'CONTROVERSIAL ART':

INVESTIGATING THE WORK OF

DIRECTOR ROSEMARY MYERS

Noel Jordan
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Signature: [Signature]

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Both Rosemary and Kate helped to make this study a reality.
Abstract

Arena Theatre Company's Eat Your Young is examined as an intrinsic case study. The aim is to investigate the role of a director in the creation of an original multi-media theatre production designed for young people. The study explores the current social, political and cultural position of young people and argues that they are viewed and portrayed as a marginalised "other". The history of Arena Theatre Company is documented in relation to the development of Theatre in Education from its British roots to the Company's current emphasis on contemporary artists exploring the possibilities of multi-art form technology. The development of multi-media usage in theatre over the past century is outlined in order to gain an understanding of Arena's place within this technological experimentation. Utilising ethnographic methodology, including participant observation, "unstructured" interactive interviews and the construction of participant monologues, the creative rehearsal and planning process of Eat Your Young is chartered over a five month period. The outcomes of the study confirm the literature relating to the qualities of a good director: they are leadership, vision and the ability to collaborate. The metaphor chief architect is coined to describe the central figure of the director, Rosemary Myers. The case study discusses the development of a Company culture where artists work in an intensive social and interactive environment and it identifies the unique pressures and individual responsibility of the role of director.
I can't accurately describe what takes place in the rehearsal room because it depends on what happens in front of me. This determines how I react and how I channel what I witness. Rehearsals are complex and organic processes which defy definition as much as they resist formal or intellectual structure. . . . My role (as a director) is to create conditions for free exploration. I think it's correct to say that every actor needs to be directed differently . . . . This is why it's always hard to give a description of rehearsals. It's like asking Picasso what he painted. If there is an answer, it lies in what he removed, scribbled out or painted over.

(Warner cited in Giannachi G. & Luckhurst M. 1999 p137)

British theatre director, Deborah Warner, raises some fascinating issues about how she views her role as a director in the rehearsal room. Warner acknowledges the varied interplay between director and actors; different in every circumstance. The resulting creative process is framed in a responsive mode with the director reacting to what is created in front of her. The complexity of this interactive process is immediately evident leading one to assume that the role of a director defies a
singular definition. Warner's comments fascinate, arouse and captivate. What does occur in a rehearsal room in the development of a production? What is the role of a director? What is the exact nature of this 'organic process' and how are conditions created for 'free exploration'? Taking on board Warner's analogy of Picasso and rehearsals, I am intrigued to discover what elements are 'removed, scribbled out or painted over' in rehearsals. As a researcher I want to get closer to the rehearsal experience and try to begin to understand the nature of a director's role and working processes.

Since graduating as a specialist secondary Drama teacher, I have spent a great deal of my professional career working in Theatre for Young People; a particular area of theatre that in my experience is regarded as marginalised from mainstream practice. My work has involved creating, directing, writing and performing theatrical work for young audiences. As a practitioner and an educator I have been involved directly in many rehearsal processes but have never studied them in a systematic way. This study therefore sets out to investigate the role of a director in the creation of a theatre production designed for young people. The production at the centre of the study is contemporary and original and incorporates the use of multi-media in its presentational form. Using ethnographic methodology I began the task of researching; tracking the creative development process of Arena Theatre Company as it moved towards the staging of **Eat Your Young** for the 2000 Adelaide Arts Festival.
Meeting Rosemary Myers - Circa 1989

Summer 1989 and I was accepted as an actor into the Woolly Jumpers, a theatre for schools company based in Geelong, Victoria. The name was a legacy of its Deakin University originators who were mischievously acknowledging the wool district in which they were based. Future employees, however, were somewhat embarrassed, even appalled by this title. In spite of the name I was excited. I was offered a one-year contract to create theatrical work designed for young people. The Company consisted of four ensemble actors, a Company Manager and an Artistic Coordinator. The personnel within the Company set their own artistic agenda for the work that was to be produced. The Woolly Jumpers had a solid reputation. They devised all their own work, not a particularly unique feature at the time, but an empowering one.

The Artistic Coordinator, Paul Summer, was also leaving. A previous actor and recent freelance director with the Company had been invited to replace him. Like the originators of the Woolly Jumpers, she too had trained in performance making at Deakin University. Her name was Rosemary Myers.

To keep my options open I had also applied to work as an actor with Back to Back Theatre; a Company that was also based in Geelong but worked from a very different philosophical base. The Company consisted of actors with and without intellectual disabilities and was fast gaining a reputation for presenting powerful
theatre based on the stories of its members. As a precursor to the audition process I was invited along to see the Company perform a double bill of their current work at the Athenaeum Theatre in Melbourne.

In amongst the audience that night were some familiar faces; the actors who were returning for another year of work with the Woolly Jumpers. They greeted me warmly, making me feel welcome despite my self-consciousness at relating to them outside the audition process. I asked them what they were doing there and actor, Bruce Gladwin replied, "Oh we're here to see Rose."

The first play, **Stinking Houses**, began. I was mesmerised. Caz Anderson, the Artistic Director of Back to Back had warned me that audiences are generally "blown away" the first time they see the Company perform. Here was a cast of seven or so people, lurching around the stage, telling the story of two people in the same institution who learn they are actually brother and sister. There was music, there was yelling, there was singing, and there was tremendous sadness and tenderness. I was totally confronted by the presence of these performers with such a range of disabilities and abilities. I felt shell-shocked by these incredibly dynamic and brave performers telling the story of themselves: stories mainstream society rarely witnesses on stage. Within this seemingly choreographed chaos was a female performer with a tremendously strong presence. She wove in and around her fellow performers encouraging them along, dragging them up and delighting in playing with them. This was not patronising or derogatory. It was compelling, engaging,
affirming and powerful drama. This performer had vitality, energy and an enormous and effervescent acting style. There was an early Madonna sensibility about her dance style and clothes sense. Was it a costume or her own wardrobe? Her hair was dyed blonde, fashionably untidy and tied up with a ripped ribbon. She sang gusto pop and threw herself into a wild disco sequence. Members of the audience with disabilities joined in as it provided a chance for all to become involved rather than passively observe.

At the play's conclusion Bruce noticed I was affected by the experience, "What did you think?"

Nothing seemed appropriate to describe what I had seen. After a while I asked, "Who was that woman?"
"The singer? Oh that's Rose."

And there it was my introduction to the woman who would be my 'boss' for the next two years. I was excited and inspired. What I didn't realise at that point was that within her performance style was the embodiment of her entire art-making philosophy: - Be bold. Be theatrical. Tell stories that challenge and stories that some may not want to hear. Play with form. And sing pop songs.

All of these things I would come to know and to debate, dispute, embrace and ultimately research. My aim was to gain a better understanding of the nature of one director's process in the creation of an original theatre production designed for young people.
10 Years Later - Entering The Research Site

The middle of summer, 2000. I am walking up a lane way in North Melbourne towards a double storey converted warehouse on my way to the first day of rehearsals for Arena Theatre Company's latest production, Eat Your Young. I am not at all nervous, as I would normally be on any other first day of rehearsal. I have another rehearsal within the month, across town at the more mainstream Playbox Theatre, and this holds some trepidation for me. As a director I have always found "Day 1" intimidating. More so than as an actor. All eyes are upon you. You are the creative leader. The guide who will take the assembled group of artists on a journey through an intensive rehearsal process. The ultimate aim is to actualise what is currently only an idea or a written script and to develop it into a three dimensional theatrical event. As a director you are responsible for the 'totality' (Diamond cited in Daniels 1996 p50). On "Day 1" people are waiting to hear you verbalise your vision. Director, Zelda Fichandler, refers to this phenomena as 'the subtle recognition by all that the director has the roadmap' and will excite the creative team by 'her belief or insight that this is the thrilling route to go'; to release, enliven and enrich the creative journey for all (cited in Daniels 1996 p47).

Today I am not under scrutiny as an actor or as the creative leader and director. Today I am here as a researcher to document, analyse, interpret and observe the rehearsal process that the creative team will undertake, under Rosemary Myers' guidance, culminating in the staging of Eat Your Young.
Time Past

It has been nearly ten years since Rose and I first worked together at the Woolly Jumpers. We have remained friends, close friends. Rosemary Myers' career developed steadily in that time. After leaving the Woolly Jumpers in 1991 she became the Artistic Director of the Student Union Theatre at the University of Melbourne. I believe it was here, in a nurturing environment away from the intense scrutiny of the federal and state arts funding body systems, that she honed the production values of her work, specifically in the use of lighting and the possibilities of working within a controlled theatre environment. This position provided an opportunity not open to her when touring work to schools with three portable sets loaded into the back of a van.

Rosemary Myers' interests in story telling and devising original productions were always strong features of her work. In 1994 she accepted her current position as Artistic Director at Arena Theatre Company and gradually her interest in multimedia and new technologies developed. With the creative assistance of Bruce Gladwin, past Woolly Jumpers collaborator, the Anthro POP Trilogy was staged. Each production was technically and theatrically more adventurous than the last. On the basis of the final part of the trilogy, Panacea, staged at the 1998 Melbourne International Festival, Eat Your Young was commissioned for the 2000 Adelaide Festival. Within an Australian context being programmed for a mainstream
internationally regarded arts festival was a real coup, especially for a Company making work for young people.

I was interested to observe first hand how Rosemary Myers' directing process had developed within the last ten years of constant performance making that included the staging of such an ambitious project as Panacea. In her words, the production explored a wide range of possibilities for the fusion of cinema and theatre. The use of robotics in image and set provided an example of the relationship between the form and the content . . . . The digital animation allowed us a fast moving landscape of images, the movement and physical image in the choreography operated similarly. All elements talked together as a thematic deconstruction, to carry narrative action and information or to shift and juxtapose landscape to create the performance text.

(Arena Theatre Company 1998 p11)

This description of Panacea indicates the level of technical sophistication that the production explored. Rosemary Myers' words highlight her interest in how cinema and theatre can work together in a hybrid formation. This aspect of her work had been developing for some time but was given a larger scale platform for experimentation within this production. She continues:

The robotic platform allowed us to erect, strike and fly huge screens up and down altering our screen ratios throughout the course of the performance. In this way
we were able to move the screens and projected image in a manner similarly to the way performers move. We believe this was critical exploration in the creation of live work, which utilised changing physical space as opposed to cinema which utilises a fixed screen. We also used non static and diverse projection surfaces including the performers' bodies and costumes, the set pieces namely giant weather balloons and other surfaces in the space.

(Arena Theatre Company 1998 p11)

The notion of movable projection screens became a feature of the production's design; foreshadowing something that would later launch the entire design development of Eat Your Young. Of prime importance is the central place of technology and the increased budget allowing for exploration of possibilities. Panacea was a site-specific production in an abandoned police garage. The days of Rosemary Myers touring productions in a van carrying actors and three sets were gone.

A Central Research Question

Where would her interest in technology now take her with this latest production Eat Your Young? In 1996 I collaborated with Rosemary Myers on the production, Schnorky the Wave Puncher. I acted in the piece, a subversive beach pantomime, featuring a lively one-dimensional cartoonesque set by Jeff Raglus. Now I wanted
the opportunity to observe her at work unencumbered by the distraction of being a cast member. *Eat Your Young* seemed like the perfect opportunity. The central question of the inquiry was; what are the processes a director undertakes in the creation of a multi-media production designed for young people?

This central question raises many others. Who are the main collaborators within the rehearsal process? Do the collaborators cross-collaborate? In other words, are the collaborators working with each other or only with the director? How are the views, perspectives and aesthetics of young people regarded in the making of the work? How are the artistic philosophies of the company reflected in the actual form, narrative and style of the resulting production, *Eat Your Young*? These questions formed the heart of the study and framed my investigation into the role of one director.

*A Case Study: Arena Theatre Company's 'Eat Your Young'*

The production, *Eat Your Young*, provided me with an opportunity to carry out an ethnographic case study. The purpose was to examine the various roles and processes of a theatre director in the creation of a new Australian multi-media production designed specifically for young people. Observation and analysis of the work of the director, as the principal creative force behind the production, formed the main component of the research. All aspects of the creative journey were studied including the production's beginning, the creative development stages and
various script drafts, the collaborative processes of theatre making, through to its final staging at the Odeon Theatre in Adelaide, March 2000.

One of the main considerations I faced in designing the study was the nature of my previous and current working and personal relationship with Arena Theatre Company and the main focus of the research, Rosemary Myers. An established relationship can have its benefits. Hitchcock and Hughes indicate the importance for qualitative researchers of 'the establishment of rapport, empathy and understanding between interviewer and interviewee' (1995 p159). For the purposes of the study I had originally intended to adopt the role of "privileged observer" (Wolcott cited by Ely M. Anzul M. Friedman T. Garner D. & McCormack Steinmetz A. 1991 p45). As a "privileged observer" I was well known and trusted by the company and was given ready access to a variety of information. What developed as the study proceeded was a far more active role. This process of investigation will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

Familiarity of the context for a researcher (Hitchcock G. & Hughes D. 1989; Donelan 1991) presents simultaneous advantages and disadvantages. I was at once an ongoing freelance artist employed by Arena Theatre Company, and a friend, peer and co-collaborator of the main creative force behind Eat Your Young. Before the research process even began I possessed a vast amount of information about the Company and Rosemary Myers. The problem I faced was 'of rendering the familiar strange in order to avoid missing or taking for granted crucial aspects' of what I was
exploring (Hitchcock G. & Hughes D. 1989 p59). I was at once privileged and potentially blinded by my familiarity within this context.

**The Significance of the Study**

The literature that forms the theoretical basis for this study draws on a number of recent studies that are of significance in the area of a director’s role and function (Bartow 1988; Daniels 1996; Ekersley 1997; Giannachi G. & Luckhurst M. 1999; Manfull 1999). Of these only two specifically focus on the work of female directors in any great detail (Daniels 1996; Manfull 1999). Of further note is the absence of discussion of any directors working in the realm of Theatre for Young People. This study is therefore of significance in aiming to fill a gap that exists in this research area. I will focus on the work of a female director working in the area of Theatre for Young People.

This study will hopefully provide a valuable resource for the Company under investigation. Established in 1966, Arena Theatre Company is currently regarded internationally as a leader in its field. The study aims to be of use to other industry practitioners and researchers. In an educational context it may add to the growing base of knowledge about the role and processes of a director in the creation of original work in the field of Theatre for Young People.
In summary the purpose of the study is to gain a better understanding of the role and processes of a theatre director in the field of Theatre for Young People.

The specific objectives of the study are:

- To examine the role of the director in the theatre production, *Eat Your Young*.

- To examine the directorial processes involved in this production.

- To explore the nature of artist collaboration as orchestrated by the director.

- To investigate this role and associated creative processes within the context of creating a multi-media production designed for young people.

Chapter 2 will investigate the social, political and cultural context of the study, examining notions of "youth", their portrayal in the media and their access to culturally relevant activities such as Theatre for Young People. Chapter 3 will present an overview of current literature related to the study of directing. Chapter 4 considers the historical background of multi-media usage in theatre and focuses on three major influential artists. Chapter 5 outlines the ethnographic research methodology employed in the study detailing the negotiation of the researcher role. Chapters 6 and 7 present and discuss the data through narrative description, participant monologues and analysis. Finally Chapter 8 will draw conclusions from
the study comparing my findings with those of other researchers who have investigated the role of the director and the directing process.
CHAPTER 2

CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

This chapter will seek to analyse the contemporary social, political and cultural context of the study. Central to the study is Theatre for Young People, a form of theatre that has arisen out of a British educational theatre model. To trace and understand the development of this form of theatre is crucial, particularly within an Australian context. Creators and devisors of Theatre for Young People operate from clear philosophical positions and along with the art form itself, these have developed over the last forty years. Significant for this study are young people themselves, the principle recipients of theatrical works by Arena Theatre Company. Their position in contemporary society and their portrayal in the media will be explored. There are significant political implications in creating culturally relevant theatre opportunities for young people. This chapter will outline the broad social context of the study within which Arena Theatre Company operates.

The Position of Young People

It is important to define what is meant by the term "youth" throughout this study. It is generally accepted by such bodies as the Australia Council for the Arts that the term "youth" refers to a person anywhere in age 'from birth to 26 years' (1999 p15). Some government agencies will narrow this age range down to 15 - 24 year olds.
when classifying young people for specific 'government "youth" benefits' or
initiatives (Australia Council 1999 p15). In contrast, the recent Victorian Youth
Strategy Discussion Paper, produced by the newly appointed Office for Youth, a
division of the Department of Education, Employment and Training, specifically
classifies and targets "youth" as the '12 to 25 age group' (2001 p4). It is difficult to
reach consensus over age definitions of youth. However age classification is only
one definer and viewed by some cultural theorists (Wyn J. & White R. 1997) as too
narrow when discussing the diversity and breadth of "youth" as a category. The
classification contains many interrelated variables and influences such as class,
access to power, physical and social environments, family background, and
individual psychological make up that is also affected by lived experience.

The Portrayal of "Youth" as a Marginalised "Other"

In the ground breaking cultural theory book, Gangland: cultural elites and the new
generationalism (1997) author Mark Davis raises concerns about the current position
of young people in an Australian cultural environment. The book stimulated
widespread cultural debate amongst artists, educators, youth practitioners and
cultural theorists alike. Davis highlighted a 'broadly based cultural elitism which
exclude(d) younger people' (Arena Theatre Company 1997 p5). He argued that we
currently live in 'an age that doesn't generally celebrate the contemporary' (1997
p100); young people 'seem to be drowning in a sea of sixties revivals, while their
pleasures - be they dance parties or so-called 'grunge' fiction - are denigrated,
ghettoised or ignored' (Davis 1997 pviii). Davis asserts that young people lack
control over the way they are represented and portrayed in the media. Their pursuits and cultural interests are 'reported in a climate of chronic social difference, fear, moral decline and scandal' (1997 p100).

This view is further explored by Giroux who asserts that 'Youth as a complex, shifting and contradictory category is rarely narrated in the dominant sphere through the diverse voices of the young' (1998 p24). Due to a lack of access to the public domain and 'prohibition from speaking as moral and political agents', Giroux believes youth becomes an empty category, overruled by the values and opinions of an oppressive adult orientated society (1998 p24).

When the voices of young people are given a forum within a performing arts platform the work is frequently described as 'grunge theatre'. This label, Rosemary Myers argues, was used to describe any 'work created by and for "younger" audiences' at the 1997 Melbourne International Festival (Arena Theatre Company 1997 p5). This attitude highlights a dismissive attitude towards young people as a marginalised "other". Giroux outlines the widening gap in the extremities of how young people are perceived; 'Lauded as a symbol of hope for the future while scorned as a threat to the existing social order, youth have become objects of ambivalence and spaces of transition' (1998 p25). The chair of Youth Arts Queensland, Susan Richer, argues that these conflicting and alternate messages of youth are continually 'portrayed in the mass media indicat(ing) an alienation of
young people from mainstream communication and mainstream political platforms' (1998 p21).

A recent article in the Melbourne newspaper, *The Age*, actually highlighted media bias towards youth and their pursuits when the national summer event, the Big Day Out, toured the country. Over a one week period a small number of incidents and accidents were highlighted in crowds of over 40,000 in three separate states; particularly the unfortunate heart attack and later death of a 16 year-old girl caught in a crush around the front of the stage. As reporter, James Norman, points out 'the media . . . seem obsessed with casting negative stereotypes about the lifestyles of Australia's youth' (2001).

Even before the Big Day Out tour had completed its Australian circuit the media had begun its onslaught:

Right across the country on Sunday, newspapers decried the "chaos" that surrounded the Big Day Out, or, in the words of The Sunday Age, the "Bad Day Out". The Sydney Sun Herald went so far as to describe the entire event as "Out of Control" on its front page, and provided pointers to action shots of riotous young people (in one case naked) hurling themselves across mosh pits.

(Norman 2001)
Fig. 1: An image of "violent" and "wayward" youth at the Big Day Out 2001. Notice the contrast with the somewhat more positive image in Figure 2 (Age, 2001).

The article compares the event with other large crowd events such as AFL football where violent incidents from alcohol occur frequently without reaching the attention of the nation's media. Norman questions the vilification of young people in this manner and makes a comparison with the '1950s anti-rock'n'roll moral crusades . . . once again, it is young people who have to wear the labels of being irresponsible, out of control and chaotic' (2001). The aim of the Big Day Out, in Norman's opinion, is for young people to come together 'in a spirit of shared celebration' and revel in their appreciation of contemporary music (2001).
Fig. 2: The Sunday Age newspaper (28.01.01) portrays a positive visual image of fans enjoying the Big Day Out in Sydney, next to the damming headline 'Mosh casualties see renewed call for crowd control'. The image was placed underneath fig.1 in a significantly smaller size.

In their book, *Rethinking Youth* (1997), Wyn and White discuss the frequency of studies in which youth are referred to as a "victimised" category. This approach has led state governments in Australia to respond with a "welfarist" mentality that is detrimental to the young people they are hoping to aid or support. In a more positive light, Wyn and White believe that contemporary studies have positioned young people as 'active creators of their social reality' rather than victims (1997 p141). This shift is a focus on cultural dynamics and processes, which exist in a virtual free-floating state, . . . where young people actively pick and choose what kind of post modern subject they are to be for the moment. . . . the mode of communication - especially the mass media - becomes the central definer and template upon which identity is forged. Thus self image and self-identity are seen as reflections of a process . . .

(Wyn J. & White R. 1997 p141)
The authors propose a middle ground between these two positions; they claim that young people do exercise some degree of control and agency whilst being hindered and aided by societal relationships around them. This alternate view of young people takes into account many factors from institutional influences, access to money, education, family and psychological make-up (Wyn J. & White R. 1997 1997).

The Victorian Youth Strategy Discussion Paper (Department of Education 2001) aims to promote debate on issues of youth development and participation and pinpoints many areas of concern that have already been raised. It would seem that the Victorian Labor Government is aware of the current major issues affecting youth. Rather than repeating mistakes made by previous government youth agencies they are seeking community advice about the best way to proceed. The Paper acknowledges that the 'media focus on negative images of young people (which) perpetuates the stereotype of young people as a burden on the community' (Department of Education 2001 p6). Furthermore the Paper calls for the promotion of positive images of youth that reflect their contributions to society and culture. It acknowledges that youth are diverse in their needs and interests. This diversity arises from differences in 'age, gender, cultural background and geographic location' (2001 p10). Lack of access to government decision making processes is also highlighted as a distinct area of concern in the 'empowerment of young people as citizens and as contributors to the development of solutions and social problems' (2001 p7).
The participation of young people in artistic and cultural pursuits is viewed as a crucial opportunity for 'self expression, personal growth and the development of social and community "connectedness" ' (Department of Education 2001 p8). Participation in sporting and cultural activities provide young people with the means to engage, risk take, make decisions, question and experiment with the aim of developing a sense of self and identity within a social context. There is an interesting synergy between the Victorian Government's commitment to the development of a Youth Strategy and the views of arts officer, Richer, academic and cultural theorists, White and Wynn, and reporter, Norman. The focus of the developing Youth Strategy seems to indicate that not only are the ideas of these and other theorists being seriously considered by state government officials, but more importantly are being acted upon.

**Cultural Opportunities: Theatre for Young People**

One opportunity for cultural expression that is available to young people is theatre with a specific youth oriented approach. This type of theatre activity is actually quite complex and diverse. Jackson (1993) and Fitzgerald (1990) offer specific definitions to encompass the broad field of theatre for children and young people. Both similarly suggest five categories. These are Theatre In Education (TIE), Drama In Education (DIE), Children's Theatre, Youth Theatre, Education in Theatre and Young People's Theatre. It is the latter, that this study will examine.
For the purpose of this study I have enlisted the ideas of Susan Richer to define Theatre for Young People (TYP) more specifically. Theatre for Young People refers to:

1) Theatre that is professional; all company staff are paid an industry monitored wage,

2) Theatre that is created specifically for young people,

3) Theatre that aims to principally entertain, rather than educate,

4) Theatre that allows young people to 'reflect upon, celebrate and make meaning of their experiences' (Richer 1998 p22),

5) Theatre that is 'culturally relevant to young people in both content and form' (Richer 1998 p23).

**To Entertain or Educate?**

In the past thirty-five years the impact of Theatre in Education has created a need to differentiate between theatre whose prime objective is to educate and theatre whose intention is to entertain (Swortzell 1990). Pascoe (1999) argues that to entertain is one of the main purposes of theatre and drama. He offers a broad definition of entertainment; entertainment is 'not merely limited to . . . simple enjoyment but can be a complex and powerful engagement' (1999 p133). Within the field there has been ongoing debate on the position of entertainment over education amongst artists and educators alike. The essential role of Theatre In Education, Jackson argues, is to 'harness the techniques and imaginative potency of theatre in the service of education' (1993 p1). In support of the educative role of theatre, Mirrione believes
that the primary aim of the TIE playwright is to 'to impart information that stimulates critical thinking' (1993 p76). Indeed he lists one of his central motives when writing as 'the desire to engage and educate students, by presenting dramatic material that directly relates to their concerns and needs' (1993 p 76). This line of argument is reflective of the British model of Theatre In Education.

I would argue that Theatre for Young People operates beyond this educationally based construct, particularly in the contemporary Australian context. Theatre for Young People shares a broader belief that:

Any good theatre will of itself be educational - that is, when it initiates or extends a questioning process of its audience, when it makes us look afresh at the world, its institutions and conventions and at our own place in that world, when it expands our notions of who we are, of the feelings and thoughts which we are capable, and of our connection with the lives of others.

(Jackson 1993 p35)

It is essential to re-examine the place and value of entertainment in theatre. Pascoe (1999) argues that the entertainment value of theatre would normally imply a viewing response that requires little thought and carries minimum associated importance. However he sees this as a narrow view of entertainment. Both Pammenter (1993) and Pascoe (1999) believe that entertainment is provided by the relationship or engagement between content, actor and audience regardless of whether it is lightweight or heavy, humorous or tragic. This broader view
acknowledges that the ultimate goal of Theatre for Young People is to create an experience for young audiences that is captivating, stimulating, potentially provocative (Jackson 1993) and in essence, entertaining. This position values entertainment in the viewing response of young people as the means of opening up cultural opportunities specific to this audience sector. This notion is a shift from the educational basis of the British model of Theatre In Education imported to Australian shores in the 1960s.

