



Universidad de Salamanca

Facultad de Filología / Departamento de Filología Inglesa

The Emerging Spaces of Scottish Drama and Theatre in the 1990s

Tesis doctoral

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THE EMERGING SPACES OF SCOTTISH DRAMA AND THEATRE

IN THE 1990s

Tesis para optar al grado de doctor

presentada por

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V B 

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Salamanca, 2015

This dissertation is dedicated to my maternal grandparents, János (b. 1922) and Mária Viola (b. 1931), whose faith, hope and love helped them survive the darkest moments of the twentieth century. May the sufferings of their generation never be forgotten.

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List of Abbreviations

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
EIF	Edinburgh International Festival
EU	European Union
Gen.	Book of Genesis
MP	Member of Parliament
MSP	Member of Scottish Parliament
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NTS	National Theatre of Scotland
NVA	Nacionale Vita Activa (theatre company)
<i>OED</i>	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
PM	Prime Minister
Rev.	Book of Revelation
RP	Received Pronunciation
SNP	Scottish National Party
SSP	Scottish Society of Playwrights
<i>Cheviot</i>	<i>The Cheviot, The Stag and the Black, Black Oil</i> (play by John McGrath and 7:84 Theatre Company, 1973)
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
UN	United Nations
US	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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Introduction

Introduction

In the past twenty years, Scotland's people had two opportunities to directly influence their country's future direction when in 1997 and 2014 they were called upon to formally express their opinion on Scotland's status within the United Kingdom. In 1997, the overwhelming majority of the electorate (74.3%) decided in favour of devolution, which meant a higher degree of autonomy by the re-establishment of Scotland's parliament after a long hiatus starting in 1707. Instead of creating an additional parochial layer in bureaucracy, this localisation of decision-making eventually initiated beneficial dynamics encouraging active citizenship and the assimilation of ethnic, linguistic, religious and sexual diversity as a distinctive feature of Scottish culture. Devolution also opened new political perspectives for the voices demanding more profound changes for Scotland's status. As a consequence, at an accelerated pace, a referendum on the country's independence was organised and held on 18 September 2014, in which the Scottish electorate, at an exceptionally high voter turnout (84.6%), decided that the nation was not yet ready to break the centuries-long union with the other constituents of the UK. Therefore, the results of 2014 once again validated those of 1997 since the people opted to remain on the path set by the devolution within the British framework.

During the campaign for 2014, global media was prompt in recognising that a favourable outcome for independence would have game-changing consequences for international politics, and this brought unprecedented international attention to Scottish matters and generated passionate debate far beyond Scotland's borders. Instead of the technical and political complexity of the country's recent history,

however, worldwide coverage on referendum issues often recurred to the imagery of the freedom-loving Scots, popularised in global culture by works as diverse as James Macpherson's *The Poems of Ossian* (1773), bagpipe music or Mel Gibson's *Braveheart* (1996). This romanticising discourse demonstrates that the question of Scottish independence, which has been unceasingly prominent since the establishment of the Union with England in 1707, has been as much a political as a cultural-artistic project, and both components are indispensable when analysing key events in Scottish history like the recent referenda.

This blend of art and politics has always been at the heart of theatre culture, since the powerful combination of text and performance provides a direct, personal and often interactive way of participating in socio-political debates by responding to them through the staging of plays of high literary quality. The playwrights and directors working in Scotland's vibrant theatre scene in the age of referenda also exploited the political dimension encoded in this art form by exploring its potentials to articulate the transformations that Scottish identity underwent since the end of the 1980s. Both referenda offered the chance for the redefinition of Scotland's place within the UK and the campaigns leading up to them posed other important questions of what type of space the country should become; therefore, a series of essentially spatial concerns emerged to which the plays and productions from the period actively responded.

Beyond the specifically Scottish context, the fall of communism in Eastern Europe (1989-1991) also transformed the whole continent as a space, where paradoxically, the mushrooming of new borders

paralleled the previously unimaginable acceleration of globalisation. Technological development opened up new horizons for humanity, out of which the construction of a new habitat, cyberspace, seems to be the defining achievement of the age. These hopeful signs of a less conflictive, peaceful era to come, theorised by Francis Fukuyama's controversial *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992) as the endpoint of humanity's sociocultural evolution, were gradually overshadowed by minor economic crises and the television close-ups of ethnic genocide on the Balkans and Rwanda. Even though the worldwide euphoria over the new millennium aroused new hope, it was soon ravaged by the terrorist attacks on the twin towers of New York City's World Trade Center on 11 September 2001, forcing nations to yet again align with one of the black-or-white truths of a newly emerging bipolar world order. In retrospect, however, the fact that the 1990s lacked global conflict and competing demonising ideologies (e.g. Reagan's *evil empire* or Bush's *war on terror*) creates an image of relative tranquillity for the decade unequalled in post-war history.¹ This politically less confrontational atmosphere of the 1990s, then, is the background to a crucial turn in Scotland's drama and theatre, in which their function as a site of political resistance and protest lost importance

¹ At the time of writing, one can observe a global tendency of looking back at the 1990s as the generation brought up since then, myself included, is currently searching for an identity for the decade, as solid and easily identifiable as those found (and constructed) for the 1970s or the 1980s. This global quest for attributing an identity for the 1990s is especially influential in the domain of popular culture, where iconic brands, products, stories and characters are being brought back to please the nostalgic longings of this new generation of consumers. This spirit of nostalgic retrospection on *those days* is reinforced and validated by consumer culture, but it is excluded from the scope of the present dissertation.

after 1989, and they gradually became a laboratory for creative experiments with future directions that the globalised world with no dividing ideologies could take.

The strong impact that the abovementioned socio-political changes made on the theatre culture of their time is highly visible since they inspired playwrights and directors to problematise spatial concepts and the representation of identities through them. These artists developed a unique, experimental idiolect which ventured far beyond the traditional horizons of Scottish drama and the proscenium stage (e.g. by using foreign settings or non-theatrical performance spaces), but at the same time it looked closely at Scotland and strongly local matters in order to provide a microscopic analysis of the issues surfaced by devolution (e.g. the concepts of home and nation). These new forms required the dissection of the traditional spatial structures while irreversibly expanding the horizons of drama and theatre, leading to new subject matters (e.g. by the problematisation of global identities). Evidently, this renewed dialogue of art and its context also redefined the place of the audience, for which new ways of engagement had to be pioneered in accordance with the deep transformation affecting theatre space. This engagement cannot be separated from the wider context of devolutionary aspirations in Scotland in the 1990s since community-building was at the heart of both political rhetoric and theatre-makers' experiments, and the interrelatedness of the political and artistic projects in the country reassures theatre's position as an open, sensitive forum for social debate. Therefore, the hypothesis for the present dissertation is that in the 1990s, an emerging generation of Scotland-

based playwrights and theatre directors responded to the massive socio-political changes of their time with daring experiments regarding space in both text and performance, transgressing traditional limitations and engaging audiences in new ways. These artists' projects such as incorporating global themes, global identities and non-theatrical sites into the mainstream theatre practice has proved to be a long-lasting influence on Scotland's drama and theatre trajectory still influential today.

In order to test this hypothesis, I will analyse a strategically selected corpus of plays and theatre productions written and/or performed in Scotland between 1990 and 2000. The criteria for considering works for discussion has been their explicit and innovative treatment of the concept of space as a major signifier, their engagement with the topic of the Scottish nation as a space in transition, and the fact that their creators (playwrights and/or directors) represented a new generation of Scotland-based theatre-makers emerging in the 1990s. This latter criterion has led to the exclusion of works by several, already established generations of playwrights, various members of which producing some of the major plays of the decade (most notably Peter Arnott, Ian Brown, Jo Clifford, Sue Glover, Chris Hannan, Liz Lochhead and Rona Munro). However, as later chapters will demonstrate, the spatial and thematic structures found in the early oeuvre of the emerging generation (in this dissertation represented by Catherine Czerkawska², Angus Farquhar, Stephen Greenhorn, David Greig, Ben

² I regard Czerkawska as a member of this emerging generation despite the fact that she debuted as a playwright a decade earlier with *Heroes*

Harrison, David Harrower, Douglas Maxwell and Anita Sullivan) were innately different from the political, linguistic and theatrical modes of representation established by their precursors, and were less of an organic development from these than the new work produced by, say, Hannan or Lochhead. (The use of the Scots language and Scottish historical settings on stage, for example, is a major difference between the generations.) My analysis of this corpus of plays and theatre productions will combine traditional methods of literary investigation such as the textual commentary of dramatic texts with those of performance studies integrating more complex approaches to the spatiality of the staging context, in an attempt to integrate all possible aspects of the theatre space-political space relationship into my critical perspective.

As a consequence, I have divided my dissertation into five chapters that will guide the reader through the diverse artistic responses and reactions that the political developments of the 1990s inspired in Scotland's new generation of theatre-makers. I will finish the discussion just before the destruction of the World Trade Center's twin towers in 2001, which would create a completely different international reality and thus demand new aesthetics, offering breakthrough for new playwrights, among them Gregory Burke and Henry Adam.

Chapter One is an overview of the major socio-political developments of the 1990s, both in Europe and in Scotland, with an outline of the trajectory of Scottish drama and theatre in the decades

and Others (1980), since she abstained from playwriting after the negative experience of that production until her first true stage success, *Wormwood* (1997).

preceding 1989. It aims to set a referential framework for the later discussion, and to analyse how the processes challenging power structures, such as the redrawing of Europe's borders and Scotland's struggle for devolution, were conditioned by notions of national identity, and surfaced questions of spatial redefinition. The chapter also explores the main thematic and aesthetic currents of Scottish drama and theatre since the 1970s in order to identify the layers that the creative developments of the 1990s simultaneously grew out of and worked against. In mapping how the questions of class, language, history and national identity have always been central in this trajectory, the different generations' responses given to these issues reflect a growing sense of diversity in Scotland's theatre culture.

Chapter Two, the other pillar of the dissertation's theoretical foundation, presents a far less Scotland-specific survey of the development of theatre space as a signifier. After analysing the polysemy encoded in the term *space*, I intended to list the major space types found in theatre and detect how their constellations form a unique sign system, which can be read as a theatre-maker's idiolect. First I study how throughout the twentieth century, the proscenium arch was undressed until the point it became an empty space in Peter Brook's terms, then I examine how theatre space has been used to problematise national and global identities with building on the tension between fixed notions of space (theatre building, stage, audience seats) and fluid, imaginary constructions. These spaces are simultaneously present in the theatre experience, and their opposition is the major creative force behind site-specificity, an aesthetic movement analysed at the end of

the chapter. There, I analyse how site-specific productions question prevailing notions of local and global identities and revolutionise audience engagement by representing plays at selected non-theatrical venues like forests or airports.

Once this theoretical framework is set, in Chapter Three I turn to specific plays that premièred in the immediate context of the devolution referendum of 1997 and dramatised the problem of representing home in graphical terms. David Greig's *The Architect* (1996), Stephen Greenhorn's *Passing Places* (1997) and David Harrower's *Kill the Old Torture Their Young* (1998) stage unsuccessful attempts at capturing the abstract yet essentially local notion of home, arguing for a less fixed and place-bound understanding of belonging, in which chosen communities rise above pre-determined certainties such as bloodline in the construction of fluid identities. An unnaturally impeccable architectural model of a crime-torn housing estate, a roadmap resulting incomplete for the Highlands, and a documentary nobody manages to film in these plays are all converted into central signifiers of the complex relationship between space and identity, and as the chapter argues, they respond to the purpose of devolution in a globalising world.

