

# RealTime

**RealTime at LIFT '97. In this the final festival issue, overviews of the LIFT experience—the cosmopolitan LIFT experience, heartbreak LIFT, LIFT and the city, LIFT as community; plus *Utshob, I was Real—Documents*, Cirque Ici; more on De La Guarda's *Periodo Villa Villa*, Juliana Francis' *Go Go Go*; and Daily Dialogues**

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## **Big Talk in Small Rooms** Virginia Baxter

I'm glad the Daily Dialogues at the Royal Court Upstairs are coming to an end. I'll miss the talk but honestly, the room is starting to itch. I have tried meditating on its surfaces, I have written words on its walls, picked up sudden poetries within it like Huseyin from Turkey leaning against that wall, saying "The world is getting wider and smaller" and Wesley Enoch using the slope in the floor to argue the necessity of an Australian continent, and a week later Gabriel Gbadamosi pinching his metaphor and using it as a ramp to dump shit on the Germans. And Linda Marie Walker liberating us all by pointing out the sign permitting us all to turn to smoke on entering. In RT#3, Wesley Enoch was right to point out that the dangerous spaces of *Periodo Villa Villa* had nothing on this theatre of tamed lounge chairs and fake velvet curtains. Yesterday I noticed that the black faces of the South Africans working on *Pakhama* were nearly invisible against the mission brown of the fittings.

I've been here for four weeks now and I've seen a lot of theatre but maybe it's because you always remember the first time and in there was the place I saw my first LIFT performance, *The Geography of Haunted Places*, and first felt the walls closing in on what I remembered from Australia as a more open-ended performance, then next day got a whiff of the Real with Hal Foster and nights after, felt the absent spaces of *Things Fall Apart*. I've seen a lot of other places during this festival but I keep coming back to this room and I'm sorry that Laurence Olivier has got mixed up in this dusty vision of decay because I've always seen him as a kindred soul—an actor who worked from the outside in.

What is this? Come-down? Post-LIFT ennui already? Snap out of it.

Remember underneath the arches in there, Edward Lam saying in his laidback way that he wanted a lover who spoke three languages, and Gabriel Gbadamosi in that armchair saying that when we talk about belief we should avoid claustrophobic exactness and the shake in Tony Fegan's voice lamenting the loss of public space, saying that these days you can get what you want at

Sainsbury's without uttering a word, and Deborah Mailman answering a question about crying on stage with "If the feeling isn't there, just keep making the sound and it will come", and Gabriela from De La Guarda saying "Whether I'm on the floor or in the air, it feels like dancing". Remember how these words opened walls.

Think back to the first of the Daily Dialogues when Hal Foster landed on the stage like some animal delivered to the wrong zoo and Andrea Phillips politely stepped over the puddle of theatre onto the kerb of critique. Remember that first feeling of disturbance at the familiar discussion of theatre as a problematic, grubby pursuit—and this for an audience of performance practitioners too depressed to speak; then a member of *Desperate Optimists* in the audience trying to explain why they feel the need to deny their involvement in theatre because it's seen as having such a childish, non-intellectual framework, laying claim to it only because "it just happens to be the place where we resolve ideas". Remember trying to piece this together and comparing it with home where a body of work exists called Performance (*not* Performance Art) which has almost grown too big for the room that tries to contain it; suddenly back at The Performance Space in Sydney in 1994 when those of us working this territory were practically disowned by the performance artists who had in some cases, inspired us. Think what might have happened if the dialogue hadn't moved to more comfortable, communal corners.

LIFT is, after all, a festival of theatre and what it does is to make bigger spaces inside the tight, institutional structures of this City of Theatres, making room for more, more diversity, relevance, more experience, something altogether more representative of the everyday lives of more of the people who make up this city. Situating itself in established venues as well as opening up others, it matches works with venues. It fills West End theatres with black bodies, with monumental sets, with silence. It draws attention to new venues like Three Mills Island and highlights the innovative work of places like Battersea Arts Centre. It builds labyrinths in red light districts, stages feasts in council chambers. It provides nurturing spaces, places of

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support and development. LIFT is a warren of interconnecting rooms.

The other place I've come to know is our editorial office where five Australians who've been brought together by LIFT have had a very rare meeting. Though we all write for the paper in Australia, the place is so big that the likelihood that Wesley Enoch (Queensland) Richard Murphet and Zsuzsanna Soboslay (Victoria) Linda Marie Walker (South Australia), Keith and I (New South Wales) would come together in the one room is rare. Australia is also big on multicultural but the number of practising black artist-writers still relatively small. Thanks Indhu, Zahid and Gabriel. The city you've shown us has been generous beyond words.

Otherwise, my view of this vast city has come from darting in and out of buildings containing variously large and small scale works from outside this place and trying to bring to them, a set of personal responses. In week one, I moved inside a travelling body venturing some connections between that body and a piece of work that was also a stranger here. By week two, I was writing inside a body which had by then been moving from one place, one show, one dialogue to another and in which a profusion of images and ideas had begun to blur.

Week three came from somewhere more settled, sedentary. Inevitably writing centred around the experience of being a constant audience and a set of questions which occurred while sitting, waiting, before, during or after performances: waiting for *Stunde Null* with a sense of foreboding; listening to Juliana Francis speak after the performance about her writing as a skeleton, a map for performance; joining a spontaneous 'sssh!' in the audience for *Cirque Ici*; talking to writer-director Jenny Kemp about the movement in the dance we'd both seen the night before but experienced differently; feeling elated but distant from *De La Guardia*, then a real sense of connection at hearing them speak; getting irritated at applause interrupting at *Cirque Ici*; wondering what you miss if you hear a German and see a Nazi or if someone writes you a map, and all you do is look for the hidden treasure of subtext, what you might miss on the surface. Week four and, for the time being, what I remember is the small woman gazing at a projection of the sky and then straight out at the audience in Teshigawara's *I was Real* and Hal Foster's 'The real is the rock you trip over but can't touch.'

