

# BACK TO BACK THEATRE ANNUAL REPORT

# 2009

THE DEMOCRATIC SET  
IMAGE Jeff Busby

**"We're  
people  
who do  
shows"**



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2009

# BACKTOBACKTHEATRE ANNUAL REPORT 2009

"We're  
people  
who do  
shows"

**Back to Back seeks to be regarded as a leading proponent of contemporary theatre practice in the world, through recognition of an exceptional body of work. We are an ambassador for work of this kind in Australia and overseas.**

In 2009 we continued to build our oeuvre through the creative development of two new professional works, **TOUR GUIDE** and **GANESH VERSUS THE THIRD REICH**, and touring of works in repertoire, in the form of **SMALL METAL OBJECTS** and **FOOD COURT**, now witnessed by audiences of over 23,000 in 29 cities and over 5,300 in 4 cities respectively by the end of 2009.

Back to Back Theatre has gained important ground in 2009, with continued performances in high profile, iconic arts venues like the Opera Theatre of the Sydney Opera House, the Royal Flemish Theatre in Brussels and the Kennedy Center in Washington DC. Furthermore, for the first time in its 22-year history, the company was invited to present a work of scale, **FOOD COURT**, in the Ford Theatre, the main stage of the Geelong Performing Arts Centre: it was great to bring our major work home at last.

Back to Back uses the medium of contemporary theatre as a mechanism to increase social inclusion for people with disabilities. We do this by creating and presenting great and intelligent art, challenging the usual perception of people who have intellectual disabilities.

Back to Back Theatre's success will be measured in the long-term relative to its impact on people's lives:

We begin with the seven members of the Back to Back ensemble who have great jobs and the community participants who learn life enriching skills through our community programs. We work to affect our audiences – who are spellbound or moved to tears – and ultimately to transform our collective culture that through witnessing the work, or reading about it, or hearing about it, learns to more greatly value art, imagination and difference in our world.

We are grateful for the privilege of undertaking this work. We extend our heartfelt thanks to all who surround the company with their generosity and for the freedom to create theatre that can't possibly exist.

**Rose Hiscock** CHAIR  
**Bruce Gladwin** ARTISTIC DIRECTOR &  
**Alice Nash** EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

## FAREWELLS

### Rita Halabarec

In late 2009, we farewelled the doyen of Back to Back Theatre: Rita Halabarec left the company to pursue her second passion, visual art.

Rita joined Back to Back in 1987, the founding year of the company. She has been involved in countless productions over this period of time. Her influence on the company's oeuvre, vocabulary, visual aesthetic, narrative, and identity have been profound.

Rita will be deeply missed by all members of the company and her audiences.



### Rick Merrigan

In August our ever so fine, horse-racing treasurer, Rick Merrigan, passed away. We will miss his clear-headed acuity and warmth.

The Geelong community and south-western Victoria – including the Port Fairy Folk Music Festival and the Geelong Performing Arts Centre – will miss him and his long standing commitment to the arts a great deal.

# ABOUT BACKTOBACKTHEATRE

2

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 seven actors, Back to Back creates work that is idiosyncratic, passionate and at times confronting. Back to Back's ensemble is made up of actors perceived 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.

## ENSEMBLE

"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."

## MISSION

Back to Back Theatre creates new forms of contemporary theatre imagined from the minds and experiences of a unique ensemble of actors with a disability, giving voice to social and political issues that speak to all people.

# 2009 HIGHLIGHTS

3

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



### SMALL METAL OBJECTS

Tour to Linz, Ljubljana, Hamburg, Bristol



### SMALL METAL OBJECTS

Tour to Portland, Philadelphia, Washington DC



### FOOD COURT

Ford Theatre, Geelong Performing Arts Centre, Geelong



### FOOD COURT

Royal Flemish Theatre, Kunstenfestivaldesarts, Brussels, Belgium



### FOOD COURT

Opera Theatre, Sydney Opera House, Sydney



### TOUR GUIDE Developmental Commission at Linz 09

- European Cultural Capital, Linz, Austria



Kit Denton Fellowship for courageous scriptwriting for

### GANESH VERSUS THE THIRD REICH



THEATRE OF SPEED creative developments for four new works including

### FRANKENSTEIN



### THE DEMOCRATIC SET

Residency at Castlemaine State Festival



EXTENDED SCHOOL RESIDENCY at Nelson Park [Special] School,

Bell Park, North Geelong



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# CAST & CREW

## STAFF

**Alice Nash**, Executive Producer  
**Bruce Gladwin**, Artistic Director  
**Marcia Ferguson**, Artistic Associate  
**Marisa Chiappi**, Finance Officer  
**Pauline Cady**, Funding Development Manager  
**Stacey Baldwin**, Administration Manager  
**Belinda Hellyer**, Giving Manager  
 & Marketing Coordinator

## ENSEMBLE

**Mark Deans**  
**Nicki Holland**  
**Rita Halabarec**  
**Sarah Mainwaring**  
**Scott Price**  
**Simon Laherty**  
**Brian Tilley**

## COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

**Bobbie Hodge** (1996 - )  
**Gillian Hoysted** (2006 - 2009)  
**Ian Bracegirdle** (2006 - )  
**Monica Walters** (2008 - )  
**Patrick Over** (Secretary) (2005 - )  
**Rick Merrigan** (Treasurer) (2007 - June 2009)  
**Jean Jansen** (Treasurer) (June 2009 - )  
**Rose Hiscock** (Chair) (2006 - )  
**Simon Laherty** (Ensemble Representative)  
 (2004 - 2009)  
**Yoni Prior** (2002 - )

## THEATRE OF SPEED

**Samantha Bade**  
**Phoebe Baker**  
**Tom Banks**  
**Laura Berrisford**  
**Joan Black**  
**Robert Croft**  
**James Lewis**  
**Craig Matheson**  
**Polly Munday**  
**Tamika Simpson**  
**Jessica Walker**

## GUEST ARTISTS & COLLABORATORS & COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Amplified Elephants  
 Andrew Livingston  
 Becky Hilton  
 Bernadette Sweeney  
 Bluebottle3  
 Box Wars  
 Chris Abrahams  
 Claire Bracken  
 Daniel Schlusser  
 David Dellaflora  
 David Symons  
 David Wells  
 Diana Hume  
 Dianne Leverett  
 Eden Smith  
 Elodie Vandenplas  
 Frog  
 Genevieve Picot  
 Hannah Hayman  
 Hugh Covill  
 Ian Anderson  
 Ingrid Voorendt  
 James Hullick  
 James Pratt  
 James Saunders  
 Jen Hector  
 Jo Lange  
 Jo Leishman  
 Jude Fraser  
 Julia Hales  
 Kate Sulan  
 Kylie Trounson  
 Lachlan Carrick  
 Leanne Stein  
 Lloyd Swanton  
 Luke Ryan  
 Mark Beasley  
 Mark Cuthbertson  
 Mother's Art  
 Nelson Park School  
 Phillip Ivan Pietruschka  
 Rhian Hinkley  
 Sarah Ford  
 Shio Otani  
 Sophie Muselle  
 Sonia Teuben  
 Stephen Oakes  
 The Necks  
 Tony Buck  
 Vicky Shukuruglou  
 VideoWorks  
 Wendy Smith

# FUNDERS SPONSORS & PARTNERS

## CORE

**Arts Victoria**  
**Australia Council for the Arts**  
**Department of Families, Housing,  
 Community Services &  
 Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA)**

## PROJECT

**AICC**  
**ANZ Trustees**  
**Besen Family Foundation**  
**City of Greater Geelong**  
**Glover Foundation**  
**Newsboys Foundation**  
**United Way Geelong**  
**VicHealth**  
**William Buckland Foundation**

## COMMUNITY SUPPORTERS & PARTNERS

**Amplified Elephants**  
**Art Life**  
**Art + Power**  
**Bellarine Secondary College**  
**Castlemaine State Festival**  
**CreateAbility Events Network Bendigo**  
**Family Dog Circus**  
**Footscray Community Arts Centre**  
**Geelong Heritage Centre**  
**Geelong Performing Arts Centre**  
**Harwood Andrews**  
**Herbert Geer**  
**Ignition Theatre Training**  
**Nelson Park School**  
**St Laurence Community Services**  
**Theater Malaria**  
**Schrage Vogel (Crazy Birds)**  
**SoundSo Theater**  
**Very Special Arts International**  
**Windarring Castlemaine**

