



Writings on Dance 23: vibrant bodies / complex systems SUMMER 2005-06

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nancy mauro-flude: http://sistero.sysx.org/mythengine/writingsondance/index.html

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Everywhere you shut me in. Always you assign a place to me. Even outside the frame that I form with you... You set limits even to events that could happen with others... You mark out boundaries, draw lines, surround, enclose. Excising, cutting out. What is your fear? **That I might lose your property. What remains is an empty frame. You cling to it, dead.**

Luce Irigaray [1992]

last night I dreamt about the iraqi war but the americans were shooting all the aborigine type people they could come across. I went into a fantasy world with a barbie doll into her wardrobe with all her **costumes**, she had an **anti war** badge that stood up for the Russians. my old critical theory teacher was there he said to me something about **mnemonics** and I will be surprised to see if you get out into the **media** with that story. I thought how he always has these quick intelligent **logical** comebacks that leave me thinking and when I want to respond it is too late or he is gone or on-anther topic. I was then on a big bus waiting to be freed with everyone else then it was like i was in a **zone** i could not communicate with anyone else although i could see people moving outside and no one was on the bus, then there were people on the bus. Then the bus drove us to this Irish pub and I saw Guinness and Stout on the black board. I was pleased. then we walked inside I was with these **women** i didn't know they were a bit brash and one was asking me to buy her something and I said its 10 \$ she said = well you have that and I said yes that's all I've got and i didn't know how long we would be staying there- could be 1 day 1 week 1 month and I might not have enough to last me, so I went to the counter and was looking at the menu and she wanted popcorn but it was 10\$ I was confused as i didn't want to let her down but had to look after my self... I woke up

submerged, smothered, choked by the Crown fallacy, the herd theory/ sheep on desert[ed] land? command>/. FREE us from the mainframe sitting in a locked room in some distant city.

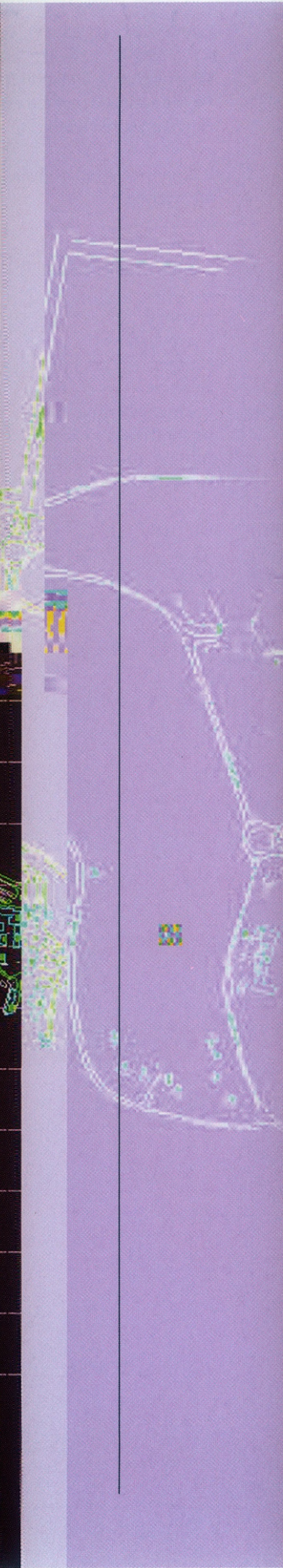
<break> <spell> <acknowledge><customs> <habits> <trapping> <our> <perception> <>

warning: unknown(files); Permission denied in /var/www/ eclectic details return to NOMADODOLOGY belief systems/short term effects/stagnant/loops effective/ produce realignments/shake things up... hit a nerve spark a connection

complex systems : surges of new forms pounding entrance & on FLOW -</CHAOS/repeats/ reproduces/grows/decays/unfolds/flows/spins/vibrates/swerves framework> (not loaded) ... a system what is underneath ... form = resonance ~Chapter ended Sleep exception!!! java.lang.NullPointerException at sistero.sysx.org (Unknown Source CODE) at java.lang.Thread.run(Thread southern hemisphere-552) 147.31667/-42.88333. Error Reporting [17th Century] CFLog (21st): Cannot find executable magic words sensible to commands 0x0000-</System/copyright/PrivateFrameworks/liberty.framework> (not loaded) it is a tough environment around here... all that stuff floating around... constantly changing forms responding sensitively. interacting with an environment in a kind of interface level. This is what is happening to you. VIBRANT BODIES complex systems embedded in environment (vitality = system does not have to do all the maintenance).

Some of the things i got used to, but i also switch back, now and then because i just miss to many things that make my life easier..

proscenium interpreted a slip back to the most of the dance theatre and political cabaret practitioners saw that one's society was not a block to performance but the necessary precondition of any communication. This work, which is grounded in political motives of cabaret, is directly linked to Rudolf Laban. Arguably he was one of the greatest reformers of Western dance in the 20th Century, & did much for our understanding of the complexity and mediacy of the human organism in movement. His bodies projected into virtual worlds where ordinary place, space and time disappeared into dance illusions. In Austria, mainstream post-modern dancers & critics-rational coincides with recent attempts to discuss movement being intimately involved with the lives, habits and daily routines of social living, (collective life) as social groups which look's to everyday events & relationships in people's lives as repositories of larger-cultural conditions. However, I believe the parameters of bodily-experience and potentiality are shifted, both for performers and for spectators when the perception of space, time and the body are deliberately disrupted and framed as extra-ordinary ---->



Spoken word

It's a funny old game that

Spoken word

Lots of poets, they call themselves

Gather round a microphone set stage

Usually

And read poetry at each other

Sometimes non-poets come too

And they clap each other on

And they give support when it is not due

And they cheer for people

Who suck

Because it is subjective sharing

And the beauty of subjective sharing

Is in the expression

Is in the sharing

Is in the doing

And I hate that

I find in spoken word

An art form where I can excel

In arrogant self serving aggrandisement of skill

Which in this day and age

Are not very much valued by my

Contemporaries within

Industrio-based/material-desire-feeding culture

In point

Creative word use

Vocal reconfiguration,

Theatrical genius

General obsessive self interest

Oh

And a ruthless desire to be better

Than everyone else

Much much better

So much better in fact

That there is no question

That I am better

These desires find a home

On my spoken word stage

I see spoken word poetry as a very undefined place

It is a broad term for a lot of forms

There are improvisations-scripts-games-ditties

and more

There are bush poets, beat poets, rhythmic poets, theatrical poets, sonic poets, visual poets, cynical fucking poets, shy poets, sexy poets, under-worked poets and over-enthused poets. And of course multi-labelled poets.

At the moment I have a name for myself

As a bit surreal

I'm trying to define a form within poetry

Very loosely

Titled *Extrem Spoken Word* poetry

Why Extrem

Well

The norm of a spoken word poet

As opposed to a poet is

Sadly

A poet who reads off paper

In a voice they have not developed past their own

With a habitual posture

Pedestrian movement

Few microphone skills

And a heap of improvisation

Not to mention

A disorganised and loose focus

A distraction from audience and

Hesitancy to share for fear of ridicule

Not saying this is all you see

Or the only thing you will see

But see parts of it you will

On a spoken word night

And

It truly breaks my heart when

The text someone has created

Is hindered by their delivery of it.

I work with a colleague – Crazy elf

A.K.A. Joey Kurtschenko

Who by chance and influence on each other

Have developed and are developing

Extrem Spoken word

It is generally and/or includes

Memorised

Loud

Theatrical

To/With Audience

Vocalised

Postured

Choreographed

Propped

Costumed

Improvised within Form

Strong/Powerful Focus

Directed to audience

Full throttle sharing of subjective viewpoint

Big stuff

Loud

Crazy

I feel insane on stage
I truly feel I let go all rational processing
Yet
I am master of the show I am performing
Something seriously changes within me
I let loose something
I process this happening
I play a predefined text
Which is memorised to the point
Of being
Impulses firing from my brain to body
And vice versa
There are energies roaming in and out of my body
Which I beck and call at will
I feel shaman channelled from within
And a grand interaction with non-logical entities
Streaming through me
I channel dragons and pitch-black nights
Heart wrenching heartaches
Slow drizzled sonics
Falsettoed sighs into nothingness
Deep growled monsoons
Sunsets glorious and kissed
My creative mind-ideas-collective-consciousness
Link spurts forth a
Missionilion ideas
I play them out
No two readings are ever the same
I'm sure you can imagine

It's a funny little investigation
I feel I have
Controlled manic episodes on stage
At least that's the good ones
This can be defined a few different ways

A link to energetic combustion
An emotional outburst sustained
A choreographed psychotic episode

My fascination with the manic state
Called crazy grew from
Seeing it in many intimates as I grew
It is powerfully creative
Full of comedy
Wry wringles of wit
Thinking becomes slippage
Idea pushing new boundaries
Understanding through
Introspective ideas
Subjectivity times 1000
And re-enforced by giant resounding YES!
Is what I love about
The Manic State
And the energy
People in episodic or plain manic states
Are able to access.

I love this state
I think it is beautiful
Magical
Yes I know
It can be scary
Especially when the manic person is focused on
darkness
Especially when the manic person is "out of
control"
Especially when the manic person disregards
danger
Especially when the manic person is near you

On an open mic stage
I am far and set from the audience
I am staged
I can literally pierce or smother them with sounds
As dangerous as need gets
I can energetically blast woo cajole seduce
Whatever I wish with them
I am completely visible
Engaged with my whole body,
People can see hear feel
Almost taste and even touch
What I am saying with
Every essence of my being
I am yelling from my gut
I am rasping my voice against
My vocal chords
To deliver this very message

And for some reason I have
Yet to fully rationalise or understand
They love me for it.

When they are all watching
I am blessed with their energy
I am able to have enough energy
To do these things with them

Whether that "is really true objectively like"
Or not
It feels subjectively true
Thus it is a great perceptual practice
To engage in while performing
Makes for incredible performance charisma.

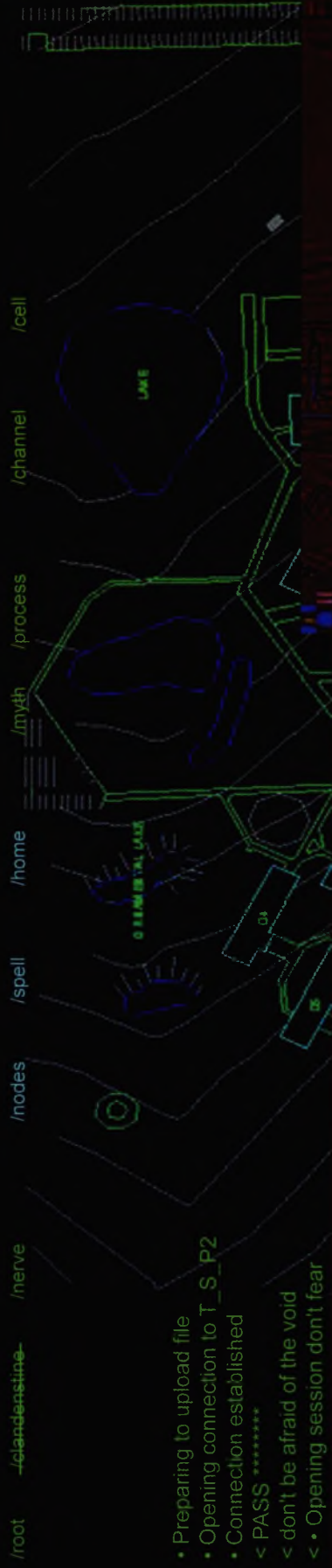
Oh yeah
And finally
I get to say what I want to say
However I want to say it
Without interruption and generally
With grand applause
So it is very satisfying especially
For a self centred egotist genius boy
With a lot of solutions for earth
And little ways to instigate them

In short and summary,
Spoken word becomes a
Catharsis
Rehearsed
Monologue
Stage for entertainment
Purging
Relaxation
Enjoyment
Aggrandisement
For me

ESTEBAN DAVID DO SANTOS

**ESPOKEN
WORD TREEEM**

nancy mauro-flude: <http://sistero.sysx.org/mythengine/writingsondance/bin.html>



- Preparing to upload file
- Opening connection to T_S_P2
- Connection established
- < PASS *****
- < don't be afraid of the void
- < • Opening session don't fear

< run away processes broken sessions which never properly terminated
i am sure there is a socket timeout setting to prevent this...

Persephone, the ancient greek Goddesses of the underworld.

< PORT > PORT command successful.

/// a truly connected human being ///

< STORE divinations/divination.htmp

> 550 divinations/divination.htmp: No such file or directory

HOLDING PATTERNS [people are afraid to merge] no feeling because everything is dead

Collaboration patience intimacy willingness unknown out of the safety. A social political agenda in a poetic symbolic action. Networked space - new ways of broadcasting - subvert the powerfully conformist atmosphere of nationalistic ego-centric screen culture & televised media. why are you so worried about upsetting the wrong people

... complex systems behave discontinuously, systems change states, in modes of complex systems a controlling loop may reach a threshold state and transfer control to another loop altogether ...

networked distributed systems & ways of making performance contribute to the negation of the rising intensity of authoritarian culture

... simple goal directed single loop -- regulated feedback systems; have a certain continuity of action ...

central command-and-control system . top down. defending territory.

Performance is a struggle to communicate with all the people = everyone, it's like a telepathic field. There are moments when people relax, but when people feel the zeroing in - tuning in the middle I feel a lot of archaic energy - membranes are pushed. Then you push and penetrate another one, a long ribbed canal- A<ahref=" ./porthole/porthole.html"> porthole . A snake pushing out it's skin is like that / and it has got some ecstatic movements painful moments, you die a worm and become a butterfly.

Dianne Reid

SCENES FROM ANOTHER LIFE



VIDEO TITLE: *Our bodies are inescapable...we live in them.*

**PROJECTED IMAGE:
OPENING GHOST IMAGE**

What is my dance now?

My body is saturated with images and details.

My choreography has become an exorcism of ghosts of "opening-nights past" as I dance out memories and events inscribed on my body.

A chorus of my other selves accompanies my performance, live and virtual, real and imagined, past and present.

GHOST IMAGE OUT

Scenes from another life

As a dancer I 'understand' and reflect on the world through the instrument of my body. The body is the content and the vehicle of expression for an art form inextricably linked to the 'present'.

Dance, shifting through and between bodies, is intangible, elusive, transient, and eventually lost, confronting each dancer from an early age with her own mortality.

The art form of dance is in danger of remaining frozen in time and place at the beginning of its development, in the infancy of its vocabulary, reinventing the (cart)wheel.



BACK & FORTH EXCERPT TO STILL IMAGE

It denies change in the physical body as it updates the face of its population. It ignores continuity as its heritage disappears with its experienced artists. Its legacy is confined to a few words in a review, a fuzzy VHS of a performance, a poster.

Her own body is seeking, longing to find, the vanished body whose motions produced it. (Foster)

Performance is a site for both the establishment and relinquishing of identity. In front of an audience I exist, I present a particular life or self.

These lives, selves, are simultaneously changing and constant, written on my body as lived experience. I want to be seen to exist beyond a particular performance moment, and into that moment, I want to bring the 'meaning' inherent in my body.

I want dance to be about real things, the range of emotions, images, and events that form and inform my moving body.

My body is the fabric onto which all objects are woven ... the general instrument of my comprehension. (Merleau-Ponty)

SMALL MOMENTS DANCE

It is almost as if the skin itself served as a notebook, a reminder of what was not allowed to be forgotten. (Grosz)

Dance making becomes a post-modern puzzle in which one must sort the sample from the original, the memory from the dream.

It becomes a dissection of the body in search of clues: the formative events that shaped the present, for what's changed and why other things haven't.

