, or single channel work I always want to say the same thing: “this is alive, this is not alive, this is image, this is film, this is video, this is an object”.

BJ How does that sit with collaborative work, where meanings get propelled beyond your arrangement and become the properties of someone else’s arrangement?

ES I think it’s still the same, you have one more person, another variable that is also trying to say the same thing, otherwise we are working together. But if we remain in our own identity— it’s important to maintain identity.

JG For me no. I find my work with other people you express other parts of yourself.

EP I don’t see it as fragmented, but rather open-ended. In a collaboration, I may combine at most two or three ideas but I will also contribute to the performance if I can, and I want the performer to know what’s in the video, what I am doing.

JG Rather than being hired as the artist to create the video for the performance.

EP Right, I don’t write a script for the performer, we work at it together. I want to have the ‘sense’ of performance coming from both the video and the performance. I think one of the major problems for collaboration is that you can’t just have a strong identity into the work right from the beginning. Because, as a video artist, I have a certain technical skill and a machine, I find myself in a position of power. I think most performers are not used to working on one channel video installation, or with questions of space and structures. I have the privilege to do it, so I don’t want to force people to follow.

JG In some of the videos I’ve done with performers, I’ve been interested in creating a kind of screen-based form that is not representational. The aim is to try and shatter the representation of the performer so that the performing body breaks through the apparatus of representation.

Beth Jackson is the Director of Griffith Artworks, Griffith University, Brisbane.
awakenings

a journey through landscapes of identity

with Zsuzsanna Soboslay & Benjamin Howes

August 14 - 24
Wed - Sat 8pm
Sun 5pm
199 Cleveland St, Redfern
BOOKINGS: 9319 5091 or
First Call 9320 9000

MELBOURNE FRINGE FESTIVAL

Meanwhile, Become a member of Melbourne Fringe. It's the most efficient way to make sure you're informed of the latest Festival developments, and gives you greatest access to Fringe support when preparing your event.
You need to become a member to participate in the Festival. Call Fringe to join:
* MELBOURNE FRINGE
PO BOX 2087 ST KILDA WEST 3182
p. (03) 9534 0722; f. (03) 9534 0733
e. fringe@vicnet.net.au; www.vicnet.net.au/-fringe

If you drink, then drive, you're a bloody idiot. -IC

Stage One Registration: Open till June
Register your interest. It doesn’t matter if all your details are not finalised, if you are planning to present work in the ’97 Fringe let us know now, early planning will ensure best choice of venues.

Stage Two Registration: July 18, 1997.
This is it. Give us your details for the Festival Programme. Formally sign up for Your Fringe Experience.
Singing change and loss
Terri-ann White sees Mary Morris' Voices

In this current landscape of desolate and poignant change, shot through with loss, Voices was a tough performance. Walking through the recently decommissioned state prison to the old workshops, passing a group of dear old men tinkering with model rail systems in an adjoining workshop, I arrived on a chilly night for this show about women. Angela Chaplin utilises a community women's choir to act as chorus—an amazing body stage presence—and the speaking parts are handled by just five actors. The twenty-odd bodies, then, make it work on a big scale: this play about the women imprisoned in Sumatra by the Japanese during that (last) war to end all wars. A play about resourcefulness and respectful friendship and love. Its features are too numerous to detail here, but I can say that each element: the individual characterisations, the sense of solidarity, the staging and the music from that fine and modest chorus, works and builds to make a cumulative effect.

In her script, Mary Morris uses all of these imprisoned women's voices to build a wall of stories, of context and resistance, of regret and yearnings, of everyday exchanges. It works wonderfully: we learn so much about these characters, particularly the Australian nurses. The English colonial woman, presented as the archetype of resistance who organises and keeps the choir singing against the relentless marching of the Japanese captors, manages a despair of loss and a requisite screeching whistle sound that signifies the Japanese dunng that (last) war to end all wars. A chilling night for this show about women.