In Chapter Four, I examine Scotland in this global context by discussing plays that are set in what used to be the Eastern Bloc before 1989 so that they can explore the possibility of a European identity seen from the periphery. The works, David Greig's *Europe* (1994) and *One Way Street* (1995), and Catherine Czerkawska's *Wormwood* (1997), stage characters living among the ruins of a collapsed empire and

juxtapose memories of oppression to the not less violent legacy the changes have left, creating landscapes trapped between past and present and unable (sometimes unwilling) to progress. Both Greig and Czerkawska abstract the Eastern European setting they conjure up, which consequently becomes a liminal space in transition where one can experiment with fluid identities and ideologies that the future of the continent could be built on. Furthermore, Eastern Europe becomes the paradigm of marginality and periphery in these plays, a status Scots can easily relate to due to their similar experience within the United Kingdom, so as the chapter argues, an unlikely connection is achieved here between post-communist nation-building and devolution.

Transcending the level of text in order to directly address questions of performance, I examine the emergence and first phase of the development of site-specific theatre in Scotland in Chapter Five since the aesthetics of site-specificity, emerging as a distinct theatrical movement in the 1990s, are signalled out among other approaches to performance by the centrality of explicitly spatial concerns in their devising processes and understanding of theatre. In the productions of this movement, the site is responsible for cohesion, meaning-generation and audience-engagement, so it originates all the dynamics that constitute the theatre experience. After surveying some early Scottish productions exemplifying growing sensitivity to the place of performance from the 1970s and 1980s, the discussion advances to Glasgow's European City of Culture project from 1990. Its founding bodies encouraged large-scale productions celebrating the symbolic spaces of the city, and the quest for alternative stages such as a shipyard

and a locomotive yard resulted in theatrical milestones for theatre-makers, audiences and funding bodies alike. The major part of the chapter is dedicated to the oeuvre of the Scottish theatre companies NVA (standing for *Nacionale Vita Activa*, 1992-) and Grid Iron (1995-), pioneers of site-specific aesthetics in Scotland through their genre-defining productions. Whereas NVA has invaded sites to make political statements and later to explore the aesthetic potential of newly emerging spaces (e.g. the cyberspace), Grid Iron has united the semantic dimension of a given site with new writing, developing a more literary response to what a particular site has to offer. Despite the two companies' rather different approaches to sites, their experimentation with unusual performance contexts successfully responded to localisation, a main idea behind devolution.

With the analysis of these interrelated processes of Scottish drama and theatre in the 1990s (supported by interviews, plot summaries and production pictures included in the appendices), this dissertation aims to guide the reader through a prolific period in Scotland's arts scene characterised by experimentation, innovation and an outward-looking tendency despite strong roots in the local reality. Just like the country's re-opened parliament in Holyrood, these theatrical inquiries proved to have long-lasting effects on Scotland in the first decades of the new millennium by setting standards of aesthetics and audience engagement, and revealing new artists who are still prominent in Scotland's theatre culture.

Chapter One

Historical Context of Scottish Drama and Theatre in the 1990s

The present chapter aims to contextualise the Scottish theatre scene in the 1990s, so it focuses on the social and political transformation that Europe and Scotland underwent in that decade, and provides an overview of Scotland's twentieth-century theatre trajectory. The second section of the chapter explains how post-Thatcherite Scotland used the existing political and cultural infrastructures to revitalise her international image and re-establish the Scottish Parliament, which ceased to exist after the Treaty of Union in 1707. The exploration and appreciation of the country's innate linguistic and cultural diversity ruled ethnocentrism out of political discourse, but this was not without a broader context, as it will be shown in the first section of the chapter since ethnicity played a crucial role in the Eastern European political transitions that took place in the 1990s, too. Therefore, the new phases of nation-building in the post-communist states and in post-Thatcherite Scotland were parallel processes and, as I will argue, the warning signs of the dangers of ethnic nationalism influenced the Scottish quest for other forms of nationalism. This interplay between Eastern Europe and Scotland did not only appear on the level of political discourse but it also inspired Scottish playwrights who reflected on the new world order after the fall of the Iron Curtain extensively, often by importing themes and characters from Eastern Europe. (This dissertation will analyse such work by Catherine Czerkawska, David Greig and Anita Sullivan.) These plays, which brought Eastern European dilemmas of identity and psychological recovery to the British stage, found a highly receptive audience in the parts of Europe which felt identified with the plays, thus plugging Scottish playwriting into the European mainstream as a side

effect. The last section of the chapter analyses the trajectory of Scottish theatre since the 1970s, examining how the key issues of the 1990s were organic developments of the previous generations' artistic inquiries, and how they contributed to Scottish theatre gradually becoming home to internationally established venues, powerhouses of significant innovation.

1. The 1990s: A Vacuum between Two Global Wars

As I have stated above, this first section of the chapter contrasts different types of democratic transition in Eastern Europe in the 1990s in order to highlight the major role that ethnic nationalism played in each of them, since the parallel Scottish process of nation-building was influenced by the conclusions drawn from these difficult and sometimes even violent processes. Therefore, what follows is an outlined analysis of this period on the international stage, from the transcendental fall of the Berlin Wall, which started to be taken down by the masses on 9 November 1989, until the destruction of the twin towers of New York City's World Trade Centre on 11 September 2001, conducted by members of the terrorist group al-Qaeda with two hijacked passenger airliners. These two events, the first connoting euphoria and the second horror in our collective memories, were demolitions both literally and symbolically as they are considered major milestones in contemporary

history that marked the beginning of a new age on a global level.³ Therefore, the twelve years separating them, which roughly coincide with the decade of the 1990s, can be interpreted as a set of historical transitions. Not only did they bridge the second and third millennium, but they also saw the gradual dismantling and subsequent disappearance of the Soviet systems in Eurasia, thus ending almost forty-five years of passive international warfare commonly referred to as the Cold War. Later, their end marks yet another transition, that to the age of the War on Terror, which, as of 2015, has not yet concluded.

The Cold War was passive on the surface only, as the two superpowers that dominated the global world order, the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, heavily competed in an accelerated nuclear arms race for supremacy, although the growing rivalry and geopolitical tensions never led to a direct military combat between the two countries other than frequent interventions in third countries' conflicts on opposing sides. The *coldness* of the war in the context of the Eastern Bloc, however, gains a further layer of interpretation as Moscow directives required the regimes they had imposed on their satellite states to maintain the artificial unity and reinforce a sense of comradeship among them, thus obliging them to hibernate the serious ethnical, religious, political, social and linguistic animosities that had confronted the nations of Eastern Europe in the world wars and to bury their severe traumas

³ We can see that the Scottish watershed dates to be used in the next section, which are Margaret Thatcher's abdication in 1990 and the re-establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999, roughly coincide with the international ones presented here.

unresolved. Therefore, the demise of the Soviet system also meant the immediate surfacing of these repressed issues after more than forty years of imposed hibernation, and the nature and success of the individual democratic transitions of each former Eastern Bloc country depended essentially on the way it could deal with the resurgence of ethnic and religious identities.

Charles King, in *Extreme Politics: Nationalism, Violence and the End of Eastern Europe* (2010), gives a detailed analysis of the different paths these Eastern Bloc countries took in their transitions, and summarises his findings in the following passage:

Some [Eurasian transition countries] have rejected authoritarian governments, refashioned state institutions, and become fully integrated parts of Euro-Atlantic structures, including NATO and the EU. Others have rejected authoritarian regimes without managing to build authoritative governments. Still others have done little more than exchange the mantras of international socialism for those of nationalist authoritarianism . . . Some states that are relatively homogeneous in an ethnocultural sense, such as Poland, have had a far easier time than heterogeneous countries such as Romania . . . No one would have expected the transitions to be exactly alike; after all, twenty-two of the postcommunist countries are also new states, facing problems of state building and

nation building, as well as regime change and systemic reform. (84-87)

We can observe that King's analysis distinguishes different types of post-Soviet transition that resulted in the successful Western integration of some countries but in unstable democracies or prevailing authoritarianism in others, and he emphasises the crucial importance of the ethnic and cultural constitution of the transition countries to this process. Many of Scotland's identity dilemmas of the same period were contrasted to those of the post-communist area in both political rhetoric and playwriting. King actually introduces *Extreme Politics* with comparing the harmless image of Scottish-Americans' bagpipe and kilt-flavoured heritage games, a popular form of suburbanite weekend entertainment, with the ethnic conflicts of Eastern Europe, raising the questions: "Is the experience of western Europe fundamentally different from that of the old communist east, where nationalism and ethnic disputes were some of the dominant themes of the 1990s? Could being a Serb or a Chechen, in other words, ever become the same thing as being a Scot?" (4) Even though the wording of the last question is quite unfortunate, King's contrast of the nature of Scottish and, for example, ex-Yugoslav nationalism, both being textbook examples of opposing concepts of what nations are, is highly relevant to the context of Scottish drama as political influence and literary inspiration.

To illustrate King's vital point on the diversity of democratic transitions, I will offer two brief examples. Poland and Hungary, the first countries to initiate their separation from the Eastern Bloc, were

indeed the most homogeneous states of the region in terms of language, ethnicity and religion, so their social movements for democratic transformation faced no substantial internal opposition, neither was there any threat of a possible schism on ethnic grounds. Their surfacing pre-Cold War traumas, however, which included horrors of both Nazi and Soviet military occupation, the Holocaust, massive border changes and the Communist oppression of Roman Catholicism were issues that haunted Polish and Hungarian politics well beyond the democratic transition.

On the other hand, the transition from communism to Western-style democracy was very different in the rich mosaic of Southeast Europe, which has always been a cultural-political subcontinent of fragile peace due to the difficult coexistence of religions (Western and Eastern Christianity, Islam and Judaism), languages and nations constantly threatened by imperialism. The state of Yugoslavia, which was created as an attempt to encompass all this diversity and to prevent post-war conflicts on the Balkans, underwent several structural changes during communism in order to sustain the unity of the state, but the innate asymmetry between Slovenian and Croatian economic prosperity, Belgrade-based political power and the underdevelopment of the southern territories could not be counterbalanced. In 1991, an aggressive war broke out with brutal operations against non-Serbs. In order to ethnically homogenise certain areas, millions were obliged to leave their homes, but in the darkest moments of the war, when rape and executions were used to subjugate civilians, ethnic genocides were committed, the most echoed being the 1995 Srebrenica massacre, in

which more than 8,000 Bosnians were killed by the Serbian paramilitary forces. War zone refugees flooded Europe, which was slow in responding and even after the 1989 revolutions, it remained little flexible with migration.

If the end of communism at the beginning of the decade shook left-wing ideologies worldwide and made redefinition inevitable for them, then the images of violence and the stories of inhuman cruelty that entered headlines and public consciousness during the Yugoslav wars showed the inefficiency of the global peacekeeping system and, most of all, the dangers of ethnic nationalism, which ceased to be a viable element of right-wing political rhetoric for a time. Contemporary British dramatists like Sarah Kane were shocked how little reaction the horrific war reports had on people and politics, and this lack of compassion was an inspiring force in the development of new theatre aesthetics in the 1990s. David Greig's *Europe* (1994), a play to be analysed in Chapter Four, dramatises this Balkans context and reflects on how after decades of communist oppression, new dangers are awaiting for the region (and Europe) such as xenophobia.

