P - FORM

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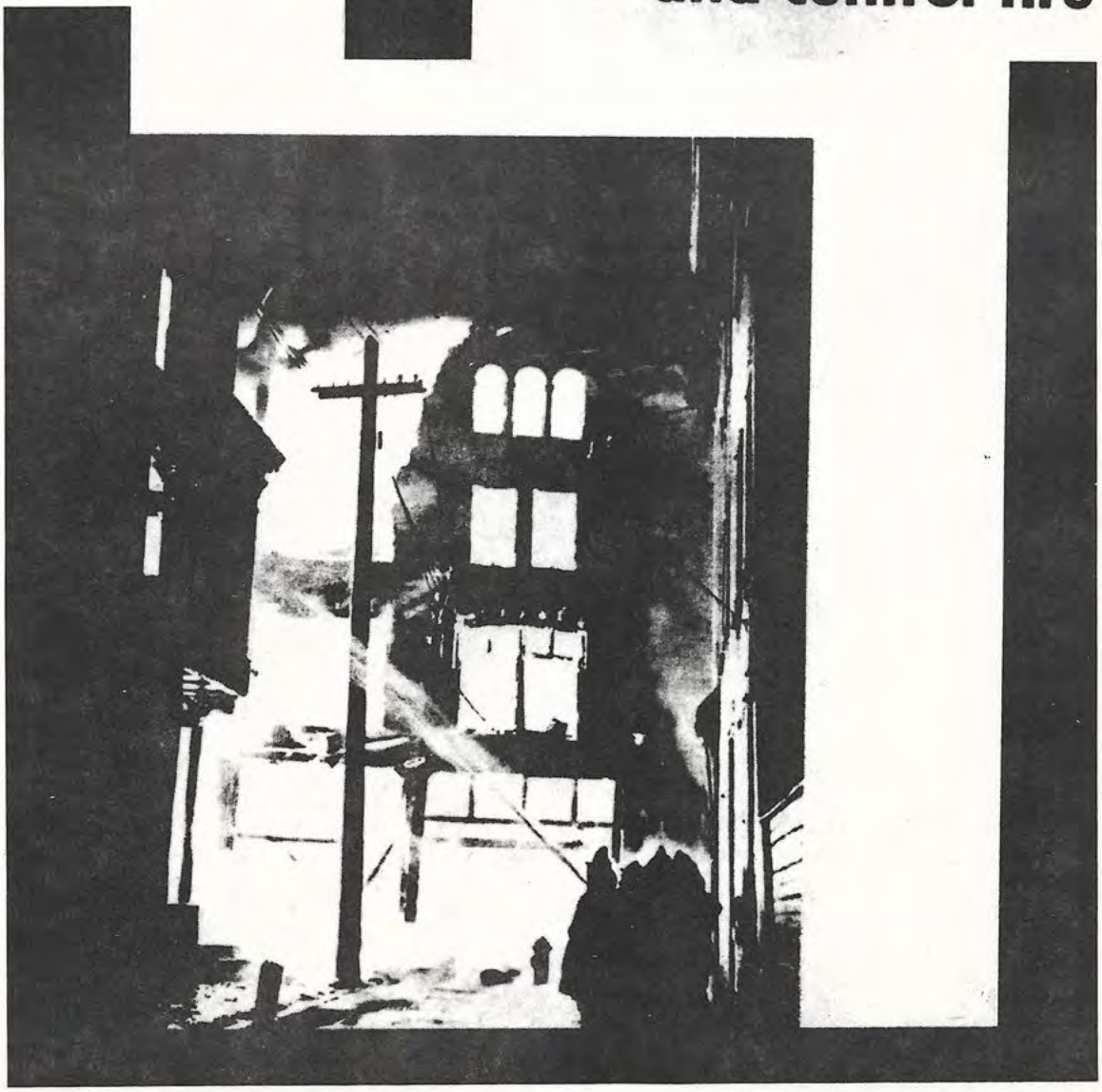
How do we use and control fire?



Inside: Divine, Jello Biafra, Theater Banlieue, Todd Haynes Milly's Orchid Show, Larry Steger....

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Editors Note

Welcome back. Our apologies for altogether neglecting the month of April. We thought we'd lunge ahead with optimism to the spring-like promise of May/June. And here we are with one of our most diverse issues (no more talk about all our writers hatched from the same batch). See for yourself, there's something for everyone. And in keeping with our inconsistency, Art Director **Brendan deVallance** would like to excuse himself for a cover image that has nothing to do with anything.

We heartily welcome aboard **Danny Ray Leopard** as fearless Reviews Editor, **Michelle Rabkin** as Contributing Editor, and **Susan Cartland** on production crew. Overdue bienvenue to P-paparazzi **Susan Anderson.**

Coming up: A hot summer, an ice cold *P-Form*, special section on *Fame* curated by **Dani K.**, more coverage, more subscriptions?!! (Hint, hint...) And enough discourse to make you sweat. So keep cool, keep reading, and keep in touch.

P-FORM

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Todd Haynes

Randolph Street Gallery
March 4 & 5, 1988

Death legends take time to gain momentum. I recall that when Karen Carpenter died of anorexia nervosa in 1983, the college radio station in my hometown ran a spot which featured her rendition of "I'm On The Top Of The World" playing at high speed in the background while an announcer's voice intoned a bogus promotion of "the new and improved Karen Carpenter diet." The Carpenters were subjects of ridicule, purveyors of pabulum, representatives of the kind of music that the whole family could sing along to during long car trips. You wouldn't catch me admitting that I knew all the words to "Close To You." The seventies had just ended and had yet to acquire any nostalgic glamour.

Time passes. The disease, the death, the decade gains distance and resonance. Enough water under the bridge, the time is ripe for Todd Haynes, a young New York filmmaker, to produce "Superstar: The Karen Carpenter Story," a film that definitively removes the aforesaid saga from the realm of pop rock trivia and places it firmly in the sphere of historical and sociological significance.

"Superstar" can be simplistically described as a docudrama, a recreation (a "simulation," the sub-title informs us) of the life and death of the quintessential All-American Girl. Haynes' first and most obvious deviation from the traditions of this genre is his use of Barbie dolls. "Superstar" is an entirely minaturized melodrama. Karen C. and her brother Dick, their parents, their producer, and all their various acquaintances are all portrayed by Barbie and Ken dolls (often significantly altered to indicate old age, illness, or moral decay). The dolls stand stiffly on tiny sets, staring blankly ahead, as voiced-over dialogue creates the narrative. These inanimate creatures quickly become imbued with emotional life. Any viewer who as a child could translate the jerky movements of Saturday morning cartoon characters such as Super Friends and Scooby Doo into action and adventure easily adjusts to the spectacle of a plastic doll swaying gently in front of a miniscule microphone as she "sings" her lates hit single. Even her unchanging expression does not deter the viewer from inferring a whole range of emotional experiences.

Of course the Barbie Doll is a legend in and of itself, one which dovetails neatly with the Karen Carpenter story. Karen and Barbie were both displayed as exemplary representatives of American womanhood: the one a public spokesperson for wholesomeness and clean living (who was privately starving herself to death in a desperate attempt to gain control over at least one aspect of her life), the other a plastic icon of commercial femininity. When Barbie/Karen made her first appearance in "Superstar," I was struck by her remarkably curvaceous figure. I remember that my childhood playmates and I were obsessed with Barbie's well-developed breasts. Hers was the mini-sweater we must all strive to fill. It was a rather awesome responsiblity. The total arrest of all sexual development brought on by severe anorexia relieved Karen C. of this pressure to compete with Barbie's irrefutable endowments.

Haynes cont. on p. 15

Laughlanguage of the Joodoo

Oxygen Jukebox
Jones Art College
Northwestern University
March 11 & 12, 1988

"Desire is unaware of death, of negation, and the tragedies of the familialist Grand Guignol strike it as funny....the death instinct comes into play only at the point when one leaves the sphere of desiring flux and intensities for that of representation." -- Felix Guattari, *Molecular Revolution: Psychiatry and Politics.*

Paula Killen, as a manic Venus in Furs, rushes into the space carrying a valise of magical tokens and whirring a wand like a shamanic bull-roarer. From the valise she pulls reams of string, a kaleidoscope, a feather, and a cobalt blue "poncho of peace." The audience is engaged to hold the connective thread as her narrative takes off with an intensity that would leave Dennis Hopper permanently attached to his now iconic oxygen mask. As she riffs through a series of identifications as shaman, healer, geomancer, Jimi Hendrix, Mae West, and an escapee from EST, she becomes a veritable desiring machine that Guattari and Deleuze would applaud. Schizogenic, terrified of gravity, Killen mobilizes *transversality* as formal principle in the unstoppable production(s) of desire.