## Trenchdigging Richard Murphet

Sometimes we feel to me like trenchdiggers, we *RealTime* writers. Earlier this century in Central Australia, the Anglican Missionaries gathered unnaturally large communities of blacks and whites into settled Mission stations. In order to support these communities they organised for trenches to be dug to tap into the water within "the folded declivities in the earth's surface where it periodically flowed or was naturally present". My guide here is, as usual, Paul Carter who continues: "True,

waters lost themselves in the sands, but there was another side to this: anastomosis of surface water, its tendency to spread out and seep underground rather than to run briskly in narrow grooves over land and down to the sea, need not mean dissipation and death; it might simply signify a different form of circulation". Carter compares this circulation to "the heart's beat, its repeated distribution of life-giving fluid to the furthest reaches of the body". I am aware of the 'narrow grooves' of my responses to the body of LIFT and of the danger that they will drain its spirit (I am not talking of imagined critical power but of the sensibility that informed the New Guinea tribe which refused to allow photos to be taken of it because this would steal its spirit); or, to switch the metaphor, I see the inflexible fences I build across the irregular surface of a show, enclosing it in a way that is never healthy because it halts the drifting quality of a work of art, as I read the articles of my fellow writers on the same event and am led to reflect again upon what I might have written (or might have seen). 'How do I see?' has been 'How do I write?' for all of us as we steer clear of trenches already dug, remembering that, in their determination to give sustenance to their community, the missionary trenchdiggers weakened "the capacity of the...landscape to withstand invasion". We are saved by the diversity of cross opinions. My fences have been broken open by others, allowing less trammelled movement for the reader. In fact, the writing of Linda, Zsuzsanna and Virginia often has for me the quality of a drift lane, not digging anywhere too deep, more interested in the ground beneath their feet as they travel.

LIFT has had none of the flat, open certainty of a cultivated field. It has had the multi-planar surface of the artists and their cultures, reminding me of nothing so much as the curvilinear city in which it takes place: turn this corner and two Palestinians are arguing about a passport (*Ramzy Abdul Majd*), get out of the tube here and a group of British-Nigerians are dancing so joyously you can't take your eyes off them (*Things Fall Apart*), stop here for a moment too long and that sad looking young woman will open up her multiple personalities (*Go Go Go*), go into this grand building and a few politicians (or museum guides) are preparing to convince the public of something (*Stunde Null*), look out my hotel window and the workmen are hanging on the scaffolding opposite like they are about to jump (*Periodo Villa Villa*). The surface of the city and that of the Festival fold into one another constantly. I was having coffee with Dina the other morning when she said: "As we sit here, thousands of people are travelling beneath us", and I immediately thought of the man crawling like crazy underneath the woman who walked so carefully along the row of beds in *I was Real—Documents*. How aware of him was she? And alternatively, when I'm underground do I imagine the surface?

Montaigne praised his servant as the best of observers because he related things simply, as he saw them, instead of glossing over the truth with clever words. "Don't interpret," I encourage students, "just say what you saw". Such maxims may be appropriate for the travel observations to which Montaigne referred but LIFT has proved how inadequate they are for

theatre. I have been fascinated for instance at the diversity of ways of reading offered me by the sets of the shows I've attended. The scaffolding rig, huge space, tarpaulins, moveable rostra, water, drums and lights in *Perioda Villa Villa* were for the performers nothing more than the necessary supports for their acts; but the very fact that they were uninflected by the performance let loose an extraordinary flock of often divergent images in the RealTime viewers. The props and technical equipment in *Go Go Go* were similarly the functional ingredients of Juliana Francis' show; but in this case they were interpreted for us continually by the performer so that despite their reference to aspects of American Culture they became her world of mirrors and inescapable aspects of her teeming psyche. Both *K'Far* and *Things Fall Apart* laid down earth to represent the land they were fighting for. On the distant stage at the Lyric Hammersmith, the sand of Jewish settlement may as well have been painted on the backdrop since the focus was not upon the here and now but upon the creative act of recalling the past, symbolised so well by the revolving platform on which the characters floated in and out as if through the folds of memory. In the hot intimacy of *The Royal Court*, the circle of earth was not just the representation of the 19th century Igbo village; on its churning surface was welded together a remarkable team of contemporary Nigerian and British-Nigerian performers—it was the ground for a new village. I could go on: the beautifully finished coffin of bureaucracy that entrapped the German politicians, the mental space onto and off which glided the competing energy forces of Teshigawara's realities, the stunning juxtaposition of hanging iceblock, bed of earth and mock tree stump in Glenn Francis' poetic rendering of Deborah Mailman's grievous Australia.

I have been able to watch all these worlds unfold and in the best of them have realised (unlike Calvino's Mr Palomar who spends so long trying to decide the correct way to look at the pretty girl's breasts that she gets up and leaves) that they too are watching me. It is LIFT's strength that it includes them all on the stage of London. Perhaps LIFT could have had more of intercultural London looking back at it from the stages of the Royal Court and the South Bank.

### The Promethean Performer

Gabriel Gbadamosi

Cirque Ici, Clapham Common, June 16

One-man circus is a clever, curious thing. One-man is never let off the tightrope of performance. The biggest laugh went up for a bold child heckler's first fearless step: 'Mummy, is he going to fall?'

He didn't, but he nearly did. Doing a clog-dance on ten green bottle-necks, Johann Le Guillerm's carefully crafted Pierre Pan persona slipped in struggle with a whirling dervish of sweat...but that second mask had no eyes; I recoiled.

Light relief came in a succession of ambulatory mechanisms—free-standing, sculptural toys dancing eerily across the space

(who saw anyone pull any strings?). Where ancestral masks of the dead can mock the living, these non-human parodies of artificial intelligence—each with its own curious personality—were our little brothers; clowns with bells on.

I think of circus as community. Their community engaging ours in the magic of things multiple and simple, the healing magic of earthing aerial spirits in the end, and releasing us all. But the empathy I felt for the darling Star Wars R2D2s—little Orwellian beginnings of Big abstractions, blurring the human in scale and texture—brought me up short.

Without the nurture of touch (performers touching hands after a feat—to steady, to celebrate, in trust), Johann Le Guillerm's solitude supplants the democratic utopia of circus with a solo aristocracy of talent. He is prince of an empty fortress, a scissor-handed aesthete in ragged, Gothic neglect, radically, romantically, incurably alone. A lost child with royalist instincts in him. A Pretender.

Only one-man's feet in pointy elfin slippers (he kept changing shoes rather than hats) remained to point my yearning for the plural. For community. A way out of the yearning loneliness of childhood. He conjured in me a yearning to parent. To bring children up out of their cave of silence and set them on their feet. To tell them life is short, and didn't ought to be a lonely, long-distance performance.

As if to prove all this nonsense, a moment came when the prince wordlessly asked us to help him blow out a candle-flame at the centre. Everyone must trust someone. I didn't miss my chance. I have nothing to expiate. No pettiness. Together we gulped the flame, and between us swallowed its sword. We were reconciled.

### Hearing: The heart, here, rambles on (Part One)

Linda Marie Walker

The festival is almost over, and 'over' is large, somehow, larger than expected, as although time runs out, memory doesn't. At the end of any affair there are shadows. And now, with the anxiety of having to write ebbing away, the shadows are darkening.