## THANKS

Jacqueline Woodman  
 at the Australian Writers Guild  
 Shaun Cannon

Our key and other contacts at all our  
 funders / community partners

Families, friends and long-term fans of  
 Back to Back Theatre

**We have tried to remember everyone!**  
**Please forgive us if we've missed someone.**

**ARTS  
 VICTORIA**





# ENSEMBLE REPORT

6

## Highlights & Lowlights:

We did **FOOD COURT** at GPAC on Black Saturday. The electricity went out, we didn't know if we could do the show, we sat waiting and saw the fires on TV. We thought the apocalypse was coming. We went up an hour late. Nelson Park parade, Box Wars soldiers and gladiators. People sit in corridor, two guys ran down at top speed. Home and Away gave me the one thing I am really trying to do, screen acting. I didn't do it properly. Linz was Brian's first time overseas, off his head with excitement, an eye-opener – the distance! People asked what was going on – I could only speak English! Some nights we carried **FOOD COURT**, the energy of the piece flowing really nicely. Rita stopped the show, a low light, difficult to manage. My highlight was that I saved the show! Performing in the Opera House! **COW!** Big place! I was so excited! The best thing about Belgium was the frites, we call them hot chips, Bruce bought them for us and the waffles! With **SMO**, Europe was fun but the USA was a whole lot better. On the last day I got photographed outside the **White House**. The President was IN!

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

# 2009 PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES

2009 was our biggest year ever.

TOUR GUIDE  
IMAGE Nick Mangafas



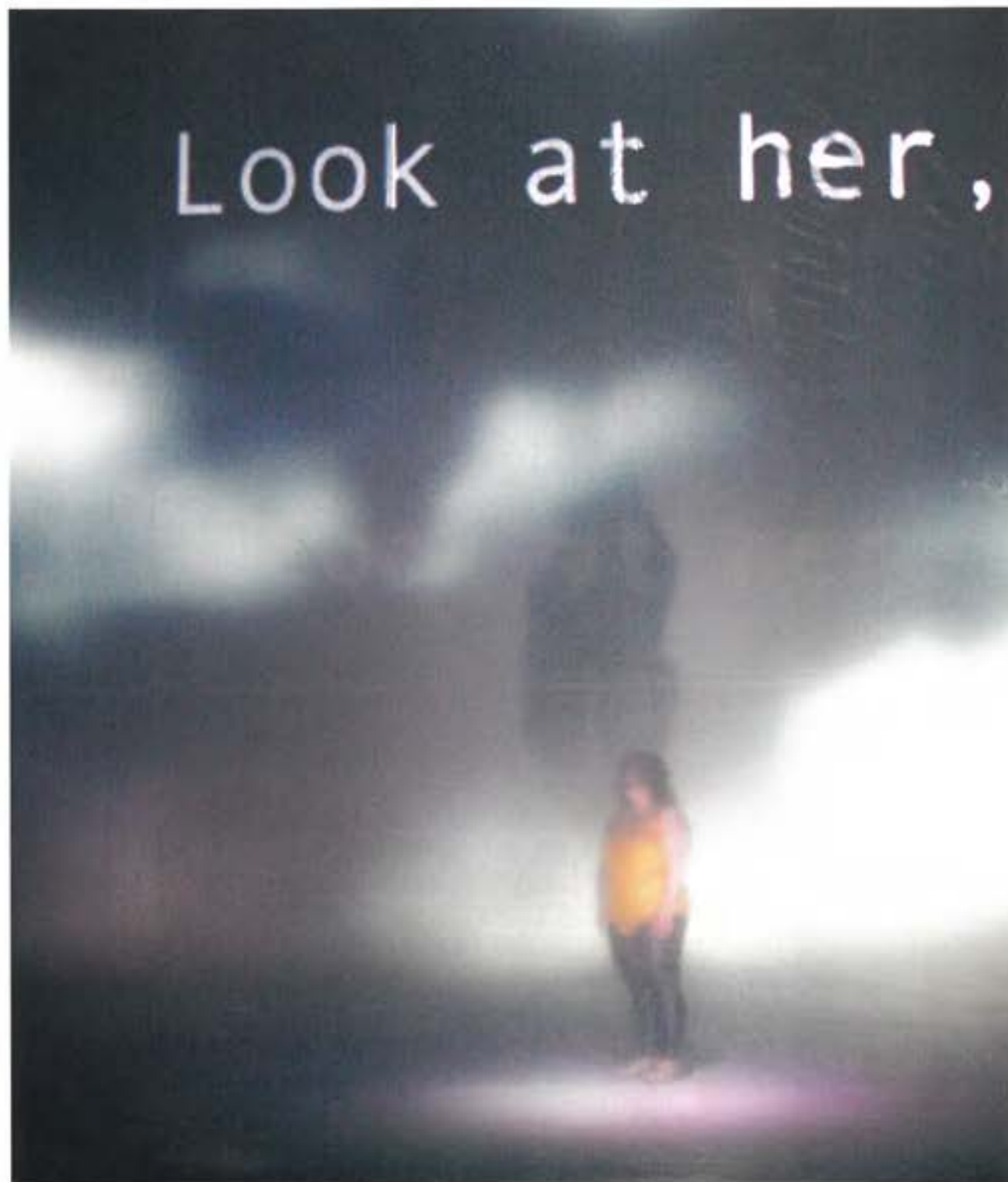
"A smart play with fiction and reality showing lots of truth, **TOUR GUIDE** crosses everyday life and the reality of life. Shown by people with and without disabilities whose problems, hopes and disappointments are far more similar than one would expect."

Tour Guide mitten durch das Leben, Von Karin Schütze,  
OÖ nachrichten, 12 August 09



"Congratulations to all who worked on Food Court – the best thing I have seen by Back To Back. I was transported, entranced, seduced, shattered and hypnotized. It was cinema, soundtrack and theatre. Layers and layers of dark beauty." AUDIENCE COMMENT

FOOD COURT with The Necks  
IMAGE Jeff Busby



# 2009 PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES

2009 was our biggest year ever.

## BODY OF WORK

Within our body of work, we have work that is created for professional presentation and work that is created in a community context.

## SMALL METAL OBJECTS 1st TOUR EUROPE/UK 2009

SMALL METAL OBJECTS premiered and sold out at the 2005 Melbourne International Festival. It won the inaugural Age Critics' Special Commendation and was nominated for a Helpmann Award for Best New Australian Work. It has since also won the Zurich Festival Prize, a coveted New York Bessie, and a Green Room Award for Best Production.

### LINZ SEASON

24-25 April 09, Shopping Centre Wells, Linz, Austria

Presented by sicht:wechsel: spielt a project of Linz 09 – Kulturhauptstadt Europas [European Cultural Capital]

The season attracted a number of schools groups and these young people were particularly taken with the ingenuity and technical accomplishment of the production. The season also provided an opportunity for the disability theatre groups who subsequently worked with us on TOUR GUIDE to become acquainted with Back to Back's practice.

The show was performed in English with live in-ear translation in German.

### LIUBLJANA SEASON

4 May 09, Preseren Square, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Presented by Exodus Festival

Ljubljana was lovely, a low key pearl in a valley between snow-capped mountains and green forested hills. There was an easy pace, the feeling of a being in a village.

The show was performed in English with live in-ear translation into Slovenian.





SMALL METAL OBJECTS  
IMAGES Jeff Busby

#### HAMBURG SEASON

**7-9 May, Hauptbahnhof, Hamburg, Germany**  
**Presented by Kampnagel**

Hamburg station was grungy, edgy and overwhelmingly busy, deals going on right next to our seating bank. This season was conspicuous for being too convincing. The real drug dealer that usually occupies that spot of the Hauptbahnhof got very upset to find the actors in his territory and approached Simon Laherty with money – trying to negotiate relocation in German! The next day some skinheads unplugged some of the sound gear! It was the most tense and volatile season we've done.

The show was performed in English with live in-ear translation into German.

#### BRISTOL SEASON

**21-23 May, Broadmead Mall, Bristol, UK**  
**Presented by Arnolfini**

Arnolfini staff and Back to Back worked incredibly hard together to make the show work to its full potential in the site that we had identified in Bristol. We really felt that nothing could have gone better!

Back to Back also led three days of workshops with Art + Power, Bristol – a membership organisation led by disabled artists creating work in visual arts, theatre, poetry, music, deaf arts, multi-media and film. The participants were very accomplished and amazing – all writers and painters and really fantastic people: articulate, self aware, open and very funny. They had never worked with professional theatre artists before and their objective was to gain more confidence as performers and come away with the seed of a show that they can work on for the London 2012 Olympics.