Her second work continues the carnivalesque nomadism (now cultic at the Sorbonne) as she leaves college and plunges into life as a perpetual camping trip. Her not-quite-joyful nihilism for the provisional life is grounded as her lover repeats his increasing need for ritual, for containment of the intensities and serpentine wanderings of desire. The major tension of both works is the antagonism between desire and fetishism, *trobar clar* v. *trobar clus*, the need to keep moving and the counter-demand to stop, make sense, and create the defensive identity that won't dissolve in the multiplicities of desire. Hopefully she won't reterritorialize her selves too quickly.

"5 Fairytales and a Creation Song" by Seth Greene was performed by Greene, Audra Budrys, Lauren Narano, and Trish Tillman. An extended jazz poem that beautifully played with durations of verbal rhythms and isolation of phatic sounds, the acoustic space was filled by a shifting narrative voice spliced among the three readers of scripted text. Taking a ride through the subway, we stop abruptly in a park to overhear a blind and guilty Oedipal masturbation scene. Locked in "the tornado bag" of the Oedipal trian-(stran)gulation, the divided self spawns warring Twins -- one with spectacles, the Other must die.

The image of the Twins transforms into black female siamese twins joined at the crown of the head (with separate brains). "The performance artist falls in love with the twins for their singularity." They/She is the only mate capable of saving the artist from himself. Doubled and warring, desire expands to a conflict between the senses of sight and hearing. The hegemony of sight-singularity-identity-representation battles with the subversive movement of sound. Rhythm or image? Sound or vision? No comfortable fusion here for Greene. One of the brothers must be sacrificed.

He succumbs to the image, provoking his desire to move in a masturbatory haze. He recalls a prolific painter who lacks a memory. Imprisoned in the present, she sees him for the first time each night. No continuity: psychosis or spiritual eyes? Her thighs ache perpetually with no recollection of passion or person. He dies each night to be recreated in the rhythm of her brush strokes.

Although repressed in classical Greek tragedy, this *Liebestod* or Love-Death is favored Celtic and Teutonic narrative tradition. Mary Zimmerman staged a clean, sculpted work based upon the Godiva legendry that was performed by Emilie Beck, Laura Eason, Tracy Walsh, Mark Hager, and David Hollander. The three women represent the aspects of Our Lady as maiden, consort and death-dealer. The men perform as the doubled marriage and mutual masking of the consorts. She becomes part beast, he a partial woman. The fabular taxation scene (the peasants were taxed for collecting firewood) is presented as the husband drops pennies into a glass jar. A surplus of taxes overflows -- an adept play on the investments of libido and capital, the only sign of excess in this work.

Blindfolded and wearing only one high-heeled shoe, Godiva walks upon projected images on the ground. Sightless, she can hear. The power of the voice can repel and dispell the power of projection. No one really sees her but the Peeping Tom. "Poor Tom" (an excellent soundtrack by Greene) is sacrificed for his stolen pleasure. Like Acteon, Poor Tom suffers the consequences of furtively stealing a glance at unadorned Truth: *sparagmos.*

"Supposing Truth to be a Woman -- What?" asks Nietzsche in *Beyond Good and Evil.* Seeing Truth, he loses Face. She shatters the glittering artifice of mere representation. Bereft of appearances, he dies like Orpheus, to liberate his voice.

The Oxygen Jukebox is a group to watch for in the future. The readymades they play with are the props, objects, and elements of dressage they reveal and conceal. Moreover, readymade ideas of identity and representation are played with in a fashion that moves us from mere knowing to the multiple pleasures of desire producing new combinations.

Although still a common myth in the West, the Oedipal blockage is theoretically retro. The binary and triadic deformations of desire "it" produces are all too familiar. However, Greene seems to be looking and listening for leverage. Meanwhile, beware of swollen feet.

MAGGIE DRALAND DOYLE

The Last Divine Review

Bistro II
February 18, 1988

Photo:Steve Marton

Finally she came on. She was really on. It was not another teasing unnatural break in the disco beat. The crowd was hot, impatient, and packed tightly into the Bistro II discotheque. No one could move more than an inch or two in any direction. After 40 minutes of waiting the feeling of relief was collective as the curtain rose slowly against a fast synthetic drumbeat. She was fantastically illuminated. Her 300 pound body curved smoothly as a raindrop using the most economical shape to displace the greatest amount of surface tension. She was gigantic. She wore a dazzling sleeveless white stretch fabric dress covered with quarter-sized silver sequins. Inflated beyond capacity, the body looked as if it would have split open if the sweat hadn't begun to roll down her skin. She didn't look like she would eat steaming dog shit anymore.

She moved carefully upstage. There was no pretense of morality, only royalty, and those who questioned it were commanded to "Fuck off."

While primping her Marilyn Monroe-in-a-hurricane hairdo, she wiggled in white leather pumps up the three steps to the microphone, positioning herself comfortably above the crammed and writhing crowd. The house shook to the high-energy beat pounding from the stacks of speakers while the delicate tonal introduction to her first song, "I Am Beautiful," was heard under a roaring ovation. Beneath the grotesquely penciled black eyebrows, white, blue, and purple frosting adorned her eyes. The makeup curved back along her round face forming sharp, expertly blended points above her temples. Her dark lipstick enhanced her froggy lips as they curled forming the refrain "Hey! I'm beautiful! It all depends on your point of view!" Yes, she was, and yes, it does.

At first, the microphone seemed dead, but it didn't matter. She was on stage and for the moment it was interesting enough to watch her bang the expensive wireless mike against its stand until the engineer turned it up. Anyway, she had wisely chosen to sing along with herself on the mastered tape. She had no qualms about faking it. Her character is without morals, and the actor behind the mask was certainly faking it. No, she was not real. She was no woman. She was a symbol, a symbol of defiance. All tradition was to be tried and either taken and twisted or scorned, mocked, and disdained. This colossal she-clown was the royal queen of the freaks, and minutes into the show she displayed regal boredom and let the audience feel its collective unworthiness.

Once the mike was turned up her coarse, gravelly voice sang in unison with her recorded voice, "HEY! I'm beautiful!" She turned her huge behind towards the crowd, struck two booming beats on her hip, and turned back to finish, "It all depends on your point of view." She was in command and the audience erupted wildly as they did every few seconds for the rest of the early morning show. The beat mixed into "Walk Like a Man" and everyone shouted line for line along with the sarcastic singer. The medley ended when she spoke: "Oh fuck you, you're too much for TV." She blotted herself with Kleenex and tossed the sweaty facial tissues into the pit. Young men lunged their hands above the mob to catch them. She belched and said it must have been someone she ate on the way from the airport. There was a tired and charming professionalism to the way she spoke, as if by rote, though randomly, spontaneously, from an expansive catalogue of vulgarisms. She confronted the audience: "You wanna fuck me, don'tcha? I know. If I was you and you were me, I'd wanna fuck me too." From her toenails to the tip of her wild platinum blonde wig she oozed pure and perverted sexiness. Unctuous and remote she teased us into believing that she was, if not a woman, Divine.

As she moved into the next song she pulled out a condom and gave a brief public announcement. "Sex is good, honey, but it ain't nothin' worth dying for." The crowd responded mildly, almost resentfully. One would expect an iconoclast such as Divine to be anti-safe sex if not pro-disease. However, in this age they were resigned to accept if not embrace the message. The next song, "Hey You!," conjured irony in its chorus, "Hey you! It's only natural love!"

From cruel to coy she unleashed her multifarious facial expressions on her vast face. Each line of each song took on melodramatic significance and grotesquely specific emotions. So pronounced was the burlesque that her screen performances are subtle in comparison. She was like an animated hologram cartoon on pills, reefer, crack, champagne, and acid. Perched atop three-inch cha-cha

Divine cont. on p. 14

Secret Life of Dust

Robert Metrick and Dani K.
The School of the Art Institute
of Chicago January 22-23, 1988

I've seen this piece twice in two very different spaces at least twelve months apart and as a result my mind is playing games with me. The two shows keep intertwining in my mind, creating a sort of "mega" version -- a perfect union. Of course it would be unfair to write about the two shows as if they were one, yet Robert Metrick, in a collaborative effort with Dani K., has created another piece that hovers ever so lightly above the ground it's occupying. Whether it's the seventies-version of a thrust stage (the kind of place Frank Sinatra would feel at home in) at Daley College, or the basketball court they call a performance space at SAIC, *The Secret Life of Dust* did everything in its power to subvert the notion of place (domicile).

