The

PERFORMANCE

Magazine

No 5

INTERVIEW WITH CHARLIE DRAKE

50p

PIP SIMMONS THEATRE GROUP

ICA THEATRE

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29april · 17may tues · sun 8.00pm

Art and the Sea

Eight galleries around the British coast are presenting a series of exhibitions on the theme of Art and the sea throughout 1981 (Third Eye Centre in Glasgow, Sunderland Arts Centre, Bluecoat Gallery and the Liverpool Academy of Arts on Merseyside, Mostyn Art Gallery in Llandudno, Arnolfini in Bristol, Southampton City Art Gallery and the Photographic Gallery, Southampton.

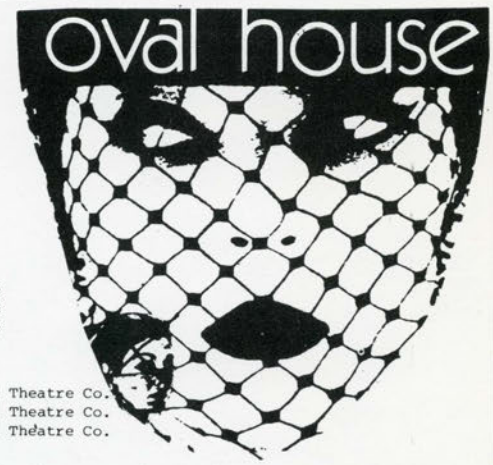
Artists are invited to submit proposals for new or current work based on the theme of the sea. Each gallery will be responsible for the selection of ther exhibition from the work submitted, and all the work selected will finally be represented in some form at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London early in 1982.

There are no limitations on the kind of work to be submitted and we expect entries to cover a wide variety of media. Artists are expected to check on the dimensions and facilities of particular galleries before committing themselves to a project..

Sponsorship schemes are being pursued to support individual artists and further details will be available at the selection stage.

Application forms and further details can be obtained by sending a stamped addressed envelope to "Art and the Sea", 12, Carlton House Terrace, London SW1 by 28th July 1980.

oval house



May

Thur: 1	7.30 Bloo Lips	
Fri : 2	7.30 Bloo Lips	9.30 Skyline
Sat : 3	7.30 Bloo Lips	9.30 Skyline
Sun : 4	7.30 Bloo Lips	9.30 Skyline
Wed : 7	7.45 Pure Monkeys	
Thur: 8	7.45 Pure Monkeys	
Fri : 9	7.45 Pure Monkeys	9.30 Natural Theatre Co.
Sat :10	7.45 Pure Monkeys	9.30 Natural Theatre Co.
Sun :11	7.45 Pure Monkeys	9.30 Natural Theatre Co.
Wed :14	7.45 Colditz	
Thur:15	7.45 Colditz	9.30 Shadowfax Theatre Co. (preview)
Fri :16	NO PERFORMANCE	
Sat :17	7.45 Colditz	9.30 Shadowfax Theatre Co.
Sun :18	7.45 Colditz	9.30 Shadowfax Theatre Co.
Wed :21	7.45 Colditz	
Thur:22	7.45 Colditz	
Fri :23	7.45 Colditz	9.30 The Little Deaths
Sat :24	7.45 Colditz	9.30 The Little Deaths
Sun :25	7.45 Colditz	9.30 The Little Deaths

Oval House is a theatre Club: membership is for six months and costs 50p. Each member may bring one guest to every performance. Membership can be obtained up to half an hour before the performance. Non-members cannot be admitted. All membership cards must be shown.

Ticket Prices: £1.15p Downstairs Theatre. 90p Upstairs Theatre. Under 18's 40p.

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PERFORMANCE NOTES

Unreprocessing Performances

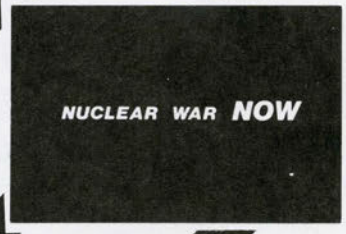
Performance in political action, whether intentional or unintentional is making the news again, particularly in the anti-nuclear field. According to the Guardian April 8 1980, reporting a march in Suffolk against the proposed cruise missile base in Lakenheath, 'the protest ended with a mock launching of missiles from the Suffolk base. The marchers fell to the ground in simulated massacre. Then a dove was released'. A less spectacular, but more subversive performance was achieved at Stratford station in East London earlier this year. A group of 'terrorists' composed of a local councillor and Friends of the Earth members staged a rocket launcher attack on a goods train carrying nuclear waste from Windscale through London. The whole performance was achieved without arousing the suspicion of the railway authorities as they had taken the precaution of buying a platform ticket. A later plan to actually lie down in front of the train was, however, thwarted. Presumably this was going too far.

The recent anti-nuclear demonstration in Trafalgar square proved a good opportunity for what seemed like score of street performers in gas-masks, white faces etc to do their stuff to the amplified accompaniment of Labour ex-cabinet ministers apologetically turning their backs on former misdeeds. There were some reasonably effective two-headed mutants, and quite a bit of radio-active dust sprinkled around the square. (Courtesy of Barnums Novelties).

But the real theme for this year is the re-emergence in the public conciousness of the actual threat of nuclear war and it's effects on our completely unprotected civilian population. Discussions in the media on the niceties of whether looters should be shot on sight, or whether civil servants can take their families into regional seats of government; you know, that sort of thing. The Pop Group are introducting their performances with the soundtrack from the 'Protect and Survive' film which is scheduled for broadcast in case of nuclear attack. Meanwhile some enterprising anti-artists have been producing postcards which say simply 'Nuclear War Now'. I suppose they want to get it over with.

SHOW Biz Kids

Did you know that the Oscar is made by the Dodge Trophy Company inc. of Crystal Lake Illinois? Do you want to hire the Queen, Humphrey Bogart (their lookalikes)? Do you want to feel like a real Hollywood mogul as you scan box-office returns and TV ratings over your cornflakes? You probably don't, but Bailey and Litchfield, proprietors of Ritz, the stay-at-home star-vampers manual, think you do and are flooding corner newsagents and station bookstalls with copies of *Showbiz*. This is a new weekly periodical whose first marketing aim seems to be to clean up that market dominated by The Stage, which won't be too difficult in the circumstances (a review in The Stage is the last review you'll ever get, anywhere). This was no doubt foremost in the mind of Anthony McCall who was lured from his job of assistant editor of The Stage to become editor of the flashy upstart. Trouble was, after the first three issues the ex-Stage prop was elbowed out to make way for one of the publishers, David Litchfield. This may or may not be symptomatic of the somewhat sordid and decaying ambience of West-end Theatre, and the vicarious opportunistic nature of the 'entertainment industry' from which this tabloid arises; littered as it is with unappealing mug-shots of 'international singing stars' (recording offers only); but whatever it is folks, thats . . . . . oh forget it.



Compiled by Rob La Fren

Pub Theatre upsurge

A new wave of pub theatres surfacing in London leads us to the York and Albany in Camden Town. This is one that looks likely to take off by virtue of the determination of it's founding collective to promote 'Non-naturalistic, experimental performance especially involving masks, puppets, and mime.

I asked about the process of finding suitable pubs. It seems to be necessary to sell the whole idea of pub theatre to the brewery once you have tramped the streets and found a willing landlord. The idea is to find a pub where business isn't too brisk; to put it crudely, where it's so dead they'd do anything to get them in. The Y&A seems to follow this pattern: Watneys House, plastic flowers and semi-believable 'Pub Grub' sign. So it hasn't been too difficult to push bar returns up. But, according to Jan Dalley, on of the collective, the problem is the competition. Theatre doesn't encourage heavy drinking, as opposed to discos or live music. No-one wants to drop off in the back row. On the other hand, theatre doesn't frighten the horses, or annoy the locals, (except of course for the odd piercing cries of 'Darling, you were wonderful!') Not that that sort of thing would be encouraged in the audience of 'Puntilla and his Man Matti', a lesser known Brecht comedy performed by the resident Mouth and Trousers Company. An odd little prod at the 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' faces of capitalism, it takes the drunkeness and sobriety of a Finnish Landowner, and it's schizophrenic effect on his character as an allegory for a feckless and wilful society which takes away as quickly as it gives. (ie Capitalism as a drunken man who gives you his wallet to buy the drinks then accuses you of stealing it when he's sobered up.)

It's done in a spirited way with grotesque, spotty masks, lots of costume changes and doubling up, the as yet untamed lighting flickering on and off. The full rough theatre effect would be quite complete if the audience weren't quite so polite and subdued. Isn't it about time Pub Theatre started attracting people from pubs?

ais and Luke Dixon

We are not fooled

April 1st came round this year with it's usual frightfully British little semi-coincidences, stunts and media japes. The financial year ended, nudist beaches were opened and in all the offices and institutions around the land little performances took place excercising the right to make jollity at another's expense. This magazine's first Arts Council grant application was considered on this day, for example. The New Scientist printed a method of making an A bomb in a semi-det--ached house, and Spare Rib printed an alarming report on a new male contraceptive (only 2 deaths among the 100 men tested) A new show opened at the ICA opened called 'Merrie Prankes' and we sent our new critic, Barry Fenaka to review it. We are not entirely sure whether he got the drift of it.

Oh deary me! 'Merrie Prankes' performed by The Fireflies of the Boulevard at the ICA to thunderous self-publicity, was so eclectic an evening as to be positively unoriginal. Where have Martin Duncan and David Ultz who devised the show been for the last ten years that they can be so unaware that it has all been done before?

OK, so collaging 'Hedda Gabler' and 'Hamlet' may have illuminated both texts in a bizarre kind of way but Marovitz has already done this sort of thing so much better. And as for the set, all RSC white box and jock-straps, it was positively passe.

Things were little better in the second of the evening's four sections when we were treated to an 'open rehearsal' of a dance version of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. Did these infuriatingly vain poseurs think that they were being daring in allowing us to see their 'work in progress'? The bitchiness of the company made one cringe with sympathy for the ICA official who was escorting a confused patroness in the audience.

Things might have been better had this not been a boorishly fashionable promenade production but all that shuffling around on cold floors caused your critic's piles to prolapse and necessitated a hasty retreat to bed and cocoa at the interval.

General Idea's Test Tube

Photograph: General Idea

When artists use new technology, are they being gimmicky, boring, or are they just doing what comes naturally? If you put video art on television will everyone switch off? Will performance art, as the New Musical Express suggests be the pop 'thing' of the eighties. Have the long succession of tapes watched in back rooms of small galleries merely provided groundwork for the Kenny Everett Video show, Top of the Pops and saturday morning childrens fun shows. These are questions I ask myself as I stand perusing the 'Computer Art' display (this exhibit out of order) in the Science Museum on a Sunday afternoon, prompted by memories of keen technology fever as a bright eyed ten year old innovation fanatic sweating over suggestions of 'Three-Dee Colour TV' in a country of limited unichannel monochrome.

North Americans have no such reservations. Born into a world where anything is possible for some, Canadian arts group General Idea announce 'We wanted to be famous, we wanted to be glamourous, we wanted to be right, that is to say we wanted to be artists and we knew that if we were famous, if we were glamourous, we could say 'We are artists' and we would be'. They extend their fairytale careers into the making of a new art videotape called Test-Tube; specifically designed for broadcast TV. Although it won't have a chance in this country, it is significant that it was shown recently by Video Arts at the Acme; whose director, Jonathan Harvey, is known to be part of a consortium bidding for a new independent TV franchise. If he gets it, which is a bit of a wide chance, he assures people that he will get independent artists tapes shown in this country.

Test-Tube, shot at De Appel, the increasingly well-known performance gallery in Amsterdam, shows bewilderingly contrasting images within a chroma-keyed TV test pattern which is simultaneously the decor for a futuristic cocktail bar, the clientele sipping their cocktails out of, you've guessed it, test-tubes. The participants then exchange various quips on art, politics, culture and TV while talking in a coded McLuhanised jargon. Meanwhile Marianne, a sort of home-bound artist is doing various things involving prison bars and TV sets while a baby cries off-camera. Eventually, she ends up in the Colour Bar with the rest of the General Idea crew watching bizarre adverts for things like Nazi milk and other ideological cocktails.

For a group of video artists, General Idea have got themselves pretty well-known back home. Their first tape 'Pilot' has been shown widely on educational TV, and their various media stunts have turned them into a household name in Toronto. In particular there is their 1984 Miss General Idea Pavilion, a monument to their worship of Glamour. Planned to be built by 1984, this pavilion, haunted by the Spirit of Miss General Idea 'toting her doggy bag like a pet peeve' is described as the 'first project where fascism and anarchy could join forces to create a work of art'. You get the jargon; their artefacts are riddled with phrases like 'is basically this', verbal trompes d'oeil like 'guilt-edged' and 'stretching that social fabric' (from Test-Tube). Finally, echoes of Yonge St. 'I didn't know the Colour bar was also a Gray bar'.

General Idea are not for hard line-purists, especially of the British school, but their rampant lateral chic, their colourful sidelong glance at art, glamour and fascination are of interest here. Britain is, after all, the home of the technological fetish.

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ARTISTS ALREADY FORM AN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. THEY SHARE A CERTAIN
WAY OF WORKING. CERTAIN STATES OF AWARENESS. CERTAIN KINDS OF INFORMATION.
TELECOMMUNICATIONS CAN HELP THIS COMMUNITY TO BE INTERCONNECTED MORE
QUICKLY AND MORE EASILY.IT CAN ALSO HELP THEM TO WORK COLLABORATIVELY
RATHER THAN COMPETITIVELY,.SINCE A COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM CANNOT FUNCTION
EXCEPT IN AN INTERACTIVE SENSE, WITH BOTH SENDERS AND RECEIVERS. IDEALLY,
IT CAN GIVE ALL PARTICIPANTS A CHANCE TO SEND AND RECEIVE.


RECEPTION COMPLETE
TO
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From Tom Klinkowstein

INTRIGUE AT THE HOTEL RELAXAY

Sylvia Ziranek, Kitsch Artist & Social Butterfly

Profiled by Andrea Hill

When I was young (as the saying goes), MAD magazine—considered highly intellectual by American youth—used to bring out a special book of party games, the MAD Party Book. The most popular game consisted of a short "story" in which many of the adjectives, adverbs, nouns, and other assorted parts of speech had been left blank. One person would be in possession of this page and would shout out "ADJECTIVE", "NOUN", and so forth, and other members of the group, usually in a hilarious condition, would supply the missing words in as arbitrary a style as possible—"NAUSEATING", "SNAIL", "CACTUS". Finally, the story would be read out in its entirety, with reader and audience alike barely able to contain their uproarious mirth at the results.

Silvia Ziranek's performances, which are highly and densely verbal, sound like sophisticated city cousins to the MAD party games. They give the impression, as sentence after unpredictable sentence rolls by, mingling nonsense with dead-on insight, of having been composed with a thesaurus in one hand and a paragraph full of blank spaces in the other. How else to account for passages like: "Savagely sprinkled with ceramic etceteras in integrated opportunities of unparallelled specifications, including an engaging incognito organist, Hotel Reelaxay occupies the very heart of pom-pom pre-requisites."? Unlike my childhood party friends, though, Ziranek brings a calculated thread to bear on her stories, has an unerring writer's sense of how to bring together sensibly a speech rampant with disconnected adjectives and seemingly lacking in full stops. At the end of the performances you have, not a sense of character or story exactly, but a sense of conglomerate characters and stories, made up of fashionable cliches from all possible quarters, usually leisured or moneyed ones, coupled with the odd sarcasm. Mixed metaphors, quasi-references which turn out not to refer to anything, substitutions of the wrong word for the right one, beginning everything with the same letter or sound, puns, all give her work a kind of 'now you see it now you don't' meaning. An intuitive and free-associational mind is the best equipment for appreciating a Ziranek 'intrigue'.Another introductory sentence from *Hotel Reelaxay* sums it up: "the atmosphere here is one of just about everything with that extra special touch".

