



ONE STEP BEYOND: INTERDISCIPLINARY EXCHANGE

THE ANNUAL MAGAZINE OF

ASSITEJ 2016





**19th. ASSITEJ WORLD CONGRESS  
AND PERFORMING ARTS FESTIVAL FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES  
17-27 MAY 2017 CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA**

.....

**ASSITEJ** unites theatres, organizations and individuals throughout the world dedicated to theatre for children and young people.

.....

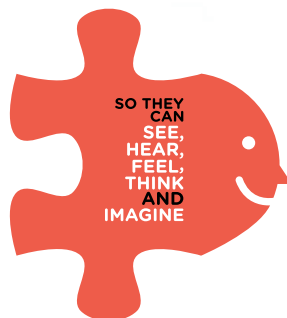
**ASSITEJ** promotes an international exchange of knowledge and practice in theatre in order to increase creative co-operation and to deepen mutual understanding between all persons involved in the performing arts for young audiences.

.....

**WORLD DAY OF THEATRE FOR CHILDREN**

Every March 20th, ASSITEJ celebrates World Day of Theatre for Children and Young People with the campaign “**Take a Child to the Theatre Today**” and with World Day Messages, focusing on the cultural entitlement of children around the world.

**TAKE A CHILD TO THE THEATRE**



## ASSITEJ PROJECTS

### NEXT GENERATION PROGRAMME

**Next Generation Residencies** are designed to bring together a group of young and emerging artists from all over the world for a special programme at an international festival.

**Next Generation Placements** enable artists to be hosted in different international settings through ASSITEJ member organizations offering diverse volunteer opportunities.

### FRIENDS OF ASSITEJ

Is an opportunity for members and supporters to contribute to building the next generation of Theatre for Young Audiences practitioners, by contributing on a once-off or annual basis to the ASSITEJ Next Generation Placements programme.

### ASSITEJ ARTISTIC GATHERINGS

Every year ASSITEJ holds an Artistic Gathering around an International Festival which brings together members from across the Globe. Each Gathering focuses on a particular theme and offers space for projects, network activities and special events. The overarching theme for the period 2015-2017 is One Step Beyond.

### THE ASSITEJ WORLD CONGRESS AND FESTIVAL

Every 3 years ASSITEJ holds a World Congress and an International Festival open to everyone involved in the field of theatre for young audiences. Here the General Assembly of ASSITEJ members sets out the next 3 years of activity.

**ONE STEP BEYOND: INTERDISCIPLINARY EXCHANGE.**  
"ON THE EDGE" World Festival of Theatre for Young Audiences, Birmingham, UK, 2-10th July 2016

**ONE STEP BEYOND: INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGE.**  
"CRADLE OF CREATIVITY" 19th ASSITEJ World Congress and Performing Arts Festival, Cape Town, South Africa, 17-27th May 2017

### ASSITEJ MAGAZINE

An annual ASSITEJ Magazine is produced yearly with contributions from artists and writers from around the world working in the field of theatre for young audiences.

### ASSITEJ AWARD FOR ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE

Awarded at every World Congress for outstanding contributions in the field of TYA over the previous three years.

## ASSITEJ NETWORKS

### SMALL SIZE

A network of artists and theatres active and interested in the field of theatre for the early years (0-4)

[www.smallsize.org](http://www.smallsize.org)

### ITYARN

(INTERNATIONAL THEATRE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES RESEARCH NETWORK).

Furthering research into theatre for young audiences.

[www.ityarn.org](http://www.ityarn.org)

### IIAN

(INTERNATIONAL INCLUSIVE ARTS NETWORK).

Bringing together artists who practice in the field of inclusive arts for young audiences.

[www.inclusiveartsnetwork.com](http://www.inclusiveartsnetwork.com)

### WRITE LOCAL. PLAY GLOBAL.

The ASSITEJ playwrights network. Membership is free and open to anyone who values plays for young audiences.

[www.writelocalplayglobal.org](http://www.writelocalplayglobal.org)

### NEXT GENERATION

An informal network for participants of the placements and residency programmes.



[www.assitej-international.org](http://www.assitej-international.org)

ASSITEJ    

# CONTENTS

## WELCOME

**Steve Ball** 🇳🇵 Executive Producer

## ON THE EDGE OF TIME

**Liesbeth Coltof** 🇳🇵 Netherlands

## NOT IN FRONT OF THE CHILDREN

### QUEER THEATRE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

**Dr. Steve Ball / Nina Hajjiyani** /

**Andrew Moffat** 🇳🇵 England

## SOME THOUGHTS ON DANCE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

**Joke Laureyns** 🇳🇵 Belgium

## HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN'S SNOW QUEEN

### FOR THE XBOX GENERATION

**Liz O'Neill** 🇳🇵 England

## TELL A TALE

**Imran Khan** 🇳🇵 India

## INTERDISCIPLINARY EXCHANGE

**Finegan Kruckemeyer** 🇳🇵 Australia

## BODY AND LIGHT

**Andrea Buzzetti** 🇳🇵 Italy

## NO LONGER IN THE SHADOWS

**Daryl Beeton** 🇳🇵 England

## STANDING ON THE EDGE IN THE MIND

**Asaya Fujita** 🇳🇵 Japan

## FALLING DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE:

### BEYOND THE EDGES WITH OILY CART

**Jeremy Harrison** 🇳🇵 England

## A DIFFERENT WAY OF WRITING FOR THE THEATRE

**Berta Hiriart** 🇳🇵 Mexico

## ART AND CULTURE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ASSITEJ

**Antonia Büchel** 🇳🇵 Liechtenstein

## SYNERGY OF CHOREOGRAPHY AND INSTALLATION

### ART - TOWARDS INTER-RELATIONAL ECOLOGY

#### AND IMMERSION

**Dalija Acin Thelander** 🇳🇵 Serbia/Sweden

## NOMADS

**Irene Basilio Intxausti** 🇳🇵 Spain

## EMPATHEATRE IN DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA

**Dylan McGarry** 🇳🇵 South Africa

## WHAT ARE WE WATCHING?

**Leo Vukelić** 🇳🇵 Croatia

## ON STAGE AND OFF RECORD: A DIALOGUE AMONG

### GENERATIONS IN BERLIN REFLECTIONS ON THE

#### ASSITEJ ARTISTIC GATHERING 2015

**Anna Eitzeroth and Meike Fechner** 🇳🇵 Germany

## THE RED SHOES

**Teater Fot / Lise Hovik** 🇳🇵 Norway

## THE BANYAN TREE

**Ruby Lim-Yang** 🇳🇵 Singapore

Page

04

05-10

11-13

14-17

18-19

20-23

24-26

27-30

31-33

34-36

37-39

40-43

44

45-47

48-51

52-55

56-58

59-61

62-64

65-67

# IMPRINT

## ASSITEJ Executive Committee

Yvette Hardie (ZA) *President*

Marisa Giménez Cacho (MX) *Secretary General*

Stefan Fischer-Fels (DE) *Vice President*

Vigdís Jakobsdóttir (IS) *Vice President*

Asaya Fujita (JP) *Vice President*

Roberto Frabetti (IT) *Treasurer*

## EC Members

Adi Beerí (IL) / Daniel H. Fernández (AR)

François Fogel (FR) / Sue Giles (AU)

Nina Hajjiyani (GB) / Imran Khan (IN)

Diana Kržanić Tepavac (RS) / Manon van de Water (US)

## Rotating African Counsellors (2015-2017)

Pamela Udoka - (NG)

Phylmon Odhiambo - (KE)

Hamadi Dimassi - (TN)

Marissa Garay (MX) *Executive Assistant*

## Publications Working Group

Marisa Giménez Cacho (MX)

Manon van de Water (US)

Asaya Fujita (JP)

Kenjiro Otani (JP) *Assistant of Mr. Fujita*

## Advisory Committee

Asish Kumar Gosh (IN) / Lola Lara (ES)

Tony Mack (AU) / Wolfgang Schneider (DE)

Young Ai Choi (KR) / Zbigniew Rudzinski (PL)

Kim Peter Kovac (US)

## ASSITEJ Magazine

*International Editors*

Manon van de Water (US) / Kenjiro Otani (JP)

Marisa Giménez Cacho (MX)

*Editors for GB/IE*

Steve Ball

*Managing Editor GB*

Thomasina Carlyle

## Design

twentyfirstcentury design

## ASSITEJ International

via Matteotti 16

40129 Bologna - Italy

[www.assitej-international.org](http://www.assitej-international.org)

[sg@assitej-international.org](mailto:sg@assitej-international.org)

*Published and Printed in England by*

What's On Magazine and 21st Century Design

## ISBN

978-1-5262-0261-1

Cover Picture

The Curious Scrapbook of Josephine Bean by Shona Reppe

photograph by Eoin Carey



# EDITORS NOTE



We are thrilled to present you here with the fifth Annual ASSITEJ Magazine, in Birmingham at the On the Edge World Festival of Theatre for Young Audiences. This is the first time TYA UK and TYA Ireland jointly host a major ASSITEJ event, involving among others performances, and symposia, all centered around the Festival theme On the Edge. And it includes the ASSITEJ Artistic Gathering, which was first held in Okinawa in 2012, as a way to bring the ASSITEJ community together in discussion and exchange, in this case Interdisciplinary Exchange.

Since the first ASSITEJ Artistic Gathering, the magazine has reflected the theme of the hosting festival as well as that of the gathering. This magazine is no different. We asked for global contributions on the theme of *On the Edge: Interdisciplinary Exchange*, arguing that we are facing “the end of the world as we know it” and that we are living in rapidly changing times. Are there new narratives evolving globally? How interdisciplinary are the narratives, how do they cross traditional boundaries, involve other art forms, research disciplines, different genres and styles? What are the edges of society, of art, of art & society, and can we go beyond these edges? And ultimately, how experimental, unusual, and on the edge can interdisciplinary performance be?

For this magazine we wished to change the focus from the textual narratives, accompanied by pictorial illustration, to visual narratives accompanied by texts of 500-1000 words. Meaningful texts, inspired by the theme of On the Edge and Interdisciplinary Exchange. This was an experiment in and of itself and we received an unprecedented number of submissions. We faced the difficult task of looking at representation on subject, country, and modes of inter-disciplinarity and crossing edges. As a result, this magazine contains more text and less pictures than we envisioned, but it does represent the wide variety of interdisciplinary activities globally. We welcome your input and comments.

The articles you find here, as the ones in the last issue, are in two languages: English and the mother language of the individual authors. Except for the UK/Ireland contributions, the editing of the English has been mostly done in US English; we tried to keep this as close to the original submitted translation as possible.

Our heartfelt thanks go to the contributors of the articles, the On the Edge team, TYA UK and TYA Ireland, and our publishing partners. We wish you an inspiring, interdisciplinary experience!

**MANON VAN DE WATER / MARISA GIMÉNEZ CACHO**

editors

**KENJIRO OTANI**

picture editor

# WELCOME!



TYA UK and TYA Ireland with Birmingham Rep are delighted to be jointly hosting the ON THE EDGE World Festival of Theatre for Young Audiences, the 2016 ASSITEJ Artistic Gathering

Interdisciplinary Exchange is the overarching theme of the Festival and the Gathering. This has provided a rich stimulus for the selection of productions from around the globe. *Boing* is an exhilarating piece of dance theatre; *Why Do Hyenas Have Shorter Back Legs Than Front Legs* is *Why Do Monkeys Have Bare Bottoms?* uses masks and poetry; *'A Feast of Bones'* by Ireland's Theatre Lovett uses music and theatre as storytelling *The Curious Scrapbook of Josephine Bean* involves puppetry; *Brush* the visual arts and *The Broke'N'Beat Collective* explores the hardships faced by young people in the UK today through hip-hop music.

ASSITEJ provides a unique platform for international exchange and discussion between artists and professionals making work for young audiences, as part of the festival there are a number of spaces to meet, talk and share ideas.

04

One of three Artistic Encounters addresses questions around what interdisciplinary means to those making theatre for young audiences, how this approach leads to new practice, as well as examining the cultural differences in relation to how we define and understand interdisciplinary work.

Interdisciplinary approaches are not new. Leonardo de Vinci was a scientist and an artist. The British choreographer Wayne McGregor's work is a fusion of art, digital film, music and architecture. But interdisciplinary work can provide us all with innovative modes of creativity and new ways of expanding theatre and questioning boundaries.

The ON THE EDGE festival, the symposium and this magazine help us to do just that: to take risks, innovate and - through Interdisciplinary Exchange - create the best possible Theatre for Young Audiences.

## **STEVE BALL**

Executive Producer, ON THE EDGE

## **MARIA FLEMING**

Chair, TYA Ireland

## **NINA HAJIYIANNI**

Chair, TYA UK



# ON THE EDGE OF TIME OP DE GRENS VAN DE TIJD

LIESBETH COLTOF



In reaction to the radicalisation of young men in the Middle East, but also in Europe and the heavy violence they are committed to, I decided to make a new version of *Macbeth* with a young Dutch Syrian actor. The process of feeling neglected, the lack of opportunities and the demand for respect, were the main objectives. Step by step I followed how one crime leads to the other, until there is only brutal violence and no human empathy left. The performance had to be physical and full of frantic energy, so I asked choreographers Emio Grecco and Pieter Scholten with their modern dance company ICK to join the production. We made a radical adaptation for 4 actors and 8 dancers. The dancers became the aggressors, the victims and the voices in the head of Macbeth. They even danced some of the characters; dialogue between actors and dancers, between language and movement. The play became stunningly actual and horrifically beautiful at the same time.

## INSPIRATION

The world is a complex place. Polyphonic. Open for multiple interpretations. Not logical, not fair. It is sometimes safe, but more often chaotic and confusing. There is a lot we don't understand from the world and from ourselves. Young people live in a society that is quickly changing. They are confronted, by the media or in real life, with extremism, migration, unemployment and poverty. The Internet and social media connect them closely to their peers and loads of information. This provokes creativity and self-awareness. But there is a counter side. A growing group of young people lose, with all the choices and possibilities, sight of their own story. Who am I? Where do I come from? And where do I go? The awareness of your own story, even in bits and pieces, gives direction and meaning. It provides a sense of belonging. And if

you belong, you can also accept the other. In this open society it becomes increasingly more important to connect with what is strange and different. To lose the fear for what we don't know. To lose the anger for what we think is threatening us, but turns out to be just another human, with a different history. Theatre is par excellence the place for this search. It shows us personal lives, with their struggles and victories. We get a view from the inside and see how people try to go forward and give meaning to their lives and the lives of their loved ones. We see their courage and defeats, we can relate to their joy and anguish. We can reflect, ask questions, search for meaning, mourn and laugh. Theatre shows multiple perspectives and makes what is general personal. It offers a human perspective. And so we step at the same time in and out ourselves. We change the angle and look with different eyes, away from the prejudice and self-proclaimed truth. Especially now, theatre must take its place as a free zone. We have to relate to the big movements in the world and the influence they have on the lives of children and youngsters. They don't have the power to change them. They are the powerless and they share this with many adults all over the planet. In my work I try to give them a voice, I listen to them and make room for their stories.



The Beginning of Everything



'You and I are like potatoes left in a box. The potato thinks the dark is the dirt and it starts to grow roots so it can survive. But the dark isn't the dirt and all it ends up sucking on is a fistful of air. And then it dies.'

### **Derailed**

In *Derailed*, based on the play *The Trestle of Pope Lick Creek* from the American writer Naomi Wallace, I dealt with the crisis and the influence on the life of youngsters, the lack of possibilities to get a meaningful place in society and the reckless behaviour this provokes. A subject not often talked about, but for many children a daily reality. The girl and boy in *Derailed* are scared; their only option seems to be the same poor and unemployed life as their parents. In order to challenge their faith, they decide to run towards the 7 o'clock train on a single track. If they don't make it in time, they will die. But if they make it, they believe anything is possible. I chose to perform it as a pop concert, rough and on the edge: an explosion of energy, a heartbroken cry for help and a soft attempt to console. One of Holland's best singers Frederique Spigt and her band joined a small cast of actor/singers. The difference between spoken word and music disappeared and merged to one powerful statement.



Macbeth

### **AMSTERDAM**

I work in a city, Amsterdam, and here almost 60% of the children and youngsters have parents or grandparents with a non-western background. They develop, stuck between two worlds, a whole new and hybrid cultural language. Music, theatre, dance, film, social media, and social action are all used to get their stories across. For a theatre maker this new culture is a great source of inspiration. Not to copy it, but to embrace it, to enrich both sides and start a dialogue where we all can learn. My theatre language is constantly changing under the influence of these young artists. They challenge me to explore new territories and at the same time stay true to myself as an artist. I never believed in giving children and youngsters in the theatre exactly what they know. I try always to connect and at the same time widen their horizon.

In *The Beginning of Everything* two technicians move boxes into the theatre. As they wait for somebody to sign the receipt, a little paper falls out of the grid: "you can begin." This is the starting point of a travel through stories from all over the world about the beginning of earth and mankind.

In *Thaibox Sorrow* we investigated the interest of boys, especially from a cultural diverse background, in the martial arts. Ad de Bont wrote the play and a Thai box trainer and a Kung Fu Master trained the actors. In the performance we mixed text and fighting; a very exciting and sexy moment was a love scene using only Kung Fu katas. The whole play was performed in a boxing ring with the audience on four sides and had the energy and reactions similar to a box match. We used street language, this wonderful mix of different languages that youngsters in Amsterdam from different backgrounds are speaking, as well as poems.

### **AUDIENCE**

The way young people experience and value theatre is rapidly changing and with it their role as audience. More than ever they want to be involved, they want to participate. This need for participation widens our horizon in all aspects of our work. The acting becomes more transparent, the audience is present and the actor is aware of their presence.







More and more we leave the theatre buildings and work on all kinds of locations. The adventure of making theatre in the public space asks for different concepts and dramaturgy. In *Sold*, a text from Roel Adam about slavery now and then, we played in a completely destroyed factory. The audience was part of a world that is mostly hidden, but very much existing. In *Mehmet the Conqueror* we build in a big hall, three complete different sets, a Turkish palace and the Vatican, a desert, and the city of Constantinople. In a three hour performance, with in-between a Turkish meal, we told the story of the young pasha Mehmet and his encounter with the young son of the pope. Based on history became Mehmet a very actual play about the fruitful and painful relation between Muslims and Christians.

We experiment with co-creation and make the artistic expression of children part of the performance. The inspiration for *Metro* was the influence the Internet and social media have on the perception of reality of youngsters. What is true and what is fake? What do the images and tweets we share really tell about us? Roel Adam wrote a play about a modern Eurydice and Orpheus. Eurydice, confused about her identity, dies and finds herself in the underworld. Here a modern count Dracula has a multimedia centre where he collects every post and every image placed on the Net. In order to bring her back to life, Orpheus and Eurydice are confronted with this material. They

have to convince Dracula of one true moment. The performance was a mash-up from text, film, music and co-creation with young people. We filmed the whole relation between Orpheus and Eurydice, prior to her death. Youngsters played in these filmed fragments. We also asked them to make their own small films, based on themes in the play. These films were present on the screens in Dracula's centre, just as the game we developed with young game designers. On stage there was a lot going on at the same time, crowded with images, information and in the centre the touching story of a boy and a girl searching for truth.

The beauty of theatre is that its roots are in society as well as in the arts. It has the possibility to embrace many different elements, without losing its identity. I see it as a great opportunity for theatre makers to be open for all the different movements and ideas that the world and especially children and youngsters develop. Theatre is about change and we have to change with it.

**Liesbeth Coltof is since 25 years director and artistic leader of theatre company de Toneelmakerij, based in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. In 2014 she received the ASSITEJ Award for Artistic Excellence.**

All photos are by Sanne Peper

In reactie op de radicalisering van zoveel jonge mannen in het Midden-Oosten, maar ook in Europa, en het daarmee gepaard gaande extreme geweld, besloot ik een nieuwe versie van *Macbeth* te maken met in de titelrol een jonge Nederlands-Syrische acteur. Uitgangspunt was om inzicht te krijgen in hun proces: hun gevoel genegeerd te worden, het gebrek aan kansen en de hun roep om respect. Stap voor stap volgde ik hoe de ene misdaad leidt tot de volgende, tot er alleen grof geweld overblijft, zonder een spoor van menselijke empathie. Ik had een heftige, fysieke voorstelling voor ogen die uit z'n voegen moest barsten van nerveuze energie. Dus vroeg ik choreografen Emio Grecco en Pieter Scholten en hun moderne dansgezelschap ICK deel te nemen aan de productie. We maakten een radicale bewerking van de tekst voor 4 acteurs en 8 dansers. De dansers werden daders en slachtoffers. Ze vertolkten de stemmen in het hoofd van Macbeth. En zelfs werden sommige karakters niet gesproken maar gedanst. Zo ontstond een dialoog tussen acteurs en dansers, tussen taal en beweging. Het stuk werd verbluffend actueel en tegelijk afschrikwekkend in zijn schoonheid.

