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Bros. Lumiere, eds.

EMERGENCY is a FREE and BI-WEEKLY gazette, providing an immediate response to what's really happening in theater, film and performance. EMERGENCY is not a consumer guide. The idea: To liberate the form of criticism from the limitation of conventional review etiquette. EMERGENCY seeks: essays, research reviews, masterpieces, dialogues with colleagues, proposals for "impossible theater". Please send us word of open rehearsals, guerilla acts, collaborations, shows, and screenings.

free

GAZETTE #8

December 22, 1999.

EMERGENCY

fin du cinema*

DEAR READERS,

There is nothing to fear.

Barring any alpine altercations, the next issue of the EMERGENCY gazette will appear on Wednesday, JANUARY 19th.

hi

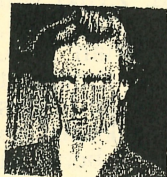
And, following, the EMERGENCY gazette will appear every alternate Wednesday ad infinitum.

8

Faithfully,
BROS. LUMIERE

us

Argument for a Pantomime: The Philosopher's Stone



In one corner of the house is the laboratory where the Doctor conducts his experiments.

Harlequin, who has noticed Isabelle for some time and desires her, will introduce himself into the house, under the pretext of being the subject of a more or less sadistic experiment by the Doctor, who searches for the philosopher's stone.

Isabelle has a kind of dream in which Harlequin appears; but a wall of illusion, in the middle of which she thinks she sees him, separates them.

On the stage we see one of the Doctor's experiments where Harlequin loses his arms and legs as Isabelle watches, terrified. Her feelings of horror are combined with the first stirrings of love. Harlequin and Isabelle are alone for a moment and Harlequin takes the opportunity to make her a baby.

The Doctor surprises them in the middle of the lovemaking, which was happening at the same time as the sadistic experiments. The lovers hasten the making of the baby and take it out from under Isabelle's dress. The baby is a small mannequin and the exact replica of the Doctor. The Doctor, seeing himself reproduced in his wife's progeny, can't believe he is not the father.

Antonin Artaud

Translated by Milton Loayza

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NEWS FROM BOSTON AMANDA PALMER AT THE PINK PONY

I met her at college, heard her playing piano, cast her in one of my plays; unlikely friends with Amanda Palmer.

From what I've seen and gathered through working with her in the theater, much of Amanda's work uses tableau and a kind of frozen gestural language, or motion that has a repetitive nature or lacks specific direction.

Amanda is well known in Boston as THE BRIDE, the living statue performance she does regularly in Harvard Square. THE BRIDE stands eight feet tall, dressed from head to toe in white, even her face is painted pale. She is completely still until

someone interacts with her, or puts money in her basket. Then THE BRIDE gives them a flower or blows them a kiss and changes her pose.

For Amanda, this is one of several jobs, and usually a well paying one. What fascinates her about it are the responses she gets: Many people give her presents, sketches they have made of her, poems they write for her on the spot, or after seeing her in the Square over and over.

* * *

A recent Sunday. Amanda and I at the Pink Pony Café in New York.

AMANDA: In September I recreated LIBERTY LEADING THE PEOPLE, the painting by Delacroix, with ten actors all painted white, just freezing as the painting in The Pit...

ME (ASIDE): The Pit is a small outdoor area in the middle of Harvard Square, where punks hang out and buskers perform.

AMANDA: ...all painted white, with props. And I was Liberty, with my bare breasts and a big, big black and white American Flag. We held it for 15 minutes and then a group of vandals dressed in black came and just like spray-painted and vandalized the shit out of it like with chains and streamers. And by the end it was this mass; you could hardly see the people under all the junk.

AMANDA: I was asked by Dave Franklin to do THE BRIDE at a Mobius party...

ME (ASIDE): Mobius is a Boston arts organization.

AMANDA: ...a party fundraiser thing at Stilling Street, a building that's slated for demolition. It's been all over the papers, the artists who live there don't want it torn down. I did the bride with christmas lights inside the dress, so it was the glowing bride, and behind me the manager of the Empire S.N.A.F.U. Restoration Project was in a cage, naked and covered with dirt. He rigged up these hooks in the ceiling and strung up a big cow bone and a metallic meat pump and a big box made out of rat traps. And he worked the pulleys so these three objects were going up and down in front of the bride. It was our little installation and we did it. It was funny. There was no meaning to it.