The "rush of technological advances" pushes the body into a state of catatonia—we become a static mass hunched around a flurry of eye-hand movement. The shape of the audience has changed and barely recognizes the dancer's body. Technology is re-inscribing the body and dance must re-consider its syllabus.

I began creating dance video work to assert my existence, imbuing my presence with a palpable history, and with it credibility, a meaning.

On screen, dance can reappear and be replayed. It becomes a tangible artefact accessible across geographical and temporal locations.

As the movement of the dancer and dance are inscribed in film and video, that inscription becomes the artefact that endures over time.

And by this process, as choreographers, dancers and filmmakers, future generations will have access to the marks we made. (Bromberg)

GHOST ARMS OPENING

I have created a video dance body that acknowledges and responds to both changes in my body and changes in the way we view.

My dance vocabulary has refined:
instead of a leap, I gasp;
a lift of a finger replaces an arabesque;
to fall I close my eyes.

Virtuosity for me now is about detail, specificity, a quality, and about a psychokinetic connection.

I have different things to say with and about my body.

My 36,000th leg brush tells me less than my first wrinkle.



SCAR, SKIN, SWEAT

I dance the new body of the camera and become both dancer and viewer.

I come closer to the nuance of the body and its underlying emotive or psychological inscription.

Choreography becomes cinematic as I re-frame the body and re-sequence the movement.

With the camera I control the body's identity, how it is seen.

In the edit suite I control the meaning, imposing connections.

A new dance exists outside the physical body.

My body is returned to me as a site rather than an object.

Sound: My head is hot

The intervention of technology has opened up new choreographic possibilities (Dodds)

But alas, I have been split into a Cartesian dilemma.

My video dance body exists and my 'present' self remains intangible.

When I re-enter the theatre I carry in the cinema.

I have become shaped by my own transposition of dance to the screen...small and random actions have become large, vast, loud, significant...

MINI ME DANCE/PROJECTION

I have become inscribed by self-imposed images of myself. How can I resolve this multiplicity?

Will I, and the live dance form, disappear, fading through over-duplication, and will my clone, my image of myself become more real than me?

I am now both puppet and puppeteer as the tiny image of myself enters and becomes trapped in the landscape of my body—the image of a dancer as a body in a specific period in time, always from the past, a younger self irretrievable and immutable, elusive like the physical art form of dance.

This mini me has become a superior body, preserved by technology.

While the physical body deteriorates the virtual body defies gravity,

As technology reduces the size of our movements, it amplifies the microscopic.

SPLAT MINI ME

I become the microscopic in the landscape of my imagined self.

HOLLYWOOD MUSICAL

I am televisualized.

I cannot distinguish between my real self and my imagined self. I create the illusion of truth as I reveal my lies, my fantasies.

...there seems to be a time lag in the perception and registration of real changes in the body image. (Grosz)

GHOST STRUGGLE & MUSIC

Video dance has both liberated the dancing body from the small window of youth, the pedestal of virtuosity, and imprisoned it under the stark reality of the magnifying glass.

The mature dancer can live on through specificity and nuance and be simultaneously crucified by the scrutiny of the close-up.

The body is still an object of desire: the televised body may only have to lift a finger rather than its own weight, but it must look desirable doing it.

A wrinkle may reflect a history, suggest a life, trace a pattern of emotions, but it is a reminder of our own mortality.

My body, my dance now comments on the changes in all our bodies – bodies seated and sedentary before a screen, closed by terrorist threat, cosmetically altered, starved, severed, displaced, resisting change yet recanting history.

FINAL DANCE

My head is hot

My brain is bubbling

I sweat and I shiver

My lungs are scorched

My heart bounces like an egg boiling

The more I dance anxiety, the more I end up standing still.

My mobile phone defaults to September 11.

I am four years younger than Madonna.

I want to be able to open my body without bracing for impact.

Alas, then she is drown'd?

to fall asleep in a public place with your head back and your mouth open

to lay on your back with your stomach exposed like a cat to laugh uncontrollably

to call out inside someone else's house

to take your shoes off and turn the soles of your feet upwards

to hold out your hand

to expose your throat

to close your eyes

to receive touch

to move through space.

FINAL GHOST IMAGE

I want to make a dance about stillness, without moving slowly. (Hay)

nancy mauro-flude: <http://sistero.sysx.org/mythengine/writingsondance/boot.html>

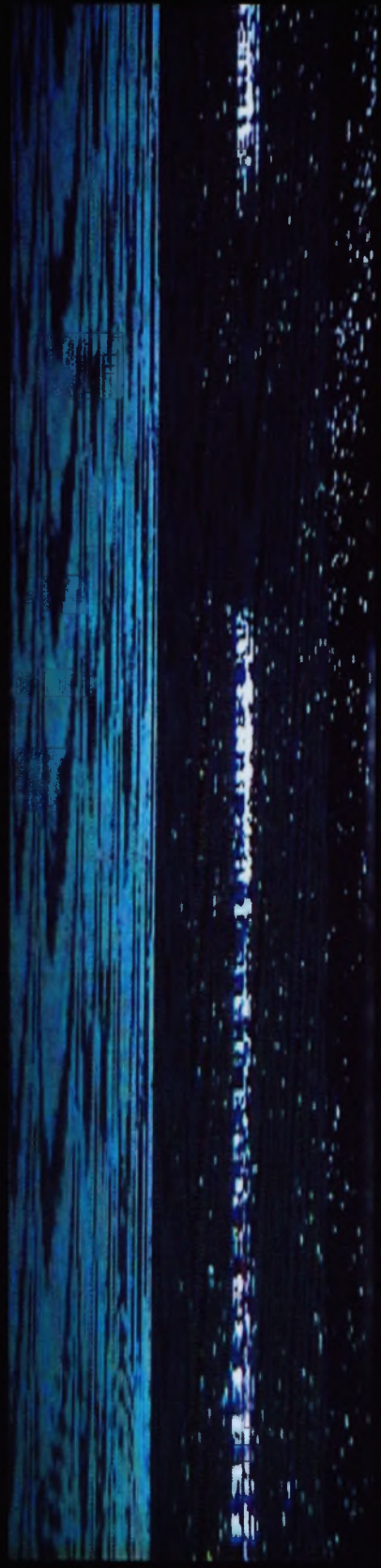
[/root](#) [/clandenstine](#) [/neve](#) [/reeds](#) [/spell](#) [/home](#) [/myth](#) [/process](#) [/channel](#) [/cell](#)

white noise

(a big fall)</change></p>of<p><face=
 switched back because i just miss too many things that make my life easier...

<QUIT

> 221 Goodbye.



The Insecterl Star cluster by sister O is located in the constellation of curseodialect, when it makes its first dawn appearance (sister O rising), people of the new world disorder know that this is the start of the annual dancing season in order to energize cell life. A short time afterward these communities dance, sing in death metal choirs outside capitalists' houses, pirate electricity & chat about the lost knowledge of the night sky. In this Area the stellar realm of indigenous Australians name this group the Pleiades - a group of women sitting in the sky with a group of kangaroos, a little akin to the European story of the seven sisters. Arcturus is a star near the tail of the constellation Great Bear; its rising and setting were supposed to foretell Tempests.

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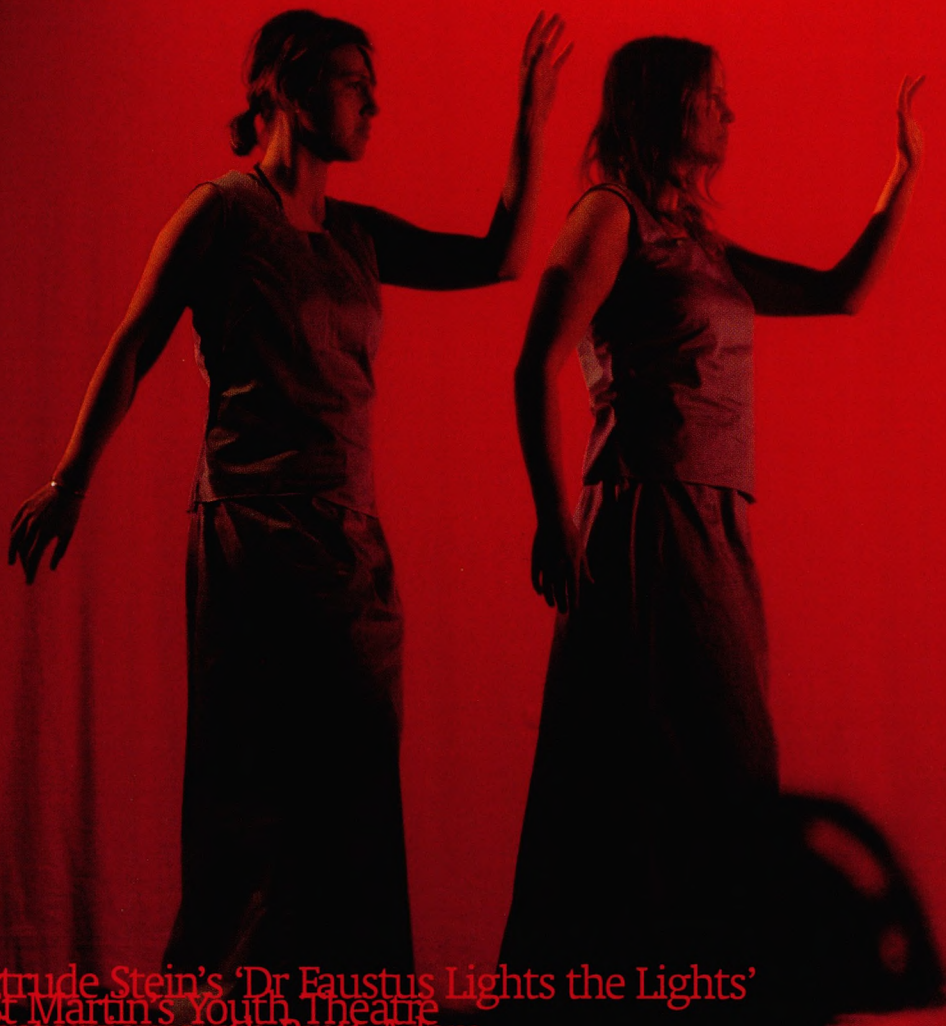
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Gertrude Stein's 'Dr Faustus Lights the Lights'
at St Martin's Youth Theatre
An interview with Brett Adam
by Sally Gardner

Gertrude Stein's 'Dr Faustus Lights the Lights' at St Martin's Youth Theatre An interview with Brett Adam by Sally Gardner

ABOVE: Anthea Stephens and Libby Gott
in the St Martin's Youth Theatre production of
Gertrude Stein's *Dr Faustus Lights the Lights*,
directed by Brett Adam. Images on subsequent
pages are also from this production.
All photographs by Ponch Hawkes.

"The first day I met Brett Adam was the first day I met the writings of Gertrude Stein. As you can understand this was a lot to take in, the repetition, the imagery, and this was just Brett trying to tell me where the auditions were ..."

– Joseph O'Farrell, member of the chorus, quoted in St Martin's Youth Arts Centre Newsletter, Issue 4, 2002

*I hear her
he says
I hear her say
Call to her to sing
To sing all about
to sing a song
All about
day-light and night light.
Moonlight and starlight
electric light and twilight
every light as well.*

*The electric lights glow and a chorus in the distance
sings*

*Her name is her name is her name is Marguerite Ida and
Helena Annabel.*

Faustus sings

*I knew it I knew it the electric lights they told me so no dog
can know no boy can know I cannot know they cannot
know the electric lights they told me so I would not know I
could not know who can know who can tell me so I know
you know they can know her name is Marguerite Ida and
Helena Annabel and when I tell oh when I tell, oh go away
and go away and tell and tell and tell and tell, oh
hell.*

[The Ballet' from *Dr Faustus Lights the Lights*]

Sally Gardner Could you tell me about your decision to stage Gertrude Stein's *Dr Faustus Lights the Lights* with young people at St Martin's Youth Theatre? **Brett Adam** Generally, one of my intentions during my time here is to provide young people with a wide range of theatrical experiences. I think it's really important for young people to be exposed to the widest possible range of theatrical experiences and forms and models. When I first started I actually found that a lot of the young people coming through ... and they come from various backgrounds – some of them are university educated and are studying drama and will go on to drama schools, others just want to have fun – but it seems that the education system at the moment isn't exposing them to contemporary arts practice at all. So a lot of them would come here expecting 'a play' with characters and ... they can get that anywhere. So what I was really keen to do in my time here was to provide them with stuff that they can't really get elsewhere in Melbourne.

Sally What I very much enjoyed about *Dr Faustus* was that it just had this sense that the characters in the play are really people who are trying to come to terms with new experiences of the world or a world that is changing. So there was a sense of wonder, or a sense of trying to understand: 'what is this viper?' or 'what are these lights?' and that that is very pertinent to young people encountering a world which can be both frightening and wondrous. It seemed to me that the cast, because of their youth, had a very solid way of conveying that feeling. I liked that a lot. This cast had found a very felt connection with the play and its 'characters' despite the high modernism of the text – or perhaps because of it. Because they would have had to attend to the language *as language* with its rhythms and musicality.

Brett That's an interesting point. We also run a performance ensemble here every year for people between the ages of 15 and 25. It's entry by audition and because these guys are a little bit more focused on craft they have the idea that acting involves creating a persona or 'theatrical self' – that a play somehow demands that. The cast for *Faustus* had the same idea: 'Oh, I have to serve the text and it's not about me. Whereas

*my work, personally, as a director is the exact opposite: the work has to start from the self. There is no...the play, as a text doesn't exist, it's just words on a page. It's been fascinating watching people realise that because it's so empowering. Not just for young people, but generally. It was interesting during the rehearsal process too because the language is very difficult – on first, and second and third readings... and it took us a long time...I mean I've had the play for years. And I come back as I do with a lot of work and reread it and reread it. And it took literally years to begin to understand what is going on. And the actors had the same challenge put before them. It was interesting that, generally speaking, those in the cast who took to it most easily were the younger ones who didn't have the baggage of being university educated or the, you know, imposition of having to analyse the text from a psychological point of view. The younger kids – like the 13, 14 and 15 year olds just took to it I think because they were closer to childhood. Stein's rhythms are very sort of childlike. Quite a lot of them had never done a play before – I don't think any of them had ever done Gertrude Stein so there was this *thing* in front of them, this new thing and it was again completely refreshing going back to the point I made before of getting them to understand that it was *their* connection with it that was going to breath life into it. And the comments I got back from them after the production were all that about how they'd been helped to – well they'd been empowered basically to claim the text. You're aware too obviously – maybe its not obvious – we approached it from a physical point of view because with a text like that its not going to work through the intellect or through the head, it *has* to work through the body. Because she writes musically.*

Sally You anchored the play in some very strong images. What was that process and how did you with your own ideas and having become familiar with that text over such a long time then encounter these young people and how they might have seen it. How did the two come together?

Brett We started with just general discussions about the piece and everybody brought their understanding or their research to it: whether it was philosophical or religious or historical backgrounds to it. I did have very clear storyboard almost of the images. When I started the piece they weren't fully formed and I was relying on their input, the cast's input, to fill it out – which they did. I knew that I wanted *Faustus* to be sitting in a chair of light, for example, it just made sense to me. And then we worked, as rehearsals went on we basically detailed the images more and more and I threw it up to them and I always incorporated them into the decision-making process. Once they understood the general vision for the piece they were able to make suggestions that just were wonderful. So a lot of what you saw was their input in lots of ways. Yes, but I approached the piece from an image base first rather than from any psychological or narrative base.

Sally I haven't been to anything for a long time that was as stimulating intellectually, sensuously and emotionally at the same time. It seemed to work on so many levels and always to be very open.