#### TOURING PARTY

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| DIRECTOR           | Bruce Gladwin (Linz only)                                       |
| SHOW DIRECTOR      | Marcia Ferguson<br>(Ljubljana, Hamburg and Bristol only)        |
| EXECUTIVE PRODUCER | Alice Nash (Linz only)  |
| PERFORMERS         | Simon Laherty, Sonia Teuben,<br>Genevieve Picot, James Saunders |
| PRODUCTION MANAGER | Bernadette Sweeney  |
| SOUND OPERATOR     | Phillip Ivan Pietruschka  |
| STAGE MANAGER      | Jo Leishman   |

# SMALL METAL OBJECTS 2nd TOUR USA 2009

#### PORTLAND SEASON

**9-12 September 09, Pioneer Square, Portland, Oregon, USA**  
**Presented by TBA (Time Based Arts) Festival of the Portland Institute of Contemporary Art**

We had an almost full house, some beautiful hacky sack players (about 20 of them) in the space who were very dance-like, and choirs, brass bands and an international trade fair. The space changed dramatically and we had to re-block the show each day. We had a rather feisty interaction with a news anchor, but anyway. It's all part of the real-life SMO drama...

#### PHILADELPHIA SEASON

**16-19 September 09, University Green on the border of 40th Street and the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, USA**  
**Presented by Philadelphia Live Arts Festival**

The Philadelphia season was the result of three years of talking and planning, which commenced with a site visit in October 2006. We performed on the border of University of Pennsylvania and 40th Street, a wide promenade setting where the show unfolded on both sides of a mildly busy street. Like **SMALL METAL OBJECTS**, the site defined a border between two worlds, that of corporate types and poorer, street-wise residents, and underscored moral and economic tensions between these two worlds.

For the first time, **SMALL METAL OBJECTS** was performed at twilight when the show slowly progressed into darkness. A backdrop of canopied shops backlit the work's shadowy dealings with the glittering facades of capitalism. Fading light foregrounded the soundscape and drew the audience in close.

The festival established contact with Temple University where we conducted two workshop presentations about our work with 55 first year students.

#### WASHINGTON SEASON

**30 September – 1 October 09, Grand Foyer, The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington DC, USA**  
**Presented by The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts**

The Kennedy Center is one of the foremost presenters of contemporary performance in the USA. The Australian Embassy in Washington hosted a reception for the company.

The show was shot and streamed live on the Kennedy Center website. We received a wonderful review in the Washington Post.

Back to Back led a workshop with for people with disabilities in collaboration with VSA (Very Special Arts) International.

#### TOURING PARTY

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| DIRECTOR           | Bruce Gladwin (Washington only)                            |
| SHOW DIRECTOR      | Marcia Ferguson<br>(Portland, Philadelphia only)           |
| EXECUTIVE PRODUCER | Alice Nash (Philadelphia only)                             |
| PERFORMERS         | Simon Laherty, Sonia Teuben,<br>Genevieve Picot, Luke Ryan |
| PRODUCTION MANAGER | Bernadette Sweeney   |
| SOUND OPERATOR     | Phillip Ivan Pietruschka                                   |
| STAGE MANAGER      | Jo Leishman  |

# FOOD COURT

12

## FOOD COURT – GEELONG SEASON 09 29-31 January 09, Ford Theatre Presented by the Geelong Performing Arts Centre

Part concert, part theatre show, **FOOD COURT** features the remarkable vision of Back to Back Theatre and the music of The Necks, one of the great cult bands of Australia, who improvise a driving score for each performance from the orchestra pit.

Set in the lush minimalism of an illuminated white void, the story of one woman's humiliation is played out in a psychological space constructed from light and sound. Luminously fragile, **FOOD COURT** is a near death experience in a suburban wonderland where a small fatality of dignity takes place between The Asian Hut and The Juice Bar.

The Geelong season was part of a deliberate commitment by the Geelong Performing Arts Centre to expose their (largely subscriber-based) audiences to riskier, more challenging work. The Centre were adroit and committed to dealing with the audience members who found the work unexpected and confronting.

It was tremendous to have the opportunity to present our work on the main-stage of our home town. This was the first time this has happened in the company's 22 year history.

### COLLABORATORS

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>DIRECTOR, SET DESIGN &amp; TEXT</b>           | Bruce Gladwin  |
| <b>PERFORMERS &amp; TEXT</b>                     | Mark Deans, Rita Halabarec, Nicki Holland, Sarah Mainwaring, Scott Price |
| <b>MUSIC BY THE NECKS</b>                        | Chris Abrahams, Piano;<br>Tony Buck, Drums;<br>Lloyd Swanton, Bass       |
| <b>UNDERSTUDIES</b>                              | Simon Laherty, Sonia Teuben, Brian Tilley                                |
| <b>TECHNICAL DIRECTION &amp; LIGHTING DESIGN</b> | Andrew Livingston, bluebottle  |
| <b>PRODUCTION &amp; STAGE MANAGER</b>            | Berni Sweeney, bluebottle  |
| <b>SOUND SYSTEM &amp; SOUND DESIGN</b>           | Hugh Covill  |
| <b>ANIMATION DESIGN &amp; OPERATION</b>          | Rhian Hinkley  |
| <b>SOUND ENGINEER &amp; OPERATION</b>            | Lachlan Carrick  |
| <b>COSTUME</b>                                   | Shio Otani   |
| <b>SUPPORT WORKER</b>                            | Stacey Baldwin   |



## FOOD COURT – BRUSSELS SEASON 2009 2-5 May 09, KVS Bol [Royal Flemish Theatre], Brussels, Belgium Presented by Kunstenfestivaldesarts.

13

**FOOD COURT** is a show about Back to Back's relationship to the weight and history of theatre. Kunstenfestivaldesarts was thus an ideal environment for the European premiere of the work.

The season was presented in the Royal Flemish Theatre, a venue saturated with the theatrical past. Notwithstanding that this was an enormously traditional environment – an opera theatre (albeit one that has been given a complete modern reworking), Kunstenfestivaldesarts focuses on presenting emerging experimental theatre. At this time, this festival is the place where European theatre makers and presenters gather to see ground-breaking work.

An unprecedented amount of American presenters attended the festival this year; this was because of Back to Back's presence and our concerted work in this market. Festival staff were themselves surprised at the delegation.

### TOURING PARTY

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>DIRECTOR, SET DESIGN &amp; TEXT</b>         | Bruce Gladwin  |
| <b>PERFORMERS &amp; TEXT</b>                   | Mark Deans, Rita Halabarec, Nicki Holland, Sarah Mainwaring, Scott Price |
| <b>MUSIC BY THE NECKS</b>                      | Chris Abrahams, Piano;<br>Tony Buck, Drums;<br>Lloyd Swanton, Bass       |
| <b>TECHNICAL DIRECTION &amp; STAGE MANAGER</b> | Andrew Livingston, bluebottle  |
| <b>PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT</b>                   | Frog, bluebottle   |
| <b>SOUND ENGINEER &amp; OPERATOR</b>           | Berni Sweeney, bluebottle  |
| <b>SUPPORT WORKER</b>                          | Lachlan Carrick<br>Stacey Baldwin  |

## FOOD COURT – SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE SEASON 2009 9-10 June 09, Opera Theatre, Sydney Opera House, Sydney Presented by the Sydney Opera House as part of Luminous, curated by Brian Eno.

There was much discussion at the Australian Theatre Forum in 2009 about the glass ceiling that keeps small to medium companies and directors out of mainstage venues. The Opera Theatre is a 2000 seat venue. It is not usual that a small to medium company is programmed to perform there. It was very exciting to bring our work to a stage of this scale with the knowledge that the work could and did fill the space.

