

# RealTime<sup>free</sup>

Sydney Film Festival Lift Out Guide

Melbourne International Film Festival

Memories & Dreams

Sharon Stone

Hal Hartley

June - July

Performance and the National Arts

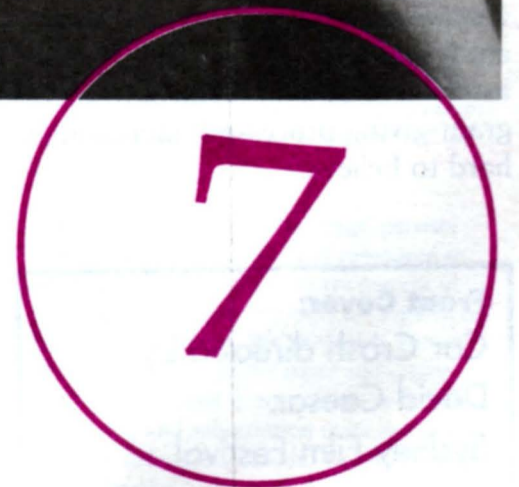


Dance & Youth Arts in Queensland

The End of Peer Assessment?

Arts Crisis in Victoria?

Intencity



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Our Special Editorial says it all. What is now confirmed is that the restructured Australia Council, without committees, will become strictly hierarchical with Council dictating policy rather than committees debating it or proposing it. Although this might not make much immediate difference to, say, the Literature Board, the impact on the performing arts with the threat of even more remote and anonymous assessment procedures could be brutal.

The performing arts are not books, they are not objects, they have to be experienced in a range of venues and spaces, they are geographically difficult to get at, they are vast in number. Of course, the assessors will be chosen because of their expertise and their local knowledge but how will they remain anonymous, how can they avoid lobbying? Anyone who has done this kind of work in the past for the PAB knows exactly what we mean.

Will assessors really see the work of the artists they are judging? Will they have travel allowances? Who will monitor the work of the assessors? The one composer on the Performing Arts Fund, say? The one or two theatre people? Council staff, who will accrue much unwanted power in the new structure? (Yes, given Australia Council Chair McPhee's hatred of committees, members will now sit on Funds, not on committees.)

It is hard to imagine how assessors and the Fund will make their decisions with little sharing of information and even less debate. The idea of a 'pool of peers' (already 'pool of piss' in the field), all of them used only once is frightening. Who are these many geniuses who will bring to bear vast unchallengeable knowledge of their field, overcoming the tyrannies of distance and prejudice with the A/B/C stroke of a pen? And the use of this pool is optional for a fund to turn to. How will we know when and how we're being assessed? Obviously were not meant to. The council will well and truly cover its back.

Just as an announcement has been made that application procedures have been simplified, we all thought to encourage more applicants more fairly, Hilary McPhee on Radio National's *Arts Today* reveals its true purpose, forecasting a tightening of application criteria ('narrowing the gateway') - an interesting way to discourage criticism of the Australia Council and hide its inability to fund the growing number of excellent artists

On *Arts Today* McPhee sustained the rhetoric of agreeing with the Council's critics with her denigration of the existing committees as 'fiefdoms'. The medieval analogy seems more appropriate to the new structure than the relatively democratic old one. Now we have a Great Chain of Being with a Council firmly in control delivering the word (Council Member Terry Lane of the ABC has already got off to an appalling public start), an insulated Major Organisations Board (without an artist's peer in sight) and a crowd of individual, small group, regional, community, alternative and experimental artists on the bottom rung threatened with 'buffer zones' between fundings (no buffers for the MOB?) and anonymous assessments. It's a shock when you open *The Australian* (June 1) and you find your least favourite critic of the Australia Council Mark O'Connor rightly arguing for more time for assessments not less and that the new assessment procedures will not be more cost-effective. (Of course, you're reminded that this is O'Connor when he proposes his 'socialist' solution - cut Australia Council staff salaries on the grounds that they earn more than artists and re-distribute the money to panels and artists.)

There is already talk that the new system will be unworkable unless it is quite ruthless. Council may well find that the wrong applicants won't simply go away and that the mechanics of the new assessment procedures will be more elaborate than the current ones. The out is that the PAF "may be further broken down into Funds for Dance, Drama, Music and Hybrid Arts" but, predictably, McPhee sees these as one-off gatherings, not on-going committees. Council has moved quickly. It claims that it has run "a 12 month public review of peer assessment". Of course, it only really went public in April for a few weeks and had already re-defined 'peer' and created a peer-less MOB. Artists cannot afford to wait to see how the new structure treats them. Current committee members will have to look to their consciences and their dignity to see if they can complete the year under a Council that has so denigrated them.

Peer assessment is on the verge of becoming meaningless with Council announcing that it "will be seeking nominations for the register of peers from the arts industry and the public later this year", declaring "Our aim is to give the best possible service, using peer assessment where peer assessment is appropriate." Council's undue haste is generating new antagonisms, its claims that "peer assessment remains central to the grant-giving processes" increasingly hard to believe.

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# Special Editorial: Peering at the precipice

This response by members of the editorial team of *RealTime* to the Australia Council's Peer Group Assessment Review Discussion Paper was written before the May 31 announcement of "A new look Australia Council for 1996". Because its observations and criticisms are all pertinent to the new structure we have decided to run this special editorial without changes.

Is it a coincidence that the letters sent to "colleagues", requesting input into the Australia Council's current peer assessment review were inauspiciously dated 1 April? Given mail turnaround times, this left around three weeks for Australian artists, whose fortunes are intimately connected to the policies of the Council, to consult with colleagues and develop a response by the deadline of April 28.

A few pages into the attached "discussion" paper and the disingenuousness of the putative "consultative" process is apparent. Prior to any invited public discussion, the Council has helpfully "agreed on one major change" on behalf, presumably of its clients: the definition of peer is no longer persons who practice or have practiced the arts but, "anyone who, by virtue of their knowledge and experience, is equipped to make a fair and informed assessment of artistic work and grant applications." (If the Council is ever short of newly-defined "peers", I'd be happy to pass on the name of an accountant; he'd be a whizz at checking the figures in grant applications, believes in a fair go, loves Ken Done and, as a bit of a Renaissance man, is a long term subscriber to the AO.)

There's an uncomfortable sense of predestiny to this review which was kick-

started by Keating's Creative Nation cultural policy statement of October 1994, and helped along by chronic grumblings from parties such as the Australia Council 'reform' body set up by the strangely disaffected Les Murray, (recipient of a cool \$500,000 from the Council before his road to Damascus conversion to anti-peer assessmentism). The blueprint for the review's outcomes is presented in the cultural policy document. Creative Nation states that (surprise!) change is needed to the definition of peer, and that the process of applying for funding should be streamlined, simple, transparent and flexible to meet "future needs". It asserts that a peer assessment system that "is not efficient of time and resources should be changed".

In a "future needs" environment overshadowed by an enormous ledger and a time-and-motion stopwatch, the fundamental principles of peer assessment – artistic and creative ones, one would have thought – curiously vanish from the agenda. Creative Nation further suggests that the Council should continue to break down the "rigidities" between the artform boards (and their committees), and develop a cross-board approach. Put chairperson Hilary McPhee's avowed aversion to committees together with this none too subtle intervention from Canberra and you don't have to be a rocket scientist to work out the direction in which the Council is heading.

The Council's vision for the future is presented in the three options for restructuring the assessment system outlined in the discussion paper. The options all relate, in varying degrees, to the assertion (unsupported in the document) that "the suitability of formal large committee structures to assess creative work" is in severe doubt.

Option A would comprise a series of modifications to the current system. Artform specific committees could be relieved of their policy related roles, as a 'time reduction' measure. Members could be appointed for shorter terms than the present 1 to 3 years. A ratings system for application could be introduced. Committee numbers could be reduced by the use of external assessors. Committees could be split, with half the applications being assessed and rated by half the committee.

The cumulative effects of these measures would have major implications for the nature of assessing of creative work. Removing the committee from a policy role suggests a collective of individuals severed, from a philosophical overview of the process in which they are engaged. Splitting committees lessens the opportunity for open dialogue and discussion on both the criteria for funding and the merits of individual applications. Reducing committee numbers by using external assessors further seriously undermines the possibility of debate and the process of information exchange. Paradoxically, given the document's imperative to cost and time efficiency, the rapid turnover of committee members, would, amongst other things, add enormously to the administrative burden for the Council. An alarming suggestion is the introduction of "buffer zones" between applications (the paper notes that Council is already – pre-emptively – considering introducing three year buffer zones between successful applications). Given the recent Throsby report (*But what do you do for a living?*) – which showed that almost two-thirds of artists earn less than \$10,000 pa from their creative work, and that artists' real incomes have declined 13% since 1987 – this measure, which has the potential to structurally enshrine impoverishment and preclude continuity of support, needs particularly careful consideration. Would this mean, for example, that an artist receiving a \$5,000 grant in 1995 would be

ineligible for further support until 1997 or 1998?

If Option A is the thin edge of the wedge, option B is about halfway to the thick end. This option relies largely on external assessors, and an increased role for Council staff. All applications would be read by staff and referred to the "best possible" assessors for the applications for rating. The highest rated applications would then be referred to expert panels for final decisions – the committees again would cease to exist. Call me sceptical, but this system, which relies on the costly process of engaging external assessment expertise, and places enormous requirements of time and responsibility in the hands of staff, seems no less resource-onerous than the existing system. This scenario also reduces dialogue and debate amongst peers, as well as obviating peer involvement in the initial step in the assessment process; staff will now have a large hand in determining the fate of applications by autonomously selecting assessors. Applications are then initially appraised by only two people – bad luck for those who would have benefited from exposure to the broader range of interest and expertise represented on committees. In a kind of sudden death, if the proposal doesn't appeal to the two people selected by staff, it apparently falls off the bottom of the list (unless there's perhaps some fail-safe mechanism where applications rated "CC" or "BC" can be retrieved by the panels for further consideration).

Option C presages the full decimation of the committee and artform specific board structure. As the discussion paper states, the individual artform boards would be replaced by an arts companies board and an individual artists board. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board and the Community Cultural Development Board would stay as is. A Major Organisations Board (MOB) has already been established. The pool of external assessors would be used in the same way as Option B, and a set of artform panels would mediate between the assessors and the boards, presumably with policy and management decision making resting in the larger cross artform bloc of boards. It's a mystery to me how this structure, which still requires external assessors, a series of panels, and so on, would reduce duplications and improve cost and time efficiency. What it would do is definitively can the productive agonising and the complex but relatively open and democratic process of debate that are the core features of the current peer committee system, while centralising policy making in non-artform specific middle management. That the Council has already established the MOB is perhaps an indicator of the eventual outcome of the review.

It may well be legitimate to claim, as Hilary McPhee has done, that this review is necessary and timely – a little self-reflexivity is highly commendable, and there are a range of views in the arts community about how the system could be improved. However, much of the public debate around the review to date has been commandeered by disgruntled punters (described in Michael Duffy's recent Independent Monthly piece as "victims" of the Council) muttering darkly about "ideological conspiracies". Whatever its findings, the blinding obviousness of the fact that the process of dismantling peer review – including the Orwellian 'rewriting' of the definition of peer – has begun, should sound warning bells in the artistic communities that it is the Australia Council's charter to serve. If the Council is serious about its consultative processes perhaps it could consider holding off decision making until artists have been afforded a genuine opportunity for input into the debate on their own futures.

## Briefs

Congratulations Legs on the Wall who were awarded the Sidney Myer Foundation Performing Arts Award for 1994 for 'past achievements and future development'.

The Sydney Critics' Circle split prior to the announcing of the theatre awards for 1994 casting not inconsiderable doubt on the value of the awards and their very future. Pamela Payne (Sun-Herald), Angela Bennie (Sydney Morning Herald), Bob Evans (ex-SMH), John West (ABC) and Paul McGillick (Financial Review) resigned. John McCallum (Australian) didn't vote. These reviewers were concerned that some members of the circle had full voting rights but were not seeing a lot of shows, especially alternative, fringe and performance works. It was subsequently revealed that the resignations had taken place in the middle of last year. Bob Evans wrote to the Sun-Herald, "An accreditation sub-committee set up under a new constitution found that a number of reviewers were not eligible for full voting membership. Included in that group was the circle's entire executive." The public announcement of the split resulted in one of those rare occasions when performers felt comfortable about praising critics.

English art critic Giles Auty has joined *The Australian* as senior art critic, an appointment many artists have found depressing. During his most recent visit even Sydney's conservative critics were keen to dissociate themselves from his views. Auty, in response to the Melbourne Age's hostile welcome, promptly lectured us that name calling was a sign of immaturity. He is now peppering his writing with the word 'antipodean'.

Doubtless Adelaide will soon be claiming itself as the 'arts capital of Australia' with the largely positive response to Barrie Kosky's festival program (so far, there's more to come) and the announcement of a Wagner Ring Cycle in 1988. Has this sent Leo Schofield into spin or will he announce an all Australian Ring for Melbourne? The Adelaide one is a praised French import, but most of the singing and the playing will be done by Australians. Kosky's 1996 Festival already includes enough distinctive works to drag the interstates in by the 'plane and bus load' – Jordi Savali on viol da gamba, the Maly Theatre of St Petersburg, Israel's Batsheva Dance Company, France's Image Aigue (to feature twelve South Australian children rehearsed in France), the Whirling Dervishes and The Bang on a Can All-Stars percussion group from New York. Enormously attractive will be the space given to Scriabin – the complete piano sonatas with the lighting specified by the composer and four orchestral works. The first of the Australian performance contingent to be announced is The Ethereal Eye, 'an evocation through music, dance and image on the ideas and architectural spaces of Walter and Marion Griffin'. A collaboration between choreographer Nanette Hassell, Synergy percussion, Leigh Warren and Dancers, composer Jonathan Mills, sound designer Steve Adams, stage designer Mary Moore and lighting designer Margie Medlin. What a line-up. Where's the dramaturg, for god's sake?

The international paper 'shortage' persists with prices rising steadily and rumoured to lift sharply by as much as thirty percent in July. This makes life very difficult for a street paper like *RealTime*. We've already gone to newsprint for all but the cover and centre pages to keep costs down and we're holding advertising and subscription costs at current rates for as long as possible. *The Australian* gave a detailed account of the complexities and the implications in its *Weekend Review* pages May 27 - 28. Presumably this is good news for the electronic media investing in the internet. Either way, *RealTime* hopes to be on-line very soon.



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# Forecast: Wet & Wild

Richard Murphet tests the talk of crisis in the Melbourne art scene

Marvellous Melbourne is miserable. The rain has set in over Albert Raceway Lake. Jeff Kennett has put out the buckets so the private speculators can sell the water back to the citizens it has rained upon. Bruno Grollo is handing around pictures of his latest dream - the world's tallest erection. Rupert Murdoch has wiped AFL off the front and back pages with Rugby Rugby. Millions of pilchards are dead on our beaches - killed by cold water.

It's going to be a long cold winter. Hey, it already has been. The season turned around a month ago. We Bergmanic Melbourne artists are proud of our St. Petersburg fortitude. Indeed, we thrive on it. We were bidding a last hurrah to the sun with the Comedy Festival when cold news blew along an unexpected alley and caught us with our t-shirts on.

Over four days in mid-April the Melbourne *Herald-Sun* ran a series of articles under the banner 'Arts Capital in Crisis'. The proposition was clear: Melbourne was losing to Sydney its supposed pre-eminence in the arts in Australia. A team of journalists, headed by arts editor Simon Plant, set about to investigate this proposition through interviews with Melbourne arts practitioners and bureaucrats. The focus was only upon the top end of artistic activity - the National Gallery of Victoria, the Victorian State Opera, the Melbourne Theatre Company, famous playwrights, but the conclusion that the series drew was that the prognosis was, like the weather, gloomy.

The headings cried out the sad tale: 'Ailing opera admits woes', 'MTC's fight to stay on top', 'Trailblazer sifts ashes of past glory', 'Lack of heart spells doom', 'Rapid decline' and, enough to send a chill to the heart, 'Brain drain looks a reality'. The accompanying photos supported the mood. Roger Hodgman, MTC's artistic director looking soulfully sad - miserable. Ken Mackenzie-Forbes, VSO's outgoing general manager, teeth gritted - miserable. Jean-Pierre Mignon, AD of the defunct Australian Nouveau Theatre (ANT), wryly resigned - miserable. Only Aubrey Mellor at Playbox was smiling and, dammit, he's just arrived from up north.

This is all somewhat more operatic than the comment by Simon Plant over the phone that there is "some evidence that (the shift of focus from Melbourne to Sydney) is true". This serves to underline the fact that the main functions served by 'Arts Capital in Crisis' were commercial, journalistic and political. The commercial and journalistic intentions are to be expected for a daily newspaper. The political focus is of more import. It was, it seems, there from the

start. The idea for the series came as a response in part to the Kennett government's Arts 21 Policy, unveiled last year. The policy contained some worthy initiatives framed within a vision of a position for Melbourne as one of the three cultural capitals of the world - alongside London and New York. Setting aside the sheer bombast of such a vision, the *Herald-Sun* series served to remind the government, from many perspectives, that the reality gap is enormous and getting larger. Paul Gray pointed out the contrast: "So much for the inspiring vision - now for the brutal reality." As all those interviewed made clear, the support for local arts and artists is waning and several companies have either disappeared or are on the cliff edge. Kennett's Major Projects policy of buying up big-name projects to kick start the economy may work in other areas but the arts are an outgrowth of local activity not international gloss. Chris Boyd commented: "The trouble is Mr. Kennett wants to offer visitors McFranchised productions of overseas hit musicals instead of local cuisine. 'What local cuisine?', I hear you ask".

The federal government's arts policy did

not escape criticism either. Creative Nation, the Australian Creative Fellowships and the Australia Council were all targeted as demonstrating a pro-Sydney bias, as was the board of the Archibald Prize.

All this is as may be. The focus of the political argument on the mythical Melbourne-Sydney rift certainly reflects a long held conspiracy belief held by many Melbourne artists. It also lends an emotional edge to the topic. Whether it is based on fact and whether it serves a long term purpose to Australian artists to parochialise the issues is another question. Comparative figures were occasionally quoted, such as the table of government spending per head of population (Victoria \$24.14, NSW \$28.75) A more bizarre comparison quoted the Australia Council estimate that '44% of Australia's artists now reside in NSW and the ACT. Only 26% live in Victoria.' Quite what this proves I'm not sure. A gradual process of artistic cleansing?

There are also some assumptions behind the whole exercise that need to be highlighted and questioned. Has Melbourne ever been an 'Arts Capital' beyond the pen of its publicists? What is an Arts Capital? Is a state of crisis such an unfamiliar one for the working artist? (The claim that "The final measure of Sydney's growth as a drama capital is the number of Sydney productions heading south" was put in perspective by a letter the following day

pointing to a number of Melbourne productions heading north.) And on the level of the hundreds of thousands of working artists operating below the top end, is it any more difficult to survive in Melbourne than in any neck of the woods?

In the end the most significant factor about the 'Arts Capital in Crisis' series was not the arguments developed or the conclusions drawn, as important as many of these were in the context of the arts debate. Its real significance was the fact that it appeared at all in a publication still not seen by most Melbourne artists as supporting them. *The Age* has traditionally been the voice of the arts in newsprint. But over the past two years a quiet and steady change has been taking place at Flinders Street. The present Editor-in-Chief has a strong interest in the arts and since February 1994 a larger format has been made available for arts coverage. The *Herald-Sun* has become a second major daily outlet for arts news and reviews and, with this series, its team raised the arts to the status of political news - and provided a touch of warmth.

*Richard Murphet is a theatre director and lecturer in drama at the Victorian College of the Arts.*

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# Border Difficulties

Teresa Crea on a significant gap in arts training in Australia

*Teresa Crea, director of Adelaide's Doppio Teatro talked with Keith Gallasch about performance and culture prior to delivering a paper at Softening the Boundaries, The Fourth Australasian Theatre Training Conference being held at the Queensland University of Technology Academy of the Arts, Brisbane, June 7-10.*

TC We've got a culturally pluralistic society but most of the art that comes from that society doesn't express that diversity. So how can we start to incorporate that diversity into training, prepare theatre workers for a culturally complex society?

KG *You think there's little preparation for this now?*

TC Absolutely nothing institutional. Cultural studies is coming into vogue, but when it comes to incorporating the theory into arts practice there's not much at all.

KG *The experiences are largely local, anecdotal and few of them published. Will your paper be a call to action?*

TC The problem is people say we've done multiculturalism and forget that rather than looking at it as a political theory it's a description of the complex and vibrant society we live in. I find still in my experience most of the professionals who have formal institutional training are, dare I say, indoctrinated. They come from a monocultural perspective, monocultural training, theatre training which is very Anglocentric. This makes it very hard for people trying to work interculturally because that work requires a whole perceptual framework that you have to engage with. It's

not just a case of employ your Asian actor, employ an Aboriginal actor. That's what does happen and that's what people end up thinking multiculturalism or cross cultural arts practice is. There's a lot of confusion in the field about issues that address access and equity. If someone does a play about aboriginal themes with a few aborigines it's assumed they're dealing with that culture whereas often this work can be quite anglocentric.

KG *Are we talking mainstream theatre?*

TC That's all you get there.

KG *But you also mean the others - regional, community, T.I.E.?*

TC There are companies and individuals exploring the area but there's still a lot of confusion. Many see themselves as multicultural but they're not. It's confusion, not necessarily tokenism or opportunism.

KG *They don't immerse themselves in the culture they're interacting with?*

TC Companies do try to do it but end up doing something else.

KG *A product of one-off projects?*

TC The pressures of making theatre don't help, but you get companies saying let's tackle this issue, but it just remains on the level of an issue, rather than exploring the very tricky but fascinating territory of different perceptual frameworks and cultural aesthetics.

KG *That takes a long time. Are you suggesting longer engagements or more specific culturally based companies like your own?*

TC I don't want to say it should be one thing or another. There is a spectrum of theatre practice and it is legitimate for artists to take up issues. But we lose the potential to come up with a unique arts practice - the hybrid cultural practice unique to Australia - if we don't get genuine intercultural activity.

KG *Is there a role for interpreters and dramaturgs in overcoming those difficulties?*

TC This is an issue in itself - once you engage with interpretation you need cultural translators who then can assume a lot of power and you have to understand how this influences your work. It makes this work exciting and frustrating. There are no ground rules, no training, yet, but a lot of questions. You arrive at work thinking you know who you are and how you function as an artist and then you're confronted with this total other language, not just verbal, and you have to negotiate that.

KG *How complex is such practice?*

TC I personally could say, with a reasonable amount of confidence that I have a bi-cultural framework with academic and life experience of another culture, but I have a piece, *Bread and Onions*, I want to take into Italian communities - plural. We'll play in the clubs - Sicilian, Veneto with their very different languages. So we start the piece, get the bi-lingual writer in; then we have to work out the different characters from different regions and translate each part into a different language. Then we have to find the actors fluent in the dialect, let alone the Italian, change cultural perspectives of the characters, not just the language, according to who we are playing to. And we have a stage manager without the language trying to follow a script that changes in these different versions of the show. All I can say to the stage manager for cueing is, "Think of it as dance. Go with visuals."

KG *Clearly you need a whole range of strategies.*

TC Luckily I have a creative team now with continuity including a designer and a composer. However I'm directing Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author* for the State Theatre Company of South Australia, but not with the people I normally collaborate with. The State Company wants an Italian perspective but in these circumstances I have to work with people from a different cultural framework, so part of my job is how to maintain my cultural perspective - I have to brief these artists culturally so I can give another reading of the work.

KG *Are enough people aware of the complexities of the situation?*

TC It's up to artists. A few interesting academics like Mary Kalantzis are pushing the policy further than any other country has, but it is artists who intuit ahead of time what is happening and academics come in and describe. I am getting calmer about this. I was worried that multi-cultural policy was going to produce a whole lot of very simplistic work and that we'd lose an important opportunity. But I do know there is a network of artists truly questioning these issues, extending their practice. But, as always, it's work on the margin.

KG *Are artists getting left out of cultural policy development given the way Creative Nation is set up, the changes at the Australia Council and the academic push into cultural studies?*

TC It's all internationalism and standardisation. The Australia Council changes seem haphazard to me, not underpinned by ideas. I suppose change was inevitable after such enormous artistic growth - how could government maintain 'arms length' to something that's become such a powerful tool. Ironically, this is because our arts have matured. The challenge is for artists to keep doing what they do.

# Globally Yours

RT talks with Colin Mercer about Griffith University's international Cultural Policy Conference

RT *Why such a wide-ranging conference?*

CM We thought it was time to return to a large macro-level conference after having done specific subjects like film policy, multi-media and post-colonial themes, time to return to the bigger picture - and that was before Creative Nation was announced.

RT *What was it - an urge to sum up, a fin de siecle impulse, the pressure of multi-media developments?*

CM There's a bit of fin de siecle about it because we are moving rapidly into the 21st century, whatever that means. There's a sense of an ending or of a beginning, but in the context provided by Creative Nation and an awful lot of work going on in cultural policy in the country, we thought it appropriate to do a bit of showcasing of what's going on in Australia. There's world class work going on here.

RT *Theory or application?*

CM Both. Australia has world class status in cultural studies but also in the cultural policy work happening in relation to indigenous cultures, multiculturalism, the analysis of cultural industries and the new frameworks for the management of cultural resources in areas like heritage.

We also wanted to internationalise the conference as much as we could, to get some substance into the area of cultural diplomacy, especially in the Asia-Pacific

region.

RT *If this is about action as well as theory, what kind of contributors do you have from the region?*

CM There are people coming from Korea, Hong Kong, Indonesia, from Taiwan, The People's Republic of China, the other side of the Pacific and from South Africa. They are theorists, policy-makers, media activists. For example, there's a prominent Korean academic who is also the leader of a citizen's coalition in relation to media policy issues. There's also someone from the government's cultural policy bureau.

RT *Is the focus Pacific rim?*

CM No, though it's a substantive element. The agenda is the taking of cultural policy into the 21st century. We've moved beyond arts policy into cultural policy and given the imperatives associated with globalisation, the information superhighway and the recognition of these as a common concern in a number of countries especially in regard to their autonomy.

RT *Will artists play a role in the conference given you've 'moved beyond arts policy'?*

CM Yes, there will be artists speaking - not as major players but a healthy component. And we're having a multimedia forum the day immediately preceding the conference. Ironically the Australian participant

produces his goods for France - Guy Casaril who works out of his basement in the Gap in Brisbane.

RT *Where are the other participants from?*

CM The USA, Britain, Russia, Greece, Finland, Norway - more policy-makers and activists than academics, and when I say policy-makers I mean both official policy-makers, and, in the case of activists, unofficial. There'll be one hundred papers over three days.

RT *How do you determine the influence of an event like this? Is there the usual delay before papers are published and distributed?*

CM We have no definite plans but you let conferences roll and if particular recommendations or motions or demands come out then we'll certainly make sure they get targeted in the right direction. We'll be publishing outcomes, but not proceedings, in various formats. Interested people can come in for a day or a half day - for a registration fee. One of the keynote elements will be Lois O'Donoghue announcing ATSIC's new national cultural policy framework. Cathy Santamaria, deputy secretary in the Department of Communications, and politicians Richard Alston and Cheryl Kernogh will speak on Creative Nation. Peter Botsman from the Evatt Foundation will talk about cultural industries and their implications for policy.

RT *There's an increasingly significant and influential academic involvement in cultural policy. What's it like to be involved in something so immediate?*

CM It's exciting. It helps academics to maintain some level of sustained interface

with what's going on in the world - at community and government levels. I spend a lot of my time writing for federal and state and local governments, researching consumption patterns and so on. With a number of aboriginal people we're writing the ATSIC cultural policy framework - we were commissioned to do that.

RT *Is yours a service role or do you see it as more active than that?*

CM It's research for effective and equitable policy development in a domain which has been marginalised in policy terms for a long time.

RT *How do we fit in the Asian perspective?*

CM I've just come back from Korea and it's remarkable how many similarities there are between their cultural policy developments and ours. Their economy, like ours is committed to globalisation but the country is also concerned about the fragility of its own culture and its difference from both China and Japan. Australia is equally attempting to establish a distinctive cultural niche and identity.

*Conference paper topics include women and music, libraries, post-colonialism, museums, South Australian cultural policy, copyright, city life in Brisbane, Johannesburg and Belfast, culture and foreign policy, fashion, film, censorship, SBS, tourism, and advertising.*

*Colin Mercer is the Director of the Institute for Cultural Policy Studies, Faculty of Humanities, Griffith University, Queensland.*

# Multiple Museologies

Nicholas Gebhardt gets Ross Gibson's update on the Museum of Sydney

Under the imposing shadow of the new Governor Philip Tower, the recently opened Museum of Sydney has emerged out of the rubble of the old Government House (1788-1846) to mount, what Ross Gibson, writer and director of the Museum's Bond Store installation describes as "... a sustained and creative inquiry into the operations of power and commerce and colonialism." Like many of the "new wave" of museums that are opening around the world, the Museum of Sydney produces itself as an entirely reflexive and reflective event that, in its very structure, in the very act of creating the museum environment, turns history into effect of interpretation.

The inert "ruins" of the colonial government are subsumed into a mobile, panoptic structure that imagines, and images, culture as the exchange between the microscopic and macroscopic dimensions of an everyday environment. It attempts to construct a multi-layered series of interpretative perspectives and projections that mark out the historical possibilities for any site, for all sites, at the same time as it vigorously resists any form of closure or completion of the past. In this sense, the Museum stands as a kind of fragile nexus of museology and informatics, of aesthetics and politics, where artefacts, narratives and events are reconfigured within a complex choreography of advanced audio-visual systems to mark out the site as one of an ongoing cultural contestation and negotiation.

For Gibson, the museum exists to demonstrate that "... the meanings of so many places around this inhabited country are always and endlessly questionable. As

we go through the museum, we hope it becomes apparent to the visitor that there is a profusion of assertions, versions, stories, options, testimonies; and that they all interrelate and they all invite interpretation. And that's what the place is about: the necessity for you to reason through, worry through, imagine through, and come up with your best preference for how to interpret the various narratives, rather than it being a place where you're taught a given line. Of course that open-endedness is ideological as well."

Approaching the design of his installation and the place as a whole, Gibson continually draws attention to the notion that "space is a live construction of meanings which is changing all the time and so the idea of spatial history is fundamental to the place. Nothing is impeccably solid; it's there but it is only just there. And although you can see the outside world so readily through all of the glass, in this quite hi-tech, metallic design, no matter where you are in the space, a representation of the natural environment, of a pristine ecology, is always informing what you see and hear. You can't go anywhere without the environment, as it is understood in a mediated system, being close by."

Each installation or exhibit produces itself as both a singular point of attraction, of narrative possibility, and as an interconnected passage between the various levels of the site. From the subterranean image of the "dig" mapped onto the outside plaza, to Heidi Riederer's and Colin Grimmer's arcane, shifting panoramas of Sydney on the top level, there is a feeling of

being drawn through a range of vistas, of ideas, of sounds, and of mechanisms that are, for Gibson, "... ghosted with the markings of previous struggles, previous occupations, previous institutions. It's a site of transience, but even at this very moment, it's also a site of contestings, of meetings and negotiations."

In this way, Gibson sees the Museum as a place for devolving authority, for making it negotiable, changeable; a place of layering, of levels, and reflection that initiates an "interpenetration of outside and inside space, outside and inside light, outside and inside vantage points. Every surface that you strike, every surface that you encounter, has several latencies in it; and this idea of layers, this idea of having to continually look and shift your focus and know enough about any of the surfaces that you encounter is central to the direction of the museum. This is a space in which you

can almost see the edges; you don't become lost in it, and over time it alters itself endlessly."

And yet, as we move through this "new" space of cultural production, what also becomes apparent is that the sheer indeterminacy of this interpretative surface carries within it the potential to dissolve, into its "aura" or spectre, the very divisions, the differences, the material conditions, of a colonial history; to subsume politics into aesthetics, critique into mediation, event into environment. To maintain its critical edge, the Museum of Sydney must become a site that not only negotiates or contends the assumption of meaning, but one that inevitably questions the whole categorical imperative of a mediated "culture" itself.

*The Museum of Sydney opened May 20.*



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Steven Holland, Master of Arts (Visual Arts) candidate 1993-95, "Game Painting" (meat words on windows) and "The Fox and the Moon's Reflection" detail. (Band-aids installation), Canberra School of Art Gallery March 1995. Photo David Martin

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# That's Entertainment

Leigh Raymond guests at Intensity

In the same moment that Luna Park, Sydney's oldest amusement park apart from Kings Cross, has been threatened with closure, a new entertainment space has opened in a shopping centre in suburban Hurstville, far from the Sydney-defining harbourside spectacle.

Called Intensity, it's part video arcade, pinball parlour, sideshow alley and simulated amusement park, billed as "intertainment for the new world".

Perhaps it is no more than egregious inner city snobbery to wonder at the ambition to create a new world in Hurstville. Kogarah at least gave us Clive James and is home to the bank that brings us the cheerfully tinny sound of Julie Anthony.

But Intensity is in Hurstville, in Westfield Shoppingtown, backed by Australia's leading entertainment companies, Village Roadshow (the movie distributors and exhibitors) and the Nine Network.

If American shopping mall planning strategies are being used in this case, Intensity is in less than intense Hurstville because the demographics are right. In other words, the audience profile in the service area will maximise the number of visits and the size of the spend of what they call, in the trade, 'guests'.

According to publicity, 212,000 guests visited Intensity in its first three weeks of operation. That's slightly less than the number of people who visit Sydney's Hyde Park Barracks Museum in a year. And they expect 20,000 to 30,000 a week. (It was a slow Friday night when I went but maybe that was because it was cold and wet.) It's principally aimed, according to Gary Berman, the Managing Director of Village Nine Leisure, the company behind Intensity, at 18–39 year olds.

Intensity's recorded message promo boasts that it is the world's first indoor interactive intertainment complex — intertainment being a combination of interactivity and entertainment.

So what is Intensity? What happens there? And what does it mean? Is it a menace to society? Is it like the video arcade, to use John Fiske's phrase, a semiotic brothel of the machine age?

Intensity contains elements of the themed restaurant, the video arcade, the pinball parlour, the funfair, the theme park and the museum. It occupies just over 3,000 square metres and employs a staff of 150 people.

The space is divided into a number of themed areas which offer different kinds of entertainment. There's Virtual World, a game set somewhere in space, like Mars. Here speed is success and rookie players are advised, "Be a bully. Collisions are big points when done right."

Groups of participants, up to eight, battle it out, the aim being to win a race. The lengthy introduction to Mars and the rules of the game by video presenters and staff takes up a large part of the 25 minutes the experience lasts. Then you climb into a pod which is designed like the cramped cockpit of a Martian mining vehicle with a big screen up front looking out onto the virtual world. Then the race through the Martian canals begins.

Afterwards there's a debriefing which tells you how you went. Even virtual reality has a reality check.

The other game in Virtual World is called Battletech. In the 31st century, the promocopy runs, sport is a deadly thing and war has been ritualised into sport. Mechwarriors fight it out like knights of yore in jousting competitions. "In Battletech, you can play as teams, or in a free for all where it's every man (sic) for

himself."

This is the most expensive attraction at Intensity and bookings are recommended (although seemed entirely unnecessary on a wet Friday night during school term).

The other big attraction is Chameleon, which is similar to Virtual World but with simpler controls — steering wheel, accelerator, brake — rather than the complex and graded control possibilities in Virtual World. And you get to go to some differently designed part of the Hurstville universe, with more vinyl and fewer metal finishes.

For 1–12 year olds there's Hide and Seek, created by Keith Ohlsen, one of the people responsible for McDonald's soft-play concept areas for kids, a huge tubular play space area with mazes, slides, tunnels and obstacle courses.

There's also a Wide World of Sports Centre where you can play virtual reality boxing (this is certainly not a spectator sport) in which you put on virtual reality head gear and have a boxing match with an opponent whom you don't actually touch. As well there are mechanised basketball hoops, computer golf and baseball batting cages.

Other areas relate to music and include a booth where you can singalong, karaoke style, to an extensive playlist of pop songs, record the result and take the cassette home. It also includes DiMMensions (Village owns radio network Triple M) which I missed. (Intensity is structured like a simple enclosed maze and it's easy to get lost or distracted.)

Intensity's front of house staff are all young people. Apart from security, waiters and sales people, they are mostly integrators, because their role, according to the media kit, is to 'integrate guests into the Intensity experience'. More on this later.

So does Intensity offer a new kind of interactive entertainment?

The term interactive has had two principle applications both of which find their way into the Intensity experience.

Interactivity was a concept essential to the science centre movement which began in the United States in the 1960s aiming to educate people, kids mostly, about science, by getting them to participate in experiments or demonstrations of scientific principles.

The role of interactives was as three dimensional 'permanent' science experiments, which demonstrated a scientific principle. In San Francisco's Exploratorium, the first science centre established in 1969, demonstrators — young people, mostly university science students — explained the principles of prisms or magnetic fields. The demonstrators were supposed to interact with visitors, to answer questions, provide help, or explanations if required, like the integrators in Intensity.

Interactive came to be applied more generally to any installation in a museum which got a viewer to do something other than look at it or read a label. At its most elementary, you might push a button and a video would start, or you would, using a computer interactive, make a complex set of choices using either a touch screen or a keypad, to elicit different kinds of information — a video clip, a computer game, or more recently, sending e-mail on the internet.

By extension, there were interactive and non-interactive forms of entertainment. Reading a book involved low levels of interactivity. At one level, it could be argued most book narratives were closed in the sense that you couldn't change or alter them by your intervention (although fiction with narrative options for different

outcomes have recently appeared).

Interactivity's other history was in computer culture in the 1980s, where it became a buzzword for the message-response relationship that was set up in computer interface design.

It was here that higher levels of interactivity — not simple mechanical button pushing or reading, were seen to be possible. Interactivity in both these processes was seen as the key link, a kind of negotiated performance between the computer, or the machine and the user. This was partly structured by the computer's hardware and software, in particular its language and design, partly by the user.

In early studies of video arcades in the 1980s, based on Pac men style games, social critics like John Fiske argued that these games constructed a particular kind of subjectivity, a form of resistance to home, school, work and family.