Brett That's great because that's what we were aiming for. And that's partly why I chose that text. That text allows you to do that. And personally with my work it's the direction that I want to go in with work generally. I'm very interested in really being aware of the medium – and it's *theatre*. I use all the resources. I mean in that theatre we had flys, a beautiful little proscenium arch theatre that *they* wouldn't get a chance to work in, I wouldn't get a chance to work in, if I wasn't working here. So, it was *using* what you've got, the resources that are at hand rather than trying to make it like television and film which a lot of theatre is or thinks is the bench mark.

I've been trying to think of a term for it just to make it easier, which I haven't been able to come up with, but the best I've been able to manage is 'hyper theatre' or hyper-theatrical where it's working within a theatrical context really emphasizing each element – almost layering all the elements on top of

each other. With *Faustus* I was able to do that beautifully – the text allows you to do that. So much theatre you see is reduced by the director's or the actors' reliance on the narrative or the psychological, or the text itself, the linguistic elements of it which we all know are only one part of the theatrical experience. And an audience exposed to that can find it so easy to turn off if there's nothing else there. Theatre should be sensual – you were saying before it's a sensuous experience and it must be. And I'm not saying all productions need to be big and you know huge lighting effects and stuff like that, but it's being true to the nature of the piece itself. I mean you look at the large theatre companies – MTC's programme for next year is doing some interesting things – but they're bound by subscribers, they're bound to tradition. I get really distressed that theatre in Australia is still in the 19th century, still working on 19th century models which is no longer even *last* century, it's two centuries ago. And I've travelled a little bit and I read a lot of stuff that's happening overseas and that is getting an audience and people are being affected by it. The theatrical form's moving on whereas here I don't think it is. And it's so unlike the other art forms. I mean the visual arts, if that was stuck in the 19th century we'd still be doing portraits.

Sally Is it a choice for you to work with so-called 'non-professionals' – outside of the ... why are you here, really?

Brett The job came up. I had been freelancing for years. I graduated from the VCA in 1992 and I had been working in Sydney before that and I'd been freelancing for years and years and doing what I thought was good work, also teaching and working with various schools around the place and I had got to the point where I just wasn't getting anywhere personally with my work and also just generally. And I had made the decision that I was going to move overseas. And I started putting the wheels in motion to do that when this job came up and I got this job and it sort of answered what needed answering for me and it was very different. I had worked with young people and I'd worked with St Martin's for a number of years, but not as intensely as this job demands. I was at a conference in Sydney a while ago where people were talking disparagingly about theatre professionals who work with young people as a step to somewhere else. I don't see myself as a youth theatre worker – I'm not a youth worker. Not that I mistrust people who do but what this place (St Martin's) needs is professional theatre workers and that's what we get funded for: that's what produces good results from the kids, it's what they want. So I'm a professional director who happens to be working in a youth theatre for this number of years. It doesn't really affect the standard of my work at all. I expect the same standard of work from these young people as I would from professional actors. Obviously these young people aren't trained so in the rehearsal process you need to understand that you need to train them – train's an awful word but – expose them to methods that they might not have been exposed to that professional actors are. But still working here for me has been wonderful. I have been able to explore a lot of things that I wouldn't be able to if I was freelancing because the resources I have here are so much greater. It's actually been perfect for me being here because a lot of things that I want to explore with my work that I'm able to do – you know, and if it happens to be with young people, that's great.

Sally So for the young people it's more like an apprenticeship – or that you learn about things by being involved in the actual scene of creation. Is that how you've come through? **Brett** That's a really good way of looking at it. As I said I studied directing at the VCA. But before that I went through Sydney University originally and during my time getting a BA there I became involved in SUDS, the Sydney University Dramatic Society. And that was the best training ground because it was run by us. It wasn't affiliated to any department and this was the mid-eighties. There wasn't a drama department there at all. There were few drama courses. Every two weeks there'd be a new play and we had our own little theatre space that we looked after. Every two

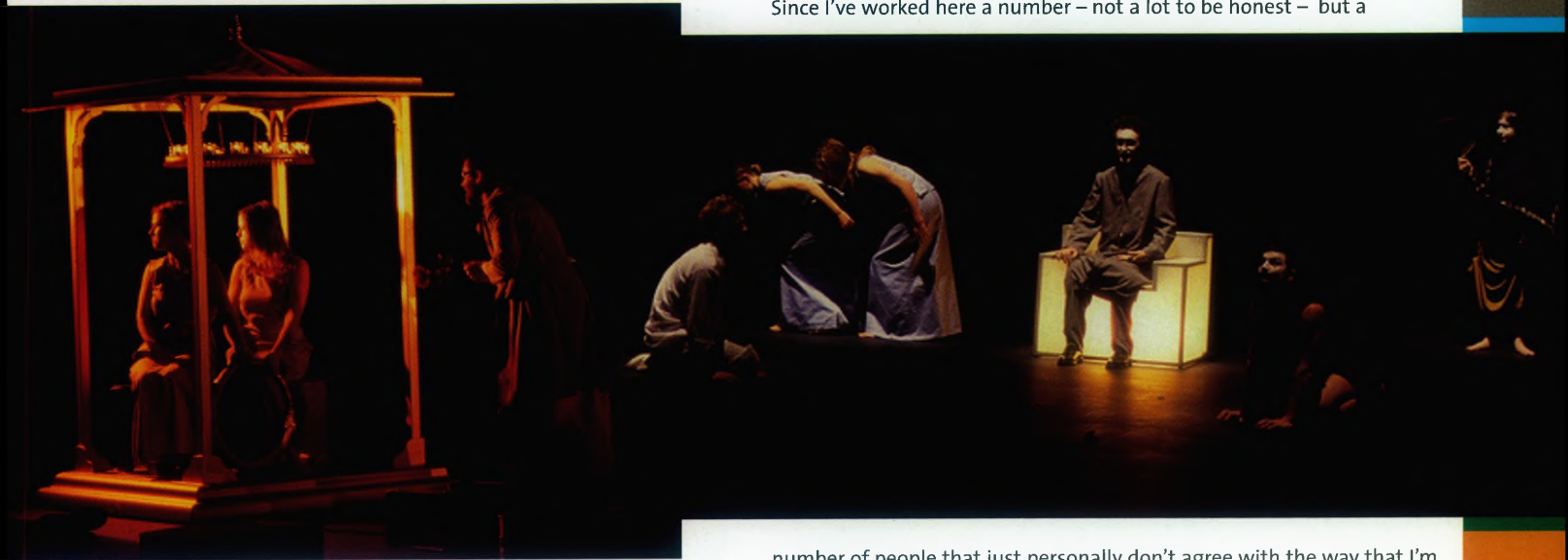
weeks there'd be a new production and we'd write, act, design, operate, the whole thing. I was involved there almost every show for a number of years and I learnt how to light shows, I learnt how to operate, I learnt about sound design because I had to do it. My first show that I ever I directed I stupidly did everything. I remember sitting there at 10 o'clock at night sewing costumes working out the lighting plot and directing the actors which was stupid *but...* really great training because I don't know if you heard, I think that you might have. I had to step in and stage manage on *Dr Faustus* and being able to do that, just being able to call a show, and the VCA didn't train me to do that at all. And I found ... the education I got at the VCA was great *but...* There was a lot there. I mean you can't teach directing, you really can't teach acting. I don't think you can teach any of the arts. They're about experience; it's about experiential learning. You can teach formulae and theories and approaches and models and all those sorts of things but you have to get out there and do it. So the time I had at SUDS was fantastic and a lot of people that I've worked with there are now working all over the world



and throughout Australia in great positions as well. It was a practical training, an apprenticeship, it really was. And we were working with people that were a couple of years older than us who had had more experience, who were able to pass on their knowledge and then we'd pass it on to the people below us. I went through Sydney University as I said during the mid-eighties. I was reading a lot about post modernism, reading a lot about amazing stuff that was happening in the States and that just fuelled my desire to learn and to explore the theatrical form. I got a bit of a reputation when I was at Sydney Uni. I started creating my own pieces, just visual, image-based work with eclectic writings and musics because I was interested in exploring the form. And for me just the traditional straight narrative didn't excite me terribly much. It was the attendant things around it that really got my fire going. I'm really excited about how we can push the boundaries and find out what's new in the form and, again, I'll come back to the point that doing it at St Martin's is ideal because these young people come along for the ride and they want to know what's new... Because if you mimic an existing form you're not really allowing for a lot of personal expression or... it's not about you it's about something that exists outside you. Whereas exploring new forms is about finding it from here – that we create. And it's scary and it's risky and so it should be. Tony Kushner who wrote *Angels in America* says this wonderful thing about how artists must aspire to the highest degree of risk they can otherwise the work is just not worth the paper it's written on. **Sally** It seems then that you're really able to do what you want as an artist within this situation at St Martin's Youth Theatre. But what kinds of challenges

does it pose for you? **Brett** When you're working with professionals I think it's so easy to have a vision and realise that vision and have professionals come along and they understand that you're speaking a language that's particular to you and realise how they can help fulfil that vision. Young people have no compunction about going: 'That sounds like a real wank. I don't understand what you're doing.' And having to explain yourself is great. And a number of times I've realised that the path I was going down was not relevant or not productive or practical. Young people ask really upfront questions, and so they should. More often than not though I feel really validated in what I'm exploring because the people I work with here understand what I'm doing once it's explained to them and they broaden it for me to actually open out what I'm doing as well because they get excited about it because it's something they haven't experienced. I love working with young people. And I'll do it for the rest of my career. Not one hundred percent but ... I think everybody should work with young people. I really do. Because otherwise your work can become so self-

we've got to change these kids lives and I've got to give them a worthwhile experience'. I know the standard of my work is good and that's why I was employed. I was employed for my work, for the vision I have and I do that work and I know that the trickle down effect that will have will fulfill all those needs within the company's vision and also the young people themselves so it's a really happy marriage. **Sally** The reference that you made to some other notion of working with young people what is that exactly? **Brett** It's more of a not therapy but almost social work where you put the young person's experience at the centre of the work. Rather than understanding that it's an element and how that integrates with all the other elements. And it's much more interesting for me to accept their work which I do willingly but making them understand how it integrates and how that suggestion is quite an appropriate suggestion given the vision of the piece or what the scene's about or how we're, you know, portraying the characters. Rather than just blindly working with the young person from a more egotistic point of view. And you know occasionally we get people who don't want that. Since I've worked here a number – not a lot to be honest – but a



reflexive and for a smaller audience. I mean Brecht used to say that he would take his productions to a young audience, a 12 and 13 year old audience, because if they didn't understand what was going on they would say so and they would ask questions; whereas an older audience, it was assumed that because they don't get it they're stupid or whatever, but the young audiences he would test work in front of them to see how it was received. **Sally** In your working process, in your practice you don't make an exception, if you like, of young people so that those who audition and start to work have to meet your standard, they have to accept a sort of professional standard. Does that challenge some young people? **Brett** Yes it does. And as I was saying people coming out of the education system. They're used to high school productions. You know, I don't want to dismiss all high school productions. But a lot of them come from an environment where it's about mucking around and they are... they go through a period of adjustment where they realise that I demand a really high quality of commitment from them – of dedication. And you know they grumble a little bit every now and then about demands but through experience realise that that produces really good work and really good personal work from them. And the responses we get back from the cast at the end are just so gratifying. You know a lot of them speak about life changes and realisation and a greater sense of self-worth and all that sort of stuff which is fantastic and that happens on every level not just for the young people. I mean I don't push it. I made the distinction before about being a youth worker. I don't come in here going, 'Oh

number of people that just personally don't agree with the way that I'm approaching it because, for various reasons – they don't get on board basically. And that's fine. They're in a different place, they need something else at the moment so that's fine. **Sally** What about the critical reception of things that you do at St Martin's Youth Theatre? **Brett** It's been an issue ever since I've been here and it's something I've been trying to address. For a while I was actually thinking about changing the name of the place so that we lose the term 'youth theatre' because there's a stigma, there just is. People see (the words) 'youth theatre' and for some reason they think it's not going to be good quality. It's going to be kids running around the stage. And it's been difficult to try and address that. And the artistic directors before me have had the same philosophy and artistic directors of similar companies across Australia I know have the same problem. Whereas, as I said, we're professionals, we do professional work but with young people and the work is no less because of that. And I think what you spoke about before, and what a lot of people have picked up on, is that one of the strengths of youth theatre is that immediacy and the vibrancy because it's all new to them a lot of the time and they dedicate themselves one hundred or two hundred per cent to this piece. You won't see that energy level, I don't think in other companies. I mean I could have done *Dr Faustus* with a professional company and it would have been very similar production but it would have had a very different feel. Very different. And it's while I'm here that I'm very aware that that's something I can use: it's that enthusiasm and that willingness to be challenged and to go places they wouldn't normally go. I mean all the

productions we've done here have had a really similar energy within a different form. *Coliseum* was scripted of course. *Rave* was devised. But we've had really good comments about all those pieces we've done. About the commitment of the cast. And it's once they understand their place in it and they trust what I'm doing and how they can be involved their commitment is really evident. But as you say it didn't surprise me that we weren't included in the (Melbourne) Festival roundup. It's happened before. John Slavin's review in *The Age* was actually interesting because he engaged with the ideas which not a lot of reviewers do. They think 'youth theatre' and so all they have to talk about is children. They don't actually engage with the ideas of the piece. And admittedly that was a difficult piece for them to talk about. I mean a number of reviewers just tell the story. We had a number of those that had difficulty telling the story of *Dr Faustus*, so...what could they do? And that was interesting, I thought that was fascinating. And the same with *Rave New World*, they did not know how to take that at all. I was really trying to explore a lot of ideas with that, theatrical ideas, and I'm very interested in the nature of the audience-performer relationship,

What made me feel kind of joyful, and I'm thinking about this partly in relation to people who might never have been to the theatre before, was the transgression of grammar in the play where Margarita Ida and Helena Annabel ... where the verb in relation to them is always in the singular and it's totally ... it is part of the language of the play and we come to accept it. It's a constant thing that you're hearing and it's so marvellous to just go ... she is Margeurite Ida and Helena Annabel and there are two women there. There is something so very pleasing about that. And I guess that putting into question the idea of an identity is happening on all sorts of levels. For example Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel look for the viper bite on different parts of their bodies, so that we see them as two but language regards them as one. I suppose that has to do with the different theatrical languages – words, movement, space etc – having their own existence, fully. I liked that too with the timing of the lighting – that there was time just for the lights.

