

Sunday, May 21, 2000
Issue Number Seventeen

Bros. Lumiere, eds.

emergency@notnow.com



EDITOR'S NOTE:

I extend this apology to our readers and subscriber for an unexpected two-week hiatus. As it happens, one of the Bros. Lumiere is on special assignment on the continent, across the Atlantic, that is, back in the old world. That leaves me, one Brother Lumiere, that's Louis, to be sure, the younger brother, oh!, to do it all.

But please rest assured, EMERGENCY will soon resume a quicker rate of production. We expect an excruciatingly high volume around the time of the New York Fringe Festival in August, which will more than make up for a slight summer slump in the hotter months. During June and July, the gazette will come out as often as possible; no more than three and a half weeks shall pass between printings, I swear it!

Since I have you here, I would like to take this opportunity to make the following announcements:

§ The next several installments of the gazette will feature extensive reports from Europe, from Moscow to Novy Sad to Edinburgh. EMERGENCY seeks

correspondents in all corners of the globe. If you are interested in joining our international spy ring, send inquiries to emergency@notnow.com.

§ We are now collecting materials for the upcoming very special Kharms issue, focussing on Daniil Ivanovich Kharms and the OBERIU (Real Art) movement, for which edition we are open to all related submissions and suggestions.

§ You can still subscribe to EMERGENCY at \$15 a year for 24 issues. Send checks to our publishers (made payable to M. Yankelevich): Ugly Duckling Presse, 112 Pioneer Street, Brooklyn, NY, 11231.

§ Also on the horizon (for those of you who want more!) an EMERGENCY web site is rearing its golden head. Watch out.

And, for now, adieu, on with it, or, to quote my dear brother: go!

Thank you for your continued support, we shall not fail you.

Sincerely at Your Service,

Louis Lumiere,
Editor

LUNA ZEYGMAN, ABROAD: COMMUNIQUÉ No2



I propose a theater where the play happens, as usual and with all of its particular traits and effects. Then, someone other than the play's director, anyone, not necessarily a director or even a "theater person" per se, will arrive in the middle of the play's run and add, remove, alter some small things about the play, not according to the original intentions of the playwright or director, but in response to the play as an event in performance.

For example, in Moscow there is a director called Fomenko who staged a play adapted from a writer called Tolstoy. It is, like many stage events in Moscow, a play in the classical tradition, with the actors, costumed and ACTING, with dialogues and intrigues. Surprisingly, it is not hateful but delightful, shocking even. The actors perform caricatures with a deadpan cynicism worthy of Richard Foreman. The stage is large, wide, and the cast is huge. When you tire of watching the

leading lady blah blah, you look over to the side and, on the extreme downstage is a messenger, silent, stuck in a chair, peripheral and fascinating. Although classically staged, Fomenko's play is unlike anything else I've seen in Moscow because of its speed. The actors move fast, not lingering over their moments and avoiding indulgent "significant" pauses.

O! To now come in and play! To tinker with this play, this found object! To insert a too-loud buzzer, set to sound every time the audience bursts into idiotic applause after a speech or an exit! To eliminate Acts III and IV, where the plot is resolved and satisfaction guaranteed!

This is my proposition, to take a theatrical performance and sample it, cut it and submit it to the process of collage, the way you can an image or a piece of music, the way that you do automatically, in your own head, every time you walk down the street.

Luna Zeygman

☛ Bend Your Mind Off
(a review)

by Matvei
Yankelevich

:OSREV

VERSO:

#The Diamond of Necrophilia

by Filip Marinovic

HIGHWAY TO TOMORROW

Elevator Repair Service's work-in-progress, under the direction of John Collins and Steve Bodow, combines Euripides' THE BACCHAE, Fela Kuti, Florida swamp snakes, Fitzgerald's THE LAST TYCOON, basketball dances and puppets made from everyday household items. Last Day! Sun, May 21 at 8pm. HERE, 145 6th Ave, south of Spring St. 212-647-0202 or www.here.org. \$12.

AGAMEMNON 2.0

Tali Gai directs Charles L. Mee, Jr. Last day! May 21, Sunday at 2pm. Access Theatre, 380 Broadway. (212) 591-0202. 10\$.

REV. BILLY & THE MACKY DEES GOSPEL CHOIR.

