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Playback and Landrights Education

By John Faisandier

One interesting aspect of my work is to run workshops for Pakeha (white New Zealanders) on their relationships with Maori (the indigenous people) based on the Treaty of Waitangi of 1840. This is recognized as

the founding document of our Nation.

The beginning of a recent two-day workshop for lecturers at the local College of Education was disrupted because the room had been double-booked. My colleague and I decided to begin the session with both groups combined while the problem was sorted out. Having completed several action warm-ups there came a moment when I sensed the group was ready to go deeper into its own story.

It was never our intention to do any Playback but somehow this group seemed ready to try something different. I was certainly ready to try "Playback by one." I had recently attended the Second International Playback Conference in Sydney, Australia, plus a workshop here in Christchurch with Jonathan Fox, and I was hot to try out this idea of doing Playback with people who had never done it before.

A Central Story

The group had been sharing in two stories from childhood as a warm-up to looking at Pakeha culture. This warm-up seemed quite deep to some. I spoke about stories as containing truths that the whole group shares, and that in the group there was someone with a story that would be right for the moment.

One of the participants stepped forward and told a story from when she was four years old. She had gone with her father to a beach where there was a wounded albatross. A vet was tending to the bloody injury and explained to the frightened little girl what he was doing.

Two days later she was back at the

This issue features a survey article on Playback Theatre in Education. See page 3

beach when they let the albatross go. It soared high in the air and was free.

The teller chose the various actors from amongst the group of 30 colleagues and I gave them instructions as to what they needed to highlight in the playing back. I encouraged them to play the parts from what they knew inside them. I even had the rest of the group to act as the sea.

Actor's Enthusiasm

At one point the father got very enthusiastic and suggested they take the albatross home and look after it. This was not in the original story. I was anxious at this point and remembered Jonathan saying that sometimes you have to interrupt the story. I did this simply from the conductor's chair by saying they need to stay with the story as it was told. Without losing anything of the playing back they carried on with the story and ended with a beautiful song from the musician as the albatross flew off.

I linked this story to the purpose of our workshop which was to address the injury caused by the Pakeha in New Zealand by not honoring the Treaty. Our hope was to see the bird flying away, freely and beautifully. It was a deeply moving story which assisted the group to warm up to this purpose. Other participants also saw it as a symbol of the healing that needed to occur within that particular institution.

I was so excited that I had success-

fully used Playback in the workshop that

I conducted a story in the closing session which was also full of symbolism that related to the meeting of our two major cultures in this country.

I will certainly be looking for more opportunities to use the Playback form to enhance my work with groups in Treaty education.

John Faisandier has been a member of the Christchurch Playback Theatre Company for over three years as an actor, musician and conductor.

Action Poetry

By Lori Smith

In an effort to write a paper about critical standards for Playback as performance, I began by retracing my own experience with art criticism, a class I took as part of my master's degree in Art Education. What I discovered as I reviewed old notes, papers and journal entries was that, as a result of an assignment and a particularly powerful lecture, in that 1985 Spring Semester class, I began searching for what I identified at the time in my journal as "action poetry."

The assignment was to write a critique of two paintings that were part of an exhibit titled *Disarming Images: Art For Nuclear Disarmament*. According to the catalog, this show:

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Playback Around the World



P. T. 日本の学会で紹介される

10月29日、東京中野サンプラザにおいてIPTNのメンバーの一人、日本カウンセリング学会役員である杉溪一言氏により、来日中のジョナサン・フォックスの「プレイバック・シアター」が紹介されました。

参加者は約100名で臨床家をはじめ、学校の教師、企業の教育担当者、カウンセリングを学んでいる人等様々な分野の方々が集まりました。日本の2つのカンパニーの中から8名のメンバーが役者としてこれに参加しました。

ジョナサンの人を引きつける温かさと、巧まざるユーモアが会場全体を包み参加者の共感と笑いとより深い関心を引き出しました。日本のカウンセラーやセラピストにとりプレイバック・シアターの実際を見、学ぶ機会が得られたことは大きな意義があったと言えます。

JAPAN COUNSELING ACADEMY

In October, Professor Kiyotoki Sugitani, a member of the IPTN, introduced Playback Theatre and Jonathan Fox, who was in Japan, to the Japan Counseling Academy

About a hundred people attended—therapists, school teachers, company trainers, student counselors, and representatives from a variety of other fields. Eight members from the two Playback companies in Japan took part as actors. Jonathan's warmth and humor drew out the sympathy and enthusiasm of the audience. The event was significant in providing counselors in Japan a chance to experience Playback Theatre first-hand.]