If anything is contrary to such spaces certainly dust would top the list; it is a persistent reminder that a perfect environment is an illusion. And yet, dust has a certain sense of democracy about it; a certain natural order to its apparent chaos -- it settles with a perfect evenness like the first snow or a great flood. It falls into the realm of nature's smaller miracles. It gets in your clothes, on your records, and, if left long enough, will take over all the woodgrain on your furniture, leaving the house one big drawing board -- where you can leave messages, draw pictures, or doodle with just an index finger. This seems to be the creators' intention. With the single wave of an index finger a mysterious world of conventions is turned upside down -- this show had the feeling of a political machine being driven by children.

At the very base of this show was the inadequacy of systems: systems of representation (the tribal choreography of Dani K.'s dance with the vacuum cleaner), systems of language (Robert Metrick's semiotic ruminations), the rigidity of metered music (the piano and trumpet duo or the "harmony" singing of "The Erie Canal"), plus "English-accented" voiceovers and Allan Ross in a beautiful evocation of that vague halflight known as breakfast time.

The performers remained in longjohns throughout the show, keeping the audience in that same state of suspension. Metrick has a way of turning systems, or idioms, on their ear, an uncanny way of turning coherent language into a self parody of itself -- using dialect and notions of style toward a mocking end, thus disrupting the complacency of any accepted system. Using the flattest, driest delivery imaginable, he plows wholeheartedly through the vast array of communications arriving at a world held together by remarkably thin threads, and once there he leaves that world intact, poised, as it were, on the head of a pin as if we were never even in the original configuration because ours is a world overrun with dust and the sediment of outdated styles, with the inadequacy that language has always offered over experience.

Dani K. in her usual idiot-savant persona exemplifies all of the desires of a pre-prefabricated society, she's like an existential version of Charlie Chaplin (not to mention a pretty mean piano player). And last but not least, Allan Ross is always a joy to watch in much the same way as Dani. With a very plastic face, Ross can move his emotions around like a ouija board.

KEVIN HENRY

Leap Year

The Organic Lab Theater
February 18-21, 1988

Lessons Learned from the Mirror
by Victoria Hoch
Performed by Deborah Hede and Victoria Hoch

As in all spectator events the audience has the possessive eye, they play the masculine role, but Vickie Hoch, although playing to us, reiterates that ours is not the only image of her. She leads us through a chain of scenes gleaned from a maze of mirror images of herself, taking care that each image shares a connecting edge with the preceding one. She stands on tiptoe, trying to see beyond the initial dominant specter created by our gaze which threatens to obscure the rest.

At this point we (the audience) progress past the initial image into the facets that surround it.

"How I see myself,. How others see me. What others say about me " (and in a dark rectangle). "What I don't let in."

We follow the images into dreams which also contain multifaceted mirrors.

". . . my father's face which is a mask, which peels back to reveal other masks which also peel back."

We can never be sure that each image in the mirror represents exactly the one we see. The suspicion of betrayal by one's own image is integral to the awareness of an image at all.

"Like when someone takes your picture, they freeze you into the image of what they see."

By seeing the image that the enemy (maybe us) holds, she is possessed, and surrenders, becomes the image held by the possessor. Then suddenly she is at the center, and from there can tell

Leap Year cont. to p. 18

Perfect Performance

photo: Susan Anderson

We think we are in a bar. *Laugh track.*
At the subway station. Gays get off. *Laugh track.*
Wait at the subway station. Straights get off. *Laugh track.*

Impressions of Larry Steger's performance *Rented Movies*, NAME Gallery, 3/24-25/88. These are interpretations, not in order, and inaccurate sequences of events, thoughts.

It's easy to be celibate,
but it's even easier to fool around.

". . . I'm so good. . . " -- *Lou*
"I refuse to say that line" -- *Larry*

We are the actor and the psychotherapist, we are the bartender, and we do performance and we do construction, and deconstruction.

Seduction
Nostalgia
Intimacy *CUT*

We are turned on, remember naive attraction, remember the physical need, remember romance and sick pleasure.

You took us on, one by one, into the back room,
YOU LEFT, US IN TOTAL DARKNESS,
We sucked your bood, YOU HUNG UPSIDE DOWN and the leather vampire told us a story, and we the village people might have been watching the hanging of a young boy.

Cut/Spot follow to champagne bottle and glass/
(deliberate reference -- *thank god*)
We rehearsed for your show the previous night.
You sang along with Lou Reed (*Perfect Day*) and we drifted into that personal realm of emotion that is revived when we hear his voice and that song.
Your voice and accordion playing connect us with the music; we are kept hovering between nostalgia and the present moment -- a collective indulgence, a new interpretation, we can still feel those feelings, or maybe will for the first time.
Singing by yourself at home, a lonely and attractive pasttime, is both sad and humorous when you put it naked before us.
Cut/ Spot follow to vaudeville dance/ transition/ give us time for absorption and gently pull us back to the bar stool.
Everyone is looking at me and they think I've been drinking.
new paragraph/*cut/* We know that you know that we know the moves, the cues, the directions, the follow spots/ the exposed theatrical rules. The content would have been just as interesting without such conscious deconstruction acknowledgement. These cues, transitional devices, almost seemed too obvious a maneuver in comparison with the colorful and absorbing content of the piece. A personal tale is always intriguing, especially when it is sexually intimate. It works, it appeals because of its gay (but not exclusively gay) aesthetic, because of the smoothness, because of the ease with which you manipulate our thoughts (we want you to take us there), because of how slick you look, neat and clean, organized and rehearsed spontaneous storytelling. You were almost too tight: I wanted you to have a moment of complete unrehearsed, loose, abandonment, a lapse of uncontrolled expression. You set the scene up, you lead us through the door, into that bar where lust, memory, and desire shape a perfect other self that one imagines oneself to be but never really is. But you never quite went all the way, you never let us see you lose control, the egg shell never cracked, we never got to fall off the edge of the mountain, and there we were left in deliberate awe. This suspended bliss, a lack of awkward or improvised break, only contributed to the self-consciousness that was imposed by the deliberate references/borrowings from other art/theater modes, styles, and intentions.

The packaged style of the piece will be attractive to larger, more main stream audiences. In this case let's hope the personal and honest quality of the content does not get lost along with the deluxe serving.

ANDROGYNOUS

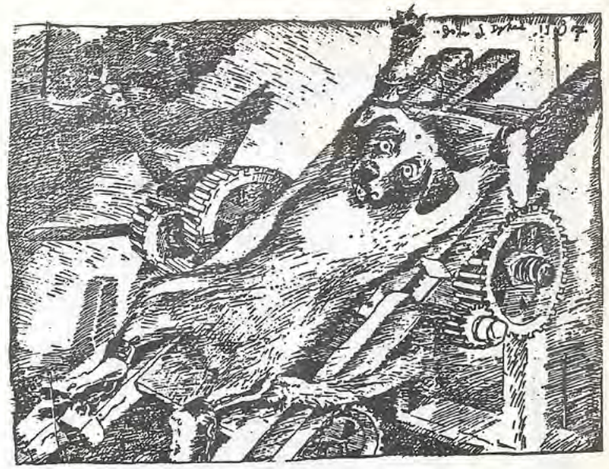
Eternal Recurrence

About two years ago Dan Trattler, Jeff Twiss, and myself did a performance at the Club Metro entitled *The Starfish Execution* as part of a night of New York and Chicago performance. The piece could be summarized as follows: A starfish in a goldfish bowl is parked on the front of the stage. It is read the following charges by the judge before sentencing:

"You are charged with 2 counts of hogging all the Roman numerals,
And disobeying the Law of Fives,
And washing up on the shore of Shrike Island before the beginning of low tide,
And lying down on the Xerox machine and setting the quantity selector at five to the fifth,
And swiping the cookies from the cookie jar with your suction cups,
And obeying the Law of Fives,
And asking Claude Monet to paint Rouen Cathedral on a set of Venetian blinds,
And riding the dumb waiter to the fifth floor five hours after curfew,
And not growing back a severed limb in time to throw out the first tandoori drumstick at the Fifth Annual Dinner Dance of the Shrike Island Legislative Assembly,
And upsetting the matrix of Earth, Air, Fire, and Water with your extra tentacle,
And one count of posing as a model for a neo-echinodermist painter,
(Praise be to bum-stuffed Jeezus for the neo-echinodermist movement)
And crawling on all fives in the third degree when you should have walked,
And gluing together the beads of the abacus,
And befouling the mouthpiece of the tuba of the Shrike Island Oom-pa Band,
And possession of the pentagram,
And walking on all fives when you should have crawled, in the first degree."

