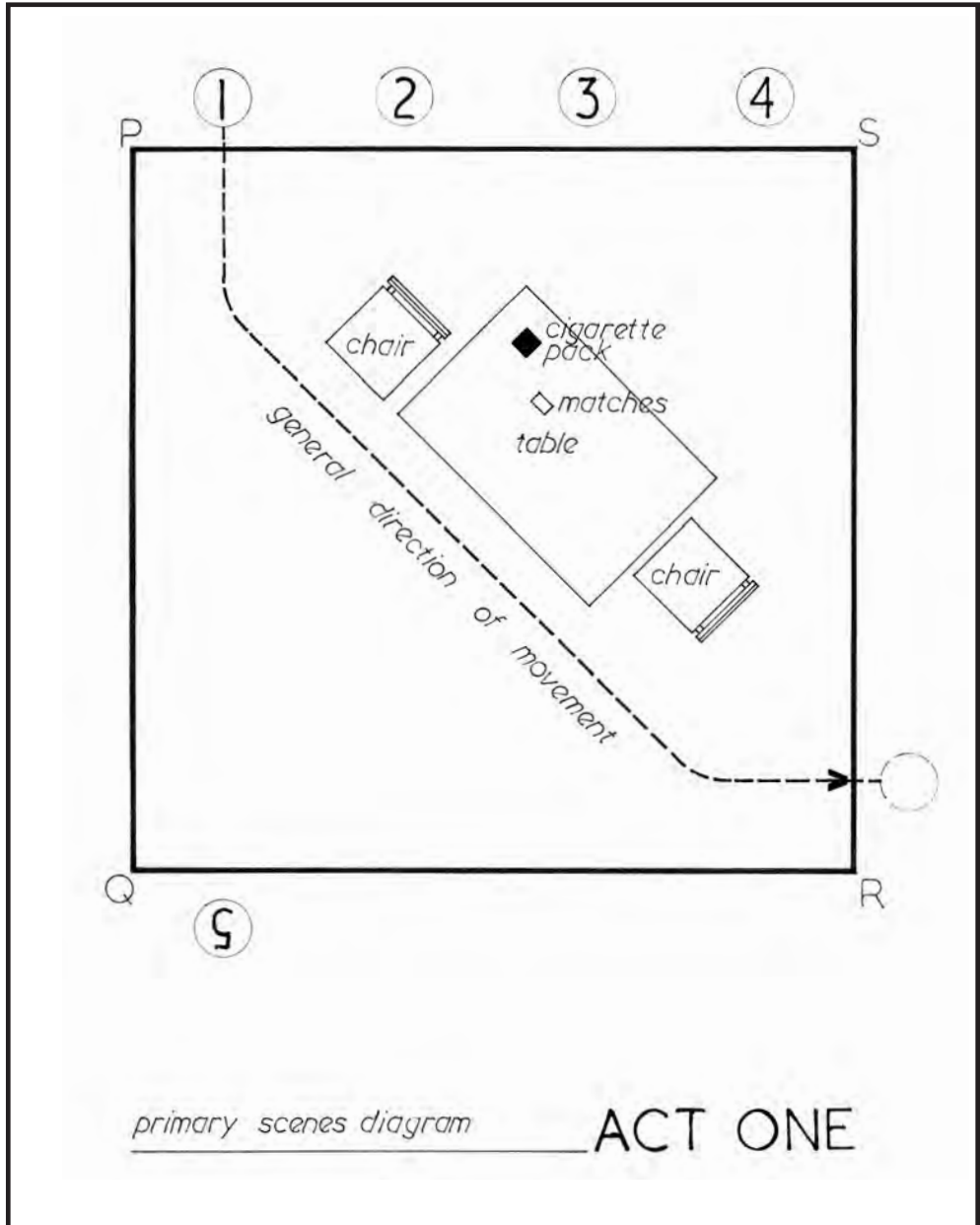


GOING



THE THEATRE OF MISTAKES

GOING

Going is about going.

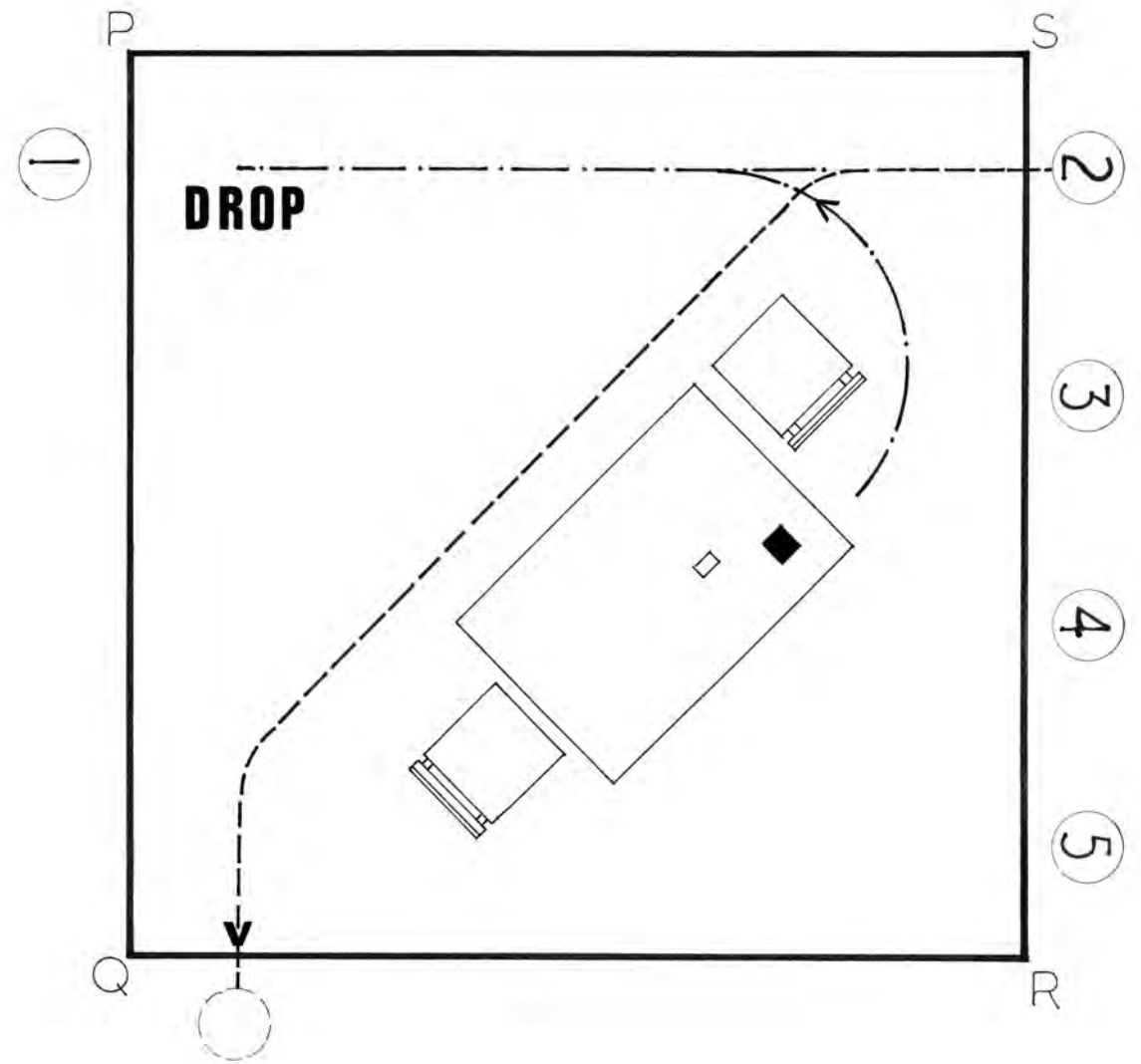
Going where? Anxiousness to prevent anyone from going interrupts the characters' saying where. They do go, they are no longer where they were going from, but still they want to go, and do go again. By the time they finally go out of sight, their going has become detached from any space and time. Going is in the future, it is going to happen; yet something has happened which has to be gone from. They will have gone, be gone. They are continually in an ambiguous position of changing by means of an act—that of change—which seems essentially the same.

