



Send submissions,
reviews and listing
information to:

EMERGENCY
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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 critical response from the limitation of conventional review etiquette. EMERGENCY seeks: essays, research reviews, manifestos, dialogues with colleagues, proposals for "impossible theater". Please send us word of open rehearsals, guerilla acts, collaborations, shows, and screenings.

Wednesday, January 19, 0

GAZETTE No. NINE

EMERGENCY

THEATER IN DANGER

On January 7th, the Present Company received a default notice from their landlord, alleging that the group owes what Artistic Director John Clancy called "an enormous amount of money." The Present Company disputes the debt, and the group now has a lawyer and a court date, and have begun a frenzied campaign to raise \$100,000 by the end of the month.

The real estate in question is the Theatorium, the Present Company's 7500 square foot theater/rehearsal/office space on Stanton Street. The Theatorium has housed the company's own work, as well as that of other New York theater groups. The Present Company, who initiated and produces the New York International Fringe Festival, gives the annual festival a central headquarters in the Theatorium.

HISTORY

The company itself began eight years ago, when Clancy was writing skits and friends (many from the Boston punk theater group House of Borax) were performing them in the back room of the Piano Store. It was the summer of 1992, and the Piano Store was then a tiny bar with five square feet to play in. Out of necessity, the group used no sets or props, and focused on the spoken word and the immediacy of performance. When they decided to form a company, the name came from Joe Chaikin's THE PRESENCE OF THE ACTOR.

By 1996, the company had staged VOMIT ROSES, a critically-acclaimed original work that, in later incarnations, would be called AMERICAN ABSURDUM. "Everyone," explained John Clancy, "said: go to Edinburgh; you'll be the kings of the festival. When we did the calculations, we realized it would cost almost \$10,000. I had been calling people who had been to Edinburgh and, at one point, I looked down at the notebook in front of me and realized I had the names and phone numbers of many New York-based artists. I thought, why not do it here?" Clancy put out an ad to see if anyone would be interested in creating a Fringe Festival based in New York, and 350 people showed up to the first meeting. After a year of planning, the Fringe Fest was launched in 1997.

"What we wanted was to create an opportunity for artists to see each other's work. There is great work going on and we never see it because we are too busy working on our own shows, operating in a constant state of emergency. What we didn't expect is that the New York Times would cover it, that the phones would be ringing off the hook, that so many people would come downtown to see the shows."

THE CAMPAIGN

Clancy and Managing Director Elena Holy have started an urgent fundraising campaign to raise the necessary \$100,000. "The \$100,000 or Bust Campaign" promises that, if the company does not raise the required sum of money, it will give each contribution back. Already, the company's board of directors has pledged \$15,000, and, at a fundraising party last week, \$3000 was donated within minutes of the campaign announcement.

"What we've been doing for the last eight years," says Clancy, "has been without major funding or major individual support. We're doing critically acclaimed work, presenting an international festival, subsidizing smaller companies with rehearsal and performance space, but we just can't keep doing it alone."

Performance organizations that try to implant themselves in the expensive real estate of New York City always get shit upon. (See Charas and CSV: the Clemente Soto Velez Cultural Center). Don't let it happen again.

You can help the Present Company
Call (212) 420-8888 or
Fax (212) 420-8899.

IMPOSSIBLE THEATER

—The Cast Has No Esophagus—

Scene i:

[Dark stage, voluminous; a limpid darkness, smelling of fish or the underside of a rock. Falsetto cough, then a waft of synthetic perfume.]

VOICE [ripe into rot]: We met in a jazz club in Harlem, a year or two later than made sense. Little flames danced in everyone's eyes. It was Christmastime. A hundred years earlier, a beautiful woman had died giving birth on the sidewalk outside. You could say there was more sky back then. It's a wonder we ever found each other, cramped as the light has gotten.

[As VOICE has been talking, a single focused beam of light has gradually come up. It cuts from one side of the stage to the other, brushing and partially illuminating three objects, or rather, three concatenations of objects: a pair of red gloves stapped to a 2X4, an empty bottle sitting on a dead plant in a terra cotta pot, a blackboard covered in scrawl.]