The shadows are alive, like the virus in my body this past week, having its whole life-time there, noisily ghosting me, reminding me that desire for wellness-of-heart comes from sickness-of-heart. And it struck me that every work I have seen in LIFT is about sickness-of-heart. Is about heartbreak. Is about shadows in the heart. The heart was starkly present at the Step project Daily Dialogue (June 23). The young London dancers mentioned it again and again, the word came easily from their tongues. This heart is the weather-beaten, beating heart, it's the one that matters to itself, it's the murmuring heart.

What kind of knowledge is wellness, is sickness, is 'heart'?

Something worried me from the beginning of LIFT, in a good way, in a gripping way. For instance, I wanted more of my books around me, I wanted their protection, I wanted my heart protected by the company I love, from home. It was clear that many questioned strands of my own life and practice would arise, and I was not prepared, I was alone. I could not succumb to *Oráculos*' 'warmth' or accept *La Feria*'s 'generosity'. They could not console me. It seemed an elision was occurring, a sleight-of-hand, and it also seemed that this elision was central, maintained. I was out in the cold. It worked, except for an ongoing half-formed question. Like being at the Daily Dialogues and wanting to say or ask something, but being in another dream altogether. A bit like turning up, stepping into the right dream, as the 'chair' says: thank you all for coming. Then late at night, after a wine or two, the words make a whole sentence and it's too bad. This sickness-of-heart is a powerful creature. Work (theatre, performance, writing, dance, visual art, etc) is made, hungered for, from this heart. The sick-heart must cry. It calls to be well.

But I am affected, imbued, by what I've seen. I'm disturbed by it, overall, at the instant that I recognize it. As it tells about despair, demand, resilience, regret, and awesome reserve (and recognition is unexpected often, it depends whether one is ready or willing, it can be so minute too: a hand held out, the exchange of a glance—oh, how one longs to pursue that pleasure); William Yang talked about 'recognizing' at once what one had never seen before, not the 'thing' of it, but it itself, its relationship with 'me'.

De La Guarda appeared a glorious celebration, but hear their energy, their claim to be present, to create, to be the crucial, risky artists they are, and you hear the earth and the sky forced open. Nothing will hold them. They push and pull for love and sex, for connection. That dance they do, beating the platform with their feet, their feet are drums; I have rarely been so bodily charged, drenched by the liquid which seemed to gush from their flesh. I call this 'desperate'. This is a sensuous telling, which at the same time as screaming joy, is screaming pain. It cannot be otherwise. You saw the shadows above right from the start, like I did. You saw the body slam into the lush bed, like I did. Oh sure, give me gifts: not likely.

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## Undivided

Indhu Rubasingham

*Utshob*, Trinity Buoy Wharf, June 21

Terrible weather threatened *Utshob*, the site-specific community performance. The rain poured down on the audience as hundreds of young people streamed forth, dressed in the colours of the rainbow. Bhangra music and sweet-smelling incense poured out of the warehouse, transporting me to other, warmer worlds.

A fusion of musics turned to feet-stomping, hand-clapping as

the stream of young people from 5-18 years old invited the audience into the warehouse. The space was covered in sand and decorated with candles, incense and adorned with vegetables from all over the world—beautiful.

What ensued was organised chaos. One friend said, This is how I imagine India, colour, noise, bustle, distinct routes impossibly entwined. Exactly, I laughed. Music thumped, different groups danced, sang, told stories, competing to be heard. Very young kids wisely whispered their stories to the audience with such a generous energy that I found myself suddenly moved to tears, even though I'm not sure why. Older ones told stories of people perceived as mad but really torn apart as Partition ripped India apart. Another group spoke of personal freedom in a more contemporary setting—the right to wear what you want etc. Papers on the wall were scribbled with multiple meanings for the word 'Freedom'. Hundreds of photographs of students with candles beneath each face adorned another wall, becoming an altar to their passion and energy which vibrated through the room. More dancing and singing invaded the space.

What was special about *Utshob* was the feeling of unselfconscious celebration of multi-culturalism, the joy and unmanipulated interaction between young people all looking at what freedom meant to them, personally and globally. As I left, I wondered about the source of the piece—the 50th anniversary of India's independence, a catch-phrase applied to many Asian art programmes made in 1997. I wondered what my forbears would have made of their grandchildren celebrating their efforts and victory in the country they were fighting and striving for independence from—the irony of the largest temple outside India being built in London, the huge community of Asian people settled in the UK in the last 50 years, the influence that this community has had on contemporary British culture, the trend-factor of ethnicity in the 1990s.

## Air/Space/Dream: I was Real—Documents

Richard Murphet

(with thanks to Jenny Kemp)

Documents of the time when I was real—for I am no longer?

The first thing that happens is that a black box sitting centre stage slides, seemingly under its own volition, to the edge of the space. A moment later a carpet, previously jutting onto the stage, slides slowly also to the edge. The tall bald man in black rises, moves to the edge and falls over. The black blob stage left rises into a woman who walks to the front lip of the space. All that remains on the ice-like surface of the stage as the lights brighten are some small black circles which in a moment will prove to be berets but now appear like inky thumb prints on a white page. The mind is cleared to begin to remember, the new book is open to write upon.

There are many dancers in Teshigawara's company but the stage never seems crowded, the tendency always is towards

emptiness, or clear focus upon one or two items. As a viewer, I am gently given the choice of entering and following, so that, despite my seat on the other side of the footlights, imaginatively I am travelling too. Four men enter, put on berets then leave, enter, put on berets then leave, enter, put on berets then leave—no, one stays behind, fascinated with the moment of picking up the beret, bends, holding the pose. This is the telescopic process that dream and memory often utilise. Who is dreaming this moment, the man lying on the floor or the woman standing out front? One man is alone endlessly gyrating across the space, a group gathers, builds into a dance of release and joy, a shared counterpoint of energy patterns; suddenly another woman is there slowly moving down the edge of the space (again), carefully watching step after step. A virtually naked woman lies (dreaming?) at the side, she is joined by another woman who moves relentlessly centre stage, while three men wheel on beds in frames, slowly, carefully, in different configurations.

A man dances solo and two women stand as sentinels, upstage, still, facing back. We seem to be going deep—into an inner space where the air is thicker and the dreams are nightmares. The man's hacking cough as he walks along the columns transforms into the cries and moans of demon images as he crosses into the inner sanctum, his tongue out of his mouth, like an epileptic. Soon the space is filled with wailing figures, moving through their pain, while off to one side a couple stands, holding one another like Tristan and Isolde, forever crying good-bye. The last image is magically simple. Two women are centre stage, in a clearing of light. One squats, looking out front, cocks her head (she saw something/remembered something?), looks front again. The other lies, elbow crooked, head in hand, slowly lowers her head onto the ground, then sits up again, then down. Alice lies listening to her sister reading a story, she falls asleep. Perhaps this is where the dreaming began?