Or is it? The same act repeated can not be the same act, if only because it has the context of the first. The same smile is now passive, now cruel; the sentence which begins and ends the piece, "Oh don't be so silly!", moves from being said in a physical and verbal vacuum, to being common sense, to being vicious, and to cutting with a knife of humour through the entire state of affairs. The smile is even now seen, now unseen as with each act the same event moves at a different angle: full views become profiles, or lost in shadow.

Who is going? A character speaks in the first person: "I do have to go now." , but is he not leaving the person who a moment previously said, "Really, I must go!"? Or was that someone else? But did that person not say, "She doesn't have to go, does she?"? And it is none of these people who is putting on his coat. Each person (one can hardly say character) weaves a role identical to that of the others into different moments of the same role. Dressed neutrally and performing in a sparsely marked and furnished square, each person becomes paradoxically more real, and the setting closer to the audience, below the scrutiny of the piece itself. They are They are all going, all watching each other go—but is this the first time anyone said, "Goodbye!"? How much difference does a surprise make; does surprise lie in newness? A different act by a different person may be the same act. We deepen our knowledge of an act by returning to it, whatever it may have become. "Why do you have to go?" cries one of them. Why indeed, if only to return? But precisely.

going is in order to come. There is no apparent chaos, rather a logic that is forbidding in its precision, a purity that heightens the senses. Someone falls. The piece cracks open. The room holds its breath; we are all frozen until they breathe out.

Gradually, inexorably we watch people going and again going, or is it still going, dismissing and preventing and preparing. There is singing which hints that going led nowhere, or is it that we must not go. Words slide into sound. It is a sublime Going, or a sublimely ridiculous Going, towards us and away from us and between us, and finally simply before us. One by one, they have gone. And we go. Is our going like theirs, or like any other time we have gone? Are we going? Are we ever not going? Later, we notice the turn of a head, the inflexion of a voice in a cliché across a room. They seem invested with a significance; it signifies merely what we have noticed.



primary scenes diagram

ACT TWO



GOING

THE THEATRE OF MISTAKES

"Going" is a five act play in which, attempting to be each other rather than attempting to enact characters, the performers have to learn all of the parts. It is a fugue put together out of the mannerisms of departure. It concerns going, or attempting to go when the participants are bound together as closely as the strands of a knotted ring. Each weaves a role identical to that of the others into different moments of the same role.

6.30 p.m. - 7. p.m. on Wednesday May 10th in Gallery One.
and

6. p.m. - 7. p.m. on Friday May 12th in Gallery One.

ADMISSION FREE

THE THEATRE OF MISTAKES

GOING

A PERFORMANCE

I do think I'd better be going
now because I—

Oh, don't be so silly!

Really, I must go.

Ahem.

I do have to go now.

Are you sure?

Why do you have to go?

If you must, you must.

'Bye.

Really.

Bon. Je pense qu'il vaut mieux
que je parte maintenant
parce que—

Oh, ne dis pas de bêtises!

Non, vraiment, je dois partir.

Hum.

Il faut que je parte maintenant.

Tu es sûr?

Pourquoi dois-tu partir?

S'il le faut, il le faut.

Aur'voir.

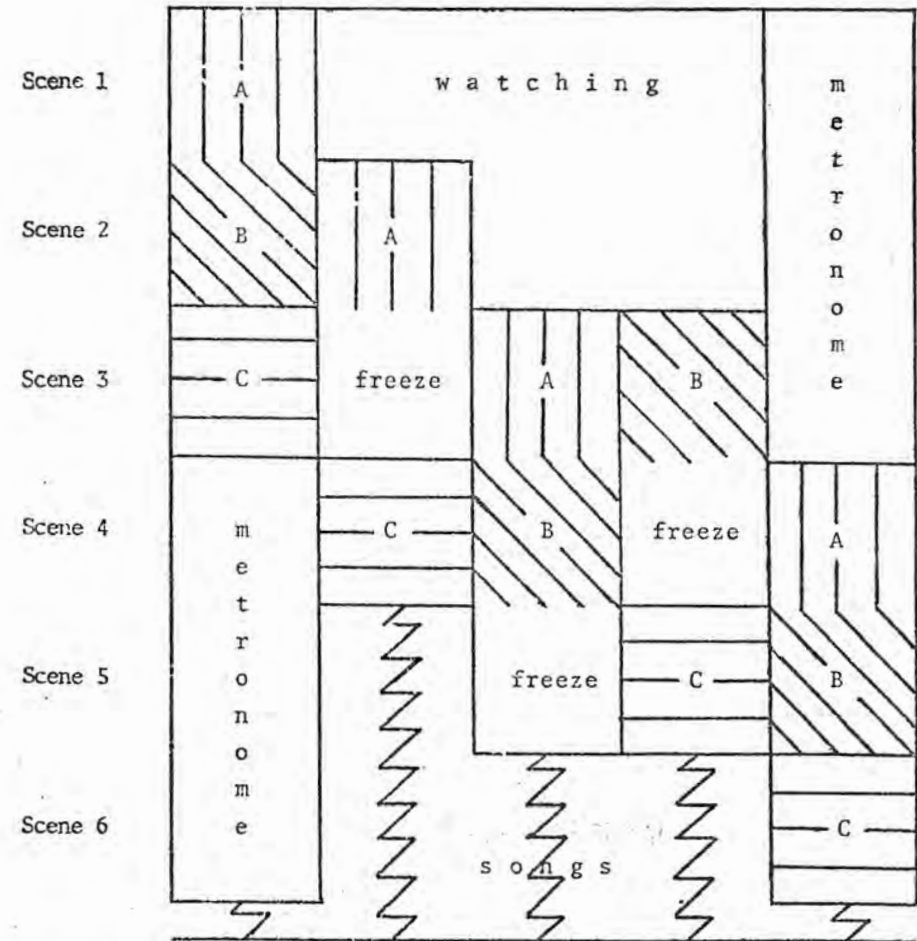
Oh, vraiment.