Their anti-consumerist church services have been called "the most pointed and exciting political theater in New York" by The Times. After each show follow Rev Billy to Starbucks (47th/9th) for the nightly citizen's eviction of the 'Mermaid with the \$3 latte'. Last day! Sunday, May 21 at 8pm. Theater At St. Clement's 423 West 46th St., west of 9th Ave. 212-358 5181. \$15. Stu/sen \$12. "STARBUCKS OUT OF HELL'S KITCHEN!"

(EXPERI) MENTAL FILMS FROM PRAGUE

The hidden face of Czech cinema. "The (experi) has bracketed itself—and what has remained are Mental Films: sometimes they are at odds and out of sorts, but they are always free and revel in their independence." ---Michal Bregant, curator. Program I & reception, May 23 at 7pm. Program II & III, May 25 & 26, 7pm. Anthology Film Archives. 2 Ave & 2 St. 212-505-5110. \$8. \$5 for students.

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LISTINGS

ROBERT BECK MEM'L CINEMA

Peculiar films every Tuesday at 9pm. May 23: Picture Books for Adults: Lewis Klahr (!) presents 8mm oddities. May 30: Necrorealism from Russia. Yevgeni Yufit, etc. on video. Collective: Unconscious, 145 Ludlow For info: 718-706-6697. \$5.

A PLACE LIKE THIS

CJ Hopkins' new play, talk of the town. May 24--June 17, Wed--Sat at 8pm. Present Company, 196 Stanton St., LES 212-420-8877. \$12.

EURDYCE

Jean Anouilh directed by John Regis. Tues, Wed, Thurs at 7:30; Fri, Sat at 8. Through June 3rd. The Studio Theater, 145 West 46th St. 800-965-4827. \$15.

DREAMBOATS & SLEEPYHEADS

Written and directed by Charles Alcroft. May 25 to 6/3, Thu-Sat 7:30 & Sun 2:30 La MaMa Experimental Theatre 74A East 4th Street. 212-475-7710.

LOUISE BOURGEOIS: I DO, I UNDO, I REDO

Created and perf-ed by Denise Stoklos, based on the life, work & writings of the French-born modernist sculptor. Set design by Bourgeois, herself! May 18--28; Thu--Sun 8pm & Sun 3:30 La MaMa Experimental Theatre 74A East 4th Street. 212-475-7710

THE PICTURE

Rip Torn's Sanctuary Theater Wrkshp, with Tony Torn in newly translated and rarely performed Ionesco play. Wed--Sun, at 8pm, through June 4. chashama@111, 111 W. 42nd. 212-206-7188. \$12

THREE OF FRANK'S IDEAS FOR PERFORMANCES ACCOMPANIED BY MY BRIEF ANALYSES AS TO WHAT THEY MEAN

1. DIRT PUPPETS

A black-clad puppeteer stands in front of a table piled with dirt. The puppeteer uses two sticks to slowly push the dirt around. Gradually, all the dirt falls to the floor. An assistant then brings more dirt, and the puppeteer repeats the process. This performance goes on for eight hours. Eventually there is a large pile of dirt all around the table.

ANALYSIS: Puppeteer equals God. Dirt equals man. Remember that old metaphor, man is but a handful of dust, a lump of clay? The image of a Master Craftsman/God at work is implied here, only this God is someone who might as well be pushing pasta around on his plate. In other words, in the world of Dirt Puppets, there is no Master Craftsman, carefully weaving our individual fates. There's just a guy who's as bored and trapped in His job as we are in ours.

2. DANCE FOR 5000 DANCERS

A few dancers come onstage, from various places along the eaves, on stage left. They walk across the stage like normal people, and then exit through a narrow doorway on stage right. It should be clear that there is no other way to exit stage right than through this doorway. The pace accelerates. Dancers come in pairs, then groups of threes and fours. As dancers begin entering the stage faster than they can exit, a bottleneck forms around the doorway. It

then grows, until dancers spill off the stage and into the audience. Eventually, there are more dancers in the audience than spectators.

ANALYSIS: The primary image here is of the dancers engulfing the audience. By doing this, the dancers defy our expectation to see a handful of specially-trained artists do tricks. Instead, we are faced with the image of 5000 dancers doing nothing extraordinary at all. Thus we are confronted "metaphorically and figuratively" with the idea that there is no separation between us and the dancers. We are all engaged in the same process, headed towards the same fate, waiting to go out the door.