*The 'Philosophical Position' of the Creators of Theatre for Young People*

McLean offers a list of skills and research interests that indicate the 'philosophical position' of contemporary leading Australian TYP creators, or 'teacher artists' as she labels them (2000 p8). The list includes developing an ontological position, an engagement with contemporary cultural theory, an aesthetic awareness and sensibility and an interest in examining issues affecting youth (McLean 2000).

TIE deviser, David Pammenter, believes creative teams have a responsibility to raise real and important issues, social, political and personal, 'in a clear, accessible and meaningful way that avoids mystification and so does not fail our children' (1993 p61). Work created for young audiences often raises questions about 'racism, conservation, . . . law, philosophy, the role of women in society, unemployment, old age, violence', teenage sexuality, family relationships and societal pressures on youth (Pammenter 1993 p62). Invariably these theatrical explorations 'challenge
accepted truths and norms' and, as Pammenter argues, are an important part of young
people's self-discovery (1993 p63). This type of approach operates from a
developmentally responsible position that acknowledges the power of theatre to
explore, expose, challenge and present issues to young people and values theatre's
place in their moral and social educations. Frequently this developmentally
responsible approach underpins the 'philosophical position' from which Theatre for
Young People creators operate. This is reflected in the writings of artists and
educators when discussing the philosophies of TYP creators (Jackson 1993;
Mirrione 1993; O'Toole J. & Bundy P. 1993; Williams 1993; McLean 2000; Parker
2000).

The creative team's 'philosophical position' permeates all aspects of a production
from the characters chosen to appear in the performance text, the content of the
action that occurs within the narrative and the dramatic and theatrical elements
employed to heighten the artistic form of the piece. Of prime importance,
Pammenter (1993) believes, is the performance as an event witnessed by the child,
or youth audience.

A crucial part of the devising process should . . .
concern itself consciously with critical analysis, both
of the material to be performed and the effect of the
performance, of ideas that it may stimulate and is
intended to stimulate, and of the relationship between
what is intended and what actually takes place.

(Pammenter 1993 p63)
'Culturally Relevant' Theatre for Young People

Understanding and recognising the artistic preferences and 'sophisticated aesthetic sensibilities' of youth audiences is a crucial aspect for creators when devising Theatre for Young People (Richer 1998 p21). Of equal importance is the necessity for the creators to embrace the concept that "youth" does not exist as a single group (Wyn J. & White R. 1997; Richer 1998).

Richer, in her excellent critical essay *Concentrated Extract*, argues that the arts industry in general must recognise and acknowledge the place of 'young people as current, not just future contributors' (1998 p22). She believes that TYP must be 'culturally relevant' and for this to occur the work needs to have a relationship with its audience through artistic processes; 'young people are not just there at the end but right at the beginning as investors, contributors, artists and cultural developers' (Richer 1998 p23). Philosophically, most TYP companies across the globe would embrace this statement. However, their level of commitment to realising this agenda varies in the quantity and quality of time spent engaging with their audiences as active and not passive recipients of theatrical art works.

Queensland academic and artist, Judith McLean, shares the concerns of cultural theorists Davis (1997) and Giroux (1998). She is motivated to 'ensure that young people have a sense of agency and therefore feel that their contribution has a meaningful place within the Australian cultural industry' (McLean 1998 p13). In her theatrical work McLean is concerned with presenting the 'stories, ideas and images'
of young people to create a critical dialogue about 'what it means to be young' (McLean J. & Richer S. 1999 p13).

McLean believes that Arena Theatre Company is an exemplary Company making Theatre for Young People. Her keynote address at the 1999 Youth Performing Arts Australia (YPAA) Conference and her review of the CD ROM, Collaborator, and video, Panacea: a documentary, both praised the philosophical base of the Company in terms of its youth agenda. McLean also applauded Arena Theatre Company's fusion of form in 'drama, dance, contemporary music and digital animation to create a work that is stunning' and 'visually spectacular' (McLean 1999b p115). McLean highlights the work of TYP practitioners, within Salamanca and Arena Theatre Company, who place their youth audiences at 'the centre of their creative process' (1999a p10). These practitioners, she believes, 'place a holistic emphasis on the relationship with the work and their audience', furthermore 'there is always direct contact with representatives from the intended audience' (McLean 1999a p10). For McLean and Richer (1999) TYP practitioners who create work with young people as a central focus and as crucial creative stakeholders strengthen the philosophical basis of the theatrical work produced. This strategy aligns these artists with current approaches to creating culturally relevant youth opportunities.
Theatrical Appeal to 'Screenagers'

British theatre director, Phyllida Lloyd, voices concerns shared by many practitioners in the field, about the future of theatre in a technological age, particularly in relation to its appeal for young people:

The well made play in the formal theatre building is not a seductive prospect for many people; certainly not young people. The future seems to be outside these monolithic buildings, perhaps in places where plays don't usually occur. Perhaps theatre will become less about plays and more about theatrical "events". I'm not sure for how much longer the text can reign supreme in this country. It may be that by making it our god, we have failed to notice how rapidly the changes in communication in the world have affected people.

(Lloyd cited in Manfull 1999 p200)

Contemporary Australian TYP artists, such as those working at Salamanca and Arena Theatre Company, share Lloyd's concerns. Of prime importance is the development of theatre that is relevant and engaging for its audiences. These artists seek to embrace youth culture, technology and multi-media and this is realised in both the ethos of each Company and the artistic product. The resulting work specifically attempts to create a hybrid form that directly appeals to 'screenagers', a term coined by Douglas Rushkoff in response to a contemporary society of children who are 'born into a culture mediated by the television and computer' (Rushkoff 1996 p3).
The recent theatrical work of Judith McLean, through her association with Queensland University of Technology and the Queensland Performing Arts Trust, adopts and explores Rushkoff's view that today's youth are sophisticated in their media literacy. She believes that young people are exposed to and aware of ways 'to find meaning in complex narratives, and to make sense of chaos by making tangential non-linear inferences' (McLean J. & Richer S. 1999 p15).

In an endeavour to excite younger audiences about the possibilities of live performance contemporary TYP artists, such as Arena Theatre Company, are creating more multi-disciplined theatrical works than are currently on offer to this audience (Arena Theatre Company 1997). This attitude is philosophically based on 'research suggesting that the needs and interests of young people vary from other audiences' (McLean J. & Richer S. 1999 p15). Artists and cultural theorists in the field assert that youth, as audiences of today, have already accommodated massive technological advancements as we move into the new millennium; 'young people are already sophisticated readers of complex non-linear visual forms' (McLean J. & Richer S. 1999 p16). Young audiences of 'techno babies' are highly visual and technically sophisticated (Brown 1999 p23). Jonathon Shiff, award-winning children's television producer, further supports this belief (Jordan 2001b p179). Shiff, like Rushkoff, argues that this audience, reared on music videos, the Internet, Playstation and Nintendo are 'smarter, wiser, more adept and more able to adapt' (Hooks 1999 p3). The work of Arena Theatre Company and Judith McLean
incorporates the use of multi-media technology in an attempt to engage young audiences by making the work multi-narrative in structure, content and form.

**The Development of Arena Theatre Company**

The Company under investigation in this study, Arena Theatre, have a long and established reputation for presenting quality and engaging theatrical performances for young people. In 2001 the Company celebrated 35 years of existence. This is no mean feat considering the changing Victorian political and cultural climate in which the Company has operated. Within its thirty-five year history Arena has witnessed and survived difficult years for Theatre for Young People. In 1987 Bouverie Street Theatre, an Education Department funded TIE Company, lost its funds and folded (O’Toole J. & Bundy P. 1993). But perhaps one of the biggest blows for the industry in Victoria came in 1994 when two regionally based companies, the Woolly Jumpers and Barnstorm Theatre, downscaled and eventually disbanded in 1995 due to funding cuts. Now Polyglot, a puppetry company, and Arena Theatre Company remain, as Victoria’s only full time professional arts funded theatre companies creating work specifically for young people.

**British Influences and the Development of an Australian Cultural Voice**

Naomi Marks, an ex-Melbourne University student, is credited with having initiated the idea to establish Arena Theatre Company in response to 'the lack of good quality' theatrical productions on offer to young people' during the mid 1960s (Parker 2000
p16). Arising out of the amateur Toorak Player Children's Theatre, Arena Theatre Company was professionally established in 1968 under the banner Children's Arena Theatre. The productions of the late '60s and early '70s were based on the British Theatre In Education movement. British playwright Brian Way was the playwright of choice for the Company during this period. Marks' rationale was quite simply and admirably that 'the scripts treated the children as intelligent people' (Parker 2000 p16).

The British influence on Arena Theatre Company can be traced to the appointment of David Young, Arena's first professional Artistic Director. Young had worked with the 'pioneering TIE team at the Belgrade Theatre in Coventry' (Pammenter 1993 p55). Belgrade's approach was to adopt the educational philosophy of the time: 'learning by doing' (Pammenter 1993 p55). The drama at Belgrade involved children's participation in the work (Williams 1993). Pammenter elaborates that 'the involvement of the children led to problem solving and decision making based on an exploration of a problem or situation' (1993 p55).

Children's participation in Theatre In Education was to polarise artists, educators and critics alike for the next twenty years. Its translation to an Australian context nationwide has been fraught with debate. Drama educator, Rob Galbraith, in an interview in 1992, claimed that there is no magic of theatre in audience participation (O'Toole J. & Bundy P. 1993 p137). Swortzell also reflects this attitude on an international level. In his informative introduction to the 'International Guide to

The early 1970s was a period in Australian theatre history where adult companies such as Melbourne-based Australian Performing Group (APG) were 'strongly committed to the championing of a home-grown Australian drama' (Gadalooff 1991). APG member, Paul Stevenson, describes the work as retaliating against 'the museum theatre being dished up by the Melbourne Theatre Company and the Old Tote' (O'Toole J. & Bundy P. 1993 p136). The cultural and political environment was stimulating the creation of a distinctly Australian voice under the leadership of Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, a strong advocate for the arts. Between 1972 and 1975 the Whitlam Government injected "huge" funds into the arts (Wherrett 2001).

This environment 'considerably complicated the TIE movement' in Australia as O'Toole and Bundy outline (1993 p136). Whilst being attracted to the left wing social and political orientations of the British model of participatory theatre, Australian youth theatre practitioners were also trying to find their own voice, as were theatre workers across the nation. O'Toole and Bundy point out that the large geographical regions within Australia and the financial constraints of touring the small-scale British style participatory theatre restricted the development of TIE. In fact very few Australian theatre workers would have either seen the British model done well or even have participated in it (O'Toole J. & Bundy P. 1993). In 1971, in
the midst of this 'strong reaction against the cultural cringe' (Gadaloff 1991 p34) and the mixed response to the British TIE participation model, Arena Theatre Company began to commission its first work with relevant Australian cultural content (Parker 2000).

**Long Term Survival**

Over its long operating history Arena Theatre Company has changed its 'house style' many times. This in fact can only be expected with several changes of Artistic Directors and the recognition that each new director will bring his or her own chosen style of working and his or her own collaborators into the Company. As in most theatre companies changing of personnel brings a freshness to the Company and allows the Company to re-invent itself whilst still keeping its eye on its primary aim to produce quality theatrical work for young people. Parker (2000) has witnessed this first hand at Arena Theatre Company where she has worked as a set designer and tour manager and has also been an active board member for many years. She describes the environment as one in which

> the artists have been empowered to make the kind of work they believe in and have been encouraged, with responsibility and within the resources available, to develop their own visions. Each artistic director . . . has contributed something unique to the development of Arena.

(Parker 2000 p17)
On an international level the company gained attention in the mid '80s when it toured overseas for the first time to the Vancouver International Children's Festival, arguably the most highly respected festival of its type in the world. The production, The Women there... was directed by past Arena Theatre Company Artistic Director, Angela Chaplin, and written by Julianne O'Brien, also the writer of Eat Your Young. Fitzgerald believes that since its inception

    Arena has been committed to offering high quality and challenging theatre to young people in schools. Even though each artistic director has brought his or her own philosophy and form to the productions, the aims of creating theatre of relevance and innovation, as well as a firm commitment to young people have remained central.

(Fitzgerald 1990 p8)

Current Artistic Director - Rosemary Myers

Rosemary Myers has been the Artistic Director of Arena Theatre Company since 1994. In the seven years of her leadership the Company has received attention on a national and international level through its use of multi-media, techno music, pop art design, technology and collaborations with artists from non-theatre backgrounds. Almost ten years since their first visit to Vancouver the company was invited back with their production Autopsy, which again featured the work of Julianne O'Brien, this time as dramaturg.
'In 1999 Arena Theatre Company received the International Honorary President's Award for excellence in Theatre for Young People. ASSITEJ (International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People) present this award every three years' (Jordan 2001a p68). Parker points out that 'this award is the highest international award that a company making theatre for young people can receive' and signals its position as a current leader in its field (2000 p17).

Arena Theatre Company has a strong sense of artistic purpose and outlines its detailed vision in the company's Artistic Manifesto (1999). This Manifesto frames the entire Company ethos.

Theatre can speak loudly.

It can strip naked.

It can sensory overload.

It can produce adrenaline and cannot be ordinary.

Theatre is an ancient form

that has been mistaken for a relic.

Theatre lives in the contemporary world.

Theatre is a micro world.
Every way in which meaning is conveyed can be duplicated there.

In an age of technology and media, where a mass politic pervades, theatre must re-look, dissect and reassemble.

It must seek to invade the mindset of the mainstream propaganda - the notion of a singular answer.

(Arena Theatre Company 1999 p3)

I have reproduced the manifesto as it appears in the Company's 1999 Annual Report, although it was originally written in 1995. The typeface is bold; white letters on a black page. The words have been carefully selected. They leap out in a very contemporary presentation style. This style reflects the attitude the Company intentionally project. It is an attitude of 'risk-taking, energy and renewal' (Parker 2000). The manifesto has a "public relations" market place awareness and savvy, yet acknowledges that theatre itself is a form that is centuries old and deals with the
senses. It has a postmodern sensibility that seeks to deconstruct life through theatrical image making. It culminates in a poststructural belief that the reading of a text or signifiers is open-ended and has plural meanings and dimensions. It firmly aligns the company with the philosophy of other directors working in a postmodern context. Postmodern directors:

    do not want to bring a single meaning to each spectator. Postmodernists believe that the world is encountered in fragments and that each person experiences it differently. There is, in their view, no universal meaning to a work of art. They juxtapose sights, sounds, space and sentence fragments in odd aesthetic combinations that force each spectator to read the performance differently.

(Whitmore 1994 p56)

The original objectives of the company as they appeared in the Memorandum of Association, Companies Act 1961, when Children's Arena Theatre crossed over from an unincorporated body into an official Company provide a fascinating contrast to the current philosophies of Arena Theatre Company. These objectives and guiding Company goals reflect the time in which they were constructed and have a clear emphasis on education;

(2) To produce in schools and elsewhere plays written for children with a view to promoting extending advancing cultivating and fostering the education of children.

(3) To promote extend advance cultivate and foster in and amongst children and
parents of children and teachers music, dance, and dramatic art in all its branches.

(4) To improve the standard of speech in children.

(5) To educate cultivate and promote children's interest in the fine arts generally and to stimulate in children creative work in the fine arts by encouraging them to develop artistic pursuits and hobbies.

(7) To develop, cultivate and advance the artistic and cultural standard of all children in urban, suburban and rural areas and to promote through an educational type of entertaining high ideals, good conduct and greater enjoyment of and benefit from the fine arts.

(Children's Arena Theatre 1961)

It is clear from this extract that the 'philosophical position' of the Company, at this particular time, reflected the educational ethos embedded in the principles of Theatre In Education in the 1960's. Item (4) is interesting. Not only were the Company seeking to improve 'cultural standards' and foster the education of children but also they were actively endeavouring to improve children's standards of speech. The 1996 manifesto contains none of this sense of education, cultivation, advancement or promotion. Instead, the place of theatre as a space where multiple meanings exist is emphasised. Theatre has a clear and prominent place in the manifesto whereas the original objectives have a more generalised focus on the fine arts. Both artistic statements relate to the time and place in which they were written and reflect the
principles of that period. The place of education, in a traditional sense of 'high ideals' and 'good conduct' is central in the 1961 statement. In contrast, the 1996 manifesto moves the concept of education in theatre into a multi-layered experience, where meaning is deconstructed and can be read differently by each audience member. I believe this is a progression from a modernist to a postmodernist approach to Theatre for Young People.

As a researcher, I was intrigued to examine how the 'philosophical position' of the Company would actually be reflected in the daily activities of performance making. In particular I wished to examine the various roles Myers would need to undertake as a theatre director in the creation of a new Australian play designed specifically for a young audience. The following chapter will explore the associated literature on the director and the directing process.
CHAPTER 3

THE STUDY OF DIRECTING

There is a lack of material that directly relates to the processes involved in the staging of a multi-media production. This is particularly pertinent to the role of a director in a technically sophisticated theatrical work and the creative processes that they employ to stage such a production. This gap in the literature also concerns the creation of productions specifically designed for young people. One could argue that Theatre In Education and Theatre for Young People, are 'hidden theatre form(s)' that largely occur behind closed doors in schools or theatres with audiences of predominantly school aged children (Williams 1993 p91). Multi-media usage in theatre, whether adult or youth orientated, is a relatively new form that has only existed for around seventy years (Burian 1971). This places the field of inquiry into an area that has not been widely researched or theoretically explored. When investigating the literature I approached the material by focusing on three categories associated with directing, multi-media usage in theatre and artistic collaboration. These categories are:-

- The role of the director and the directing process;
- The nature of artistic collaboration in theatre;
- The history of multi-media usage in theatrical productions

This final category will be investigated in Chapter 4.
The Role of the Director and the Directing Process

There are diverse approaches to directing, but documentation of the creative process of the director has been scarce or erratic (Giannachi G. & Luckhurst M. 1999), especially when compared to the study of acting (Daniels 1996). Leach argues that a major reason for this lack of documentation is due to the performance event itself; 'since theatrical performance is the most ephemeral of the arts and the only easily reproducible element is the text, critical attention has tended to focus on the playwright' (1989 iii). For Manfull a principal reason for this lack of research material lies in the 'recent development of the craft' (1999 pxvi).

Directing is a modern concept and has only been in existence for one hundred years. Directors were not needed until the nineteenth century. Playwrights or leading actors in companies would co-ordinate productions themselves. Innes describes acting up until this period as having 'fixed rules which were derived from rhetoric, and governed tone and gesture so that there was little variation between performances of different plays within any period' (Innes 1972 p66). Only as productions became more technically complex, in relation to actors, lighting, costume, set, sound and choreography, 'did the art of directing emerge' (Manfull 1999 pxvi). This resulted in the need for a 'single, outside, objective eye to guide all the disparate elements into a single unified vision' (Daniels 1996 p9). Innes further argues that the introduction of a more naturalistic acting style requiring detailed rehearsals combined with the 'practice of hiring actors for specific performances'
created a need for an 'arranger' (Innes 1972 p66). Documentation of the work of directors did not appear until the nineteenth century (Cole 1992). Indeed it was not until 1863 that a director was acknowledged on a British playbill for the theatrical production of Byron's poem, *Manfred* (Innes 1972). Documentation of the work of women directors is scarcer still due to their involvement in the more marginalised domains of theatre such as regional, experimental, educational or community sectors (Daniels 1996).

Most contemporary research is based on interviews with directors themselves (Bartow 1988; Daniels 1996; Eckersley 1997; Giannachi G. & Luckhurst M. 1999; Manfull 1999). Susan Cole's informative book *Directors in Rehearsal: A Hidden World* (1992), is one of the few sources that specifically documents actual rehearsals. Between 1985 and 1989 Cole observed the rehearsal work of ten professional American directors; five male and five female. The work represents a range of accounts of varying productions from the traditional to the experimental, the collective experience of performance making to the processes of the "auteur" director. Cole has also included in her study informal interviews with the directors under observation, but her principle form of data collection is through field notes taken in the context of the rehearsal itself. This account and the interviews with directors in other research books (Bartow 1988; Daniels 1996; Eckersley 1997; Giannachi G. & Luckhurst M. 1999; Manfull 1999), provides clear evidence that there is not, and never has been, a universal way in which to understand process and
practice, nor is there a universal way to understand the role of the director' (Giannachi G. & Luckhurst M. 1999 pxv).

The Director

A director is a psychoanalyst, father, mother, brother, sister, mistress, lover, friend. Author's surrogate, actor's conscience, and ideal audience.


Many terms have been used to seek to explain the exact nature of a director's effect on a rehearsal process. Cole lists several metaphors that depict her vision of the many roles of a director. The metaphors provide a sense of an almost omnipresent paternal figure who constantly keeps the production under her steady 'maternal gaze' (Cole 1992 p5). Her list of metaphors help us to understand the multi-faceted role of a director. The list includes:-

Director as Teacher
Director as Ghost, Invisible Presence
Director as Voyeur
Director as Ego or Superego
Director as Leader of an Expedition to Another World
Director as Puppet-Master
Director as Sculpture/Visual Artist
Director as Midwife
Director as Trainer of Athletic Team
Director as Trustee of Democratic Spirit
Director as Listener, Surrogate-Audience
Director as Author

(Cole 1992 p5)

Adding to the metaphors scenographic designer, Josef Svoboda, describes his relationship with the director utilising 'the analogy of an orchestra; he sees scenography as one section of the orchestra, and the director as conductor' (Burian 1971 p19). American director, Mark Lamos, refers to himself as a chef whilst acknowledging the importance of the role of his collaborators; 'I'm only as good as my ingredients' (Bartow 1988 p185). International directors interviewed for the book, In Contact with the Gods?, variously describe the creative process of directing as 'cooking, shopping, deciphering, conducting, cultivating bacteria, giving birth and tossing salads' (Delgado M. & Heritage P. 1996 p1).

These metaphors express a creative role that is full of contrasts. At times the director is expected to be silent witness to the rehearsal room run throughs, at others to be a visionary and to lead by clear and concise instructions, at times lead with a firm hand and at other times the director is expected to hint or suggest in subtle ways how an actor can make their own discoveries or realisations. This last point is reflected by actor Kelvin Kline who views the purpose of rehearsals, and by
implication the role of the director, from a particular standpoint; "The rehearsal process to me is a process of exploration and discovery . . . . The rehearsal process is the means by which the actor finds out what the scene is for oneself" (cited in Cole 1992 p172). Clearly the terrain is difficult to navigate; it is a 'strangely defined and shifting role with a range of responsibilities that require someone who is artist, philosopher, actor, pedagogue, procurer, coach, linguist, midwife, technician and administrator' (Delgado M. & Heritage P. 1996 p1).

Directing

is a delicate and demanding activity; it calls for scholarship, experience, taste, infinite patience, great physical stamina, and a capacity for leadership. It demands from its practitioners, besides the knowledge and skills that can be acquired, the instinctive and delicate balance between sensitivity and megalomania.

(Houseman 1985 px)

Benedetti places emphasis on the skill of a director in 'communication and relationship . . . (as being) essential to the work' (1985 p6). 'Human communication' is a central and vital ingredient to the success of a director but is rarely explored in the critical domain (Daniels 1996 p12).
Cole argues that gaze or observation is one of the director's principal tools in the rehearsal room. It is an active silent engagement in the work that is being created and relates to her concept of the director being a 'surrogate-audience' member (Cole 1992 p5). The actors play to the director who will eventually be replaced or surrounded by the audience. In moving to a more definitive interpretation of what is meant by the director's gaze, Cole relates her observations of puppet master, Tamamatsu, whilst watching a puppet-actor at work;

His gaze is steady, impassive, ineffably poignant. ... It is the gaze ... of absorption in and detachment from the other, as if the viewer is inside and outside what is viewed. Not easily categorizable, it is what I have called the "maternal gaze" in its ideal aspect. Neither purely voyeuristic nor purely possessive, it is a taking in and letting go.

(Cole 1992 p208)

The concept of a director being inside and outside the experience of the creative process is also taken up by Daniels (1996) who refers to this phenomena as a state of dual consciousness. Daniels' study, entitled Women Stage Directors Speak, is also highly informative. Between 1991 and 1994, Daniel's interviewed 35 women stage directors working in the US. In contrast to Cole's study, where she attended rehearsals of all of the directors in her study, Daniels attended rehearsals of only some of those interviewed. These rehearsals are not documented or analysed in any significant detail. From her research into the directorial process from a feminist perspective Daniels notes her reservations about the use of the "maternal" or
motherly image when describing a female director. By citing Venables, Daniels points out the negative connotations of this image. Venables criticises the use of the motherly imagery because it 'makes it possible for women directors to assume power yet still keeps them a prisoner of old and powerless archetypes . . . the image is very limiting because it conforms to the stereotypes about women, that they cannot be real leaders' (cited in Daniels 1996 p123). This throws a cautionary note around Cole's "maternal gaze" descriptor. In reflecting on the nurturing quality of a director's role it needs to be tempered with a consciousness of its feminist implications.

Daniels believes that in 'most articles or texts on directing' there is a distinct lack of 'theoretical cohesion' in relation to the function of a director and the processes of directing (Daniels 1996 p10). In spite of this, certain principles seem to be commonly held by most directors. These principles include the 'qualities of a good director': the ability to assume leadership of the creative process, a sense of vision and the ability to collaborate with other artists (Daniels 1996 p11). The collaborative nature of directing will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Daniels examines the quality of leadership of a director in her study. Daniels cites Robert Cohen, who believes 'the most important single directorial quality is leadership. The director must initiate, must organize, must arbitrate, and should be able, as well, to command, induce and inspire' (Daniels 1996 p46). However the nature of a director's leadership is dependent upon direct and subtle lines of
interaction and communication. Robert Benedetti, in his practical guidebook for novice directors, *The Director at Work*, refers to this leadership style as a '"quiet authority", a special blend of openness and firmness' (1985 p6). The director guides the work of his or her fellow artists, but creates the "room" which allows them to solve their own creative problems. The qualities which most contribute to this ability are centeredness and patience: the centeredness of "knowing who you are" so that the demands of your ego can be kept from intruding into the work of your fellows, and the patience to remember that it is sometimes more important for actors or designers to solve a problem for themselves than that the problem be solved quickly.