Brett Somebody else has commented that with a lot of my work I love taking my time. And I mean you look at that script and it's just dense

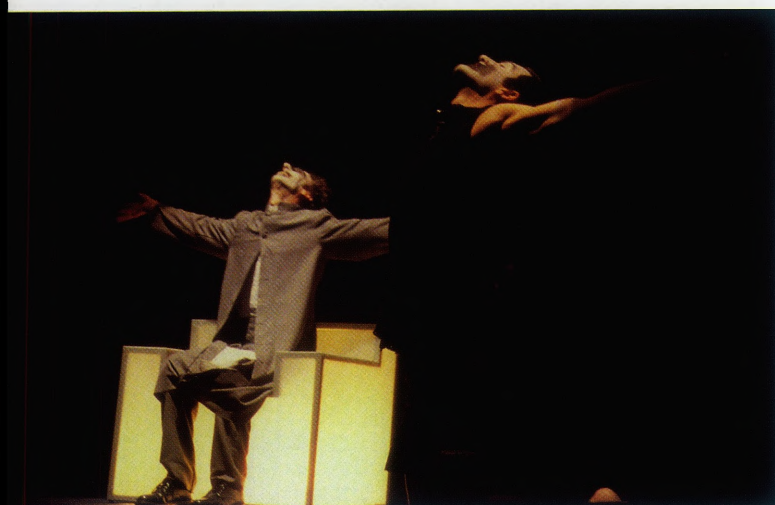
physically and spatially and the reviewers just aren't able to engage with the ideas. It would be interesting ... if I was doing these pieces with adult performers would they review it in a different way? Yes, they would. Which is sad. Really sad. There seem to be limited opportunities for these works to have a larger effect. The flip side of that though is that we do get ... our audiences are new audiences. A lot of them are people that would not go to the theatre normally: parents of kids, you know it's the first show they've ever done, or only come because their kid's in it. That's actually really exciting. That's something a lot of people don't think about with this company. We are reaching new people who don't ever go to the theatre, or are used to high school productions – *Annie* or whatever. I feel that *there we're* actually doing something. As artists I think we can fall really easily into that trap of preaching to the converted, assuming that our audiences have a language, and an education in what we do and they don't always. There was an experience where I was sitting at the back of one performance and there was a group of people in front of me that knew one of the performers – one of the two Margarita Idas I think. They came on stage and the woman in front of me just started waving. Of course, she saw her friend on stage ... and that's what excites me, that there are people coming who haven't had experiences in theatre and we're able to...I'm hoping to lead them to further experiences. **Sally** That was the case for me with *Dr Faustus Lights the Lights*. I felt grateful to be given that experience. I might never have seen one of Stein's plays performed otherwise. I've read Stein but I was unaware that she wrote plays or operas. And then to actually have it given to me as this experience ...

text. The kids were a little freaked out when they looked at it the first time. They said, this is going to be really boring if we're just talking the whole time. I said, no, no – because one of the things I love is understanding the musical structure of the piece. And so I gave the time for the girls' entrance with the lighting change. And also, which has been really interesting, a lot of people have picked out as their favourite moment when the tourists come on with their suitcases towards the end of the second act. For me it just, structurally, it needed time there before we launched back into the text. And the young people involved were *great*. They understood what I was doing about finding the highs and lows and the shape of each scene. That it didn't just have to be based on the words. And again there's an understanding that they come with this assumption about the language and ... no, no, no it's just one part of it. What world is she trying to create, what mood is she trying to create here and how can we support or meet what she's trying to do. What we can contribute? Again, John Slavin's review said a beautiful thing – because you know there's a lot of music in the piece and I tend to have a lot of music and lots of different musics – he spoke about it being an opera for the spoken word. And it was something you were talking about as well before about the use of music not necessarily being a cliché and I think part of the reason in *Dr Faustus* was because you have music that sets up a mood straight away *and then* you've got Gertrude Stein's text which is very musical and its the vibration that the two of those form – because there are times when the actors – consciously or unconsciously went with the musical



rhythms and then times when they didn't, and I was very specific with the types of music that I was using. We also looked at patterns on the floor. And circles were really important throughout the whole piece and were used in different ways. And again it was great to see the young people understanding that if I talk about Faustus as being centred all the time – he's stuck in the one place and Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel is working on circles – they understood that quite quickly as a valid alternative to, 'Why am I saying this?' Or, 'What is my motivation?' **Sally** There's another symbolic language...

Brett And a very theatrical one and it was again what I was trying to do ... as I said one of my aims here is to introduce young people to alternative approaches to theatre. That are just as ... or are fulfilling in lots of other ways and produce different sort of work. **Sally** I think the other thing for me was that there are some literal things that were explored ... like the idea of the ballet of lights and there seemed to be all these references to conventions that people stage in ballet – like the tourists who come in: to me that's like 'the peasants' or 'Giselle's friends'. They do all this stage business and they pretend to talk to one



another, change their groupings and then the principals do their dance. And there was Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel's entry running in a circle which also reminded me of something in Giselle, Act II. I thought that you'd decided to take the word 'ballet' – really take it literally – and go: what is the tradition of ballet and what are some of the forms of ballet? Well, I liked what I thought I saw. **Brett** It's interesting isn't it. Because the way you engage with that ... I'm not a ballet fan at all. I find it really irritating because of those conventions. But sub-consciously obviously *you* meet the work on that level because it's there on some level and it's there because the actors that I'm working with have either been, have done ballet or have seen ballet. I'm very interested in working collaboratively with everyone I work with and so we all bring this sub-conscious stuff with us and we collaborate with the audience in the same way. **Sally** To the extent that I saw those references I saw them as ironic, and witty – not reverential by any means. And to have been a kind of attention to Stein's own use of the word 'ballet'. **Brett** That's interesting, the way different audiences come to it. I talk to these young people about this all the time that you do your work in the theatre and then there's always this gap that the audience fills in from where they're coming from. You can never presuppose and you can never manipulate your audience. It's wrong to do that in theatre, it's wrong to do that in art generally. Because people go to the theatre to have responses, to respond in their own manner, because that makes art meaningful to the individual as an audience member. **Sally** Well I suppose in that way too, Stein's language is very...it operates on a quite subliminal level. I suppose that's what

melody does, too – you keep hearing it all around you in the everyday.

Brett That's partly why I chose the piece – because that side of her writing is so strong. She doesn't devalue that side of things – what am I trying to say – she's aware of the non-ideational use of language so it is the musical rhythms, it's the music of her writing that's just so strong and you hear the repetition and after a while occasionally with some of them you don't hear words you just hear consonants or the soundscape that she's creating. I mean the challenge for me is to work that way and this is an ongoing thing for me to work the way that I worked in *Dr Faustus* with much more narrative based texts. And we're hoping next year to do a play by Michael Gow called *Live Acts on Stage* which hasn't been done in Victoria – hoping to work with a video artist on that. It's a very straight play in a way. It's a beautiful play – very epic and it's how I can crack it open so that this same thing with *Faustus* – all these elements are equal, really. But what you find, I think, with narrative: the audience latches on to narrative straight away and the psychological realism and all the other elements around it are devalued in relation to those – so that's a challenge for me. It's going to be a really interesting challenge and also I think that performers want to latch on to something and they couldn't latch on to what they thought they were going to latch on to in *Dr Faustus*, they found other things. They found a physicality, a musicality of the language that they could ... that made sense to them. **Sally** With *Dr Faustus* I was intrigued that it did seem so kind of topical in a way. I could hear the use of an aeroplane sound...that apocalyptic scene, and the whole question of electricity, which I suppose at the time of the play's writing stands for new technology and science, these things seemed very current. I thought people might take that up at the forum. ... they had more concerns about the characters and where they fitted in and so on. Was that ... did you choose to do *Dr Faustus* now in any kind of topical way? **Brett** Yes and no. The no is that when I started at St. Martin's in 2000 I knew that I wanted to do *Dr Faustus* during my time here, so obviously the global situation was very different to what it is now. It just worked out that we did it at this time. And again I don't mean to sound esoteric but good art always reflects the times that it's created in but also is presented in. And that's why a work like this can be presented over and over again – it's like Shakespeare. She has such amazing resonances that ... and obviously with a piece like that you could do it any way at all that you wanted to. And again it's my work that I tend to ... almost all of my work here reflects a lot of contemporary concerns but not in a really obvious way. So and again I read that last scene and we read it with the cast and just a lot of the topics we spoke about in rehearsals those images were the appropriate ones for us to do – for *that* cast, for *that* time. So it's ... it wasn't a conscious thing really. It wasn't, 'I need to talk about these issues'. I don't think that's what art should be about. It's more that something here was speaking, and something within the cast was speaking through it. That sounds a bit sort of ... strange. I mean I do consider myself a political person in lots of ways and ... the season of new work we're doing at the end of the year it will be an international season and one of my really strong concerns is for new writing but also that we see Australian work – and this why I thought this festival was fantastic – in an international context. We need to understand how we fit into the world. We need to understand how our work fits in to the work of other people around the world. And an idea I've got for once I leave St Martins is to actually start presenting new work from all around the world. I just think the international picture, and the intercultural model is a really important one, not just at the moment but generally. I've always thought that, but especially now.

19

/root /clandenstine /nerve #nodes /spell /home /myth /process /channel /cell

// neurotransmissions // collective regenerations //

hack narratives, genre & code - nobody learns to be a connoisseur simply by applying the rules. This is not the inside knowledge of an elite, but an openness to movement, difference, sensation. There are factors in play which cannot be measured - a whiff, a glance, a lowering of the eyelashes. These kinds of knowledge tend to be unspoken, whose rules do not easily lend themselves to being formally articulated or even spoken aloud.

A day of research:
n + j at Time Space Place 2: [by n]

this girl is talking about how she's a radio body renegade /// using technology that fails more often than she does + n likes mistakes glitches in the flow of information 1. entry point //// n is not interested presenting moments of Mastery /// but zones that convert humans back into complex sets of ideas and matter in flux [vessels of infinite veracities] /// radio sirens do this /// j dances in gutters = n dances in compost heaps in order to levitate /// audience is not invited but 2 witness by chance by accident different points of access to the: code / information / subjugated knowledge's /// devising of the dance body away from the Institution /

|||| not into the shiny self-presentation middle-o-the-road-kill mode||||| /// we need to operate as a transmitters N picks up signals body text transmissions /// 'i am a transmitter', traveling away from the Anglophone mode of 'I am A Camera' "I am a camera, with its shutter open, quite passive". j + n cellularly communicate beyond all this / they don't really have to speak its outside of Logos ||||| we are, more and more like transmitters and receivers [we are not cameras]: active thinkers, responding and playing amongst the border zones / lines of force and energy flows ||||

n finds an old bee interface & places it on the window ledge j collects it and the connection is made /// connectors : data flow conduits/



n+j at tps2: [by j]

n was filtering messages to the trash. j was receiving a low-level pulse. there was an instant recognition of electric/magik connection but there was so much interference around it was hard to negotiate the signals. n felt exposed, j was raw. we ran interference as protection.

when our noisy cells collided a body recoiled. when we gravitated towards total failure there was a connection. apparently there is something about our bodies colliding that = trouble. we crashed the computer system at Tandy's. we triggered an explosion from the gutter. we left traces of text. we made the authorities nervous. we didn't have time to talk about it. we left in a hurry....

J [subliminal]





David Quirk I can't remember the first time I rode a skateboard. I might have been six or eight, I don't know. I remember having a thin, flat skateboard made of fibreglass or something similar and it was as if it had sat in my Dad's shed waiting for me to be born or be old enough to ride it, because I never knew where it came from. Though I didn't take up skateboarding until I was thirteen or fourteen, I realise now that it was at that pre-pubescent age that I learned to *ride* a skateboard, to balance, to turn by shifting my weight from side to side and to push. The only "trick" I recall doing was rolling towards a couch on the veranda (where the dog slept) and I would jump up and walk across the couch as the board rolled underneath, trying to keep the same speed as the board without seeing it, and then I'd jump back on as it rolled out from under the couch.

My father and older brother were both very good tennis and Aussie rules football players. My brother is thirty-eight now and gave up playing football several years ago to coach a couple of local clubs in northeast Victoria. He has also since given that up. He is pretty well respected in all aspects of his life, I guess. My father is sixty-seven and in his day he was a great player on a tennis court or on a football field. He had true skill. Between them, my Dad and my brother were invited to play for clubs like St Kilda, Fitzroy and Essendon, but for their own reasons they didn't stay with big clubs in big cities. I was brought up participating in both tennis and football. My family lived in the country, a place called Bright (or Porepunkah, to narrow it down) and I played football just about every Sunday morning for five years till the end of year seven in high school. I don't remember ever hating the game, but I certainly did not excel in it. I suppose I was a little bit afraid and, looking back, I had no real passion for it.

"Skating is standing, rolling, standing unattached on a board with four wheels..."

Ben Krahn in the film *Northwest*

WORDS ON SKATE

By year eight I rediscovered skateboarding. One of the more rebellious kids in my year got me into it. He was pretty out-there and he became one of my best friends for a number of years. The next year or more for me was nothing but skateboarding or wanting to skateboard. A strange but necessary period I went through in my teens saw me quit for nearly three years, so, altogether, I have been a skateboarder for about nine years. I can't help it. I remember seeing my first skateboarding magazines (videos were rare then). For me, there was something awesome about them, they were hardcore, and they gave me a chance to see something that was really underground. At that time, unlike now, you had to look to find skateboarding or a skater (?).

Sometimes I simplify and refer to skateboarding as a sport but really all it has in common with the traditional sports that I grew up playing is the fact that it is physical, that you need to use your body. There are no rules. I find it impossible to properly express what it is that is so satisfying and amazing to me about a person on a plank of wood with wheels attached to it. I still have the same passion for gazing at a good photograph in a skate magazine now as I did when I was young. It's about how the body looks on the board. The board never really changes its shape much, it is *the* skateboard, but I suppose it is merely the implement or tool for the act of skateboarding. It's what the body riding the board is doing that I am interested in. It's the body that can make or break the whole act. The body can and does change, not necessarily its shape but its positions and arrangement. There can be style and flavour or there can be neither. Something can be communicated and expressed from one skater to another, with no words, just eyes looking upon a body as it performs certain acts. It has only been in the last year or so that I have come to understand and realise that when I skateboard, I am performing in the proper sense. I have been wondering lately when the performance begins and ends, or if it does either.



When I am at my local skateboard park and I have just finished a run in the bowl (similar to that of an empty old-style swimming pool with curves and transitions) and I walk or roll away from it, I retain something in me from that previous run, like I have given the other skaters in that session some 'food for thought', so to speak. I am trying to speak to them with my body. Other skateboarders do it to me and I do it to them. It is seen then felt.

Some people view skateboarding as a 'childish' thing to take part in, and in a sense it definitely is. Almost all people who skateboard started doing it as children or in their early teens. For a great many of these people it is too powerful to stop, so it continues. Its innocence is truly genuine. On the other hand, there is something very 'manly' about doing certain things when skateboarding, certain manoeuvres. Some moves have the ability to 'separate the men from the boys'. I am amazed all the time at something somebody or a *body* has executed on a skateboard simply because I can barely imagine my own body doing the same thing.

A fall for a skateboarder does not mean what it means to someone outside of skateboarding. A fall really is nothing to be ashamed of. I honestly wish I fell off my skateboard more often. I say and mean that because falling shows an amount of commitment and lack of fear. I am afraid of falling when I skate only because of the pain I may feel physically. It has nothing at all to do with embarrassment or peoples' perceptions of me. This may sound rather obtuse, but I sometimes get a sense of pride when I fall in front of other skaters. Thirty-six year old professional skater, artist and eccentric, Mark Gonzales, asked in an interview, 'Do you know how you tell when you have been skateboarding for a long time?' 'How?' said the interviewer. 'When the falls feel as good as the makes', Mark replied.* When I read that for the first time I was so intrigued. I realised how great it was for a person to feel this way. Skating is much more than executing a trick and landing it, it is also about not landing a trick or not even doing a trick. Pummelling my body against the cement or rolling down the smoothest street, is a microcosm of life. Falls are part of skateboarding, and can be viewed as something other than negative, if one changes one's outlook. Skating cannot be mastered because there is no end.

Growing up skating in a small town meant that I skated anything my wheels would roll on, and the idea of a skatepark was just that. Local kids persisted at the town council until they had a six foot high metal half-pipe (ramp) built. Although the new ramp did not accommodate the needs of the majority of the skaters, it was new and gave us something else to skate. One of our favourite spots was the clocktower in the town centre which we continued to skate after the ramp was built. At a council meeting between the local skaters and the council officials, we soon learned of an implied agreement that we had never caught wind of: "We gave you the ramp, why are you still skating at the clocktower?" they asked. Now, living in an age and in a city where skateparks are quite common and often well-made, I appreciate them. But the nature of a skateboarder is to go somewhere new or somewhere else and to be excited. A skateboarder cannot be told what to skate or enjoy. The local spots I skate will always be good but they will never cancel out my desire to jump a fence and ride something not made to be ridden or to build my own or to travel this or any other country for the purposes of skateboarding. As far as terrain goes for skateboarders in Australia it is the best it has ever been and should continue to improve. The irony lies in the fact that by having 'skate classes', 'trick-tip' DVDs and near perfect skateparks close-by to a young skater's house, it begins to diminish the spark and originality of what it is to be a skateboarder. Worse, if skateboarders are relying heavily on skateparks as terrain, then they are relying on bureaucratic decisions to dictate their future as skaters. Instead of learning to skateboard in the streets, carparks or on home-made ramps like myself and just about every other skater I know, kids are now getting a skateboard, and heading to the nearest skatepark. Besides the problem this causes for people who aren't ready to use what a skatepark might offer, and those who have to skate around one more obstacle, it may also lead to the internalisation of the idea that this is the essence of skateboarding: a 'safe,' enclosed environment, with arbitrary rules enforced by those who have never touched a skateboard.