During the 1990s, the way the world was perceived and the borders of human knowledge were expanded through the discovery of new spaces. The Hubble Space Telescope, carried into the orbit in 1990, revolutionised astronomy and opened a new frontier to be explored in the future, and other new space programmes were launched, accelerating the conquest of outer space. Down on Earth, the architectural project of reaching the sky, which has been an ongoing enterprise since biblical times, came to a new climax in 1999 when the

Petronas Twin Towers in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, were inaugurated and became the highest buildings on the planet for the following five years, reflecting the growth of both Asian and Muslim countries.

Besides these tangible physical spaces, humanity's natural habitat was radically transformed with the invention of internet and the subsequent development of cyberspace, which provided an alternative dimension for communication and information processing, turning the world into what is colloquially known as a global village. New technological advances such as instant messaging, mobile and digital devices became indispensable parts of everyday lives, although the technological apocalypse foretold for the second when the world entered the new millennium temporarily shattered people's trust in their reliability. A fact that may best describe how irreversibly technology has transformed the world is that the number of US librarians peaked in 1990—the steadily growing knowledge required an historical number of people to organise and process it, but throughout the 1990s, digital technologies reduced the necessity of people doing it (Beveridge 73). A new sociological space was opened in gender relations, as in 1990, homosexuality was removed from the World Health Organization's list of illnesses, and in the United States, 1992 was nicknamed the Year of the Woman because more women were elected for the Senate than ever before. The late 1990s popular culture was dominated by power girls in music (the Spice Girls) and on television (*Sailor Moon*, *Xena: Warrior Princess*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*), although their contribution to gender equality is dubious.

The new millennium, in spite of the aforementioned popular theories on apocalypse, was received with euphoria all around the planet, but the relative world peace and the enthusiastic optimism with hopes for better times were smashed in less than two years, when on 11 September 2001, paradoxically in the UN's Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City were destroyed by hijacked passenger aircrafts. In the moment when the live images arrived to television sets in every country, a new bipolar order was born between terrorist organisations and democratic states, evoking patterns of the Orient and the Occident. Since the Gulf War, many sporadic acts of terrorism had been committed against US institutions, such as the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing and the 1998 attacks on US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, but the shocking brutality of the attack against the World Trade Center in 2001 entered public consciousness through the live broadcast, and the War on Terror started, initiating a new historical period that has not finished yet.

This section has examined how in the melting of the Cold War, hibernated ethnic conflicts reappeared and thus converted the question of ethnicity into a key component in democratic transitions and subsequent nation-building processes. For Scotland, whose politicians and artists observed Eastern European events closely, the conclusions drawn from these transitions were crucial when designing a viable future for the nation, basing it on civic instead of ethnic grounds, as it will be examined in the next section.

2. Degrees of Separation: Post-Thatcherite Scotland

Having set the global context in the previous section, I now turn to the Scottish case to demonstrate that Scotland had to face similar identity dilemmas to that of Eastern Europe, although they were resolved with very different outcomes. For this, first the section will analyse the causes of the need for national redefinition, such as the alarming lack of support for the Conservative governments by the Scottish electorate, the declining sense of Britishness and the parallel revitalisation of Scottish culture through internationally successful art products. Once these dynamics that initiated a new form of nationalism are explored, the next part of the section will examine how Scotland was redefined as a nation both politically and symbolically.

The ten years in Scotland's history that I intend to synthesise here may represent a microscopic focus when compared to the millennia of world history, yet it will be shown that the period between Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's resignation in 1990 and the formation of the first Scottish Government in 1999, that is, the decade of the 1990s in Scotland, is anything but insignificant as it experienced a powerful and irreversible redefinition of the major keywords that had been haunting Scotland's modern history since the early eighteenth century, and as it will be demonstrated in later chapters, theatre played an active role in this redefinition.

A major tendency in the decade, the Conservatives' steady decline in Scotland, was the result of the Thatcher and Major

governments' apparent unwillingness to consider Scottish interests, which fuelled hostility towards them north of the Border and widened the chasm between Westminster and Scotland. This resulted in a general distrust in British institutions and caused an expanding perception that the British government was imposed rather than elected, as the House of Commons' make-up did not reflect the Scottish electorate's votes at all in the first half of the 1990s. As a consequence, the Union between Scotland and the rest of Great Britain, which had been the subject of an unceasing debate ever since it came into being in 1707, had to be reformed, and following the Labour Party's triumph in the 1997 general elections, it was made less asymmetric in power terms when the Scotland Act of 1998 devolved several legislative functions from Westminster to the re-established Scottish Parliament.⁴ The campaign for devolution was parallel not only to a decreasing sense of Britishness but also to a growing cultural confidence in Scottishness, fuelled by a lively cultural scene at home and by the enthusiastic reception of several Scottish films, songs, novels and plays abroad, which internationalised Scotland as a rethought brand. The desired arrival of home rule, however, after the initial euphoria wore off, proved to be insufficient to end the two-century-long debate on the status of Scotland in the United Kingdom, and in the next decade, the growing support of the Scottish National Party signalled an increasing demand for independence.⁵ In the following pages, the analysis of these

⁴ Hereafter, following the conventional terminology, this process of decentralisation will be referred to as devolution.

⁵ The first referendum on Scotland's independence was held on 18 September 2014.

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Appendix 1

Plot Summaries

David Greig's *Europe* (1994)

Act One

In a small impoverished border town somewhere in Eastern Europe, the train station is closing down because no trains will stop there anymore as a result of political changes simplifying border control. Two refugees from a war-torn country, Sava and his daughter Katia arrive there, and in spite of the initial problems of communication, Fret the station master and his daughter Adele become friends with the strangers since Sava has also worked at the railways, and Adele, married to Berlin, is sexually attracted to Katia. Smuggler Morocco comes home, and finds that the local unemployed men at the pub, among them Berlin, echo racist tropes and he senses growing xenophobia, since they accuse immigrants for their misery.

Act Two

Berlin and his friend Horse paint racist slogans on public buildings, and the latter beats up Sava. Meanwhile, Katia, Adele and Morocco are planning to leave town together but Morocco is beaten up, too. Sava decides to stay with Fret, and their daughters escape together. Horse and Berlin burn the train station down with Sava and Fret inside. Berlin envisions international headlines for the fire, while Katia and Adele, in a state of euphoria on an international train, enumerate almost twenty cities they would like to visit together.

David Greig's *One Way Street* (1995)

John Flannery, the play's narrator and only visible character, is a Lancastrian living in Berlin, Germany, and in his conversation with Max the waiter in a pavement café at Prenzlauerberg, it is revealed that Herr Frisch has hired him to write a pocket guidebook with ten walks in the former East Berlin. Each scene represents a walk intended to guide audiences through the reminders of a by-gone city, but gradually, Flannery gets lost in the perplexities of his personal memories related to the particular urban spaces he has to describe in his guidebook. Among Lancastrians and East Berliners who appear to Flannery during the ten walks, audiences meet his ex-girlfriend Greta, various members of his family such as his brother Tony, and even Bertolt Brecht. The play reconstructs Flannery's relationship with Greta in the form of non-linear fragments: they first meet at a demonstration, Greta becomes pregnant and she moves to the West.

David Greig: *The Architect* (1996)

Part One

Architect Leo Black is approached on a building site by Sheena Mackie, who is an activist for the demolition of Eden Court, a housing estate designed by Leo. Sheena explains how Eden Court has become a crime-infected, unliveable place damaging the residents' physical and mental health, for which she accuses the poor design of the estate, so she asks Leo to sign their petition for demolition, which he rejects. At home, Leo's son Martin warns his sister Dorothy about Leo's un-fatherly gazes at her. Leo's neurotic wife Paulina, in constant fear of food-poisoning, is not only estranged from her husband but also from the world outside their house, so when Leo makes advances, she vomits in disgust. Martin, in one of his random sadomasochistic encounters with young men in public toilets, meets Billy, a suicidal Eden Court resident, who steals him a green jacket from a shopping window. They go to the roof of a high-rise where Billy unsuccessfully tries to connect with him. Meanwhile, Dorothy is picked up by married lorry-driver Joe for a night-ride, who excites her by telling her how he was masturbating while she was asleep in the lorry. Dorothy kisses him and goes home in the morning.

Part Two

Sheena visits the Blacks to get Leo's support for their petition. As they take a look at the cardboard model of Eden Court, Leo defends his architectural plans while Sheena contrasts them to the ghetto they were turned into. Paulina backs Sheena, for which Dorothy insults her, but Dorothy is not willing to stand by her father either. Paulina asks Leo to move out. Martin fantasises of leaving his family again. Billy jumps off the roof, Martin goes to the morgue to kiss him, and he returns to the public toilet for new encounters. Joe picks up Dorothy again. Leo signs Sheena's petition, and locks himself into her flat to be blown up with his building. The play ends with the detonation of Eden Court and the crowd's applause.

Catherine Czerkawska's *Wormwood* (1997)

Act One

Natalia is on a visit to Pripyat, a ghost town totally abandoned after the nuclear disaster in Chernobyl in 1986. Her boyfriend and her sister's family used to live and work there but they are all dead now as a consequence of the explosion of the power plant. Deeply moved by her memories, Natalia meets mysterious Artemis, whose questions take her back to the day of the disaster, which she spent in Pripyat. She revisits a picnic in the park, where her sister Tanya was arguing with her husband Stefan about moving to Kiev, while Natalia's boyfriend Viktor was dreaming of starting a middle class life in Pripyat together as workers of the power plant. In an interrogatory interview, Artemis forces Viktor, who was working at the night of the disaster at the power plant, to explain the events that led to the explosion. Gradually, Viktor realises the responsibility he as a scientist had in the tragedy. At the end of Act One, Tanya sees beautiful lights in the sky, without knowing that they are coming from the explosion of the power plant.

Act Two

Viktor dies in the explosion. Stefan, working as a fireman in the team tackling the blaze at the power plant, is taken to a hospital in Moscow after being exposed to a lethal dose of radiation, and dies twenty-one days after. Natalia, Tanya and her son Anton manage to escape to Kiev

by train but as they have all been exposed to radiation, Tanya, whose face is burnt, dies of pneumonia and Anton of thyroid cancer. Natalia is the only survivor of the family, haunted by survivor's guilt and unable to restart her life, but with Artemis's help, she finally discovers the truth behind the events that led to the disaster.

Stephen Greenhorn: *Passing Places* (1997)

Scenes before the interval (1-37)

Alex is tired of his dead-end job at schizophrenic Mr Binks' sports shop in Motherwell. After two youths hit him with a baseball bat that he has unsuspectingly shown them in the shop and they take the money, Alex is fired. Angry and drunk, Alex breaks the shopping window at night and steals Mr Binks's surfboard to sell it in Thurso, Northern Scotland. He convinces his friend Brian to take his brother's Lada car and the two drive off to the Highlands. Mr Binks finds out their plan soon and goes after them by motorbike, constantly talking to his imaginary brother Ronnie and terrorising the people he asks for direction. On the road, Brian reads out everything from his guidebook and proposes touristic stops, but Alex is nervous to get to Thurso without being caught. As the Lada breaks down, they are offered help by a traveller community living in tents, where they meet Mirren, whom they agree to take to Skye in exchange for a mechanic to fix the car. On the Isle of Skye, they meet Canadian geologist Iona and her French partner Serge, and they all end up at a multinational karaoke-ceilidh (merry Highland gathering with music and dancing) where Ukrainian ship-workers translate Burns into their language.