ME: There seems to be a difference between the Boston you describe and what's happening here in New York, something about the goals of the artists.

AMANDA: At Stillings Street I met Michael Pope who is making a film called NEOVOXER. Ultra-bizarre art film been in the works for two years. It's a silent film with live ensemble. And he asked me if I wanted to do some stuff for it. Absolutely. And after the Mobius party broke down he set up NEOVOXER in there and I showed up a couple days later and it was a whole production, thirty people there. It's this long, long loft space, he had set up 800 candles on

the floor and lit them all at the same time, and had all these people in god-like robes doing Shintaido. And I was a person painted gray and freaking out in some bathroom with some other people. He's [Pope] from New York along with some of the primary actors in NEOVOXER and they just trekked up to Boston. And I got into a conversation with one of the main people, this girl named Scully, and she said the same thing. She was like, "New York is great, but this wouldn't be happening in New York, you've gotta be shitting me. This is what everyone thinks happens in New York all the time. No it's different."

ME: Yes! Yes! There's something about--

AMANDA: She said it's an agenda thing. Everyone doing any project would be like how is this going to look on my resume, and what am I going to get from doing this. Maybe its because people come to New York to make it. And people don't go to Boston to make it.

ME: (sighs and lingers on a cigarette.)

AMANDA: Allie [Alina Vilenkin] and I went on an eight day road trip. She's doing a documentary on three people from Lexington [Mass.] and I'm one of them. We went from Boston to Montreal, to Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, New York, back up to Boston. I just did THE BRIDE in bizarre places. Nowhere. We did 11 sites: A highway underpass, some highway medians, train tracks, abandoned house, corn fields. We went to the lawn ornament capital of the world in Michigan and I stood [as the bride] among the lawn ornaments. The other really good one was the christmas decoration capital of the world in Frankenmuth, Michigan, they have this parking lot that's just filled with kitsch christmas bullshit, and I did THE BRIDE there at night with the car lights illuminating me, in front of this really cheesy crèche scene.

* * *

The next day at my apartment, Patrick tells me about Amanda's dead naked woman routine at Wesleyan. Amanda explains that she was wheeled up to campus center and tossed onto the ground in front of the student center. The place was busy with students and professors getting lunch and mail and Amanda was sprawled out naked—a naked dead woman covered in fake blood. Her friends wandered about the crowd with hidden tape recorders, getting the reactions of passersby and on-lookers.

She later did the same thing on a table in the middle of the big dining hall, at dinner. The one person put his tray on the table and sat down to eat, nonplussed, of course gained her eternal respect.

What's interesting is how she takes it all outside the theater. Just standing still can become an event when all around are busy bustling and buying plastic presents. Being dead and na-

ked in public is a definitive event. And what do people say? They fall in love with a living statue, they bring squash and write poems in tribute so that a kind of shrine forms by her hidden feet. These are spectacles without an agenda. It's a surprise to stumble upon them. Unsuspectingly, people let a theatrical event become a part of their life.

This reminds me of a different story from those bygone days. This story tells of a performance not intended for any audience, except perhaps the performer herself. A secret act.

Amanda was opposite Patrick in a play I wrote. At the time he was more or less a folklorist and, every night, put fresh milk out on his back door step. "For the færies," he said. And the bowl was always empty by morning.

I was over one late night, getting close to sober and typing delirious 'round 5 am. Patrick was asleep in the dark cavern of the loft bed above me. I happened to look through the window and what did I see? A real human-size færie, in a ruffled and tatter-torn white dress, pink in the blue light of just before dawn. Am I seeing things? A wreath of flowers atop her hair. Did Patty put that opium in my pipe again? She bent down and picked up the cold bowl and held it with her fingertips, tipping it and drinking slowly, blissful, beautiful. Amanda. She was completely unaware of me watching from the darkness inside. It was a ritual. She even licked the last drops from the rim of the china bowl. She set it down softly and stole away, cat-like into what was left of the night.

I told neither of them of what I had witnessed until much, much later. Of course, she did it every night as winter turned into early spring. How it ended, I don't know.