This production contains some exquisite scenes. Particularly, the opening tableau of women in their funny red-shawled nurses uniforms waving in a petite group, simply going out and leaving, with their backs to us; the backdrop a long straight wall lined with bamboo, and the music from that fine and modest chorus, the Japanese during that (last) war to end all wars. A community women's choir to act as chorus—an amazing body stage presence—and the speaking parts are handled by just five actors. The twenty-odd bodies, then, make it work on a big scale: this play about the women imprisoned in Sumatra by the Japanese during that (last) war to end all wars.

In her script, Mary Morris uses all of these imprisoned women's voices to build a wall of stories, of context and resistance, of regret and yearnings, of everyday exchanges. It works wonderfully: we learn so much about these characters, particularly the Australian nurses. The English colonial woman, presented as the archetype of resistance who organises and keeps the choir singing against the relentless marching of the Japanese captors, manages a despair of loss and a requisite screeching whistle sound that signifies the Japanese dunng that (last) war to end all wars.

This production contains some exquisite scenes. Particularly, the opening tableau of women in their funny red-shawled nurses uniforms waving in a petite group, simply going out and leaving, with their backs to us; the backdrop a long straight wall lined with bamboo, and the music from that fine and modest chorus, the Japanese during that (last) war to end all wars.

Singing change and loss
Terri-ann White sees Mary Morris' Voices

In this current landscape of desolate and poignant change, shot through with loss, Voices was a tough performance. Walking through the recently decommissioned state prison to the old workshops, passing a group of dear old men tinkering with model rail systems in an adjoining workshop, I arrived on a chilly night for this show about women. Angela Chaplin utilises a community women's choir to act as chorus—an amazing body stage presence—and the speaking parts are handled by just five actors. The twenty-odd bodies, then, make it work on a big scale: this play about the women imprisoned in Sumatra by the Japanese during that (last) war to end all wars. A play about resourcefulness and respectful friendship and love. Its features are too numerous to detail here, but I can say that each element: the individual characterisations, the sense of solidarity, the staging and the music from that fine and modest chorus, works and builds to make a cumulative effect.

In her script, Mary Morris uses all of these imprisoned women's voices to build a wall of stories, of context and resistance, of regret and yearnings, of everyday exchanges. It works wonderfully: we learn so much about these characters, particularly the Australian nurses. The English colonial woman, presented as the archetype of resistance who organises and keeps the choir singing against the relentless marching of the Japanese captors, manages a despair of loss and a requisite screeching whistle sound that signifies the Japanese dunng that (last) war to end all wars. A chilling night for this show about women.

This production contains some exquisite scenes. Particularly, the opening tableau of women in their funny red-shawled nurses uniforms waving in a petite group, simply going out and leaving, with their backs to us; the backdrop a long straight wall lined with bamboo, and the music from that fine and modest chorus, the Japanese during that (last) war to end all wars. A community women's choir to act as chorus—an amazing body stage presence—and the speaking parts are handled by just five actors. The twenty-odd bodies, then, make it work on a big scale: this play about the women imprisoned in Sumatra by the Japanese during that (last) war to end all wars.

In her script, Mary Morris uses all of these imprisoned women's voices to build a wall of stories, of context and resistance, of regret and yearnings, of everyday exchanges. It works wonderfully: we learn so much about these characters, particularly the Australian nurses. The English colonial woman, presented as the archetype of resistance who organises and keeps the choir singing against the relentless marching of the Japanese captors, manages a despair of loss and a requisite screeching whistle sound that signifies the Japanese dunng that (last) war to end all wars. A chilling night for this show about women.

This production contains some exquisite scenes. Particularly, the opening tableau of women in their funny red-shawled nurses uniforms waving in a petite group, simply going out and leaving, with their backs to us; the backdrop a long straight wall lined with bamboo, and the music from that fine and modest chorus, the Japanese during that (last) war to end all wars.
The power of musical networking

New Music Network's Marshall McGuire interviewed by John Potts

Marshall McGuire is one of Australia’s leading harpists, and an enterprising innovator of contemporary composition. His acclaimed CD Awakening features Australian works for the harp. He is also the President of the New Music Network, an association comprising member groups ELSION, the Song Company, The Spring Ensemble, Sydney Alpha Ensemble, The Seymour Group, Synergy, as well as associated ensembles such as XI, SYMA and Machine for Making Sense.

