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BACKTOBACKTHEATRE

## about Back to Back Theatre

Back to Back Theatre was founded in Geelong in 1987 to create theatre with people who are perceived to have a disability. It has gone on to become one of Australia's leading creative voices, focusing on moral, philosophical and political questions about the value of individual lives.

With a full-time ensemble of five actors, Back to Back creates work that is idiosyncratic, passionate and at times confronting. Back to Back's ensemble is made up of actors considered to have intellectual disabilities, a group of people who, in a culture obsessed with perfection and surgically enhanced 'beauty', are the real outsiders. This position of marginality provides them with a unique and at times subversive view of the world. The stories they create explore "the cold dark side" of our times, be it the sexuality of people with disabilities, the uses of artificial intelligence and genetic screening, unfulfilled desire, the inevitability of death, and what the fixation with economic rationality and utilitarianism means for people excluded from the 'norm'.

With **Bruce Gladwin** as Artistic Director, Back to Back has nurtured a unique artistic voice, placing the ensemble at the centre of social and cultural dialogue. Through a process of research, improvisation and scripting, and collaboration between the ensemble, Artistic Director and invited guest artists, new work is realised.

Back to Back Theatre  
PO Box 1257  
Geelong VIC 3220  
[info@backtobacktheatre.com](mailto:info@backtobacktheatre.com)  
[www.backtobacktheatre.com](http://www.backtobacktheatre.com)

### Ensemble statement

"We're people who do shows.

We're all quite short, but each one is a little bit taller than the one before.

We're agile and work professionally as a theatre company.

There are other things we do as well... warm ups, research, trips to Melbourne, lots of meetings, and time off when we need it.

Sometimes we have noodles for lunch.

The artistic director's name is Bruce and he makes us laugh. He gets on the table, pretends he's a dog, and then turns into a robot. He tells us to put our noodles down.

We love people. We believe in angels, shows and Britney Spears.

Hugs all round."

## 2005 Highlights

SMALL METAL OBJECTS premieres at 2005 Melbourne International Arts Festival and wins The Age Critics' Special Commendation

MINOTAUR premieres in Geelong at the Celebrate All Abilities Festival

REGIONAL POD (4+5) presented in Ballarat and Colac

THEATRE OF SPEED vs BOZ'n'HOK screens at the Edinburgh International Film Festival and 7th London Disability Film Festival

Back to Back feature article and cover of MAKING THE JOURNEY: Arts and Disability in Australia, published by Arts Access Australia

Back to Back awarded a Community Heritage Grant from the National Library of Australia

Rita Halabarec exhibited artworks at HUB Gallery and Artitude at the Gordon Gallery

# Staff & Board Members 2005

## BACK TO BACK ENSEMBLE

Mark Deans  
Rita Halabare  
Nicki Holland  
Simon Laherty  
Sonia Teuben

## STAFF

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR  
Bruce Gladwin  
GENERAL MANAGER  
Alice Nash

## ADMINISTRATION MANAGER

Sue Hartigan  
FINANCE WORKER  
Marisa Chiappi  
THEATRE OF SPEED  
DIRECTORS  
Kate Sulan, Marcia Ferguson  
THEATRE OF SPEED  
SUPPORT Jillie Romanis

## COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

CHAIR Bobbie Hodge  
TREASURER David McGinness  
SECRETARY Rose Hiscock

## OTHER MEMBERS

Patsie Frawley  
Patrick Over  
Yoni Prior  
Ann Tonks

# Guest artists, collaborators & supporters 2005

Emily Barrie  
Clare Bartholomew  
Lachlan Carrick  
Hugh Covill  
Marcia Ferguson  
Katrine Gabb  
Wendy Grose  
Ashley Heenan  
Rhian Hinkley  
Cherise Jettner  
Chris Kohn  
Andrew Livingston  
Ross Mueller  
Luke O'Connor  
Tee O'Neill  
Shio Otani  
Genevieve Picot  
Neil Pigot  
Patrick Ryan  
Melissa Reeves  
Jim Russell  
Kate Sulan  
Andrew Tranter  
Richard Vabre  
Ingrid Voorendt  
Berni Sweeney  
Brian Tilley  
Allan V Watt  
Jethro Woodward

Jeff Busby  
**Jeff Busby Photography**  
Kathryn Ross  
**Ballyhoo Publicity**  
Lin Tobias  
**La Bella Design**

**Support and Research Staff**  
Deb Barclay  
Pauline Cadly  
Annie Emery  
Brad Spolding  
Leanne Stein

**Work Experience Students**  
Stacey Baldwin and  
Camille Ferguson

## Theatre of Speed

Samantha Bade,  
Laura Berrisford, Adam Berry,  
Joan Black, Belinda Cini,  
Robert Croft, Scott Price,  
Joel Pollard, Tamika Simpson,  
Brian Tilley, Allan V Watt

## Thanks and Acknowledgements

Kristy Edmunds,  
Mary Ellen King, Kara Ward,  
Kara Miller, Andi Moore,  
bryan Andy, Olivia Anderson,  
Danielle Parker, Maureen  
Gardner, Bill Colby, Alice  
Lowenstein, Marcelle Tobschall  
and Crusader Hillis

## Melbourne International Arts Festival

## Denise Feldman Disability Rights & Advocacy

Andrea Schade, Therese  
Scalise Connex

Janine Shelley, Dianne  
Thomson **City of Greater  
Geelong Rural Access**

Rob Rees **St Laurence  
Disability Services**

Kate Kent **Inclusive Events  
Planning Group**

Lynden Costin, John Quick,  
Luke Gleeson **Courthouse  
Youth Arts Centre**

Zoe Snyder, David Dellafiora,  
Robyn Fry, Guenter Sahr  
**Karingallery**

Steve Cooper **Mac Assist**

Julianne Moss **University of  
Melbourne**

Cas Anderson  
Phil Hobbs  
Sandy Oliver  
Alison Richards

## OUR FUNDERS

John Baylis, Karin Mistry,  
Kim Hanna, Julie Grayland  
**Australia Council**

Stuart Koop, Amanda Brown,  
Debra Jeffries, Mandy Grinblatt  
**Arts Victoria**

Neil Richardson  
**Department of Family &  
Community Services**

Paul Dunn, Edwina Breitzke  
**Department of Human Services**

Cameron McNaughton  
**Percy Baxter Charitable Trust**

Sandy Shaw, Gemma Gamble  
**The Myer Foundation**

Candy Mitchell, Martin Paten  
**City of Melbourne**

Andrew Lawson  
**Geelong Community  
Foundation**

Sylvia Geddes **RE Ross Trust**

Gavin Seidel **United Way**

Di Shaw, Kaz Paton,  
Duncan Esler  
**City of Greater Geelong**

# Funders, sponsors and partners 2005

## CORE FUNDERS

Australia Council for the Arts  
Arts Victoria  
Department of Family & Community Services

## PROJECT FUNDERS

Arts Victoria  
City of Melbourne  
The Myer Foundation  
VicHealth  
RE Ross Trust  
Department of Human Services  
United Way  
Helen Macpherson Smith Trust  
City of Greater Geelong

## PROJECT PARTNERS

Melbourne International Arts Festival  
Connex  
St Laurence Disability Services  
Celebrate All Abilities Festival  
Courthouse Youth Arts Centre  
Club Wild  
International Standards Certifications Pty Ltd  
Brrrr Theatre  
Ants Pantz Arts



## Quality

Back to Back is a Quality Assured Organisation, certified in 2004 by International Standards Certifications Pty Ltd in accordance with the Commonwealth Disability Services Standards.

Back to Back carries its commitment to quality across all areas of work and practice. This includes:

- Supporting the full participation of the actors in the ensemble in both decision and policy making
- Maintaining a high professional standard in all areas of work including productions, performances, workshops, promotional material, public events and meetings
- Providing ongoing training and education for everyone in the company
- Ensuring a supportive and professional work environment at all times
- Promoting a positive image of people with disabilities as artists, creators and performers, to the local community, audiences, and to theatre companies and organisations.

# Chair's Report

Bobbie Hodge / chairperson

Back to Back continued with its full program of professional and community activity, the highlights of which were the premiere of SMALL METAL OBJECTS at the 2006 Melbourne International Arts Festival (and the winning of The Age Critic's Special Commendation) and MINOTAUR, Theatre of Speed's third major work, selling out in our hometown.

The performance of SMALL METAL OBJECTS at Flinders Street Station was the culmination of a year of intense creative development and risk taking, resulting in a show that pushed the boundaries of performance and established a unique and precious relationship between the actors, audience and general public. Back to Back and its Artistic Director Bruce Gladwin continue to create work that is challenging, breath takingly original and aesthetically uncompromising.