## Looking: The heart, here, rambles on and on (Part Two)

Linda Marie Walker

I couldn't take any more of the sadness around me, night after night, or the denial of this at the discussions day after day (I got sick, I had to look from swollen eyes, from a congested chest). Where was the session on pain, on tears, on the broken-heart? I've seen a million broken-hearts this June. Every work began with that, with that rock, bare and sullied, taking-up, absorbing the body (chorus rock words: ritual, rite, real). One asks a question of/from that rock, of/from the love stalled in the broken-heart (the rock is so heavy, is it 'authentic' though?). And when everything slowed down, was repeated, like in *I was Real —Documents*, then there was gentle time in which to just be sitting, looking. There was the big black rock waiting on the stage, watching us come into the theatre. Dressed in some ridiculous old cumbersome garment. Taking a bit longer to die than one wished. Keeping itself in the dark right up to the last moment. Hiding all its movements, its shivering, being nothing but shadow. One document amongst

many. Then the other documents were offered, gifts already labelled 'trouble', brief and solitary spaces upon which to focus. Some, too small to recall. Watching a rehearsal yesterday of *Invisible Room*, Teshigawara working with Step, the attention to detail is apparent: the flutter of hands, the pace of walking (how to melt, how to begin to melt). This process is patient and testing, not because I am a voyeur, but because I am concerned with the 'choreography' of writing. So, I watch as Teshigawara writes with his dancers, and I watch how they write themselves back to him, how they take up the time and space of their own sensibilities. It's a long life, and we are love-objects in it. We are witnesses who participate. And it's true that I am not a journalist, that I haven't a bone in my body that wants to chase a story, let alone a fire-engine. And that last sentence is related to the thinking of Teshigawara, somewhat.

There's a song, from the 70s probably, or maybe the 60s: 'What becomes of the broken-hearted?' (Jimmy Ruffin sang the song, says the man behind the bar.) Well, they are all here, at LIFT, at the 'carnival', telling us their stories, telling each other, allowing us to poke around in them, and face our own habits and prejudices.

What becomes of the broken-hearted? This is what I reckon: they set out on a long journey, alone. They set out for 'home'. They are the ones who are asked "where do you come from" (like De La Guarda were), and who reply, "here". And yet are moving, following the 'roots' along their "routes". They are the ones "on the trail of a fragrance—the fragrance of the country they've never known". Where that fragrance is your mother's coffee—that coffee, made by that woman, from that place—'No coffee is like another'. (Gabriel Gbadamosi citing Mahmoud Darwish). The broken-hearted depart, they are inside departure—what to pack, what to expect, how to travel, how to see, where to eat, where to sleep.

Across my hotel window there is a white nylon curtain; it makes the grey building over the road faint and blurry, as if a long way off, as if it's the background in a 'bad' photograph (I've always loved 'bad' photographs). It's not at all romantic, or misty and nostalgic, this view. It makes me nauseous, it's irritating and restricting, once or twice I saw it falling toward me. And yet the curtain softens the light and keeps the naked body private. When one is sick, the world is a different place—or one dwells in another world, alongside, one can't quite manage all the steps, or remember whether to cross on the green or the red. Oneself, heart-aching, can only wait, and while waiting, either pretend to be 'with' others, or make a world out of this self, a provisional one, that values small moves, broken speech, long bouts of crying, calling, wailing, where wandering and wondering constellate as knowledge. A knowledge of listening and whispering. What else can the broken-hearted do, but tell 'you', wave to you as they catch the train. Juliana Francis, in *Go Go Go*, epitomized this fragmentation. Busy as a bee, her broken-heart demanded its voice, and hadn't a hope in hell of really making me/you understand the exact shape and depth of the pain, of the loss, of the disaster. She grabs whatever is at hand to 'speak', to ask for my/your

help, forgiveness, respect, whatever, and then she sits down, at last, and eats her lunch, watching the images of herself still trying to flee, to escape. It's too late, always too late, as the moment that broke the heart is unforgettable, and that body is still alive. Unforgettable: that's the point. The broken-heart is smashed forever. The question is: how to lead a life, how to have movement and presence and home and community, out from the site of the cracks and creases, from the wound, from the trauma.

It is curious, in retrospect, that Hal Foster was the first speaker at the Daily Dialogues (I promised not to speak of him again way back, it doesn't count now), and the one who distanced himself most successfully from his own work on trauma, the trauma of people and cultures, work that would have been apt for the works in LIFT (and which he went on to elaborate at a venue a few minutes away). Surely this means something in terms of perceived audiences, but what? I can't help thinking of the strangeness of his reticence, his avoidance (or an avoidance that can be assumed now) of the very issue integral to a particular reading of the works performed. I guess sometimes the wound is best left alone, for fear of infection. Perhaps he had a premonition, perhaps it was, or might have been, painful. Perhaps we would not have known what he was talking about. What is Real, that was his intended topic: "how does the return of the real in artistic practice relate to theatre's suspension of disbelief" (there seems no word quite so un(sur)real as REAL). The broken-heart returns to itself continually, it cannot suspend disbelief. That's its very quality: repetition and belief.

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### Dance among equals (cabbages and kings) Zsuzsanna Soboslay

"Step up, you poets". *Stunde Null*

I would like to talk about lips, and the edges between things (and why the sea is boiling hot, and whether pigs have wings). About being a child, and trusting an adult. About being an adult, and trusting the child. About opening the mouth, and calling forth...language, articulation, the lips moving, their moist hinges oiling the mechanics of speech *i o u a e*.

I would like to talk to you, LIFT artists, I would like to talk to the theatres you have given me. To tell you how I watch, and taste, and smell, and see. How deep is the river of looking, how blue the sky how full the balloon you play with that is me.

I am a woman, graced with two breasts and two pairs of lips; I pass through museum portals, run wild on heaths, crave music, write. In seeing your theatres, I have been variously cooked, touched, fried, chastised...and dissolved, made less than I am. What do you think of me?

As a child, held in the O of my mother's arms, I suckled, pinched, wavered and wailed until the edges became clear and

different parts of me learnt the world. My fingers landed on the toy, legs on a chair, my breast at table examined by its edge, the rest examined by the mirrors of the world.

And I became adult, making toys, colouring with brushes, crafting the stage. My art of living is meeting the world. With tools, I am equal to the methods. I am Real, my separateness matches the separateness of these others, my skin touches wood and shapes it as it teaches me.

I have learnt to come, to meet. When I come, it's not only with the cry and suck of two lips. I am equal to it: I am I and s/he is s/he and there is abundance speaking within/around me. My lips speak to each other and another, speak me. This is a very complex bliss. (And when we do not come together we are assured of our differences, s/he to me.)