Scenes after the interval (38-54)

Brian is shocked to find that Serge has painted his brother's Lada fluorescent, and after his unserious attempt to drown himself, he realises that he cannot go back to Motherwell. Alex and Brian meet Mirren's father, Tom, who is a freelance software designer and works for Silicon Valley companies via video conferences from the Highlands, a job that excites Brian. When they finally reach Thurso, a local surf guru helps them find a possible customer called Mo for their stolen surfboard, but as she manages to find the perfect wave with it before paying, she does not want to buy it anymore. At that moment Mr Binks finds them, and reveals that the surfboard is filled with South African gold. He shoots with his gun in the air, and as the bullet hits the Lada, it burns down. Mr Binks leaves crying, and Alex and Mirren agree that they might go further north together.

David Harrower: *Kill the Old Torture Their Young* (1998)

Part One

The Rock Singer is flying to the last city of his European solo tour. Film director Robert Malloch arrives at the airport of his home town, where he fails to meet the production company's young driver, wannabe-actor Darren. Darren is fired, and Robert meets Steven from the company. After ten years elsewhere, Robert is back home to direct a documentary of his home town. An enthusiastic Steven unsuccessfully tries to impress him with the changes that the city has undergone. In a tenement of the same city, amateur artist Angela starts a conversation with her elderly neighbour Paul Hunter who tries to remove a dead bird from the guttering.

Part Two

The Rock Singer is sitting alone in his hotel room. Steven wants to take his off-stage daughter to see the filming of the documentary but he cannot find Robert or the camera crew in the city. He meets Angela and Paul at an open ground, where the latter used to watch birds and claims to have seen an eagle there, which another birdwatcher discredits. Angela draws a picture of the place with an eagle for Paul but she destroys it. At a petrol station, the Rock Singer asks Angela for the name of the city while Paul steals food from the shop. Darren, now a security

guard, stops him and asks Angela out. Robert, in search for inspiration, recognises Paul from his childhood.

Part Three

Robert and Steven's secretary, Heather, are in his hotel room where the Rock Singer next door tries to talk to them through the wall. Steven arrives to confront Robert about the dark images of the documentary. After talking to Paul, Darren discovers who Robert is and beats him up. Robert is left unconscious. Angela and Darren realise they will probably never become artists.

Part Four

Steven is frustrated that he cannot direct the documentary himself. Robert, hurt and with a hangover, temporarily quits the project. Angela gives Paul a photo of the bird-watching ground, and she does not answer Darren's call. The Rock Singer leaves town.

Appendix 2

Interview Transcripts

**Online interview with playwright Douglas Maxwell, 10
October 2013.**

András Beck: People often think of theatre (and the major dictionaries define it) as a building, which is urban, metropolitan, artistic, interpersonal and cultural. All these words are somehow antonyms to nature, from which it seems that theatre and nature are in opposition. *Decky Does a Bronco* premièred in a swing park in a site-specific performance, making this opposition problematic. Was the decision of the unconventional staging taken because of the plot, or was it also motivated by the fact that it could expand the audience's perception on what theatre is? The park also raises the question of urban nature, an oxymoron itself.

Douglas Maxwell: The idea to stage the play in a park is in the original script, but really a dare on my part. Almost a joke. I didn't know companies like Grid Iron existed and certainly had never heard the phrase site-specific theatre before. But now of course I know just how deeply the staging and the play are interlinked in the audiences' reading of the experience. It's a powerful thing. It has its disadvantages of course, very hard to keep the cast happy, the weather forces cancellation more often than not, you have to deal with whatever is thrown at you by the environment: inappropriate offstage noises, wandering drunks, dogs invading the stage. And, importantly, it means that we can't cast the play with children. A vital loss. Health and safety, etcetera, etcetera. So the play itself has never been seen as I imagined it, with real kids in

those younger parts. All of that is outweighed by what is added though. I say to every new cast, don't worry if the audience look like they're not watching or listening. People experience this show in a really odd way. They stare at the grass or up into the trees, they crane their necks to watch the real kids who may be on the swings in the distance. People who do that love the play the most it seems. They are like the narrator, caught between memory and the now. On the right night, with the sun setting and the music drifting through the space. That can be heady stuff.

The audience sit in a huge circle around specially built set of giant swings. The seats are very small, close to the grass. So they are shrunken, looking up. The fact they are close to the ground seems to be important. I've seen countless audience members kind of stroke the grass. Somehow it's different to normal grass. This is swing park grass. From a long time ago. Something about that long first section with the kids is authentic enough that it acts as a key in a lock for the memories of the audience. They are each in their own playground. So when Decky doesn't return, when they work out what's happened to him it can feel very, very real. Even though, textually it's barely covered at all and certainly not in any depth. Maybe, to go a little far, there is already a grief of sorts in that sort of nostalgia. So when *real* grief—from the narrative—is added to the mix it can knock people out. A handful of people always get *very* upset. And almost everyone has a deep feeling of loss. When the play ends, the grass isn't the same anymore. Would that happen in a theatre? Well, there's no grass. No kids playing over there, no sun setting. So, no.

The kids in the play are close to the ground, close to the bushes. They are *of* it, like we all were when we were let loose in the park or the woods. This is their park. They own it. Nothing scares them here. The nettles that sting them can be rubbed away with dock leaves. “Maybe we need to get stung” thinks Decky, “or else we’d never even use the dock leaves”. Do we need bad things to happen to look closely at the stuff that’s already there, surrounding us? “God put them there for our convenience” he says.

One of my favourite moments in the version that toured a few years ago was when the narrator, as a child, upon hearing that Decky is dead says “I wish god was real” and then looks up into the sky. The audience members who are closest to him would all follow his gaze up into the sky. Sometimes people would still be looking up minutes later. When was the last time they looked up into the sky like that?

There’s a trend now, with companies like Punchdrunk talking about site-specific shows as being immersive. But I don’t think that’s it. I think it’s the opposite. I believe that even in a traditional theatre the audience don’t immerse in a play as they would a film or a novel. At *all* times we are aware that this is a show and that’s part of what’s good about it. Like watching a band. They’re actually doing it! Over there! In a site-specific show the distance between the world of the play and the fact that it is a performance becomes greater. When you watch a Grid Iron show in, say an airport (*Roam*) or in a flat (*Those Eyes That Mouth*), you are much *more* aware of your own presence in the place: “Shit, look at us, watching a play in an airport. Those guys are making a couch turn into a waterfall in a flat, that’s mad!” We are made conscious

of our experience. So in *Decky* the fact they are sitting in a park at dusk is the fun of it. "Look at us, sitting in a park." They never forget that. So that consciousness has to now mix with the part of us that follows a story and buys into the play. These are actors, this music is telling me that something bad is going to happen. On top of that is the fact that grown men are pretending to be nine years old. And yet, having seen the show a million times over the last ten years or so I can say without fear of contradiction that a deep immersion is achieved in *Decky*. But it's an immersion into the audience's own sadness, not into the sadness of the play. That's there too, but on another level. Instead we're dealing with memory, a sense of themselves as they were. I've seen people start to cry as they sit waiting on the play to *start*, just looking at the big swings and listening to the music play. Without the site, would all that happen? I doubt it.

A.B.: Could you comment on the links that may connect the play with earlier and later works in Scottish theatre history? I'm particularly thinking of J.M.Barrie's *Peter Pan* (the child-only natural space of Neverland/the playground, the importance of transition to this space: flying/bronco, not growing up, male environment) and Gregory Burke's *The Straits* (again, male environment, rites of passage, dislocation, the summer of 1983).

D.M.: I have a problem with *Peter Pan*. I think it's a strange, clunky and badly structured piece of theatre. Disney cut it to the basic characters and made it last about an hour. Good choice. But more than that I just

don't believe that children are driven by a desire to stay children. I think children want to grow up. Adults want to go back. Children think life sucks and want to get all the stuff grown-ups get to do. Only on the cusp of adolescence does a nostalgia for childhood raise its head, but again I've always thought there's a kind of pretence to that in young teenagers. They are deliberately trying to be nostalgic to show how mature they are. Note how many kids do their underage late night drinking in swing parks. They are saying, "look at how far we've come". Of course there is always a pang, a fear of losing something when you move on. At about 11 I remember hiding toys and secretly playing with them lest anyone—including my mum and dad—thought I was being babyish but I'm just not sure you would find kids of the Peter Pan age who would want to be kids forever. But saying that, I suppose that is all there in the play. Wendy is to be the Mum, Peter the Dad and they go back and Pan becomes a sad figure, so maybe I'm wrong. Only O'Neil would stay a kid. The swings are his Neverland. But he's an adult. He has had that forced upon him. He is the first to switch over to an adult performer because he is the first to know what happened to Decky. And he knows that because it was his dad who raped and killed his pal. Think what else he must know? And yet it was O'Neil who felt like the grown up to all the others, he was Peter, right? He can fly! The youngest one, Chrissy, is the boy who destroys the swings. He "puts away childish things" with extreme prejudice. And he does it as an act of aggression towards O'Neil. He knows how important this place is to him.

I hadn't clocked that *The Straits* is set in the summer of 1983! How interesting. It was probably written at the same time too. There was a

huge wave of pre-millennial nostalgia in those days. The first for my generation. A generation that were probably taking over the management reins of the culture and entertainment industries. Star Wars was back, there were a million film and TV re-boots of shows from my childhood. There was a fashion for countdown shows, “Top 100 Toys”, “100 Best Adverts of the 80s”, even the music started to flashback and re-issue. Have you read Simon Reynolds book *Retro-Mania*? It goes into this in great detail. But in comparison to the boys in *Decky*, the army to my guys is something from TV. It’s a distance fiction. Something you could run away to, like being a pirate or a mermaid or a hero who can fly. For the Straits boys it is an absolute reality, maybe the *only* reality. In both plays you could argue that an adult reality destroys not just their place of play, but their ability to play. It’s been a long time since I saw *The Straits* mind you. Those characters were also much older.

**Online interview with playwright Catherine Czerkawska, 14
May 2014.**

András Beck: I find it fascinating how you synthesise the two pillars of European civilisation, Christianity (through the biblical references) and the Greco-Latin heritage (through the scenes evoking Cassandra's dream of Troy's destruction) in *Woodworm*, a play about such a recent event, and the name of the town even matches the Biblical passage of the Book of Revelations. Could you briefly explain how you came up with these incredible connections?

Catherine Czerkawska: I'm not even sure I can answer this effectively. I work very instinctively, don't plot, rarely plan. I do a lot of reflecting and then put the words on the page and work on them as I used to work on poetry. So all of that is in there, but I never consciously thought of it at all. That kind of analysis comes later. It didn't even happen during the production, although we had a lot of discussion about the references to wormwood in the Book of Revelations. The inspiration behind the play was at once simpler and more complicated. I was pregnant with my son at the time Chernobyl happened. As the cloud drifted closer to the UK, I felt very vulnerable. Fortunately, I also had influenza at the time and was confined indoors for two weeks, so missed the worst of it! My father was a scientist and worked with radioactivity in his research. We had a great many conversations about the implications of the disaster, about concepts of risk and safety etc. He realised that people forget to respect what they are dealing with and that's what's dangerous about it.

And of course, he told me a great deal about the random nature of the fallout. So yes, it did seem to have an apocalyptic quality about it all, and I'm certain that fed into the play, as did my own background in Mediaeval Studies. My first degree was an honours English degree from Edinburgh University, but I specialised in Mediaeval Studies for my two honours years, and I think all of this background to European civilisation was there, like a well, waiting to be tapped. But it wasn't consciously on my part. It happened.