JP What does the New Music Network entail, and why was it formed?

MM The New Music Network was formed as an initiative of Daryl Buckle, the artistic director of ELSION, who wanted to get all the new music ensembles in Sydney together to talk about the direction of new music, and how we could all access each other’s audiences. There seems to be a fragmentation of audiences in new music, so the idea of a network captured the imagination of some of these groups. It’s still at a formative stage as we haven’t officially launched the network, but we’ve received seed funding from AusIndustry which has taken us on board as a cultural development project. We’re just about to launch the membership drive and a publicity drive so we can represent contemporary music in Sydney and in Australia.

JP Do you envisage working together to stage concerts, festivals?

MM Yes, all these things are possible. Obviously it will be driven by what the membership wants and what audiences want, this will take some time. I see collaboration between groups. For instance, I think it would be interesting for groups like the Song Company and SYMA to get together on a project, coming from two completely different backgrounds. I think interaction with other contemporary art forms is important—this is something where music has been lagging behind, existing on its own. We can think of any other contemporary art form, be it film or architecture or design or dance, which have good followings and profiles, whereas some music doesn’t have that profile.

A lot of people say they don’t understand contemporary music, so they don’t want to feel alienated and not enjoy it. But you could use the same argument about Bach: not many people would understand how a Bach suite is put together, but we can still react to it emotionally. Living in a predominantly visual age as we do, it is more difficult to understand because you can’t access it in five seconds as you can with a painting. This is difficult but not impossible. It’s up to us, the musicians and the ensembles, to present it in such a way that people don’t feel alienated.

JP Audiences for contemporary music are often surprisingly small and relatively old. A younger audience would go to a challenging film or play or performance work, don’t seem to know about contemporary music. I think there’s a lack of engagement with that audience. But it’s also because the gulf between popular music and what you might call ‘serious music’ has widened. It’s not so long ago that the two forms of music were much closer together, but now there’s more relevance for kids in Regurgitator or Silverchair, mostly in terms of image and lyrics. There are more young people now experimenting with new music, because they’ve reached the end of their interest in old music. There are more institutions who recycle old ideas with a lack of passion and a lack of relevance, so kids who have seen the possibilities of expression in other forms of music want to now explore it in ‘serious’ music. Hopefully the Network, with the breadth of style and the expertise each group can bring to it, as well as the people like marketing consultants who can call on, can tap into contemporary music.

JP When you say new music, of course, there’s a great range of styles within that term.

MM To a certain extent there’s been a lack of engagement with that audience. But it’s also because the gulf between popular music and what you might call ‘serious music’ has widened. It’s not so long ago that the two forms of music were much closer together, but now there’s more relevance for kids in Regurgitator or Silverchair, mostly in terms of image and lyrics. There are more young people now.

JP Why do you envisage working together to stage concerts, festivals?

MM Yes, all these things are possible. Obviously it will be driven by what the membership wants and what audiences want, this will take some time. I see collaboration between groups. For instance, I think it would be interesting for groups like the Song Company and SYMA to get together on a project, coming from two completely different backgrounds. I think interaction with other contemporary art forms is important—this is something where music has been lagging behind, existing on its own. We can think of any other contemporary art form, be it film or architecture or design or dance, which have good followings and profiles, whereas some music doesn’t have that profile.

A lot of people say they don’t understand contemporary music, so they don’t want to feel alienated and not enjoy it. But you could use the same argument about Bach: not many people would understand how a Bach suite is put together, but we can still react to it emotionally. Living in a predominantly visual age as we do, it is more difficult to understand because you can’t access it in five seconds as you can with a painting. This is difficult but not impossible. It’s up to us, the musicians and the ensembles, to present it in such a way that people don’t feel alienated.