And then I see *Go Go Go*. Crippled to a stop. What is a woman? Nothing much, Juliana says, except an endless play of roles. "There's nothing here," she wails, holding a mirror facing out from her body, the most accurate picture of the effects of violation I've seen.

Facts and figures support her hypothesis, that victims of child abuse figure high as sex workers and gogo girls. She learnt it young: this is a half-lipped body dancing. This is a piece about One who Cums, not two. The abuse to cum in bliss whilst unvoicing another: Do not speak of this, my unequal, sealing her lips (whilst tearing those others open) and rendering her partial, crippling...

The violated self splinters into bits: the peep show box revealing arm, leg, lips, and tits...The body no longer hangs together, there is no One (and hence no god of larger things: the earth, the air, the round 'O' of a trusted world).

I wonder about this literalness. The strip, the body, the tease...She speaks, but whilst her moister lips re-enact, the drier ones and dry teeth hiss the smaller world. This is death, to speak only of and to some parts. Francis replicates this death. The silencer of the gun. And because I know this silencing, because for me this is a re-violation of an old offense (I, too, knew the scene, foresaw the rest), I again struggle to remember a way out of this.

Who is this enactment for? For those who know it, sadness, a recognition of pain. And for those who don't, how does it change the world? For me, a reminder of the force, larger than the story, is important. What else accompanies the huge meanness of the world?

We are robbed in so many ways of speech. When I listen, I inbreathe you, my pores my lungs my heart my liver sees and tastes and touches *and takes you in*; and I speak from these: there is effort here, there is body, fluid, solid, thinking, digesting, re-patterning. There is so much to listen to. Insisting on smallness is also a violation.

They barricade the relics of Stonehenge—pointless; the stones act as synecdoches. The henge is also what emanates from the centre—the whole ground, the density at the fulcrum, the fluid field around.

I see myself walking through the arches and know the sun knows me. This great O that wraps around.

That's why I wonder about any work that only outlines me: hammers at my edges, calls the shots, hits me with sound. *Do not touch me smaller than I breathe you in.* We curve in space, and when my finger touches you, you are a network of veins from that place, you enter mine. I speak to a map coursing through you, you breathe on my neck and unravel mine. Insisting on smallness is also violation.

My heart speaks through my chest, is fed via my fingers, my shoulders cope (or do not) with vestments given me by my peers.

I've run through Welsh moors, trying to gargle in my throat and clack my tongue around Welsh words. The rocks are thrown up over grasses just like at home. I open and laugh here: we share stout and ales and stories of wily uncles running farmhands to the ground; my lover runs to the hill's edge and stands ready to fall from this green napkin into the belly of the sea. This child in him that runs, this child in him that plays, and laughs with us, with me, teaching the laughter in me.

I choose life, I choose enormity. Don't hit me with small sound.

Perhaps, not everybody wants multiplicity. Everybody dance. Now. Everybody drown (*Periodo Villa Villa*). Instances in the festival remind me of our practiced smallness: when poor amplifiers make wooden slings and arrows of sound (*Periodo*); when an actor remains on her surfaces (*Geography*); when fireworks explode (*Un Peu Plus de Lumiere*) and we are asked to see only the light and not the violence. When the slide of the eagle and the music soar in synchronous climax (*The North*), or when the dancer's movement climaxes with the ostensible break in the music (*Khol Do*) and doesn't notice the wave motion that already passed within it some moments before.

There is invisible breathing: we breathe in, and out—in, and as the breath breathes out, many other breaths breathe in: through lungs, corpuscles, becoming another substance, in and in and in, whilst the in and out continues. Waves within waves, patterns within patterns, we are sounds and breaths and memories filing past each other, rubbing shoulders (Emio and Saburo's shoulders brushing past—I Was Real); we are mud and fire (boggled at the fireworks), the centre and the emanation (me at Stonehenge). The body and the something else.

Watching, being; it costs a lot to attend, to see. I shed my barriers in coming to you, because you ask me to sense life. Watching is giving; remember how much watchers can give. It costs everything and nothing. Sometimes we can give too much.

## Talk crazy

**Indhu Rubasingham**

Daily Dialogues, Royal Court Theatre Upstairs

Two more days of the festival, then it's all over. The usual clichés spring to mind: it's gone so fast... it only seemed like yesterday... so much has happened.

I can't write an overview, not yet. It's not all sunk in but lots has been learned, absorbed and stimulated. So for my final piece I thought I'd eavesdrop on two regular LIFT-goers talking about their experience of the Daily Dialogues, not members of the LIFT team, not RealTimers but your common stock, run of the mill, jobbing British actors, Aileen and Daniel (now referred to as A and D).

The Scene: Leicester Square in the bar of the Theatre Royal Upstairs (formerly known as The Ambassadors). Sofas and comfy chairs scattered round the steeply sloping floor. Aileen and Daniel are cosily chatting on one of the sofas sipping coffee. I'm skulking behind them, pen and paper in hand, wishing I had a tape recorder.

D Why the hell did you keep coming to the Daily Dialogues? It's not like you saw any of the shows.

A Unlike you Daniel, I was working so I couldn't get to the shows. And it wasn't as if you had to have seen them to be involved in the discussions.

D Yeh, it's just like you talk for the sake of hearing the sound of your own voice.

A Oh, come on, there's no need to be like that...Love you.

D Sorry, love you too. (*They hug*) But I must say the big attraction of the DDs was the free coffee and tea.

A Don't be crass...what about the intellectual stimulation?

D Yeah, that too.

A Actually, I must say that the only reason I kept coming is because it was free. Even if I had to pay a pound I don't think I'd come.

D It's people like you that give actors a bad reputation.

A Yeah, but it's a great incentive and atmosphere for out-of-work artists to get together.

D But you're not out of work.

A I know, but...um...

D Forget it. I must say I did feel sorry for the guests having to sit on that slope. They did look uncomfortable.

A Why did Alan Read never sit on the slope?

D He knew what he was doing. If the slope was being written about in *RealTime* they'd make some comment about the "unusual angle of the speakers being symbolic of the precarious nature of the contextualisation of the festival and its embodiment in multiculturalism". (They laugh.)

A I must say it did seem rather Brechtian.

D Speaking of Germany.

A As you do.

D I loved the discussion on *Stunde Null* and the use of the translator. Especially when the translator spent ages translating a question and then the dramaturg just shrugged her shoulders as if for her there was no point in answering the question.

A You didn't need a translator for that to happen. Remember Cirque Ici, the guy refused to talk at times.

D But then the opposite happened. In *Things Fall Apart*, there was rioting in the stalls!

A I was shaking after that. It was great.

D That's the thing about the DDs. They're unpredictable.