A.B.: Ukraine has always been situated in the buffer zone between great empires (Ottoman Empire, Russia, the Polish Commonwealth and Austria-Hungary), and what we see on stage are ruins and a postindustrial desert. Does this landscape also symbolise the end of empires? It is interesting that Hong Kong was returned to China some months after the première of *Wormwood*, what many interpret as the end of the British Empire. On the other hand, the fall of communism in Eastern Europe after 1989 remains unspoken in the text, although it separates the scenes based on Natalia's memory and her meeting with Artemis in the present, and it arguably had a similar powerful effect on Ukraine than the Chernobyl disaster. Was this omission a conscious decision?

C.C.: The end of empires? Possibly. My own background fed into this play too. My father was Polish but from a place that is now in the Ukraine and was always a borderland, always in turmoil, always dangerous. The dangers of borderlands have always fascinated me. I

think it perhaps gives a dimension to my thinking that the people who have always lived on this small island remain blissfully unaware of! Everything is precarious, everything can change in an instant when you live in that kind of place. And yet you carry on living, even though you might be on the edge of disaster. You forget about it, because in so many ways, you couldn't live otherwise, rather like people who live in earthquake zones or on the edge of volcanoes! The omission was deliberate in that I really did NOT want this to become a play about the fall of communism. I wanted it to be at once smaller AND bigger than that. Or do I mean more focused? But yes, I was well aware of the background. I had lived and worked in Poland for a year back in the very late seventies when Solidarity was on the rise. I even wrote a play about that time, called *Heroes and Others*. It was staged at Edinburgh's Lyceum Theatre but it was not at all a happy experience for me. We had a terrible, bullying director who tried to change the play in all kinds of ways. I still meet actors who remember it and we all sympathise with each other! But I felt I had tried to explore that already with mixed results and I consciously didn't want to be side-tracked into repeating the experience with this new play. But, yes, it had a similar powerful effect on the Ukraine, and the before and after is there, both politically and in terms of the disaster, which are somehow paralleled.

A.B.: *Wormwood* premièred in the year of the devolution referendum. Has this coincidence influenced the way the play was written or staged in any way? Does the work engage with the debate on the redefinition of Scotland's status within the UK? This is pure guesswork but I am

thinking of the fact that the nuclear disaster happened only five years before Ukraine became an independent nation, so while the scenes in Natalia's memory are from the Soviet times, her meeting with Artemis takes place in independent Ukraine. Besides this, there is also criticism towards centralisation (Kiev need more power from the plant; they do not properly inform anyone about the events and the wounded).

C.C.: I'm not sure that the devolution referendum influenced the way the play was written or staged at all. In fact, I suspect it wasn't even mentioned during rehearsals! The director was English, so am I, or at least English-born, but Polish, English, Irish—not Scots even though I live here and love the place. But yes, centralisation of all kinds was an issue that was discussed and debated. Interestingly, one of the problems with our current Scottish devolved parliament is increasing centralisation! It is becoming a real issue here. The centralisation, for example, of the police, which is resulting in many complaints that our police service is being organised as though the whole country resembles the cities of Glasgow and Edinburgh with their high crime rates, when in fact most of the country is rural with incredibly low crime. This is just an example, but I suppose what I want to say is that the impulse against centralisation and the problems that brings DOES inform the play, but it wasn't as clear cut or as simple as a redefinition of Scotland's status within the UK. It had much more to do with the ways in which the economic needs of the many—and the political impulse to prioritise those needs—can and occasionally does cause unanticipated problems,

sometimes minor and irritating, but sometimes huge and disastrous—as it clearly did at Chernobyl.

A.B.: Did you model the Ukrainian characters based on your experience with Ukrainians, did you know some at the time of writing *Wormwood*? I am asking this because in the initial stage directions you seem to have specific knowledge on how they act and speak. Have you ever been to Ukraine when doing research for the play?

C.C.: As I said, my dad was a Pole whose family came from Lwow (now Lviv) and a place called Dzedzilow (now Didyliv) some miles away. I had spent time in Poland, although had never visited this part of the Ukraine. Dad came to England at the end of the war. We moved to Scotland when I was 12. I visited Poland several times and eventually worked there for a year, in Wroclaw. At the time when I wrote *Wormwood*, I had been writing a great many plays for BBC radio, had done some television and various stage plays. What bothered me was that plays set in Eastern Europe so often seemed to involve English actors speaking a very precise kind of received pronunciation. They never seemed right to me. When my father went back to Poland in the 1970s, he visited his aunt and uncle who had survived the war: Wanda and Karol Kossak. (Karol was one of the family of artists.) My half English half Irish mother accompanied him, and my great aunt Wanda told my dad that she was very surprised to meet her, surprised especially that she smiled and laughed so much, because the only English women she had met before the war had been at official events,

sometimes diplomatic functions, and they never ever smiled. (My mum was working class and the Irish side of the family was very much to the fore—I've always thought that Poles and Irish had a lot in common.)

A.B.: Polish on your father's side. Did this heritage influence the way you staged Ukrainian/Central-Eastern European characters and settings? Do you think your understanding of that side of Europe is different than that of other Scottish playwrights?

C.C.: I wanted to make it very clear that I needed an energy about the whole thing that is also found in Scotland, especially Glasgow. There's a word *gallus* that is often used to describe Glaswegians. It means, roughly, self confident, daring, cheeky. The play may have been produced and staged in Edinburgh, but I was very keen to have a kind of lowland Scots energy about it. A passion, if you will. I needed it to be *gallus* because it was the closest thing I could find to that Eastern European passion and energy I had experienced at first hand in Poland and with my own father. He was the kindest of men, but always impatient with English coldness where he found it. This was important to me in that I needed my characters to be truly *alive*—perhaps especially because for the duration of the play, if you think about it, most of them are actually dead! It could easily be staged in Ireland, with Irish characters though.

A.B.: Are the characters' names symbolic in any way? I am particularly interested in your choice of calling the *deus ex machina* Artemis.

C.C.: This play is a recommended text for the Higher Drama course in Scotland, or was for a while. There is a set of teacher's notes. I remember the person who wrote them asking me this same question. Interestingly, if you see the production on stage, you will realise that Artemis is never ever named. The audience wouldn't know what he was called, unless they looked at the programme. So in a sense, the name is a practical necessity only for the actor. But yes, there is a certain symbolism to it. Artemisia is another name for wormwood (the plant) and also in its female incarnation, a hunter. And that's what Artemis is doing—hunting for the truth. Artemis was a very difficult part to cast. A couple of people turned it down because I think they were afraid of it. The actor Forbes Masson made it very much his own and was superb in the part. It was staged in a small, almost claustrophobic space and he commanded it as indeed he had to. He has to be part magician, part interrogator. He is at once natural and supernatural. There was a student production in Germany where two people—a man and a woman—played the part. I didn't see it but I think it probably worked well. Interestingly, when this play was staged, people fainted a lot! The director said that they had never had such a problem before, but people kept passing out and having to be carried out. I could well understand it. It became very intense, the audience were very close to the cast. They wept a lot—the audience, I mean. I sat in on a number of performances, since it was staged over about three weeks. I saw people become very emotional indeed. It was incredibly well reviewed, but since then it has been completely ignored here in Scotland. I have a theory about this: it

was much too uncomfortable. There was a small revival of interest in it when Fukushima was in the news, but not much. There have been a handful of student productions, but that's all—one in the US, one in Germany (but in English) a couple over here, I think.

A.B.: Has the play been translated into other languages?

C.C.: Not as far as I know.

A.B.: Did the production differ much from the published text?

C.C.: It was directed by Philip Howard at the Traverse and I felt he was an excellent director. As usual, as a playwright, you have certain images in your mind, but it depends upon a director who is in tune with those images, feelings, emotions. I always felt Philip knew exactly what I wanted, the experience of working with him was wholly positive. When the play was staged, the beginning was as you see it in the third picture. As the audience were finding their seats, on three sides of the stage, the big doors at the back were open and workers were walking back and forth. But this was very closely choreographed over some ten minutes or so, so that there was an increasing sense of panic about it. It was intriguing to sit and watch how the audience members gradually became aware of it, were gradually sucked in to this feeling of something going wrong. Eventually, the workers in their white protection suits were rushing about, the audience all fell silent (and were very disturbed) an alarm sounded, the doors closed - and the play

began. This beginning was entirely Philip's idea and it was absolutely perfect, it worked every time.

Online interview with playwright Anita Sullivan, 1 June 2014

András Beck: I read that you were inspired to write about Mayakovsky on a trip to Moscow. To what extent did this visit to Russia influence the way you staged the city in the play? Did you, for example, visit the places Mel and Vladimir visit in the work? How are your personal memories of Moscow present in the play?

Anita Sullivan: Many of the elements of Mel's journey through Moscow are based on my own: places I visited, things I saw, people I met. And like her, I felt quite lost in what surrounded me. Just about everything I thought about a situation was actually about 45 degrees off. I couldn't trust what I saw or what I was told. In many cases, at least two possible truths existed simultaneously. I also felt I was in a city where the political past was a living pulse, imbedded not just in the architecture but in how people think and feel. "Men crumpled like bedsheets in hospitals, and women battered like overused proverbs." I haven't felt that in any other Western European city. Also, the very position of Maykovsky's statue staring out defiantly at the Stalin Towers and McDonalds seemed to capture everything. I knew the statue before I knew his work. And then I read, and read. The power of his verse charging across history, through translation.

A.B.: *Monumental* juxtaposes several different time-spaces: we see present-day Moscow, the city in the 1920s, and the places (real and unreal) of Mayakovsky's memory. These are connected by the

monuments, which seem to capture time in stone. What is the symbolism of these monuments, also emphasised by the title? Would you say that your work is a kind of monument, too?

A.S.: Mayakovsky himself discussed in his writing the problem of how his work would be remembered. He didn't want his belief in socialism to be separated from his poetry or the image of himself as a poet. He wanted integrity. But he has become a statue, an underground station, the man separated from his work and belief. (Next up the line from Pushkin, another statue, another underground—a completely different agenda and poetry). As he says of Gagarin “He's not a man, he's a concept. You might not like it but it's only the ists and isms that are truly powerful. Only the concepts remain.” Gagarin, made of Titanium is going on the same journey: “No trace of Me. Then they turned me into a monument. A silent monument. Like you.” But concepts/ ideas and even facts become eroded. “First man on the moon”, is Mel's mistake. *Monumental* is about capturing and losing self in history. It is itself a small monument to Mayakovsky too, another stone to add to the random heap of artefacts that makes up his presence through time.

From “At the Top of My Voice”

It's no great honour, then,
 for my monuments
 to rise from such roses
 above the public squares,

where consumption coughs,
 where whores, hooligans and syphilis
 walk.....

...I don't care a spit
 for tons of bronze;
 I don't care a spit
 for slimy marble.
 We're men of kind,
 we'll come to terms about our fame;
 let our
 common monument be
 socialism
 built
 in battle.

A.B.: The Cold War, which is the historical period connecting the work's two Moscows, and the fall of Eastern European communism in 1989/91 are mentioned only briefly. Was this a conscious decision you took? I am asking this because in the present-day scenes, they walk on the *ruins* of the Soviet empire, which disappeared in the decade of *Monumental's* première, so it might have been a vivid memory for audiences.

A.S.: Hmmm, not really sure! I think that decision came from character. I wanted Mayakovsky to be plunged instantly into (then) contemporary Moscow with its emerging hard-nosed capitalist values and

technologies, with a naive guide and no context. I wanted him to experience that initial wonder and curiosity, and then the shock. The Cold War is expressed by Gagarin, as he and Sputnik launched the space-race and the age of intercontinental ballistic missiles. That's when Mayakovsky realises he is no longer a man and can no longer walk the streets of Moscow. He is a statue, frozen in time, eroding, with the world shifting around him.

