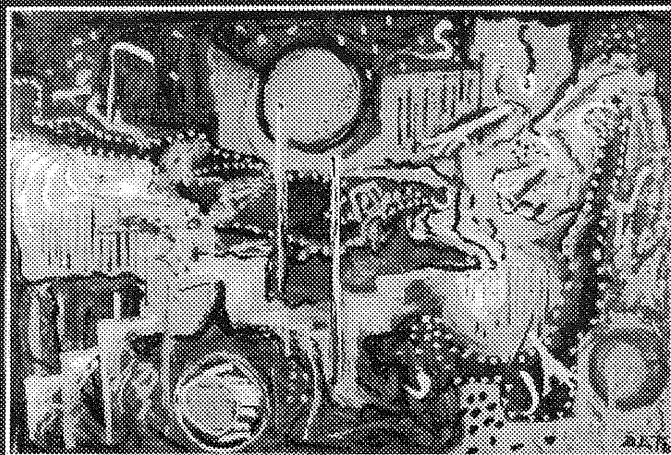


ACE News

Issue 4 Winter 1999



**between the shipyard
and the horizon**

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Inside

Reviews, What's On and
info, plus more...



Editorial

Neridah Wyatt-Spratt

Hello everyone

Firstly, AArts apologises for the delay in getting ACE News to you. Helen Connors and I were fortunate enough to attend three art and disability conferences in Los Angeles in June.

We met some interesting people, saw diverse performances by people from around the world, and spread the word about what was going on in New South Wales. In the next issue of ACE there will be a comprehensive report for you to sink your teeth into.

AArts Improvised Performance Program got off to a great start with more than twenty performers attending and we would like to have more. If you know anyone with or without a disability who has some performing arts experience either on or off stage (included directors), who would be interested in an integrated performance company, please get them to contact me. This is an exciting project and there are opportunities to gain work in 2000 and beyond.

If you are going to be in Melbourne the week of the 18 October then think about going to 'Verve'. Part of the 'New Century, New Connections' conference, 'Verve', runs from Tuesday 19 'till Wednesday 20 and will cover a number of current issues within the art and disability arena. Topics include 'Cultural Context', 'Issues relating to Process and Product' and 'Making a Career as a Professional Artist with a Disability'. For more information contact Arts Access on 03 9699 8299.

The next issue of ACE due out in early September will be devoted to the LA trip, AArts Strategy Plans 'till 2002 and our 1998 Annual Report. Therefore any articles submitted (excluding What's On & Info) will be kept to later in the year.

Anyway, get out there and get creative!

Photography Acknowledgments

Front Cover

Left hand side: Graig Mills, CD launch in Orange see page 6-7 for details

Right hand side: Neridah Wyatt-Spratt. Downtown LA and Buen Viaje Dancers

Accessible Arts Inc.

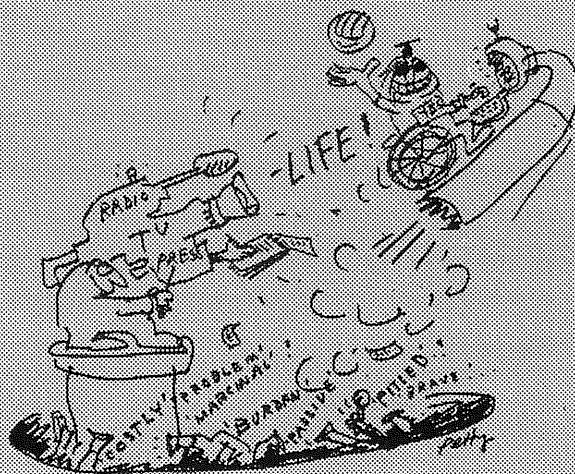
Ph: 02 9251 6499

Fax: 02 9251 6422

Email: aarts@ozemail.com.au

www.central.com.au/aarts

Celebration of Ability - Media Awards -



Encouraging the positive
portrayal of disability

Get an Entry in NOW!