## INSPIRATIE

De wereld is een complexe plek. Meerstemmig. Voor velerlei interpretatie vatbaar. Niet logisch, niet eerlijk. Soms veilig, maar veel vaker verwarrend en chaotisch. Er is veel wat we niet begrijpen, van de wereld en van onszelf. Ook jongeren leven in een maatschappij die snel veranderd. Ze worden in hun eigen leven en in de media geconfronteerd met extremisme, migratie, werkloosheid en armoede. Door Internet en sociale media staan ze nauw met elkaar in contact en hebben toegang tot oneindig veel informatie. Dit daagt uit creativiteit en zelfbewustzijn. Maar er is een keerzijde. Een groeiende groep jonge mensen verliest door al de keuzes en mogelijkheden het zicht op hun eigen verhaal. Wie ben ik? Waar kom ik vandaan? En waar ga ik naartoe? Het thuiskomen in je eigen verhaal, hoe gefragmenteerd ook, geeft richting en betekenis. Het creëert 'a sense of belonging' en schept daardoor de mogelijkheid de ander te

accepteren. In deze open samenleving is het noodzakelijk om ons te verbinden met wat we niet kennen. Om de angst voor 'de vreemde' te overwinnen en de woede los te laten voor wat ons lijkt te bedreigen, maar vaak gewoon een mens blijkt met zijn eigen geschiedenis. Het theater is par excellence de plek voor dit menselijk perspectief. Het laat ons levens zien, met de gevechten en overwinningen die daarbij horen. We krijgen een blik van binnenuit hoe mensen vooruit proberen te komen en hun leven en dat van hun geliefden betekenis proberen te geven. We ervaren hun moed en nederlagen en we delen hun angst en blijdschap. In het theater kunnen we reflecteren, vragen stellen, naar betekenis zoeken, rouwen en lachen. Het laat meerdere perspectieven zien en maakt het algemene persoonlijk. En zo verplaatsen we ons tegelijkertijd in- en buiten onszelf. We veranderen van invalshoek, kijken met andere ogen, weg van vooroordelen en zogenaamde waarheden. Juist nu, moet het theater de rol van een vrijplaats op zich nemen en zich buigen over de grote veranderingen in de wereld en de invloed die ze hebben op de levens van kinderen en jongeren. Zij hebben de macht niet om iets te veranderen. Zij zijn de machtelozen en die positie delen ze met vele volwassenen over de hele wereld. In mijn werk probeer ik ze een stem te geven, te luisteren en ruimte te maken voor hun verhaal.

*Jij en ik en de rest van de jongeren hier, we zijn gewoon de laatste aardappelen in een zak. Die aardappel denkt dat het donker de aarde is en dus begint 'ie wortel te schieten om te overleven, maar het donker is geen aarde en het enige dat 'ie opzuigt is een mondvul lucht. En dan gaat 'ie dood.*

## Derailed





Mehmet the Conqueror

In *Derailed*, gebaseerd op het toneelstuk *The Trestle of Pope Lick Creek* van de Amerikaanse schrijfster Naomi Wallace, verhielde ik me tot de crisis en de invloed hiervan op het leven van jongeren, het ontbreken van de mogelijkheid een betekenisvolle plek in de samenleving in te nemen en het roekeloze gedrag dat dit uitlokt. Een onderwerp waarover niet vaak gesproken wordt, maar voor veel kinderen een dagelijkse realiteit. De jongen en het meisje in *Derailed* zijn bang; hun enige optie lijkt hetzelfde arme en werkeloze leven als dat van hun ouders. In een poging het lot uit te dagen besluiten ze op de eenbaansspoorbrug, de aanstormende trein van 7 uur tegemoet te rennen. Als ze het niet op tijd halen, zijn ze dood. Maar als ze het redden, dan, geloven ze vast, zal alles mogelijk. Om de pijn voelbaar te maken koos ik ervoor het stuk als een popconcert op te voeren, ruig en op het scherp van de snede: een explosie van energie, een hartverscheurende schreeuw om hulp en een milde poging tot troost. Frederique Spigt, een van de beste zangeressen van Nederland en haar band voegden zich bij een kleine cast van zangers en acteurs. Het verschil tussen het gesproken woord en muziek verdween, tekst en zang mengden zich tot één krachtig statement.

## AMSTERDAM

Ik werk in de stad Amsterdam. Bijna 60% van de kinderen en jongeren hier heeft ouders of grootouders met een niet-westerse afkomst. Gevangen tussen culturen, ontwikkelen ze een nieuwe en hybride culturele taal. Muziek, theater, dans, film, mode, social media, en sociale actie worden allen gebruikt om hun verhalen te doen horen. Voor ons als theatermakers is deze nieuwe cultuur een bron van inspiratie. Niet om te kopiëren, maar om te omarmen, om beide zijden te verrijken en een dialoog te starten waarin we allemaal kunnen leren. Deze jongeren veranderen mijn theatertaal continu. Ze dagen me uit nieuwe gebieden te verkennen en tegelijk trouw te blijven aan mezelf als kunstenaar. Ik heb er nooit in geloofd om kinderen en jongeren in het theater precies dat te geven wat ze al kennen. Ik probeer altijd om me met hen te verbinden, maar ook hun horizon te verbreden.

In *Het begin van alles* dragen twee technici kisten het theater in. Terwijl ze wachten tot iemand hun bon aftekent, valt er een klein papiertje uit het grid: "je kunt beginnen." Dit is de start van een reis door verhalen uit alle hoeken van de wereld over het ontstaan van de aarde en de mensheid.

In *Thaiboksverdriet* onderzochten we de groeiende interesse van jongens met een cultureel diverse achtergrond in de Martial Arts. Ad de Bont schreef het stuk en een Thaibokstrainer trainde samen met een Kung Fu Master de acteurs. In de voorstelling werden tekst en vechtkunst gemixt tot een onlosmakelijk geheel. Hoogtepunt was een liefdesscène geheel opgebouwd uit Kung Fu Katas, spannend en sexy. Het stuk werd opgevoerd in een boksring, met het publiek aan vier zijden en lokte de energie en de reacties van een echte bokswedstrijd uit. We gebruikten straattaal, die prachtige mix van talen die de Amsterdamse jongeren uit verschillende culturen gebruiken. Daarnaast maakten we ook gebruik van poëzie, minder bekend bij jongeren.

## PUBLIEK

De manier waarop jonge mensen theater beleven en waarderen verandert snel en daarmee hun rol als publiek. Meer dan ooit willen ze betrokken worden. Ze willen meedoen. Deze noodzaak om te participeren verbreedt onze horizon in alle aspecten van ons werk. Het acteren wordt transparanter, het publiek is duidelijk aanwezig en de acteur is zich bewust van die aanwezigheid. Meer en meer verlaten we de reguliere theatergebouwen en werken we op allerlei locaties. Het avontuur van het theatermaken in de openbare ruimte vraagt om nieuwe concepten en dramaturgie.

*Verkocht*, een stuk van Roel Adam over slavernij toen en nu, speelden we in een compleet verwoeste fabriek. Het publiek was onderdeel van een wereld, die meestal verborgen is, maar die nog overal bestaat. In *Mehmet de Veroveraar* bouwden we in een grote hal drie compleet verschillende toneelbeelden: een Turks paleis en het Vaticaan, een woestijn en de stad Constantinopel. In een drie uur durende voorstelling, met tussendoor een Turkse maaltijd, vertelden we het verhaal van de jonge pasha Mehmet en zijn ontmoeting met de jonge zoon van de paus. Mehmet werd een zeer actueel, op de feiten gebaseerd toneelstuk over de vruchtbare en pijnlijke relatie tussen Moslims en Christenen.

We experimenteren met co-creatie en maken de artistieke expressie van kinderen onderdeel van de voorstelling. De inspiratie voor *Metro* was de invloed die het Internet en social media hebben op de perceptie van de realiteit van jongeren. Wat is echt en wat is nep? Wat zeggen de foto's en tweets die we delen echt over ons? Roel Adam schreef een toneelstuk over een moderne Orpheus en Eurydice. Eurydice, verward over haar eigen identiteit, sterft en vindt zichzelf terug in de onderwereld. Hier runt een moderne graaf Dracula een multimedia centrum, waar hij elk bericht en elke foto verzamelt die op het Net geplaatst worden. Hij confronteert Orpheus en Eurydice met dit materiaal. Om Eurydice het leven terug te

geven moeten zij hem overtuigen van één echt en waarachtig moment.

De voorstelling was een mash-up van tekst, film, muziek en co-creatie met het jonge publiek. We filmden de relatie tussen Orpheus en Eurydice, voorafgaand aan haar dood, waarbij jongeren meespeelden. Ook vroegen we ze korte eigen films te maken, gebaseerd op de thema's uit het stuk. De films werden vertoond op de schermen in Dracula's ondergrondse centrale, net als het computerspel dat we ontwikkelden met jonge spel-ontwerpers. Op het toneel speelde alles zich tegelijkertijd af: een overvloed aan beelden en informatie, met in het hart het ontroerende verhaal van een jongen en een meisje op zoek naar de waarheid.

De schoonheid van het theater is dat zijn wortels zowel in de samenleving als in de kunst liggen. In het vermogen andere kunst- en maatschappelijke vormen te omarmen, zonder de eigen identiteit te verliezen. Ik zie het als een enorme kans voor theatermakers om open te staan voor de diversiteit aan vormen en ideeën die zich overal op de wereld, maar vooral in de cultuur van kinderen en jongeren ontwikkelen. Theater gaat over verandering, laten wij mee veranderen.

**Liesbeth Coltof is sinds 25 jaar regisseur en artistiek leider van theatergezelschap de Toneelmakerij te Amsterdam. In 2014 ontving zij de ASSITEJ Award for Artistic Excellence.**

# NOT IN FRONT OF THE CHILDREN QUEER THEATRE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

DR. STEVE BALL / NINA HAJIYIANNI / ANDREW MOFFAT

## THE CONTEXT

Discussing sexuality with children and young people has long been controversial. Unlike many of our North European neighbours we Brits have remained largely tight lipped about heterosexual sex and relationships, let alone any examination of same sex relationships or transgender issues.

This position was legitimised in the late 1980s when the Conservative government introduced 'Section 28', a hugely controversial piece of legislation, which banned local authorities and schools from portraying homosexuality 'in a positive light'

But in just over a decade there has been a seismic shift in legislation and attitudes towards LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) people in the UK. In 2003 Section 28 was abolished by the then Labour government. The 2010 Equality Act requires public bodies to ensure that people in the workplace, including LGBT people, do not face discrimination. In 2013 legislation supporting same

sex marriage was introduced and in 2015 the Conservative Education Secretary made tackling homophobic bullying a "top priority". Schools in England are now required to address homophobia and many are beginning to recognise that work to promote equality needs to begin when children are forming ideas about the world around them. Some believe that LGBT people are not part of the community around school and it will not have occurred to them that anyone in their classroom will turn out to be gay or have gay family members.

Now schools not only have a duty to ensure LGBT people do not face discrimination, but also that any children with emerging LGBT identities do not face discrimination and know that as they grow up, it's ok to be different. Educators of young children must confidently challenge discrimination in all its forms and promote a world where children who are different and children who follow different faiths, have different skin or live in different families, can live alongside each other as part of a cohesive community.

## HAPPILY EVER AFTER

*Happily Ever After* is inspired by the Dutch children's book *King and King* by Linda De Haan and Stern Nijland which has been banned and challenged in some countries.

The book is a fairy-tale story about a prince who falls in love with a prince and they live 'happily ever after'. The production, created by Action Transport Theatre, is the first professional UK production and is performed by an international cast under the direction of Nina Hajiyianni. It follows a number of productions of the story created in other countries which includes the play 'Principe Y Principe' (Prince and Prince) written by Argentinean playwright Perla



Happily Ever After Photo: Johnathan Clover



Post-show art work created by primary school children following the show *Happily Ever After*

Szuchmacher. This version of the story is deliberately wordless, avoiding the potential pitfalls of language and utilizing rich visual detail in the form of clowning, physical comedy and dance. Feedback from schools demonstrates that the project can be overwhelmingly positive for the whole school community, at times provoking emotional and passionate responses from teachers who feel that a fundamental shift has occurred in their school for the first time.”

However, the production has also caused controversy and schools are consistently stating that they are nervous about parental reaction. The production was the lead news item on BBC Radio Manchester. Some parents have strong views and assumptions, despite the fact that they have

never seen it. The double standard is very obvious when one compares *Happily Ever After* to the fairytale *Cinderella* or *Sleeping Beauty*, which sees the prince and princess married off at the end. A production based on these stories would never provoke the same concerns and controversy.

## PENGUINS

*Penguins* is a co-production between the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, Prime Theatre in Swindon and Cahoots NI in Belfast. It's based on the true story of two chinstrap penguins, Roy and Silo, residents of New York City's Central Park Zoo. They had bonded as a couple and tried to hatch a rock as if it were an egg. On noticing this the zookeeper gave them a spare egg from another couple that subsequently hatched. The baby



penguin, Tango and her two dads achieved celebrity status when the story was told in the New York Times in May 2004.

Roy and Silo's story inspired two children's books, *And Tango Makes Three* by Justin Peterson and David Parnell and the German language *Two Daddies for Tango* by Edith Schrieber-Wicke and Carola Holland.

*Penguins* is a non verbal piece of dance theatre for 3 - 7 year olds directed by Paul McEneaney of Cahoots NI. The production will tour throughout the UK, Ireland and the US in 2017 and will use dance and animation to tell the story of Roy, Silo and Tango.

*Penguins* will be accompanied by a set of online resource materials produced in association with Stonewall.

*Happily Ever After* Photo: Johnathan clover



## CONCLUSION

*Happily Ever After* and *Penguins* portray gay identities and relationships not as a matter of social responsibility but as work for children and family audiences which reflect the diversity of the world in which we live. They demonstrate that TYA has an important part to play in promoting an ethos that celebrates difference and diversity. Productions that include gay identities can bring to life the otherwise abstract concept of a 'LGBT person' for a child whose life experience has previously promoted heteronormativity.

Despite the fact that many children and young people grow up experiencing homophobia there has been an absence of gay identities in theatre and wider culture. *Happily Ever After* and *Penguins* are deliberate attempts to help 'validate' these realities, including for those children and young people who identify as gay themselves. Given that LGBT practitioners, creatives and producers are well represented within Theatre for Young Audiences it does beg the question - why has work for children and young people with an LGBT focus taken so long to appear on our stages?

**Dr. Steve Ball**, Associate Director, Birmingham Repertory Theatre, UK  
**Nina Hajjianni**, Artistic Director, Action Transport Theatre, Ellesmere Port, UK  
**Andrew Moffat**, Assistant Head Teacher, Parkfield Community School, Birmingham, UK

## LINKS

Action Transport Theatre  
[actiontransporttheatre.org](http://actiontransporttheatre.org)  
Birmingham Repertory Theatre  
[birmingham-rep.co.uk](http://birmingham-rep.co.uk)  
Cahoots NI [cahootstheatrecompany.com](http://cahootstheatrecompany.com)  
Parkfield Community School  
[www.parkfield.bham.sch.uk](http://www.parkfield.bham.sch.uk)  
Prime Theatre [primetheatre.co.uk](http://primetheatre.co.uk)  
The Proud Trust [lgbtyouthnorthwest.org.uk](http://lgbtyouthnorthwest.org.uk)

# SOME THOUGHTS ON DANCE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES\*

JOKE LAUREYNS

## AANTEKENINGEN OVER DANS VOOR JONG PUBLIEK\*



A while ago, I was asked to paint a picture of the current developments in the field of dance for young audiences.

To which I thought... What picture? I do not know if there is one, nor am I certain there ought to be one. There is, however, the following: There is dance. But when we say dance, what exactly are we referring to? Should we divide it into separate categories? Do we refer to dance for young audiences separately? Do we refer to dance for children, dance for toddlers, dance for babies, dance for foetuses, even? How many pictures does that leave us with?

There is an immense diversity in what is being created and performed. There is so much, and nothing is alike. How, in such a heterogeneous field, does one talk about a form of identity? There is the word 'young'.

But who exactly does this term include? The audience? A new generation of artists? Does "young" refer to the field as a whole, or to a carefully and newly developing subfield? In any case, dance *for* young audiences is not to be confused with a forum by young artists. Quite the contrary: a young audience has every right to creations put together by experienced artists. There is a vast waste land, in which all artists mark their spot and create their settlement the way they see fit. These settlements are far removed, and there is very little coherence in terms of style or form.

There are no institutes, no set values, there are no established norms in this developing field. There are fascinating artists working on the very down-to-earth motive of creating dance for a young audience developing their very own idiom of dance in doing so. And there are those artists merely acting from their own internal necessity, without profiling themselves specifically.

There is, in short, no set standard, no specific trade one can learn to produce and perform for young audiences.

There is, however, a market for these kinds of productions. When the motto becomes "we aim to please," commercialization lurks. Speaking in terms of a "target audience" entails a concern for the young audience on the one hand, but on the other hand, it involves the threat of mere obligingness, willingness to please, but nothing more.



Rauw/Raw Photo: Kurt Van Der Elst





There is unlimited freedom, as there is no established tradition in relation to which one can or should define one's position. The audience, in its turn, enjoys considerable freedom: their response remains uninfluenced by their views on the performing arts, by new tendencies or trends in the field. From this point of view, there is no one to please, no views or reactions to answer to. There are no obligations, not even the obligation to exist. There is, to resume, freedom, and there is a certain expectation that those who pave the way do so consciously, and with care. A young audience is no practice arena, it is the only future!

There is hybridization, which is a given within theatre for young audiences, something natural, self-evident. But is this hybridization a goal worth pursuing in the field of dance? Is dance not all too often a mere illustration, an interlude? Will choreographers dare to let go of classical theatrical narrative when working for a young audience? Will dance get the recognition it deserves as a language in its own right?

There is dance, let us discuss that, regardless of age or audience. Dance, not as in 'one-step-two-step', but dance which, precisely because it avoids spoken language, can address longing, loving, death, fear... all these major emotions we cannot seem to talk about without stammering, especially when addressing a child.

That is where dance can make the difference. As a lexicon of the ineffable. As the art to communicate on a deeper, more intuitive and almost instinctive level, preceding language and impossible to pin down. As an art with the capability to astound. There is, in my experience with young audiences, always a degree of wonder about what they have just witnessed. Mostly, it is a boundless not-knowing, now-knowing how to process what they have seen into language, or to name the kind of viewing experience they have gone through. And that is a good thing: I don't think art for children should meet their expectations, I think we can serve them much better by showing them

something unfamiliar, something which will raise questions and put the world in a different perspective... Art for children should be about creating a moment of not-knowing, offering some breathing space in between all the certainties they are brought up with. It gets better even, when the grown-ups do not seem to know the answers, sharing in their children's surprise, when there are questions, when there is the beauty of doubt, opening doors to philosophy and to mental wealth. It must be wonderful to not-know together, when there is a warm kind of confusion, when one is being thrown off balance almost lovingly. This is the potential of dance. This mental challenge is not an attempt of the artist to pester the audience, nor is it a competition about who observes or understands "best." I plead in defence of reckless performances, performances which acknowledge dance as an exciting medium to express the layering of our thoughts and feelings, to blur the contours of our experience, to render our perceptions ever more infinite, and, ultimately, to make us more open, better people. I plead in defence of doubt, too. For adults as well as for children, preferably, a shared doubt which dissolves the boundaries separating generations: a parent, a grandparent, a teacher, admitting: "I couldn't tell you myself, let's think about this together, what exactly did we see?" and in that conversation, or the ensuing silence, wisdom becomes of all ages, a two-way street, rather than a top-to-bottom transfer of knowledge.

\*This text is an adaptation of the first State of Affairs, dance for young audiences - a biannual project in which Belgian Krokusfestival asks choreographers/dancers to reflect on the dance field for young audiences in Flanders

**Joke Laureyns is a Belgian choreographer, with her company kabinet k she creates for an audience of all ages with both adult dancers and children on stage. [www.kabinetk.be](http://www.kabinetk.be)**



Er is mij gevraagd om een landschapstekening te maken, om u te vertellen hoe het staat met de jeugddans. Welk landschap? heb ik gedacht. Ik weet niet of dat er is, ik weet ook niet of het er moét zijn.

Er is wel één & ander. Er is dans. Maar wat is dat eigenlijk? Moeten we daar in afzonderlijke categorieën over spreken? Jeugddans? Jongerendans, kinderdans, kleuterdans, babydans, foetusdans? Hoeveel vermeende landschappen zijn dat?

Er is een grote diversiteit in wát er gemaakt en getoond wordt. Er is véél en het is allemaal anders. Hoe moet je binnen zo een uiteenlopend veld spreken over een identiteit? Er is het woord 'jong'.

Wie voelt zich daardoor aangesproken? Het publiek? Een nieuwe generatie makers? Gaat 'jong' over het mogelijke 'vak' of over een veld dat zich voorzichtig ontwikkelt? Dans voor een jong publiek mogen we in elk geval niet verwarren met een vrijplaats voor jonge makers, integendeel: jong publiek heeft recht op creaties van doorwinterde makers.

Er is weids braakland waarin iedere maker zijn of haar hut naar eigen believen optrekt. Die hutten staan vrij ver uit elkaar en er is weinig coherentie in stijl en vorm.

Er zijn geen instituten, geen gevestigde waarden, geen verworvenheden in dit prille veld. Er zijn boeiende makers die een zeer concrete drijfveer hebben om dans te creëren voor een publiek van kleuters en jonge kinderen en die daarvoor een specifiek dansidoom ontwikkelen. En er zijn makers die hun eigen noodzaak volgen, zonder zich specifiek te profileren als 'jeugddansmakers' en wiens werk ook blijkt te kunnen communiceren met jong publiek. Er is dus geen standaard, er is ook geen ambacht of métier dat je kan leren als het erom gaat te maken voor een jong publiek. Er is wél een 'markt'. U vraagt, wij draaien. Commercie is niet veraf en het spreken in termen van 'doelgroep' slaat enerzijds op een bekommernis om het jonge publiek, maar er is ook de dreiging louter te willen behagen. Er is een grote vrijheid: er is geen lange traditie waartoe we ons kunnen of moeten verhouden. En ook ons publiek geeft een grote vrijheid: hun respons is niet gekleurd door hun visie op

tendensen binnen de podiumkunsten, door modes en profilering. We moeten in die zin niemand behagen, we moeten geen visies van een treffend antwoord voorzien. We moeten niets, de vraag is zelfs of we wel moeten bestaan?

Er is dus een grote vrijheid, en er is de verwachting dat degenen die de verse sporen trekken in dat prille landschap dat bewust doen, en met veel zorg. Jong publiek is géén oefenpiste, het is de enige toekomst!

Er is hybridisering. Die is als een verworvenheid binnen het jeugdtheater. Een naturel gegeven. Vraag is of die hybridisering ook een goede zaak is voor de dans an sich? Wordt dans niet te vaak enkel illustratief ingezet, of als intermezzo? Durven choreografen de klassieke theatrale narrativiteit loslaten als ze werken voor een jong publiek? Wordt de dans als een eigen taal genoeg erkend?