20 January 1978

time diagram

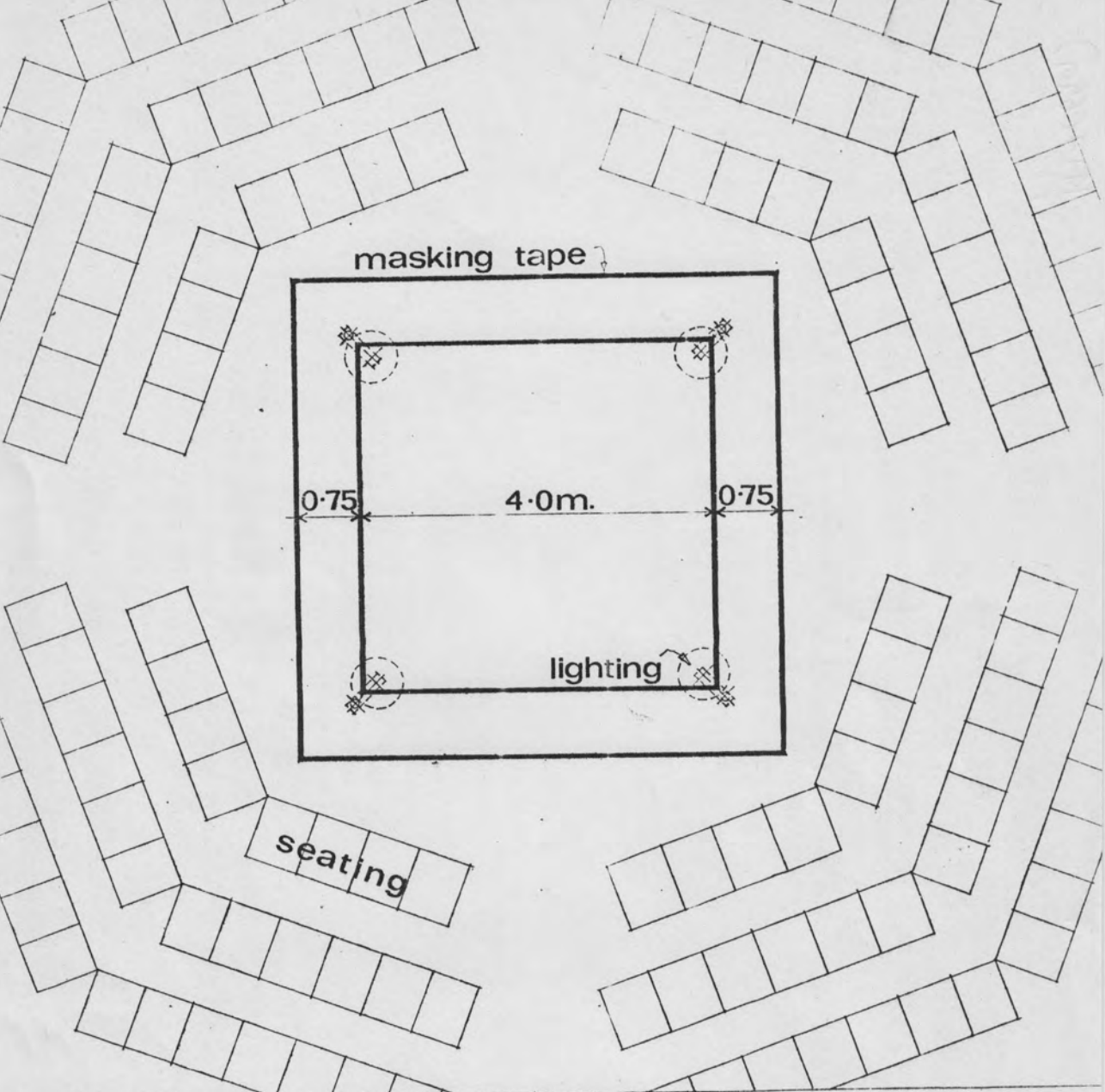
Performers:

⑤
(instigator) ① ② ③ ④



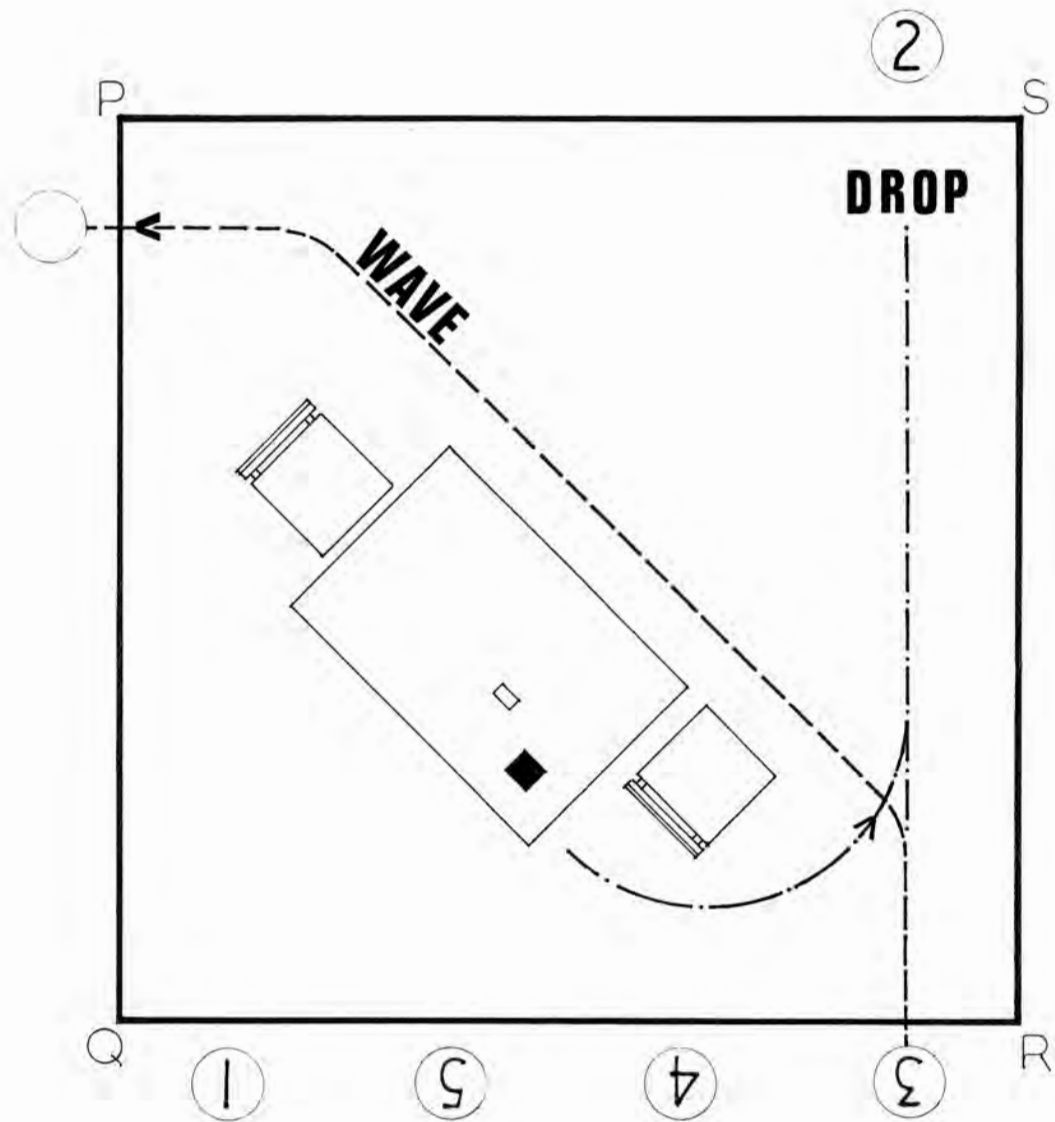
A, B & C = primary scenes

ACT FIVE



GOING
SPECIFICATION SHEET No 1
PLAN OF PERFORMANCE SPACE





primary scenes diagram ACT THREE

Going (1977)
The Theatre of Mistakes

Going is a performance in five acts. In it, the performers have to learn all the parts, while trying to be each other rather than presuming to enact characters. *Going* is performed with either three women and two men, or three men and two women, who may appear in any order.