Skateboarders view the world through different eyes. The streets are looked at in an irreversibly different way than by a non-skater. Swimming pools are best when they are empty, handrails down stairs are tools to prove yourself and have fun with and the city is a playground. When done for long enough, skateboarding becomes like walking.

* Mark Gonzalez quoted by Bob Burnquist, *Skateboarder*, Summer 1998



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transmitti.ng, receiving and entwining incongruent sensory codes, signs and knowledge's. Glitches, scars, interference access points a conversation Mistakes are where the soul shines through. Interference, scratches, maps, glitches-openings un processed moments replaying in the system, the nervous system to become in a way hidden knowledge, challenging thresholds to discover. In the underwater data base water carries memory of the ancestors, it is a portal to the other side where unfinished business, subjugated knowledge circulate in waiting to manifest itself through apparitions. carry meaning to other places / // via digital palimpsest / borderlines / horizontal zones / the vestibule/ the vesper/ terrain vague / unused spaces / glitches [errors] + open up POSSIBILITIES*****[[[create a region that lies under the shadow of - but is still, for the moment, outside - colonisation]]] some calling the wild

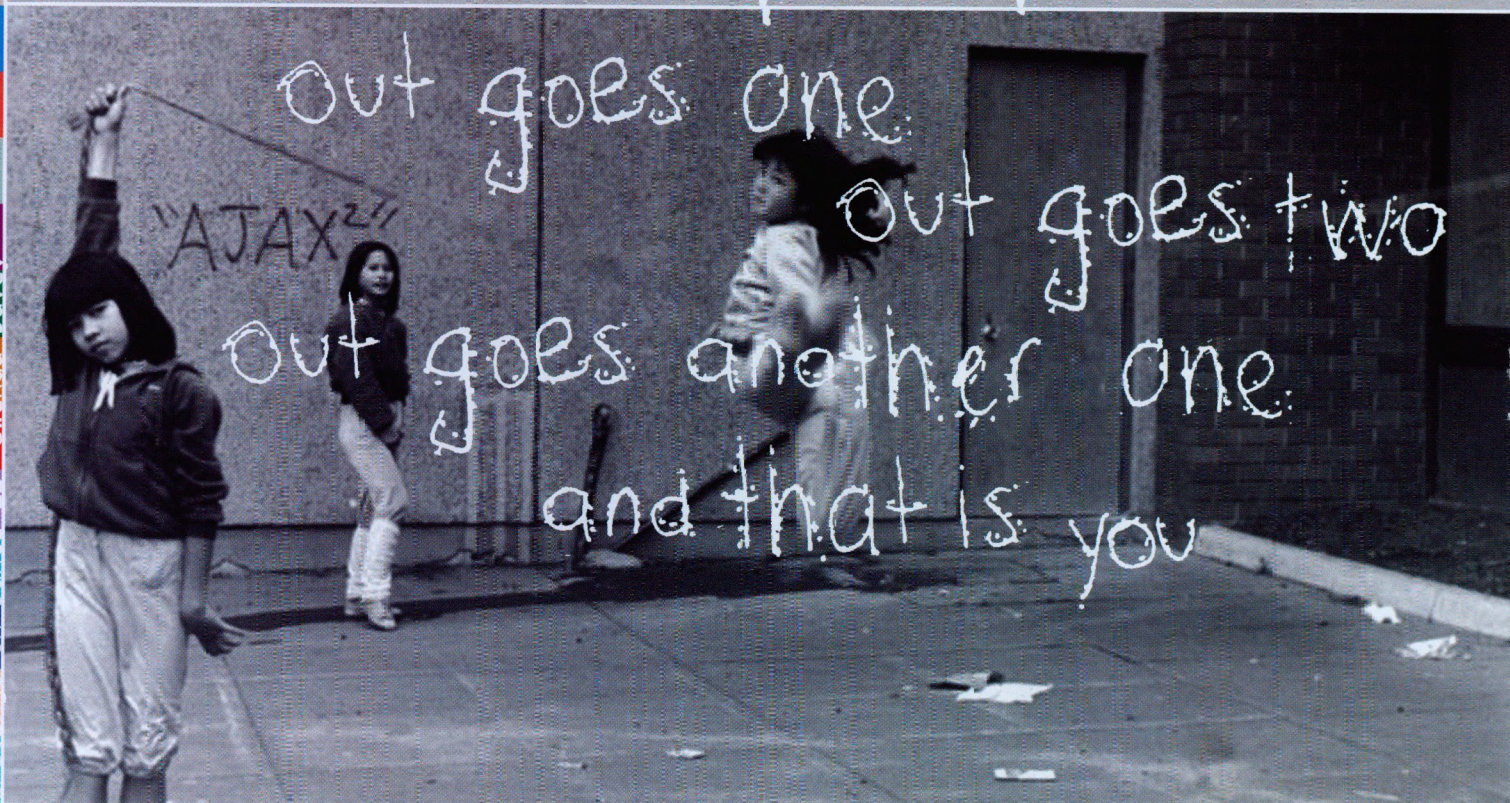
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to unaccompanied, unmapped, un prescribed zones basic know-how ... not everybody watches

"If I can't dance, it's not my revolution," said Emma Goldman (1869-1940), feminist heroine, anarchist activist, editor, writer, teacher, jailbird and general trouble-maker.





Article originally appeared in 'The Age' Thursday 15 January 2004.
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of the Australian Children's Folklore Collection, Museum Victoria.

'Losing weight may be child's play' by Gwenda Davey

It is to be hoped the 'fat camps' the Federal Government wants to incorporate into after-school programs to tackle what it calls 'the twin crises of child-care availability and childhood obesity' will not simply offer more organised 'phys-ed', and more control on children's activities.

Hard-pressed teachers and carers, faced with more demands on their time and skills, might be encouraged to know that children themselves have some of the answers to obesity and ill-health through their own traditional playground games.

Almost a generation ago, two Queensland university lecturers in physical education, P.L. Lindsay and D. Palmer, produced a report titled *Playground Game Characteristics of Brisbane Primary School Children* (1981)¹. The report which has never been duplicated, is even more relevant today.

The researchers compared formal syllabus games with the traditional games children played in the playground. They observed nearly 5000 children from grades 1 to 4 playing their traditional games such as ball games, pursuit games, skipping games, hop-scotch, elastics, marbles, knuckle bones and jacks, hand-clapping games, counting-out rhymes and 'miscellaneous games'.

Overall they found that many traditional playground games offered more for children's well-being than the syllabus games.

These games are part of a folk-lore of childhood. They are passed from one generation of primary school children to another in the playground. They are not taught to children by adults, although most Australian adults can remember at least some of their childhood favourites, such as the skipping rhyme:

*Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch the ground,
Teddy bear, teddy bear, turn around...*

Most traditional playground games include considerable physical activity, such as running, jumping, skipping or hand-clapping, but the Brisbane researchers studied not only movement but social, interpersonal and environmental factors involved in game-playing.

Overall, there was a high statistical correlation between syllabus games and playground games with both representing the basic physical needs of children. Some of the differences were, however, particularly striking, such as the greater emphasis of the traditional games on cardiovascular endurance, strategy, pursuit, chanting, touching, and rhythmical movement.

It is possible that in the generation since this research, the difference between syllabus and traditional games has narrowed. But the value of traditional games is still outstanding. In the interests of public health, schools and after-school programs should encourage children to play spontaneous games, and should provide free time and environments friendly to such games.

Playgrounds should contain a variety of play areas as recommended by Lindsay and Palmer – open areas, confined areas, walls for ball bouncing, grass-covered areas, artificial surfaces, dirt areas, adventure play-grounds, under-school areas, wet weather play areas and shaded areas. The playground needs to be an effective learning environment where a variety of play is possible.

Many schools are already implementing these recommendations, but traditional play itself is often under threat. In the United States, some schools have abolished recess time and other free time in the interests of discipline and academic achievement.

Fortunately, Australian schools have not gone to such extreme lengths, but fears of accidents, litigation and of 'fighting' have led to some schools banning certain games such as 'British bulldog' and marbles. (Interestingly, 'red rover' and British bulldog', noted as the most popular boys' games in Brisbane in the 1970s, were found to develop a sense of strategy and improvement in cardiovascular endurance.)

Fears are not confined to accidents. Anxiety about paedophilia has led in some places to concern about hand-clapping and skipping rhymes such as the old favourite:

Girls playing Knucklebones at a Melbourne school, 1955.
Photo: Dorothy Howard.



Parachute string game, demonstrated in Melbourne, 1954.
Photo: Dorothy Howard.



Child playing Hopscotch at a Melbourne school, 1984.



*I am a Girl Guide dressed in blue,
Here are the things that I can do.
Stand at ease, bend your knees;
Salute to the King, bow to the the Queen,
Show your knickers to the football team.*

The Mr and Mrs Grundys who are worried about the 'poppy show' might like to consider that serious physical activity, including traditional play, needs appropriate clothing, and school uniforms need to consider these requirements. Primary school girls would do better in summer shorts than dresses or skirts. Skirts are not helpful for high-jumping, cart-wheels and somersaults.

Adults sometimes claim 'children don't play like they used to'. Wrong. The Australian Children's Folklore Collection at Museum Victoria has one of the world's largest collection of children's traditional play games and rhymes, and it is clear to the museum's curators and supporters that such play is alive and well.² The Children's Museum in the Carlton Gardens is featuring a participatory program in traditional games.

Playground games are not only of value for children's physical well-being, but for intellectual and social development as well. Prodigious feats of memory are required to remember the numerous verses of hand-clapping games. Lindsay and Palmer also found that co-operation held sway over competition in playground games and that children were flexible in the rules to allow for participation by children of different ages and ability levels. The degree of organisation required to achieve these ends is considerable, and it is not for nothing that children's games have been described as 'legislatures and courts of law'.

Even the preliminary to many games, the counting-out ritual, involves careful organisation and arcane rhymes:

*Eenie meenie macka racka
Ra ri diminacka,
Chickalacka lollapoppa,
Om pom push.
Out goes one! Out goes two!
Out goes another one
And that is you!*

Perhaps it is time to bring back into adults' vocabulary a phrase that many seem afraid to use today when talking to children: go outside and play!

- 1 *Playground Characteristics of Brisbane Primary School Children* is published by the Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra. It is the Education and Research and Development Committee Report no. 28.
- 2 The Australian Children's Folklore Collection at Museum Victoria is listed on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register.



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← Cross-cultural practice as hybrid performance? →
 ← what kind of question is that

Stop PROJECTING SOURCE CODE ON TO ME (source code = blood)

There are so many problems caused by blood in this world.

>>> I choose to dance in the dark that night especially <<<
 ||| preconceptions of performance—how positional everything is—|||
 body in a theatrical sense or a body in a network sense
 world view— a different world view / a different understanding

||| are we going to do this because we know each other and it's safer |||
 <— do you just vote left cause it's in fashion to be a member of Greenpeace —>

differnt methods or processes
 of processing information

when you
 are foraging for information
 how can you
 make it interesting for others?

how can
 you collate that experience?
 and why bother?

personal inscriptions

a deeper understanding
 some performances are done for the benefit
 of all of the people to maintain the health & wealth of all of
 the people, not just the artist
 — trying to pay his mortgage by making cross-cultural work
 for the performing arts market —

Why are there panic reactions from some arbiters of taste in
 Australia post modern dance, when dancers acknowledge
 that they participate in a "frenzy of the visible"?

un lock conduit of power · shutdown · run
 level = 0

nodes people can participate in
 - different entry points access to the information ... ||| ~ ~ ~
 spiralic polarization ~ ~ ~ wi-fi range ~ ~ ~ converge
 physically ~ ~ ~

do you want to add to the channel, an sms
 bridge? (perhaps)

The lack of socioeconomic diversity is one of Australian contemporary dance performance's blind spots. Most diversity efforts, though, focus on ethnic, racial, and gender minorities, can often mean people with different skin color but largely the same mindsets, class background and aspirations

good historical knowledge can effect how dance is conceived of by dancers.

art is the expression of experience...work can be different... inhabitants of many worlds and can appear in any one they wish.

^



By Carla Chianese

Hip hop is an art form derived from black and hispanic street culture in New York city in the 1970s. Today it branches out into MC-ing (rapping), DJ-ing (disc-jockey sampling music), writing (aerosol art), and B-boying/ B-girling (break dancing). MCs, in a form of scat style rhyming, originally used the word Hip-hop. For example: 'Hip Hop y'all and ya don't stop, rock on, till the break of dawn'.





Carla Chianese and Lina Alofi

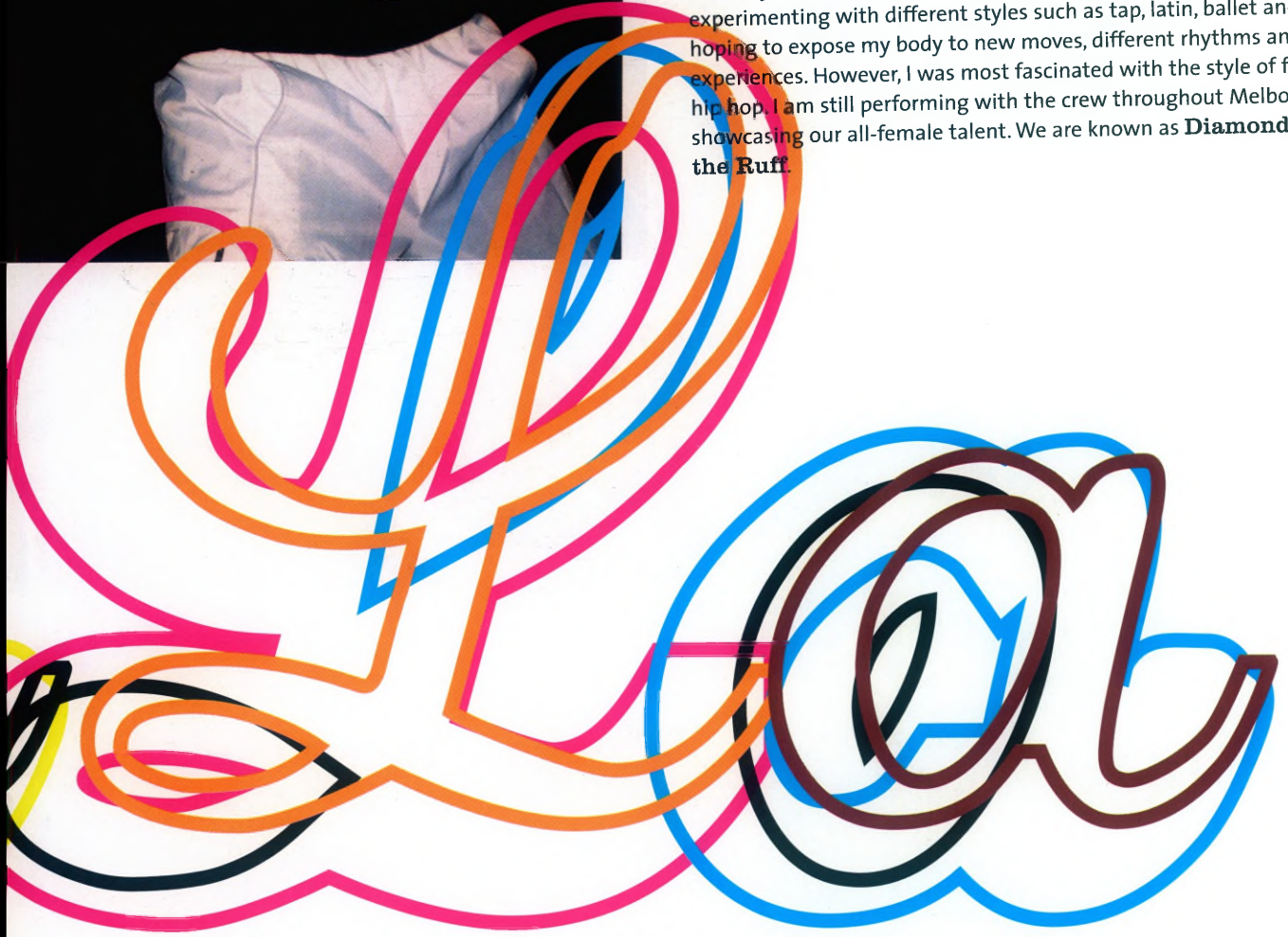


There is a specific linguistic structure in hip-hop underlying its very own identifiable jargon. Dance is highly regarded as well, originating with forms such as **popping** and **locking**. These forms developed into an identifiable style expressed through great muscular control, isolation, deliberate jerked movements, co-ordinations and flexibility. Hip hop dance spread throughout the west coast of the USA during the 1970s becoming a cultural movement nourished by R and B, soul and funk music at community events and discos.