The judge then informs the starfish that he has been found guilty on all counts. He asks the starfish if he has anything to say before sentence is passed. All that is heard in response is the sound of the ocean. The starfish is placed on a wagon and taken down the last mile by a priest and executioner while the judge intones, over dirgelike music, "On Thursday, April the 12th, you will cartwheel across the hot coals of the last mile, serenaded by the stilted Piglatin of Father Flotsky. You will be scalped by Geronimo, placed in an electric blender until dead, and scattered over the Isthmus of Panama. Would you like a cigarette?" Then the starfish is placed in the blender, which is turned on, and the performance is concluded.

What I didn't know when I wrote this piece is that from the 9th to the 19th centuries -- actually the bulk of recorded history -- this kind of shit ACTUALLY HAPPENED. I should mention that I am a painter, and only do performance sporadically. The piece came about as an



extension of a prolonged series of paintings, drawings, and collages that I had done. . . all on the theme of starfish executions. In these artworks, starfish were placed in devices usually reserved for human executions: iron maidens, guillotines, gallows, electric chairs, etc.

I discovered the historical antecedents to our performance at the Club Metro in a 1906 book that was brought back into print late last year entitled The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals: The Lost History of Europe's Animal Trials by Ed Evans (1831 - 1917). Virtually every animal imaginable is catalogued in the twenty page appendix, a veritable death row bestiary: a compendium that comes complete with date and place of execution (although no starfish are listed here, in the text, or in the index).

Easily the most picturesque of the hundreds of graphic cases that the author has painstakingly chronicled down through the centuries is that of a barnyard sow hanged for infanticide at Falaise in 1386. The sow was dressed in human clothing and executed in the public square near the city hall. A painting of the execution existed until 1820, when it was whitewashed over. Facsimiles of it survive, and one adorns the cover of the book.

Greeks, Romans, Christians, Muslims, primitive tribes, and many other peoples all have their day in the sun throughout the 300 some-odd pages of this volume. Written at the turn of the century, Evans' thoughts on how "justice" is dispensed may seem prophetic of today's contemporary legal climate. Animals were once considered to be as responsible as people for their "crimes." Now people are reckoned no more responsible for their actions than dumb animals. When a defendant tries to beat a murder rap by pleading that he ate too many Twinkies, how long will it be until that Labrador once again has his day in court??

(". . . and he was always the nicest dog on the block. . . ")

BRADLEY LASTNAME

David Cale

Goodman Theater
February 2-7, 1988

"Most of us never get to know many other human beings very well - even our closest friends, ... above all, our children, even ourselves...We know people, perhaps, chiefly by their voices - their individual, indescribable, unmistakable voices..."
Notes on Macbeth-
John Berryman

It is David Cale's ability to create a collection of distinct and genuine voices which makes his one-man performance, *The Red Throats*, so remarkable. Cale explores the interactions, or the sad lack of them, in a modern British family, the Weirds. Though they all live together, the members of the Weird family are out of touch with one another. The Weirds seem not to know each other at all. But the audience does come to know each of them, because David Cale invests each of the characters in his tale with such individual, unmistakable voices.

The resonances of the title are indicative of the sly humor which pervades the piece. *Redthroats* could be taken as a misreading of "Redcoats", pointing to the work as an expatriate's critique of British family life. There is also an allusion to "rednecks" implied, anchoring Cale's exemplary family in the middle/working class. But the "redthroats" Cale actually speaks of in the piece are fish, the prize catches of schoolboy fishermen, who usually settle for guppies or an occasional carp. The redthroats are scarce in the polluted river, so catching one is a prestigious accomplishment.

Throughout the work, Cale uses language in this multi-faceted manner. When it seems he has fallen upon a metaphor loaded with social criticism, he immediately turns the reference in a different direction, toward nostalgia or sentiment. In the wrong hands, such a method might seem highly manipulative or even offensive, but since Cale never pushes his performance toward bravado, his low-key, wrenchingly sincere delivery remains full of delights and surprises.

Mr. Weird, who works in his father's factory, never seems to do

Cale cont. on p. 15

Produced and hosted by
Brigid Murphy
Lounge Ax
March 20, 1988

Milly's Orchid Show

December 16, 1987 marked the debut of Brigid Murphy's "New Premier Vaudeville" venue. The program that evening featured bowling rats, a break-dancing escape artist, performances by Brendan deVallance and Elham Jazab, a masterful rendition of "Ave Maria" by diva Jill Greenman, and a film by Dennis Frank. These elements combined with the unpredictable "open mike" (cleverly titled the "forty second streak"), the water dripping from the ceiling, and the sequin stars dropping off the speakers, to create the sneaking suspicion that one might turn around to witness Spanky arriving with Alfalfa and Darla in tow, while the peanut gallery begged for the Florry-Dorries. Yet there was a method to this madness.

Prior to the creation of "Milly's Orchid Show," Brigid, who describes herself as an inveterate "people watcher," began performing various characterizations. She became increasingly frustrated with the tightly controlled nature of these caricatures, and began seeking a method of combining structured performance with improvisation. An early experimental lampoon was Flora Funcakes, a busty, bawdy Southern Belle who pre-figured Milly by a few months. While struggling with this new material, Brigid happened to travel to Nashville. Here, in the mecca of country and western, the home of the Grand Ol' Opry, Brigid unearthed Tootsie's Orchid Lounge, a well-preserved artifact of Nashville's history. Tootsie's was a treasure trove of C & W memorabilia and its friendly ghosts. Three songs would come from this serendipitous southern exposure: "Raising a Little Hell on My Way to Heaven," "Eating Jelly Beans on a China Plate," and "Bury Me on Cadillac Row." Milly May Smithy was born.

Milly made her debut appearance in a new work at the Organic Lab Theatre in October. Brigid was soon off to New York where her new persona was tested out at King Tut's Wa-Wa Hut and where yet another catalytic element presented itself. On Wednesdays at the Wa-Wa Hut, DanceNoise (a women's performance/dance duo) presented a weekly variety show featuring three performers (or filmmakers, musicians, etc.). Murphy returned to Chicago, a vaudeville entrepreneur, with a mission under her belt. Back home, Murphy immediately began her search for "rare talent" and a hospitable stage for what would become "Milly's Orchid Show." Within two weeks she had secured the Lounge Ax on Lincoln and placed ads in the *Reader* for unique and eccentric acts. Murphy borrowed the open mike idea from the Poetry Slam (which is held at the Green Mill on Sundays) where she had both performed and discovered a number of acts for her own show. Soon the auditioning was over and the debut cast was assembled and ready to roll.

Since December, the Lounge Ax's stage has welcomed a parade of diverse characters, including the Poet Laureate of Gary, Indiana, John Sheehan, Steve Burrow's hokey musical saw, mashed potato wrestlers, performance artists Paula Killen, Doug Rand and the Loofah Method, as well as films by Ira Hirsch and Byron Kelly, Cynthia Pusheck and Dan Dinello. "Milly's" is always an animated mix, with audience heckling as integral to the experience as the hustling waitresses and amplifier feedback.

Milly May Smith, arranged in a gaudy spangled outfit with "Howdy" written in sequins along her butt, a frightful wig, and garish white trash hooker makeup, supplies a crisp and pungent running commentary throughout the proceedings. Milly prefaces her songs of social commentary with thoroughly banal and mundane anecdotes. "I was getting on this bus and the sign said 'Step Up' and I thought about it -- "step up, step up" --and I wrote this next song..." Milly and sister Willie May (actress Consuelo Allen) banter back and forth with sibling rivalry as they introduce the acts via a curtained chalkboard. Willie May has twice come to the rescue of a lull in the open mike segment by providing trionic Shakespeare recitation while dangling a spoon off her nose.

What began as a conceptual conceit continues as a prize formula for Murphy, allowing her to free up her newest persona (Milly) to improvise within her role of hostess of the show which she produces single-handedly behind the scenes. Brigid Murphy is a rare breed of performer, one who has a discerning eye for quality performers, the trust of the performance community, and the energy to continue creating her own work. Murphy describes her work as a mix of comedy and tragedy, and compares it to "orange with black." "Orange is brighter for the black, and the black darker for the orange."