PLAYBACK GOES CORPORATE

Over the past several months, Playback Theatre Northwest (Seattle, WA, USA) has begun performing for corporate audiences, according to *The Teller*, the company newsletter: "As a management consultant, troupe member

Jonathan Rosen has been able to incorporate the use of Playback as an organizational development tool in a number of consulting contracts.

In May the troupe performed at the Impact Strategists Summit, a national conference of senior executives from Fortune 500 companies, on the subject of managing organizational change and diversity. The conference was held at the Woodmark Hotel on Lake Washington in Kirkland. The performance was a smashing success in integrating personal and professional issues such as gender discrimination in the workplace and dysfunctional family backgrounds for high level executives and corporate cultures.

In August, five members of PTNW performed in New Jersey for the staff retreat of DiBianca-Berkman, an international consulting firm. The focus was "Who are we now and whom do we want to be?" Our lively performance resulted in immediate contracts for Playback to perform for two major DiBianca clients - Allstate Insurance in Chicago on August 27 and Hughes Aircraft in Los Angeles on September 30 and October 1. These performances will be part of DiBianca's long-term leadership training programs. Upcoming this fall are performances for UW Medical Center and the Headstart regional training conference. It is deeply rewarding for us to apply our skills and participate in the process of transforming the American workplace into a more human and productive environment."

WOMEN OF OREGON

There's now a Women's Playback Theater Troupe in Eugene, Oregon (USA), reports the group's founder, Leigh Files, a psychotherapist. "We've been rehearsing weekly since May with our long term goal to go to battered women's shelters, women's prisons, women's alcohol and drug treatment centers, and perform their stories."

INTERPLAY is the newsletter of the International Playback Theatre Network, an association of Playback performers and teachers.

PO Box 1173, New Paltz, NY 12561.

YATES AND EASTWOOD

Jeffrey Yates of DC Playback (Washington, DC, USA) recently played a secret service agent with Clint Eastwood in the film of *In the Line of Fire*. He will also conduct a day-long Playback workshop at the next Family Therapy Networker conference in March.

Michael Clemente

Michael Clemente, a member of the Original company, died in his home on October 1 of complications resulting from AIDS. He was 38 years old.

Michael joined Playback Theatre in 1978 and was a member of the four-person team that travelled to New Zealand and Australia in 1980. His combination of artistic sensibility and trustworthiness made him an especially effective improvisational ensemble performer.

He worked as a counselor and directed a role play theatre company for adolescents called Acting Out Repertory.

In the past six months Michael created a multimedia presentation about AIDS, identity and sexuality called "Creating Hope: Art Facing Fear." He was able to perform the "Hope Show" only once before he became too ill, but it was a great success.

As well as his Playback family, Michael is survived by his partner, Edwin Gonzales, his parents, two sisters and a brother. Jonathan Fox conducted a secular memorial service held at Unison Learning Center, in New Paltz, NY, home of many Playback activities, which was attended by about 200 people.

President's Letter

Dear Playbackers.

I recently received a letter from Bev Hosking telling me about her experience as a conductor in a Playback performance where a story of central importance to the whole community was told. She talked of the healing that occurred. It is extraordinary when an event has affected a whole community - an accident, a natural disaster or sometimes a triumph - and it can be shared. More often I think we hear slightly more individual or private stories and it is our job to touch something more communal or universal so that it becomes the story of everyone.

Perhaps it is not the story that is important but the resonance. I have begun reading a book by Christopher Bollas with the theme of "the unthought known." Is it for this that we continue to work?

Warm regards,

Manu Good

IPTN NEWS

Ingeborg Meyer

IPTN renewals and new memberships can now be sent to Ingeborg Meyer of Hannover, who has agreed to be Membership Secretary for Europe. She can be reached at Lichtenbergplatz 2, 3000 Hannover 91, Germany. Her telephone is 49-511-441673.