The person in charge of the machine was generally young, in terms of social power in a subordinate position, and from non anglo ethnic background. Fiske argues that the machines give the young man a sense of control, and so of power and pleasure, which he could not otherwise access because of his social position.

Fiske also noted social criticism of the arcades, namely that they were harmful to young people — distracting them from school, worthy consumption and home life — and that they encouraged vandalism, hooliganism and petty crime (young people would become addicted to the machines and need to steal to support their habit).

In Sydney, video arcades were banned from parts of the gay and lesbian Oxford Street precinct, and were not permitted in some shopping centres because they were seen to attract young men who were prone to anti-gay and lesbian violence on the one hand, or vandalism and petty crime on the other.

Intensity's location in a shopping mall and the involvement of the developer Westfield in its operation is significant because the design and management of Intensity enables some forms of social control. It's like McDonald's meets the video arcade.

While some of Intensity's games can offer the same kind of subjectivity that old video arcade games did, the environment in which they're placed is far more tightly regulated, and the 'guests' or users who might go to a video arcade might not find the Intensity experience that attractive. It's safe, sterile, (if brightly coloured and shiny), family oriented and heavily staffed, unlike a video arcade.

While the subjectivity offered by those old Pac men machines is still possible at Intensity, the combination with other forms of entertainment and group-operated machines makes that kind of subjectivity relatively marginalised.

The subjectivity that's created by Chameleon or Virtual World is the subjectivity of the cultural actor, in which pleasure comes from participating in a narrative. A subjectivity of resistance might be built around disruption, or stepping in and out of roles. Stepping in and out of roles, however merely leads back to the social, and one of the principal pleasures of Intensity is to make it a place to meet people. Hence there are lounges where you can talk with the people you played with in Virtual World. It's another suburban heterosexual public place.

And unlike the arcades, Intensity is not largely a single sex space. It is designed to include young women. In Chameleon, for example, both the video presenters taking you on your mission are experienced, no-nonsense young women.

Symbolically, the central theme of Intensity, its creators argue, is music, movies and sport. But these are marginalised spatially and experientially. Movies are reduced to a series of decorative blow ups of big stars, music to music video, a narrow playlist of hits you can sing along to, and a DJ booth screened off by a thick

window, and closed mostly except to integrators. What counts is simulation games and the narratives they present.

In this new goal-oriented world "a man is defined by his actions, not by his memory" as Cuarto the mutant rebel leader says to Arnie in *Total Recall*, and here we become cultural actors who act and perform action.

"Just do it", says the Nike ad.

The point is that there is nothing else to do. In the narratives of action, the aim is to score the goal, or win the race; there is pursuit and flight, attack and defence.

The games are designed for an environment which is safe and sterile. Both the games themselves, and their physical and simulated environment, have many of the characteristics that George Ritzer argues, in *The McDonaldization of Society*, are being built into a fast food world: rationality, efficiency, calculability, standardisation and predictability.

Wherever possible, he argues, this McDonaldization removes the human. Staff become integrators, a role which is at least partly scripted and for which they are trained.

When integrators and actors step outside their roles, things become more engaging. Wandering around the corridors of games we meet up again with the young man who introduced us to the Chameleon. He asks what my score was and I say it's so pathetically low I couldn't possibly tell him, he'd just laugh. He laughs anyway.

Did I like it? he asks, and because he wants me to like it because he identifies so strongly with it, I say yes, sure, it was cool. But I'm not used to it. It made me feel, well it made me feel sick, I tell him.

He says he's had hundreds of goes on it and you get better the more you do it. I want to say that like any reality, it probably looks better after a drink, but then I remember the vomit button in the cockpit pod and I start feeling clammy and nauseous again.

It's time to get back to the real world.

Jean Baudrillard has argued that the post modern involves the collapse of the real and history into the televisual and the disappearance of aesthetics and values in kitsch. If you take a particle accelerator to be high tech in the way that *Last Year at Marienbad* is high culture, then the games at Intensity are technokitsch.

So another suburban branch of the postmodern has opened in the decentred city. It's free to get in, but prices vary depending on when you go. If you go during the week the main attractions are a dollar or two cheaper. At peak times over the weekend, Virtual World is \$10.00 and Chameleon is \$8.00.

Go with others. The constructed unit of consumption is, except for the sports and sideshow games, not the individual but the couple. Everyone was in groups and many of the games can only be fully played in pairs — there were young couples on a night out, girlfriends out together driving racing cars, buddies from a local gym practising their swing on the simulated golf range.

If you forget to eat before you go, the diner, *Intake*, serves what promo-language calls incredible edibles, or fast food. Incredibly it's not that inedible.

*Intensity, Westfield Shoppingtown, Cross Street and Park Road Hurstville Sydney.*

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*Leigh Raymond is a Sydney writer.*

# Last Rights?

John Potts speaks with Ian Collie, Director of the Arts Law Centre of Australia, about rights in the digital age

*JP What have you found to be the most pressing legal ramifications of the new media technologies?*

IC With multimedia, the most obvious issue concerns the way art forms can be transposed from a hard copy to a digital format. Whether that's a CD-ROM or an on-line system, it provides an easier format from which to access, to manipulate and download. The difficulty is in monitoring that situation so that the copyright owner, the creator, is fairly remunerated for the use of that work. I think it's the monitoring which is the real challenge at the moment.

*JP It's often said that the law covering intellectual property is a cumbersome beast lagging behind technology. Unless the law is amended, technological change makes it obsolete. Has that been your experience?*

IC There's no doubt about that. The Copyright Act, dating to 1968 with amendments in 1989, is basically looking a bit tired. The federal government is now in the process of producing a totally revised copyright. They want to simplify it and bring it up to speed with the age of convergence. The inadequacy of the Act at the moment concerns the transmission right, which in essence is like a cable right. It's very limited in scope and really not sufficient to ensure copyright owners have some control over transmission of material

down the line.

At the recent contemporary music summit in Canberra there was a demonstration where musicians put their work on the Internet. They were saying that people could access it without restriction. In theory they could, because the transmission right as it's presently defined is so limited as to make it difficult to prevent people downloading music files onto their computers. The government has, through the Copyright Convergence Group, recommended a broad communications right which would be sufficient to restrict the free market downloading of this information. That would be OK in theory, but then how do you monitor people doing this, how do you police it?

The whole copyright Act is based on discrete activities, which are now overlapping so much that it's very difficult. It was initially the right to copy, where the reproduction right has been the key right, to stop making duplicates, pirating. But in the convergence age, we don't need to make a hard copy anymore, we can access it through a terminal, and get the same information. Likewise soon we'll have cable music, CDs transmitted down the line for listening. The tangible items that we're used to will still be there, but perhaps they'll be more peripheral. Therefore the communications right, this transmission right, will be the all-important right, more so than the reproductive right.

*JP Is that because the nature of information is immaterial? Information is malleable, and can take different forms depending on the information carrier.*

IC Yes, because basically you'll have things whizzing through the ether, from one databank source to your home PC. The main issue will be properly controlling that dissemination and making sure that when you use that information, the copyright owner is properly recompensed for it. It's not so much the laws that are at fault, as we can amend the laws to fit the new

environment, but there's a technological solution - encryption schemes - by which people can't download the material until they've paid the gatekeeper a certain fee. It may be that you can browse an abstract, for example, for free, but any accessing of information would incur a fee.

The other key issue in the digital age is moral rights. At the moment there is no moral right protection in Australia, although the government has confirmed its intention to introduce moral rights legislation. When artistic material is more readily available in digital format, it can be easily sampled and so on. Moral rights are the rights of owners to protect the integrity of their work.

It's a difficult issue, because we still want that freedom to create new work based on existing work, and you don't want moral rights or copyright to be a fetter on artistic freedom of expression. But you want to protect the integrity of the work from perhaps the more insidious commercialisation of it, where it gets re-hashed, as in an old Gauguin being used to sell pizzas. But there are two arguments here, and you have to try for a fine balance.

*JP Here perhaps we have an aesthetic approach clashing with the law of copyright. There are many artists working with samplers and scanners who have a post-modern aesthetic of appropriation. There are theorists like John Perry Barlow who wrote in Wired that "everything you know about intellectual property is wrong", in the information age. One argument is that there should be a greater public domain to allow artists freer access to images and sounds. Are such arguments doomed to founder on the rock of copyright law, or is there some scope for a compromise, in which the law can be relaxed?*

IC A lot of people are sympathetic to these postmodern arguments - but then you get it from the other side. Take the example of multimedia. It's like a hybrid, taking bits

and pieces from different art forms. Some say that a multimedia producer could take a piece of a visual artist's work, a piece of music, and put it altogether, and not have to pay those artists. But then from those artists' point of view, if that multimedia work makes a lot of money, surely they should get some slice of the pie.

I think there'll be a move towards collecting societies which allow you to use the work without being restricted as long as you pay fair remuneration. I think that's probably the way it will go, and perhaps the only way. It provides access to the material, but ensures that the original artist gets a fair remuneration.

*JP Is that the most workable compromise?*

IC I think so, because it is fair that if you're an artist by profession, you should be compensated if your work is sampled or scanned. But then I think in the past the pendulum has swung too much towards the owners of copyright and not enough towards allowing access to material.

*The Arts Law Centre of Australia gives legal and accounting advice to artists in all art forms. Services include free preliminary phone advice, referral to solicitors or dispute mediators, legal advice nights, publication sheets and seminars.*

*The next seminar, Tales From The Infobahn, discusses developments in electronic publishing and the challenge presented to the traditional publishing paradigm. Speakers are Oliver Freeman, from Publish Australia, Lynne Spender of the Australian Society of Authors, and Colin Galvin, barrister and lawyer. The seminar is held on June 14, 6-8 pm, at the Gunnery, Woolloomooloo, Sydney. Phone 02 356 2566*

# The Techno Touch

Louise Gough plugs into Brisbane's CONTACT

"We're a youth arts organisation. Our bottom line isn't theatre, it's kids. If theatre stopped working then we'd change the way we work. We use arts and cultural activities as a tool." I'm talking with Michael Doneman Co-Artistic Director of CONTACT. Ludmilla Doneman, the other artistic director, is busy organising the company's move from the city to their new space GRUNT in Brisbane's Fortitude Valley.

1995 sees the company in a serious state of reorganisation. The Donemans spent eight months in 1994 away from the company gathering ideas to inform the future directions of the organisation. They founded the company six years ago and it now has a six digit turnover. "It's time for us to move on." They are currently organising a hand-over of the company to occur over 1996-1997 when "the old and the new can segue. We're organising a mentor scheme for our successors."

Currently the company serves a range of clientele. "On one level we serve everyone." The company involves disadvantaged young people who lack access to arts based activities. "This includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disabilities, young people in detention, young people in regional and remote areas, young people from a diversity of cultural backgrounds (ethnic, gender and sexual identification). Social justice is an area of

passion for the company and initially we focused on indigenous communities, less so now, as we've morphed into general cross-cultural work."

The company's activities are extensive and push into areas not commonly associated with Youth Arts. There are four main areas in which the company is active: workshop programs, performance-based projects, outreach workshops and "other".

These four areas are being pushed laterally as the company engages with technology. Its commitment to infotech is growing rapidly. The GRUNT space will be developed as a telecentre where groups can have access to technology. CONTACT is investigating virtual performance, establishing Perfect Strangers W3, national youth arts site on the world wide web and setting up collaborations with young people and companies who work with youth in global, national and local contexts through technology. The techno-work will also extend into multimedia and broadband with the company looking at making web pages and CD-ROMs, a music interface and midi files in live music. In broadband CONTACT will experiment with on-line workshops. The access to internet will feed back into other areas of operation.

CONTACT is also extending its work into "training" with the establishment of the Bush Pilots Project, a year long course to cater for the young long-term

unemployed, "those people who fall through the net". The focus will be on training young people through providing them with experiences which can prepare them for the "jobs of tomorrow not the jobs of yesterday". CONTACT attracts a different league of funding through this focus, playing in the "big league", with DEET (Department for Education, Employment & Training) for example.

The philosophy of CONTACT is based in access, participation, equity and empowerment. The subtext to the philosophy is based in a "serious and informed cheekiness", the ethic of always working on the "front foot". The company currently employs three full-time staff - two artistic directors and an office manager - a part time coordinator of cultural programs and around six casual arts workers and tutors at any given time. Pending funding the company envisages a growth in staff which would include a director for the Bush Pilots Program, more administrative assistance, coordinators for the formal outreach work in Redcliffe and the infotech work through Ipswich.

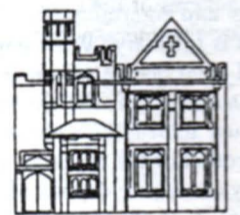
If all progresses as planned for CONTACT, we'll begin to see the growth of a company in Queensland which challenges the scope and content of traditional youth arts work, informing it with a global perspective.

CONTACT can be contacted by e-mail: [contact@odyssey.com.au](mailto:contact@odyssey.com.au)

Louise Gough is a dramaturg with La Boite Theatre, Brisbane.

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# The Sound of Very Loud Silence

Vikki Riley interviews sound artist Simon Crosbie

Sound art has been a long-standing form of artistic practice in Melbourne, a continuum in live performance art since the late seventies, with renowned sound poets such as Chris Mann and the late Jas Duke creating virtual happenings around the human voice as an act in itself. In fact, if there exists an idiosyncratic Melbourne approach to sound art it is a preoccupation with the uttered voice which defines the best artists in this city. For some ten years now, ARF ARF (whose film *Thread of Voice* documents their complex live sound poetry alongside animation and experimental film) have been the most internationally recognised Melbourne sound artists. Like their contemporaries, the gallery space for them is but another site to exploit as a tangible environment. This April Sydney's Artspace held *Sound in Space* at which ARF ARF, Margaret Trail and Carolyn Connors participated. Another Melbourne sound artist, Simon Crosbie, presented a combination of human mayhem and vocal bombardment in a piece provocatively titled *Artspace piece: Cage is Dead*. It began with a single voice narrating anecdotes and cut-ups from Mr Cage's texts but rapidly transpired into a cacophony of seemingly unintelligible rantings from behind the Artspace walls, a method he used in his previous piece at The Old Melbourne Gaol at the *Earwitness* event in November last year which was broadcast on ABC's *The Listening Room*.

VR *How long have you been a sound artist?*

SC About five years. My first big project was in the *Sound in the Dome* program curated by Jennifer Phipps in 1991 in the spectacular dome of the State Library of Victoria where I was working at the time. The dome is one of the largest rooms in Australia. It is a circular space with three levels and twelve balconies. The most striking sound was of the trolleys being pushed on a metal mezzanine floor and I used three trolleys pushed simultaneously at different points. The sound had an unusual synergistic effect. I used the sound of the gong the library used to bang every night to inform people it was closing time. I did this piece a second time as part of the *Metrodome* series at the Melbourne International Festival the same year.

VR *What do you look for in a site?*

SC Interesting acoustics. Places that allow

for horizontal and vertical movement of sound. I like to hide performers away.

VR *Why is it important that the performers are faceless and also, I understand, unskilled in any specific musical area?*

SC Well a lot of the performers I use are highly skilled musicians but I don't ask the performers to play music, rather to make sounds. People are essentially sound makers anyway and I like audiences to listen rather than see.

VR *What prevents your events from turning into meandering noise? Some people would say you are playing around with the idea of noise as John Cage did decades ago.*

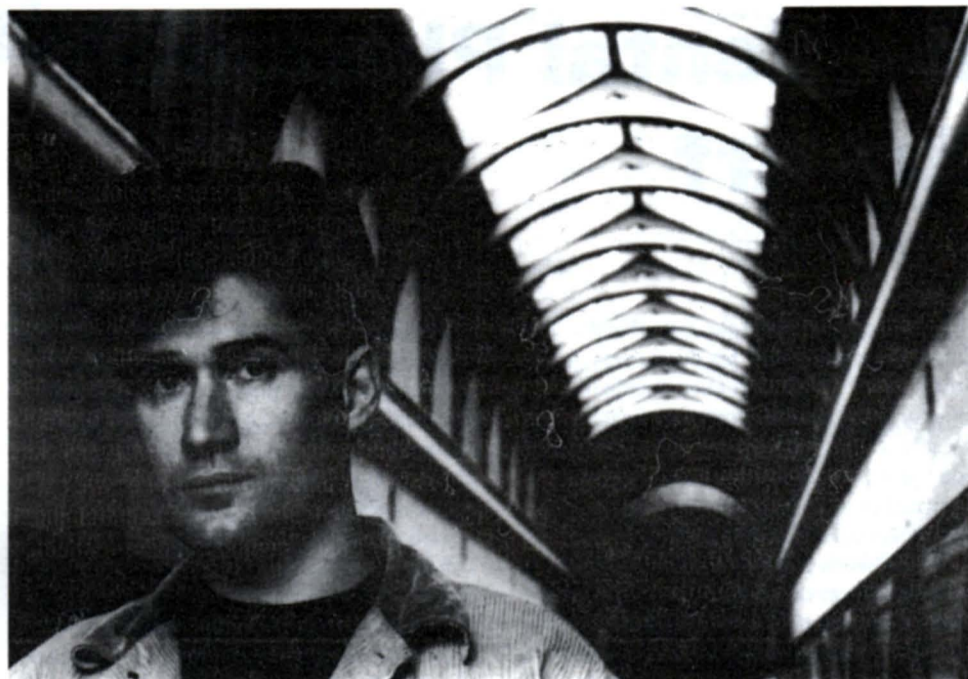
SC If there is anything that resembles chaos I usually aim to give it a start and finish point. As for John Cage I hope a lot of people are playing around with the idea of noise in a hundred years' time.

VR *What other Melbourne sound artists do you find interesting?*

SC There are a lot of sound artists in Melbourne I find interesting. David Chesworth, Chris Mann, Rainer Linz, Warren Burt, Margaret Trail, Carolyn Connors, Arf Arf of course ... I worked with them in the State Library. One aspect of sound art in Melbourne is that there is no coherent or unified sound art movement.

VR *The Artspace performance piece was unusual for you then because it is basically a gallery space.*

SC Yeah! I find it hard working in Gallery spaces. People who go to galleries tend to have certain expectations that run counter to certain sound practices. I incorporated the sound I collected of the previous night's crowd with the sound of 35 people reading and there was a strange tension between the two of them. The result was a disparate collection of sounds at both ends of the gallery as well as in the stairwell and one guy crashing a metal rod outside the gallery itself. The sound of the crowd as well as the performers reading seemed to get the audience going as well. At the very end of the piece there was a sound of Nick Tsoutas introducing the program from the night before.



Gaol Piece - *The Architecture of Silence* from *Earwitness* Old Melbourne Gaol, November 19, 1994

VR *What were people reading?*

SC They were reading all sorts of printed material. I gave them no instructions on what they had to read. I told them how to read it, slow and loud. The woman I had reading, Peggy Wallach, was going through the gamut of voice poetry techniques as well as John Cage anecdotes cut and pasted and contorted so that they sounded absurd. There was no inherent meaning to anything she was saying. She was the only person facing the audience.

VR *Why concentrate on the crowd?*

SC Apart from the other performers, the sound of the gallery crowd from the night before was one of the strongest sounds of the event - a sound that for the audience is a subliminal sound, one that nobody consciously listens to unless they are asked to. Reproducing the crowd's own sound to the crowd seemed to make the crowd want

to talk. the texture of the real crowd sound was markedly different from the one I had collected. A kind of subliminal mimesis.

VR *What have you got planned for the future?*

SC Quite a few projects. I am looking at a few sites in Melbourne and Sydney as possible venues. I try to do one large site specific work every year. The *Sound in Space* piece has stimulated me to do another gallery piece just using the sound of gallery crowds. I have long dreamt of doing a version of the Gaol piece in San Francisco at Alcatraz.

*Sound in Space* is presenting two programs at the MCA, Sydney in July. Philip Brophy demonstrating the making of the sound track for his film *Body Melt* and a series of short avant-garde sound/video works including *Arf Arf's* *Thread of Voice*.

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# Incidental Pleasures: Arf Arf

by Adrian Martin

Jacques Tati's final film, completed almost a decade before his death, was *Parade* (1973). It is a strange, decidedly amateurish swansong from this great director. *Parade* is a modest effort, shot on video and transferred to film, completely theatrical in its setting. Different groups of performers come on and off stage, doing their time-worn routines; Tati meanwhile concentrates on the behaviour of audience members as much as the acts themselves. The film ends with a surprising, ragged coda: children wander about the empty set, picking up discarded objects and letting out little noises that mean nothing and lead nowhere in particular.

Tati's film is utterly entrancing because it gives the viewer the rare sense that, here, the very language of images and sounds, the potentiality of performance and space, the relationship of spectacle and spectator, is being discovered step by step, as if for the first time. Filmmaker Jean-Marie Straub described *Parade* as a film about "degrees of nervous flux - beginning with the child which cannot yet make a gesture, who cannot yet coordinate her hand with her brain, and going up to the most accomplished acrobats".

*Parade* would make a good double bill with Arf Arf's wonderful 'performance film' *Thread of Voice* (1993). Although nominally this work could be taken as an innocent 'documentation' of some of the sound pieces that Arf Arf have performed live since the mid 80s, the film confounds all categories. They use their sound work to transform the medium and language of film - and vice versa - just as the most inventive

recent dance films, such as Mahalya Middlemist's *Vivarium* (1993), have done.

Co-ordinates of time and space, and all the usual connectives between these filmic realms, are freely, lyrically distorted in the rigorous montage plan of *Thread of Voice*. Physical gestures begin in semi-darkness, get carried on by another body in another place. The film constantly displaces itself from one register to another: 'direct' filming, varieties of refilming, animation. A marvellous sequence, anchored in an aural performance of a blackly comic and unnerving piece about a violent domestic argument, visually weaves together ciphers, actions and motifs from right across the film. Silhouettes lumber and fly behind screens, a dream of silent cinema that recalls the shows of the Even Orchestra, or the childish pantomime of Wenders' buddy-heroes in *Kings of the Road* (1976). Words and drawings, forever cancelled, restarted and superimposed, hurl past frame by frame. Previously seen images of the performers are retrieved, slowed down, frozen, caught mid-production of some odd utterance or gesture.

Arf Arf refer to their sound pieces as 'songs', which surely makes *Thread of Voice* some kind of mutant musical. Their entire fugitive oeuvre, down this past decade, is difficult to 'place' in an Australian context. The exploration of body and voice that goes on here, the haphazard constructions of 'multimedia' assemblages, the merry 'deconstructions' of sound, meaning and narrative draw their inspiration from some other bundle of influences and traditions than the ones we are normally used to recognising and citing in local performance

art.

There are traces of art brut, arte povera, Grotowski's 'poor theatre', Artaud ... and also the 'chiselling' practices of the Lettrists, the sound-poetry of Bob Brown, and Baruchello's visionary uptake on the legacy of Duchamp. But, ultimately, a kind of hushed secrecy is the watchword of Arf Arf's art. If there is a complex archaeology of influences in their pieces - across all the media they work in - it is a mangled, shattered, thoroughly transformed lineage. There is an extreme 'symbolist' legacy in their work, as in the avant garde films of Stan Brakhage or any number of the dense, allusive, little known poets they so admire: the 'source' of a piece has been lost or disguised beyond recognition, the key for its decoding has been buried, the 'score' they use is a dizzying, compacted mass of lines, dots, letters and markings.

"We do not concentrate on any one medium as we are specifically interested in how a particular medium can be transported into another one". Arf Arf has always been interested in unusual, cryptic, almost fantastic correspondences and exchanges between different art forms and media. The principal members of Arf Arf are Marcus Bergner, Michael Buckley, Marisa Stirpe and Frank Lovece. Between them, individually and collectively, they have worked in everything from post-punk music (Melbourne's 'Little Bands' era so feebly mythologised in the film *Dogs in Space*) to CD-ROM, via all the visual and literary arts.

As an ensemble, Arf Arf bears out an old motto of Philip Brophy's - that it is better to have not artistic intention, just artistic tension. All the key members have different styles, approaches and strengths. Bergner's forte is his experimental animation - drawing and writing on film - and his radical approach to artistic collage (both evident in his masterly *Tales From Vienna Hoods*, 1987). Lovece has a very distinctive, quite lyrical and aleatoric way of working with bodies, gestures and voices (as in *Te*

*Possino Ammazza*, 1987). Buckley's strength is in the poetic ordering of diverse materials in montage; his work is multi-layered, juggling anarchy and control (as in the excellent recent shorts *Witness* and *Forever Young*). And, as one of the best 'songs' in *Thread of Voice* memorably shows, Stirpe is a remarkable performer able to mutate herself with each new vocal inflection.

Arf Arf is a performance group that, it might be said, does not 'communicate' easily. But on the other hand, there is an utter simplicity, directness and transparency about what they offer. In their sound pieces, words appear from random noises, are momentarily played with, and then disappear back into a sound-mass. Nor is it much of a theatrical 'spectacle': very drawn to non-slickness and the pleasures of an 'incidental' art, Arf Arf do their shows in their everyday clothes, without fast or tricky transitions from one piece to the next. You see clearly all the moments of randomness and improvisation that go into their pieces. When they use 'props' or items of technology, these are deliberately primitive, clunky, exposed: bits of wood, transistor radios, a 16mm projector.

The artistic work of Arf Arf, across all the media they use, is vivid, kinetic, involving, very humorous, full of the rawness and randomness and mysteriousness of life. It is an extremely heterogeneous art, clashing different styles, timbres, textures. It is sophisticated, deeply considered, and also spontaneous and immediate in its emotional effects. It is full of almost violent juxtapositions and gear shifts - as well as sudden, hushed passages of calm, poetic grace.

*This article is part of a series called Across Media written with the assistance of the Visual Arts and Crafts Board of the Australia Council.*

*Adrian Martin is a film critic, cultural commentator and the author of Phantasms.*

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The Exhibition Co-ordinator is responsible, in conjunction with the Director of PICA, for developing and implementing the exhibition program and associated activities. The attributes of the Exhibition Co-ordinator should include experience in curatorial practice; the ability to efficiently co-ordinate and provide technical support for all PICA's visual arts projects including the organisation and maintenance of all relevant materials, display areas and equipment; excellent written and verbal skills; an in-depth knowledge and (critical) passion for contemporary art practices; the ability to work sympathetically with artists and the ability to pass on knowledge. Experience in all aspects of hanging and the installation of art works is essential.

Salary: \$29,000 pa. If you feel you have the necessary experience and personal skills to fill this role, please contact PICA on (09) 227 6144 for an information package. Applications should be addressed to Sarah Miller, Director, Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, GPO Box P1221, Perth, 6001 by Friday June 9, 1995.

# P I C A

Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts

*Hatched: Healthway National Graduate Show '95*, national survey of art graduates from '94 exhibiting June 1-25; FORUM program: June 24 & 25; *Sadness*: a celebration of life, family and friends by William Yang, June 7-17; *Written Works* photographic work by William Yang, exhibiting June 7 - 25; exhibiting July 6 - 30: the annual City of Perth Photographic Award, *Conventions, Objects & Fields* by Rob Ward, *Erasure/Sous Rature* by Paul Eachus and *These are the days* video installation by John Tonkin, from Britian *The Raft of Carrots* by Jem Southam and *One Foot Has Not Yet Reached the Next Street*, by Keith Arnatt; *Independent New Choreographers*, July 10-16; Nigel Kellaway Performance Workshop, July 17 - 21; Weekend Lighting Workshop for artists, tutor Mike Nanning July 22 & 23; *Putting on an Act*, PICA's festival of new performance: July 24 - August 6

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# Nurturing Sound Practices

Joseph O'Connor and Maryanne Lynch explain Eye-Phonics

Eye-Phonics is a twelve-month investigation in Brisbane of multi-media, multi-art practices, with particular reference to sound and its relation to performance. The adventurous program has already featured masterclasses with New York poet John Giorno and French sound and visual poet Bernard Heidsieck with more to come from performer and writer Kathy Acker and multi-media artist Ellen Zweig, both from the U.S.

On a recent visit to Brisbane, Keith Gallasch visited the Metro Arts Centre and discussed the motivation for, the progress of, and the future of the Experimetro program run for Metro Arts by Joseph O'Connor. Maryanne Lynch is the co-convenor of Experimetro's Eye-Phonics project with Joseph. Academic, writer and performer Nicholas Zurbrugg has collaborated on planning and negotiations. The following interview was performed to the accompaniment of jackhammers in the street and a square-dance caller next door, the latter a reminder that Metro Arts began as a community arts centre. It still sustains those activities but also houses a cinema, a small theatre, Experimetro, Kooemba Jdarra (at that time performing *Murri Love*) and other organisations – it has become a significant contemporary arts centre.

JO Eye-Phonics is a response to a lack of innovation in performance in Brisbane, an initiative of the Experimetro program jointly funded by the Drama Committee of the Performing Arts Board and the Queensland State Government. Experimetro supports new and developmental performance and theatre practice.

ML It's about creating a space for performance which is being more broadly defined by the day. So Experimetro is like the tree from which other projects like Eye-Phonics extend like branches.

JO The catalyst program we'll have for 1996 will be a film and video program that's run on the same kind of structure as Eye-Phonics. It's like pulling performance apart and looking at its components and for defined periods of time, really honing in on each one of those and developing them and providing as many opportunities for artists as we can.

ML Having a diversity of artists means that the way in which the question of, say, sound in performance is approached is a diverse one rather than getting together a group of people who all come from the same tradition or school of thought. It's already proving interesting to participate in the way different processes and starting points jump off one another or jar with one another.

KG What were the criteria for selecting the participating artists?

ML They all needed to have some experience in an art form. It didn't need to be sound or performance but an interest in and a rationale for being involved in the Eye-Phonics program.

JO We have film-makers, sound people, theatre directors –

ML Performance artists, community

theatre people, writers. The program is aiming to broaden the performance culture as well as improve the practice of individual artists.

JO There is no school or group of sound artists in Brisbane. Sound culture is not something that Brisbane is known for. Part of the aim of Eye-Phonics is to provide the fertile soil for that to start to grow. What the twenty one artists are getting out of it is remarkable, but if this project ends up with only five people that continue to work specifically in experimental sound practice, we'll be pleased.

ML I don't think they even necessarily need to end up in sound.

KG So a visual artist might use sound in an installation at a later date in a more interesting way?

ML Or just approach what they've been doing differently even if they don't use sound at all. They've been informed about other processes and ideas.

KG Will this help to create a performance culture here?

JO There already is a performance culture here. I think it's a particularly interesting one. You've got to be here for a while before you can start to access it. And a lot of people couldn't give a shit whether their work is given the credibility that we might think it needs or deserves. They're oblivious to the system in a way. A lot of this is to do with performance in Brisbane being part of the club scene.

KG Do performers speak and work with one another? In Sydney, for example, there's a lot of cross-fertilisation.

ML My impression is of fragmentation. There are 'scenes'.

JO It is fragmented but there's also a generosity amongst those practitioners.

KG Where is this work happening?

JO You see it in clubs like Van Gogh's Earlobe at West End, The Zoo in Fortitude Valley, some of the gay clubs up on Spring Hill and the Roxy, primarily a live music venue.

KG So is it a cabaret format, one-offs or do people do seasons, or is it in the context of, say, independent dance?

JO All of those. What is missing is an independent dance movement, though Clare Dyson, Avril Huddy, Rachael Jennings and Brian Lucas are setting up The Crab Room which could make a big difference. Then there are groups like Nude Productions who've done some interesting movement work. I see popular music as the catalyst for a lot of these things. The Livid Festival has been a major showcase each year. Last year's Livid, the ninth, pulled about 12,000 people.

ML Apart from clubs, performance happens in some of the fringe galleries like Isn't Studio.

JO We used to have Brutal and Space Plenitude but they no longer exist. These

galleries support the sort of performance that IMA (Institute of Modern Art) supports, mostly solo works with an intellectual or theoretical base, whereas places like The Sitting Duck and The Zoo support the Brink sort of performance – the puppetry, the mime, the ensembles –

ML Community companies. I think the performance scene in Brisbane is fragmented. I do find it amazing that in a city this size one group will not even know another exists.

KG In Sydney the Performance Space provides a focus. Sooner or later most people seem to perform there so you see one another's work. Is Eye-Phonics a way to draw some of these people together?

ML Yes. I think we've got quite a disparate group in terms of where they usually work and who they normally work with.

JO The group includes Linda Milani – visual artist, Doug Leonard – theatre director, Natalie Lynch – performance artist, Damien – a contemporary classical composer, Hugh Watson – community theatre writer, Komninos – poet, Kylie the lead singer of a techno-band, performer Keiran Knox ...

ML Diverse in ages too – the bulk in their mid thirties but also 20's, 40's, 50's.

JO It's an open-ended project. The only fixed things are the CD at the end, a compilation of works created as part of the project, and a magazine. There is a structure but it's open ended so we can pick up on interesting things that happen along the way. Along with the international guests we are having visits by interstate artists to give people here a sense of what's happening elsewhere. There are also artists in the group who are working on projects of their own. We have monthly meetings where people get together and decide what's needed. Last month we had a technical workshop in the morning and in the afternoon presentations of people's works in progress.

KG What sort of resources do they have to develop work?

JO That's the question they've been asking. After looking at what the artists are doing –

ML And our options, given our 'vast' resources.

JO Most of the money for this project from the Hybrid Arts Committee has gone on artists' fees and airfares.

ML It's now apparent that it will be more useful to have fewer artists coming and more time with equipment. That's part of the responsiveness to this group.

JO So we're buying some equipment that will be compatible with other stuff we can hire on a long term basis and there's a room on the second floor which we're converting into a recording studio.

ML The artists will have access to a DAT recorder, a sampler, a reel to reel, some use of computer. At other times, when the need

arises we'll bring stuff in. A couple of people in the program are happy to share their own equipment up to a point.

JO It's very important that people in this program place demands on the program and Experimetro and the Board of Metro Arts. It's got to enable them to realise whatever ideas they have in mind.

ML We've also got space on the internet. We have a web page for each artist.

KG What about broadcasting some of the results?

JO 4ZZZ are interested and it's possible we might strike a deal with the ABC. We'll distribute the CD through our membership and data base but it will also be distributed nationally by Valve Records which is a Brisbane based outfit.

ML And because it will also have the international and interstate artists – that's a bit of a hook.

JO It might be hard to sell a CD with local soundwork by Brisbane artists but someone might want to buy a Kathy Acker piece – that's what we've asked them all to do.

KG Are there any signs that Eye-phonics is already having an impact?

ML Doug Leonard is using sound in an interesting way in his piece IONALYMPUS, a performance about Eve Langley.

JO When I saw Keiran Knox's piece last night, I was dead proud. I loved it, work that I've never seen Keiran do before. It was called *This Is Not A Revolution in Choice* and it dealt with the introduction of pay television. It was the second of three performances I saw on the Wharf down by the river. He just got up and talked with this big projection, lots of white noise, very funny in his very dry way.

KG Does he usually use a talk format?

JO No. He generally makes noise like this tape recorder was before we started the interview. It's the work that keeps you going, especially when you can see results from what we're doing. I'd like to think the organisation could become a production house, offer its resources for longer periods of time to specific but diverse projects.

ML In Brisbane people complain about lack of venues. It's important that a program like Experimetro and the Eye-Phonics project are attached to a place, a venue. Like the Performance Space.

JO I find at times being in Metro Arts an amazingly stimulating experience. You walk up the hallway and the door will open and you'll just get a glimpse of something like square dancing and you think, I've got to do something with those people. Then the Indian classical dancers move in.

ML I hate to say it, but it's so "hybrid" here.

JO I wonder who thought up that term?

ML That's the first time I've used it 'spontaneously' in conversation.

JO I try consciously not to use it.

# CAST Aways

Jennifer Spinks on Contemporary Art Services Tasmania

In a recent state election one candidate issued a flyer referring to "both Tasmania and Australia". Mainland Australians are not the only ones who think Tasmanians are a little ... well ... different. Suspicion of 'mainland ideas' – whether in business, in politics or in the arts – is something that more than a few Tasmanians happily confess to. With that suspicion goes a degree of well deserved pride in the state's unique natural features and resources; but also a less convincing sense of cultural independence which is sometimes expressed as conservatism and parochialism.

When Tasmanians don't feel quite so confident about their lot, they talk about isolation, diminution and deprivation. Within the state's small contemporary arts community, this can be a deadly cycle, like an arts 'deficiency syndrome': less artists means less galleries means less exhibitions and less money and less community support. Contemporary Art Services Tasmania (CAST) is trying to reverse this spiral of negativity. Its mission is to "present and promote contemporary visual art and craft, with a particular focus on practice throughout Tasmania". Given the tough odds, they face a daunting task.

CAST appeared in the early 1990s under controversial circumstances. It was formed in the merger of the under-resourced remnants of three organisations: Chameleon in Hobart, Arthouse in Launceston, and the state branch of the nationwide exhibitions touring agency called NETS. The amalgamation inflamed a traditional feud between the north and south of the state, which is a down-home version of the rivalry between Sydney and Melbourne. Chameleon, for instance, had been one of Tasmania's first artist co-operatives, and a focus for local contemporary art throughout the entire 1980s. Parts of the Hobart community seemed gripped by nostalgia for the 'good old days' of Chameleon and resented its passing. The new kid on the block represented '90s cultural policy and hard times; and like any replacement for an old departed friend, they were not liked or trusted.

But despite its inauspicious beginning, CAST has pressed on with a reasonably consistent program. It supports curatorial initiatives, tours exhibitions (both within regional Tasmania and interstate), and maintains a publication. There are problems with each of these. While the state is home to some very interesting artists, getting up a variety of thematic exhibitions from a relatively small pool of talent can be tough. Inevitably, the same names pop up. As a consequence, Tasmania has a particular need for 'imported' exhibitions. CAST's director, Victoria Hammond, firmly believes that "... it's very important that Tasmania doesn't become this closed little circle ... In the long run, the art scene will be enervated if you don't keep injecting it with ideas from other places." This view is reflected in the organisation's policy, and over the past twelve months there has been an equal division between Tasmanian and mainland artists included in CAST exhibitions. One of CAST's most exciting projects to date, however, has been wholly Tasmanian. *Bad Light*, curated by Philip Holliday in early 1995, features the photographers Jane Eisemann, Pat Brassington, Jane Burton, and David McDowell. It is a sophisticated and visually arresting exhibition which confirms the growing national reputations of these artists.