In the closing moments of a recent show, Jeff Abell went wild, taking Tony Adler to task for his article in *Chicago* magazine (February 1988) where Tony concluded ". . . performance art never really existed in the first place. . . What looked like performance art was actually the expression of a longing felt by visual artists for a more engaged style of working. . . to set the visual in motion." Perhaps Tony is trying too hard to set the historical in motion. {Suggested reading: *Performance: Live Art 1909 to the Present*, compiled by Roselee Goldberg (Harry N. Abrams: New York, 1979)}. See Kevin Henry's *Bad Actor Series*, or come on down to "Milly's" where you might witness Paul McComas' *Taste of Andersonville*, an off-beat rendering of the street where we live. Performance is alive and very much a greased pig. Come on down soon, y'all.

LARRY LUNDY

INTERVIEW WITH MILLY MAY SMITHY

Larry Lundy, P-Form Correspondent

LL: How did you end up coming to Chicago?

Milly: Not that I was down on my luck or nothin'. I was performing at Lilly's ex-husband's club in Nashville, the Cow Hunk Saloon. I'd warm up for the band, but it was goin' nowhere. I'd been hittin' the bottle a bit then, drinking Mad Dog and I looked at the bottle and the label was peeling off and I realized that it was a sign. And after the show one night, I was peeling off myself, and I hopped a freight headin' north. I woke up in Chicago.

LL: Have you performed at other places in town besides the Lounge Ax?

Milly: Well, yeah, I've performed at a few places but you know country music isn't real big up here, needless to say, and I just kinda got lucky with this show. You know, I thought, what the heck. Them ladies over there is real nice at that bar. I was waitin' tables, and the ladies from the Lounge Ax was there and we kinda got to talkin' real friendly like and I asked them if maybe I could have my, you know, and they said maybe I would want my own show, and if I cleaned up my act, well, you know. I was excited. You know what I mean? And I thought maybe my luck was changing. Well, there you have it.

LL: Do you have people helping you produce the show?

Milly: Well, I do it all by myself. The decorations I have help on sometimes. My sisters helped me do the curtains. And my costume, I got a cousin, Elisa May, who does a lot of my costumes. But pretty much I do it all on my own. I go out night-clubbin', lookin' for people, kinda like a pro-ducer.

LL: Where does the inspiration for your songs come from? Can you go into that?

Milly: Well, yeah -- it's funny, you know, how they just come to ya. Most of my songs come through signs. I get a lot of signs, like this one mornin' I was havin' breakfast and I looked -- it was a real scorcher -- I looked into the creamer and there were these three dead flies, you know, two house flies and a horse fly. And I

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knew it was a sign, I knew. I dropped my fork, picked up a pencil, and wrote down a song.

LL: What song?

Milly: That song was "Eatin' Jelly Beans on a China Plate." A lot of people don't listen to their signs but I do.

LL: It seems as though you've bounced back from some personal hardships with pretty powerful songs. Have your sisters helped you in any way?

Milly: There's Lilly May, who's real particular. I'm sure she wouldn't have lost her first husband, weren't for that. And there's Willy May, who's real good lookin'. She's a very accomplished actress, she's never had no lessons, but she does Shakespeare like nobody's business. And she's been going down every summer for the biscuit bake-off and Shakespeare festival. And she's the Juliet! Billy Joe Romeo just sent up a song for the next show. We're callin' it "Freelance Romance" right now. We'll debut it next time.

LL: You talk about kids in "Raisin' a Little Hell on My Way to Heaven." Do you have a family yourself?

Milly: Well, you know I've got two fine boys, both in the military. Billy is 18, and Willy, who's 24. I never, well you know, got hitched or nothin'. Both boys fathers are big shots back home, so it's kinda hush-hush, you know what I mean. But we keep in touch.

LL: Where do you go for fun?

Milly: Well -- you know, it's funny, there ain't much country western in this town but there's this place called the R & R. Oh, and they got this sweet band, the Sundowners, I go down there a lot, they got great chili, and they got this old bartender named Barney, he pours you extra tequila when you order it. He knows I'm singin', in "the business" you know.

LL: Any advice you'd give to young talent?

Milly: Well, you know, it's one of those things, I say you gotta dream, honey, you take a cab there, don't bother. . . I mean, you know, you're supposed to be doing the long haul and everything, but honey, spend the money, it's gonna cost you, but take a cab. You know what I'm sayin'?!

LL: What's ahead for you?

Milly: Maybe a cable show. There's a station called the Nashville channel or somethin' like that, I get it sometimes. It'd be great to be on that show. Jeez.

LL: When will we see a Milly album?

Milly: You know, like I said, 'bout meetin' that feller from Piddle-Paddle Country Records.

LL: Was he a big wig?

Milly: I'm not real sure. The waitress said he worked over there. He was kinda interested in my stuff. He said he might come see me. So there you have it.

LL: Any other shows coming up?

Milly: Just the Orchid Shows, honey, and hopefully we'll be doin' the "Best of the Orchid Show" and who knows, maybe we'll pack 'em in an old tour bus and take it down to Nashville and the Grand Ol' Opry. Stranger things have happened.

LL: It'd be nice to be back home?

Milly: Hometown gal makin' it big, you know, I'd show them a thing or two in Nashville! ■

Jello Biafra

Northwestern University

Jello Biafra's celebrated trial for distributing "harmful material" to minors ended last year with one of those hollow victories of principle: after $80,000 and some bankruptcies, the dissolution of the Dead Kennedys as well as the personal stress of riding the rusty wheels of justice to their end, Biafra has emerged as a zealous "man with a mission" hitting the college lecture circuit to promote his cause. It's a calculated gesture: Biafra seems to know where to find his most sympathetic audience and under which circumstances to address them. I heard him at Northwestern University in the Tech Auditorium, speaking before a near capacity crowd.

To understand Biafra's message it would be useful to consider his anticipated audience and, accordingly, I took a little demographic appraisal of them as they assembled. There was a lot of black leather and tattered jeans, accentuated with occasional flourishes of studs and Dr. Martens, together with the same collegiate audience I've been in before (do these people follow me around?), and a contingency of bright red mohawks surveying the convivial and expectant scene from the balcony.

Jello Biafra opened with what was, in essence, a prepared performance piece. In a black leather trench with black jeans and an alarming polyester shirt, his hair spiked up and intense black glacier glasses on his nose, he began a careful rant which focused upon the trappings of pop culture and the inherent evil lying beheath. On the stage behind him was one of those ubiquitous six foot folding tables college lecture halls always provide, on which sat water, papers, a tiny Rambo doll, and an airline sickness bag. He delivered his material like some socialist nightmare of Fascist assumption of control of the media. "Shut up!" he insisted while outlining a fictional plan of media manipulation and TV complacency to override any impulse of individual thought or creativity. "The comfort you have demanded is now mandatory!" This is familiar Orwellian speculation but delivered with timely panache and sincere urgency.

What followed was a random sampling along the same theme, often quite funny and betraying an almost rabid devotion to current events. He lambasted Olliemania ("Sexy, homespun, no-nonsense Nazi") and the implications of "yahoo Yankee renegades" intoning how convenient and familiar, how "New Age," was the reliability of "Love, American Death Squad Style." His principal target appeared to be commercialism and the all-too-obvious dark side of constant media manipulation. He spoke of Karen Carpenter and her revolutionary diet plan, and the formation of the "Karen Carpenter Church of Anorexia."

Holding aloft the miniscule Rambo figure (which, he pointed out, is produced by Coleco, the same company which manufactures the Cabbage Patch doll) he sang the praises of "Rambozo the Clown" the "Bull-shitter in the Indo-China Shop" and, snapping the legs and arms off, reflected sadly upon his coming home in a wheelchair. He then drew parallels between the anachronistic "Wild Kingdom" and similar public television nature programs with an irreverent description of US marines as lemmings racing to slaughter in Beirut, the mindless pawns of "Christian Heroin Warlords."

One of the most effective moments of the evening was Biafra's description of the ultimate half-time entertainment: a neo-Wagnerian Grand Guignol orchestrated by Anita Bryant "the Queer-bashing Orange Juice Lady" who sings accompaniment to a mass hanging of orange clad homosexual prisoners lifted aloft by the neck by brightly festooned mechanical cranes.

