

The Alistair Trilogy (1994)

The Alistair Trilogy was created through three workshops during 1993. Each workshop was performed publicly at Rhubarb!, The Toronto Fringe and SummerWorks that year. Peter Hinton, who was then working at Theatre Passe Muraille, invited the trilogy to be performed in TPM's backspace in 1994. The final production was nominated for Dora awards and won the Chalmers Award in 1995. **The Alistair Trilogy** is recognized as the production that launched STO Union onto the national scene.

The creators, Diane Cave and Nadia Ross, infused the piece with striking imagery and introduced a new approach to performance: 'acting' was discouraged and replaced with a more visceral and real way of being onstage, where 'role' matters less than the person playing the part. The play itself raises the question of 'roles', looking specifically at how history selects certain women's stories to be told, while ignoring others. In the end, **The Alistair Trilogy** was a powerful and visceral experience about one woman's attempt to find her place within discontinuous and contradictory interpretations of the past.

Written and directed by:

Nadia Ross and Diane Cave.

Performed by:

Ross, Mark Shields, Earl Pastko, Peter Lynch, Geoff Wiebe.

Set design by:

Paul Mezei and Sandra Wheeler.

Light Design by:

Bonnie Beecher. Soundscore by Brad Hilliker.

Stage Manager:

Ruth Winston.

Dress Design:

Deborah Hiscock.

Video:

Paulette Phillips

Produced by:

STO Union.

Presented at:

Theatre Passe Muraille

Awards:

Chalmer's Award (Diane Cave and Nadia Ross)

Nomination for Best Actress Dora Award (Nadia Ross)

Nomination for Best Lighting Design Dora Award (Bonnie Beecher)

Excerpts from the Emo Journals (1995)

In the 1990s the AIDS epidemic in Toronto hit its tragic peak. Our friends, partners and collaborators were dying and the Toronto arts community was shaken to the core. These very dark days were made even darker, when a rigid and harsh conservative government took over the province, slashing funds and essentially gutting a community under crisis. Once the dust settled, many of the people that made up Toronto's vibrant theatre community had either died, left the theatre, or left the city all together. Splintered and wounded, many from this community would never fully recover from this 'perfect storm' that decimated a new wave of creativity that was just starting to take root.

Excerpts from the Emo Journals was born during this sad time. Our great collaborator and friend, Mark Shields, was dying. He bravely continued to work on Emo, a play about the end of his world. Dark, tragic and angry, the piece had no words because there were no words to be found that could express our collective sadness. Excerpts from the Emo Journals is a piece about the end of our world, as witnessed by those of us who were on the front lines of this dark time in our history.

1995 / TORONTO, CANADA

Theatre Passe Muraille, Toronto, Canada

Written and directed by:

Nadia Ross and Daniel MacIvor.

Consulting director:

Daniel Brooks

Performed by:

Jim Allodi, Caroline Gillis, Mark Shields and Volker Burger.

Light Design by:

Andrea Lundy. Set design by Paul Mezei.

Soundscore by:

Richard Feren.

Stage Management:

Jonathon Da Silva

Presented at:

Theatre Passe Muraille

Awards:

Dora Award Best Sound Design for Richard Feren

Recent Experiences 2000 – 2006

Taking place over the course of one hundred years, **Recent Experiences** recounts the story of four generations of a single family as they wind their way through the historical backdrop of the difficult 20th century. The audience sits around a large table alongside the performers. With everyone sitting around the same table the traditional hierarchy between the stage and the audience is diffused, thereby creating a common situation and providing a possible space for the intimacy of story telling. Recent Experiences is a performance in the form of a micro-epic. It examines a gradual change in thinking: from a worldview that saw ethics and morality as something to be derived from tradition, to an outlook that searches for meaning in the potential of the future. Each generation strives not to repeat the mistakes of their parents, as the minutiae and melodrama of everyday life weave and clash against the major turning points in the 20th century. These stories stir up a legacy of shared beliefs about happiness, love and the yearning for truth, and they wrestle with the moral, ethical and human dilemmas that evoke notions of responsibility, death, guilt, solitude and despair. Recent Experiences re-invents the 20th century as a family story. The only thing left to do is sit with us at the table and gently partake in the wonders of this humane and tender play.