Meanwhile in Geelong, Theatre of Speed also entered new territory when it took the Minotaur legend and reworked into an energetic and stylish piece of theatre. Shame, rejection, greed and perversion were the themes of a show in which humans and immortals battled for status and recognition, and compassion was the casualty.

A Department of Human Services Innovation Grant allowed Regional POD (our experimental residency project) to visit Ballarat and Colac, working with regional companies Brrrr. Theatre and Ants Pantz Arts. Each residency created a dramatic and engaging environment in which local narratives were prominent. Work was also begun with Break of Day from Warrnambool for a residency early in 2006. The team of collaborators has worked hard on developing and extending the POD concept into a flexible and responsive program.

The Board throughout 2005 focussed on a multitude of issues including getting ready for Case Based Funding, developing a comprehensive and strategic approach to marketing, overseeing a change in the provision of advocacy to the actors in the ensemble, and of course gearing up for a major premiere at the Melbourne International Arts Festival.

My colleagues on the Board have contributed their expertise to all of these areas – Rose Hiscock with marketing, Patrick Over with legal and governance, Yoni Prior with artistic, David McGinness financially, Patsie Frawley with her in-depth knowledge of disability rights and issues and Ann Tonks with her managerial expertise.

On behalf of Back to Back I recognise and appreciate the enormous contribution of Trish Jardine, in her capacity, over many years, as Ensemble Advocate. We wish Trish all the best for the future and we know she will remain a part of Back to Back's extended family of friends and supporters. Denise Feldman of Barwon Disability Rights and Advocacy has taken up the work of advocacy and already her contributions and work with the ensemble are being felt.

Back to Back thanks its funding bodies for their continued support, particularly the Australia Council for the Arts and Arts Victoria, and also VicHealth, the Department of Family & Community Services, The Myer Foundation, Department of Human Services, United Way and the various philanthropic foundations that supported SMALL METAL OBJECTS and MINOTAUR.

And finally a sincere and warm thanks to:

**The Back to Back ensemble:** Mark, Rita, Nicki, Simon and Sonia for their vision and remarkable performance-making. And also to Allan V Watt who did a sterling job performing in SMALL METAL OBJECTS, and Brian Tilley who travelled to Colac with POD, stepping into the breach at the last minute

**Bruce Gladwin** for his subversive imagination and brilliant mind

**Alice Nash**, the fastest spreadsheeter in the world and General Manager par excellence

**Sue Hartigan** for keeping track of FOFMS, DMIs, CBF, stretch capacity and IEPs

**Marisa Chiappi**, our bookkeeper and stationery queen

**Deb Barclay and Stacey Baldwin** for their work with the ensemble

**Pauline Cady and Brad Spolding** for their work on touring, marketing and fundraising

**Kate Sulan, Marcia Ferguson and Jill Romanis**, for their unstinting and creative work with Theatre of Speed

**And the many artists, collaborators, friends and supporters who help us make it all happen.**

# General Manager's Report

Alice Nash / general manager

## **SMALL METAL OBJECTS**

At the end of 2005, Back to Back began fielding a significant level of interest from national and international presenters in presenting SMALL METAL OBJECTS, with a corresponding impact on staff resources dedicated to responding to interest. Back to Back has received approximately 45 expressions of interest in the work from 2007 to 2009, including adaptations into several foreign languages and requests for the company to consider international co-productions and collaborations.

## **THEATRE BIZ: INTERNATIONAL MARKET DEVELOPMENT**

This year Back to Back received a Theatre Biz grant from the Theatre Board of the Australia Council to consolidate its position in the market-place, build on recent accomplishments and acclaim in national and international settings, and increase earned income via contract fees. We sought support for the development of national and international touring opportunities through: 1) a mentorship program with three separate mentors; 2) employment of a part-time Tour Development Researcher; and 3) national presenter allowances to view the work in 2006.

This enabled Back to Back to respond to the interest in SMALL METAL OBJECTS by preparing for the 2006 Australian Performing Arts Market and employing Brad Spolding as Tour Development Researcher. An unexpected and delightful outcome of this process has been the establishment of a wide support network for Back to Back.

## **ARTS PRECINCT RE-DEVELOPMENT**

In late 2005, the City of Greater Geelong and the Geelong Performing Arts Centre invited Back to Back to be included in a feasibility study commissioned by Arts Victoria for the re-development of GPAC and surrounding area, including the possibility of Back to Back as a resident company within a re-developed precinct. Back to Back subsequently submitted an expression of interest for inclusion in this study.

## **RESTRUCTURE OF AUSTRALIA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS**

Back to Back continues to adjust to the subtle changes resulting from the re-structure of the Australia Council of the Arts in late 2004. We anticipate further changes in line with the emphasis on the strategic initiatives.

## **RESTRUCTURE OF ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT TO ENSEMBLE**

From January our disability funder, the Department of Family & Community Services (FaCS), stipulated that Supported Employment Services could no longer employ internal Advocates, requiring Back to Back to end the provision of internal advocacy to the ensemble. This was a difficult and controversial process, particularly as it resulted in declaring a long-term employee redundant.

## **QUALITY ASSURANCE**

Back to Back receives funding via FaCS as a Supported Employment Service for employees with intellectual disabilities. As part of employment service reforms, Back to Back was required to be certified as a Quality Assured organisation. In 2005 the surveillance process required a dedicated staff member for 0.3 EFT and the involvement of all key staff. In addition to staff time, Quality Assurance required ongoing financial resources for auditor fees and other compliance costs.

## **TRANSITION TO CASE BASED FUNDING**

In 2005, Back to Back prepared for transition to Case Based Funding. This required considerable time of all key staff and a dedicated staff member for 0.1 EFT. It is anticipated that the transition to case based funding will result in reduced disability funding in 2007 from the 2005 level of \$75,924 per annum to between \$51,000 and \$60,000 per annum, a reduction of between roughly \$15,000 and \$24,000 annually.



### **TAILORED BUSINESS ASSISTANCE**

In 2005 Back to Back was supported by FaCS to review its company structure, workforce, and succession planning. This resulted in the outsourcing of advocacy services and the creation of a new position of Ensemble Development Coordinator for 2006. As part of this process, Bruce Gladwin and Alice Nash attended residential management programs – in Leadership Development & Management Development respectively - at the Melbourne Business School's Mt Eliza for Executive Education.

### **FINANCE**

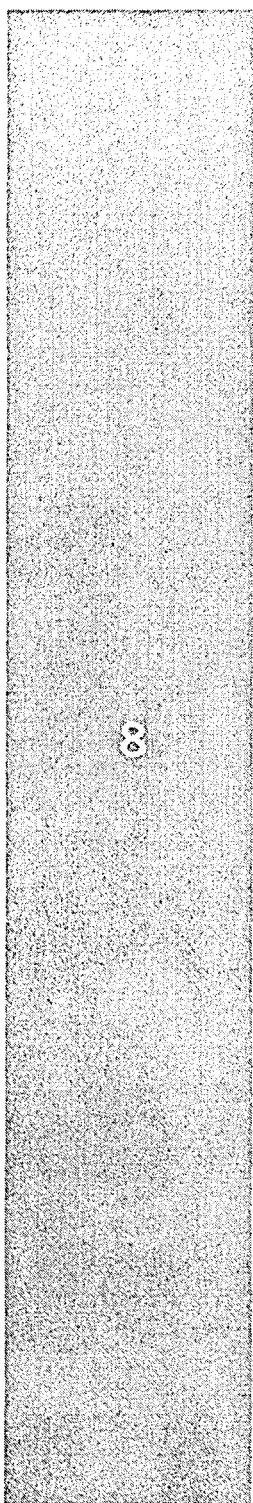
As with the industry at large, limited core funds and our drive to dedicate as many resources as possible to the creation of new work mean that key staff are compelled to take on a wider breadth of responsibilities than is necessarily sustainable. We seem stubbornly – under the guise of fiscal responsibility – stuck to this mentally, mostly to the detriment of key staff.

Back to Back is aware that our funding is diminishing in real terms and that we are being asked (particularly by our disability funder) to do more with less. To deliver the annual program for 2005, we received support via 17 project grants (including philanthropic grants) for professional, community projects and business development initiatives.

Notwithstanding the above, Back to Back continues to thrive and operate in a fiscally sound manner. Our economic house is in order.

# Artistic Director's Report

Bruce Gladwin / artistic director



Liberal adjectives can't articulate the artistic density of 2005. In a year dominated by the presentation of new work, Back to Back capitalised on the development and planning of the previous 12 months.

SMALL METAL OBJECTS premiered at the Melbourne International Arts Festival in October, and in November, Theatre of Speed, in collaboration with the Back to Back ensemble and guest artists, placed their own idiosyncratic spin on that most ancient of myths – the MINOTAUR.