(Benedetti 1985 p6)

Ultimately leadership style is a personal attribute. Liz Diamond gives her first hand opinion of her own qualities of leadership as a director, which she embraces:

I want to see my ideas, my visions up on stage. I want to test my reading of the text against my collaborators. I really want the passionate debate, that aesthetic and intellectual bout. . . . I love getting in the room with a bunch of actors and engaging them so much in the process that they feel a shared responsibility for the whole creation, I think that's good directing. . . . Strong leadership is essential, and actors must know that you are prepared to say "Yes" or to say "No" at any given point, so they know that there's someone
who is prepared to take final responsibility for the work.

(Daniels 1996 p50)

Manfull (1999), in her interviews with thirteen British female directors, lists a number of qualities or gifts that a director should ideally possess; these echo Daniels' findings and include: 'the eye, the judgement, the leadership, the instincts, the tastes, the artistic vision' (Manfull 1999 pxxv). Benedetti (1985) surveyed some thirty American directors about their work methods and theatrical beliefs. From these responses he formulated a "portrait of a director" in which he notes a 'kind of energy that is uninhibited and unselfish . . . . Effective directors, . . . (he) concluded, tend to be people who are vitally interested in their world and open to life experience; they are, in a word, curious about the human condition' (Benedetti 1985 p4).

The precise nature of a director's job has never been categorically defined, 'there is no formula' (Manfull 1999 pxxv). The director is viewed as the creative force within a theatrical project; for Benedetti it is the 'central intelligence responsible for bringing all the parts (of a production) into a creative synergy' (1985 p24). The director's role is pivotal in the development of a production. Questions that are central to this study are also posed by Manfull; 'How does the director move from that which exists on the printed page or in the mind's eye to that which is a living entity on the stage? What is the rehearsal process like?' (1999 p61).
The Directing Process

The work of rehearsal work - what, in fact, often makes actors irritable and frustrated- is the forced enactment of the flow and stoppages that are inherent in all creative activity.... The director in rehearsal has the paradoxical role of ...(assisting), the creative flow of energy by seemingly trying to stop it, interrupt it, at times detour, distract, (and) antagonise it.

(Cole 1992 p9)

Benedetti (1985) argues that the directing process needs to recreate the play and is in effect comparable to the original process in which the play was created by the playwright. A director examines many components including character, relationships, plot, theme, sub-themes and style. This however is only one part of the task of realising a text. Director, David Glass, broadly defines the job of directing 'in its widest sense as the organization of time, space and bodies of performers' (cited in Giannachi G. & Luckhurst M. 1999 pxv). Essentially, directing is the guidance of a creative process (Benedetti 1985). Daniels reflects the view of many with her statement that 'there may be as many methods for directing as there are individual artists' (1996 p10).
From her research into the literature on directing theory and pedagogy Daniels (1996) concludes that there are some key commonalities that appear across the sources in relation to the directing process:

The first element is some kind of textual interpretation, which derives from the field of literary analysis and criticism and is the basis for the director's creative vision and production concept. . . . The second important element involves the visual aspects of the theatrical production, including design elements, composition, stage picture, blocking and movement. These all involve the physical translation of the text into visual patterns and derive their theoretical base from the aesthetics of visual art. A third major element in the directing process is work with actors, using methods and materials from acting theory and pedagogy. This element often stresses psychological approach, emotional context, and motivation and involves by far the most intimate and personal collaboration.

(Daniels 1996 p12)

It is interesting to compare this with Benedetti's summary of the directing process as key descriptive actions, or what he refers to as the process of discovery:

1. Analysis: the penetration of the text in order to fully grasp the story of the play and the manner of its telling;

2. Translation: the discovery of theatrical means to re-create the text as a living event;
3. *Synthesis*: the editing of the experience to make it accessible to the audience and to give it its own integrity as a work of art.

(Benedetti 1985 p11)

These actions, when placed against Daniels' account provide a more complex understanding of the directing process. The commonalties in the approaches and ways of thinking of these two theorists result in a series of targeted key elements aligned with key actions. It may be that Daniels has been directly influenced by the work of Benedetti, in developing her model for the directing process, as she openly cites his work throughout her book.

At the conclusion of her study, Cole (1992) was able to generalise about the creative process that the production team are engaged in. She argues that it is usually a process in crisis, always involving the search for answers, working against deadlines, making decisions and then revisiting them. Cole views this process as a kind of hermeneutic circle: the problem has to be fully understood in order to be resolved and yet only the right resolution fully illuminates the nature of the problem. Even playwright-directors . . . depend on seeing the effects of their directing in order to *know* the emerging shape, the physicalized presence of the written text. . . . What is constructed by the playwright, and reinscribed by the director, is mediated by the physicality of persons and objects, a
physicallity that leaves its own traces in the process of creation. The frequent complaint of actors that certain directors don't know what they want until they see it enacted in fact calls attention to a nearly inevitable aspect of directing.

(Cole 1992 p7-8)

This description of the intangible qualities of a director's work is central to understanding the creative process of directing. Theatre and its rehearsal process are complex ephemeral events and are contingent on the interplay and interaction of many elements, human and technical. The directing process involves working 'continuously in a problem solving mode' and therefore requires an individual response to the immediate needs at hand (Benedetti 1985 p3). This aspect of the directing process, dealing 'with each situation according to its own specific nature', has an improvisational or 'on-the-spot' quality (Benedetti 1985 p3).

The Nature of Artistic Collaboration in Theatre

Directors depend on and work with others, and these other people, the actors and audience open up the search for us and allow us to go beyond our individual capacity. Directors never work alone: they function within a complex act of relationships and this is their strength.

(Brook 1996 pxi)
The literature indicates that there is one unifying feature and belief about theatre and directing in general; by its very nature, theatre is a 'collaborative art form' (Daniels 1996 p91) (Benedetti 1985; Cole 1992; Daniels 1996). Daniels regards the ability to collaborate, along with leadership and authority, as intrinsic and essential qualities of a good director; 'to be inclusive of and sensitive to the creative input of others and to create an open and encouraging environment where artistic interaction can thrive and prosper' (1996 p91). Director, Alexander Taïrov, describes the collaborative function of the director as 'coordination and harmonization of individual creativity to the collective creativity ' (cited in Daniels 1996 p92). The collaboration of artists within a production is ultimately managed and engineered by the director.

Benedetti argues that the director's role is like that of an executive; he or she is responsible for the delegation and alignment of the efforts of many people of differing temperaments, each of whom is concerned with a particular aspect of the whole. . . . (In an) executive capacity, the director often stands at the point between management and labour, and between the demands of art and of commerce, helping to share and guide the project on a day to day basis.

(Benedetti 1985 p23)

In elaborating on 'alignment' as one of the four main components of a director's job, Benedetti (1985) asserts that it is a director's job to encourage and assist each team member's contribution to the group effort. A director functions to align the team so that individuals are contributing in a way that enhance the efforts of others with the
overall objective of supporting unity. Benedetti (1985) believes that the process of collaboration and alignment allows an individual's input to be driven by self-motivation. The production carries a life force of its own, overseen by the director's careful eye to ensure a productive spirit is maintained.

Collaboration is deemed to infuse all aspects of the directing process (Daniels 1996). Collaboration, in a theatrical context, involves such concepts and working methods as

letting collaborators work *with*, not *for*, the director, learning to trust feelings and intuitions, being sensitive to individual emotions as well as the dynamics of group interaction, and nurturing the other artists by creating a positive environment of emotional support in order to make it safe to risk spontaneous creative ideas that are new and untried.

(Daniels 1996 p92)

The interactive and responsive quality of the work is again stressed with the director constantly needing to respond to the demands of the work at hand. Benedetti even goes as far as to suggest that the director even engages in a degree of 'social engineering' to ensure the creative group are operating productively (1985 p24).

Daniels' (1996) study is enlightening as to the importance of collaboration in theatre, particularly in relation to how collaboration is approached by female directors. Female directors interviewed by Daniels 'believe the ability to collaborate comes
more easily to a woman, especially because of their social conditioning as a mediator in the home and family environment' (Daniels 1996 p94). This belief is based on the premise that women are essentially trained from early childhood to watch others; 'to be sensitive to their emotions, to be ready and available to people, to take care, to nurture, and to develop' (Giomi cited in Daniels 1996 p94). With this underpinning ideology, some of the women interviewed in her book even believed that women may be more prepared to stimulate a greater collaborative atmosphere than their male counterparts.

As director Adele Prandini points out, selecting the creative team is an important first step toward a successful collaborative group process.

There are many relationships that create a theatre performance. So then, who is the artistic team that I want to work with? Who are these people? What’s important to them? What are their goals? What challenges are they looking for in life? Every aspect of theatre makes a statement, so it’s important in choosing those collaborators to ask, "Can we work together? Can you communicate?"

(cited in Daniels 1996 p106)

This essential first step of gathering a team together builds a solid foundation for a sense of community or family to develop within the group. Some directors like JoAnne Akalaitis, believe the rehearsal process is a life-enhancing, spiritual activity that broadens communication: 'It deepens the understanding of what community is
because one of the most powerful aspects of theatre is that it is a communal event' (cited in Daniels 1996 p107). Director, Brenda Hubbard, takes this notion of community through to a sense of creating a "family unit" throughout the rehearsal process. Intrinsic to a cast functioning at optimum level is the dependence 'upon each person in that cast finding a place within that newly created group' (Hubbard cited in Daniels 1996 p122).

From her interviews with female directors Daniels identified a number of key elements that assisted these women to successfully collaborate.

The first of these elements was a sensitivity and openness to feelings and emotions; the second was the ability to create an environment of trust and intimacy for the ensemble. Inevitably, almost all of the discussions contained a mention of the idea of nurturing artists during the process of collaboration. One other important aspect was the ability to use intuition and to trust instincts during the collaborative process.

(Daniels 1996 p115)

In summary Daniels discusses the interviewees' conviction that collaboration is 'an indispensable element in their work as artists and was the issue that most women agreed upon overall' (1996 p110). These female directors 'see themselves at the center of a web of artists and are willing to take control when they believe it to be
necessary. Most are reluctant, however, to think of themselves as the only one controlling the ultimate destiny of a production' (Daniels 1996 p110).

Daniels (1996) hypothesises that women may in fact be better suited to directing than men due to their circumstances of social conditioning and their ability to suppress ego. She asserts that this is particularly appropriate when discussing the crucial role of collaboration in the directing process. I have yet to find any other sources that can support this claim, and Daniels' study is unique in its feminist approach. My own study may contribute to this view although it has not been designed to analyse the nature of gender influence on the directing process. Daniels' theory needs to be qualified by a consideration of the unique individual identity of a director, whether male or female. The women interviewed ultimately believe this individuality makes any gender distinctions difficult to distinguish. Daniels concludes:

Many women (directors interviewed) think that they have unique ways of collaborating, especially in their willingness to admit they don't always have the answers and to be truly open to input from others. It is clear that almost all of the women believe very strongly that collaboration leads to shared success, a success more complete and rich because of the whole-hearted contributions of the many different artists in the production process.

(Daniels 1996 p114)
CHAPTER 4

THE HISTORY OF MULTI-MEDIA USAGE IN THEATRICAL PRODUCTIONS

Several terms are currently used for the application of technology in performance; these include 'multi-media, poly-media, hybrid art, multi-arts, mixed-media, screen-media, new media' and work with new technology (Gough 1999 p23). In this study I will use the single term multi-media. This form of performance incorporates a range of media from stereo surround soundscapes, choreography of bodies through space, live action and spoken text, the use of computer technology and most significantly the projection of images both still and moving in the performance space. Meaning, in this context, is communicated through the interplay of 'screen media, sound, live bodies, spoken text, space and time' (Gough 1999 p23).

Multi-media usage in theatre is not particularly new. The term has undergone many transformations and is defined in various ways. Ever since the technological inventions and advancements of film, projection and slide images, theatre makers have been utilising these kinetic elements in their stage designs. Willett asserts that well before World War I film had been incorporated 'in opera houses for illusionistic purposes' (1978 p113). Innes (1972) claims experimentation and developments in theatrical convention during the first half of the twentieth-century
represented a new awareness of the physical resources of the stage and its relationship with the audience. Multi-media usage with a focus on projected image and text was a significant part of this development. Unfortunately research into this area is scarce. According to Braun it is difficult to reconstruct, document and analyse 'so ephemeral a phenomenon as a theatrical performance' (1979 p13).

My search has uncovered three major influences in the use of multi-media in theatre. These include the political theatre work of director, Erwin Piscator, the concurrent theatre of Russian director, Vsevold Meyerhold and the influential work of Czechoslovakian set designer, Joseph Svoboda, still working in his eighties as Art Director at Laterna Magika in Prague as recently as 2000 (Laterna Magika 2000).

**The Political Theatre of Erwin Piscator**

Burian claims that the 'first truly significant adoption of film by theatre' can be seen in the work of German political theatre director, Ervin Piscator (1971 p77). Although other directors had experimented with its usage, Willett argues that no other director up until this point had 'used film so extensively or thought about it so systematically' (1978 p113). Innes asserts that Piscator 'introduced mass-media to the stage in order to make the theatre capable of handling twentieth-century issues' (1972 p2). For Rorrison, his aim was to 'be modern' and this involved competing
with 'the new media, film, radio and the press', which had the ability to report events as soon as they occurred (1987 p11).

In 1920, Piscator started working with the Proletarian Theatre, travelling with minimal props and lights in a cart around Berlin. The work established a reputation for Piscator and featured sketches 'advocating the class struggle and support for Soviet Russia' (Rorrison 1987 p10). Throughout his career his intention was always to be contemporary. The subject matter of the performances was 'present incidents or recent history . . . (with) immediate relevance and practical use . . . to inform the audience and assert a direct influence on their actions' (Innes 1972 p51). In 1924 Piscator began working for the Volksbuhne, one of Berlin's leading theatres. Here he had access to a modern theatre where he began to 'experiment with projections as a means of locating plays in their historical and social context and manipulating the audience's response' (Rorrison 1987 p10). Piscator employed front projection, back projection and simultaneous or overlapping projection from more than one source. In his view slide projections were the 'literary element' . . . while film could be three kinds: instructional, dramatic or commentary-cum-chorus. Instructional film was documentary, historical; it 'extends the subject matter in terms of time and space'. Dramatic film furthered the story and saved dialogue; commentary film pointed things out to the audience and emphasised the moral.

(Willet 1978 p113)
Innes (1972) claims that Piscator's use of film in theatre altered the entire nature of the theatrical event. Film 'allowed an apparent liberation from the temporal and spatial limitations of the stage and made it possible to shift viewpoints, so that the action could be extended to global scope and gained the "epic" ability to comment on itself' (Innes 1972 p4). Piscator himself states that his development of work, labelled "epic theatre" dealt with the 'extension of the action and the clarification of the background to the action . . . a continuation of the play beyond a dramatic framework' (Piscator 1980 p75). Film was intrinsic to this overall vision.

The production, In Spite of Everything, provides a fascinating example of how Piscator's use of film and contemporary data interconnected and commented on each other. Piscator describes the interrelated effect where film, documentary footage from the archives of the Reich, was combined with live action for the first time.

... we used authentic shots of the war, of the demobilization, of a parade of all the crowned heads of Europe . . . . These shots brutally demonstrated the horror of war: flame thrower attacks, piles of mutilated bodies, burning cities. . . . live scene and film clip . . . interacted and built up each other's power, and at intervals the action attained a furioso that I have seldom experienced in theatre. For example, when the Social Democratic vote on War Loans (live) was followed by film showing the first dead, it not only made the political nature of the procedure clear, but also produced a shattering human effect . . . .

(Piscator 1980 p92-97)
Fig. 3: **In Spite of Everything**, Grosses Schauspielhaus 1925 (Piscator 1987). A montage of stills used in the production; German officers, the Flanders trenches, workers demonstrating 'in front of the Brandenburg Gate in 1918, and at the bottom a partial rear view of Liebknecht's corpse' (a political leader of the far left who was murdered) (Rorrison 1987 p16). The montage is mounted over an image of the theatre.
Innes claims that the use of film in stage productions was 'Piscator's decisive innovation' (1972 p107). Ultimately Piscator was not interested in claiming priority; film was merely a means to an end, which could easily be replaced tomorrow by further technological advancements. In his work film sequences, both existing documentary footage and sequences specifically shot for a production, 'expanded the action of the play, documented it, commented on it and even regulated the tempo' (Innes 1972 p107). The actors on stage appeared static and artificial in contrast to the expanded definition and constant movement of the filmed silent images. A new acting style, described by Piscator as 'hard, straightforward and unsentimental' eventuated as a direct result of the dominance of the screen (cited in Innes 1972 p111). Innes believes Piscator's use of film 'enforced a redefinition of the actor's function ... setting new standards of precision, actuality and impersonality for sound effects, movements, scenery and particularly speech' (1972 p4). Innes (1972) asserts that Piscator's productions were an attempt to find a means of successfully integrating the two forms of stage and screen.

In effect plays were turned into film scripts: sketches of action to be filled out with optical details by the director, where primary emphasis is on the efficient transmission of information or material not on the aesthetic form. ... (For Piscator): 'The theatre had become uninteresting. The shabbiest film contained more topical interest, more of the exciting realities of our day than the stage.'

(Innes 1972 p112)
Fig. 4: *Tidal Wave*, Sturmflut 1926 (Piscator 1987). A total of four projectors were positioned onto the cyclorama with the effect that the projections were much more complex than previously. The use of film, some specially shot, received mixed critical responses (Rorrison 1987).

*The Theatre of Vsevold Meyerhold*

Rorrison (1987) acknowledges that Russian director, Meyerhold was also using film and multiple projection screens in his work with the Soviet October Theatre as early as 1924. Piscator denied any knowledge of this; 'very little news about (Soviet) performances ... came through to us' (1980 p 93). The possibilities of film were also making an impact on the stage presentations of Meyerhold, a director Rudnitsky (1981) claims to be in the forefront of avant-garde theatre. According to
Kiebuzinska (1988) Meyerhold not only experimented with the use of screens for the projection of slide images and text during the 1920s but was particularly concerned with how the form of film could be reflected in the form and content of theatre. This was significant in Meyerhold's use of 'the speeding up of action and in the cutting of acts into scenes "montaged" together for effect' (Kiebuzinska 1988 p55).

It is not possible here to detail the impact and influence of Meyerhold's theatrical work. It is however important to focus on Meyerhold's concurrent experimentations with multi-media, specifically his use of slides. In 1923 Meyerhold was the first theatre director to be awarded the title of 'People's Artist of the Republic', an honour awarded at the completion of twenty-five years service in the theatre with twenty years spent as a director (Braun 1979). Significantly in this year, in his production of Earth Rampant, Meyerhold began using screens for projections. Like Piscator the relevance of the play's action to familiar and recent historical events was highlighted by 'familiar Civil war slogans projected on a screen above the stage during the performance' (Braun 1979 p180). Braun suggests that 'these titles also performed a formal function, replacing the long-discarded front curtain as a means of further dividing the play up and announcing the theme of each episode' (1969 p188). This is a further example of how film influenced the presentational form of Meyerhold's theatre.

Leach (1989) claims that Popova's design of projected titles for Earth Rampant were amongst the most interesting and impressive that Meyerhold employed. The
play dealt with an abortive attempt at mutiny by soldiers embattled in an imperialist war. The designs and lettering of the text projections include such statements as - 'Knock off the crowns of the last tsars' and . . . 'Education is the sword of revolution' . . . 'Long live the union of workers and peasants' ' (Leach 1989 p108). The overall design effect and construction was entitled "machine-photo-poster" (Rudnitsky 1981 p314). Leach outlines how the projected slides contribute to the meaning of the performance.

The modernistic lettering, in yellow and black or red and black, and the frequent changing of slogan, together with interspersed sequences of film on another screen (there were thirty-two of these altogether) add a dialectical zest to the production. The contradiction between screen action and live action, spoken words and words read . . . make for a peculiarly dynamic excitement.

(Leach 1989 p108)

In 1924 Meyerhold presented Give us Europe!, also known as D.E.. In this production Meyerhold employed the use of three projection screens hung over the performance area. Reminiscent of the silent film convention of the display of captions, D.E. witnessed a 'dialectical interplay relevant to the action' (Leach 1989 p106). A large central screen provided scene information such as a title, location and specific character comments. The two side smaller screens displayed political appeals, propaganda slogans and 'quotations from the written works and speeches of Lenin, Trotsky and Zinoviev' (Braun 1979 p189). Meyerhold's aim, again similar to
that of Piscator, 'was to point out the political significance of the events on stage and to relate them to as wide a context as possible' (Braun 1979 p189). Of prime concern for both directors in their use of multi-media was the work's relationship to the immediate socio-political context from which they were being viewed.

*The Scenographic Work of Josef Svoboda*

Scenographic designer for over seven hundred theatrical productions around the world, Svoboda has been regarded as one of the 'most prolific, vital and sought-after designer(s)' of Europe (Burian 1971 pxix). Svoboda's work has focused on the integration between technology and art in scenic production techniques, similar in essence to the philosophies and ideas of the 1920's Bauhaus Theatre. Together with his design team Svoboda forged new directions in the application of complex technical and mechanical devices that incorporated 'sophisticated lighting and projection techniques' on a large scale (Burian 1971 pxix). Burian praises Svoboda for his creation of a complex 'new, hybrid form incorporating actor and screened image' (1971 pxx).
Fig. 5: Their day, Prague 1959. This production designed by Josef Svoboda incorporated techniques from Laterna Magika. Nine mobile screens were used that could disappear, each had at least two projectors. 'Svoboda's concern was the creation of new stage space, not the establishment of a locale' (Svoboda 1973).

Svoboda's experiments with slide projection began in 1942, some twenty years after the ground breaking work of Piscator and Meyerhold, and by 1943 he had begun to look at the combination of film projected image and live action (Burian 1971 p77). Svoboda's philosophy of scenography is based on the premise that 'theatre is a synthetic, componental phenomenon that ideally needs balancing' (Svoboda cited in Burian 1971 p18). He believed in the constant advancement of the technology of theatre. Of particular concern for Svoboda was theatre aligning itself to the
advancements of technology; 'Stage technology has always dragged behind the general technical advancements of the time . . . we're still at the luna park and merry-go-round stage as far as I'm concerned' (Svoboda 1959 cited in Burian 1971 p25).

Svoboda subsequently developed the Laterna Magika, a technical device capable of dealing with multiple projection images of slide and film. Mobile screens were employed with the live action of actors. He even incorporated a device that could redirect a projection beam to any place on the stage. The technique also involved the use of footage shot specifically for the production at hand rather than the use of stock prints, and eventually incorporated live video action shot in an adjoining studio.

Svoboda describes the unique interplay between the forms:

The play of the actors cannot exist without the film, and vice versa - they become one thing. One is not the background for the other; instead you have a simultaneity, a synthesis and fusion of actors and projection. Moreover, the same actors appear on screen and stage, and interact with each other. The film has a dramatic function.

(Svoboda cited in Burian 1971 p83)
Fig. 6: The Last Ones, Prague 1966. Considered the most successful theatre application of 'integrated stage and filmic action. Characters from the play and related incidents were filmed and then projected in juxtaposition to on-stage action. The projection surface was the crumpled rear wall of the set... ' (Svoboda 1973).

Laterna Magika was praised at the time by theatre director, Jan Grossman, for its multifunctional ability to absorb and artistically express 'the density and dynamics, the multiplicity and contrariety of the world in which we live' (cited in Burian 1971p85). Svoboda remains convinced by the power and possibilities of projection in theatre; he believes that when combined with the use of lighting, projection is ultimately the future of scenery, far surpassing the possibilities of paint (Burian 1976 p3).
The pioneering work of Piscator, Meyerhold and Svoboda has had far reaching effects on the development of multi-media usage in theatrical productions across the globe. The development is non-sequential, as artists such as Piscator claim no knowledge of the simultaneous experimentations of Meyerhold. This is in direct contrast to the work of director Bertolt Brecht who openly acknowledges the influence of Piscator and Meyerhold particularly in his use of projected text (Rorrison 1987). These artists are responding to the technological advancements of the day and exploring them within the bounds of their theatrical work. The employment of technology is not a means in itself but a further resource available to an artist in their desire to communicate a story, message or theme. The use of multi-media has affected the form of the work and the way the actors are presented on stage. This is seen in the development of a particular acting style in Piscator's work that directly relates to the screen and live action interplay. In its early development multi-media was utilised to comment on the action of the play and place it in a wider global context. It provided an opportunity for political commentary and global perspective and became an intrinsic design feature with its own dramatic function. For artists such as Svoboda and Piscator multi-media became a hallmark of their work and the basis of their efforts to make the work relevant, contemporary and engaging for their audiences.
CHAPTER 5

EMPLOYING ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was designed as an ethnographic case study. I conducted fieldwork, as suggested by Hitchcock and Hughes (1989), involving prolonged, intensive, and direct involvement in the lives, interactions and activities of Arena Theatre Company. I agree with Hitchcock and Hughes belief that ethnographic researchers aim to 'share in the experiences in as natural a fashion as possible in order to understand better how these people view' and 'make sense of their worlds' (1989 p52). The study set out to examine the processes by which the members of Arena Theatre Company interacted and engaged to produce and stage the original theatre production, Eat Your Young. As a researcher conducting fieldwork I became a part of the Company's daily activities. I attended rehearsals and production meetings to better understand these phenomena.

*An 'Intrinsic Case Study'*

Stake (2000) outlines three types of case studies. Utilising Stake's definitions, the study of Eat Your Young could best be described as an 'intrinsic case study'. I have undertaken the study of this particular case not 'because the case represents other cases or because it illustrates a particular trait or problem' but because I want to understand the process of direction better; 'in all its particularity and ordinariness, this case is of interest' (Stake 2000 p437).
Le Compte and Schensul (1999) argue that ethnography is a human endeavour in which the researcher is the primary tool for data collection. They maintain that 'the ethnographer's principal data is amassed in the course of human interaction: direct observation; face to face interviewing and elicitation' (Le Compte M. & Schensul J. 1999 pxiv). In attending production meetings and rehearsals I was able to observe first hand the interactions of the participants. Interviews with key participants formed a crucial source of data for the study. Throughout the study I experienced the consequences of Le Compte and Schensul's assertion that 'ethnographers have only three basic kinds of data: information about what people say, what they do, and what they leave behind in the form of manufactured artifacts and documents' (1999 p1). Investigating human interaction requires the researcher to observe, note, listen, participate, question and experience in their efforts to gather data in the field (Hitchcock G. & Hughes D. 1989).