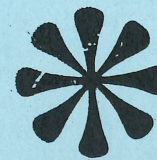
3. MARATHON MOVIE

Frank runs the New York Marathon. Not the whole 26 miles, though. He just runs until he gets to the first pancake place he sees. And while he is running, he carries a video camera, to film it.

ANALYSIS: The marathon runners (like the 5000 dancers and the pile of dirt) are marching inexorably from point A to point B, from birth to death. They can't stop it. Frank's fleeing from the marathon to partake of life-giving pancakes is his protest against this fate.

Amy Fusselman

"Three of Frank's Ideas" first appeared in the Spring/Summer 2000 issue of Pierogi Press.



Made in U.S.A.



A work-in-progress collaboration by the Collapsable (sic) Giraffe & the Radiohole, presented at the Radiohole Studio loft in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Closed May 6.

I don't know it till it's over and I get up fatigued, back aching, knees wobbly. I didn't know that I had come to this: that I had gone through a physical transformation. Nothing in the theater has given me such hope (for what? for actuality? cruelty? freedom?); I have long ceased expecting it from the theater. But now: I need a smoke and a drink—thankfully both are provided by our kind hosts—and I sit down again to regain my self. It's not the way one needs a fix after a mental exercise, after a Foreman show for example: It is not the brain that is frazzled, rather the mind-gut, the gut of our intellect, so to speak.

As the title suggests, the group's explicit goal with **BEND YOUR MIND OFF** is to force the mind to stray from the beaten path. Yet, this is not an end unto itself, it is not shock therapy for the already lobotomized audience. The reality becomes clear: the performance is a real event, the actual frightening pursuit of freedom, in which the impossible can be attained. This group uses performance as a tool to go beyond themselves, to do things greater (or lesser) than themselves, thus offering themselves up to the audience. Acting is self-degradation and physical castigation in pursuit of freedom. The performance becomes a whip with which to beat oneself senseless, to lose sight (through pain and pleasure) of oneself, of self-hood, of pre-programmed individuality. Bataille writes, "Freedom is nothing if it is not the freedom to live at the edge of limits where all comprehension breaks down."

Although to shock is not the main point for the seven souls on stage in **BEND YOUR MIND OFF**, it becomes a natural result of the performance: this kind of shock is refreshing. It is achieved by no excessively loud noise or blast of light (such as blinded me at a Reza Abdoh play). The comfortable, almost careless use of video lends perspective instead of cheap trick surprise. There is no separate tech crew, no far off booth with control switches. Technology is in the room, on stage and at their fingertips (some of them have acquired their tech calluses working with The Wooster Group, Foreman, the Builder's Association, etc.) Yet, the group does not use a/v effects as a crutch. Rather, (how old fashioned) it is built on performance. Not in the sense of beauty or teamwork, but in the sense of—burning.

There is not a shred of the shrewd audience manipulation one finds everywhere today, from the Whitney to Broadway, from the flying trapeze to the basement black boxes. Here, no theatrical technique or element is pointed at with a self-conscious finger to be distinguished as important, smart, or valuable in and of itself; no gruesome transgression or effect falls below the belt, or else all of it does; the parts become indistinguishable, as in madness. There is something endearingly honest and childlike to this brutal game, trying the naughty on for size; this self-inflicted cruelty, playing with matches, excrement, bloody tampons; children getting carried away, sometimes overboard, the game going too far.

If we are shocked, it is because we are used to theater as a safe form of entertainment. It is with fear and disgust that we acknowledge a loss of control, because this spectacle seems to spill over, its boundaries dangerously fragile and slipping. We are no longer safe.

Working, in progress, the event seeks not to draw you in, it seeks not approval. It seeks to happen. The mind is working, perceiving. The body is tensing; premonition of pain. The performance assumes pain, aspires to pain, always teetering on the threshold between pain and pleasure. To get to the room of pleasure one passes through the

room of pain. And at times, they are one and the same room. "A child's scream, a cry of terror and yet of intense happiness." (Bataille, in **THE IMPOSSIBLE**)

So, Eric Dyer repeatedly bangs his own head with a microphone (*tool of the postmodern theater)—emitting cries of "Open the door!" Spontaneous self-punishment, a minor skin burst and, at the same time, a pleasure button you just can't stop pushing. After all, if you bang hard enough, perhaps someone will eventually open the door.