Directory Published

The Member Directory will be shipped soon. Kevin Gray and Marc Weiss, of PT West in Denver (CO, USA), put it together. James Lucal of PT Northwest (Seattle, WA, USA) is handling the printing and distribution.

Brochure Out

A smart-looking brochure promoting the IPTN has been printed. Members wanting copies should write to Jo Salas, IPTN Secretary, at PO Box 1173, New Paltz, NY 12561.

New Members of the IPTN (since March 1992)

Companies:

Charlottesville Playback Theater, Charlottesville, VA, USA
London Playback Theatre, London, UK
Magic Mirror, Raustalampi, Finland
Pentimento Playback Theatre, Albany, NY, USA
SOS Playback Theater, Portsmouth, RI, USA
York Playback Theatre, York, United Kingdom

Individuals

Rebecca Blasing, Dallas, TX, USA
Sue Bonnin, Hilton, WA, Australia
Donna C. Breeden, Juneau, AK, USA
Rebecca Brennerman, Seattle, WA, USA
Lauren Burgess, Belize City, Belize
Marvin Burns, Cleburne, TX, USA
Marion Burns, Cumberland Park, WA, Australia
Nan Crawford, Denver, CO, USA
Kevin Gray, Denver, CO, USA
Paiivi Jalkanen, Raustalampi, Finland
Stephen Josephs, Charlottesville, VA, USA
Hans Joss, Bern, Switzerland
Tom Kenney-Herbert, London, United Kingdom
Bette Kimmel, Chicago, IL, USA
Jane Knox, Ridgefield, CT, USA
James Lucal, Seattle, WA, USA
Miranda Mills, Lawson, NSW, Australia
Jude Murphy, Northcote, VIC, Australia
Veronica Needs, London, United Kingdom
Juliet Neill, Christchurch, New Zealand
Roni Ostfeld, Pittsburgh, PA, USA
Paule Patterson, San Diego, CA, USA
Karin Peterson, Hamburg, Germany
Heather Robb, Le Havre, France
San Rosen, Winston-Salem, NC, USA
Janet Salas, Duerkheimen, Germany
Judith S. Schrader, Houston, TX, USA
Tom Schwab, Bern, Switzerland
Kit Shepherd, Leichhardt, NSW, Australia
Ian Strives, Northcote, VIC, Australia
Phillip Speiser, Brookline, MA, USA
Thea Simons van der Ven, Manlius, NY, USA
Stephen Wale, London, United Kingdom
Ben-Zion Weiss, Bondi, NSW, Australia
Deborah Witzel, Denver, CO, USA

Friends

Sarah D. Adams, Pacific Palisades, CA, USA
Roz Malone, Sunnyvale CA, USA
Eleonore Pepin, New York, NY, USA
Michiko Tamaki, Nagano, Japan
Dan Yashinsky, Toronto, Ont., Canada

WANTED! FOR THE PLAYBACK THEATRE ARCHIVE

ARTICLES about Playback (with summary)

VIDEOTAPES (include short description)

BROCHURES

FLIERS

SEND (as soon as possible) to ANNETTE HENNE
FRIEDBERG-STR. 60A
CH-8200 SCHAFFHAUSEN
SWITZERLAND

THANK-YOU!

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TRENDS IN PT FOR EDUCATION

By Jonathan Fox

This article is an in-depth look at a major focus of Playback activity. It can be pulled from the newsletter to stand on its own.

I'll start this survey of past and current Playback Theatre activities in education with a story: it takes place in 1984. I had just arrived in Melbourne, Australia, to observe what the **Melbourne Playback Theatre company** had achieved since the seed-sowing visit of the **Original company** four years earlier. They took me to a children's home where a project was winding up. The children were of primary school age. The atmosphere was informal, but not without tensions, for there was a gaggle of adult strangers (including me) there to evaluate. The Melbourne company acted out some stories. Then the conductor invited the children who had been part of the project to perform.

What I remember most vividly is the eagerness with which the children rushed to the stage: to listen to a teller; to act out their roles with all possible expressiveness; to work in harmony with each other; to return to the boxes when it was over and, in stillness, wait for another story.