Er is de dans, laat het ons daar over hebben, los van welke leeftijd van welk publiek dan ook. Dans, niet als “pasje hier, pasje daar”, maar dans die, juist omdat ze de gesproken taal vermijdt, het kan hebben over verlangen, over liefhebben, over de dood, over oerangsten. Over alle grote dingen waarover we niet kunnen spreken zonder te stotteren, zeker niet tegenover een kind. Dààr kan dans een onderscheid maken, als een vocabulaire van het onuitspreekbare. Als de kunst met het vermogen om te communiceren op een dieper en intuïtiever niveau, pré-talig, instinctief bijna en onbenoembaar. Als de kunst die mag verwonderen.

Er is, in mijn ervaringen met jong publiek, altijd een verbazing, over hetgeen het net heeft gezien. Vaak een enorm niet-weten, niet-weten hoe het geziene te verwoorden, of hoe te benoemen welke kijk-ervaring er net is geweest. En dat is goed: ik denk niet dat kunst voor kinderen moet beantwoorden aan hun verwachtingen, ik denk dat we hen een veel groter plezier doen door hen iets te tonen dat ze niet kennen, dat vragen oproept, dat de wereld in een ander perspectief

plaatst..

Een moment van niet-weten, creëren, een adempauze tussen alle zekerheden waarmee ze worden opgevoed - mooist is als ook de grote mensen het niet zo goed weten, dat ook zij in de verbazing delen, dat er vragen zijn, de schoonheid van de twijfel, de opening naar filosofie, naar een mentale rijkdom. Het lijkt mij heerlijk om samen niet-te-weten, als het gaat om een warme verwarring, een liefdevol uit-het-lood te worden geslagen. Dat is wat dans kan doen. De mentale uitdaging is geen pesterij van een maker tegenover zijn publiek, het is ook geen wedstrijd over wie de beste kijker of begrijper is. Ik pleit voor onvoorzichtige voorstellingen, die de dans erkennen als een prachtig medium om de gelaagdheid van ons voelen en denken een platform te geven, om de omtrekken rond onze ervaringen uit te vagen, om veel oneindiger te worden in onze perceptie, en dus opener, mooiere mensen. Een pleidooi voor de twijfel, ook. Voor volwassenen én kinderen, en liefst een gedeelde twijfel, één die het onderscheid tussen de generaties opheft: een ouder, een grootouder, een leerkracht, die zegt ‘ik zou het ook niet weten, laat ons even samen nadenken, wat hebben we gezien’ en dat in het gesprek, of in het zwijgen dat erop volgt, wijsheid leeftijdsloos wordt, tweerichtingsverkeer ipv top-bottom-kennis-overdracht.

\*Deze tekst is een herwerking van de eerste ‘Staat van de jeugddans, dans voor jong publiek - een tweejaarlijks project waarbij het Belgische Krokusfestival aan een aantal choreografen/dansers vraagt om een reflectie op het danslandschap voor jong publiek in Vlaanderen.

**Joke Laureyns is een Belgische choreografe, met haar gezelschap kabinet k maakt ze voorstellingen voor een publiek van alle leeftijden met zowel professionele dansers en kinderen op scène. [www.kabinetk.be](http://www.kabinetk.be)**

# HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN'S SNOW QUEEN FOR THE XBOX GENERATION

LIZ O'NEILL



Specialist, contemporary family storytelling at Z-arts, Manchester brings the Snow Queen into the digital age with a modern makeover of a classic tale. Gaming, online safety, puppetry, fostering and adoption all become part of an innovative and dynamic festive theatre experience

In December 2015 Manchester's specialist venue for contemporary family arts, Z-arts staged the UK Premiere of a multi-venue co-production of Hans Christian Andersen's *Snow Queen*. Making storytelling relevant to young people and their families living in the modern world, audiences are the driving force behind all work produced at this family-focused venue.

How will young people relate to a story of make-believe, written in 1844? Through consultation with children and young people, *Snow Queen* fast forwards nearly two centuries to reside in a world of online viruses, interactive gaming and social media identities. The design is influenced by gaming technology, using projection mapping animation for the actors and puppets to interact with.

Kai is snatched from a familiar world into one of peril, having fallen hopelessly under an evil spell and into the waiting clutches of Snow Queen. Only his bond with Gerda can save him, as she refuses to believe that Kai is beyond her help and sets off fearlessly to his rescue, her journey augmented in a high-tech, visual feast of projection mapping.

Writer, Philip Osment and director, Jonathan McGrath along with a team of innovative theatre creatives including designer Jane Linz Roberts, puppeteer Liz Walker, musician Semay Wu and digital artists Cubic Flowers have combined

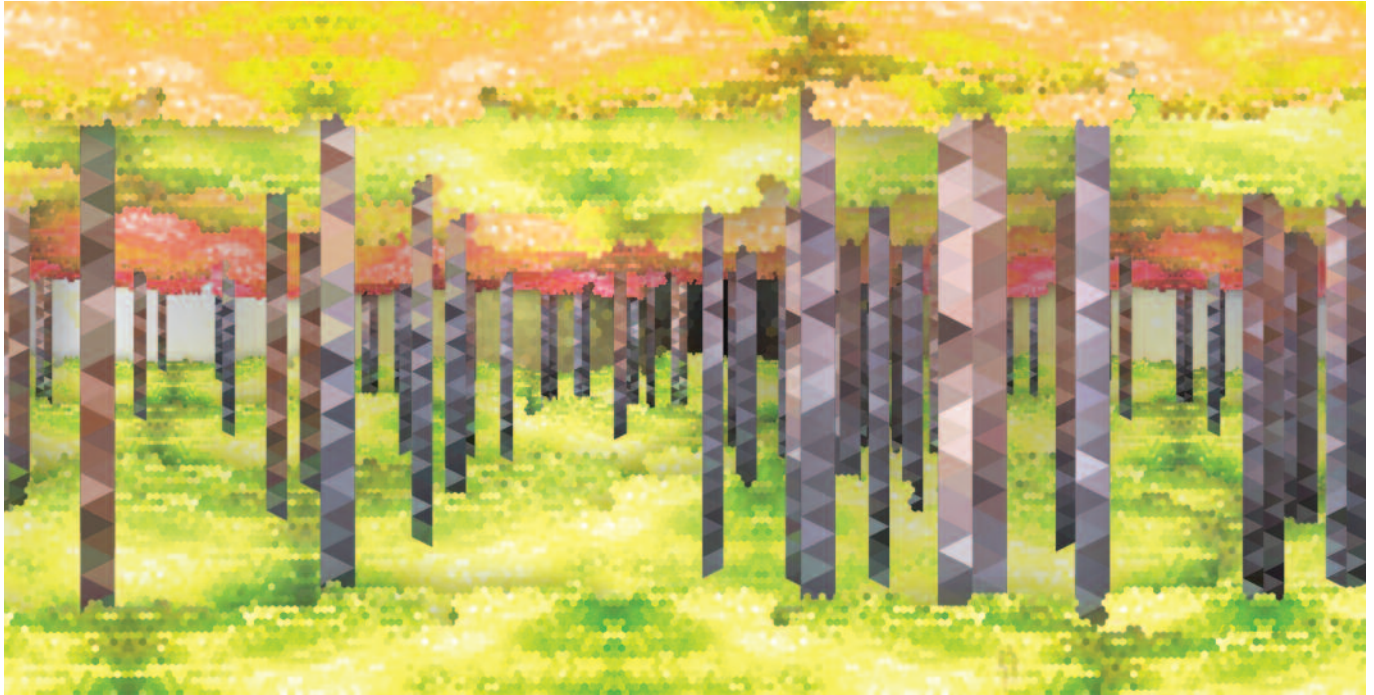
technologies to revive this sage fable of childhood curiosity, misplaced trust and unbreakable friendship. Determination to reflect aspects of credible, real life in a world of make-believe, Kai and Gerda come together in the midst of complex family dynamics, with Gerda welcoming Kai into her adopted home, with him a new foster child. Theirs is a relationship often seen as unconventional, but their bond could prove stronger than most as they face the challenge of a lifetime. Just who is The Snow Queen? In the occasionally dangerous online world, she could be anybody.

Liz O'Neill, Artistic Director of Z-arts, said:

*Kai lives much of his life through his games console and, like many other young people, it's a world that's comfortingly real to him. When an Evil Troll and The Snow Queen appear in that realm to steal his trust, he is at risk of falling under their spell and being lost to those around him. This modern day version of a well-loved family story sets Gerda on the same path to saving her much-loved friend, but the ways in which the audience will see and relate to that journey will be like nothing they have seen before.*

Aimed at audiences of 7 years old and up, there is promise of light-hearted fun as Gerda meets with talking flowers, nosey birds, a grumpy reindeer and other magical creatures on her way. As well as remarkable visuals, an impressive cast of puppets and an original musical score, expressive movement from a cast of five will keep young eyes





transfixed. Families will have opportunity to flex their creative muscles, working with animators to draw up scenery for the show. After they have been into the world of the Snow Queen and settled back at home, families will be emailed a 'Zed Talk' from Gerda, reflecting on her journey and the important lessons she identified en route.

Liz says "It was really important to me to create a piece of work that had digital creativity at its heart. I wanted a world that modern children could relate to - hence the gaming references. But it wasn't enough to just have those references in the script. They had to pervade through the whole process. That's why we worked with projection mapping animators Cubic Flowers to create the online world, and we also worked with a digital storyteller to make sure that there were ways before, during and after that audiences could engage with the work in the comfort of their own homes. They could make

snowflakes using the computer programme the animators used, or make their own Zed Talk. Family audiences nowadays expect much more than passively sitting and watching a performance. They want to be involved. We wanted to incorporate the twenty-first century world that children recognise with a fairytale world, and give families the chance to join in."

**Liz O'Neill is Artistic Director of Z-arts, Manchester's venue for children and families, and also recipient of the Paul Hamlyn Breakthrough Award for visionary cultural entrepreneurs, which supports her mission to make theatre for families that reflects the diversity of contemporary society.**



# TELL A TALE / INDIA-KOREA EXPERIENCE OF SHARING AN INTERDISCIPLINARY PROJECT

IMRAN KHAN

یناہک و ہک

ہیروک و دنہ

ہبرجت اک ے بو صنم نلپ سڈ رٹنا کی ا

Mr Moon and Ms Sun  
Photo: Mohit Dhiman, KCCI  
Style: Korean enactment



Asian theatre is known to the world for its various traditional/Folk and classical art. The continent is filled with diverse styles of performance such as Dance Theatre, Mask Theatre, Puppet Theatre, Musical Theatre and within the said styles there are various sub-forms and schools and furthermore distinctions on a micro level. One of the oldest forms that Asian performing arts has really cherished and which almost every person has experienced as a child is "Storytelling:" from grandmother's bedtime stories, to folk singers who narrate stories with their music, to royal storytellers, to street side hawkers using stories to sell their goods.

The art of storytelling has not been practiced in modern times the same way as it was during ancient times or in the medieval period. There may be various reasons for that, including our fast and busy lives, and the evolving of new styles and formats of performing art. However, storytelling hasn't lost its charm and interest, both in practitioners and listeners. Therefore, when ASSITEJ India in Collaboration with the Korean Cultural Centre decided on a project of telling Korean stories to Indian children, it was very important for us to mix the traditional style of narration with other techniques. So the Project was that there will

be 3 Korean stories which will be narrated by 3 different Indian performers for 3 different age groups and each story will be prepared in two languages, English and Hindi. Now there were many ends that these performers were suppose to meet.

## Language: Hindi/English

Languages have their own rhythms, styles can be specific to age groups and not every story is universal and may be dependent on cultural or regional connotations. Performance venues may vary from formal performance spaces to make-shift arrangements. For us, it became very important to find the right combination and balance of these various possibilities. Bringing different art forms or languages together in one performance is like using ingredients of one country within a recipe of another country. If the combination works then that'll be the beginning of a new dish on the menu, but if it fails then it is not only going to affect the dish, but also the reputation of the chef.

Keeping all these things in mind we thought of using styles like "Nautanki," a folk style from Northern India with lots of singing and all lines in verse; Kshatriya or warrior Dance from Northeast, which requires a lot of power and grace; and, Bahroopia or wandering character, who keeps changing his costume and make-up to impress people. The project also became a starting point to the research and training of these forms, since most of the actors had an urban background and no formal training or degree in theatre arts. We also needed specialized help in certain areas like a Music Director who could compose a Nautanki for the urbanized technologically savvy children on a tune which would fit well both with



## KOREAN STORIES

### AGE GROUPS



#### 5-7 YEARS

Story 1 Style 1

Story 2 Style 1

Story 3 Style 1

#### 8-11 YEARS

Story 1 Style 2

Story 2 Style 2

Story 3 Style 2

#### 12-15 YEARS

Story 1 Style 3

Story 2 Style 3

Story 3 Style 3

Hindi and English, and a writer who could translate a Korean story in verse keeping the meter the same for Hindi and English.

The Project was called *Tell a Tale-Korea* and toured 33 schools. There were wonderful, challenging and problematic situations due to using new technologies with folk or classical styles. Usually folk and classical art forms are staged with live music but here they were staged with recorded music and sound tracks. Not all the school venues were equipped with a decent audio system and without it there was no possibility of singing those tracks. Also, since the tracks were recorded and timed the performers were supposed to stay within the calculated time. In these situations, performers performed without the audio track and improvised the whole performance still respecting the style and space. At some places it did magic and at others it was a disaster. Partial narration and partial enactment felt like having almost no

style and it could become quite confusing. In all though, the project worked very well for all the parties: the Korean cultural Center, the audience, and the performers. The audience watched more than story narration. The Korean Cultural Center was able to introduce Korean culture to Indian children through their stories. Performers got a chance to experiment, explore, research, and perform new ways of story narration. Art needs to evolve with time because 100 years from now these experiments or new ways that have emerged will have become the folk styles of that time. And just like now, we will love some traditional styles and some not so much, and some we will still practice while other will have merged or have become extinct.

**Imran Khan is an actor, storyteller, and director, he works exclusively with and for young people.**

ایشیائی تھیٹر تمام دنیا میں اپنے فالک/روایتی اور کلاسیکل فن کے لیے جانا جاتا ہے۔ برصغیر کا حصہ نہ جانے ایسے کتنے ہی پرفارمنس اسٹائل سے بھرا ہوا ہے جیسے کٹیپتلی تھیٹر، ماسک تھیٹر، میوزیکل تھیٹر وغیرہ۔ اور اگر ہم ان فنون کی اکائیوں تک پہنچنے کی کوشش کریں تو ہمیں معلوم ہوگا کہ انہیں کتنے ذیلی انداز موجد ہیں کہ کئی مرتبہ انکی گنتی کرنا بھی مشکل ہے۔ اسی طرح کے فنون میں سے ایک "فن قصہ گوئی" یا پھر کہانی کہنے کا فن ہے جسے برصغیر میں ایک خاص اہمیت حاصل ہے۔ یہ وہ فن ہے جسکے تجربہ سبھی کو ہے اور سب ہی اس سے لطف اندوز ہوتے ہیں۔ اور اسکی وجہ یہ ہے کہ ہم سبھی بچے رہے اور ہم سب نے بچپن میں کہانیاں سنی ہیں۔ دادا دادی سے سنی گئی کہانیوں سے لیکر فالک کہانیاں گانے والوں تک، شاہی قصہ گو سے لیکر سامان بیچنے والوں تک جو کہانیاں سنا سنا کر اپنا سامان بیچتے ہیں تک فن قصہ گوئی برصغیر کا حصہ رہا ہے۔

کہنی وجوہات کی بنا پر کہانی کہنے کا یہ فن اپنا اثر دار نہیں رہا جتنی شدت اور کثرت سے اسے ابتدائی یا دور وسطیٰ میں کہا اور سنا جاتا تھا۔ اگر اسکی وجوہات پر غور کریں تو شاید جدید دور کی تیز رفتار زندگی، فن میں نئے نئے تجربات، ارتقاء اور ترقی ہو سکتے ہیں۔ بہ وجود اسکی لگوں نے اس فن کے تئیں اپنی توجہ اور دلچسپی نہیں کھوئی ہے۔ اسی لی جب اسیٹیج انڈیا اور کورین کلچرل سینٹر انڈیا نے ایک مشترکہ منصوبے کے تحت ہندوستانی بچوں کو کوریا کہانیاں سنانے کا بیڑہ اٹھایا تو یہ ضروری ہو گیا کہ ہم اس کہانی سنانے کے فن کے ساتھ دوسرے اور فن بھی جوڑیں جس سے سنے والے کی دلچسپی اور بڑھ جائے۔

منصوبہ تھا، تین کوریا کہانیاں تین الگ الگ اداکاروں کہ ذریعہ تین الگ الگ عمر کے بچوں کے گروپ کو سنائی جائیں گی۔ ان کہانیوں کو دو الگ الگ زبانوں میں کہا جائگا، اردو اور انگریزی۔ اب اس پروجیکٹ کے الگ الگ پہلو تھے جنکو ان پرفارمنس کو جوڑنا تھا۔ جیسے۔۔۔۔۔

### کوریا کہانیاں

#### Age Group

5 تا 7 سال

کہانی ایک انداز میں  
کہانی دو انداز میں  
کہانی تین انداز میں

8 تا 11 سال

کہانی ایک انداز میں  
کہانی دو انداز میں  
کہانی تین انداز میں

12 تا 15 سال

کہانی ایک انداز میں  
کہانی دو انداز میں  
کہانی تین انداز میں

ہر زبان کا اپنا ایک توازن ہے اپنی ایک ترتیب ہے، اسی طرح سے ہر فن ہر عمر کے لیے نہیں ہوتا، فالک کہانیاں جس کلچر سے پنی ہیں انکا اس کلچر سے ایک جڑاؤ ہوتا ہے۔ پافارمنس کی جگی بھی مختلف ہونگی، کہیں بہ قائدہ ایک آڈیٹوریم جوگا اور کہیں عارضی انتظامات ہونگے۔ اس لئے یہ ضروری ہو گیا کہ ایک ایسا طریقہ کار سوچا جائے، پرفارمنس کا ایک ایسا انداز ہو جو ان تمام مشکلات کو حل کرنے میں مددگار ثابت ہو۔ صورت حال یہ تھی جیسے آپ کسی ایک جگہ کے مسالچے لیکر دوسری جگہ کا کھانا بنانے جارہے ہیں۔ زبان کی دال، کلچر کا چاول اور عمر کے لہاز سے الگ الگ سبزیوں لیکر ایک کھچڑی بنائی جاسکتی ہے مگر کھچڑی اچھی نہیں بنی تو زبان بھی بد مزہ اور خانسامہ بھی بدنام۔ تو ان تمام چیزوں کو مد نظر رکھتے ہوئے ہم نے سوچا کیوں نہ "نوٹنکی" کا استعمال کریں۔ نوٹنکی ایک فالک اسٹائل ہے جو شمالی ہندستان کے اتر پردیش میں کھیلا جاتا ہے۔ اسمیں کافی ناچ گانا ہوتا ہے اور مکالمے منظوم ہوتے ہیں۔ دوسرا اسٹائل "شتریہ ڈانس" یا "واریر ڈانس" جو ہندوستان کے شمالی مشرق کے اسام میں کھیلا جاتا ہے۔ اس اسٹائل کو کرنے کے لیے کافی قوت اور مکرہ کی ضرورت ہے۔ بھروپیا یا بھانڈ جو وقتاً فوقتاً اپنا روپ بدلتا رہتا ہے اور اس طریقے سے لوگوں کی داد اکٹھا کرتا ہے۔







اس شکل میں پرفارمر نے کوریائی کرداروں یا کسی ایک کردار کا روپ دھرا۔ اس منصوبے نے لوگوں کو ریسرچ اور ساتھ ٹریننگ کے لئے بھی موقع فراہم کیا۔ زیادہ تر پرفارمرز شہری ماحول میں پلے بڑے تھے اور ان میں سے بہت ہی کم تھے جنہوں نے تھیٹر کی نظم پائی تھی۔ ایسے میں یہ بھی بہت ضروری ہو گیا تھا کہ ایسے استادوں کی مدد لی جائے جو کہ ان فارمز کے ماہر ہے۔

مثال کے طور پر ایک ایسے موسیقی کار جو اپنی دھن کو آج کے ٹیکنالوجی پسند کرنے والے بچوں کے مطابق ہو ساتھ وہ اپنا روایتی وجود نا کھوئے۔ ایک ایسی دھن جو انگریزی اور اردو دونوں زبانوں کے بول کو بھائے۔ ایک ایسی دھن جو انگریزی اور اردو دونوں زبانوں کے بول کو بھائے۔ ایک ایسا مُصنّف جو کوریائی کہانی کو ایک ہی وزن کے ساتھ دونوں زبانوں میں لکھ دے یا ترجمہ کر دے۔

پروجیکٹ کا نام تھا۔ (نیل اے ٹیل) کوریہ (بکوا ایک کہانی۔ کوریہ) چھ پروجیکٹ کے دوران پرفارمرز کو ۳۳ سکولوں کے دورے کرنے تھے بچوں کو یہ کہانیاں سنانے کے لئے۔ ان پرفارمنس کے دوران وہ مختلف قسم کی پریشانیوں سے پرفارمرز کو دو چار ہونا پڑا اور ساتھ ہی فوری طور پر انکا حل بھی وہیں نکالنا پڑا۔ زیادہ تر آنے والی پریشانیاں تھی جہاں کلاسیکل اور فولک اسٹائل میں ٹیکنالوجی کا استعمال کیا گیا تھا۔ زیادہ تر سکولوں کے پاس آڈیو چلانے کا معقول انتظام نہیں تھا اور بنا اچھے آڈیو سسٹم کے، بنا آڈیو ٹریک بجنے کے کہانی کو گانا ناممکن تھا۔ یہ تمام اسٹائل سازندوں کے رہتے انکے ساتھ گائے جاتے ہیں۔

اس وجہ سے پرفارمر اپنے نازرین کے ساتھ بات چیت کرتے تھے۔ پر جب میوزک پہلے ہی ریکارڈ کر لیا گیا تھا ایسے میں پرفارمر کو اسی کے حساب سے کہانی انی تھی یا سنانی تھی۔ جس کی وجہ سے ایک فولک فورم جو اصل میں ایک بات چیت والا فورم ہے۔۔۔۔۔ فارم بن گیا۔ ایسی جگہوں پر پرفارمرز نے بنا میوزک کے پرفارم کیا۔ کبھی تو یہ کامیاب ہوا اور کبھی بُری طرح پٹ گیا۔

An Audience Member reacting to story



ون روا سوچ صباخ۔ راک تیاہ، وگ، صرق، راکا، ناخ نارم  
سے، ترک ماگ کے کل کے روا ہتا اس کے رمع

# INTERDISCIPLINARY EXCHANGE

FINEGAN KRUCKEMEYER



You and Me and The Space Between Terrapin Puppet Theatre's Production Photo: Jane Longhurst



24

A current project looks at the nature of edges - specifically those at which the water laps. It is a work inspired by islands, borne of a conversation between island dwellers.