### TOURING PARTY

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>DIRECTOR, SET DESIGN &amp; TEXT</b>             | Bruce Gladwin  |
| <b>PERFORMERS &amp; TEXT</b>                       | Mark Deans, Rita Halabarec, Nicki Holland, Sarah Mainwaring, Scott Price |
| <b>MUSIC BY THE NECKS</b>                          | Chris Abrahams, Piano;<br>Tony Buck, Drums;<br>Lloyd Swanton, Bass       |
| <b>TECHNICAL DIRECTION &amp; LIGHTING OPERATOR</b> | Andrew Livingston, bluebottle  |
| <b>PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER</b>                    | Berni Sweeney, bluebottle  |
| <b>ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER</b>                     | Diana Hume   |
| <b>SOUND ENGINEER &amp; OPERATOR</b>               | Lachlan Carrick  |
| <b>SUPPORT WORKER</b>                              | Claire Bracken   |
| <b>EXECUTIVE PRODUCER</b>                          | Alice Nash   |



# TOURGUIDE

Creative Development & Showing 09

**WORKSHOPS AND AUDITIONS:** 17 – 20 April 09, Linz, Austria

**SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT:** June – July 09, Geelong

**SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT & REHEARSALS:** 20 July – 9 August 09, Linz

**PERFORMANCE SHOWING, 10 & 11 AUGUST 09, Summer Theatre Festival, Volksgarten, Linz, Austria. Presented by sicht:wechsel:spielt, a project of Linz 2009 Kulturhauptstadt Europas [European Cultural Capital]**

## TOURING PARTY

|   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| <b>DIRECTOR</b>   | <b>Bruce Gladwin</b>             |
| <b>ASSISTANT DIRECTOR</b>   | <b>Daniel Schlusser</b>          |
| <b>SOUND DESIGN &amp; COMPOSITION<br/>&amp; SOUND SYSTEM DESIGNER</b> | <b>Hugh Covill</b>               |
| <b>SOUND SYSTEM, DESIGNER &amp;<br/>SOUND ENGINEER</b>                | <b>Phillip Ivan Pietruschka</b>  |
| <b>ENSEMBLE/PERFORMERS</b>  | <b>Brian Tilley, Scott Price</b> |
| <b>PRODUCTION MANAGER</b>   | <b>Berni Sweeney, bluebottle</b> |
| <b>STAGE MANAGER</b>  | <b>Jo Leishman</b>               |
| <b>EXECUTIVE PRODUCER</b>   | <b>Alice Nash</b>                |

**CRAZY BIRDS:** Ingrid, Marlies, Gabi, Julia, Carmen, Ingrid, Christina, Edith, Peter, Dieter, Christa  
**SO UND SO:** Walter, Felix, Florian, Norbert, Christian, Felix, Klaus, Dagmar, Petra  
**THEATRE MALARIA:** Iris, Ursi, Barbara, Koxi, Stephan, Herwig, Ruth, Kurt, Sabine

TOUR GUIDE was commissioned by Linz, European Cultural Capital 2009.

(In November 2007, Bruce Gladwin and Alice Nash conducted a two-day scoping visit to Linz.)

In April 2009 Back to Back ran a week of open workshops in Linz. Three local companies nominated to be involved in the project; Theatre Malaria, So and So and Schrage Vogel (Crazy Birds). Over the week we engaged with over fifty performers.

In July 2009 we returned to Linz, bringing with us our production team and ensemble actors Scott Price and Brian Tilley. We worked with each local company for two days applying script that we had prepared from the April residency and continuing to devise new material. The material was then scripted, assembled and translated into German. In each workshop we were assisted by two experienced bilingual actors who functioned as translators, actors, stage managers and assistant directors: their role was essential to the success of the show.

In the last days of rehearsal we brought the three local theatre companies together as one large cast, approximately 35 in all. Four individual actors wearing a binaural microphone rig, each actor becoming a mobile recording studio, captured the action across the four scenes, which formed TOUR GUIDE. The two performances sold out.



IMAGE Nick Mangafas

14

# GANESHVERSUS THE THIRD REICH

Creative Development 09

Throughout the year, Stott Theatre, Old Courthouse Building, Geelong

In 2009 we completed three short creative developments.

The initial catalyst for the story came from pitch shifting the actors' voices and observing how this impacted on their physicalisation, with one actor, Sonia Teuben, transforming rapidly and convincingly into a neo-Nazi. Another actor, Rita Halabarec, brought her long-standing interest in Ganesh.

In brief, as currently envisaged: the story begins with Ganesh's creation and his transition from boy to god, how he gained his elephant head, his burden of being both human and animal, and his destiny to fulfil the role of 'God of overcoming obstacles'. Summoned by Vishnu, Shiva and Parvati, Ganesh accepts the task to reclaim the Swastika from Hitler, travelling incognito on foot, steam ferries and train from India to Nazi Germany, desperately trying to disguise his large elephant head under a broad rimmed hat and high collar.

Captured by the Nazi's in a eugenic fuelled sweep of the German community, Ganesh is considered to be some form of genetic mutation dreamt up as a secret weapon by the allies. He is tortured and interrogated by the SS. Ganesh then escapes, and travelling against an exodus, makes a final journey to the heart of darkness to Hitler's subterranean bunker in Berlin.

Since conceiving of the narrative, which we love, we have been considering that it is an idea that we love but couldn't and perhaps shouldn't be made into a live work. Should authors be allowed to craft fairytales, satires and comedies about anything? Is it okay for a small theatre company from Geelong to re-write Asiatic and European history? Can the holocaust only be dealt with respectfully in documentary? What is truth in fiction? What stories need to be told as the whole truth and not part truth?

These questions have become as interesting and exciting as the emerging fiction they had begun to create. Creating a forum for the audience to witness and be involved in these questions has become our quest. As the hero's journey progresses the ethics, morality and responsibility of presenting such a narrative becomes an issue of debate by the presenters of the work. The further Ganesh travels, the more enmeshed its protagonists become in the politics of appropriation.

## COLLABORATORS

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>DIRECTOR</b>        | <b>Bruce Gladwin</b>   |
| <b>GUEST DIRECTORS</b> | <b>Marcia Ferguson and Kate Sulan</b>  |
| <b>ENSEMBLE</b>        | <b>Mark Deans, Nicki Holland, Simon Laherty,<br/>Rita Halabarec, Scott Price, Sarah Mainwaring</b> |
| <b>ANIMATION</b>       | <b>Rhian Hinkley</b>   |
| <b>COSTUME</b>         | <b>Shio Otani</b>  |

# CHECKMATE

8 April – 16 June

Showing: 16 June 2009

**ENSEMBLE** **Brian Tilley**  
**GUEST DIRECTOR** **James Pratt**

Guest director James Pratt worked with ensemble actor Brian Tilley over 10 weeks to create the beginnings of a solo performance, CHECKMATE. The development concluded with a short work-in-progress showing.

15

# THEATRE OF SPEED -EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE CENTRE 2009

16

**THEATRE OF SPEED** is a group of young people with intellectual disabilities exploring contemporary theatre making. **THEATRE OF SPEED** in 2009 was an experimental theatre centre – an intensive work and training environment.

From January to December, **THEATRE OF SPEED** worked on three creative development projects: **THE DEMOCRATIC SET**, **FRANKENSTEIN** and **TEXT**. In the final term, **Back to Back** offered a series of Open Workshops, to provide increased access to the company's practices.

**THEATRE OF SPEED 2009** Samantha Bade, Phoebe Baker, Tom Banks, Laura Berrisford, Joan Black, Robert Croft, James Lewis, Polly Munday, Tamika Simpson, Jessica Walker and Craig Matheson.

## Project 1: THE DEMOCRATIC SET

Showing: 25 March 09, Stott Theatre, Old Courthouse Building, Geelong

**THEATRE OF SPEED** teamed up with live music outfit, The Amplified Elephants, a disability music group working out of the Footscray Community Arts Centre on 25 March 09 to present a showing of **THE DEMOCRATIC SET**, featuring edited footage of choreographic work undertaken by **THEATRE OF SPEED** in 2008 combined with live performance devised and assembled around this film footage. The collaboration with The Amplified Elephants was a highlight.

### COLLABORATORS

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| DIRECTOR                  | Marcia Ferguson  |
| THE AMPLIFIED ELEPHANTS   | James Hullick, Artistic Director<br>and members of the Elephants' ensemble |
| FILMMAKER                 | Rhian Hinkley  |
| SET DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION | Mark Cuthbertson   |
| LIGHTING DESIGN           | Jenny Hector   |
| SUPPORT WORKER            | Leanne Stein   |

**THE AMPLIFIED ELEPHANTS:** Danny Al Sabbagh, Jay Euesden, Liz Hofbauer, Robyn McGrath, Enza Practico, Kathryn Sunderland and Esther Tuddenham.

THE DEMOCRATIC SET  
IMAGES Jeff Busby



## Project 2: FRANKENSTEIN

Showing: 24 June, Stott Theatre, Old Courthouse Building, Geelong

**THEATRE OF SPEED** participants along with theatre makers James Pratt and Josephine Lange, explored the dark side of gothic life with Mary Shelley's **FRANKENSTEIN**.