A.B.: Could you briefly describe the site-specific performance? How do you think site-specificity contributes to the play's meaning and perception? You mentioned that it had a non-site-specific premiere, too. What was the main difference for you between the two productions?

A.S.: The site-specific concept was about taking the audience on a physical journey as disorientating and phantasmagorical as Mel's own. It was also about using the city of Glasgow itself as a character, in the same way that Moscow becomes a kind of character. The Citizens' Theatre started out as a socialist concept itself, making theatre accessible to all in the city. The opening scene had Mayakovsky high above the front doors of the theatre foyer, with the skyscrapers of the Gorbals behind him, sunset. Mel was in the bar, telling bar jokes. It had its own resident statues too. It all fitted. And then we took the audience outside into the back alleys around the rear of the theatre. Into the scene-dock (which became a railway carriage). The only scene played in a conventional theatre space was the Third Shot/ The Poet's Cafe. There were big constructivist mobiles etc.

One night early in the run the theatre was besieged by a bunch of kids from the local estate, who could see some kind of show happening in the foyer. The front of house people were holding the glass doors shut as the kids shouted, pushed, spat, kicked. And the actors knew that at the end of the foyer scene, they would have to exit through those same doors into the kid's territory, if the show was to continue. It was one of those moments: do you let the invisibles become visible? If you don't, yes, you should stop the play, shut up shop and go home. So everyone in the cast and crew picked up something to make noise or music, and we led the audience out into the street among the kids. The kids became an impromptu part of the show, a mob: "you can say what you like to the audience, but no touching and no spitting". They were interested enough in what was happening to stick to those basic rules. And for the rest of the run, sometimes some of them would drop in, take part, make noise, disappear into the night. Or hang about and watch. That was my favourite thing about the production! The worst thing about it was that when we left, the big doors of The Citizens' Theatre were shut on them again.

Online interview with theatre director Ben Harrison, 25**August 2014.**

András Beck: How did Grid Iron and its engagement with site-specificity emerge?

Ben Harrison: Grid Iron emerged from a frustration with the restrictions of the black box, and actually the proscenium arch as well. As a young theatre maker, I made a lot of work at the Edinburgh Festival, the Fringe, which temporary converted the black box studio spaces. I found it very restrictive as an experience with the audience and for the performance, and at the same time, wondering why we didn't use the extraordinary buildings of our city, both landscapes and topographies, both outside and inside. It began as an aesthetic choice, but it is also political because if we take work outside of something understood to be a theatre, you're immediately and implicitly challenging all the structures that create those theatres even if they're contemporary theatre spaces. It has a political dimension, and especially promenade work challenges the idea of passivity, in terms of the audience just sitting there in a chair passively, absorbing material as if it were television or a classroom, these habits we have. We were very interested in how we could make it more alive, more erotically alive if you like, for the audience. There is something transgressive about going into a space you are not really meant to go into. Many years later, when we did a show at Edinburgh Airport, we had changed the law to allow the audience to get to that side without tickets. There is this

transgressive sense that's been there quite a lot, which I suppose is political.

A.B.: Could one relate this transgression to the political events around the time when your first productions came out in the second half of the 1990s?

B.H.: Our first breakthrough site-based piece was in 1997, when there was a change of government, the Labour Party got in after eighteen years of Conservative rule, so politically there was a tremendous sense of optimism, that things could change, and in Scotland, the devolution followed fairly swiftly after that, that was all beginning to be possible as well. Theatre in particular doesn't exist in a vacuum in the arts. I think we benefited from the devolution, from the growing sense of Scotland's identity as a distinctive cultural nation rather than a region of the UK.

A.B.: Did the new technological developments such as the Internet have an impact on your work?

B.H.: The proscenium arch is a product of the Victorian period. Now I quite like it but at that time I felt that the space was predominantly suited to the rather old-fashioned form of text-based classic theatre where the audience sit passively and the actors declaim through the picture frame at them. I have been at it since then, but at that time I wasn't very interested in that because I felt that there was not enough for the audience to do, it was not empowering or exciting enough for the

audience. The internet culture is another factor because the information age has made people feel, which is an illusion really, that they are more in control, particularly of culture.

A.B.: As opposed to some other theatre companies, your productions include texts.

B.H.: Text is very important in our work. I often think about the work as very cinematic, it is almost like a live film in that you are in a real environment completely surrounding the audience as if you were at a film location and also because where the different people are in the space, either standing or seated, or lying down. Each member of the audience is getting a slightly different camera angle if that makes sense, a slightly different perspective on the work whereas in the proscenium arch, presumably the task is to present a picture more or less the same for the members of the audience. Of course there are better seats and worse seats but effectively you're projecting a unified image out through the proscenium whereas you have to let go of that when you're on promenade.

A.B.: Is there a hierarchy between text and site in your productions?

B.H.: It varies with each project. The first project, *The Bloody Chamber*, I would say that the text and the site emerged at the same time. I was quite busy at university, when I was at drama school, a designer worked with it, done an adaptation of it, I was very intrigued by what could be

done with it, and at the same time, we discovered this haunted vault underneath the city of Edinburgh, and it was the same summer that I was busy with the text, and the two matched, the content matched.

Decky Does a Bronco was a play written for a site, although the playwright put it as a joke in his author's notes at the front, he said "if you don't have much money, you can just do it at your local swing park." He did that as a joke but I took it literally as that's what we like to do. Quite a few of the pieces have been adapted from literary sources, I don't know the exact statistics but I think more than half are completely original.

A.B.: Could you name any precursors that had an influence on the company? I am thinking of NVA in particular, and productions like Bill Bryden's *The Ship* and Peter Brook's *Mahabharata*.

B.H.: I think *Mahabharata* was a megaproduction because Brook made it in other places as well, he used the so-called Peter Brook Wall at the Tramway and helped launch that space, so I wouldn't say Brook was a big influence but certainly NVA. They were an influence but they also were not competition because of their interest in landscape, as we were more interested in urban topography and structures, whereas Angus [Farquhar] always tends to be more interested in landscapes and environment and less in text and character. We see it as a dance between the site on one hand and the text on the other. But it was encouraging that he was able to deliver those projects and there was clearly an audience who wanted to go into the countryside and prepared

to be rather adventurous. This definitely helped, it gave us confidence. I didn't see *The Ship* or *The Big Picnic* but I was very aware of them, as I have worked with people in them. They were more inspiration than Brook. *The Ship* is a really meaningful and important text and event for that community, done at that scale and at that particular location. I think these things are good and inspiring.

A.B.: Are there any other cultural movements that you would regard as an inspiration, within or outside Scotland?

B.H.: In the early work we were very interested in the idea of magical realism, obviously starting with Carter, and in our production *Gargantua*, we went back to Rabelais, very much a magical realist although with that production, we started to work a lot with the actors, some of the material there is very personal. Also, we were making political analysis of the city of Edinburgh and how it behaved at that time. In 1998, Scotland was emerging, and still struggles with this, from a kind of a Protestant, Calvinist inheritance and struggling with the idea of pleasure and enjoying things like food and wine, really enjoying them in a way that the Spanish don't have any trouble with. Mediterranean countries know how to enjoy life. Until about 1995, you couldn't get a proper cup of coffee in Edinburgh, it was pretty much all instant coffee. It seems trivial to say this but it gives you some idea, you can't imagine that now, there is a coffee shop at every corner but it has something to do with being an industrial country, a poor country, and then emerging into a more connected relationship. The international context came a bit

later. I was very much influenced by continental European directors, a lot of my influences came from site-based theatre in the Netherlands, which was very active in the 1990s indeed, and much more active than in the UK. I used to travel there a lot, I felt I was bringing a kind of continental sensibility from there. In terms of practically getting our work out there, I guess there was an international shop window in terms of the Fringe, so lots of people from abroad saw the work but we didn't start touring internationally till more the 2000s, around 2004. The Scottish company that inspired me the most was *Communicado*, Gerry Mulgrew was also very interested in continental forms, he got his actors to learn to do tango, and again, those representations were very joyous, very Scottish, very rooted in the kind of live music tradition and directly addressing the audience, but they were infused with this more exotic, innovative style. *Communicado* was very important to us, they were the biggest company in Edinburgh when we started.

A.B.: What does the context of site-specific production add to the texts of *Decky Does a Bronco* and *Monumental*? Being great plays, they might work well in studio theatres, too.

B.H.: It is interesting to compare the two. The reality and the ownership of the site was absolutely essential to *Decky*. When we were researching the play, we went on a tour on the West coast of Scotland trying to find a series of playgrounds we could stage the play. We went to one playground on the Isle of Skye, and a group of children playing there was very curious of what we were doing there with all the cameras. They

asked us what we were doing, we explained everything, and as we left, a twelve-year-old girl called after us and said, “Just remember, it’s our swing park!” It was a very profound moment for me because we thought we got to seal the park for our audience, we can’t have those kids coming in and disrupting the play but she made us realise that of course it was their space, it was designed for them so then we kept it very open. In fact, the kids in the park in Edinburgh used to come in and watch bits of the play, and run away, and they would play in the background. As the play darkens and it gets much more tragic in the second half, real kids innocent of tragedy would quite often be playing in the background on real sets of other swings, so there was this kind of counterpoint. It added a whole layer to the experience for the audience and for us. And they also taught us some great tricks on the swings! So the show was very embedded in all those sites we took it to. It was a big hit when we launched it in Edinburgh, and a lot of London theatres offered to take it inside and cover the stage with grass. We refused because we knew it wouldn’t work as well.

A.B.: How about *Monumental*?

B.H.: I think *Monumental* would work perfectly well in a studio theatre. (I often use it as an example of what not to do in site-specific performances.) It is a perfectly decent play but then we scratched it rather thin across the sprawling canvas of the Citizens Theatre, and it didn’t quite work. The two reasons we did it there are because the Citizens Theatre has got a lot of statues in its foyer, and the play is very

predicated on the idea of a statue coming to life, and also we felt the Gorbals housing estate would look like a Stalinist housing project. We thought that would be enough but it wasn't really, the play didn't support the promenade, or rather our promenade didn't support the play. It didn't work, it was odd, and I'm sure it did much better in studio later. We were still quite young, three years old when we did *Monumental*, and we learnt a lot from that. The text has its own dramaturgy, then the site would have its own dramaturgy, and both of them have to be allowed to play into the creation of a text. This is why quite often adaptations work well, because the site can help you to adapt it. It's generally myself who adapts the pieces, I'm adapting them but I am always listening to what the buildings are telling me as well.

A.B.: How has site-specific theatre changed since those early days?

B.H.: I think the big change is that everybody's doing it, it is no more radical now than the black box would be, it has become part of the language of theatre, which is a great thing really but it doesn't make it easy for anyone who works in the form. Before, we could rely on the feelings of "wow, we're taking an audience underground" or "wow, we're taking an audience into an abandoned hospital." I think the audiences got so used to it now, it's taught a lot at university level, it's very much in the culture so what you don't have any more is this radical sense to it, it's just an option to do. It's not that you can't still do extraordinary things, the possibilities to some extent are endless but it's not quite that shock of the new. It wasn't new, Brith Gof, Neil Butler, Deborah

Warner, a lot of artists had been doing it before us but when we did it, it caught the imagination of the media somehow in a big way. We rode that wave quite a while. We've worked quite a lot abroad, and there is or can be a kind of innocence depending on the culture. If you visit a culture let's say like Jordan, we made a piece there three years ago, where the audience had never been asked to get up out of their seats and move before, you're into a totally different but very exciting experience. I used to wander around saying things like "Burn the proscenium!" quite literally but I'm quite interested in the proscenium now because in many ways the form makes theatre so much more liberalised now as a result of what happened in the 1990s. I don't feel that dialectic as much. It seemed very experimental back then. With *Decky*, the papers were saying things like "this production revolutionises the idea of what makes a stage." It was a big paper, and quite a big statement to make. These comments would not be made about our work now. There was a lot of talk then about its significance, the tenth anniversary production reminded people of its significance. Just because a piece is made on a location, found space or site, it doesn't mean it's going to be any good. There is a lot of very poor work in site-work, just as there is a lot of poor work in proscenium arches. It will work if the material benefits from the site, if the material is stronger in the site and the site is stronger with the material. When you get it right, this magic chemistry happens, where both the site and the text or the concept are much greater than they would be otherwise. It is still magical when that happens.