Observation and analysis of the work of the director, as the principal creative force behind the production, formed the main component of the research. Le Compte and Schensul suggest that the creation of an initial conceptual frame 'early in the research process is very helpful in focusing questions, observations, social and geographic mapping operations, and the recording of event sequences' (1999 p15). During the initial creative development week I was aware of the large amount of activity taking place in the rehearsal room. Like other ethnographers I was struggling with deciding 'what to write down, or what to write about . . . . Does one look at the physical environment? the people? which specific people? or all of them?
and what if they are doing many different things?' (Le Compte M. & Schensul J. 1999 p13). Once I had decided to focus on the role and processes of the director I was then able to deal with the complexity and confusion that I was experiencing within the room. Le Compte and Schensul recommend that 'interviews with key informants in the first stages of an ethnographic study also help to frame the exploration process through the eyes of the participants' (1999 p15). Early interviews with the director and the writer were instrumental in gaining an initial perspective of the scope of the directing process and the role of the director.

As this was the first production of Eat Your Young, press interviews and reviews became available and proved very useful in examining the public face and media portrayal of the Company and its work. I was given access to the Company’s Annual Reports, archival documents, the 1999-2001 Triennial Australia Council Funding Application, research material, the play script, promotional flyers, photographic images and a CD recording of the original music. I attended several live performances of the production at the 2000 Adelaide Festival and took detailed observational notes of the performance and audience reactions. The data, collected over a five-month period, traced the creative journey the Company undertook in producing and ultimately staging, Eat Your Young at the Odeon Theatre in Adelaide, March 2000.
**Negotiating the Role of Researcher and Observer**

As a researcher I had originally intended to adopt the role of "privileged observer". This term was coined by Wolcott to define a style of participant-observation where the researcher is familiar and trusted and allowed access to information (cited in Ely M. Anzul M. Friedman T. Garner D. & McCormack Steinmetz A 1991). For over ten years I have been well known by the Company and their staff, both personally and professionally. Using Alder and Alder's (1994) terms of classification I regarded myself in this context as a 'complete-member researcher'; a full member of the social setting I was entering. I was allowed access to the 'subjectively lived experience' of its members yet carried an awareness of altering 'the flow of interaction unnaturally' (Adler P. & Adler P. 1994 p.380). This "membership" role within the community reflects contemporary social research practice (Angrosino M. & Mays de Perez K. 2000).

Gaining entry to the research site was reasonably straightforward. A simple telephone call to the Arena Theatre Company Artistic Director, Rosemary Myers, backed up by a letter clearly indicating my aims and I was allowed to proceed with the study. There was no interrogation by a gatekeeper, no negotiation. The Company and its members appeared to trust me implicitly. I was initially confident that the nature of the study and my role would be completely clear to all participants. The main component of my study was to be undertaken through interview and passive observation. However within the first few days of the initial creative development week the researcher role I assumed caused some disturbance. Having
worked with the Company, although not with this group of assembled artists, I was a familiar presence in the rehearsal environment. My unnaturally quiet demeanour of serious researcher taking notes unnerved people and gained undue attention for myself. My field notes from the day explain further -

*My place here is very noticeable. I am familiar with Rose (the director), Julianne (the writer) and Dan (the multimedia artist) but the others are new. They comprise performers who are not yet cast in their roles, Phillip (the choreographer) and two industry placement students. I have already been invited to join in for a warm up massage, led by Phillip with the actors, but I declined. I did not want to seem a part of the acting ensemble or creative team. Rose has also said to me this morning that she may even get me up on the floor today as an actor. The older male actor she had invited to attend is unavailable and this role is quite intrinsic to the narrative line they are trying out on the floor. (I will handle this as it arises. It probably won’t but I am personally not keen to become so involved. I want my role to be that of observer rather than becoming a full participant. I don’t really want Rose to utilise my skills as an actor and see me as a part of the team that she can draw into the process. I have already experienced this from the inside before. I am placed in an interesting position immediately on Day 1*
and imagine that people, particularly those who I know, will just need time to adjust to the role I have adopted as researcher.)

This extract from the field notes indicates the complexities of the relationship between researcher and subjects and the need to renegotiate it throughout the fieldwork. My own thoughts and perceptions about events are bracketed off from my observations. Hutchinson (1988) believes this technique of "bracketing" is a vital part of interpretative data. The researcher needs to be 'aware of one's personal values and preconceptions and transcend them during the research in an effort to see the situation with a new perspective' (Hutchinson 1988 p130).

At the end of the first day Julianne O'Brien, the writer, lent across and commented on my guise of researcher, "Noel it's so funny seeing you in this role." I took this to mean my unusual quietness and constant note taking. Clearly, as Denzin and Lincon argue, 'the effects of the observer's presence can never be erased' (2000 p634). In discussions between Rosemary Myers and Julianne O'Brien the next morning the subject again arose. I return to my field notes -

*Rose has just commented that she felt the need to talk to me last night, to check what I thought of the work. She felt unnerved by my silence. She wanted to know what I thought of the work that was being developed. (It is very uncharacteristic of me not to comment on the work at hand in the rehearsal room. As a creative stakeholder I*
regularly offer my opinions. In an effort to go unnoticed and not impact on the work or phenomenon at hand I have unwittingly caused a ripple effect.) Both Rose and Julianne comment on the fact that they are wondering what I am thinking. (I need to sort this out, find a balance where I am not impacting by silence or too much comment. I will confer with my supervisor.)

By Day 4 of the creative development my field notes recorded a shift in my role. I noted that I was commenting much more in discussions, even suggesting ideas for an improvisation that the Company had been wrestling with. I was still unsure of my role and place in the rehearsal room and was aware of constantly battling my natural desire to collaborate in such an environment. What developed was a far more active role within the context of the events than I had anticipated. My opinions about the work explored in the rehearsal room began to be frequently sought by Rosemary Myers. Indeed one of her characteristic trademarks is to ask any one walking into the rehearsal room: 'What do you think?' This is a point I will take up further in Chapter 7.

Writer, Julianne O'Brien, describes this phenomenon:

She has a lot of personality tics and one of them is she's quite compulsive. Rose almost has a bodily reaction to working. It takes up her whole mind and body. So when she compulsively asks it's because she's feeling this excitement about the work and when you work with her for a
long period of time you realise it's got nothing to do with insecurity.

(O'Brien interview 1999)

As a researcher and observer of Rosemary Myers' work I quickly became swept up in her inclusive approach. I eventually managed to adopt a more natural and interactive role in the artistic process; an observer functioning as a collaborative participant (Denzin N. & Lincoln Y. 2000). I acknowledged that I was in fact a co-collaborator when in the rehearsal room with Rosemary Myers and Julianne O'Brien, even when I assumed the role of researcher. I was aware of my own 'conscious adoption of a situational identity', a key principal in social interactive observation (Angrosino M. & Mays de Perez K. 2000 p678). This identity was part of an interactive process of negotiation and refinement throughout the course of the study. Like Angrosino who adopted a volunteer role in his study of mentally disabled adults and their agencies, I was able to demonstrate that I had a 'meaningful function' within the social setting at hand (Angrosino M. & Mays de Perez K. 2000 p679). I too was able to spend a considerable amount of time taking detailed observational notes openly in the setting. After a while my presence also ceased to be 'novel enough to be disruptive' (Angrosino M. & Mays de Perez K. 2000 p679). Over time, I was able to conduct interviews with the creative team with a sense that I was someone who could be trusted.

Denzin and Lincoln make the point that 'interactive participants are by definition intrusive' but not necessarily in the negative sense of the word (2000 p634).
Acknowledging and accepting this position as an active participant observer in the process of inquiry was a crucial lesson learnt within the initial stages of data collection. Angrosino and Mays de Perez argue that observational research 'is essentially a matter of interpersonal interaction' (2000 p692). They outline the research situation as a context in which researchers define themselves as members of those social settings they are observing and as a member 'interact in dialogic fashion with other members' (2000 p690).

**Data Collection via Interview**

A major source of data for the study was generated through interviews. Fontana and Frey (2000) contend that interviewing is one of the most accepted and effective ways in which we attempt to understand others. It is based on the underlying assumption and 'faith that the results are trustworthy and accurate' in terms of their portrayal of the informants' meanings and their lives (Fontana A. & Frey J. H. 2000 p646). Interviews:

seek the words of the people we are studying, the richer the better, so that we can understand their situations with increasing clarity . . . . In striving to come closer to understanding people's meaning, the . . . interviewer learns from them as informants and seeks to discover how they organise their behaviour.

Patton asserts that interviews give us access to information that we cannot readily observe such as 'feelings, thoughts and intentions' (cited in Merriam 1998 p72). It also gives us access to situations where we as observers cannot be, or were not present. The purpose of interviewing, Patton believes, 'is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective' (cited in Merriam 1998 p72).

The informants included all artistic personnel involved in the production. They willingly made themselves available for various interviews. Director, Rosemary Myers, as the main creative force behind *Eat Your Young*, was regularly interviewed in an endeavour to chart the course of the production's development and to understand her particular creative processes and role.

In response to the nature of the research setting and my pre-existing relationships with some of the respondents I developed a style of interview that used a combination of semi-structured and unstructured approaches. The "semi-structured" interview, as defined by Hitchcock and Hughes (1989), allows the interviewer to penetrate and elaborate on the responses of the interviewee, providing greater depth than a "structured" or formal interview. The "unstructured" interview may appear conversational or informal but, as Merriam argues:

Less structured formats assume that individual respondents define the world in unique ways. . . . (The researcher) respond(s) to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondents, and to new
ideas on the topic. . . . The interview is essentially exploratory.

(Merriam S.1998 p74-5)

Fontana and Frey describe the interview context as 'an active emergent process' and examine the interview as a form of negotiated text (2000 p654). They believe 'interviewees are increasingly seen as active participants in interactions with respondents, and interviews are seen as negotiated accomplishments of interviewers and respondents that are shaped by the contexts and situations in which they take place' (Fontana A. & Frey J. H. 2000 p663). The interview form becomes a discourse in which meanings are contextually grounded and jointly constructed between two people (Schwandt cited in Fontana A. & Frey J. H. 2000).

It was clear that in interviews with Rosemary Myers the interview style varied in relation to the context of the study and the stage of the rehearsal process. For example early interviews tended to be centred on more general questions regarding her aims, philosophies of theatre and various influences. I noticed her responses were delivered in a somewhat controlled and considered manner. To my knowledge, from my interactions with her as a friend and colleague, this behaviour is a little uncharacteristic. Rosemary Myers usually talks quickly and frankly and is highly passionate in articulating her ideology. At the time of our first interview I observed that she lent in towards the mini disc recorder, spoke rapidly yet clearly and looked either at the recording device or off into the distance. She rarely looked at me when delivering her responses. The responses were phrased and delivered as if to please
me in some way; as if she wanted to assist me in my study by producing quotable quotes. On the other hand she could have been demonstrating her willingness to engage in philosophical discussions about art making; a task she relishes.

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) indicate the inherent pitfalls in interviews with participants who are peers or have pre-existing relationships. They outline the respondents' potential to answer questions in a way that they think the interviewer may want them to respond. I have included an example of an answer delivered by Myers to my question regarding her preoccupations as a director. In her response she outlines her opinions and philosophies of theatre and her belief in the audience's sophisticated ability to read and deconstruct performance in a holistic way. The tone of her argument is driving and passionate, as it frequently is when discussing her convictions in relation to her own art making; an art that she believes should be challenging.

I think that I am totally obsessed with the fact that theatre is a contemporary form. It has to be relevant. So I'm interested in the revolution of the form particularly since the advent of the screen. Because now we've got TV, video, film, we've got a very visually literate audience. We've got an audience that's very up to speed with production values. We've also got a form that does naturalism a thousand times better than what we can achieve theatrically. I'm interested in the relationship between form and content. To me if I could have a seamless relationship between those two things in my work then I'm really achieving something. I'm interested in inter-discipline work. Because I think that's what the audience of today is used to and has amazing
skills in reading how music, image, text, movement and space interrelate, even though people may not intellectually understand that. I think we’re really good at visual languages now and I like to push those skills to the maximum in my work because so many other media don’t. I like to play with how good we are at using those skills. I’m also interested in contemporary themes, not comfortable ones. I think art should be challenging us all to take some responsibility, to acknowledge the complexity of the world. I want to make work that’s always an exploration of things that excite me. I want to go into a work exploring certain themes and ideas. When someone goes, “What’s the central statement of your work?” I don’t believe in that. I believe in a central exploration, a clear exploration. I think if you know the answer what’s the point.

(Edited interview transcript with Myers 13.12.99)

When the study had progressed, and these more formal philosophical questions had been dealt with, an interesting shift in the interview style occurred between the two of us. As we began to discuss the developing work at hand and Myers’ immersion in it, the interviews became noticeably more relaxed in the quality of our interaction and in vocal intensity. The interviews became an opportunity to reflect, with responses becoming more casual in tone. I then added more specific questions within these exchanges. Maxwell argues that 'specific questions are generally the result of an interactive design process, rather than being the starting point for that process' (1996 p49). This interactive process allows 'questions to emerge and to shape during the data gathering phase' (Ely M. Anzul M. Friedman T. Garner D. & McCormack Steinmetz A 1991 p57).
When arranging a late night interview during a rather tedious technical plot rehearsal, I noticed the interview became even more conversational and unguarded. This situation was then an opportunity for Rosemary Myers to talk about the frustrating components of the work and the exhausting reality of attempting to stage an event such as Eat Your Young. For the first time there was no sense in her responses that the interview was a conscious contribution to my research study. She was no longer leaning in as if to be assured that the mini disc would record her words clearly. We both casually lay on the floor of the foyer and chatted. Gone was my need to ask the bigger philosophical questions. We were engaged in an active conversation, not in a question and answer format. The discussion provides a fascinating example of Myers ascertaining my views on her experiences of the creative process.

Noel: And so what time do you think you'll be here until tonight?

Rosemary: I don't know. What time is it now?

N: 9.20pm.

R: I reckon I'll be here for awhile, we haven't even started.

N: And you've been here for two hours?

R: It's a lot isn't it?
N: Yeah.

R: Would you feel good if you were me? Or bad?

N: Um I'd probably feel inundated but you are on the tip of something very exciting, there's no denying that.

R: You have to say that though.

N: No, why would I have to say that?

R: Just to make me feel good.

N: No way.

R: Good. I think so too. I think so too.

(A general conversation about mutual friends occurs, and then: - )

But I think this is the part that you need to see for the multimedia. Because that's the thing that I think that people don't realise, the actors don't realise it, Hugh (her husband and music composer) doesn't realise it, these guys (multimedia artists and technicians) don't realise it - that the projects going on in three different places and I'm going between the three.

Noel: Just label those three.
R: It's been the music, the film and the actors. And of course it was the writing before that. And it was the fund raising before that. Like I'm in every stage.

N: You are the one constant.

R: That's my job. That is my job.

N: So how many hours do you think you're putting in a week?

R: A lot now but luckily I'll work a lot less hours later in the year.

N: But you're doing what, easily twelve hour days at the moment?

R: Easily, and seven days a week.

N: And what's the pay off for you in this?

R: I love making the show if it's good. I want to create something amazing.

N: That's what you love doing?

R: Yeah I love it. Well don't you?

N: Yeah.

R: That's what I just want to do if I can sit down at the end of it and to be blown away by what we've made, I'll just be thrilled. I'll just be so excited and then I'll start thinking of the next one. I'm addicted to it. I love making the work. Also don't forget that this is short term. It's not like you work like this all year. I worked for a year to get this project off the
ground and I'm just going to live every minute of it and get what I can out of it in terms of challenging my work and just going hard to make it really amazing. It's not like I have to sustain it for fifty-two weeks of the year at this level. Like I'll probably work seven-hour days for heaps of the rest of the year and it balances it in the long run.

(Edited interview transcript with Myers 18.2.00)

This interview conducted two weeks before opening night, captures Rosemary Myers in an open and contemplative mood. After waiting two hours for the multimedia and sound artists to be in a position to commence rehearsals she is surprisingly relaxed here, perhaps realising that technical events and circumstances are largely out of her control. The discussion is more evenly balanced than previously in its interplay between interviewer and interviewee. The interview became an opportunity for us to relate as friends and move in and out of discussions about the project; it enabled Rosemary to reaffirm her commitment and position as an artist involved in the heavy demands of making a large-scale work. Her passion is clearly evident to me, as is her sense of living in each moment - appreciating the experience of what she has spent a year planning. There is no hype or rhetoric in her language about the Company or her vision as an artist working in Theatre for Young People. Rosemary Myers' words indicate the responsibility she alone possesses as director of the project. Responsibilities that she believes others involved in the project are not aware of.
**Researcher and Respondent Rapport**

Fontana and Frey (2000) stress the importance of the researcher establishing a rapport with the respondents. They believe the goal of unstructured interviewing is to understand the respondents' viewpoint, rather than super-imposing the researchers 'world of academia and perceptions upon them' (2000 p655). A strong rapport already existed between Rosemary Myers, Julianne O'Brien and myself before the project began and this developed further throughout the data collection phase. This rapport opened up a line of communication where both participants clearly felt comfortable and secure in discussing their opinions, viewpoints and experiences.

**The Analysis of Data**

In approaching the task of analysing data I utilised aspects of Hitchcock and Hughes' (1995) detailed schemata, where they outline various related tasks in the analysis of interview transcripts. These tasks are also relevant for the analysis of observational notes and documents. They provide the researcher with a way of managing the process of analysing many pages of collected data.

Of central importance was the reading and re-reading of the interview transcripts and field notes, totalling 65,000 words, to become familiar with the data. This is one of the first steps outlined by Hitchcock and Hughes (1995 p173). From this point I began to analyse and describe patterns within the data by sorting the interview transcripts into 'general units of meaning', as suggested by Hitchcock and Hughes (1995 p173), constantly relating them to the research focus. I then attempted to
colour code the themes that began to emerge as a method of organising the data. But very quickly, within the space of one extensive interview with Myers, I abandoned this technique as the theme headings quickly began to outnumber the range of colours available in the 'Post it - Flags' range! Initial theme headings included: -

Myers as a storyteller.
Stories as theatre.
The Company as a community or culture.
Collaboration with the artists working on the project.
Production process; pre-production, design and rehearsal.
Artistic philosophies.
Working with new multi-media technology.
Postmodern form.
Young people and how they are viewed by the artists and contemporary society.
The personal impact of the project on the director.

Once the units of meaning were isolated I considered laying out the data into a display or mixed grid, as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) as a further method of highlighting patterns and themes. I had utilised this technique in an earlier pilot study of the Company and found that the use of a display organised the data in an efficient way and enabled clarity in identifying emergent themes. I could see at a glance the overall patterns and themes that were emerging. However given the larger scope of this study the display format seemed inappropriate given that the
information contained within the interview transcripts and field notes would need to be summarised into a concise form in order for it to be contained within a grid format. Given my aim of wanting to use the words and meanings of the participants this technique appeared reductionist in its approach; it did not allow for the detailed and multi-layered responses of the participants to be presented.

I returned to a process of re-reading the transcripts and field notes and re-analysing their meanings. I summarised each transcript, listing the thematic connections and identified page references for the exact location of the information in the full transcript. By allowing time for further reflection on the data and my research focus I then selected the most central themes and supported my interpretations with particular sections of data. I was then able to cross check a range of respondents' opinions on selected themes and decide on which comments to include in the research report.

**Monologues: Voices of the Participants**

In my role as researcher I endeavoured to discover, view and reflect life through the eyes of the people I observed. To allow the reader to access the subjects of the study in the written report, I constructed monologues from the original verbatim interview transcripts. In some cases, as Ely suggests, the monologues 'are distilled from the data in as close a likeness as possible of the participant's mode of expression' (Ely M. Anzul M. Friedman T. Garner D. & McCormack Steinmetz A. 1991 p154). The
monologue technique is one of Ely's suggested rhetorical devices, which include 'first-person story, layering, (and) vignettes' (1996 p169). Ely argues that the research writer crafts the presentation. The aim is to enlist the reader into entering the story, living it the way the researcher has experienced it, and understanding the grounds upon which the conclusions and inferences are based. The aim here is to communicate as richly, creatively, and bravely as possible the essence of the experience - to bring people to life (and this includes the researcher) - to build a story line and rhythm so compelling that there is no question but that readers choose to stay.

(Ely 1996 p169)

The monologue, a dramatic convention that allows characters to voice their interior thoughts and desires, gives readers uninterrupted access to the informants in a form that is direct and powerful. Implied responses even when the participant does not complete replies or when sentences overlap, have been included within the body of the monologue so as not to interrupt the flow of thoughts or ideas. In the normal ebb and flow of conversation ideas and themes are returned to and these interrelated sections from the transcripts have been edited together as one. The overall effect is intended to bring about, in a direct manner, the immediacy and intimacy of the respondents' voices.


Ethical Considerations

As a researcher I believe I have an ethical and a moral obligation to the informants to make my intentions as clear as possible so that the study can be conducted in an open manner. In this study all informants were made aware of the purpose of the research from the outset (Hitchcock G. & Hughes D. 1989; Patton 1990). After an initial telephone conversation outlining the proposed research the Company was sent a letter with a more detailed description including the "Human Research Ethics Committee" application where the project is described in lay language outlining any anticipated effects of the study. Once the members of the Company had agreed to take part in the research project written consent forms were then completed. The Company General Manager gave anyone entering the project at any stage a copy of the consent form to complete with an attached covering letter detailing the project in terms of its research focus. The consent form outlined the informants right to refuse to take part in the research project (Hitchcock G. & Hughes D. 1989). Permission was also sought from all informants to conduct recorded interviews (Ely M. Anzul M. Friedman T. Garner D. & McCormack Steinmetz A. 1991).

Due to the small size of the Company, and its standing within the arts community, I thought it would be appropriate and beneficial to both the education and arts industries, if the names of the artists involved in the work and the name of the Company, were openly disclosed. Before commencing the research phase of the study, written permission was sought from the Company and all its employees to be openly identified.
The statement was phrased in the following manner:

The information I collect is only for research purposes. As the Company is of some significance and of such a small size, anonymity is difficult to achieve; as a consequence your real name will appear in the resulting thesis and any possible resulting articles or papers.

(Jordan 1999)

Participants were allowed the right of anonymity through the use of a pseudonym and the option of withdrawal at any stage; any unprocessed data relating to them would be destroyed if this was requested. All participants signed and kept copies of the consent forms and agreed to the open disclosure of their identities. No one withdrew from the project at any time.

As much of the work involved in a qualitative case study deals with personal opinions and instances of human interaction it is important to respect the rights of all participants; as researchers we have a moral obligation to do so (Stake 2000). Stake argues that ‘those whose lives and expressions are portrayed risk exposure and embarrassment, as well as loss of standing, employment, and self-esteem’ (2000 p447). There were a couple of occasions throughout the study where I was aware of the sensitivity of the information being disclosed and observed. Some participants asked me to exclude certain aspects of the data in any subsequent reports. This direct request has been honoured. Subsequently a key informant expressed concerns over how she and the Company would be portrayed in any written form. To allay
the fears, as suggested by Stake (2000), I made all interview transcripts available to participants. This included the full final draft of a previous study involving the participant. Once this documentation was read the fears of the informant were alleviated and she declined any further offer by me to read and check my written report.

*Trustworthiness*

To ensure the interview data was as accurate a reflection of the words and ideas of the participants as possible, all interviews were recorded on mini disc and transcribed by myself. This process helps to 'recall the experience, expands details, and . . . provide(s) a fresh perspective on the material' (Ely M. Anzul M. Friedman T. Garner D. & McCormack Steinmetz A. 1991 p82). The transcripts were then referred back to the informants to confirm or refute their accuracy and to allow them the opportunity to reconsider or rephrase points made at the time. This process, known as member checking, 'is the single most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpretation of the meaning of what they say and the perspective they have on what is going on' (Maxwell 1996 p94). It should be noted that three of the informants altered the copies of the transcripts sent to them. Their alterations mainly consisted of grammatical corrections to improve the structure of their speech but also involved the extension of an idea. In some cases new thoughts related to the topic were added upon reflection.
The study uses multiple forms of data, including interviews with several participants, observational notes and document analysis, 'for triangulation of findings' (Ely M. Anzul M. Friedman T. Garner D. & McCormack Steinmetz A. 1991 p97). Triangulation, Stake argues, 'has been generally considered a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning' (2000 p443). Hitchcock and Hughes refer to triangulation as 'the use of more than one method of data collection within a single study . . . (with the aim to) add some depth to the analysis and potentially increase the validity of the data and consequently the analyses made of them' (1995 p180). Ely asserts that 'triangulation can occur with data gathered by the same method but gathered over time' such as in the use of 'observation notes in field logs' (Ely M. Anzul M. Friedman T. Garner D. & McCormack Steinmetz A. 1991 p97). This study largely relies on interview transcripts as its main form of data. I was able to triangulate by cross-checking insights, thoughts and opinions of one informant with another on any given theme, idea or critical incident that occurred. Like Mathison I found that 'in practice, triangulation as a strategy provide(d) a rich and complex picture of . . . (the) social phenomenon being studied, but rarely . . . (did) it provide a clear path to a singular view of . . . the case' (cited in Ely M. Anzul M. Friedman T. Garner D. & McCormack Steinmetz A. 1991 p98). This outcome is entirely consistent with postmodern thought which rejects the notion of the grand narrative or "great story", as termed by Lyotard, and decentres the human subject and in turn celebrates 'plurality and the politics of racial, gender, and ethnic difference' (Giroux 1991 p61). The aim is to deconstruct, investigate and reveal the nature of multiple meanings (Efland A. Freedman K. & Stuhr P. 1996 p28).
As discussed in Chapter 3 most contemporary research involving the study of directing involves interviews with directors themselves (Bartow 1988; Daniels 1996; Eckersley 1997; Giannachi G. & Luckhurst M. 1999; Manfull 1999). My own study includes several interviews with the director throughout the life of the project. Although extremely useful in conveying the ideas and philosophies of the director, interviews do not give the reader direct access to the rehearsal room and the processes the director employs to undertake staging a production. We have the words of the director describing what they do or how they approach the work. However the perspective of an observer of the creative process and the perspective of other participants who are involved in the process, highlight areas that may not emerge in interviews. The director may take certain things for granted or may not be fully aware of their own intuitive working methods. Throughout the study there was an examination of the role of the director and the directing process from various perspectives: from the director, the actors, the writer, the multi-media artist, the choreographer, the composer and my own observations. The process of developing 'multiple perspectives on the events researched' is a deliberate and central aspect of this study (Taylor 1996 p39). Taylor argues that this approach helps 'crystallize the rigour, artistry and trustworthiness of the findings' (1996 p39).