Soon after, many ethnic groups and communities were engaged in the culture, uniquely expressing themselves. Much of the world followed with the influence of the media. But hip hop dance was usually performed in commercials, music video clips or films for just a few moments, revealing very little of its full potential. However, there is strength in the cultures that maintain the integrity of this visually exciting technique. The dancer's body engages with itself, **forming, exploring, transforming, moving, freezing, flying, gliding, sliding** etc. Many artists are creating new choreographies and recreating earlier routines to keep the tradition alive.

I was lucky to be able to experience this in professional performance.

During the summer of 2002 I was asked to dance alongside a very well known and respected performer, Kate Armstrong. I was honoured to be asked, as I was only sixteen at the time. So I definitely took up the opportunity with great pride. It was something so unexpected: a chance I had only dreamed of. I have danced since I was four years old, experimenting with different styles such as tap, latin, ballet and jazz, hoping to expose my body to new moves, different rhythms and new experiences. However, I was most fascinated with the style of funk and hip hop. I am still performing with the crew throughout Melbourne showcasing our all-female talent. We are known as **Diamonds in the Ruff**.



We each hold a title or stage name (as we like to call it) to give us a unique identity whilst we are on stage. I didn't feel there was one name that summed me up as a whole so after much thought I chose **LaLa**. LaLa is the translation of Carla in Tongan and is a nickname used for me for years by many of my Tongan friends and fellow performers. I also felt that LaLa was short, sweet and simple. Before appearing on stage I am introduced as LaLa. My body is predisposed before I have appeared on stage since LaLa implies a light, happy easygoing person because of its intonation and repetition of syllables.

Break dancing is physically demanding. I have the responsibility to maintain my body in athletic condition. I have to exercise regularly, take part in a boxing training program, and do stamina and endurance activities, advanced dance classes and stretching and flexibility exercises. I have to attend rehearsals with the group and learn choreography.

Gender has had an impact upon my experience as a performer and as an audience member since, traditionally, hip hop was performed mainly by men. Now however there is a range of both male and female hip-hop artists. Most original break-dancing and hip hop choreography is designed for a masculine body, usually requiring a strong upper body, flat chest and extreme muscular strength. My experience as a dancer has been affected in many ways by the masculinity of hip hop. Most of my hip hop and break dancing teachers have been male. I found it hard to keep up with the class (consisting mostly of males) as I could not hold my own body weight for long and found it difficult to shift my weight from body part to body part as fluidly as the men did. I felt ridiculed and singled out because I couldn't keep up with the class, wasn't strong enough or could not execute the formation correctly. I put this down to the fact that I was female and I saw it as an opportunity to prove the boys wrong. I had to work twice as hard to build up muscular strength, especially in my upper torso. I took it upon myself to recognize the difference between myself and the masculine bodies to see how I could best improve my fitness to keep up with them.



Moving on to a female instructor personally allowed me to explore my own connection with the forms. I could look up to her and actually aspire to achieve what she could do because I knew it was physically possible. I could train my body the way she did so I was able to perform the very same moves as everyone else. I could relate to my female teacher – she had roughly the same body shape as me and she understood how I felt. She understood that I had breasts and that this would affect my moves, alignment and centre of gravity.

We ('Diamonds in the Ruff') only perform at events for all ages.

If we were to perform at an over-age nightclub for example, then we would have to dress in sexy, skimpy clothes for the audience to keep their interest or to recognize our talent. If we wore street clothes (like we do) they would most likely not appreciate us. 'Diamonds in the Ruff' deliberately consists of all females. We want to demonstrate to the public that women can perform hip hop as well as men. There are approximately twelve group members ranging from seventeen to thirty seven years old – all different races and all different shapes and sizes. One performer is deaf: **B-girl Friend** is an inspiration to us all. She is completely deaf and only communicates through sign language and dancing. She **can feel the vibration of the beats through the floor** and that allows her to move in the most extraordinary way. I always assumed that I could only learn how to move through listening, watching and recreating. But through B-girl Friend, I have learnt that attention, feeling and expression are vital components in moving my body.

Many people associate hip hop with gangsters from the back streets of New York. Ready to fight, ready to kill, ready to battle. Hip hop derives from a passion influenced by culture and oppression. Performing hip hop is not about trying to become another body, culture or race, it's about understanding and respecting other cultures and being proud of your own. Whether it's physical moments of pain as I desperately longed to keep up with the men, or trying to find my place in the society of hip hop without using my body as a sex symbol, I still manage to put myself out there as me. I don't use my sex as an advantage and I don't try to outdo males. I accept who I am in society and try my best to have fun doing what I love most. My performance is a wonderful celebration of our feminine talent and is a great excitement to witness. I feel blessed every time I walk out onto that stage because I know that I have done nothing but hard work to achieve where I am at that point, and despite all the odds, that the audience understands and is there to see... **an all chick kick ass show.**



Lina Alofi, Kerrie Micallef and Carla Chianese


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Border Hacking: Freedom of Information, or Freedom of Movement
/// it's scary to enter into the flow & watch things unfold in collaboration with many languages ~ to take yourself out of the safe cocoon of what is known //



Margie filming Nancy in compost levitation garden created during streaming exercise at TPS 2

****streaming debrief**** chat with brisbane TPS 2
misha : there is a lot of "is that all there is", especially when presented as a hole in space, video wall. in the theatrical context, it takes on an a language of



Assimina Simmons

Late last year, as part of the completion of my undergraduate arts degree in Performance Studies, I was required to undertake a subject entitled 'Graduating Seminar.' The written information concerning the subject seemed like dry rhetoric to me at first and, although I had respect for the course as a whole, I suspected that this might have been a subject just tacked on at the end in response to increasingly rigid university guidelines to which I was hoping our department would not succumb.

Ever the cynic, I was not thrilled with the prospect of a weekly three-hour class in which we would look at grant applications and ways to survive the realities of pursuing an arts' career. I felt as if I should have been making 'work' instead. Combined with this was the fact that, being one of a few slightly older mature age students, at twenty five I have to admit that I sometimes found the nature of debates amongst the group of around twenty mostly twenty year olds somewhat tedious and self-centred at times, even though they were, on the whole, a really supportive, friendly group. One aspect of this class excited me however.

We were asked by the lecturer what sort of project we would like to undertake, what we really wanted to do, what our dreams were concerning performance and how we would go about realising them. It seems a small thing but I realised in conjunction with another classmate of mine that this was an unusual proposition. Yet it was an unusual course to say the least. How often in life are we given the opportunity, or even more importantly how often do we give *ourselves* the opportunity to strip back all of the things we think we should be doing, are told we should do, and try to find out what we really want, what we need to do? I am of the belief that you cannot choose whether to live your life as an artist or performer, you will simply need to do it; it will recur in your life because you have no choice. It will indeed be beyond your control.

My initial idea for what I wished to undertake, was to canvas a large cross section of participants from the university and interview them on themes relating to their experiences of joy and sorrow. I then wanted to make a huge installation and position it within the centre of the university. It would involve alternating slide images of people I'd interviewed and audio

recordings of their stories so as to distort ownership over these stories, thus hopefully pointing to the differences *and* commonalities within us all.

My time at Victoria University was a difficult one personally and I think I was attempting, during that period, to make some sense out of what felt like a sometimes senseless environment. As the time drew closer to the project I found myself struck with fear. It's so hard to put yourself on the line again and again, not just in the guise of an 'artist' but as a person – although I think a good artist sees no divide anyway. However, to continually open yourself up to the scrutiny and possible ridicule of others is difficult. Yet the heart speaks louder than the mind. Just try to silence it and see what happens.

In this age, the notion of care and compassion often seems to me to have gone out the window, so to speak. When I see eighteen year olds wearing t-shirts proclaiming 'sick bitch' I feel like screaming. And it seems we are all in the race to win some bloody big prize, but I'm not sure anyone actually knows what they think they will win at the end anyway. Yet I have read other



being

writers' laments about the state of the world and this supposed decline of care and compassion and have often wondered if it ever was any different? Do we romanticise some bygone era that never existed anyway? Are we trying to deny the ugliness of humanity? Perhaps. But I think we are affected by others and deeply so. Our relationships with one another form a huge part of our lives. I found that in this time I felt I had to speak to this group of people in my class about what I was feeling about them and about our world. About their bad treatment of one another and their seeming lack of compassion and overriding self-interest. I sometimes felt as if I were going mad because I couldn't fathom why they didn't notice how they were acting and I felt I was suffocating in my inaction.

So when it hit me, it hit like a ton of bricks. I realised I couldn't make this work about *others'* states of being. I could only speak of my own experience. It was like a wave of adrenaline surging through me. I also had to speak of these relations that I was experiencing in my life. Not only within the classroom, but every day. People were treating each other so badly, with such

disdain, and I felt that I was becoming sucked into this void, this machine of anger and frustration which we call our world.

The piece of performance work I was driven to make last November was about the nature of human relationships as I was experiencing them at that time. The polarities of human kindness and human intolerance were at the forefront of my mind as I feel they always are. Instead of following my initial idea I made a very raw audio recording detailing some of my recent interactions and reflections on those incidents. Lovers, friends, classmates, policemen, tram drivers, anyone who had entered my world and affected me. I had a friend film me, naked from head to toe, slowly and steadily in fluorescent light. We had had tiresome classroom debates over issues of nudity and to me this final gesture was not simply a clichéd protest but a hopefully relevant signal to the others in my class – who, chose to walk around the university half naked but would not commit to the full act within a performance context – that I had had enough. I suppose the image became a metaphor for my not being able to hide any part of myself any more, not being able to deny the truth of how

much I needed to expose my feelings. And about how much it did affect me to see the interactions I witnessed and was a part of everyday. I also wanted to show the ridiculousness of the issue of nudity in performance (in my view) by showing my whole body as an object of uniqueness and beauty – the way I believe we all are.

I think all artists have a responsibility to respond to the state of the world, whatever that means for them, depending on their individual circumstances – to respond to the state of their immediate world. This will hopefully allow them to speak of larger, more far-reaching truths for a wider audience. We are not as different as we are told we are. Yet I don't believe in a universal subject, it's not as simple as that. I do think we can find hope in our communication of our individual stories. I think making this work for me was the start of the realisation that I do have to speak for myself sometimes and be willing to take that risk, to take a stand, to put myself on the line. Now all I have to do is try to convince myself to keep standing there.

Luckily, I think it's beyond my control.

I'm driving home from my parents' house and I see flashing lights ahead. I'm a little bit worried because I think it might be a booze bus, but it's not, it's a tram and it's surrounded by police cars. I stop my car because I can't get through and I wind my window down and sort of wait for the policeman to look at me. When he does, I realise that he's only about twenty two and he says, 'I'm really sorry, you can't get through because, um, the tram driver has been hit, by a rock' and I say, 'Oh, another one' because I'd heard, or seen in the news that a couple of tram drivers had been hit by rocks thrown at them. And I remembered seeing a tram driver who was really upset on the news report and he didn't want to go back to work and he couldn't understand why people were doing this. Anyway the policeman looks me in the eye and I say, 'It's okay' and I want to say 'Are you alright?' And I think about the fact that he has to deal with things like this everyday, and it's probably not the worst thing that he has dealt with, but I often wonder how does that affect one's psyche. How do you learn to deal with people treating each other badly on a daily basis?

I'm in the library and I'm trying to study, probably trying to get some reading finished that I haven't completely understood, so I'm feeling a little depressed. So a phone goes off and this happens on a routine basis. Anyway the girl gets up and starts walking along the aisle talking into her mobile phone. I try to tell myself to stay calm. What does it matter in the grand scheme of things? I tell myself to breathe, that I need to learn to let go a little bit more. She keeps talking. I think of things to say to her in my head such as, 'hey, princess, shut the fuck up' or 'do you realise this is a library, you fuckwit. I refrain from saying these things directly to her. Eventually, I go up to the girl and I say, 'you do realise this is a library, don't you?' She says to me, 'so'. That's when I turn around and say, 'shut the fuck up'. She looks me in the eyes and I look her in the eyes and I'm shaking by this point. I'm scared, but I'm angry, more angry than scared I suppose.

I'm nineteen and have just had my heart broken for the first time. I start dating a woman who is twenty-six. I like her, but I know that it's not serious. Anyway, after about three months it's her birthday and she asks me the question, are we just fucking or are we dating? I answer, just fucking. Lately, I've been thinking about this woman and how that must have made her feel. Maybe it's something to do with the fact that I am going to be twenty six on my next birthday. I often think about what I would say to her if I saw her. Whether I would apologise, whether she would accept that apology or if she hasn't even given it a second thought.



I'm in Beanland, BI, to be more specific. I'm having a conversation with someone but I am listening to another conversation going on. This young woman is badgering a lecturer. She is abusing her for reasons unbeknown to me. What I do pick up however is her lack of commitment to her own responsibility to make decisions affecting herself. She chooses to blame another for her inability to assert herself. While I am very fond of this particular young woman and I realise that she is quite young, I feel an overwhelming urge to, in a morbid sort of way, allow this young woman to unravel herself. I want her to be exposed for her ugliness in this moment and I see that it's affecting someone else. I am powerless to stop it in this instance.