Working with lights and shadows, classical music and really bad melodramatic acting techniques, **THEATRE OF SPEED** presented a few scenes of the sad, horrific and prophetic tale of Dr. Frankenstein and his Monster (who has been nicknamed Henry) at an informal showing.

This development period was so rich in discoveries that it will be a major focus for **THEATRE OF SPEED** in 2010.

### COLLABORATORS

|                   |                        |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| GUEST DIRECTORS   | Jo Lange & James Pratt |
| LIGHTING DESIGNER | Jenny Hector           |
| SUPPORT WORKER    | Leanne Stein           |

## Project 3: TEXT

Showing: 28 October, 09, Stott Theatre, Old Courthouse Building, Geelong

Guest director David Symons used a transcribed episode of long running Australian soap opera 'Home and Away' as the basis for this project, investigating this material as a catalyst for a theatre form that integrates the original source in the performance event.

**THEATRE OF SPEED** participants genuinely enjoyed the project, half of the group stating enthusiastically that that it is very important for them to be acting on TV or in movies. Learning lines proved to be the most challenging area, with nearly all participants revealing that they had struggled with remembering lines.

Although this was hard, participants felt new confidence in their abilities and were glad that they had persevered.

### COLLABORATORS

|                |              |
|----------------|--------------|
| GUEST DIRECTOR | David Symons |
| SUPPORT WORKER | Leanne Stein |

## Project 4: OPEN WORKSHOPS

At the very end of 2009, **Back to Back** offered the community a unique opportunity to experience the work of the company when we opened up our Wednesday **THEATRE OF SPEED** workshops to include new participants. Participants over 16, of any ability or experience, from Geelong and further afield were invited to join **THEATRE OF SPEED** members and participate in one of five open workshops in dance, acting and improvisation.

**GUEST DIRECTORS** Ingrid Voorendt, Becky Hilton, Marcia Ferguson

Participants came from Family Dog Circus, Melbourne, Ignition Theatre Training, St Laurence Disability Services, Geelong, Art Life, Footscray, Bellarine Secondary College as well as several individuals.

Director Becky Hilton set up interviews in pairs which were recorded on paper, and interpreted gesturally. Participants performed and directed the performance component of the workshop.

Choreographer Ingrid Voorendt developed her current preoccupation with the notion of 'appearing/disappearing', via a workshop in improvised movement and site-specific performance. Ingrid found the group incredibly open and skilled, and found that under their hand, the thematic developed in rich and fruitful ways. Ingrid and Becky commented with pleasure on the fact that no one hung back.

The Open Workshop structure develops our community program in multi-faceted ways – like an empty vessel, it can be filled with many intentions: it trains and supports directors to run workshops with people with disabilities via a mentoring component; it offers continuing exchanges with community and professional artists and others; and it encourages other organisations to invite us to one of their workshops.

**"I never made any work like that before."** Open Workshop participant

17

# THE DEMOCRATIC SET 18

## Castlemaine Residency: 2-4 April 2009

Performance Showing, Saturday 4 April 2009, Phee Broadway Theatre, Castlemaine

*A bit like flicking through a magazine of tiny dances and stories.*

The performance was an advertised event for the Castlemaine State Festival and attracted about 120 audience members, family, friends and community workers, who paid \$10 for a ticket.

**THE DEMOCRATIC SET** is a purpose built film set, an empty box, an egalitarian environment for performance. Conceived as an offer and an invitation to artists to "make of it what they will", the box is capable of framing live and filmed performance of many natures: the unpredictable, contemporary, and disturbingly obvious.

The premise of the residency was very simple: over two days, Castlemaine community members were invited to have their video portrait filmed in **THE DEMOCRATIC SET**. Each portrait took approximately ten minutes to film. Live performances were created by members of Bendigo's CreateAbility Events Network and Windarrang Castlemaine, with actors from Back to Back Theatre. Film and live performance segments were brought together as instantaneous, experimental performance and presented to the audience at the performance showing.

**THE DEMOCRATIC SET** residency produced a dream-like procession of images populated by locals, where the simple framed presence of an individual achieves an inspiring transcendence. Devoted to the "ordinary", this performance assemblage demonstrates how theatre – like democracy – allows an individual to really be seen and heard.

### COLLABORATORS

**WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY** Betty Bodzsar, Carol Brewer, Sally Brockley-Moon, Paul Byrne, Nigel Carroll, Kyra Drummond, Sarah Goninon, Melissa Gordon-Cooke, Julie-Ann Miller, James Morrison-Blunck, John McQueen, Scott Price, Glyn Prosser, Jo Stubbings, Brian Tilley and Aaron Williams.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>PORTRAITS</b>                       | <b>Members of the Castlemaine Community</b> |
| <b>CONCEPT &amp; SET DESIGN</b>        | Bruce Gladwin                               |
| <b>RESIDENCY DIRECTOR</b>              | Marcia Ferguson                             |
| <b>ANIMATION</b>                       | Rhian Hinkley, lowercase                    |
| <b>SET DESIGN &amp; CONSTRUCTION</b>   | Mark Cuthbertson                            |
| <b>LIGHTING DESIGN &amp; OPERATION</b> | Jenny Hector                                |
| <b>VENUE TECHNICIAN</b>                | Ian Anderson                                |

**PROJECT PARTNERS:** Windarrang, based in Central Victoria, ensures that people with disabilities have choice of, and access to quality services. CreateAbility Events Network, based in Bendigo, provides opportunities through the arts for people of all abilities.



THE DEMOCRATIC SET  
IMAGES Jeff Busby

# NELSON PARK SCHOOL 19

## – Extended Schools Residency 09



Back to Back conducted an Extended Artist's Residency at Nelson Park School in 2009. The company was resident at Nelson Park School each Monday of School Terms 2 and 3. Nelson Park School has students from Prep to Year 12 and caters for children with mild intellectual disabilities.

**134 students participated in one or more of 58 workshops.**

We decided from inception to orient the Residency towards an 'arts as process' experience, as opposed to single project focus. We invited students to participate and share each other's work by observing workshops in action or small 'showings' of work that students had created. The workshop schedule was left deliberately open ended, so that we had some capacity to schedule workshops spontaneously in response to the interests of individual students as they arose.

The extended residency was a deeply meaningful and successful chapter in our ongoing relationship with Nelson Park School. The project culminated in a large-scale 'showing' and a picnic with the whole school, parents, teachers and friends invited to attend.

Feedback from the school indicated that there was enormous value and potential for further positive learning outcomes in this work.

### COLLABORATORS

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>RESIDENCY DIRECTOR/ PERFORMANCE</b> | Marcia Ferguson  |
| <b>RESIDENCY CO-FACILITATOR</b>        | Jo Lange   |
| <b>PUBLICATIONS</b>                    | David Dellafiora   |
| <b>MUSIC &amp; SOUND RECORDING</b>     | Stephen Oakes  |
| <b>INSTALLATIONS / SCULPTURES</b>      | Mark Cuthbertson   |
| <b>TEXTILES</b>                        | Claire Bracken   |
| <b>DRAWING</b>                         | Vicky Shukuruglou  |
| <b>CHOREOGRAPHER</b>                   | Ingrid Voorendt  |
| <b>DRUMMING</b>                        | David Wells  |
| <b>CARDBOARD COUTURE</b>               | Box Wars   |
| <b>COORDINATOR NELSON PARK</b>         | Wendy Smith  |
| <b>ENSEMBLE</b>                        | Simon Laherty, Brian Tilley, Scott Price, Sarah Mainwaring, Mark Deans |



# LEADERSHIP

Back to Back Theatre is committed to leadership in the arts and disability sectors.

20

## Networks & Sector Development.

Back to Back was an active member of the following networks and committees in 2009:

- Arts & Disability Access Network (ADAN) of Victoria
- Geelong Arts Precinct Leadership Group
- Theatre Network Victoria
- The AD / GM Network of Victoria.

## Australian National Theatre Forum

Alice Nash was part of the four-person Executive Committee of the Australian Theatre Forum 09, the first national meeting of theatre-makers in 21 years.

## Speaking Engagements

Back to Back staff were invited to present or speak at a number of events in 2009:

**Australia Council Speaker Series, "Programming the Arts: Is it for you or is it for your audience?"**

Bruce Gladwin was a panel speaker for the Australia Council's Speaker Series with visiting American expert Alan Brown and director Kate Champion on the topic: "Should arts companies program to "benefit" audiences, or to satisfy their own artistic intentions? Are these mutually exclusive goals?"