An insightful advertising analysis followed with Biafra reading from right-wing organization pamphlets and ads. He read of the Heritage School in Provo, Utah, a mind-melting conformists' concentration camp for troubled youth; a circular articulating the telltale signs of corruption in young people listening to punk and heavy metal music, and the insidious Satanic overtones implicit in: high top tennis shoes, black clothing, jewelry on boys, anything made of silver, LA Ranger t-shirts, cats, donkeys, and eagles. Frogs, of course, indicate the presence of the Devil as does, apparently, graffiti in underpasses and bridges ("located closer to Hell and the Devil"), and the star of David.

He discussed the "Aware" Home Drug testing kit now on the market in which you can detect the ominous signs of drug abuse in your children, and followed with a segment entitled "Why I'm Glad the Space Shuttle Blew Up!" in which he conceived that the next shuttle was scheduled to take on board 45 pounds of weapons-grade plutonium.

Finally getting a bit more referential to the general interest of the assemblage, Biafra offered, as a sort of ersatz public service, an amusing list of possible names for bands. He claims that he is constantly called upon to do so wherever he goes, and rattled off a dizzying list of possibilities including: "Pets Eat Their Masters," "Anchovy Smegma," "Conqueror Worm," " Shut Up and Buy," "Crotch Puppets," "Bank of Sodom," "Ku Klux Flintstones," "Angel Pus," the Islamic speed metal group "Magnum Jihad," "Clown Feast," "Video Sex Pope," "Magnum Dada," "Id Vaccine," culminating with the suggestion of a video entitled "Lest We Forget" by "The Six Million Jews."

Many audience members, myself included, assumed the program was at an end when Biafra put down his notes and began talking more informally. We were way off. He had only primed us for his true purpose: a concentrated diatribe against what he obviously views as dangerous times ahead and the fascist tendencies implicit in the words and works of Allan Bloom, George Bush, Jesse Jackson, et al and, above all and most representative, Tipper Gore and her self-righteous organization of "Washington Stepford Wives," the PMRC. He related interesting, occasionally frightening facts regarding the FBI file on the song "Louie, Louie" (after countless hours and hundreds of pages, the Bureau could only conclude that, if indeed the song were subversive, they could not understand the words anyway), an intriguing list of persons, works, and bands not allowed in the US by immigration including the Pet Shop Boys, Steeleye Span, and Gabriel Marquez.

For Tipper Gore, Biafra had saved some of his most vitriolic ammunition. He sighted countless examples of creeping censorship such as: 7-11 withdrawing Playboy, Walmart dropping Rolling Stone, Cream, and Tiger Beat, John Denver being dropped by RCA after testifying before the PMRC, and, of course and ultimately, his own case in San Francisco.

Like the twilight performances of Lenny Bruce, Biafra recounted in some considerable detail the persons and incidents of his trial. Doing mock versions of the prosecuting attorney Michael Gorino and various jury members, he led us through jury selection, individual witnesses, his arrest, the repercussions of the case on those involved. He then returned to the PMRC, identifying particular companies, individuals, and organizations who have voiced their approval: 7-Up, Coors, the American Mental Health Association, and the American Academy of Pediatricians.

All this lasted for more than three and a half hours. I was interested to note the growing impatience amongst the crowd, that hissing hostility which is so commonplace in TV generation gatherings. To his credit Biafra maintained the bulk of the attention by the sheer power of his confrontational hipster personality. The larger question, of course, is what effect his efforts will have upon this same group (a group historically nihilistic in its tendencies) and what ultimate impressions will be left with them.

To this listener, at least, there was a pervasive sense of anachronism to the evening. I might have been hearing Dick Gregory or Abbie Hoffman fifteen years ago speaking in a very similar tenor, if not with the identical message. And, too, Biafra's points of reference were as often dated (Anita Bryant, "Leave It To Beaver," ...Marlon Perkins, Walter Mondale) as they were contemporary and topical. Even the focus on Oliver North seemed somehow retro in this accelerated world, though that, perhaps, is one of Jello Biafra's main points. At any rate his borderline paranoid obsession with the insinuous workings of fundamentalist self-interest remind one of nothing so much as the rhetorical atmosphere on college campuses twenty years ago. I cannot fault him for that, however, insomuch as I share his alarm and admire his self-exploitation in a more democratic interest. What better person to rally a disaffected and nihilistic populace on the verge of desperate reactionary spasm than an admired and well-known victim of technocratic thought police? If Shirley Maclaine can raise audience consciousness with pieces of rock cannot Jello Biafra function as the insistent deviant calling like-minded young people to arms? It is probably no accident that he is presenting himself during an election year, the blood of the trial still dripping from his talons, hoping, at least, to remind his sophisticated followers of the very tenous stake they have in the outcome.

MATTHEW OWENS

Divine cont. from p. 5

heels, her 300 pound body rocked to the native beat. Her tongue was long and pointed and she frequently displayed it in snake-like fashion to the adoring throng.

She allowed an extended question and answer period in which the audience played straight man to her crooked wit.

"Who do you support politically?"

"I support no one. I don't believe in politics. What are politics? All I know is that I should be Queen!"

"Do you believe in God?"

"Honey, I *am* God!"

"Do you have a date tonight?"

"No, but I'm lookin'. And right now the blond number in the blue tank top looks good to me."

"Where are you staying tonight?"

"Honey, I ain't that stupid!"

When questioned about her enormous breasts, she boasted "Double D!" as she tickled the tips of the bra which competed with the rest of her figure for prominence. She responded to questions about her new film "Hairspray" with catty remarks about her co-stars, describing Sonny Bono as "the man who fucked Cher." She refused to mention Pia Zadora at all. Divine mentioned the possibility of one day moving to Chicago, but only if Oprah Winfrey left, because "there's only room for one fat bitch in this town!"

Prayers for "Native Love" were answered as the encore song began.

"My car is by Ferrari, my body's Jack LaLanne,

My clothes are by Armani and my hair is by Elaine,

Tiffany and Cartier are telling me the time,

This native love is restless and I'm just not satisfied!

And I never get enough. . . "

She stepped from the stage and was gone.

Harris Glen Milstead (42) died of heart disease 17 days later on March 6th in Hollywood. Milstead brought Divine to life. Divine parodied everything, and nothing was sacred. Like many of you I am very sad because I never got enough.

JOHN SPEAR

Haynes cont. from p. 3

The subject of this film is as much anorexia as it is Karen Carpenter (not surprisingly, given the all-consuming nature of the disorder). Haynes' treatment of this subject ranges from educational to expressionistic. In one segment of the film the rhythms of an "educational health film" are expertly recreated as young women standing on street corners ask basic questions about the disease and its victims ("don't they get hungry?...do they really think they look attractive like that?") while medical diagrams and photographs are intermittently displayed and explained by a professorial voice-over. At other times the topic is addressed by printed texts (sub-, over-, and inter-titles) which discourse upon the personal and social implications of the disease. Karen Carpenter's story becomes a case study of media manipulations, societal perversion, and self-denegration.

Haynes also engages these issues through his choice of visual images and aural juxtapositions. The doll-dramas are interrupted by moments of live-action footage which act as highly charged symbolic accents. These accents include a campy shot of a hand clapping a tambourine, grainy Vietnam War clips (yet another aspect of the seventies "scene"), and excerpts from World War II death camp documentation. Haynes handles this last image with particular sensitivity and skill. The sudden introduction of an emaciated corpse, which could so easily fall into the trap of gratuitous appropriation, becomes a necessary and revealing comment on the anorexic condition. This moment is further amplified by a text which describes an anorexic's "fascism" over her own body.

The music of the Carpenters plays an important role in the structure of the film. As the sweet, bubbly signature sound of the Carpenters' music swells up on the soundtrack, the camera motors past row after row of ranch-style homes or lingers on a group of tan teen-agers loitering on a street corner. Here we have the Carpenters at their most puerile, creating a smooth, seamless background to the placid suburban existence from which they emerged. These are the "kids" that President Nixon invited to sing at the White House, the brother and sister who lived with their parents in Downey, California long after achieving fame and fortune.

Haynes' film reveals (creates?) another reading of the Carpenters' work -- or, more specifically, of Karen Carpenter's voice. Several hip-looking interviewees in the film point out that Karen C.'s voice is not as sickeningly sweet and syrupy as Dick Carpenter's overblown orchestration leads one to imagine. Actually, her voice has a rather husky, sophisticated quality. As Karen's story develops, the songs seem to gain new depth and meaning. In the context of her own personal struggles, Karen Carpenter's rendition of "Rainy Days and Mondays" ceases to be "easy listening" and becomes almost tragic, certainly ironic.