Two years ago, while working together in San Diego, my friend Eric Johnson (artistic director of Honolulu Theatre for Youth) and I got to talking about the geographies which hold our work and lives. He lives in Hawaii and I in Tasmania, locations thousands of miles apart, but also both island states of larger nations. And while the former (steeped in a rich Polynesian history) is arguably more well-defined to the outsider's eye (Tasmania's equally proud indigenous culture having been threatened since

colonial arrival, but thankfully now asserting itself once again), each inhabits an intriguing middle-ground, as it is at times beholden to a broader national identity ("Australianness," "Americanness," whatever those terms may mean), and at times a space unto itself.

And besides these geopolitical notions of borders, there are the other borders - the sea borders. Because an island is a space imbued with its own psychology, a space which has a robust sense of self (as it can gauge its parameters - and perimeters - so well), a space which has sometimes troubling relationships with "the other" (that which lies beyond its edges), a space which





You and Me and The Space Between Terrapin Puppet Theatre's Production  
Drawing: Tom O'Hern

has grown to have a rich conversation with the sea (as both protector and inhibitor), a space which holds citizens who may at times wish to leave but, once having done so, similarly yearn to come back. And so we began imagining a play for children and their families about islands.

But to truly make this a conversation, there was an agreement that two partner organizations had to exist, one located in each floating state. Honolulu Theatre for Youth would bring the work to life in its Hawaiian location, and in our minds it had to be Terrapin Puppet Theatre that would do the same in Hobart, Tasmania. Each is a company that marries both invested grass-roots process and grand, theatrical vision. Each is well regarded on its island, and well thought of beyond. Each has at its helm an artistic director (in HTY's Eric, in Terrapin's Sam Routledge) who is excited by a conversation, and by the opportunity for a work to evolve where it needs. Coupled with this was the support of Tasmania's Ten Days on the Island Festival, and the nationwide Major Festivals Initiative (which saw it invested in, and programmed by, a string of prominent Australian festivals).

And perhaps most exciting of all, was not the similarities but rather the differences - the opportunity for a point of creative departure. I would write the one play (it currently sits on my computer as a third draft, still amorphous but finding its shape), and it would be realized in two forms, by two companies, on two islands. Written as a direct-address monologue - with themes of journeying, and environmental refugeeism, and border policy and family and place, and old ways, and young love - the work, You and Me and the Space Between, could be presented as each

director wished.

So in its Australian incarnation, Sam's is an exercise in transportable (and transportative) theatre, a conversation between orator, illustrator, musician and physical performer, with an economy of set and cast members picked up in - and culturally drawn from - each city and town visited. As a touring work then, the net cast will be wide but a sense of relatability will be ever cultivated. And in Hawaii, Eric seeks to harness the breadth of the Pacific Island culture, with multiple ethnicities visible upon the stage, and so recognizable to an equally diverse audience sitting in front of it. In this way, the themes held within the work may be repurposed as metaphors for the world outside, an homage to Hawaii (as point of arrival and departure and indigenous homeland all) without any specific place named.

So now, looking out from this island upon which I live, two plays sit upon the horizon, upon that most great, expansive edge. The words they hold are the same but the worlds they hold (crafted from the rich artistry that will see scores composed and environments conjured and characters embodied by wonderful performers) could not be more different. These works may never meet each other - separated as islands are by great bodies of water - and, aside from the small rectangle of a Skype screen, I may never meet these works. But this is the excitement and the risk and the palpable "what if" that comes with conversations which span oceans, that comes with two companies allowing one play to organically diverge as it must, and that comes with the presenting of big themes to small humans, who deserve narratives and stakes just as large as their imaginations.

**Finegan Kruckemeyer has had 76 commissioned works performed on five continents and translated into five languages, with 34 awards received.**



# BODY AND LIGHT

ANDREA BUZZETTI

## IL CORPO E LA LUCE



Making the light move. Shaping it, giving it a body. Crossing the shade to play with light. Combining two different approaches and passions: that of the performer who tells kids stories, and that of the lighting designer who paints the scene with strokes of light.

Enjoying the hic et nunc that's in every performance, so ephemeral and intangible, to then make it concrete with a lamp, a switch, a projector or a cable.

As a technician specialized in electronics and telecommunications, my relationship with what I have learned is natural and passionate at the same time, and I don't seem to ever be satisfied. So, I always try and understand things, and I open new windows. I am so curious and there's too much to discover out there.

Moving through the light as a performer, I started to think that behind every spotlight, every PARCAN light, every profile spot, there was more than just an object, which is already extraordinary in itself. Something that could create images, entwine light and darkness, enhance the depth of bodies and things. So I figured that the technical object could become an expressive element per se.

And I shared my thoughts with my fellow workers at La Baracca: with Lucio and Giada, lighting designers and performers; with Arro and Alex, lighting designers and technicians; with Valeria, who's not a technician but, as a director, she loves to explore light and its games and nuances.

So, basically I shared my thoughts with all of the technical and artistic staff at La Baracca -Testoni Ragazzi, a theatre company where a multi-faceted professional approach is not uncommon. A place where research is crucial, and where it doesn't matter who initiates it. We were all ready and tuned on the same channel.

And step after step, attempt after attempt, in 2007

we focused our research on a performing dimension where lighting bodies could be on stage together with the bodies of the performers. To date, the shows created have been four.

The first was *Under a Different Light*, in February 2008. Lucio and Giada on stage, directed by Valeria. And we were behind the scenes, coming to terms with darkness to slowly rediscover light. It was as if we were looking at it with the eyes of a child, and as if we were still able to be surprised at it.

On stage, small lights and lamps walk, because lighting fixtures have their dignity and this needs to be visible in this story.

*Under a Different Light* is successful, and a big surprise for us, too. And then, after a while, we are ready for our second step.



On-off Photo: Francesca Nerattini



I like to play for very young children, maybe because I started my career as a performer playing in *The Colors of Water* in 2003. I have met many young children ever since, in many cities of the world.

And I still fail to understand why a big boy like me, 1.90 meters tall, gets along so well with that bunch of tiny creatures.

So I brought my light bulbs and cables into the *Nidi\** of Bologna. 'Dangerous' but fascinating stuff, that deserves to be treated with respect.

And I researched and interacted with children and caregivers, with the support of Carlotta, who researched and wrote with me and who helped Valeria with the direction.

This lasted months and I finally 'discovered' that very young children do not always fear the darkness, they do not mind when a ray of light takes them by the hand.

In 2010, we created *On-Off*, a show for children from 1 to 4 years old. A jam-session for an actor and his light bulbs going on and off, on and off... *On-Off*.

On stage, a performer-technician, 100 meters of orange electric cables, 10 bulbs, 4 floor lamps, plus a variety of switches and potentiometers.

Music and movement play with the lights switching on and off, becoming a flower, a spoon, a dancer, a candle, a merry-go-round, a father, a mother and a child...

Light fixtures have also beautiful names: 'moving head lights,' conveying the idea of bright bodies in movement. It was love at first sight.

I wanted to tell a story about friendship; the friendship between a man and a moving headlight, aka *Spot*.



Spot Photo: Matteo Chiura

We needed a lot of software programming. Behind each movement of *Spot*, there are at least 20 minutes of programming. Then there was the performer's work. I needed to find a harmony in both rhythmic and spatial terms with the moving headlight, something so real that kids would literally want to kiss the light fixture after the show. In February 2012, after 250 hours of software programming and 4 weeks of rehearsals, we had the première. *Spot* is also for very young children, and as happened with *On-Off*, I had the full support of the entire staff.

Two years passed; two years to collect suggestions. To go back to the essence. The origin of light. To decide to tell young boys and girls of 6-7 years how light is created and how much energy and effort it involves. Electric energy - Dynamo - Bicycle! Where Lucio, Giada and I go on stage with three bicycles-generators.

Dynamos installed in the back wheel, 250W and self-produced light on stage.

*Rays of Light* premiered in 2014 and it is also a tribute to the concept of sustainable energy.

Light runs and this story has definitely not reached the end of the line.

There are so many routes to explore and many are the lamps that can light them up...

I have just come across the new generation LED bars.

I looked at them, for a long time, straight in the LED... and there it was, fatal attraction! What will happen?

I don't know, but quite a few lights have already turned on in my head...

\*In Italy, *crèches* (*Nidi d'infanzia*) are public educational institutions for children from 6 to 36 months.

**Andrea Buzzetti: actor, technician and author of *La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi* / Bologna (Italy)**





Portare la luce in movimento e dargli corpo. Attraversare l'ombra per farsi accarezzare dalla luce.

Intrecciando due sensibilità e due passioni. Quella del performer che incontra i bambini nei suoi racconti in movimento.

E quella del light designer che dipinge la scena con tratti di luce.

Cogliere il piacere dell'attimo che è proprio della performance. Etereo e impalpabile, fuggevole ed effimero. E contaminarlo con la concretezza di una lampada, di una spina, di un proiettore o di un cavo.

Perito elettronico, diplomato in telecomunicazioni, vivo con naturalezza e passione il rapporto con tutto quello che ho imparato, senza sentirmi mai appagato. Cercando di aprire sempre nuove finestre. La curiosità è tanta e c'è troppo da scoprire e conoscere.

Muovendomi nella luce come performer, ho cominciato a pensare che dietro ad un faro, un Par, un Domino, un Sagomatore, ci fosse qualcosa di più dell'oggetto, già di per sé straordinario. Capace di creare immagini, di tessere la luce con il buio, di esaltare la profondità dei corpi e delle cose. Ho iniziato a pensare che l'oggetto tecnico potesse diventare elemento espressivo di *per sé*.

E i miei pensieri hanno iniziato ad intrecciarsi con quelli dei miei compagni di strada de La Baracca. Con quelli di Lucio e Giada, che come me sono illuminotecnici e performers. Con quelli di Arro e Alex, light designer e concretamente tecnici, analogico e digitale. E con quelli di Valeria, che non

è un tecnico, ma come regista ama frequentare la luce e le sue sfumature.

Insomma: tutto lo staff tecnico e il direttore artistico de La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi, una compagnia dove la molteplicità professionale è di casa. Dove fare ricerca è fondamentale, e chi sia a dare il via non è così importante.

Eravamo già tutti pronti sintonizzati sulla stessa frequenza. E tentativo dopo tentativo, passo dopo passo, nel 2007 abbiamo iniziato a ricercare su una dimensione performativa dove i corpi illuminanti potessero stare in scena assieme ai corpi dei performer.

Così, fino ad oggi, sono nati quattro spettacoli.

Il primo è *Sotto un'altra luce*, febbraio 2008. Lucio e Giada in scena. Valeria in regia. Noi dietro. Tutti a confrontarci col buio, per riscoprire piano piano la luce.

Guardandola con gli occhi di un bambino e la coscienza ancora in grado di stupirci.

In scena piccole luci e lampade che camminano, perché il materiale illuminotecnico ha una sua dignità e in questa storia deve essere ben visibile.

*Sotto un'altra luce* va e stupisce anche noi. Una breve pausa e poi siamo pronti per il secondo passo.

Mi piace lavorare con i piccolissimi, forse perché ho iniziato il mio percorso come performer con *I colori dell'acqua* nel 2003. Da allora di piccolissimi ne ho incontrati tanti, in tante città del mondo.

E ancora non riesco a capire perché io, che sono





alto quasi 1,90, mi trovi così bene insieme a quella banda di “sottoilmetro”.

Allora ho iniziato a frequentare i nidi d’infanzia\* del Comune di Bologna, con le mie lampadine e i miei cavi. Materiale “pericoloso”, ma affascinante, da trattare con cura e rispetto.

Momenti di ricerca, interazioni con insegnanti e bambini, accompagnato da Carlotta che sperimenta e scrive con me e affianca Valeria in regia.

Uno studio durato mesi per “scoprire” che i piccolissimi non hanno sempre paura del buio, soprattutto se c’è un filo di luce che li accompagna. Così nel 2010 nasce *On-Off*, uno spettacolo per i bambini da 1 a 4 anni. Una Jam-session per attore e lampadine, che si accendono e si spengono... *On-Off*.

In scena un tecnico-attore, una scala, 100 metri di cavo elettrico arancione, 10 differenti lampadine, 4 piantane, interruttori e potenziometri vari. Musica e movimenti accompagnano il ritmo dell’accendersi e dello spegnersi delle lampadine che diventano un fiore, un cucchiaino, una ballerina, una candela, una giostra, un papà, una mamma e un bambino...

La bellezza dei fari è anche nei loro nomi: *moving head lights*, fari a testa mobile, corpi luminosi in movimento. Un amore a prima vista. Voglia di raccontare una storia di amicizia, tra un

uomo e un *moving head light*, detto anche semplicemente *Spot*.

Per farlo tanta programmazione software, perché dietro ad ogni movimento di *Spot* ci sono almeno 20 minuti di programmazione. Poi c’è il lavoro di messa in scena, per trovare come attore un’armonia ritmica e spaziale con quella macchina, il *moving head light*, così vera da essere riempita di baci dai bambini a fine di ogni spettacolo. A febbraio 2012, dopo 250 ore di programmazione software e 4 settimane di prove intense, c’è il debutto. Anche *Spot* è dedicato ai piccolissimi e come per *On-off*, dietro di me c’è tutto lo staff, che mi riempie di stimoli e di suggerimenti tecnici.

Altri due anni per raccogliere nuove suggestioni. Per tornare all’essenza. All’origine della luce. Per decidere di raccontare a un bambino di 6-7 anni come nasce la luce e quanta fatica ed energia costi. Energia elettrica - Dinamo - Bicicletta! E con Lucio e Giada andiamo in scena insieme a tre biciclette-generatori. Dinamo installata nella ruota posteriore, 250 W in bassa tensione e luce auto-prodotta in scena. *Raggi di luce* debutta nel 2014 ed è anche un omaggio al concetto di energia sostenibile.

La luce corre e questa storia di sicuro non è arrivata al capolinea... troppo intrigante. Sono tante le strade da indagare e tante sono le lampade che le possono illuminare... Ho appena visto le barre a led di nuova concezione. Le ho guardate a lungo, dritto, dritto nei led ... tra di noi, passione! Cosa può nascere? Non lo so, ma tante lampadine nella mia testa si sono già accese...

\*I nidi d’infanzia in Italia, sono istituzioni educative pubbliche dedicate ai bambini da 6 a 36 mesi.

**Andrea Buzzetti: attore, tecnico e autore de  
La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi / Bologna (Italia)**





# NO LONGER IN THE SHADOWS

DARYL BEETON



I'm sure everyone reading this has felt left out at some point in their lives, it's a feeling we all know and a feeling that is never comfortable. Sometimes it's because of a mistake we've made, words we've said or because of who we are.

Being left out because of who we are, because of the colour of our skin, because of our beliefs or because we are different from the perceived norm allows us to look at the world around us with a different view point. We're not in the middle of it all, not centre stage but placed in the wings, peeking out and observing the action.

Being on the edge of mainstream is a unique position. For all its negativity it can be one of luxury, not of pity. It allows us to sit back to examine and observe the world, question what we are seeing and spot the injustice happening all around us. This unique view of life enriches our thinking, our creativity and our approach to the rules we are made to play by. For us the rules don't always apply, which means we have the luxury of improvising and making our own.



The Garden, Graeae Theatre Company

As the years have gone by for those of us on the edge, in the wings peeking out, we have gained in numbers, we no longer sit alone in the dark corners, we are together, we are speaking, we are creating ideas and ways to engage and we are about to burst out.

Mainstream theatre has become obsessed with the latest trends, wanting to create the next best thing through cross collaborations with science, technology or media. But surely the best form of Interdisciplinary exchange is with those who are forced to live in the shadows because for years we have been making theatre that is truly interdisciplinary. We've had to think outside the box just to ensure we can communicate with each other and our audiences.

For over a decade Inclusive Theatre has been using integrated sign language, wireless technology for audio description, live video captioning, adapting, changing and evolving every art from theatre to circus to make it accessible to us and in doing so created new forms of dance, music and performance. We've done this in the shadows on our own. To begin with it was so we could make theatre as good as the mainstream, but now we've evolved beyond that, we are making theatre that is becoming the mainstream, theatre that is beyond the mainstream. How are we doing this? By making theatre that is made by and for everyone. No longer will this multifaceted form of theatre be kept in the dark. There is movement happening and TYA is its natural bedfellow.

Article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that every child has the right to participate freely in cultural life and the arts. What's important in the convention is the word 'every'. Every child has the right regardless of whoever they





are. Within TYA I see a change in the work being produced for young audiences, companies are making work for every child. Work that is specialised and made specifically for children with multiple and profound disabilities, work for children on the autistic spectrum, work for deaf children, for blind children. I applaud these companies for making creative and imaginative bespoke shows but due to their target audiences this work is often hidden in the shadows, out on the edges, so only a few fortunate people ever get to see them.

In TYA we always think about our audience, but in doing so our focus can become too outward facing. Yes we are making work for young Disabled people,

but what about the internal aspect of TYA. Where is the cultural and creative exchange happening between Disabled artists and ASSITEJ? How are we encouraging those Disabled theatre makers to make work for young audiences? What is stopping us?

There is a lesser known UN Convention, the Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons, this states that 'persons with disabilities have the opportunity to develop and utilise their creative, artistic and intellectual potential, not only for their own benefit, but also for the enrichment of society.'

As a global network we should be embracing this



as much as we have begun to embrace the need to make specialised shows for disabled audiences. We should be seizing this opportunity to start a new narrative with those Disabled theatre makers in the shadows, who are on the edge, who have been using every creative tool necessary to make challenging, experimental and interdisciplinary theatre for the last decade.

Theatre made by those 'on the edge' is theatre that doesn't confine itself to traditional rules. New forms and techniques are evolving all the time, not because we set out to do something different but because we had to and we have now turned this to our advantage, into a creative force that should be embraced not out of pity, but because of its richness.

Let's see Disabled theatre makers in the rehearsal rooms, on our stages and out of the shadows. It's time to pull back the curtains, open up the mainstream and make a new centre stage that everyone can access. Without these new dialogues and artist exchanges, Theatre for Young Audiences will never really be for everyone, instead it will be for the lucky ones and perpetuate the feeling of being left out by yet another generation.

**Daryl Beeton is an independent theatre maker and producer who creates shows for indoor and outdoor spaces. He is chair of the International Inclusive Arts Network.**

All photos are by: Alison Baskerville



The Garden, Graeae Theatre Company



# STANDING ON THE EDGE IN THE MIND

ASAYA FUJITA

心の中でEDGEに立つ



This ASSITEJ Artistic Gathering has a subtitle named “On the Edge”.

So I started wondering; what is “the edge” for our art?

When I look it up in the dictionary, “edge” means, in Japanese, “blade,” then “tip, end, and corner,” the nuances of which are all different, and lastly “sharpness and merit.” “Brink” and “verge” in Japanese also mean “edge.” The character for “brink and verge” is used for words, “just before,” “critical moment,” “time of departure,” “outstanding,” “risky,” “close,” and “indecent,” and the same character is used for such words as “international” and “interdisciplinary,” implying “inter.”

Then accordingly, if we use the Japanese nuances of “edge,” the word or the character has a nuance of a close borderline between different realms over which it is risky to transcend, and the other nuance of significance of different realms to be connected transcending a borderline.

In such a country as Japan where traditional art has originally developed, it is considered impossible that one art realm transcends to, mixes itself with, or invades the other. It was impossible for a Kyogen actor to perform Noh, and a school of Kyogen that taught Kyogen to a Kabuki actor was demolished. It was all in order to protect tradition and one genre should not be influenced by the others. And it was because the authority of the time was afraid that the power of theatre could change the society, and they banned theatre artists to create new work and demanded them to repeat the same repertoire inherited from ancestors. As a result, a miracle has occurred that a new work of a few hundred years ago is still performed in the same manner today. And this leads to a fact in Japanese performing arts that an old man who knows the old is the most superior and everybody else has to obey him. Such a climate has raised a centering ideology of each

genre such as Kabuki and Kyogen, but has not raised an ideology that has a view outside of these genres. While only knowledge was accumulated and technique was developed, stability and stagnation were created. And a mistaken impression that the stabilized and stagnated condition is the ideal condition was also created. It may be inevitable for genres of traditional performing arts, but it is problematic that this ideology has been inherited by the genre of contemporary art.

Even the genre of TYA inherits such a state. Needless to say, stability and stagnation is the enemy of performing arts. Performing arts need to change as if to take changes of audiences in advance. Even more, artists who are demanded to foresee tomorrow need to stand on the edge and be bold to transcend the edge in our time when it is much easier to cross the borders, and where differences between classes and ethnicities are not as fixed especially in Japan and countries which have proud traditions.

And those who think we have nothing to do with traditional arts as we don't have them should be careful as well because from the moment one feels satisfied when a certain result is achieved, stability and stagnation will begin, therefore, I keep reminding myself that we, artists, should be standing on the edge in the mind.