While CAST's exhibitions program continues to develop, a cloud hangs over the future of its quarterly journal. It is produced almost entirely by volunteer labour, and has lost two editors in six

months to the understandable lure of paid jobs. Managerial problems aside, the magazine is caught in a particularly Tasmanian bind, and one which is reflected in the variable quality of its content. Simply put, it is difficult to develop a critical culture in an environment where cutting-edge exhibitions are the exception rather than the rule.

This brings us to the most fundamental problem in the Tasmanian arts community at present: the lack of a permanent, contemporary art space. Without one, Tasmania faces a bleak future of sporadic and possibly inadequately-displayed exhibitions, and a permanent brain-drain of disillusioned young artists. Without the kind of access and publicity that a 'shop-front' can generate, CAST faces an uphill battle to increase its profile in the community. Currently, a lack of funds prevents the development of any suitable site in Tasmania. Hammond's frustrations with the 'powers that be' are evident when she explains that "... it's simply not realised that if Hobart had a terrific contemporary art space like the IMA in Brisbane, ACCA in Melbourne or Artspace in Sydney, it would be a tremendous asset to the city." It should be interesting to see how Tasmania's relatively conservative business sector will respond to the focus on corporate sponsorship which CAST, like every other publicly-funded arts organisation, will no doubt have to adopt. We can only speculate on the uniquely Tasmanian solutions which may emerge.

*Jennifer Spinks is a Tasmanian writer. Bad Light is currently showing at the Centre for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne.*



Pat Brassington from *Pond* 1995

## exhibitions

### Australian Centre for Contemporary Art

Kathy Temin 15 July - 13 August  
Dallas Brooks Drive South Yarra  
Telephone 9654 6422 Tue-Fri 11-5, Sat-Sun 2-5

### Centre for Contemporary Photography 'Winter House'

Sadie Chandler and Stephen Birch  
21 July - 19 August  
205 Johnston Street Fitzroy  
Telephone 9417 1549  
Wed-Fri 11-5, Sat 2-5

### 200 Gertrude Street

Mutlu Çerkez  
Tony Clark  
Kerrie Poliness  
Jacinta Schreuder  
Kathy Temin  
Constanze Zikos  
wall drawings and situations  
CURATOR Max Delany  
4-26 August  
200 Gertrude Street Fitzroy  
Telephone 9419 3406  
Tue-Fri 10-5.30, Sat 1-5.30

### Linden Gallery

'Histories' Andrew Wright-Smith  
12 July - 13 August 26 Acland Street St Kilda  
Telephone 9534 2396 Tue-Sun 1-6

## forums

### Changing Values: the contemporary art space and institutional cultures

Sat 5 August 5-7pm, 200 Gertrude Street  
SPEAKERS INCLUDE Carolyn Barnes and Elizabeth Gertsakis

### The Expanding Field: public, commercial and artist-run spaces

SPEAKERS Robyn McKenzie, Greg Creek and Bill Nuttall  
Sat 12 August 5-7pm, CCP

### The Next Wave Forum: Cities, Festivals & the Contemporary Visual Arts

SPEAKERS Judy Annear, Barrie Kosky, David O'Halloran, Hiram To  
CHAIR Zane Trow  
Sat 19 August 2-5pm  
Erwin Rado Theatre (next door to CCP)  
Telephone 9417 7544

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## lecture

Professor Thomas Crow Professor of Art History  
University of Sussex Monday 10 July 7.30pm, ACCA  
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the contemporary art space in melbourne

An Art in Inner Melbourne Project \*



\* Art in Inner Melbourne (AIM)'s members are the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Centre for Contemporary Photography, 200 Gertrude Street, Ian Potter Gallery, University of Melbourne, Linden Gallery and the Next Wave Festival. This project has been generously assisted by Arts Victoria, a division of the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism

# Does it Hurt Your Knees ?

Sarah Miller at the Fremantle Art Centre's *Longitudinal Project*

Currently on show at the Fremantle Arts Centre are artists Barbara Bolt and Tony Lusk performing *Excessive Practice*. Also playing critical roles are curator John Kean and Ivan Green the video whiz, whose credits include the making of a 20 cent in the slot pay-TV in Bunbury. *Excessive Practice* is the first stage in a three month project that seeks to develop, among other things, a more sustained relationship between artist and gallery and between artist, gallery and audience, whilst making transparent various art-making processes.

The artists are making work in what was originally the dining room of the Women's Lunatic Asylum, now an exhibition space. The ambience of a nineteenth century artist's studio (or given the architecture – perhaps a salon) is somewhat incongruously juxtaposed against definitively twentieth century video technology. Four monitors, four cameras, mirrors, theatre lights, reflectors and a large projection screen frame two artists, extending and amplifying their every movement. It's a bizarre displacement and reconfiguration of the gallery space in both real and recorded time.

Everywhere are portraits and self portraits: extraordinary images by Tony Lusk, stretching from floor to ceiling, bending around cornicing and corners further distorting the already cartoonish (excessive?) drawn features. Barbara Bolt's rich drawings and canvasses enclose the space and the smell of pastels, paint and turpentine pervades the space. Viewers can watch the artists working in real or recorded time, on a single or quad split screen. They talk to the artists and the artists talk to them, often cajoling or persuading the nervous or uncertain to cross the threshold, chatting with the interested and sparring with the arts cognoscenti.

Responses to the project to date have been polarised – love and hate – and yet it is not the calibre of the paintings and drawings that is in dispute, it's the artists. There they are, working away, having cups of tea and chatting to casual visitors. It is this visibility, this interaction, this availability that either engages or enrages audience members.

*SM It seems ironic that despite any number of attempts to demystify various art practices, the consequence has often been to confuse, infuriate and make increasingly opaque the very notion of contemporary art.*

*JK It is particularly heightened in this atmosphere because many people come to enjoy the pleasant, ambient courtyard and grounds or to visit the museum or to view the historic buildings rather than for an art experience. So they'll come and they'll take in a gallery but basically they just want to hang around in the space. Loading on the sensory stuff in the gallery is more than our visitors might anticipate but they're our key visitors ...*

*BB That's where our role as talkers and getting people over the threshold comes in. We're conscious that people hover at the door. Often it starts with the technology – people feel comfortable asking questions about that – so that's often the icebreaker. I get a bit miffed that the work itself seems so incidental.*

*TL I knew it was going to be hard work but it's been a lot more challenging and demanding than I imagined and it stirs up all sorts of things. You're on show all the time. You can't hide anywhere and I'm working with another artist who's very dynamic, very extroverted and very*



*Longitudinal Project Stage 1: Excessive Practice Tony Lusk in situ*

John Austin

talented. It's very confronting working next to somebody like that which is partly my reason for being here – to expose myself – but having done so, it makes me extremely anxious. You can't think about what you're doing because you're constantly dealing with the audience. The work in some senses takes a back seat.

*BB One of the hard things is being out of control, of not being able to focus. You don't have the luxury of being able to sit back for a couple of hours and look at the work. It's a much more fragmentary and disjointed activity. One of the nice things has been that when I've really wanted to focus, Tony's taken the brunt of who's coming through, I've really enjoyed having Tony here. I've had incredible self doubt the whole time. I think this work will be extremely important but it's my single-mindedness that's holding me together.*

*TL When Barb's not around, they talk to me. When she is they talk to her. That's part of the problem for me because people don't respond to me in the ways that I wish they would. When I'm alone they come to me and I actually enjoy that. I can always tell the ones with an art background because they ask much more pointed questions. Other people talk about the work, but differently. For instance, if I'm bending down doing a drawing, they'll ask, "does it hurt your knees?" or "how long is it going to take?" They're fascinated by the peripheral things. I have some wonderful conversations that aren't related to art at all. The art is the starting point for the interaction.*

*JK It's a very different way of running a gallery. In the mornings you go in and sort of sniff the air to work out what to do to make it right for the day depending on what's been introduced the day before, how people have been responding. We've had to reduce the level of stimulus in order for people to be comfortable to go in. You have to remember the shock and surprise of people who have experienced this gallery over ten years who haven't previously been*

exposed to this kind of thing. There's also an element of tension because visitors are descaled both by the video cameras and the size of the work. Tony's self portraits reach from floor to ceiling. The technology amplifies everything including self doubt and nervousness. You're not only there in real time but you can be played back at any time.

My interest in using the technology came from the idea of 'an eye in the sky' because curatorially, that's been a really important idea for me, the world as a flat thing. We construct it from above. That comes from working with Aboriginal artists. It's also a way of tracking movement. Once we started working with art cams attached to the artists' heads and arms as well as the overhead cameras, we found ourselves implicated within the realm of popular culture and sports presentations. Since then it's got much more complicated. Setting it up creates a complicated and fractured space – analogous to Cubist space in a way – and it's a means of activating all the gallery area. The issue of time is also interesting. You might have two real time and two recording cameras operating and with the quad split screen, you can see all of those things. It's also been good using off-the-rack technology. I think of the technology as a kind of 'exoskeleton' around the artists.

*BB In many galleries, video cameras are used only for surveillance and the audience is unaware that they're being watched. Here the reactions of people being viewed has been quite bizarre. It's not just the cameras. Being viewed viewing our work has created a real tension for some people. They can't look at the work because typically, art works are viewed and consumed privately.*

*JK The next stage of the project will be created by the *Serious Ink Men*, Paul Trinidad, Bevan Honey and Ross Turner. They're interested to make their processes transparent. As printmakers, this stage will be much more about the nature of multiples and mechanical processes. The tension will*

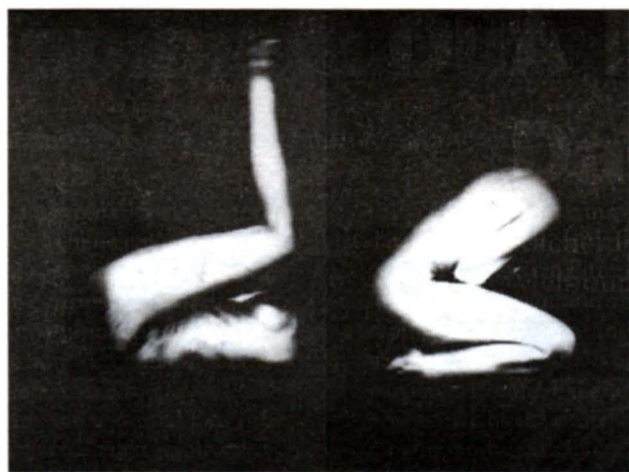
be in the kinds of mechanical processes used which have their origins in the 16th, 17th and 19th centuries and the ways in which they're recorded and documented. Information will be fed back to them electronically. That'll be interesting to play out. We have yet to work out how to get rid of the fumes.

In Stage 3, with Mary Mclean and Nalda Searles, the technology will be used to create ambience and to dampen things. It will be less theatrical. Mary and Nalda are enormously charismatic. People are drawn into their quiet space. Like Barbara and Tony, they're working on a large collaborative project.

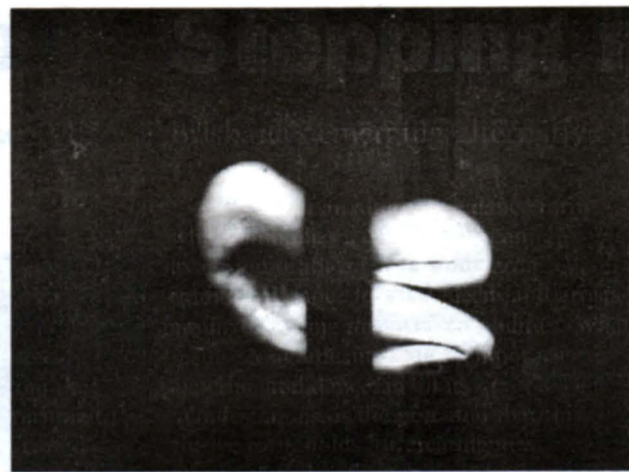
All the artists have their individual projects but the gallery project is quite different. That's about us and the audience and maintaining and extending existing relationships with artists; working it out on a daily basis rather than artists walking in and talking about the placement of their objects, having a nice show, a cathartic opening and that's it. *The Longitudinal Project* is much more about our extended process with artists and audiences and that's reflected in the ongoing renegotiation of the space whenever people are around.

*April 28 – May 26: Excessive Practice, Barbara Bolt and Tony Lusk.  
May 26 – June 21: Serious Ink Men, Paul Trinidad, Bevan Honey and Ross Turner.  
June 21 – July 23, Minyma Kutjara, Mary Mclean and Nalda Searles.*

*Sarah Miller is the director of the Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts.*



Still Leben (Germany)



Institute for the Science of Evidence

## Seeing the Light

Vikki Riley at the cutting edge of the Melbourne International Film Festival

The festival is screening an unprecedented ninety-one features and over one hundred and forty short films and videos, including a retro package from Germany's Oberhausen Kurzfilmtage, one of the world's oldest film festivals. Amongst a variety of foreign features there are titles which stand out as unmissable: Chantal Ackerman's somewhat 'fake' period piece *Portrait of a Young Girl in Brussels at the end of the Sixties*; Cahiers du Cinema editor Olivier Assayas's *Cold Water* and Claire Denis' *US Go Home*, all not uncoincidentally preoccupied with teenagers growing up in the late sixties.

From Melbourne itself come premiere screenings of John Ruane's adaptation of Tim Winton's novel *That Eye The Sky*, Alexi Vellis' *The Life of Harry Dare* and Brian McKenzie's *Pat and Eddy's Greyhound Racing Family*.

In the documentary category comes a surprise tribute-style profile of Brazilian icon Carmen Miranda by Helena Solberg whose feminist documentaries from the 70's on the plight of Latin American women set the stage for this unusually personalised

lament for Miranda. Solberg exposes the unfortunate circumstances Carmen Miranda endured as a personal relations emissary for dictator Vargas and as a virtual technicolor exhibit of third world exotica in Daryl Zanuck's dream factory. There, her bad English and sexy Portuguese, half sung, half spoken, rapid fire delivery was both a marketing gimmick and means of enslavement to a cultural type only death released her from.

The Melbourne Festival has always screened some of the best experimental films you are likely to see in Australia, especially crucial since all avenues for exhibiting such work outside the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group have withered away. Melbourne conceptual painter Tony Woods, who has only recently taken up film making has one of the strongest works to be made on Super 8 for a long time, *Samuel Beckett/Tony Woods*, a semi-portrait of Beckett constructed from fragments and reflections; four images of Beckett found on the streets; Rorschach tests that Woods made in the sixties and shots around the artist's studio and local

area. The result is a kind of succession of visual ploys aimed at the viewer in which the artist tempts us to confuse his identity with that of Beckett, his myth, persona and strange warbled intensity.

Also on Super 8 are two films from the Bush Studies project which screens as a whole collection of responses to Barbara Baynton's 1902 collection of short stories later screening around Australia at the National Cinematheque. Both Bush Studies films are, believe it or not, called *A Dreamer*. The first is by Melanie El Mir and is eerily reminiscent of Tracey Moffatt's *Night Cries* with its 'ugly and old' mother melodrama at its bewitching centre. The second is by Peh and is a continuation of her aesthetic meditations on how many bare essentials of light and movement you can stretch into a filmic sequence.

From Germany's Institute for the Science of Evidence comes *Still Leben (Still Living)* which is more like an exquisite corpse peep show than formal film, where a parade of naked bodies metamorphoses into each other like machines of collapsing erogenous dead flesh. It's without a doubt that this apocalyptic approach to the question of the 'body' is more than a passing theme in so much contemporary art and what *Still Leben* exposes is a healthy lack of faith in the histories of the imagined body (the precedents of experimental dance, performance art) by literally forcing bodies

into grotesque poses and ritualistic forms in order to simulate death and create a sense of alienation from anatomy.

But the highlight of this year's experimental program is Canadian/Armenian Garine Torossian's *Drowning in Flames*. Torossian, only in her mid-twenties, would have to be one of the best practising film alchemists around, at a time when hand tinting and optically printed film is being invalidated anywhere computer generated images reign as a new aesthetic. An endless celluloid mosaic or palimpsest, *Drowning in Flames* is a homage to fellow Canadian photographer twins Mike and Doug Starn. Her film takes in their obsession with clichéd art history images but resembles a dusty tome whose sepia pages look like they are peeling off the screen. It's an unusual dialogue with the Starns' work, but only somebody like Torossian who is passionately concerned with beauty as decay could pull off such a stunt. She says, "The Starn's work seeks to create a multiplicity of layers which incorporate art history, aesthetic devices and post modern pluralism. My film has become yet another layer, a visual statement which both enlightens and makes the images in the Starns' work impregnated with new realities and strata of meanings".

44th Melbourne International Film Festival  
June 8 -25, 1995. For details: fax 03 9417-3804, tel 03 9417-2011.

## Virtual Stupidity

Adam Cullen on *Dumb and Dumber*

When I saw *Pulp Fiction* I thought "Wow - this is a really way-cool film". But then I fell backwards into *Dumb and Dumber*. Quentin Tarantino worked in a video store before he got himself together to make films. Appropriating every violent genre available to his insidious little middle-class mind, he's managed to construct a series of films for wankers and sluts with no visual life of their own. Now all you can expect is an unrelenting dream of juvenile pseudo-academics making Tarantino copies just to justify their own aesthetically bankrupt existences, and futile careers, and fucked-up emotional lives. Doesn't anybody love themselves anymore!

I'm not a giant Jim Carrey fan, but when you get crammed into a velvety cinema-cineplex and you've got one hundred, eyebrows-joined inbreds laughing at this goof with a small dick, it's pretty funny. Especially when *Pulp Fiction* fans have absolutely nothing to say - they wouldn't lower themselves to go and see this masterpiece of mockery and liquid panic. OK, the film is basically trash - but there's nothing cheaper than an audience. Art needs somebody to look at it and this film takes the seeing out of the shaman.

I suppose I should describe what actually happens. The less glamorous one of the moronic bipeds gets a job as a limo

driver, drives the unnecessarily short and cute woman to the airport, she makes a drop-off in the form of a suitcase full of cold hard cash and forgets it. He picks it up and gallivants all over the countryside, touring through the midwest, exchanging moist, spiritually active gags with his sidekick in a desperate and love-driven attempt to return it to her. (These guys love their mothers.) When he and his dumb friend discover the contents of the bag they spend it. Consequently, they fill the bag with IOU's - this is the conceptual part of the movie.

*Dumb and Dumber* doesn't signify anything. It basically doesn't satisfy anything at all and this is where its dewy nothingness sits and all adolescent awareness adheres. This isn't a film for people who think sexuality is a fluid thing. The two stars are embarrassing, they act out the fast food of your psyche in a rehearsal that seems like it will never stop. There's no jerking off into the soluble economy of social exchange. For a social comedy, it's an epic - it just depends on what one thinks of as social geography and how humour fits into virtual scenography - you don't just laugh for nothing.

This is a documentary about relief, not release. This is why it's not a film for people trying to live an alternative lifestyle,

contemporary bisexual theorists, or people who think they're really good looking. If you can't afford to buy drugs or make a film of your own, or are in no position to

kill yourself, go and check out *Dumb and Dumber* on video - you'll wonder why.

Adam Cullen is a Sydney-based visual artist.

Sydney Intermedia Network  
**NEW** presents   
**PERSPECTIVES**  
on the ART of the MOVING IMAGE

July 18, 20, 25, 27

**PAUL WINKLER: FILMS 1964-1994**

a joint project with the Museum of Contemporary Art

American Express Foundation Hall, Museum of Contemporary Art

For bookings and information, Ph: 241 5876 (11am-6pm)

These screenings will present a full survey of the films of German-born, Sydney-based film artist Paul Winkler who has been producing remarkable low-budget, low-tech but highly compelling films for the last thirty years. Paul's films have been collected by the Museum of Modern Art, New York and have been shown extensively overseas. The screenings will be accompanied by an exhibition at the MCA and a comprehensive colour monograph.

Saturday August 19

**COLOUR OF TIME**

Presented by Arthur and Corinne Cantrill

2pm Domain theatre, Art Gallery of New South Wales, \$8 / 5

This screening will look at one of the recurring interests in the films of Arthur and Corinne Cantrill —experiments with colour. It will include works dealing with the emotional and symbolic use of colour, depth perception and experiments with hand printing, colour filters, saturation, print grading, aperture effects and a variety of film stocks. While focussing on colour experiments these films also indicate the range of the Cantrill's concerns covering the nature of film and visual perception, art, poetry, still life, landscape and expanded cinema.

# Memories and Dreams

Freda Freiberg

Lynn-Maree Milburn's film *Memories and Dreams* eludes the attempt to define it. To describe it as a spidery-spun and intricately woven tapestry of documentary, dramatised fiction, experimental animation and lyrical romance is accurate but still not adequate. To describe it as an empathetic and experimental attempt to document a life story seems accurate until you realise that it is equally a discourse on the impossibility of such an undertaking. And while it may be accurate to describe the film's subject as the elusiveness and illusiveness of human subjectivity and history, it could also be misleading, as this is a very concrete sensuous film rather than an abstract theoretical essay.

The documentary elements of the film tell a familiar tale of dispossession and loss, oppression and exile, suffered by one (now elderly) Czech refugee, one of the displaced people who migrated to Australia in the aftermath of World War 2. She tells her story in voice-over and sometimes direct to camera; and the public political events of her story (the death of Masaryk, the triumphal occupation of Prague by German and later Russian troops, incarceration in Terezin — aka Theresienstadt — concentration camp) are illustrated with archival footage. But such footage is sparse and enclosed in a frame of white or dark haze. The film is primarily composed of painted and animated sequences of falling leaves; step-printed fragments of re-enacted scenes from the narrator's past; fleeting but recurrent images of motifs in her story — a sewing machine, a motorbike, a typewriter, a fire in the Barrendov film

studio, a child's snowboots; and snatches of Czech folk tales and folk music. The effect is of a jumble of confused and indistinct sights and sounds, the products of the failing memory of a woman's experiences of 50 years ago. It was long ago and far away, like the once-upon-a-time of fairy stories.

The film is strongly imbued with a poignant pathos. The stumbles and strangled breaks in Johanna's account of a personal loss (of family, freedom, lovers and homeland) are wrenching but generally the film works to evoke a more lyrical pathos, a feeling that the movement of time is generally beneficent, in its capacity to heal hurt and muffle painful memories, and in its comforting gift of nostalgia for youthful fantasies, loves and hopes.

The nostalgia is already prefigured in the film's epigraph: "Two things are forgotten only in death — the face of our mothers and the face of our cities". The exile's lament conflates the body of mother with native soil, mourning the wrench from both homes of origin. But the film opens with magical images of autumn leaves that mutate into falling stars and snow drops. They carry suggestions of fairytale worlds, of the European seasonal changes, and of the fragility and brevity of life; intimations of romance, as well as pathos and sorrow. And sure enough, Johanna's romances are stressed as much as her traumas and sorrows. Her romance with the motorcycle, her romance with Czech nationalism, her romance with Richard, the second lover. Personal and political liberation are associated in her memories with her Harley motorcycle. And Richard, the only one of her lovers or husbands who is figured in the film, appears in association with the romantic world of film, in the re-enacted sequences set in the German-occupied Czech film studios at Barrendov, amid the blinding lights and dancing figures of period-costumed performers.

Since Johanna has spent most of her adult life in Australia, it is appropriate that most of the film was shot and processed here. The memories are here, not there, as Jo herself attests — she does not want to go back to



*Memories & Dreams* Joanna Weir as Jo

Prague; her Prague isn't there any more; it exists only in her memory. So the fragments and traces of that past were in the main constructed in the here and now, with only a little footage shot in Prague. The weaving together of the heavily doctored fragments of film (which underwent a long and complicated process of tinting, re-photography and animation) may appear to disguise the heterogeneous sources and processes of production but it can also be said to represent the interpenetration of the present and the past, the here and the there, the absent and the present.

This is a remarkable film, truly a labour of love. If not exactly a meditation on memory, it is an elaborate figuring of the process of retrospection through the medium of film. The film took seven years to make, and is the outcome of personal dedication and intensive experimentation on the part of director/ animator Lynn-Maree Milburn, producer Julie Stone, cinematographer Andrew de Groot and their team of assistants. It has already received critical

recognition, winning the Erwin Rado for Best Australian Short Film at the Melbourne Film Festival in 1993, and is now belatedly enjoying a theatrical release. The art house cinema has finally recognised that the most interesting and intelligent work in Australian cinema is currently locatable in those short features (or long shorts) that experiment with a mixture of fiction and non-fiction. Not requiring the exorbitant budgets of the big feature, not suffering the concomitant pressures towards commercial viability, they allow for a more personal and exploratory approach to form and content. Like Laurie Johnston's *Eternity*, Lynn-Maree Milburn's *Memories and Dreams* is the product of intense personal commitment to a project, love for the chosen subject and love of cinema.

*Memories and Dreams* is currently screening at the Carlton Moviehouse.

Freda Freiberg is a Melbourne writer and commentator on photography for *The Age*.

# Masculine-Feminine

Noel King on how to read Sharon Stone

It's too easy to say that Sharon Stone plays a Clint Eastwood role in a new spaghetti western, Sam Raimi's *The Quick and the Dead*. Of the Sergio Leone spag westerns, Raimi's film is closest to *Once Upon a Time in the West* and Eastwood wasn't in that. Charles Bronson was, so maybe she's an amalgam of Eastwood and Bronson. But one of her best acting techniques (she's very good at reaction shots) she shares with Robert Redford so maybe it's some other kind of film. Remember the scene in *Intersection* where she reacts to her husband Richard Gere's "firing" of her in their office? It's as good as any Redford reaction shot.

But why talk about Sharon Stone's acting in relation to the performances of male stars? Well, because she's like some male stars in that her performances are always supposed to be moving the spectator beyond her body while also allowing the viewer as much quality bod-viewing time as possible. The scene in *The Specialist* where she slinks toward camera in an evening gown is the best example of this; it's a supermodel-on-a-catwalk walk with different bits of her body (boobs, tum, legs, shoulders) apparently moving independently (at least sufficiently independently to draw a fetishistic gaze) while cohering into a dreamy aesthetic whole. Faced with the fact of this kind of corporeal poetry in motion it's ridiculous to read those quotations from past and present women stars deploring the alleged beaver glimpse in *Basic Instinct*, as if this constituted some sneaky, ersatz way to stardom. The bitchy line is that Shas can't act and so she constantly substitutes her body for another kind of performance of which she is

incapable.

If the criticism sounds familiar think of the number of classical Hollywood male stars who for years either were obliged or were happy to trade on their looks and their bodies before trying to demonstrate some broader acting range (Burt Lancaster, Victor Mature, Sterling Hayden). In English cinema, the wonderful Dirk Bogarde eventually stopped being a pretty-boy Doctor at Sea/in the House, did *Victim*, then a bunch of Losey-Pinter stuff right on through to a great performance as a passive-aggressive turd of a husband/father in *Daddy Nostalgie*. And I know lots of women viewers who were convinced that the principal difference in the performances of River Phoenix and Keanu Reeves in *My Own Private Idaho* was that River knew what all the Prince Hal/Falstaff stuff was about and Keanu didn't have a clue. That was their way of keeping Keanu a bimbo-body-object-of desire. Of course now that we've seen *Speed* we know that Keanu is truly in his body and is as cerebral as you need to be to carry a mainstream Hollywood action film.

Some snooty people are still waiting for Shas Stone to deliver the equivalent of those male star performances that finally proved the beefcake in question had brains or some kind of cerebral performance factor. Almost twenty years before *Unforgiven* made him fashionable, Eastwood won a lot of sceptics over with his acting in *The Outlaw Josey Wales*; thirty years before that, Victor Mature was "Shakespearean" in *My Darling Clementine*; a year ago Costner was a knockout in *A Perfect World*. But we supposedly are still waiting for evidence of Shas's ability to do this. It's a reversal of the

Meryl Streep situation where it took *The River Wild* to prove that she could add to her thespian cred by carrying an action flick. Shas has to prove (to whom?) that she can add cinematic thespian cred to her body cred.

But Shas has always been pushing the outside of the performance envelope had we but eyes to see. She is very like Eastwood in her intelligent manipulation of her star persona and equally aware of what it makes available to her cinematically. I'm not sure it was such a great idea to ask a whacko like Faye Dunaway how to handle sudden fame but then Dunaway was terrific in *Chinatown* and easily the best thing in the absurd film version of Bukowski's *Barfly*, a cinematic event whose principal raison d'être seemed to be to allow Micky Rourke to do a Mr Magoo accent for a couple of hours.

So here Shas is again, in *The Quick and the Dead*, another in the list of retakes on the classical western genre (*Wyatt Earp*, *Tombstone*, *Bad Girls*), not many of which are making money. But they are throwing up some striking performances; Val Kilmer as Doc Holliday in the tedious *Tombstone* and Uncle Gene Hackman even better in *The Quick and the Dead* than he was in his Oscar winning role in Eastwood's *Unforgiven*. This is what Shas is up against: the virtuosity of the actor that Warren Beatty once said "has a strong claim to being the best of our generation." Once you get past the jock's body, with Hackman it has always been the face, eyes and above all, the voice. In *Night Moves* he is the ex-football player turned private eye, spying on his philandering wife. They wind up having a strained conversation in the kitchen with Hackman saying "it's your ball, run with it" and turning on the compactor. The noise is loud and his wife asks him to turn it off because "I can't hear myself think". Back comes Hackman's strangled, cuckold's rage-containing reply, "lucky you". That vocal quality returns in Raimi's film in the moment

when Stone comes to challenge Hackman and he tells her to go away, he's already been challenged (by the son he won't acknowledge).

Eventually what the Raimi film is all about, maybe what the western always was about, is virtuosity. Who is the fastest gun, who is the fastest director/cinematographer to capture with the most virtuoso flair virtuoso gunplay? A traditional way of showing this is to have the set-piece in which Russell Crowe goes to buy a gun and a beardless youth (the unacknowledged son) takes him through all the options in this technology of killing. This is the sort of set scene that Scorsese reprises in *Taxi Driver* when the obsessive gun salesman outlines his wares (and remember that Scorsese was so taken with this real-life person that he made a documentary on him). It's all those scenes in westerns where the expert inducts the ingénue into the art of gunplay: it's the moment that leads to the hour of the gun that will be the film's denouement. But Raimi adds to this convention by having dreamlike collage scenes of floating guns (cf the scenes of fish jumping and mid-western barns in *My Own Private Idaho*) and by having amazing shots in which the camera seems to zoom through the pistol hole in the head of someone who's just been shot in one of the many gun joustings that comprises the main narrative line of *The Quick and the Dead*.

Eventually the woman-with-no-name utters her name at the moment of her completed revenge and rides off (no child shouts, "come back, Shas!"). As that happens we watch Shas ride out of our immediate vision into what I'd like to think is a fuller cinematic recognition. That's the way I saw it, in New York, in January, when snow was on the ground.

Noel King lectures on film at the University of Technology, Sydney.

# Surfing the Festival Guide

Documentaries: The Sydney Film Festival, June 9 - 24

The 1995 Festival Guide reveals an impressive range of documentaries and a chance to catch up on some Australian rarities. A highlight will doubtless be Marcel Ophuls as festival guest presenting his *The Troubles We've Seen* about journalists at war which includes a stint 'holed up in the Holiday Inn, Sarajevo'. MGM - Sarajevo about film-makers working in Sarajevo should, along with a larger retrospective of their works, *SA-Life*, add to our perspective on that war. Other documentaries cover the colonial history of Indonesia (*Mother Dao*), a man with twelve personalities (too many film festivals? *The Norman William Affair*), a murder investigation with camera in Mexico (*The Devil Never Sleeps*), a Saigon childhood that ends in gangsterism and prison in the U.S. (*Bui Doi: A Life Like Dust*) and two works focussing on Tiananmen Square. *Hell-Bento* is an Australian journey into Japanese underground culture. This list alone is indicative of the international range of the festival's documentaries.

On the arts front, look out for *Middle of the Moment*. Many of our readers were taken with Janine Peacock's account of European circuses in a recent RealTime. In this documentary the acrobats of the French Cirque O are "on the road .... with Tuareg nomads in the mountains of the southern Sahara".

Not exactly a documentary, but certainly a record of fully-rehearsed but not publicly staged *Uncle Vanya*, Chekhov's play as adapted by David Mamet from a literal Russian translation and directed by Andre Gregory with his *My Dinner with Andre* co-star Wallace Shawn as Vanya. Terry Zwigoff gives an account of the 'personality and completely bizarre family life' of American cartoonist Robert Crumb. The late Ron Wawter (of The Wooster Group) appears in a film of his performance Roy Cohn/Jack Smith. Cohn the right wing homophobe died of AIDS in the 80s (and figured in the play *Angels in America*) as did the underground film-maker Jack Smith. Let's hope this film gets a general release. Of left and right, *Montand*, about the life and career of French film star Yves Montand might offer insight into the conservative shift in his values towards the end of his life.

Music figures prominently with *A Great Day in Harlem* about the taking of a famous jazz photograph in 1958, two Robert Muggle films, one about 'the life and death struggle among zydeco musicians in Louisiana to determine the new king of zydeco', the other about bluegrass festival. Composer, musician and producer Don Was has created *I Just Wasn't Made for These Times*, a 'bio-documentary' about Beach Boy Brian Wilson. And there are two films about the life of Marvin Gaye. *Not Bad for a Girl* documents the opinions of girl rock stars like Joan Jett, Hole and Lunachicks. The CD's been around for a while but this is the first chance to see the Kurt Weill tribute *September Songs* on film with Nick Cave, Betty Carter, Elvis Costello, the Brodsky String Quartet and Lou Reed.

LaLaLa Human Steps have only visited Australia once with their multi-media performances involving live music, film and

athletic and minimal dance patterns entailing a capacity to roll horizontally through air-space. *Velasquez's Little Museum* is a 'free adaptation of eight choreographies from the latest stage production' of the Montreal dance group.

Film itself comes under scrutiny, not only in several frame-by-frame analyses including George Miller and Nick Enright on their *Lorenzo's Oil* and Conrad Hall on *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, but in Lumiere's Century, a retrospective of French documentaries (including works by Carne, Marker, Franju, Lelouch, Clouzot, Varda), Sam Neill's survey of New Zealand cinema, *Cinema of Unease*, and a historical survey of film-directors looking at war - Capra, Jennings, Chauvel, Ford. One not to be missed will be *A Personal Journey Through American Movies with Martin Scorsese*, a four hour survey of favourites and influences. Forum discussions on film criticism and new technologies, plus the visit by Andrew Sarris promise a festival about film as much as the pleasures of watching.

Our cover photo is from Australian film-maker David Caesar's keenly awaited *Car Crash* premiering at the Sydney Film Festival. RT

## 5th Jump Cut Film Festival

Perth & Fremantle, July 14 - 23

Hot on the heels of the Sydney and Melbourne film festivals is the Film and Television Institute of WA's *Jump Cut* through their Lumiere Cinemas. The program includes David Caesar's *Car Crash*, the girl rock star doco *Not Bad for a Girl*; three Hong Kong features - *The New Legend of Shaolin*, *The Bride with White Hair*, and *Chungking Express*; Boaz Yakin's feature *Fresh* which won the *Un Certain Regard* award at Cannes in 1994; actor/director Tom Noonan's *What Happened Was ...*, the winner of the Grand Jury Prize at the 1994 Sundance Film Festival; Jorge Buttgerit's 'sub-genre-entail-spilling-horror' flick *Schramm*; and *Eclipse* from the Canadian director Jeremy Podeswa who is introducing his film at *Jump Cut* and around Australia. Nine days of films, forums, workshops, insights and escape. RT

## Butterfly Kiss

Directed by Michael Winterbottom  
Sydney Film Festival

Michael Winterbottom's *Butterfly Kiss* is a ride into the maelstrom swirling around a proselytising sociopath on a personal odyssey through the bleak truckstop cafes and motorways of northern England. The film opens with Amanda Plummer's wired derro Eunice stalking gas stations for the imaginary 'Judith', the one person she believes loves her. She meets up with Saskia Reeve's pathetic petrol clerk, the lonesome Miriam, who falls under her spell: the two continue Eunice's quest, despatching several unfortunates (a vacuum salesman, clerks, a truck driver) along the way. Winterbottom is not interested in psychologising Eunice: her violent acts are as spontaneous and aleatory as natural disasters; her bizarre mix of bible-speak, body piercing, mania, pathos and polymorphous sexuality a hybrid of existential angst and pomo nihilism on the brink of once-Great Britain's vortex of decline. It's rare to see a female character of such power and perversity, indeed evil, in the cinema, BK is edgier than *Thelma and Louise*, less voluble and mannered a study of sociopathy (read post-Thatcher England) than *Naked*. Miriam and Eunice (who call each other 'Mi' and 'Eu') are fractured, allegorical creatures, mirror images of perversity and purity, unrelenting cruelty and hopeless loyalty, both bearing the intractable pain of loss. The denouement of the film is suitably profligate. Mi commits the most unspeakable act for the sake of what both she and Eu were seeking: unconditional love. AMJ

## Vanya

Directed by Louis Malle.  
Sydney Film Festival.

Yes, this is a filmed stage version of Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*, but it's shot by Louis Malle and it's no ordinary stage production. Shot mostly in intimate close-up, played with a heightened American naturalism amplified by David Mamet's adaptation of a literal translation from the Russian (but not sounding at all Mamet) and superbly lit, this is great Chekhov. Of course, those who prefer their Chekhov mock-Russian-emotionally-and-physically-slow motion or stiff upper lip English picnic, will find *Vanya* exacting. Characters are edgy and blunt; they giggle, they grin as they internally grimace, their anger is real. The production was filmed in the elderly unused New Amsterdam Theatre and performed in contemporary street clothes with only a few props adding strongly to a sense of watching a performance being constructed. The only awkward material involves the stage director Andre Gregory greeting the performers and a few guests (including Madhur Jaffrey inexplicably playing a 'Mrs Chao'), but once you get past these, the rest is excellent. KG

## Hell-Bento

By Anna Broinowski and Adam Broinowski. Sydney Film Festival.