JP Audiences for contemporary music are often surprisingly small and relatively old. A younger audience would go to a challenging film or play or performance work, don’t seem to know about contemporary music. I think there’s a lack of engagement with that audience. But it’s also because the gulf between popular music and what you might call ‘serious music’ has widened. It’s not so long ago that the two forms of music were much closer together, but now there’s more relevance for kids in Regurgitator or Silverchair, mostly in terms of image and lyrics. There are more young people now.

MM We struggled with the title a little bit—it came down to ‘contemporary’ or ‘new’. We figured that ‘contemporary’ has been taken up with rock music; we thought that ‘new’ was good because the music is new, whatever comes out. Whatever’s written now is new. It can be anything from Ross Edwards to Elena Kat-Cernin or SYMA’s improvisational music, or Machine For Making Sense, which is a different way of making music or sound. The term ‘new’ tries to encompass the diversity of the Network.

JP There must be a sense of frustration for new music practitioners, that the music they know people will want to come and see. They’re not challenging these audiences, and I think audiences do like to hear something new. I was shocked to see in the Melbourne Symphony’s program for this year that there are only four Australian premieres in the whole year. I’m deeply saddened by that. New works add a level of stimulation to music-making and music-going, which is lacking a bit at the moment.

JP What are your thoughts on contemporary Australian music?

MM It’s actually very healthy, underneath. I’m surprised that so many people are still writing as much as they are and getting performances, despite all the obstacles put in the way by a lack of recognition, the lack of approval by the large organisations. There’s a great wealth of talent and imagination out there. It’s been thriving in an underground fashion, what we want to do now is bring it out into the light.

JP You perform Australian works and commission compositions for the harp for concerts and recordings. Did you set out to be an advocate for new Australian works?

MM It’s actually more selfish than that. I got very sick of playing the traditional harp repertoire, needed something more challenging to do, and so it seemed logical to commission Australian composers. A number of these works have come through personal contacts with composers. For instance Elena Kats-Cernin’s Chamber of Horrors, which has taken me next year. She wanted to write a piece for harp, I wanted a piece for harp—let’s see what we can do. And she thought there are pieces by Gerard Brophy, Gordon Kerry—again, people I’ve worked with through ELSION and various other areas. It just seemed logical to explore with them their ideas for the harp. I think a lot of composers are fascinated by the harp, it’s a very complex instrument to write for and always the last chapter in the book on orchestration. And harp players have been a little reticent to challenge themselves—never have they gone to composers and said, “I want to do something”. So that stifled the creativity in harp music for a while. I believe in Australian music, and I think it’s up to instrumentalists to fulfil their part of their contract, to introduce new compositions and challenge what instruments and performers can do.

JP Now I’ll ask you a question that always gets asked, which people hate to answer.

MM Why did I take up the harp?

JP No. Do you think there’s anything distinctive about Australian composition, or is it part of an international approach?

MM I don’t find anything distinctive about Australian music per se; what I find exciting is its diversity. Maybe that is distinctively Australian. Other than that, I’m not sure what distinctively Australian could be... I have a problem with appropriating didgeridoo. The younger composers perhaps feel they’re more able to express their individuality nowadays, rather than subscribe to one particular school of composition. The younger composers I’ve worked with display a great technical knowledge, they’re very well trained in that sense, and they have a wide choice of people they can turn to for advice. They have the benefit of drawing on an eclectic mix of tutors and styles in Australia.

JP One more question, since you brought it up. Why did you take up the harp?

MM I’m not going to answer that. I think I liked it because no-one else was doing it, it’s very expensive and it’s very difficult.

JP It wasn’t Harpo Marx?

MM It could have been. He gets the frosted lens in his harp scenes. He’s extraordinary, and he was such a great harpist, apart from everything else.
Jim Dente and the Random Module

April becomes a bit the more important for being of talk, its musicality, its chance capture, you, this "five acts and twenty scenes of spurious context, are mesmerising, often transmitting a tradition, are mesmerising, often transmitting a

Indian bamboo flute, or bansuri.

various styles, traditions and instrumentation of Indian music. In covering so much scope, it is inevitably highly eclectic, but the accompanying notes help locate each work in a specific context.