A creative development, focusing on drawing and the act of creation, under the working title of DUMB, returned Back to Back to the proscenium arch of traditional theatre. Scheduled for 2007/08, DUMB will be a conglomeration of the ensemble's interpretation of personal and cultural genesis mythology.

Back to Back's commitment to community collaboration bore a number of outcomes including POD residencies in Ballarat and Colac. Summer School, in late November, offered a plethora of genre and activity including clowning, acting for camera, sound effects in performance, movement and design. Theatre of Speed continued every Wednesday for 42 weeks of the year.

In April we launched the Theatre of Speed music video project, also known as THEATRE OF SPEED vs BOZ'n' HOK. Designed, rehearsed and filmed in 2004, the work was unleashed onto the world via the *Mirrorball Down Under* section of the 2005 Edinburgh International Film Festival and the 7th London Disability Film Festival. The video's inclusion in film festivals is testament to its infectious appeal and accessibility.

Involuntary and spontaneous reaction to the emerging artistic work was generously supported by the resoundingly clear administrative and managerial practice. Thanks to all staff, creative collaborators, board and ensemble for injecting their energy, commitment and intelligence to a program which builds on Back to Back's recent history and establishes a foundation for the future.

# SMALL METAL OBJECTS

Premiere 2005 Melbourne International Festival

## CO-DEVISORS:

Bruce Gladwin, Sonia Teuben, Simon Laherty,  
Jim Russell, Genevieve Morris

## PERFORMERS:

Simon Laherty, Sonia Teuben, Allan V Watt,  
Genevieve Picot, Jim Russell

DIRECTOR DESIGNER: Bruce Gladwin

COSTUME DESIGN: Shio Otani

WRITER / DRAMATURGE: Melissa Reeves

SOUND COMPOSITION / ENGINEERING / DESIGN:  
Hugh Covill

## PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT:

Paul Summers & Andrew Livingston,  
for bluebottle

SOUND OPERATOR: Lachlan Carrick

Flinders Street Station Concourse,  
St Kilda Road, Melbourne  
7-22 October 2005

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**SMALL METAL OBJECTS** premiered to critical and audience acclaim, sold out rapidly, and won the The Age Critics' Award Special Commendation.

**SMALL METAL OBJECTS** was staged 18 times during the Festival at Melbourne's iconic Flinders Street Station, amidst thousands of commuters who inadvertently became part of the show. Performances were staged at different times of day – 8.30am, 4pm, 5pm and 7pm – to coincide with high volume pedestrian traffic and to test the impact of different performance times on the tone and realisation of the piece.

*"When the show begins, you're not sure who you should be watching. Steve and Gary are a quiet, slightly lonely pair existing on the fringe of society, and we are initially unable to see them amidst the eddying current of people crisscrossing the space. When our protagonists emerge, it is only gradually, two points slowly moving towards us through the crowd. We are the only witnesses to their small and intensely personal drama, passers by oblivious to their conversation."* From John Bailey, Beat 2005

Back to Back decided to split **SMALL METAL OBJECTS** into two distinct works – **SMALL METAL OBJECTS** and **BEDROOM**. The motivation for splitting the work was artistic: while the two pieces had emerged from the same thematic, it was difficult to justify their presentation as companion pieces. **BEDROOM** will have a creative development period from February to April 2006 and is due to premiere in 2007.

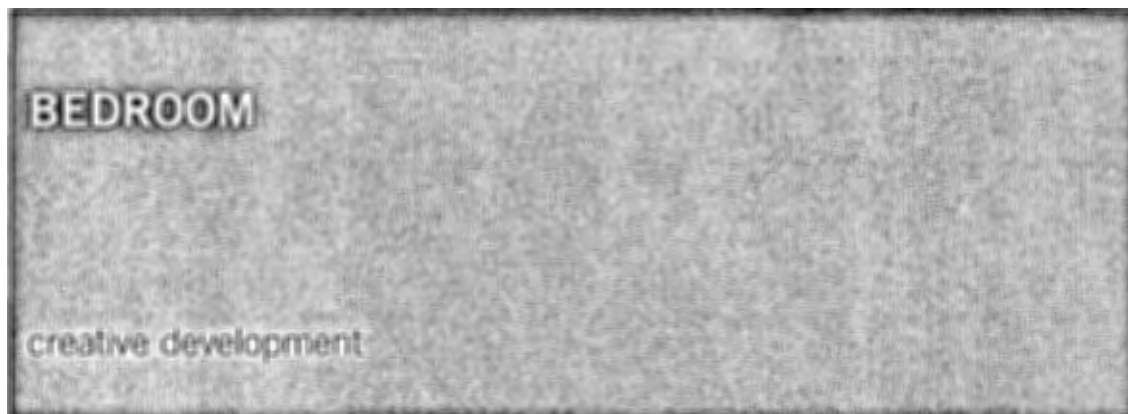
The narrative for **SMALL METAL OBJECTS** was generated from ensemble member Sonia Teuben's interest in developing a character that was a series of contradictions to her own identity. The character Gary was male, successful with his own business, financially independent and surrounded by a loving family. Gary became an alter ego to Sonia and a vehicle for her unique home spun philosophy.

The emerging story is of a financial transaction gone wrong. Presented at a train station the story is of the every day in real time, a contrast of intimate and public.

**SMALL METAL OBJECTS** was overwhelmingly successful. Our only regret is that the performance sold out within days of opening and many would-be audience members were unable to see it.



PHOTO: Jeff BUSBY



**CO-DEVISORS / PERFORMERS:**  
Rita Halabarec, Mark Deans, Nicki Holland,  
Sonia Teuben, Simon Laherty

**DIRECTOR / DESIGNER:** Bruce Gladwin

**ANIMATION & FILM:** Rhian Hinkley

**GUEST DIRECTOR:** Marcia Ferguson

**BEDROOM** is the companion piece to **SMALL METAL OBJECTS** and will premiere in 2007. Like **SMALL METAL OBJECTS**, **BEDROOM** explores the relationship between economics and human value.

The three ensemble actors not involved in **SMALL METAL OBJECTS** (Nicki Holland, Rita Halabarec and Mark Deans) worked on **BEDROOM** while Sonia Teuben and Simon Laherty rehearsed and performed **SMALL METAL OBJECTS**.

**BEDROOM** developed in two streams:

### 1. Animation

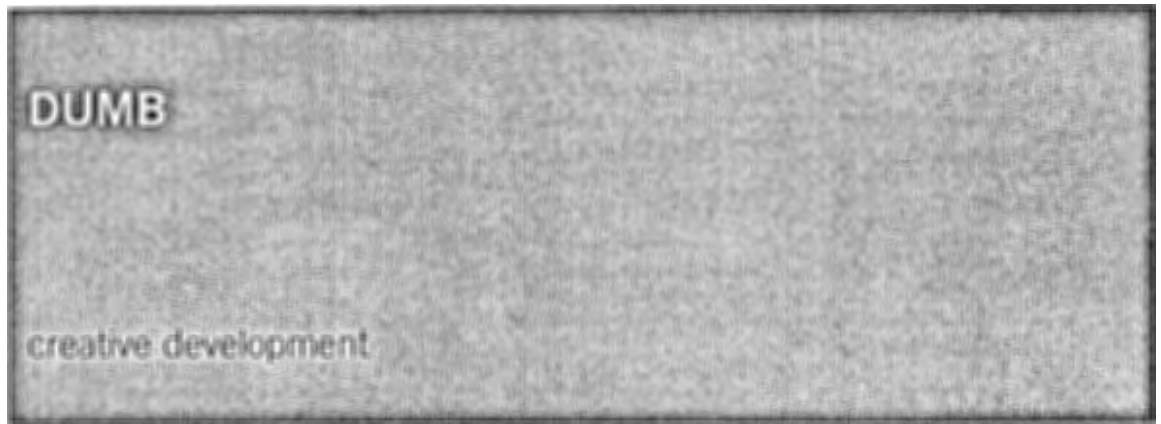
Rita, Nicki and Mark worked with film and animation artist Rhian Hinkley, developing ideas for screen-based performance. The actors began filming their own bedrooms, guiding us into their private worlds of everyday artefacts and intimate possessions. This documentation offered an opportunity for Rhian to assist the ensemble in operating video equipment. The footage has been edited into a short stand-alone work.

Other developments included creating video images for Rita's thoughts on the current war in Iraq. The human suffering of this conflict is very present in her current perspective on the world. Working with a drawing tablet, Rita is building a catalogue of images of the conflict which tell a story about Iraqi domestic life and the effects of war.

### 2. Narrative

The ensemble worked with guest director Marcia Ferguson to flesh out some of the narratives developed in 2004. Each actor took a particular personal interest and created a meeting point between that subject matter, themselves and an audience member.