**Limitations of the Study**

As a researcher I felt acutely aware that I had missed or been absent from significant events as they occurred. During the initial creative development week I attended
and documented the rehearsals each day. However it became clear that the rehearsal room was only one site of activity. Even though I kept in contact with the project after this development week, interviewing both Rosemary Myers and Julianne O'Brien, significant developments occurred between this phase and the final rehearsal phase without me being present to observe them. This sense of "missing" events is one that bothered me throughout the project and I had to accept the impossibility of following Rosemary Myers around in her frequent fourteen hour days to comprehensively research her creative process.

In the final rehearsal phase I attended two or three rehearsal sessions each week to observe and document the process through my extensive field notes. I also observed the filming of two sequences for the many projected images used in the play. I interviewed Myers every two weeks throughout the six-week rehearsal period. At the completion of the project I also interviewed the five main collaborating artists and three out of the four actors. Although the data from my field notes and the interviews are rich and extensive I continued to have a nagging doubt that because I had not been present to witness all events that the quality of my data would be affected. This feeling continued until the final stage of writing the report when I became aware of the wealth and extensiveness of data I had collected and analysed for this study.

To provide a full, detailed and supported account of the themes emerging from the study I have adopted a presentation style where the language of the informants, in
monologue form, is interspersed throughout the analysis. This approach provides
the reader with sections of key data to allow them to evaluate the researcher's
analysis and 'enables the reader to become part of the process of interpretation'
(Donelan 1991 p90). It also provides a platform for letting the case "tell its own
story" while at the same time grounding it in the ethos of an interpretive study: to
seek 'emic meanings held by the people within the case' (Stake 2000 p441).

Chapter 6 will outline the creative development week of the rehearsal process. I
have adopted a narrative presentation style, which draws mainly from my field
notes, Company documents and interview transcripts. Chapter 7 covers the final
rehearsal stage of the project. Key emergent themes from the study are highlighted
and explored through the use of substantial quotes from the participants. Their
voices are presented in a monologue format. Ultimately I agree with Fontana and
Frey's assertion that 'human beings are complex, and their lives ever changing; the
more methods we use to study them, the better our chances to gain some
understanding of how they construct their lives and the stories they tell us about
them' (2000 p668).
Monday morning, 9.45am and people have begun to assemble for the first day of a one-week creative development for Eat Your Young, the latest production for Arena Theatre Company. The upstairs rehearsal space of the North Melbourne warehouse consists of a large open area with rough wooden floors. Two metal pillars supporting the roof structure significantly interfere with the available rehearsal space. Along one wall is an old kitchen sink and bench top littered with various mismatched coffee cups. There are two old couches that look ready for the rubbish tip or have recently been salvaged from one. Assorted chairs, a half sized bar fridge and an oversized inflatable plastic baby, lying deflated on the floor, occupy the rest of the space. The rehearsal room is basic but if one looks out of the double doors, the remains of the loading area from when the building was used as a warehouse, one is able to view the interconnecting laneways that lead from the warehouse to the city beyond. The venue literally stands on the edge of the city - a prime location, surrounded by buildings currently being converted into trendy and expensive apartments; an apt location for this theatre company focused on the contemporary.
The collaborative artists and student attachments move in, forming a circle with a cup of coffee for a briefing on this week's aims. The assembled project cast and crew are:

Kate Denborough - a dancer, choreographer and first time artist with the Company,

Emma Hawkins - a recent drama graduate from Ballarat University and also a first time artist,

Christopher Brown - a Victorian College of the Arts trained actor and New Zealand television soap star, also a first time artist,

Luke George - a Victorian College of the Arts dance student about to graduate. He already has offers to work next year with contemporary Melbourne based dance company, Chunky Move. He is also a first time artist but will probably be unavailable to be a part of the final production,

Daniel Crooks - the multi-media/kinectic artist; this is Daniel's third collaboration,

Phillip Adams - the choreographer; this is Phillip's second collaboration,

Julianne O'Brien - the writer and long term collaborator,

Tess and Perry - two industry placement tertiary student attachments.

The biographies of the cast and crew from the show program are listed in Appendix I and provide a clear indication of the interdisciplinary backgrounds of those involved.
I am slightly disappointed to hear the writer announce that she has already written a rough eight-page synopsis of the play. As I had anticipated, the project idea has already been formulated; considerable time and discussion have already been spent on the narrative and theatrical form it is to take.

In their application to the Adelaide Festival for the financial backing to produce the production in 2000, Arena Theatre Company outlined their approach to theatre making. They extend their Artistic Manifesto to expound on their artistic philosophies.

Arena’s processes of developing new performances are highly collaborative and rely on ongoing dialogues with a dynamic team of artists from a broad range of performance and non-performative media. The multi-disciplined work created celebrates a modern re-shaping of our cultural expression. Dance party, meets film in a contemporary art gallery. Arena utilises fast editing and image saturation to create a sensation more like an advertisement than the traditional notion of Western performance. In these works Arena represents a multiplicity of meaning contained in the interplay of text, form and content. Our ambitious productions are a testament to the calibre of our audience and a reflection of our artistic philosophy that sees young people at the fore of new cultural expression.

(Arena Theatre Company document 1999)
**Eat Your Young** began to be planned in the evaluation stage of the preceding large-scale production *Panacea*, presented as a part of the 1999 Melbourne International Festival. Whilst discussing the nature of the multi-media component of this show Rosemary Myers and Daniel Crooks, multi-media artist, began to explore ways to integrate the screen more effectively into the overall design and staging concept. The semi-circular screen idea was born and began to evolve over the following year. The projection screens, rather than remaining flat fixed features in the space, became two moving semi-circular objects that ran on two circular tracks in the theatre ceiling. Video projectors were to be mounted on the circular tracks or rig. This unique system provided multiple and complex projection states to become possible, all operated by computer technology.
Fig. 7: The schematic design drawings for *Eat Your Young* indicating the circular rig which housed two projection screens which could be moved to any point in the circumference (Crooks D. & Myers R. 2000).

Meanwhile writer/dramaturg, Julianne O'Brien, raised the idea of writing a play based on the real life story of mutual friend Korrina. Korrina’s family upbringing involved twelve years in the State Welfare System in the 1970's with her three
brothers. O'Brien 'planted a seed' which Myers subsequently responded to a year later (O'Brien interview 1999). The collaborative team then obtained, through freedom of information and with the permission of the subjects, access to the government files of Korrina's family. These files, containing letters, drawings, reports and assessments of the children, formed the raw material for the play. Following subsequent discussions, the play was set in a futuristic landscape to explore the full possibilities of technology.

I was reading a lot about technology and culture, because I work for a Theatre for Young People's Company the whole young people thing interested me. Korrina and her brothers were young but what was it about young people, it's always about how marginalised young people are, how there is a fear of young people and I think that's a big issue for the future because the population will be ageing, there's more generationalism. I didn't want to just put their "1970s children in foster care" story on stage. I was very interested in the genre of science fiction at this point in time as well. But not so much as a mode of predicting the future but more of a mode of exploring the present. By looking for little signs that you think exist in the present and then speculating on them. I'm not going this is what will happen in the future. I read a great article that says science fiction is a way of exploring the slippage's of the world today.

(Rosemary Myers interview 1999)

This was the director's first foray into science fiction and one she relished as it allowed her to be artistically freed; to become 'playful and imaginative' (Brown 2000 p23). The development process up to this point is a clear example of Rosemary Myers' aim 'where possible to allow substantial development times so thorough
dialogue occurs between all collaborators from the conceptual stage, throughout the work's evolution into its evaluation' (Myers interview 1999).

The synopsis for the play at the creative development stage placed four children

Under the guardianship of the Director-General . . .
(after) a social welfare complaint that they were not under proper control . . . they live in a fully automated childcare institution run by a software program MARYPOPINZ designed to offer the ward the nearest thing to a mother.

(Arena Theatre Company document 1999)

Under state care at a facility called Liberty House, the children are fitted 'with neural implants that modify their behaviour with alternate realities and intuitive dreams, they are constantly monitored' by an electronic surveillance system (Arena Theatre Company document 1999). When ultimately faced with the threat of separation triggered by the eldest child's approaching sixteenth birthday, the children plot their escape from their minders, both human and technological.

In form the play promised to explore

Image, Memory, Surveillance. The dynamic relationship between the real time experience of the live performance, the live projected image and the pre recorded image . . . (to) engage the audience in the sensation of dream, memory and reality/illusion of image.

(Arena Theatre Company document 1999)
With so much conceptual planning having occurred at this point, Rosemary Myers announced to the artists assembled at the creative development, "The purpose of this week is to try things out on the floor. It is a two-way dialogue. We are trying to write the work from a multi-discipline base. All the elements can be integrated in the development. We have certain questions to sort out. We have looked for multi-disciplined performers. We want to see things on the floor - to say here are the connections. Other actors will join in later during the week. Our focus is the writing of the play on the floor. We will be mounting a video projector up here into the space to get a full sense of the final form. We know the general landscape. We want to know what the actual play is about."

This discussion by Myers sets the parameters for rehearsal for the coming week. She makes her expectations clear to everybody and encourages others to actively contribute to the developing work. I record in my field notes that this is quite an interesting challenge because the actors and dancers assembled, as I have mentioned, have not actually been cast in their roles. In effect this is a week-long audition and perhaps not the most ideal environment for performers to creatively offer suggestions and do their best work. However as Myers does not hold auditions this is her only real chance to assess the skills of new performers.
Character Profile - Rosemary Myers

Rosemary Myers is a storyteller. She exudes personality and enthusiasm. Fast
talking, engaging and dynamic in conversation. She often speaks over the top of
other people to make her point, not in a rude manner but a highly passionate one.
She is an incarnation of an artist. Her hair, cut in a page boy style, is generally
unruly and purple. Her make-up consists of slightly garish lipstick and
unconventionally rouged cheeks. She is in her mid-thirties and a mother who adores
her early school aged child. Her background, even at high school, involved the
'making of a lot of contemporary new work developed from poetry' as opposed to
the presentation of 'scripted plays' (Myers interview 1999). In Year 12 under the
guidance of an inspirational drama teacher, Gail Kelly, she attended the Adelaide
Festival where she witnessed the influential theatrical work of Peter Brook, Pina
Bausch and Kiss, a Dutch physical performance company. This work excited her
imagination and encouraged her to enrol in a course in performance making at the
Geelong campus of Deakin University, headed by James McCaughey. Rosemary
Myers says of this time, "The course really deconstructed all of the performance
elements and played with all of them and then rewrote them together. And that was
a course you either loved or you hated. I loved it. I was really lucky." Upon
graduating she began work with an offshoot of Deakin University, the Woolly
Jumpers, a professional theatre for schools company. This is where I first met her.
"Let's Create a Broad Palette!"

As the actors and dancers change into their warm up clothes Rosemary Myers and Julianne O'Brien continue to talk, clarifying for each other their goals for the week as writer and director. "I don't care if over the coming week we don't actually solve what the play is about, but that is what I want to explore."

"I agree", O'Brien confirms.

"Is it about people's relationships with their parents?" Myers continues. "This is one question for me when I'm looking at everything,"

"We haven't invented a narrative and then need to stick slavishly to it."

Myers interjects, "The synopsis is flexible for the week. I have a totally open attitude to making performance. There is a space and there is an audience. We need to just get out there and do something in front of them. In our communal first read through I will be watching for the tiniest image and building it up. I want to know what is the virtual reality journey these characters are taken on via their neural implants. What if in the end these children are integrated into the technology?"

Myers and O'Brien lead the morning's discussion and continually voice various questions that they see the narrative posing for them at this stage of the development. These questions are vital and frame the focus for the creative development week. Later that morning O'Brien adds, "For me the central conflict in the whole play is will the family be kept together?" This line of questioning indicates O'Brien's sense as a writer of carving out the narrative journey and main
theme line. Discussions continually circle around the synopsis to fill in missing
details, searching for the inherent conflict in the drama.

Myers' directing style at this point is crystallised in the statement, "Everyone throw
out really wild stuff and we'll worry about putting it together later." This type of
generalised comment frequently punctuates proceedings in an attempt, I imagine, to
help release people's creativity so that they do not feel bound by decisions already
made; it opens up the door for experimentation, free and unguarded. "Blow the
material as wide apart as we can. Let's create a broad palette!"

In my field notes I comment on the atmosphere in the rehearsal room up to this point

> The actors appear nervous, unsure yet friendly. The main
collaborators in contrast are very familiar with each other.
They are chatty and catching up on news. The new
Company General Manager, Katherine, is racing around
saying, "This is what it's all about really isn't it? Sorry
the contracts won't be ready until tomorrow." The
assembled team are short one male actor as someone can't
make it. Rose is on the phone to another actor and friend,
Jim Russell, checking on his availability for the week.
Rose is very hyped, excited, friendly and quite exuberant.
There is a sense of beginning (although the project has
already begun).
Creating a Rehearsal Room Culture

The day continues with a session after lunch of theatre games. These exercises are fun; one actor is focused on another actor's movements and repeats them, while at the same time answering a stream of personal questions from the other actors sitting on either side at close proximity. "How many brothers do you have?" "Do you have a girlfriend?" "Describe your bedroom." People observe each other closely. There is a sense of awareness, of shared enjoyment. The games are not random activities, nor are they fillers. They are part of a conscious decision Myers has made as a director; she wants to create a sense of group cohesion and shared culture within the rehearsal room, particularly amongst people who have never worked with each other before. From my own experiences working with Myers there is a social element that always happens during her productions and this often begins from sharing personal experiences. This can often spill over into long conversations that would not be out of place in a pub or some other social environment. These types of conversations are regular occurrences by the end of this creative development week. On the final day, as an example, a one-hour lunch break is extended by a further hour of general discussion in the rehearsal room before work recommences.

It's not on purpose. I certainly have grappled with it a lot thinking, "Are we wasting a lot of time?" and I've come to the conclusion that no, we're not. I think it informs the work. It's about a group of people working together and getting to know each other. I like to play a lot of voyeuristic games. "Sit down here and throw the ball around and ask each
other personal questions." It's not just me. We've always loved that. That's become the culture of my rehearsal room, from the people I've worked with as well. I like that. I'm not very formal by nature. I'm fairly neurotic. I'm not a very self-disciplined person in many ways. I can't come in and just be professional, you know if some juicy conversation starts up I like to hear it. It's all a part of the process.

(Myers interview 1999)

For newcomer, Emma Hawkins, the social interaction that takes place in the rehearsal room 'creates a relaxed environment' (interview 2000). For third time collaborator, multi-media artist Daniel Crooks, the social discussions are an important part of creating a positive and interactive work environment that values social discourse between collaborators.

I can't imagine working with someone that I didn't like. I know lots of people must do that; just work. Just do it and you just get it done. And I just can't actually imagine doing that. But then sometimes I'm just going, "Fucking hell it's five o'clock and I've done nothing today at all. What am I doing? This is madness." But it's so easy; so many hours just shooting shit with Rose. And then you sit up to six in the morning to finish a job. It enamours a certain loyalty to Rose and to the show I suppose. Because she is such a cool person and you really want to do something good. It's not just, "Fuck it, it's just a job."

(Crooks interview 2000)

Kate Denborough, also an Arena newcomer for this project views the social environment quite differently. She is from a dance background and is used to a more disciplined and rigorous approach. While acknowledging the importance of such an inclusive social work place environment, Denborough is also frustrated by
its impact on the work at hand which she views as pressured, compromised and unchallenged as a result.

It seems to be an important part of the structure of the way Rose works, but at the same time I'm not necessarily convinced that it's the best working method. I think you do need to set up a boundary or some kind of time frame because I started to feel a little bit frustrated that we would spend all this time talking and then we just wouldn't get things done. It just builds pressure. It might be her on the line but really it's us on the line too. But then if you had the opposite, if you had someone who's not interested in any kind of repartee it might feel very isolating. Dance to me is so much more disciplined in terms of things like that because you have to be I guess because otherwise, physically you can't afford to stop. Not only modern dance but physical theatre; you can really get a lot of momentum by pushing through. And sometimes I feel like we'd just be getting somewhere and someone would go, "Oh let's stop for a cup of tea." And we would never push it. We'd never really get to an edgy place because we'd always stop or someone would always come in and interrupt. I don't know if any of us really took a risk or had an opportunity to really keep pursuing it.

(Denborough interview 2000)

Choreographer, Phillip Adams, becomes swept up in the social interaction that takes place. From his own perspective Adams welcomes what he sees as the benefits of these tangential discussions. He is able to articulate their direct connection with the scene work at hand and, in his mind, realises how ultimately these discussions set about broadening and informing the work and creating the basis of a relaxed working environment.
She is truly an original. There's no one else I have met like Rose Myers in my entire life. I'm a gossip too and I'm not to be encouraged. Shocking. Once we're in a room together the whole lunch can be extended until four o'clock and nothing can get done. But I think that's a good thing. I think that that process and that time we spend talking; about what happened last night, extends from some scene we're working on. And then the conversation breaks out in regards to orphanages and people that we know who had a friend of a friend who was in jail, it is connected in some way to that scene. And I love Rose for the fact that she doesn't go, "Ok, it's time. Can we shut this down now and get on with the work." She goes with it. She's right in there with it. She drives the whole thing and causes the stuff ups in the first place that we're all side tracked by. In that process a lot of stuff comes out. I think a lot of the comfortableness, or the environment of Arena Theatre, is based on this.

(Adams interview 2000)

**Improvisations Inform the Work**

Improvisations form the basis of most of the work for the coming week, beginning on the afternoon of the first day. There is no text for the actors to work with. They must respond instantaneously to scenarios suggested by Rosemary Myers, Julianne O'Brien and even the choreographer, Phillip Adams. The improvisations begin on a seemingly simple level but quickly escalate into deeper psychological and sexual territories. Kate Denborough has a strong sense of her character right from the beginning. My observational field notes detail a harshness and sadness about this abandoned fifteen year-old girl. Myers side coaches the actors continually at this
early stage. The first improvisation, detailed in my field notes, outlines the process by which she responds to the actors' work on the floor. Their strengths, physicality and acting styles all inform the work that develops.

*Improvisation 1: Chris is taking Kate through the facility, which will become her new home. The actors jump straight in without hesitation. There is an immediate sense of the world of the characters created. Kate is pushing Chris physically as he is showing her around. Rose side coaches, “Make clear the limits of your expectations in regard to her behaviour.” It has an immediate impact. Kate is strong and there is a sense of her overpowering the scene. “Chris try to keep Kate away from your personal space - she is invading it,” Rose adds. Emma is also sent in to intrude on Chris' space. Emma's character is very young, only five or six. (I am struck, not for the first time, by Emma's height. She is undeniably short, about 110 centimetres tall. She calls herself a small person, not a dwarf (Levy 2000).) Standing in the acting space with the other actors Emma is waist height. Rose side coaches Emma, “Cling to Chris as if he is your father figure. Kate, you as well.” The strange entwined group look like lovers. (There is an undeniable air of sexuality between Kate and Chris. Physically both are quite beautiful and appear of a similar age, which sends out complex and
confusing signals; they are after all playing brother and sister. Their youth has a dangerous and powerful quality.) Rosemary and Julianne analyse the scene in terms of Kate's strength and the sexual quality the actors are portraying.

The improvisations proceed and Rosemary continues to offer suggestions and directions while the actors are improvising, "Tell him about what happened." "Chris let's hear how fucked up she is for making up this bullshit."

Rosemary's comments, after an improvisation has concluded, are supportive and encouraging, "They're pretty strong, strong moments."

Kate lifts Emma into the air in one improvisation simulating flying. There is a strange, gentle and dangerous quality of Emma being lifted. (Those assembled, even at this early stage, get a strong impression of the childlike quality of the physicality of Emma and the enormous power of an image where she is carried, lifted or supported. This was to become a major feature of the final production where Emma 'is frequently tossed about the stage and carried by other actors throughout the show' (Levy 2000 p3).)
(The actors are doing well. Just responding to the improvisations. Putting it out there, being open, not judging, going with it. Internally, as an actor, you may be feeling that the work you are creating is appalling. I have vivid memories of constant improvisations under Rosemary's direction. The important thing is to place judgement in her hands at this early formative stage and these actors seem more than willing to do this.)

Rosemary Myers' response to the various improvisations played out before her seems instinctive. There is an assuredness in her manner, commented on by Julianne O'Brien, where Myers is able to offer prompts during improvisations. The prompts have a sense of expediency, of "cutting to the chase" and getting to the essence of a scene or character motivation. Rather than letting the scenes naturally play out according to the actors' own instincts, Myers is guiding them, responding to them in an attempt to unearth the most dramatic moments; "Convince him." "Scare him." "Use quiet tactics." She is more aware than perhaps anyone else in the room about the nature of these initial improvisations. They can be hit or miss but Myers, at this stage of the work, is looking for potential. Potential images from which to build, such as the physical support of Emma Hawkins in the space by the other actors. Potential character traits that can be further developed, such as the sexual tension that exists between the characters played by Chris Brown and Kate Denborough. Myers states quite clearly in rehearsals, "You can't refine work in
improvisations. You only really need a glimpse." This is perhaps her principle
guiding philosophy for approaching the creative development week.

Rosemary Myers herself comments on the fact that she could not have made these
works when she was younger. She now feels she has more expertise and is able to
use this directly. Julianne O'Brien elaborates on this when reflecting back on the
creative development week. Where O'Brien may be uneasy with her position as the
older more experienced theatre maker in the room, Myers is more certain and
assertive and seems more comfortable with her position.

I had an awkward situation in the creative development,
where for the first time I felt I was one of the older wiser
people in the rehearsal room. I was never that before. I
was always the young whizz kid looking up to the director,
often having a little sister relationship with the director. But
in the room I saw them looking to us. Looking up to us and
looking to us for what they were meant to do. And there
were a couple of times when we made them do sexual stuff
and I wasn't really clear about my motive. I thought I was
just playing with these beautiful young bodies. I felt god-
like. I can make them do and say anything. I can just say
to an actor, "Take your clothes off," and he would. I could
say to a woman, "Lie down." We did. We did those impro's.
"Lie down and the other two male actors, you just caress
her all over." I felt awkward about it and when I said it to
Rose she said, something like, "Go with it, enjoy it." And I
realise that she had accepted her position of authority and
power because she's had more practice at it in a room full of
young bright-eyed actors. And she was much more
comfortable with it and I think she is just getting more and
more comfortable with her own authority. It's not a bad
place for someone who is going to put on a show as big as
this and have that many elements working together. I don’t think it’s bad at all. Some directors I know are all about power, authority and ego and they are flashing it around. They are all about status. Rose is never about status. Rose never pulls status. She never positions herself in the higher status. But she obviously has natural authority in her role and enjoys it. I think that she is so comfortable in a way with her position of authority in the room that she doesn’t even need to do some of the ego dancing that I’ve seen a lot of directors do. A lot of the puff and bluff; she doesn’t do any of it.

(O’Brien interview 2000)

Glimpsing the Final Form

Mid week during the creative development and I arrive late to witness a hive of activity taking place in the rehearsal room. All the windows have been blacked out with thick industrial plastic. Hugh Covill, the music composer, is busy setting up sound equipment; a keyboard, speakers and a turntable with an unusual attachment. Perspex screens hang from the roof; I imagine they are simulated projection screens or possibly sound deflection surfaces. A philosophical discussion about the work and the art form of theatre is taking place.

"Contemporary art should have a strong driving manifesto, it’s so hard to work out what is cutting edge," Rosemary Myers voices. The assembled company are discussing Dogma Films, a group of artists in Europe with very specific film making guidelines and ideals. Their most well known work to date is the harrowing and
bleak film, **Breaking the Waves**. "Texts are being read in multiple ways. They make the audience think."

"Do you think we will be able to do that with this?" questions Julianne O'Brien.

Rosemary Myers responds, "I hope so. Narrative and storytelling are such an ancient art form. How can we tell narrative story by not telling all the details? Perhaps through movement we can make people feel the narrative. We are not at a university. We are trying to perform for a new audience demographic."

The work of avant-garde Australian theatre director, Barry Kosky, is discussed. Rosemary Myers is obviously inspired by his work, particularly his recent production, **The Operating Jew**. "You don't quite understand the work but you feel that we are aware that something incredible is happening. You are aware of the intelligence. We feel it."

"It's challenging," adds O'Brien.

"Film can really deal with great huge narratives. Theatre can't compete with that. But that's the challenge. Theatre can do different things," continues Myers.

"But I still think we have to deal with very strong narrative structures," counters O'Brien.

"Yes but we can take this outline," offers Myers holding up a diagrammatic journey of **Eat Your Young**, "and throw it over to Phillip and say take this section and re-interpret it through dance and do the same thing with Hugh and the sound. Imagine starting from a point where Hugh creates some music and we say, Julianne, write some text in response to that."
These types of conversations are important and appear time and time again throughout rehearsals. There is a constant sense, not only of engaging in the making of the art, but also in engaging in discussion about philosophies of art and art making. This involves all collaborators in an open discourse about the work at hand and about their guiding philosophies when making the work. What inspires us? What do we hope to achieve? How can the various art forms interrelate and speak to each other? How is meaning created? What do I like to see on stage when I go and see theatre, film or dance?