Although I've emphasised the verbal aspect of Ziranek's work, what strikes first are actually the visuals. At the Hayward Annual (*Chili con Cardboard*) and later at the Film Makers Co-op (*That Charming Vase*) observers were allowed a pre-performance meditation on a stage set abounding in chintziness, everything appearing to be either fluffy and pink or else made of bamboo, with screens, birdcages, ostrich feathers, exotic plants around the place. When Ziranek appears (in extravagant dress, and old-fashioned high fashion with lots of make up and ballooning skirts and things very tight at the ankle and waist), every motion is studied and contrived, to give the greatest possible graciousness and high etiquette to her pronouncements. In fact motion (to borrow her alliterative style) is minimum, and she is liable to stand confidently in one place, delivering impeccably timed phrases, for quite some time. If she crosses the floor, you know it's not improvised; every step cries artifice and hours spent rehearsing.

Everybody's first reaction to a performance of Silvia Ziranek's is that it's "so well done", "so professional", quickly followed by, "unlike so much other work you see in performance . . . these days . . . " It's often suspected, in fact, that Ziranek has a proper theatrical background, including drama school and experience on the stage—though actually she went to art school and did performance there pretty much from the very beginning without preliminary years in painting or sculpture. She *did* have ballet training when young—it shows in the graceful arms and serene bearing—and claims also to have tap dancing skills. And of course, she has worked a good deal with Bruce McLean, England's master poseur, but has retained not so much the style as the genre of McLean's work, her own manners and methods are unique. A predilection for the entertainment profession and the whole notion of showbiz in general comes through loud and clear when she says that her future plans include first a trip to Bermuda and then a nebulous scheme to hire herself out to entertain at millionaire's parties.

Ziranek, like many another ambitious person before her, is unabashedly affected and doesn't bat an eyelid at the thought of presenting her own chic self for consumption, admiration, and one can't help but, imagine, plenty of money.

Millionaire's parties? This is a strange sound coming from the usually impoverished and correspondingly grumpy world of performance art. Millionaire's parties?

Ziranek, like many another ambitious person before her, is unabashedly affected and doesn't bat an eyelid at the thought of presenting her own chic self for consumption, admiration, and, one can't help but imagine, plenty of money. Like other great phonies (of whom Andy Warhol seems the most immiediately relevant, if in a rather bigger league), she packages her personality, uses *herself* as the artwork. But it's not her natural self so much as her dressed up and made-faultless self. In short, Ziranek is dealing exclusively with her own image.

This is a cause of irritation to some viewers, who find something distasteful about any artist (who is not supposed, in this country anyway, to be an entertainer or have a public image) blithely doing herself up, speaking pretty phrases, and generally behaving in a fairly unserious manner. Consequently it is sometimes thought that she is not really saying anything, that her work is contentless, is no more than a glamorous shell. This is a true assessment but not a fair one, because it neglects both the social intelligence which this species of frivolity demonstrates and the pointedness of those pretty phrases. ("There is nothing quite like a social conscience with a patio.") An artist dealing in facades, as Ziranek is, knows what's behind them; such an artist is bound to realise that adopting a facade, or many facades, in an artwork is not tantamount to accepting the values indicated by that affectation. Actually, I suspect that Ziranek, like Warhol, would say she simply adores expensive hotels and trashy novels and champagne and all the rest of it, but that is beside the point—it only indicates how thoroughly she has integrated her performing with her real life persona. The fact remains that every word of her scripts reveals, ok, an infatuation with all brands of mannerism and expensive banality, but at the same time has a sense of, a feel for, the language of cliches and received judgements which makes it quite clear that she herself is not (or not just) a socialite. The

wit bites pretty deep. It also bites pretty funny. So Ziranek is in the schizophrenic position, potentially anyway, of being acceptable to the very class of audience which another class of audience might see her as parodying. It's a subtle move, and it'll be interesting to see where it leads her. But in the meantime: "... now listen to the poetry of those tweaking tendons, ripple to the rhythm of the moody metatarsal. To some a foot is just a plaything for an hour, remember, yours are with you for life. The classics of today, the meaning of tomorrow, feet speak in a language all can understand."

Angels descend like Agatha

Photograph: Chris Schwartz

This Spring brought two shows that I found myself eagerly awaiting – the first ever TV adaptation of Agatha Christies's 'Why Didn't They Ask Evans?' and Noel Grieg's 'Angels Descend On Paris' by the Combination at the Albany Empire. Without appearing to be flippant I did find them somewhat similar. They were both extremely long, both were period plays with rather complicated plots, both were very well produced and both were who-dun-its. In the case of 'Evans' one could either sit back till all was revealed or follow through 'vital' clues which after all, is perhaps the fun of a Christie. In the case of 'Angels Descend on Paris', however, a lot was asked of the audience but not necessarily in the most effective ways.

The action that links the destinies of the Six Characters in Search of Survival is rather too involved but it was not obscure or unreasonable or deep but at moments of 'thickening plot' the audience was given the detective story treatment via musical 'hints', usually accompanying lines that presaged what would perhaps follow later. Theoretically, it may have been a good idea but musical hints like that can confuse and intrude – particularly when the first half of the play did not necessarily lead one to think one was going to end up watching a who-dun-it. The who-dun-it angle was very interesting but most of the demands that made it unsatisfactory seemed to be made from the script itself.

In parts it was saying a whole heap of political/philosophical things – the politics of art/the art of politics; the changes of ideals, positions and attitudes in the survival game of escaping from and coping with oppression at people's doorsteps; the pressures of hiding one's real identity in times of danger; questions of maleness; the economic bases of fascism and survival; the role of an artist (or any person of conscience) in the political world and so on. All very profound and, no doubt, very difficult to deal with in one show. So then there was the personal level on which we were asked to be interested in the six characters including a butcher/entrepreneur who was French and dealt with buying and selling paintings, a German Jewish cabaret artist and her 'drag queen' partner who were both escaping from her political family background, a lesbian woman working with the Resistance and a middle-class French woman who was a frequent customer and one time lover of the butcher. These people and their dilemmas, backgrounds, fears, desires, natures, searches, escapes, compromises were all interconnected against the background of spreading Nazism. There were times when these two levels didn't click.

Some moments were crying out for real intimate understanding and were being continuously cut across by the largeness of other moments that called for a more heightened theatrical style. So much so that I found some of the characters were difficult to actually get to grips with, even though the performances were all very good and effective. Indeed, the theatrical largeness of production seemed to take precedence over the rest.

Nancy Diuguid's production was extremely good, large and theatrically effective. Paul Dart's monumental white set that looked like a butcher's shop-cum-hospital-cum-giant Underground Station was superb but not truly environmental or atmospheric in that the tables and chairs of the Albany seemed self-consciously perched round the edge waiting for a cabaret that turned out to be a West End Musical. The effect, perhaps intentional, was cold and clinical. It was a shame that the seating couldn't be incorporated more naturally into the environment. The set was superb enough to warrant it. Paul Sand's music, now haunting, now lulling seemed tailor-made for a Big Musical, which was what the production seemed to be aiming at, and the songs themselves were somewhat like an opperetta with West End Hit Musical type choruses crossed over by duets and solos – some of which were beautifully sung.

The romantic symbolism that constantly edged into the production was sometimes annoyingly predictable. I mean – roses wrapped in barbed wire hanging on a meat-hook and black shrouded vieled figures lurking around chanting about the Angel of Death in a show that revolves around Fascism is about as romantically predictable as you can get. At other times the symbolism was used to great effect such as the opening song of the second half with the entire company singing on telephones in different parts of the set – very showy. The songs themselves I found highly repetitive but they also demanded that one actually listened to the lyrics (not a bad thing at all) and, indeed, I felt that had I just heard the songs alone I would perhaps have not needed to see the play.

I felt a lack of clarity (and brevity) in the writing of the play which seemed to be troubled between the political/philosophical level and the intimate/personal leveland opted to cut both short by coming down rather heavily on theatrical symbolism, aesthetics and the 'plot', Nancy Duguid's production giving the whole thing a foundation of confidence. But behind it all there were signs of a well-attempted unity for an ambitious script that could have been more defined about where it wanted to take its audience instead of floundering on a sea (rich though it may be) of symbols, theatrical stances and images and then coming into harbour in a who-dun-it multiple murder finale.

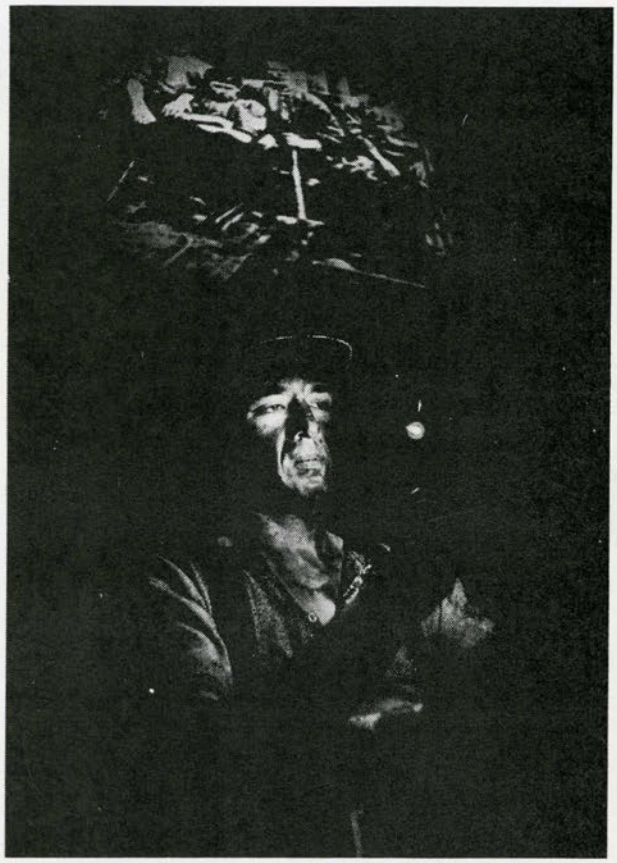
See it.

Bruce Bayley

CARDIFF-
NEW PERFORMANCE CENTRE OF EUROPE

A PROFILE OF CHAPTER ARTS CENTRE AND ITS FOUR RESIDENT COMPANIES

by Simon Kelly



Moving Being

The Chapter Arts Centre in Cardiff began life with a £1500 grant from the Welsh Arts Council. And when the premises, a disused and derelict school, had been put in some sort of order and the doors of Wales' first performance/arts centre opened, the detractors, who are always present on such occasions, said it wouldn't last three months.

That was in March, 1971, now nine years later this home for the visual and performing arts still occupies a unique, if unappreciated place in Britain. At every step of the way, the centre has had to fight the efforts of the Conservative controlled local authority to close it down and to counter smear attacks in the local press.

Parallels for this centre, where painters, film makers, dancers, and theatre groups can perform and exhibit are hard to find.

"We wanted to make possibilities available. The idea was of the arts lab, as a place of ferment, experiment, a seething ground for new ideas", says Mick Flood, Chapter's artistic director, the man who founded the centre and has overseen its development ever since.

"Not many people thought we'd last, but I saw it as a vital provision and facility for artists of all kinds and I retain that feeling to this day. We primarily exist for the provision of contemporary arts, and the community as such was not a major factor behind setting up Chapter, although as it has evolved, the community has been woven into the fabric of the activities.

Working under the umbrella of Chapter are four theatre companies: Cardiff Laboratory Theatre, Moving Being, Reflex Action, Pauper's Carnival, and occasionally, Diamond Age.

Moving Being was the first to take up residence at Chapter in 1972, led by director Geoff Moore. Formerly based in London the group is best known for its work in multi media. Cardiff Laboratory on the other hand very much has its roots in Wales, and after a period of gestation at Cardiff University moved to Chapter in 1974. They are an actors company in that they begin with the art of the actor and then only proceed to the art of the theatre. Pauper's Carnival, perhaps the least known of all the groups at Chapter, began work there in 1975. A company of three actors, they now work primarily through the myths and celebrations of England, Ireland, and Wales. Recently, they have begun to do children's shows. Reflex Action (formerly Red Light) began work in 1976 and from early work on the surrealists and absurdists now wholly work through improvisation. The group has also evolved out of being a director's theatre, and is now run on collective lines.

All of the companies, although receiving assistance from the Welsh Arts Council to varying degrees, supplement their income by touring, and also to extend their audience. Cardiff Laboratory in fact makes 40 per cent of their income through European performances.

In looking at the work of these four companies it is easier to find areas of divergence than convergence. One however, is that none of the companies have an overt or explicit political stance, which is not to say they are apolitical, rather that their work is implicitly political as are the structures of the groups themselves.

Cardiff Laboratory, Reflex Action, and Pauper's Carnival have all attempted to leave the literary theatre tradition, with different degrees of success, and Moving Being has tried to revitalize that tradition by drawing on other forms.

Geoff Moore, the Director of Moving Being came to theatre from art school and dance, from beginnings concerned with the use/manipulation of space, later fused into work with mixed media. "We got to Cardiff in 1972 at a time when the fringe theatre was beginning to break up; London was getting expensive, and we wanted to consolidate our work and we'd been very well received when in Cardiff before," says Moore of his reasons for finding a new home for Moving Being.

"When we began there were about a dozen actors. It was a very different period. We were finding out about all sorts of things. The idea of the group was the first thing . . . in the late 1960s people were creating new ways of being and creating . . . the original company was together for five to six years,

and some stayed eight or nine. Now we work with a small nucleus."

A measure of the change that has occured in Moore's thinking is that he's no longer concerned with the group as the source and dynamic of the creative process. "Theatre can get stuck in a lot of blind alleys if that's (the group) the only reason for doing." Instead of maintaining a company of actors he works frequently with about three and contracts actors in and out for individual projects and productions. This practice, says Moore, aids creativity rather than detracts from it, while allowing Moving Being the maximum amount of flexibility, particularly economically.

It is problematical whether Moving Being's last production would have greatly differed had it been the result of work between actors who had worked together consistently for a long period of time. A criticism that is often heard of Moore is that he allows his actors no room, curtails experiment, and from first rehearsal to last attempts to get the actors to become the vehicles of his inner vision.

Rananim (the dream of D.H. Lawrence) tells the story of the relationship between Lawrence and the New Zealand writer Katherine Mansfield. The text, as is often the case with the group's work, comes from a wide range of sources, including their own works, letters, journals, essays and travel writings. The programme notes say "the piece evokes Lawrence's quest for the achievement of 'complete being' through spiritual and sexual rehabilitation of man." Its said that Lawrence and Mansfield never partook of the latter form of relationship, which is just as well, as the nearest we get to passion is a frying pan being whopped across the knuckles.

Moving Being's next major production is to be based on the Mabinogion myths and the choice of material was made it would seem more because it is a rich source of material, than because they are Welsh.

"I don't think its necessary for the material to relate to the particular area in which it is being performed," says Moore. "We are as much a European or American company as Welsh."

By contrast, to the Cardiff Laboratory Theatre, Wales is of primary importance. "The thing we feel close to is an endemic Welsh theatre, and we may by our work, be able to assist in the creation of this," says Laboratory senior partner, Richard Gough.

Photograph: Pol ar Ruz

Laboratory Theatre

Moving Being

Indeed, there is a feeling within the company to eventually leave Chapter Arts Centre, which has been its home since 1974, and move to a small town or village where it may be possible to get closer to the roots of Welsh life and culture.

A decision, when and if it is made, would in part be influenced by some of the more negative aspects of Chapter, which while providing reasonably secure environments for the theatre companies and the 15 artists housed within it, can also act as a drain on energy, because, as with every centre of this kind (and there are very few) it attracts the usual group who take a lot but contribute little.