Rita continued her exploration of the Iraqi conflict from a woman's perspective, developing a series of monologues. Nicki constructed an exotic and sensual world based on Dolly Parton and the imagery of her lyrics, while Mark played with illusion and sleight of hand.



**DIRECTOR / WRITER / DESIGNER:**  
Bruce Gladwin

**ENSEMBLE:**  
Rita Halabarec, Mark Deans, Nicki Holland,  
Sonia Teuben, Simon Laherty

**SOUND DESIGN:** Hugh Covill

**ANIMATION:** Rhian Hinkley

**GUEST DIRECTOR:** Kate Sulan

**GUEST ARTISTS:** Colin Lane and Frank Wood

In a world of accelerated cultural interchange, instant media image and the 'taxed imagination', **DUMB** shines the beacon for the universal and unending power of human creativity. Inspired by the visual art practice of the Back to Back ensemble and the 'outsider' art movement, **DUMB** is a surreal visual theatrical spectacle, a poetic and dramatic examination of the current state of humanity.

**DUMB** is an epic journey, drawn from the actors' imagination and observations of the contemporary condition. **DUMB** is a process-driven work, employing a universal performance language that is readable and accessible from multiple perspectives, and uses multiple theatrical forms, including new technologies, especially sound and projection.

**DUMB** aims to create a framed performance forum for the ensemble's interior landscape, for their perceptions and reflections on contemporary society, drawing a direct line to the 'outsider' or 'brut' art movement. As a company that employs artists with disabilities, the discourse of the 'outsider' art movement continues to be a major influence in the development of our work.

During March and April, Back to Back undertook a two week development on **DUMB**, the resulting narrative synopsis providing a blueprint for further development.

**ACT 1** A quiz-master as god, a mantra of questions spoken as if it was The Torah. The sequence of answers illustrating a complex system of interconnection, as the words are spoken an ecosystem of knowledge is born. Eve looks on, she's already on the in; dressed in a gold bikini she's like a door bitch keeping a faux curious eye on the patrons. The people queue at the door, taking their turn to step up to God. It's a quest for self-knowledge, a chance to be reborn, to cross the threshold of the divine, an understanding of what it means to be human.

**ACT 2** A cowboy rides into town. We all know he's a cowboy because we're all made of the same substance. He's small, about the height of an average knee, a little man in a big world. The bar goes silent when he walks in; he's not sure if it's because he's intimidating or pathetically small, better opt for intimidating. He orders a drink and massages his revolver. Macho gun-play leads to the accidental shooting of his dearly loved horse. Unable to let go of the reins, our cowboy is dragged to heaven, like a man dangling from a horse-shaped balloon

**ACT 3** With the head of a baby elephant, Ganesh – god of education, knowledge, wisdom and wealth - makes the journey from India riding on a mouse. Festering in a pitch-black room, accompanied by fear and prejudice, the growing Nazi beast rejoices in the thought of orchestrated intolerance. Ganesh, the rightful owner of the swastika, arrives to reclaim the sacred symbol from the demented god that man has become.

## POD in Regional Victoria

[pod] the outer case holding the seeds of a plant

**POD** is a workshop process and residency model developed to work with community groups in a variety of settings, creating a multi-disciplinary theatrical work that merges architectural design, projected animation and live performance. Through **POD**, Back to Back creates a model for community performance making that encourages the development of original stories by individuals with disabilities.

By the end of 2005, **POD** had five incarnations:

- #1 Hannover (August 2003)
- #2 Geelong Night School (April - June 2004)
- #3 Horsham's Awakenings Festival (October 2004)
- #4 Ballarat in collaboration with Brrrr. Theatre (June 2005)
- #5 Colac in collaboration with Ants Pantz Arts (July 2005).

The vision for **POD** includes a research, documentation and dissemination process to examine artistic practice and community outcomes from interdisciplinary perspectives. The research stream embeds the work of Back to Back and its communities within academic discourse, and, more broadly, in civic society. The research stream aims to strengthen the outcomes of the project through an evaluative approach.

Back to Back uses a literal structure – a large inflatable – to facilitate collaborations. The structure does not pre-determine process, content or outcomes. Each community collaborates in the creation of the artistic work (performance, construction and animation) and the research stream within their own contexts. The focus is on collaboration not facilitation, and the interaction operates in both directions.

The methodology for **POD** places people with disabilities as the drivers of artistic process and its resultant discourse. The residency does not create a finished work; it culminates in a presentation to an invited audience.

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PHOTO: Susan HARTIGAN



## POD4 WITH BRRRR. THEATRE

### COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS:

Brrrr. Theatre: Matt Atkinson, Neil Heaton,  
John Fidler, Tanya Greaves, Stephen Hutterer, Dave Knowles,  
Sally Peck, Brian Reynolds, Chrissie Reynolds,  
Tanya van Gils, Maria Van Ravenstein

### ENSEMBLE:

Mark Deans, Rita Halabarec, Nicki Holland, Simon Laherty

DIRECTOR: Marcia Ferguson

FILM & ANIMATION: Rhian Hinkley

SET CONSTRUCTION: Mark Cuthbertson

SUPPORT WORKERS: Leanne Stein, Ashley Heenan

LOCAL COORDINATORS: Sarah Sneddon, Ashley Heenan

VENUE COORDINATOR: Cas Anderson

4, 11, 18 and 25 June 2005  
Showing 25 June 2005  
Camp Street Theatre Ballarat

Brrrr facilitators hoped for a project that would reinvigorate their group, expand their artistic repertoire and experience, and most importantly, offer theatrical "seeds" for future developments.

The preliminary workshop created several small performance moments. From these the group chose a theme of "underground" for **POD 4**, stories about the past, buried deep down inside. The inflatable tunnel was chosen as thematic structure, amplifying a theme suggestive of both the body and its secrets, and the tunnels and labyrinths beneath Ballarat's unspoken histories.

The preliminary workshop also explored performance-making processes that produced verbal and non-verbal theatrical moments. From these the group requested a performance process that focussed on devising script.

The preliminary workshop was extremely positive and enhanced our capacity to plan and work effectively with the group from day one.

### Workshop Days

At the beginning of each workshop day, participants chose whether to work on inflatable construction, performance or animations. Mark's inflatable groups took up the theme of underground by working with tunnels, shadow puppets and cut outs.

Rhian's animation groups explored self-portraits that inspired story-making process (improvisation, interview, scripting and acting work) in the performance group. These stories then fed into simple storyboards appropriate for animation or film.

The group's previous theatrical experience is in pantomime and the **POD** process felt revolutionary for them. The focus on personal stories was new and while some found it initially confronting, the company soon embraced it, discovering a source of creativity and ideas they had not previously regarded as legitimate. The group's great strength is in character work – improvisation was new and exciting for them and would be a great skill to extend. Simple gestural work and images were also exciting. However, memories lapsed over the extended five-week period and it was difficult to build and retain simple scores.



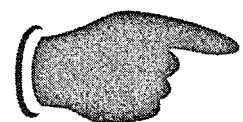
## POD4 WITH BRRRR. THEATRE

### PUBLIC PRESENTATION

In the foyer the audience (of about 60) were welcomed by three looped events – two performances and a DVD of earlier PODS. John and Steve performed a vigorous and uninhibited belly dance to primal drumming, and Maria introduced **POD** with a script made up of participants one-liners about **POD** followed by a weirdly seductive hybrid tap-belly dance, as she waved the audience through the doors into the dark tunnel.

The black Post Office theatre was our underground space. Audience members heard stories and fragments as they were drawn down the dark intestinal tunnel by flickering miners lights. Stories ranged from illnesses stored inside the body, a man's experience in the meatworks, the buried world of Lakeside (Ballarat's huge, demolished and forgotten psychiatric institution), and urban myths about Ballarat's tunnels and caves the participants explored as children.

Exiting the underground space, the audience were "birthed" out of the body-like tunnel's air-tight seal, into the white room, a mirror reflection of the "past". In the white room, the audience found themselves on the outside, peering into the future by placing their heads into a suspended tunnel and witnessing projected animations and films about the actors fantasies. They interacted with a fortune teller hidden inside a tiny **POD** like the wizard of Oz, seated beside her own outsized projection. And they sat to have their portraits done, watching their "self becoming" out of thin air as portraits were drawn through live to air projections. Subjects received a print-out of themselves as they left the "future" and walked outside into the present, holding a little tracing of an experience drawn by the protagonists of the event.