Since five o'clock this morning I have been trying to wake up changed. I wake up to find it's only me and I'm still the same way, lonely and cold and trying to block out the light from the street. Bloody buses keep rolling by and I can't seem to stop them. What interests me now is going through the door with the flashing light. Walking in on my own, going down the tunnel, crashing through the opening and telling more people that it really is an emergency situation and I simply must get in. I cannot understand why there is not more death, not more destruction, not more falling off the edge. I cannot understand why there are not more bodies found in the river. I don't understand the power that can flow through one body and how I can pick it all up through osmosis. I wish for better days, for a brighter future, for more gold and less transactions involving money. I wish for her, I wish for her to return for the first time. I wish for fish to swim in this river again. I wish for the ability to levitate. I wish for peace for each and every one of you. I wish for laughter and for dreams. I wish to crawl inside the belly of a great dragon and feel no pain, nothing but comfort. I wish to stop searching and stay still. To be held and to be able to hold once again. I wish for every single day. We walk slowly and surely and serenely to the edge, we push each other, and then we come back again.

nancy mauro-flude: <http://sistero.sysx.org/mythengine/writingsondance/usr.html>

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we are not in the least afraid of ruins
we are going to inherit the earth
the bourgeoisie may blast and ruin
their world before they leave the stage of history
but we carry a new world in our hearts
Duretti

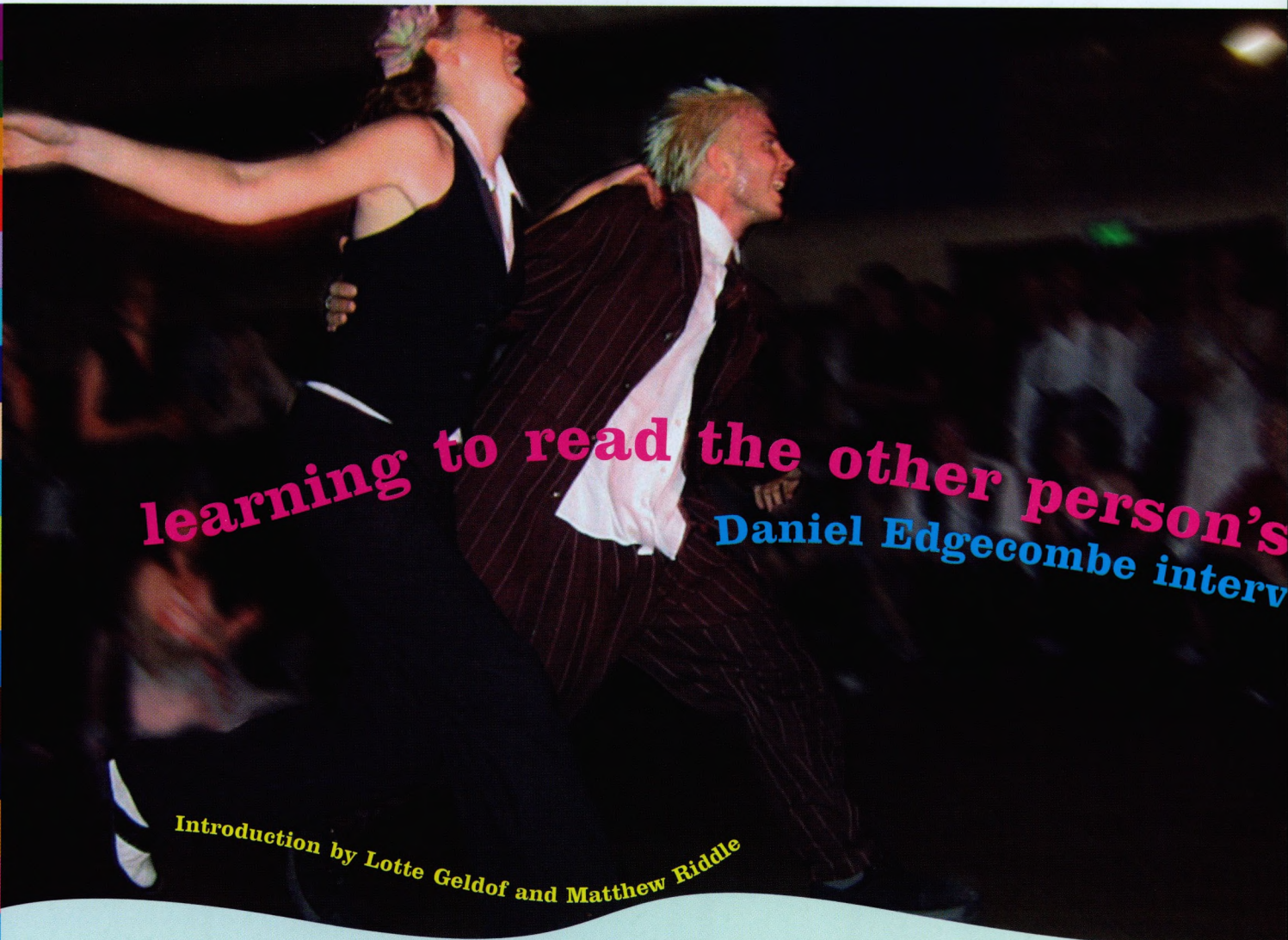


Spinning = cellular rejuvenation
not looking, just being there - contracting & expanding

Excessive body states: going into the ZONE The overpowering emotion and sudden access of intense feeling...without reference to any boundary or oppositional force without any mention of a self. this ecstasy as pure event, as an intensity that happens, a rush: the abstract energy. spatializing. as fusion or crises, its effects.

In Jean Baudrillard's theory of media, ecstasy in this sense is an epiphany ("the quality proper to any body that spins until all sense is lost, and then shines forth in its pure and empty form") in which a term may "obliterate" others only because it spins free from binary structures: a term in ecstasy ceases to be "relative to its opposite" (thus annihilating its value), becoming Superlative positively sublime, as if it had absorbed all the energy of its opposite.





learning to read the other person's
Daniel Edgecombe interview

Introduction by Lotte Geldof and Matthew Riddle

“During the depression Jitter Sauce was hard liquor and when the white people started to do Lindy Hop they weren’t very smooth and it looked like they’d been on Jitter Sauce so they were called Jitterbugs. The whites didn’t get it but they still called it the Jitterbug.” – Claudia Funder quoted in *The Melbourne Times*, 13/10/03

Swing dancing can be defined most simply as dancing to music from the ‘Swing era’ — big band music that achieved worldwide popularity in the 1930s and ‘40s. It covers a broad range of styles including Charleston, Lindy Hop (or Jitterbug), Collegiate Shag, Balboa and many more. Band-leaders such as Chick Webb, Fletcher Henderson, Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Artie Shaw and Benny Goodman were household names and played their music almost exclusively for dancers in this golden era of partnered social dancing.

The first international swing dance craze, The Charleston, was made popular through the appearance of the James P. Johnson tune of the same name in the 1922 musical ‘Runnin’ Wild’. Newsreels and movies spread the dance across the United States, and eventually the world, and this pattern was to be repeated many times with the development of each swing dance derivative.

The ‘Lindy Hop’ — originally known as ‘The Breakaway’ — originated in 1927 as a fusion of many early 20th century dances, in particular the Charleston. While Charleston was a solo dance in its most popular form, Lindy Hop had evolved primarily as a partnered dance that maintained its close connection to the music and its antecedent jazz dances, including ‘Cakewalk’, ‘Black Bottom’ and other Afro-American traditional dances such as the ‘Ring Shout’. Historians generally agree that Lindy Hop got its name from a headline announcing Lindberg’s successful aeroplane crossing of 1927: “Lindy Hops the Atlantic”.

The most famous Lindy Hop troupe was Whitey’s Lindy Hoppers, who performed stunning routines in movies such as the 1937 Marx Brothers’ classic ‘A Day At The Races’ and the 1941 Vaudeville extravaganza ‘Hellzapoppin’. The performances in these movies are legendary among swing dance revivalists today. Frankie Manning, lead choreographer and dancer with Whitey’s, and now in his nineties still travels teaching Lindy Hop internationally.

Connection

Interviewed by Sally Gardner

Swing dance is popular today in many different countries, including the USA, Canada, Australia, Singapore, New Zealand, Spain, France, The Netherlands, Russia, Sweden and many more. In swing dance communities there is a strong focus on sharing skills and ideas as an effective way to improve technical ability and enjoy the excitement of dancing with new people. Over time, local and international dance camps and 'Lindy Exchanges' have become more and more popular. They provide extended dancing opportunities sometimes 24 hours a day, for a whole month (like the annual Herrang Dance Camp in Sweden) for swing dance addicts such as Daniel Edgecombe.

Sally Gardner How did you get into swing dancing?

Daniel Edgecombe I got into it because a friend of my girlfriend's said, 'Come along and see this wonderful swing dancing thing that I'm into'. Fair enough. Turned up on the Sunday and I was waiting for an excuse to get out of the house ... just needed to get out and about 'cause I was always home. It was at Southbank. It was what you would have seen at Fed. Square ["Dancing in the streets" Melbourne International Festival 2003. Ed.] – just people dancing. They did group Charleston demonstrations and then the rest of the day was just social dancing. I stopped by, I saw it and I went 'That's for me. If I can ever be that good I'll be really excited', and started 24 hours later. And I've missed three classes since. At first I was just doing one class a week and going home. You know, going for the hour and then going home. And there was a social night started up on Tuesday so I went to that and then started doing four classes a week, two social dances a week and it's got up to the point where I'm now dancing four or five nights, at least three or four nights a week. Two troupes, one private a week, dancing two or three nights, gigs occasionally.

Sally What do you like about it?
Daniel Swing is ... you're not dancing, you're just playing around to music. Like you've learnt set moves but after a while you ... when you first start you're like, 'Oh I've got to step here, I've got to step there, I've got to be on this beat.' But after a while you realise that you can just do whatever you want and it's all just guidelines. You end up having the basic rhythms but you can play around with them, do whatever you want and ... make people do things. I'd done a bit of ballroom and jive and rock and roll and stuff when I was younger. It was all fun and good but ... I did about a year of ballroom, a year or two, not strictly, but going to classes and mucking around ... In year 10 I did a year of ballroom – a course type thing that went for a year, each week you went up. And that was more fun ... and then I saw Swing ... and it's completely different, the class structure. You don't have to turn up. You just turn up whenever you want. So people can turn up every three weeks and they'll still ... it's not a problem. But I was turning up every week.

Sally So part of what's compelling about it is that freedom or improvisational aspect?
Daniel Well not the improvisational aspect. That part scares me 'cause I'm bad at it. Just the fact that it's playing around ... it's not strict. There are no rules. It's not like ballroom where you learn the foxtrot and there's a set routine and you just repeat it to the music. Like, you listen and 'oh, it's a quickstep,' and you'll do it or 'oh, it's a foxtrot' or 'it's a rhumba' – you do that set move. You just chuck on music there's the eight beat, six beat, charleston, '20s charleston, shag, bal – all of those and you just mix them up between every song. You go from style to style you just lead into each one and you can change around so you're not set with like, 'this song must be done this way.' So it's a lot more ... more freedom to do whatever you want.

Sally Is the dancing with a partner part of the ...
Daniel Well, I'm not a big dancing on my own type but dancing with your partner's completely different to playing around with your partner. Like ballroom, you dance with your partner. This one it's just ... you can dance with anyone and you have fun. You don't have to have a ... people have silly dances

learning to read the other person's connection

Daniel Edgecombe

throughout the night where you don't do moves you ... muck around, do silly things. You still dance together, the basic rhythm's there but there's no sensible things happening – there's big legs, there's arms, just throwing yourself around and having a good time.

Sally What struck me when I went up to the Toucan (studio) and saw the class was that people are ... it's very promiscuous. People are constantly changing partners. **Daniel** Oh yeah, they keep changing partners. You don't have a set dance partner. They make sure you're able to dance with anyone. **Sally** How does that work?

Daniel Well, when we're doing a gig you don't have set dance partners. We're not a professional troupe. Basically they say, 'We've got a gig. Who can do it?' And when you get there basically ... people *have* set dance partners, like there are couples, like people who always dance together. You can you go to a gig and dance with anyone but ... like I normally dance with Celia, so if we're at a gig it's kind of agreed that we'll dance together. Like the teaching couples, if they turn up to a gig it makes more sense for them to dance together because they're more comfortable. But because we rotate you can dance with anyone. You know it's possible to dance with absolutely anyone.

Sally What's the communication that makes that possible?

Daniel It's the lead/follow and the connection and the technique which you learn throughout the dancing. So basically, social dancing, you dance with absolutely everyone so you've got to be able to lead the moves. So after a while ... because it's a routine the girls know what's happening. You've just got to learn ... if they've forgotten something or you've forgotten something you can help each other out. So it doesn't matter who you're dancing with. You both know the routine. It doesn't really matter, it's the same style of dance. You've just got to match each other. Some people dance a little different to others. Some people are bigger, some people are smaller, some people travel, some people don't. You've just got to work it out between you. **Sally** Because it is all about change of weight. **Daniel** Weight changing and counterbalance. All those ... the usual dance things. **Sally** It's not nothing to be able to understand somebody else's weight very quickly is it? It's quite a skill. **Daniel** The kind of technique and connection they teach us makes it fairly easy. You're always taught to basically give what you receive. If someone's pulling on you, you pull back. And if they're not pulling on you you don't pull back. If they're not giving you a whole lot of weight you don't give them a whole lot of weight. You learn to read the other person's connection. So basically through your hand you can work out what the other person's doing.

Sally Yes, I noticed that the contact is really quite peripheral a lot of the time. **Daniel** Just one hand usually. Hand to hand and a hand on the back. And you can lead almost anything through those two connection points. Some things are visual leads. ... a big kick out and you go, 'Oh hang on we're about to go into something', but most things you can lead with just a hand on the back and the hand that you're holding. **Sally** And when you watch other people what do you like to see in their dancing? **Daniel** It's got to do with

style. Like everyone's got their own style. Some people ... basically I think the people that aren't confident won't look as good as the people that are confident. That's the main difference. If you do a move and one person means to do it – they go, 'I'm going to do this move and I'm going to put everything into it'; or some person just goes, 'Oh I've seen this move and I might try it', it'll look like they're trying it, the other person will look like they've actually done it. The good dancers are the people who just get out there and – like even some of the beginner dancers are so much better than the intermediate dancers because they're getting out there and doing their thing. They're not really paying attention to what anyone thinks, they're just doing it and it looks so much better if you just do that. If you're worried about what people are thinking – you're self-conscious – it shows. **Sally** It's very engaging to watch but people don't look like they're ... the showing off is very understated. **Daniel** Depending on the song it's an inward ... you're dancing together and sometimes if it's a jam session you're more out there. If you're just having a social dance you're not dancing for anyone else you're just dancing for yourselves ... I don't know, the energy seems to pull inwards – it's all in there, there's nothing coming out. Or you can open it up ... let it out to everyone else. You're just looking outwards but if you keep it in there it becomes very personal. It just feels in there. You can just dance or you can bring it in on your own or you can throw it out there. **Sally** How do you learn it? What's the process of becoming easy with it?

Daniel They start off teaching basics. You've got the basic 6 beat, the basic Charleston and off that the moves develop. And you keep the same footwork mostly but you'll put a spin for the girl or a spin for the guy. Or you'll turn this way or turn that way. So once you've got the basics you can then basically do whatever you want. When you watch a beginner they're always doing the set rhythm no matter what the music says. They're thinking they've got to get it right – it's still not muscle memory but after a while it becomes second nature. Basically just social dancing is the way to learn it. You can't really teach it. You can teach the basics but you can't teach how to dance it. The moment people start social dancing their learning goes through the roof. They dance with so many other people and they've got to think harder because people don't know what's coming up. You've got to actually learn to lead it or learn to follow it – as opposed to class where they say this is what we're going to do and the person knows that the other person knows what's coming up. **Sally** So when you're saying social dancing you mean ... **Daniel** Just on a night out with CDs playing. CBD or things like that. Everyone just gets together and you have a chat and a dance. It's just a night out basically. There are set nights like Thursday night we go to CBD, Friday night's at the FunPit. There are nights where everyone goes. But there's just music playing and you can dance with anyone that's there. **Sally** And you were saying that's the best training ground ... **Daniel** You don't know what's coming up. If you're a follow you don't know what's coming up, you have to follow. If you're a lead she doesn't know what's

coming up. You have to tell her. You can't rely on the fact that she knows what's coming up. In a routine or in a class where they say we're going to do a basic, we're going to do a circle and the guy goes, 'Oh, she knows what's happening, I'll just do them.' On the social floor, if he wants to do that he's got to tell her what we're doing and when we're doing it ...