The work of the Laboratory covers three main areas: street and special projects work (which may involve collaboration with other theatre groups) performance and a resources centre. Almost from the beginning they have explored non-verbal theatre, at first with the work led by a director, and now with a coordinator who is appointed from within the company to lead a production or a project. Initially, the performance impulse came from the text (their own and others) early on, this was replaced by ideas and/or characters.

Now, as with "Postcards in a Glass Court", their latest formal production and the first since "Moths in Amber" last year, the work evolves from the individual and personal researches of the actors. What such work requires, of course, is discipline and no small amount of dedication. This they show in their approach to the work process and to performance as a whole. While other companies talk and theorize about the work of the actor the Cardiff Laboratory seems virtually alone in its genuine attempts to translate into concrete terms.

What the Laboratory is attempting is much more than the sum of an individual performance or performances. And it's the other aspects of their work that may in the long-term be of more significance. What the Laboratory is helping to build, and in many ways to lead, is the creation of a whole climate, that challenges on a fundamental level the assumptions about theatre, that examines theatre work through philosophical and moral principles, and through building a sound infrastructure make it possible to change its direction and tap its potentialities. Significantly, findings from these researches are now being published by the Laboratory itself, as an extension of its resources centre, founded with the aim of spreading, disseminating, and furthering understanding of theatre in Wales. The resources centre is soon to be expanded to include video as well as publication of original material not readily available in English.

Cardiff Laboratory belongs to that small (but growing) group of theatres around the world that have come to constitute what is now called the "Third Theatre".

> "Almost unknown, it is rarely subject to reflection, it is not presented at festivals and critics do not write about it. The Third theatre seem to constitute the anonymous extreme of the theatres recognized by the world of culture: on the one hand the institutionalized theatre, protected and subsidized because of the cultural values it seems to transmit, appearing as a living image of a creative confrontation with the texts of the past and the present — or even as a noble version fo the entertainment business; on the other hand, the avant-garde theatre, experimenting, researching arduous or iconoclastic, a theatre of changes, in search of new originality, defended n the name of necessity to transcend tradition, and open to novelty in the artistic field and within society. The third theatre lives on the fringe, often outside or on the outskirts of the centres and capitals of culture . . . Perhaps it is here in this third theatre . . . one can see what constitutes the living matter of the theatre, a remote meaning which attracts new energies to the theatre and which in spite of everything, keeps it alive in our society. . ."
>
> —Eugenio Barba—

The Laboratory's next major work, the village project, will in some ways be to move

away from Chapter as already speculated, albeit temporarily. The project stems directly from outdoor performance work and celebrations throughout Wales in the summer of 1979. The project, running from April through December, will try and examine the way in which theatre might approach small communities where there is no street life as such. The project is to have three main phases: a town or a collection of five villages will be chosen in which the Laboratory can take up residence to try and see if theatre can be created that relates to the community.

Also to be attempted is the intergration of a group of performers into the community and an examination of the degree to which they and their work are accepted. A culmination will be a presentation of the Lab's own performance work and the creation of a special event to celebrate one particular aspect of the community.

In August, the Odin Teatret from Denmark are to join this project. The Odin have previously done related work in Sardinia, Italy and South America. At Chapter they will present their entire repetoire, and the group's director, Eugenio Barba, is to conduct a five-day seminar. Later, the actors of Odin and the Laboratory will fuse into three groups and will seperately go and work in three small towns.

The bringing of theatre groups, dancers and individual performers from all over the world to Cardiff and Wales is an important aspect of the Laboratory's work. It allows Wales the opportunity of seeing a wide variety of theatre/performance not readily available and it gives the actors both at Chapter and outside the possibility of working with and assimilating diverse influences. One forthcoming example of this, apart from the Odin's visit, is the arrival in July of Krishnan Nanbudiri, director of a widely respected Balinese Kathakali school and his leading actor. They will give a series of public performances, demonstrations, lectures and discussions.

"Postcards in a Glass Court", which has just returned from European tour, is, one senses, the apotheosis of the Laboratory's six years work. "Postcards" tells the story of the group, their inner visions, voices and obsessions, their history. When the audience enters the actors are already in lace, the dark cavern of the theatre is analogous to entering the unconscious, and then to bringing it to conscious reality in a fixed time and place. We go with the actors in their own and collective "dreamtime" through the pain and the pleasure, and had anyone – actor or audience – felt the need to say again: "Don't be afraid, I am coming with you" – it would have been unnecessary because the journey in its lyricism – akin to floating on a gentle tide – smoothed the worries, and made the cracking of the shell, not a violent haemorrhaging more a letting go. We are on a rolling canvas of three dimensions, and as we tumble normal points of reference blur, and we must ask, more tell ourselves, that its the actor who at the end is hanging by the feet, and not our comfortable world inverted.

All the companies espouse a physical theatre, but unfortunately, all, with the exception of the Laboratory, fall unceremoniously back on the word. An obvious example of this pattern is the latest work of Reflex Action.

Reflex Action's artistic policy has undergone a fundamental change in the last year. The group no longer stages formal performances, but are, they say, exploring the uniqueness of each theatrical event through improvisation. This ostensibly means the rejection of most theatrical conventions and norms. "Theatre should not be a place that reinforces social isolation but on the contrary offers a rare opportunity for strangers to join together in a shared experience," says the company. The function of theatre is seen as a meeting place for the exchange of 'gifts' between the audience and performers. The audience's gift can take the form of suggestions, words, sounds, songs etc., which the actor can choose to use as a 'springboard' for a creative process.

Photo : Steve Attleson

Laboratory Theatre

Unfortunately, this promise of Christmas being able to take place daily, of a shared experience, was not realized when I attended a presentation of their work. The audience enters – as usual, sits on traditional tiered seating, facing the performance space, occasionally, the actors leave their warm-up to greet a friend, the lights are fixed squarely on the performers, the audience sits in the shade. The audience, when the warm-up is (one supposes) completed, is told its role and responsibilities, and of the gifts they can give if they choose.

"A performance may be influenced by themes chosen by the company or it may be entirely free form. In both cases, the performance aims to create a rich collage of dramatic ingredients, without props, costumes, sets. . ." The actors take up their positions and wait: one is reminded of a human anatomy lecture where the students sit expectantly awaiting arrival of the first specimen. The first 'gift' is given and it is, significantly for the performance as it later turned out, a word. At this moment one can't help but admire the courage of the actors in taking this step away from structured 'safe theatre'. But as the audience begins to see, this expedition into the nether regions of theatre is not unprepared, there are numerous back up and life support systems, all of which add up to a working structure that finally is as rigid as any other.

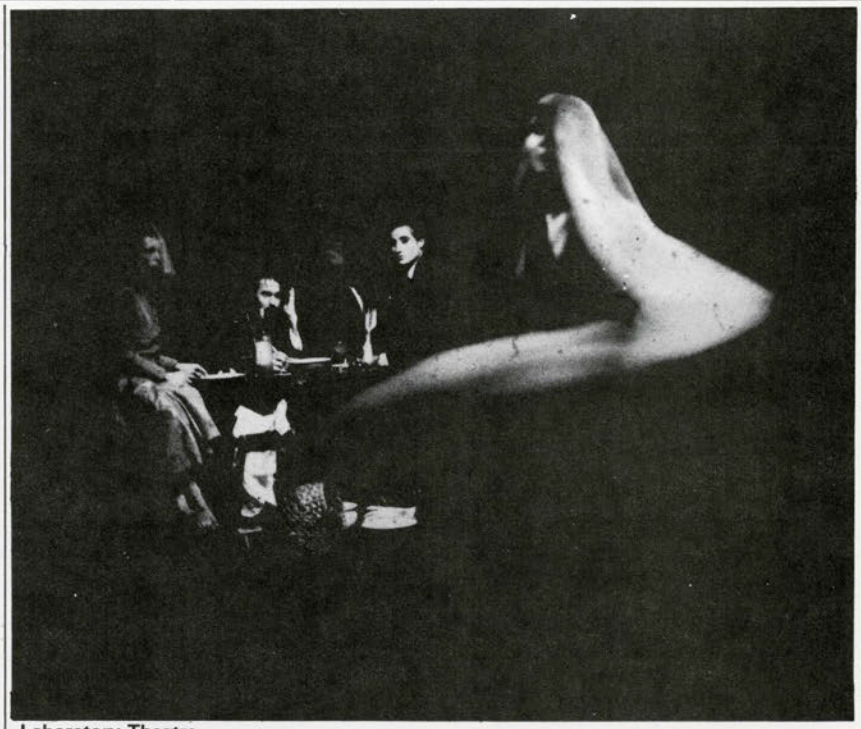
In fact, the actors are on very safe ground, and pretty much at home too; they know the rules of this game and they abide by them, assured that nobody will challenge them. Consequently, they take no risks and the audience is given few opportunities to break out of their isolation, social or otherwise. As the piece progresses, the actors increasingly grope in a sea of words from the audience as well as their own mouths. The spectators by this stage have acquired that self confidence so often obnoxiously apparent in the second half of football matches. Moreover, in this case the audience can direct and control, give texture, but the words are coming so fast the actors have to-

filter out those they will follow and those they won't. This, on occasion, led to considerable confusion among the actors. Participatory theatre is now a half forgotten dream – although it lives on in areas where it works best: children's theatre, and theatre in education. But at best it seemed to offer more than this auto-suggestion, this work that vacillates around the questions of performance and theatre, because as Reflex Action realize and regret, far too infrequently does it become anything more than a word game, semantic acrobatics, without meaning or content.

And this is surprising: Reflex Action place such emphasis on physical training, but only rarely is the body used dynamically, to express or to say. In their own individual way Reflex Actipn have reached the point so many companies meet but cannot cross: not being able to go beyond the structure, the formula. "The real risk would be to stop being a 'theatre' group," says Reflex Action's Anna Furse. It is a risk that the company in its present form probably won't be taking, but conceivably could occur when Reflex Action is reorganized later in the year.

"The Droll-teller's Wedding", Pauper's Carnival's major production for 1980, assures, somewhat gratuitously, that the world is a blessed place, even if demons and fireflies do sometimes menace us. It is the latest step in their retelling of the myths and legends that once constitute the collective mythology of England, Wales, Ireland and Scotland. They present their work in the way that perhaps the travellers, story-tellers and gypsies may have done. For this reason audiences may find their work untheatrical, – there is no sense of performance – and adjusting to their rhythms is similar to the sort of effort required when viewing one of Sanjit Ray's movies.

There is a sincere feeling of welcome for the audience in entering the performing space, and being asked "would you like a glass of punch. "The text is characteristically dense and the final image of death and rebirth – the only point in the whole work where there was a performance quality and tension – gave the work and added dimension. However, one must ask whether this, and their previous productions, are not more suited to the greens, fields, and other areas where such presentations were traditionally made, and where the group frequently performs.



Laboratory Theatre

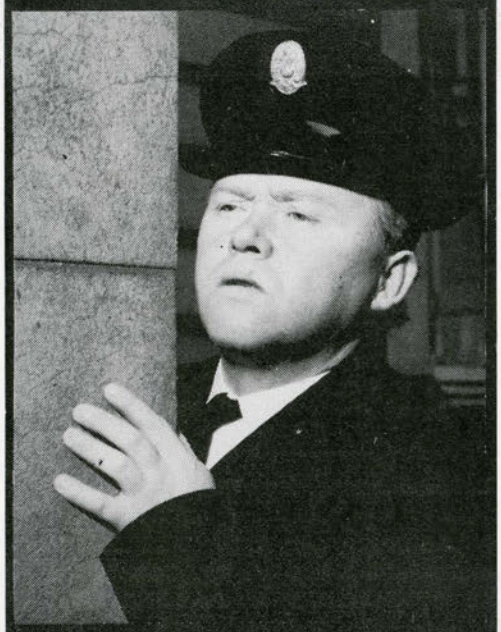
Pauper's Carnival round out the Chapter Arts Centre's theatre umbrella, and in some ways provide the closest link with the Wales (and indeed England) that is rapidly disappearing. It is close to the hills, valleys, and mining towns of Wales, and speaks of the anxiety of a people that are as depressed economically now as they were then.

It was the combination of political repression and economic decline that stifled the growth of any contemporary Welsh theatre and art. In backing the concept of the Chapter Arts Centre the Welsh Arts Council not only showed the appreciation that this needed to be reversed, but have given Britain as a whole the only performance centre of its kind – housing four or five theatre companies, an art gallery, two cinemas, health food restaurant, learning exchange, restaurant and two bars.

"There are quite a lot of social users in the bar, people who come here to drink and never use the rest of our facilities. But there are also those who come here for a meal, visit the gallery, and see a late night movie" says Flood.

"Chapter has been the main force in raising the cultural temperature in Cardiff but the sadness is our reputation lies outside Cardiff – its a schizophrenic situation, and the reason for this is that we've been at the mercy of the media in presenting our image, but we hope to change that."

CALL ME UBU!



Jarry's portrait of the teacher who inspired the creation of Pa Ubu.

Photographs of Charlie Drake courtesy of the BBC.

Intrigued by an unusual fusion of talents, Neil Hornick went along to the Cochrane Theatre to see Charlie Drake play King Ubu in a very free version by Spike Milligan of Alfred Jarry's classic surrealist burlesque, directed by Charles Marowitz. The next day he talked to Charlie Drake himself.

Charlie Drake has had his ups and downs. Once one of our most popular television comics, he's not appeared on TV since about the time of an on-set accident which left him concussed in mid-performance when shows went out live. And he was banned by Equity for a year when he insisted on employing a non-Equity housewife in one of his pantomimes. Short of stature, he has a reputation for perfectionism — and truculence, a useful quality, you would think, in the playing of Jarry's monstrously comic tyrant. yet the critics have agreed in finding his performance curiously subdued.

Drake is thinner these days, affable, communicative and altogether more humble than his reputation led me to expect. He comes over as a very genuine person, the only hint of affectation, perhaps, being a slightly awkward refinement of accent which sounds as if it's been acquired en route during his chequered life. This instantly likeable man also holds some unexpected views — on Jarry, Fringe Theatre, and the 4th television channel. . . .