## POD5 WITH ANTS PANTZ ARTS

### COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS:

Ants Pantz Arts: Andrew Knight, Michael Jobling, Greg Heinrich, Deb Morgan, Craig Murray, Robbie Farquhar, Mathew McCabe, Greg Riches, Nick McNamara, Catherine Farrell, Maz Hogan, Terry Bishop, Sally Armistead, Claire Farrell, Peter Church, Leonie Lucas, Paul Morgan

### ENSEMBLE:

Mark Deans, Nicki Holland, Simon Laherty, Brian Tilley

DIRECTOR: Marcia Ferguson

FILM & ANIMATION: Rhian Hinkley

SET CONSTRUCTION: Mark Cuthbertson

SUPPORT WORKERS: Deb Barclay & Lorraine Henkel

LOCAL COORDINATOR: Cherise Jettner

VENUE COORDINATOR: Peggy Puksand

4-8 July 2005

Showing 8 July 2005  
Trinity College Colac

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PHOTO: Susan HARTIGAN

**POD 5** was an event to be staged with Ants Pantz players. Our work commenced with a preliminary workshop at the *Meeting Place* with Marcia and the group. Unfortunately we had not understood the *Meeting Place* was a drop-in centre so anyone who chanced to come along was invited to join in the first devising event and could leave at any time, distracting us from developing a relationship to content or process. The space was compromised by the bar-like set up of the venue and was difficult to work in.

The preliminary workshop yielded a particular interest in houses, and generated a simple text that instigated the process for all the art forms:

*I walked inside,  
I took off my shoes,  
My head was in the clouds.*

Negotiations with the venue – the gym hall at Trinity College – ensured very clear access, and the venue worked for us extremely well. We had a large turn out of participants, new to theatre, sometimes up to 23 people a day. In the performance group, improvisation was identified as the main skill being sought – this opportunity was snapped up by the Back to Back artists and encouraged newcomers – unfortunately some promising Colac performers who devised script around their own stories did not wish to perform their stories on the performance day, but were happy to participate in the workshop showings.

Rhian's animation group explored very raw and naïve forms of animation including slides. Mark's group were invited to design and build inflatable houses or to add rooms to the Horsham **POD**. One of these constructions was used in a short film where participants were VOX POPPED about their own homes.

**POD 5** centred around a theme of home. The showing included a simple scripted story of a few scenes, installations made from participants writings and drawings, small television soap operas exploring funny shared house experiences, and animations and projections from small monologues. Live music was created by Cherise's music group. The audience at the showing (about 60 people) did not look comfortable to move around the space and enjoy each "room". Having arrived, they took up a traditional static role as viewers. We regretted not having pursued an alternative exit (the back door) for the space but did not have time to construct further alterations to the space. Rhian's group created an interactive digital house, an innovation for all of us.

# THEATRE OF SPEED

## PERFORMERS 2005:

Samantha Bade, Laura Berrisford, Adam Berry,  
Joan Black, Belinda Cini, Robert Croft, Joel Pollard,  
Scott Price, Tamika Simpson, Brian Tilley, Allan V Watt

## SKILLS DEVELOPMENT (January – April 2005)

Led by Marcia Ferguson, Theatre of Speed members participated in performance skills workshops based on Ruth Zaporahs' book, "Improvisation and the Art of Presence". The workshops progressively built ensemble awareness and individual acting and movement skills through layered scores. The work was highly successful and could be further explored in disability performing arts training contexts. Acting and devising skills were further developed in film workshops towards Theatre of Speed's second term project, The Gaol Film.

## THE GAOL FILM

From April till June, Theatre of Speed worked with filmmaker Rhian Hinkley and Marcia Ferguson (Dramaturgy) on the filming of a short film set in the Old Geelong Gaol. Using the performance technique explored in the skill development period, the film sought a practical application to the training period. Working as a solo, duet or trio, the actors developed characters, incarcerated within the cells, whose narratives explored time and isolation. The film will be completed in early 2006.

# MINOTAUR

Premiere

Performed by Theatre of Speed

DIRECTOR/CO-DEVISOR:  
Kate Sulan

CO-DEVISORS/PERFORMERS:  
Samantha Bade, Laura Berrisford, Adam Berry, Joan Black,  
Belinda Cini, Robert Croft, Mark Deans, Rita Halabarec,  
Nicki Holland, Simon Laherty, Joel Pollard, Scott Price,  
Tamika Simpson, Brian Tilley, Allan V Watt

DESIGNER: Emily Barrie

SOUND DESIGNER & COMPOSER: Jethro Woodward

LIGHTING DESIGNER: Richard Vabre

DRAMATURG: Bruce Gladwin

SUPPORT WORKERS: Jillie Romanis, Annie Emery

STAGE MANAGER: Deb Barclay

SET CONSTRUCTION: Jim Stenson

Stott Theatre, Courthouse Youth Arts Centre, Geelong

7-8 December 2005

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Theatre of Speed has developed from Back to Back's outreach work within the Geelong community, in particular the theatre workshop program begun in 1999. Theatre of Speed operates with the dual aims of creating a pool of associated artists with theatrical skills and teaching the ensemble leadership skills. The participants are young people perceived to have an intellectual disability, drawn from St Laurence Disability Services. Theatre of Speed works with the Back to Back ensemble and collaborating artists every Wednesday for 42 weeks of the year.

**MINOTAUR** was inspired by the ancient Greek story and this production was Theatre of Speed's eclectic interpretation of the myth, complete with vengeful and negligent Gods, flawed royalty, mad inventors, rock star bulls, an over confident matador and an anarchic Greek chorus. Told through narration, live video, movement and a pumping sound track, **MINOTAUR** followed the story of the half-bull, half-man, from his conception to his death. The final production was fast paced, frenzied, humorous and affecting, a true reflection of Theatre of Speed's delight in the bizarre, their anarchic energy, vivid imagination and boldness.

The development and rehearsal period for **MINOTAUR** took place one day a week from July to December 2005, with more intensive rehearsals leading up to the season in December.

The design components of **MINOTAUR** were developed through close discussions between the designers and Theatre of Speed. The performers responded to the story by creating pictures and this artwork was directly translated into the visual design and costumes.

The design included:

- Seven metre high structures of the King and Queen, created from the artwork of Rita Halabarec
- The world of the gods created through live video projections dominating the space
- The labyrinth, in which the Minotaur is hidden, built by the performers using domestic objects including chairs, plates, string and shredded paper
- The actors on stage throughout the production, commenting on the action and assuming the role of the traditional Greek chorus.

The sound design, by Jethro Woodward, was deliberately eclectic and moved swiftly between sound bytes of opera, hard-core rock, cartoon sound effects and original composition, driving the piece and cueing the performers.

The text was largely created and written by Brian Tilley, member of Theatre of Speed.

With only three performances, and an unforeseen last minute reduction in audience capacity, meant that many people were unable to see the work.



PHOTOS: Jeff BUSBY

# SUMMER SCHOOL

## GUEST ARTISTS:

Acting for Camera: Neil Pigot

Hybrid Arts and Performance:  
Katrine Gabb and Andrew Tranter

First Step to Final Draft:  
Tee O'Neill and Ross Mueller

Clowning: Clare Bartholomew

Sound Effects in Performance:  
Chris Kohn and Jethro Woodward

Slapstick & Circus: Luke O'Connor

Movement for Dance & Theatre: Ingrid Voorendt

## PARTICIPANTS:

Peter Abbey, Phoebe Baker, Angus Bannister, Adam Berry,  
Allan Bonning, Jenny Bowden, BRRRR. Theatre  
(Ashley Heenan, Sarah Sneddon, Christine Reynolds,  
Brian Reynolds, Sally Peck, Dave Knowles,  
Stephen Hutterer, Neil Heaton, Tania Greaves, John Fidler,  
Tanya Van Gils), Alan Davies, Janet Finlayson,  
Nicole Jongebloed, Tom Leembruggen,  
James Lewis, Bill McCullough,  
Sarah Mainwaring,  
Wayne Marnell, Neil Pigdon, Joel Pollard,  
Glen Sinclair, Dawn Whitehead

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## ENSEMBLE:

Mark Deans, Rita Halabarec, Nicki Holland, Simon Laherty

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR: Bruce Gladwin

PRODUCTION MANAGER: Berni Sweeney

SUPPORT WORKERS: Leanne Stein, Stacey Baldwin

COORDINATOR: Sue Hartigan

26-27 November 2005

Courthouse Youth Arts Centre, Geelong

Back to Back's annual **SUMMER SCHOOL** is an important component of our outreach work in South Western Victoria. Summer School provides intensive training and development opportunities, focussing on, but not exclusive to, people with disabilities, their carers and/or families. Summer School is an anticipated calendar event, particularly for those in smaller regional communities who do not always have access to high quality performing arts activities.

**SUMMER SCHOOL** provides workshops with a variety of professionals across a range of artistic forms and disciplines. Simultaneously, it offers these professionals the opportunity to work, often for the first time, with people with disabilities, and to introduce the artists to the broader work of Back to Back.

This year our program offered an eclectic selection of workshops, ranging from contemporary clown to sound effects for theatre. Considering participant feedback from the 2004 and 2003 Summer School, the program for 2005 reflected the mediums and artists that had been the most requested.