Equipment:
Two chairs, one table, one packet of cigarettes and one box of matches.

Clothing:
Grey suits and black shoes.

The Idea:
Each of the five acts is a repetition of the first act. Each is begun by a different performer. In each act a further element is introduced by the first performer to enter in that act. Each new element is repeated in all subsequent acts.

Duration:
Approximately one hour without interval.

Cast:
Manuela Albrecht
Javier Cardona
Yoko Ishiguro
Florence Peake
Andrew Price
Taylor Smith

The cast of six alternates.

Directed by Fiona Templeton.

Auditorium design by Simon Jones studio after The Theatre of Mistakes.

Produced for *In Case There's a Reason: The Theatre of Mistakes*
Raven Row, 30 June until 6 August 2017.
Curated by Jason E. Bowman.

A total of twelve performances at 7pm each Friday and Saturday, from Friday 30 June until Saturday 5 August 2017.

William B. Robinson

Commissioner

James F. Howard

Superintendent



P.O. BOX 9901
PITTSBURGH, PA. 15233

TELEPHONE (412) 761-1955

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
BUREAU OF CORRECTION
STATE CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION
AT PITTSBURGH

November 28, 1978

Dr. Leon Katz, Director
99 $\frac{1}{2}$ Floating Theatre
Department of Speech and Theatre Arts
1117 Cathedral of Learning
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, PA 15260

Dear Dr. Katz:

We very much enjoyed your November 19th performance by the Theatre of Mistakes. "Going" was a play our men could appreciate on several levels and I was pleased to hear their insightful comments as to how the performance could be related to their lives as prisoners.

I believe you have done a valuable social service to the entire community by exposing this prison community to the human values conveyed in your artform.

Please call me directly at 761-1955, extension 234, about one month prior to any future performance you may be able to offer our population. As Coordinator of the Academy of Prison Arts I will make the necessary requests for your group to enter the institution. As far as I am concerned, you will always be welcome to bring your 99 $\frac{1}{2}$ Floating Theatre Festival into the institution, and as long as you give me enough advance notice, I believe I will be able to coordinate your visit into our ongoing program.

I have written to Mr. Don Marinelli concerning the procedures for his beginning some formal academic course through the institution college program.

Feel free to contact me whenever you need some additional reference as to your community service work.

Very truly yours,

Paul A. Rolin,
Music Director and
Academy of Prison Arts Coordinator

cc: file



Above: *Going* (1977), performed 1978 at the State Correctional Institution, Pittsburgh. Photographer unknown. Opposite: Letter from Paul Rolin, Academy of Prison Arts Coordinator, State Correctional Institution, Pittsburgh, to Dr. Leon Katz, Director 99 $\frac{1}{2}$ Floating Theatre, November 1978.

The Theatre of Mistakes
Going: a Partial Chronology

Compiled by Jason E. Bowman from primary sources and conflictual recollections.

1976

Serpentine Gallery, London. *Summer Exhibition 5*, curated by Michael Craig-Martin.

The structure of *Going* is initially implemented – with improvised content – as *Homage to Pietro Longhi/Scenes at a Table*.

1977

Aberdeen Art Gallery, Edinburgh College of Art, the St. Andrews Festival, The Third Eye Centre, Glasgow and Greenhaugh Hall, Hexham.

Going is premiered in a tour of Scotland and the North East of England, organised by Richard Demarco.

Originating cast:
Michael Greenall
Glenys Johnson
Anthony Howell
Peter Stickland
Fiona Templeton

Cambridge Poetry Festival; New Court Theatre, Christ's Church College, Cambridge.

Winchester School of Art.

10th Biennale de Paris des Jeunes Artistes; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. Foire internationale d'art contemporain (FIAC); Grand Palais, Paris.

1978

Space Studios, Essex Road Baths, London. Public dress rehearsal.

Studentski kulturni centar (SKC), Belgrade.

Arnolfini, Bristol.

99c Floating Theatre Festival, Pittsburgh. State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh. The Theater for the New City, New York.

1980

The Jeanetta Cochrane Theatre, London.

2007

Going is published by Grey Suit Editions (London).

2008–2010

Going with Coming – a recreation when two of *Going's* five acts were replaced by *Coming*, directed by Fiona Templeton and produced by her company The Relationship.

Chashama 217 Theatre, New York.

Dixon Place, New York.

International Theatre Festival of Puerto Rico; Teatro Francisco Arriví, San Juan.

Movement Research Festival; Danspace Project, New York.

2017

Raven Row, London.

Published on the occasion of the exhibition *In Case There's a Reason: The Theatre of Mistakes* 30 June to 6 August 2017

Curated by Jason E. Bowman

Raven Row and Jason E. Bowman would like to thank Anthony Howell and Fiona Templeton for their contribution to the exhibition and to all members for making The Theatre of Mistakes archive available. We are very grateful to members of The Theatre of Mistakes: Glenys Johnson, Miranda Payne, Peter Stickland, Julian Maynard Smith, Lindsay Moran and Howard Tong. Great thanks also to Anthony McCall, Faye Laffin, Adrien Vasquez at John Morgan studio, and the Valand Academy, University of Gothenburg. Finally, special thanks are owed to Marie-Anne Mancio, who with Jason E. Bowman, researched and catalogued the archive of The Theatre of Mistakes in 2006. We are also grateful to Arts Council England and the Henry Moore Foundation for their support of the exhibition.

Going cast: Manuela Albrecht, Javier Cardona, Yoko Ishiguro, Florence Peake, Andrew Price, Taylor Smith.

Exhibition furniture design: Simon Jones studio

Graphic design: John Morgan studio

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Images and archival material © The Theatre of Mistakes