The only stumbling-block is the opening track, Om, based on a concept from Parsons, in which a mantra is chanted over the drone produced by a tambura. New Age gripiness hovers, unfortunately, very near. The rest of the album, however, is a delight of textures, ancient instruments, persuasive rhythm and, of course, the Indian bamboo flute, or bansuri. As for The Music Of Bali Vol 2, there are no reservations. Performed by the Terta San ensemble, these gamelan performances, part of the legong dance tradition, are mesmerising, often transmitting a

shimmering beauty.

John Potts

Talk is Cheap

Machine for Making Sense

Sonic Hieroglyphs from the night continent
Jim Denley and the Random Module Twins

SPLIT Records 3 1997

PO Box 445 Potts Point NSW 2011

This grows on you, or (more accurately) into you, this "five acts and twenty scenes of spurious context" called Talk is Cheap with the Machine playing mostly short tracks in various membership permutations. The title is perfect. Talk is cheap on Talk is Cheap. Talk is the noise of talk, its musically, its chance capture, words gulped and kicked out, guttural, barked and screamed. Therefore the Machine's talk becomes all the more important for being incommunicative—your hear everything else in

and around and about talk that you ignore in the usual give and take of conversation. You hear snippets of talk, you hear the voice as a musical instrument amongst other musical instruments, the breath of Jim Denley shakuhachi-ing, speaking through wind instruments, among other sounds Rik Rue has plundered from everywhere real and synthetic, creeking and growling, sometimes distant, sometimes epic Bladerunner-y (without tunes), sometimes too real—a nearby whistle makes you take off the headphones in an empty room. Talk is everywhere crying out for interpretation, but the Machine doesn't wait for you. Sometimes you are desperate for almost two seconds to be swept away by that dark deep bass riff (shades of John Zorn in mock movie sound-track mode) or a female sigh or that word you recognise as yours. Sometimes you think Chris Mann is making sense with the curious stream of music of bureaucrat and other non-sense talk, but that's like thinking you understand a foreign language in a movie where you've drifted away from the subtitles. There is, though, reprieve from talk, in markedly musical tracks like Scene 5, quite elegantly symphonic, slow pulsed, throat, passes running in quick breathless overlap like many persons in one. The subtle about acts and scenes is also appropriate, many a track and many a moment evoking meeting characters, surprise actions, brief monologues, scenes, conflict. But nothing fixed, because this Machine spits out beautiful noise first and foremost, mimicking the world, but distilling its languages.

Sonic Hieroglyphs from the night continent is Jim Denley on wind instruments, vocals and electronics. The untreated clarity of acoustic instruments warbles against thundering synthetic textures, an echoing watery hall is traversed by chugging flute breath and technological creature sounds flit, a jazz riff half-melodies throughout, the world breaks up into static. There's a touch of the apocalyptic in Sonic Hieroglyphs signalled by the range of palate from pure breath to electronic landscapes. Denley's cover note reads: "This music is an offering to the universe real and synthetic, creaking and other sounds Rik Rue has plundered from nature, in the hands of Gibson, however, they become found objects, 200 starting-points for radiophonic adventures. Tom and Nicole would probably not be impressed.

John Potts

Radio previews

The audio arts are increasingly well represented on the ABC. Apart from flagship The Listening Room, innovative radiophonic work can regularly be heard on Radio-eye, and on Airplay (Radio National, Sundays, 3pm). Airplay's June program has the theme "Sounds Like Teen Spirit", with works concerning young people, written and performed by young people. Six productions, including "I Am Your Dream" by Camile Scaysbrook and "Not Your Mob Next Door" by Helen V. Anu, showcase emerging radio talent.