Scene ii, to follow directly after Scene i:

VOICE [from blackboard]: We had so much to remember, it was a real headache.

ANNOUNCING:
The First Annual
"EMERGENCY"
MANIFESTO CONTEST

to be held at the
Emergency gazette launch party.
Theater companies, artists, auteurs,
all are welcome to compete
and be judged by
the King of Manifestos.

For more information
regarding manifesto contest
contact the Bros. Lumiere
at emergency@notnow.com

EMERGENCY LAUNCH
February Sixth

LISTINGS

NIGHT VISION

"A New Third to First World Vampyre Opera" Conceived/Composed by Fred Ho. Libretto by Ruth Margraff. Directed by Tim Maner. Jan 26 - Feb 19 at 9pm. HERE, 145 6th Ave., 647-0202. \$12-15.

NORTH ATLANTIC

The Wooster Group re-opens their latest resurrection. Tue-Sun at 8pm. 33 Wooster St., 966-3651. \$25.

BLACK MILK QUARTET

Paul Zimet wrote and directed these musical one-acts. A hunter transformed into a stage; A housewife abandoning her family for an invisible lover. Jan 20-Feb 6, Wed-Sat at 8, Sun at 7. \$12 Ohio Theater, 66 Wooster St., 696-8594.

THE DOWNTOWN SCENE

Part of New York Theater Workshop's "Inside Theater Today" series. Including panelists Jesse McKinley, Ping Chong, Elena Holy, Mark Russell, & Kate Valk. Jan 24 from 6:30-8pm. NYTW, 79 E. 4th St., 460-5475. \$15.

SEXY PROJECT II

Steve Byrd presents "a subversive, underground and avant-garde variety hour." Shecky Beagleman, Jennifer Blowdryer, David Leopold & Karen Sneider. Jan 22 at midnight. 254-5277. \$5. Collective: Unconscious, 145 Ludlow St.

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. 279-4200. \$38. Playwrights Horizons, 415 W. 42nd St.,

JANE EYRE

British company Shared Experience, who staged Anna Karenina in 1998, are back at BAM with more wacky literature. Feb 8-12 at 7:30, Feb 13 at 3. BAM, 718-636-4100. 55/\$35/\$20.

INFRARED

Mac Wellman's latest, feat. Fancy Pants. Jan 15 to Feb 5 Thu-Sat 10pm, Sat 2pm. Flea Theater, 41 White St. 226-0051. \$15

A TALE OF THREE KINGDOMS

Kageboushi Puppet Theatre Company, a joint Japanese-Chinese production. Jan 27-30. 346-8510. Tribeca Performing Arts Center.

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.

THE IMPOSSIBLE SAFARI

Written & performed by Rick Grey. Directed by Colin Campbell. Rick joins the Peace Corp in bizarre attempt to improve his acting. Jan 14-Feb 5, Fri/Sat at 10:30. HERE, 145 6th Ave. 647-0202. \$12.

HOUSATRASH

Trav S.D. wrote, directed, produced, and stars in this satire of America, sub-titled A Musical About the Wretched Refuse. Jan 21-Feb 26 at 10:30. HERE, 145 6th Ave. 647-0202. \$12 includes free moonshine.

[Blackboard falls over, splits into six triangular pieces.]

VOICE [from gloves]: We were so sweet, undulant with sinewy fogs. A high unbroken note perched on the edge of hearing. There was a murder one time, but some place else.

[Gloves ignite, quickly fall to ash at foot of 2X4.]

VOICE [from inside bottle, and sounding like it]: We met in a rainstorm outside the gutted cancer ward. The bricks threatened to dissolve. We had nothing to say to each other.

[Dead vines curl around bottle, vise it to shards.]

VOICE: We turned a corner and nothing changed.

[Through Scene ii light has been diminishing. It winks out at "changed."]

VOICE [in haggard tremolo]: What?