My heart sang in my chest. For I knew that founding director Mary Good and PT Melbourne had got it right. Here was Playback Theatre as education, with an emphasis on life skills and a healthy sense of self. Here were disadvantaged, troubled children engaged in complex tasks with a sense of purpose and joy.

Older Audiences

From Playback Theatre's inception in 1975, education has been a major focus of PT Companies and individual practitioners, beginning with the experiments of the Original company and continuing with the present members of the International Playback Theatre Network (IPTN) in over ten countries. Playback's flexibility has allowed a considerable range of programming, both in terms of target population and performance design.

A review of Playback Theatre work in education shows two trends. The first is a shift from child to adult education. The second is a preference for using modified Playback structures rather than the standard open-ended approach that has been the hallmark of the monthly evening performance practiced by many companies.

The Original company, as it experimented with the developing PT form and gained performing experience, pursued a policy of maximum diversification. I wanted us to perform for as many different kinds of people as possible, including children—perhaps especially children, for they are in many ways more open and naive in their responses than adults. We also had a number of actors who especially enjoyed performing for children.

Modifying the form

So the Original company scheduled special children's shows, went out to the children's ward of the general hospital, to elementary, middle, and high schools, and in the summertime, to camps. Most of these performances were one-time affairs during which the company learned to keep up a fast pace. Gradually, more sophisticated programming was developed in order to obtain grants: A 10-session workshop series for at risk groups, a 3-day residency in a middle school in which the Playback work was integrated with the English curriculum, and performance/workshop designs to promote peer counseling, improved race relations, and other specific objectives.

The pioneer development of a modified PT format took place in Sydney, Australia in 1984, when Chardi Christian, a storyteller, and Peter Hall, then a recent graduate of Drama Action Centre (and now its director) created **Shuttleback**, a 2-person concept for schools consisting of the performance of prepared stories followed by audience stories (the name makes an intentional allusion to Playback). Highly successful, Shuttleback is still active and in its "8th or 9th generation of performers."

After over ten years of experience, fueled by an informal system of training, exchange between practitioners, and the inherent diversity of the PT form, Playback Theatre is perhaps most characterized by its multiformity. What follows is a description of some of the main ways Playback Theatre is used for education.

ONE-TIME PERFORMANCES. Australian and New Zealand PT companies, following the model of the Original company, have marketed themselves for one-time assembly programs just like other children's theatre companies that perform in schools. Of course, inevitably, since PT is scriptless, the "play" is different from the norm. Yet the purpose has been fundamentally entertainment, an extracurricular enrichment opportunity.

Based on interviews with many directors, it appears that, overall, PT performers have found these one-time school shows frustrating. The variability of Playback Theatre creates a dynamic that is often "soft"—weak in the controlled climaxes and high energy action necessary to hold the attention of large groups of youngsters.

The **Wellington PT company** (NZ), which has performed for assemblies of over 200 at a time, has, in consequence, backed off from accepting one-time performances. According to founder-director Bev Hosking: "The kids haven't come forward to tell so easily." Ian Shives, director of Melbourne PT, agrees that Playback Theatre needs a "good strong purpose for the performance, such as exploration of social issues or friendship, so that the kids will be warmed up to it." Melbourne now avoids contexts where the group is seen as "just another theatre company."

Auckland PT (NZ) co-founder Martin Sutcliffe, who has a background in children's theatre, emphasizes the influence of the social system on student participation. Thus, a school with a positive atmosphere will produce eager tellers who trust that their story will be
(Continued on next page)

THE COPPER CHILD

A Meditation on the Psychological Role of Conductor

By Mimi Katzenbach

While reading *Iron John* the other night, I came to the section in which Robert Bly talks about the energy of copper, the metal of "conducting." He uses the word "conducting" in a somewhat pejorative sense. His discussion forced me to take a look at negative aspects of my own role as conductor, and refigure my recent crisis with my group (Playback Theatre West). This essay is an exploration of the negative aspects of the psychological role of conductor for me and how it affected me and my group. I also offer my personal resolution, and in conclusion suggest some ways in which we can use Bly's metallic metaphor to help each of us articulate aspects of the role of conductor we need to heal and develop.