**Asaya Fujita is a Japanese playwright and director. He is also ASSITEJ International Vice President and President of ASSITEJ Japan Centre.**

All photos are by: Kazuo Yamazaki





今回のアシテジ・アーティスティック・ギャザリングには、「On the Edge」というサブタイトルがつけられている。

そこで私は考えてみる。我々の芸術において「edge」とは何か？

日本語で、「edge」の訳語を探すと、「刃」というのがまずあって、それから「はし、ふち、へり、かど」とニュアンスのちがう大和言葉が続き、そのあとに「鋭さ、利点」が来る。似た言葉に「きわ」があったと思って、試しに「きわ」を引いてみたら「the edge」とあった。「きわ」は「際」と書く。「間際」「瀬戸際」「帰り際」「際立つ」「際どい」などと使い、同じ文字を音読みすると「国際」になる。そこからの造語で「学際」などもある。「際」には「inter」の意味もあるのだ。

してみると「edge」は、日本語のニュアンスを援用すると、ある領域の、そこからは違う領域になるぎりぎりの境目で、そこを越えることには危険が伴うというニュアンスと、同時にしかし、そこを越えて違う領域同士がつながりあうことに意義があるという、矛盾したニュアンス

を持っているようだ。

日本のように伝統的な芸術が独特の発展をしている国では、芸術のある領域と別の領域とは、混ざり合ったり侵しあったりしてはならないものとされてきた。狂言役者が能を演ずることは出来なかったし、歌舞伎役者に狂言を教えた狂言の流派は取り潰しになった。すべて伝統を守り続けていくため、そのためには他ジャンルの影響を受けてはならないとされてきたのだ。それは、演劇の持っている社会を変える力を、時の権力者が恐れたからで、そのために権力者は演劇の新作を禁じ、父祖伝来のレパートリーを繰り返し再演することを要求した。その結果、数百年前の新作が、今もそのまま上演されているという、奇跡のようなことがおこったのだ。そこで日本の芸能では、昔を知っている老人が一番偉くて、みんなはそれに従わなくてはならないものとされた。そういう風土は、歌舞伎は歌舞伎らしく、狂言は狂言らしくという、ジャンルごとに中心を目指す思想こそ育てても、目がジャンルの外へ向けられるような思想は育たなかった。そこでは知識は蓄積され、技術は



向上するが、同時に安定と停滞が生まれる。そして安定し停滞した状態が、到達すべき理想的な状態であるという錯覚が生まれる。伝統的芸能のジャンルがそうなるのは、仕方のないことかもしれない。しかし現代アート分野にまでそういう体質が受け継がれていることが問題なのだ。

TYAの分野ですらそういう体質を受け継いでいる。言うまでもなく、安定と停滞は舞台芸術の敵である。舞台芸術は、観客の変化を先取りするように変化しなければならない。まして、現代のように、国境が越えやすいものになり、階級・民族の違いが固定的なものではなくなってくると、明日を予言することを求められている芸術家は、edgeに立ち、edgeを越える大胆さを持たなければならない。特に日本では、そして日本のように誇るべき伝統を持っている国々では。自分の国には伝統芸能はないから関係ないと思っている人は、注意をした方がいい。満足すべき成果をあげ、「これでいい」と思った瞬間から、安定と停滞は始まるのだから。だから私たちアーティストは、心の中でedgeに立つべきだと、私は自分自身に対して言い続けているのである。

**ふじたあさや：劇作家・演出家 / アシテジ世界理事副会長・アシテジ日本センター会長**



The Great Picture Book of Zukkoke Monster





Ya-Ya of Wonderful Forest



# FALLING DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE: BEYOND THE EDGES WITH OILY CART

JEREMY HARRISON



*'There are good theatre companies, and there are great theatre companies. There are great theatre companies, and there is Oily Cart. I'm reminded of that every time I go and see the company's work because they never fail to surprise me. An Oily Cart show is like falling down a rabbit hole and finding yourself in Wonderland. Every show is an adventure - sometimes awe-inspiring, sometimes self-reflective, sometimes a little bit scary - that makes you look both at the world and theatre itself anew.'*

**Lyn Gardner**

There are many remarkable things about London based company Oily Cart, not least of which that founder members Tim Webb, Claire de Loon and Max Reinhardt have been working together collectively and collaboratively for some 35 years; creating a multi-faceted, multi-sensory theatre for what many consider to be impossible audiences, such as the very young, children and young people with autism and children with profound and multiple disabilities. The Oily team come from different artistic perspectives with Tim Webb directing and writing the shows, Clare De Loon designing a scenography that must not only look good, but taste, smell, sound and feel good too and Max Reinhardt creating music, which provides not only the sonic world, but often a structure and performance vocabulary. Their long-standing working relationship has enabled a symbiotic blending of disciplines, which has allowed Oily Cart to develop a unique inter-disciplinary approach to making theatre that is deeply responsive to the very particular needs of its audience.

Oily Cart shows though big in imagination, are often designed to be played to very small audiences. Intensive interaction is the key to engaging those with profound sensory impairment. Each child requiring a personalized approach, facilitated through touch, sound, smell and/or physical sensation. The very dramaturgical fabric of the company's work is informed and shaped by their audience, leading to an engagement with a wide range of disciplines.

Perfumiers Seven Scent helped them create the smell of a mole hole and provided signature smells for characters conceived to work on all the senses: their very names, such as *Light Show's* Rustle or *Bounce's* Jump and Spring, allowing the human and material elements of the show to interrelate and coexist in a way reflective of their multi-sensory approach, as well as the cognitive processes of their audiences.

Instrument maker Jamie Linwood has collaborated with them on numerous projects, creating instruments out of tubes or mounting them on a bicycle that enabled the sound of the show to be both kinetic and immersive. Oily Cart music must be heard and felt. It is used as the fabric of the shows, offering audiences cues to engage: celebrating and echoing the nature of the materials that form the foundation of their work; inviting us to scrunch, smell and touch, as well as sing and listen.

Mechanical sculptor Nik Ramage has created a range of props and scenic elements for the company, such as the tube filled lanterns in *Tube* and the screens in *Bounce*, which can be seen, heard and felt, allowing even children with very poor motor skills to engage with the show in a







A young boy with PMLD enjoys the sight and sound of a tube light in Tube Photo: Amanda Webb

very beautiful way. The objects themselves somehow echoing the synergy found in the company's working methods.

Interdisciplinarity and collaboration is at the heart of the Oily Cart approach, whether it be with aerialist specialists Ockham's Razor or trampoline artists Rachel Bird and Tom Jones, as in *Bounce* and *Something in the Air*; or with Syrian kanun player Maya Youssef or Australian virtuoso bassist Adam Storey, in their current piece *Light Show*. It is an approach reflective of the overlapping and symbiotic relationship found in the core creative team. A relationship they extend to their audience who provide the inspiration, subject and form of their work. Oily Cart audiences are full participants in their interactive vision. Whether child, carer or parent, they can find themselves swinging with

the cast in specially constructed flying-cradles or touching, shaking, tasting and bouncing into their world. The audience is central to both the creation and performance of an Oily Cart show. Their disability work ending with a naming song, which sees each audience member become the subject of their own private theatrical moment, their name forming the sole lyrical content and their responses shaping the music and those performing it.

An Oily Cart show is indeed a wonderland, where edges are at best blurred, perhaps they even disappear: between disciplines; between audience and performer. This is a total theatre experience, shaped and shared by its audience, who are themselves often beyond the edges of the usual children's audience. As Guardian theatre critic Lyn Gardner writes in her forward to the Trentham book 'Oily Cart: all sorts of theatre for all sorts of kids':

'Oily Cart has consistently asked questions about theatrical form, the way in which narrative is used and how the rules of spectatorial engagement can be mischievously adapted and changed for the benefit of young audiences and their carers. For three decades the company has been investigating the very nature of theatre itself. Every new show is a question, not an answer.'

**Jeremy Harrison is chair of Rose Bruford College's Theatre for Young Audience's Centre and works with Oily Cart on their certificated training programme *Creating with the Cart*.**

# A DIFFERENT WAY OF WRITING FOR THE THEATRE

BERTA HIRIART

## OTRO MODO DE ESCRIBIR TEATRO



In 2015, *Teatro Ciego* group, formed by blind and non-blind artists, commissioned me to write a play for children about the experience of blindness. The challenge implied, to begin with, breaking the borders of my usual way of perceiving the world and the theatre itself: how to write a dramatic text without visual references?

I began an investigation following two paths: the review of essays, informative texts, and movies about the universe of blindness, and the exchange of ideas and experiences with the blind actors and the group's director, Juan Carlos Saavedra, who in spite of seeing, knows the world of the blind and the art of moving in the darkness.

Among the materials I was exploring, I came upon Louis Braille's biography and I knew intuitively this could be a seed to the play. The inventor of the

famous method that takes his name, lost the sense of sight at the age of 5 as the result of an accident. However, that intelligent and curious child would adapt himself with such good spirit to his new condition that he managed to turn the difficulties into stimuli that gave full meaning to his life.

After several meetings with the group, I found the basic idea for the play: the audience would go with the protagonist through his vital adventure. If Louis Braille lost his sight little by little, the darkness would have to be established slowly, offering first a blurry vision, then a semidarkness with variations of light and shade, and finally, the total night. And if he had to go to a regular school, in which there was not any material that helped him to acquire any basic knowledge, the audience would sit down in desks to receive in the darkness a geography lesson.



The Blind Inventor's Vision



I wrote a first version looking for sounds, smells and sensations able to replace the visual images that would be part of a conventional play. Along the way, I realized that while the dialogues lend themselves to confusion if you aren't sure of who is speaking, the letters exchanged between the characters were a great resource. They were also going well with the plot. At the age of ten, Braille traveled to the Institute for Blind Persons, in Paris, and the only way to keep in touch with home was through postal mail.

### **Dear family:**

*I hope you are healthy and happy. I am not spending my time badly. Due to the fact that I am busy the whole day, I don't think too much about the chicken with vegetables that mom prepares, nor about your hugs and words of fondness. Here everything is different: there are many stairs, we can only bath once a month and the workshops are in cellars where a beam of Sun does not enter. But not everything is sad: I already have two friends, enjoy very much the organ classes and the library with books made by letters highlighted on the paper. My bad luck is that I have read all of them and there are not any more. It should take a lot of work to do them. Some day I will invent a method in order to make it easier to read and write for the blind. I have already some ideas. For the moment, I dictate this letter to Tristan, a child with good sight that studies in our institute in exchange for helping us as a guide, reader or assistant in the correspondence. It is a good exchange that helps many children who, though they see, have difficulties and not to speak of us. I try to reward his favors teaching him the little that I know of history and other matters. Ah, I forgot! They have nominated me as an assistant of the teacher of the socks workshop. Love, Louis.*

The written play had several changes in the staging process. Everyone - the director, the actors, the musician, the lighting and scenic elements designer and the movement advisor - contributed decisively not only giving life to the text, but taking it far beyond. Blind children could have a complete

theatrical experience, probably for the first time in their lives.

Occasionally, the scene was lit by sparkles from different light sources. The effect intended to relieve the stress that darkness produces in people who are able to see. Certain moments needed to be emphasized. At a decisive point, just after the Institute authorities forbid to students the use of Braille's alphabet, someone set fire to a message. The glow of the flame, along with the smell of burned paper, spoke by itself of injustice the closed-minded professors were committing.

When the premiere came, anxiety could be felt in the air as darkness began to dominate the environment, but little by little some laughs or exclamations began to be heard while, at times, all you could hear was the touch of silence. Maybe, everybody was as surprised as myself by the power that a song, a breeze on the face, or a strong perfume of roses takes in the darkness.

At the end, the audience had an unexpected reaction: children and grown-ups began to sing with the actors:

*Above, sings the bird  
Below, sings the water  
Above and below  
my soul, it opens.*

The darkness had stopped being a threat and turned into an atmosphere that invites multiple discoveries, just as it happened to Louis Braille.

*The Blind Inventor's Vision*, by Berta Hiriart, a play for all audiences over 8 years old, was made with the support of Fundación BBVA Bancomer, Mexico City System of Theatres, National Fund of the Arts.

**Berta Hiriart (Mexico) has worked in theatre, literature and has also taught creative writing in many workshops for over four decades.**

All photos are by: Héctor Ortega



En 2015, el grupo Teatro Ciego, conformado en su mayoría por artistas invidentes, me invitó a escribir una obra para niños que abordara, de algún modo, la experiencia de la ceguera. El reto implicaba, de inicio, romper las fronteras de mi propia percepción de la realidad y del teatro mismo. ¿Cómo elaborar un texto dramático sin referencias visuales?

Eché a andar una investigación por dos caminos: el de la revisión de ensayos, textos informativos y películas que me acercaran teóricamente al universo de la ceguera, y el del intercambio de ideas con los actores ciegos y el director del grupo y del montaje, Juan Carlos Saavedra, quien a pesar de ver, conoce el mundo de los ciegos y el arte de moverse en la oscuridad.

Entre los materiales que fui explorando, llegué a la biografía de Luis Braille y supe intuitivamente que ahí había una semilla para comenzar a tejer la obra. El inventor del conocido método de lecto-escritura que lleva su nombre, perdió la vista a los 5 años, a raíz de un accidente. Sin embargo, aquel niño inteligente y curioso habría de adaptarse con tan buen ánimo a su nueva condición que logró convertir las dificultades en estímulos que dieron

pleno sentido a su vida.

Luego de varias sesiones con el grupo, logré formular la idea central de la obra: el público acompañaría al protagonista en su aventura vital. Si Luis Braille perdió la vista poco a poco, la oscuridad iría instalándose lentamente, ofreciendo primero una visión borrosa, luego una penumbra con variaciones de luz y sombra, y finalmente, la noche total. Y si tuvo que ir a una escuela regular, en la que no había material alguno que le ayudara a adquirir los conocimientos básicos, el público se sentaría en pupitres a recibir en la oscuridad una lección de geografía.

Escribí una primera versión buscando sonidos, olores y otros incentivos sensoriales capaces de reemplazar las imágenes que tendrían lugar en una obra convencional. En el camino, caí en la cuenta de que si los diálogos se prestaban a confusión al no ofrecer certeza de quién está hablando, las cartas, en cambio, eran un gran recurso. Además, iban bien con la trama: A los 10 años, Braille viajó al Instituto para Ciegos, en París, y el único modo de mantener contacto con su familia era el correo postal.



## Queridos papás y hermanos:

*Espero que todos estén sanos y contentos. Yo no la paso mal. Gracias a que estoy todo el día ocupado, no pienso demasiado en el calor de nuestra casa, ni en el pollo con verduras que prepara mamá, ni en sus abrazos y palabras de cariño. Aquí todo es distinto: hay muchas escaleras, sólo podemos bañarnos una vez al mes y los talleres se encuentran en galerones donde no entra un rayo de sol. Pero no todo es triste: ya tengo dos amigos, y disfruto mucho las clases de órgano y la biblioteca con 12 libros que tienen letras resaltadas sobre el papel. Ya los leí todos. Por mala suerte, no hay más. Debe costar mucho trabajo hacerlos. Algún día inventaré un método para que nos sea más fácil leer y escribir, ya se me han ocurrido algunas ideas. Por lo pronto, dicto esta carta a Tristán, un pequeño amigo con buena vista que estudia en nuestro instituto a cambio de prestar servicios a los ciegos como guía, lector o ayudante en la correspondencia. Es un buen intercambio que ayuda a muchos niños que aunque ven, se encuentran en dificultades, y ni qué decir a nosotros. Yo trato de recompensar sus favores enseñándole lo poco que sé de Historia y otras materias. ¡Ah, se olvidaba!, me han nombrado... asistente del maestro del taller de calcetines. Los quiere, Luis.*

El texto, como era de esperar, se vio modificado a lo largo de la puesta en escena. Todo mundo - el director, los actores, el músico, la diseñadora de la iluminación y los elementos escénicos - contribuyó en forma decisiva no solo a darle vida sino a llevarlo más allá de su planteamiento original. Los niños ciegos podrían tener una experiencia teatral completa, quizá por primera vez en su vida.

De vez en cuando, la escena se iluminaba con destellos provenientes de diversas fuentes de luz. El efecto se proponía aliviar el estrés que causa la oscuridad en las personas que nos orientamos con la vista, y al mismo tiempo subrayaba ciertos momentos con una fuerza particular. En el punto climático, cuando las autoridades del Instituto prohíben a los estudiantes el uso del alfabeto

Braille, alguien prendía fuego a un mensaje: el resplandor de la llama, unido al olor del papel quemado, hablaba por sí mismo de la injusticia que los maestros, en su cerrazón al cambio, estaban cometiendo.

Cuando llegó el estreno, los niños reaccionaron con cierta inquietud ante la creciente oscuridad pero, poco a poco, dejaron escuchar algunas risas y exclamaciones. Luego, predominó un atento silencio. Tal vez, el público se hallaba tan sorprendido como yo misma ante el poder que adquieren en la oscuridad una canción, un airecillo que nos sopla en la cara o un fuerte aroma de rosas.

Al final ocurrió un hecho inesperado: En el momento en el que muere Braille, chicos y grandes se echaron a cantar junto con los actores: *Arriba canta el pájaro y abajo canta el agua. Arriba y abajo se me abre el alma.*

La oscuridad había dejado de ser una amenaza para convertirse en un ambiente abrigador que invita a múltiples descubrimientos, justo como sucedió en su momento a Luis Braille.



La mirada del inventor ciego, de Berta Hiriart, una obra para todo público mayor de 8 años, realizada con el apoyo de Fundación BBVA Bancomer, el Sistema de Teatros de la Ciudad de México y el Fondo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes.

**Berta Hiriart (México) ha trabajado en el teatro, la literatura y la coordinación de talleres de escritura creativa a lo largo de cuatro décadas.**



The Blind Inventor's Vision

ART AND CULTURE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ASSITEJ  
LIECHTENSTEIN, KUNST UND KULTUR FÜR JUNGES  
PUBLIKUM, AM SCHRÄGEN WEG 20, 9490 VADUZ  
ANTONIA BÜCHEL



Das fliegende Klassenzimmer - Daburu(T) Tanz&Theater  
in Koproduktion TAK Theater Liechtenstein



Herzwerk - TRIAD Theatercompany in Koproduktion TAK Theater  
Liechtenstein



Die wilde Schar - TRIAD Theatercompany in Koproduktion TAK  
Theater Liechtenstein



Grimm & Co. - TAK Theater Liechtenstein



# SYNERGY OF CHOREOGRAPHY AND INSTALLATION ART TOWARDS INTER-RELATIONAL ECOLOGY AND IMMERSION

DALIJA ACIN THELANDER



*“It is not the object  
which is important  
but the way it is lived  
by the spectator”*

Helio Oiticica

## CHOREOGRAPHY AS EXPANDED PRACTICE - CHOREOGRAPHY AS ORGANIZATION OF ATTENTION

Throughout my choreographic practice, I aspire to introduce a broader understanding of dance and choreography in the context of both the artistic and social experience. I work with choreography as expanded practice - which takes as its starting point a re-thinking of choreography as a general referent for any structuring - extended beyond dance, bodily expression, representation and style. I perceive choreography as the organization of attention and as such I apply it to strategies, protocols, spatial structures and movement of the audience itself.

## SYNERGY OF CHOREOGRAPHY AND INSTALLATION ART

My choreographic practice considers the synergy of choreography and installation art and their capacities for activation of the audience.

Installation art allows the viewer to be immersed in sensory and narrative experiences. Rather than being separated from the viewer, installation art takes into account the viewer's entire sensory experience in interaction with the artistic work. Installation art's main concern is the activation of the "seeing" subject - the audience. By proposing multiple perceptions of a single situation, it denies the viewers an "ideal" place from which to contemplate the work (as defined by the artist) and

instead assigns an emancipatory role to their activation. I share the perspective of some installation artists who see "psychological rigidity" in "seeing things from one fixed point of view," relating a single-point perspective to patriarchal ideology (Bishop, 2005). Therefore I see agency and the "idea of activated spectatorship as a politicized aesthetic practice," as noted by Claire Bishop (2005). Moreover, as she formulates it, "this type of work conceives of its viewing subject not as an individual who experiences the art in transcendent or existential isolation but as part of collective or community".

## DECENTRALIZED AND DISPERSED SPECTATORSHIP

By merging choreography and installation art, the structure of my work breaks down the division between audience and performers, and proposes movement in space as a way of experiencing. As such, and in accordance with theories of babies' specific "lantern" consciousness, my performances induce the interplay of audiences' physical movement and sensory input, operating on the basis of both generated and directed attention- looking at each other, at the performers, at the structures in the space, at their caregivers, often all at the same time. The structure and the content of my work insists on decentralized and dispersed spectatorship to raise the audience's awareness that "there is no one 'right' way of looking at the world, nor any privileged place [such as by traditional hierarchies of gender, race or ideology] from which such judgments can be made" (Bishop, 2005).

## HEIGHTENED IMMEDIACY

My choreographic strategies are devised on the basis of a phenomenological approach to



**Baby Space / Poznan, Poland**  
**Photo: Jakub Wittchen for Art Stations**  
**Foundation by Grażyna Kulczyk**

perception and the connections between vision and movement. As such, they are directed towards first-hand, direct, immersive experience of the audience, heightening their awareness of perception as embodied and interdependent with its surroundings. The audience is challenged to reorganize their repertoire of responses in accordance to unfolding events - indeed, subject and object are not separate entities but are reciprocally intertwined and interdependent. With this approach, I am aiming for a multi-modal and affective experience of both child and care-taker. The role of the care-taker is emphasized as adults are invited to support and follow their child and to share the experience. Safe and stimulating performance environments are conceived to generate an inter-relational ecology, providing unique conditions for a wide variety of interchange and communication.



**Sensescapes Photo: Dalija Acin Thelander**

## DIALOGICAL APPROACH

The performative practice implemented in my performances concerns the ongoing, mutually influential exchange between the performers and audience. I implement a dialogical approach, taking care that the dancer/performer is in constant negotiation between carrying out the scores of movement material and being in open dialogue with the audience, responsive and sensible to movements and inputs coming from the child, seeking “equality of presence” and “equality of action” (Fletcher-Watson, 2013).