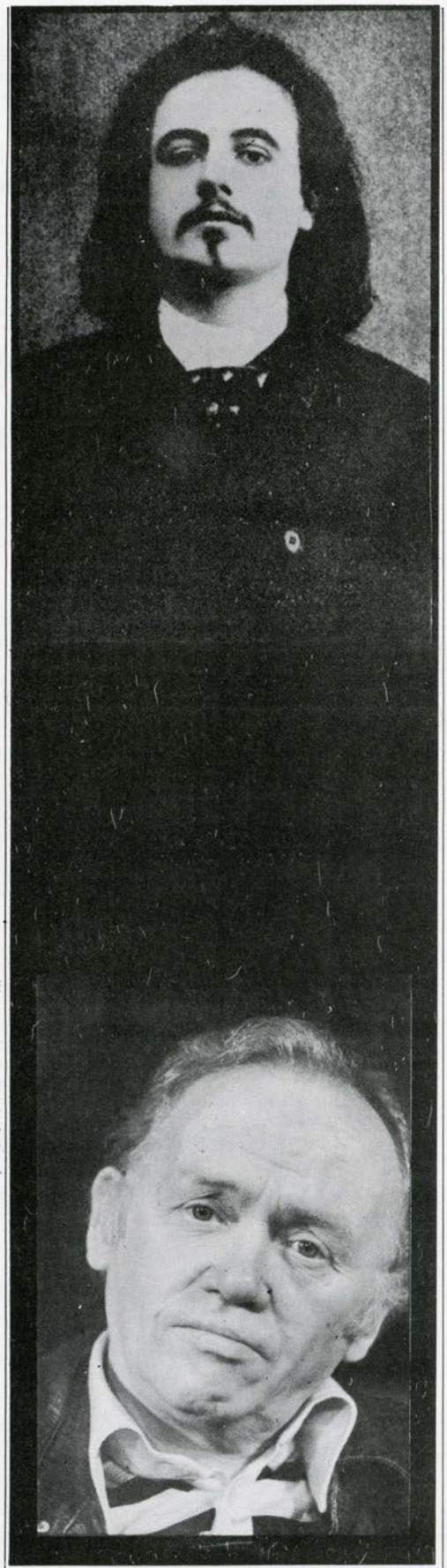
Hornick: First of all I'm interested to know how the casting came about.
Drake: Well in the first place Spike saw this piece in Paris about ten years ago which inspired him to do an edition . . . He did a revision for me. He thought the best part of my comedy was that it is basically an anarchic comedy. I read his first edition and, to be quite honest, I was a bit afraid of it. Then about nine months ago came this new revision and Charles Marowitz was to direct. And I read it and I was still a bit nervous of it. Then I said to Charles, 'Let me read about Jarry' and I got Jarry's life story out, which I read, and I read his earlier works, read what happened to him during his creation of Ubu which, in fact, during the creation or shortly after, sent him mad. Because the character took him over. He went into the cafes in Paris and said 'Call me Ubu!' And he died of excessive eating and drinking, a la Ubu, when he was 34. Ubu must have been some character to have done this to this very literate man and this interested me. It was Jarry, in fact, that swung me to wanting to play Ubu. Ubu was such a compulsive character that he had created that it destroyed him. Then I looked at Ubu types — Hitler . . . Idi Amin . . . What Jarry was saying is that it's not what you do that counts but what you can get away with. All this led me eventually to wanting to play the part.
Hornick: I see. In reading about Jarry, did you identify in any way with any of it or was it very much outside your own experience?
Drake: There was a relationship in so much as in the bulk of my work I am a little picture hanger — which is my trade. If I got to hang a picture in a great mansion I'm oblivious to all around and I may well, in hanging the picture, destroy everything around that gets in the way of where I want the picture to be. I may knock over Ming vases and tread on pianos and whatever but be completely oblivious to this.
Hornick: It's very single-minded.
Drake: That's right. That's right. That's right indeed.
Hornick: Jarry not only wrote but he also embodied some of these strange characteristics himself. He used to do all sorts of bizarre things in public, a kind of living performance. Do you feel any sympathy with that kind of approach? Have you ever done anything like that?
Drake: That's the interesting thing. I've been reading him for something like the last 8 months. I've immersed myself in Jarry and he impressed me no end. He changed the face of the theatre in Paris. It's compulsive reading. He had to die when he was 34. It was predictable in his writings. There's this great restless energy going somewhere.

I had to work at it and study him like a student at college. I've never been to college, in fact, and I asked my oldest boy, 'How am I going to work this? I've got so much reading here which I'm not used to.' I'm used to 3 minute spots — 25 minutes but broken down. And he said: 'Well when I work, dad, I work at 6 o'clock in the morning and I find I can take it in then from 6 to 9.' In the theatre we normally work at night, you know, but I did it. I made this great attempt to study and my wife got up at 6 with me and run me through this man. I based him on Mussolini, Hitler, Amin and The Lion of Judah — the little man who could stand beside De Gaulle and look taller. I got so immersed in him that one day, when my wife dropped a coffee cup or something, I shouted, 'What the hell do you think you're doing, woman!' And she said, 'Don't you come your Ubu with me!' And at the first preview it was extraordinary . . . We came to the final number in the show where I have a very important line to sing, but I was so busy posturing and Jarrying that the line went right away . . . He takes me over in that way and I can understand Jarry's problem up to a point.
Hornick: Well there's that aspect of it — the Ubu character taking over — but there's also Jarry's pranks. For instance, he liked firing a gun in the street and in cafes. Apparently on one occasion a woman complained that he might have killed her child and he replied, 'In that case, madam, we would gladly have made you another.'
Drake: Well, here I introduce a .45 revolver into the sixteenth century . . . When the Jester comes in Ubu kills him and someone says 'He's dead' and Ubu says, 'Yes, it's the gun that does it.' In fact I got this line from the original prank of Jarry's.

Drawings by Siné

Hornick: That's not one of Spike's lines?
Drake: No, no. I added it. The surprising thing about Spike – and I've known him many years – is that he's very controlled in his writing. Spike has flashes of genius and if he can't think of an idea he lets it go. Albeit the thing is very, very funny, he has held hard on to the main plot of Jarry, which is very interesting . . .
Hornick: It's a typically Milligan piece in many ways, though also still holding fast to Jarry, and Milligan's presence is very strong in it. How do you feel about being involved in a production like this in which, in a way, the ghost of Milligan is somehow hovering behind the lines?
Drake: No, I've no fear of this and there ain't no shadows, and I'll tell tell you why. This is a director's piece and the fact that Marowitz is directing – he's a very good director – means we are working with one voice and he is working to hold us on to Jarry. He's holding hard to the original Ubu. We're not de-Milliganising it, because it's there, but Marowitz has taken any outside fears away. He's in complete control.
Hornick: Is that a familiar situation for you, working with a director in this way?
Drake: No.
Hornick: What's it like? Is it difficult?
Drake: Yes it is. It's difficult in so much as, ever since I've been in the business, everything I've done I've written or co-written and had complete artistic control re casting, re most things. There's been one exception – Wolf Mankowitz wrote a play which I did on television . . . It was difficult at the beginning because I've been in the business 38 years and in none of that time no-one has said, 'Wait a minute, this is the way you do it, and this is the way you do it.' And you're spoilt to a point where you think you know how to do it and suddenly you grind to a halt with a director who proves that you don't. And you have to accept what he says. I'm so practiced in the art of theatre that if I hit a ruddy difficult thing I can't do I've got enough expertise to invent something around it rather than wrestling with it. But Marowitz won't have that . . . Once you've come to terms with the fact that, in fact, he is very clever and in control, you lose the fear and you go along.
Hornick: It sounds as if you have a lot of confidence in him.
Drake: Yes indeed.
Hornick: But what made you agree to do it in the first place if you didn't have the degree of control you're used to?
Drake: Principally, it was Alfred Jarry. And then having accepted that, it had to be a very powerful and a very good director. But I'd not met Marowitz. He came down when I was playing in Stockport, and we spent two days together. Having spent those two days I then came back and had a week with him in town and then I was convinced that he was the man, if this could be put together he would . . . . I have tremendous respect for the man and to watch him work and see what he wants doing, you know that the man is a really first rate director. It's been marvellous.
Hornick: I quite enjoyed the moments of improvisation in last night's preview. There's always that sense of danger in improvisation. Can they pull if off? And if they do, it's a very good feeling.
Drake: It is. It is. It is. And the extraordinary thing about it during that sort of situation, you're going to think, 'You know, that was marvellous, why don't we leave it in?' Never happens again, once you contrive to leave it in. Those are things that happen in limbo.
Hornick: It's quite a large cast, isn't it?
Drake: Yes, it is. And they're all so bloody good, aren't they. There used to be theatre companies as such twelve years ago, then they went, and now they're all individuals. But all these actors have so much to do that it's become a company. We're treating it as a company show. Marowitz spent about two months casting it and they're all talented . . . Everybody's an integral part and it's not Charlie Drake going on for twenty minutes after the acts, as it were . . .
Hornick: Can I ask you something about the preview? You nearly came to grief when you made a rather grand entrance at one point at the top of a stairway. Our hearts missed a beat for a moment. Did that bring back any unhappy memories?
Drake: Yes, it was extraordinary. The press and the public are so used to seeing and reading about one going to hospital that it's no longer news and the incredible thing is that there's a trap door there and that trap door is opened and the man that pushes the thing is underneath and there's two of us up there, Ray Barraclough and me, and it's me who goes down the trap. Ray could have gone but no, no, I went down! It's OK now. It bled like hell and came up last night (shows Hornick his knee) and I went to see my Harley Street man who's done it so often he can do it while he's writing. So now it's all down again. But last night, first you get the big pain, then it goes numb, then you ad lib over it just to see if I've broke it – what am I going to do and if it's alright can I carry on? It happens every bloody time. It's quite extraordinary. One a show.
Hornick: Do you think you're particularly accident prone?
Drake: I suppose that's it. It happens in the simplest ways. I was coming back from America. There were 360 people on an aeroplane and they started to serve drinks and we were at the back of the aircraft . . . and I had a hangover and ordered a Bloody Mary, and I had the cashmere suit on, I'd just been doing the Ed Sullivan show, and – this is absolutely true – everybody had their drinks and immediately she gets to me we hit a fucking air pocket and I get the Bloody Mary. And the girl said, 'I'm awfully sorry, it was an accident.' But I said, 'You've got 359 other people, why me?' And yet I take such care. It's not clumsiness . . . But, by golly, if there's a hole I'll find it. Incredible isn't it.

Hornick: I've heard differing versions of your accident on television. I'd be interested to know from you what really happened.
Drake: Yes certainly. The show was going out live, which was very pertinent, and I'd written it. It was my show.
Hornick: Was it one in the series 'The Worker'?
Drake: No, it was for the BBC and was called 'Drakes Progress'. The theme was set, and it was a man who ran a bingo hall and the Mafia came in and wanted to take over all bingo halls. They got to him and they were going to rough him up. Once again, its this anarchic comedy. I had a G-plan bookcase built across the stage and the gangsters stood me on one side of the bookcase, moved some books, placed me arm through the bookcase and they jerked me through. And then I had to play at being unconscious. And the two actors had to pick me up and throw me out of the sugar glass window on to a mattress out side. And then I immediately come through the door. But the show was live. Balsawood is very resonant, you have to be very careful witn it, and what you never do is nail it. Someone had spoken to the carpenters and said; 'Now when you put those shelves across; just a little touch of glue to hold them in position, so that when I fall through, just the sound effects of the break, and we're in business.' He did this and we rehearsed it. Fine. Put the planks back on, and we broke for lunch. When we broke for lunch, the carpenter had just finished for the day, and another carpenter took over. He looked at the shelves, thought 'that's a bit of a bodged-up job', and he's nailed it. So when we go back, we shoot it, and I get there, and I goes boinnnng! and it knocks me unconscious. That was fine, one would just have woken up out of that, but the two actors, albeit they thought I was laying it on a little bit, still picked me up and threw me out of the bloody window, and I hit the head on the stage weight, and that was what done the damage. It was a live show, and the director on the door said 'we'll hang on a minute, he'll be through.' And there was a fade, a blackout, and a bit of an announcement . . . . and that's what happened. It put me out 18 months.
Hornick: You've been immersed in Jarry for some time now . . . You're obviously quite taken by him and, it seems, by working in this relatively un-familar context. Do you feel that this encounter with Jarry is going to influence the direction you take in the future in any way, and if so, in what way?
Drake: Yes I do. One has done the movies; one has played the Palladium; one has won the Golden Rose of Montreux. Conceivably one would have thought that that's it. But what I got from Jarry was a progressive step within what I've been doing. One would have thought now I've done it all, but in fact I haven't even touched it. I feel that this Jarry man is pulling out of me more than anyone else ever did in my life. I look on this as a progressive step forward and would want to stay with these good books, these good classic writers . . . and hopefully I can get Ubu the way he wanted him, albeit that we have to update it to a point but without losing this maniacal character, this blunderbuss in society, as it were. And I just hope I can pull him. There's a fine edge between the comedy and the drama which, in the first preview, you had a sense that the audience were grab-bing it. Albeit they were laughing, they were still getting the evil that lays within this character and the breakdown at the end which happens to all dictators and bullies – they make that one mistake which seemingly is an imponderable mistake – the mistake of Napoleon . . . when the greed and lust have come over them completely there's nothing else for them to grab and in that weakened state they get overthrown.
Hornick: Jarry's considered to be one of the ancestors of surrealist drama. Do you feel now that you'd like to explore more that whole area of humour?
Drake: Yes I do. You see I wrote 'The Worker' TV series which ran for about five years and at the end of the series I'd run out of words for him to say and places for him to go and lapsed into fantasy, which meant the death of him. I think that's what Jarry did, albeit surrealism to a point. He really did have a hard plot line, he was saying an awful lot. I put it down to not what you can do but what you can get away with that counts. And it was possible, it's been proven possible, that an inarticulate man, with cunning, can do an awful lot more than an academic man because an academic man, an intelligent man, is held back by his morals whereas Ubu ain't got none. Jarry did have the liberty to go into that. 'Fancy,' he said, 'I want 60,000 peasants,' 'Well we haven't got them.' 'Well cut them out of fucking cardboard.' But he had Ubu to hang it on. Ubu was very strong. This is what is admirable about the character.
Hornick: How do you see the shape of your career so far in terms of the new direction that you've taken?
Drake: I'm half way there because I've never believed that I've been better than the words. Now I've survived on good scripts. I've never thought, give it to me and I'll make it good because my delivery and my timing are beyond reproach. I've always worked on good words, within what I've been doing, and I feel that hereafter the responsibility of holding hard to a classical character . . . I'd like to go from Ubu – if I get it. . . I think I've nearly got it although there's a little bit of conflict between Charlie Drake and Ubu at the moment.
Hornick: Really, that's interesting. In what way?
Drake: Charlie Drake's comedy really is a forceful comedy in its way. He is a forceful character. There's been all sorts of wars and revolutions in my life and Ubu's there. I've got to get the evil of Ubu and his ups and downs but when he goes down I mustn't Charlie Drake him. I've got to take Ubu down and not introduce Charlie Drake when he's down, which is a sympathetic character, I've got to pull Ubu down and stay Ubu. But what I'm apt to do at the moment is that I've got him when he's rampaging, when he's up I'm on the up, but when I take him down, when he has to be taken down, I lapse into the Charlie Drake



Photograph: Chris Schwartz

*Max Wall played Ubu at the Royal Court Theatre in 1966 – NH.

character which is a man, this cowed man, who's always uttering sort of half mumbled threats which are never likely to be expedited. And having looked at him and having played him and knowing that I can play within a classical situation, one would certainly want to do more. It's very hard and very difficult but it's fulfilling if you can do it.

Hornick: Do you think you might make a move towards yet straighter theatre?

Drake: It was Bill Whittaker, who produced my first movie, who said, 'You know, you ought to play Richard iii'. I said, 'What are you talking about?' He said, 'You're the only man I know who could say 'Cut off his head' with such dispassion.' So I read Richard iii and watched Olivier – if not the greatest then one of the greatest actors in the world – and other people playing it and I reckon they've got it wrong. You begin to feel sorry for him. I reckon he was one of the biggest villains that ever lived. They soften him and you do feel sorry which is not the way I'd work him at all.

Hornick: One reason, perhaps, why one feels sorry for him is because he's also quite funny. He's so extreme that at times it's black humour.

Drake: Yes, he's almost a Max Wall* character with his stylised postures.

Hornick: You wouldn't describe yourself as the sort of comedian who's been longing to play Hamlet all his life?

Drake: No. I tell you why that happens to comedians and quite understandably. It's because comedy is so difficult. When we go with the jokes it's so difficult because they may happen or may not. But when you're into the written book the author takes a lot of the blame if it doesn't come off. . . Anyway I think – I don't know whether you feel this – that West End theatre, and the theatre generally – this is not knocking the impresarios because it's so difficult with money and VAT – the adventure went out of the West End. 'Let's bring back this, lets bring back that.' *This* is an adventurous piece of theatre. Even with a preview audience last night, one stands in the wings and listens and you're getting a different sort of reaction: 'Look out, something's happening up there.'

Hornick: Do you have any views or preconceptions about so-called 'fringe' or 'alternative' theatre? Does it mean anything to you?

Drake: Yes it does. I think it's an unfortuante phrase, 'fringe' theatre. The public and the people who write for it think that anything fringe has got to have a cult audience and is not for the public themselves. The fringe is where things can happen. This show wouldn't have happened, 'Death of an Anarchist' and an awful lot of things would not have happened because there's no way they'll take a chance until it's happened . . .There are very many things you can name which wouldn't have got off the floor without fringe theatre . . . But if you mention 'fringe theatre' to the public they'll immediately think it's for highbrows and that they're not meant to go, which is quite the contrary.