As Bly speaks of the "conductor," he calls attention to the Copper Child, the child who is a bridge between the parents, the child who "conducts" his father's rage, one hand on his father, the other on the ground; this is the position of the Copper Child. This child is the interpreter, the channeler, the conductor, who passes the emotions of the parents through his or her core. It is a psychological role, and often it is assigned to the youngest child who is at the end of the line of displacement which characterizes dysfunctional families.

Rage and Depression

I was the youngest for six years, until my sister was born. In those formative years, I learned this "art" of conducting indelibly; it is imprinted deep into my body; even, I believe, conferring its shape. (I have heavy legs which "ground" the energy, and a bony, vulnerable throat area.) In my case, I passed my mother's rage through me to the ground, and my father's depression. At the same time I was the bridge between their troubled adversarial marriage. I was also conducting the lies and the secrets of alcoholism. Hence, for all of my conducting, the effect was to

maintain the control over the secrets, to perpetuate "alcohol."

The result, as an adult woman, is that I have a large talent for the Playback role of conductor; one does acquire skills from these painful childhood placements. Yet, this talent, great as it is, also contains within it the toxicity of alcohol; the pain of my lost childhood self who wanted to play rather than always having to conduct my parents; a need to control; and an addiction to the role itself, severely limiting my skills at membership. The Copper Child was the only way I knew how to belong to a group, though she was hiding behind the "Flashy" Conductor.

Magic and Poison

This double aspect of the psychological role of conductor—"magic" skills, "poison" motives—placed my group in a terrible bind made all the worse by my unconsciousness. On the one hand, I was the most adept and successful in the stage role of conductor, and the group felt dependent upon me for its success. This dependency was complicated by a grandiose expectation that the members of Playback Theatre West could earn a living working for corporations, placing me in the role of a monetary "rainmaker." We recall that copper conducts the lightning during a storm. That is what my talents were tending to do: keep the lightning of our "brilliance" and our "success" flashing while I conducted its potential danger to our spiritual growth into the ground.



On the other hand, my unconscious was busy deploying these conducting skills in the interests of control. While members of the group respected my talent, they kept on balking (I now know, rightly) at my taking over a designated role as the group processor, the "group life conductor." I believe that they were

as baffled as I was. I appeared so empathic, so capable of taking in and channeling through to them the feelings and words of our tellers. If I was so good at the empathic performance, why did I feel so tyrannical and autocratic and controlling with them offstage?



Sadly, my unconscious needs won out and I was named leader. The result was disastrous, for the reasons I am discussing here and for others. At one point in our group, virtually everyone was in a major life crisis, and there I was, my unconscious wanting control. I had plenty of excuses for leaving which had nothing to do with what I am discussing here. So, I left.

Reading Bly, I have found a metaphor which describes the quality and process of the healing energy which has helped me with the destructive (to self and to others) aspects of my Copper Child, my psychological conductor. This energy is the iron in the title, the metal of the warrior.

Iron does not conduct. It stands firm. It wounds one's enemies. It defends one's home and also the land of the King and Queen (our inner sacred selves). It is our armor, our shield. Iron is red with rust, the color of aliveness; the color of feminine lifeblood; the color of masculine passion; the color of the earth. Iron is a metal that artisans forge. It can be shaped to specific purposes, worked through human hands into a tool, a weapon. It is retrieved from deep within the earth, shaped by fire, tempered by water.

Iron Acts

In my quest for iron (unconscious), I had to dig deep into the earth. I had to reach far down into my past and bring

(Continued on next page)

Copper Child

(Continued from previous page)

up a lost self, and be willing to "bury myself" through removing myself from the active, visible sphere of the air. I had to die to my group, to all forms of conducting and copper. I had to let the earth



cover me: this earth shielded me from the storm and the lightning (ambition, achievement) which draws out my copper. I let myself be dark—depressed, earthbound, still.

My iron found its purpose in divorce, which demanded I become a warrior and not conduct various energies around me. In divorce I was shaped by the fire of anger, and my iron became a tool of independence and release. The fire forged in my throat shaped my voice as a tool of truth, not of lies. In my divorce, as with so many others, I was divorcing the marriage which birthed me and the marriage in which I gave birth; and so the fire in the forge forced me to develop new iron tools for dealing with my childhood pain.