The Listening Room in July is presenting a month of works concerned with devotion, contemplation and the power of the voice—the role of confession in Ireland, a polyphonic Lord's Prayer in English and Hebrew, the mortal sin of gluttony, the ancient link between the voice and the divine. Most intriguing of all is a return broadcast of Moya Henderson's Meditations and Distractions on the Theme of the Singing Nun (July 7, 9pm, ABC Classic FM). This hour-long sound play, including music for six sopranos and folk instruments, takes us through the extraordinary life of Jeanne Demessence, known internationally as the Singing Nun. Despite earning millions for the Church, she never received a penny of the royalties—yet she incurred a massive tax debt for those royalties, eventually committing suicide in 1975. This production combines an evocative use of reverits with its narration of this tragic tale.

A different angle on religion is provided by Patrick Gibson in Do The OCA, a series of short pieces featured on Radio-eye throughout July (Sundays 8.30 pm, Radio National), What is the OCA, or Oxford Capacity Analysis? It is, disturbingly enough, "a personality test" of 200 questions devised by the Church of Scientology. In the hands of Gibson, however, they become found objects, 200 starting-points for radiophonic adventures. Tom and Nicole would probably not be impressed.

John Potts

Subscription

Have RealTime posted to you direct—without days of printing—

Name

Address

Telephone

Credit Card (number, card type, exp. date)

Name on Card

Card Number

Signature

Please forward money order/cheque payable to Open City Inc for $24 for issues 20,21,22,23,24,25

Mail to

RealTime Manager
PO Box A2246
Sydney South
NSW 1235 Australia

Enquiries

Tel (02) 9283 2723
Fax (02) 9283 2724
email opencity@rttimearts.com

ANNOUNCING 2 SPECTACULAR CDs OF EXTRAORDINARY SOUND ART FROM SPLIT RECORDS...

"five acts and twenty scenes of unexpected machinations"

&

Sonic Hieroglyphs from the night continent
Jim Denley & the Random Module Twins

"astonishing" (Resonance Magazine, London)

SONIC EXPLORATION FROM AUSTRALIA

PO Box 445 Potts Point 2011

P/F: +61 02 9331 2593

splitrec@ozemail.com.au

AVAILABLE FROM LEADING STORES

"Radio-eye"
month can catch the new play by this exciting young writer Upstairs at Behov School Theatre in June-July. Country Love has been written in collaboration with Senator Don Manouney and will be performed by Sidekirk Performance Group June 19-July 13. Information: Lauren Sarf Tel 02-9560-1256

Two performance-based website events in Far North Queensland:

Travelling Sense

Laura Aboriginal Dance and Cultural Festival

Green Dance 97. Australia's annual festival of contemporary dance now in its fifth year will be held in Melbourne from June 12-July 15. The week-long program curated this year by Lee Christoffers features new and established choreographers and performers, including practitioners of the premiere of the Taipai Dance Circle ("wake, nude, bald, muscular, male, Older dancers on a performance floor") and performances by Shing and Australian dancers Louise Taouo, Steven McCooy and Michael Collins.

Rodney Norman, Alison Hall & Brian发射, Anna Smith, Natalie Weir and Garry Stewart plus improvisation, traditional and martial arts on the theme of this year's congress: Heritage and Heresy.

Sydney Improved Music Association (SIMA) offers June program includes the first Australian tour by new generation jazz pianist and composer Darrell Grant performing with Jason Conroy (tenor-sax), Lloyd Swanton (bass) and Gay Struzzullo's Quintet (June 17). Trombone player James Greene (June 4, 11) impresses with Chris Hallidley/Trevor Brown. Mike Jo Thomson/Dan Calem at the Cartoon Club (June 3). The Engine Room (June 17). Tim Reilfsen at Jo Maning/Mike Dwyer.

Nock/Cameron Undy Duo (June 25) and_dice New Noise/Music Night at Off Broadway (June 16) featuring Australian musicians who draw on the influences of classical and modern with heavy voices and an electric sound. A Noisy Quartet at Craig Walters.