Hornick: Well, a lot of people in the fringe don't like the word either for all kinds of reasons, so this other expression, 'alternative theatre', has emerged which encompasses things like this, the sort of thing you're appearing in. In a way you're now functioning within the alternative theatre. . .

I wondered whether you had any views about contemporary comedy, especially on television. Do you have any feelings about the way its's going?

Drake: I think it's in the doldrums at the moment. This is not sour grapes by any manner of means, television is a wonderful medium, but I think . . . that if you feed the public constant below-par stuff, if it's below par from 6 o'clock till 11 o'clock then they'll get used to it and tolerate it. But if you suddenly put in a good show, if amongst the twelve shows you've got one good one, that makes the eleven look even worse than they bloody well are. And I often think that some of these producers won't use the good stuff for fear of showing up the terrible bleeding stuff that lives around it. This is where I think BBC 2 went to the wall. The idea of BBC 2 was to be an alternative television network. You must be allowed to fail in this business to succeed . . . and BBC 2, when it came, was meant as a place to fail. Your book, my book, goes in, oops, it didn't work, fellers, never mind we gave it a go. But there ain't a channel that can work in this manner any more. BBC 2 are just banging on their number one shows and repeating them on BBC 1. This alternative, fourth channel would have been a marvellous thing if they'd done what you're doing – alternative television.

Hornick: You'd have been in favour of that rather than awarding it to ITV?

Drake: Certainly, certainly, certainly.

Hornick: How did you rate the Python team? Did that appeal to you at all?

Drake: Yes it did appeal to me to a point. I think that Milligan was the daddy of them all. And I think that Python was a bit of an end of term frolic, it never said as much as Spike did. It was basically very funny . . . I think it went on too long. They got lazy towards the end, but certainly it was a bit of an adventure when it happened.

Hornick: Would you say you were in any way a religious man?

Drake: Yes I am. I'd like to be more religious than I am. I think that a totally religious person who has complete belief is streets ahead of me . . . On top of the trap door waiting for my cue I said the Lords Prayer before I came on. Iask him for help all the time but then I forget to say thankyou . . . I'd love to have total belief. I've met people with total belief and those are the people who are never alone . . .

Hornick: Thank you very much for talking so frankly.

Drake: It's been a pleasure. It's nice to have met you.

Hornick: Yes. You too. I hope the show goes well. One final, brief rude question: May I ask you how old you are?

Drake: Yes, 54. I started in the theatre when I was eight and this has stretched me more than anything else I've ever done, and I've done it all. I think it's required 38 years of experience to get in and do it.

ECHOES FROM THE NORTH

A Performance by Sonia Knox

Review and discussion by Lynn MacRitchie

PART ONE. DESCRIPTION

A large room, the upstairs room at Action Space. Windows line one wall, but apart from those of the central pane, their wooden shutters are closed. A bare wooden floor, an ornamental fireplace at the end of the room furthest from the door. We sit in front of this fireplace. Much of the central floorspace is taken up with a heap of barbed wire, coiling and tangling randomly in the space. Four white wrapped packages are placed on the floor amongst the wire. Spectators seat themselves, leaning against the walls. There is little floor space left free.

Sonia enters. She walks straight to the barbed wire and begins to walk through it, following or attempting to follow a circular path, starting from its outer edge. She is wearing a white dress, of some flimsy meterial, with a floating skirt. There is a pocket in the skirt, and from this a hammer sticks out, pulling at the facbric. Her legs are bare, and she has white plimsolls on her feet. She moves through the tangled wire. As she reaches the first package, she leans forward and picks it up. She begins to unwind its wrappings, revealing them to be bandages. She bends to replace the package on the floor, pressing a switch as she does so. The sound of seagulls fills the room. She marks out the spot around this tape recorder with white chalk taken from her pocket. With the unravelled bandage, she slowly begins to bind a section of the wire . . . . . She moves on through the wire to the next wrapped tape recorder and repeats her action. This she does for each one, completing a circuit of the tangled wire as she does so. Not without difficulty—her legs are scratched, and blood flows. Her skirt has often caught and strained on the barbs and is torn. The room is filled with the sound of seagulls. A bell tolls, and Sonia's voice is heard, recounting childhood memories. These sounds continue throughout the piece.

On a second painful circuit of the wiry maze, she constructs a box of wooden slats around one of the recorders. Next, she nails strips of wood to the walls on either side of the room. These actions are necessarily slow, and painful to watch as they involve her further entanglements with the wire and further injuries. Using the unwrapped bandages, she stretches wire up to the wood on the walls and fixes it in place. She quits the circle, and leaves the room. The effective division of the space is only fully perceived as we attempt to leave, and have to duck beneath the wire to reach the door.

Reactions . . . . . full of thoughts. A piece full of content, a glimpse into a life, a friend's life, as it happens . . . . . The curious counterpoint of the words on the tape and the actions. The space between, where the watcher wanders, trying to connect, to understand. The glimpse of another's memories which always seem to raise up so many of one's own. There is much conversation, many questions to Sonia, who has now returned, in ordinary clothes, to take part in the informal discussion. We leave and wander home, still thoughtful.

PART TWO: BACKGROUND

Sonia has produced a booklet about the performance which contains a transcript of the tapes used and also her own "notes" on the piece. These notes contain certain key points which give the content of the work its deeper reference.

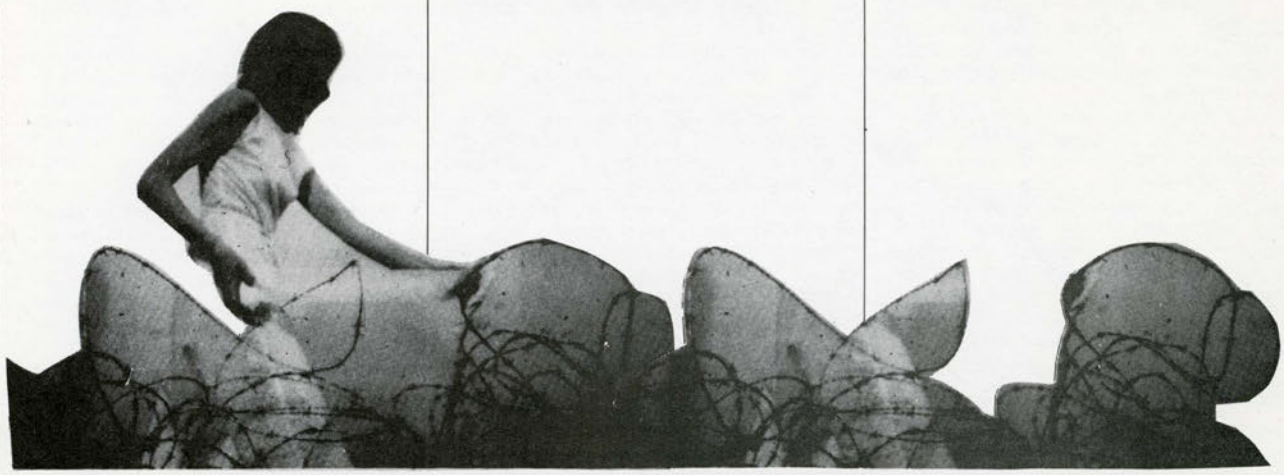
THUS: "In 'Echoes' . . . I am trying to understand and unravel . . . . . not only what the Northern Irish protestant ideology means, how it came about and why, the strains which have forced the protestants to uphold the British Empire for the English, but also the dormant feeling of being Irish which it is impossible to accept or recognise. (If it was recognised, it would force into question all those 'facts' which have been so easily accepted and are a total reflection of and acquiescence in the structures which make up the six counties.)"[1]

This represents a political analysis of a particular situation—that of the six counties of North Eastern Ireland in relation to their English occupiers. Sonia's performance places this relation in terms of an individual experience, using her own childhood and teenage recollections, random and unresolved, to characterise her then position.

THUS: "The contradictions in protestant ideology caused by these strains are reflected in the individual protestant who has as a result an identity based on contradiction. S/he is not accepted by the English, despite having been brought up in a culture dominated by England. And because of their English cultural tradition, s/he is unable to think of her/himself as Irish, or even begin to understand how s/he is inscribed into either language or culture." This contradiction and the unease resulting from it is brough out in the taped soundtrack which plays throughout the performance.

THUS: "Wanting to be accomplished, cultivated—English, although I didn't know that." OR "Teaching us to be proud of the Queen—and I was proud of the Queen. Her smooth skin, her calm serenity, her riches. These things were part of me, not part of the South or the Catholics in the North. They were something I had that was different." OR: "A film of the coronation was showing in the town—the cinema was blown to smithereens."

The division between Catholic and Protestant is expressed through the use of cliches. THUS: "They never do anything to help themselves. They don't want to work. All their dole money goes on the priest and drink." In her "Notes" Sonia points out her interest in exposing the function of such cliches. "Sayings like this are constantly repeated as jokes. But although people telling them would often be amazed if it was suggested that they really meant what they said, these are not just innocent jokes



"... how many of those in that audience at Action Space would have attended if on the way home a soldier, a stranger to them, had called them by name, had known how they had spent that afternoon and also what their Saturday evening routine might be?"

nor do they represent absolute truth . . . When analysed, they build up to a reflection of a certain set of political ideas. Thus from early childhood these ideas are reinforced with constant repetition and become seemingly facts. More broadly, the validity of these ideas is always seen clearly reflected and reinforced in aspects of the society in which they exist. And in the case of the six counties, this validity is reinforced doubly by Britain's insistence on such a state."

Thus the performance may be seen as an attempt to express, in a complex counterpoint of action and sound, the experience of a young woman, brought up as an Ulster protestant, who (as expressed in the words of the taped section) has as yet no analysis of her own imposed confusions. The effect of ideology is thereby demonstrated. Explanation, however, comes with the help of the written word, the performance document. It is doubtful if a coherent understanding of the work, as distinct from an emotional response to it, can be reached without considering at least the performance document, with its essential political placing of the question.

PART THREE: IMPLICATIONS

Sonia's performance dealt in part with the impact of ideology on an individual. It is always tempting to consider an artwork as being an equally individualised response—whether the work is considered "bad" or "good", "successful" or "unsuccessful", whether or not it is "liked". It is important to remember that this notion of the individual artwork and the individual response is itself founded on an ideological assumption. For the artist however, unlike the "terrorist", may be permitted to "comment" on society, but from such a position of institutionalised exclusion that any such comment is protected from the necessity of being taken seriously.

It is surely time to recognise that artworks, like the law, neither exist nor have their creation in a vacuum. Rather, they have developed out of the existing social and economic relations persisting at any given time. Thus the performance at Action Space that February afternoon was occasioned not by an individual act of will or "inspiration" but by a social situation which already involved all those who attended the performance even before their common entry into that upstairs room.

For example, as a direct result of the situation in Ireland with which the performance was concerned, any member of that audience who might have been sympathetic to even such a perfectly legal political organisation such as, for example, Sinn Feinn[2] might perhaps have found themselves subject, under the Prevention of Terrorism Act of 1976, to arrest and detention for up to 48 hours, or even then a further five days[3]. The arrest could be made on a police constable's "reasonable suspicion" that a person was concerned in 'the commission, preparation or instigation" of acts of terrorism. In the Act, "terrorism" is loosely defined as "The use of violence for political ends, (including any use of violence for the purpose of putting the public or any section of the public in fear". This loose definition can and has been extended to include support of organisations who simply defend the right of the Irish to choose their own tactics in their political struggles.

If that member of the audience had come from the six counties or the south of Ireland, they might have found themselves deported there, removed without warning from family and friends.

Walking home from the performance, they might have found themselves stopped and searched; asleep at home in the early hours of the next morning, they might have awakened with the sound of their front door crashing in, as the police made use of their powers to enter property without a search warrant, powers which the Act also guarantees. Should such suppositions seem far fetched, consider the numbers to whom just such things have happened, and continue to happen, even as this article is written and read. (The Act was made law on25th March, 1976. By 11th October of that year, some 2023 people had been arrested. The Act is still law.)

Consider also the issue of information.[4] Is it possible that the collection and dissemination of "information" can turn into the prosecution of repression? Consider the use of the media in Ireland. Firstly, that with which we are all familiar, the daily television and newspaper reports. For example, in the words of a BBC TV news sub-editor, "The official line is we put the army's version first, and then any other." The 'army version' of course is not generally acknowledged as such, but pressented on the screen as "neutral" reportage.

The other side to the reporting of "news" is of course the collection of "information". On the occasion of a demonstration somewhere in the six counties, an army photographer will be issued with some sixty to seventy 120mm films and twenty 35mm films. Six prints are made of every single frame, almost 10,000 prints in all. When they are ready, the army collects them in a land rover, because there are too many for one man or two men to carry. Such is the saturation of visual images available to the troops that they begin to know by sight, like their neighbours do, not only those who lead and speak at demonstrations, but those who even silently attend.

What is the effect of this ever increasing bank of information on the doings of the minority community in the North of Ireland? Why should it be necessary for the British army to store on their computer the colour and arrangement of the furniture in a Bogside family's front room? Perhaps an effort at empathy might make things clearer . . . . how many of those in that audience at Action Space would have attended if on the way home a soldier, a stranger to them, had called them by name, had known how they had spent that afternoon and also what their Saturday evening routine might be? Had perhaps even abused them, again by name and making use of personal references, for going near such an event?

It is understandable to consider the notion of repression as something removed, something that takes place somewhere else. But for the oppressed, the experience is very far from abstract. Rather, it is personal, deeply personal, even intimate. THUS. "We believe they've been trying to stop the men going for visits by searching you in a degrading way when you go for a visit. They spread you over and put a mirror between your legs right up to your testicles and shine a flashlight up your back passage and prod you everywhere."[5]

A sophisticated control of the media reportage, a blanket use of computerised information storage and retrieval, all the trappings of the high technology state, merely front and uphold repression of the most basically brutal kind. A repression experienced by individuals, men and women and children every day of their lives. A degree of that experience is the subject of Sonia's performance.

PART FOUR: DISCUSSION

This article was written only after several discussions with Sonia about her work, and what that work was trying to achieve. The following section draws on transcripts of these disucessions.

It seemed as if art work about Ireland had tended to take the form of "documentation": that "political" art was considered almost necessarily concerned with the presentation of "facts". There seemed to be almost a fear of taking a more personal interpretative approach—usually the artistic norm—as if the horror of the subject made such an approach inappropriate. Also, the artists concerned tended to come from the middle classes, where the day to day experience of violence was not the norm, but something approached as an outsider. The working class were not encouraged to find a language in which to express this experience. It was surely necessary for artists to try to face up to the contradictory nature of their experience and position, and struggle to achieve a more developed relation of self to society.

The experience of art students to whom the performance was presented in Belfast and Dublin provided a useful illustration. They were especially struck by the use of mixed media in the performance, and pointed out that the work would not have achieved such a complete expression without the use of the spoken word. They were quick to appreciate that the traditional areas in which they were being trained—painting and sculpture—had in this instance

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WELL DO THEY?

GENTLEMEN PREFER BLONDES—

Monstrous Regiment

Reviewed

Photograph: Roger Perry

Brimming with stylish comic fizz Monstrous Regiment's stage rendition of Anita Loos' 'Gentlemen prefer Blondes' is a startling affair for fans of the original book. Written in 1925 when Loos was a successful screenwriter with a distaste for Hollywood society that made her perpetually commute between the West Coast and New York, the novel relates, in diary form, the adventures of an ingenuous flapper whose peroxide hair and blue eyes are a passport to a life of leisure at the expense of every man who comes her way.