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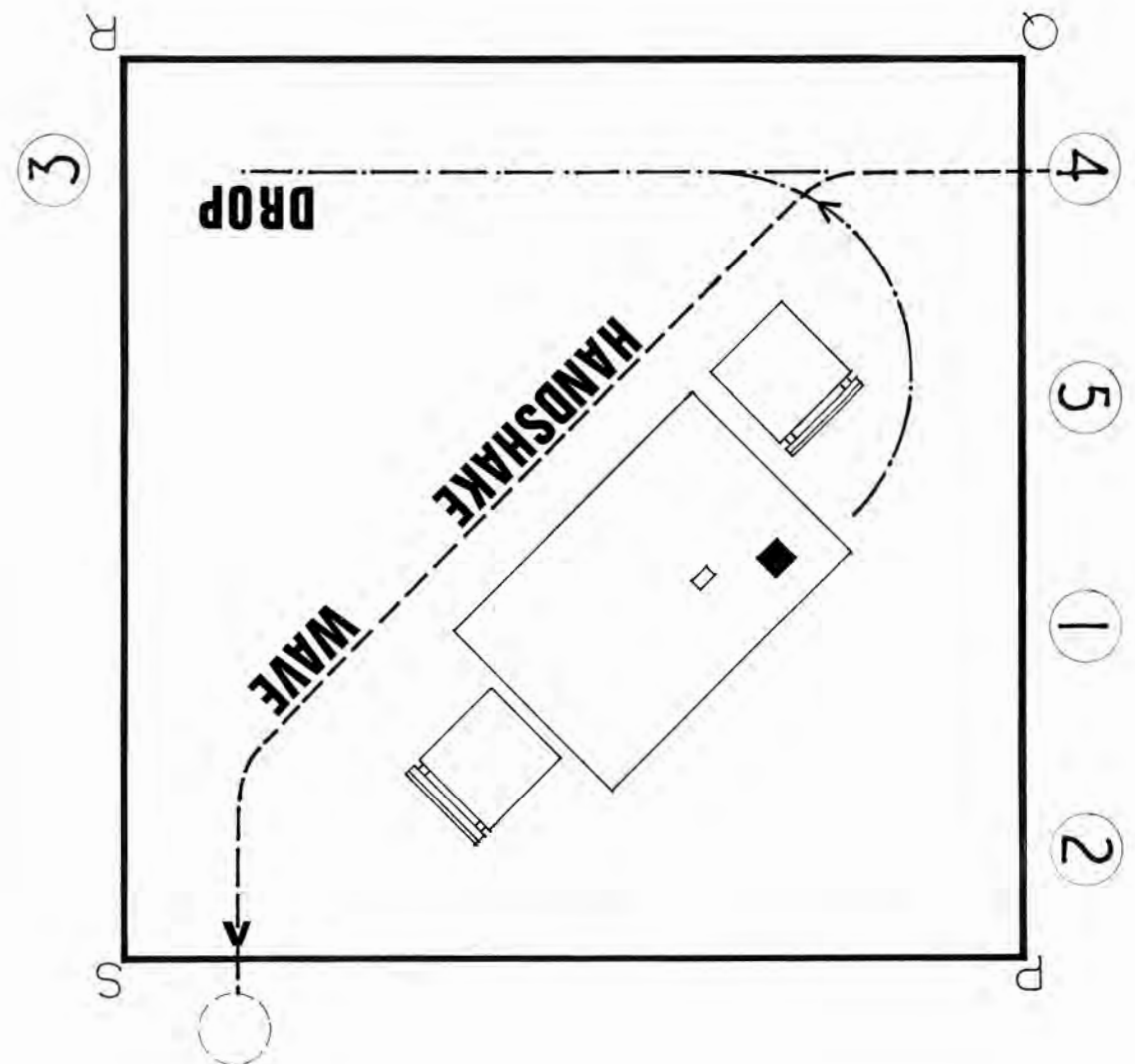


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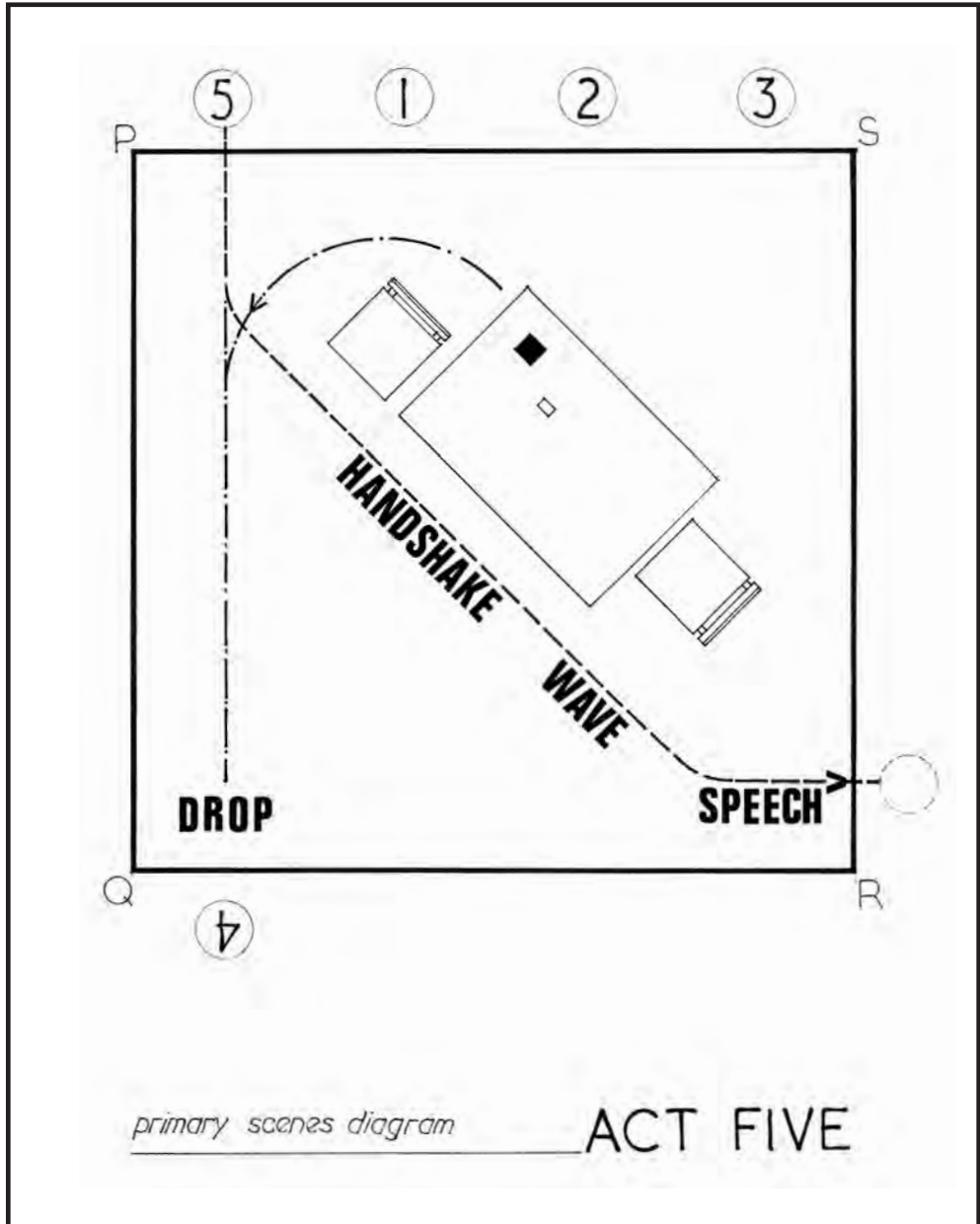


ACT FOUR

primary scenes diagram



IN CASE THERE'S A REASON



THE THEATRE OF MISTAKES

THERE'S A REASON: A CASE FOR THE THEATRE OF MISTAKES

Ting, the Ting, The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes – a series of monikers that sometimes chronologically overlap in the records (1971–81)¹ of this artist-group from which the exhibition *In Case There's a Reason: The Theatre of Mistakes* is constructed, alongside revitalised performances that mark two chapters of its practice. Firstly, the group's early open, participatory and co-productive phase involving numerous people fostering exercises towards a hypothesis of performance art. Secondly, a new production of *Going* (1977)², a decidedly systemised work devised by a dedicated core – that emphasises a commitment to disabusing characterisation in favour of being.

As a survey, *In Case There's a Reason: The Theatre of Mistakes* enmeshes the archival with the reconstruction of live works. The exhibition also considers the operational and administrative dynamics of the company amidst the influences of its fluctuating membership and associates over a seven-year trajectory (1974–81). Divergent records and memories command selectivity, however whilst a singular chronicle is evaded – a narrative, nevertheless, is evinced.

In Case There's a Reason navigates a dominant notion of performance art as being ideologically preoccupied with time-bound, evaporative immediacy, a concurrent disavowal of objecthood and materiality, and resistance to documentation. Whilst some of the exhibited records are ephemeral, meaning that they mark evanescent moments in a history of The Theatre of Mistakes, others are more provocative in terms of an impulse for potential longevity.