**SUMMER SCHOOL** not only links individuals to Back to Back, but also operates as an informal network between organisations such as Brrrr. Theatre (Ballarat) and Break of Day Players (Warrnambool) and the artists programmed as facilitators. This was Brrrr's first attendance at Summer School and a fitting closure to our collaboration with the POD residency in Ballarat.

**SUMMER SCHOOL 2005** consisted of seven workshops over two days.

Neil Pigot worked on the technical skills for acting for camera: eye lines, blocking and narrative improvisation.

Claire Bartholomew dealt with the technical details of clowning before unleashing 14 red nosed apprentices and one whoopie cushion.

Katrine Gabb and Andrew Tranter, in collaboration with the group, developed costume, set and performance inspired from historical works of art.

Chris Kohn and Jethro Woodward worked with generating sound effects from digital, acoustic and analogue sources, then applying soundscapes to physical images.

Tee O'Neill and Ross Mueller facilitated a writing workshop that looked at alternative ways of generating character and narrative without sitting down with a pen and paper.

Luke Connor explored a range of circus and slapstick skills.

Ingrid Voorendt developed a choreographic work with workshop participants.

# Ancillary Activities 2005

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## ENSEMBLE DEVELOPMENT

In February and March, Back to Back devised a professional development series for members of the ensemble. This included voice with Wendy Grose, animation with Rhian Hinkley, and a range of physical fitness workshops. Back to Back acknowledges the physical and creative health of the ensemble as a vital ingredient in the company's long-term future.

## COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

This year Back to Back offered workshops to the following groups:

- Year 8 Students, Kardinia College, Geelong
- Geelong Performing Arts Centre Trustees, Geelong
- Melbourne University Education Students, Melbourne

Back to Back was also a part of local arts and disability networks and participated in Arti Gras, the showcase of Geelong theatre, at the Geelong Performing Arts Centre

## RESEARCH

Innovative, contemporary disability arts practice proposes new paradigms and new social models. It has the capacity to shed light on, provoke and dramatically transform civic society. There is a need to leave traces of this practice in our community, to provide testimony to how this work is devised and how it impacts in the long-term on our social fabric.

In 2005 Back to Back has commissioned two preliminary research papers: one on the creative processes of the company (Dr Alison Richards) and one for the POD residency model (Marcia Ferguson). These will be completed in 2006. It is hoped this preliminary research will be a starting point towards an Australian Research Council Grant in 2007.

The research team is jointly convened by Patsie Frawley (Disability Sector Researcher / Back to Back Board Member) and Yoni Prior (Convenor, Drama Strand, Deakin University / Back to Back Board Member).

## FILM SCREENINGS

In 2004, Theatre of Speed made a short dance video, **THEATRE OF SPEED vs. BOZ'n'HOK**, in collaboration with filmmaker Rhian Hinkley and seven Victorian choreographers. The film screened at:

**Club Wild**, North Melbourne Town Hall, 24 June 2005

**Edinburgh International Film Festival**, *Mirrorball Down Under* Edinburgh Filmhouse Scotland, 22 August 2005

**7th Disability Film Festival** National Film Theatre London, 1 December 2005.

# Ensemble Report 2005

By Simon Laherty, Nicki Holland, Rita Halabarec, Mark Deans and Bruce Gladwin

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## HIGHLIGHTS OF 2005

- Premiere of MINOTAUR
- Premiere of SMALL METAL OBJECTS
- DUMB Creative Development
- BEDROOM Creative Development
- Professional Development workshops with Rhian Hinkley (animation), Kate Sulan (directing) and Wendy Grose (voice)
- POD in Ballarat and Colac
- Theatre of Speed – GAOL film and skill development
- Premiere of Theatre of Speed's dance video
- Summer School
- Christmas Party
- Workshops at Melbourne Uni and Kardinia College

## WHAT WAS THE HIGHLIGHT?

**Simon** *I really enjoyed Summer School, especially working with Jethro. I've wanted to do a sound workshop for ages. The other thing I loved was SMALL METAL OBJECTS. It was totally new.*

**Nicki** *I liked the BEDROOM Development because I got to sing Dolly Parton. I fall in love with the songs.*

**Mark** *Summer School, people coming. Catching the train to Footscray.*

**Rita** *Community people coming to do workshops. Katrine Gabb's workshop at the Summer School. I like working on Iraq. Going to Melbourne to see GOTHARAMA with Sue and Olivia. Designing set and T-shirt and costume for MINOTAUR.*

## WHAT WAS THE LOW POINT?

**Simon** *I didn't like POD very much. I didn't like being the usher in Ballarat and in Colac I didn't get to do much acting. Everyone else seemed to feel it was all good.*

## WHERE COULD WE IMPROVE?

**Simon** *The company meetings – some one different each week should write what's coming up onto the white board. Clean the kitchen and a new couch.*

## WHAT NEEDED MORE RESOURCES?

**Simon** *Some people in MINOTAUR didn't get to say much - we should have spent more time on development. The story needed to be developed more. Also the X-mas party wasn't that good. The trivia quiz started too late and people had to leave.*

**Nicki** *We needed better change rooms for MINOTAUR.*

## WHAT COULD WE HAVE DONE WITHOUT?

**Simon** *Could have done without the Club Wild gig.*

## WHAT WAS MISSING?

*Night school.*

*Diet Girls*

*Up to Melbourne more. See more shows.*

*What projects or areas challenged you as artists?*

**Simon** *SMALL METAL OBJECTS was challenging, because we had to do so many shows in the Melbourne Festival.*

**Nicki** *I was challenged enough last year.*

## DID WE DO TOO MUCH OR TOO LITTLE?

**Simon** *In between*

**Mark** *Too much*

**Nicki** *I don't know*

**Rita** *It wasn't boring or interesting. Just keep going.*



PHOTOS: Jeff BUSBY/Sue HARTIGAN



# Back to Back Ensemble

## Mark DEANS

Mark joined Back to Back in 1989 and has been described as a "modern day Chaplin" (The Adelaide Advertiser 2002). Mark has created some of the most memorable characters in the Back to Back repertoire, including the legendary MR SEPTEMBER, the intellectually declining Tom in MENTAL, the infernally frustrated magician in COW, the enigmatic man from the future in SOFT, and the God of God's Gift to Women in MINOTAUR.

On television Mark has performed in BLUE HEELERS and NEIGHBOURS and made a series of Super8 films including MULLET and MARK DEANS HUMAN CANNONBALL. In 2002 he starred in the independent short film, VICTIM OF CIRCUMSTANCE. Mark has performed his solo show COW in Spain, London, Hanover and most recently at the Sydney Opera House.

## Rita HALABAREC

Rita Halabarec is the longest serving member of Back to Back and has been developing work with the company since its inception in 1987. In that time she has collaborated with a broad cross section of Australian artists performing on stage, in film and as the lead singer with Big Bag.

Rita's idiosyncratic voice circumnavigates the universe, dissecting heaven and hell, good and evil. Social institutions such as family and church are simultaneously vilified and vindicated. Her characters are plucked from all corners of the 20th Century and relocate in a surreal world. She's created a witch, an angel, a pussycat, a queen, a nurse, Elizabeth Taylor, a fairy, Susie O'Neil and other alpha females. Her poetic lucidity and sharp observations conjure a magical realism that ultimately questions your own reality.

Rita is a prolific visual artist whose work has been exhibited in Geelong. Rita's performance as the mermaid in MINDS EYE was nominated for a Green Room award in 1997. In MINOTAUR she played the imperious queen besotted with the white bull, as well as designing the set in collaboration with Emily Barrie.

## Nicki HOLLAND

Nicki joined Back to Back in 1997 after working with Warrnambool's Break of Day Players. Her first role for Back to Back was Mrs Darling in PETER PAN, and since then she has gone on to create a series of emotional and romantically thwarted characters including the tragic Sally in DOG FARM, the fantasy rabbit in MENTAL, the distraught mother in FISHMAN and the ghost of Queen Elizabeth in INSIDE THE ANGEL HOUSE.

Nicki played the doctor in SOFT both in Melbourne and as part of the 2003 European tour. Nicki combines her love of food and melodrama when she plays Jenny, the other half of the famous DIET GIRLS.

## Simon LAHERTY

Simon first worked at Back to Back when he was a student at Nelson Park School, devising and performing in DRAG RACES IN LOVE (1999). From 2001 to 2003 Simon was an important contributor to the development and growth of Theatre of Speed, taking lead roles in ARNOLD, FISHMAN and the short film, 12 WAYS TO OPEN A DOOR. Since joining Back to Back in 2003, Simon has continued to perform with Theatre of Speed. He created the character of Steve for SMALL METAL OBJECTS and eagerly awaits the experience of touring internationally with this show.