Time is running out for you to submit your entries for the 'Celebration of Ability' Media Awards. Established by the Ageing and Disability Department, in partnership with disability sector organisations, to encourage the positive portrayal of people with a disability in the media and to celebrate International Day of People with a Disability on 3 December.

The awards are open to television, radio, newspaper and magazine journalists as well as media outlets. Two media awards will be presented; to a publication or network that has demonstrated outstanding positive reportage on disability issues; and to an individual journalist for their contribution. Student awards are also being offered.

Nominations for both awards are open until Thursday 30 September 1999 and the winners will be announced on 3 December 1999. For information contact the Community Liaison Officer (Disability), Ageing and Disability Department:

Ph: 02 9364 6966

Lighting Up Bondi Beach

Vanessa Liell

Where were you on May 15th? If you were anywhere near Coogee Beach, you would have witnessed the explosion of light, colour and sound that was Youth Week 1999.

Rain streaking down and gale force winds were no deterrent to this group of 'creatures' from The Shack Youth Centre and Eastern Respite & Recreation. Bumble bees, giant prawns, monsters, wizards, butterflies, peacocks, drummers and fire twirlers snaked down the hill at north Coogee Beach, creating a weird and mysterious spectacle. These creatures had spent four days during the school holidays creating costumes, masks and lanterns, learning fire twirling, choreographing dance moves and making musical instruments. This frenzy of activity culminated in the parade of the evening of Saturday May 15.

The youth week workshops and parade was the result of lots of hard work by Randwick Council, Botany Council,

fireworks and fire twirling made it well worth braving the cold. The parade also received lots of media attention. The Triple M rock patrol was at Coogee, giving away prizes and promoting the parade on air. There was also an excellent article about Youth Week in 'The Messenger', which you may have seen.

We asked some of the participants what they thought of Youth Week, and they said:

'The fireworks were good. Triple M was good. It was good'. Jimmy Garcia

'I loved it. I thought it was great. I loved making the costumes. I loved all the new people. The best thing was the parade'. Dina Franks

'I had fun. I had a good time marching in the parade. As soon as we got up there it poured, but we had a good time'. Christopher Lewis



Shack Youth Services and Eastern Respite & Recreation. The idea of it was to give kids both with and without a disability the chance to get together and do something fun and creative where everyone could participate equally. Youth Week is an annual event, but 1999 was the first time kids with a disability could get involved and be part of the action, along with all the other local kids.

Many people turned out to watch the parade, despite the inclement weather, the fantastic costumes, dancing,

'I liked it. I want to do it again'. Nick Kranidis

The parade was such a success, that we will be having more workshops and another parade in July this year. The next parade will be part of the Mascon Festival run by South Sydney Council at Sydney Park, which is a fantastic, huge, annual event.

Sean and Amy's Story Bernette Redwood

I have been to many plays but 'Sean and Amy's Story' written and directed by Nick Lewis is one that I will not forget. The play opened with a emotional dance by Nick and I knew straight away that this was not a 'run of the mill' play. Nick based his play on 'A More Fortunate Life' with which he had been involved in 1992. Therefore there were similarities but Nick had included some of his own life experience, some of which were apparently autobiographical and others that he said 'were almost like my own life'.

I really enjoyed the dancing at the beginning and I laughed and laughed at the final scene but I enjoyed everything in between as well. The play was presented with much sensitivity about the lives of people with a disability and presented the concepts with humour and warmth. The acting by the support cast (which included staff as well as consumers) was of a high standard. I would think that Nick could work on his play further and develop it, in time, into a professional production. The use of some more props and scenery would be worth thinking about to help this process.