Matvei Yankelevich

IMPOSSIBLE THEATER

Dear Bros. Lumiere,

Hi, guys! Here's a suggestion for Impossible Theater:

FIRST PERSON: "But the way he said it! It was just so...so...it—made my hat collapse!"

SECOND PERSON: "Your hat?! It made your hat collapse?! I...I..."
(hat collapses)

Michael Lumelsky



Reviews!

IS THERE LIFE ON MARS?

Piotr Mamonov.
Texts by Chekhov, Ionesco,
Rubinstein, Ermilov, Ozhegov.
Tribeca Performing Arts Center.
December 17&18, 1999. Over.

They know these signs and words subconsciously, they recognize them as the stuff of their lives, the gestures and movements they see others make and which they make themselves. But it is revealed to them (without them necessarily comprehending the revelation) that these signs have lost any potential for more than vulgar or accidental meaning.

— Mamonov is expressly interested in what he calls the fall of language, its disintegration, which he keenly notices in the polite communiqués of our affluent society, just as in Chekhov's world of petty land owners. It is this dying language that he flings or, as he puts it, "babbles" into the noisy vacuum of the audience.

— Still, I feel tired. My retrospective dissection of the event yields ideas, but all of them are destructive. Mamonov destroyed and destroyed, but in the end created nothing, and, for this reason, his performance, in the moment and in retrospect, is exhausting.

— Tribeca Performing Arts Center is packed with mostly young, bohemian Russian emigres, adoring fans who know Mamonov from way back when he was an alternative rock star with his band, Zvuki Mu [literally "the sounds of mu/moo"], lauded by the likes of Brian Eno. They applaud every bit as though it were a burlesque show. One begins to wish there were no blackouts, no artificial interruptions between scenes. They laugh at Mamonov's crude innuendoes during his Brechtian parody of the Chekhov play in which he jumps from one character to another. And it strikes me that they are laughing at the bawdy motion of pelvic thrust itself—the very fact that it's on stage, in a Theatre, tickles them to giggles. They laugh not realizing that the holy freak on stage is mocking them, their little lives, their stupid squabbles, their own pelvic lust and consumerist grunts, THEIR inability to communicate with this crude and defunct gestural language.

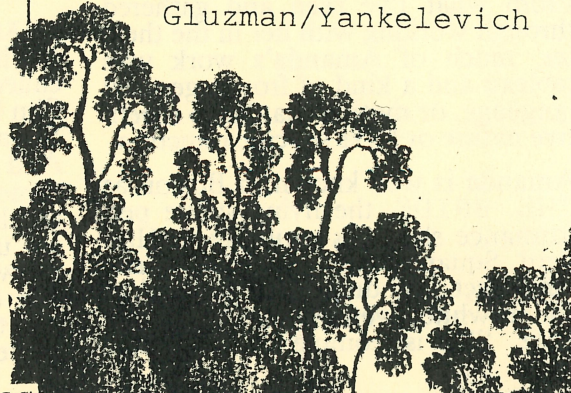
— Why doesn't he just come out and say it, come out and say "you idiots, go home, you don't understand anything." His contempt is troubling him. Playing the idiot, he is in danger of losing his distance from that which he is deconstructing. By mastering the trade he becomes a slave to it, to professionalism and, more importantly, to theatrical conventions.

— In the end, I am tired. The performance, after the initial shock of the chaotic twitching physicality passed, was embarrassing (not least because of the boorish laughter and conditioned applause). Each grotesque characterization seemed to be an act of destruction, of revealing the repulsive underbelly of theater, and yet Mamonov would then finish the scene, retreat behind an idiotic screen and change costume for the next bit. In other words, with each act of destruction, he would hold on to perhaps the most stale element of traditional theater: the scene changes.

While watching the performance, I was embarrassed and tired. Is it over yet?

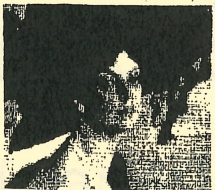
Now, thinking about it, it becomes increasingly meaningful, especially if I allow myself to assume that Mamonov's mission is to inhabit a dead form, to make the statement that the theater is dead and, at the same time, that theater is life. a equals b and b equals c. Therefore, according to him, life is dead and his brutal contempt for Chekhov and his characters drives the feeling unmistakably home.