This is a vivid Australian documentary account of Japanese underground culture ranging from the expected - lesbian performers, a geisha, right-wingers, sex workers, cross-dressing, sadistic fantasies - to unemployment and the poor living in cardboard boxes in railway stations. What makes *Hell-Bento* special is its intimacy. You see the makers in the homes of their subjects, families and friends chat casually about very big personal issues. Hostility to the U.S. is recurrent although admitting its earlier influence - "America has run out of ways to surprise us." Highlights include a girl who usually works in all-girl bands - pop, rock, 70s revival - playing bass for an all-male nude band - "It's not sexy at all." The subtitling, by SBS, is intelligent, the brisk editing is tempered by recurring personalities and voice tracks sustained across disparate images. KG

## 'Evocative and soulful'

-Barbara Creed, The Age

# Memories & Dreams

'Two things are forgotten only in death  
-the face of our mothers and the face of our cities.'



Thus opens *Memories and Dreams*, a mesmerising biography that became a labour of love for Melbourne film maker Lynn-Maree Milburn.

With every frame of the film meticulously re-photographed, tinted or hand painted, director Milburn's extraordinary first feature film welds documentary, animation, archive footage and dramatised reconstruction into a moving, highly personalised biography of one woman's life.

Part fairy tale, part gripping tragedy, *Memories and Dreams* tells a tale of loss and renewal in which romantic love is but one of many passing passions. The film is set almost entirely in Prague and chronicles the life of Czech born Johanna Kilma-Ocenaskova, from a childhood of freedom and fantasy to the unexpected horrors of World War II and her eventual escape to Australia. The film relays her experiences as not only a series of connected events but a metaphysical exploration of the nature of personal memory.



'...astonishingly beautiful and moving  
...quite simply a thrilling experience'

-David Stratton, Variety

*Memories and Dreams* is now screening at the Carlton Movie House and at the Trak Cinema, Toorak from Friday 9 June.

An exhibition of the breathtaking, original hand tinted cells from *Memories and Dreams* is on display at The Continental until Sunday 25 June.

The Film & Television

Institute (WA) Inc.

through its

LUMIERE CINEMAS

presents

5th JUMP CUT  
FILM FESTIVAL

14 - 22 JULY 1995



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# FILM FESTIVAL GUIDE

The Sydney Film Festival  
is sponsored by



## The Sydney Film Festival

9 - 24 June 1995

The State Theatre and The Pitt Centre 3

### Day & Night Trippers

**State Theatre \$20**

(3 or 4 films day OR evening)

**Pitt Centre \$16**

(3 or 4 sessions day OR evening)

TICKET PRICES INCLUDE ALL FILMS LISTED FOR THE SPECIFIED VENUE ON THAT DAY OR NIGHT (NOT BOTH)

Book in advance or at the box office on the day.

Bookings 373 6655

State Theatre Box Office  
& all Greater Union cinemas.



#### Venues:

The State Theatre  
49 Market Street

(between George & Pitt Streets)

The Pitt Centre Cinema 3

(Pitt Street, between Market and Park Streets)

FESTIVAL BOOKINGS 373 6655

FESTIVAL INFOLINE 0055 63167

#### KEY

● State Theatre Night Tripper \$20  
■ State Theatre Day Tripper \$20

\* Short film screens with feature

○ Pitt Centre Night Tripper \$16

□ Pitt Centre Day Tripper \$16

#### FESTIVAL TICKETS

**Day Trippers/Night Trippers** State Theatre: \$20 Pitt Centre: \$16

**Subscriptions** 50 sessions at the State Theatre + 52 bonus sessions at the Pitt Centre

*Green* (daytime) from \$120

*Gold* (evenings / weekends) from \$160

*Red/Blue* (1st or 2nd week - evenings / weekend) \$120

**Opening Night Film & Party** \$60

**Dendy Awards** \$12

**State Theatre Special Nights** \$20 **State Theatre Late Shows** \$16

**Frame By Frame**

Cinematographer - \$25 (2 nights)

Writer - \$16 (1 night)

### THE DENDY AWARDS FOR AUSTRALIAN SHORT FILMS

FRIDAY 9 JUNE 10am-6pm \$15

Screening of the finalists 10am Documentary 12.15pm General 1.15pm Fiction over 25 minutes 3.10pm Fiction under 25 minutes 4.15pm The EAC Award 5.25pm The Yoram Gross Animation Award. Winners announced at 6pm. Ticket-holders have a chance to win an annual pass to the Dendy Cinemas.

### OPENING NIGHT FILM & PARTY

FRIDAY 9 JUNE 8pm \$60

The film event of the year. World premiere screening of **ALL MEN ARE LIARS**, a warm-hearted Australian comedy about a boy in love with a girl who loves him for what he isn't. Debut feature by Gerard Lee. Then to the Powerhouse Museum for an ab-fab party - with supper and drinks and dancing.

### SATURDAY 10 JUNE

● 4.45pm **FAUST** (Czech) Jan Svankmajer, one of Europe's master animators, retells the Faust myth in a free-flowing adaptation mixing live action, animation and life-size marionettes. A full-length visual delight. \*

7.25pm **FRESH BAIT** (France) In December 1993, a girl and two boys robbed and murdered two men in cold blood. Their only motive was money. Bertrand Tavernier won the Golden Bear at Berlin this year for this rich, raw and uncompromising film. \*

9.45pm **AMATEUR** (USA) Isabelle Huppert as an ex-nun, who thinks she's a nymphomaniac; Martin Donovan as an amnesiac who might also have been a killer. Directed by Hal Hartley.

### SUNDAY 11 JUNE

● 4.40pm **THE TROUBLES WE'VE SEEN** (Fr/UK/Germ) Marcel Ophuls' latest opus is a brilliant two-part exploration of journalists at war, focussing primarily on the long-termers, hacks and Pulitzer prize-winners alike, holed up in the Holiday Inn, Sarajevo. Incisive, witty, acerbic. (Screens with one interval). Ophuls is a festival guest. Q&A

9.25pm **MOTHER DAO** (Netherlands) The colonial history of the Dutch East Indies, now Indonesia, composed entirely of archival footage from early this century, with a recreated soundtrack and no narration. An absolute stunner. \*

□ 10am **MIDDLE OF THE MOMENT** (Germ/Switz) On the road with the acrobats of the French Cirque O, with Tuareg nomads in the mountains of the southern Sahara, and with the American poet, clown, and philosopher Robert Lax. \*

12 Noon **THE NORMAN WILLIAM AFFAIR** (Canada) Norman William, a.k.a. Pierre Doris Maltais, born in East Angus, Quebec. He is also Piel Petjo Maltest or Dr Man or the Prince of Faucigny-Lucigne Malatesta. Jacques Godbout's fascinating documentary about a man with a dozen identities. \*

2.20pm **THE DEVIL NEVER SLEEPS** (USA) When Lourdes Portillo heard that her favourite uncle had been shot dead, she returned to Mexico with her camera, to investigate. A doco about a family with plenty of passion, lust and betrayal. \*

4.30pm **SONS OF MATTHEW** (Aust. Retrospective) Charles Chauvel. 1949. An epic story of Australian pioneer life, tracing the story of three generations of settlers in rugged frontier land.

### PITT SPECIAL - JAPANESE FILMS

○ 7pm **KANA KANA: THE SUMMER THAT NEVER WAS** Noriko, 30 and unattached, is intrigued by a 15-year old boy whose mother appears to have abandoned him. While the rest of Japan celebrates the emperor's wedding, they move in together. Directed by Taku Oshima. \*

9.20pm **MY WIFE IS FILIPINA** Terada Yasunori, the filmmaker, marries Teresa, a Filipina who works as an escort girl in a bar. A very personal autobiographical film that sheds light on the question of immigrants, their working conditions and the attitude of the Japanese to them.

### MONDAY 12 JUNE

● 4.40pm **A GREAT DAY IN HARLEM** (USA) In the summer of 1958, everyone who was anyone in American jazz (and who was in New York at the time) converged on a brownstone in Harlem for a photograph that became justly famous. Jean Bach's delightful film is about the making of the photograph. Oscar-nominated. \*

6.40pm **BURNT BY THE SUN** (Russia France) Nikita Mikhalkov. In the summer of 1936, war hero Serguei Kotov is holidaying with his family in the countryside when one of Stalin's secret police arrives with a message. Winner of the 1994 Cannes Film Festival Jury Prize and the 1995 Oscar for Best Foreign Film. \*

9.25pm **VANYA ON 42ND STREET** (USA) Based on Andre Gregory's critically acclaimed modern-dress production of Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* — and featuring a new translation by David Mamet — Louis Malle's film has Wallace Shawn as Vanya, performing the play as a rehearsal in an abandoned 42nd Street theatre. Absolute magic.

□ 10am **BACKROADS** (Australian Retrospective) Phillip Noyce. 1977. Jack, a white vagrant (Bill Hunter) and a young Aboriginal man, Gary (Gary Foley) steal a 1962 Pontiac Parisienne and head off around the dusty roads of western New South Wales. Gary Foley's participation was central to the construction and content of the film.

11.15am **PURE SHIT** (Australian Retrospective) Bert Deling. 1975. The episodic story of four young heroin addicts in their journey through Melbourne's sub-culture in search of their next drug supply. Comedy with rapid-fire dialogue - banned by the censors, then released with an R certificate with a title change to *Pure S\*\*\**. Bert Deling will introduce the film. Q&A.

1pm **FORUM FILM-MAKERS WHO WORKED WITH CHARLES CHAUVEL**. With actor/producer Michael Pate, camera operator Bill Grimmond and others who worked with legendary Australian film-maker, Charles Chauvel.

2.35pm **MY WIFE IS FILIPINA** Terada Yasunori, the filmmaker, marries Teresa, a Filipina who works as an escort girl in a bar. A very personal autobiographical film that sheds light on the question of immigrants, their working conditions and the attitude of the Japanese to them.

○ 4.45pm **DIRECTORS AT WAR (1)** Film-makers turn their hands to truth and propaganda - a retrospective to mark the 50th Anniversary of the end of WWII. Includes new prints of Humphrey Jennings' films from the British Film Institute. Tonight: *Prelude to War* (Frank Capra), *Listen to Britain + Words for Battle + This Is England* (Humphrey Jennings) *While There is Still Time + Soldiers Without Uniforms* (Charles Chauvel). Also see June 13, 21, 23.

7pm **THE KINGDOM OF ZYDECO** (USA) Robert Mugge's fascinating account of the life and death struggle among zydeco musicians in Louisiana to determine the new "king of zydeco".

9pm **GATHER AT THE RIVER** (USA) A portrait of the 1993 World of Bluegrass events at Owensboro, Kentucky. Directed by Robert Mugge. \*

### TUESDAY 13 JUNE

■ 10am **MOTHER DAO** (Netherlands) The colonial history of the Dutch East Indies, now Indonesia, composed entirely of archival footage from early this century, with a recreated soundtrack and no narration. An absolute stunner. \*

12.15pm **THE TROUBLES WE'VE SEEN** (Fr/UK/Germ) Marcel Ophuls' latest opus is a brilliant two-part exploration of journalists at war, focussing primarily on the long-termers, hacks and Pulitzer prize-winners alike, holed up in the Holiday Inn, Sarajevo. Incisive, witty, acerbic. (Screens with one interval). Ophuls is a festival guest. Q&A.

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● 6.10pm **I JUST WASN'T MADE FOR THESE TIMES** (USA) The resurrection of Brian Wilson — pop genius of the Beach Boys in the early '60s, brain-fried in the '70s, recording again in the '80s. A fascinating bio-documentary from Don Was.

7.40pm **AMNESIA** (Chile) Many years after his return from a desert prison camp, a man spots his old tormentor in the street. An evocative film about Latin America's modern history by Gonzalo Justiniano. \*

9.40pm **LAST CALL** (Netherlands) An old actor, bitter and second-rate, is coaxed from retirement for a last role with a troupe of young performers. The director is a Jew, the actor an anti-Semite. Superbly directed by Franz Weisz.

□ 11am **LUMIERE'S CENTURY (1)** A retrospective of French documentaries introduced by French film critic and writer, Michel Ciment. Today: **La Zone: Au Pays des Chiffonniers** (Georges Lacombe) 1928. A portrait of the inhabitants of a narrow strip of land between Paris and the suburbs, most of whom live in caravans. **Nogent, El Dorado du dimanche** (Marcel Carne) 1930. Every Sunday crowds from the working class areas of Paris gather on the banks of the Marne in Nogent. **Aubervilliers** (Eli Lotar) 1945. Little children of Aubervilliers diving head first into the slimy waters of poverty.

1.30pm **CINEMA OF UNEASE** (NZ) Sam Neill on New Zealand Cinema. Part of BFI TV's Century of Cinema series.

2.50pm **DIRECTORS AT WAR (2)** See June 12. Today: **Jungle Patrol** (Tom Gurr), **Fires Were Started** (Humphrey Jennings), **December 7th** (Gregg Toland and John Ford). More screenings June 12, 21, 23.

○ 5pm **FORUM** with MARCEL OPHULS, French documentary film-maker, director of *The Troubles We've Seen* (screening in the festival).

6.40pm **LUMIERE'S CENTURY (2)** (See above) Tonight: **Le fond de l'air est rouge** (Chris Marker) 1977. An analysis and a philosophical report about the story of the Left between 1967 and 1977. The first part tells of the influence of the Vietnam War, the second starts with the Prague Spring. (240 mins.)

### WEDNESDAY 14 JUNE

■ 10am **FAUST** (Czech) Jan Svankmajer, one of Europe's master animators, re-tells the Faust myth in a freeflowing adaptation mixing live action, animation and life-size marionettes. A full-length visual delight. \*

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3pm **AMATEUR** (USA) Isabelle Huppert as an ex-nun, who thinks she's a nymphomaniac; Martin Donovan as an amnesiac who might also have been a killer. Directed by Hal Hartley.

### STATE SPECIAL: FRENCH CINEMA

Presented by the Alliance Francaise and Renault.

5.30pm **THE PASSION OF JOAN OF ARC** Carl Dreyer's 1928 silent classic accompanied by the Sydney Chamber Choir and organist James Allington, conducted by Ben Macpherson.

7.30pm **TRAVOLTA AND ME** A 16-year-old girl has seen *Saturday Night Fever* and can't stop thinking about John Travolta. So when she meets Nicholas, it's love at first sight.

9.30pm **TOO MUCH HAPPINESS** A small town in the Midi, where the sun always shines. Valerie has just been expelled from school, so she and her friends decide to party. A tale of youthful hopes, racism, alcohol, music and sexuality. By Cedric Kahn. \*



# F I L M F E S T I V A L G U I D E

## WEDNESDAY 14 JUNE (CONT.)

11am **LUMIERE'S CENTURY (3)** See 13 June. Today: **Le Vampire** (Jean Painlevé) 1939. A magnificent horror film in 9 minutes. **Le Sang de Betes** (Georges Franju) 1948. A cine-poem shot in the world of the Paris abattoirs - the fantastic is born of reality; **Hotel des Invalides** (Georges Franju) 1951. A guided tour of the Army Museum becomes a plea against war and its atrocities, **Les Statues meurent aussi** (Alain Resnais/Chris Marker) African statues removed from their cultural context lose their meaning - in the West we only give importance to outer appearance; **Pour Un Maillot Jaune** (Claude Lelouch) 1965. The Tour de France as if we were there; **Autours des filets** (Jacques Doillon) 1973.

1.30pm **BUI DO: A LIFE LIKE DUST** (USA) An examination of the life of Ricky Phan from his childhood on the streets of Saigon, to his days as a gangster in the USA, to his present life in a Californian state prison. + **Which Way is East: Notebooks from Vietnam** (USA) The film-maker and her sister travel from Ho Chi Minh to Hanoi, discussing with Vietnamese strangers and friends the flip sides of a shared history.

3pm **MOVING THE MOUNTAIN** (USA) Michael Apted's account of the democracy movement in China in 1989 follows the stories of several young people who ended up at Tiananmen Square at the same time. \*

5.15pm **THE SQUARE** (China) A portrait of Tiananmen Square - the largest public square in the world - site of the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Chairman Mao meeting one million Red Guards in 1966 and, more recently, the June 4 incident of 1989.

7.20pm **SUNNY AND THE DARK HORSE** (Australian Retrospective) David and Judith MacDougall. 1986. A family's developing passion for 'picnic racing' on bush tracks in rural NSW leads them into both humorous and arduous situations. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal families and neighbours share the excitement of weekend races. A side of country life not often seen in the media. Judith MacDougalls will introduce the film.

9.05pm **CRUMB** (USA) Robert Crumb is the creator of *Fritz the Cat* and a whole world of badly behaved cartoon characters. Terry Zwigoff spent six years delving into Crumb's personality and his completely bizarre family life.

## THURSDAY 15 JUNE

10am **LAST CALL** (Netherlands) An old actor, bitter and second-rate, is coaxed from retirement for a last role with a troupe of young performers. The director is a Jew, the actor an anti-Semite. Superbly directed by Franz Weisz.

12 Noon **AMNESIA** (Chile) Many years after his return from a desert prison camp, a man spots his old tormentor in the street. An evocative film about Latin America's modern history by Gonzalo Justiniano. \*

2pm **FRESH BAIT** (France) In December 1993, a girl and two boys robbed and murdered two men in cold blood. Their only motive was money. Bertrand Tavernier won the Golden Bear at Berlin this year for this rich, raw and uncompromising film. \*

4.25pm **TAKE CARE OF YOUR SCARF TATJANA** (Finland) Sometime in the mid-'60s, two Finnish men, one Estonian woman and one Russian woman take to the road in Southern Finland in a black Volga station wagon. Directed by Aki Kaurismaki. \*

6pm **OSAKA STORY: A DOCUMENTARY** (Japan) After three years in England, film-maker Toichi Nakata goes home to Osaka to tell his family he is gay. While waiting for the right moment, he tells us about his Korean father, his Japanese mother, and his father's Korean mistress. \*

7.45pm **MGM - SARAJEVO** (Bosnia-Herzegovina) A film by members of the Sarajevo Group of Auteurs (SaGA) who have continued filming throughout the war - a portrait of a city under siege. A larger retrospective of SaGA's collected work, all made during the war, will screen at the Pitt Centre on 17 June.

9.50pm **TOKYO KYODAI** (Japan) After the death of their parents, brother and sister (Kenichi and Yoko) live together in a suburb of Tokyo where streetcars still run and old shops remain. Everything is peaceful until Kenichi brings home his friend Mimura. Directed by Jun Ichikawa.

11am **BLACK IS...BLACK AIN'T** (USA) In his last film, the late Marlon Riggs travelled across the US talking to African-Americans about questions of identity. \*

12.50pm **STATE OF WEIGHTLESSNESS** (Poland/France) The space race, as seen from the Russian side, with amazing archival footage and revealing, sometimes heart-breaking interviews with the cosmonauts (those who survived). Directed by Maciej Drygas.

2pm **BETRAYAL** (Swed/Norr/Den) For 20 years Sascha Anderson spied for the Stasi, reporting on his friends and lovers in the East German culture elite.

### 3.15pm ANIMATION

A one-hour program of international short animated films.

4.40pm **LUMIERE'S CENTURY (4)**

See 13 June. **Mais qu'est-ce qu'elles veulent?** (Coline Serreau) 1979. Women from all walks of life talk about their problems at home or at work; **Les Inconnus de la terre** (Mario Ruspoli) 1962. Ruspoli meets the farmers isolated in the mountains south of the Masif Central.



## PITT SPECIAL: CRIME STORIES

7.30pm **THE UNDERNEATH** (USA) Steven (sex, lies and videotape) Soderberg's remake of the 1949 film-noir classic *Criss Cross*, an intense exploration of the psychological 'underneath' of the story of a criminal heist. \*

9.25pm **LOW** (USA) Speck White, a towel boy at a Brooklyn boxing club, kidnaps a woman as a gift for a failed prize-fighter just out of prison. A startling, haunting film from Lise Raven.

## FRIDAY 16 JUNE

10am **MGM-SARAJEVO** (Bosnia-Herzegovina) A film by members of the Sarajevo Group of Auteurs (SaGA) who have continued filming throughout the war - a portrait of a city under siege. A larger retrospective of SaGA's collected work, made during the war, screens at the Pitt Centre on 17/6.

12 Noon **BURNT BY THE SUN** (Russia/France) Nikita Mikhalkov. In the summer of 1936, war hero Serguei Kotov is holidaying with his family in the countryside when one of Stalin's secret police arrives with a message. Winner of the 1994 Cannes Film Festival Jury Prize and the 1995 Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film. \*

2.40pm **VANYA ON 42ND STREET** (USA) Based on Andre Gregory's critically acclaimed modern-dress production of Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* - and featuring a new translation by David Mamet - Louis Malle's film has Wallace Shawn as Vanya, performing the play as a rehearsal in an abandoned 42nd Street theatre. Absolute magic. \*

5pm **LE FRANC** (Switz/Fr/Senegal) A penniless musician in Senegal buys a lottery ticket, hoping to pay the rent. He glues it to the back of his door, for safekeeping. Directed by Djibril Diop Mambety, a film packed with atmosphere and incident.

6pm **CAR CRASH** (Australia) A look at the culture of that frequently lethal, contemporary pin-up - the car. Directed by David Caesar. Q.&A. \*

7.25pm **71 FRAGMENTS OF A CHRONOLOGY OF CHANCE** (Austria) In 71 scenes, Michael Haneke (*Benny's Video*) traces the paths of a series of characters who will end up in the same bank on the same day just before Christmas, 1993 - as a youth enters with a gun. A film about violence on film. \*

9.20pm **TAKE CARE OF YOUR SCARF TATJANA** (Finland) Sometime in the mid-'60s, two Finnish men, one Estonian woman and one Russian woman take to the road in Southern Finland in a black Volga station wagon. Directed by Aki Kaurismaki. \*

## LATE SHOW - EROTIC TALES

FRIDAY JUNE 16 AT 10.45pm STATE THEATRE \$16

### EROTIC TALES

Producer Regina Zeigler gave six directors carte blanche to create a half-hour film drawing on their vision of what is erotic in their culture. Here's what came up.

**The Dutch Master** (Susan Seidelman) A dental nurse develops a passion for a man in a 17th century Dutch painting.

**Wet** (Bob Rafelson) A huge bath showroom, a charming, well-built manager and Davida (Cynda Williams). Splash!

**The Cloud Door** (Mani Kaul) Adaptation from Indian tales of princesses, lovers and magic birds.

**The Insatiable Mrs. Kirsch** (Ken Russell) Good vibrations in a very English hotel.

**Vroom Vroom Vrooom** (Melvin van Peebles) Leroy is lonely and horny as hell until his wishes are granted by a witch.

**Touch Me** (Paul Cox) Two women (Gosha Dobrowolska, Claudia Karvan) spend a sensual weekend in the country.

11am **LUMIERE'S CENTURY (4)** See 13 June. Today: **Les Photos d'Alix** (Jean Eustache) 1980. An autobiographical essay begins to take the shape of a hoax; **Lettre d'Alain Cavalier**, (Alain Cavalier) 1982. The anxiety of facing a blank sheet of paper sparks Cavalier's imagination. **Les anneés declin 1957-77** (Depardon/Ikief) 1983. Depardon describes his life in pictures; **Ceux de Chez Nous** (Sacha Guitry) 1952. A trip back in time to visit Degas, Saint-Saens, Renoir and other important artists from history.

2pm **BASTANIER'S PICTURES** (Germany) Dieter Zimmer's film documents the German attack on the Soviet Union in 1941, using rare original colour footage shot by war cameraman, Hans Bastanier.

3pm **FORUM: CINEMA FUTURE: THE WHO, WHAT AND HOW OF THE FILMS OF THE FUTURE.** The effect of new technologies and the global economy on creative practices.

5.15pm **SHIRLEY THOMPSON VERSUS THE ALIENS** (Australian Retrospective) Jim Sharman. 1972. The story of a "widge" in the 1950s in Sydney who is visited by aliens from outer-space. Ignored by the closed minds of the Menzies era, Shirley is committed to an asylum. Dubbed an "A-Grade B-Grade movie" by its director, a milestone by others. Jeannie Lewis sings.

## 7pm FRAME BY FRAME WITH A WRITER

Nick Enright and George Miller, co-writers of *Lorenzo's Oil*, do a detailed analysis of the film's Oscar nominated script. Q&A

## SATURDAY 17 JUNE

6pm **UNDER THE OLIVE TREES** (Iran) The third part of Abbas Kiarostami's trilogy set in the mountains of northern Iran, and one of the most highly praised films of last year - from anywhere. Kiarostami casts a young man and woman who don't get on to play lovers, then films them not getting on. A kind of sequel to *And Life Goes On...*

### KEY

- State Theatre Night Tripper \$20
- State Theatre Day Tripper \$20
- Pitt Centre Night Tripper \$16
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- \* Short film/s screen with feature

8pm **VIDEO FOOL FOR LOVE** (Australia) Robert Gibson has kept a video diary since 1983. He chronicles the most intimate moments of his life and relationships. For Gibson, - writer, actor, director, cameraman and crew - the only difference between life and the movies is editing. Truth or dare? Robert Gibson will present the film. Q&A.

9.50pm **CLEAN, SHAVEN** (USA) Plagued by hallucinations, Peter Winter flees a violent past and returns to his hometown only to discover his daughter, Nicole, is being deliberately kept from him. An intense and often violent first feature from Lodge Kerrigan. \*

10am **SA-LIFE** (Bosnia-Herzegovina) A disturbing program of films by the Sarajevo Group of Auteurs which has continued making films in their war-torn city. (4-hours with an interval.)

3pm **MEANWHILE, SOMEWHERE...1940-43 - AN UNKNOWN WAR (III)** (Hungary) Peter Forgacs has completed an impressive oeuvre largely of lyrical compositions made from material from home movies - a technique he has raised to an art - including scenes from everyday life in the first half of WW II.

4pm **SYDNEY ON FILM** Part (1) *Sydney City Life 1899-1948* explores the inner city on film, drawing from newsreels, home movie collections and other archival material. Part (2) Film historian, Graham Shirley, using rare archival extracts, takes us on a cultural tour of Sydney from the turn of the century to the early 1980s. His six themes are Inner-City Living, Leisure and Celebrations, Early Films of Commitment, Aboriginal and Ethnic Sydney, and Wide Shots.

## PITT SPECIAL: GAY HISTORY

7pm **A QUESTION OF EQUALITY** (USA) Four part series: *Hollow Liberty* explores the legal policy that reduces lesbians and gay men to second class citizens; *Generation Q* documents the efforts of the lesbian and gay youth, whose growing strength brings society progressively closer to the promise of the modern liberation; *Outrage '69* examines the genesis of the modern lesbian and gay movement during the turbulent '60s through the tenuous growth during the '70s; *Culture Wars* investigates the violent backlash to lesbian & gay visibility in the midst of AIDS.

## SUNDAY 18 JUNE

4.20pm **VACANT POSSESSION** (Australia) Tessa (Pamela Rabe) returns to the empty family home in Kurnell, a house that, like the land, is alive, has a soul, is full of ghosts. Debut feature for Margot Nash who will introduce the film. Q&A

7pm **VIVE L'AMOUR** (Taiwan) Hsiao-kang sells niches in a crematorium. May is a real estate agent living alone. Ah-jung sells clothing on the street. By chance, each finds refuge in the same vacant apartment in downtown Taipei. A film of mesmerising beauty by Tsai Ming Liang, winner of the Golden Lion at Venice last year. Tsai is a guest. Q&A

9.30pm **I LIKE IT LIKE THAT** (USA) A Latino family in the Bronx, struggling to survive. A film full of laughter, tears, kisses and fists. Directed by Darnell Martin, reputedly the first black American woman to write and direct for a Hollywood major. \*

10am **SPIN** (USA) TV out-takes appropriated from network satellite feeds unravel the fabric of US television and the media's contempt for public debate. + **Prime Time in the Camps** (Chris Marker). \*

12.15pm **ROY COHN/JACK SMITH** (USA) Two infamous homosexuals - who had nothing in common except their death from AIDS in the late 1980s - seen in counterpoint. Roy Cohn, homophobic right-wing lawyer and sleazy politico; Jack Smith, notorious underground film-maker. A brilliant performance piece from Ron Vawter. \* \* \* \* (including two **Tom Kalin** shorts.)

2.30pm **LUMIERE'S CENTURY (5)** See 13 June. Today: **Le Mystere Picasso** (Henri-Georges Clouzot) 1956. Picasso at work in the Victorine studios; **L'Opera Mouffe** (Agnes Varda) 1958. An unusual portrait in nine tableaux of the Rue Mouffetard and its markets. **Tout la memoire du monde** (Alain Resnais) 1956. A journey into the heart of the vast institution of the French National Library.

5pm **MONTAND** (France) The remarkable life and career of Yves Montand, using only his own voice and archival images. Singer, actor, political activist, perhaps the greatest of all post-war French stars. Directed by Jean Labib.

## PITT SPECIAL: MUSIC AIN'T NOTHIN' LIKE THE REAL THING

8pm **I JUST WASN'T MADE FOR THESE TIMES** (USA) The resurrection of Brian Wilson - pop genius of *The Beach Boys* in the early '60s, brain-fried in the '70s, recording again in the '80s. A fascinating bio-documentary from Don Was. 9.20pm **ARENA - MARVIN GAYE** (UK) The last four years of Marvin Gaye's life covering his exile in Holland and the UK and his return to LA and a violent death at the hands of his father. + **In Motion** (USA) At the peak of his spectacular career, David S. Ware swapped his life in the spotlights for a job as a cab driver in New York.

MONDAY 19 JUNE

10am **TOKYO KYODAI** (Japan) After the death of their parents, brother and sister, Kenichi and Yoko, live together in a suburb of Tokyo where streetcars still run and old shops remain. Everything is peaceful until Kenichi brings home his friend Mimura. Directed by Jun Ichikawa.

11.50am **VIDEO FOOL FOR LOVE** (Australia) Robert Gibson has kept a video diary since 1983. He chronicles the most intimate moments of his life and relationships. For Gibson, - writer, actor, director, cameraman and crew - the only difference between life and the movies is editing. Robert Gibson will be there. Q&A.

1.55pm **SEPTEMBER SONGS: THE MUSIC OF KURT WEILL** (Canada/Germ) Nick Cave singing 'Mack the Knife', Betty Carter doing 'Lonely House', Elvis Costello and the Brodsky String Quartet playing 'Lost in the Stars' and Lou Reed's version of 'September Song'. A fabulous tribute to the music of Kurt Weill, with many other performers, directed by Larry Weinstein. \*

4pm **UNDER THE OLIVE TREES** (Iran) The third part of Abbas Kiarostami's trilogy set in the mountains of northern Iran, and one of the most highly praised films of last year - from anywhere. Kiarostami casts a young man and woman who don't get on to play lovers, then films them not getting on. A kind of sequel to *And Life Goes On...*

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8.05pm **VELASQUEZ'S LITTLE MUSEUM**

(Canada) A free adaptation of eight choreographies from the latest stage production of the acclaimed Montreal dance group, LaLaLa Human Steps, featuring the flamboyant Louise Lecavalier, accompanied by other dancers of the company. \* \* \*

10pm **THE JAR** (Iran)

When a terracotta water jar develops a crack, it's a major problem for the teacher in a small desert school. A fable, in the best Iranian tradition, about the large consequences of a small event. Directed by Ebrahim Forouzesh.



11am **A PERSONAL JOURNEY THROUGH AMERICAN MOVIES WITH MARTIN SCORSESE** (USA) 240 minutes of Martin Scorsese on American movies. Part of the Century of Cinema series presented by BFI TV. (One interval.)

3.50pm **FORUM FILM CRITICISM: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE** Panelists are Michel Ciment, Andrew Sarris and Lesley Stern.

5.50pm **STRANGE WEATHER** (USA) Engages an area of philosophical inquiry - the controversial position held by drug taking in our culture. The tape shows the flip side of taking drugs, an unsensationalised look at the subject that points to broader questions of morality, health, excess and truth telling. \* \*

FRAME BY FRAME WITH A CINEMATOGRAPHER (PART 1)

8pm A frame by frame analysis of *Butch Cassidy And The Sundance Kid* by the cinematographer **CONRAD HALL** whose credits include *In Cold Blood* and *Searching for Bobby Fischer*. \* Special price of \$25 for two nights (Part II 8pm Tues 20 June).

TUESDAY 20 JUNE

10am **VELASQUEZ'S LITTLE MUSEUM** (Canada) A free adaptation of eight choreographies from the latest stage production of the acclaimed Montreal dance group, LaLaLa Human Steps, featuring the flamboyant Louise Lecavalier, accompanied by other dancers of the company. \* \* \*

12 Noon **VIVE L'AMOUR** (Taiwan) Hsiao-kang sells niches in a crematorium. May is a real estate agent living alone. Ah-jung sells clothing on the street. By chance, each finds refuge in the same vacant apartment in downtown Taipei. A film of mesmerising beauty by Tsai Ming Liang, winner of the Golden Lion at Venice last year. Tsai is a guest. Q&A.

2.20pm **CLEAN, SHAVEN** (USA) Plagued by hallucinations, Peter Winter flees a violent past and returns to his hometown only to discover his daughter, Nicole, is being deliberately kept from him. An intense and often violent first feature from Lodge Kerrigan. \*

4.10pm **OSAKA STORY: A DOCUMENTARY** (Japan) After three years in England, film-maker Toichi Nakata goes home to Osaka to tell his family he is gay. While waiting for the right moment, he tells us about his Korean father, his Japanese mother, and his father's Korean mistress. \*

6pm **WHEN NIGHT IS FALLING** (Canada) Winner of the Audience Award at Berlin this year, a bitter sweet romance between a woman who's straight and a woman who's not. Directed by Patricia Rozema (*I've Heard the Mermaids Singing*) who is a festival guest. \* \* Q&A.

7.55pm **THE SUMMER OF BOBBY CHARLTON** (Italy) Summer 1960. When the marriage between a southern Italian teacher and his northern Italian wife breaks down, the teacher grabs the kids and drives south. Life on the road in 1966 with two kids, a VW Beetle and a radio. \* \*

10pm **LOOK FORWARD IN ANGER** (Romania) After the fall of Ceaucescu, a Romanian worker and former dissident finds himself unemployed. Everything is turned against him and his family, in a world of chaos. Directed by Nicolae Margineanu.

11am **TYPICALLY BRITISH** - BFI TV's series *The Century of Cinema* continues with **Stephen Frears on British cinema**; 12.30pm **OURSELVES ALONE**, Donald Taylor-Black on Irish cinema (BFI TV), plus **CINEMA ON THE ROAD**, Jang Sun-Woo on Korean film.

2.30pm **FORUM LESS THAN THE SUM OF US: PORTRAYALS OF HOMOSEXUALITY IN AUSTRALIAN FILMS** What's the state of play in the portrayal of lesbians on Australian screens?

4.30pm **SOLO, THE LAW OF THE FAVELA** (Netherlands) Against the background of the World Cup, the film-maker went in search of talented soccer players in the slums of Rio de Janeiro. The film concentrates on the buddies, Anselmo and Leonardo, inseparable until their ambitions become serious. \*

6.05pm **DEALERS AMONG DEALERS** The virtually impenetrable world of diamond and precious stone trading, from street exchanges to great auction houses. Made over five years. \*

8pm **FRAME BY FRAME WITH A CINEMATOGRAPHER (PART 2)** Frame by frame analysis of *Butch Cassidy and The Sundance Kid* with **Conrad Hall** continues with **CONRAD HALL**. (See 19 June).

WEDNESDAY 21 JUNE

10am **LOOK FORWARD IN ANGER** (Romania) After the fall of Ceaucescu, a Romanian worker and former dissident finds himself unemployed. Everything is turned against him and his family, in a world of chaos. Directed by Nicolae Margineanu.

11.45am **HELL-BENTO** (Australia) An intense, uncompromising journey into the Japanese underground using tape, film and 3-D computer animation. Explores the subversive counter-cultures beginning to tear at the facade of Japan Inc. By Anna Broinowski, Adam Broinowski, Andrew Sully and Marcus Gillezeau. \* Q&A.

1.25pm **71 FRAGMENTS OF A CHRONOLOGY OF CHANCE** (Austria) In 71 scenes, Michael Haneke (*Benny's Video*) traces the paths of a series of characters who will end up in the same bank on the same day just as a youth enters with a gun. A film about violence on film. \*

3.25pm **THE JAR** (Iran) When a terracotta water jar develops a crack, it's a major problem for the teacher in a small desert school. A fable, in the best Iranian tradition, about the large consequences of a small event. Directed by Ebrahim Forouzesh.

STATE THEATRE SPECIAL NIGHT: AN EVENING OF CHINESE CINEMA

5.30pm **RED LOTUS SOCIETY** (Taiwan) An old man holds court in a Taipei park passing on tales about a secret society of seven people who mastered the clandestine art of 'vaulting' - the ancient kung-fu martial art that enables a master to defy gravity and cover huge distances.

7.50pm **CHUNGKING EXPRESS** (Hong Kong) Wong Kar-wai's exquisitely shot (by Chris Doyle) romance in two parts, set in the heart of Tsim Sha Tsui, starring superstar Tony Leung as a beat cop in love with a fast food waitress.

9.40pm **ERMO** (Hong Kong/China) A young village woman, struggling to support her ailing husband and son, sets out to buy the ultimate status symbol: a 29-inch colour television set. Directed by Zhou Xiaowen.

11am **DIRECTORS AT WAR (3)** See June 12. **Bismark Convoy Smashed!** + **Kokoda Front Line** (Cinesound Reviews), **The Memphis Belle** (William Wyler), **The Silent Village** (Humphrey Jennings), **Le Six Juin a l'Aube** (Jean Gremillon). More screenings June 12/13/23.

1.30pm **FATHER, SON AND HOLY WAR** (India) Anand Patwardhan began his film on communal violence in India seven years ago, during this period the connection between religion, violence and male identity became increasingly apparent. Anand Patwardhan is a festival guest. Q&A.

4pm **FORUM GETTING OVER THE GREAT WALL: ASIAN FILM AND AUSTRALIAN AUDIENCES**. Why do people queue for miles for Chinese films in Berlin, but leave in droves in Sydney?

6pm **HELLO PHOTO** (USA) Film-maker Nina Davenport travelled for a year through India with her 16mm camera. She shot countless places and moments: a rooftop kite festival; cows in traffic jams; elephants blessing people, and the sets of Bombay's film industry.