The Theatre of Mistakes may be understood to have engaged in the production of legacy; in part based on the potential for others to replicate its works and advance its concepts including hypothetically after its demise. Its attention to accounting for itself exploited the multi-disciplinary skills and approaches of members – poets, writers, dancers, visual artists and architects – works were collaboratively planned for and charted by text, collage, diagram, photography and drawing. Rehearsals, proto-works and finalised performances are therefore documented across media. Despite seeking funding to exploit its medium, only occasionally was video employed.

Several written statements identify what may otherwise have been considered extra-artistic documentation to be what were termed 'soundings'³. These are inclusive of particular manifestations of editioned images, collages and publications for which pricelists were conceived. As an indicator of possible monetisation, irrespective of its success – after all London was not yet a market centre for contemporary art – this

reveals that the group, or at least some of its members, did not consider performance art to be a repudiation of physical art production nor were they resistant to the possible sale of artefacts.

Several scholars⁴ have acknowledged administrative qualities as being inherent to conceptualist and idea-centric forms of practice such as the instructional nature of production inherent to Sol LeWitt's paintings or Hans Haacke's institutional interventions. Paperwork is both a significant residue from, but was also an apparatus within the collaborative nature and entity of The Theatre of Mistakes, as well as those who engaged with and contributed to its own making and re-making. Typed papers complement handwritten documents and a profuse use of the photocopier repeats a keenness for generative circulation. An early word processor was used to construct the outlines for *Time Diagrams* for 1976's *Scenes at a Table*, which were then coloured by hand. Notes inform various handbooks for work in progress with plans and schedules and thoughts on who may do what, when, how and why – and for what duration, including decisions made sometimes by chance, though not necessarily carried out as initially proposed.

Concurrent to the group's evolving theories of performance art, missive-like statements were made and appear as cumulative versions across promotional material and other forms of self-description. Snail mail correspondence between peers and associates – including on cigarette-paper-thin airmail paper – suggest a commitment to the generosity of discourse in the building of communities of practice. Durational peer-to-peer support of experimentation also took place at Purdies Farm⁵ in Hampshire, where intermittently – and sometimes controversially – manifestations of works or projects in progress also occurred on the nearby village green of Hartley Witney. As a rural environment Purdies was a site of a commitment to sociality where other artists were invited to stay, work and engage with each other's concepts and foster critique whilst exploiting the landscape and the farm's buildings as sites. It was also where the group made works for mutual viewership including a night of solos and *Fantasy Piece* (1975). At Purdies, The Theatre of Mistakes generated forms of intimate viewership, questioning whether an audience was indeed required for a work to exist. The dole, as for many artists of the time, allowed for mobility (then one could sign on anywhere) and basic living expenses. One document reveals the predicted monthly expenditure of members.

Anthony Howell (ex-Royal Ballet dancer and poet) initiated The Ting in 1974, prompted, in part, by an encounter with a disseminator of one of Yoko Ono's instructional works. At London's artist-run spaces such as Artists Meeting Place, The Dairy and the studio of artist Robert Janz people would gather twice weekly in open workshops to generate, co-commit to performing and redefine exercises, initially in two conditions: physical and verbal.

Connection took place via word of mouth and the cordiality of artists' social lives. Those participating included practitioners from the arts but also from other occupations, such as the economist Victoria Chick, who was recruited via an action group attended by both her and Howell's then wife Signe Lie. Lie had introduced Howell to the historic Nordic concept of Ting, a form of polity conducted through peaceful assembly of free men and women on common land, but capable of being presided over by lawmakers.

An underlying rubric at the artistic Ting assemblies was that in proposing an exercise one was concomitantly agreeing to perform those proposed by others, and so began

a series of conventions that, despite it never being legally constituted, punctuates the history of the group's organisational formations. By 1975 writer and poet Fiona Templeton had connected with a shared interest in games, specifically concerning the potential for multiple games to be played out simultaneously.

Mik/Mikey/Mickey/Mike Greenall, Miranda Payne, David Spathaky and Howard Tong were recruited from art schools in Maidstone and Hornsey. With Howell and Templeton, they are named as the first six in what would become an alterable roll call of 'nucleus' members of The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes and then The Theatre of Mistakes. Core members and participants in Ting events recruited friends and acquaintances to perform, such as the near 25 performers who participated in the group's early performance, *Preparations for Displacement* at the Cambridge Poetry Festival in April 1975 or the 60-odd people who, in the same year, co-performed *The Street*. Later indices see the named nuclei vary across projects and timespan and see the enrolment, constancy and leave-taking of various formations of core membership including of Glenys Johnson, Julian Maynard Smith, Lindsay Moran, Pat Murphy, Peter Stickland and Anita Urquhart. In a tripartite sequence of *Mutual Signatures* (1975) Anthony Howell, Mickey Greenall and Fiona Templeton reveal themselves as entwined in a shared monogram. Beginnings or endings can be elusive, not least when a membership – whether associative, one-off, sporadic, recurring and peripatetic or core, hard-core or nuclei – concertinas across time, venue, project, life, task and art. Nevertheless, principal players who signed up in 1976 to a five-year commitment to sustain working together were Greenall, Howell, Payne, Stickland and Templeton – the cast of *Going*.

Garnered from selected exercises developed at events, recorded in what was referred to as *The Gymnasium*, several early public performances such as *Preparations for Displacement* and *The Street* familiarised publics and engaged constituents in the group's burgeoning commitment to advancing its own theories and praxis of systemic art but also as site-responsive works. Rehearsed for almost 11 weeks *The Street* – described as 'a dance chorale' – was then performed by around 60 people including co-residents of Ascham Street in Kentish Town, some of whom moved the contents of their living rooms from their domestic space to the thoroughfare.

The work of contemporaries such as the American polymath Robert Wilson⁶, who had trained in spatial design and whose productions also emphasised actions within the visual frame through real time, calibrated at different momenta and tempo, was an influence. The embraced restraint inherent to how the writers and mathematicians involved in Oulipo (*Ouvroir de littérature potentielle*)⁷ whose command of structures allowed, nevertheless, for disruptive inconsequential permutations provided inspiration. As with the impulse of Ono's instructions and Oulipian conventions the potential for replication via dissemination, or perhaps more accurately continuation of its concepts and hypotheses – via distribution and participative adaptation – became key to the mannerisms of The Theatre of Mistakes' production.

In ways that conversely insinuate authorship but signal willingness for shared proliferation, Howell and Templeton produced the group's only self-published volume *Elements of Performance Art* in July 1976. By then *The Gymnasium* had become a compendium of hundreds of handwritten exercises which were duly edited and converted into reams of typewritten text, then distilled, refined and calibrated into this proto-manual by which to make performance art from The Theatre of Mistakes'

reasoned definition of its foundational elements. Alongside republication of excerpted statements, made previously by the group, this book offers a total of 42 exercises divided into six varieties of 'performance exercise or idea(s)⁹. It is suggested that these confer 'a menu' that when designated from, including through the aleatoric impact of rolling dice, may constitute a performance made up of conjoining choices – some leading to incompatibilities and thus generative of mistakes, dilemmas and impasses. Its introduction includes an outline of divergent spatio-temporal possibilities including how spectatorship 'in the round' – or more exactly, in terms of their future trajectory, 'in the square' – would allow multi-dimensional and integrated points of view rather than the singularising framing effect inherent to the proscenium arch theatre. Works were also conceived for their ability to produce tableaux-like images. In all its editions *Elements of Performance Art* is comb-bound, suggestive of functionality: its pages capable of lying flat on a surface whilst being consulted as exercises are activated.