**

Par le biais d'histoires, d'entrevues et de projections vidéo, trois interprètes (Nadia Ross, Jacob Wren et Tracy Wright) explorent les parallèles qui existent entre l'entreprise psychothérapeutique, l'isolement métaphysique et l'essence de la performance. La prémisse de *Revolutions in Therapy* est que la pratique de la méditation et des nouvelles thérapies puisse constituer un guide de survie pour quiconque mène une vie difficile. Les auteurs Nadia Ross et Jacob Wren débattent ensuite de la validité de cette hypothèse en invoquant leurs points de vue divergents. S'ensuit alors une performance d'une haute densité intellectuelle lors de laquelle ce qui est exprimé se révèle de façon profondément touchante, tout en étant impossible à définir.

Nadia Ross et Jacob Wren ont développé un langage théâtral faisant appel à une mise en scène et à une narration simples et minimalistes. À cela, ils ont ajouté des textes coups de poing qui vont droit au but. Recent Experiences, spectacle né de leur collaboration précédente, jouit encore d'un franc succès à l'échelle internationale.

Revolutions in Therapy est une œuvre contemporaine qui traite de nos préoccupations personnelles et collectives les plus intrinsèques.

Le production finale a été créé en residence à Usine C (Montreal)

International productions of play by other groups:

- 2003/2004: Stuttgart Stadt Theater, **Germany**
- 2003:Tehran Center for Dramatic Arts, **Iran**
Iranian production has since toured to a number of international locations.

CREATIVETEAM

Written and directed by:

Nadia Ross and Jacob Wren

Performed by:

Learie McNicolls /or Andrew Moodie, Tracy Wright, Andrea Davis /or Ngozi Paul, Charles Officer, Ingrid Veninger, Nadia Ross

Set Design and Staging Concept:

Paul Mezei

Lighting Design:

Steve Lucas

Technical Director:

Steve Lucas

Stage Manager:

J.P. Robichaud

Produced by:

STO Union in association with Candid Stammer Theatre

Touring Agent:

Menno Plukker

2006 / LOS ANGELES, UNITED STATES

UCLA Live, Los Angeles, United States

2004 / BERLIN, GERMANY

UCLA Live, Los Angeles, United States

2004 / BELFAST, IRELAND

UCLA Live, Los Angeles, United States

2004 / THE HAGUE, NETHERLANDS

Theater Regentes, The Hague, Netherlands

2003 / HONG KONG, CHINA

The Hong Kong Festival, Hong Kong, China

2002 / MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

The Melbourne International Arts Festival, Melbourne, Australia

2002 / BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

Kunstenfestivaldesarts, Brussels, Belgium

2002 / VIENNA, AUSTRIA

Vienna Festwochen, Vienna, Austria

2002 / BONN, GERMANY

Theater der Welt, Bonn, Germany

2002 / FRANKFURT, GERMANY

Mousonturm Künstlerhaus, Frankfurt, Germany

2001 / MONTRÉAL, CANADA

Le Festival de Théâtre des Amériques, Montréal, Canada

2000 / TORONTO, CANADA

The Theatre Centre, Toronto, Canada

With the support of the Canada Council for the Arts and the Ontario Arts Council

Revolutions in Therapy (2003 – 2006)

Using story, question sessions and video projections, three performers (Nadia Ross, Jacob Wren and Tracy Wright), explore the parallels between the psychotherapeutic enterprise, metaphysical isolation and the nature of performance. The central idea in **Revolutions in Therapy** is that the practice of meditation and new therapies may offer some kind of perspective on how to cope with a cruel life. This idea is then informed by the fact that the writers, Nadia Ross and Jacob Wren, have opposing opinions on the validity of such a claim. What ensues is an intellectually compact performance piece, where what we share reveals itself as something profoundly moving and impossible to define.