7.15pm **SWEETIE** (Australian Retrospective) 1989. Jane Campion's critically-acclaimed first feature. The machinations of Kay's family (particularly her unstable sister, Sweetie) threaten her relationship with the man of her life. Haunting black humour and a tragic finale.

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- \* Short film/s screen with feature

9.15pm **NOT BAD FOR A GIRL** (USA) Grungy girl rock stars tell all. Interviews with L7, Babes in Toyland, Hole, Lunachicks, Joan Jett and more. Some of the straightest talking you'll ever hear about the music industry. By Dr Lisa Rose Apramian.

THURSDAY 22 JUNE

10am **WHEN NIGHT IS FALLING** (Canada) Winner of the Audience Award at Berlin this year, a bitter sweet romance between a woman who's straight and a woman who's not. Directed by Patricia Rozema (*I've Heard the Mermaids Singing*) who is a festival guest. \* \* Q&A.



12 Noon **THE SUMMER OF BOBBY CHARLTON** (Italy) Summer 1966. When the marriage between a southern Italian teacher and his northern Italian wife breaks down, the teacher grabs the kids and drives south. Life on the road in 1966 with two kids, a VW Beetle and a radio. \*

2.10pm **WAR STORIES OUR MOTHERS NEVER TOLD US** (New Zealand) Women who were young during World War II, talk for the first time about their lives and loves when their men were fighting in Europe and New Zealand was occupied by thousands of Marines. Director, Gaylene Preston, is here for the festival. Q&A.

4pm **I LIKE IT LIKE THAT** (USA) A Latino family in the Bronx, struggling to survive. A film full of laughter, tears, kisses and fists. Directed by Darnell Martin, reputedly the first black American woman to write and direct for a Hollywood major. \*

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7.50pm **BUTTERFLY KISS** (UK) Amanda Plummer stars as the unpredictable and highly dangerous Eunice, searching the north of England for the only woman who has ever loved her - Judith. On the way she meets lonely, naive, Miriam (Saskia Reeves) who has never met anyone quite like Eunice before. Director Michael Winterbottom is a festival guest. Q&A

9.40pm **SANCTUARY** (Australia) Based on David Williamson's play. A righteous young academic, John, and the high-flying Bob, confront each other. The encounter ignites primitive emotions in both, and we're not sure who is the more dangerous. Film-maker, Robin de Crespigny, will be there. \* Q&A

11am **QUEENSLAND** (Australian Retrospective) John Ruane. 1976. For Doug, a factory worker living a withdrawn existence in a gloomy Melbourne suburb, Queensland represents an ideal of a new life - sunshine, a decent job and an escape from monotony.

12.10pm **OUT OF IT** (Australian Retrospective) Ken Cameron. 1977. Three friends drift from stripping cars to assisting in a clumsy warehouse robbery. Strong, affectionate characterisations and plenty of humour.

1.15pm **SOLO, THE LAW OF THE FAVELA** (Netherlands) Against the background of the World Cup, the film-maker went in search of talented soccer players in the slums of Rio de Janeiro. The film concentrates on the buddies, Anselmo and Leonardo, inseparable until their ambitions become serious. \*

2.45pm **A DEDICATED LIFE** (Japan) Kazuo Hara, director of *The Emperor's Naked Army Marches On*, sifts through the layers of reality in the personality of one of Japan's most controversial post-war writers, Mitsuharu Inoue. Filmed in the last year of Inoue's life. \*

PITT SPECIAL: THE KINGDOM



6pm **THE KINGDOM** (Denmark/Germany) A whimsical satire with the horror elements of a daytime soapie. The film is set in a huge Danish hospital, The Kingdom (also its real name), an institution that symbolises pure rational science. It is precisely here, where every superstition is taboo, that von Trier lets the genie out of the lamp. A festival highlight. Directed by Lars von Trier who also made *Zentropa*. (240 mins. with one interval).

FRIDAY 23 JUNE

10am **SANCTUARY** (Aust) Based on David Williamson's play. A righteous academic, John, and the high-flying, Bob, confront each other. The encounter ignites primitive emotions in both, and we're not sure who is the more dangerous. Film-maker, Robin de Crespigny, will introduce the film. \* Q&A

12.10pm **BUTTERFLY KISS** (UK) Amanda Plummer stars as the unpredictable and highly dangerous Eunice, searching the north of England for the only woman who has ever loved her - Judith. On the way she meets lonely, naive, Miriam (Saskia Reeves) who has never met anyone quite like Eunice before. Director Michael Winterbottom is a festival guest. Q&A

2pm **VACANT POSSESSION** (Australia) Tessa (Pamela Rabe) returns to the empty family home in Kurnell, a house that, like the land, is alive, has a soul, is full of ghosts. Debut feature for Margot Nash who will introduce the film. Q&A

3.55pm **GARDEN OF EDEN** (Mexico) The fates and fortunes of young Mexicans stranded in Tijuana, waiting for their chance to cross into the US. A drama from Maria Novaro. \*

# F I L M F E S T I V A L G U I D E

## FRIDAY 23 JUNE (CONT.)

● 5.55pm **LE FRANC** (Switz/Fr/Senegal) A penniless musician in Senegal buys a lottery ticket, hoping to pay the rent. He glues it to the back of his door, for safekeeping. Directed by Djibril Diop Mambety, a film packed with atmosphere and incident.

6.55pm **WAR STORIES OUR MOTHERS NEVER TOLD US** (New Zealand) Women who were young during World War II, talk for the first time about their lives and loves when their men were fighting in Europe and New Zealand was occupied by thousands of Marines. Director, Gaylene Preston, is here for the festival. Q&A

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### LATE SHOW LESBIAN ROMANCE

STATE THEATRE 10.45pm Friday 23 June \$16

**THIN ICE** (UK) A romantic lesbian comedy in which ice skating brings together two unlikely lovers, for an attempt on the gold medal at the Gay Games in New York. Funny and charming debut feature from Fiona Cunningham Reid.

Plus short films: **Playing the Part** (USA) How do you tell your very nice parents you're a lesbian? **The Party Favour** (USA) Susie and Debbie are at a bridal shower - looking for a sperm donor. **Little Women in Transit** (USA) With sisters like Jenny's, it's hard to be the next Louisa May Alcott. **When Shirley Met Florence** (Canada) A candid look at the life-time friendship between two Jewish women, one lesbian, the other heterosexual. **B D Woman** (UK) Black Lesbian life in Britain. **Greetings from Africa** (USA) (Note: one interval.)

○ 4.30pm **DIRECTORS AT WAR (4)** See June 12. **A Diary for Timothy** (Humphrey Jennings), **Let There Be Light** (John Huston), **Night and Fog** (Alain Resnais).

7pm **FORUM MAKING FILMS IN THE SEVENTIES** Australian films in the 70s were rough, tough and full of creative energy. Have recent successes un the industry exacted a price?

9pm **GOODBYE PARADISE** (Australian Retrospective) Carl Schultz. 1982. Alcoholic ex-cop Michael Stacey (Ray Barrett) is on the trail of a Queensland politician's daughter. The case develops into a violent political struggle culminating in an attempted coup led by a dissident army officer.

## SATURDAY 24 JUNE

■ 10am **THAT EYE THE SKY** (Australia) A small troubled community is visited by a stranger who promises help and salvation but who may well be a phoney. Screen adaptation of Tim Winton's mystical book (also a successful play) starring Lisa Harrow and Peter Coyote. Directed by John Ruane, a festival guest. \* Q&A

12.25pm **THE EMIGRANT** (Egypt) From Egypt's leading filmmaker, Youssef Chahine, comes a gorgeous epic set in Ancient Egypt, with high priests, pharaohs, peasant revolts, romance and a pure-hearted hero. Better than C. B. De Mille.

2.45pm **COLD COMFORT FARM** (UK) Based on Stella Gibbons' novel, this feels like a cross between an Ealing comedy and DH Lawrence's worst nightmare. The Starkadder clan of Sussex sodbusters meet their newly orphaned cousin from London, Flora Poste who unleashes her society belle fetish for order on their ruined farm. A cracking pace and cheerful tongue-in-cheek style makes for a riotously funny film. \*



● 5pm **THAT EYE THE SKY** (Australia) A small troubled community is visited by a stranger who promises help and salvation but who may well be a phoney. Screen adaptation of Tim Winton's mystical book (also a successful play) starring Lisa Harrow and Peter Coyote. Directed by John Ruane, a festival guest. \* Q&A

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## FILM TITLES BY COUNTRY

SCREENING DATE AND VENUE

S = State, P = Pitt Centre

### AUSTRALIA

ALL MEN ARE LIARS ..... 9,S  
BACKROADS ..... 12,P  
CAR CRASH ..... 14,S&16,S  
GOING DOWN ..... 11,S  
GOODBYE PARADISE ..... 23,P  
HELL BENTO! ..... 21,S&22,S  
JUNGLE PATROL ..... 13,P  
OUT OF IT ..... 22,P  
PURE SHIT ..... 12,P  
QUEENSLAND ..... 22,P  
SANCTUARY ..... 22,S&23,S  
SHIRLEY THOMPSON ..... 16,P  
SOLDIERS WITHOUT UNIFORMS ..... 12,P  
SONS OF MATTHEW ..... 11,P  
SUNNY AND THE DARK HORSE ..... 14,P  
SWEETIE ..... 21,P  
THAT EYE, THE SKY ..... 24,S  
VACANT POSSESSION ..... 18,S&23,S  
VIDEO FOOL FOR LOVE ..... 17,S&19,S

### AUSTRIA

71 FRAGMENTS ..... 16,S&21,S

### BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

MGM-SARAJEVO ..... 15,S&16,S  
SaGA PROGRAM ..... 17,P

### CANADA

NORMAN WILLIAM AFFAIR ..... 11,P  
VELASQUEZ'S LITTLE MUSEUM ..... 19,S&20,S  
WHEN NIGHT IS FALLING ..... 20,S&22,S  
WHEN SHIRLEY MET FLORENCE ..... 23,S

### CANADA/GERMANY

SEPTEMBER SONGS: KURT WEILL ..... 19,S

### CHILE

AMNESIA ..... 13,S&15,S

### CHINA

DAY THE SUN TURNED COLD, THE ..... 12,S  
POSTMAN ..... 17,S  
SQUARE, THE ..... 14,P

### CZECH REPUBLIC

FAUST ..... 10,S&14,S

### DENMARK/GERMANY

KINGDOM, THE ..... 22,P

### EGYPT

EMIGRANT, THE ..... 24,S

### FINLAND

TAKE CARE OF YOUR SCARF ..... 15,S&16,S

### FRANCE

A PROPOS DE NICE ..... 12,S  
ANNÉES DÉCLIC 1957-1977, LES ..... 16,P  
AUBERVILLIERS ..... 13,P  
AUTOUR DES FILETS ..... 14,P  
CEUX DE CHEZ NOUS ..... 16,P  
CRIMINEL, LE ..... 15,P  
FOND DE L'AIR EST ROUGE, LE ..... 13,P  
FRESH BAIT ..... 10,S&15,S  
HÔTEL DES INVALIDES ..... 14,P  
INCONNUS DE LA TERRE, LES ..... 15,P  
LETTRE D'ALAIN CAVALIER ..... 16,P  
MAIS QU'EST-CE QU'ELLES VEULENT? ..... 15,P  
MONTAND ..... 18,P  
MYSTÈRE PICASSO, LE ..... 18,P  
NIGHT AND FOG ..... 23,P  
NOGENT, EL DORADO ..... 13,P  
OPÉRA MOUFFE, L' ..... 18,P  
PASSION OF JONAN OF ARC, THE ..... 14,S  
PHOTOS D'ALIX, LES ..... 16,P  
POUR UN MAILLOT JAUNE ..... 14,P  
PRIME TIME IN THE CAMPS ..... 18,P  
SANG DES BETES, LE ..... 14,P  
SIX JUIN L'AUBE, LE ..... 21,P  
STATUES MEURENT AUSSI, LES ..... 14,P  
TOO MUCH HAPPINESS ..... 14,S  
TOUT LA MÉMOIRE DU MONDE ..... 18,P  
TRAVOLTA AND ME ..... 14,S  
VAMPIRE, LE ..... 14,P  
ZONE LA ..... 13,P

### FRANCE/UK/GERMANY

TROUBLES WE'VE SEEN, THE ..... 11,S&13,S

### GERMANY

BASTIANER'S PICTURES OF THE WAR ..... 16,P  
GERMANY/SWITZERLAND  
MIDDLE OF THE MOMENT ..... 11,P

### GERMANY/USA

EROTIC TALES ..... 16,S

### HONG KONG

CHUNGKING EXPRESS ..... 21,S

### HONG KONG/CHINA

ERMO ..... 21,S

### HUNGARY

MEANWHILE, SOMEWHERE... ..... 17,P

### INDIA

FATHER, SON AND HOLY WAR ..... 21,P  
IT'S A LONG WAY TO THE SEA ..... 18,S

### IRAN

JAR, THE ..... 19,S&21,S  
UNDER THE OLIVE TREES ..... 17,S&19,S

### ITALY

SUMMER OF BOBBY CHARLTON ..... 20,S&22,S

### IRELAND/UK

OURSELVES ALONE? ..... 20,P

### JAPAN

DEDICATED LIFE, A ..... 22,P  
KANA KANA ..... 11,P&17,S  
MY WIFE IS FILIPINA ..... 11,P&12,P  
TOKYO KYODAI ..... 15,S&19,S

### MEXICO

GARDEN OF EDEN, THE ..... 23,S

### NETHERLANDS

IN MOTION ..... 12,P&18,P  
LAST CALL ..... 13,S&15,S  
MOTHER DAO ..... 11,S&13,S  
SOLO ..... 20,P&22,P

### NEW ZEALAND

WAR STORIES ..... 22,S&23,S

### NEW ZEALAND/UK

CINEMA OF UNEASE ..... 13,P

### NEW ZEALAND/UK

CINEMA ON THE ROAD: SAM NEILL ..... 20,P

### POLAND/France

STATE OF WEIGHTLESSNESS ..... 15,P

### ROMANIA

LOOK FORWARD IN ANGER ..... 20,S&21,S

### RUSSIA/France

BURNT BY THE SUN ..... 12,S&16,S

### SWEDEN/UK/NORWAY/DENMARK

BETRAYAL ..... 15,P

### SWITZERLAND/France/SENEGAL

FRANC, LE ..... 16,S&23,S

### TAIWAN

RED LOTUS SOCIETY ..... 21,S

VIVE L'AMOUR ..... 18,S&20,S

### UNITED KINGDOM

ARENA - MARVIN GAYE ..... 18,P

B D WOMEN ..... 23,S

BUTTERFLY KISS ..... 22,S&23,S

COLD COMFORT FARM ..... 24,S

FIRES WERE STARTED ..... 13,P

LISTEN TO BRITAIN ..... 12,P

LONDON CAN TAKE IT ..... 10,S

THIN ICE ..... 23,S

THIS IS ENGLAND ..... 12,P

TYPICALLY BRITISH: FREARS ..... 20,P

WORDS FOR BATTLE ..... 12,P

### UK/JAPAN

OSAKA STORY ..... 15,S&20,S

### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AMATEUR ..... 10,S&14,S

BLACK IS...BLACK AIN'T ..... 15,P

BUI DOI: LIFE LIKE DUST ..... 14,P

CLEAN, SHAVEN ..... 17,S&20,S

CRUMB ..... 14,P

DEALERS AMONG DEALERS ..... 20,P

DECEMBER 7TH ..... 13,P

DEVIL NEVER SLEEPS, THE ..... 11,P

FRESH ..... 12,S

GATHER AT THE RIVER ..... 12,P

GREAT DAY IN HARLEM, A ..... 12,S&13,S

GREETINGS FROM AFRICA ..... 23,S

HELLO PHOTO ..... 21,P

I JUST WASN'T MADE ..... 13,S&14,S&18P

I LIKE IT LIKE THAT ..... 18,S&22,S

KINGDOM OF ZYDECO, THE ..... 12,P

LITTLE WOMEN IN TRANSIT ..... 23,S

LOW ..... 11,S&15,P

MEMPHIS BELLE ..... 21,P

MOVING THE MOUNTAIN ..... 14,P

NOT BAD FOR A GIRL ..... 21,P

PARTY FAVOR, THE ..... 23,S

PLAYING THE PART ..... 23,S

PRELUDE TO WAR ..... 12,P

QUESTION OF EQUALITY, THE ..... 17,P

ROY COHN/JACK SMITH ..... 18,P

SPIN ..... 18,P

STRANGE WEATHER ..... 19,P

UNDERNEATH, THE ..... 15,P

VANYA ON 42ND STREET ..... 12,S&16,S

WHICH WAY IS EAST ..... 14,P

### USA/UK

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AMERICAN MOVIES WITH

MARTIN SCORSESE ..... 19,P

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# True Fictions

Virginia Baxter reads Hal Hartley's *Amateur*

If you've seen Hal Hartley's films there's a particular pleasure in reading the script for his new movie *Amateur* (Faber and Faber) which includes an interview with Hartley by Graham Fuller. I found myself reading in the gestures and vocal tones of actors I know from Hartley's ensemble - Martin Donovan's intense monotone, Elina Lowensohn's Romanian accented English, adding Isabelle Huppert's minimal vocal intonation.

Between the lines I read the recognisable gestures of Hartley's characters who "search one another's faces", "wander away troubled", "can't form words to answer", "turn to face each other for a long moment", "sigh and think, trying to put their thoughts together". In fact I think a lot of my pleasure in Hal Hartley films has been watching acts of thinking. Human behaviour in Hal Hartley films may not be normal but it is recognisable, unexplained but never inexplicable. And contrary to descriptions of the world of his films as "rarefied", in my life, people often behave like they're in a Hal Hartley movie.

"She looks away frustrated and considers this."

"She almost starts to recite a list but gives up"

People are self possessed in Hal Hartley films. They never quite surrender. They avoid contact. Some people say this makes for unemotional films. Depends how you read emotion. Emotion can flood and burst but it can also be slipped inside an envelope of small gestures, curl in a pattern of controlled speech acts. There's next to no improvisation in a Hal Hartley movie.

"You see, to me, this capacity of fiction is a kind of miracle but whatever it is, it resides in us. We have the ability to let fiction do this to us. I also think that where this miracle works is in fiction that does not depend exclusively on sentiment"

He sees all his films up to now as melodramas. In *Amateur* he's written what he calls a tragedy (Isabelle Huppert calls it a metaphysical thriller and Martin Donovan an action movie) with his usual surprising collection of characters (a nymphomaniac ex-nun, an amnesiac film producer, a vengeful porn star and as always, an interesting characterisation of the middle-aged woman, this time in the form of Officer Melville "a strangely sensitive and violently emotional woman") a good beginning (a dead man wakes) and some nicely lateral plot turns. I don't care that I know the ending because the story is just the beginning. Now I've read the script and the interview, I'm waiting to see cinematographer Michael Stiller's Eisenstein angles, the colours (his darkest yet), the music Hartley composed with his partner Jeff Taylor and those recurring images - the hide and seek scene, the slaps and shoves.

"When audiences come to see a Hal Hartley film with Martin Donovan, they can't wait for Martin to knock something off a table, or break something or smoke. Movie actors can have characters that expand beyond the borders of each film".

Though he shot everything in the script, in the editing some scenes have been reduced or cut. So the reader gets the ghost of an earlier idea for an internal narration which he later ditched. Then there's the

scene between Donovan and Simon, a 12 year old boy who in the movie turns out to be played by a 22 year old woman.

You get the inside story from the interview with Hartley in this edition that the man behind True Fictions Pictures is entering a new phase. "Sometimes I feel tired of subordinating any kind of creative impulse to the laws of dramatic verisimilitude; to telling a story so that it seems like real life. I have loved doing fiction, but the urge to move away from fiction film-making is quite strong in me now."

In fact, when he got to the editing of *Amateur*, Hal Hartley found he'd shot the film in a much more radical way than he thought. "When I was shooting it, I was walking away from the set each day, saying 'I'm just a hack.' Then (in the editing) I found I'd built the images so that it was very difficult to make normal narratively continuous scenes. I remember yelling at the wardrobe girls a lot 'Don't mess with his tie!' And you know, not only was the actor's tie different but so was his chair and he was in a totally different position. So I was indifferent to continuity. Continuity bugged me. It got in the way of the image. When it came to editing these images I was forced to reconsider the necessity of seamlessness and continuity moment to moment. The way I shot the picture pretty much determined that I would have to have ellipses, I would have to have jump cuts."

Hal Hartley is less interested in manipulating the audience's psychological and emotional connection to the characters than in focussing their attention on "the event of becoming interested in the actors playing these roles". He even suggested to the *Amateur* actors that they retain their names for the movie. All but Isabelle Huppert refused.

"I'm almost aspiring to have the audience moved by virtue of recognising

they're all in one big room with a strip of film passing through a projector."

His loving descriptions of his actors are revealing "I'm moved by some of the most normal shots. The angle on Isabelle with the coffee cup. She's sitting on the edge of the bed with Martin wakes up in her apartment and it's a very simple single shot. It has everything to do with Isabelle Huppert. What she allows to be seen. What she retains. The time she takes. There is a state of the soul that she loans to her character. It's almost like a physical knowledge. And (Cinematographer) Martin Spiller and I couldn't ignore the fact that we'd look through the lens at Isabelle Huppert and see a certain portion of the history of French cinema. That was a little disconcerting at first, until we just embraced it."

"Elina Lowensohn is somebody who knows all about the pleasure of being watched, of letting herself be seen. That's clearly part of why she's an actress. She is one of the few actresses I know who admits that, but at the same time she's one of the least vain people I know."

Hal Hartley is shooting a lot of video now. He said to Martin Donovan: "Look, what we do is this: I just videotape you moving around smoking, walking, making gestures, or something like that. Then we'll put them into the computer and freeze-frame parts of them. Then we'll look at just these parts and try to isolate an emotional state that each of them makes us feel then start creating something from there. I've always collected pictures and made collages that relate to the moving pictures I'm making. But it can go further."

Read the script.

Can't wait to read the movie.

*Amateur* screens at the Sydney Film Festival in June.

## TV Turn On

Nicola Robinson surveys the first Festival of Television for Australian Children

I get 50 Ore when I win. Granny drinks a beer when she wins. I've won 30 Kroner in two days. Granny drank three beers tonight. Granny says I'm smart.

*Hasse's Diary*, Sweden

They love death, disaster, sex and comedy ... It has to be handled in a certain way ... a subversive, childlike way. It has to have that element of carnival and burlesque in it. Children want to explore these issues in a safe way.

Lée Burton, *The Weekend Australian*

It is common wisdom that classrooms are the scourge of creative, let alone subversive, thought. The first Festival of Television for Australian Children - or at least its rhetoric - flew in the face of such assumptions. The festival was held March 18-26. More than sixty excellent programs, between five minutes and two hours in length were broadcast nationwide by the five networks largely within school hours for classroom use.

A quiet event this. Media coverage was minimal. The TV Festival was overshadowed by the World Summit of Television and Children held in Melbourne during the previous week, about which the familiar, easy stories poured out - angst

over TV violence, advertising, Americanisation of Oz culture, and kids' long viewing hours.

The festival pushed such weary questions aside, focussing not on what kids may be told, but the ways they may understand the telling. First up - and most straightforwardly - they faced the hurdles of subtitles, dubbing or narration. There were programs from Poland, Sweden, Japan, New Zealand, Iran, the UK, Turkey, Belgium, Canada, the USA, Germany, Ireland and Denmark. Often language barely mattered; the telling was highly visual.

In *Help He's Dying* (Sweden) the parental demands 'Eat your dinner!', 'Get in the taxi', 'Look at me in the funny hat!' need no subtitles. The slightest of narrations unites this comic drama about a boy forced to leave his pet rabbit unfed during a family holiday. In the kids-locked-in-the-flat-with-leaking-gas film *The Key* (Iran), action is almost all. In *Ecu Ecu: The 'A' Story* (Ireland), an anorexic teenager's family speaks to the camera in her empty bedroom; the word 'death' is unnecessary.

Sex, comedy, danger, death. It's a conundrum: the TV most kids prefer is not child-centred, perhaps because most child-centred TV (at least in Australia) is filtered through a rose coloured lens. (In 1994, Neilsen Media Research found Australian kids aged 5 to 12 top rating series were *Lois and Clark*, *Full House* and *Hangin' with Mr. Cooper*. Teens add *The Simpsons*, *Seinfeld* and *Home Improvement* to the list according to Mojo Australia). But while some festival programs showed a safe and jolly world, many featured unhappy, sometimes hugely dysfunctional families - from a child's viewpoint.

Pertinently, adult - not child - fingers held the remote. The bleak or physically 'rude' shows - which might disturb a child or, more likely an officiating adult - were screened largely during school hours.

Teachers' post-festival response sheets show a tendency to record programs rather than view them live in class. Timetable demands and year-round curriculum needs aside, the record button surely served as a safety valve. Who wants to face angry parents or troubled kids?

Censorial programming? Maybe. A necessity, since subtitled children's programs are unlikely to be watched or shown (excepting SBS) outside school hours? Probably. Smart planning by festival organisers? Definitely. Schools could provide a framework for the more subversive programs, especially with the help of activities suggested in the festival's Teacher Resource Kit.

The kit employs the usual and rarely contested kiddie-culture promotional buzzwords: quality, appropriate, thought-provoking. These words are known to reassure adults. These words also complement the widely accepted, 'it just goes in' model of TV-viewing, whereby programs are assumed to be consumed unmediated - especially by passive and 'innocent' children.

But then the kit provides another model. Side by side with activities based on issues and commonsense notions of viewing, are those which encourage children to decode both the construction of TV programs and their own viewing responses.

Middle/upper primary pupils are invited to "investigate various techniques and conventions associated with program types ... discuss the fact that programs are based upon, and often promote, particular viewpoints and values". Secondary students can "explore their understandings of the ways television programs are constructed to represent reality selectively, are targeted at specific audiences, use a variety of techniques, practices and technologies, reflect cultural values and assumptions, etc."

This approach sidesteps the tired moral

framework by providing educative reasons to view programs like *Hasse's Diary* (Sweden), a superb naive-art animation which combines heavy-duty family troubles (parental violence, alcoholism, abandonment, foster homes) and physical humour.

The resource kit suggests classes discuss whether *Hasse's Diary* is suitable viewing for Australian 7-12 year olds. Did school groups approve beer-swilling grandmas for Oz kids' TV? How about wrapping shit in toffee papers? The pain of one's mother failing to visit? Or the size of one's foster father's willy? (somewhere between one and six metres, according to the cartoon image.) Whatever they decided, using the program to discuss censorship, rather than banning it from the screen, makes sense.

The kit offers similar media studies approaches across the range of programming: How would the whacky US geography game show *Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?* differ if produced in Australia? Why have devices like papier-maché maps, toy cars and surreal shadows been used in the otherwise realist drama *Tiger* (The Netherlands)? View *Crawl Like An Insect-See Like A Bird*, a docu-drama about Japan's first map-maker, then devise a program treatment using similar techniques and Australian characters. Look at how the content and emphasis of the child-written and directed magazine segments of *As Seen On TV* (UK) reflects the children's control.

This kind of classroom approach provides concepts and language to explore the visual literacy that kids undoubtedly possess - possibly creating discriminating viewers (if this matters), possibly giving kids subversive tools to use across the enjoyably motley spectrum of TV programming.

Nicola Robinson is a Sydney writer and children's book reviewer.

# Actual Footage

Virginia Baxter conducts a Time and Motion study

"It's like living on the set" says Rosalind Crisp on the phone from her studio where she lives and is now working on *The Cutting Room*, a solo work that will be part of the performance component of the *Time and Motion* project, an ambitious event that brings together choreography, dance/movement and critical writing.

Rosalind Crisp began with Kinetic Energy in Sydney and worked in companies and independent projects in Sydney, Adelaide and Melbourne. In 1991 she received an Individual Development grant to work at Holland's Centre of New Dance Development and stayed on for three years working with dance/theatre companies in Belgium and Canada. Back in Australia she created throughout 1993-94 *The Lucy Pieces* a set of three dance works inspired by a woman from her childhood. "She lived alone and like the rest of the neighbourhood I wanted to know what went on inside her." Rosalind adopted Lucy as persona for these works and in *The Cutting Room* she picks up the thread, this time fleshing out her own inner feelings, delving into what she calls her "uncivilised moments" *Uncivilised?* "Some mornings I put on Nick Cave and start working before I'm even awake. If I feel sad, bad or mad, I express it, then I press out into those areas of emotional extremity".

As well as working from improvisation Rosalind has used for inspiration Charlotte Perkins Gilman's story *The Yellow Wallpaper* and *The Handless Maiden*, a story that appears in Drusilla Modjeska's biographical/essay/novel, *The Orchard*. Both are stories of women at the extremes, often interpreted as victims of social oppression but she's interested in exploring another

perspective, from the inside. "A lot of *The Cutting Room* is about death and about female strength in vulnerability and grief. It's also about the exhilaration of a body flying through space."

Rosalind, who previously worked alone, is collaborating on this new work with Nigel Jamieson. She describes the relationship as bizarre and wonderful. "He was interested in getting me to backtrack into my childhood to find out where some of these ideas might be coming from. We came up with some strong images - watching my father killing sheep, animals hung in meat bags - though for me the piece is not about my childhood. Let's say if the theatre had windows, you might look out on these real incidents like a disturbing presence. Nigel is interested in clarifying meaning while I'm more interested in the subtle, surreal meanings to the movement. Movement? "Oh, I can't decide any more what it is I'm doing. Maybe it's more theatre this extreme emotion in dance or just dance taken further by channelling it into themes like death and the breaking apart of a woman/myself."

On the other side of town Julie-Anne Long has covered the walls of the studio with pink cards each with a sentence, a story, a movement phrase - "sensual, grotesque-gestural, punchy, boppy", and pictures: Sophia Loren gets an eyeful of Jane Mansfield's awesome décolletage; a woman with one breast rubs shoulders with Rosalyn Norton's catwoman with six; a bouquet of burlesque beauties overlaps with all manner of creases, splits and crevices human and geological; Siamese twins; a body stitched together post autopsy.

Working with her as dramaturg, I use a



Heidrun Lohr

sort of conversational method and we're now at the interesting stage where our vocabulary includes a whole lot of squiggly gestures that pass for movement. She's on the floor tracing scribbles in the air. I'm making notes. In the corner the tape recorder blurts "Let's just relax and say tits". She cuts across the words with some swooping phrases of her own, punctuated by strange little gestures - nipple snips? Whatever. She has a nice turn of phrase. She stops mid-movement. The definition dances before our eyes. *Klividz* defined biologically, geologically, chemically and last of all colloquially as "the cleft between women's breasts". From the tape-recorder "Cleavage is the promise". She flips into a set of balletic arm movements. She'll put the feet in later. "Dancers' breasts are usually the bits that get in the way". From the tape: "Anybody tasted breast milk? How was it, funny? Did you put it in a glass?" Inside this small room, Julie-Anne Long is taking on a word, uncovering it, shaking it around, flaunting it, re-shaping and revealing it for all its meanings. "What am I doing? Most women can't stand people staring at their breasts when they're trying to talk about something serious and here I am putting myself and the audience through exactly that experience".

The *Time and Motion* project was born of a recognition of the growth in volume and maturity of dance and movement-based performance commonly referred to as independent and of the significance of the individual, exploratory processes that go with it. Whereas opportunities exist for emerging artists to perform their work and to profit from collective management and presentation, there are few such

opportunities for seasoned artists with a more developed creative process and sense of their artistic vision. *Time and Motion* comprises performances, workshops, creative development and critical writing.

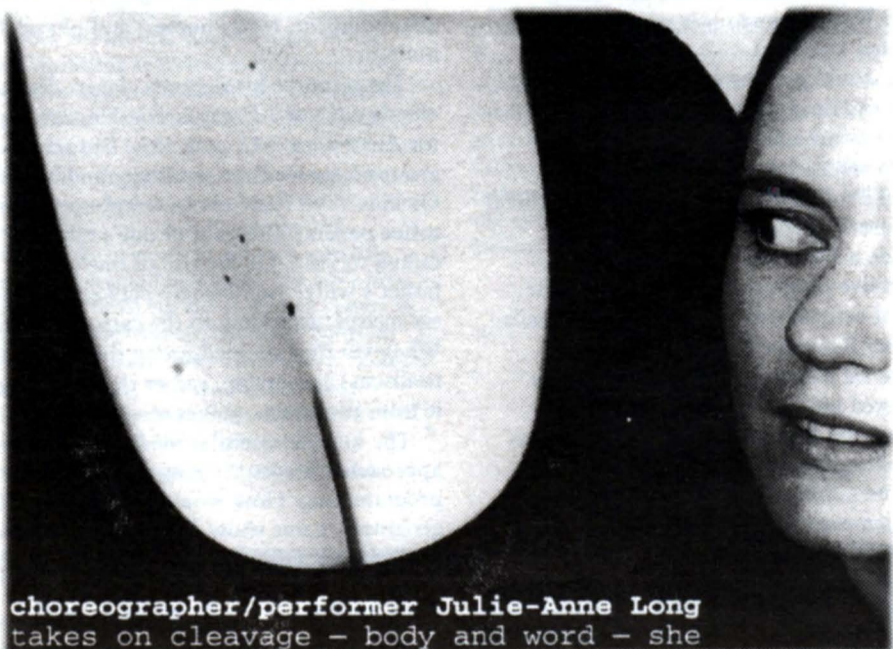
In *Where Have All The Dancers Gone?* dance artist Sue-ellen Kohler conducts an intensive workshop on processes that keep movement of the body personal with an aim to develop different understandings of what dance can be. Dancer/Teacher Helen Poyner's workshop will focus on the non-stylised movement she has developed creating improvised, site-specific cross art form collaborations and more recently her work in Java with Suprpto Suryodermo.

The two Creative Development projects are: *Thursday's Fictions* in which Karen Pearlman and Richard Allen move out of the duo and into the epic with a group of dancers and *Body/Space/Language* in which artistic counsel for the *Time and Motion* project Barbara Richardson is joined by teacher-writers Elly Brickhill, Kathy Driscoll and Karen Martin in presenting a series of critical writings that will situate local practice within the broader framework of contemporary performing arts theory and experimentation. The writing is intended to serve as a reference point for the artists involved in the project as well as provoke a higher level of critical dialogue surrounding local dance/movement.

*The Time and Motion project runs from July 1 - 16 at Sydney's The Performance Space, the University of Western Sydney and Sydney University's Centre for Performance Studies.*

## cleavage

a dance with a definition



choreographer/performer Julie-Anne Long takes on cleavage - body and word - she uncovers, wrestles, shakes, divides, flaunts, re-shapes, reveals...stories from the changing room. Dive in!

dramaturg: Virginia Baxter  
lighting and production: Janine Peacock  
design: Rohan Wilson

The Performance Space Studio  
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Bookings (02) 319 5091  
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Cleavage 9.30pm TPS Studio + the cutting room  
(Rosalind Crisp) 8pm TPS Theatre  
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time & motion 1995



A triple bill of new dance works choreographed and performed by Sue Healey & Phillip Adams, in collaboration with Michelle Heaven, Nicole Johnston, Jennifer Newman Preston and Luke Smiles.

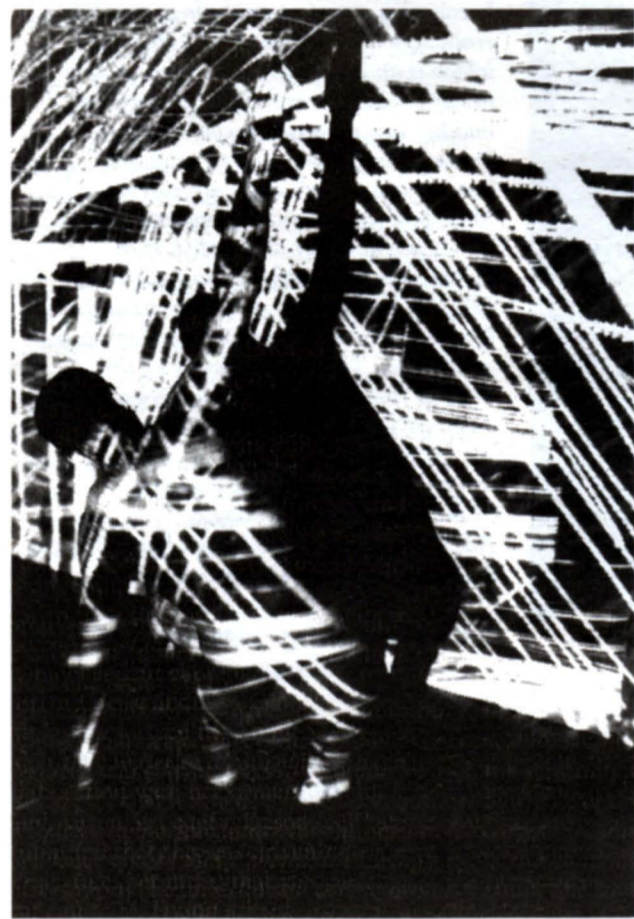
28 June - 15 July. Wednesdays to Saturdays, 8pm.  
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in the wind's eye

Vis-a-Vis  
DANCE  
CANBERRA

# A Melancholy New Dance

Rachel Fensham talks with Gary Rowe, visiting artist with Melbourne's Dance House



Hellen Sky

Gary Rowe blows on a hand-painted slide in the cavernous reaches of the old Masonic Hall that is Dance House in Melbourne and we look for a patch of sun to talk. Rowe, a British artist and performer, is making a new work called *Love Song After Death* that will premiere here en route to London and Edinburgh.

Rowe combines a background in the visual arts, originally as a painter, with years of work as a dancer. In the 1980's he studied at Dartington College in the UK, that was an internationally renowned centre for new dance development. Under the visionary Mary Fulkerson, the course encouraged students to think of themselves as artisans – to experiment, make and show their own work. The visiting teachers sound like a roll-call of the pioneers of postmodern dance – Steve Paxton, Lisa Nelson, Miranda Tufnell, Laurie Booth, Nancy Topf, Valda Setterfield, Simone Forti, Michael Clark, Richard Alston. Deliberately disoriented, the students had to find their own paths through projects that ranged from social dancing to trapeze or Skinner Release technique. Rowe's own epiphany came in front of a Mark Rothko painting and he chose to continue a process of choreographic enquiry within the postmodern, minimalist tradition.