Improvisations continue on the floor with Phillip Adams taking a stronger lead. Rosemary Myers has moved through the week with a very clear goal. Her starting point has been to try things quite naturalistically before getting Adams to "blow the scene apart in its form, to try it larger, bigger." Adams has responded at this stage by creating a semi-stylised piece. Three actors, Kate, Luke and Chris, are standing huddled together with the fourth, Emma, tied to their leg, with rope around her waist. The image is disturbing, a crazed family portrait with members trying to look and move in various ways. Hugh Covill begins to experiment with sections of records over the sound system. There is a sense of the sound moving in and out behind the piece, as though the record is stuck, constantly playing the same piece; discordant, unharmonious. A video camera films the scene and projects it onto one of the perspex screens. The camera is able to pivot and follow the action around. The effect is like a "surveillance" camera. Here is a direct example of the collaborators working together. Of Hugh Covill spontaneously responding to the
choreography of Phillip Adams. Of Phillip Adams responding to the previous groundwork of Rosemary Myers and of Julianne O'Brien's synopsis. Of Daniel Crooks filming and projecting the work of Phillip Adams. There is a sense of attempting to blend the forms of acting, text, sound and movement.

"The problem with most dance theatre companies in the world is the difficulty in dropping out of reality into movement sequences and vice versa," Phillip Adams warns.

"Maybe it's a sense of keeping both going, instead of swapping from one to another. The whole thing has to be pitched at that level. The whole play needs to be written in image," offers Myers.

"I think the whole text needs to respond to this style - impressionistic," suggests O'Brien.

"The text could consist of both live and pre-recorded dialogue," adds Covill.

"The focus needs to be to make the action and then deconstruct it and to look at how we can perform it. The focus of this week will then inform everyone's work. We will be able to gain a clear sense of the style," instructs Myers.

Adams continues, "This is particularly important for the text. The script sets eighty percent of the parameters."

The final performance elements are glimpsed and potential witnessed during these five formulative days of work. With the arrival of Jim Russell to play the social worker, Tapp, the surveillance possibilities of the video camera and voice
amplification through microphones are explored. Russell, as Tapp, is positioned in such a way that he is looking straight down the camera. This image is then projected up onto one of the screens. At other times Hugh Covill experiments with the words of Russell in a loop, sometimes with a higher pitch. Russell completes his own sentences voiced earlier in the scene.

"Ok that's immediately more interesting for an audience. The whole notion of surveillance is clear. Jim is being filmed watching a monitor watching the children. The effect of the sound makes him different. Without the mike he would be like a regular dude. Certain lines are repeated. We see him from the children's perspective," comments Rosemary Myers.

"It's like lines of the text are underlined," offers O'Brien.

Next Julianne O'Brien's voice is recorded as virtual therapist, MARYPOPINZ, and then played over the improvisations. Phillip Adams responds immediately, "The voice gives it an institutionalised feel, a detached, cold state. Jim Russell, as Tapp, is constantly watching, monitoring their world."

Within the space of a few short hours in one day of the creative development several performance elements begin to take shape. These elements include: - voice amplification, the layering of a pre-recorded virtual therapist voice track over scenes, the projected image of Tapp observing the children, live action being projected into the performance space, the overlay of discordant music, stylised
choreographed movement sequences lifting naturalistic scene content onto a new platform and the actors' physical handling of Emma in the space. All are experienced in a rudimentary rehearsal form. All of these theatrical elements will eventually become major performance components to be developed more fully in the coming rehearsal period.

**The Actors' Position in the Creative Development**

Thursday morning and after a late start the actors assemble for a discussion with the director, having just completed a warm up and massage session. Luke George, the dance student has departed and another male dancer and long term collaborator of Kate Denborough, has arrived. Rosemary Myers is using the week as an opportunity to meet and work with a variety of performers that she has been interested in working with, although this is not her principle focus. "This week is not really about the actors but the form. Out of twenty offers made on the floor only one of them may be a gem. The work in the rehearsal room may pick up aspects that the other artists would never have thought of," announces Myers. Her process leaves no one to second guess her intentions. She outlines the next two days, indicating that the actors will be sent home early Friday afternoon to allow the main collaborating artists a chance to debrief and discuss the week's work.

This is actor, Jim Russell's second day on the creative development. His position is different from that of the others. He is fully aware that he is not being considered
for the role of Tapp. He is only present because the intended or preferred actor, Merfyn Owen, is unavailable. Russell is regarded as an excellent improviser and performer and has worked with Arena Theatre Company on their last production Panacea. He brings up an issue that has troubled him since his arrival on Wednesday, "I think that the actors should feedback as well, rather than just do impros."

Rosemary Myers is quite clear about the role of the actors for the week and she does not intend including them as a part of this debriefing process. This is not to say that their comments are not welcomed or encouraged throughout the week but when Friday afternoon arrives, the discussion is left to the main artistic team who have already been employed for the entire project. Perhaps at this stage of the work, Myers is clear that the actors' comments about the form of the work will not be of major importance to the main collaborators who will take ultimate responsibility for the final production. Decisions about form are more the concern of the writer, choreographer, multi-media artist, music composer and director than that of the acting ensemble. This is not openly discussed. Julianne O'Brien believes Myers no longer places the actors in the same position of importance as she once did.

Well the actors are colours on a canvas and you can move them around but only Rose's got the vision of where the painting's going. I feel like over the last couple of years she has been taking collaborative power more and more off the actor. Taking more power away from them. I think it's fair enough. It's different when she is working on a different sort of a show maybe where you need a lot of ideas. When you're devising you need devisors, great minds in the room.
After the creative development we realised pretty much there were no great improvisers in the room. Which was very rare and that was because they weren't as strong improvisers that Rose usually works with. They actually didn't produce much in terms of material. It was mainly marking out the terrain. And marking out the landscape. I think I kept three lines from improvisations but I still felt it was a great week in terms of vision and that's what she's got her mind on all the time.

(O’Brien interviews 1999 & 2000)

O’Brien would be the first to admit that, as a writer, she is rarely present in the rehearsal room outside of this week’s workshops. For director, Rosemary Myers, the creative development is a particular part of the entire process. These workshops are designed by Myers to look ’at how the elements will integrate’ and this will then ’inform the writing’; the final stage of rehearsals is ’to bring the writing to life’ (Myers interview 1999). As Julianne O’Brien outlines, Rosemary Myers is not devising the text from scratch with the actors. The actors' work, their physicality, skill level and characterisations do however inform the work. Julianne will very much write the young character of Ava with Emma Hawkins in mind as the actor who will be playing the role.

Creative Development Debrief

Friday afternoon, 3.30pm and the performers have been thanked for their work and sent home. The main artistic collaborators are now left to reflect on the week and envisage the final production. Daniel Crooks, Rosemary Myers, Julianne O’Brien,
Hugh Covill and Phillip Adams are assembled. The conversation is full of possibilities and excitement about the next stage of the project to come, the realisation.

"What if we started with a camera that could go anywhere on one plane, then maybe the camera and images start revolving with the screens. I keep thinking circles and loops at this stage. Spherical screens on a track in the roof. The images and set are completely circular," Daniel Crooks enthuses.

"Circles," offers Julianne O'Brien, "life is about circles."

"I want something stunning, tourable and affordable." Rosemary Myers begs the question everyone is hoping to achieve, "Will it be amazing?"

After intricate discussion about the set of movable circular screens, complete with diagrams Myers voices her desire, "I want to build the setting as soon as possible, to work with it from the beginning."

A powerful improvisation, where Tapp's image was projected above a dining table scenario where the live actors as the children were being chastised about eating dinner in a civilised manner, is recounted by Myers. "I want the audience to feel unaware of what will happen. How many actors will appear? Is Tapp live or pre-recorded?"

The conversation moves back to the set and the circular screens. All agree that the set solves so many problems; it provides a sense of a contained and enclosed space around the children and when the virtual reality experiences are entered into the screens will begin to move and surround the actors.
"This piece would ideally suit a warehouse space rather than a proscenium arch or studio theatre environment," suggests Rosemary Myers. "This script has really not been written like a traditional play."

Julianne O'Brien agrees, "Every scene is like a different language/performance style. There will have to be some dialogue; the audience crave and need it. The set up of the play is the children getting to know the system. The first virtual reality sequence is a turning point."

"Each turning point must have a dramatic function," insists Myers.

The collaborators return to re-read the synopsis as written to date. The final image is still to be resolved and a debate ensues over Ava, the youngest child and her position as pivotal to the end of their journey. The possibilities are still open and the collaborators each discuss their preferences: - Is Ava a part of the next stage of human evolution into technology? Do the children become a permanent part of the virtual reality landscape? Do the children's remaining physical bodies then die? These questions and many more are yet to be answered but the team's input at this formative stage will affect the final outcome in both the written and performance texts.

The creative development week for Eat Your Young has finished. The collaborators have now gained a clearer sense of the final presentational form and style of the production through their experimentations over the last week. A sense of how the inter-related art forms will work together has been glimpsed. Each artist
can now go away and begin some further individual work while remaining in consultation with Rosemary Myers. Myers and Daniel Crooks have the job of ensuring the set design and construction of the screens takes place and meets their needs and specifications. Hugh Covill can begin composing music samples that can then be played to Myers for feedback and input. Julianne O'Brien has the crucial task of writing various script drafts. Once the actors have been cast and script finalised Daniel Crooks can begin filming some of the projected images. Phillip Adams will not continue full-time with the work but will spend time considering the choreography of the performers' bodies in space, particularly once he is certain about Rosemary Myers' final casting choices. There are some casting givens already; it does seem certain that Kate Denborough, Chris Brown and Emma Hawkins will be involved. Whether there is a fourth child in the family is still to be decided. Merfyn Owen is still the first choice for Tapp even though he was unable to attend the week of workshopping.

Chapter 7 will pick the project up three months later and track the six-week rehearsal period. The project develops significantly over this period of time. The script is now in third draft form. Ninety percent of the music now exists in a rough draft form after being scored very closely to the written text. Chapter 7 will outline key emergent themes from the study and draw from the extensive interview transcripts and field note descriptions.
CHAPTER 7

VOICES FROM THE REHEARSAL PROCESS

The voices from the rehearsal process communicate each individual’s unique experience of Rosemary Myers’ direction style in mounting Eat Your Young. In this chapter I will examine in detail the following categories or units of meaning that have emerged from the data: -

- The Director as Chief Architect
- Creating a Sense of Ownership
- The Director’s Trust of the Artists
- Personal Cost and Ultimate Responsibility of the Director

The Director as Chief Architect

Throughout the study I observed that Myers oversaw the entire production, her role was central to the creative process. She became the through-line for the development of the performance text - the common thread. Although the collaborating artists focused on the final end production, often up to four separate operational sites occurred at one time, all under the overall direction of Rosemary Myers (Jordan, 2001b).
These included:

- the work in the rehearsal room with the actors, director and choreographer,
- the music composer sampling and scoring the music/soundtrack,
- the in-theatre technical plotting of "show control" via computer program. (Each separate movement through space, of the two semi-circular screens with the accompanying video projectors, was painstakingly programmed onto a computer),
- the multi-media artist rendering video images on to computer programs that ultimately served as the Simulated Virtual Reality environment in the play's narrative.

Company management and production management issues were also concurrently being resolved in informal and formal meetings.

Although Rosemary Myers' role is central in the development of the production, she acknowledges the level of cross-fertilisation of creative activity between the collaborating artists.

The other artists that I work with, together we set the vision for the project, but the strong part of our work is that it's way bigger than one person's vision. It's really about processes of collaborating, . . . we are really good at setting up and facilitating processes so that artists can really bounce off each other and be inspired by each other and push each other to unknown places.

(Myers interviewed by McLean, 1998)

The director, I observed, is viewed as the chief architect of the project (Jordan, 2001a). This metaphor is one that I conceived to describe the functions of Myers'
role as director. When participants were asked if this is how they viewed Myers as
director most generally supported this concept. In some cases the respondents
developed their own metaphors in direct relation to my chief architect reference. I
have formulated these metaphors into a list that suggests the multi-faceted role of a
director. Like the list created by Cole (1992) in her study quoted in Chapter 3, these
metaphors help develop a comprehensive picture of the director and her functions.
The list includes:

Director as Best Mother
Director as a Brain from which the Collaborators are Connected Limbs
Director as Freedom Enabler
Director as Collaborative Administrator
Director as Keeper of the Big Picture
Director as Protector of the Work
Director as Facilitator
Director as the Writer of Theatrical Elements
Director as Driver or Driving Force
Director as Relinquisher of Power
Director as Chief Creative Force
Director as Constructor

Choreographer, Phillip Adams, also views Myers as the chief architect. As architect
she is able to set tasks, walk away and then return and view the completed tasks and
respond accordingly. Adams marvels at her more autocratic moments where the centrality of her position is clearly evident.

She actually leaves the house and walks out and everybody else goes and builds something and she comes back and goes, "Oh." When it becomes overwhelming, "Oh shit they've fixed the door." Certainly she can work out of the architecture and trust that all of the workers will put her plan to action and come back. And other times I see her right at the top and I love those moments when she gets really passionate about it and the whole scene.

(Adams interview 2000)

When discussing rehearsing without the multi-media and music/soundtrack components, actor Emma Hawkins, pinpoints Myers' central position in the formation of the final stage text. Hawkins also articulates the faith that is required in Myers' overall vision; "the big picture".

She always had a really clear picture in her head of where the multi-media and the sound would come and it was just for us to wait and see. So we had to have faith in her that she knew what she was doing. She had the big picture going on. But I always thought she had a good hand on that. She'd always try to explain exactly what was going on. It's difficult but you just have to have faith in other people's skills and know that it will come along eventually.

(Hawkins interview 2000)

Music composer, Hugh Covill, views Rosemary Myers' ability to assume central artistic control as a crucial factor in her role as director. Covill believes it is Myers' view of the whole and her understanding of how all the theatrical elements will
come together that is her major strength as a director. Diverse elements, from music
selection to casting decisions, must fit together and function successfully.

For me the success of her collaborations is due to her ability
to know what is going to work. She'll be able to listen to bits
of music and go, "I can use that. I know how that will
function in the piece." It's good in a sense that from an
early stage you can have these seminal ideas and she'll be
able to say, "Develop this. Develop this," and she's pretty
on the mark with that. Whereas sometimes you can spend
a lot of time developing something that you think is going to
function well and then it just doesn't. It's almost like she's
juggling these separate elements to bring them all into
balance. It's that view of the whole and how all the
elements are going to come together that are definitely her
strength. Some directors are very actor focused, some like
to sit down and do lengthy negotiations with the cast
regarding the script or really looking for each character's
motivation within single phrases or whatever. Although
Rose is prepared to go there if people want that, it's the
juggling of all the people's needs. What I see as the role of
the director, is the person with the over riding artistic vision
and the ability to bring all the disparate elements on board
so that those elements do work together to create a whole.
More than just, "Well here's the story and we're going to
present it in eighteenth century kimono's." All of the
separate things come together and it seems like it's all right.
It seems like that's the right decision. That's even down to
casting. I think the casting for the show was exceptional
and Rose has got a great eye for that. From really early on
she's going, "How do I envisage the end of it? What people
do I need?" That's being aware of the physicality and the
skill base required but also bringing together a group of
people who are going to be able to function well.

(Covill interview 2000)
Rosemary Myers' interest or focus on the "bigger picture" is viewed by some as a potential disadvantage in her working methods. Although supporting Covill's comments on Myers' ability to direct actors in a very detailed way writer, Julianne O'Brien, is cautious about her tendency to leave actors to their own devices rather than directly challenging them.

She's the kind of director I know certain actors with certain training would want more from, like more detailed direction about motivation, and she'd be the first one to say that. She is capable of directing at that level because I've heard her. I've heard her turn to an actor and go, "Your motivation is this, this and this. On that line you're doing this. On that line you're doing that and on that line you're doing that." I've actually heard her direct like that so I know she can but I think she's not that interested in it. That's possibly a shame for the actors' own experience in the play. It's certainly not a shame for me. Well it's only a shame if it effects performances. She just has a different focus. Again it's her vantage point; she's not really that interested in mid-wifery; in delivering an ego through the difficult process of mounting a play. She's got her eye on the bigger picture so it doesn't worry me so much. She relies on actors to rely on themselves. I think that sometimes she can let an actor fall back on his or her own laurels or schtick when she might need to challenge them. So maybe sometimes the smaller details get sacrificed for the bigger picture.

(O'Brien interview 1999)

Actor/dancer, Kate Denborough, also supports this view. Whilst praising the enthusiasm and inclusive nature of Myers' direction style, Denborough believes that this can often be at the expense of specific direction, something she acknowledges could be more about her needs as a performer than anything else. She focuses on the
disturbing and sexually charged moment of tension between her character, Mary, the sixteen year old eldest Bird child, and the middle-aged male social worker, Tapp, as perhaps not being fully explored theatrically. Rather than relying on the results of improvisations, Denborough believes that through detailed direction the scene may have reached a darker place.

The most exciting component of working with Rosemary on this project was definitely her utter irreverence for anything and her lack of preciousness. Everyday was just so enjoyable because she had such enthusiasm and no matter how big a problem, she just really stayed with it. Her vision was inspirational, it was like she didn’t really care what anyone was thinking and would just do her thing, say her piece. Let us really explore. Mervyn at times was very demanding about things, in a good way. But she was very willing to let us have a voice. But the funny side to that is that sometimes I feel a little bit helpless because I thought that I needed to have more criticism and more direction and she was quite loathe to do that. She didn’t really ever, hardly ever, give any kind of performance direction. She’s more bigger picture. But maybe that was just out of my insecurity that I wanted her to be ‘more’. We would say, "Is that alright?" and she would say, "Yeah, yeah it’s fine" and we’d all be going, "Could it be better?" and "What about this?" I think that in some respects it is a weakness and a strength of her work that she’s actually concentrating on the bigger picture and letting you work out that detail yourself but I think it also depends on the cast, how capable they are. But I think I like it when people take a lot of risks with direction and force you to try different things. Not force, but lead you down lots of different avenues, but then be really clear like a "Yes" or a "No" or "That’s completely the wrong way." "That’s the right way" or "More that way." I think that has to be a strength and there wasn’t much of that in this
process. And I just think for some of it, it could have even been more full on, just in terms of performance perhaps, because all the stuff with Tapp that we did, we just improvised those scenes. Like the hand down the pants were just things that I threw in physically. That's where I felt like I could really offer a lot in terms of physical meaning. I just think that we could have pushed it to more extreme places, not necessarily explicit or anything but just edgier. A bit darker.

(Denborough interview 2000)

**Helping the Actors 'Find Their Way'**

I witnessed an event in rehearsals where, as director, Rosemary Myers moved into a mode of specific and detailed actor focused direction. Supported by interviews with several of the participants, I documented the incident from a range of perspectives. Both Covill and O'Brien acknowledge that Myers is capable of this style of direction and they agree that this approach to direction is not where her interests lie.

The casting of actor, Emma Hawkins, was always going to be slightly contentious. As a recent graduate of a regional Theatre Studies Course Emma's acting experience was limited. Emma was an adult actor cast in the role of a six year old child. As an adult actor she is clearly short in stature. I asked writer, Julianne O'Brien, whether this had impacted at all on the writing of the play. She replied,

I said to her over lunch once, "How do you feel about playing a child?" She said, "Oh not that great. I'd rather play someone evil or someone sexy", or something that she wasn't. And that influenced me because I thought well, not
that we have to justify her casting, but if we wanted to really use her casting then why not take that character to some dark places or extreme places. So as a six year old character she reaches a maturity that no six year old could do so that justifies her casting for me. In the end she has to take control of the destiny of her whole family and she’s only six. That’s what Ava does and the fact that it’s played by an adult makes that possible I hope. Compare her role to ’Panacea’ where a young boy was cast. He played a boy. He played a boy that was really trying very hard to be a good swimmer, that looked up to his coach as a father figure and was ultimately victimised. He didn’t have to be anything other than a young boy. What we’ve done here is create a character who is transforming, that is becoming something else. So that’s why I think we’re justified in using an adult.

(O’Brien interview 1999)

From the first day of work in the creative development workshops everyone was drawn to the physicality of Emma Hawkins. During the first debriefing session all the collaborating artists commented on her work, that there was a childlike quality captured in her being passed around through the air by the other actors and in her clinging to her other siblings. Yet I also noted that Hawkins was side-coached quite frequently by Myers and choreographer Adams; encouraged to become angrier, pushier and more powerful. I observed Hawkins struggle with these directions and merely repeat the lines suggested to her. There seemed to be a difficulty with Emma Hawkins playing high status roles.

By Day 4 of the rehearsal period Julianne O’Brien returned to check on the progress of the work. That night she phoned Myers with concerns about the acting quality of
Hawkins, requesting that a rehearsal director be bought in to work with her. O'Brien reflects,

On one of the first days of rehearsal I realised I hadn't separated enough from the work to be able to watch it objectively and I got upset about Emma. I didn't think she had the ability to do the job and I rang Rose that night and insisted on an acting coach for her. I just did a whole panic. I normally distance myself from the work. I normally don't care what happens to it, to a degree, but I didn't want anything to upset our beautiful vision.

(O'Brien interview 2000)

This incident was of major concern to Myers who felt that O'Brien had overstepped the line of responsibility with her request. Myers was aware that O'Brien had attained a greater sense of ownership with this production than she ever had before. Myers was also aware of the different needs and requirements of this diverse group of actors. When relaying this interaction to me in rehearsals, Myers commented on the fact that she was, "aware that Emma is self conscious; she can't be pushed or made to feel vulnerable." At the end of the first week of rehearsals Myers reflected on the various demands of the acting ensemble: their needs and expectations and her responses to the work created in front of her.

The serious work that I have to do this week is stylistically in terms of the performance and also sorting out methodology for working with the diverse actors because I can't really pander. I have to be careful. One actor at one end of the spectrum, Merlyn, is just an incredibly sophisticated actor. He's very experienced and he's amazing on the floor and intellectually and analytically he's very onto it. And then there's Kate who has a dance background; she learns in a different way. And then with Emma it's about finding her
way in. And all their ways are different and I've got to juggle all of their needs and it's my responsibility to make sure that they all have the opportunity to find their way in. Also I usually work with some actors that I've worked with quite a few times before and actors find me strange to work with; there's no denying it. Actors I've worked with a lot have admitted to me that the first time they worked with me they found it strange and scary because everything comes together at the last minute. As it will do in this project. The level of the writing is much more intricate, so it's pushing me in a certain way. Some of the actors will be asking me to extend myself which is really good. But then some of the others will need me to hold their hand, which is not so good. And it's my job to make sure all of them are satisfied in there so they can get on with their work. The collaboration with Merlyn, that's a great opportunity for me as a director to really learn a lot about directing because he's such a good actor and he's such an experienced actor and he's such a generous performer. So that is a great opportunity but on the other hand the opportunity to work with Emma is in some ways quite boring to me because the challenges that she's throwing at me are like hand holding. But that has to be expected; she's twenty, she's got a low level of experience in many ways. And I knew this from the start. And Kate, because Kate's a dancer and she hasn't done a lot of acting. She has done the John Bolton School for a year. But Kate is in a different place to Emma again. She's five years older. Kate can stand to gain an incredible amount out of this project if she wants to. Intellectually she's there to see what the process is with someone like Merlyn and engage with that. Emma is not even at that point. She's at a very different point. I have to work with her on a very basic level. I have to take her through things and I have to throw her lots of images and lots of actions to play and find out which ones work. So I have to do the intellectualising for her. I have to say what's going on for
her character, now and then I have to give her some tasks
that are really clean and see what she throws back at me
until I see that she throws back what I wanted.

(Myers interview 23.1.2000)

On Day 5 of rehearsals I witnessed an intensive script analysis discussion between Myers and the actors. My field notes recorded a discussion that reflects Myers' assessment of where the actors are at and what they are bringing to the piece. Merfyn Owen, Rosemary Myers and Kate Denborough are highly engaged in conversation about character motivation whereas Emma Hawkins does not contribute at all and Chris Brown only rarely. I note that Myers is very careful to phrase her opinions from her own perspective such as, "I read it like this . . . ."

There is never the over-riding perspective of an autocratic director. There is a sense of group-negotiated meaning, which is then translated from the written script into the performance text. When debriefing in a production meeting, at the end of the first week with the main collaborating artists, Myers voices her concerns and is clearly isolated in her role. There is little sense of a shared burden with her co-workers.

"Every actor is coming from a different perspective with different requirements," explains Myers.

"Chuck 'em a bone," replies Byron Scullin, the sound technician.

Daniel Crooks, the multi-media artist, offers, "They are the nice typeface at the front of the space."
Both responses are quite telling statements about the different orientations of the collaborating artists, especially by Crooks who first trained in graphic design. He compares the actors to the typeface he used to design the layout of posters. For Crooks, the actors are tools at his disposal, something to be manipulated. Byron Scullin refers to the actors as animals to be pacified. Neither is serious and neither offers any real support or sympathy to Myers.

On the following day of rehearsal, while the other actors are out filming, Rosemary Myers takes the opportunity to work one on one with Emma Hawkins for the entire day. Whether this is in response to the phone call from O'Brien, or whether Myers would herself have scheduled this session without such prompting, is hard to ascertain. The session is a part of a concentrated effort to give clear and precise direction to Hawkins. Throughout the session I observe Myers continuously instructing and side-coaching with directions related to interior emotional states such as, "She is on the verge of tears here." There are also technical line delivery instructions, "Hardly any voice here and quite high; play with the 'and' in the speech." In a crucial scene where Hawkins as Ava begins to communicate with Childress through a ouija board Myers' instructions to Hawkins are about confidence in delivery and stage presence, "Be bold. Be confident. You've got us by the seat of our pants. Take control. Own it." Hawkins is interrupted midway, "I think you lost commitment there" and Myers shifts back into her confidence building approach of "Be bold!" They return to the scene with Rosemary Myers speaking over the top of
Hawkins’ lines and actions as she moves over the ouija board, "Looking good. Taking a lot of time with it."

"Is there anyone in the world listening to me?" recites Emma Hawkins.

"Slow and connected otherwise it flies over your head and you don’t engage with the information."

"Is there anyone in the world listening to me?" repeats Hawkins.