## AGENCY

Proposing to the audience to move, respond and choose their own perspective and their own way of interaction and participation means entrusting the audience with an active agency. Giving an active role to the audience also means that their experience and responses become part of the aesthetic of the performance: “The specific aestheticity of the performance lies in its very nature as an event. And the aesthetic experience of the performance does not depend on the ‘work of art’ but on the interaction of the participants. What emerges from the interaction is given priority over any possible meaning” (Fischer-Lichte, 2008). Therefore I am interested in the subjectivity produced by sensory immediacy, and the asymmetry which occurs in the diversity of the audience’s experiences.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bishop, C. (2005), *Installation Art*, Tate Publishing  
 Fletcher-Watson, B. (2013), *Child’s Play: A postdramatic Theatre of Paidia for the very Young*, Platform, Vol. 7, No. 2, ‘Staging Play, Playing Stages’  
 Fisher-Lichte, E. (2008) *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*, Routledge

**Dalija Acin Thelander is Serbian choreographer, living and working in Stockholm, Sweden. She is using English language for all her work related materials.**







Sensescapes Photo: Alexandra Sende





## **V... OF COMMITMENT**

Early Childhood is the age of surprise, the age in which everything is still to be discovered. Children aged from 0 to 6 years are citizens who are on the verge of discovering a virgin territory; it is a time when everything is possible.

The youngest children, in their desire to explore the world, are at the beginning of all artistic expressions: looking to balance in order to walk and dance; playing with sounds they discover music; exploring a material they find Plastic Arts... The arts are therefore a prime tool to promote the integral development of children through the development of their multiple intelligences.

Evolutionary psychology, meanwhile, has shown that Early Childhood is the most important vital period in a person's development: it is at this stage that the most decisive experiences take place that will build the pillars of their personality.

This is why we feel that creating for this audience and, what's more, doing so based on the keys that they are familiar with, that is, those of an interdisciplinary universe, is more than just an option, it is a responsibility which the artistic community must be committed to.

## **ON THE EDGE... OF A NEW WORLD**

The verb "to grow" is intrinsic to Early Childhood; to grow, as evolution, as continuous learning through exploration and first-hand experiences.

Thus, the youngest children grow by investigating the world, the physical space around them which constantly surprises them with unknown novelties. But that physical space is more than just a place, it is the territory in which human needs are revealed by the footprints we leave in it. In their first games,

the youngest children create simple structures to express what they see or imagine.

Architecture is precisely that which deals with this relationship between human beings/physical spaces; even before we had time to consider it, all of a sudden, at the beginning of the creation of this new production, we instinctively felt that this discipline should be an indispensable part of the work process.

## **ON THE EDGE... OF HISTORY**

On the search for characters who, like our audience, live and breathe the desire and the need to explore the world, we set out, along with the team from Maushaus Architects, to navigate the history of humanity, in the various forms of life and social structures that anthropological research have brought us closer to.

So, we travelled a long way, so far in fact that we reached the most primitive peoples, where we knew as soon as we arrived that we had found what we were looking for: the nomadic people of millions of years ago.

Those nomads, just like the youngest audiences, did not initially communicate through the use of language. Likewise, before coming to understand and use numbers and letters, both prehistoric nomads and children discover drawing and construction.

Throughout history and throughout life, the world is therefore progressively transformed into a more and more symbolic reality.

All these parallels made it clear to us: our protagonists would be two nomads.



## ON THE EDGE... OF THE STAGE

Two nomads arrive at a strange, disorganised and chaotic place. It is a stage. The challenge we had was, therefore, to come up with a poetic discourse from all this.

Overwhelmed by responsibility, the scientific view of our architect friends helped us simplify this physical space. We discovered that the place into which we introduced our nomads was nothing more than a cluster of corners, lines and planes: the primary elements of Geometry and Mathematics and the pillars of the world, after all. That's how we knew that music, sound, light, movement, characterisation, actions, reactions... everything that is on or happens on stage should be built based on the simplicity that supported this apparently chaotic world.

How could our nomads shelter in a house made of corners, lines and planes? How could they move freely if they had to adhere to them? How could they hide behind such simple elements? And the music for the stage, how could it be a line? How could it be a corner? And how could the spotlights draw a plane?

## ON THE EDGE... OF EXPERIMENTATION

The show, *Nomads*, is the result of a creative process in which research has been the key;

Architecture, History, Psychology, Geometry, Mathematics, and Art are just some of the disciplines in which we have immersed ourselves throughout this exciting adventure.

Another key for us to really delve into it was experimentation, both in terms of creation and in the end result of the work.

Because if the creators of the show had not been free to ask questions, they could not have invented. And if the actresses had not been free to test the story, they would not have been able to respond when asked, *Why...?* Similarly, if the audience were not free to interpret the story in their own way, it would make no sense to them.

Letting each link in the chain experience in its own way is, therefore, a commitment to freedom. What is this, if not going one step beyond?

**Irene Basilio Intxausti is responsible for Communication in Teatro Paraíso company.**

Nomads Photo: Teatro Paraíso.





## EN EL BORDE... DEL COMPROMISO

La Pequeña Infancia es la edad de la sorpresa, la edad en la que todo está aún por descubrirse. Los/as niños/as de 0 a 6 años son ciudadanos/as que están al borde del descubrimiento de un territorio virgen; se trata de un momento en el que todo es posible.

Los/as más pequeños/as, en su deseo de explorar el mundo, están en el inicio de todas las expresiones artísticas: buscando su equilibrio para andar, bailan; jugando con los sonidos descubren la música; explorando un material se encuentran con las Artes Plásticas... Así, las Artes se convierten en una herramienta privilegiada para impulsar la formación integral de los/as niños/as, a través del desarrollo de sus inteligencias múltiples.

La psicología evolutiva, por su parte, ha demostrado que la Pequeña Infancia es el período vital más importante en el desarrollo de una persona: es en esta etapa en la que se viven las experiencias más decisivas que construirán los pilares de su personalidad.

Es por todo ello por lo que sentimos que crear para estos/as espectadores/as y hacerlo, además, en base a las claves que ellos manejan, es decir, las de un universo interdisciplinar es, más que una opción, una responsabilidad con la que la comunidad artística ha de comprometerse.

## EN EL BORDE... DE UN NUEVO MUNDO

El verbo "crecer" es intrínseco a la Pequeña Infancia; crecer, como evolución, como aprendizaje continuo a través de la exploración y la vivencia de experiencias en primera persona.

Así, los/as niños/as más pequeños/as crecen investigando el mundo, el espacio físico que les rodea y que les sorprende con continuas novedades desconocidas. Pero ese espacio físico es algo más que un lugar, es el territorio en el que las necesidades humanas quedan evidenciadas a través de las huellas que dejamos en él. Los/as

niños/as más pequeños/as, en sus primeros juegos, crean estructuras sencillas para expresar lo que ven o imaginan.

La Arquitectura es, precisamente, la que se ocupa de esa relación ser humano / espacio físico; fue antes incluso de razonarlo, y de una manera totalmente instintiva, como de repente, en el inicio de la creación de esta nueva producción, sentimos que esta disciplina debía ser pieza indispensable en ese proceso de trabajo.

## EN EL BORDE... DE LA HISTORIA

A la búsqueda de personajes que, como nuestros/as espectadores/as, respirarán el deseo y la necesidad de explorar el mundo, comenzamos, junto al equipo de Maushaus Arquitectos, a navegar en la Historia de la humanidad, en las distintas formas de vida y estructuras sociales que las investigaciones antropológicas nos han acercado hasta nuestros días.

Así, viajamos lejos, mucho, tanto, que llegamos hasta los pueblos más primitivos, donde supimos, nada más llegar, que habíamos encontrado aquello que buscábamos: el pueblo nómada de hace miles de millones de años.

Aquellos nómadas, al igual que los/as espectadores/as más pequeños/as, no se comunicaban en un inicio haciendo uso del lenguaje. Y de igual manera, antes de llegar a la comprensión y uso de los números y las letras, tanto los nómadas prehistóricos como los/as niños/as, descubren el dibujo y la construcción. El mundo, así, tanto a lo largo de la Historia como a lo largo de la vida, se transforma progresivamente, en una realidad más y más simbólica.

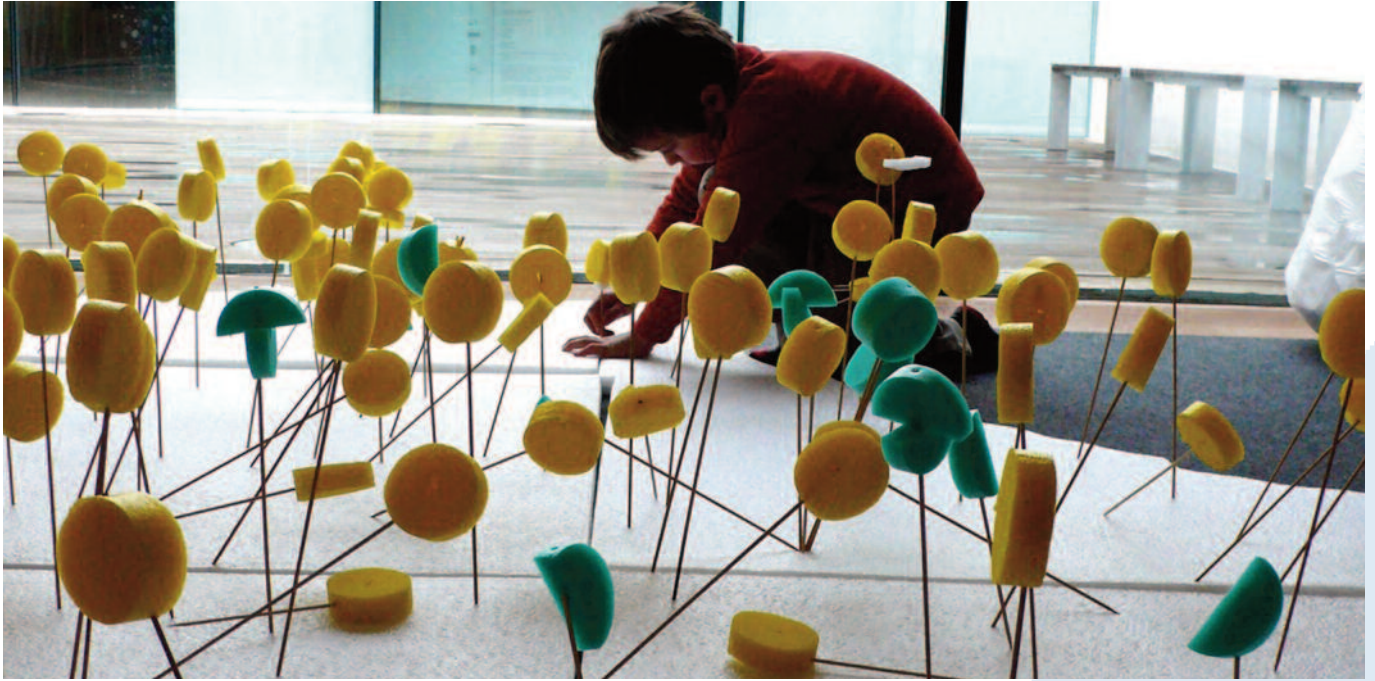
Todos estos paralelismos nos lo hicieron tener claro: nuestras protagonistas serían dos nómadas.

## EN EL BORDE... DEL ESCENARIO

Dos nómadas llegan a un lugar extraño, desorganizado y caótico. Es un escenario. El reto que teníamos era, por lo tanto, el de elaborar un discurso poético de todo aquello.

Abrumados por la responsabilidad, la visión más





científica de nuestros amigos arquitectos nos ayudó a simplificar aquel espacio físico.

Descubrimos, así, que aquel lugar en el que habíamos introducido a nuestras nómadas, no era sino un conglomerado de puntos, rectas y planos: los elementos primarios de la Geometría y las Matemáticas, y los pilares del mundo, al fin y al cabo.

De esta manera supimos que música, sonidos, luces, movimientos, caracterización, acciones, reacciones... todo aquello que estuviera u ocurriera en escena debía ser construido en base a esa sencillez que sustentaba aquel, en apariencia, caótico mundo.

¿Cómo podrían nuestras nómadas cobijarse en una casa hecha de puntos, rectas y planos? ¿Cómo podrían moverse libremente si debían ceñirse a ellos? ¿Cómo podrían esconderse detrás de tan simples elementos? Y la música para la escena, ¿cómo podría ser una recta? ¿Cómo, un punto? ¿Y cómo los focos podrían dibujar un plano?

## EN EL BORDE... DE LA EXPERIMENTACIÓN

El espectáculo *Nómadas* es el resultado de un proceso creativo en el que la investigación ha sido la clave; la Arquitectura, la Historia, la Psicología, la Geometría, las Matemáticas o el Arte han sido

algunas de las disciplinas en las que nos hemos sumergido a lo largo de esta apasionante aventura. Otra de las llaves para adentrarnos en ella ha sido la experimentación, tanto a la hora de crear, como en el resultado final de ese trabajo.

Porque si los/as creadores/as del espectáculo no hubieran sido libres para hacerse preguntas, no hubieran podido inventar. Y si las actrices no hubieran sido libres de testar la narración, no hubieran sabido responder a un *¿Y por qué...?* De igual manera, si los/as espectadores/as no fueran libres de interpretar la historia a su manera, ésta no tendría ningún sentido para ellos/as.

Dejar que cada eslabón de la cadena experimente a su manera es, por lo tanto, un compromiso con la libertad. ¿Qué es esto, si no ir un paso por delante?

**Irene Basilio es responsable de Comunicación en la compañía Teatro Paraíso.**



# EMPATHEATRE IN DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA

DYLAN MCGARRY

## EMPATHEATRE ISE THEKWINI, ENINGIZIMU AFRIKA



Over the course of 2015, the Big Brotherhood, a Kwa-Mashu based theatre company have been working closely with awarded South African playwright Neil Coppen, local actress and ethnographer Mpume Mtombeni, and myself Dylan McGarry (an educational sociologist), recording the oral histories of Durbanites, and transforming these into captivating theatrical experiences. Together we created a unique interdisciplinary theatre methodology that we have named: Empatheatre - which brings together various forms of forum, documentary, verbatim, research and applied theatre models. The hope is that through Empatheatre we are able to share people's real-life stories, with the intention to inspire and develop a greater empathy and kindness in spaces where there is conflict or injustice.

Our most recent production: *Ulwembu* - [www.ulwembu.net](http://www.ulwembu.net) - is a transdisciplinary interactive theatrical experience that interacts between the fields of anthropology, sociology, criminology, health, law-enforcement, mental-health and theatre. *Ulwembu* specifically shares the many stories of young Whoonga (brown heroin) users in Durban, and explores the role police and government services (such as health and social development) play in the lives of vulnerable youth in the city. Ultimately *Ulwembu* aims to use the embodied, empathetic and energizing potential of theatre to improve the relationship that police, health-care/social workers and Durban citizens have with homeless drug-using youth in the city.

### THIS IS FIRST A MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE

The *Ulwembu* team spent almost a year "undercover" interviewing users, dealers, police officers, doctors, social workers, ward councilors, parents, principals, teachers, and friends in and around Durban (working more like sociologists than theatre makers). So far we have found that there are many ways out of drug use, but they require support from the community as a whole. What we have learned is that responding to drug use needs to be seen as a mental health issue

and not only a policing issue. Researching a play such as this requires a sensitive team who could go deep into the world of street level drug users, and create safe spaces for conversation and story telling. The Big Brotherhood theatre group work as both researchers and actors, and helped shape the narrative of the play drawing from their first hand experience gleaned from those they interviewed. During performances the young actors embody the life-worlds of people they have met and spoken with directly. Not only does this add to a richer performance, but also ethically ensures their stories are told properly, with a deep sensitivity, and compassion.

### BRINGING A MOTHER'S LOVE TO POLICING IN DURBAN

Mpume Mthombeni's performance is outstanding as Portia the police woman who desperately seeks balance between justice, mercy, and empathy. While policing the street-level drug use in the city (often arresting vulnerable youth with possession and use of drugs) she doesn't notice her own son slipping into a Whoonga addiction. Her world is turned upside down when she arrests a young boy only to discover he is her son. This reversal ensures that Portia and the audience begin to view drug users in a whole new light. Witnessing her own son's battle with addiction, her empathy, love and understanding towards drug users begins to grow. Portia's character is based on testimonials of real Metro Police and SAPS officers in Durban, where many of them changed their perspective of users, once they made the effort to listen to the stories of the users before arresting them. Performing this play at police stations, is a strategic use of the theatrical experience, whereby police and other citizens grow their understanding and empathy for users emotionally, by having a personal encounter as they follow a story on stage, that is connected to their daily working lives.

### THE POWER OF A CENTRAL IMAGE

In this scene Siphso (Zenzo Msomi) reveals the painful cramps known on the streets as 'Arosta,' which emerges as a side effect of smoking Whoonga. The pains are related to the use of a rat poison



(strychnine) that is mixed with heroin to prevent the user's blood from clotting. Neil Coppen always likes to work with a significant recurring central image in his plays that embody the essence of the story. Here the image consists of ropes wrapped around the lead characters that are pulled by other cast members - as they tighten around Andile's or Siphó's waist, we experience the pain and anguish of falling deeper into the daily grind of a heroin addiction, that is fueled by the fear of Arosta. Yet this image offers even more, it shows how each person in the community is interconnected, and how the pain one user feels will affect many others in his/her community. Hence we entitled the play: *Ulwembu* (which is Zulu for Spider web) - a central image of connectivity. If we want to respond to drugs humanely and comprehensively in Durban, we need to understand the interwoven and deeply interconnected nature of this problem.

## ENCOURAGING COMPASSION AS OPPOSED TO FEAR

*Ulwembu* is not merely a precautionary play that aims to "scare" young people into not using drugs. The life of a whoonga user is scary enough; there is no need to add to that horror. Instead the production goes beyond intimidating audiences into avoiding drugs, but rather revealing the entire world of drug use in the city, and to create an engrossing, emotive, and honest experiences for audiences, that speak to the realities of why people begin to use drugs in the first place. This production afford audiences the opportunity to walk in the shoes of misunderstood others: be it users, dealers, police officers, social workers and parents. It engages the imaginations of audiences to stay with Portia, Andile, and Siphó's individual realities without judgment or prejudice, as we begin to understand why they made the choices they did. As a team we feel that empathetic experience (or more simply stories that engage your compassion for others) have a greater chance in shifting people's perceptions than speaking to their fears.



**Dylan McGarry is a Post Doctoral fellow at the Environmental Learning Research Centre at Rhodes University, and a research fellow at Urban Futures Centre, at Durban University of Technology, in South Africa.**

Ngonyaka ka2015, iBigbrotherhood okuyinkampani yemidlalo yeshashalazi ezinze kwaMashu isebenze ngokukhulu ukubambisana nesithwalandwe sombhali wemidlalo yeshashalazi uNeil Coppen, umlingisikazi wasendaweni ophinde abe yisazi kwezamasiko uMpume Mtombeni kanye nami uDylan McGarry (uchwepheze kwezenhlalo mpilo yoluntu) ukuqopha nokonga umlando oxoxwa ngomlomo ngempilo ephilwa ngabantu bomsinsi wokuzimilela eThekwini, saphinda saguqula lololwazi lwaphenduka lwaba nguchungechunge lwemidlalo yeshashalazi ukuze luzwakale futhi lwamukeleke kangcono. Ngokuhlanganyela sihlanganise ulwazi lwethu olunhlobonhlobo sasungula indlela entsha kwezeshashalazi esiyiqambe ngokuthi yi Empatheatre eqoqele ndawonye izinkundla zokucubungula, amafilimu okongiwa kweqiniso, ukugcina isibanjalo, ucwaningo kanye nezindlela jikelele ezisetshenziswayo kwezeshashalazi. Ithemba esinalo elokuthi nge Empatheatre sizokwazi ukuxoxa ngezimpilo zabantu nqo ngenhloso yokwakha ukuzwelana kanye nozwelo ezindaweni lapho kukhona izinxushunxushu kanye nokungabekezelelani.

Umdlalo wethu esiwudidiyele kamumva nje: *Ulwembu* - [www.ulwembu.net](http://www.ulwembu.net), uyinhlanganisela yolwazi olucutshunguliwe lwase ludidiyelwa kahle ukufinyelela ezingeni eliphezulu kwezeshashalazi, lokhu kuhlanganisa ulwazi kwezamasiko, ezenhlalo yabantu, ezobugebengu, ezempilo, ezomthetho, ezesimo sengqondo kanye neshashalazi. *Ulwembu* lugxile kakhulu ezindabeni eziningi ezibhekene nabantu abasha abasebenzisa isidakamizwa iWunga abahlala eThekwini, luphinde lubheke indima edlalwa ngamaphoyisa kanye nezinsiza zikahulumeni ezivela kakhulu kwabezempilo kanye nakwabezenhlalakahle ezimpilweni zabantu abasha ezisengcupheni abangondingasithebeni abahlala edolobheni. Empeleni *Ulwembu* luzimisele ukuqoqela ndawonye izindlela ezinamandla futhi ezinozwela lusebenzisa amandla eshashalazi ukuthuthukisa ubudlelwano phakathi kwabomthetho, abezempilo, osonhlalakahle kanye nomphakathi waseThekwini ababanakho uma bebona abantu abasebasha abasesebenzisa izidakamizwa abahlala edolobheni.