An honest curiosity—to know what's behind that door—what Artaud defined as a "blind appetite for life", drives the performer to the limit, where chaos and nature ensue. Reason, common sense, good taste—all disappears in the void that follows. What remains is anguish and, above all, lucid consciousness. Herein lies the cruelty. Not in self-laceration, but in the conscious decision. Not in sexual degradation, but in the lucid curiosity. This is the consciousness of cruelty. "The theater has been lost," writes Artaud, "It is upon this idea of extreme action that theater must be rebuilt." Collapsable (sic) Giraffe and Radiohole seek to do just that. It is no wonder, therefore, that even their chosen textual material naturally follows Artaud's call "to concentrate around famous personages, atrocious crimes, superhuman devotions" giving us "everything that is in crime, love, war or madness" in order for the theater "to recover its necessity." I do not mean to imply that this theater comes out of Artaud or any theoretical pretense, rather it comes out of the current necessities of theater as did Artaud's in its time.

True to its self-proclaimed situation, experimental theater must be dedicated to the marginal. Having selected as its texts Fassbinder, S.C.U.M. manifesto, neo-nazi love stories and low-grade porn—cruel imbecilic thirst for sex and power—Radiohole and Collapsable (sic) Giraffe breakdown all rational boundaries between them. The marginal is the hothouse of excess. Nothing fits. The structure of the play is constantly nearing the limit, zero, that is chaos. From chaos comes organicity, anything can be born. These divergent texts and splinters of narrative flow organically one into the other, because no fake structure connives them into cubbyholes of meaning.

The whole event verges on the extreme, threatening to fall into this irrational void. This is the void that attracts us, makes us curious; aided by insatiable passion for the impossible, we reach for it. Returning to us the spark of intense life, the performance burns, taking the written pages along with it. All that's left is pure laughable anguish. To create is a necessary cruelty.

There is a degree to which nothing played on a stage takes shape as a real event. Perhaps only violence and transgression—not only in regard to theatrical convention, but to the greater societal values and the natural human body—can raise the theatrical event back into the ring to compete with reality.

Matvei Yankelevich

(MARGINALIA ON BATAILLE'S "THE DEAD MAN")

"Because rational thought can conceive of neither disorder nor freedom, and only symbolic thought can, it is necessary to pass from a general concept that intellectual mechanisms empty of meaning to a single irrational symbol." — Bataille

#

The diamond of necrophilia is the genitalia gorging on and penetrating the future incarnate: the corpse.

#

Sex and the corpse. The diamond of necrophilia formed in the pure carbon of night.

The ultimate transgression. Who can witness this final rape?

The witness is the dead man? who's eyes are everywhere.

Cane Toad mounts disintegrating Cane Toad

corpse amidst flies in the roadside sunlight.

(The supreme sexual urge: fucking without concern for orgasm of the Other. In Shakespeare: Othello—Desdemona; Hamlet—Ophelia; Lear—Cordelia; Strangely Mac is the only one who refuses Necros; but his wife and he are already dead—necrophilia while still "alive".)

#

When Ed falls back dead, Marie comes instantly. She comes for Ed. Ed's last sight is Marie's tits sticking halfway out of her dress. Ed's last sight is eternity: for eternity he will see nothing but this red nipple and its flaming aureole revolving a new ring of inferno.

Bataille's subtitles, like a silent movie he projects into the reader's head. We are the accompanying player piano. Like a bible concordance. Like a Brecht stage placard. Like a like. Like a stillborn simile. Do it!

#

Marie runs out naked. Marie pisses into the earth. Why is this? Marie is fertilizing the grass where Ed will be buried so that: a flower can grow from his head in health:

the flower of Necros. She will pick it and stick it inside her and Ed is there forever, a flower that cannot wilt but only pollinate her, until they are mixed into one again. The soil heals the corpse.

Marie's nakedness humiliates her before anyone has seen her. But the dead man's eyes are everywhere. She is seen. In the earth she is humiliated. More!