Poles Apart is the June double bill at The Stables Theatre in Kings Cross. Two youth plays by London playwright Denisa Ivacske (Ivic's first Australian) and writer Monica Razowski (White Mud). Ivacske's play won the UK New Writing Festival in 1996. Conflicts with a boy who has a crush, a group of young people who are rehearsing for a performance, and an audience that is. Wearing clothes, music and a drink, he becomes the center of attention. A Noisy Quartet at Craig Walters.

Like a short, sharp, inventive and/or experimental five minute video of your performance experience as an archival record or for promotions purposes? Telephone Smith Street Films and arrange to see their showreel of performances shot for ABC and SBS TV as well as community organisations. Telephone: 02-9318-4071 for booklets.

The pitch: Bundaberg Rum is offering 5,000 for a photograph or film catch. (A photo has the "capture of the spirit of Ausse Good times"; b) your photo is to include a reference (suitable for art) to Bundaberg Rum somewhere on your photo; c) the photo must be one that you have to enter; (d) for legal reasons the photo must not include any people aged under 18 such as a family or friends. The prize is a new Minolta X300 camera and photographic kit worth $500 and if you win your photograph will be included in the competition calendar. Entries must be received by the camera competition is open to professionals as well as students and amateur photographers. Closing date for entry is June 28 for a free brochure Michelle Flynn or Kristin Conacher 02- 95913777. http://www.bundabergrum.com.au.

Sydney audiences who have a fascinating taste of photography. Rare, early, and modern negative works. The Fertility of Objects at Griffith Theatre last

SPORT

TOOTH AND CLAW with Jack Rufus

Of all the no-hopers and deadbeats in the history of sport, the biggest loser of them all must be...Garry Kasparov. Sports stars have enjoyed a steady improvement since before, but nobody has let down more people than this so-called champion. Not only did Kasparov let down all chess players, and all Russians, but he let down the entire human race, over its four million years of evolution.

When he threw up his arms and ran off stage after a 19-move whisker from Deep Blue, Kasparov shaved all his. His tearful press conference only made it worse. If he was any kind of sportsman he would have resigned, John McEnroe style, by smashing into that blasted box of circuitry with the nearest axe or sledge-hammer. At least bad sportsmanship is something we can all respect.

What are we to do now? If we're stuck with no-longer-for-the-rematch, we need to toughen him up a bit. He should go into it doing what humans do best: cheating. He could make Deep Blue up early, by "accidentally" spilling his glass of water into its mainframe. Then, while its minders aren't looking, he could yank out a few circuits or sabotage its program. With Deep Blue reduced to the level of a dog, even Kasparov could compete and give us back our self-respect. Only then will Garry Kasparov shake off his title as the greatest loser of all time.

The Actors Centre began operation in 1987 as a professional resource centre - on-line, up to date, industry aware. A base where industry practitioners can continue their Technical and artistic development.

The Actors Centre offers:-
- Screen Performance Classes
- Casting / Screen testing facilities
- 1 year acting programme - "The Journey" - Part time courses in acting & performance
- Weekly Drop-in classes
- Audition information board
- Tailored and personalised tuition for individuals or theatre companies

Phone 02-9310-4077 for brochures or more information

241 Devonshire Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010

TEE OFF with Vivienne Inch

It's been a while since I've witnessed the discipline and dedication needed to honour something as simple as the Fore regulation. It was therefore shocking this week to watch the PM publicly outstripped at the Reconciliation Conference after a failure to call "Fore", followed by a pathetic display of pique that had the audience turning their backs in silent protest. The Fore regulation is part of the very civil code of behaviour that attracts me to golf. This code requires that players take account of everyone on the course, repair any damage done along and out a worry about anyone who may be liable to be struck by the balls they hit. The word itself is an aptnic variation on the word 'before'. Howard's game this week lacked all sign of civility. I've said before, the man is a weak player and all the coaching in the world will not make him any more convincing. He approaches each tee cold, practice-swinging like a man wondering what's wrong with his game. He shuffles his feet and wriggles his eyebrows and blusters about his ten point game plan. At no stage at this week's outing did he address the damage that this plan would do, nor give warning of its disastrous impact on those who, backs turned, stood directly in its path.