Sally Physically.

Daniel He's got to lead it. So if you don't know what you're doing it won't feel right and then after a while it'll start to click and it gets easier and easier.

Sally The Swing dancing teachers...does their dancing inspire you?

Daniel There's always someone you look up to. You're like ... I want to be like them. You want to look like that person dancing. You know when you first start you're like, 'I want to be that couple, 'They're awesome.' And after a while you learn from them and you get really good and you develop your own style. And you realise that looking like them is not what you want ... after a while you stop wanting to look like somebody... but there are still people that are better than you. You don't want to look like them but you realise that they've got a lot they can give you in terms of technique and connection that they can teach you. It gets to the point where it's just little things like a pivot on 2, or a different hand grip or just little, little things they can give you that just help. Even if it just changes a milli-second of your dance. It helps but you're no longer going for style, you're going for technique.

Sally You obviously know quite a lot about the history of Swing.

Daniel Some people really get into it and they learn all the ... they really want to know but I know like the basic times and like when it happened and the main people but I've never really got fully into it. After three years you pick up a fairly large amount of information. You know who the main people were, the people who started it, who kept it going, which were the big ... like the people who pushed it along. The same with now like just through hearing things you learn ... I've never been to America but I know most of the big names and I've never met any of them. I've seen one of the main guys that started it, Frankie Manning, who's now like 80 something. He came down. He was one of my first international teachers. He was one of the original group – the black people who got into the movies. If you see any of the movies from back then with the main swing dancers – he was one of them, the leading force in getting Swing out there.

Sally How do you see yourself continuing?

Daniel I don't know. I'll see what happens basically. It's fun and I'm doing it. Either it continues or it'll dwindle off or I might suddenly turn around and stop turning up. But I can't see that happening at all.

Sally So at the moment can you say why you keep doing it?

Daniel I'm addicted.

Sally You're addicted.

Daniel It's an addiction. There were times over Christmas I went away with the folks and after three days I was sitting at the Christmas table with all the family and I'm just jittering. Mum's going, 'what's wrong?'. I'm like, 'Mum it's a Thursday you know exactly what's wrong.' She's sitting there going, 'Oh god he's normally out social dancing now' and I'm just in another state going, 'I want to be back home and dancing instead of spending time with my family.'

(laughs) So I realised that right now I could be social dancing and it was eating away at me that I wasn't, I was somewhere else and I was missing it and everyone else was dancing and I wasn't.

Sally Is the social aspect part of it do you think?

Daniel When you first start it's the fact that you can dance with everyone. After a while you actually start learning people's names. When we started the troupe Scotty made us get together in a café and learn everyone's last names 'cause we'd known each other for about two years but no-one had the faintest idea what people's last names were we just knew each other's first names. Because you never use them. When you go up you go 'Hi I'm Daniel, would you like a dance. You know that person now. You might forget their name and you might learn it again later but you never get to know the people outside of Swing. After you've been in it for a while you start hanging out with people outside of Swing and you make friends and you end up being friends with quite a large amount of people that you can call on outside of Swing. When I was at University and didn't really go out much – wasn't into like the raving and the dancing and the pubbing – I didn't have enough money to go pubbing each night and I just found myself at home being boring. And now I'm never home. Like my parents do Tango about as badly as I do Swing. They were addicted about a year before I was so they were home like two nights a week. And now it's got to the point where either I'm home and they're at Tango or they're home and I'm at Swing. You pick a night one of us will be out dancing 'til one in the morning and stuff.

Sally That's obviously an influence.

Daniel A little. Well it's always been a bit of a dancing family and a bit of a musical family. It was never like a folk music family where you have singalongs and stuff but we always had the folk music camps we always enjoyed that type of thing and the ballroom. They were always into dancing and I never had a problem with it so we ... there's always been a bit of music and dance around the household but it's kind of exploded now. They'll bring people around and they'll have nights where there's about ten people over and they all tango in the back room. Or you'll have people round and you'll Swing. There's nearly always some form of dancing going on in my house these days.

Sally So from their point of view what you're doing ... the way you're spending your time is ...

Daniel Well, they can't complain. They're doing the same thing so ...

Sally And are you still at University then?

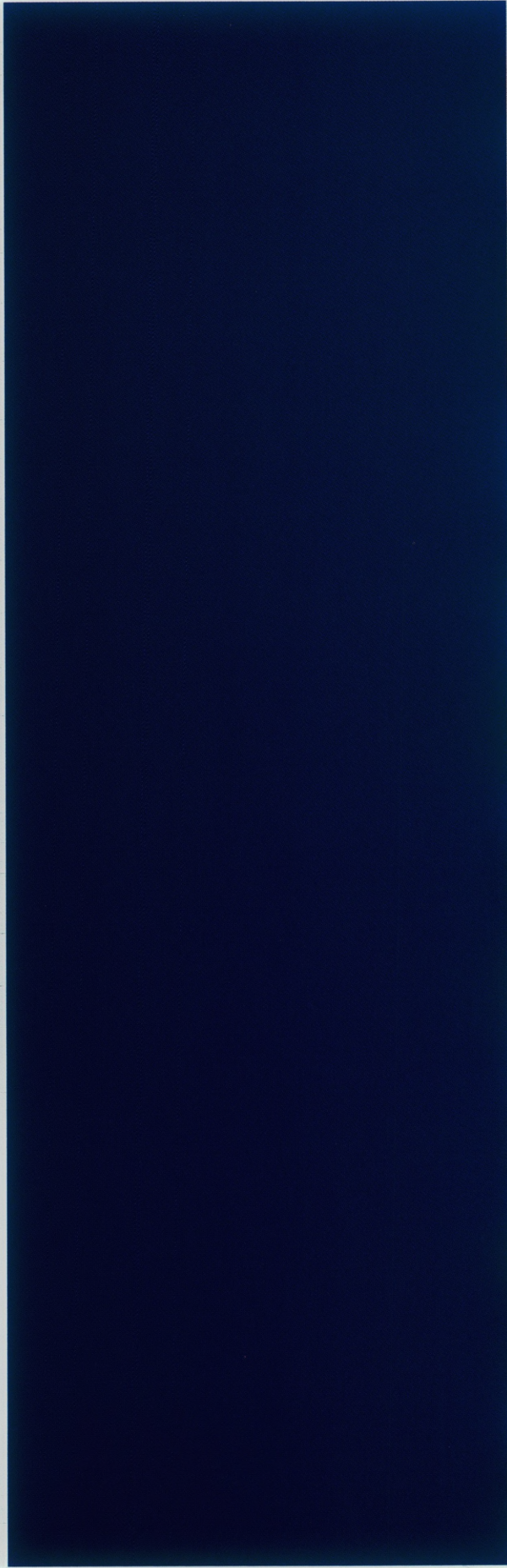
Daniel No, I've dropped out twice.

Sally What were you doing?

Daniel I was doing Computer Science. And decided that computers could go to hell. I didn't want to have anything to do with them. And now I'm just Swing dancing continually and I've finally got a full-time job. I used to be doing late, night-time work so I had all of my days free and I was doing absolutely nothing with them 'cause everyone else worked. And then I'd go to Swing so ... now I'm working during the day and dancing during the night ... and that's about it.

When I work out what I want to do I'll probably go back to uni or find a job that may go up through a company and find out what I want to do that way. I'm not really sure. Just Swing dancing, having fun.

user name and a pass word
and that connects me to the girl
yep correct.
the main thing is
we don't have a mail server
we have ftp access
we have qtime streaming
but no mail server
internet sharing on
sharing your internet connection with airport
computers
its all about sharing
and sharing is under the network
under consistent preferences of sharing
services and internet
physical world
hardware software wet ware
do you think meat world is a below the belt
comment?
we have to set up
it started up without a password
a short name is being used
we need a user for people to connect to any
volumes we set sharing up on
let me see the log in options it actually needs
a users account to get log in access
how did you get sharing
sharing where is it from the network
preferences/



Contributors

Brett Adam is a freelance director, dramaturg and writer. He was the Artistic Director of St Martin's Youth Arts Centre from 2000 to 2004.

Carla Chianese is a Performance Studies Student at Victoria University. Her main performative interests include; dance and movement, choreography, film, writing text, co-producing and stage managing.

Daniel Edgecombe I have always dabbled in dancing. From an early age my parents had me going to music festivals and dancing at folk dances. Later on this led to some dabbling in ballroom, then a little Rock'n'Roll, back to some ballroom. Yet none of it ever really took hold. Nothing until four and a half years ago when a friend asked me to check out this new dance she had found herself a part of. A day later I was in class. A year later I was performing and now four and a half years later I am learning, performing and also teaching. I've come a long way from my humble beginnings in the dirt at a folk festival, and loved every minute of it.

Dr Gwenda Davey AM is the co-founder with June Factor of the Australian Children's Folklore Collection at Museum Victoria which was placed on the UNESCO Australia Memory of the World Register in 2004. Davey was co-editor of *The Oxford Companion to Australian Folklore* (1993) and co-author of *A Guide to Australian Folklore* (2003), both with Graham Seal. Children's traditional games are one of her principal interests. She is an Honorary Research Fellow in the Cultural Heritage Centre for Asia and the Pacific at Deakin University in Burwood, Victoria.

Esteban David Do Santos performs Spoken Word in Melbourne venues. He is developing a form called Extreem Spoken Word. He works as a Ballroom/Latin Dance Teacher. He is undertaking Honours @Victoria University Footscray, Performance Studies. He has won awards.

Nancy Mauro-Flude was raised in Tasmania, Australia. A childhood spent in acrobatics, dance theatre, re-editing cassette tapes of Kate Bush with scissors & tape and making beautiful patterns on her commodore 64 keyboard. Via stints in punk noise bands, and close escapes from the Asian cabaret circuit, activism, tai-chi, ballet and Grotowski-inspired groups. She began research in experiential anatomy & physiology at Institute of Somatic Movement Studies, where she often teaches. As performer and key artist her work with the sister O project has been produced in various forms in Australia, South America, Asia, and Europe. Most recently she collaborated with director Edit Kaldor (Squat Theatre) writing and performing in solo theatre piece 'Drama', and her own work "All of Us (girls) Have Been Dead For So Long". She is a graduate of DasArts: Advanced Institute of Theatre and Dance Studies [2004] and an Honours 1:1 scholar of the Department of Performance Studies, The University of Sydney [2000]. Currently an associate researcher at the Institute for Networked Cultures, and a developer of the annual */etc eclectic tech carnival*. Related urls: <http://sistero.sysx.org> and <http://www.eclectictechcarnival.org>

Dianne Reid is an independent dance and video artist and Artistic Director of Dancehouse, Melbourne's centre for independent contemporary dance. Dianne was a member of the Melbourne contemporary dance company, Danceworks, from 1990–95, was a founding member of Outlet Dance in Adelaide (1987–89), and lecturer in contemporary dance and dance video at the School of Communication & Creative Arts, Deakin University (1996–2004). Under the company name hip sync, Dianne produces dance screen works and video documents/edits live performance. Her dance video works have screened at Green Mill Dance Project (1995), Dance Lumiere (1998), Melbourne Fringe Short Film Festival (1999), IMZ Dance Screen 2002 (Monaco), Videodance 2002 & 2004 (Greece), Hong Kong Fringe Club (2004) and ADF Dancing for the camera (2004). In 2003 she created a pilot version of the solo performance work "Scenes from another life" for the Dancehouse Bodyworks Festival and presented "Scenes from another life – the paper" at the RMIT conference "Image, Sound, Text: change and continuity" (2003) and at Dance Rebooted (2004). She published a chapter in the book *Womenvision: Women and the moving image in Australia*, edited by Lisa French. In 2004 Dianne performed in the Dancehouse solos program *The Dance Card* and in Luke Hockley's *places I have been*.

Assimina Simmons is currently finishing her Bachelor of Teaching (Pri/Sec) at Deakin University. She has also completed a Bachelor of Arts (Performance Studies) and a Diploma of Arts (Small Companies and Community Theatre). She maintains her lifelong love of performance and is excited about teaching dance and drama in schools. She hopes to continue making work both with students, and on her own, for a long time.

David Quirk is a comedian, actor and skateboarder. He is a graduate of Performance Studies at VUT.

Acknowledgments

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Editorial Note: This issue started out as a 'youth' issue. We wanted to represent some physical practices of younger people and we perceived, in relation to these, the reductiveness of such polarizing categories as (high) art and popular culture, 'professional' and 'recreational', local and global. We saw the imposition of such categories as tending to negate the difference and particularity of what younger people might do when they participate in, create or shape cultural practices. — Sally Gardner



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**Writings on Dance 23
vibrant bodies/complex systems**

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When it vibrates the organs you know it's good, I feel as though I am the sea with my triumphs and sorrows, a good Punk Rock concert for me is like - an archaic church a place of release - I can let go and breath - stretch out explore - astound discover.

people meeting physically and virtually, sending data through nodes and cells, a live channel, is integral. Flows & currents . simultaneously transmitting and receiving.

Another sense of time. A disembodied state.

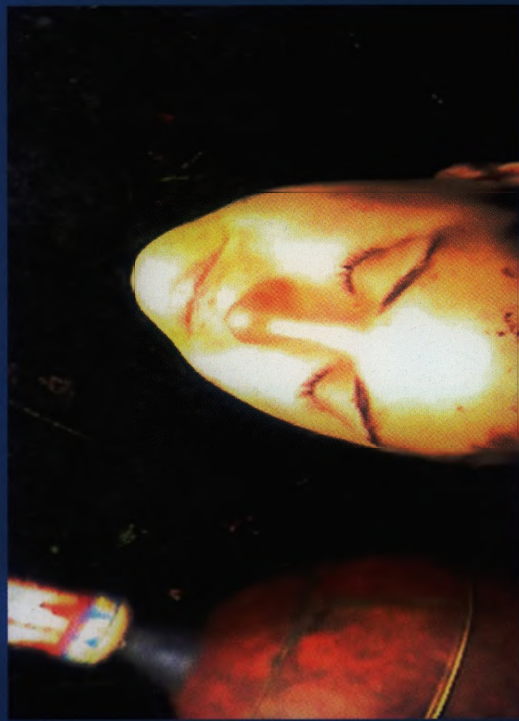
Sometimes if I'm dancing, I leave my body, I'm in a disembodied state.

In altered states, you teleport.

VNS Matrix in 1994 wrote many cyber feminist manifestos. One appeared on an Australian billboard and declared, "The clitoris is a direct line to the matrix," . Cellular communication is underneath the nervous system.

Often validated are limited number of ways to manifest this information. This information is underwater, we must find some way of mobilizing it, of finding its flows. This is what sister O does. Her Operations around the underwater data base are not unlike how the motor nerves efferent fibres carry information from the brain and spinal cord out through the different levels of the body - or in sister O's case its mainly the social sphere. The outgoing nerves and descending tracts are located anterior to the vertebrae - or underground as subjugated knowledge's.

The sensory nerves collect data from the greater environment and carry information and awareness into the Central Nervous System from the cells.



Nancy Mauro-Flude a.k.a sister O during a Burial [re coding cell rejuvenation] in sth Colombia



Nancy Mauro-Flude a.k.a sister o in "All of Us [girls] Have Been Dead For So Long..." Amsterdam.

Much of the time, sister O is like Ophelia, serpentine and hyper aware and connected, existing on the horizontal plane interconnected with the more-than-human world. It's familiar for her to be in the underwater database, mediating the horizontal and vertical when her cells are resonated enough, she comes through to Operate in the 'vertical' world and with this brings part of the data-base with her.

Writings on Dance 23 vibrant bodies / complex systems Summer 2005-06