Many have succumbed to the delights of this book. James Joyce went blind reading it, Aldous Huxley went to Hollywood because of it and Howard Hawkes, with the talents of Marilyn Monroe and Jane Russell, translated it into a memorable movie. Its tone is one of acerbic irony and it is written, as Ms Loos herself admitted, with an infantile cruelty, mercilessly exposing the foolishness of all its protagonists. In its wisecracking, brilliantly funny and dispasionate way it could be regarded as a feminist tract masquerading as fiction, critically revealing as it does so much about men's attitudes to women. Indeed the book is essentially a critique of male chauvinism, prejudices and weaknesses which is made all the sharper for being searingly comic.

For the Monstrous Regiment Bryony Lavery has done radical things to the original. 'We had this idea . . . to use two 1925 characters as vile and degrading examples . . . and set them in 1980,' the company tell us at the outset, revealing Lorelei Lee, the diarist, and her companion Dorothy from under the dust sheets of symbolic sexual repression. At the end of the evening only Lorelei returns beneath the shroud, Dorothy having learnt enough from the criticisms of her doings offered by the company, to liberate herself into the 1980s. A hurried and confused ending makes it unclear just how this self-revelation came about and dissipates the already enfeebled theatrically interpolated commentary which accompanies Lorelei and Dorothy's escapades through the high society of New York and the capitals of Europe, making overt through polemic what is already implied in the subtext of the original. The dialectic which Ms Loos supplies in the book through her use of irony is replaced by upfront obviousness in the play. What saves the evening politically is the engaging self-depreciation of a company who are aware that a society in which women peruse the classified columns of Time Out to learn the whereabouts of the nearest 'consciousness-raising' session is as ripe for satire as one in which women are able to lead lives of ease by the fleecing of gullible schmucks. And where the company are very strong, much more so than Ms Loos, is in exploring the nature of female friendship and how it conflicts with female/male relationships.

The other thing which saves the evening is the brilliant inventiveness of a staging made slick by weeks of touring before I saw it at the Half Moon. The visual wit of the optical gags matches the verbal wit of Ms Loos and Ms Lavery. A silent film sequence, complete with introductory M.G.M. roaring lion, is brilliantly sustained and in one of the best moments of a generally fun-packed evening a cocktail party is peopled with electric dentures chattering away in cocktail glasses.

The twenties ambience is well evoked by the Ritzy designs of Mary Moore, Eva Darlow's sharp choreography and the music of Paul Abrahams and Josefina Cupido. Pity though, that the lyrics do not have the incisiveness of the dialogue or the period allusion of the music.

There was some charisma here and a few weaknesses as well, as Lorelei Lee was too much a pale version of 'Soap's' Jessica Tate. Though there was less variety in her performance as Dorothy had a firmer grasp of her stateside manners. Amongst the other performers accents toured with a geographical abandon that not even the contemporary updating could excuse. John Slade was the token man, his mere appearance enough to provoke generous anti-male abuse from those around him.

Luke Dixon

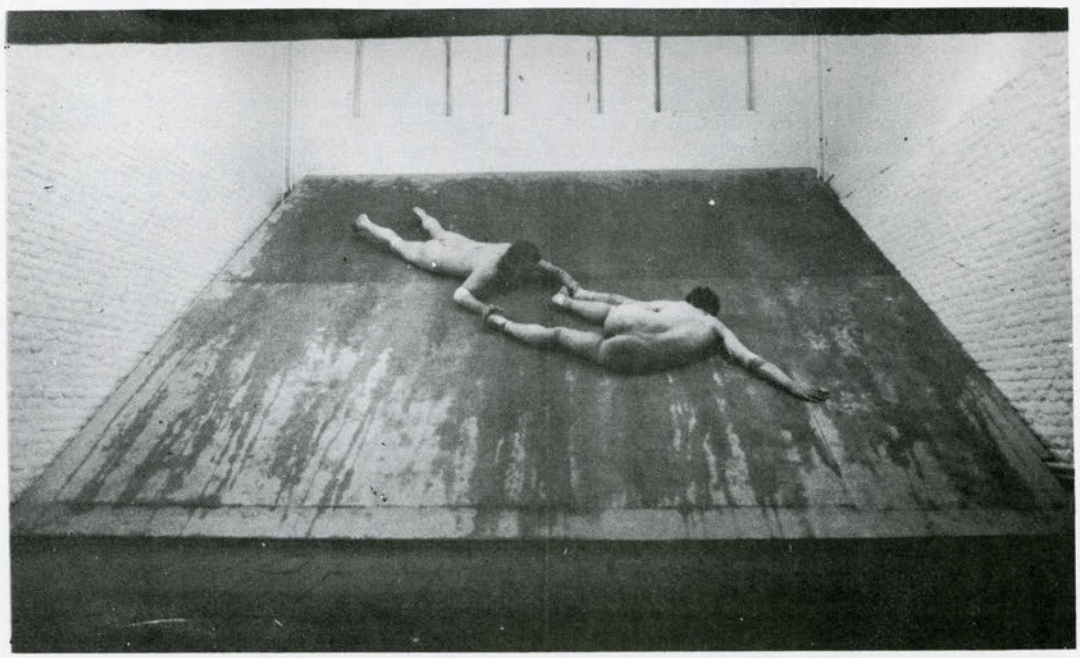
BETWEEN

Stuart Brisley uses his own body as a site of confrontation. This confrontation may be with an object or installation, a place of habitation or even another person. It may take a brutal or discreet form, but it is always directed back upon the self. Self-aggression and self-absorption are used to elucidate, enact conditions of individual and social disorder. (Though Brisley is opposed to the low-grade politics of the street performer as agent provocateur of the imagination; conflict is never off-loaded against the audience). In *Work for Two People A and B* (Acme Gallery, 1978) in which he took on two distinct personalities, one a 'preservationist' the other an 'anarchist', the confrontation of the two selves was played out as a psycho-drama – albeit at times very low-key and very unevenly. In *Measurement and Division*, (Hayward Gallery 1977) bodily degradation took the form of an expressionist ritual, a stunning but rather naive gesture of defiance against the reductive values of standardization exemplified by the grey, uniform architecture of the Hayward Gallery itself and the South Bank. Another of these 'life-situations' – but with less emotional spillage and less romanticist notions of individual politicking – was *10 Days – 'An English Lie-Hunger Makes Free'*, first performed in Berlin in 1972, then at the Acme Gallery in 1978. Performed over the Christmas period Brisley starved himself for 10 days presenting an austere corrective to seasonal sentiment and over-indulgence. A silent, cerebral Brisley sat at the end of a long dining table. At each mealtime the public were invited to eat the food, the remains of which were left on the table to rot. The performance ended with a celebratory meal to greet the new year, with Brisley claiming that he felt far healthier for his ordeal. This is only a rough outline and does not do justice to the complexity of the piece, but it does reveal to a certain degree the extent to which the pursuit of self-renewal as a process of working takes on a ritualised public form in Brisley's work. There is an approach by which the bounds of personal safety and comfort are lowered in order that the making of art be re-connected with the roots of experience; the messy, the nasty and venal. It also reveals, paradoxically, the degree to which the moral roots of this 'cleansing' of the sensibility are permeated with a sublimated religiosity. The imagery of *10 Days* (the silent seated strangers eating, Brisley at their head) was close to the spiritual largesse of the Last Supper. Similarly *Measurement and Division* , in which naked, covered in paint he hung himself upside down by his ankles inside a huge wooden cage-like structure, was like an arrested deposition scene. Noting the 'religious' connotations of certain works is perhaps a loaded way of re-emphasising that one of Brisley's subjects is regeneration. In *10 Days* out of the surrounding decay and personal denial emerged a renewed moral vigour and a revived sensibility. Now this quite obviously has no notional value in *itself*. But as a specifically Christmas performance, and as such a passage from one year to another, Brisley's refusal to eat as others ate in front of him, was an act of wider implications. The social pressures bearing upon the individual to continually consume ideas, images, forms without questioning the claims of what is being consumed, in return for some abstract notion of freedom of choice and ideological stability, was briefly reversed. To continue to refuse food *is* a political act.

Last Christmas at De Appel in Amsterdam the complexity and extended metaphor of *10 Days* and recent other 'alienation' pieces was eschewed by Brisley in favour of a self-critical approach which was private and self-enclosed. Nowhere as dark or visceral in vision as other work; *Between*, performed with Iain Robertson (a 'repeated attempted performance of a task which is not easily realized') was still a compelling totally convincing experience. In a sense its short duration and simplicity, with all the limitations that created, characterized it as an experiment, a prototype for a longer, public work.

Beginning on December 20th 1979 and lasting 48 hours, Brisley and Robertson, naked, set themselves the task of performing a series of repeated ascents and maneovres on a ramp they had built in the gallery. Made out of sheets of chipboard nailed to timber supports and extending the width and two-thirds the length of the gallery, the ramp rose steeply to an intimidating height of 15ft.The surface was slippery and there were no footholds or rests. All natural light was blocked out. All viewing of the performance took place from the balcony above the space, under which Brisley and Robertson rested, ate and slept out of view. The work finished midday on December 22nd with the dismantling of the ramp by hand.

Although, as I outlined above, *Between* displayed certain characteristics (simplicity, self-containment) which differentiated it from recent work, its methodology remained fundamentally the same. As in *Work For Two People A and B*, a



Stuart Brisley and Iain Roberson
Friends, Enemies and Rivals

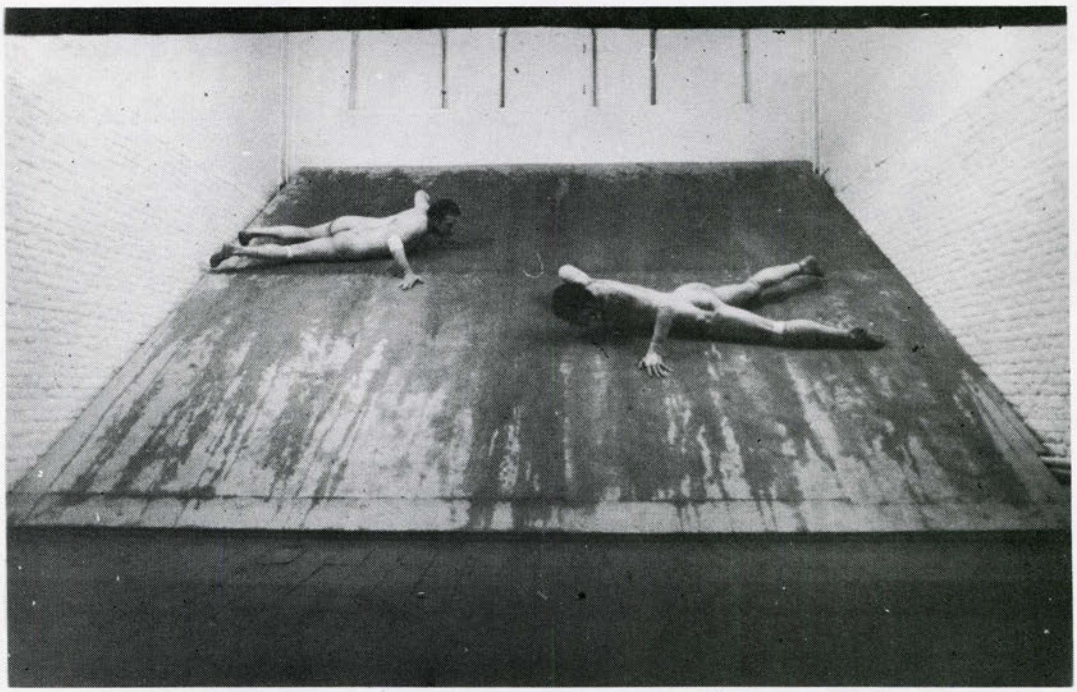
by John Roberts

meeting of opposing tendencies becomes the site of a power struggle. But whereas *Work For Two People* was a meditation on power, and actively engaged the imagination of the audience in realizing the conflict, *Between* physically and conspicuously enacted it. There was no physical or intellectual distance to allow the audience to create an imaginative, analogous state away from the work. The struggle was self-referential and as Robertson set out to discover what distance, physically, intellectually, there was between their respective ages, experience and status. A struggle for power as well as *of* power which related directly to Brisley's own pre-history as a performer and his present position as an artist who, approaching middle-age, is still performing his highly demanding work. Between was a test and commentary upon this state of transition. In the proposal to the work we find this articulated quite openly.

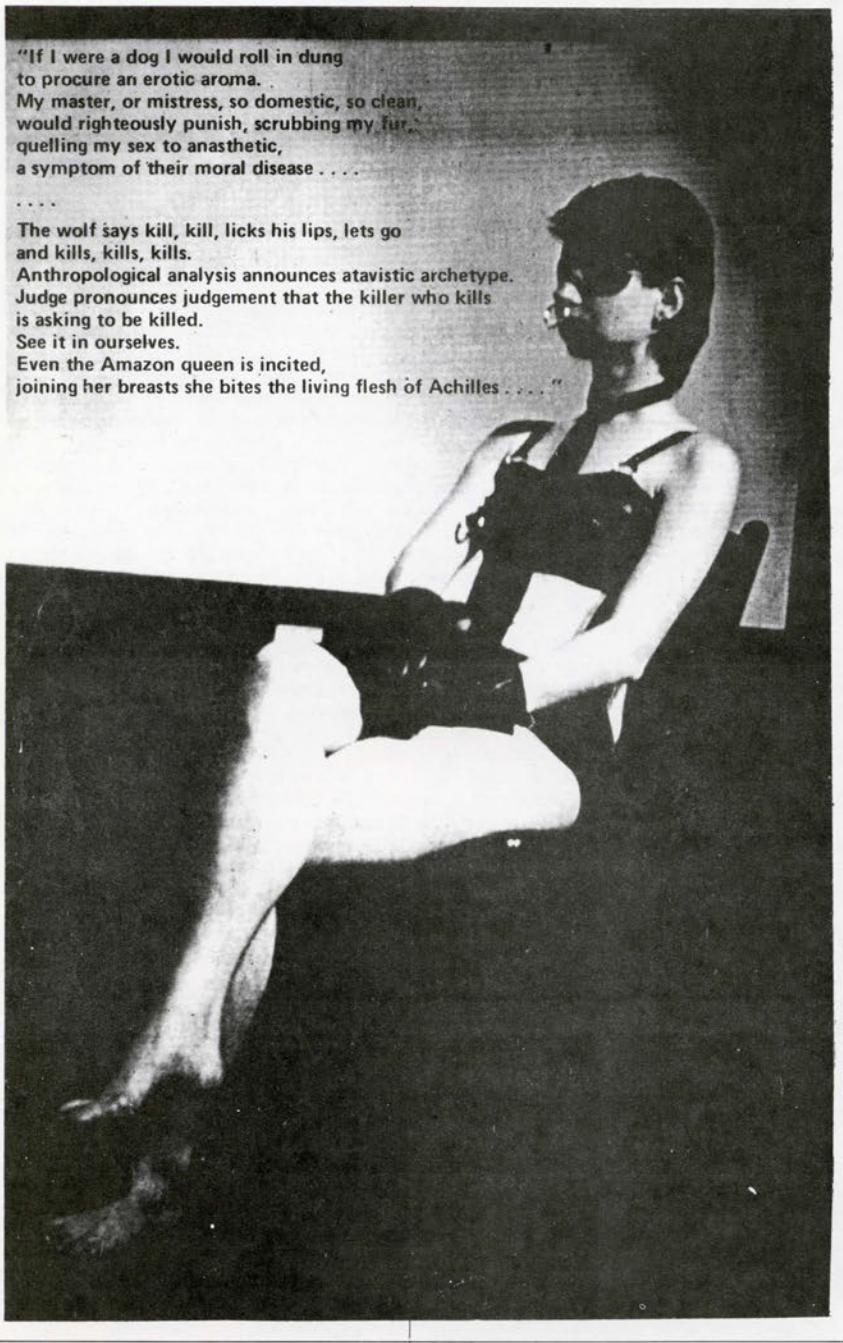
> *Iain Robertson was born on the 10.8.55 and is 24 years old. Stuart Brisley was born on the 19.10.33 and is 46 years old. The one is more or less half the age of the other. Therefore according to Jung's observations they are representatives of the second and third stages of human life. They know each other well, each being the friend, the rival and enemy of the other.*

The power struggle though, never became a contest for each other's territory. Such manifestations would have turned the work into a spectacle of power rather than a demonstration of its processes. The mechanics of the confrontation were in fact built more upon questions of personal resource and initiative than aggressive domination of space. Although they pushed each other around, locked bodies and occasionally forced each other off the ramp, they never tried to prevent each other from ascending. The risks involved were actually too great – a sudden move could result in an immediate and nasty fall. Accordingly the confrontation became more a matter of actually trying to stay on the ramp, eventually resulting in a mutual, tacit cooperation. Highly watchable because of this ever changing pattern of positions, it sustained a genuine tension and excitement through to the end. As expected there was an immediate rush of enthusiasm and energy at the beginning. Brisley and Robertson would run diagonally, crossing each other's path, to opposite corners of the ramp. This initial bravado resulted in repeated falls. Great weals and sores began to appear on their bodies. As the wounds got worse cotton bandages were wrapped around. After they had familiarized themselves with the easiest 'routes' (walking backwards up the middle was favoured the most) things became calmer and long periods of inactivity on the ramp were sustained. When they reached the top they would either squat in the corners or middle, heads tucked into their chest like gargoyles, or lie on their front or back and slide down slowly. On occasions they would link arms and slide down together. They also tended to copy each other's movements creating a curious chorus effect. By the end of the first day things had slown right down – with less movement there was less pain. On the second day water was applied to the ramp making it easy to move about without slipping. Movements became more regulated but Brisley at times towards the end as an attempt to climax the work began to take up an aggressive position, intimidating Robertson by pushing and charging him. Robertson refused to rise to the challenge. By the end, extremely tired and painfully sore, they were content to lie down as if sunning themselves.