### Creative New Zealand

Alice Nash presented a workshop on international market development and touring to 15 emerging New Zealand companies.

### Gasworks' Art of Difference Festival International Arts Symposium

Alice Nash was a respondent at a Symposium Session 5 "The Future of arts and disability: Where to from here?"

Bruce was a speaker at a Symposium Session on "Mainstreaming Disability Arts".

### Regional Arts Victoria Conference

Alice Nash presented as part of a panel at the Regional Arts Victoria conference, on the topic of "Art & Adversity."

### VATE State Conference Forum

Marcia Ferguson spoke at the Victorian Association for the Teaching of English (VATE) 2009 State Conference at Deakin University Burwood as a panelist for the forum "Social Inclusion and its Implications for Education and Schooling".

### Australia Council Pre-APAM Road-Show

Alice Nash spoke on the Melbourne panel of the Australia Council's Pre-APAM Roadshow.

## Research

### Melbourne University Extended Schools Residency Research Project

As an adjunct to the Nelson Park Extended Schools Residency, Arts Victoria commissioned Melbourne University to conduct a research project about the efficacy of their extended school's residency program. Back to Back was chosen as one of two projects to participate in this research and worked closely with Jo Raphael (Lecturer in Drama Education, Faculty of Arts and Education, Deakin University), Dr Peter O'Connor (Adjunct Associate Professor, University of Sydney, Director Applied Theatre Consultants Ltd) and Madonna Stinson PhD, (Senior Lecturer, Artistic & Creative Education, Melbourne Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne).

# LEADERSHIP

21

## Awards

Back to Back was recognised by the following awards in 2009:

### HELPMANN AWARDS

FOOD COURT received three Helpmann Award Nominations for:

- **Best New Australian Work** – Back to Back Theatre with The Necks
- **Best Original Score** – The Necks – Chris Abrahams, Tony Buck and Lloyd Swanton
- **Best Scenic Design** – Mark Cuthbertson, Bruce Gladwin & Rhian Hinkley

## KIT DENTON FELLOWSHIP

At the 42nd annual AWGIE Awards on 28 August, Back to Back was awarded the Kit Denton Fellowship for our new work **GANESH VERSUS THE THIRD REICH**. The purpose of the \$25,000 fellowship is to promote courage, to champion bold and challenging ideas and to reward talent and excellence in performance writing. After awarding the fellowship Andrew Denton said

## Mentorship

**ATTACHMENT – Julia Hales** Initiated in 2008, ATTACHMENT, our in house residency, allows an emerging director, designer, composer or performer to spend up to a month with Back to Back during a period of development or rehearsal. The position seeks to support artists who have an interest in the company's work and the development of contemporary theatre practice, in particular devised theatre. Artists with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply.

Julia Hales is resident in Western Australia where she has been working with disability theatre company Dadaa. Julia was resident with Back to Back for two weeks.

**SPARK – Mish Grigor** The SPARK program assists 18–26 year olds to break onto the national arts scene, providing support, training, advice and funding for outstanding young and emerging dancers, media artists, theatre makers and artists working with or in communities. In 2009, Bruce Gladwin worked with Mish Grigor.

## Leadership Training

**Cranlana Program** Alice Nash was awarded an Arts Victoria Scholarship to take part in the 2010 or 2011 Cranlana Leadership Programme, a project of The Myer Foundation and Curtin University.

## Williamson Leadership Program

Rose Hiscock, Chair, was accepted into the 2010 Williamson Leadership Program.

## One-Off Community Workshops

**Kardinia College Workshops** 8 & 15 October, Kardinia College, Geelong

**THEATRE OF SPEED** Open Workshops – See above for further details.

"In the tradition of the boy who pointed out the Emperor's new clothes, we were looking for writers with courage, to think the unthinkable and speak the unspeakable. I think we can proudly say that in Back to Back Theatre we found it."

Andrew Denton

# SUSTAINABILITY

22

Sustainability has a number of different meanings for the company; not limited to financial, human resources or environmental sustainability.

The company continues to work on sustainability on multiple fronts.

## Diversified Programming

The company continues to develop a range of marketable products and processes. The company currently makes new work, tours work in repertoire and develops models for collaborating with communities locally and further afield.

## Diversified Financial Base

The company had a high percentage of earned income in 2009, continued to enjoy strong support from government sources and expanded its private donor base.

## Nurturing Relationships

In July 2008, Belinda Hellyer was appointed as Giving Manager at Back to Back Theatre as part of the Australia Councils' Key Organisations Philanthropy Mentoring Program. The aim was to increase the company's fundraising via philanthropic funds / trusts and private donors in order to enable the company to leverage the most from its artistic programs.

Since the role of Giving Manager was created there have been many beneficial shifts and changes within the organisation. Our stakeholder management has matured due to a shift in our perception of 'relationships'.

In 2009, our emphasis was on building the profile of the company in Geelong. In 2009, we were encouraged by two local ongoing funders, the City of Greater Geelong and United Way Geelong to apply for greater amounts of funding for 2010. This is a direct result of this careful and attentive relationship building.

In 2010 we will work with the City of Greater Geelong to work towards securing recurrent funding for Back to Back Theatre from the Council.

We have also expanded our philanthropic base and have several major funding initiatives on the table with private donors.

## International Market Development

Back to Back continued to work effectively with our international agent Sarah Ford from Quarternaire. Our international marketing strategy combines rigorous attention to detail and patient and long-term relationship building. Initial contact with presenters is followed wherever possible or appropriate with face to face meetings and site visits scheduled in conjunction with performance seasons.

## Capacity Building

Back to Back was invited by ANZ Trustees to propose a capacity building project to their Strategic Initiative Partnership program. The company is working with ANZ Trustees to shape and pitch a 3-year initiative to be considered for funding in 2011.

In December 2009, we confirmed support via Arts Victoria for a Business Development Initiative to assist the company in consolidating our exponential growth in the past 3 – 4 years and to assist us in clarifying further opportunities for growth.

# SUSTAINABILITY

23

## Archive

With funding from the National Library of Australia's Community Heritage Grants, Back to Back had a Preservation Assessment of our Archive. We also secured a new home for our nationally significant Collection at the Geelong Heritage Centre.

## Quality Improvement

In 2009 we received the highest possible grading for our annual Surveillance Audit, assessing the implementation of and improvement in enacting 12 Federal Disability Service Standards.

## Carbon Offsetting

Back to Back partnered with Climate Friendly to offset our international flights.

## Long Service Leave

Bruce Gladwin took long service leave 30 November – 31 January 2010

# CRITICAL RESPONSE

4

# CRITICAL RESPONSE

## SMALL METAL OBJECTS – Media

**“Back to Back are a talented bunch with some excellent credentials and a unique knack of uncovering prejudices”.**

Disability Arts Online, Bristol, UK

**“This is an astounding, funny, poetic piece of theatre. It makes magic of the humdrum, and communicates a take on the world that is – without any hyperbole whatsoever – totally unique.”**

(Timothy X Atack), The Podium, Broadmead 22/05/09

**“This atypical theater arrestingly challenged the usual rules of veracity. What you heard was more important than what you saw...but what was truly important happened within characters who were guileless yet opaque because of their inability to articulate the specific nature of their transformation. Voices and characters emerge from a misty plot”.**

David Patrick Stearns, Philadelphia Inquirer, 18 September 09

**“Watching the brilliant Back to Back Theatre, whose innovative show in Pioneer Courthouse Square focused attention on people with "developmental or intellectual disabilities," I couldn't help thinking of the arguments we'd have at [Washington Heights] about the "special ed" students. Were the kids who made fun of them -- but also talked with them, laughed with them, engaged with them about their lives -- treating them better or worse than those who just ignored them altogether?”**

Marty Hughley, The Oregonian,

[www.oregonlive.com/performance/index.ssf/2009/09/tba\\_09\\_return\\_to\\_the\\_valley\\_of.html](http://www.oregonlive.com/performance/index.ssf/2009/09/tba_09_return_to_the_valley_of.html)

**“Small Metal Objects is a very fun, funny, and moving production, and the use of the streets of West Philadelphia as its stage makes for a wonderfully environmental piece of theatre. Back to Back Theatre’s performance and the use of technology as a unifier (uniting the audience and the actors) and a divider (separating the audience from the rest of the world) is brilliant. It’s a performance you’ll certainly remember”**