I retrieved the lost iron self of my childhood by stepping aside and refusing to "conduct" my parents—individually, and also as their bridge. There I was tempered by water, as I allowed myself not to be a bridge across the sadness and the pain, but to fall into it and cool my rage. From these waters of grief, I can now be reborn, and my role as "conductor" can be reshaped.

As I turn to look again at the role of conducting in Playback, I see the importance of developing both "iron" and "copper" skills in order to nurture a group and to shape a performance.

IRON	COPPER
facts	feelings
integrity	energy
earthbound	skyward
shaped with skill	serendipitous
protective	imaginative

strong
specific purpose
courageous
able to penetrate
sadness
power
give
territory
warrior

flexible, soft
open-minded
vulnerable
penetrable
joy
surrender
receive
passage
healer

We need copper and we need iron; not all "conducting" is negative, nor is all conducting entirely about being copper. I happen to need iron. Others in the role of conductor and group leader may need to find their copper. We must find ways to be copper warriors and iron conductors. There are other metals which figure, I am sure, including lead (our shadows, our inert selves) and gold (our glories, our spiritual light).

The healing I have had to do around the Copper Child continues; this essay is part of that process. How I will conduct in my life and in Playback in the future remains unknown. But of one thing I am certain: I need iron as well as copper to make the role work for me and for others.

Mimi Katzenbach is a member of Denver Playback Consultants and the author of a recently completed novel, Shadowman.

Action Poetry

(continued from front page)

...assembles 44 works by 46 artists who are vitally concerned with the increasing threat of nuclear annihilation and who address this issue in their work. While point of view and approaches to the subject vary greatly, many of the artists focus on the horrific aftermath of the nuclear bomb; its physical, psychological and spiritual consequences. In dwelling on the horrible potential, they stimulate a living commitment to prevent nuclear war.

While standing amidst the art work, confronted by image after hopeless image of destruction, I did not feel empowered to prevent nuclear war. I felt numb and resigned as if attending the planet's wake. Especially haunting was the painting by Jenny Hollzer and Lady Pink. Branded across the image of a

woman and man being vaporized on a city street are the words "You are trapped on the earth so you will explode." I felt paralyzed, hopeless and angry as I exited the exhibit.

In an upstairs gallery was a show of work by Charles Burchfield, an American artist and naturalist who captured the spiritual essence of nature in his watercolors. I had long been impressed by his imagery and philosophy of nature from books of reproductions, but had not seen much original work. As drained and despairing as *Disarming Images* left me, the Burchfield exhibit restored my energy, faith and joy. The contrast was powerful. I learned that I wanted to make a kind of art that affirmed and celebrated life.

The final lecture of the semester occurred in a dark classroom. The instructor showed videos of something called performance art which was new and thrilling to me. Laurie Anderson, Vito Acconci and others used themselves as media. Not an actor, the artist was in fact the art. Though I continued to make pictures for several years, I was also searching for an artform that would satisfy the craving for life-affirming performance.

As my understanding of Playback as network increases, I am reminded of Ken Keyes' book, *The Hundredth Monkey*, which relates directly to my reaction to the *Disarming Images* exhibit and Burchfield. To me Playback is the antidote to those defeatist images of destruction. Art is about affirming and restoring life and the will to be alive, not wallowing in images of planetary extinction. I see Playback, which satisfies my ideas of action poetry, and a global network building to that critical mass consciousness that allows for awareness of the need for community.

I've been searching my own journals for the thread that brings me to where I am with Playback now - which is that it commands more and more of my energy, attention and love. I believed that my connection to and infatuation with Playback was sudden, but it is not. It's been a long, long process of preparing the soil for the right seed.

Lori Smith is founding director of Pentimento Playback Theatre in the Albany, NY, area.

PT in Education

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In Europe, Hans Joss of Bern, Switzerland, and Daniel Feldhendler, of Frankfurt, Germany, incorporate Playback Theatre as a technique in teacher training. "There is a new generation of students who want to be teachers, and it is very important to offer them active approaches," says Feldhendler, who instructs future French teachers at Goethe University in Frankfurt. Tarquam McKenna, a lecturer in Drama and Language Arts at Edith Cowan University in Perth (Australia) uses Playback to help student teachers focus on problems regarding behavior management.