In its most rigorous form, postmodern dance has relentlessly questioned the vocabularies, frames and artistic functions of dance. Addressing questions to the maker as well as the spectator, the choreographic process is used to test and extend relationships between the visual and the textual, the spatial and the aural. The purpose of art is viewed objectively in contrast to the personal, expressive or spiritual quest and the choreographer's task is to make patterns of movement articulate and intelligible in very particular ways. Precise, individual offerings of human endeavour are placed inside conundrums of time and space.

Rowe's first independent work, *Eclipse, an Apparition* was shown in a tiny but unusually shaped gallery. Using a grid pattern, he plotted visual and spatial connections for duets between three women. A long and silent work, the bodies

violently orbited from the structure before returning to their trajectories. Created with no emotional intent, it held and affected its audience intensely. Subsequent work has been mainly in the form of site-specific installations combining strong visual images and lighting effects with stylised phrases of movement. In *River Crossings*, for instance, projected slides from the Queen's Collection hung like tapestries on the walls of a building. Against a battle scene backdrop and the mixed sounds of water, Ella Fitzgerald and an echo of gunshots, two men danced. Behind them a woman and a young girl in period costume whipped foils through the air.

*Love Song After Death* retains a strong visual texture in the slides projected on the wall, objects and bodies. But this time, a text locates an emotional field. Rowe's autobiographical writing was first reworked by the novelist

Peter Slater into fragments of prose. In performance, actor Paul Hampton's Australian accent distances the identification of the words with a personal self.

Rowe and Alan Widdowson dance duets and solos, hooded and clothed in white. "The invisible man" laughs Rowe, although the piece peels off the flesh on an emotional world. Perhaps he is the shadow and Alan, the angel. The shrouded piano becomes a dream house boarded up with its door unopened. From it emerges the music of Benjamin Britten and Erik Satie – songs of memory and desire. The body is not nude but dissolved, naked in reflected light, a surface for touching, for tattoos and erotic sensation. Addressing both the feminine and the masculine, the dancer tiptoes across the stage. "I don't know what those boundaries are," says Rowe.

It is part memorial – a lover dies, this time of AIDS, and the dance is painful – a relentless, physical shuffling. In another room 400 candles floating in wine glasses form a carpet of remembrance. Repetition and stillness inform the work. Freud says that melancholia is the effect of unrieved loss. Performance is often a problem of unacknowledged loss, both a refusing and an incorporation of the lost figure. Is it also a lament for a positive masculinity? A loss that pervades our culture.

Rowe is grateful for the space, technical and administrative support that Dance House has provided for this project. In Britain, as elsewhere, there are fewer opportunities for rigorous investigation of the aesthetics of dance. Popular emphasis on technical prowess is a far cry from the minimal necessities of continuing to say things as an artist, not simply to be a choreographer. Far from home, Rowe has not been distracted and is making another 'new dance'.

Rachel Fensham is a lecturer in performance at Monash University.

# Stepping It Out

Brisbane's emerging alternative dance scene surveyed by Julia Postle

In terms of an alternative dance form which embodies a challenge to, an extension of, or a reaction towards traditional dance forms, Queensland artists are investigating multiple possibilities. What seems so significant for contemporary experimental dance, in all its manifestations, is the potential that this elusive form holds for creating new meanings and understandings of dance. The obvious dilemma in considering the contributions of Queensland choreographers within this context is, who to include? It follows that this examination is necessarily a selective one. However I wish only to share my perception of certain individuals whose work is fundamentally exploratory. Although the heterogeneity of new choreography is hardly a localised phenomenon, these artists are essentially re-investigating and celebrating possibilities within dance, and their choreography represents the profusion of new work in Queensland.

Helen Leeson, an independent Brisbane artist, has created work which manifests a collision of post-Cunningham strategies and contemporary experiment. *Making Zero*, performed as part of Brisbane's Shock of the New festival in 1994, foregrounded the audience by presenting multiple sites for attention and thus demanding a selective viewing process. Four individuals perform separate renderings of movement, in an exploration of the levels and parameters of the space and of the other performers. There are rare moments of uniform movement and weight-sharing which blend into and out of individual performance. *Making Zero* is, however, only one representation of a practice which essentially resists categorisation. Leeson's choreography is eclectic, sometimes utilising contemporary dance technique, sometimes site-specific, sometimes a juxtaposition of numerous elements. Leeson also performs in her own work and that of others. She met with chaos theory as a dancer for Jean Tally's *A Strange Attraction* (1992).

Tally is choreographer and lecturer in contemporary dance, composition, and alignment at Queensland University of Technology. My earliest memories of Tally recall her abandoned laughter, her composed and yet effervescent manner, and most significantly her acute awareness of the moving body. Those first impressions remain valid today. Most recently, Tally has engaged in a creative dialogue with composer Andy Arthurs and designer Tolis Papazoglou. The abiding collaboration has been sustained through two completed projects, *A Strange Attraction* and *Ritual* (1995).

As the title suggests, *Ritual* is an investigation of the ceremonies that pattern our lives. The piece begins as the audience enters and moves around the circumference of the performance space. Papazoglou's design is suspended from the ceiling to create a circular screen within the performance space, at times separating the audience from the performers, and at others containing the audience. *Ritual* is a physical and conceptual journey for its witnesses, and the centrality of this aspect of performance communicates Tally's awareness of the relationship between audience and performer. "I'm interested in ways of seeing, ways of participation", she explains. Tally is presently acting as collaborator/director for *Cyber City Cabaret*, a production premiering at the Brisbane Biennial on May 31st. The work is another interactive experience for the audience, but in contrast to *Ritual*, *Cyber City* gives its audience even more freedom to choose their own pathways of meaning throughout the performance.

This acknowledgement of the autonomy of the audience is shared by the hybrid art collective Montage. As part of the Fringe,

the six artists who constitute Montage have devised *Dormant*, a work which communicates five different stories through movement, design and voice. The artists represent a variety of forms (hence the name Montage), and what I found particularly valuable about *Dormant* is its acceptance of the individuality of the moving body. Of course, this is nothing new. The non-dancer in performance was embraced as far back as America's Judson Dance Theater in 1962, with artists searching for alternatives to the categorisation of the body in the traditional dance forms of ballet and modern dance. Today, many contemporary choreographers have since returned to technique; manipulating and interrogating it. However for the artists who are Montage, individuality is central, as the performers travel divergent paths. This is what makes *Dormant* such a valuable experience; the audience witnesses a trained dancer performing alongside a vocal artist, and recognises the unique physical moments specific to each individual.

Coinciding with the Fringe is *Tripping on the Left Foot of Belief*, a programme of three works by independent choreographers Clare Dyson, Brian Lucas, and Lisa O'Neill. In meeting with Dyson I asked her about her contribution titled *Water to a Morning Mouth* – a collaboration with performers Avril Huddy and Alison St Ledger. Dyson courageously admitted that she was driven to create *Water* as an experiment; that is, "something that can fail". Dyson's intrepidity is a conspicuous quality. She considers living in Brisbane part of an effort to somehow distance herself from the traditional expectations placed upon a choreographer in her position. "I try and stay as far away from everything that I'm supposed to do, or what I'm supposed to be." For Dyson this isn't so much a reaction against convention as an endeavour to be true to herself and her work. She has a sensitivity to gesture which is really quite remarkable. *Water* is dotted with countless memorable images – a frantic rubbing of necks, Avril lifting her dress, then violently rocking in a chair – and infused with the resonance of St Ledger's voice.

While the connections between movement and song seem almost tangible in Dyson's *Water*, the relationship between text, voice, and dance in Maggie Sietsma's work is more indeterminate. In the choreography of Sietsma, artistic director of Expressions Dance Company, the audience is compelled to create its own connections between the various facets of performance, and in this way Sietsma acknowledges the plurality and contingency of creating meaning. As Expressions celebrates its tenth anniversary, Sietsma and Natalie Weir have created two new works for the company. *Alone Together*, the director's latest work, is characteristic Sietsma – an assorted characterisation of humour, melodrama, hopelessness, and wretchedness – this instance being inspired by Edward Hopper's paintings, particularly *Night Windows*.

Weir worked from the same motivation in creating *In-Sight*, an integration of athletic and challenging choreography with 'convention', and the imposition of conventional gender roles is one indication of this. Weir's *Burning* (1994) was promoted as 'new dance' for QB's contemporary season, and the piece definitely manifests a challenge to traditional modes of performance for a ballet company. Needless to say, the choreographer's utilisation of spectacle, illusion, virtuosity, technique, and expressive movement wasn't exactly 'new dance', but rather a re-orchestration of these elements within a familiar contemporary dance form.

Julia Postle is a Brisbane writer.

# Too Safe Sex

Sydney Dance Company's Fornicon puts Sue-ellen Kohler off-colour

Another night at the Opera House. Sue-ellen Kohler is seen outside. She looks sick. Perhaps it's her all-day-and-night morning sickness or has something she's just seen caused that pained expression?

What's the matter Sue-ellen?

*I have just sat through two hours of... of... Her mouth opens but nothing comes out. She tries again but the words evade her.*

*Finally. There was ... umm ... a lot of colour and movement. There. That's it, I saw something with a lot of colour and movement.*

You're talking about the latest Sydney Dance Company performance *Fornicon*. There must be more to say about it than 'colour and movement'.

*Oh well, after what I just saw it's hard to remember that there is much more to dance anyway! I mean the audience seemed well pleased with a bit of light entertainment, titillation, a bit of a story taken from other stories and a chance to perv on all those glamorous hot bodies – a bit like Baywatch, nothing too challenging or disturbing. What more can you ask for?*

You do sound sick. I thought *Fornicon*

was inspired by great moments of eroticism, love, sex, power, citing De Sade, Bataille, Calasso, Nin, Byron to comment on our repressive views of sexuality in a world terrified of AIDS.

*Exactly! Her colour is returning. You go to see dance which claims all those things and you find that there's no danger there, just pretence. Gesturing towards breaking taboos while playing it safe, safe eroticism! (I didn't know that was possible till now). The Clayton's form of sex – spend with an eye on saving. Dance can therefore remain a powerless form of communication, commenting on nothing and no-one and (almost) everyone seems to be happy.*

But surely the work has merit. This company is one of the most highly funded in Australia – one of Australia's cultural flagships adored by Paul Keating and dance critic Jill Sykes alike!

*I think there are individual merits but if I took either the costumes, the design or even the music out of context I would seem to be speaking of three unrelated contributions. You can see the skill and enjoy those elements on their own but in context with the work they are all at odds.*

*Fornicon is so underdeveloped that each element represents a different ego. Because the work in itself doesn't have a voice or language to call its own then it becomes transparent leaving it at the mercy of either the glamour or ravages of fashion.*

Yes, yes. But what happens?

*The story is a torrid little soap opera sorely lacking originality and shape. The 'author' (Graeme Murphy) is imprisoned for writing pornography. The scenes unfold as visions of his censored imagination. Drawing on the classic figures of love and lust, including Eros, Paris, Don Juan and Helen of Troy, the 'author' interweaves their stories and desires with contemporary icons including a pop star. And a giant winged penis. The steps were the same ones that we've been seeing from Sydney Dance Company for years now – with the exception of Mark Williams the pop singer, as 'the Don', who was doing more dancing and commanded more attention than any of the dancers in the company.*

Was there anything you liked?

*My performer's body is tired of watching these skilled dancers throwing themselves violently from one shape to another, performing steps that speak to the body (especially the female body) as if it is a commodity to be used and abused as the means for another's end. There was a brief respite however with a short solo set within the surreality of an opium dream and*

*performed by Wakako Asano, a dramatic contrast to the other scenes, drawing the audience into the sinuous quality of her almost butoh-esque movement. The performance is driven by a strong filmic score by Martin Arminger who collaborated on the scenario with Graeme Murphy.*

Now you're looking better. Who's really to blame for making you sick?

*Audiences. They like to be in control, to commodify and ultimately have total power over our cultural experiences. To me *Fornicon* is a perfect example of this. The erotic, the idea fundamental to the work, which is about breaking taboos, is here a neatly packaged very safe expression of middle-class repressed sexual desire. Perhaps *Fornicon* is so well supported because it is so safe and unthreatening. More innovative work by independent artists is ignored or denigrated. If in *Fornicon* we are supposed to vicariously live out what we can no longer do in real life, then one cannot but help feel repressed at all turns. The sexual fantasy of the 'Author' provides no satisfactory escape for a culture which is morally cautious.*

Sydney Dance Company, *Fornicon*, Sydney Opera House, May 6 – 30; Adelaide Festival Centre from June 22; then Melbourne and Canberra.

Sue-ellen Kohler is a Sydney dance artist.

# Au Revoir Vis a Vis

Keith Gallasch talks with Vis a Vis Dance Company's administrator Fiona Bozic and artistic director Sue Healey

FB Our funding was cut approximately 50% for 1995 so rather than spread that very thinly across the whole year, the company elected to use its funding over seven months which is not that unusual for small companies working on tight budgets. The current company finish at the end of July.

Sue's resignation forced us to look at what was going on. We stopped and asked how do we get our funding back and which direction do we go. So we've had consultations with the community, with funding bodies, dancers, other artistic directors. We wanted to find out if there really is a desire to have a professional contemporary dance company in Canberra and what the form of that company should be. We held a public meeting at the end of April and more than a hundred people attended. There were lots of letters of support not only from members of the community but from people like Meryl Tankard and Don Asker, the two previous artistic directors of the company. We got good media coverage and representatives of the Australia Council and the Cultural Council, the ACT funding body, attended.

We presented a strategy paper for options for 1996. Although the need for a company was clear, the issue of what kind of future was not, because of the number and diversity of the people at the meeting. But it did make clear who we should keep talking with, including dancers and choreographers.

KG What is the ACT dance community attitude to Vis a Vis?

FB Very concerned that there might not be a company – with a loss of work opportunities, peer opportunities – just knowing that you've got a company in Canberra you can work with, get advice from, get support from – administrative support, classes, keeping up professional standards.

KG The federal cut was from \$142,000 to \$100,000, the local one from \$150,000 to \$85,000. What was the rationale for the local cut?

FB A lot of things. The bottom line was they didn't feel that audience development was happening fast enough, that the work was inaccessible.

KG Were they right?

FB We've been doing surveys for a year now and no one said inaccessible. At the meeting with Cultural Council we asked them 'Where do your statistics come from?' and they didn't have an answer. They were correct about the high level of government subsidy but it is on a par with other dance companies around Australia. Their argument was that in comparison with other non-dance companies in Canberra on lower subsidy, how could they justify funding this company.

KG A blanket approach?

FB Exactly. The result – no professional dance company and the loss of sixteen years of work. But the forum was a positive event and the board has an exciting concept for next year to answer everyone's problems. We did a very successful tour to Greenmill and got excellent reviews. Took *Succulent Blue Sway* to the Gippsland Festival, an inspiring experience – so many people want to see dance. Then we did *Askew*, *Dance of Line* here – it was well-received. Finally, we're doing *in the wind's eye*, two pieces by Sue and one by returning Canberra Phillip Adams. Then it's over to the board for 1996.

It takes a while for a company to establish itself. Sue's third year has been very good, so it's a bit like it's all been cut out from under her just as it's all starting. It shows a lack of insight in various quarters. We've also had the problem of negative arts journalists, even where they haven't seen the work. But Sue's leaving on a fantastic note.

KG What is this concept for 1996 that's going to answer everyone's problems?

FB A choreographic centre with an artistic advisory panel (local and interstate). We're

calling for projects – this will be advertised over the next few weeks. We can provide administration, publicity, rehearsal space and performing venue ...

KG Is this an interim strategy or a long-term one giving the board more power in the absence of an artistic director. Could it be like the inclination to replace theatre company artistic directors with executive producers?

FB We definitely do not want to cut out the idea of the artistic director. The board will not make the artistic decisions, the advisory panel will select from the proposals submitted.

KG Sue Healey, how are you coping with this very dark situation?

SH It's not really dark, it's just that Canberra is no longer the place I want to be. It's a difficult place – it's conservative, it's small-minded and it's small. But I feel I've done a lot of what I wanted to do and the company's been a fantastic stepping stone for me.

KG What is your connection with the dancer Phillip Adams?

SH He was a student at the VCA many years ago when I was teaching there. I was intrigued by him. He's a unique dancer and choreographer. In Australia he's only worked with this company, the rest of his time has been spent dancing in New York with many cutting edge choreographers. He's ready now to make a work.

KG How would you describe his work?

SH The emphasis is on distortion and restriction, how distorted bodies can be – it's not a pretty little dance.

KG You're doing two pieces.

SH *Saddle up* is light-hearted on the outside, but it's really a comment on my time in Canberra. I did a sketch of it in our last season, *Askew*. It has a horse theme and rodeo theme. Physically I'm looking at the horse but metaphorically it's about what a ride I've had in Canberra. It's been tough but I keep getting on that horse. The other piece, a more major work is called *Hark Back*. There's an ancestral element to it and also an evolutionary thread, and in a grand way, light evolving through the

different elements from water to land to air – that's the guiding structure to it.

KG Are you still pushing the choreographic limits?

SH The basis of my work is a fascination with the body but I sense a change in what I'm doing. I'm interested in what the body is saying and what the motivation for movement is, more in a theatrical sense.

KG How is this expressed – is it more psychological as opposed to working on form?

SH Yes, with a strong base in physical form, but the theatricality is vital and each performer explores genetic, physical, family origins. It's fabulous for them.

KG Do you use speech? I ask because there is a proliferation of talk in recent dance and because the material lends itself to speech.

SH A little. I have used it before but only as an aside. Once people introduce language it can take away from what the logic of the body is saying. Speech has to be organic for me, come from a central physical focus. My work in this show with the body is quite architectural. It's the first time in Canberra I've worked with a set. I've designed it in collaboration with a builder. I'm working with the set and the dancers as I create it. It's very three dimensional, with lots of possibilities for changing spatial relationships – putting people upside down, placing them high in the air. We move on it but there are shifting elements. It's architectural in form, because, as with the bodies and lives of the dancers, I'm looking at the evolutionary element.

The music is composed and improvised by percussionist Keith Hunter. I always have live music. He's very much a performer in the piece. There's also a pianola activated by the performers – including myself.

KG And after Canberra?

SH I head straight back to Melbourne to teach briefly at the VCA and then I'm off overseas.

Vis a Vis' new season in the wind's eye commences June 28, Gorman House Arts Centre, Canberra.





Nikki Heywood



Andrea Aloise &amp; Katia Molino

Heidrun Löhr

Heidrun Löhr

## NEXT STEPS

It's almost expected these days that performance works will appear at all corners of the room. My personal favourite is still the perspex panel inserted in the ceiling of the Performance Space to reveal earth shovelled above our heads, 'burying us alive' in the Sydney Front's *Passion*. Anyway, just when we thought we'd seen it all Next Steps uncovered more – an attic, a wall shelf, a window, a space above a doorway – and a new audience locale, a circle in the centre of the room, all of us sitting on portable stools. To the right of us *Fragment 1* by Leisa Shelton gave us a horizontal show of legs defying gravity, lining up and slipping out of view. And how strange legs are when you look at a line of them for long enough. Part of this serious fun with movement and space was some very nice finger and footwork from accordionist Gisel Milon. Along a platform, *Jean/Lucretia* – Nikki Heywood singing beautifully from Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* and taking a movement microscope to her grandmother, Jean, talking us through and into her stance, her gait, the way she stood when she laughed, taking them into her own body and out again, not quite becoming but commenting on them in a persona, emotional and at the same time detached demonstration of memory. In three separate spaces, Andrea Aloise and Katia Molino created *Gynaecology I, II and III*, three short pieces beginning with some wriggly work through a see-through tube, some raunchy bum wagging through to an evocative, silent scenario at a window which definitely has the makings of a longer work. Outside the door and in the ceiling Alan Schacher retraced the steps of some former inhabitants of the Performance Space, recreating remembered movements from his own and other performances. Anna Sabiel stepped inside her metal rigging and fell into suspended animation inside this external body, the machine breathed sound around her. In the studio and at the windows of the office space, photographer Heidrun Löhr created a theatre of images from the landscape round Tibourra along with a set of tableaux containing suggestions of movement – boat, fan, tree caught inside rusting metal frames. In *Fugue*, a film directed by Louise Curham, choreographer Sue Healey's four dancers moved through physical spaces, some we might identify as real, others far less certain. Bodies transformed, shuddered, flew across the screen in the (very) cool night air outside the theatre. In Gideon Orbarzanek's postmodern *apache* with Narelle Benjamin, *My Brother-in Law's Mostly Disfunctional Marriage*, movement became metaphor, the couple all angles and impossible connections. Kate Champion is an inventive dancer with a nice sense of humour. Her pieces in last year's Steps program (a woman falling up from her dress, a drugged woman barely standing) take some beating. This year's *Of Sound Body and Mind* lays bare the fears of the damaged body complete with amplified sound of knees creaking (audience groaning in sympathy) as she repeatedly steps up and down from a chair to change a continually failing lightbulb. Finally Jeremy Robbins explores all the gymnastic possibilities of a bathtub full of water in a very athletic striptease and display of the pure pleasure of the body at full stretch, directed by Gail Kelly with her usual theatrical flair. This year's Steps program was a nice step up from last year's Steps One. The participating artists are linked by their work being primarily physically based and by collectively representing dance/physical performance in its broadest terms. Leisa Shelton (Theatre is Moving) has plans to tour. VB



Melanie Gray

## SWEET YETI

She stomps on tattered shoes into the long narrow performance space, all concentration, moving forward along a line looking straight ahead into the moving light source. She switches her half smiling attention to the audience flips into a set of sideways almost Indian dance poses, half turns of the body. Her attention moves to her assistant with the light as he moves to another part of the space. The shadow of the tiny dancer shoots up and across the wall. Her movement is sometimes eccentric, sometimes reminiscent of something 'oriental' sometimes 'exotic' sometimes minimal. Loud grunge by Beck interspersed with silence counterpoints the performance. She completes the piece with a perfect swan dive into her tatty shoes. She brings the house down with her. Lisa O'Neill describes her work so: "*Sweet Yeti* is a movement based piece designed to take the viewer on a theatrical journey into the world of one small woman. The piece is peculiar in manner with a sudden twist and turn of thought around every corner. The woman is both happy and sad, determined and carefree, loud and soft, but most of all, she is alive". Lisa O'Neill is an independent dance artist now based in Brisbane. She has worked as performer, choreographer and teacher both in Brisbane and with Darc Swan Company in Sydney. She has a diploma in Dance from QUT. VB



Michael Simmons

## WHAT TO NAME YOUR BABY

Father and son act: Richard and Sam performing in *What To Name Your Baby*, filmed and shown by SBS and screened as part of Tasdance's first season under new artistic directors Karen Pearlman and Richard James Allen with dancers Joanna Pollitt, Gregory Tebb, Kylie Tonatello, Samantha Vine and Scott Graylands who will join the company after recovering from an injury he sustained while performing in Adelaide. Tasmanian reviewers and audiences took to the new company with praise and enthusiasm and not a little curiosity about work which features a baby and a strong emphasis on the spoken word. The company is based in Launceston and toured *What To Name Your Baby* to Burnie and Hobart in April and May. RT

# Out of the Cocoon

Julie Huffer meets Montage at the Brisbane Festival Fringe

Out of the darkness numerous slide-projectors beam images of autumn leaves on to tent-like cocoons, giving them colour, texture, and life. Inside the cocoons, constructed from twisting branches and a multitude of semi-transparent materials, bodies slowly begin to move, an arm extends, a foot appears, a whisper is heard, and guttural sounds emerge from within. The audience members are able to move among the performers (they are reluctant to do so), observing the metamorphosis as images change, forms alter, and movement changes pace.

For the six members of Montage (dance, theatre, music, and visual arts graduates), the Brisbane Festival Fringe premiere of *Dormant* at the Metro Arts' Movement Studio is both a work in progress and a work centred on process. The company's facilitator, Kelli Dipple, suggests "this performance is valid, but we are defining ourselves in a grey area". That grey area is, of course, hybrid arts – defined by Hybrid Arts Committee chair Stephen Armstrong as "the coming together of two or more art forms that creates something new in itself". Kelli believes *Dormant* will mature as the company works towards developing a new form and style.

The form and structure of *Dormant* was guided by Megan White's design. Sandra Inman says for her, the design "influenced the development of the work just as music could have done". Megan began designing the cocoons early in the rehearsal process, adapting them according to the performers' responses. Intrigued by a relationship between body and environment, Megan initially planned to make costumes out of organic matter, but then opted for slide projection as a means of dressing both the set and the performers. Her earthy design aims to sensitise people to their surroundings, and encourage them to view elements of nature in a new light.

In terms of content, the journey of a butterfly from its cocoon serves as a metaphor for the parallel journeys of the

performers. Without a strict narrative, the audience makes its own connections between largely individual visual and aural fragments, with spoken text enhancing the sensory experience but not readily conveying literal meaning. Kelli argues that "the focus is on impressionism ... if the audience come expecting to be spoon-fed they'll be disappointed". Sandra Inman describes *Dormant* as, "a collage of voice and movement and light and visual textures...a portrayal of the five senses".

Kelli says: "I don't want the audience sitting in seats. I want the audience to feel close, for there to be opportunity for touch – not just physical, but in terms of eye contact as well. Theatre can touch people in a way that film, video, computers and the information superhighway can't." Sandra Inman says the audience for *Dormant* "in some way become props, influencing the performers by their very presence". As the company grows, they will perhaps challenge this relationship further. Interactive theatre is not new, and *Dormant* doesn't break new ground in the way that performances by Sydney's Sidetrack – using audience involvement as an integral component in the performance – did. It's more a case of the work having "no front, no back, no us and them".

The company sees its method of working as special. In preparation for this work, each company member conducted workshops for the others, in their specialist art forms, in an effort to build and share skills. Avoiding a directorial approach, they then explored various methods of working and creating, focusing on the integration of voice and movement. Kelli's training has included the Linklater voice method, Feldenkrais, dance, and body therapies, but she believes no one method satisfactorily trains the performer to combine voice and movement. Montage is integral to her search for such a method.

Julie Huffer is a Brisbane dance teacher and reviewer.

the  
cutting  
room.

choreographed and performed by  
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directed by **Nigel Jamieson**  
design: Prisque Salvi  
lighting design: Ken Roach  
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time & motion 1995

photo: Heidrun Löhr

# The Liberator of Spaces

Colin Hood talks to Ian Hartley about film culture, inner-city night life and how not to become a Kings Cross identity.

I've just about reached the end of a long two-installment interview with Ian Hartley about the history of Sydney night-clubs, cinema cultures and the decline of repertory cinema when a quiet, shuffling Kings Cross resident politely inclines towards our table. A garage sale it sounds like – a lot of junk perhaps, but a stack of 200 or more records that he – Ian – might want to take a look at. Vague directions are given (to my shame I can never remember the names of Stanley and Palmer Streets – especially when under pressure). He checks his watch and glances across to his small shop – “The Hungry Eye” (I'd bought my Lenny Bruce CD's there 12 months before but was short of cash for the “antique” Richard Kostelanetz anthology. Opening time – 4pm. It's a Sunday afternoon on Victoria St, and the spray of leafy shadows are about to send me from de-caf to something a little stronger. “I'll try and get around there” he says, with a neighbourly nod.

Ian Hartley describes himself as a “liberator of spaces” which seems the most apt description for a man who has moved on to so many different sites (night clubs, hotels, radio, cinemas) redesigning, reformatting, setting an original tone for inner-city nite life and not-so-fringe cultures for over 15 years. Many colleagues and friends of mine remember the film screenings, exhibitions and other events at I.C.E. on Riley St (The Institute for Contemporary Events) which kicked off in 1980 after Hartley had sold his share in “Skin Deep” (probably the first outlet for Docs in the late seventies). Moving on to the Film-makers Co-op premises in 1981, Hartley programmed a heady mixture of underground and avant-garde films, while providing “event” space for bands like Severed Heads and SPK. Bums filled seats for films by the Fluxus group, Stan Brackhage, John Cassavetes and special festival events. Moving up to the Paddington Town Hall, Hartley co-ordinated the last season for the National Film Theatre.

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A few nights in the early eighties when the Clifton Hill “enfants” (Kozic, Brophy, Martin et al) were tangling and partying with the Sydney Super-8'ers, doing gigs at French's and playing the pinnies down at Stranded (with Fifi Lamour and Simon Reptile at the helm, finessing performance and dance gigs with a relaxed “hybridity”), I felt convinced (while watching *Jaws* in the fluffy, Romanesque “chill-out” room) that our night-life, visual art and cine-culture would kick on just fine. The venues might change their names and owners, music and themes (not to mention the party drugs). Media recording and delivery platforms were going to give us faster, cheaper and more efficient audio-visual resources – pushing musical and cinematic innovations into new territory – as well as improving night-club “atmospherics.” We'd still have our “conventional” cinemateque programs of course. Outside of film course screenings, Paddington Town Hall was a great place to go for that “stick in the eye” introduction (I speak for myself) to experimental film and modernist narrative cinema.

It was last November – during renovations for the Valhalla Cinema in Glebe – when the last of the die-hard cine-buffs filed in for one of the final Cinemateque screenings for 1994. The sound was fuzzy, the seats were

uncomfortable. “Was I getting old”, I thought, “heading in abject decline for a soup kitchen for homeless men?” No – not an old mad bum yet. Something had gone wrong, gone missing and I wanted it back.

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Ian Hartley and scriptwriter Brett Gartner put in one of several proposals for the refurbishment and management of the Paddington Town Hall complex. “We were going to take over the cinema and make it into a venue, using the bar to bank-roll [to cross-subsidise in a sense] ongoing cinema and videoteque programs – including a video bar. I was going to run it till it made money – build up some capital, and then we would initiate a range of film and video programs – establish a shop for exchange and purchase of a range of books, videos and equipment. Some seats would be removed from the original spectators’ ‘hole’. But then it's better to have half a brilliant cinema than no cinema at all.”

The refurbishment of the Paddington Town Hall is now almost complete. According to the April issue of *Film News*, The Sydney Film Centre will contain “two cinemas, office space, a bar and a large foyer”, contributing to what Geoff Thompson (writing in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, May 22) describes as the great boom in art-house cinema. And not only that: “Once the domain of a small audience of die-hards unfazed by sub-titles, obscure foreign directors, and esoteric scripts, art-house cinemas are pushing out into the suburbs” – by which he means Newtown, Cremorne and Glebe. And lest we forget – before too long – the difference between avant-garde, independent, experimental, mainstream and ART-HOUSE cinema, and those who served to program (and screen) the difference.

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Before the crash in 1988, Hartley had pretty much a free hand in designing and programming club nights at Base (which featured live performances by the likes of Diamanda Galas, the Dome, Kinselas and Site (which finally cashed in its chips and immense popularity to card machines and backpackers 12 months ago). When the money squeezed, money managers became events-managers, and the carte-blanche days for smaller independent entrepreneurs was over. Suits moved into the Hell-Fire Club (rummaging around for girls in dog-collars) and ecstasy made it feel like more of the same.

Dancy cocktail music now fills the air on Sunday night at The Tender Trap, inspired by Hartley's rave in a REsearch publication, *Incredibly Strange Music*. When the doors closed again on the old Les Girls venue, and in an intrepid bid to turn a meat-market into a serious venue – for a few hours at least – Hartley booked outstanding performance bands like The Jack Lords – as a seriously fun alternative to groping and schooning – at the Cauldron (standard clientele: suits and wannabe models).

Back at Les Girls again – and still at the Cauldron Thursday and Sunday nights – the show will continue, and if Hartley has his way, the liberating of spaces will continue into the next millennium.

# New at the Zoo

Francisco Ascuí talks with the new artistic director of Hobart's Zootango

It can be difficult to find your feet when stepping into another's shoes. Apparently not so, however, for Louise Permezel, newly appointed artistic director of Tasmania's Zootango Theatre Company, who seems to have quickly established herself as successor to founding director Richard Davey with energy, enthusiasm and a clear vision for the future. RealTime interviewed Louise in the company's offices backstage of the Peacock Theatre in Hobart's Salamanca Place.

*What are some of the rewards and frustrations of being artistic director of what is virtually the state theatre company, in a state as small as Tasmania?*

Well, I was actually attracted to apply for the job because of the size of the company and the size of the city that it's operating within – as opposed to working in the context of a larger city such as Melbourne or Sydney, which I have also done – simply because it demands of the company and the people working within it to go out and make connections with the community, and to make efforts to get to know the community. That, in fact, I find quite an exciting challenge, even though I'm very much a newcomer to Hobart.

There is a smaller arts community, and whilst that has its downside because you're drawing on a smaller pool of professional artists and skilled practitioners, the up-side is that it is very easy to network artists, and in fact the community facilitates collaborations if you choose to go that way.

*What are some of the new directions you're bringing to Zootango?*

Well, Zootango's gone through several phases in its history – it's now in its ninth year. The company's certainly pursued new work before, but it's been primarily and almost exclusively the work of the founding director, Richard Davey, because he was also a playwright. I am not a writer, so I'm looking to bring in artists from the mainland to start working with the company. I'm planning the development of new work in two ways: on the one hand I'm putting out an invitation to fairly well-recognised or significant Australian artists (such as Louis Nowra and Hilary Bell) to come and work here in Tasmania, and to

allow this community to affect their work, thereby creating new work that is particularly for a Tasmanian audience. The other direction that I'm pursuing is to initiate ideas with Tasmanian artists. We develop project ideas, and then I set up and bring together an appropriate team of artists to start a collaborative work process. We've just received a Creative Development grant from the Performing Arts Board of the Australia Council to commence work of exactly that kind, involving myself and seven other artists, including four performers, a composer, a writer, etc. That work will probably be produced in 1997 – all the work that I'm initiating is being given twelve to eighteen months developmental time.

*What do you think is the identity that Zootango already has?*

I think over the past three or four years it's been quite difficult to pin down exactly what the identity of Zootango has been – it has tended to follow the model of a mini state theatre company – in other words, offering a repertoire of primarily existing scripts that have been done elsewhere. I think the company has sometimes been caught up in trying to be all things to all people. I'm choosing not to follow that course any longer, because I feel it dissipates energy and focus. Through the creation of new works, Zootango is going to develop an identity that springs from the fact that the artists who have worked together have been inspired by the state of Tasmania, so that something of this place will be affecting our work and the voices within our work. The aesthetics and values and work processes that I bring to the work, combined with those of the artists will, over time, develop a very particular style of theatre that I hope will be contributing to theatre in an Australian context. So I'm looking for opportunities to take the company's work interstate – I see that as a real priority.

June 2 – 17 Zootango presents *Meatsafe*, a new play by Franz Docherty at the Peacock Theatre, Hobart. Ph 002 234-544

Francisco Ascuí lives in Hobart and is an editor of the interdisciplinary arts and literature magazine, Siglo.

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## Dress Code - Remove

Colin Hood did the Post-Arrivalist thing upstairs at ex-Les Girls, Kings Cross.

Door Posts trembled as Cat-Woman demurred from removing even a single item of her clinging kitty-playsuit. "Rest assured there are no US sailors in here," replied the tribal delegate nervously as we crossed the threshold into the post-theatrical-malaise escapade. "Shame, that would have been more fun," replied [name withheld]. She picked up her bag, my wallet and disappeared into her own self-assured, eventful evening.

Funny. Pinocchio's nose did not stretch an inch when Daniel, an EO3 from the USS Constellation took me aside for a smoke, a drink and a chat. Disappointed at receiving no prize (not even a bleeding Barbie Doll) for trouncing the competition in musical chairs (City Gym did me right for once), I snubbed the upside-down surfing event for some vocational guidance. What if I were to be trained and paid by the US Navy to become a dental technician; would I resist the temptation to jump ship to marry a Perth girl? The exit door from performance studies and the ongoing malaise of the humanities was but an arms-length away.

Hope shattered, the glowing outline of

the magic door dissolved when an unfortunately semi-clad person – even mannequins look better with their clothes on sometimes – chided Dan and I for spoiling the performance with our too high level of spectator-to-spectator interactivity.

It was probably the explosive conversation between cuddly "wowlies" on a stick that prolonged my chat with Sailor Dan the Dentist. The Posts were working the Kings Cross context to the max (entertainingly so). When PK sides with the Japanese after the present escalation of the US/Japan trade war, there'll be thousands of bugs hidden in twinkie wrappers lying on the lawns of Australian embassies all over the shop. "Dan", I said, "Pretty soon we Australians are going to be your new Asian trading partners – on our terms." He nodded calmly, facing the inevitable – with a maturity beyond his years.

Back on the court with the Posts, I was strapped for cash and wondering how many nips of vodka I could get for five dollars. One and a half said the barman, meanly but politely. Dodging tennis balls and cut-out terrorists – something like that

– I ran in to an ex-student of mine from the Theatre Department of the University of Western Sydney. I'd last seen him on a Chokito ad on TV, and he was now pursuing further study in Wollongong.

Entracte: a percussive rendition (complete with big tribal hair) of something vaguely familiar. Too many late nights watching *Prime Suspect* and *Funky Squad* on "time-shift" must have set my brain on fire.

Chastising some poor SMH reviewer, who'd claimed they were theatrically inept, the Posts continued the rite of several passages with an anthropologically correct reading – in performative terms – of George Seaton's *Teacher's Pet* (starring Doris Day and Clark Gable). Flagellation and journalistic self-criticism – dolls, dildos and a wicked aerobicised mistress – completed the inversion of the original story-line. When it comes to journalism, according to the Posts, experience is the jockey and education the horse.

I usually avoid all kinds of participatory theatre, preferring to sit in the dark and exercise my "glutes," ears and eyeballs. But



The author, seated right foreground

Mr Hood

this was my home turf. Backpackers and beery bus-boys beware. "If you go down to the Cross tonight you're sure of a big surprise". Outperforming the chatty jugglers, bikers, "burbers" and spruikers, Chokito, Dan, Jules and the rest of the Post-it stickers skulled the dregs of their warm ales and Stud Colas and – led by one of the tribal elders – fell into a round of processional chanting and placard waving, filing toward le banque de change, to pay an earnest and unrehearsed homage.