Samantha Lazar, [www.uwishunu.com/2009/09/direct-from-australia-to-philly-small-metal-objects/](http://www.uwishunu.com/2009/09/direct-from-australia-to-philly-small-metal-objects/)

## FOOD COURT – Media & Audience Comments

**“Characters such as children, outsiders and those who have been declared “irresponsible” often spark off an exploration of the fine balance between what is morally acceptable and what is not. Recent work by Romeo Castellucci and Back to Back Theatre presents dreadful confrontations in this respect”**

Onculture.eu – Belgium – An art celebration in Brussels, [http://onculture.eu/story.aspx?s\\_id=715&z\\_id=2](http://onculture.eu/story.aspx?s_id=715&z_id=2)

**“A disciplined scenography and the fact that the actors are “different” make the experience special”**

Kunstenfestivaldesarts ‘ Food Court’ by Back to Back Theatre, Australia, Stephan Modens, De Morgen

**“Compression is key to Food Court, which like an elegant picture of barbed wire, depicts violence, beauty and tragedy in a single piercing image. Food Court pricks the conscience, sense, skin”**

The Image that Pierces, Caroline Wake, p42, Real Time Issue 92, August/September 09

**“Back to Back Theatre don’t seem to have intended on creating something that people love or hate, just something that the audience won’t forget – and that’s exactly what they have achieved...Playing out like an unsettling dream, Food Court isn’t a production you enjoy, it’s one you experience”**

Michael Storey, The Brag, Sydney, 15 June 09

**“This show is original, raw and an utterly poignant meditation on the objectification of people and the danger of pack mentality... this is a must-see for fans of thought provoking theatre should it return”**

Class act for lovers of revealing slice of life, Alex Lalak, Daily Telegraph, Sydney 12 June 09

**“Food Court reinvents within the classical western canon and absorbs it into Back to Back’s own practice. It is an aesthetically sophisticated and harrowing work but it is the sound of it that gets to you, the sound of it that awakes in you fear and horror, the gradual build to a climax of sound that creates the tragedy”**

Mark, [theperftheatre.blogspot.com](http://theperftheatre.blogspot.com), review-food-court-back-to-back-theatre.html, 10 June 09

## TOUR GUIDE – Media

**“A smart play with fiction and reality showing lots of truth, TOUR GUIDE crosses everyday life and the reality of life. Shown by people with and without disabilities whose problems, hopes and disappointments are far more similar than one would expect”**

Tour Guide mitten durch das Leben, Von Karin Schütze, OÖ nachrichten, 12 August 09

**“Tour Guide explores body language as much as the content of its German and English scripts. The audience are reminded that in such public places, while unable to hear the words of others, we may be able to observe the emotions in private conversations, sense the aggression of one person standing over another, decipher the pursed lips of disappointment, or empathise with the embarrassed fidgeting of rejection”**

More than a walk in the park, Back to Back Theatre’s Tour Guide, Alexandra Crosby, page 42, Real Time Issue 93, October/ November 09



## SMALL METAL OBJECTS – Audience Comments

"SMO is what theatre should be. The work is elegant and simple, telling us that there is no such thing as normal, that we are all gloriously alone and unique and in the brief time we are here the most important marks we make are those achieved through small acts of kindness and caring."

"HUGE CONGRATULATIONS to you for bringing that magical piece of work to Bristol. I have heard nothing but glowing feedback – genuine exhilaration from people who have never seen anything like it (including myself). It's very very inspiring."

"Thanks for the opportunity to see Back to Back in Broadmead yesterday. It was an especially powerful - yet very moving – performance presented so well in the public realm. It's rare that the combination of narrative, performance and location works so well - but Small Metal Objects did - memorable!"

"Thanks for bringing such a dense and complex experience to the heart of Bristol. Good to see craft skills allied with serious creative imagination. I thought the narrative ambiguity combined perfectly with the serendipity of the trans-national social context. The "three focal points" (artists, engaged audience and passive passers-by bumping into the action) works very interestingly when the audience is so conspicuous on the rake and so cut off by the headphones."

"I have just experienced 'small metal objects' in Bristol and am deeply, deeply moved. Thank you so much, thanks to the performers, designers, crew and all involved. A special mention to the sound and music composition (as it is the field I work in) and integrated use of technology. Best thing I've seen and heard in recent memory! Theatre does change our lives."

"I am writing to say thank you for coming to Bristol with Small Metal Objects. The show was just tremendous. It absolutely transformed Broadmead, a shopping centre that I have used over the years. I will always think of your production every time I hit that spot! It brought home to me the power of theatre. You transformed the everyday and transported me into my imagination. It was an amazing experience to be cut off from the world with the headphones and yet still feel part of it, with an audience, who I imagined themselves having different thoughts and reactions whilst we were all sharing the same event. Sort of cut off and connect. It was also a reminder of really seeing. Just being and seeing. Please come back and stay for longer, because I know so many people who I would have loved to have seen it. I feel really privileged to have been someone who did see it."

## FOOD COURT – Audience Comments

"I was delighted to see Food Court - harrowing and moving piece, very beautifully done. It was so provocative, particularly in the world of today where judgements are so often made at face value and very little time given to depth and consideration. I look forward to seeing more."

"I saw Food Court at GPAC and was riveted - disturbed, intrigued, utterly absorbed, moved... so many emotions. I thought the whole production was wonderful. Visually stunning and superbly performed, it stimulated at every level. Congratulations to all concerned!"

"Congratulations to all who worked on Food Court – the best thing I have seen by Back To Back. I was transported, entranced, seduced, shattered and hypnotized. It was cinema, soundtrack and theatre. Layers and layers of dark beauty."

"Enjoyed 'Food Court', please pass all my best wishes on to the Company. Thought it gave Geelong a taste of Antonin Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty, got the audience out of its comfort zone!"

## THE DEMOCRATIC SET SHOWING – Audience Comments

"I was at the creative development showing of The Democratic Set, Back to Back's latest work in development, which featured a live soundtrack by the Amplified Elephants. The work was amazing – beautiful and seemingly simply realised, whilst retaining a dark, challenging content matter. The soundtrack not only perfectly enhanced the live performance, it was its own microcosm of a show and was beautiful to watch as well as hear."

# BACKTOBACKTHEATRE PRODUCTIONS 1988-2009

28

2009

## TOUR GUIDE

Linz 09 – European Cultural Capital 09, Linz, Austria

## FOOD COURT

Sydney Opera House, Opera Theatre, as part of Luminous curated by Brian Eno, Sydney

Kunstenfestivaldesarts, KVS Bol [Royal Flemish Theatre], Brussels, Belgium

Geelong Performing Arts Centre, Ford Theatre, Geelong

## SMALL METAL OBJECTS

The Kennedy Center, Millenium Stage, Washington DC, USA

Philadelphia Live Arts Festival, Philadelphia USA

Portland Institute of Contemporary Art, TBA Festival, Millennium Square, Portland, USA

Arnolfini & Bristol Old Vic, Podium Broadmead, Bristol, UK

Kampnagel Live Art Festival, Hauptbahnhof, Hamburg, Germany

Exodus Festival, Preseren Square, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Linz Cultural Capital 09, Shopping Centre Wells, Linz, Austria

## AWARDS

Helpmann Award Nomination for Best New Australian Work;  
Best Original Score & Best Scenic Design for **FOOD COURT**.