The Housing Connection put on the production and North Sydney Council sponsored it. It was held at the McMahons Point Community Centre and this was certainly an ideal venue. The play performed to a full house and was extremely well received by the audience. An excellent supper was also supplied after the play. Nick also introduced a poignant note at the end of the play when he presented his mother with flowers for her sixtieth birthday. Overall it was an extremely pleasant and enjoyable evening. Keep up the good work, Nick and all those who helped and supported him.

Writers 'Likely to be somewhat Mad' Richard Wilding

Establishing the Writers Centre in a former mental hospital building has predictably caused much comment. The popular feeling is that writers are likely to be somewhat mad anyway, and certainly could well be locked behind the walls of an asylum for the good of the community. As long as writers continue to make the community anxious, as long as they continue to ask the forbidden questions and to raise difficult issues, they will always provoke this response.

Certainly in the English language tradition poetry and incarceration in a mental hospital have often been associated. In the eighteenth century the English poet Christopher Smart is the most famous of the writers locked away. The charge was religious mania. 'I did not think he ought to be shut up', Dr Johnson remarked. 'His infirmities were not noxious to society. He insisted on people praying with him; and I'd as lief (readily) pray with Kit Smart as any one else. Another charge was, that he did not love clean linen; and I have no passion for it'.

Australia has its own traditions. J.F Archibald, the founder of the Bulletin magazine that was so important a hundred years ago in publishing the work of Henry Lawson, 'Banjo' Paterson and the other writers of the 1890s, died in the Gladesville mental hospital, a few miles away. Francis Webb, one of the major Australian poets of the 1940s and 1950s, spent many years in Rozelle hospital.

Their stories were tragic, but there are happier ones. Some years ago I was giving a reading of my fiction on the Isle of Wight in Britain with the poet David Gascoyne. Gascoyne had been something of a prodigy, publishing his poems and fictions in the 1930s when still in his teens. He lived for some years in France and wrote one of the best introductions to Surrealism. And then, under the stresses of literary life, and from excessive use of amphetamines, he had a break-down. He was put away in a mental hospital, lost to public view, and effectively forgotten.

One day he was in a therapy session. A visitor to the hospital was holding classes in which she read poetry, to try and encourage some interest in the patients. She had recently lost her husband so the therapy session was also serving in part as a therapeutic activity for herself. She herself told me this story. 'I read out this poem,' she said, and then this man in the back of the room said, "I wrote that." "Yes, yes" she said. 'No really,' he said, 'that's one of my poems.'

And it was. The man was David Gascoyne, it was one his poems. According to Gascoyne she sort of tapped him on the shoulder as if he was a deluded madman - after all it was a mental hospital, and said condescendingly and a little nervously, 'There, there, I'm sure you did.'

But he did. And they got to know each other. And he recovered an interest in life, recovered his health, was discharged from hospital, and they married each other. And now, in his seventies, he is writing again.

Reproduced with kind permission from News Write, the newsletter of the NSW Writers Centre. No 81 April 99.

Between the Shipyard and the Horizon, Arts Gratia Artis

Graig Mills



L - R: Celelia Rochelli and Sue Hall



L - R: Don McPherson and Mick Humphries (Ash)



Roslyn Errey

1998 and early 1999 saw the fruition of a project run by the SHIPS Activity Centre. Clients of the Mid Western Area Mental Health Service in association with the Arts Council of NSW, Western Institute of TAFE, recorded and produced a compilation CD of their works. Titled 'Between the Shipyard and the Horizon', the CD showcases a range of music from Acid Jazz, through folk, hard rock, classical and spoken pieces.

Initially the project was modest in scope, the intention being simply to record demo tapes of each artist for their own benefit. As more thought and input went into the idea, the tale seemed to grow in the telling. Finally it was decided to 'go the distance' and produce the work as a broadcast quality.