[Lights come up, permanently blinding audience. Ushers lock the doors from outside.]

Gregory L. Ford

Reviews!

THE MEMOIRS OF GLUCKEL OF HAMELN

An adaptation in Banksang, or picture recitation form, of the only pre-modern memoir by a woman in Yiddish. Performed by Jenny Romaine and Roberto Rossi (of Great Small Works), directed by Romaine. Music by Adrienne Cooper, the foremost interpreter of Yiddish vocal music in America, and composer Frank London of the Klezmatiks. Features puppets and design by Clare Dolan of Bread and Puppet Theater. Jan 20-Feb 6. La MaMa, 74A E 4th St., 475-7710.

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, Fri & 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.

BOX

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

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.

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. \$15.

GOGOL BORDELLO

Who's to say this amazing Ukrainian punk band isn't theater? Not this gazetteer, boy. Jan 20 at 8 at Joe's Pub, Public Theater, 425 Lafayette. 239-6200. \$15.

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 (bet. Franklin & White), #3. FREE!

128 VARIATIONS ON A GEOMETRIC HEART

Heiner Muller text out of the body of director/performer Richard Nash. Part of an ongoing series of short performances at the Tate Gallery. Past shows have included texts by Witkiewicz and Khlebnikov. The short piece is performed in a continuous loop on Feb 10, bet. 7-9pm. Tate Gallery, 413 W. 14th St. (bet 9&10th). 242-9888. FREE!

F I L M

WHITNEY MUSEUM

Interesting stuff throughout end of Part 2 of the American 20th Century exhibit. Our Small Selection: Tuesday, January 25, at 3:30pm: Vito Acconci's THE RED TAPES Wednesday, January 26, at 4pm: The video tapes of Bill Viola. Thursday, January 27: Nam Jun Paik (1:30pm); Jud Yalkut, John Cage, Duchamp (3pm); Peter Ungerleider's slide work (6:30). Sunday, January 30, 1:30pm: THEATER NARRATIVES: R. Foreman, R. Wilson, M. Monk, L. Anderson, Wooster Group. Friday, January 28, 11:30am: George Kuchar's ugly dreams. For more info: 570-3676. Tix \$6, or \$12.50 including the exhibit. Whitney Museum, Madison & 75th St.

BAM ROSE CINEMAS

Lars von Trier's THE KINGDOM (280 min.) January 25, 7pm. Brooklyn Academy of Music. 30 Lafayette Ave, Brooklyn. 718-623-2770. \$8.50, students \$5.

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NAUSEA

One luckless night in December I went to see THE SEXY PROJECT - a midnight show at a venue on Ludlow Street called The Collective Unconscious.

First, a woman read a poem about urine expressionlessly. Then, two guys in Santa Claus outfits, with plastic horns on their foreheads, acted like six-year-olds and talked about a giant breast - an act that would bore the dead.

I relate the above merely by way of exhibiting my tolerance credentials.

These acts were followed by an aging man who sang a song about urine - with reprises - and then made jokes about AIDS and the Holocaust.

There are, apparently, people so desperate for attention and so devoid of talent that they resort to disgusting their audience. He even harassed us as we walked out.

Get used to it, Dave. You'll be seeing a lot of our backs.

Collective Unconscious considers itself an alternative venue - but an alternative to what? Sticking our fingers down our throats, perhaps.

Steve Capra

LUNA RESPONDS

In my first column for this gazette (EMERGENCY NO. 1), I wrote about the power of theater; how it can, more than any other form, make an audience elated, uncomfortable, rageful, embarrassed, or disgusted. An audience member, by virtue of the structure of theater, is always in a position of powerlessness relative to the performers. An audience member's ultimate and most violent act of power is to walk out of the performance, just as Steve Capra, author of the above review, did. Aside from walking out, a spectator's only alternative to cope with their sometimes burning reactions is to create something themselves; since few spectators have the tendency to respond in this way, the phenomenon of "response representatives" (more commonly called critics or reviewers) has evolved.