Gluzman/Yankelevich



THE DISASTROUS ACT

Pooh Kaye/Eccentric Motions
Joyce SoHo. Dec 16-19. Over.



It was like being in a crib; sitting in a crib. And when one sits in a crib, one is at first enthralled by the things surrounding one, because the crib

is the universe and it is shielding one completely and one has only these objects in the crib so of course one is interested and after a while one goes through the clothes, one seems to explore all one can of it, and one discards the toys and the crib.

And then one grows bored with everything around because the crib is the universe and the universe is very small. One says: Well I'm a thing, obviously, and if I'm a thing I can do what those other things just did, I can discard myself, I can jump. I can get out of my crib.

And one day, as with all children who learn to walk, they throw themselves out of their crib and they land flat and hard on the floor. But they're not really upset, because they're out of their crib; they may cry a bit, but they get up pretty quickly. And the thing that amazes us about little people is how they can get up so quickly when they fall, and how they can seemingly trip and run around all day without even a splinter of black-and-blue, not even a bit of bruise. (As we get older, just a knock from the refrigerator door will give you a black-and-blue.)

These dancers were like that. They could fall like children and get up. They were with another person and were not able to share space. They felt crowded so they tripped their lover. They felt by slapping them. And the other person would fall down, they'd get up and they'd be fine, they'd be renewed. It didn't matter. It didn't hurt them.

They were people in space. And they couldn't all be in the same space together without bumping into each other, colliding and colliding. We experience space all the time, in buses, subway trains, and Hudson Tubes. Once in a while you feel that you're entitled to have your space back and so you take it from the other people.

But these scenes were very intimate. Two people can't be alone in a room together. Not for long. But there are times when that's not absolute; when a couple, struggling for space in which to sleep, suddenly finds the perfect juxtaposition of their bodies and, finally, sleep together.

Ellie Ga

CITY LIGHTS

Chaplin's classic with live musical accompaniment by Laura Cromwell & Cine-Noir Pornographic Orchestra. Thursday, December 23, 10:30pm. Cine-Noir Film Society, 253-1922. Pink Pony, 176 Ludlow Street. FREE. Donat'n suggested for food drive.

BAD BOY NIETZSCHE

Richard Foreman's newest, about Nietzsche throwing his arms around a horse, begins on January 27th at the Ontological-Hysterical Theater. 533-4650. St. Marks Church, 2nd Ave & 10th St.

DREAM HOUSE

La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela open their dream house to the public to experience seven years of sound and light. Open Thursdays and Saturdays, 2pm - Midnight. 925-8270. 275 Church Street, 3rd Floor. FREE!

TABLES OF DESTINY

A piece by Russian futurist Velemir Khlebnikov, who once signed a manifesto entitled "A Slap in the Face of Public Taste." Part of an ongoing series of short performances held at the Tate Gallery, the 2nd Thursday of each month. Past performances have included texts by Witkiewicz and other European avant-gardians. Jan 13 at 7. Tate Gallery, 413 W.14th St., 242-9888. FREE!

LUMIERE DAY, DECEMBER 28

The Robert Beck Memorial Cinema suggests the following celebratory action: ILLUMINATIONS or A THOUSAND POINTS OF LIGHT "On this anniversary of the first public film screening (December 28, 1895) by the presciently & poetically named Lumière Brothers, we request & instruct that each of you LIGHT THE LIGHTS by turning on a projector in the private of your home or local theater for a few moments (or longer) at exactly 9:33pm to celebrate the pure white light of cinema!" ...The Brothers Lumiere would only like to add that in absence of a cinematographe at your house, just go out and see a movie, any movie, look into the light.

Open salon every Saturday, 10pm till late. Says James, "Sometimes I'm in my underwear, people knock on the door, and the performance begins." Also: OVERTURES Starring Miss Murphy. New Year's Eve. Call 212-875-7171 for info. BOX, 70 Commercial St. (& Box St.), Storefront 102, Greenpoint, Brooklyn.

CONGA GUERRILLA FOREST

Susana Cook writes and directs seven women and an angel. Astonishing prophetic paraphernalia. Dec. 19-30 at 9. WOW Café. 59 E. 4th, 777-4280. \$10.