Funding was initially in the form of a Country Arts Support Grant from the Arts Council of NSW, administered by Accessible Arts. This is a modest grant in nature and is ment in essence to secure the services of an arts worker to provide resources for individuals or groups to develop skills. The artists who participating, were in their own right, highly polished performers, writers and musicians so all that was needed was to weld the group into a cohesive unit were individual skills were blended to enhance the group. It was easy to access outside resources such as session players and technical assistance however the challenge was to make best use of what we had available thus giving a direct sense of ownership of the works to the participants of the project.

The projects success was based entirely on the input and efforts of the arts worker Rob 'Rocky' Rochelli. Rocky is, by trade a mental health and developmental disabilities nurse, however his main claim to fame is that of being a seriously good musician with an interest in digital recording, audio engineering and all that other stuff that goes with it. Rocky has set up a studio at his home with full digital recording, mastering and production capabilities. Rocky leapt at the opportunity to assist with a work of this nature and threw himself into the project with enthusiasm and endless vigour. His work background gave him a unique insight into issues faced by the artists and his welcoming, easy nature went a long way towards making them feel that their works were worthwhile.

From a small core of original players, more became involved by word of mouth. In all 13 people contributed to the project. To develop a sense of group identity we ran the idea past the local TAFE's Arts and Media department. Head teacher Peter Gibson was enthusiastic from the outset and co-opted the Outreach team into the equation. Jo Sedgers came up with the idea of running the project as an Outreach course using modules from the Contemporary Music Certificate course. These modules covered

a range of subjects including Basic Songwriting, Effective Rock Rehearsal techniques, How to make a Demo tape and Rock Performance Craft to name a few. The beauty of the Outreach Program is the flexibility of delivery. The artists completed the program and gained credits towards the full certificate course, should they choose to enroll.

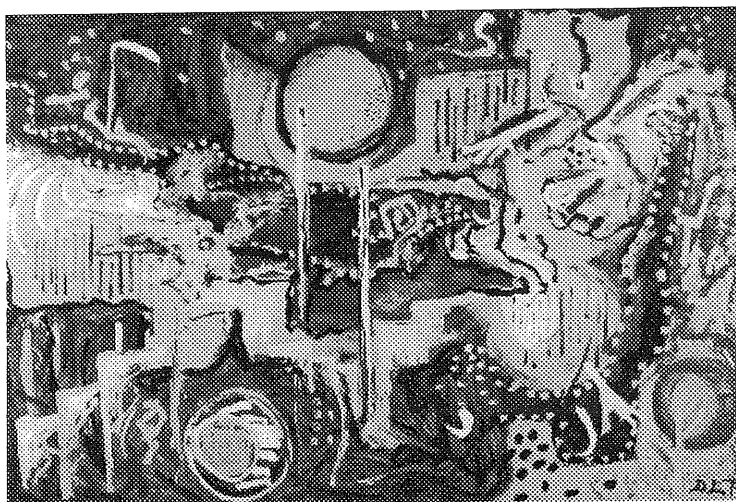
Issues such as shyness, insecurity, performance anxiety were overcome in the friendly atmosphere at Rocky's place. Each person had a sense of belonging and ownership. Magic moments abounded, some of which were caught on recording, some were not. One sticks in my mind after a long and grueling recording session. We were sitting around in the early morning, eating cold pizza and drinking beer when Don picked up young Rob's guitar. We all knew that he could play guitar a bit but at this stage he was playing base. He cranked up the amp and soon was into a full rendition of Led Zeppelins' Kashmir.

Sounds OK you might think, the reality was that Don had been seriously disabled for a long time by his illness. The project and this night in particular signaled something of an awakening for Don who was more involved as time went on, even to the point of writing and performing his own piece on the CD. It would be fair to say that each artist gained some measure of self esteem and satisfaction from their involvement in the project.

An official launch on 25 July at the Orange Regional Art Gallery was attended by celebrity Glynn Nicholas and about 50 invited guests. This was a opportunity to show how good we were. Work in mental health is by large unrewarding and also receives at times questionable publicity. The completion of the project lifted the artists self esteem beyond belief. It also restored some confidence, in the artist's eyes, in the health system which is their to help them but often seems to fall short.