Just as a performance exists in the public sphere, so does a review. Just as a performance can be argued to have a responsibility (or none) to its audience, so can a review.

I did not see THE SEXY PROJECT at Collective Unconscious, but I know that Steve Capra really hated it. He was so repulsed by it that, in order to deal with his disgust, he wrote his reaction and put in into

the public sphere. This is fair and, perhaps, even healthy, despite what the performers of THE SEXY PROJECT may feel when they read Capra's harsh reaction. Is it criticism? My feeling is: Yes. But, I suspect more and more: Is it the criticism we want?

Most criticism one encounters is presented in the structure of a consumer guide; the performance is a product whose purchase the reviewer recommends or discourages. In cases of great offense (like in Capra's reaction to THE SEXY PROJECT, or New York Magazine critic John Simon's reaction to Andre Serban's HAMLET) the reviewer feels strongly enough about the product to essentially encourage a boycott. In all criticism of this nature, the question is always centered on how well the show was done: a positive/negative grading system.

My favorite critics often never mention whether a performance was good or bad. The late Polish critic Jan Kott wrote of specific performances in terms of their relation to (or revelation of) a particular text and/or social phenomenon. G.E. Lessing, the grandpapá of dramaturgy, wrote HAMBURG DRAMATURGY in 1767, and used specific performances to analyze the process of acting and dramatic structure. More currently, Alisa Solomon (theater critic for the VILLAGE VOICE) often dissects a performance in terms of its comment on political or moral trends. The common factor in the work of all three critics is a political, philosophical, or literary agenda that lies outside the performance itself, and which each critic investigates using the event of the performance.

I reiterate: I did not see THE SEXY PROJECT. But, I'll bet there is something more interesting, more constructive to be gleaned from it than an assaultive burst of rage, even if the performance itself was an assault. If this (looking beyond the success or failure of a performance to its larger implications about society or art) is the responsibility of a critic, then it is a responsibility to themselves. If a greater responsibility exists, say one to the public or even one to the artists, then it is left to the critic to raise the level of discourse from commerce to meaning.

Lest I be accused of preaching, I confess that I too saw a performance recently. Richard Eoin Nash, who runs a series of performance installations at the Tate Gallery on 14th Street, presented TABLES OF DESTINY, a text by Russian Futurist Velemir Khlebnikov (1885-1922). Nash conceived of the piece and performed it, standing alone in a lonely corner of a high-ceilinged, white-walled gallery space, accompanied only by a music stand, a ten-foot metal ladder, and a white dry-erase board.

Nash played the role of the lecturing scientist, wearing a lab coat and gesticulating enthusiastically as he explained his discovery of a numerical system to explain history. The "I" in Khlebnikov's text is the Khlebnikov himself, who did in fact spend many years studying numbers, trying to discern patterns within them, and forming numerical Laws of Time that govern "every event that is subject to the flow of time". Nash, however, was not playing Khlebnikov (or even a character called Khlebnikov); he was playing the stereotype of the slightly batty but potentially genius scientist.

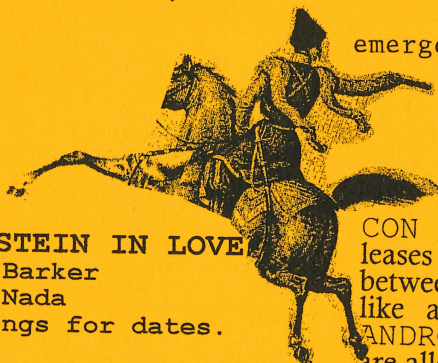
This, the role of the scientist, was unsuccessful. Although Nash was often reading the text from the music stand, the affectations of the character made the text (already very complicated) even more difficult to hear. I felt, watching and listening, that the performance would have been better served if Nash had simply read the text, slowly and hesitantly, as if he himself not entirely convinced by it. The character that would emerge, then, would be a more interesting scientist (to whom communicating his idea would be of tantamount importance) than a lab-coat cartoon.