I never said a proper goodbye to Dan as I pocketed a stray tennis ball for the pussy to play with. Couldn't even palm him a business card. Happy life Dan. Happy Trails Posts.

## B-File Australia

*The five Beatrices, a suitcase in their hands, lean or sit on the sides of the stage. They sip cans of Pepsi, eat a sandwich, consider the audience coming in, take out tissues to wipe hands, etc. The stage fills with blue light. They assemble on stage and sing in harmony*

All: God is dead.

So begins *The B-File* an erotic interrogation by UK performance writer Deborah Levy (*Beautiful Mutants, Heresies*) who will be in Australia in October this year at the invitation of Playworks, this year celebrating ten years as our national workshop for women writers for theatre and performance. Deborah Levy, who was a guest of the International Women Playwrights Conference in Adelaide last year, returns to create a new *B-File* for Playworks with 10 Australian artists. "My

aim is to stage as many versions around the world as is interesting. The work has what I think is a water tight structure and can be created over and over again in many tongues and with different emphasis." Over the two weeks in Sydney Deborah Levy will work with the autobiographies and languages of the Australian participants (five women who identify themselves as performers or are happy to perform, a stage manager, a designer/visual artist, a choreographer, a composer and a singer).

The first version of *The B-File* was created in response to a project Deborah Levy devised for non-performers in Cardiff in 1991. In 1992 she re-worked the piece with five professional performers three of whom spoke Welsh, Italian and Greek.

B1: *Cia'r drivus.*

Interpreter: *She says, shut the door.*

*Is Beatrice a character?*

*If she is a Welsh character is she dressed for the part?*

*Is Beatrice a persona?*

*If she is a Welsh persona what are her voices?*

The piece changes each time depending on the participants and as the shape and themes deepen. "When I began, the theme of my choice was to find a theatrical version/translation of some of the ideas I was exploring in my fiction *Swallowing Geography*. I was interested in the yearning for a place and a person never met. An imagined place or half imagined person, the familiar feeling of knowing you want things to be different, having a fragmented picture in the mind of what that might be, an atmosphere or a moment, but not knowing how to meet it.

B3: *My name is B. I am wearing a blue dress, brown shoes, red lipstick and my hair up.*

Interpreter: *Do you love Z?*

B3: *Yes I do.*

Interpreter: *Does Z love you?*

B3: *I hope.*

Interpreter: *What words do you say to Z when you make love?*

B3: *Tesoro.*

Interpreter: *She says, My Treasure.*

*What effect do you want your words to have?*

B3: *Passione.*

Interpreter: *She says passion. After you have made love who goes to sleep first?*

B3: *I do.*

Interpreter: *What does Z think about while you sleep?*

B3: *He takes a book and reads a map of the city.*

RT

*Deborah Levy's Swallowing Geography and Beautiful Mutants are published by Vintage.*

*Enquiries regarding Deborah Levy's visit should be directed to Playworks Ph: 02 262-3174 Fax: 02 262-6275.*

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# Splinters' Unplugged

Roland Manderson celebrates Splinters' 10th birthday

Peter Haynes, ex board chair, put it best when he said probably only Canberra would hold Splinters to its heart for so long. Partly that's a product of size. Well, most of the energetic and loudmouthed performers in Canberra have worked with Splinters, or been part of Splinters, or ended up really pissed off with Splinters, at least once in the past decade.

And so at this formal celebration, 11 am on a Monday, a large number of the current Splinters associates (who weren't at school or university), plus most of Canberra's senior arts workers and arts managers were there; along with a few bureaucrats from Playing Australia (out and about on a team building exercise), Canberra's recent arts minister, Bill Wood (but not the current one, Gary Humphries), practising artists from the ACT's arms-length funding committee, a couple of our (surprisingly) most junior arts bureaucrats — all together eating chicken wings and strawberries in the warm sun and gentle chilling breeze. A perfect Autumn day.

Location and design have always been a strong Splinters' feature. We gathered in the concrete forecourt of the defunct Yarralumla brickworks, flanked by kilns, a drop punt from Bill Hayden's Government House, surrounded with memorabilia from many past events which included the breast plates brave performers wore when they were abused by Rev Heads at the Summernats ("get it off! get it off!"), iron sculptures and vehicles with that much loved Vaskess look (sort of Miro meets Searle), stalwart performers a bit cold but alive in fabulous feather and wire dresses and beaks, and three or four other regular contributors in silver jump suits handing around drinks.

Of course giving us champagne in glasses and providing paper towels with the finger food was shocking evidence that Michael Mitchener's recent marketing consultancy really will move them on to the more 'professional image' that arguably they're looking for ... and some of us returned to our jobs later shaking our wise old heads.

David Branson conducted the event between chats to the media. He didn't go on and on mind you, just introduced the guests. (Maybe, David, you could apply the same technique when you're hosting cabarets!?) Patrick Troy was also charming, and very very quiet, but then this was not an event of artistic statement, or iconoclasm. The night time party, with a band, noise, requisite Splinters' fire, and several police visits to which Patrick could respond, would restore the balance later, but this Monday morning was a modest marking of the moment, with a terrific

poster of Splinters' poster past, the highlight of the hand-outs.

There was entertainment. Catherine Hassell in Butoh-like slow motion, full of huge repressed emotion, rolled acrobatically on velvet covered concrete, and with thumping dolphin kicks 'swam' across the hard hard ground. A solo performance by a fully dressed adult woman! How things change now we are ten. And Mikey and Geoffy from P-Harness sang good songs, and silly songs, and made rude comments about Splinters who give us all the shits, and who we love. Then Sara Vancea and Jonathon Nix played great music behind us as we chatted, and admired the setting, and sized each other up.

I was in the video/poster booth, with its walls done out with momentos of most of Splinters' output and video footage of one show or another filled with manic laughter, barely clothed performers, fire, noise and moving metal objects, when I was struck with profound envy. Splinters are only ten years old. Ten years before that I would have been right in there with them, being rude and loud and indiscriminate. What fun to do those things with friends. And, if you are Splinters, to take it seriously.

Of course, the only legitimate approach to take if you grow up in Canberra, with its apparently ordered streetscape, its repressed loneliness and hidden poverty, its newly built suburbs, and its backbone of clean white collars, is to be baroque, or crusty, or neurotic, or surreal. There're a lot of people in Canberra who do a lot of that. Which is why Canberra and Splinters deserve each other.

The performing arts in Canberra is about working with others, and making it up. Near enough is good enough quite often. People make loose alliances, join in for the fun of it. Well, the audiences are mostly your friends, eh? And Splinters thrives on this volunteer enthusiasm that anyone can be a part of it. Anyone often is. In the midst of that kind of looseness a lot of energy and invention and surprise can happen.

Canberra actors are under fire for being 'too lazy'. The director who wants a well-made play here, might find the well-made actor hard to find. There's no industry base so it's not surprising, but it's also a choice. Canberra actors audition very poorly. Usually there's no point. We make our own work. And, like Splinters, sometimes it's risky. Sometimes it's sloppy. And sometimes it's a real thrill.

Roland Manderson is artistic director of the Canberra Youth Theatre.

## Moonwalkers

There's excitement in the air in Sydney theatre circles. Timothy Daly's new play *Moonwalkers* is about to premiere at the Stables. Daly wrote the successful *Kafka Dances* produced by Griffin Theatre Company in 1993, remounted for the Sydney Theatre Company 1994 (both productions directed by Ros Horin) and La Boite, Brisbane (directed by Jim Vile) in 1995. If that play was about a genius writer who flirted disastrously with the temptations of ordinary social life, then *Moonwalkers* is about an ordinary man who finds himself in astonishing circumstances that test his rationality and reveal a destructive personality. Just as in *Kafka Dances* a Yiddish Dream Theatre nightmarishly shows the writer the way to resolve his plight, so in *Moonwalkers* Eric encounters, though in real life and not in his dreams, insane neighbours who threaten to change his and his wife's lives. At the same time his body is accumulating abnormally large and dangerous charges of electricity. What appears to be a social comedy rapidly escalates into a bourgeois nightmare where fidelity, fertility and sanity are put to the test. RT

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# “But with so much forgetting how can we make a rose”

Jules Supervielle

Linda Marie Walker

Over coffee Mary Moore talked to Linda Marie Walker about her set for Jim Sharman's production of Strindberg's *Miss Julie*, about how intricate unexpected relationships between object and body, and body and body, bring about minute decisions which determine that mirror, glass, flower. And how each decision reads specificity.

Theatre is a peculiar art, especially given the word's close relationship to theory. To what is imagined a way (a glass) to watch and suggest the world. While theory itself is “a site of display” (Peter Bishop, “Zen and Lacan”). Theory is theatre. Theatrics, perhaps, imbue theatre curiously (for me), as something old, shiny, worn. A mode then of excess, of making-out, as if theatre is theory besieged. And is for this reason instantly knowable. I anxiously watch the explicit composing (the sudden framed spectacle), the narrative of theatre, narrated again, and go home. Weary.

The theatrics of display are hard work, to hear, to see, to love. And this is personal, this misgiving, misunderstanding. Something comes over me when ‘I go to the theatre’, I am subjected. If I can, though, consort with, so as to be absorbed, one or two elements of the overall event, then I relax somewhat, am attracted differently, side-lined, and note, wonder about, this and that. The narrative register softens, and other, isolated, tales (of design, lighting, music, movement, costume) arise. Why be kept by *Miss Julie* for ninety minutes. Now, today. And yet ... deals are made, broken (aren't they), surely, so as to dramatise oneself (before arriving, say). It, pleasure, must be then the form itself, theatre, theatrics, theory (as speculation, excitement). And in this instance, the symmetry of ‘action’, as rhythm, tone, ambience, and as pulse: yes to no, contempt to envy. This is tough skill, the way the woman's body (Julie/Pamela Rabe) sways in the moment, and the way the man's body (Jean/Robert Menzies) smashes that delay. This logic deals with rendezvous, with text. Like swimming, the horror of floating, of sinking, in the chlorine blue, a matter of timing/practice, and theatrics must, in some way, cover this fact, that ‘naturalism’ is athletic. Nothing truly confirms this, as intention. It's taken for granted. And I attend, ‘lost for words’. Still, all is speakable, finally. Nothing halts reading, the “perfumes of the audience” (Roland Barthes, *The Grain of the Voice*) endure.

I watch the set: as sketch or score. Simple shapes. Spare notes. It's there, as picture. Stark, not cold, open, not vulnerable. A presence without ornament. Functional. It provides ‘stage’, underpinning, and stages. It's intimately woodenly visible. It speaks/acts alongside the ‘play’, in strokes, swoops, marks. And the actors act in concert.

There is a huge pine table, with a wide front and narrower back, ‘pointing’ to Jean's bedroom (where the deed is done). And a pine staircase curving up from the kitchen to a platform, and to ‘outside’. The platform overlooks the main space, the kitchen (with large black oven). The cook/Kristin's bedroom is off to the left, under the stairs. The floor is slate. And there's the high wall/screen (backdrop too easily names it) with swirling red/orange lit slashes before which everything occurs/occurred, signalling the play's facts, like fire, festivity, night, day. (The red/orange of Munch's *The Scream* and *Anxiety*). They are Munch lines, say from *The Lovers & Separation 1*. Lines of terror, emptiness (and transformation), the lovely waves (relief) of madness, sadness. The exquisite joy of unravelling, of drifting

from self-possession – which *Miss Julie* won't relinquish. (Munch drew August Strindberg in 1896: “When he added a symbolic frame to the picture made up of zigzag lines and the naked figure of a woman, Strindberg complained, ‘You know how I hate women, and that is why you have introduced one into my portrait.’ Munch later removed the frame.” J. Hodin, *Edward Munch*.)

The whole design is a geometry of subtraction, everything big and small, seems to speak as ‘preface’ (‘theatrical’ slows down, e.g. lilac is a sprig, mirror is minute). And as interface too, with the play already ‘read’, contained. The set (almost) denies (ignores) the ending. Death. Even though Death is proposed as freedom/cure, a woman cuts her throat. The scene is theatrical, crazy. Is, then, ‘theatrical’ embellishment, the extra, insurance, like insistence (in Stein's sense) or repetition (in Blanchot's). If so, it's a guarded state, and probably the theory (theoretical) moment of theatre. The hot sore spot. The loud prolonged ringing of the bell was ‘ending’, of course. Why did the audience pause. Were they touched. The man/Jean would have responded to a mere tingle from the master/count. We knew that.

The set's functional timbre affects the determined moments – anger, pity, hope – as they stamp (and seal) time and space, press down narrative. The set keeps pace, which seems obvious (being constant), but is a considerable condition. It's a thing, object, dividing all perspectives, going everywhere, while very grounded, heavy, drawing bodies like a magnet, beautiful when the red scarf falls, cold when Julie cracks, when Jean rants. The stairs are dangerous, physically and emotionally, as characters race/swagger up and down, console, explain, seduce, cajole. The table is the flat thick surface of useless authority, a coffin (Julie), scattered with ordinary objects, it swallows the ‘dumb’ passions of the ‘lovers’, it's a too porous blotter, absorbing the beheaded finch, making the spilled blood a red spot, showing the pathetic nature of the issues at stake, the absolute irrelevance of the ‘story’ and the ‘people’, the table ‘re-stages’ the stage, utensils congregate there (as tableaux of those ‘determined moments’), appear, disappear. And yet it remains a bare weighted ‘theory’. The bird's death on the bread board is nearly untheatrical, a minor miracle. The woman's death is barely visible on the big big table of her ‘theatrical’ life. The finch is beheaded, Julie ‘beheads’ herself just beyond the staircase, and the screen. The white (start over) dress useless, her body a silhouette, any number of Munch's backs and fronts of women - *The Lonely Ones*, *Stormy Night*, *Two People* (*The Lonely Ones*). (The script I read said: “Miss Julie walks firmly out through the door.”)

Foucault wrote: “the heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible. Thus it is that the theatre brings onto the rectangle of the stage, one after the other, a whole series of places that are foreign to one another.” (*The Order of Things*.)

Mary Moore's set leaves space to breathe. The single site generates others easily, as they come about in speech, in the telling of before and the dreams of after. The contoured structures work on the play, intervene, as the play works on, over, through them. And this exchange seems based on distance, reserve, as if the play can't tangle (confuse itself) with the set, and vice versa.

This pleasure is dialogic, or perhaps de-dialogic, in that it is both plural and



David Wilson

singular. And not dependent on weave, but on threads as they cross, and part, on their passing, and ‘use’ as world. And as memory, when the learned words, emotions, gestures, are issued, on the third step say, or at the far end of the table, each ‘bit’ specific to and for memory, as a repeating of the impossible. Forgetting allows this. The set was (perhaps) a forgetting machine, echoing the drama, the malaise, the hysteria (male and female). It embraced the economy of dream, where the obvious is forgotten: Miss Julie forgets how to act, and demands orders. It's as clear as the table, awkwardly trompe l'oeil. “What is forgotten points at once toward the thing forgotten and toward forgetting, the most profound effacement where the site of

metamorphosis is found.” (Maurice Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation*)

Moore's set is relationally activated, by things and bodies, it is and isn't theatrical, even while the play is, relentlessly. It's a voice from afar, and readable, like a current, on every surface (theoretically speaking).

*Strindberg's Miss Julie*, adapted and directed by Jim Sharman, and designed by Mary Moore for the State Theatre Company of South Australia, April 22 - May 13, 1995. Mary designs Timberlake Wertenbaker's *Three Birds for the STCSA* in June.

Linda Marie Walker is an Adelaide writer and visual artist.

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# Tropical Tribulations

Wesley Enoch on Queensland Youth Arts

The development of youth arts in Queensland is a representative journey of the development of work with young people in the arts nationally. In spite, or perhaps because, of the fact that the Queensland government had no articulated policy on youth arts (and in some respects still has no active agenda), the youth arts industry in Queensland has grown as a rogue rainforest parasite grafting itself onto many sources, pulling in influences and, like the young people we work with, surviving on the edge of social norms, leading in new practices and philosophies. This survival instinct, which is best characterised by the breadth of projects and diversity of Youth Arts companies that exist in Queensland, has created a lean statewide organism with a voracious appetite for networking, resource sharing and a 'pack mentality' with a special commitment to critical debate and support.

In 1991, the Australia Council released the *Ideas, Facts and Futures* document which highlighted the use of arts in work with young people and the validation of 'youth specific' cultural communities. The document, which was launched in Queensland, pointed toward the acknowledgment of arts practices outside the traditional realms of 'high art' practice such as street dance, aerosol art, language and improvised song making, fashion and cartoon. It also recognised the utilitarian use of the arts in youth community cultural development, the select use of arts-based strategies to achieve non-arts outcomes, eg. youth accommodation issues such as design, consultation and information distribution.

In the same year the Australia Council also brought out a discussion paper, notoriously known as the *Blue Paper* because of an unfortunate stationery choice, questioning the ways in which the Drama Committee of the Performing Arts Board had traditionally supported youth arts. The suggestion by the PAB of limiting access and capping companies had been a direct response to the growth in applications from the youth arts industry nationally. The outrage which flowed from the threat was so overwhelming that the *Blue Paper* was

the hottest topic at the 1991 Youth and Performing Arts Conference in Adelaide, far overshadowing the conference theme of sexuality and young people.

From that conference came The Carclew Consensus, named after Carclew Youth Arts Centre, which endorsed a funding ceiling, up to the wage of one key person per company and unlimited access to apply for project funds. This consensus formed the basis for the Drama Committee's youth arts policy up until quite recently with the additional prioritising of those companies working with young people identifiably isolated on cultural, geographic, social and/or economic grounds. The challenge had been firmly set. Youth arts companies set about diversifying their funding base and hence re-evaluating their practice.

In Queensland this challenge was eyed off hungrily; lobbying State bodies such as the Dept of Family Services, the newly established Youth Bureau (which had as its brief to deal with sports, scouts and law reform), Arts Queensland and DEVITIR (the state equivalent to DEET). Training in 'soft politics' and acronyms were all the go; at CONTACT Youth Theatre at the time the staff would roughly average a grant application every 1.5 weeks. In 1990 the Queensland Youth and Performing Arts Association (QYPAA) was established and acted as a depository for information and training. QYPAA went on to become Youth Arts Queensland (YAQ) and in 1993/94 ran the NYAAP - National Youth Arts Advocacy Project which was modelled on a successful state based process of identifying alternative avenues for youth arts workers and companies to seek funding and to promote arts based strategies for youth community cultural development.

Similar to the emerging hybrid arts debate, the acknowledgment of a broader interpretation of youth arts incorporating community cultural development models brought a range of previously unrecognised practices into focus. The more cynical reader may also suggest that many artists were driven by the funding policies, as opposed to being committed to the work, and hence shifted their practice to fit the guidelines. In Queensland, with a history of

community-based and political theatre, youth arts have grown up with a strong social justice agenda. Gender, cultural background, indigenous issues, disability, isolation and transport have all affected the funded Queensland youth arts companies in their development of access and participation guidelines, and simultaneously supported a real diversity of youth arts practice.

I identify three major forms of youth arts practice in Queensland: training, empowerment and emerging artists. It must be stated that these three areas are not mutually exclusive but are in dynamic relation to each other. Training is a model I define as the passing on of skill from a particular area for a particular purpose with a measurable comparative outcome. This practice is predominant in youth dance where training in ballet is a primary youth arts experience for young people. In Queensland - as in the rest of Australia - training young people in the arts is highly commercial. Many amateur theatre groups conduct workshops as well as profit driven companies, while youth theatres subsidise their other activities through lucrative workshop programs. Significant are the high cost of tuition fees and the affluence of the clientele, mobile and product driven.

The word empowerment remains the most cited word in contemporary youth arts practice. Strictly speaking, empowerment means 'to give power to,' but it has many applications. Feral Arts, for example, use recording technologies (video, photo, audio) to empower young people in the process of cultural mapping and planning. Currently 'the Ferals' are working at South Bank (a public parkland in inner city Brisbane, with its own beach and fairy lights) gathering data and working with groups of young people concerning responses to the space and the new youth laws which give on-site security guards the powers of police. Other projects have included video documentation and projection work at shopping centres in Logan and a community centre at Crestmead (where a 3m high fence was erected to keep the young people out).

Broader social agendas have also been enacted through the work of La Luna (Townsville), Grafton Arts (Cairns), Snot artS (Inala) and Youth Arts Queensland. This work is characterised through the artistic processes developed by young people, facilitated by an interpretive and reflective skill enhancement. Young people,

when given access to skills and resources, have their perspectives aired. Often this work provides a means of dialogue with other groups, as seen in CONTACT Youth Theatres cross-cultural work or La Boite Youth Theatre's gender-specific work.

The area of emerging artists is one in which Street Arts have been active. The nurturing and resourcing of a group of young people, who may have already gone through a process of training and/or empowerment, helps overcome the 'wasteland' years where young artists are 'too inexperienced to get a job and can't get a job to get any experience'. Grasp, which is the name of Street Arts' youth project, consists of young people exploring form and content far outside the 'loco parentis' problems associated with youth arts. The exploration is characterised by an ensemble of dedicated young artists who approach companies with concepts and request resources. Often these groups emerge from within youth arts company structures and take on their own momentum, eg. Youth Inc at CONTACT, Hereford Sisters at La Boite.

One of the strengths of the Queensland youth arts industry is the acknowledgment of diversity and the tolerance of divergent work practices and philosophy. The ability to incorporate the practice of a social worker in youth housing using visual arts and drama strategies to discuss accommodation issues, and the rehearsal and performance of scripted drama works by young people, has created a youth arts worker with diverse skills and greater work opportunities. The only argument which remains is one of resourcing and funding (who should pay for what?), and the ethics involved in working with such a broad range of interests and expectations. The cries go up: where's the art?; we shouldn't mix social work and art? Ultimately there must be an appreciation, as was outlined in *Ideas, Facts and Futures*, of the diversity of youth cultures and hence the diversity of expression of those cultures. In Queensland, the flavour is clearly about diversity of approaches and an open discussion of philosophies.

Wesley Enoch is the artistic director of Brisbane's Kooemba Jdarra performance company.

## GiBBER

Founding Co-ordinator Fleur Ginane writes about GiBBER, a Perth magazine for, by and about young people.

Have you heard the one about Perth's Youth Problem? It talks of gangs and crime, drugs and car-chases, repeat offenders and teenage whores. It's produced a whole new section in the WA police force (Juvenile Aid Group at your service), a storm in the press, careers for several youth workers around town as media experts and funding for groups of people to gather in government rooms and ask each other, "What the fuck are we going to do?"

In fact, everyone's had a slice of the action, everybody's had their say, except, hang on, there's something missing ...

GiBBER Magazine was born out of the need for young people on the street, in gaols and outside the mainstream education system to have a voice. It's a place where these much discussed individuals have an opportunity to give their perspective on their lives, experiences and thoughts. Not only that, it exhibits and encourages the production of raw and exciting youth street art and writing.

Most of the contributions in GiBBER are from people between the ages of twelve and eighteen. It means collecting the work from juvenile jails, the parks where Nyoongah communities gather, and youth and emergency accommodation centres. About eighty percent of the inmates of juvenile jails are aboriginal and consequently, at least half of any edition is by Nyoongah youth

Everyone involved with GiBBER is under the

age of twenty-five and it has a 'hands off' editorial policy. Nothing is changed, shortened or corrected. The work selected is chosen on the basis of it being representative of the general view of the contributors. It's always treading a thin line between choosing 'good' art and writing and giving everyone a say. Topics are broad and have included feelings about being locked up, solvent sniffing, love, doing crime, anger, graffiti and families.

Coming up to Edition 5, GiBBER has established its place amongst Perth's youth. A couple of the older street kids, who are regular writers now, help and encourage their friends and relatives to contribute in informal workshops in the parks. Some of the poetry is transcribed for youth who can't read or write. It has expanded into a regular spot on Aboriginal Radio where contributors read their writing. An exhibition of words and images from the magazine is also being planned. This will be projected onto walls in those parts of the city where young people hang out.

Youth street culture is dramatic and alive. It is a unique blend of indigenous and non-indigenous culture, of being on the fringes and of being young. GiBBER is about drawing out the creative, the insightful and the expressive side of this culture and of giving a voice to the kids on the street.

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# But The Children Really Liked It

Pamela Payne takes a critical look at responses to youth theatre reviewing

"But the children really liked it." It's a familiar justification from directors of theatre for young people (TYP) less than happy with critical response to their work.

Some children quite like to sniff glue, or roller blade through traffic. Is that OK then? Is "the children really like it" all that matters?

What about less loaded examples? What about fast food from the big hamburger multinationals for example? Yes, the children might really like it but who would expect food critics to rave? And wouldn't those responsible for their children's well-being much rather they ate a balanced meal? That they developed a taste for food other than mass-produced bland?

"But a hamburger once in a while can't harm kids. Why can't we just let them have fun? Isn't that what childhood's about?" That's the next riposte – usually in a tone of voice that suggests I'm kill-joy incarnate.

Of course I want children to have fun. And if a production isn't reaching them – if they're bored or confused – then it can never be deemed successful. My point is, though, that while "the children liked it" must be a given of any production created for them, it's not necessarily enough.

We're all familiar with the easy ploys to keep young audiences involved: bastardisations of traditional pantomime, sometimes with a veneer of sophistication. "Tell me when you see the witch. Let's have a practice. Louder. Louder." Or "What the pretty princess needs is some very clever boys and girls to come up onto

the stage and help her to sing her magic song." Or "Let's all be the wind in the forest. What noise does the wind make?"

It's just not enough. I want young audiences to have an experience of theatre that engrosses them; that perhaps provokes them; that fires their imaginations; I want them to recognise – and for many of them this will be innate – that something exciting has happened.

They might have been sitting at the feet of a single storyteller; or have been out adventuring in a perambulatory theatre work; or in a classroom, school hall or gymnasium with a three-actor-three-rostrum-and-a-screen touring company; or have seen a main stage, big budget production; or a puppetry company. Whatever theatre form, and whatever the venue, the criteria are the same: the highest technical and creative standards and material that is focussed specifically on its audience.

In other words, TYP must be judged by exactly the same criteria as professional theatre for adult audiences. Anything less is gross patronisation of children.

And just as any review of a play for adults will embrace comment on the quality of the text – and I don't mean to imply a necessarily verbal text – so must we address the TYP text. But here our standards often seem oddly askew. I don't think I ever read a review of a play for adults where the moral or pedagogical worth of the text is considered compensation for banal language, predictable plot, superficial characterisation or trite scenario. Not so,

though, for TYP.

I find it curious that for adult audiences theatre is considered entertainment – in the broadest sense – which includes qualities such as intellectual stimulation, philosophical/ political provocation, teasing and stretching the imagination as well as, possibly, the chance to have a good laugh. Too often, though, it seems that TYP is perceived only as a means to an end: the lesson taught.

Do we want to go to the theatre to learn that we shouldn't drink, or drive too fast, or how to fill in our tax form? Of course we enjoy theatre that provides us with food for thought – whether its the art-or-science debate at the heart of *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* or the troubled themes of *King Lear*. But what we don't want is to be blatantly 'taught', or even worse, 'preached at'. We demand that the playwright respects our intelligence, gives us scope to deduce themes, challenges us, and trusts us.

There are certainly TYP plays that achieve all this. What I'm suggesting, though, is that to use as either justification or primary criteria for critical standards, "the children really learned a lot" is no more satisfactory than "the children really liked it." Without high order theatrical values – applicable equally to a discussion of one actor on a bare floor and full stage productions – all other yardsticks for critical standards are erroneous.

Other areas where there often seems an inexplicable dichotomy between critical standards for TYP and adult theatre are form and style. There often seems an odd sensitivity from critics to work for children that deals in forms other than linear realism, or linear cartoon caricature. But if there's one audience most likely to respond to divergent and unfamiliar theatrical form, to abstraction, symbolism, fractured narrative, dance, music, hybrid arts, it's children. They live in a world of untrammelled imagination. What's more their notions and expectations of theatre have not yet been conditioned by over-exposure to conventional work.

Then there's the issue of critical appraisal of performance standards. Undeniably there's excellent work going on. But there's also a good deal of performance that is woefully clichéd. And the cliché isn't even always based on truth. I've searched in vain in playgrounds for little girls with wired plaits who habitually stand with their hands behind their backs, jiggle a lot, have pigeon toes and high cutesy voices. I can't find them. But they're on the stage – it's an unsolved mystery of TYP.

As for every other element of theatre, when discussing the effectiveness and thoroughness of characterisation, I can find no justification for differing standards as we move between theatre for adults and theatre for young people.

There is, though, a curious phenomenon here. It's to do with support of the form. A negative review of an adult company is

contextualised by the theatrical event: it's understood that the critic is directing comment at a specific production. Where TYP is concerned, though, a negative criticism of a specific production seems often to be read as lack of support for all TYP. It's dangerous territory. And a long way from reality: our concern for TYP and its audiences has to be reflected in the rigour of our critical standards.

If TYP presents problems, Youth Theatre (performances by youth) is a minefield. Despite the eagerness of many youth companies to see their work hailed in the press, there's only one reason for a professional review of youth theatre in a daily or weekly newspaper: that the company is seeking to attract a general public audience. We're paid to inform our readers, not to nurture or to teach young people – harsh perhaps but reality. (That a review is not appropriate doesn't, though, exclude the possibility of a story that talks about the project and process.)

But if a youth company enters a public arena, seeks to attract an audience outside parents-and-friends and immediate local community, then a review is entirely appropriate.

What standards should apply? Of course, a youth company cannot be expected to have the technical competence of trained professional actors. We can't demand this; we must make allowances.

When reviewing youth theatre, the concept of standard is, I believe, related to the way in which a director compensates for lack of performance technique. It can't be 'adult theatre done badly': a limping amateur production. There might not be great technique, but there must be great conviction, intelligence, invention. As, for example, when we sat on the muddy, sludgy field of Agincourt while young Henry V, on horseback, addressed his meagre army (Australian Theatre for Young People's *Henry V* directed by Antoinette Blaxland), I had no doubt that I was experiencing splendid theatre. And no hesitation in writing a review that would convey my enthusiasm for this production as work of high theatrical standard.

Good youth theatre – whether company devised or text based – should make no less impact on its audience than good adult theatre. But its means and methods may well be different.

In a sense any discussion about standards of reviewing TYP and Youth Theatre seems about as silly as discussing acceptable standards for children's health, safety or nutrition. Surely all we want for them is the unquestionable best. And to get the best we as critics must demand the best. That's our responsibility.

*Pamela Payne is the theatre critic for the Sun Herald in Sydney. She recently delivered this paper at a Critics Forum as part of Come Out 1995.*

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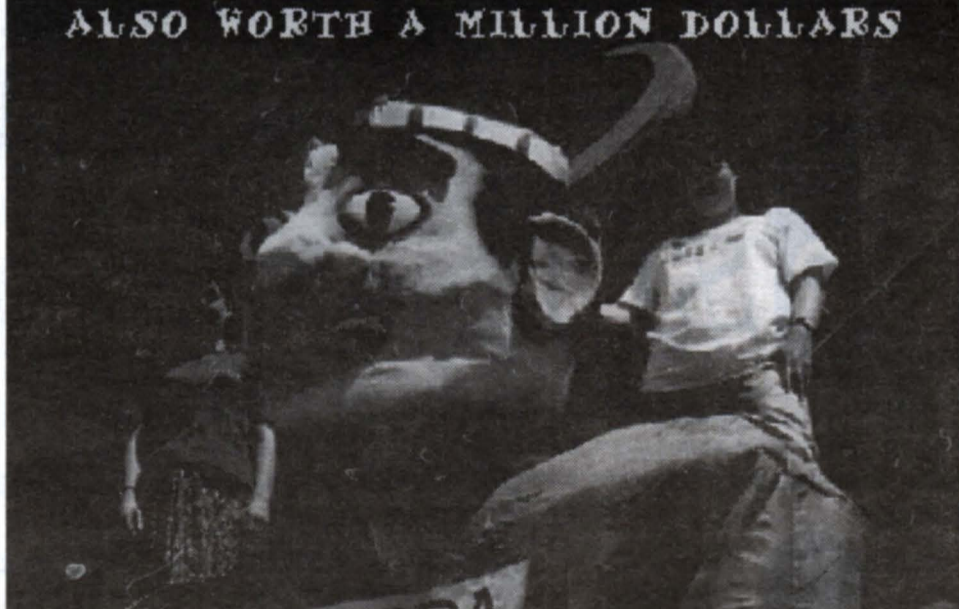
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# Beneath the Melody

John Potts speaks with composer Robert Lloyd

*JP Your first CD Nullarbor is about to be released. Looking back, how do you think your music has developed over the years?*

RL I was entranced by Balinese music when I first saw a gamelan in Sydney in the early 70s. But there's a whole lot of other influences in my work as well. I think the most common thing is a strong rhythmic structure. Most of the music is derived from rhythmic cycles played against each other, which you hear in a variety of different types of music. African music has it, Indian music has it, Balinese, and mediaeval and renaissance music have it, as well as many others. I studied music in Bali in 1975: for me that was a confirmation of what I'd been doing. In Bali I got a sense of the connection between music, dance, theatre, a variety of experiences.

*JP The importance of rhythmic units in your work invites a comparison with minimalist music, especially of the New York school. How do you situate your music with theirs?*

RL My musical path has had more to do with traditional Asian music than listening to American music. I found it fascinating when I first heard the New York school of composition. Again, I got an affirmation of what I was doing. But the biggest driving force in my music is rhythmic structure, timbre, the idea of many things moving together in different rhythmic cycles. To me that connects more with the

everyday experience of walking down the street and hearing four or five people talking at once, with the sense of some things coming to the foreground, some things moving away.

*JP You've written music for dance and performance. Do you adapt the music to fit those forms, or is there already a concord between your musical concerns and body movement?*

RL I think there's both. Originally I wrote concert music, then choreographers asked me would I write for them, or could they use pieces I'd already written. So the music was already there and choreographers were interested in it. With theatre, particularly working with Open City, it's had a bit to do with working with text. I've always been fond of the spoken word, and like to find ways of working with it. So what I've done is simplify structures, or use less layers. Out of five layers, I might drop two to accommodate a male and a female voice.

For me, to function as a composer I need to work in theatre and dance and in concert, and in other forms as well. As an example, in the concert when we launch the CD, there's a piece called *Hands and Feet*, which is based on a ten beat rhythmic cycle. This was part of some material I used with Open City in a piece called *Sense*, where everyone was using a hand and feet rhythm on stage. That's something I developed for theatre, now I'm putting it back into a concert environment.

*JP As well as the performing arts, have you had much inspiration from the visual arts?*

RL I've been playing around with a video opera with a collaborator for a year or so. More generally, contemporary painting has been a big interest for me. I guess the connection with painters who've influenced my work is the repetition we have in common. Liz Coates, a Sydney painter, has images layered in juxtaposition, and to me that's quite musical. It relates to my music in the way I might use a cycle of 7s against a cycle of 5s against a cycle of 9s, and after a while they all meet up at the lowest common denominator. I see music visually pretty much all the time.

*JP But how does that relate to your rhythmic influences, which may derive from non-notated, improvised traditional musics?*

RL Well, Balinese music isn't really improvised, the way people think it is. Like Indian classical music, it's based on a rhythmic cycle, and a lot of the rhythmic figures are learnt and handed down. This is one of the misconceptions about music from cultures without a notation system. It's handed down to such a degree that it's closer to European classical music than is generally recognised.

*JP Where do your particular rhythmic patterns come from?*

RL Some have come from playing with speech patterns. People's names have often been used to create rhythms. Another one is from walking patterns. And from other cultures, where percussion rhythms have been learnt from such an early age that speech and drumming can be very

rhythmically connected.

*JP Have you consciously absorbed as many rhythmic patters from around the world as you can?*

RL When I was a student I was probably obsessed by it. Now I've absorbed so many rhythms, they'll last me for quite some time. I'm more in a position of inter-relating rhythms, where one may trigger a memory of another.

*JP What is the role of melody and harmony in your music?*

RL Subservient. I've attempted to turn music on its head. I want to give rhythm a more dominant role, and I think that's relevant to the way culture is now. Melody can come out of rhythmic melodic lines. But I generally don't write music where one instrument stands out, like a violin. I don't have a lot of interest in hierarchical music. Some people get scared if there's no melody - what can they hang onto? Many people have an emotional connection to the melody as the thing that touches their heart. But I think underneath the melody there's something deeper. Certain pulses or tone colours affect us in particular ways. The whole gamut of music - not only melody, but rhythm, harmony, tone colour - all those things together affect us. To me, it's the putting of all those things together which creates interesting music, and emotional connection.

Robert Lloyd's CD *Nullarbor*, on *Move Records*, will be launched with two concert performances, July 8 & 9, 8 pm, at *St Laurence Arts Centre*, 505 Pitt St Central, Sydney.

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# Electric Eclectic Elektra

Romano Crivici and Nicholas Gebhardt on string quartets beyond the concert hall

For the last six or seven years, the Elektra Quartet has been trying to forge its own vision of string quartet performance in a music scene where if you're not symphonic, then you're scraping. Dissatisfied with the direction of the various projects they were involved in, violinists Romano Crivici and Mirka Rozmus, viola player Rudolf Crivici, and cellist Marcus Hartstein are attempting to forge a distinctive style of playing that opens up what has traditionally been the most formal of ensembles, making it accessible, eclectic and challenging – all in a single bound. We caught up with artistic director Romano Crivici on a languid afternoon as he sat contemplating the exigencies of budgets, basements, and the blues.

The Elektra Quartet is definitely in search of "the people". Crivici thinks that, in fact, the very nature of the Elektra Quartet, as a collaborative enterprise which highlights the breadth of contemporary music culture, allows them to commission works that prove that "...contemporary music can be accessible, it can be popular, particularly if the composer is trying to write for people, is aware of people, rather than following some sort of formula, or hiding in a school. For us commissioning new work is crucial because there is not

much stuff already written that we feel is right for us. Broadening the range of venues in which we play also opens us and the audience up to new listening experiences."

The shift from simply relying on the acoustic qualities of the instruments to working with electro-acoustic effects, amplification and improvisation induces a different sensibility in an Elektra performance. The use of pickups and effects pedals exposes the volatile temperament of the strings while at the same time altering the overall resonance that you might expect from a chamber ensemble. Crivici emphasises, however, that rather than being a hindrance, this exposure opens the musical potential of the group right up, bringing new textures to light, forcing the players to think about their sound and the sound of the quartet in unexpected and unusual ways, and facilitates the melding of different musical and instrumental traditions.