A Yes and no. I mean it's funny how certain people always ask the same type of questions.

D What do you mean?

A You know, never mind about the discussion, certain people had their own personal agendas, asked the same kind of question, whether it was about psychoanalysis or the oppressed ...

D People could accuse you of the same.

A I know...maybe that's the problem with discussions...the quest for meaning.

D Yeh but that's why the Dialogue is there. To find out the intentions behind the artists' work and other people's opinions.

A But they weren't created to be discussed, but to be experienced. If you're told the meaning then you become heart-broken.

D Come on Aileen, enough of the dramatics.

A (emphatically) I'm not being dramatic. It's just that it reminded me of school and how your own meaning becomes less relevant.

D I know what you mean. Sometimes you feel you should be thinking something else but maybe that's our own paranoia. At the discussion of *Go Go Go*, I found it very hard, as a man, watching that show, and discomfiting, but when it was dis-

cussed other men said they found it ...uplifting...(pause)...but, I mean we're still here, we keep coming every day...why?

A That's obvious...it's great to be amongst a whole group of international artists and people from different disciplines...different angles...hearing what people have to say...the intellectuals, the audience, the artists.

D Yeh, it's great, you can check people out...

A Don't you mean the women!

D I love the tape machine operator. She's fantastic. She knows exactly the moment to change the tape.

A And she does it so discreetly. You can see her face trying to suss out whether now's the moment.

D She's fab.

A OK, OK, Enough.

D Have you read *RealTime 3*? (My ears prick up)

A I've started. I must say I did find it daunting to look at. (I glare daggers at her)

D All you have to do is take a deep breath.

A (Gulps)

D Not literally. It's an event in itself.

A It takes more than one tube journey to read it.

D That's because it's like a novel.

A An intellectual Daily Dialogue!

D Theatre on the page!

A It didn't appeal to me at first.

D That's because you like gloss.

A That's not true, just because I read *Hello*!

D Precisely... the satisfaction one gets from reading it is...

A Good as sex?

D Now who's getting crass?

A And it's free!

D Now we're back to square one.

A Aah, this is the life.

D It is refreshing.

A Flexing long-unused muscles.

D I'm going to miss them.

A I know. So will I...at least we've got each other...(they go to get another cup of free coffee.).

Watch this space for the next instalment...I skulk off, wondering if I really have to wait another two years for the next LIFT.

## Matriarchy and Magic

Gabriel Gbadamosi

LIFT 97 and Utshob, Trinity Buoy Wharf June 21

I'm Yoruba and Irish from London—so no-one should take what I say too seriously, because I'm going to say it anyway. Women run LIFT, and my association with matriarchy is magic—*awon iya wa aje*: our mothers, the witches.

With John Major gone I hope we can stop being vague about class. Patriarchy and patronage are aspects of the British class system, but the really class acts among and behind our power brokers are women. LIFT sought and secured patronage from a parochial London scene by being obvious—it's an international city. Now LIFT is moving away from the central power bases of London culture in site-specific explorations of outlying powerful sites. Places of magic in the backwoods are, in my view, proper places for midsummer ceremonies.

*Lady Margaret, Lady Margaret  
Was sewing at the seam  
And she's all dressed in black,  
When the thought come in her head  
To run in the woods,  
To pull flowers to flower her hat, me boys  
To pull flowers to flower her hat ...*

Anon

*Utshob*, a commemoration of Independence in India out by the East India Docks, began outside on an afternoon of transforming rain. The audience wanted to surge forward with coats and umbrellas in the sudden squall to young people determined to hold their ground—bright, canary colours of procession conflicting with the grey, metal sky. Trinity Buoy Wharf was being whipped by spray from green, dark slopping water, a surge of actual and historical power along the Thames at docklands against which we are holding our ground.

I woke next morning to a bang of thunder; it was the man from British Telecom come to fix the phone and reconnect me to the world. Outside, rain was erasing the street. The storm held me against the window pane, thinking of the English-Jamaican boy in my class at primary school who drowned where we used to play by the Albert Embankment. I remember seeing his mother's face. My mother saying, *Stand up. It's rain; don't let it be a*

*hump to your back*. I couldn't go on to the *RealTime* editorial meeting until I found my feet. It was time.

## Waiting: The heart, here, rambles on and on and on (Part Three)

Linda Marie Walker

Deborah Mailman begins *The 7 Stages of Grieving* crying, sobbing. And when she explains, with the several piles of sand how 'lineage' works, and how finely balanced lineage is, how every breath depends on that continuity, and how devastating culturally and psychologically the wrecking of that is (in this case, the 'stealing' of children, the heart-break of unimaginable loss) that big hard rock drops, and it drops from a great height, and it crushes every thought I have, I cling to, I/one feel(s) the 'nothing' she has spoken, the quality of that 'nothing'.

In *Stunde Null* you see that the broken-heart can (choose to) go no-where, can stay (keep itself) in the drifting bloodied past, as if all 'fragrance' has gone, as if there never was fragrance, as if memory had no memory. This is the horror of homeless souls, of barren, exhausted ground; where repetition is misery and false hope, and false hope begins over and over, ensuring, forever, no pathways to other worlds.

I am lost in this, in this trouble of the heart. I am always lost in writing, in the slowness of writing, in the bits and pieces that vanish before I can find them a home. I am lost when I'm told that the 'father' in *Things Fall Apart* did not have to kill his 'son'. He did, that's the story, that's the poison that broke his heart. That's his wound, it was waiting for him. It began with the arrival of the 'son' (could it be said that the 'son' did not have to turn up in that place, at that time), moving toward him. He made the wound come into being, to have a life of its own, it was already there. He prevented it in another person, momentarily, then it ate everything. That's how big the wound was, that's the story.

The broken-heart stammers, stumbles. Hélène Cixous writes: "All biographies like all autobiographies like all narratives tell one story in place of another story". I've always wondered how Yoko Ono lived with her broken-heart. Not just when John Lennon was murdered, but always. I have carried her 'yes' around with me, ever since I read it. I have taught that 'yes'. Then, I opened the newspaper last night and there she was, in London, returned, really, receiving some recognition for her work. She said this, perhaps about the heart: "I'll tell you what happened. [This reminds me of that Maurice Blanchot story 'The Madness of The Day' where it doesn't matter what story he tells 'the authorities', they still demand of him: now, tell us, what really happened. And he says finally, 'No stories, ever again.'] I was in Harvard summer school back in the Fifties, I was walking on campus one day, and there were so many students, guys, just looking at me. I got so nervous that I tripped on myself, and fell flat. It embarrassed me, and I went zoom, out of my body, way up. After that, when something was happening that was very intense, I had a

way of moving my spirit a little bit above it. Part of me would pull deeper into myself. The other part went further away." (*The Independent*, June 24)

It's this movement in two ways (this push and pull) that seems to define the broken-heart, the hard, cold gaze of it. A movement which, at the same moment of leaving, is arriving ever deeper. The thinking of fragrance, or a fragrant-thinking: a way of thinking around things, a geography of human movement which takes each 'whiff', word, sound, sight, as a route, a passage, toward belonging, toward the right to belong, to go home, leave, visit, return: and this is a recognition, by the heart, at the heart of things, in the everyday, "a hunger for what feeds you, sustains you in your sense of self on whatever journey your life is taking you." (Gbadamosi) This is the journey William Yang told, of the search for sustenance, for the places to-be, where the look and longings and imaginings of the body reside, and have been given to one through the half-truths of relatives, through their loves and hates, through the making of houses and gardens. Through being born someone/somewhere and not someone/somewhere else.