In 2004, Simon starred in the independent short film RODNEY. This year he played the character of Lucky Phil in the feature film NOISE.

## Sonia TEUBEN

Sonia Teuben has been creating powerful, passionate, intensely emotional and at times confronting performances with Back to Back since she joined the company in 1993. Sonia brings her own unique, and at times highly personal view of the world to each character she creates. Her one-woman play GINA'S STORY (1995) has been published in a collection of stories about women with intellectual disabilities. Sonia has performed in joint productions with Melbourne Workers Theatre, Handspan, Circus OZ and Arena Theatre Company.

Sonia starred in the film, PORN STAR, (originally part of Back to Back's DOG FARM) which has screened at festivals in Germany, Montreal (2002) and London (2003). In 2002 Sonia travelled to Japan to participate in a workshop season with Muse Company. Most recently Sonia has created the character of Gary for SMALL METAL OBJECTS.



# Committee of Management 2005

CHAIR: Bobbie Hodge  
TREASURER & PUBLIC OFFICER: David McGinness  
SECRETARY: Rose Hiscock  
ENSEMBLE REPRESENTATIVE: Simon Laherty  
BOARD MEMBERS:  
Patsie Frawley  
Rose Hiscock  
Patrick Over  
Yoni Prior  
Ann Tonks

## **Bobbie HODGE**

Bobbie has extensive expertise in the fields of cultural development, project management and event production. As Executive Officer with Arts Victoria she had her first exhilarating contact with Back to Back. She is General Manager of Astra Chamber Society.

## **David MCGINNESS**

David is the Chief Financial Officer of AKD Softwoods in Colac. He is a Certified Practising Accountant with over 20 years experience locally and internationally. He has interest in community art and participates in community arts events in the local region.

## **Patsie FRAWLEY**

Patsie Frawley has worked for 15 years in the human services field. She has extensive experience across the disability sector having worked in the Adult Training Support Service sector, held positions within the Department of Human Services and Family Planning Victoria Disability Unit before setting up her own business running workshops, doing research and working with services to support change towards improved service provision for people with a disability. Patsie has expertise in research with people with disabilities, their families and service providers, the development and delivery of staff training programs, and service and program evaluation of disability services, both government and non-government. She has also worked as a sessional lecturer for RMIT in the Bachelor of Applied Science, Intellectual Disability studies. Patsie is currently working part time as the Executive Officer of the Disability Advisory Council of Victoria, and part time doing research and running workshops for people with disabilities and service providers in the areas of sexuality, disability awareness and rights

## **Rose HISCOCK**

Rose has more than ten years' experience in service marketing and extensive networks in the arts, media and tourism. Career highlights include project managing the public launch and marketing campaign for Melbourne Museum and the launch of the Planetarium at Scienceworks. In her current role

she manages marketing across the four Museum Victoria venues, Melbourne Museum, Scienceworks, Immigration Museum and the Royal Exhibition Building. The Museum has infiltrated its way into her kitchen, where she pickles and preserves a fine collection of fruit every season.

## **Patrick OVER**

Patrick has been a lawyer for 9 years, and is currently a barrister at the Victorian Bar practicing in personal injury law, administrative law and commercial law. Before he donned the wig and gown, he had a life that included working as a creator of programs for Scienceworks, presenting science shows in regional Australia, and being a radio announcer. He sometime seeks to reclaim his youth by hiking and travelling. Fortunately, he knows how to read maps.

## **Yoni PRIOR**

Yoni is a writer, performer, dramaturg and director. She is currently Coordinator and Lecturer in Drama at the School of Communication and Creative Arts, Deakin University. She was a member of the Theatre Board of the Australia Council from 1999 to 2002. A founding member of Gilgul Theatre, under the artistic direction of Barrie Kosky, she collaborated on the creation and performance of THE DYBBUK, ES BRENT, LEVAD and THE WILDERNESS ROOM. Recent works include JAWS, THE MUSICAL, and DANCES WITH PIGS (as director/devisor), DEAREST (as choreographer/performer) and FRAUGHT (as dramaturg). A further collaboration with choreographer Sandra Parker and Danceworks, SYMPTOMATIC, was part of the MIFA program in 2003.

## **Ann TONKS**

Ann is still General Manager of Melbourne Theatre Company. Whether that's because she has impressive financial, organisational, personnel and planning skills, or because she hasn't been found out, is unknown.

# Back to Back Theatre Staff and Guests 2005

## **Deb BARCLAY** ADMIN & SUPPORT

After completing two years of studies in community theatre in Geelong, Deb performed with Skipjack Theatre, was stage manager with Circus Oz, administrative support for Courthouse Youth Arts Centre, production assistant/tech operator for Halit Mueller Productions, coordinator of theatre day at Karingal, stage manager for High Tide Festival Torquay and admin assistant/support worker/tech operator for Back to Back Theatre.

## **Marisa CHIAPPI** FINANCE WORKER

Marisa has worked as a bookkeeper for not-for-profit organisations and small businesses for six years. She also brings experience as an administrator, office manager and performer to her work at Back to Back, having spent many years as a star of both stage and desk over her working life. She likes the columns to balance, the dancing to be passionately in time and the tea to be hot.

## **Marcia FERGUSON** GUEST DIRECTOR

Marcia is a performer, theatre maker and lecturer with a particular interest in avant garde and community theatre. Recent work includes writing and directing projects commissioned by Back to Back, including *INSIDE THE ANGEL HOUSE* (2003), *DOG FARM* (2000), and *FISHMAN* (2001), and Arena Theatre Company (*AUSTRALIAN MARRIAGE ACT*). Marcia co-founded *Crying Out Loud* (*PROMISES, INFECTIOUS*) and the Australian Women Directors' Group.

## **Bruce GLADWIN** ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Bruce specialises in the development of adventurous theatrical work, working as director, designer and writer. He has created five works with Back to Back: *DRAG RACERS IN LOVE* (1999), *MENTAL* (1999), *DOG FARM* (2000), *SOFT* (2002) and *SMALL METAL OBJECTS* (2005). Work prior to Back to Back included extensive collaboration with Rosemary Myers at Arena Theatre Company (*AUTOPSY, MASS* and *PANACEA*). Bruce's other directing credits include *THE ISLAND* with Lano & Woodley, *BLUE RINSE CLUB* with MOMO (Museum of Modern Oddities) for the 2004 Melbourne International Arts Festival.

## **Susan HARTIGAN** ADMINISTRATOR

Sue coordinates Back to Back's community theatre workshops, its Quality Assurance requirements and represents Back to Back on the Inclusive Events Planning Group, among other things. She has a BA (Hons) in Photography from the University of Westminster and this year commenced an MA in Community Cultural Development at VCA. She was Community Coordinator for BLUE SHEEP, the first pilot of such fertile ground, for Geelong Arts Alliance and Regional Arts Victoria in 1999 and is still an active member of Geelong Arts Alliance.

## **Rhian HINKLEY** GUEST DIRECTOR

Rhian Hinkley is a Melbourne based film maker with a history in animation and experimental media. His recent works, both with and without Back to Back, have focused on the possibilities available to digital story tellers. The animations created for *INSIDE THE ANGELHOUSE* and *POD* are the result of a collaboration/experimentation between Rhian, the ensemble and workshop participants, and a vast array of new media technologies.

## **Trish JARDINE** ENSEMBLE ADVOCATE

Trish has worked for Back to Back as Ensemble Advocate for more happy years than she can remember. The other part of her working life is with Villamanta Legal Service, a statewide community legal service working on disability related legal issues.

## **Alice NASH** GENERAL MANAGER

Alice rejoined Back to Back in 2003. Alice was General Manager of Back to Back in 2000. Previous appointments include Associate Producer – Performance and, subsequently, Acting General Manager, Next Wave Festival 2000-2002, and General Manager, Big West Festival 1998-2000. She has worked extensively in theatre and festival production and administration including Snuff Puppets, Melbourne Fringe, the Melbourne Moomba Festival, the Maribyrnong Festival, First Night Festival (Canada), and Catalyst Theatre (Canada).

# Back to Back Theatre Staff and Guests 2005

## **Jilli ROMANIS SUPPORT WORKER**

Jilli is Support Worker for Theatre of Speed but she also travelled to Europe with Back to Back on the SOFT tour. She has a Diploma of Performing Arts (Theatre) and Advanced Certificate of Aboriginal Music Theatre from Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts. She has worked in theatre in Sydney and in 2002 was a cast member of The Torch Project and Youth Coordinator for Pako Festa. Jilli also has another life as a Safari Guide at Werribee Zoo.