"We're not self-conscious about what we're doing, and we are definitely not on a mission to create the new form for the 21st century. I think that's just sort of spontaneously happening from the nature of the venues you play at, the nature of contemporary culture. There are hundreds of contemporary quartets. They're flooding the market, they're playing beautifully,

perfectly in tune, perfectly in time, with great musicians. But it doesn't mean much. Not many people hear them. For us, what is important is creating an environment where people hear music they can relate to, music they can enjoy, maybe even talk over. Which is why the gig at the Basement was interesting as an attempt to find other performative situations that are less alienating than the concert hall."

Crivici considers Elektra to be making a significant break with the expectations of performance practices and conventions. "We've done plenty of formal concerts and audiences get tired of it. It's time to critically assess what we're doing and look at what audiences want and what is possible within the context of the music. I think even some of the more traditional organisations like Musica Viva and the Sydney Opera House are looking at ways of attracting new audiences who are educated in more intimate and informal events. It's more interesting to incorporate the audience in what you are doing and get them involved in thinking about the music, something I think, from experience, people really like. The 'proper' concert procedures are dying and really, who cares?"

"The risk you take is always that you are working with untested material, with ideas

that are still in the process of being formed. To find the balance between the demands of the music and the commitment to accessibility means we are always walking a tightrope. The thing about contemporary music is that it is constantly creating gaps for inserting new ideas and I think audiences see that and respond to our willingness to engage with various performative possibilities and still remain distinct."

In this sense, Crivici is adamant about Elektra's determination to transform and expand the concert experience, to the point where the audience is as much a part of the performance as the members of the quartet. And they are busy implementing their plans: a yearly subscription series featuring a range of commissioned works as well as Crivici's own compositions in a variety of venues, a show with REM Theatre in July called *To Be Brave*, and performance work with the percussion group Synergy. The overwhelming concern for Elektra, after all, is collaboration; to develop techniques that enable them to work with different media, with different art forms, with different people.

*Elektra String Quartet Sydney concerts:*  
Casula Powerhouse June 9  
Goethe Institut June 17  
The Basement June 25.  
Enquiries: 02 247 4677

# The Aural Lens

Nicholas Gebhardt talks music with the Belgian best-seller

In a global media market where pure forms are becoming lost in a frenzied aesthetic of the mix, and the tendency towards cross-fertilisations and mixtures becomes the basis for cultural production, a Requiem Mass doesn't sound like a winner. But then again, no one thought Górecki's *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs* would take the pop charts by storm. Now *Flamma Flamma*, a Fire Requiem by Belgium composer Nicholas Lens based on the Latin mass and using a range of traditional and synthetic sounds, is an incendiary attempt to recover the primacy of pre-Christian mystic and pagan rites along with a range of non-Western musical influences as the source of an ecstatic musical experience.

Lens, in the spirit of Stockhausen's cosmic musician, thinks that *Flamma Flamma* marks a particular point in musical history where composers have an infinite variety of musical resources at their finger tips, and through electronic technologies, can manipulate and transform these resources in unimaginable and profoundly moving ways. He senses that "... while technically this piece breaks no new ground, its mixture of formal operatic or trained voices, various 'ethnic' voices and instruments, orchestral timbres and electronic instruments, is an innovative synthesis of old and new, building bridges between different musical traditions and cultures to create a heightened emotional state."

*Flamma Flamma* is indicative of the influence of pop and world musics on the classical composer. It tends to operate more by quotation and transposition than through the production of new sonorous material. For Lens this is a conscious decision to avoid what he sees as the pitfalls of Western art music. "Distinctions are disappearing and everyone is using and listening to other elements. Because of this, music shouldn't be defined by styles or schools, but just as music. For the last fifty years classical music has been dominated by an intellectual approach to composition. People have become too serious and too analytical about what music is and this has meant that the emotional side of music has

been forgotten, that music is missing something. In this sense, I feel I'm much closer to the aesthetics of pop or rock music than the contemporary avant garde."

It's a sensibility that also informs the way Lens likes to work. "I travel a lot, taking in different sights, different sounds. My travels have definitely influenced the shape of *Flamma Flamma*, and then it's a case of trying to let the music flow from these experiences and from the things I know. I don't like to think about it too much when I am actually composing; it's more to do with feeling the shapes of the sounds. Then, when I've got things down, I start to work with it, to bring all the elements together. And of course, the other standard I have is whether or not I'm having fun, whether I am actually responding emotionally to the piece I am creating. I'm not all that interested in writing boring, difficult works that make it impossible for anyone without a classical music education to appreciate and understand."

Because all the innovations in orchestral music have already taken place and the history of music has moved beyond the electronic experiments of the 1950s, Lens feels compelled to look elsewhere for inspiration, for ideas. *Flamma Flamma* relies heavily on the resources of vocal group, *The Women's Voices of Bulgaria* as well as the tradition of death rituals in what Lens calls 'primitive cultures.' For Lens, this is a way of moving beyond the heritage of 19th century symphonic music while still creating new musical colours and combinations that speak to the desires of the listener, that evoke an immediate response, an immediate identification in the power of the music to express human emotions.

So are these new 'hybrid' forms simply an excuse for a return to a musical primitivism or in fact a greater formalism, or is there something else going on? Lens considers *Flamma Flamma* the first part of a trilogy that will transcend musical borders through what he defines as a cosmic transition. "The more I listen to Javanese or Indian music, music that is

deeply meditative and emotional, or listen to the pleasures of silence, the more I realise that the future of music lies in this mixture of acoustic and electronic material in a way that will make works that are exciting and that express human concerns

about universal issues. Music can always do that."

*Nicholas Lens, Flamma Flamma: The Fire Requiem, Sony Masterworks 1994 CD SK 66293.*

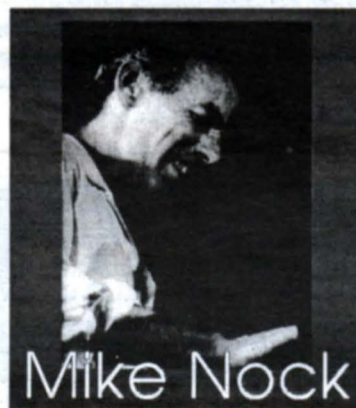
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# Views and Previews

## Books

**Jean Baudrillard, The Gulf War Did Not Take Place (translated and introduced by Paul Patton), Sydney: Power Publications, 1995.**

Paul Patton's introduction to these three essays - written "before", "during", and "after" the war, examines not only Baudrillard's ficto-critical account of the conflict, but also draws on criticism of Baudrillard's "inhumane" acquiescence in the face of real human tragedy.

In the lead-up to the Gulf War the US media conscripted the "people" into the war movie apparatus. The pre-release preview was done on location. The voice of Roseanne was properly buried as the words of the Star-bangled banner (vibrating handsomely in the body of a black US marine) echoed through football stadiums and global media outlets. "Stormin' Norman" and associates fine-tuned the war script - creating nodals, points of tension, "hallucinating those [opposing them] to be a threat of comparable size", before parking the through-line in the usual spot before the media hypermarket. Here, winners, losers and supporters could all claim a prize at the check-out: the US, for the defeat of the savage enemy and for proving that "sumptuary expenditure [on high-tech armaments] is equal to real war"; Saddam, for success in peek-a-boo charismatics and low-tech deception (including a surgically altered doppelganger son and inflatable battle-tanks imported from Italy).

One might dismiss Baudrillard's account as cynical complicity and postmodern irrationality. But going back to Patton's introduction, we find the political realists in a conundrum as well. He quotes Chomsky in support: "As I understand the concept 'war', it involves two sides in combat, say, shooting at each other. That did not happen in the Gulf." Perhaps the Oklahoma bombing (work of a disgruntled, disenfranchised Gulf War veteran) provides an appropriate footnote to the grim realities and machinations of the "non-event."

**Theatre and the World  
Performance and the Politics of Culture  
by Ruston Bharucha  
Routledge, London 1993**

This one's been out a while, but RealTime is catching up on the Routledge catalogue and strongly recommends Bharucha's passionate response to the western appropriation of eastern performance traditions in the name of universal human values. If, like quite a few of us, you didn't find yourself entranced by Brook's *Mahabharata* but couldn't always put your finger on why, then Bharucha's 'view from India' will certainly focus your thoughts. Grotowski and Barba are also punished but the diatribe is tempered by interesting observations about the way their theories and practice evolved under apparent eastern influence. Just as enticing is Bharucha's own curious venture with co-director Manuel Lutgenhorst. The two staged various versions of Franz Xaver Kroetz's *Request Concert* in Bombay, Madras and Calcutta. In each city they worked with a different performer, quite different in respect of cultural values and performance careers. The attempt to translate this play for a solo woman performer in response to local values turned out to be complex and demanding, even in a play without language and relying on everyday actions and gestures. Bharucha puts himself in the hot seat of interculturalism in this enjoyable account.

In RT8 reviews of Elaine Aston's *An Introduction to Feminism and Theatre* and the paperback release of the 1993 *Towards a Third theatre, Eugenio Barba and the Odin Teatret* by Ian Watson, and *Acting (re)considered* edited by Phillip B. Zarilla, all by Routledge.

## CDs

**Michael Smetanin  
Skinless Kiss Of Angels  
Elision Ensemble ABC Classics**

Composer Smetanin and ensemble Elision are well matched on this collection of four works, written with energy and invention, and demanding the same qualities in performance. On the title piece, Smetanin lets his Russian roots hang out, coming on like an Aussie Schnittke in his settings for words by Melbourne poets Alison Croggon, Jacinta Le Plastrier and Daniel Keene. Ignore the WARNING! EXPLICIT LYRICS! stickers; give yourself up instead to the spirals and tilts of desire as Elision wear themselves out playing this manic music. Elsewhere, Smetanin offers up a harpsichord and recorder meditation on particle physics; a tour of an asylum inspired by an Andy Warhol painting; and an odyssey for electric guitar and percussion inspired by a win at the racetrack. You can't go wrong with inspiration like that.

**Riley Lee, Water Music, Tall Poppies TP033 1995**  
In 1992 the Water Board emptied Centennial Park's Reservoir No. 1 for the first time since 1898. Taking advantage of its extraordinary acoustic, shakuhachi grand master Riley Lee and producer Belinda Webster ventured into the Reservoir to record a series of komusō (a Zen Buddhist sect) meditations in the sacred or honkyoku tradition. Each piece drifts, sparingly, exquisitely, across the broad acoustic field, folding in amongst the water dripping from the roof, pushing towards an infinite stillness. Throughout the recording, it's this amplification of the water that acts as a distinct rhythmic plane, cutting across the image of each melodic phrase, producing a delicate counterpoint of tempo and texture, of colour and consistency; a thread of elemental forms that combine and dissipate through the porous surfaces of each meditative moment.

**Kronos Quartet, Philip Glass, Nonesuch, CD7559-79356-2, 1995**

For Philip Glass the four string quartets (Nos. 2-5), collected on this Kronos Quartet recording, are fundamentally about the question of musicality. Over a period of ten years Glass has come back to the form of the quartet as the essential form for inflecting upon the compositional process as a whole, and these works argue for certain transformations in his musical thinking while still encompassing and developing the central premises on which his work is based. Quartet No. 5 operates on the edges of Glass' trademark lyricism, moving between the usual egregious arpeggios and a series of more finely wrought melodic incursions. No. 4 is more deft and the second movement is built on shifting planes of suggestion and anticipation - shades of Shostakovich and Debussy, but with Glass' constant attention to decaying pulses. No. 2 stands out simply because of the tautness of the Kronos' playing. They attack it with a ferocity and a clarity which draws out the intricate exchange between the underlying pulse and the

actuality of rhythms. No. 3 is based on the soundtrack Glass did for Paul Schrader's film *Mishima* and is quintessential Glass. The strength of the Kronos in all the quartets lies in their ability to find the secret rhythmic modifications that run through all of Glass' work and make them work as formal or structural elements in themselves, a sort of turning-inside-out of the melodic surface. What is lost however, are the surreal textures, the dynamic possibilities that Glass' grasp of woodwind and keyboard voicings bring to his larger works, or even to his songs.

## Radio

**The Listening Room, ABC FM, Mondays 9pm  
Music and Questions with Tom Johnson  
by Kaye Mortley, July 3**

It's not long into this half hour work that you want to start answering the questions posed between the simple striking of a bell: *Do you prefer listening in the verbal or the non-verbal mode? ... Do you try to answer the questions as you hear them? ... Do you sometimes think about music too much? ... Do you sometimes forget to listen? ... Do you pay attention to the sound between notes? ... Do you find that the music is more repetitive than the text?* Tom Johnson, true to the spirit of the composers he promoted in *The Village Voice* 1971 - 83 (now collected and published) - Steve Reich, Phillip Glass, Robert Ashley - has created a cycle of questions that you soon leave off answering inside your head and enjoy for their musicality or the chance to reflect on your original response.

You become very conscious of the speaker's voice and pick up the tiniest shifts in emphasis and tone, even a hint of anxiety and heightened pitch two-thirds in. Definitely one for a reflective frame of mind and produced with her usual musical clarity by Australian Kaye Mortley, also resident in Paris.

**Naked: Dressing and Undressing the Radio in Thirty Minutes  
by Andrew Yencken and Carolyn Connors, July 17**

No preview copy, but the description reads intriguingly: "We dive into a wardrobe of vocal clothing and cosmetics. We dress up the radio with improvised gestures only to strip it all down again to the fundamental sounds of the voice. As we push through the protective layers of clothing and skin what do we find inside the singer?" This is a question posed recently at the recent voice symposium at NIDA and is getting fresh attention elsewhere. The singer is Carolyn Connors, the composer Andrew Yencken, the producer Andrew McLennan.

**Newtown  
by Christine Papangelis, July 17**

Again too early for a preview copy, but I was immediately attracted by the press release, again on the grounds of voice - "The program raises certain issues pertinent to some second-generation Greek-Australian women: the horror of accent, the rejection of voice and a mourning for the death of accent ..." This sounds so close to a question I have long wanted to ask of a second-generation Greek-Australian friend about her curious English, I will have to listen.

**Soco Gap: Snake Charming In America  
By Susan Stone**

A radio allegory by Stone, set in a poetic deep south. Narrated by a laconic southern story-teller, the narrative concerns Chance, the Hands of Fate, and a weird assortment of freaks in a travelling show. There are ex-zoo animals, tattooed women, and rattlesnake men, some with an "inner snake". The breezy story-telling compensates for a rather fey work overall, which is prone to meander along without making much of an impression. Still, the southern ambience

and subtle musical accompaniment colour this bizarre radio journey, part symbolic ode and part circus extravaganza.

**The Things About Bugs  
by Christof Migone and Gregory Whitehead, July 17**

A dark and buzzing journey into the "infinity of bugs". As you'd expect with Whitehead involved, this piece operates on several levels at once. Bugs as bugs, electronic bugs, bugs as dirt in the world of digital hygiene. Fascinating and highly listenable (unless you happen to hate bugs). There is indeed bad news for all enemies of the little buggers, as one voice forlornly intones. "The thing about bugs is, you can't kill them all... To eliminate them all, you would have to eliminate their habitat, and this would mean incinerating your home, and setting fire to your own body." This radio work unearths more bugs than you're generally aware of, from bugs in the swamp to bugs in the machine.

**July 31**

The program includes the sounds of pottery (by Alan Lakovetsky) in the twelve minute *Earthenware* - "making a pot, deconstructing a cycle of history" - by Robyn Ravelich; *Peace*, "a posthumous realisation of a radio piece by the late avant garde composer, musician and magician of La Mama Theatre, Syd Clayton" produced by Russell Stapleton and Andrew McLennan; and works by New Zealanders John Cousins and Phil Dadson, the latter working "with voices from stones".

**Radio Eye**

**Radio National, Sundays 8.30pm and Saturdays 3.30pm**

**My Echo, My Shadow and Me  
by Patrick Gibson, Tony Barrell and John Jacobs, May 28**

Already broadcast, but well worth investing in for the understanding and experiencing of the shadow world of the echo, especially in its role in the production of music - pop, western and classical. A mezzo amusingly tries out various acoustics (the difference between her broad everyday delivery and her precise singing is alone remarkable), the workings of old favorite pop and country recordings are revealed and the technicalities are explained with ease. Lovelier in stereo, but still an experience.

**The Miners Hospital  
by Cathy Peters, June 4**

This is straightforward radio documentary, a moving account of a successful battle to keep a hospital open in the old mining communities sixty kilometres south of Sydney. The evocation of place is strong as very elderly locals describe the thin strip of land between mountains and sea, the ills of coal mining, the sense of community and their joy at uniting once again to fight for basic rights. Peters' simple, almost hesitant narration, the vigour of the aged speakers and the sustained ambient sounds remind you how much radio can equal and better television.

**Dreaming of Fat Men  
by Lorelei Harris, June 18**

This is special, an excellent companion to Dawn French's television piece (SBS) about body weight and the sense of self. Four "obese, not a little bit overweight or pleasantly plump or well rounded" women came together "to feast and to talk about the place of food in their lives." The women hadn't met each other before and were recorded together one night over a meal. The recording, even when played mono, is excellent, placing you in the conversation, accenting its rhythms and carefully shaping through cross fades the various stages of the conversation. The women are ebullient, witty, alert utterly to the effects of their weight on their self-image and their sexuality, hurt and anxious about that degree of will they cannot exercise when it comes to

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food. Anecdote and personal narrative engage the listener in an empathetic experience of otherness, listening to voices that do not sound 'fat', listening to bodies you cannot see. *Dreaming of Fat Men* won a special commendation in the feature category of the Prix Futura and was made for RTE. Ireland. KG

#### Sound Systems

by Brent Clough, technical producer Stephen Tilley, June 25

Still in the making but one to look forward to as Brent Clough takes us into Jamaican music culture, not the expected world of reggae bands but, instead, "sound systems. Huge, awesomely powerful mobile discos" where performers sing over pre-recorded rhythms, tour locally and internationally, and sometimes meet in bloody combat in 'sound clashes' between competing systems. Clough interviews members of Stone Love, Jamaican music and culture experts Dr Carolyn Cooper and Garth White, and American anthropologist Norman Stolzoff.

#### Hyperland

by McKenzie Wark, Rosie Cross and Michael Lamrock, July 9

This is a brisk pop-trot through current techno issues, taking techno-hyperbole to task but still sufficiently engaged in the technology not to sound too disapproving. Wark even manages a bit of irony, adding the name of his new book, *Virtual Geography*, to a list of hip-hype terms. It's quite a relief to sit back and listen to all your techno anxieties (about globalisation, monopolies, the usual bad ride for the artist) rolled out with such good humour. My favorite moment is an artist joyously describing her work as 'user-unfriendly interactive' - 'All the buttons say don't touch!' If you missed it, demand a repeat. KG

#### Neubaten's Faust

by Tony Barrell with Rik Tanaka, July 16

In their post-industrial phase German band Einzustende Neubaten have been involved in a three hour stage version of Faust by the late Viennese playwright Werner Schwab. Band leader Blixa was cast as Faust "with the rest ... playing other aspects of his character and a whole range of musical instruments made out of wood and paper. These included drums, guitar, bass and marimba which, with minimal electrification and maximum mechanical improvisation turned the sound of the production into a metaphor for the Faustian legend. The guitar in fact is a massive table, with strings." "The climax of the play comes when Faust's huge books are first 'played' and then shredded in a monumental theatrical finale." Rik Tanaka recorded the performance in Hamburg. This is a rare chance to hear something of Schwab, "Germany's most performed contemporary playwright" and EN's latest manifestation. No preview copy.

## TV

### SBS

#### Bookmark

Fridays 11pm

June 9 Paul Murphy interviews Noam Chomsky. June 23 a special for sci-fi devotees, Romana Koval interviews Kim Stanley Robinson.

#### Masterpiece

Mondays 8.30

June 12 Organ Stop at Notre Dame takes you inside

the renovation of the cathedral's organ and Philippe Lefebvre plays.

June 19 Martin Amis interviewed by uncle Melvyn Bragg.

July 3. Just as *Three Tall Women* opens in Sydney, Masterpiece schedules a program on the playwright Edward Albee.

July 10 For anyone interested in photography, a program about American Sally Manne whose eros and thanatos photos of her children proved too much for some of her critics. If you're interested in Bill Henson then you'll find resonances in Manne's work.

July 17 Joan Miro, the Catalan artist.

#### People

Fridays 8.30pm

June 23 Fresh Live Cream

Jack Bruce, Eric Clapton and Ginger Baker (and poet Pete Brown) muse individually over the jazz and especially blues origins of Cream, their collaborations, copyright tensions, their happiest years, exhausting tours, superiority over the American bands of the time and their astonishment at what they achieved and how they managed to survive. The plethora of Jacks, Bruces, Micks, Gingers, Erics becomes quite poetic. Bruce's account of an unstoppable dash by the group down Ben Nevis through the town into a bakery is hilarious. The interviews are frank, the sense of history and context acute (Clapton on Hendrix - 'If I was black I'd be this guy', Bruce on his creative ambitions) and the brief re-union performance (at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame) of *Crossroads* is moving. KG

June 16 Robbie Robertson: From the Band to the Hall of Fame

Robertson is a fine guitarist and a great talker, on Ronnie Hawkins (whom he started out with), Bob Dylan ('his words coming at you a hundred a minute'), New Orleans ('the way people talked was in rhythm'), his American Indian ancestry and relatives, learning as a kid to play bottleneck without a bottleneck ('bleeding fingers'), Mississippi Delta music, being booed around the world with Dylan's folk rock ('the world changed, we didn't'). This is a nice piece of documentary history including great footage of The Band at work in the basement on *The Basement Tapes*. Martin Scorsese who made *The Last Waltz* featuring The Band recalls filming at Woodstock and not taking to the manners of The Band before he got to know them. Musician and producer Daniel Lanois and Ronnie Hawkins add their views on Robertson. Like many of his peers, Robertson says, "It's a wonder we survived". His most recent work includes two excellent solo efforts and a compilation of contemporary American Indian music just out in the stores. KG

## Films

SBS has a strong line up of movies over the next six months including *Jean de Florette*, *Naked*, *Manon des Sources*, *La Grande Bouffe*, *Riff Raff*, *La Marseillaise*, *The Double Life of Veronique*. Eric Rohmer's rarely seen 1972 feature *Love in the Afternoon* screens on August 4. For the curious, Roger Vadim's *Dangerous Liaisons 1960* with Moreau, Trintignant and a jazz score by Thelonious Monk screens on August 12

#### Babble On

Sundays 5pm

Watch out for this one, rumoured to be an *Eat Carpet* for the kiddies.

# Shorts

One of the too rare chances in Australia to see a play by Germany's most performed playwright **Franz Xaver Kroetz**. A short return season of Ariette Taylor's production of *Farmyard* will play at the **Fairfax Studio, Victorian Arts Centre** June 21, 22 and 24 at 2 pm. Kroetz says of this play, written in 1971: "I wanted to break through the unrealistic theatrical convention - garrulity. The most important action of my characters is their silence." Ph: 03-9281.8000

Another welcome return: **Chamber Made Opera's** *Recital* with **Helen Noonan** accompanied by **Stephen McIntyre**, devised and directed by **Douglas Horton** with original compositions by **David Chesworth**. June 23-24 **Fairfax Studio, Victorian Arts Centre**. Ph: 03-8281.8000. **Chamber Made** also present a season of *The Burrow*, the highly evocative and surreal portrait of Franz Kafka in the last few minutes of his life. Music by **Michael Smetanin**, libretto by **Alison Croggon**. *The Burrow* was first performed at the 1994 Festival of Perth by the Song Company. **The National Theatre, St Kilda** August 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 19.

**FAST (the Festival of Australasian Student Theatre)** is a week long annual event held in September which brings together students from tertiary campuses from all over Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea in order to showcase the skills of student writers, performers and directors. Dozens of theatre professionals will be hosting workshops and speaking at forums. In this its fiftieth year, and with increasing interest from the South East Asian campuses, FAST has become a truly international event and has a change of name from Australian to Australasian. The festival will take place September 24-30 at the **Bundoora campus of Latrobe University**. Campuses are encouraged to send as many delegates as they can afford and to present as many pieces of performance as they wish. The organisers are anxious to gauge the level of interest so they can plan accordingly, so contact Zoy Yerondais this month to register your interest in attending/presenting work. Ph: 61-3-9479.2194/9479.1198 Fax: 61-3-9478.1591

Artrageous acts permitted at Perth's own alternative performance festival **Artrage**, promoting innovative and independent artists. Artrage is actually able to offer a high level of assistance to artists through their sponsorships and funding. Support services include provision of venues and basic technical equipment and staff free of charge, discounts and assistance with publicity materials, as well as administrative advice. Historically, Artrage has been the primary vehicle for local WA artists to exhibit and perform. This year the festival is keen to expand the participation of artists presenting new and challenging works in theatre, dance, music and the visual arts from all over Australia. Some international participation is also anticipated. The deadline for submissions has been extended to June 26. Ph: Graeme McLeod 09-227.6288.

The **Performing Word Circus** is a group of Sydney performers taking the initiative to present their work at the **Harbourside Brasserie** introducing another flavour to that venue's normal music fare. Ring-mistressed by the drag diva Muffin, the Circus will open with the mating calls of Halex Vargus in their dance-theatre act, *Herding* followed by Theatre of Desire's *Rites of Memory and Desire* and *Confessions of an egg eater* and a *Tiny Man* presented by Out of Thin Air. Performing odd dates throughout June. For information call Eliane Morel 02-389.7521

**Open Door** is an experimental youth theatre company founded in 1991 by Gabrielle Gazal and Nicholas Frost: "Amidst the entertainment 'industry' we ask students to find a special openness in attitude, to value the group above individual ego and to value the search for understanding above the search for dollars" Appropriately Open Door present Stephen Sewell's speculation on greed and exploitation *Dreams in an Empty City* at the **Bondi Pavilion Theatre**, June 5-10. Enquiries: Ph/Fx: 02-398.1146.

**Vitalstatistix** present their popular **Winter Playreadings** - new plays by SA women writers Sheila Duncan, Carey Saunders, Anne-Marie Mykyta, Julie d'Lima and Anita Goerecke directed by Catherine Fitzgerald. **Waterside, 11 Nile Street, Port Adelaide**. Ph: 08-47.6211 Saturday afternoons with a glass of mulled wine 3, 10, 17 June.

*Live and Loud*. Comedian **Lenny Henry** will make his first national tour of Australia from August 1 starting in Adelaide at **The Office**. Also coming up on the Seven network later this year *Chef* Lenny Henry's sitcom inspired by some talented but tyrannical chefs he kept reading about in the Sunday papers. He's now credited with inspiring a new class of black chefs who didn't seem to be around before the series was screened. Enquiries: Howie & Taylor Ph: 03-9349.1313 Fx: 03-9349.1419

Noted Canadian poets **Douglas Barbour** and **Stephen Scobie** are giving individual readings and sound-poetry performances at universities around the country until the end of June as part of the annual program from the Canadian Consulate General. Enquiries: Culture and Communications Officer 02-364.3028

Two exhibitions offering some new views on landscape by women photographers in May-June *The Shaking Tree* an exhibition of large format photographs by **Susan Purdy** at **Stop 22, St. Kilda** taken from a train as Purdy retraced the journey that gave inspiration for Xavier Herbert's novel *Capricornia*. Meanwhile, from the street outside **The Performance Space**, passers-by looked up to the windows at **Heidrun Löh's** large format photographs taken around Tibooburra, the country that inspired the poetic writings of explorer Charles Sturt.

**Centre for Contemporary Photography** June 28: **Paul Carter** - Double Take: 2 sets of images 10 years apart; **Freda Freiberg** - Reclaiming the bourgeois family photograph: a personal rebuff to Benjamin's barbs and Barthes' bathos; **Martyn Jolly** - Photographic

Voodoo: reconsidering iconic Australian photographs. Enquiries: CCP 205 Johnston Street Fitzroy. 03-417.1549

**SIMA (Sydney Improvised Music Association)**'s June program includes Carl Orr Quartet, the catholics, Mike Nock Quartet, Mark Isaacs Trio, The Engine Room and the Lisa Parrott Trio. In July SIMA hosts master drummer **Pheeroan akLaff** who will play with master pianist **Mike Nock**. "Pheeroan akLaff is one of the best arguments against the jazz-is-dead pop supremacists. His drumming is informed by the new spaces of free-playing, but can work in more inside contexts, the rhythmic backbone of many important black avant-garde outfits. He has a polyrhythmic mobility ... his beautiful, balletically adroit drums dance and sway at the centre of the music." (Wire Magazine) Enquiries: SIMA 02-938.2180

**australYSIS** in association with **Sydney Conservatorium of Music** presents:

COMPROVISATIONS: In August: *Reacting/Interacting* in which performer and improviser interact with the computer. Program includes new works by **Sandy Evans** (*Sonic Fractures*), **Andrew Ford** (*Becalmed*), **Hazel Smith** (*The Riting of the Runda*) and **Greg White**. Also *Re-actions* by australYSIS; **Dennis Smalley**: Clarinet Threads; **Andrew Schulz**: Suspended Preludes. October program: *Sighting Sound* - Visual and aural objects intermingle and transmigrate. Premiers of new works by **Steven Adam**, **Colin Bright** (*El Nino Dances*), **Roger Dean** (*Electric Tomato*), **Adrian Luca** and music by **Ian Shanahan** (*Arc of Light*) Enquiries: australYSIS Ph: 02-523.2732 Fx: 02-527.2139

**Machine for Making Sense** just got back from six weeks in Europe, following their appearance at the Urban + Aboriginal x Australia Festival in Berlin in February-March. The Machine - **Jim Denley**, **Amanda Stewart**, **Rik Rue**, **Chris Mann** and **Stevie Wishart** - packed em in across Northern Europe, with performances in Amsterdam, Eindhoven, Dortmund, Gent, London, Vienna, Basel and Zurich. Promoters will be relieved that after a farewell performance at the Brisbane Biennial this month their current work, entitled *Silence is therefore the only possible means of communication*, *K. Marx 1843* will be replaced by a new piece with a much shorter title. It's rumoured that in Vienna Chris Mann was spotted looking thoughtful outside S. Freud's old house. Towards the end of August Machine will be joined by **Tony Buck**, **Carolyn Connors** and **Greg Kingston** on an improvising free-for-all in Sydney at the **ABC's Ultimo Centre**.

Membership of the Board of the **Australian Multimedia Enterprise (AME)** has been announced. AME received \$45 million from Creative Nation "to provide financing for the development and commercialisation of interactive multimedia product and services". Members are: Mark Burrows (of the Baring Brothers Burrows) Bruce Moir (Film Australia), Daniel Petrie (Microsoft Corporation), Ian Reinecke (University of Queensland), Rodney Martin (Australasian Interactive Multimedia Association), Hilary McPhee (Australia Council), Catherine O'Connor (Turnbull & Partners) and Alfred

Milgrom (Beam Software).

Meanwhile, on June 4 the **Art Gallery of NSW** hosted a new media forum chaired by Mike Leggett with John Colette (Don't Believe the Hype: A new image is here all right, but who did you believe?). Sally Pryor (Writing the Interactive Image), Darren Tofts (The Digital Unconscious: The mystic writing pad revisited), Jon McCormack (Ways of Interacting: The work of art in the age of machine synthesis).

**Synapse Art Initiatives** operates on a project basis deliberately maintaining no permanent office nor exhibition space. Synapse is presently using the exhibition floor of **The Performance Space** as a working, meeting and doing place for planning future projects concerned with cultural imperatives, change and exchange. The day I visited there were giant pumpkins on speakers, a punching bag, an exercise bike, a large round table set with paper plates each with a statement from the artist, some cartographical computer images with faxed updates from the artist, a cardboard bodice for a dress designed by computer (the artist would be in the next day to install the skirt), an intimate dinner setting that sprang to aural life when I sat down. A series of meals, meetings and conversations will occur in the space until June 10. Subjects expected to materialise and lead to other activities and events include those of Feral activity and the built environment, Taste, discrimination and finesse (serious coffee tastings are scheduled); Communication, thinking patterns and content; Art and working life; new Community Arts. Through these discussions Synapse expects to develop new projects and effective creative solutions. New things will happen. Enquiries: Synapse Ph/Fx: 043-741.276 or 02-699.3645.

Later in June - **System-X** will present a computer installation featuring its World Wide Web interface as the front end for audience interaction with System-X's currently published web pages. This will feature information regarding current aims and objectives (providing equitable access to networking facilities and building a local area artists' virtual community owned and operated by artists) as well as links to artists pages and projects currently under construction. These hyper-linked documents will feature selectable sounds, images and movies as part of their interactive format. Included will be the ability for the user to visit documents of other artsbased organisations and groups currently using the internet. June 28-July 1 **The Performance Space, Sydney**. Enquiries: 02-698-7235

**Art Hotline** a group of artists and an electronic information source which provides access to weekly one-day shows taking place at a range of temporary venues around Sydney. 25 artists involved in the Hotline. Work ranges from installation through object based work to performance at non-gallery sites like warehouses, street corners, electronic spaces, office buildings and shopfronts. exploring a borderline between public venues and isolated spaces - the politics of viewing art inside and outside the white cube. July 6-22 **The Performance Space, Sydney**. Enquiries: 02-698-7235

Continued page 36

A cryptic note from **The Basement Gallery** "Don't miss **Paul Quinn's** beautiful big pants!" See the pants along with **Sadie Chandler's** *Lost Portrait Collection* and work by **Mathys Gerber, Jonathan Nichols** (*Things in You - Watch Your Business*), **Penelope Lee, Peter Hennessey** and **John Meade**. Basement Gallery, 178 Collins Street, Melbourne. 03-941.97316

**John Jenkins** and **Rainer Linz** are currently researching and writing a book on new music-theatre and chamber opera in Australia covering ground-breaking work produced locally in the past ten years. If you work in this area and have access to research materials and information contact **Red House Editions** PO Box 2123 Footscray 3011. Ph/Fax 03 9687 7785.

Australian film-maker **Gregor Jordan** has been awarded the Jury Prize at the **Cannes International Film Festival** for his self-funded short film *Swinger*. The film is 3.25 minutes long and is about depression and how to deal with it.

The other Australian shorts selected for Cannes were Jonathan Ogilvie's *Despondent Divorcee* and Scott Patterson's *Lessons in the Language of Love*

Melbourne has a new venue which combines live performance, music and films and videos all on the one night! **Club Axe** (that's pronounced ashay) will be presenting every Friday night the best of Latin, Afro and Brazilian music both on the dancefloor and silver screen. On June 16 is **Aye Carmen!** a

celebration of Carmen Miranda — the girl "with eyes like two headlights!"

The club will feature local Latin and African performance groups as well as documentaries and features from well known directors **Jean Rouch** and **Glauber Rocha**. Look out for rare never seen Cuban films and videos in the near future! All info program details 03-9527.3602

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Butter and milk and a plate of fish  
And a broken, leaking mouse.

CHESTER.  
Hughes

From 1958 issue of ARNA (Journal of the Sydney University Arts Society).

Edited by John Cummings, with "enfant" illustrations, poems and essays by Robert Hughes and Clive James, plus a provocative (and still timely) essay on the Sparkes-Orr case which rocked the Australian University establishment in the mid fifties.

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## Sport

### TOOTH AND CLAW

with Jack Rufus

Everywhere you turn, people are talking about the Super League, bemoaning its impact on the people's game, Rugby League. But there is another effect, more insidious, yet far more profound, which has gone un-noticed. This is the attempt, by Rupert Murdoch's organisation, to take over the English language itself.

The first tell-tale signs came when footballers began talking about themselves in the third person. Ricky Stuart told the media, "I have to do what's best for Ricky Stuart." Mal Meninga followed up by announcing: "I'll soon let you know what Mal Meninga's decided." This initial grammatical shift was compounded by a sudden lurch into the plural. News Ltd representatives began speaking of their grand vision which included "the Brisbanes, the Canberras, the Newcastles." The next logical step is for players to refer to themselves in the second person and plural. Ricky Stuart will tell the media: "I have to do what's best for the Ricky Stuarts."

What can this mean? Keen judges of the game have forwarded two theories. The News Ltd people may have invested in genetic engineering technologies, which will produce, in the years ahead, cloned version of individual star players. Hence, "the Ricky Stuarts". Or, and this may amount to an evil too great even to be comprehended, the new masters of professional sport may have put their first down-payment on ownership of the language itself. Soon perhaps even the Jack Rufuses will find themselves speaking - or Foftelling - a whole new ball game of language.

### TEE OFF

with Vivienne Inch

At Royal Oak this week the buzz at the 19th was just how it came to pass that a Grand Prix was lost and replaced with a minimalist Der Ring des Nibelungen. Now I say a city full of petrol heads and bimbos is no big loss. Caps off to Premier Dean Beige (a recent convert to opera after his 1994 Vienna Bon Bons tour) for his proud announcement that he had secured the "Olympics of the performing arts of the world" and I for one will very definitely be there to tee off in 1998 with the other 22,000 buffs to see sixteen hours of Nigel Mansell as Siegmund, Alain Prost as Brunnhilde, the Valkyries from Channel 9 doing promotional laps and the 82 members of Adelaide's Nyow-Nyow chorus putting their talents to proper use for once in an event with a little more tone.

# SMALLS

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PICA is a dynamic, multi-artform contemporary arts organisation in Perth with a local, national and international program of activities encompassing exhibition, performance, site specific works, cross art form projects, publishing, workshops and forums. PICA is seeking a highly motivated, creative and proficient person to fulfil the role of Exhibition co-ordinator. The Exhibition Co-ordinator is responsible, in conjunction with the Director of PICA, for developing and implementing the exhibition program and associated activities. The attributes of the Exhibition Co-ordinator should include experience in curatorial practice; the ability to efficiently co-ordinate and provide technical support for all PICA's visual arts projects including the organisation and maintenance of all relevant materials, display areas and equipment; excellent written and verbal skills; an in-depth knowledge and (critical) passion for contemporary art practices; the ability to work sympathetically with artists and the ability to pass on knowledge. Experience in all aspects of hanging and installation of art works is essential.

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