Throughout the film, Haynes plays with this dichotomy between corn and compassion. The songs are sad but stupid; the plight of the characters is moving, yet the players are unreal, inhuman; the plot is engrossing though the narrative is disrupted, distantiated. Haynes deconstructs and lampoons an era, but at the same time recognizes the seductive quality of its sentimentality. Despite the pervasive artificiality of the film, the viewer may become deeply involved in the world being represented.

Show business, the business of show, ate up Karen Carpenter and spat out the bones. Todd Haynes has transformed this pathetic footnote in the annals of pop culture into a powerful allegorical tale of an All-American Everywoman, destroyed by societal expectations, preconceptions, and representations of perfection.

MICHELE RABKIN

Cale cont. from p. 9

well enough to please his demanding father. Poor Mrs. Weird has turned class dissatisfaction into an art form; she is constantly lamenting the ways in which the world doesn't live up to her expectations. Her home is a pigsty, she never gets anything nice, and she can't understand why Mr. Weird just sits in front of the telly instead of paying attention to their son, Stephen. "It's just not natural," she says of Stephen's fondness for Judy Garland, "for an eleven-year-old boy to be singing along with a dead woman."

It is Stephen who garners most of our attention in the work, and his coming-out story is refreshingly funny. When Mr. Weird, in a moment of final frustration, kills Mrs. Weird with an ashtray, Stephen finds himself pretty much on his own. The eleven-year-old boy who told his school guidance counselor he wanted to be a legend when he grew up ("...like Judy Garland"), finds that at age 16 he can pick up spare change by going for rides in cars with gentlemen and "just holding hands." Before long, Stephen has gone much farther than just holding hands. Yet Cale relates even kinkier stories with enough charm and insouciance to disarm the most "mainstream" audience member.

The work ends with an account of Stephen's plane trip to America. If this final section is not quite as dynamic as the earlier parts, it is probably because the ending is clearly a denoument: the trip to America is scary, but by this time it is clear that Stephen is a survivor, and we feel certain he's going to make it in the New World. After all, look how well David Cale is doing. A gay British expatriate, like his character Stephen, he has managed to create works that bring subject matter like teenage prostitution to a level of acceptability. Perhaps in these days, when gays are viewed by some as pariahs, we need to be reminded how horribly normal it is being weird.

JEFF ABELL

Theatre Banlieue

Organic Lab Theater
Feb 25-March 6, 1988

Georges Bataille, in writing about the Popular Front in Paris in the 1930s, said: "A beggar whose broken voice cries out a song one can barely hear in the rear of a courtyard seems at times to have lost less in the game of life than the human matter arranged in buses and trains during rush hour." [1]

Those of us who went to see *Aqui No Se Rinde* by the Theatre Banlieue of Belgium were hard pressed to find even a narrative thread in the work, let alone a message. Publicity posted in the lobby of the theater gave some background information on the group. In its current manifestation it consists of two people - Alan Meirouk and Isabelle Lamouline. They unabashedly label themselves as an "avante-garde troupe" and cite Jerzy Grotowski's Poor Theatre as a major influence. For the last several years the group has toured throughout Mexico and Central America. This piece is said to be based on street scenes they witnessed in the countries they visited. Presumably they visited Nicaragua. The group took the name of this piece from a Sandinista slogan which means "No one surrenders here."

Given this information, the piece was surprisingly lacking in the sort of overt political content one expects from work about Nicaragua. In fact, there was never a direct reference to any of the revolutionary movements in Central America. Once again, the piece suffered from the lack of narrative structure. Most of the dialogue was in French with some Spanish and a smattering of English. The little English that was spoken seemed like utterances of aliens - a parody of communication. This performance was pre-verbal. What we saw were images of degradation, castration and insanity. We as the audience were voyeurs, watching these street people act out their pain for us, confirming our perception that at least we are not as bad off as they are. The scenes enacted bore an uncanny structural resemblance to scenes which can be witnessed every day on the street below the Sheridan el stop. You can see these people living in the #22 Clark St. bus any night after 3 a.m. These are the people who stink and urinate on public transportation. They are the marginal, the unhomogenized, the genderless: the primordial ooze of our culture. They are the reason we lock our doors. If the revolution started in the streets, we surrendered the streets to them long ago.

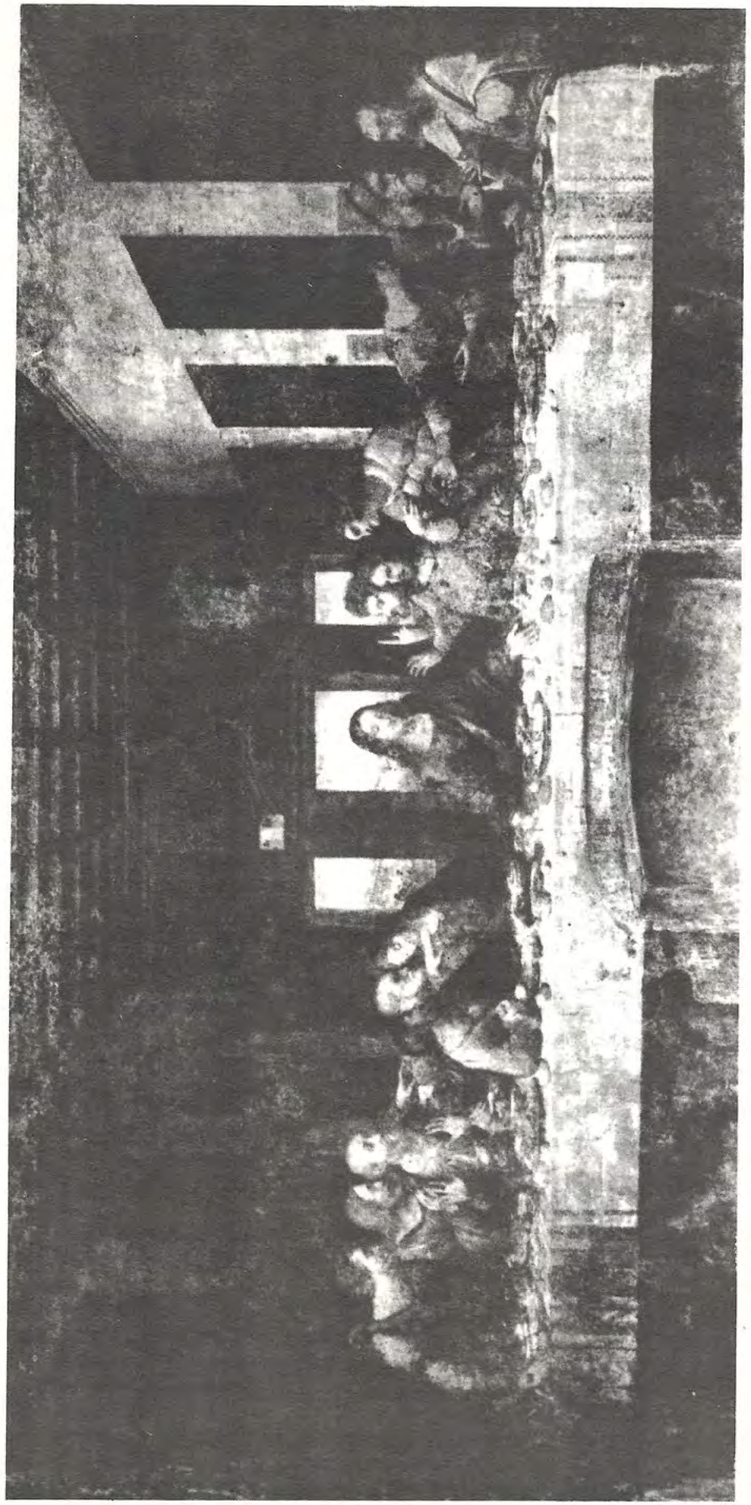
The piece started with a song sung from offstage. The sound of marching became louder and louder, eventually drowning out the singing completely. The song was a folk song - more rural than urban. The two performers appeared in the guise of nebulous creatures made from pieces of wood, a drainpipe, and a large phallic-looking gourd. Using controlled gestures and vocal sounds they created highly convincing monsters. They then shed their costumes and began an hour of physically demanding movements. The performers were often extremely loud and poked things at audience members or sat in their laps and stroked them. There was a masochistic edge to this performance. When Isabelle wore the drainpipe on her leg - implying amputation - one could see the pipe digging into her flesh. By the end of the piece the performers were sweating profusely and quite smelly.