The final production was created in residency at Usine C (Montreal) and premiered as part of the 5th edition (2004) of the Théâtres du Monde event presented by the Festival de Théâtres des Amériques in Montreal.

**

Par le biais d'histoires, d'entrevues et de projections vidéo, trois interprètes (Nadia Ross, Jacob Wren et Tracy Wright) explorent les parallèles qui existent entre l'entreprise psychothérapeutique, l'isolement métaphysique et l'essence de la performance. La prémisse de *Revolutions in Therapy* est que la pratique de la méditation et des nouvelles thérapies puisse constituer un guide de survie pour quiconque mène une vie difficile. Les auteurs Nadia Ross et Jacob Wren débattent ensuite de la validité de cette hypothèse en invoquant leurs points de vue divergents. S'ensuit alors une performance d'une haute densité intellectuelle lors de laquelle ce qui est exprimé se révèle de façon profondément touchante, tout en étant impossible à définir.

Nadia Ross et Jacob Wren ont développé un langage théâtral faisant appel à une mise en scène et à une narration simples et minimalistes. À cela, ils ont ajouté des textes coups de poing qui vont droit au but. *Recent Experiences*, spectacle né de leur collaboration précédente, jouit encore d'un franc succès à l'échelle internationale.

Revolutions in Therapy est une œuvre contemporaine qui traite de nos préoccupations personnelles et collectives les plus intrinsèques.

Le production finale a été créé en résidence à Usine C (Montreal)

TOURINGHISTORY

2006 / LOS ANGELES, UNITED STATES UCLA Live, Los Angeles, United States

2006 / ROTTERDAM, NETHERLANDS Rotterdam Schouwburg, Rotterdam, Netherlands

2006 / STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN Stockholm Kulturhuset, Stockholm, Sweden

2005 / BERLIN, GERMANY Hebbel Theater, Berlin, Germany

2005 / BONN, GERMANY Theater der Welt, Bonn, Germany

2005 / TORONTO, CANADA Artword Theatre, Toronto, Canada

2004 / MONTRÉAL, CANADA Théâtre du Monde, Montréal, Canada

2003 / TORONTO, CANADA Toronto's Theatre Centre, Toronto, Canada

2003 / WAKEFIELD, CANADA Black Sheep Inn, Wakefield, Canada

Written, directed by:

Nadia Ross and Jacob Wren

With the artistic collaboration of Tracy Wright

Performed by:

Tracy Wright, Nadia Ross, Jacob Wren

Set Design:

Nadia Ross and Jacob Wren

Video projection design:

In collaboration with W.A.C. (Wakefield Art Collective)

Lighting Design:

Steve Lucas

Technical Director:

Steve Lucas

Stage Management:

J.P. Robichaud

Produced by:

STO Union, Le Festival de Théâtre des Amériques (Montreal) and Theater der Welt (Germany),
in association with Artword Theatre (Toronto)

Tour and Production Management:

Sarah Rogers

Supported by The Canada Council for the Arts and The Ontario Arts Council

7 Important Things (2007 – 2015)

George Acheson has spent his life protesting the status quo. In **7 Important Things**, we look to the past in an attempt to reconcile his life, one that has been profoundly marked by the times.

Born in 1950, George rejected the comfortable, easy life his family had in mind for him. He was eventually kicked out of his house because he would not cut his hair. He was a teenager and the hippy movement fascinated him. For him, it was a movement that symbolized freedom, unconventional thought and lifestyles. Being a hippie became his identity, so when the movement fizzled out, he was lost. He felt like a failure when he finally accepted a job working in the government. He was working in London, England, just as the punk movement was starting to build: another movement protesting the status quo and another identity he was comfortable with, but that too would fall apart.

He still hasn't figured out how to live under a system that he doesn't condone, yet cannot escape. Today, he feels like an invisible, generic, 64 year-old man and as such, he has a story to tell.

7 Important Things premiered in 2007, at Canada's National Arts Centre, and has since toured around the world to beautiful reviews. This original creation managed to delve into new forms for the theatre, as well as bring a deeply personal story about one man's attempt to come to terms with a world seemingly far removed from the ideals that his peace and love generation believed in.