JET LAG

The Builders Association is a New York company of directors, performers, and architects who stage large-scale media-based work. This latest show was all the rage on the European festival circuit last summer. Jan 6-8, 11, 13-15 at 8. The Kitchen, 512 W.19th St., 255-5793. \$20/student discounts avail.

SEX

Mae West's play, finally published a few years ago, is getting its first NYC revival since 1926. Directed by Elyse Singer, with music by Sex Mob. Jan 6-16, Thu-Sat at 8pm, Sun at 3pm. Gershwin Hotel, 7 E.27th, 439-8122. \$12.

THE ILIAD: BOOK ONE

Aquila Theatre Co., known for their staging of the Greeks, are in residence at NYU's Center for Ancient Studies. Catch their Homer. Jan 6-9 at 7 and 9:30. Clark Studio Theatre, 70 Lincoln Center Plaza, 279-4200. \$25.

KING LEAR

Not content with just Homer, the busy Brits at Aquila are also staging Lear. Two shows only. Jan 4 & 5 at 8. Clark Studio Theatre, 279-4200. \$25.

LOBSTER ALICE

Salvador Dali in Hollywood. A new play by Kira Obolensky. Tue-Fri at 8, Sat at 3 & 8, Sun at 3 & 7:30. Thru Jan 23. Playwrights Horizons, 415 W.42nd St., 279-4200. \$38.

WALTZ

Hetty King, often seen dancing for David Dorfman, choreographed. Jan 12-14th at 8. Joyce SoHo, 155 Mercer, 334-7479.

A NEW GENERATION OF PERFORMANCE FROM JAPAN

DTW and the Japan Society present dance & theater by Ginko, Kei Takei & Moving Eart, and the Kaze no Machi Theater Company. Jan 7 & 8. Dance Theater Workshop, 219 W.19 St., 924-0077.

FRANKENSTEIN IN LOVE

Subtitled "The Life of Death," this Clive Barker gem is directed and designed by Ian Hill. Jan 6-30, Thu-Sun at 7:30. Nada, 167 Ludlow, 420-1466. \$12.

AUGUST STRINDBERG

Strindberg's five chamber plays: Thunder in the Air, The Back Glove, The Pelican, After the Fire, and The Ghost Sonata. Performed in rep. Jan 21-30; Fri-Sun at 8, Sat & Sun at 3. HERE, 145 6th Ave. 647-0202. \$12.

HAMLET

Andrei Serban directs Liev Schriber. See it if you can afford the Public Theater's not-so-public prices. Thru Jan 9; Tue-Sat at 8; Sun at 7, Wed, Sat & Sun at 2. Public Theater. 425 Lafayette. 239-6200. \$45.

THE PARK (ING LOT)

Written & performed by Mike Tyler. Billed as the "Complete Breakdown of Everything." Jan 7-16 at 8. HERE, 145 6th Ave. 647-0202. \$12.

HOUSE OF TRASH

Trav S.D. wrote, directed, produced, and stars in this musical satire of America, featuring wrestling and glue-sniffing. Jan 21-Feb 26 at 10:30. HERE, 145 6th Ave. 647-0202. \$12.

DARIO D'AMBROSI

Italian performance artist D'Ambrosi remounts four pieces of his teatro patologico. Jan 25-27 We are Not Everybody Jan 28-30 Days of Antonio Feb 3-6 Frustration Feb 8-13 Prince of Madness La MaMa, 74A E 4th St., 475-7710. \$12.

DONKEY SHOW

Diane Paulus and Randy Weiner adapted A Midsummer's Night Dream and got a wack disco. Everything is fun and funny until the fairy dust kicks in and decadence ends in bestiality. Comedy (like disco) has never seemed so evil. Thu-Sun at 8, F & Sat at 10:30, Club El Flamingo, 547 W.21 St., 307-4100. \$25.

CHARLIE VICTOR ROMEO

Text taken from "black box" cockpit voice recorder transcripts of six major airline emergencies. Extended for the second time. Jan 13-Apr 1, Thu-Sat at 8. Collective: Unconscious. 145 Ludlow St. 254-5277. \$10.

emergency@notnow.com