Theatre Banlieue is a theatre of gesture that has its roots in 1960s experimental theater. Their methods, however, are less shocking than those of far more potent groups such as Julian Beck and Judith Malina's Living Theater. The fact that they bill themselves as an avant-garde troupe is problematic. It seems inappropriate to discuss here whether or not such a thing can even exist in the late 1980s, but in this case we can only take "avant-garde" to mean a genre of performance which has its roots in radical theater of the1960s. This group is breaking ground and thus run the risk of being dismissed as retrograde. This is a grave charge for a performance which claims as its inspiration the revolution. On the other hand, this kind of production can only be the result of close observation of the world combined with years of disciplined improvisation. Their inspiration does not come from books; the meaning of the work is in the movement. They are the raw material of their own work - they are what they do. Unlike much highbrow performance being done in Chicago there is no ironic distance between these performers and their material. While this may seem somewhat naïve, it borders on being quite revolutionary in this post-modern age.

STASHU KYBARTAS

Notes

1. Georges Bataille, *Visions of Escess: Selected Writings, 1927-1939.* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota, 1985.) p. 167.



MALE BONDING
THE EARLY YEARS

END ALL © 1988

Leap Year cont. from p. 6

us that this multiplicity of images moving in where a singular one once occupied the space is. . . "not so bad, it's just another kind of quiet."

We (the audience) are treated as existing both within the space outside the mirror, and again within the mirror itself. The two spaces are not mutually exclusive. Our possessing eye always holds an image of the observed, and, craning her neck, standing on tiptoe, Vickie tries to see beyond that initial, dominant specter trapped within our gaze.

Untitled (From the Bad Actor Series)
by Kevin Henry
Performed by Susan Anderson, David August, Kevin Clark, Deborah Hede, Kevin Henry, Victoria Hoch, Jeff Ragsdale, Will Warren, and John Walsh

Kevin Henry stands back thirty or forty years and surveys the midwestern plains. The corn fields roll out with a consistency that only distance provides. By viewing a time when our parents were young, Kevin is able to look at the ideas which have informed our thoughts on "Peace," "War," and "Peacetime" from the perspective of those at home. The details are significant--even the word "Peacetime" places us at the time surrounding World War II, and rings nostalgic and ironic in an age of undeclared and covert wars.

The Landscape is prevalent throughout. Always on the lookout for landmarks, Kevin identifies dogmas standing like billboards among the corn. Communism, Socialism, Transcendentalism, Entrepreneurialism, and Anarchy become monolithic landmarks on our childish consciousness. These landmarks serve as counterpoint to contrived dramatic scenes illustrating sentiments, again from a great distance. These sentiments have the smooth surface of billiard balls and roll closer and farther as Kevin bangs them around. Occasionally an image flies over the decades. Using some very dark humor, in the form of a Black man's leg sent home to the wrong wife, the fallout of war becomes any war. Every war occludes the politics, events, and anything that differentiates one war from another. It is only the shit of war that remains the same. Becoming conscious of the fact that we can't actually know these past ideas, but only see their images out of context, we are left looking at the surface, at the "beautiful damage left by the glaciers" and the relationship between generations that takes on a hopelessly beautiful air.

IRIS MOORE

LINKS HALL PERFORMANCE SERIES SPRING '88

April

7. RON ALLEN, INKA ALASADE. 8PM $4
8. TOM CORA 9PM $7
9. ALGEBRA SUICIDE 9PM $5
14. JACQUI DISLER, MARIS GRUDZIEN, JANE JORITZ 8PM $3
15. INFINITY ARTS ENSEMBLE 9PM $5
16. JOSEPH CELLI 9PM $5
21. KENT MUELLER, LESLIE REESE, CINDY SALACH 8PM $3
22. THE ELVIS MESSIAHS 9PM $5
23. BILL FRISELL, IKUE MORI, JIM STALEY 9PM $8
28. ACHY OBEJAS, SUSAN FIRER, YOLANDA MARTINEZ 8PM $3
29. DAMON SHORT 9PM $5

May

5. NEELI CHERKOVSKI 8PM $5
6. DON MECKLEY 9PM $5
7. ETHNIC HERITAGE ENSEMBLE 9PM $8
12. CHRISTOPHER MCNAMARA, DAVID SEDARIS, RAY WALLER 8PM $3
13. CHINESE MUSIC 9PM $5
14. CHINESE MUSIC 9PM $5
19. SHEILA DONOHUE, JANICE FINNEY, JULIUS KLEIN 8PM $4
20. FRANK MELCORI 9PM $5
21. FRANK MELCORI 9PM $5
26. MICHAEL HANNAN, STEVEN SCHREINER, JOHN SHEEHAN 8PM $3
27. OTIS "SMOKEY" SMOTHERS 9PM $5
28. DAVID "HONEYBOY" EDWARDS 9PM $5

June

2. MITCH HEGFILL, KIMBERLY LYONS, LORNA SMEDMAN 8PM $4
3. KATHERINE HUGHES, GENE COLEMAN 9PM $5
4. IMPROVISOR MAGAZINE BENEFIT CONCERT 9PM $5

All shows are general admission. Tickets are sold at the door.

Programs funded in part by the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency, and the Chicago Office of Fine Arts.

3435 N. SHEFFIELD • CHICAGO, IL. 60657 • 312-281-0824

P-FORM CALENDAR

through May 29	"MUD" by MARIA IRENE FORNES Chicago Actors Project 8 pm	A production of Element Theatre Company, "Mud" is directed by Doug Rand and features Vito Bitando, Cynthia Caponera, and Jim Ortleib.
May 6	DON MECKLEY Links Hall 9 pm	Called one of the "best damned shortwave radio players in the United States," Meckley creates "sonic landscapes" by using low-tech devices.
May 5-15	"NEMICO MIO (ENEMY OF MINE" Organic Lab Theater Thur at 9, Fri at 8 Sat at 8 & 10:30, Sun at 8	New Italian theater by DARIO D'AMBROSI and STEFANIA ABBATI
May 6 & 8	"SEXUALITY OR GENDER" "EPIDEMICS" Chicago Filmmakers Fri at 7:30 pm, Sun at 7 pm	Programs 3 and 4 of Infermental, a travelling video exhibition presenting the work of 58 artists from 30 countries. Included in these programs are works by Paula Levine, Paul Sharits, and Lynn Hershman, among others.
May 13	"DREAMS THAT MONEY CAN BUY" by HANS RICHTER Chicago Filmmakers 8 pm	Inspired by Max Ernst, this film tells the story of a young poet who uses his gift for interpreting dreams to set up a fancy office selling his clients dreams from their own subconscious.
May 14	FESTIVAL OF CHICAGO'S INTERNATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO ARTISTS Chicago Filmmakers 8 pm	This festival will offer a unique opportunity to see work by young international artists working in film and video who are currently living in Chicago.
May 19-22	"THE KENNETH WALKER STORY" by ROBERT DAULTON Organic Theater 8 pm	A performance history of the tragic life of Kenneth Walker.
May 21-29	"ONE GOLD TOOTH" by S.F. Field Beacon Street Gallery 9 pm	This comedy-drama journeys to a secluded monastery, a Chicago two-flat and a cowboy saloon where the two main characters, Chris and Jo, unravel the whys of their existence.
May 27 & 29	"IMAGE DIALECTS" "THE NEW COMPARISON" Chicago Filmmakers Fri at 7 :30 pm, Sun at 7 pm	Program 5 of Intermental, a travelling video exhibition presenting the work of 58 artists from 30 countries.
May 27 & 28	"PSYCHOPOETICA: WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF?" directed by JEAN HOWARD Maniscala Chapel 8 pm	This theatrical production performed in a former mortuary, begins by exploring the darkness of common childhood fears and continues to travel with those fears into adult terror.
May 28	THE LOOFAH METHOD "WHITE LIES" by MARION CAJORI Chicago Filmmakers 8 pm	This performance group seeks to "loofah the living world and all creation." "White Lies" is a film in an experimental narrative from the point of view of a woman experiencing jealousy.
June 17-18 June 24-25	"PERFORMORAMA" N.A.M.E. Gallery 8 pm	Benefit performance including Sharon Evans, Kevin Henry, Mark Roth, Brendan deVallance.

Chicago Actors Project	Links Hall	Chicago Filmmakers	Beacon Street	Maniscala Chapel
2856 N. Halsted	3435 N. Sheffield	1229 W. Belmont	4520 N. Beacon	441 W. North Ave.
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