*“By far the best Canadian performance which I saw was **7 Important Things** by Nadia Ross, who is more famous now in Europe than in her homeland... With interviews, self-reflections and happenings the two Davids show that they are always more intelligent, more humorous and more talented than all Goliaths of this world... Ross presents this with intelligence and irony, using simple means and strict form, and from that, this ‘portrait of the artist as a young man’ tells us more about the glory and the misery of this seemingly distant period of protest than any books or statistics ever could.”*

Renate Klett, Frankfurter Rundschau, Germany June 26, 2008

En 1971, George Acheson, qui a grandi dans une famille de militaires, se trouve dans une ferme abandonnée de Perkins, au Québec. Il a les cheveux longs. D'ailleurs, à l'âge de 16 ans, il a été fichu à la porte de la maison familiale parce qu'il refusait de se couper les cheveux. Il a voyagé au Maroc. Il est allé à Woodstock, à Berkeley, à San Francisco, il a manifesté contre la guerre du Vietnam. Alors que le mouvement hippie s'essouffle, George s'agrippe à son idéologie et continue de croire en des lendemains qui chantent.

Quelques années plus tard, il se retrouve à Londres, où il assiste à la naissance d'un autre mouvement de la contre-culture : le punk. Il s'y jette à corps perdu, mais ce mouvement se

désintègre à son tour. Sa vie durant, George s'est identifié à des mouvements culturels qui vont à l'encontre des courants dominants et s'opposent au statu quo. Aujourd'hui dans la soixantaine, barbier dans un petit village du Québec, il ne peut plus s'identifier à aucun mouvement contreculturel, non parce qu'il est trop vieux ou pas assez radical, mais parce qu'il estime que tous les mouvements qui souhaitent s'opposer à Goliath sont récupérés par le système et ne deviennent finalement que des produits de consommation comme les autres. George Acheson est ce que l'on pourrait appeler un utopiste raté, mais il n'est pas pour autant un homme amer. « Dès nos premières rencontres, déclare Nadia Ross, il m'a dit qu'il avait pleinement vécu parce que, selon lui, il avait au moins essayé»

TOURINGHISTORY

2015 / VANCOUVER , CANADA

PuSh International Performing Arts Festival

2013 / TORONTO, CANADA

SummerWorks Performance Festival

2011 / STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

Stockholm Stadsteater

2011 / TRONDHEIM, NORWAY

Teaterhuset Avant Garden

2011 / OSLO, NORWAY

Black Box Theatre (festival)

2009 / ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Baltic Theatre Festival

2009 / CALGARY, CANADA

Theatre Junction Grand

2009 / BERGEN, NORWAY

Bergen BIT Teatergarasjen

2008 / MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

The Melbourne International Arts Festival

2008 / ROTTERDAM, NETHERLANDS

The Rotterdam International Theatre Festival

2008 / VIENNA, AUSTRIA

Brut Kunstlerhaus

2008 / BERLIN, GERMANY

Hebbel Theater

2008 / MONTREAL, CANADA

FTA

2007 / OTTAWA, CANADA

National Arts Centre

2006 / OTTAWA, CANADA

National Arts Centre

2006 / , WAKEFIELD, CANADA

Centre Wakefield La Peche

CREATIVETEAM

Written by:

Nadia Ross and George Acheson

Directed by:

Nadia Ross

Performers:

George Acheson and Nadia Ross

Stage Manager and Technical Director:

Rob Scott

Set Design:

Barry Padolsky

Lighting Design:

Steve Lucas

Video:

W.A.C.

Mask:

Rick Ritza

Costume Design:

Andy Tait

Tour Producers:

Sarah Conn (2012-15) and Nadia Ross (2006 – now)

Touring Agent:

Menno Plukker Theatre Agent Inc.

Produced by:

STO Union and the National Arts Centre English Theatre in association with the Wakefield Art Collective

Awards:

Contra Guys Award for Best New Performance Text
(SummerWorks Festival 2013)