#

The smell of unwashed sex just outside the inn door. Pleasure. The tavern will take her in and digest her, like an unwashed canapé. She cries, but her tears will be brandy momentarily.

#

I am not going to re-tell the story. Let Marie talk, since she is the ventriloquist of the dead.

The diamond of necrophilia is the genitalia gorging on blood like the most starved mosquito in the swamp.

When Marie says "dawn" and no one hears her: this absence opens the cracks of the body and the cracks of the sky. Dawn. The mistress of the inn gives orders for her to be sucked. Dawn, unheard. But the inn folk become it instead of hearing it, together.

Marie, what is it like to fuck a corpse?

The ghost of the beloved comes in the form of a dwarf count to be fucked, begging for urine in the face; who faints when he sees himself on the floor, a corpse. As soon as Marie dies, he dies. The dead man Marie follows into the ground is both the dwarf and Ed. The corpse and the ghost of the corpse: Marie parts with both on the verge of coitus. This almost-full-circle is the arc of the narrative. In the space where the two curved lines would meet to complete a circle stands Marie, holding the two by the hand—transgression's automaton: what do you do on a heap of piss, come and vomit? You shit. The bodies merge: their glue is their waste. The waste becoming the binding element: the carbon that forms the diamond of necrophilia. The absence of actual coitus between Marie and the corpse: this space is the diamond: pure desire.

#

What does it smell like? And no return of wetness, lubrication.

And what are the armpits in the mouth with no sweat?

And what is the anus, neither dilating nor contracting.

And what is the cock? sagging like a flogged horse you embrace in the streets of Turin?

And what is the cunt? a blue alcove, dry.

And what are the big toes? Two dead eyes.

And what is the body? A stapler. A house. Anything you want now.

Anything you need. Fertilizer. Piss on it. Feces. Vomit. Come. A vector of the future.

Can it be done? Fuck the corpse. Do it! Do it now.

The diamond of necrophilia is her tear when she leans over the corpse of her lover and shudders.

Filip Marinovic

the emergency gazette

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SAD CLOWNS ON VELVET

Three Chekhov Vaudevilles directed by Ian Hill. Three sad sacks face their despair: "On the Harmful Effects of Tobacco," "The Tragedian in Spite of Himself," and "A Moscow Hamlet." Superb vaudevillian performances by Ian Hill and Peter Brown. Thurs--Sat, May 18--June 3 at 10pm; Sundays, May 21--June 4 at 8pm. Nada, Ludlow St., 420-1466, \$10.

LAVA

Edward Einhorn's notorious version of this classic experimental text by Richard Foreman. The audience is forced to sit on stage and perform Foreman's play. Stay on for the instant cast party with refreshments, music, and dancing. Mon, May 29 at 8pm; the last Monday of every month in 2000 sans December. Nada, Ludlow St., 420-1466, \$5.

ACHE

written and performed by Blake Nelson, "Love is just chemicals/Anyway..." Presented by the Bat Theater Company. May 11--June 10. Thu--Sat at 10pm. 41 White Street. 212.226.2407. \$12.

WHAT THE FUCK IS STRING THEORY?

A work in progress by Susanna Speier in collab w/ Hope Cartelli, Jeff Lewonczyk and Stefan Weisman. Monday, May 29, 7pm. @ HERE, 145 6th Ave. 212-647-0202. \$10

BROOKLYN FILMMAKERS

34th Brooklyn Art Council Int'l Film & Video Fest's final screening with panel discussion preceding (at 6) and party following. Monday, June 12, 8:30. Ocularis, 70 N.6th. 718-388-8713. 5\$.

I, RASPUTIN

Kriota Willberg, Todd Alcott, and R. Sikoryak. Music by Wharton Tiers. May 25--June 11, Thurs--Sun at 7:30pm PS 122, 150 1st Ave. (at 9th St.) 212-477-5288. \$15.

YIELD BURNING

Written by Jill Szumacher, directed by Heidi R. Miller. Looks interesting. May 25--June 11; Tues, Thurs-Sun at 8. Ontological Theater, St Marks Church, 131 East 10th St. 212-533-4650. \$12.

If your favorite hometown café, bookstore, or performance venue does not supply you with the free, bi-weekly **EMERGENCY gazette** write to us! We'll put you on the map. Don't be left out.