This work was a concentrated enquiry into areas of negotiation between opposites and as such continued, though in a far more autobiographical way, the notion of confrontation I outlined at the beginning. Negotiation between states of rest and movement, between security and anxiety, between pain and comfort, between the vertical and horizontal location of a figure in space, between differences in personality and temperament. At no time were Brisley and Robertson totally secure on the ramp. They were constantly in a state, or anticipated state, of imbalance. In this sense the ramp, as an area of unpredictability between two fixed, stable points, was an actual physical equivalent of a state of mind, of the intellectual process of transition. The past strength of Brisley's work has been in an ability to convey states of mind through the use of sympathetic locations, this was particularly successful in *Work For Two People A and B*. The split in personality in Brisley's imagination was conveyed by the use of two seperate locations. Person B, the preservationist and dominant personality, lived in the top gallery at Acme, person A the 'anarchist' lived in the lower gallery. *Between* achieved a similar succinctness of vision.



Vivien Lisle's Vertical Courage



Vivien Lisle is a performer based in Amsterdam and was in London giving a performance of her show 'Vertical Courage' at the London Film Co-op on March 31st.

Vivien is a lesbian and a feminist and in this performance is concerned with the images of eroticism, pornography, sado-masochism fantasies and bondage using leather, plastics, chains, straps and so on. She rejects the distinction between eroticism being considered celebratory and pornography being masturbatory as intellectual; dealing with sexual images in the face of some vocal feminist opposition by maintaining that the bases of these fantasies are far more deeply rooted in all of us than some people would allow. I put it to her that sado-masochism and bondage could be seen as coming straight out of a sexism prevalent in heterosexuality and in some areas of gay sexuality that are formed around that kind of a heterosexual foundation. She countered that she herself is gay and had not always been so. Such a change in one's sexuality does not automatically remove the fantasies or images that form a basic part of it. These images are part of our history and reside within all of us and therefore need to be explored and presented, men and women alike. Breaking the distinction between eroticism and pornography and the censorship that implies is political to Vivien.

She also works with Edith Pollack in Amsterdam and the two women did a show called "We Can Always Adapt" about survival on a hyperactive planet and the dangers hyperactivity could present to earth bodies. For example, giving birth in the usual earth manner would be highly dangerous to women and well nigh impossible because of the effect of hyperactivity on the body cells and their growth. So a Partheno-generator is constructed into the mother which lays an egg.

Vivien is full of such ideas and hopes to work on another show with Edith and Rachel Pollack in Amsterdam. However, as far as 'Vertical Courage' is concerned, she hopes to develop the show and find more venues in London within the next month or so. She says the show is most suited to small studios. Anyone interested in contacting Vivien Lisle with possibilities of bookings etc. can write to her in Holland at:

Korte Geuzenstraat 506,
Amsterdam 1056 KW.

Bruce Bayley.

continued from page 18

been insufficient to fully express the content of the work. It had been necessary to develop a new formal presentation to deal with the subject of the piece.

The students in Dublin were glad of the opportunity to consider the situation in the North; media censorship was heavy, and they had little idea of what was going on. It is interesting to consider this point in relation to the presentation of the piece as part of the "Sense of Ireland" series of events, exhibitions, discussions etc. For a comprehensive attendance at the seminars run in conjunction with this event in London had revealed that, for the new middle classes of the South, the "troubles" were "England's problem" and had little to do with a community which, at least as far as the emergent bourgeoisie was concerned, had set its sights on Europe.

However, the essential point brought out by discussion would seem to have been the necessity to counter the notion that the art work was, almost of necessity, by definition, a singular and isolated phenomenon. The notion of the personal as political, first articulated and developed by the Women's Movement, could perhaps be usefully introduced at this point. For such a concept, that even the most personal experience is at once both a product and potentially a comment on the political conjuncture, could be canvassed to inform even such an apparently esoteric field as performance art. In the case of "Echoes from the North", with its particular concern with the effects of ideology on the individual, it seems particularly appropriate.

PART FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

"Echoes from the North" is not a work which leads to conclusions as such. Rather it is a presentation which, in the complexity of its form and content, demands that the spectator both respond and consider. For the audience is not left merely in the

continued on page 26

Hinchliffe Lashes Out

It was a pretty mild winter and the undramatic weather seemed to rub off on everybody at large. Everyone seems so bored it's just not true. The dullness is broken by the occasional feeble 'Woo' from the cretins wobbling their backsides to 'The Day We Went to Bangor'. They should ship the lot of 'em to Bangor in coachloads so they could fester in their own banality en masse.

Yes chaps the pressure isn't on. The big boot in the sky isn't stamping on us as promised but is applying a slow, steady, suffocating squash. The lambs are not being led to the slaughter but are subject to being packed in ice and tinfoil and put in the deep-freeze. Findus if you can!

Talking of freezing things, someone should invent a gun that can instantly freeze people solid. By going into action with this, the first assault would be on the archetypal fat-arsed life and soul of the party who is seen to be in the throng of, yes, the 'Day We Went To Bangor' brigade. He should be stored in a special museum dedicated to the 'Didn't We Have a Lovely Time' Foundation. This place would be allocated to all the self-conscious silly bollocks of class clompers and the Ross group.

Cardboardary predictions came true recently and as expected, the humble pint has hit ten bob a shot and true to the breweries horoscope we are drinking just as much as before the raise, some of us more- perhaps it's the desire for a total anaesthetic obliviousness. Yes our world is so flat that we no longer see the non-guitar playing goons contorting themselves into invisible guitar playing Hendrix whap-outs. '79 saw away the last bits of pink hair to almost extinction and the remaining locks lost recognition amongst the falling autumn leaves.

I enjoyed the smashed up tube train last week. Unbelievably, the threat of an all-out tube-strike comes this weekend. Another case of mis-spent manpower caused this, not the railway artists'. If London Transport re-allocated it's busker-culling divisions to attending the chuff-chuffs themselves then perhaps they wouldn't have a chance to waffle about the glass-sculptors.....but that train was a bloody good bit of sculpture.

OK let's start again first of all we get rid of gold, money, jewels, bonds, bankers cards, stocks and shares and above all special lavatory seats for the Queen.....'people outnumber shits is the slogan.

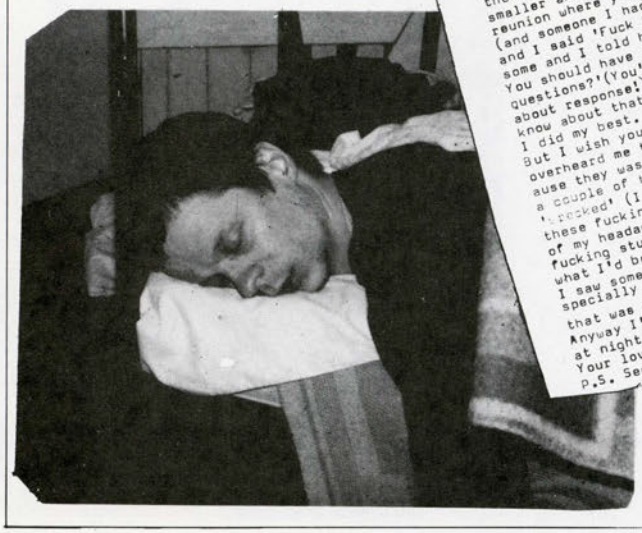
The bishop told the vicar that if a man strikes you, to turn the other cheek and if he should strike that one, to turn the other one and if he should strike that one again, kick him in the balls.... another slogan-'you know it makes sense'. We've had enough, can't we admit it? If the work has to go out, the mass media has

to be used. Be it performance, alternative theatre, experimental bog roll changing, or purely saying 'don't let the bastards grind you down', we need and most definitely need the unity of the people. Unfortunately, the new dawn is approaching and there's not a glimmer of a new day.

The song may be right.....'Didn't we HAVE a lovely The obvious is we didn't and the way things are going aren't likely to unless someone changes this cold, dirty, bathwater.

R.I.P. Quentin Meebs (1946-80)

Quentin Meebs, noted 'fringe' playwright took his own life on April 12th. In tribute to the life and work of this brilliant, unstable, tragic figure, we print below his last letter, found beside his emaciated body in his squalid Peckham squat.



dear mum

Remember me telling you I'd been doing these plays for the last eleven years well I finally got asked to talk about it at this festival about what I'd done and everything so off I went they were paying expenses. And a bit extra on the side £15.

You should have heard me when I done my lecture all relaxed and unform- al with my lots of cigarettes and beercans and my T-shirt (and my new white plimsolls giving them the old 'chat'.)

You should have seen me sitting there in the lecture room waiting for them to turn up mumbling bits to myself as my writing got smaller and smaller and the 'speed' come on. The night before was the kind of reunion where you meet people you last met at another reunion before (and someone I hadn't seen for ages said 'what are you going to say?', and I said 'Fuck knows I wish I had some sulphate' and he said he had some and I told him how nice it was to see him again.)

You should have asked me a question after I finished and asked 'Any questions?'(You'd have had to shout to make me hear though, talk about response!) They wanted to know about this and they wanted to know about that and I can't know what they didn't want to know about! I did my best.

But I wish you'd have been there at the 'disco' after. You should have overheard me talking back to all these students picking my brain bec- ause they was all so interested in the things I said things about. And a couple of th[illegible] it [illegible] but I said I was because there were all these fucking students dancing about with this strobe on and I had one of my headaches and all I could do was make comments about all these fucking students to someone who was trying to say something to me about what I'd been saying in my lecture earlier on.)

I saw some plays before that. They were all right. One was a new one specially written by one of the students who were there doing it so that was original. Not your cup of tea though probably.

Anyway I'm back now and I can't sleep so I am writing this to you now at night.

Your loving son Quentin.

P.S. Send more candles and tins of beans.

A police spokesman said yesterday that there was no connection between Meeb's death and his recent visit to the 25th National Student Drama Festival.

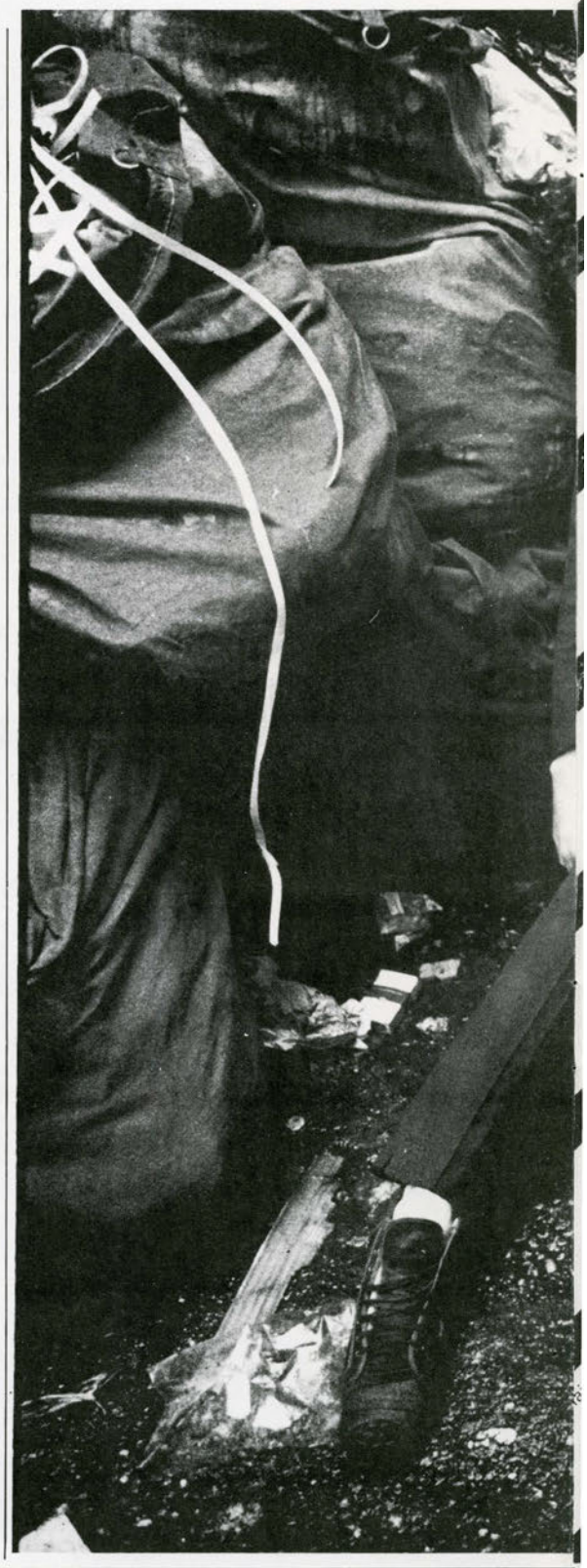
Friends and colleagues of the deceased are advised that a brief funeral service will be held on May 6th at the ICA 'fringe' theatre. Following the service, at his own request, Quentin Meebs will be eaten by a representative group of ' fringe ' personalities, Mr Mark Long, Mr 'Snoo' Wilson, Mr Ian Hinchliffe and the entire cast of 'Accidental Death of an Anarchist'. *Paddy Fletcher*

You could be Prime Minister

John Dowie discusses reincarnation with Rob La Frenais

John Dowie, professional deadbeat, musician and poet, has a dry, self-disparaging humour that has become legendary in fringe venues and clubs. His latest show, Life After Death Before Breakfast, recently on late nights at the ICA, started with the announcement that he was killed in a car crash on the way to the theatre, but the show would continue because 'that's what John would have wanted.' Dowie then appears, dead, and tells all about the experience. The Performance Magazine, always ready to tempt fate, picked him up in a fast car and whisked him off an hour before the show to hear about his attitudes to death, reincarnation, the Dutch, critics, sex, depression, and Jimmy Pursey. The Smirks (who he records with) interpose.....