500 CDs were produced and will be marketed throughout Orange. Proceeds of the sale of the CD will go back to the Activity Centre for future project development. Each artist owns copyright to their work. 'Between the Shipyard and the Horizon' retails at \$20 and is available through Lander's Music in Orange and the SHIPS Activity Center:

Ph: 02 6360 800



between the shipyard and the horizon



L - R: Rob Rechelli and Mick Humpries (Ash)

Rob Stephen



This article has been edited to allow for reproduction in ACE News 4. *Editor*

Chaos makes Contacts

Nicola Pilkinton

In April this year Chaos makes Contact, a project funded through the Ministry for the Arts (NSW), Australia Council Community Cultural Development Fund and auspiced through Northern Rivers Performing Arts (NORPA). The project was designed and managed by Company Chaos an integrated dance movement theatre. Company Chaos members and allied dancers participated in a contact improvisation training workshops that culminated in a series of inspiring and artistic performances.

'Chaos makes Contact part 1', was facilitated by a dynamic trio, Helen Clark Lapin, Janis Claxton assisted by Sara Chesterman. The weeks workshop was inspired by the 'Anybody's Dancing' Project conducted by Helen and Janis in Sydney in 1997 in conjunction with Ausdance and NSW Ministry of the Arts. Part 1 was accompanied by local musicians Barry Hill and Barney B, who moved between playing music and dancing in the workshop.

'Chaos make Contact part 1' involved Company Chaos core and community members and the workshops was attended by members of Pilgrim dance company, a Brisbane based group of five women with disabilities directed by Scotia Monkivitch and graduates from 'the alternative dance training course' facilitated by Janis Claxton.

Put three dance dynamos with an impressive range of teaching and dance skills into a room with a group of people with a diverse range of abilities, commitment and passion and you get an incredible brew of magic, movement and dance. Helen Clark Lapin commented that the breath of skills existing in the combined group made for her an incredibly rich and unique experience.

Allowing oneself to become completely disorientated in space, to allow others to roll, fall, swing, hang, push off and lean into other body requires a high level of trust between yourself and those you dance with. Helen, Janis and Sara skillfully set up a range of exercises so that there was always enough physical and emotional support for participants to take risks even if they were not familiar with the form.

The attention Helen, Janis and Sara paid to detail in process and technique was truly inspiring. The trio made a lasting impression with their openness and willingness to be flexible, to chance the direction of the sessions in order to response to the needs of the group at any moment. There skillful ability to breakdown the components of contact improvisation, as well as their playfulness and their ability to keep the tone light while still imparting information about highly technical movement was commendable.

The response from participant was overwhelming in their willingness to receiver new challenges, support each other to take risks, extend their movement skills and have fun.

A strong emphasis was placed on the fundamentals so that individuals could explore how movement can feel good in their bodies. It was refreshing to work at a pace that enabled this experience to be witnessed in a visible transformation in the bodies of many people; it was astonishing. It was exciting to see so many people express the joy of feeling their bodies move with pleasure. This experience greatly facilitate the development of new movement skills.

'Chaos makes Contact part 2' was designed to support Company Chaos long term members Gabriel Smith, Lyndall Martin and Bridgid Pearse alongside invited artist Sara Chesterman in the practice of choreography. The aim of part 2 was to create a new short work for the company's school program directed at year 11 and 12. Under the direction of Kat Worth the five creators explored movement sourced from part 1 and ways of which to transform workshop material and concepts into performance substance. Improvised and choreographed the eight short pieces resulted in a 30 minute work currently called 'In Touch'. Each piece was accompanied by Miranda, using her powerful voice and percussion.

Access to Design Professions

A Leadership Initiative Proposal funded by the National Endowment for the Arts Adaptive Environments Center in the US.