The scene appears to me as an observer to become so "worked" that Emma Hawkins looks confused. It is as though the scene has become scrambled and she has lost connection with the material and the individual lines while still trying to build a sense of character. However this session turns out to be highly significant and begins to lay the foundations for future work. The process appears slow and arduous but is clearly necessary. The atmosphere is one of support and encouragement. Hawkins reflects on this day,

That was great for me because I really needed that time to sort out what Ava was all about because I really didn’t know. It was great to do one on one for a day; it set me up for the rest of the rehearsals. The most difficult part of the process for me was finding my character. I found it quite difficult to find a six year old. I found I was trying too hard. Trying to be me, too old, too serious. So I just started having more fun with it and just let it happen, which is good. That was about trusting and respecting Rose’s feedback, she’s really helped guide me through it. She saw something in me that I didn’t see at the beginning. She helped me to discover and to trust in "less is more."

(Hawkins interview 2000)
Fig. 8: Actor Emma Hawkins, as Ava Bird, communicates with the computer childcare system in the stage production of *Eat Your Young* and leads her siblings into cyberspace (Busby, 2000a).

It is interesting to return to the reflections and words of writer, Julianne O'Brien. Through hindsight she is able to acknowledge the work that actor, Emma Hawkins, produced in the staged performance and the appropriateness of Myers' decision in casting her.

I know Rose was hurt by me ringing up and saying, "Emma needs an acting coach." I know she interpreted it as a lack of confidence in her ability to take Emma through the process. But as I said to you, Rose is not interested in midwifery, she's interested in the big vision and if an actor cannot fall back on their own resources in the past they've possibly ended up under directed. I feel really weird about
that phone call now because Emma was ultimately a great piece of casting, she doesn't do a brilliant performance, but she was a great piece of casting. And I've talked to enough people after seeing the show to know that she is without a doubt the star of the show. She is what everyone loves. She appeals to the common person, the critics loved her as well, just across the board everyone loved her. I think there are probably complex reasons for why that happened and I think it was an intuitive and probably an insightful piece of casting. Did she need an acting coach in the end? Well clearly not, she didn't need one.

(O'Brien interview 2000)

**Director as 'Chief Creative Force'**

Myers views her role as director as the 'chief creative force' and central facilitator of the inter-disciplinary contributions from the collaborators (Myers interview 1999). She fosters dialogue with each artist to produce the overall result. She also views herself as the 'driving force' of the project but in no way places her position above that of her fellow artists (Myers interview 1999). As 'driver', she enables others to focus on doing their best in their own areas of specialty. For Myers each element and each collaborator has equal place.

I have a dialogue all the way through the project with everyone. So it's very much a collaborative process. It has to be because I've got to pull it all together. I have to fill in to all of the others what the other elements are. That's my job to do the construction of the whole thing. I think I facilitate the inter-discipline in the piece. So I'm going, "How are all the elements going to work together to make this project?" I have to be the one that's writing that. They all
write their elements and I have to write them altogether. I think I work in a director based theatre process. So I think for me directing is about facilitating the project. I feel like everyone else can be specialist in their area. I don't feel like I direct a play on the floor. I don't take someone else's play and direct it on the floor; direct the actors. I feel my role is much broader than that. I feel like I drive the piece. I usually have the idea for the piece. I usually have the philosophy for the company. I always employ the artists, all of them. I'm not a director who is chosen to work with a writer. I'm more a director who chooses a writer to write a project that I want them to write me. Someone was saying to me about writing inter-disciplinary work, do I feel like it's hard for the other people to write across form and do they get short changed in that evolution? I think in the end that all those other people should be allowed to concentrate on what they want. In the end Julianne should be allowed to concentrate on the writing. Even though in the end she can talk about the multi-media. Dan should be allowed to just go and do the film. The actors should act. I want them to do their best work in their own form. I don't have an investment in any one form over the other. In the end the designer, if there is a designer, will go, "As long as the visuals look good that's enough for me." If any element's bad, it's bad for me. The direction of the play on the floor is fine that's just a small part of the job to me; how I put it out on the floor. Its a chief creative force, but it's collaborative work, so I think that I am the driving force in the work but I don't believe that being the driving force is any more or less important than being one of the other forces. Because you need all of the types of forces to make it. All I'm saying is the other people in the end can go off and be more specialised. But I've got to drive the whole thing together all the way through. If one of those elements is bad, the whole thing equals the sum of its parts. The driving force is one part; it's not the key part. I don't believe that. I've got to be
as good a driving force as Julianne's got to be as good at writing the script and as Dan's got to be as good as making the filmed images.

(Myers interview 1999)

Julianne O'Brien agrees with the metaphor of Rosemary Myers as the chief architect; "I've felt very acutely that she's had the blueprint in her head that I haven't quite had" (O'Brien interview 1999). When discussing her perspective on multi-media, theatre and the collaborative nature of their working relationship she is able to place Myers at the centre of the creative and visionary hub of activity at Arena Theatre Company. All ideas and contributions are channelled through her and disseminated to the other collaborators wherever appropriate. For Julianne O'Brien, Myers' artistic world involves the contributions of many people, but she is firmly at the helm.

I'm utterly bored by theatre. I don't even go to the theatre. So why am I interested in new theatrical work? Basically I'm interested in film and what Rose is doing, a marriage between theatre and film, is the most exciting theatre that I can see happening in the city. And I want to be a part of that. I see Rose as the brain of which we are all limbs hanging off that brain. I'm doing the scripting, which I take extremely seriously and I do thoroughly and deeply and I don't try to thin out what I know by becoming some sort of quasi expert on multi-media. I'm not an expert. I will never be an expert. When writing the Simulated Reality scenes, where the actors literally move into becoming a part of a multi-media landscape, I really struggled with it through the whole of the writing of the script. I just sketched them knowing that that part would be handed over to Rose and Daniel to compose. People are so scathing about the use of multi-media in theatre but at least it's going to take us somewhere, especially what Rose is trying to do, create a relationship between the actors and the multi-media which
is extraordinarily difficult. At least it's going to take us somewhere that we haven't seen before. Or hopefully we haven't seen before. And that's the least that I want when I sit down and I've bought a theatre ticket. Why I work with Rose, is absolutely her aesthetic, which I trust so implicitly. I feel in safe hands that I can just hold up my end of the bargain knowing that my contribution gets fed into her mind and out again. With the other collaborators it becomes something that always is really surprising to me. She's someone I trust. She's someone I'm inspired and surprised by and she's someone who genuinely pushes my writing in an area I wouldn't go but in areas that are interesting and more valuable. There's something about the way Rose works that she sits slightly above me. She has a vantage point that I don't have. She sees more from where she's at. That's why I can do my bit, not in a disinterested way, I can do my bit in a highly passionate way, knowing that she's seeing how it's all going to go together and what kind of statement it's going to make on the world stage. She allows me to think at the level I think at and for that to be a valuable contribution to this larger vision that she's got. The vantage point is higher and broader. So I love that and I feel embraced by it. I feel really honoured to be involved in it.

(O'Brien interview 1999)

Creating a Sense of Ownership

As director, Rosemary Myers was able to instil a sense of project ownership amongst the participants. All those interviewed emphasised this quality of Myers' direction style as a major strength. There was never a sense of any of the artists being employed to merely carry out their job. All felt included in decision-making processes. Their ideas and opinions on all aspects of the production, technical and
philosophical, were constantly being sought. Myers has an ability to share power and create independence and this, I believe, seems to directly contribute to a sense of group ownership amongst the many artists working within the Company. Although she is clearly positioned as the central creative force all share a sense of ownership over the production being created.

Forty-seven year old actor, Merfyn Owen, is able to compare the rehearsal process of Myers with that of many other Australian directors, who he has encountered throughout his extensive career. Of central importance to Owen is Myers' ability to create a sense of group ownership. For him the length of the rehearsal process fosters this.

I see her as a very fine collaborator and I think that's what puts her up there. All of these other people, your Kosky's and all of these people who have run these big flagship companies have had far more experience in theatre than Rose has. But in actual fact, working with Rose is far more satisfying because working with them you tend to feel quite left out of the whole picture. You really are, not only alienated by the technology, but also alienated by the process. You couldn't be accused of that in this process. We went into that space for six weeks and we had her full attention for six weeks. Six weeks! Unheard of in Australia. It allows you to have a more than generous ownership over what's being created.

(Owen interview 2000)

For actor, Emma Hawkins, one of the major strengths that Rosemary Myers possesses as a director is her capacity to include everyone in the process. 'She's always willing to listen to your ideas. She tries to involve the actors in every
process as much as she can. And always tries to map out the whole picture for you so you're not left there thinking - what's going on, what's going on' (Hawkins interview 2000).

Fellow actor, Kate Denborough, although not directly referring to a group sense of ownership, acknowledges the importance of Rosemary Myers' ability to relinquish power. This, she believes, creates a space for people to be able to make their own decisions in a supported and relaxed environment.

Very few people can relinquish power and when you're in a role as a director it's quite easy to be a control freak. Because you've got your arse on the line and you want to have the final product the way that you see it. But I think it's really smart that Rose is capable of sharing the power and obviously you can't be good at everything. So getting the best person for each separate job, in terms of music composition and film. And I guess that's her talent pulling together a compatible working, creative team. I suppose at the end of the day she is firm about what she wants. But to everyone she seems to give them a lot of space for their own decision making. Even in terms of sound. Sometimes I felt like she got influenced easily by other people's ideas. And it was the same with us, even with lines. If we go, "No, we have to have that line," she'd go, "Oh ok." Maybe she just feels that she needs to win the important battles and the smaller ones, it's silly to. It was a very relaxed working environment. Incredibly. I really appreciate that she doesn't seem to play any games with people. She does what she does. She's got enormous integrity in that. She's incredibly irreverent to the whole kind of celebrity, you know; theatre, film. I find her very honest. Just the pure enjoyment with which she pursues her vision. And also I guess the fact that she gives independence to her crew and
cast; a real sense of belonging. It's like the best mother, brings up a child, with the support and yet allows them to be capable to make their own decisions. I haven't come across anyone who has a similar working process. Ever. Because usually if they are someone who gives you that much freedom it's because they're terribly unsure of themselves or of what to do. So they're having to rely on you because they can't come up with the ideas and that's not the case with Rose. She's got plenty of ideas and plenty of options to throw up if needs be but she often doesn't. I just think it's her process. I think she doesn't like to impose. Maybe it's from fear of blocking out some other possibility that comes up on the floor.

(Denborough interview 2000)

Multi-media artist, Daniel Crooks, expresses his experience of ownership in the work. He believes Rosemary Myers and the other collaborators in their frequent discussions about the production at hand, foster this sense of ownership. These discussions are not just about the technical requirements but deal with philosophical issues related to the actual project. Crooks is able to distinguish his connection with the project as a "non-theatre" person from other more theatrically experienced staff members. He senses that they view him as operating in a state of chaos rather than a traditional ten to six theatre work schedule.

I'm such an anomaly in this whole situation. Because I'm just so "un" theatre. I've only done two shows and they're both with Arena. I've never worked on multiple theatre shows and I guess I'm just quite used to this chaos. But I know it freaks the production staff out and they get all upset by it. But I think a lot of that is because they don't own it. They're not going, "This is my show man and fucking hell I'm going to bust my balls to get it done." I feel like major
ownership, totally man. Like with 'Mass' and 'Pancea' the meetings that Bruce Gladwin and I and Rose and Pete Circuit had, they always seemed so kind of intense. They were always so much more theoretical about the show than they were about straight up issues of what's going to be going here. It was always a much bigger picture of what's the show about. Much bigger issues than just the straight up technicals of how we going to rig this set. I mean I've always been made to feel very much an owner of the show. There's no way I'm just working on it. If I were just working on it I wouldn't be doing twenty-four hour stints and sleeping in a fucking garage.

(Crooks interview 2000)

Julianne O'Brien highlights a valuable lesson that she has learnt from working with Rosemary Myers in an earlier collaboration. A lesson that has strengthened O'Brien's own sense of ownership and commitment to the work she is creating as part of a team at Arena Theatre Company.

What are her major strengths? It's her excitement about the work. Her ownership and her total lack of cynicism about what we're doing. She really believes in it. Another really important thing she's taught me, she once said to me, "Be honest. Everyone say everything. If you think there's something wrong with the narrative, something wrong with the treatment, something wrong with the style, something wrong with the character; say it now and we'll deal with it now. Don't be the kind of person who stands around the foyer on opening night and says I knew that was what was wrong with the play." She said, "If we know it, say it now and we'll deal with it." And what that taught me was the kind of loyalty and the kind of ownership that she always has to the work. She always defends the work even when it's highly criticised. She's enormously protective of the work. She's not defensive so much as protective in a real
loyal way and she's taught me that, and I've become much more honest in rehearsal rooms over the last two years because I think of Rose's insight. Just to say this is not working or just to put a question in at the right point and change direction of how it was going. You never have an attitude, which I think I have in the past, of "It's good enough, it's ok, it'll pass" or "It's sort of doing what it's meant to do" or "I don't need to worry about that, it'll do."

(O'Brien interview 1999)

"What Do You Think?"

In negotiating my role as researcher I was made aware of Rosemary Myers' desire to include everyone involved in the project in a dialogue of critical discussion. Rosemary Myers' exuberant style and inquisitive nature actively seeks to invite the opinions of others on the work that is being created. The effect of this, I believe, is to foster a sense of group ownership.

This desire to seek the opinions of others can be misread by some as a form of insecurity. Kate Denborough comments on this potentially neurotic character attribute of Myers that extends past the devising process into the performance season and beyond.

Sometimes I feel she is a bit self-conscious. She's quite unsure. She would often ask us for support on - "What do we think? How's it going? Was it good? Do we think it's good? What did your friends say? Did they like the show?" It almost felt like we would prop her up after every show. Rather than her go, "Congratulations that was a great performance." She'd go, "How did it go? Do you think it went well?" Sometimes that's a bit hard because you want
a bit of praise. It feels like quite an adult thing that you don't
actually get praise you just have to give it back.

(Denborough interview 2000)

Meryn Owen views this side to Myers' personality as a positive. 'She's so vital and
vibrant and positive, even when she's incredibly fearful, she's exciting to be around I
think. Even when she is being highly neurotic. It's not coming from a place of fear;
it's coming from a place of excitement' (Owen interview 2000). For Owen, Myers'
opinion-seeking habit engages everyone in the creative process. Owen is able to
compare her processes of direction with other directors he has worked with in other
companies.

Anyone slightly fearful would not go down that road at all.
You have to be prepared for somebody to say; "Well
actually I think it's crap." What makes it quite extraordinary
is that she is not an empty vessel. She's a very intelligent
theatre maker but she somehow enables people to put their
opinions forward. At the Melbourne Theatre Company you
would never in a million years even dream of doing that. It's
tragic. Everyone's sitting around bitching and moaning and
farting around but no one's saying anything. You are so
excluded from that crucial creative process. Totally
excluded. "Stand there." "Look here." Please the director.
It's tragic, quite tragic.

(Owen interview 2000)

For music composer and marriage partner, Hugh Covill, the offer to provide
opinions outside of his own specialist area is not something that he readily
welcomes. However this has a lot to do with the nature of his initial response to a
narrative or idea. He would prefer that the artistic boundaries were clear so that he can concentrate on his area and is not tempted to comment on the other elements.

While I say that dealing with narrative isn't one of my fortes, I can't help myself. I'm always putting in my two cents worth. "That'll never work. I hate that idea." I know that it's not productive and I should just shut up but sometimes I just can't help myself. Yet Rose asks me all the time what I think. We have that thing in our working relationship of, "Well don't ask me. If you don't want to hear what I've got to say," which is not often what she wants to hear, "don't ask me." To an extent I'd prefer that the tasks be clearly laid out. And within that I'll have a lot of ability to ply my art and to make strong artistic offers but I guess I do like the boundaries to be clear and that I'm not having to have too much input into every element. I find that's better. I can't always see things clearly earlier on.

(Covill interview 2000)

Daniel Crooks also wishes the lines of creative decision making were not so blurred or that his opinion was not always being sought, particularly when he feels he has lost a sense of objectivity about the work. He relates a typical conversation.

Sometimes it will be like she's asking us, "What do you think? What do you think?" I'll say, "Man look I don't know, you make the decision 'cause I've just been staring at this thing for the last six weeks and I haven't got a fucking clue. Rose man this is your call, it's your call. This is not my call. I mean I could say what I think but you've got to decide."

(Crooks interview 2000)

Rosemary Myers comments on the way she intentionally seeks to consult with others in an effort to improve the quality of the final product.
In my Company I have a very open dialogue with any one that works there. I get them all to see the work and I ask everyone what they think all the time. I am open to suggestions and I encourage people to give me suggestions all the time. And even if I don't take them I always try and make an environment where it's all about contributing. So I'll give the script out to everybody that works in my office. And after everybody's read it I ask, "What do you think about it? What do you like about it?" Because I'm finding out things about it. "Do you think it's this? Do you think it's that? Do you think it doesn't have enough humour in it?" Which is one of my worries about 'Eat Your Young', because it doesn't have any and that's rare for me. I ask people questions about it all the time. I ask everyone. I listen back to people's opinion and I'm not precious about taking on their ideas. Give me them all and when they resonate with some reservation I have I go, "Ah ha!" They might be very perceptive. In the making of every show I've ever made I've had really useful contributions from other people that have been core to it being successful. Someone's come along and gone, "This, this is what you need to do!" It's a brand new work. I don't care about how we get it there. Just as long as we get it there the best way we can. With a brand new work you get too close to it. I'll be working on it for a year by the time it goes on. I can't tell any more. I can't look at it with fresh eyes. I know what it's all supposed to mean. I don't know if someone who is watching it for the first time will find it clear enough. So that's very much my process to involve everyone who is working on it. Because you get better work out of everyone too if they feel ownership of it.

(Myers interview 1999)
The Director's Trust of the Artists

The director's overwhelming trust of the creative input and decision making abilities of the collaborating artists is a continual theme throughout the study. The participants almost unanimously commented on Rosemary Myers' trust and faith in allowing them the freedom and space to create their own work and offer their own opinions and ideas, within the parameters of her overall vision. The atmosphere that this trust cultivates allows each artist to work confidently and without restrictions on his or her specific craft. At the same time all artists are entering into a mutual relationship of trust with the director where they hope that she will incorporate their contributions seamlessly into the overall project.

The two-way nature of the trust relationship is expressed through the thoughts of composer and musician, Hugh Covill. He outlines the strong faith Myers has in his judgement, while at the same time acknowledging that although in the majority of cases he may not even like a project idea, he is prepared to trust Myers' opinion.

Because the artistic relationship's been going a fair time she's prepared to take a leap of trust a lot of the time, in that she'll trust my judgement. Often, eight times out of ten I won't like the idea for the play at the outset but I just need to trust that history is on Rose's side in terms of knowing what's going to work from early on. She has a handle on what makes a good story and what will work in terms of staging a performance.

(Covill interview 2000)
The sense of freedom Myers creates and fosters, and the sense of allowing artists to "get on with it" is voiced throughout the many extensive interviews. Here are some samples of these comments. Multi-media artist, Daniel Crooks:

Rose's strengths as a director is so much that ability to just trust the artists that she works with and just to let them be. Man sometimes, especially with 'Panacea' and with 'Mass', Pete Circuit and I, sometimes we're just going, "We don't have anything yet. We have nothing for that scene. We haven't even looked at it." And Rose is like "Yep, sweet as." She is very good at letting us do it and getting it done as opposed to coming in and sitting over our shoulders and going, "Nah, a bit to the left, a bit to the right."

(Crooks interview 2000)

Performer, Kate Denborough:

The freedom that Rose gave me; it was very empowering. The fact that she did put faith in my decisions without much interruption, I guess that was a shock. That's probably why I was thinking is it good enough, perhaps she really hates it but she doesn't want to say. I'm very grateful that she had put that faith in us.

(Denborough interview 2000)

Choreographer, Phillip Adams:

I can't believe she trusts me half the time. She's amazing, she just trusts people constantly; totally. And look at the work, it is always of a great standard. She pulls it off and for a youth market audience; it's the best shit around. I totally trust Rose and I know that she has been in the industry, like yourself, for a really long fucking time and you guys know the shit and the style. I think she's been given a gift and that's the gift of organising a group of people and saying "Here's the shit, put it together and I'll be at the top and
direct it." And she allows those people to rise above her and to make decisions artistically beyond the call of their duty and trust them and that collaboration's great. I mean she is really gifted at that and that's what a director does. She doesn't have to bottle it by the neck and go, "It's my baby. No one else is going to fucking touch it." There are choreographers who make everything. No one's actually allowed to make a move and who go, "I will direct it and this is how it is going to be. I am the director." Rose is truly passionate and gifted, it takes a hell of a lot for someone to hand over a slab and trust that it is going to look great. The fact that she trusts me; I feel so honoured.

(Adams interview 2000)

These various comments demonstrate the deep nature of the relationship of trust that Rosemary Myers instils in her collaborators and acting ensemble. Each participant is grateful for the level of freedom they are given, at times surprised by it. Some, like Adams, feel honoured by this open trust of the director especially in an industry that frequently operates from a hierarchical structure where the director or choreographer is reluctant to allow others into the decision making process. Myers, as Adams outlines, allows others to 'rise above her' and make artistic decisions; decisions that may often be viewed as directorial (Adams interview 2000). Her focus is constantly on the final product, "What can we all do to make this project to the best of our ability?" Any one person involved in the process is invited to answer this question. Adams considers this open, inviting and trusting quality of Myers to be a gift.
Personal Cost and Ultimate Responsibility

The enormous amount of time and creative energy that go into an Arena Theatre Company project come at a degree of personal cost; Rosemary Myers carries the ultimate responsibility. At the end of the day she is the defender and nurturer of the work. When the projects are criticised, and they frequently are, both within and outside the Company, she is the artistic public face of Arena who is directly answerable to any criticism. The projects often take at least one year to plan, create and mount and with that type of investment the stakes become high for the director who is at the centre of the creative planning. These following extracts are from the interview transcripts with Rosemary Myers over several months, and allude to incidents where she alone bears, or is seen to bear, the responsibility for the work.

I want to make something that throws up a lot of ideas rather than presents solutions. I don’t feel that all I present is just a didactic perspective and I want to acknowledge that our life experiences are complicated. Meaning exists in very complex ways in the world. I’m much more interested in the complex relationships between things and the complex nature of the human experience and I hope that our work then excites people to think about things more. Because art is a rare opportunity to think in the world, to think in a way that is hopefully transcendental. That’s the aim anyway. I don’t know if I’ve ever achieved that though but that’s the aim. I always like to have very high aims. Because these projects kill me, they kill me to do them. They push me right to the edge and that’s why I’m doing it. I want to make something really ambitious. I’m pretty obsessed with it. I love it.

(Myers interview 1999)
At times during the summer rehearsals for *Eat Your Young* temperatures would be over 40 degrees for several days in a row. Myers was well aware that this was not an ideal environment for rehearsals, especially close physical work in a room with little circulation. In this stifling environment tempers easily become frayed.

Some of the actors are having trouble with the script and they're getting really narky about it. I personally think that a lot of that is the actors not the script. It's their process. They're going to feel like they invented the play when they put it up there and they made the script great. And it also gets quite negative because they're quite harsh. They make full on comments to me all the time that they've been working for four weeks on fixing the script. And when you look at it it's been minor redrafts, when you really look at it. Actually in the end it's been edits and one scene rewritten. That's all.

*(Myers interview 7.2.2000)*

Project pressures are also caused by the extensive amount of technology that is employed by the Company. While being invigorated by their possibilities Myers and her technical crew are also at the mercy of any problems that may occur, especially in the use of new systems designed and created specifically for this project.

It's a rollercoaster. The whole project's a rollercoaster. Through the course of one evening I've gone from feeling elated to just being incredibly depressed and worried that it's not going to come together. Like last night at the start of the night I saw some moving image going around the screen and all the plotting was going well and the screen looked amazing. It was like, "Oh great this is going to be a winner." And then the vibration on the tracking system of the circular rig occurred. It was like. "Oh my god, this is like
a total disaster.* It's all an illusion that you're creating isn't it? So it's as successful as you can be in transporting the audience in that illusion. You want things to be seamless. You don't want them to be wobbling up and down and suddenly we're aware of the mechanism that's driving it.

(Myers interview 18.2.2000)

Fig. 9: The complex illusion created. Actor Christopher Brown, as Buddy, is rewarded by a Simulated Virtual Reality in the stage production of *Eat Your Young* (Busby 2000c).

Rosemary Myers is also responsible for dealing with managerial issues involving staffing that arise when an employee is not fulfilling their duties adequately. As in any organisation, staffing issues need to be resolved in accordance with due process. Working within such a condensed time frame for a production means that there is
little opportunity to attend to such matters over the rehearsal and performance period. Warning systems can be put in place to alert an employee to the inappropriateness of their actions, but even if their behaviour continues, replacing someone at short notice for the remainder of a short project is not a desirable option. Ideally once the problems have been outlined, the staff member in question should attempt to correct the situation. From Myers' experience this is not often the case. At times a decision must be made about whether to keep the employee on for the duration of the project in spite of their failings, or take the drastic action of terminating their employment, which can be contractually difficult.

I've also had to deal with a really bad staff member. It was a hindrance for the project. A small project like this, you can't really carry anyone. I deal with it. I do talk to Katherine (the General Manager) of course about how I am going to handle it. In the end to be honest you can have a process about how you're going to handle it but it's not really going to help you that much. It's not going to change someone's bad work into good work. You can give them a talking to which is pretty degrading for everyone concerned. You feel like you're not really collaborating with a professional when you have to go and talk to them. You feel like you're a school teacher or something and it's really awkward and horrible but I do it. I don't like it and in the end basically you've employed someone who is not up to the job and you can talk to them and maybe they can pick up their game a bit but not much is going to change that. I'm pretty realistic. You're not going to talk to them and they are going to become a brilliant right hand person for the project. You can tell they are a bad appointment, they're not very good, let's put it that way. And our people that we work with, they are very good. And they are highly knowledgeable and they are really the best and they come to work with Arena
because they like what we do technically and they see it as a good opportunity to collaborate. And they are outstanding. So you get bad people and you really notice it. And ultimately you are stuck contractually to continue. And also once you are on a project it's almost too far to go back. Like it's on next week. We can't get someone new in. You have to weigh it up. You could sack someone. But you've got to weigh it up.