A.B.: Are your audiences different from those of classical theatre?

B.H.: There is some overlap. Occasionally still we get somebody showing up, we had one in our current production actually, somebody had given somebody a ticket and they haven't realised they have to wander around for two hours and they were horrified. You do get that, but we have a kind of cult audience now, particularly during the Fringe, people look out for us in their book. So there is an overlap, but there are people who really like the more interactive element of our shows, and some other people like shows that are more interactive than ours where you wander completely at will, which is something we haven't done really. We had sections of shows where that happens, they are more installation-based, there is a whole spectrum. There are people who'd much prefer to sit in the stalls. There is more knowledge about it in the media, generally speaking now people know they will be asked to do things, we don't tend to have too many of those sitting ones.

**Online interview with theatre director Angus Farquhar, 7
November 2014.**

András Beck: How would you describe your first encounters with site-specific art?

Angus Farquhar: It emerged to my previous life, for ten years I was in a band in London. I went down from Scotland to London in 1980, and I was in a band called Test Department. It was a very left-wing group, very experimental, and part of our motivation as a band was that your politics should not just be about talking about, criticising a sort of right-wing, capitalist approach to citizenship and consumerism, both musically and in the way that you communicate and produce your work, try and break from the small capitalist models, so we were very critical of just things like straight concerts in normal venues, and from the very beginning, we thought the important thing was to try and almost build from that punk ethos of DIY [Do It Yourself], make your own networks, find your own locations, we were probably emerging at what was called the industrial genre at the time, and there were various really contrasting counter-cultural musical outfits in the early 1980s—Cabaret Voltaire, Throbbing Gristle, 23 Skidoo, it was at the hard experimental end of music production in that period. So from the very beginning, we started staging whenever we could, these quite large-scale events in either found locations, or partially destroyed locations, or we would legally negotiate various properties from anything from railway arches to old factories, where we would approach the organisation and explain

that we were making films to raise money for cancer and that we were doing a live concert that we would film, anything we could do to get into the building and of course occupy them. And it was really a kind of precursor of what became that kind of bigger rave scene, which happened at the start of the 1990s as well, which was that idea of a hidden location. In Test Department's work, it was very specific, we were transforming the locations completely, giving them new use, we were doing a lot of multiple film projection, and this is particularly how you give audiences an experience that they haven't had before, and introducing them to ways of seeing the art that we were producing in what we would see as appropriate circumstances. Rather than going into conventional concert halls where it's all very predictable, it's really just about money-making, and you're just sort of next in a production line of music groups coming through.

A.B.: Who were your audiences at this point?

A.F.: Test Department would fit into a kind of cult following, I mean we were getting front covers at the major music papers at the time in the mid-1980s, so we could easily pull 2,000-3,000 people to come and see a concert at its height. It's like anything that became a kind of sub-genre and has its followers.

A.B.: The main focus and content of these initial site-based shows, then, was direct political confrontation.

A.F.: Absolutely. We became actively political in terms of committing to direct struggle against Thatcherism and conservative right-wing ideology, and a critique of their version of British history as well. We toured a lot during the miners' strike and did one very notable project with the South Wales Striking Miners Choir, where we put together traditional music from the Welsh valleys with the music of Test Department, and at the same time, we spent a year fighting against Rupert Murdoch at Wapping. There was a big campaign to fight because he was the first person to throw the print-workers out of their jobs with the complete mechanisation of print-making, which was going to happen anyway, you can't stop history, but it was the way he did it of course, he did it in an extremely vicious way and he did it in a politically motivated way, to break the unions. Again, we organised the anniversaries of the print-workers' strike.

A.B.: What were the reasons that explain the transition to your less explicitly political material from the early 1990s?

A.B.: When I moved back to Scotland, the first thing I did was re-establish the Beltane Fire, which is a quite interesting sub-part of this story. The Beltane Fire is a pagan fire festival, which still runs on Calton Hill in Edinburgh on the eve of May 1, and it is attended by about 10,000 people a year. It's been running for twenty-seven years, and it was our first commitment to an outdoor public ritual. The choice of the hill that we did it on was the history of that site, it was where they used to hang witches in Edinburgh, so a positive public ritual on that hill felt

very good. It is also a hill which is the people's hill, it is owned by the council but it's a public space. That was really the idea of tying into older rituals that were beyond direct political confrontation, a sort of liberating festival, Spain is very good at this, and it was partially influenced actually by Test Department travelling and visiting a lot of festivals, happy ones and slightly more extreme ones for Easter, with the heavy drumming. It was very influential this idea that you should do public events out of doors, and sort of celebrate something that is above and beyond political life, something about being free as a citizen, and having a sense of yourself in the natural world. So there was this kind of very early ecological consciousness coming into the work as well. On the NVA website under "Past Projects," you can find works like *The Second Coming*, those were the earliest events in Scotland. Again, in found locations. We did it at one of British Rail's yards, a huge yard, to stage the work for the City of Culture in 1990. That was my transition from Test Department and music group to directing and doing more directly performance work. Again, it was more as a continuity because that's what I was good at, that's what I was used to, was finding locations, and then of course every time building up a more and more sophisticated response to locations in the sense of building the work itself around the history of what we found there, the people and the actual materials of each place.

A.B.: The ritualistic elements that you have mentioned sound quite Grotowskian.

A.F.: We went to Poland in 1988 and worked with the Drugie Studio, which was the second studio of Grotowski that replaced him when he went to Italy, and we actually made a work called *Elijah* and we stayed in the Grotowski farmhouse, very Spartan, no electricity and we made one of those very intense physical works with the kind of second generation Grotowski students, so I know that kind of history very well. That was with Test Department, the NVA work was moving into different directions.

A.B.: Besides the discovery of the ritualistic approach that you have described, were the changing political landscapes of Britain in the early 1990s also responsible for your turn to less directly political material?

A.F.: I was tiring of making art as direct political struggle. With Test Department in the 1980s, it was very black-white, it was they're the enemy and everything you're doing is trying to counteract, even in this futile way to really comment on what you saw as a very authoritarian state and a set of values you strongly wanted to critique and to fight against. I think the left-wing got exhausted in Britain in the late 1980s, more because the miners' strike was lost, whopping against Murdoch was lost, there were no struggles that were won, it was the last great union fight, so in a large extent Thatcherism has won and has to this day continued to guide politics in Britain. The Labour Party today is the equivalent to the soft Conservative Party, it's very hard to divide mainstream politics as anything less than grandchildren of Thatcher. So for me, it was opening up to a different subject matter, different ways of

working, and you see this in NVA's transition in working specifically in rural locations and doing a lot of work in natural locations. From 1998 onwards, we spent about twelve years working in mountainous locations and islands, it was a very definite choice to look at much more about our relationship to the natural world, our place within it, what you can see if you walk through a particular location, so it became a more philosophical inquiry around how we perceive movement through space, so it was already going into a different subject matter. I stopped describing it as site-specific theatre, we described it as public art, the language with which we describe has shifted into a different direction. I've found that the language around site-specific theatre is no longer relevant, because of course by calling it theatre, we are talking about an art form that's defined by eighteenth and nineteenth-century and earlier Greek values around an audience sitting and looking in an auditorium. I didn't want to again be making a piece of work that was a reaction to something I wasn't really interested in so we shifted to a language of public art, which we've carried on in the last ten years.

A.B.: I see that many of the earlier NVA shows reflected on their moment's great innovations in communication technologies like the Internet.

A.F.: You're right that in the 1990s, very much was about what they would call cross-media and cross-border collaboration, that sense of drawing narratives from bringing together, say, film-makers, musicians, architects, scenographers, directors. We were creating these hybrid

works, and again, the two areas of innovation were the choice of location and particularly in that period, I was interested in technical innovation. In *Stormy Waters*, we were doing a lot of work with the early days, the proto-public days of Internet. The Internet is now part of everyday life, and when we first did that work, there were only seven phone lines coming into Scotland, Demon was the company. I knew the person who ran it, and he had seven phone lines in the bedroom. If you went into an academic institution, which had their own larger intrauniversity connections, that was literally it: you had to wait five minutes in order to see if you could get onto a line, it was fantastic. I remember when you first did Google, at a much lower level, and you put in *Scotland*, I remember there not being enough public internet lines and public webpages in Scotland to fill a page. For me at that time thinking about my politics and this belief in networks, the belief in non-geographical community, whether you could as a small arts organisation broadcast worldwide. Of course now it's absolutely commonplace, everyone can post a picture online and make it go viral and be seen. We've just put *Ghost Peloton*, the work that we've done for the Tour de France, our most recent work as NVA, with the choreographed racing cyclists, this work is now a Vimeo staff pick and has been seen by 50,000 people in the last two days, so it's coming full circle. It's an easy thing to do, you upload your video. What we were really doing in the early 1990s was pioneering the connectivity.

Stormy Waters was amazing, we worked with absolutely brilliant internet pioneers and technicians at Glasgow University, and we ended up doing a live broadcast where we were able to in essence

send images of historic Glasgow around the world. We got about fifty-five artists to reconfigure those images, to treat them through their own eyes the way they saw the world, and again, these were the first digital artists that we were coming across and then to upload them so we could beam them back live from a microwave link on the top of Glasgow University, which has a big spire. We projected the images live onto the sides of a huge shipyard wall and this old grain factory where they stored grain, the biggest brick building in Europe, and then filmed that live without performance, with music, with graphics, with performers and sent it out. I think we got it to eighteen countries worldwide, and it was watched live within universities, and it was a phenomenal effort, it was absolutely extreme. It was about the idea of how exciting it was that for one night, it wasn't just Rupert Murdoch and it wasn't the sort of one-way control of media, and you know the fact that mainstream media at that time really controlled what you saw, and this control showed you one vision of the world. It was that first idea that you could begin to conceive the world through other people's eyes, and break through from the controlling aspect of what we see and what we don't in the mainstream media. Very naïve, very utopian.

A.F.: However, this element in your work was also gradually changing into something else, just like direct political confrontation a decade ago.

A.F.: I realised by the end of three or four years working that way was that the Internet was just about money, I was just beta-testing new technology for American corporations. When a piece of technology can

do something for you, you do it and think it's inventive but you're only doing it because the technological possibility was there. It's not that you would set out and say, this is what I want to do, these are the tools that allow me communicate that idea. I began to feel that we were being run by technology rather than us running the technology. It was that point which at the end of the 1990s made me towards working at natural locations because I felt that just being involved in creating virtual work was actually, I wanted to go back to physical space and make work in physical space and commit to those values. It was getting much bigger and I felt it was becoming increasingly commercial, which of course it was, and that obviously has been the trajectory of the Internet, which is not to say credible things aren't being done underneath the surface, and it has amazing applications in terms of documenting political actions all over the world, releasing information to allow people to self-organise from the Arab Spring to many other instances, it's been an incredible tool. So it can work both ways and it has come full circle. It was exciting in these early days to push the barriers and see what you could do with it, for me it was an extension of this idea of politically building your networks, it's still part of the DIY ethos, that you don't have to rely on the establishment or institutions to allow you to communicate with like-minded people across the world.