The Auckland PT Company has worked in adult education since its inception, when Valeric Hunton, the conductor and a physician's wife, was instrumental in having the company hired as an adjunctive training for medical students. A decade later the company remains active in working with adults. At a recent conference for 150 occupational therapists, Playback Theatre focused on transitions to self-empowerment. Director Marilyn Sutcliffe and the company modified the standard PT form, permitting, for example, "frozen sculptures," which audience members could come up and change. The results were "tremendously exciting." Such challenges, says Marilyn, help develop her "thoughtfulness" as a conductor, requiring a much more interventionist stance than the traditional PT "who has the next story" model of conducting. They also raise what she refers to as the "danger" of slipping into a need to find solutions.

Boal Influence

Some of these techniques of manipulation of scenes by the audience for problem solving may come from Boal's influence. A richness of Playback Theatre has been the tendency *not* to need answers, but to allow a rich and multi-layered dialogue that evokes a strong sense of existential truth.

Playback Theatre has been highly successful as educative conference entertainment, allowing colleagues who

experience a strong sense of professional identity the chance to share about deeply-felt issues. Such occasions demand the company have the skills to reach large groups and maintain a dynamic pacing. They tend to follow the pattern of standard PT, with sometimes a mild focussing theme, such as "your life at work," or "your life as a psychologist."

An overview of this wide range of Playback Theatre applications for education shows an evolution from the standard approach to modifications and special projects; away from work with children in favor of adult education. In fact, more than half the current number of Playback Theatre companies do not work with youth at all. Most are involved in some form of adult education. A factor for some groups is a scarcity of funding for youth projects, but it would also seem that many Playback performers and facilitators now choose to work with adults as a matter of preference.

Complex Projects On Rise

The trend in the Playback world is to more complex programming involving a number of community agencies, even though it is not clear how group members will reconcile the "citizen actor" aspect of their Playback Theatre involvement (which allows them to lead full lives in addition to their PT work) with the need for pre- and post-project administrative work that has little to do with improvisational theatre. In fact, to date less than a quarter of the companies engage paid staff or maintain offices.

In spite of a sense that Playback Theatre programming is still in an experimental phase, it seems clear that Playback has proven its effectiveness as an educational tool with both children and adults and will continue to make its presence felt in the educational arena. Playback can help groups in a crisis; it can help a school or work community understand itself, particularly at times of transition; it can bring diverse members of a community to a new appreciation of each other, as in intergenerational and

community service programs; and it can help teach a holistic approach to learning that values emotion as well as reason, relation as well as knowledge, and dramatic as well as logico-linguistic expression.

Jonathan Fox is founding director of the Original company and Editor of INTERPLAY.

PT Around the World

SUMMER SCHOOL IN YORK

In July, the Theater of Spontaneity International company met in York (UK) at the University College of Ripon and York St. John for a four-day Playback training period and three performances; one at the York Arts Centre and two at the College. Then members of the company stayed together to run and participate in a summer school for a further five days, reports David Powley, company chairman and organizer of the York Summer School:

"The idea was to make use of the wide range of skills and experience brought into our company by its members, in education, theatre, and therapy, by offering workshops not only in Playback Theatre but also, for example, in Psychodrama and Dance Therapy, or workshops tailored to meet the needs of people working with specific client groups. In addition, we hoped to make enough money to pay for our food and accommodation and perhaps our travel from various distant parts.

In the afternoons we ran two ongoing courses, one on Playback Theatre (led by Christina Hagelhorn) and one called 'Working through Drama and Dance with Abused Children and Their Families' (led by Steve Harvey). In the mornings we had a range of separate but related shorter inputs from Robert Schenck (music for Playback), Ken Sprague (working with people with severe learning difficulties), Aviva Rosenthal (transforming a personal experience of working with material into performance), Gaie Houston (working with twelve archetypes), David Powley (working with space), and Heather Robb (working as and with objects)."

The Midnight Sun PT Conference

June 10-13, 1993
Rautalampi, Finland

By Päivi Jalkanen, Conference organizer

We are still amazed having this opportunity to work for celebration and sharing of stories. It feels great to hear messages that people have warmed to make the effort to come here, and many really are coming this far.

I guess we will hear amazing stories about how people got here...