(Myers interview 24.7.2000)

In my final interview with Rosemay Myers, almost four months after the first staging of Eat Your Young in Adelaide, we reflect on a low point for her. We discuss the enormous personal burden of responsibility that the position of director carries. She previously shared this role with long-term principal Co-collaborator, Bruce Gladwin; they shared the burden and the difficult times and still retained a sense of fun. With Gladwin's move to a full-time position as Artistic Director with Back to Back Theatre Company, Myers must now bear the creative responsibilities alone. As director and chief architect Rosemary Myers is in the front line position; she bears the brunt of any criticism that is directed at the Company from any employee about any issue. Feeling low is a rare occurrence for Myers who is generally immensely positive. But after a series of accumulated incidents I notice her mood turn; her positive energy drain. The interview transcript conveys the interactive nature of our discussion.

Noel: In Adelaide, when I was there with you, it was a very interesting time. I remember you said to me very briefly, "I've had enough. I've had enough of making work." I know it was a particular time, but the show was very successful, you were turning people away. You've obviously moved on from that point?
Rosemary: Yes I've moved on from it. But I do go there. So does Bruce Gladwin. I think slowly and slowly we're just coming more to the point of asking, "What is the price of what we do?" We're asking that question more and more. I think one thing about collaborating with Bruce was that kind of did keep you going in a way. You could share it. But when it's just you it's like everything's down to you and everything's going wrong. It's like, "Rose Myers and her fucking show." "Rose Myers, you've got a reputation of destroying every one that you work with and burning them into the ground." People are going to me, "The crew will never work with you again." The crew were getting personal with me at times because they were just tired they hadn't had enough sleep. Insults made towards me and things like that. Which is just par for it. I'm used to it. At least when I work with Bruce, I could say there was a fun side to it. But it was bloody hard work overall. In the end I just sit in the theatre and watch the show and say, "Is it worth it for me?"

Noel: And is it?

Rosemary: Yes because I think what's achieved is really amazing. I think it's far from perfect but it inspires me to make the next piece. I go, "Oh we'll get it right next time." People that make art are seeking to make profound statements that help people to understand the world and help themselves understand it and reflect upon the bigger issues of the human condition and it's almost like you set yourself an impossible task every time you make a show. You kind of scrape it and it excites you to go, "Next time, next time." And that's what happens to me every time.

(Myers interview 24.7.2000)
As Artistic Director of Arena Theatre Company and as director of *Eat Your Young* she is regarded as the person responsible for this new creative work; an offer to the Australian cultural community. In the media her name is not always associated with having made the work, something that is an issue for her, but she is the person who is responsible for the staging and programming of all the work within the Company. If there is a criticism she deals with it, not the writer, multi-media artist, choreographer, composer or the actors. As director she alone protects and defends the work as a mother would a child. Julianne O’Brien discusses her view of Rosemary Myers and the ultimate responsibility that she carries.

She says to me I'm living in "la-la-land." She says to me, "You don't hear it. You don't hear what people are saying. I have to defend this show on the phone for an hour this morning. Someone was screaming at me." That's what she says to me. I think I would be hurt if I was in the firing line, like that. I'm not in the firing line. I just go back to my house in West Footscray. No one rings me up. I'm not responsible for the work in a way. Which is another side of the whole billing thing. And the incredible weight that Rose's position has. She will cop the flack and the praise. People are very bitter about her position and very jealous about her position. There are lots of people in Melbourne who would love to have a company to play with. She's very aware and doesn't take it for granted at all. She's in a good position but it doesn't come cheap. It doesn't come without that terrible burden of responsibility. She's always been good at that. I look back at some plays we've done and I go, "Oh that didn't work" and she'll still be very loyal to a piece of work. So I think it's easy for her to go into battle for a play like 'Eat Your Young' which was
artistically successful. She always stands by the work. She wouldn't be bothered making it otherwise.

(O'Brien interview 2000)
Chapter 8

In Conclusion: 'Controversial Art'

Fig 10: The final form. Tapp, Merfyn Owen, communicates with the Bird children from a live video feed off-stage. (Busby 2000d).

Researching the creative processes of director, Rosemary Myers, in her staging of Arena Theatre Company's Eat Your Young, has revealed the varied role of a theatre director involved in a complex process of creation. At the commencement of the study I outlined a range of questions in response to comments made by British theatre director Deborah Warner (cited in Giannachi G. & Luckhurst M. 1999) when describing theatre rehearsals. These questions served to direct my research focus and included: - What does occur in a rehearsal room in the development of a production? What is the role of a director? What is the exact nature of the 'organic
process' of rehearsal and how are conditions created for 'free exploration' (Warner cited in Giannachi G. & Luckhurst M. 1999 p137)? In tracking the rehearsal process of *Eat Your Young* I believe I came close to an understanding of the implications of these questions in relation to the work of director Rosemary Myers.

With many other directors working in an international context, Rosemary Myers shares a unique interest and curiosity about the human condition. Benedetti (1985) believes this helps foster the development of an effective director. Directors who share a keen fascination in the complexities of human life and engage in the art of theatre making endeavour to tell stories that help us understand our lives. The director who creates these stories is involved in sophisticated lines of communication with other artists, who together, collaborate to create the work. As outlined by Daniels (1996), the principle tool at a director's disposal, and a vital ingredient in their success, is human communication.

**Director as a Leader of a Creative Process**

Daniels' (1996) study of 35 women stage directors, outlined in Chapter 3 concluded that there was a range of principles commonly held by most directors. These include leadership abilities in creative processes, a sense of vision and the ability to collaborate with other artists. My study revealed that Rosemary Myers possesses these traits which, when combined creates the 'qualities of a good director' (Daniels 1996 p11).
Throughout the study Myers is clearly seen as the leader. As detailed in Chapter 7 her role as director is viewed as the chief architect of the project, a metaphor that was generally supported by the participants involved in the study. Myers' ability to assume artistic control is a crucial factor in her role as director. The director must be aware of and intrinsically know how the many diverse aspects of the performance are going to fit together into a cohesive whole. Julianne O'Brien describes her leadership style as one of 'natural authority' within her role as director (O'Brien interview 2000). It is neither forced nor demanded but comfortably assumed through years of experience. Myers is able to trust in her own expertise and in the decisions, that at times she alone makes. This is frequently demonstrated by her intuitive response to actors' improvisations on the rehearsal room floor, particularly throughout the creative development period where side-coaching was a feature of her directing style with the actors.

As leader Myers is also responsible for staff needs or problems that may arise. In both her one on one directorial sessions with new actor, Emma Hawkins, and her discussions with the "difficult" staff member, Rosemary Myers was able to embrace the full responsibilities of her leadership position. She provided detailed guidance and support for Hawkins and clear expectations of job duties and responsibilities for the staff member who was experiencing difficulties.

In her leadership role Myers is able to let others take on major areas of responsibility in a supported and collegial atmosphere of creation. This is evidenced throughout
the study by many participants' voices, but particularly by Kate Denborough and Phillip Adams who recount situations where Myers hands over decision making and sections of the production to her fellow artists. She is able to trust the abilities of her team, relinquish and share power and have faith in her decision to employ fellow artists in the first place. Throughout the study participants comment on Myers' ability as leader to allow people the opportunity to make their own decisions and then trust in the outcomes. I believe this level of trust is something that is particular to Myers' creative process and not something reflected in the literature on the process of direction. This quality of trust is part of a unique two-way relationship that Myers helps foster within the Company; it derives from her ability to develop a sense of ownership by the artists in the work, no matter what their level of input into the final staged production.

Shared Ownership

Myers encourages the artists to feel that they are all working together to create a production that is uniquely shared by all participants. Her inclusive directing style invites others to share their opinions on the developing work. The artists are encouraged to enter into a dialogue about the production at hand and to consider the work being created alongside their own specific areas of expertise. For example multi-media artist, Daniel Crooks, is asked to consider the developing narrative line being created by writer, Julianne O'Brien. She in turn is asked to contribute ideas towards Crooks' multi-media projections. Although artists are responsible for specific areas, like Myers, they are asked to consider the production holistically.
Nowhere was this more evident than in the creative development debriefing session where the main collaborating artists sat together at the end of the week to assess the physical beginnings of the work. In this meeting there was a clear sense of equals working together, not a team being led by the overriding authority of a director. Although the actors were not present at this meeting, they have their own opportunities to contribute to the development of the work and to develop feelings of ownership towards the production. Comments from the three actors confirm their inclusion that they all regard as one of the main strengths of Myers' direction style. For Merfyn Owen the allotted six-week rehearsal time encourages a 'more than generous ownership over what (is) being created' (Owen interview 2000).

Discussions between the director and the collaborating artists throughout the creative process are not always directly about the work at hand but indeed can lead into lengthy philosophical dialogues about the nature of art and art making in contemporary society. Daniel Crooks, as a major collaborating artist over the past three projects, speaks highly of these collaborative 'meetings', leading him to believe he has 'always been made to feel very much an owner of the show' (Crooks interview 2000).
Vision of the Director
Fig. 11: The director's vision. The Bird Children, now able to control the software program that governs them, escape to a Simulated Virtual Reality world in search of their mother (Busby 2000b).

Myers has a clear and developed sense of vision not only in her role as Artistic Director of Arena Theatre but also in her role as director of **Eat Your Young**. A clear philosophical position about young people and their access to culturally relevant opportunities underpins the ethos of the Company. As proposed by McLean (2000) in Chapter 2, this provides the Company with a clear ontological position, an expression of contemporary cultural theory, an aesthetic awareness and sensibility and an interest in examining issues affecting youth. The 1995 Arena Theatre Company manifesto, signals its engagement with a contemporary theatre practice that seeks to deconstruct human experience through postmodern theatrical image making. The Company is concerned about portrayals of youth in the media and seeks to provide an opportunity for young people to access viable forms of cultural expression. Young people's views, concerns, needs and interests are given a voice within the Company's programming. In this instance **Eat Your Young** examines youth marginalisation in a futuristic context, but is based on the life experiences of a young girl and her siblings in government social welfare care in the 1970s.

Myers' position as a key player in the conceptualisation of **Eat Your Young** is well documented. Throughout the stages of development and rehearsal she plays a critical role as the "keeper of the bigger picture." Myers has a view of the whole and an understanding of how all the theatrical elements will come together. This
includes many intricate components of a multi-media production such as: - the placement and selection of music; the sense of actor's presence on stage in relation to screen images; the awareness of moving images in multiple configurations in space and the opportunity to allow a choreographer scope to collaboratively design the actors' movement through theatrical space. It also involves the selection and appointment of all artists, a step that is seen by other directors such as Adele Prandini in Daniels' study (1996) as essential in building a solid foundation for a sense of community within the group. Those working on Eat Your Young, particularly Kate Denborough, Julianne O'Brien and Hugh Covill, acknowledge that Rosemary Myers is very good at assembling her team of artists.

Underpinning this study is the reference to the nature of the collaboration that occurred through the various artists working together. The nature and respect for collaboration within Arena Theatre Company is frequently discussed and witnessed in this study. It affirms Daniels' belief that theatre is a 'collaborative art form' and that collaboration infuses all aspects of the directing process (1996 p91). Chapter 3 outlined the importance of collaboration in theatre. This is fostered by Myers' nurturing of a positive and dynamic rehearsal room environment and the sense of communal culture that is created across all levels of the Company. Individuals in this environment feel safe and supported to offer suggestions, take risks and create in a non-judgemental atmosphere.
A rehearsal room culture is created by Myers through the playing of improvisational 'voyeuristic' games (Myers interview 1999) and social discourse, which at times can be quite frustrating for some participants such as Kate Denborough. For the majority of participants the discussions and social interactions create a unique working context where the emphasis often moves away from a sense of "work" and where the boundaries between work day schedules of 10am to 6pm are blurred. Daniel Crooks believes that this communal climate ' enamours a certain loyalty' to the director, Rosemary Myers, and to the show (Crooks interview 2000). This type of loyalty and the quality of the rehearsal room culture is unique and; to the best of my knowledge it is rarely documented in the related literature. This study documents a group of artists not only collaborating together but also, most importantly, relating together in a unique and interactive social environment. Benedetti (1985) suggests that such as environment is, to some degree, socially engineered by the director to enhance and encourage a functioning and productive creative team.

Further research could usefully investigate the formation of a theatre company’s culture. With each performing arts company operating from a different set of artistic principles and varying resources, both human and financial, such research would contribute to an ongoing dialogue about the nature of the role of the director and the directing process. This study has attempted to understand how a director creates a positive and creative working environment. Future studies would further illuminate a director's role in fostering an effective artistic culture.
At What Cost?

This study demonstrates the major responsibility that the position of director carries and the personal cost of that role. In chapter 7 I outlined Myers' intense commitment to nurturing a project that has consumed her for well over a year. Myers' obsessive personal quest to make works of significance for young people that both reflect the complexities of our human condition, and that harness the technological tools of multi-media, drive her to work long hours week in and week out. This was a significant theme of the study. The demanding nature of the role of the director is an area that I recommend for further qualitative studies. It is important to understand the nature of the personal and professional impact of the creative process on the individual who is leading a team of artists.

The director is the first point of call in dealing with criticism that may be directed at the Company. **Eat Your Young** was no exception. The project was hugely successful with the production touring throughout 2001 to parts of Australia and to the International Arts Festivals of Taipei and Singapore. **Eat Your Young** received strong praise and criticism in almost every region where the production was presented. Here is a sample of some reviews received from the first and second seasons in Adelaide and Melbourne in 2000. The combined voices of the reviewers indicate the diverse range of responses that Myers and the Company must deal with in the presentation of their work: -
It was one of the hits of the 2000 Adelaide Festival and certainly places this group at the forefront of multi-media theatrical developments. . . . There is an army of technical and creative support behind this show, creating its remarkable sound mix as well as the physically complex set, the digitalised images and the computer-driven video engineering. Shows such as this really do seem to illuminate future directions for theatre, where boundaries between film and physical acting are merged. . . . for this theatre company at least, technology has genuinely liberated extraordinary creative energies.

(Thomson 2000)

For future reference though, the poor acting of Merfyn Owen, Kate Denborough and Christopher Brown should be noted. Certainly the writing of Julianne O'Brien and the input of director/devisor Rosemary Myers haven't helped them. With the appalling handling of stage mics by Byron Scullin and the uninspired music of Hugh Covill, Arena Theatre and the Australia Council have presented a shocker.

(Bunney 2000)

(The students) did feel that "Eat Your Young" spoke most specifically to them, to their culture as younger people. They appreciated most specifically that it did not insult their intelligence by (as so frequently happens) simplifying, "dumbing down" difficult issues, language,
physicality, narrative techniques and the list goes on. . . . Arena should be supported as a "National Living Treasure" and given whatever it needs to function.

(Tyler 2000)

Director Rosemary Myers has realised a courageous concept where popular culture, performance, design and brilliant technical energy intersect to create one powerfully integrated whole. This work continues Myers' multi-disciplined exploration of the human condition with Arena. The results are impressive — the company is pioneering a whole new form in contemporary theatre practice and securing the relevance of live performance through theatre in a digital age.

(Webb 2000)

In the Melbourne street newspaper, Inpress, Jonathon Marshall reviews Eat Your Young using the director's first name 'Rose', in a familiar tone that almost reads like a public correspondence to her.

*Eat Your Young* has all the usual sexy, cool stuff to look at, technology to go: "Oohh!" at, but little more. Rose's fascination with flashy business means she often appears to assume that if you put two cool things on stage together, it will automatically be twice as cool and that these objects will naturally spark off each other in interesting ways — irrespective of quite what is done with them. This haphazard, almost
Duchamplan staging sits poorly with Rose's otherwise 'airbrushed-within-an-inch-of-its-life' aesthetics. . . . The biggest problem with EYY is the poor integration of the truly fantastic revolving screens and excellent video projection with the live performance. The cast constantly flop to the ground to allow the images to take over. This is not integration it is replacement . . . the live bodies look relatively weak and uninteresting compared to their visual counterparts. EYY is worth a look – but for my money the show would ultimately be more successful on its own terms if one removed the actors altogether.

(Marshall 2000)

These comments indicate the range of critical responses the Company received. As noted by Julianne O'Brien, Rosemary Myers will always defend the work. She is like a mother in defence of a child. The production is something she has nurtured and carefully developed and created with a team of artists and Myers is prepared to defend the work and the decisions of her team passionately.

I just think it's a work that causes debate. Always my work has done that. And I don't see that the work fails because not everyone likes it. I just think that is what it is to make work on the cutting edge. That's about new form. Some people aren't going to get it and some people aren't going to like it. I find that excruciating and I do find it painful but I go, "Oh well." It's par for the course really. If it wasn't creating debate then it wouldn't be succeeding in the way that I want it to.

(Myers interview 24.7.2000)
'Controversial Art'

The aim of this study is to examine the role of a director in a theatre company that is attempting to respond to a society that does not fully value the place and voice of its young people. Arena is creating theatre that is postmodern in form and challenging for young audiences. Its work is not easy to digest nor is it universally applauded. It responds to the contemporary world of young people and their pursuits and draws on technology and multi-media to create a multi-disciplinary form. Myers announces

This is a significant moment where the relationship between form and content can be rendered in an artistic expression which is as rich and full of multiple meanings as the subject we are exploring. In experimenting with the way the many languages speak together, we must take risks. Finding the way each can hold weight in its own right without being subservient to another we can hopefully create performance which can exploit the full dynamic of the theatrical spectrum.

(Myers interview 1999)

Collaboration with an array of artists from many backgrounds is seen as a necessary ingredient in the development of new work for the Company. This collaboration includes artists who admit to being bored by theatre yet are inextricably drawn to working with Myers and Arena Theatre. Complex relationships and lines of communication are formed in the cross-fertilisation that occurs within the collaborative process. The central role of the director is demanding and relies on the creative expertise of an individual driven to challenge, develop, debate, refine and question the theatrical work on offer for young people.
In Conclusion: 'Controversial Art'

'Theatre for young audiences has to be a little more brave... young people have a right to controversial art' (Myers interview 1999).
APPENDIX 1

'EAT YOUR YOUNG': ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Rosemary Myers: Director / Devisor

Rosemary Myers has a Bachelor of Arts from Deakin University where she studied processes of performance making. She has worked in the performing arts field as an actor and director for 12 years and has been involved in the evolution of over 30 new Australian performances. She was the Artistic Director of the Union Theatre at Melbourne University and also the Woolly Jumpers. She has worked extensively for Back to Back Theatre. As well as directing, Myers has been guest lecturer at the Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne and Deakin Universities and numerous TAFE Colleges and has been commissioned to develop works for the Melbourne, Geelong and Waverly City Councils. She is currently Artistic Director of Arena Theatre Company.

(Jordan 2001a p67)

Mervyn Owen: Performer

Mervyn's celebrated career as a performer and singer has seen him work with some of Australia's major performing arts companies including Melbourne Theatre Company, Australian Opera, Victoria State Opera, Chamber Made Opera, Playbox Theatre, Handspan Visual Theatre, Performing Lines, Theatreworks and Cameron
Mackintosh. He has received Green Room Award nominations for his roles of Leon and Nick in Speaking in Tongues by Performing Lines/Griffin Theatre Company (1998) and as Rigoletto in Rigoletto, Theatreworks (1994). He was also a co-recipient of The Age Performing Arts Award for "Best Collaboration" for Rigoletto, Theatreworks (1994). 1999 saw Merfyn successfully mount a production of Wallace Shawn's The Fever under the banner of his own production company in the company of pleasure, which he co-heads with his wife actor/director Anna McCrossin-Owen. in the company of pleasure successfully toured The Fever to New Zealand in 1999, and Merfyn continues to perform it as an ongoing project. It is performed in peoples lounge rooms for an audience of 14 to 20 people.

Kate Denborough: Performer

Kate studied dance and choreography at the Victorian College of the Arts, and graduated in 1994 with a Bachelor of Dance. In 1999 Kate received a Green Room nomination for her work with Kage Physical Theatre, and in 1998 won the Green Room Award for "Female Emerging Artist in Dance". She was also the winner of the prestigious "Woman Artist's Grant" from Arts Victoria in 1999. Kate's expertise in multi-disciplinarity has enabled her to work cross the mediums of film, television and live performance. She developed a new work with Kage for the Next Wave Festival 2000 called No (Under) Standing Anytime. In October, Kate toured her solo work Throw away the fat, bones, skin internationally as part of the Little Asia tour. Kate has recently created a new show for Australian Dance Theatre entitled Misfit.

**Christopher Brown: Performer**

Christopher graduated from the Victorian College of the Arts School of Drama in 1997. He has a background in the conception and production of original new works. His television credits include *Sit Down Shut Up, Stingers, High Flyers, Young Hercules* (USA), and *Shortland Street* (NZ), as well as appearing in numerous short films. Christopher played the lead role in the independent New Zealand feature "Orphans and Angels". In 2001, he appeared at the Melbourne Comedy Festival in the latest Other Tongue Theatre Company production, *Out Night One*.

**Emma Hawkins: Performer**

Emma has been involved in theatre for a number of years on a volunteer basis, working with companies such as Mainstreet Theatre Company in Mt Gambier, Victoria. In 1999, she graduated in Performing Arts at the SMB campus of the University of Ballarat, a course that is recognised for its emphasis on the creation of contemporary new performance. It was here that Arena was alerted to her strong performance work. *Eat Your Young* is Emma's first professional acting experience.
Julianne O'Brien: Writer

Julianne is an established playwright and dramaturg with an extensive body of work touring nationally and internationally. Her writing projects include Arena Theatre Company’s Anthropop trilogy: Autopsy, Mass, and Panacea. She has recently developed the screenplay Stick, Tracey and Tina with support from Cinemedia. Currently, Julianne has also worked as story editor for Blue Heelers.

Daniel Crooks: Automated Images

Training as an animator and graphic designer have afforded Daniel an unusual entry into the world of live performance. Most recently he has collaborated with Arena to create integrated video content for Panacea and Mass, as well as designing and producing the interactive CD-ROM collaborator exploring the creative process behind Panacea.

Daniel has won several major awards both locally and internationally for his video work, including the City of Stuttgart Prize for Animation, a Dendy Australian Short Film Award and a New Zealand Short Film Award for his animated short film food(for)thought;(three)ingredients from the mass consumer diet.

Following an Australia Council New Media fellowship at RMIT in 1997 Daniel’s work has become increasingly focused on temporal manipulation and motion control, exploring the nature of Time, Space and environmental actuation whilst
exploiting the affordable precision of obsolete technology. He is currently developing a large-scale video installation based on this research.

**Hugh Covill: Composer**

Hugh is a composer, sound designer and audio engineer. Most recently his music accompanied the television advertising campaign for the Telstra 2000 Adelaide Festival. This is Hugh’s fourth work with Arena, having completed the anthroPOP trilogy *Autopsy, Mass and Panacea*. *Eat Your Young* continues Hugh’s exploration of the relationship between surround sound reinforcement and live performance. Hugh is currently working on surround sound designs for Back2Back and the Scienceworks Museum. Hugh is a sound engineer for the Victorian Arts Centre’s Sound Department and one third of the Band of Hope.

**Phillip Adams: Choreographer**

Phillip is a 1988 graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts. After receiving the ANZ International Fellowship Award, he moved to New York, where he lived and worked for 10 years. His career as choreographer and dancer has taken him throughout Australia, North America and Europe to work with world leading dance companies and choreographers. Phillip has been commissioned by several Australian dance companies. He formed his own company *Balletlab* in 1999, which enjoyed a successful season of its new work *Amplification* in Melbourne and at
Mardi Gras in Sydney. *Amplification* will also tour to Glasgow in 2000. This is Phillip’s second collaboration with Arena, after his work on *Panacea* in 1998.

**Philip Lethlean: Lighting Designer**

Philip’s twenty years experience as a Lighting Designer is based firmly in theatrical lighting, encompasses corporate theatre, and includes permanent installations and architectural commissions. Philip has designed lighting and staging for theatrical works in arts festivals and independent seasons across Australia and internationally, throughout Europe, Asia and the Americas. Highlights include Nigel Triefit’s *Fall of Singapore*, Phillepe Genty’s *Stowaways*, Ariette Taylor’s award-winning production of Pablo Picasso’s *Four Little Girls*, and Circus Oz in Melbourne, Delhi, Bangkok, Bogata and Stockholm. Other theatrical productions include Playbox’s *Chilling and Killing my Annabel Lee* and *Rising Fish Prayer*, Jo-anna Murray Smith’s *Love Child* and *Honour*, and Chambermaed Opera’s *The Cars That Ate Paris* and *Matricide the Musical*.

**Byron Scullin: Sound Engineer**

Byron initially studied Music and Education at Melbourne University for three years before leaving to pursue work as an Audio Engineer. In this capacity Byron has worked on a variety of jobs, from live sound for festivals, pubs and clubs, through to large-scale concert events and national tours for music, theatre and dance. Previous projects include *Panacea* for Arena Theatre, *No (Under) Standing Anytime* for
KAGE, *Raised by Wolves* for Handspan, *Bodyparts* and *Export File* for Chunky Move. Byron has also composed music for SNAFU’s (*glocal*) and *Sample for Jo Lloyd*. Currently Byron is currently working on his sideburns, a 30 CD set entitled, "The Super Brisk: Greatest Hits", and a variety of music and art projects at Moose Mastering (www.moosemastering.com)

**Anna Tregloan: Costume Designer**

Anna’s work focuses on design for performance. From the National Tennis Centre to La Mama Theatre in Carlton, and from the banks of a river to the Chapter House at St Paul’s Cathedral, her work has covered drama, dance, circus, and street performance. Recently she has worked with Cazerine Barry on a dance and projected performance for the Little Asia cultural exchange; designed sets for Circus Oz, costumes for Danceworks and Melbourne Workers’ Theatre’s *Tower of Light*.

**John Bennett: Set-piece Designer**

John makes sculpture and designs things. He lives and works in Ballarat, West Victoria.

(Arena Theatre Company 2000)
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