RL Your latest show is about death. How does it feel to be dead?
JD It's a little bit like living in Rotherham.
RL I see. Why is 'Day Trip to Bangor' considered by you to be the worst record in hell?
JD It's the only record in Hell.
RL Sorry.
JD Because it's on the radio all the time. Every time you turn on the radio it's 'Day Trip to Bangor' by Fiddlers Dram. It's probably the worst record ever made. And the tune's a pinch from Nellie the Elephant.
RL How did you start off being dead?
JD I was killed in a car crash. Being driven to a gig. By this guy who had this habit of speeding down the road at 100 mph, coming up to a car, and slamming on his brakes, flashing the lights and tooting the horn and all that sort of thing and driving past. One time he zoomed up to this car and put his feet on the brakes and missed.
RL Would you say on the whole that it's been a worthwhile experience?
JD It does make life difficult when you're trying to claim supplementary benefit.
SMIRK All that tedious oiling of the hinges at the top of the coffin.
RL There's been rumours John, that you're not actually dead . . . .
JD If you don't believe it, you want to come along to my show, you'll see me die every night on stage.
RL . . . . . but that it is, in fact all a hoax to promote the opening of your show.
JD Thats exactly right, you can't be fooled can you? There's no pulling the wool over your eyes, is there? Yes it's just a vicious ploy that.
RL Anyway. Do you believe in reincarnation?
JD Er.
SMIRK That was the table speaking.
JD No. No I don't believe in reincarnation.
RL Yet you describe a reincarnation scene?
JD That's right.
RL On a train.
JD Yes, I'm reincarnated by a train. It was a different idea. You know, you go to Heaven on a bus and to Hell on a bike. You get a tube train to be reincarnated.
RL What do you really think it would be like after death?
JD I have no thoughts on this. Either it stops completely – that's the real truth, and that all the things we hear about life after death is just some vicious joke on behalf of some energy pranksters, tricksters you know. They spread a lot of stories just to keep us happy. I think that when we die we just stop forever. But on the other hand, I believe in God and Heaven and that all of us go to Heaven and have a wonderful time. I keep an open mind on all that.
RL Whatever happens to you might, for example be concerned with what you believe in. Heavenly choirs for Catholics, for an atheist a blank wall of nothing.
JD That's quite possible. Yes I'm prepared to keep an open mind on all this. I'm prepared to be big about it.
RL Yes. Tell us about your time with Alberto Y Los Trios Paranoias.
SMIRK Himself.
JD Well I did some support tours, and wrote about a third of a play called Never Mind the Bullocks. Which died on it's arse. Apparently.
RL Their stage shows don't seem to match up to their work as a group.
JD Well you know those creeps. Difficult to judge *their* stage act.
RL A thing I liked of yours was 'I Hate the Dutch' which was on TV. Where did you get the idea for that?
JD Doing a tour of Holland
(Groans all round)
JD I thought I'd write this funny little song about British holiday-makers abroad, going to Holland and hating the Dutch, you know, because they were English, and I thought that would go down really well: I thought they would love that and as soon as I started doing the song they went spare, you know, they didn't find it humourous at all.



or something in a curry ....

RL Really? how did they react.
JD Like the Dutch would react. Blank wall of indifference – 'Thot is not verry fonny' Wham! So I changed the lyrics so it would be about the Belgians.
RL Yes, that would go down well.
JD Yes, you'd think so, but every time I did it in a gig in Holland someone would come back stage 'We are from Belgium and we do not like. . .'
RL The thing is, every Dutch person has a Belgian relative somewhere.
JD Yes, that's why they hate them.
RL What are you going to do now then?
JD Well, we've recorded all the songs from the show with Mog and Mike and Neil (The Smirks) and a bloke called John Scott and Steve Hopkins on keyboards and Factory Records have got this jokey idea of putting out 'Hard to be an Egg' as a single. They've been going to put it out for about a year.
RL You said you're moving to London.
JD Yes, I might just knock all this John Dowie stuff on the head and come to London and do commercials. I could do that because I look peculiar. On the other hand I couldn't do that because I look peculiar. They'd say 'Oh, he looks peculiar, he'd be good in an advert for Mars Bars.' Then they'd say 'He can't do an advert for Mars Bars, nobody'd buy them!'
RL Some people say London should be spurned . . .
JD You try doing it in Bacup. (his home town) Try going up there.
RL Well you hear music people saying 'I will never leave Manchester, Leeds, Belfast etc.'
JD Unless you can make shoes, there's not an awful lot you can do in Bacup.
SMIRK And hack soap.
RL What do you think of London critics?
JD Grant?
RL Well, all right. Steve Grant for example.
JD Snotty, snotty. He just gave me a very snotty review, which meant the theatre was empty for two weeks.
RL It was sort of snotty. It was one of those half-half reviews which you get in Time Out, which are generally worse than bad reviews.
JD What it means is that I spend 6 months writing the bloody thing, 2 weeks rehearsing it, spend about £200 on posters, £100 on adverts and haven't earnt for 6 months while I'm doing it and because Steve Grant doesn't like it nobody goes to see it and the whole thing's a flop.
SMIRKS You should've let us know about that John.
JD Go round and sort him out.
RL Well anyway thats part of how it happens. Which is one of the reasons this magazine is now happening.
In your show, there were some references to sex which . . . .
JD There weren't any references to sex in this show. It's the first time for ages and ages I've done one that hasn't had any sex in it. It used to be all fucking in my show.
RL Yeah?
JD Yes, one sex after another.
RL Is death a good replacement, do you think?
JD It is the way I do it. (laughter.)
RL This is what we want.
JD Oh, you want quips, do you. Eh. Fish and quips (Groans)
SMIRK Lets have that one again. That went down well.
RL Would you say that you were a depressed sort of person?
JD Yes I would. I'm trying to make people laugh by scoring hatred and abuse on every aspect of their existence.
RL Do you ever stop yourself if you think you might be offending people in some way?
JD Well I was doing this gig at a club in Leeds once, and there was this great fat skinhead in the front row, and every time we finished a number he'd say 'Play something by Sham! Jimmy Pursey, do a Jimmy Pursey song.' So I said all right, in a minute, in a minute. Then I was doing a song called 'Temperamental Rhino'. He says 'Jimmy Pursey, do a song by Jimmy Pursey'. I said, 'Oh in a minute, I just got to do this song about a rhinocerous, its got nothing to do with Jimmy Pursey. Jimmy Pursey's more like a Hippopotamus. Because he's got a big mouth.' As soon as I said that, I thought 'that was a mistake.' He jumped on stage and tried to hit me in the face. So I immediately, without thinking, just crouched behind the drum kit and started pleading for mercy. Simon, the guitar player in the Albertos, one of the meekest, mildest persons you could imagine. I mean like he collects train numbers for a hobby – he's that type of person. He said to this lad. 'That's enough. Off you go.' This guy said. 'Oh. Sorry.' and went off. Most impressive thing I've ever seen.

FUTUREPERFORM

Probably not to be missed

CIRCUS LUMIERE

Always one of the most adventurous of performance groups, Lumiere & Son are about to embark on their most ambitious project to date – Circus Lumiere, an extraordinary circus taking place in a specially made, black, beetle-shaped tent. Visual spectacle with exquisite costumes, music and lighting effects is promised from this extravagent project which is the result of a collaboration between the company and Wimbledon School of Art Department of Theatre whose designers are responsible for all the scenery, properties and costumes in the show. The 250 seater tent has been specially designed by members of the University of Bath Department of Architecture. The show will concentrate largely on clowning, considering clowns from many angles in an attempt to recover some of the subversive energy that is absent from much contemporary circus or street clowning.

29-31 May Wimbledon School of Art, Merton Hall Road, London SW19 01-540 0231

4-14 June Birmingham Arts Lab, Holt St., Birmingham 021-359 4192

18-28 June Chapter Arts Centre, Market Rd. Canton, Cardiff 0222 396061

PIP SIMMONS RETURNS

Exiled with success on the continent, Pip Simmons Theatre Group is rarely seen in Britain these days so on no account miss them when they turn up at the ICA with their new show. 'Towards A Nuclear Future' dramatises the nuclear energy debate and is linked to a series of seminars exploring the issues raised in the play. But don't let that put you off. A co-production with the Mickery Theatre in Amsterdam the show has received rave reviews in Europe and should pack them in at the ICA. Book early.

29 April - 17 May
ICA, The Mall, London SW1 01-930 3647

QUANTRILL IN LAWRENCE

An intriguingly titled new play by Bernard Pomerance follows Pip Simmons at the ICA. Pomerance wrote the hugely successful 'The Elephant Man' for Foco Novo and the company is using its cut of the receipts of the Broadway production to mount projects such as this on a more ambitious scale that that its Arts Council subsidy alone would allow. 'Quantrill in Lawrence' is not, as you might suppose, an every day tale of buggery amongst the literati, but the story of a mercenary band led by Quantrill with the James Brothers, centering on their sack of Lawrence, a border town during the American Civil War. This will be the sixth collaboration between Pomerance and director Roland Rees. 'The Elephant Man', by the way, opens at the National Theatre in the summer.

21 May - 14 June
ICA, The Mall, London SW1 01-930 3647

RATIONAL THEATRE ON THE ROAD

'The Sea Wolf', after Jack London's novel, is Peter Godfrey's first venture with his newly independent Rational Theatre Company. This is what he says about it: 'In 1980 as in 1890 our society has failed to resolve the conflict between personal interest and social conscience. Jack London's search for an amalgm of Marx and Spencer aboard Wolf Larsen's tiny sea-born autocracy is the starting point for this highly physical as well as intellectual battle.'

27-28 April Observer Oxford Theatre Festival

12-13 May The Centre, Cheltenham

15 May Starters Cafe, Stroud (!, ed.)

16-17 May Walcot Village Hall, Bath

THE 1980's – A RETROSPECTIVE

The oracle's obviously back in fashion, or so we might assume from the title, 'The 1980's – a retrospective' which is unashamedly emblazoned on the posters for Action Space's forthcoming season of 'Performance' in May.

The season is, in fact, a bold attempt to look at that whole area of performance where groups and individuals have ignored (or thrown away) the labels of performance artists, actors, dancers or musicians, and instead have plagiarised freely from any of these areas in their attempts to create new forms.

This work takes up a surprising number of the 'experiments that are taking place, and it might seem strange that such a season is being proclaimed as of enormous importance. Odd as it may seem, the fact remains that there has been precious little opportunity to date for performers from different backgrounds to work together on a serious appraisal of this whole area of the arts. It seems that the galleries, theatres and arts centres have been largely reticent to allow the flexibility of programming to allow these performers to work together in the same spaces, alongside each other. This, despite the desire of many of these performers to do their bit in their own way, and with the people they have a natural affinity to. Performance Artists in particular have felt the cold shoulder in being shunted off for a life sentence in small galleries that are never going to present equivelant work from other media.

The season contains a good mixture of old-faces and hardly-knowns, and looks well worth a visit or two, even if in the end the 1980's don't turn out in quite the way Action Space predicts.

The proceedings start on May 1st with a grand opening party, and continue, Thursdays to Saturdays, until May 24th.

continued from page 22

position of passive consumer of the piece. By her writing about it, and her presence at its conclusion to discuss with members of the audience, Sonia effectively removes herself from the position of artist as presenter of a fait accompli, and actively intervenes to make informed discussion possible. Perhaps this concept of the artist not as merely the presenter of impressions but as an active discusser in an effort to comprehend events is indeed a way forward, a step twoards what Sonia herself, in her "Notes" defines as her aim.

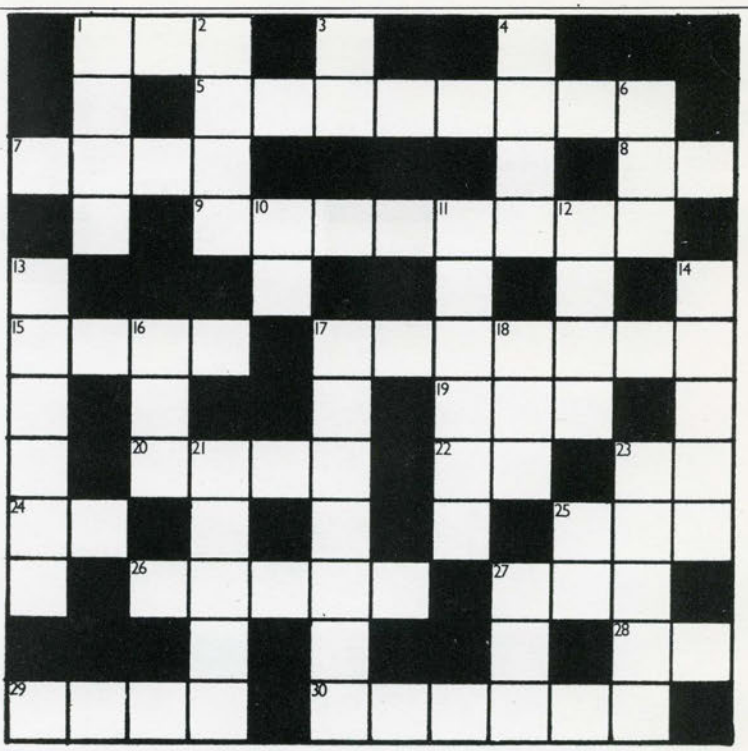
"The silence of violence has to be destroyed. The structures of this silence have to be articulated and the violence has to be demystified. As artists we have yet to find a language for this. But I would like to think of "Echoes from the North" as a very small contribution in that direction."

References

1. The "six counties" refers to the area of the North East of Ireland referred to in the media as "Ulster" or "Northern Ireland".
2. Sinn Fein; Sinn Fein functions as the poliitical wing of the IRA. Since 1970, it has been split into the Provisional and the Official wings.
3. Extracted from "Police Powers and the Prevention of Terrorism Act" by Brian Rose-Smith in "Hands off Ireland", No. 2, June 1977.
4. Extracted from "Camerawork; Reporting on Northern Ireland", Half Moon Photgraphy Workshop, August, 1979.
5. From an interview with Kieran Nugent, the first man to go on the blanket protest in Long Kesh, against the British Government's crinimalisation policy. Sentenced to three years in September 1976, Kieran was detained for fourteen months longer because of his protest. After 2½ years in the 'H' blocks, he has now been released. From "Hands off Ireland", No. 8, August 1979.

PERFORMANCE MAGAZINE CROSSWORD No. 1

BY DAZED



ACROSS

1. Send the bag back, a present from Ireland. (3)
5. This Court is above the rest. (8)
7. Can you see Grandma as a dancer? (4)
8. No Radio plays back. (2)
9. Some lunatic fringe theatre. (4-4)
15. Composer with car, lots of form. (4)
17. Spook at sea. (7)
19. Beautiful bird (without gender) leaves some of the cops behind. (3)
20. Ten and Nine, they almost exist! (1-3)
22. Disco, and not a single small step. (2)
23. Possibly a royal person talking for a collective. (2)
24. Existential quandary. (2)
25. Pining and Licking, a long term friend. (3)
26. He, the deadly foe almost, belts through the window, a radio play? (5)
27. Stop or start the laughs. (3)
28. Leave without it. (2)
29. See 10 down.
30. As funny as a slug? Ha! (6)

DOWN

1. The Capital city's always awaiting funds. (4)
2. Play in a small tree, not a pie. (4)
3. Initially, the first gravies are the rivals? (2)
4. Exposing flesh in Paris and outside in Dollis Hill? (4)
6. Hear the family firm without lights. (3)
10 and 29 Across and 13 Down. Play it, sweaty Sam. (2,4,4,2)
11. A pup's way of amusing us, with domestic swine and frogs. (6)
13. See 10 Down.
14. The small heavenly dolls gleam. (5)
16. He's in a state, brush him aside. (3)
17. With little Lionel's apples, the musician is nearly ill. (7)
18. The climax has gone to pot. (3)
21. 'Action-Theatre', partly the ace of spades. (5)
23. The sin never received monthly. (5)
25. Dad's sound, he's got the gear. (2)
27. A band at an engagement party. (3)

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