Before we made this come true we (Päivi's institute, Room For Growth, the Playback company, Magic Mirror, and the Finnish Psychodrama Association), supported by private people all over the world, like Jonathan and Jo, Annette, and Christina, are putting together many ideas trying to create a conference for you to come and join and have the experiences of a lifetime.

So far it seems that these three doorways to Playback that Jonathan has been speaking about and what he represented in Sydney, which are therapeutic, educational and artistic Playback, will be cornerstones in our planning, and the workshops will be based on these areas. We had also in mind the mythical elements of life—water, fire, air and earth—I hope they will find their place and form in our meeting, too.

The third idea has been an interest to see how different performing groups have developed their own styles - or if they have, as Peter Hall was challenging us to consider in the last newsletter. Anyway, we feel it is nice to be able to present your work also groupwise and therefore we will have many performances from different continents and countries, such as France, America, Finland, The International Company, and we hope, also, from CIS (former USSR), Germany and Australia.

The last element included in the planning at this point is the possibility to share our abilities for one night with all people interested to see Playback - Saturday night will be the Night of Stories for the whole village.

So hopefully in a year this conference will find its form and we can share our stories here in Finland. You will be coming to a small village in the middle of Finland. If you want to see our

"citics" there will be possibility for that too, for example, during the two days of rest between the conference and the post-conference workshops. Another possibility is to go for a row through our beautiful lakes in a traditional community-boat.

So far, we know that:

ON THURSDAY

Entering for the conference (Arrival)
Supper for all
Performance, Magic Mirror
Nightmusic at the church of Rautalampi

ON FRIDAY

Working in small groups
Our songs in common, music and playback

Performance
Workshops

Fireparty at Sahala

ON SATURDAY

Working in small groups
Our dances in common
Performance
Workshops
The Night of Stories

A play

Happening of the artists

Vigilia at the Church of Rautalampi

Camp fire

Theatre of Spontaneity/Soviet Playback

ON SUNDAY

Working in small groups

Performance

What we still have to do, see and hear

Working together, Epilogue

You can get more information from:

Päivi Jalkanen, tel 358-79-531-111

Pirkko Kaakinen, tel 358-79-531-010

fax 358-79-531-313

Address: 77700 Rautalampi, Finland

Anne Vesterinen is a traveling specialist, who knows how to travel in Finland. She can also give you addresses of friends where you can stay overnight if you want to spend a night in Helsinki. Write her at Rusthollarinkuja 2 B 6, 00910 Helsinki, FINLAND, or phone 358-0-1855-213, 358-0-337-484. Her fax no. is 358-0-337-484.

Note to US Playback Groups: Toni Horvatin (Community Playback Theatre, New Paltz) has offered to be the coordinator for getting a group rate for travel to Finland. If you are interested in getting savings at a group rate and/or know of a place that could offer a good deal, please contact Toni at: PO Box 802, New Paltz, NY 12561. Phones (Leave message) (203) 846-5093 or (914) 454-3682.

Good-Bye, Michael Dear, and Thank You

by Susan Metz

*This autumn yellow afternoon
when your spirit circles this
group of mourners who have come to cry
together because you left us
Know the treasured memories of your
presence
moments singular in each of our lives
will live through our telling the story*

*I played the cop, you the desperate one
I played your dog
We were trees together
In that fun we explored*

*In your bed at the wooden house
in spring
we talked so late into the night
I was sleepy but not tired
the pace was slow
until we slept*

*You came to my class
bold and sweet and flexible
You turned aside the negativity
You kept thinking
about the 16 year-olds
who make me nuts*

*I won't say I miss you
You're with me now
Your humor
Your honor
Good-Bye, Michael Dear, and Thank You*

Susan Metz is a high school teacher from Brooklyn, New York, USA. She was co-creator of the *Playback Theatre Storybook*, which was published in 1979.

Michael Clemente Memorial Fund
Diane Blumenthal and Rebecca Rucker have established a memorial fund in honor of Michael Clemente. This fund provides scholarships for training in Playback Theatre and fees for company performances and workshops in hospices and other settings which provide HIV and AIDS training and education. Contributions to this memorial may be made out to Playback Theatre and mailed to Michael Clemente Memorial, c/o IPTN, PO Box 1173, New Paltz, NY 12561.