Khlebnikov, in the first part of TABLES OF DESTINY, explains his search for meaning through mathematics by mentioning a battle and adding, "I wanted to discover the reason for all those deaths." By virtue of his own mind (and madness), Khlebnikov allows himself to enter the looking glass of this paradox, and pursue wholeheartedly a system of meaning that, in terms of providing a reason for death, is meaningless. I think Nash is interested in precisely this, the real experience of paradoxical believe (i.e. faith), and, in the concentrated and powerful space of the stage, aspires to surrogate experience the faith of Khlebnikov's Laws of Time.

My favorite critics do not put values on a performance, but how can I not tell you that the performance was boring? That I grew frustrated with the acting, and struggled unsuccessfully to listen to the text?

I keep imagining Richard Nash at home, reading Khlebnikov's text, astounded and excited. His performance, more and more, seems an unsuccessful attempt to embody the faith of the writer, and this, regardless of the performance's success or failure, proposes an interesting purpose for acting. Acting, not as a chance to become "someone else", but as an opportunity to believe an idea for the length of the performance; a chance for really experiencing faith in a place where the rules call for lies. This place of paradox is the theater.

Luna Zeygman



emergency launch party

sunday feb. 6th

FRANKENSTEIN IN LOVE

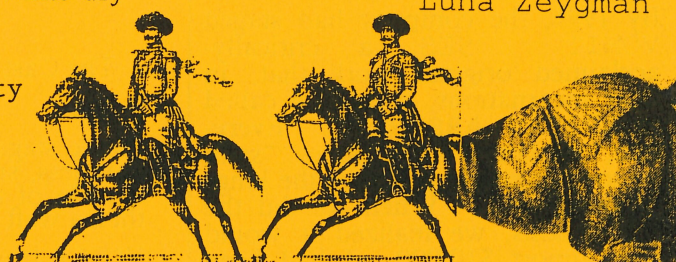
By Clive Barker
Todo Con Nada
See listings for dates.

Director/actor Ian Hill is bustling backstage after the show. I catch him mid-stride and ask, "Why this show?" Friendly but pressed for time, he rattles off thematic interests: industrial atmosphere, chaos versus order, comedy and the grotesque. Then he bustles off again, cleaning up the bloody mess on stage from the previous two and a half hours of mayhem, mutilations, ghosts, mad scientists, Latin American civil war, gay pedophile tailors, international politics, tutu-wearing morticians, the revivification of dead flesh, and, of course, love.

This is FRANKENSTEIN IN LOVE by Clive Barker (HELL-RAISER, CANDYMAN, GODS AND MONSTERS), one of TODO

CON NADA's latest downtown releases that treats that delicious line between farce and horror. It's kinda like a happy version of TITUS ANDRONICUS, where the corpses are allowed to come back to life and make wisecracks. The unlikely combination of a Latin American political crisis with the legendary figure of Dr. Frankenstein throws together a seemingly contradictory range of ingredients into the theatrical mixing bowl. It's like having a love story, modern political documentary and horror film rolled into one. Bravo to Barker for creating such a yummy conundrum, and bravo to the cast dedicated enough to pull it off.

This material isn't easy, as blood baths are often so much food dye and foam rubber. But the cast's commitment makes it work. Performance standouts were Frank Cwiklik (Cesar Guerrero, or the monster) and Yuri Lowenthal (mon-



ster/Bozzuffi). Hill is a canny director and uses the space adeptly. He seems to know what will and won't work (his experience as a veteran NADA director shows), and capitalizes well on the limited lighting capabilities of the space to create mood and tension. He works what he's got, and such practicality is refreshing in a downtown production.

Barker's writing is facile and witty, flowing from snappy one liner to surprisingly lyric poetry. The actors manage the text well and are careful not to let the serious, sentimental moments become too melodramatic. A greater contrast between the poetry and the farce could have served the poignancy of the play, but there were still touching moments between the cannibalism, the mutilations, and the dark humor. James Whale, the director of the great original Frankenstein, would be pleased.

Rachel Scott