## OKOKUQALA LOKHU KUMAYELANA NESIMO SENGQONDO

Ithimba lo Ulwembu luchithe unyaka wonke lusebenzisa izindlela ezingumshoshaphansi ukuthola ulwazi kubasebenzisi beziyobisi, abadayisi bazo, amaphoyisa, odokotela, osonhlalakahle, ama14sela angosopolitiki, abazali, othishanhloko, amathishela kanye nabangani balabo abasebenzisa iziyobisi bonke abahlala ngaphandle nangaphakathi kwedolobha lasethekwini (besebenza njengochwepheshe ngokwenhlalompilo yabantu kunokuba ngabadidiyeli bezeshashalazi). Okwamanje sikhona ukuthola ukuthi zikhona izindlela zokuphuma ekusebenziseni izidakamizwa kuloyo ozisebenzisayo kodwa loyo ofuna ukuyeka ukuzisebenzisa udinga ukwesekwa okuphelele ngumphakathi wonke jikelele. Isifundo esisitholile ngesokuthi indlela efanele ukusetshenziswa ukubhekana nqo nalenkinga yokusetshenziswa kwezidakamizwa emphakathini ngokuthi ukusetshenziswa kwazo kufanele sikubuke njengeninga ehlasele isimo sengqondo noma semicabango kubantu kunokuba siyibuke njengendlela yokuphula umthetho kuphela. Ukwenza ucwaningo ngomdlalo weshashalazi ofana nalona kudinga ithimba labacwaningi elikhaliphile elizokwazi ukungena khaxa libe sezingeni elifanayo nelabasebenzisa izidakamiswa abahlala emigwaqeni ukuze libukeke njengabo khani lizokwazi ukuvulela izindlela zezingxoxo phakathi kwalo nabasebenzisi beziyobisi ngaphandle kongabazane lokwesaba ukuxoxa ngodaba lwabo. Okwenziwa yithimba leBigbrotherhood ukuthi libe abacwaningi liphinde libe abalingisi ngasikhathi sinye, kusize kakhulu ekuqoshweni, ekwakhiweni kanye nokudidiyelwa kwesithombe esisobala somdlalo esisuselwe nqo enkulumeni ethathelwe kucwaningo olwenziwe kulabo ababuzwe imibuzo. Emdlalweni abalingisi abasebancane baveza ngokusobala impilo yalabo abayizisulu abasuke behlangane baphinda bakhuluma nabo okuyinto abayiveza besebenzisa ukulingisa kanye namagama. Lokhu akwengezi kuphela ekuvuthweni kokulingisa kodwa kuqinisekisa ukuthi izindaba zalabo okuxoxwa ngabo zethulwa zinjalo ngolwazi nomuzwa ojulile kanye nomdlandla owengeziwe.

## UKUBONISA UTHANDO LOKUBA NGUMAMA EBUPHOYISENI BASETHEKWINI

Ikhono lokulingisa lika Mpumi Mtombeni libukeka lisezingeni eliphezulu lapho elingisa indawo ka Portia oyiphoyisa lesifazane ozithola esesimweni sokuthi kumele anikezele ngamandla akhe kwisilinganiso esifanayo phakathi kobulungiswa, ukubekezela kanye nozwelo. Ngesikhathi elwisana nokusetshenziswa kwezidakamizwa emigwaqeni yasedolobheni (ngokujwayelekile ubopha aphinde avalele ejele intsha engondingasithebeni esebenzisa iphinde iphathe izidakamizwa) akakhoni ukubona indodana yakhe iphunyuka ingena ekusebenziseni isidakamizwa iWunga. Umhlaba uyamphendukela lapho ebopha umfana osemncane ethola ukuthi loyomfana yindodana yakhe. Lesisigamu sesiqephu siqinisekisa ukuthi uPortia kanye nababukeli bathola isithombe esicacile esibenza babone ukusetshenziswa kwezidakamizwa ngendlela ehlukele necacile kunaleyo bebenayo. Ukubukela indodana yakhe ilwa impi yokulingeka ezidakamizweni, ukubekezela, uzwelo kanye nothando kwenza nolwazi lwakhe ngokusetshenziswa kwezidakamizwa lukhule. Umlingiswa oqanjwe ngo Portia ususelwe empilweni nasebufakazini bangempela obutholakale emaphoyiseni kamasipala weTheku kanye nalawo ophiko lukahulumeni azinze khona eThekwini, lapho iningi lawo liyaye lishintshe indlela elibuka ngayo laba abasebenzisa izidakamizwa emva kokuba sebethole ithuba lokulalela izizathu, imbangela nezinkinga eziyimbangela yalokho ngaphambi kokuba babophe labo abasebenzisa izidakamizwa. Umbukiso ngalemidlalo yeshashalazi eziteshini zamaphoyisa, kuyiqhinga lokusebenzisa ulwazi ngokwezeshashalazi ukulekelela amaphoyisa kanye nomphakathi ngokukhulisa ulwazi kanye nokuzwelana ngokomoya nalabo abasebenzisa izidakamizwa ngokulandela indaba exoxwa esteji exhumene nempilo abayiphilayo miha namalanga.

## AMANDLA ESITHOMBE ESICACILE

Kulesisigceme abafana ababili besikole okungo Andile (Ngcebo Cele) no Siphos (Zenzo Msomi) babonisa ubuhlungu obukhulu obenziwa ngamajaqamba nokujoqana kwesisu okwaziwa ngokuthi yi 'arosta' ngolimi lwasemgwaqeni, okuyizinhlungu ezikwala emva kokukhahlanyezwa wukubhema iWunga. Umsuka walezinhlungu







Image courtesy of Val Adamson & Colwyn Thomas

umataniswa nokusetshenziswa kobuthi bokubulala amagundwane othakwe waxutshwa neheroni ukuvimbela amahlule egazini. Ngasosonke iskhathi UNeil Coppen uyathanda kakhulu ukusebenzisa isithombe esicacile emidlalweni yakhe ukugcizelela nokubonisa umongo nenhlosongqangi yaleyondaba exoxwayo. Lapha sibona lesithombe sivele ngokucacile lapho abalingisi abaqavile bevela khona beboshwe ngezintambo bedonswadonswa ngabanye abalingisi - ngesikhathi bedonsa beqinisa lezontambo eziboshelwe okhalweni luka Andile noma luka Siphon, sibona ubuhlungu nosizi okungumthelela wokuphila ngokubhema isidakamizwa iheroni lokho kubhebhezela nawukwesabela ukujoqwa izinhlungu zasesiswini ezaziwa nge arosta. Lesithombe siveza okuningi okufihlakele, siveza ukuthi abantu emphakathini baxhumene kanjani bonke, nokuthi ubuhlungu obuzwiwa yilowo osebenzisa izidakamizwa bungaba nomthelela ongakanani emphakathini wakhe. Yingakho siqambe lomdlalo ngokuthi: Ulwembu (okuyigama lesi Zulu oluchaza intandela ewuthiyo lwesidleke olweziwa yisicabucabu) - okuyisithombe sokuxhumana esicacile. Uma sifuna ukubhekana ngo nezidakamizwa nokusetshenziswa kwazo ngobuntu nangobubele eThekwini, kumele sazi umsuka nesizokozoko esiyimbangela yalenkinga.

## SIGQUGQUMEZELA UZWELANO KUNOKWESABA

Ulwembu akusingakho ukuthi inhloso yalo ukusabisa abantu abasebancane ukuthi bangasebenzisi izidakamizwa. Impilo ephilwa umuntu osebenzisa izidakamizwa isabisa ngokwanele, asifuni ukwengezelela kulokho kwesabisa. Kunalokho lomdlalo uveza okungale kokuthusa uphinde usabise izibukeli ngokugwema ukusebenzisa izidakamizwa,

kunalokho ubonisa isithombe esicacile ngomhlaba wokusetshenziswa kwezidakamizwa edolobheni, wakha isithombe esihehayo, esinomuzwa othile, sibe nesithombe esinobulungiswa neqiniso ezibukelini, lesosithombe sikhuluma ngembangela eyenza abantu bagcine besebenzise noma bangena obishini lokusebenzisa izidakamizwa. Lomdlalo unikeza izibukeli ithuba lokungena khaxa ezicathulweni zokwahlulela abanyabantu: kungaba abasebenzisa izidakamizwa, abahweba ngazo, amaphoyisa, osonhlalakahle kanye nabazali. Wakha isithombe sokuthi izibukeli zizithole zizwelana no Portia, Andile no Siphon ngaphandle kokwahlulelwa lapho siqala khona ukubona ukuthi kungani baze bathatha lezinqumo abazithathayo. Siyithimba sibona ukuthi ukuzwelana okunobuqotho (noma izindaba ezikhuluma ngokuzwelana komunye nomunye) kunethuba eliningi lokugudluza lishintshe imicabango yabantu kalula kunokukhuluma ngokwesabela abanyabantu.

UDylan McGarry uyincithabuchopho efunde yagogoda yaze yafinyelela ezingeni lobudokotela emfundweni akangema lapho waqhubeka waze wahlonishwa nangegunya eliseqophelweni eliphezulu lobudokotela kwezemfundo Isokhongo Socwaningo Ngemfundo Yezenhlalo esisenyuvesi iRhodes. Uphinde adlale indima efanayo ngegunya anikwe lona lokuba ngungqondongqondo yiNyuvesi yezobuchwepheshe yaseThekwini eNingizimu Afrika esizindeneni sayo esiqanjwe ngokuthi Isizinda Sempucuzeko Yekusasa.



Zulu Translation: Bonginkosi Ngobese

**UDylan McGarry uyincithabuchopho efunde yagogoda yaze yafinyelela ezingeni lobudokotela emfundweni akangema lapho waqhubeka waze wahlonishwa nangegunya eliseqophelweni eliphezulu lobudokotela kwezemfundo Isokhongo Socwaningo Ngemfundo Yezenhlalo esisenyuvesi iRhodes.**

# WHAT ARE WE WATCHING?

LEO VUKELIĆ

## ŠTO MI GLEDAMO?



MINIMI

MINIMI



56

Three actors. A live camera and video screening.  
Two hands like two puppets.

This is a photograph from the performance MINIMI by the Dubrava Children's Theatre, the VRUM art organization from Zagreb and Prostora Plus organization from Rijeka. MINIMI are mini me's!

MINIMI searches for the stage, for a place, for a place to play.

MINIMI searches for a body, for proportions, for size.

MINIMI searches for the living, the real, the virtual.

MINIMI searches for gazes.

These are all questions that cannot be answered by looking at a photograph.

But we can see that at the same time, the actor is little, and bigger, and big. That he is a puppet and an actor. That he plays for us, and for the camera. That his stage is on stage, and behind the stage.

MINIMI sees with children's eyes. The eyes that see everything.

This staging shows many questions, a variety of possible views, and many dilemmas that we find in the world of the child today. Which place is the place

for play, and which is the place for reality? What should we believe? What is imagination, and where do we draw the line?

Are big people grown ups, and are grown ups big people? Can they stay small even when they become big? Is there anything smaller than how small we are, and bigger than the big ones are?

Contemporary theatre for children and youth today faces an important task. With each and every performance. Contemporary theatre has to fend off technology, its accessibility, speed, and increasing demands and expectations. Today, more than ever before, we need to pose questions, offer many answers, awaken the imagination, provoke creativity, and dance on the edge. And that is harder than ever before. Globalization, industry and trade all want children as their allies, while their busy parents are slowly giving in. And theatre, even today, can still awaken the unique and common experience of the audience and the protagonist. Sorrow and joy and anger and pride.

MINIMI does not tell a story, but instead poses questions to the actors, to theatre, to itself as a play, to the children in the audience. It is hard to tell who the main protagonist is, whether it is the actor, the



puppet, or even the live camera. Is it someone small, big, or even bigger? Is it better to walk, run, or maybe dance? MINIMI can even fly. And doesn't know where the stage is. Perhaps on the palm, on the knee, on a box, or somewhere behind? It doesn't know where to play. It can't choose whether it is better to stay quiet, to speak, to sing, or to mumble.

But MINIMI does know one thing. It knows for whom. For the children in the audience. For only a child can recognize all these dilemmas, and also cannot choose between them. And does not need to choose. A child needs to watch, and dance, and shout. A child needs to see. A child can see a sheep in a cloud, a deer in a spider web, an elf in the mist. And can talk with them as they cross the street or look through the window. And will experience that unique and unforgettable experience, just like the one that some of us big people, still occasionally to this day, experience in the theatre.

**Leo Vukelić, President, ASSITEJ Croatia, visual artist and artistic director of the Children's Theatre Dubrava, Zagreb, has made nearly 100 professional theater projects for children and youth.**

All photos are by: Petra Mrsa

Tri glumca su u prostoru igre. Živa kamera i video projekcija. Dvije ruke kao dvije lutke.

Ovo su fotografija iz predstave MINIMI Dječjeg kazališta Dubrava, Umjetničke organizacije VRUM iz Zagreba i Prostora Plus iz Rijeke, Hrvatska. MINIMI ili mali mi!

MINIMI traga za pozornicom, za mjestom, za prostorom igre.

MINIMI traga za tijelom, za proporcijama, za veličinom.

MINIMI traga za živim, za stvarnim, za virtualnim.

MINIMI traga za pogledima.

Sve su to pitanja na koje nećemo dobiti odgovore gledajući fotografija.

Ali možemo vidjeti da je u isto vrijeme glumac i mali, i veći, i velik. Da je i lutka i glumac. Da igra za nas i da igra za kameru. Da mu je pozornica na pozornici, a i iza pozornice.

MINIMI gleda dječjim očima. Očima koje vide sve.

Ova inscenacija prikazuje mnoga pitanja, razne moguće poglede i puno dilema koje pronalazimo u svijetu današnjeg djeteta. Koje mjesto je mjesto igre, a koje je mjesto stvarnosti. U što bismo trebali vjerovati, što je mašta i gdje je ta granica.

Jesu li veliki odrasli, i da li su odrasli veliki. Mogu li mali ostati mali i kada postanu veliki. Postoje li oni još

MINIMI





manji nego što smo mi mali i veliki veliki. I na kraju gdje su oni veći od naših velikih i nas malih.

Suvremeno kazalište za djecu i mlade danas ima veliki zadatak. Sa svakom svojom izvedbom oduprijeti se tehnologiji, njezinoj dostupnosti, brzini, sve većim zahtjevima i očekivanjima. Ono, danas i više nego prije treba postavljati pitanja, nuditi mnoge odgovore, buditi maštu, provocirati kreativnost i plesati na rubu. A upravo je to teže nego ikada ranije. Globalizacija, industrija i trgovina baš djecu žele za svoje saveznike, dok se roditelji u žurbi polako predaju. A kazalište ipak još uvijek može, baš ovdje i sada, potaknuti jedinstven i zajednički, neponovljiv doživljaj publike i protagonista. I plač, i veselje, i ljutnju, i ponos.

MINIMI ne priča priču već postavlja pitanja glumcima, kazalištu, sebi kao predstavi, djeci u publici. Ne može se odlučiti tko je glavni protagonist, čak niti dali je to glumac ili lutka, ili možda živa kamera. Da li je to



MINIMI. Petra Mrsa



netko mali, veliki ili još veći. Da li je bolje hodati, trčati ili pak plesati. MINIMI može čak i letjeti. A ne zna gdje je pozornica. Možda na dlanu, na koljenu, na kocki, ili tamo iza. Ne zna gdje igrati, gdje zaigrati. Ona ne može odabrati je li bolje šutjeti, govoriti, pjevati ili mumljati.

No MINIMI ipak nešto zna. Zna za koga sve to. Za dijete u publici. Jer jedino dijete poznaje sve te dileme, ono se isto ne može odlučiti. I ne treba se odlučiti. Dijete treba gledati, plesati i vikati. Dijete treba vidjeti. Dijete može vidjeti ovcu u oblaku, jelena u paučini, vilenjaka u sumaglici. I bez problema će porazgovarati sa njima kada prelazi cestu i gleda kroz prozor. I doživjet će upravo onaj jedinstven, neponovljiv doživljaj, baš onaj koji samo neki od nas velikih, još ponekad, doživimo u kazalištu.

**Leo Vukelić, predsjednik Assitej Croatia, vizualni je umjetnik i Umjetnički voditelj Dječjeg kazališta Dubrava iz Zagreba, do sada je ostvario gotovo 100 profesionalnih kazališnih projekata za djecu i mlade.**



# ON STAGE AND OFF RECORD: A DIALOGUE AMONG GENERATIONS IN BERLIN REFLECTIONS ON THE ASSITEJ ARTISTIC GATHERING 2015 ANNA EITZEROTH AND MEIKE FECHNER



How can knowledge be transferred from one generation to the next, how can institutions be handed on, how can a generation of established European and other Western theatre artists meet not only young people from their own countries and cultures, but also from countries, cultures, even continents, that up until the recent past, were nearly invisible not only in the world of ASSITEJ? How can discussions continue and how can young people benefit from what has already been discussed and achieved, tested and established? And, above all, how can we ensure an artistic exchange that addresses relevant topics, expresses central positions, asks vital questions without

staying on the surface of the undeniable beauty that is inherent to all international encounters, where people fighting for a common goal gather strength from meeting each other, and discover the similarities of their struggles?

At the ASSITEJ Artistic Gathering, we wanted to offer spaces where discussions could be open, where everyone would feel they could speak, listen, and contribute and where there was no need to agree but where was instead an atmosphere of productive dissent.

The four artistic encounters aimed to create a frame from getting to know each other via artistic exchange to the structural necessities of co-operations. The artistic encounters and the productions in the festival program were the core activities for all participants and, especially, the large Next Generation group, which consisted of 36 participants from 20 different countries.

The exchange among generations was set in this framework - there were three or four generations present - the ones who are planning to work in TYA, the ones that have already started their careers,



ASSITEJ Artistic Gathering 2015. Co-operation makes it happen Photo: Juergen Scheer.



ASSITEJ Artistic Gathering 2015: Nishna Mehta and Christel Hoffman Photo: Juergen Scheer





the ones that are established and experienced, but much younger than the founding fathers and mothers of TYA, and the very senior artists who have been in the business forever. The idea was that people could meet as professionals belonging to different generations and that relationships of mentoring, friendship, co-operation, and learning from each other could develop.

Many discussions did not find an end, and often the encounters triggered dialogues between people from different continents, generations, and artistic backgrounds. People visited theatre performances together, got to know each other, exchanged their perspectives in discussions or arguments, learned from each other and some might even cooperate in the future. At the end of the ASSITEJ Artistic Gathering 2015 there is not one conclusion, one manifesto, or one best practice example, but the awareness, that diversity is strength, dialogue is essential, and that "cooperation makes it happen".

*My dream for TYA: The perfect TYA would be accessible to anyone, regardless of the nationality, age, and social class. It should be intelligent, interactive, thought-provoking as well as widely*

*respected and supported by the society.*

**(Lucas Franken, Germany)**

*It's in our hands to change our theatre(s).*

**(Stefan Fischer-Fels, Germany)**

*What makes me work in TYA? In Brazil, we face the reality of children and youth rights not being respected - the rights to integrity, equality of treatment, health, a non-violent education. It is urgent to develop artistic forms which value the perspective of youth. An exchange program like this brings new questions and makes it possible for us to see the world and theatre in different ways.*

**(Carolina Chmielewski Tanaka, Brazil)**

*It's art! It's pedagogy! It's child culture! We have to be aware of these three perspectives.*

**(Lisa Nagel, Norway)**

*I love TYA because it contributes to the emancipation of a young audience.*

**(Jean Jacques, Cameroon)**

*Everyone should travel alone to another country at least once in their lives.*

**(Nishna Mehta, India)**





ASSITEJ Artistic Gathering 2015. Photo: Joerg Sobeck

*I love the challenge of communicating with an audience whose world is growing every day. I love getting to know the specifics of what it means to be two or nine or fifteen. I love finding new ways to think about childhood and children. I love challenging adults' perceptions of what children are capable of. I love getting lost in the imagination and logic and sensibility of children. I love sharing my work with an audience who are so open to new experiences.*

**(Joanna Evans, South Africa)**

*Art is not a matter of AGE but of CURIOSITY*  
**(Small Size)**

*Co-operation is the only possibility to leave the island where we create.*

**(Joke Laureyns, Belgium)**

*Don't be tolerant in the arts. Don't say:  
Ok, we can do it like this.*

**(Ania Michaelis, Germany)**

*What makes me work in TYA  
love!*

*love for art.*

*love for young people.*

*love for my environment, my country, my world!*

*love for words.(written or spoken)*

*love for change, for growth, for developments*

*love to listen and be heard.*

*love that transcends time.*

**(Momodu Ehizua Innocent, Nigeria)**

*We need to deal with the world.*

**(Manon van de Water, United States)**

**Anna Eitzeroth is a dramaturg working at the Children's and Young People's Theater Center in Frankfurt (Main). Meike Fechner is secretary general of ASSITEJ Germany. Together with Henning Fangauf and Anne Herwanger, they were responsible for the ASSITEJ Artistic Encounters: and the Next Generation Programme in Berlin. The ASSITEJ Artistic Gathering 2015 was part of "Augenblick mal!", the festival of theatre for young audiences. [www.augenblickmal.de](http://www.augenblickmal.de)**

ASSITEJ Artistic Gathering 2015. Henning Fangauf and the Next Generation group. Photo: Juergen Scheer.



# THE RED SHOES

TEATER FOT / LISE HOVIK  
DE RØDE SKOENE



*The Red Shoes* is an interactive installation performance with magic red shoes, dance, song, music, figures, and play for those who have just started to walk on their own feet. This performance is made through playing and improvisation, in close contact with very small children (from 1 years of age). The play seeks contact with the children in movements, sounds, singing, rhythmic music, dance, red shoes, figures and playing. The performance is open, inviting children into the spatial installation of red shoes. There are red rubber boots with secret worlds inside, singing shoes, shoes floating in the air, shoes with eyes and teeth, shoes with light, shoes for dancing and rolling, shoes for jumping and spinning. Some of the shoes are transformed into headsets with sound compositions for listening. The performance builds upon the fairytale by the Dane H.C Andersen, and circles around the theme of attractive, magic and possessive red shoes, shoes that have their own life, and take control over their owners.

When we made this performance way back in 2008, there was not a lot of similar art projects: inviting the very youngest audience on to the stage, searching for a common performative language in artful and musical communication, crossing the border between stage and hall. Working in Norway, we were deeply inspired by the projects *Klangfugl* (1998-2002) and *Glitterbird - Art for the Very Young* (2003-2006), and wanted to develop this field into a new art form, a new public, and a new research field.

In my interdisciplinary doctoral thesis *The Red Shoes Project - An Artistic Research Project on Theatre for the Very Young* (2014), I investigate the possibilities of an open staging where the children liberally engage with the actors, dancers, and musician. The presence and improvisational skills

of the artists became the crucial point of research. The artistic research project consisted of three closely related performances for young children (0-3 years), in which opportunity was given for the children to participate actively in the performances and to interact with the performers.