Finally, I leave the white curtain. Yesterday I passed the Pierre Victoire, a restaurant on New Oxford Street. I stopped in my tracks. Because, several years ago I wrote a story, and part of it, taken from a true account of a spy's life in WW1, is a clandestine meeting in the Pierre Victoire. This is a place where someone's death, their fate, is sealed. This is a site where a heart broke, where it was betrayed. I order the set-lunch, and then discover that this restaurant is part of a chain, and has only been open for two years. My dream, my tenuous link with my own work, quickly fades. The heart aches easily, wanting/craving a connection, following the vaguest hint of fragrance, so as to belong.

The heart took off, by itself, the writing I mean, rambling, and left behind, left for dead, my first attempt, my original intention, to speak in the shadow about the shadow.

## LIFT and the cosmopolitan body

Keith Gallasch

### Part 4 of "New images, new bodies"

I have been on an expedition, a journey into new body space, the beginning of an inquiry. *RealTime's* involvement in LIFT is part of the newIMAGES cultural exchange between Britain and Australia throughout 1997, an attempt for each country to read the other afresh, to query inherited, often colonial images. It's as if we have become strangers, formed other relationships and have met to see how we've changed. We listen to how the other speaks, we're alert to gestures, feel the touch, register the body, the skin and the space around it—all quite familiar but very strange.

1. *A cosmopolitan body.* The LIFT program appears, at first, not to be British (excepting The Mary Ward House story and

West Yorkshire Playhouse's *Things Fall Apart*—and what kind of British is this with its Nigerian content and American director?). But LIFT proposes a British audience interested in culturally diverse works from many countries, not just from the former empire. It allows young British dancers to work over a very long period with Japanese choreographer and sculptor Saburo Teshigawara. Education Coordinator Tony Fegan speaks in a Daily Dialogue about surprising cultural similarities between the island cultures of Britain and Japan. Elsewhere in the program, LIFT embraces former colonies—black South African teachers and students in the Phakama Project. It's not always easy to reach out and touch those bodies—Tony speaks of the extreme difficulty of getting 'ordinary people' funding and passports to get to Britain.

2. *Divided bodies.* In *Utshob*, (London school) children including the diaspora of the Indian subcontinent, collaborate with Indian and Bangladeshi artists on the subject of Partition (fatally divided bodies) in a beautiful, un-selfconscious spectacle of historical re-enactments and reflections on life here. The cycle of performances gently fuses traditional and contemporary (popular) dance, music and sculpture. This is cosmopolitanism with a continued sense of responsibility towards former colonies, to those who moved here, to a sense of history and the encouragement in young people of a global view—through their singing and dancing bodies. LIFT presents an ideal British body, a body of culturally diverse bodies that can speak to each other openly in London and across the world. (It entails a young body—most arts festivals separate that body off into its own junior celebrations at other times, in other places.) Whether or not a secular festival can bring together divided (religious) bodies is a question that hovers on our lips, wishing the answer impatiently. Is *Utshob* a reply?

3. *A fluid, hybrid body.* Homi Bhabha argues a need to "get away from a view of culture as an evaluative activity concerned primarily with the attribution of 'identity' (individual or collective) and the conferral of 'authenticity' (custom, ritual, tradition)" (See Indhu Rubasingham, *RealTime* 2, page 9). He proposes that "'culture' is less about 'expressing' a pre-given identity...and more about the activity of negotiating, regulating and authorising competing, often conflicting demands for collective self-representation", "a process of articulation rather than 'authentification'", "of changing norms as represented in hybridity". In a country fixated on institutions, LIFT offers fluid interpretations of bodies and cultures through reflection and through generating new possibilities through intra- and inter-cultural collaborations.

4. *A wounded body.* This is a country still hurt by the surrender of empire, a condition that Margaret Thatcher exploited, opening the wound, in a general xenophobia and in the staging of the Falklands War. A wounded body can also be a cruel body and a self-lacerating body—it believes to be cruel is to be kind. The welfare state was abandoned. This was Thatcherism, the culture of the Bad Mother, and many artists I have spoken with are wounded by those years and cannot believe they have ended. Consequently, the election of a cautious Labour government makes for...

5. *A cautious body.* At the Daily Dialogue on the Step program (with Saburo Teshigawara), one speaker saw the dance work as celebrating the possibilities of individualism, not, he said individuality. This individualism he described as the dynamic between the individual and the group (Teshigawara is a liberal exponent of the Japanese version of this). Individuality in Britain, he said, had become a dirty word in recent years. Clearly, he didn't want to speak of the collective or the communal or the political. Instead he finely tuned the semantic of 'individual'. The Step program, appropriately, is a meeting of bodies with languages connecting in its wake.

6. *An optimistic body.* LIFT's programming, its collaborative ventures, the tenor of its Daily Dialogues, its marketing strategies, all suggest optimism, not as a message but as an experience—through the senses released (*Oraculos, La Feria, Periodo Villa Villa*), the participation in the generation of new works (*Utshob, Invisible Room*) and the witnessing of culturally diverse performances not fixed by authenticity or tradition. But the celebration is often predicated on an acknowledgement of...

7. *Being sick at heart.* (See Linda Marie Walker, this edition). How many works were about the damaged and abused (colonial, Indigenous, child, female) body or the body trying to find its place (*The North, Journey to the East, Ramzy Abul Majid*) or the body fashioned by culture (*Go Go Go*) and politics (*Stunde Null*)? The title *The 7 Stages of Grieving* says it all—here are damaged bodies, broken hearts, struggling to recover. The physical images of *Periodo Villa Villa* may have been thrilling but the slightest reflection will recall the number of them embodying struggle, pain, helplessness, endurance ("awful and awful" wrote Zsuzsanna Soboslay in *RealTime 2*) with only passionate and fleeting embraces...and a murky climactic battle between a suited man and his naked doppelganger hanging beneath him. Behind the work, as revealed in the Daily Dialogue, *Periodo Villa Villa* is shown to be part of a cultural struggle in Argentina. The performers speak not of content, however, but of going straight to the body of the audience, to ask what they can do to it and for it, setting it loose.