Kit Denton Fellowship for **GANESH VERSUS THE THIRD REICH**

2008  
PREMIERE

## FOOD COURT

Melbourne International Arts Festival, CUB Malthouse, Melbourne

## SMALL METAL OBJECTS

Singapore National Arts Festival, Vivo City, Singapore

Walker Art Center, Minneapolis Sculpture Garden, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

On the Boards, Olympic Sculpture Garden, Seattle, Washington, USA

Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, University Mall, Burlington, Vermont, USA

PuSH International Performing Arts Festival, Vancouver Library, Vancouver, Canada

Harbourfront Centre, Eaton Centre, Toronto, Canada

Under the Radar Festival / Public Theater, Staten Island Ferry Terminal, New York, USA

## AWARDS

Helpmann Award Nomination for Best New Work for **SMALL METAL OBJECTS**

Bessie, New York Performance and Dance Award, for the Under the Radar Season  
for **SMALL METAL OBJECTS**

# BACKTOBACKTHEATRE PRODUCTIONS 1988-2009

29

2007

## SMALL METAL OBJECTS

Ozmosis 07 Festival, Barbican, Stratford Station, East London

Dublin Theatre Festival, Mayor Square, Dublin, Ireland Zurcher Theater Spektakel, Landiwiese, Zurich, Switzerland

Noorderzon [Festival], Noorderplantsoen, Groningen, The Netherlands

Kobenhavns Internationale Teater [Festival], Radhuspladsen (Town Hall Square), Copenhagen, Denmark

Paris Quartier d'ete [festival], Place des Innocents, Forum des Halles, Paris, France

Theaterformen Festival, Kropcke, Hanover, Germany

Ten Days on the Island, Salamanca Square, Hobart

The Capitol, Bendigo Market Place, Bendigo

Mildura Wentworth Arts Festival, Mildura Centro, Mildura

Artshouse, Federation Square, Melbourne

Brisbane Powerhouse, Queen St Mall, Brisbane

Perth International Arts Festival, Forrest Place, Perth

Sydney Festival, Customs House Square, Sydney

## AWARDS

ZKB Acknowledgement Prize for the Zurcher Theater Spektakel season, Zurich,  
for **SMALL METAL OBJECTS**

Production in Theatre (New Form), Green Room Award, Melbourne, for  
**SMALL METAL OBJECTS**

2006

## SMALL METAL OBJECTS

Australian Performing Arts Market, Adelaide Railway Station, Adelaide

## AWARDS

Australian National ABAF Giving Award, for our philanthropic giving program

2005  
Premiere

## SMALL METAL OBJECTS

Melbourne International Arts Festival, Flinders St. Station Concourse, Melbourne

## AWARDS

Helpmann Award Nomination for Best New Australian Work for **SMALL METAL OBJECTS**

The Age Critics' [Inaugural] Special Commendation for **SMALL METAL OBJECTS**

The Sidney Myer Performing Arts Award – Group Award for the company's  
long-standing contribution to the development Australian theatre

2003

**COW** London International Festival of Theatre (LIFT), Battersea Arts Centre

Long Night of the Churches [Festival], Markuskirche, Hannover, Germany

**SOFT** Zurcher Theater Spektakel, Zurich, Switzerland, 2003 Laokoon Festival, Hamburg, Germany

**PORNSTAR** Midsumma Festival, Black Box Victorian Arts Centre, Melbourne  
Art of Difference, Gasworks Arts Park, Port Melbourne

# BACKTOBACKTHEATRE PRODUCTIONS 1988-2009

30

- 2002** **SOFT** 2002 Melbourne International Arts Festival, Shed 4, North Wharf Road, Docklands, Melbourne  
**WORKSHOP RESIDENCY** Muse Company SUMMER SCHOOL, Tokyo  
**COW** 6th Conference & International Festival of Theatre for Disabled Artists, Almagro, Spain
- 2001** **DOG FARM** 2002 Shepparton Arts Festival
- 2000** **MENTAL** Hot House Theatre, Wodonga  
**DOG FARM** La Mama, Melbourne  
Geelong Fringe Festival, Old Courthouse Building, Geelong  
**MENTAL** Sydney 2000 Summer Paralympic Arts Festival, Seymour Theatre Centre, Sydney
- 1999** **MENTAL** Athenaeum Theatre II, Melbourne  
**DRAG RACERS IN LOVE** With Nelson Park School, Geelong Performing Arts Centre
- 1998** **BOOM TOWN** With Snuff Puppets, Kardinia Park Football Arena Geelong  
**MINDS EYE** Adelaide Fringe Festival, Scott Theatre, Adelaide
- 1997** **PETER PAN** With Arena Theatre, George Fairfax Studio, Victorian Arts Centre, Melbourne  
Geelong Performing Arts Centre  
**MR SEPTEMBER** Old Courthouse Building, Geelong
- 1996** **MINDS EYE** With Handspan Visual Theatre, Lonsdale St Power Station, Melbourne  
**ROAD MOVIE** With Melbourne Workers Theatre, Lonsdale Street Power Station, Melbourne
- 1995** **BACK TO BACK IN SHORTS** A series of short works presented at the Irene Mitchell Studio, St Martin's Theatre, Melbourne
- 1994** **FREAK SHOW** With Circus Oz, Blakiston Theatre, Geelong Performing Arts Centre, Geelong; Napier St Theatre, Melbourne
- 1993** **VOICES OF DESIRE** Blakiston Theatre Performing Arts Centre Geelong; Polyglot Theatre Melbourne, Belvoir St Theatre, Sydney; tours to Albury Wodonga, Canberra
- 1992** **THE ADVENTURES OF BOBBI DAZZLER** Blakiston Theatre, Geelong Performing Arts Centre, Geelong; Polyglot Puppet Theatre, Melbourne  
**WOODENHEAD** Blakiston Theatre, Geelong Performing Arts Centre, Geelong; Arena Theatre, South Melbourne; Belconnen Community Theatre Canberra; and Bay Street Theatre Glebe, Sydney and tours in regional Victoria and Central Western NSW
- 1991** **I DON'T WANT TO LIVE IN LARA ANYMORE** Blakiston Theatre, Geelong Performing Arts Centre, Geelong  
**YELL BLUE MURDER** Blakiston Theatre, Geelong Performing Arts Centre, Geelong and Athenaeum II, Melbourne
- 1990** **THE PEG MACHINE** Blakiston Theatre, Geelong Performing Arts Centre, Geelong; Tours to TAS, QLD, NSW, ACT, VIC and SA  
**EVERYTHING AND THE MERMAID** Blakiston Theatre, Geelong Performing Arts Centre; Arena Theatre South Melbourne
- 1989** **CINDERELLA, THE FAT COW DEPARTS** Ashby Hall, Geelong  
**STINKING HOUSES** Blakiston Theatre, Geelong Performing Arts Centre; Victorian and ACT Tours
- 1988** **BIG BAG** Geelong Performing Arts Centre, Geelong; Arena Theatre South Melbourne

# COMMUNITY PRODUCTIONS, RESIDENCIES & EVENTS 1999-2009

31

- 2009** **THE DEMOCRATIC SET, CASTLEMAINE RESIDENCY** CreateAbility, Windarrang and the Castlemaine State Festival  
**NELSON PARK RESIDENCY** with students from Nelson Park School
- 2008** **ADELAIDE RESIDENCY** with Restless Dance, Adelaide  
**THE DEMOCRATIC SET** created by THEATRE OF SPEED  
**LIGHT LETTERS** with community members from Cloverdale Community Centre, Dorothy Thompson Day Centre, Norlane West Primary, Nelson Park School
- 2007** **DMI: DISABILITY MAINTENANCE INSTRUMENT** performed by THEATRE OF SPEED, Stott Theatre, Old Courthouse Building, Geelong
- 2006** **POD 6 - WARRNAMBOOL** with Break of Day Players  
**BOOMTOWNERS** with THEATRE OF SPEED and Snuff Puppets, 2006 Commonwealth Games Live Site, Geelong  
**POD 7 - GEELONG** Performed by THEATRE OF SPEED, Geelong West Town Hall  
**POD 8 - HOBART** Amalgamation Festival, Salamanca Theatre, Hobart
- 2005** **MINOTAUR** Performed by THEATRE OF SPEED, Old Courthouse Building, Geelong  
**POD 4 - BALLARAT** With Brrrr Theatre, Camp Street Theatre, Ballarat  
**POD 5 - COLAC** With Ants Pantz Arts, Trinity College, Colac
- 2004** **POD 3 - HORSHAM** Awakenings Festival, Horsham Town Hall
- 2003** **INSIDE THE ANGEL HOUSE** Performed by THEATRE OF SPEED, Old Courthouse Building, Geelong
- 2002** **WORKSHOP RESIDENCY** Muse Company SUMMER SCHOOL, Tokyo
- 2001** **FISHMAN** Performed by St Laurence Theatre Workshop, Geelong Performing Arts Centre
- 2000** **ARNOLD** Performed by St Laurence Theatre Workshop, 2000 Geelong Fringe Festival, Courthouse Project, Geelong
- 1999** **DRAG RACERS IN LOVE** With Nelson Park School, Geelong Performing Arts Centre  
**PUSH PUSH** With Karingal participants, 1999 Momenta Arts Geelong, Courthouse Project, Geelong  
**THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE WEDDING** With Karingal participants, Courthouse Project, Geelong



**TOUR GUIDE**

Linz 09 – European  
Cultural Capital 09,  
Linz, Austria 2009

PHOTO Nick Mangafas





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**“We’re agile  
and work  
professionally  
as a theatre  
company”**

NELSON PARK RESIDENCY  
IMAGE Marcia Ferguson

HOME CRAFTS