Access to Design Professions is a project that will lead to an increase in and support for people with disabilities in the design professions. The current lack of designers with disabilities perpetuates the practice of design that isolates, excludes and stigmatizes people with disabilities. As we evolve our definition and practice of universal design into a more holistic, socially inclusive approach, we need diversity of practitioners. At this moment in time, the design professions are beginning to make some diversity outreach. However, they have a notion of diversity that appears limited to issues of culture and gender. We need to expand the definition, the approach and the outreach.

The Problem: There are very limited numbers of designers with disabilities in any of the design professions, including architecture, graphic design, industrial design, interior design, landscape architecture and urban planning. The traditional recruitment methods do not target nor accommodate high school and college students with disabilities. Neither high school guidance counselors nor vocational rehabilitation counselors direct or support disabled students into the design professions. The existing professional post-secondary programs have little experience or information on the accommodations needed by students in design undergraduate or graduate programs. The practitioners are not known to each other, nor available to students as mentors and role models. Students and their families have little awareness of what the design professions are or what is required to succeed in them. There are low expectations that people with disabilities can be successful designers.

The Project: Access to Design Professions is a year long project that will be managed by the Adaptive Environments Center, Boston, in cooperation with an Advisory Group that will include the Center for Universal Design, School of Design, North Carolina State University. The three phase project will result in an Action Plan that begins to address the complex problem.

Elaine Ostroff, Founding Director
Adaptive Environments Center
374 Congress Street, Suite 301
Boston, MA 02210
Ph: 617 695 1225 x30
Fax: 617 482 8099
elaineos@ici.net

What's On & Information

Audio Resources

Non profit organization Narkaling Productions produces audio cassettes/book kits which are narrated at slower than usual speeds. This simple idea makes the kits, which include a copy of the book and an audio tape of the book recorded at one of 10 different speeds, an ideal learning tool and source of enjoyment for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, acquired brain injuries, learning disabilities, hearing loss or are learning English as a new language. Kits are available through libraries, schools and TAFE's. A catalogue of titles is available by writing to:

Narkaling PO Box 1409
Midland WA 6936
Ph: 08 9274 8022

Hands On Studio - Art Classes for People with a Disabilities

A non government funded art studio for people with a intellectual or physical disabilities is commencing art classes on Monday 19 July in Canberra. Classes include

Drawing Monday 1pm - 4pm
Screen Printing Tuesday 9.30am - 12.30pm
Sculpture Wednesday 9am - 12am & 1pm - 4pm
Pottery Friday 9.30am- 12.30pm

All classes at Cottage 4, 255 Goyer Street, Narrabundah, ACT. For more information contact manager Tonina Harvey.

Ph: 02 6232 7187
Fax: 02 6295 2627

Shakespeare in Carnivale 1999

Southern Highlands NSW September 11 - October 4

Part of a three year program presenting multicultural productions and interpretations of the works of William Shakespeare. The aim of this program is to deliver a diverse Carnivale of Shakespeare's works interpreted by the cultural attributes of different cultures. This could be in the form of: New translations of plays, sonnets or excerpts, Traditional translations of plays. A mix between two or more translations of plays, dances, music, opera or puppets. For more information contact Caroline Dyball:

Ph: 0412 308 379
Fax: 02 48722798

Streetwise Comics

A non profit organization that develops and produces educational resources for young people, is looking for contributors. Streetwise produces comics, posters, brochures, cards and activity kits that address a wide range of issues for young people. It employs artists and writers on a project by project basis and currently wishes to make further contact with the writing and art communities. If interested please contact Deborah Sharp:

2/111 Moore Street
Lichhardt NSW 2244
Ph: 9560 2040
email: stwise@streetwise.com.au

South-West Sydney Music Project

If you are part of a music group, join these workshops that start in August for groups to make their own video clips. Learn how to create websites and launch your clip. For information contact Powerhouse Youth Theatre on:

Ph: 9601 5172