8. *Body and process.* The fluidity of bodies (performers and audiences across and between races, cultures and psychological conditions, in circus and spectacle and intimate one-performer works) in the LIFT program is mirrored in the emphasis on process and open-ended forms. Juliana Francis (*Go Go Go*), De La Guarda (*Periodo Villa Villa*), Wesley Enoch and Deborah Mailman (*The 7 Stages of Grieving*) and others, all described the evolution of works by many means, various inputs and influences. In a number of works writing was only one possible way into creation, process was often long, and the work subject to revision in performance. Christophe Marthaler told us that *Stunde Null* was a rare work of collaboration in a playwright-focussed German theatre—its achievement only possible because of acting ensemble strength and an on-going relationship between director, designer and dramaturg. (*Stunde Null*, remarkably, was created in ten weeks.) On *The body of the audience*, see *RealTime 3*: Virginia Baxter page 1; Keith Gallasch page 2.

9. *The city in the body.* LIFT ambitiously attempts to generate a sense of festival in an enormous city, but it is built not on embracing an impossible many but on the opening up of sites, fascinating in themselves (Three Mills Island, Mary Ward House, Trinity Buoy Wharf) but also possible venues for future performances—a LIFT gift to Londoners, an opening out, a deepening of place, a reminder of where you are. It also uses the South Bank and the Royal Court, populating them with formal and cultural strangers. (See Richard Murphet, this issue; also *RealTime 2* page 1)

10. *A slice of life: a body of parts.* How can LIFT be anything but—as someone called the arts festival concept—a slice of culture(s)? LIFT faces the problem of most arts festivals, it occupies a moment of the year, every two years. This could yield a provisional, inauthentic body, a body of parts. But you can see the attempt to build and grow the LIFT body, recurrent guests (Christopher Marthaler, Neelam Man Singh Chowdhry, William Yang, Christophe Berthonneau, Saburo Teshigawara and others), to engage in long term projects with artists and communities local and international. These offer LIFT time beyond the festival moment, inviting artists and audiences to return. The mystery is, how many of the LIFT audience see how many shows? How many enter the LIFT vision? How many sites become part of their being?

11. *Translating bodies.* Someone asks, have you seen much British work? The answer has to be no in an international arts festival like LIFT. But I've seen an innovative British arts festival at work, and that is telling—with the bodies it displays and conjures and the issues and images that stay with me and in me. The names of our fellow writers here—Gabriel Gbadamosi, Zahid Dar and Indhu Rubasingham (all so generous with their time and their words)—are also telling. I catch myself unconsciously slipping into their voices. They strike me as British, but not. That is new. But what that means will take time to take shape. Seeing *Ramzy Abul Majid* (a Palestinian rendering of Fugard's *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (synopsis-following; memories of seeing the original in another festival; and successful guesswork driven by the production's easy naturalism) reminds me how much of LIFT and being here in London has been an act of sustained translation and interpretation, of questions answered and unanswered.

12. *The class body.* Despite the air of cautious post-election optimism, I keep encountering words and assumptions that speak of limits that check creativity, that inhibit, and the final reason given for this is usually class. Discussions about exciting developments, ideas, possibilities, are often checked by class, the final word, and the speaker seems surprised to have said it, as if the body has thrown it up, an involuntary but necessary act. An ITV series on class ends with a kind of sad-happy acceptance of the class condition. Someone said to us, as we trudged through the rain across Clapham Common after seeing *Cirque Ici*, that the British are surprised if it rains in summer, and they're surprised if it gets really hot. An Englishman eager with idealism, in a Daily Dialogue, encourages the black South African speakers not to institutionalise the good work they are doing, to maintain it 'for the people'. The

Africans look bemused and one explains that while their work might be bridging a gap between middle class and working class blacks, white audiences will not come to any black theatre.

13. *Bodies for sale*. Over red wine at Le Beaujolais (another home away from home) near the Royal Court Upstairs, Julia Rowntree of LIFT and I have a long discussion about sponsorship. Julia's story (which I will reproduce in *RealTime* in Australia soon) is a remarkable one of a search not just for money for the arts, but the means of bringing the commercial and the public sectors *into* the arts, encouraging more than patronage—understanding and openness. This is a long process, the rewards not immediate. The Spring issue of *Untitled* (Number 13) includes Jonathan Jones' "Thatcher's Children", a bleak rider to Julia's struggle: "The autonomous gallery scene in London was born as a mutant version of free enterprise". We Australians look on anxiously as our conservative government cranks up talk of flexibility, accountability, performance agreements etc., wondering what kind of artist-marketers we will have to become.

14. *Talking back*. *RealTime* has enjoyed engaging with LIFT97, providing another voice for audience and artists to take home, erasing critical distance. We've also enjoyed our readers' enthusiasm and approval. One person did say we were indulgent. Of course we are. How else do we find out what can be written? Of course we indulge ourselves by writing 'I'. We are writer-artists, not journalists. We don't have a myth of objectivity to propound.

15. *More surprises*. It's interesting to look to press reviews for LIFT. While most of them are favourable, and despite the fact that LIFT has been around a long time and has won awards, there is a sense of surprise, that these strange things (works, places, projects) are happening in this city. The corollary in some of these pieces is that LIFT is good for you. This reminds me that LIFT is not a huge festival, that it is distinctive, and that compared with theatre programming and other festivals, it is adventurous, alien even, at home in London, but an organism within that keeps worrying at, creatively irritating the bigger body.

**You might be in Britain but you can always read *RealTime* on our Website**

**<http://www.rtimearts.com/~opencity/>**

*Tides of Night*, *Invisible Room* and *Now & Again* opened after *RealTime* went to press. Visit *RealTime* 20 (Australian edition) in August for our LIFT overview including responses to these works.

## **RealTime at LIFT: Editorial Team**

### **Britain**

Indhu Rubasingham, Gabriel Gbadamosi, Zahid Dar

### **Australia**

Zsuzsanna Soboslay, Richard Murphet, Linda Marie Walker, Virginia Baxter, Keith Gallasch, Wesley Enoch.

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RealTime c/o LIFT 19/20 Great Sutton St  
London EC1V 0DN

tel 0171 490 3964 fax 490 3976

RealTime PO Box A2246 Sydney South NSW  
Australia 1235

tel 61+2 9283 2723 fax 61+2 9283 2724

email: [opencity@rtimearts.com](mailto:opencity@rtimearts.com)

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design by David Varga