Populated by dancers and choreographers, writers, visual artists and trained architect Peter Stickland, The Theatre of Mistakes paid significant attention to the spatio-temporal and its effects on the pictorial, including how bodies, objects, furniture and clothes may be moved through a series of axes. Stickland produced multiple diagrams incorporating orthographic or multiview blueprints and other plans that articulated divergent rotational planes or toyed with multi-perspectival lines of sight. The diagram was used not only to depict architectural characteristics but also to plan for, organise and impart complex structural interfaces of performers, text, multiple actions, objects, site and configurations of time and of space. Likewise, preparatory notebooks for works reveal the diagrammatic as a means for planning and preparation but also as a way to visualise suggested divisions of roles and responsibilities within the group.

The Theatre of Mistakes explored the inherent replicability of diagrams. The structure depicted in the coloured suite of five *Time Diagrams* from *Scenes at a Table* was repeated in *Going*. The promotional material for *Preparations for Displacement* and *The Street* include component exercises and diagrams that duplicate certain exercises that also informed *Elements of Performance Art*. The material distributed at *Preparations for Displacement* informs the spectator how to shift from being viewer to co-performer. Yet, principles seem to be upheld throughout: the best of ideas were to be pinpointed and further refined, additively or subtractively, allowing also for re-incorporation across works. Numerous manuscripts were produced after performances. These operate not simply as a record but also as handbooks towards potential reproduction.

The Theatre of Mistakes long sought to disorientate the laws of gravity as identified in photographic works such as *Anti-Gravity* (1975) shot at the Automobile Association's Headquarters in Basingstoke. The perpendicular *Ascent of the Stedelijk* (1976) was recorded in photography and collage by Glenys Johnson who shot photographs simultaneous to performing. The inversed pouring at play in the various iterations of *A Waterfall* (1976) is notated in multi-various charts including of the timed utterances of its riddle-like koans, the scheduling of performers, and actions such as water being poured upwards. *A Waterfall's* overall sequencing was recorded in a grid of Polaroids and in part by a time-lapse photograph by Giles Thomas. The use of objects also punctuated the group's work, especially furniture and in particular the functional, tubular steel chairs made by the English company Practical Equipment Ltd (pel). Objects were not necessarily treated as props but more as partners in performances that eschewed dramatic narrative arcs and the psychological characterisation inherent to plots. In *Table*

Moves Duet (1981) an arrangement of chairs and a table shifts through 90 degrees on the axis of the centre of the square in which it is performed or on each of the centres of its quarters. Moving furniture with bodies allowed for viewpoints as if from below, above, front, back and sides. The performers in the two-part *Homage to Morandi* (1979) switch to being their partners in the performance: a table, a wardrobe, a suitcase and chairs.

The entity of The Theatre of Mistakes defies simple categorisation. As a group, there appears to be no records of them being described as a collective or cooperative, and from loose beginnings they come to be referred to as 'a company'. No record exists of its incorporation yet their working practices reveal much about the dynamics of mutual and interdisciplinary art production. Further, the group varies in its accounts of authorship, singular and plural, amidst a shifting membership. Its claim to performance art, versus theatre, is also interestingly ambiguous. Despite a rigorous rejection of psycho-dramatic edicts, The Theatre of Mistakes' work does reveal a consideration of particular theatrical conventions, such as some works being constituted in Acts or Scenes. Clearly, The Theatre of Mistakes was an entity concerned with the potential for its work's replication.

The Theatre of Mistakes' complex forms of documentation in a range of media are carefully aligned with its conceptually-driven and systemised aesthetic as opposed to being merely recordings in photography and video. Its elaborate holdings that may assist in developing a history of British experimental and interdisciplinary performance have long been in storage. The group, therefore, may have received less public attention or research than may otherwise be reasonably expected. In bringing together live works, as well as its strategies, methods and records of its forms of organisation, it is hoped that *In Case There's a Reason* addresses the lacunae that obscures The Theatre of Mistakes' contribution to the development of systemic performance.

Jason E. Bowman

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <p>1 The records of the Theatre of Mistakes are certainly partial. Between 2006–07, Jason E. Bowman and Marie-Anne Mancio catalogued these, the majority of which were kept by Anthony Howell. Holdings by other members and associates were also logged. From 1971–73 the records are of pre-Ting projects by Anthony Howell and associates.</p> <p>2 <i>Going</i> was devised by Mickey Greenall, Anthony Howell, Glenys Johnson, Peter Stickland and Fiona Templeton.</p> <p>3 The Soundings are described with multiple definitions. In a 1975–76 funding application to the Arts Council they were defined as being the exercises recorded in <i>The Gymnasium</i> and a series of manuscripts, <i>The Performance Books</i> that recorded and allowed for replication of <i>Preparations</i></p> | <p><i>for Displacement, The Street and The London Exhibition</i>. Later writings suggest them as being artworks derived from performances including sequenced photographs, collages and works such as <i>Mutual Signatures</i>.</p> <p>4 Key texts include: Buchloh, Benjamin H. D., 'Conceptual Art 1962–1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions' in <i>October Vol 55</i> (winter, 1990), pp 105–143; and, Bryan-Wilson, Julia. <i>Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era</i>. Oakland: University of California Press. 2011.</p> <p>5 Purdies Farm was owned by Anthony Howell's veteranian mother Deborah Howell. Alongside properties at Ascham Street and later Almeida Street, it is listed as the home of the group which spent significant periods of time there.</p> | <p>6 Active since the early 1970s, Wilson is an influential American artist most known for his theatre, art musicals and operatic productions, often with large casts that employ expanded durationality. His drawings, furniture designs and installations have been exhibited in museums and galleries internationally.</p> <p>7 Oulipo was co-founded in 1960 by Raymond Queneau and François Le Lionnais. It is a loose gathering of writers and mathematicians who restrict writing resulting in constrained patterns, including aesthetically. Writers such as Italo Calvino and George Perec also wrote in Oulipian fashions.</p> <p>8 These were conditions, body, aural, time/space, equipment and manifestation.</p> |
|--|---|--|

THE THEATRE OF MISTAKES: A SELECTIVE CHRONOLOGY¹

1974

The Ting is founded in London. People from differing art forms and occupations gather to develop and co-perform instructional and games-based exercises.

The Ting at Artists Meeting Place

An initial public performance using the concept of a 'free session', when participants would perform exercises simultaneously, which would result in a complex structure including a logic of 'triggering'.

1975

Anti-Gravity

The Automobile Association Building (AA), Basingstoke.

A series of photographs in which gravity is disoriented through the use of vertical and horizontal planes against the brickwork of the AA's Fanum House.

Preparations for Displacement

Cambridge International Poetry Festival; Corn Exchange, Cambridge. (25 performers)
A performance that coalesces exercises, including drawn from *The Gymnasium* – the compendium in which the group cumulatively logged them.

The Street

Ascham Street, Kentish Town, London.
A performance devised from exercises and co-performed with the residents of Ascham Street, where it is rehearsed for about 11 weeks. It involves 60-odd performers including residents, and specialised instructions are developed for children.

Pairs Game, The Three Act Piece, Sabotage Piece

Southampton Performance Show.

Solos, Automotive Regeneration, Height Slides and Collisions

The Village Green, Hartley Witney.
The group experiment, develop concepts and create circumstances for peer-support at Purdies Farm in Hampshire. This leads to performances sometimes taking place at the nearby village green.