*The Red Shoes* (2008-10) was a dance theatre performance for 1-year olds, *Red Shoe Missing* (2011) was an art installation for 0-3 year-olds, and *Mum's Dancing* (2011-12) was an improvised dance concert, also for 0-3 year-olds. All of these productions had red shoes as a connecting theme and playful artistic material. The dramatic structure in the three different performances shifted between the traditional common focus from spectators to stage, each spectator's individual focus, and alternatively the affective multi-focus and bodily participation in the whole event. This project performed possibilities of creating common artistic experiences between performers and children, in which both could take part in reciprocal interaction and improvisation.

The pictures accompanying this text are taken from a book presented as a theatre program of the first performance of *The Red Shoes*. The pictures were meant to be reminders for the children of the performance, and represent themes and playing sensations from the theatre event. They can also be seen as playful visualisations of our improvisational working methods between music, dance, theatre, readymade objects, puppet theatre and visual arts.



**Lise Hovik is associate professor in drama and theatre at Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education, Trondheim, Norway.**







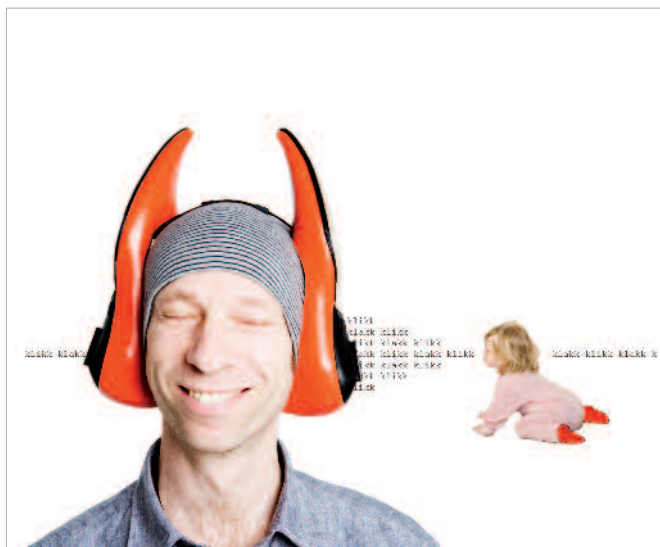
The Red Shoes



The Wild Dance



Lise Hovik



Tor Haugerud



Tone Pernille Østern



Line Strøm



*De Røde Skoene* (2008) er en interaktiv forestilling i en installasjon av magiske røde sko som danser, synger og leker sammen med tre improviserende utøvere. Forestillingen er skapt for og i tett samarbeid med dem som akkurat har lært å gå, barn i ett-toårsalderen.

Forestillingen søker kontakt med barna gjennom bevegelser, lyder, sang, rytmer, dans, røde sko, figurer og lek. Forestillingen har en åpen dramaturgi som inviterer barna inn i den romlige installasjonen av røde sko. Det finnes røde sjøstøvler med hemmelige verdener oppi, syngende sko, sko som flyr i lufta, sko med øyne, barter eller tenner, sko med lys, dansesko og hoppende sko. Noen av skoene er transformert til headsets med lydkomposisjoner inni. Forestillingen bygger på HC Andersens eventyr om de røde sko, og dreier seg rundt temaet attraktive og magiske røde sko som lever sitt eget liv og tar makten over dem som tar skoene på.

Da vi laget denne forestillingen i 2008 fantes det ikke mange liknende kunstprosjekter som inviterte de yngste barna inn på scenen, på leting etter et felles performativt språk der kunsten og det musiske sto i sentrum, og der grensen mellom scene og sal ble utvisket. Med inspirasjon fra prosjektene *Klangfugl* (1998-2002) og *Glitterbird - Art for the very young* (2003-2006) ønsket vi å utvikle dette feltet både som en ny kunstform, med et nytt publikum og et nytt forskningsfelt.

I mitt tverrfaglige doktorgradsprosjekt *De Røde Skoene - Et kunstnerisk og teoretisk forskningsprosjekt om teater for de aller minste* (2014) undersøkte jeg de kunstneriske mulighetene gjennom en åpen dramaturgi der barna frivillig fikk delta i samspill med skuespillerne, danserne og musikeren. Utøvernes nærvær og improvisasjonsevner ble et sentralt punkt i forskningsarbeidet. Forskningsprosjektet besto av tre ulike men relaterte forestillinger for aldersgruppen 1-3 år, der alle tilbød ulike former for frivillig deltakelse.

*De Røde Skoene* (2008-10) var en danseteaterforestilling, *Rød Sko Savnet* (2011) var en installasjon med improviserte hendelser og *Mamma Danser* (2011-12) var en improvisert/koreografert dansekonserter. Alle produksjonene hadde røde sko som et felles tema og lekent kunstnerisk materiale. Den dramatiske strukturen i de tre ulike formene vekslet mellom det tradisjonelle felles fokuset fra tilskuer mot scenes aktører, hver enkelt tilskuers individuelle fokus og et affektivt multifokus der tilskuerne var kroppslig inkludert i den improviserte hendelsen.

Bildene som følger denne teksten er hentet fra en bok som ble laget som teaterprogram til *De Røde Skoene* (2008). Bildene var tenkt som påminnelser for barna om forestillingen, og viser elementer og tema fra stykket. Bildene kan også betraktes som lekne visualiseringer av våre arbeidsmetoder som aktiviserte både musikk, dans, teater, readymades /sko, figurteater og bilder i den skapende prosessen.

### Lise Hovik (1962-) er førsteamanuensis i drama og teater ved Dronning Mauds Minne Høgskole for barnehagelærerutdanning i Trondheim.

#### Singing Shoes: Salvatore and Mrs. Fish



# THE BANYAN TREE

## RUBY LIM-YANG



### PROLOGUE

Theatre is art. It defines us as who we are.  
It tells us a story, whether it's imagined or real.  
Theatre is alive. We play with it. We mould it. And we make something out of it.  
Theatre is like life. It connects our head to our heart.  
Theatre is like The Banyan Tree.

### THE BANYAN TREE

When several disciplines are brought together, for example, history, music, dance, and theatre, there must be a connection between each and every one of them. They should be able to overlap each other with simplicity and ease to make meaning out of a story. Furthermore, the outcome of this alliance should be able to withstand and cross global boundaries so that audiences everywhere are drawn into the realm of the imagined journey that they embark upon.

Our Children's Theatre production entitled *The Banyan Tree* does just that and more. It is a piece that transcends borders. It bridges the gap between Singapore's past and our reinterpretation of it. It also creates an access for our audience, both adults and children, to understand and relate to Asian culture through the eyes of modernity.

### THE CREATIVE PROCESS

Using an old traditional Malay folk tale, *The Snake in the Banyan Tree*, we challenged the status quo with a production that not only used theatre as a means to share history, but also embraced dance, movement, music, art, soundscape, language and mime, ending with the pulsating beat and rhythm of the kompang - a Malay traditional drum used to announce the arrival of guests and to celebrate Malay weddings in Asia.

Considering that we intended to blend our Asian-ness with our Westernised upbringing, we decided to write the text for *The Banyan Tree* in universally-accepted English. We felt that with an English translation, the Malay folk tale could travel across the different continents and be interpreted by the varied audience members.

### THE STORY

*The Banyan Tree* is a simple narrative which brings our audience back to early Temasek (ancient Singapore) where conflict between a group of villagers and an ostracised young girl, whose only friend and confidante is a magical snake who lives in a nearby Banyan tree, erupts and how the girl transforms through the events that happen. It is spiritual, magical, and folk-like.

It also showcases a side of Singapore that not many have seen before - old kampung (village) life. This is a stark contrast to what Singapore is now - a bustling and first world city. And yet, in the midst of wildlife and nature, the story seems rather familiar. We have seen it, we have felt it, and we know it. It touches our hearts, minds and souls.

But instead of simply following every inch of the story to a 't', we wanted to embody the spirituality of the snake against the humanness of the villagers. We wanted to make *The Banyan Tree* magical and sacred. And both art and music could do just that.

### COLLABORATION

We collaborated with a talented multidisciplinary artists from Singapore who hand painted a beautiful pattern of leaves and branches on a calico backdrop and floor piece that became our circular-like thrust stage.





We also collaborated with a well-known Singaporean composer and arts educator to arrange and play the music for our performance using traditional Asian percussion instruments such as the gamelan - an ensemble of metallophones from Indonesia. In addition to making the music, she also taught our actors to play the kompong, incorporating an upbeat Malay wedding rhythm to the story.

## CONCLUSION

Working with so many disciplines gave us the liberty to turn a timeless story told through the generations into a full-fledged Children's Theatre performance filled with suspense, drama, tenderness, love, and compassion. Furthermore, arranging everything together in such a way that we did not forget to tell the story took a lot of innovativeness, sophistication and a pure love for Theatre. And with that pure love came about *The Banyan Tree*.

## EPILOGUE

*The Banyan Tree* is a beautiful and charming story. Its life is connected through its branches, stems and leaves. In the same way, Theatre flows through our veins connecting us to our audience. This shared connectedness must continue so that *The Banyan Tree* is retold through future generations.

**Ruby Lim Yang is the Artistic Director of Act 3 International in Singapore.**

## THE BANYAN TREE

Ada pelbagai cara kesenian yang digunakan untuk membina satu cerita. Contoh cara-caranya adalah seperti sejarah, muzik, tarian dan juga teater. Cara-cara ini pula, harus membina sebuah perhubungan di antara satu sama lain dengan cara yang mudah untuk memberi sebuah makna bagi cerita tersebut. Hasil cerita yang menggunakan cara-cara ini juga harus menahan batasan global supaya penonton-



penonton akan rasa tertarik dengan alam perjalanan yang tercipta dalam cerita itu.

Produksi teater kanak-kanak kami yang bertajuk “The Banyan Tree” telah menggunakan cara-cara tersebut. Ia adalah satu produksi yang melampaui sempadan. Ia merapatkan jurang antara sejarah silam Singapura dan interpretasi kami tentang nya. Ia juga membenarkan penonton, yang dewasa dan juga kanak-kanak, untuk memahami kebudayaan Asia dalam pandangan moden.

## PROSES KREATIVITI

Dengan menggunakan sebuah cerita dongeng tradisional Melayu, “The Snake in the Banyan Tree”, kami memcabar diri untuk menggunakan bukan sahaja teater untuk berkongsi tentang sejarah Singapura, tetapi kami juga menggunakan tarian, pergerakan, seni, muzik, bahasa dan mime. Penggunaan sebuah alat tradisional muzik Melayu yang dipanggil kompang, yang selalunya digunakan dalam sebuah perkahwinan tradisional Melayu di Asia, akan membantu dengan rentak denyutan dan irama lagu dalam cerita ini.

Oleh kerana kami berhasrat untuk mengabungkan citarasa Asia dan cara pendidikan barat, kami mengambil keputusan untuk menulis cerita “The Banyan Tree” dengan menggunakan bahasa Inggeris. Kami berharap bahawa dengan penggunaan bahasa Inggeris, cerita dongeng tradisional Melayu ini dapat diceritakan di merata dunia dan juga dapat memberi penonton peluang untuk membuat interpretasi masing-masing.

“The Banyan Tree” adalah sebuah cerita naratif yang akan membawa penonton kembali ke zaman permulaan Temasek dimana sebuah konflik antara orang-orang kampung dan seorang gadis muda yang hanya mempunyai seorang kawan, iaitu seekor ular yang berkuasa sihir yang tinggal berdekatan sebuah pokok Banyan. Penonton dapat menyaksikan perubahan gadis itu ketika pelbagai kejadian terjadi. Ia sebuah cerita yang menggunakan tema tradisional, keajaiban, dan kerohanian. Cerita ini akan dilakonkan ketika Singapura masih

penuh dengan perkampungan. Kehidupan di kampung dahulu memang berbeza dibandingkan dengan Singapura yang amat moden.

Walaubagaimanapun perbezaannya itu, generasi ini dapat merasa kaitannya dengan kehidupan mereka pada masa kini. Mungkin mereka pernah melihat, merasa dan memahami perasaan yang mereka akan merasai semasa menyaksikan produksi ini. Ia juga akan menyentuh hati, minda dan jiwa mereka.


Dengan versi ini, kami ingin menjelmakan kerohanian ular itu terhadap kemanusiaan orang-orang kampung. Kami juga ingin memberi sebuah gambaran yang penuh dengan keajaiban terhadap cerita “The Banyan Tree” ini dengan menggunakan seni dan muzik untuk mencapai idea itu.

Kami juga telah berkolaborasi dengan seorang pengubah muzik dan guru kesenian yang terkenal untuk menggubah dan bermain muzik buat produksi ini. Beliau menggunakan alat muzik tradisional seperti gamelan - sebuah alat muzik tradisional ensemble yang berasal dari Indonesia. Beliau juga mengajar dan membimbing para pelakon untuk belajar bermain kompang mengikuti rentak lagu sama seperti yang boleh kami dengar di sebuah perkahwinan Melayu tradisional.

## KESIMPULAN

Produksi ini membenarkan satu peluang untuk kami menggunakan pelbagai cara kesenian untuk menceritakan semula sebuah cerita yang tidak lapuk dari zaman untuk generasi yang akan datang. Produksi teater kanak-kanak ini dilakonkan dengan penuh suspen, drama, kelembutan, kecintaan dan juga belas kasihan. Cerita ini telah dicipta dengan cara-cara inovasi, kecanggihan dan semangat yang penuh dengan kecintaan terhadap Teater. Kehasilan kecintaan dan semangat itu telah mencipta cerita tentang “The Banyan Tree”.

**Ruby Lim-Yang is Artistic Director of Act 3  
International Malay Translation: Atika Mawan**



**"BRAVURA TOUCHES"**  
THE NEW YORK TIMES

**THEATRE LOVETT**

WWW.THEATRELOVETT.COM




**Starke Stücke**

International **23<sup>rd</sup> edition**  
**Theatre Festival**  
for Young Audiences  
in Frankfurt/Rhine-Main, Germany

**2<sup>ND</sup> - 14<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2017**

[www.starke-stuecke.net](http://www.starke-stuecke.net)

Toaterunionen - Swedish ITI & ASSITEJ Sweden present:

**SWED STAGE**  
**2016** 23-25  
OCTOBER

THE SWEDISH SHOWCASE FOR PERFORMING ARTS

The registration opens in June  
[www.swedstage.se](http://www.swedstage.se)

"A virtuoso performance full of magic"  
★★★★★ Mapa site

**Little Amadeus**  
Created by Gadit Cohen

50 min show  
For ages 5+



**Won Best show & Best actress**  
**in the Israeli Assitej 2009**

For booking the show:  
[www.mozartshow.info](http://www.mozartshow.info) | [gaditcohen@gmail.com](mailto:gaditcohen@gmail.com)

**Job offer:**  
Required Tour manager & an agent  
to represent the show for festivals.  
contact us: [agaditproductions@gmail.com](mailto:agaditproductions@gmail.com)





**documents**  
of poverty and hope

**A Global Theatre Intervention**

Three theaters from Europe, two from Canada and one from Australia have joined together to work globally on the theme **Poverty and Migration**. 7 intercontinental co-productions combining documentary theatre form with the aesthetical variety of the involved theaters grow out of interview material.

[www.internationaltheatre-project.com](http://www.internationaltheatre-project.com)

With the support of the Culture Programme of the EU Culture

**Participating Theatres** Teatro Elsinor Milan, Florence, Forlì | Italy Pilot Theatre York | United Kingdom Teatro O Bando Palmela | Portugal Presentation House Theatre Vancouver | Canada DynamO Théâtre Montréal | Canada ATYP - Australian Theatre for Young People Sydney | Australia **Project Management** Dirk Neldner [dirk@platformshift.eu](mailto:dirk@platformshift.eu)

**PLATFORM**

**Digital Challenges in Theatre for Young Audiences**

A 4 year programme, connecting 11 cultural partners across Europe to take the opportunities of producing theatre work for young people in an age when they as audiences and participants move fluidly between their real and virtual lives. We aim to enable theatre-makers to connect with and reflect young people's reality and inspire them with a belief in theatre as a unique live medium for modern times.

[www.platformshift.eu](http://www.platformshift.eu)

Co-funded by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union

**PARTICIPATING PARTNERS:** EL SINOR TEATRO MILAN, FLORENCE, FORLÌ | IT EMERGENCY EXIT ARTS LONDON | GB KOLIBRI SZINHÁZ BUDAPEST | HU PILOT THEATRE YORK | GB SOUTH BOHEMIAN THEATRE BUDAPEST | CZ TEATRET VART MOLDE, ALESUND | NO TEATRO O BANDO PALMELA | PT THÉÂTRE MASSALIA MARSEILLE | FR T.J.G. THEATER JUNGE GENERATION DRESDEN | DE UNIVERSITÄTET I AGDER KRISTIANSAND | NO VAT TEATER TALLINN | EE PROJECT MANAGEMENT DIRK NELDER [DIRK@PLATFORMSHIFT.EU](mailto:DIRK@PLATFORMSHIFT.EU)

## Barnstorm25

**Celebrating 25 years of Barnstorm Theatre Company**  
A leading producer of theatre for children in Ireland and touring both nationally and internationally.



Available for tour 2017

**The Bockety World of Henry and Bucket**  
by Sarah Argent (in collaboration with Barnstorm)  
*For children 4+ and Families*

The play explores friendship through a day in the life of Henry and Bucket, two friends who live in a bockety world of discarded objects.



**Monday's Child**  
by Brendan Murray  
*For children 4+ and Families*

A simple, poetic story of the unique bond between a young girl and an old woman suffering memory loss. Together in a dreamlike garden they joyously explore a treasure trove of memory boxes.



**Culture Ireland**  
Cultúr Éireann



2016 国際児童・青少年演劇フェスティバルおきなわ



りっかりっか\*フェスタ

# ricca ricca \* festa

Big Smile,  
Big Applause!

笑顔

いっぱい、

拍手

いっぱい!



art by BOKUNEN

7/25 - 31  
Mon Sun

[ 那覇市開催 Naha City, Okinawa JAPAN ]

ぬちぐすい

劇場は命薬 Theater is Nuchigusui

"Nuchi du Takara" is the spirit of Okinawa  
which protects and hands down our lives even in hard times  
"Nuchigusui" is what supports "Nuchi du Takara"  
"Nuchigusui" nurtures spirit and life

Visit [www.nuchigusui-fest.com](http://www.nuchigusui-fest.com) to see all the programmes



平成 28 年度文化庁  
国際芸術交流支援事業

International Theater Festival OKINAWA for Young Audiences 2016



EUROPEAN FESTIVAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

# Happy New Ears

MUSIC THEATRE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES  
**20. – 27.11.2016**

NATIONALTHEATER MANNHEIM



[www.nationaltheater-mannheim.de](http://www.nationaltheater-mannheim.de)

Hosted by



**JUNGE OPER**

Die Junge Oper wird präsentiert von MVV Energie



Funded by



국제청소년연극협회  
International Association of  
Theater for Children and  
Young People

“두려움을 용기로!”

국내 최대 아동청소년공연예술축제

제24회

# 아시테지

## 국제여름축제

The 24th ASSITEJ Korea  
International Summer Festival

2016.  
7.20(wed) - 7.31(sun)

대학교예술극장 대극장 · 소극장  
아르코예술극장 소극장  
아이들극장  
미마지아트센터 눈빛극장 외  
대학교 입대



국내 최대 아동청소년공연예술축제  
The 13th ASSITEJ Korea Winter Festival, Seoul 2017

제 1

# 서울

# 아시테지

# 겨울축제

January, 2017

dutch  
performing  
arts  
&  
ASSITEJ NL



1-4 September  
children's theatre  
in Amsterdam

A showcase programme for professionals,  
organised by ASSITEJ NL in collaboration  
with Dutch Performing Arts, with performances  
from 2+ to 15+

[dutchperformingarts.nl](http://dutchperformingarts.nl) | [www.assitej.nl](http://www.assitej.nl)

FONDS  
PODIUM  
KUNSTEN  
PERFORMING  
ARTS FUND NL

Bonte Hond | Aepet | Photo: Kamerich&Budwilowitz/EYES2



Xi'an Meriton Company Presents  
**Terracotta Boy**



written by **Maja Hrgović**, directed by **Ivica Šimić**, produced by **Jessica Zhou**  
Available for touring from September 2016

Add / Qujiang Culture Incubation Center, Tower B,  
20th floor Wild Goose Pagoda South Road 318,  
Qujiang New District Xi' an, China

For any inquiry, please contact  
Email / [InfoMeriton@163.com](mailto:InfoMeriton@163.com)  
Office / +86(29)8955 6475 ext.805



<http://terraccottaboy2016.wix.com/terraccottaboy>

<https://www.facebook.com/terraccottaboy/>  
[https://twitter.com/Terracotta\\_Boy](https://twitter.com/Terracotta_Boy)  
<https://vimeo.com/user29127400>  
<https://www.instagram.com/terraccottaboy/?hl=hr>



# Cradle of Creativity

## 19th ASSITEJ World Congress and International Theatre Festival for Children and Young People

Celebrating and exploring inter-cultural exchange  
with theatre, dance, and music for young  
audiences in Africa and the world

17 - 27  
**MAY**  
2017

Cape Town South Africa



[www.assitej2017.org.za](http://www.assitej2017.org.za)





TYA-UK AND TYA-IRELAND PRESENT  
THE ASSITEJ ARTISTIC GATHERING 2016

# ON - THE EDGE

#OTE2016

WE ARE DELIGHTED  
TO HOST **ON THE EDGE**  
THE WORLD FESTIVAL  
OF THEATRE FOR YOUNG  
AUDIENCES AND ASSITEJ  
ARTISTIC GATHERING 2016  
WE HOPE YOU ENJOY  
YOUR VISIT TO  
BIRMINGHAM.



2<sup>nd</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> July 2016

[www.ontheedge2016.com](http://www.ontheedge2016.com)