## **Kate SULAN GUEST DIRECTOR**

Since graduating from the Victorian College of the Arts with a postgraduate diploma in Animateuring, Kate has worked as a director, choreographer, performer and dramaturg. Kate has been the artistic director of Rawcus, a theatre company with actors with and without disabilities, since its inception, developing the productions FLIGHT, DESIGNER CHILD (Next Wave Festival 2002), BORN RAWCUS (Art of Difference Festival 2003) and SIDESHOW (Next Wave Festival 2004).

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Kate currently teaches for Ignition Theatre Training at Northern Metropolitan Institute of TAFE, a theatre-training course for people with intellectual disabilities.

# BACK TO BACK THEATRE PRODUCTIONS

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- 2005 SMALL METAL OBJECTS**  
Director Bruce Gladwin  
Melbourne International Arts Festival, Flinders Street Station  
Melbourne
- 2004 SMALL METAL OBJECTS**  
Director Bruce Gladwin  
Work in Progress, Flinders Street Station Melbourne  
**COW**  
Director Bruce Gladwin  
Sydney Opera House
- 2003 COW**  
Director Bruce Gladwin  
Battersea Arts Centre London International Festival  
of Theatre  
Markuskirche Hannover Long Night of the Churches  
**SOFT**  
Director Bruce Gladwin  
Zuercher Theater Spektakel Zurich  
Laokoon Festival Hamburg  
**PORNSTAR**  
Director Bruce Gladwin  
2003 Midsumma Festival Black Box Victorian Arts Centre  
2003 Art of Difference Gasworks Arts Park
- 2002 SOFT**  
Director Bruce Gladwin  
2002 Melbourne Festival Shed 4 North Wharf Road  
Docklands Melbourne  
**COW**  
Director Bruce Gladwin  
6th Conference & International Festival of Theatre for  
Disabled Artists, Almagro Spain  
**DOGFARM**  
Director Bruce Gladwin  
2002 Shepparton Arts Festival
- 2001 MENTAL**  
Director Bruce Gladwin  
Hot House Theatre Wodonga
- 2000 DOG FARM**  
Directors Bruce Gladwin and Marcia Ferguson  
La Mama Melbourne  
2000 Geelong Fringe Festival, Courthouse Project Geelong  
**MENTAL**  
Director Bruce Gladwin  
Sydney 2000 Summer Paralympic Arts Festival  
Seymour Theatre Centre Sydney

# BACK TO BACK THEATRE PRODUCTIONS

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- 1999 **MENTAL**  
Director Bruce Gladwin  
Athenaeum Theatre 11 Melbourne
- 1998 **BOOM TOWN**  
Director Ian Pidd  
With Snuff Puppets  
Kardinia Park Football Arena
- MINDS EYE**  
Director Ian Pidd  
1998 Adelaide Fringe Festival Scott Theatre Adelaide
- 1997 **PETER PAN**  
Director Rosemary Myers  
Co-production with Arena Theatre  
Victorian Arts Centre  
Geelong Performing Arts Centre
- MR SEPTEMBER**  
Directors Maude Davey and Ian Pidd  
Courthouse Project Geelong
- 1996 **MINDS EYE** Director Ian Pidd  
**ROAD MOVIE** Director Bruce Gladwin  
Co-production with Melbourne Workers Theatre
- 1995 **BACK TO BACK IN SHORTS** Director Ian Pidd
- 1994 **FREAK SHOW** Director Barry Kay with Circus Oz
- 1993 **VOICES OF DESIRE** Director Barry Kay
- 1992 **THE ADVENTURES OF BOBBI DAZZLER** Director Barry Kay  
**WOODENHEAD** Director Cas Anderson
- 1991 **I DON'T WANT TO LIVE IN LARA ANYMORE**  
Director Cas Anderson  
**YELL BLUE MURDER** Director Cas Anderson
- 1990 **THE PEG MACHINE** Director Cas Anderson  
**EVERYTHING AND THE MERMAID** Director Cas Anderson
- 1989 **CINDERELLA, THE FAT COW DEPARTS**  
Director Rosemary Myers  
**STINKING HOUSES** Director Cas Anderson
- 1988 **BIG BAG** Director Cas Anderson

# BACK TO BACK COMMUNITY EVENTS 1999-2005

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**2005 MINOTAUR**

Director Kate Sulan

Performed by Theatre of Speed

Courthouse Youth Arts Centre Geelong

**POD**

Director Marcia Ferguson

# 4 with Brrrr Theatre, Camp Street Theatre Ballarat

# 5 with Ants Pantz Arts, Trinity College Colac

**2004 POD**

Director Marcia Ferguson

# 3 Awakenings Festival, Horsham Town Hall

**2003 INSIDE THE ANGEL HOUSE**

Director Marcia Ferguson

Performed by Theatre of Speed

Courthouse Youth Arts Centre Geelong

**2002 WORKSHOP RESIDENCY**

Muse Company Summer School Tokyo

**2001 FISHMAN**

Director Marcia Ferguson

Performed by St Laurence Theatre Workshop

Geelong Performing Arts Centre

**2000 ARNOLD**

Director Katrine Gabb

Performed by St Laurence Theatre Workshop

2000 Geelong Fringe Festival, Courthouse Project Geelong

**1999 DRAG RACERS IN LOVE**

Director Bruce Gladwin with Nelson Park School

Geelong Performing Arts Centre

**PUSH PUSH**

Director Sue Giles with Karingal participants

1999 Momena Arts Geelong, Courthouse Project Geelong

**THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE WEDDING**

Director Katrine Gabb with Karingal participants,

Courthouse Project Geelong

## MEDIA COMMENTS

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*"Back to Back Theatre's perfectly formed SMALL METAL OBJECTS at Flinders...situated a moving, slice-of-life drama among the real commuters. This dazzling idea more effectively communicated humanity, in all its peculiar colours, than many more ambitious shows. It is also injected the one element that this uber-earnest festival may have seen to have lacked: humour."*

Raymond Gill, Arts Editor, The Age, 24 October 2005

*"The viewing experience is hypnotic – watching the characters wander through the crowd, hearing their voices in our ears and trying to decode meaning behind their words. We are so entranced that frequent distractions from the curious and boisterous public are mostly ignored. A blind man accidentally stumbled into the seating block twice and pedestrians ogled, laughed and screamed at us. But that is the beauty of this well-conceived event. The role of audience, actor and pedestrian are fluid, continually evolving and different with each performance."*

Stephanie Glickman, In Press / Interval, 19 October 2005

*"SMALL METAL OBJECTS is one of the most startling and seductive shows of the year. See review in following pages (or hell, just see the show damnit)..."*

*The story alone would be enough to make SMALL METAL OBJECTS one of the most riveting works of theatre of recent times, but it's the astoundingly successful physical situation of the piece that makes this essential viewing."*

John Bailey, Beat / Arts, 12 October 2005

*"The effect of this brilliantly simple idea is startling... What counts in this production is the unique experience of theatre that is offered here, the sudden beauty of the mundane, the highlighting of what is usually edited out of social perception as unimportant – not only the disabled members of the Back to Back Theatre Company, but the ordinary activities of everyone in that concourse at that time. It is a curiously joyous experience that stays with you long afterwards."*

Alison Croggon, Theatre Notes, 12 October 2005

*"Moments move and delight during the performance, moments that have nothing and everything to do with the play... The invisible become visible - those who populate the stations and the public places, those who do not fit into the rhythm of the stream of life we've all bought into."*

*We become visible too - the audience, stepping outside it, pausing to watch. Are we respectful? Are we judgemental? Is it OK to watch like this, protected as we are by our mob? It's a confronting place to be, and once again it's the wonderful Back to Back company who are brave enough to take us there. "*

Lisa Greenaway, The Program, 12 October 2005

*"There are really two plays going on in SMALL METAL OBJECTS, as the director's notes point out. One tells the story of two men who are invisible in a world that measures visibility by economic value. The other is the wonderful, ever-changing drama of a station concourse at peak hour with a cast of hundreds of people moving into the "theatre" created by a seating bank and an audience."*

*It is a theatrically brilliant idea that works superbly... an unforgettable theatrical experience."*

Helen Thomson, The Age / Metro, 10 October 2005

*"In an oddly low-key way it is highly exhilarating, as well as being fall-off-your-chair funny."*

Owen Richardson, The Age, 9 October 2005

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## AUDIENCE COMMENTS

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*“Thankyou for a wonderful chapter in my 20 years of attending the Melbourne Festival – definitely a high point”*

*“I felt like I was underwater as some kind of explorer – I loved the way you showed the distance between the actors – it was a most profound experience”*

*“It was really beautiful, interesting, arresting and somehow healing”*

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*“It exhilarated and scared me to bits.”*

*“I learnt something about invisibility and oversight”*

*“Innovative, confronting and amusing and all about what theatre is, or should be”*

*“Fantastic and poetic”*

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