Core Group Fantasy Piece

Purdies Farm, Hazeley Heath, Hampshire.
The group has been variously known as Ting, The Ting; The Ting: The Theatre of Mistakes and The Theatre of Mistakes. Throughout its duration, its records suggest a variance in who was considered as a core member as its nuclei changed over time, sometimes listing five, six or seven members as being the nucleus. Those who were identified in various records include: Mickey Greenall, Anthony Howell, Glenys Johnson, Lindsay Moran, Miranda Payne, David Spathaky, Peter Stickland, Fiona Templeton, Julian Maynard Smith, Howard Tong and Anita Urquhart.

Five Concert Pieces and a Free Session

The London Exhibition; Flower Market, Covent Garden, London.
Over three weekends, the group perform multiple works including: *The Three Act Piece*; *Heights, Slides and Collisions*; *The Exercise Session* with *Domino Trigger* and *The Consecutive Building Piece*; *A Continuous Contact Body Progression* and *The Table Piece*. Followed by a *Free Session* when the group self-select exercises to be performed simultaneously in ways that effect various infra-structural crossovers and impasses.

Lecture Performance

The Roundhouse, London.
A work that collapses the notion of audience through its incorporation.

Free Session

The Roundhouse, London.

1976

Manifesto of Mutual Art

Written during gatherings with artists including at Ascham Street, London and Purdies Farm, the process began in 1975 and is completed in 1976. It suggests routes to mutual production and ultimately offers two modes: unanimity, or else 'choice by chance'. It is also disseminated by post for future comment and consultation.

The Three Act Piece

Goldsmiths College, London.

Elements of Performance Art

Winchester School of Art (15 performers) and Maidstone College of Art (3 performers).

Two Journeys

Slade School of Art, London.
The first journey takes place in four parts or corridors and is thus in four acts. Part 1 is when a single performer deals with the corridor; Part 2 is when two performers address the corridor dualistically. Three people address it in Part 3 and so on. The second journey is of one part: all 10 performers attempt to re-enact their first journeys simultaneously. If new contact occurs then a layer of instructions comes into place. The Parts are temporally measured using an early version of *A Waterfall*.

Table Piece

Goldsmiths College, London.

Camouflage by Display and Display by Displacement

Various locations, including: St. Paul's Cathedral, The Elgin Marbles Room at The British Museum, The Burlington Arcade and The Circle Line of the London Underground.

Sketch for The Table Piece

New Contemporaries: The Live Show
Acme Gallery, London.

Open Rehearsals for The Table Piece

Goldsmiths College and the Falkland Fair, London.

The Table Piece

University of East Anglia, Norwich.

Reversal

The Art Room, London.
The Art Room is established as a short-lived experiment into the selling of art. Including *The Fiver Show*.

Active Circles

Hartley Witney, Hampshire.

Elements of Performance Art

Exercises developed from Ting and subsequent sessions and initially recorded as *The Gymnasium* are distilled and refined into this manual, interspersed by theorem. It is the sole publication of Ting Books. Its first iteration in 1976 is published in the quotidian format of A4, stating the edition size was to be restricted to the number requested. A later edition of 800, shrunk to an A5 format, was published in 1977. It has been re-published in a revised edition in 2017 by Grey Suit Editions to coincide with the exhibition, *In Case There's a Reason: The Theatre of Mistakes* at Raven Row.

Trio

Artists' Market, London.
Bath Academy of Art.

Scenes at a Table

London Calling 1976 Festival. Art Meeting Place (formerly Artists Meeting Place), London. Organised by Artists for Democracy.

Homage to Pietro Longhi: Scenes at a Table

Serpentine Gallery, London.

Ascent of the Stedelijk

Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.

Mutuality Signature

A stamp is produced of three of the group's merged signatures and is used to produce a sequence of variable iterations as *Mutuality Signatures*.

1977

Going

Going premieres during a tour of Scotland and the North East of England, organised by Richard Demarco, and is performed at Aberdeen Art Gallery, Edinburgh College of Art, the St. Andrews Festival, The Third Eye Centre (Glasgow) and Greenhaugh Hall, Hexham.

Going is the first fully rehearsed work by The Theatre of Mistakes. Performed in grey suits the group looks like it is representative of a bureaucracy by which it may also be trapped and from which it is attempting to escape. *Going* tours to America and across Europe.

A Waterfall

The Hayward Gallery, London.

A Waterfall is part of the controversial *1977 Hayward Annual* as selected by Michael Compton, Howard Hodgkin and William Turnbull. They perform 48 one-hour sequences over 48 days on the terrace of the building whilst the charts of how this additive production is structured are exhibited in the galleries.

Trio

Galerie Farideh Cadot, Paris.

Theatre of Mistakes Night School

Space Studios, Essex Road Baths, London. The group continue to teach their processes and sustain *Elements of Performance Art* workshop events.

1978

Two Freedoms

Vancouver School of Art.

Two Freedoms and *Going*

Studentski kulturni centar (SKC), Belgrade.

Going, *Waterfall 3* and *Rape of the Mind*

Arnolfini, Bristol.

Waterfall 6

Paula Cooper Gallery, New York.

Homage to Morandi

The Studio, Purdies Farm, Hazeley Witney.

Two Freedoms

Vienna Festival.

Orpheus and Hermes

Galerie Krinzinger, Forum für Aktuelle Kunst, Innsbruck.

Rape of the Mind

Chapter Gallery, Cardiff.

Following their tour of the United States, the group begins to fracture.

1980

Orpheus and Hermes

Brighton Theatre Festival; Sallis Benney Hall, Art and Design Faculty, Brighton Polytechnic.

Duet for Orpheus and Hermes and *Homage to Morandi*

University Theatre Festival; La Stanza Theatre, Brescia.

Duet for Orpheus and Hermes

Sala Polivalente, Ferrara.

Homage to Morandi

Saint Martin's School of Art, London.

1981

Homage to Morandi

Cultuurhuis de Warande, Turnhout; Beursschouwburg, Brussels; Cultuurhuis, Neerpelt; Cultuurhuis, Koldam te Hoeilaart; Cultuurhuis, Hasselt; Centrum Experimenteel Toneel, Wilrijk; and, STUK, Leuven.

LantarenVenster, Rotterdam; The Mickery Theatre, Amsterdam; Globetheater, Eindhoven; Kruitshuis, Groningen; Schouwburg, Arnhem; Theater de Vest, Alkmaar. Performed with Stuart Sherman's *Twelfth Spectacle – Language* and his *3=1 (A Careful Misreading)* in a tour of Belgium facilitated by the Vlaams Theatre Circuit and of the Netherlands organised by Ritsaert ten Cate, founder of the Mickery Theatre.

Homage to Morandi and

The Table Move (performed as a duet).
Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin.

The Theatre of Mistakes formally disbands.

1981–2016

In the intervening years Anthony Howell recreates *A Waterfall* with The New Mistakes, Fiona Templeton directs an edited version of *Going*, entitled *Going with Coming*. Grey Suit Editions publish new versions of selected projects by The Theatre of Mistakes including *Going*, *Homage to Morandi* and *Elements of Performance Art*, including with diagrams and layout by Peter Stickland.

2017

In Case There's a Reason: The Theatre of Mistakes

A survey exhibition organised by Raven Row and curated by Jason E. Bowman.

1 This chronology is partial and inconclusive as different written and perceptive understandings exist of what happened when, why and by whom. Whenever possible measures were taken to draw on sources such as printed programmes, publicity materials and the records of other organisations. It is also informed by primary research, conducted by curator Jason E. Bowman and art historian Marie-Anne Mancio in 2006.