A.B.: What are the practicalities of staging a show in a site-specific way?

A.F.: When I have an idea or vision for a piece of work, I then invite the creative team to react to that, and sometimes that involves inventing

things and ways. For example, if you decide to take an audience up a mountain, you have to do that safely, and if you also decide you want to use a little petrol or oil, burning fossil fuels or big generators and huge cables, you have to try to have as little damage to the ground as possible, that sets up a set of creative challenges, that technology becomes your way that you try to mitigate the impact of taking large audiences into natural places where a large amount of footfall can damage the particular area. A phrase I have used for a long time is “how you make your work is as important as why.” If you’re going to talk about certain issues, then it’s important that you think about the ethics you make your work as well. Those technical innovations were often about finding the best way, the most ergonomic and least damaging way to interact with a particular environment, sometimes to say, leave in better condition than when you left there. There is a terrible hypocrisy within conventional music festivals, they can often end up doing huge amount of damage that they’re on, a huge amount of waste, thousands of tents left, huge amount of things consumed, huge amount of energy wasted within the way they’re set up. Horrible bloated capitalist bands like U2, who preach the politics of one-worldism but use our resources to do these huge stadium tours. I do in my mind critique that kind of approach because it’s ultimately ignorant. I’m not going to portray us as environmentalist preachers. We’re not. We’re still using up the world’s resources to make work but I think it’s good just to have some sensitivity about how you make the work. The relationship to technology for me more often now is finding very creative ways to solve the problems that the work poses.

A.B.: I have already asked you about the audiences Test Department had, let me ask you about the audiences the early NVA productions attracted.

A.F.: With Glasgow 1990, there were two particular directors that year, Bob Palmer and Neil Wallace. Neil Wallace ended up running the Tramway, which is a famous venue from that time, where Peter Brook first staged *The Mahabharata*. It was a very important new venue that was established from a previous transport museum, so it was re-using an interesting industrial space. Bob Palmer carried on in a role across Europe advising around the establishment of cultural initiatives and years of culture, he's very good at what he does. He was an absolute champion of site-responsive work, so from the very beginning, I had two very important allies who were really promoting us and allowing us to take risks, and it was very clear that with this type of work it was going to be risky, with a lot of difficulties around staging work at unusual locations. These men championed that work, and as a result, more conventional funders put money in, and the results were always exciting and memorable, and it began to be seen as a valid and exciting way of working, breaking new ground. With good advertising and good word of mouth, we never had a problem to find audiences.

A.B.: Could you identify any Scottish precursors that had an influence on your work?

A.F.: Coming back to Scotland, I was very excited by the political theatre that was being made by 7:84 and various companies at that time, it was quite a flowering of Scottish theatre, but that was more about language as much as anything else, people speaking with Scottish accents for the first time, it wasn't comparing itself to England, it was a very specific flowering, Scotland's flowering, and there's no doubt that much of the art and music being created at that time was a precursor of the devolution and was building up confidence and that's where art is often able to be in the avant-garde political movements that come in its way, and that was exciting. I was excited to come back to Scotland and to have the identity of being Scottish and to be part of that contemporary movement but I wouldn't say I was drawing particularly on any influences from them, because they were connected to slightly more conventional narratives whereas we never really followed a particularly conventional narrative structure when we made work.

A.B.: Did the changing cultural and political landscapes in the years around devolution have any influence, then?

A.F.: On a most direct basis, where you get your money from and who's willing to fund you is influence. The way things are now under Creative Scotland is different because it's fully devolved the way the arts are funded so you have a very different funding situation between England and Scotland. At that time, it was the Scottish Arts Council, which remained part of the British establishment so the money was still coming from Westminster. Even though there was devolved power, the

arts funding was still seen as part of the British context, organisations like the British Council would fund people to take British work abroad, and although they have offices in Scotland, they are run from London, so you have sometimes very difficult politics on whether something is treated as regional or national. The wider question around devolution is the unbalancing power of London and the unbalancing power of Westminster, economically we know that it's the powerhouse and in terms of the political and judicial establishment, London is an absolute country to itself, and the importance of devolution and the whole transition over the last twenty-five years has been about being self-confident in your own culture. We're making very rural, by choice I wasn't touring internationally, I was focusing for one or two years on working with small, local communities, establishing really strong contacts, involving people through employment in the work, and for me the important thing was that you weren't comparing yourself with the reality that was reflected through mainstream media around big cities. You felt you could do this work in really small places, and be the centre of your own world. The nice thing with Internet is that you're able to present outside world, and circumvent some of those power relationships. Even though you're on a tiny island of the West coast of Scotland, you can really speak to a wide audience, the ideas can go out and transfer across the world.

A.B.: Is empowering the level of the local an achievement of devolution?

A.F.: I was definitely encouraged to come and work in rural settings, particular producers within Scottish Arts Council felt that it would be really good to take quite urban work out there, but nobody else had this history of spiritual relationship to landscape through Beltane Fire. For me there was on the one hand, on local level, meeting people, building relationships, finding interesting ways of involving them in the work, but never compromising for making forward-looking and innovative work, so you would involve people in something, you didn't soften the experimental nature of the work because you're in a traditional community. Quite the reverse, you build confidence for people to take part in something really unusual, and that's something I found on the long run people enjoyed. It introduced them to different ways of seeing their own landscape, different ways of talking, and particularly it's really nice when something has a deep relationship or understanding of a particular area, you take that authentic voice and you reflect it back out to the wider world, there's real power in that, the local would be presented to a much wider audience without making it bland or smoothing the edges.

A.B.: Could you describe *Stormy Waters* in terms of the concept of the local? I see it as an unmistakably local project of Glasgow but its scope was strongly international.

A.F.: *Stormy Waters* was particularly looking at Clyde and the ship industry, looking at that version of Glasgow as built on its industrial might of building ships, knowing that that was in a massive period of

transition, trying to release the idea of the city to how other people might conceive it. I was really interested in the idea of allowing free access, sending images out, and seeing what came back. I was interested in the randomness of the people, we had input from thirty or forty different countries, and just seeing how people from their own perspective might see a particular building or historic powerhouse that built the city, might be viewed through someone's eyes who had never been there and don't have a comparative architecture where they were living. People were very random, this was very typical at the beginning, just surfing the Internet, you didn't know where you were going. Now there's so much out there, you've become very specific again. But it was this random nature that was interesting, opening up to new potential. I was also working a lot with some of the early electronic musicians, Underworld, they obviously became very big, and Tomato, who were using a lot of very interesting digital interference techniques in the way they made their language for the show. Autechre and Plaid, who were the other musicians we involved. The idea was forward-looking, contemporary electronic digital culture and how that sits within this very historical setting, and that's been Glasgow's story. Glasgow very much had to reinvent itself because what it had has gone, and so it can't therefore rest on its laurels. Edinburgh by comparison has always maintained some sort of power, a kind of continuity, so Glasgow is a little bit hungry and has to work harder to reinvent itself in a postindustrial landscape.

A.B.: Do you think the representation of Glasgow in *Stormy Waters* can be read as a metaphor for Scotland as a whole?

A.F.: I can't pretend that these things are fully conscious, you're reaching into the darkness with every piece of work you do. But it posed some relevant questions probably, and we found some interesting ways to answer them.

**Online interview with theatre director Philip Howard, 18
November 2014.**

András Beck: David Greig's *The Architect* and David Harrower's *Kill the Old Torture Their Young*, both under your direction at the Traverse Theatre, stage a rather negative image of the concept of home, they seem to question that it is actually possible to identify one's home in the traditional terms of place and family.

Philip Howard: The Harrower-play illustrates your hypothesis particularly well in the character of Robert the filmmaker, and what I would call his determined failure to capture his city and his country, it's extraordinarily relevant to your hypothesis about a trope of Scottish culture, the negative self-image, the way in which the concept of home is continually being undermined. The play articulates these ideas really clearly. I'm not sure I would agree with you about *The Architect* because I think all what David Greig was trying to do there was his own way of writing an Ibsen play. It is more about the family, not just a Scottish family but any family, than it really is about Scotland. I don't really think that the home of *The Architect* is a metaphor for the nation in any way. In terms of the amount of self-dislike and antipathy within the family and the characters, I don't think that's particularly different how you would for example have in an English play of the time, whereas I think Harrower's *Kill the Old* is a wonderfully Scottish play. I do a lot of work on the differences between English and Scottish playwriting, and all of Harrower's work really from *Knives in Hens* onward illustrates

Scottishness in one form or another. Whereas David Greig always was the great European, the great internationalist, and his first play, which was not a Traverse play, namely *Stalinland*, is a young Scottish writer writing his first play by writing a European play. As you probably know, all of David Greig's works, certainly in the first ten years of his playwriting, were all experiments in writing different styles, and I think *The Architect* is no more and no less than his Ibsen play.

A.B.: As you have mentioned that Ibsen, a canonised European playwright, served as a strong model for Greig in this early stage of his career, do you think that the concept of a new Europe emerging after 1989 was also a powerful input for his generation?

P.H.: I think you're right to analyse that from the beginning of the 1990s onwards, and David Greig probably is the helmsman of this, there was a new internationalism, it did emerge, it is connected with a new generation of writers and artists in Scotland whose reaction to the growing political ideas of devolution within Scotland and the very idea of potential separation from England are being immediately articulated through a European perspective, so it's that idea of Scotland as a European nation, Scotland within Europe, not necessarily as part of the United Kingdom state. It's still too soon after that decade to really be clear, in twenty years' time we might look back and see that all of this started with David Greig and his peer group at the University of Bristol where he studied. I think it all started with the inter-railing trips while they were at university, and Greig's play *Europe*, which premiered in

1994, is at its heart everything to do with Greig's own experience of going round Europe on trains and his slight obsession with that. But the whole idea of writing about borders and a kind of new Europe, the themes of racism and civil unrest in his play *Europe*, they are really connected to the young Scottish writer thinking about what it is to be a European and not just a British person. And yes, that is all to do with a Scottish artist thinking about what it is to be Scottish, not just British.

A.B.: So the political events of 1989 and their aftermath served as a source of inspiration for this new generation of playwrights.

P.H.: Hugely. What's interesting for Greig in his work *One Way Street*, a play for *Suspect Culture*, is the idea of psychic geography through this boy from Lancashire in Berlin. I think it's a wonderful text because it's both a coming-of-age play, it's a European play, he's interested in those ideas about the way the geography of the mind relates to the geography of the streetscape in a city such as Berlin. And again, it's all about this European dimension, looking outside of Scotland, even if only ultimately to be finding a way of writing about what it is to be Scottish.

A.B.: Was this international vision not already present half a decade earlier, in the successful 1985 season at the Traverse, with Jo Clifford's *Losing Venice* and Peter Arnott's *The White Rose*?

P.H.: That's an important point. This didn't start in 1989, and there were always, even in that generation, and Jo Clifford is a really good

example of looking to Europe. Jo Clifford is an exception because of course just like me, he's actually English, domiciled in Scotland and that's a slightly different perspective that he brought with him. Even a writer like Chris Hannan is very interested in the international dimension and always was.

A.B.: Has the Edinburgh International Festival ever contributed to this internationalist vision?

P.H.: Look at why the Festival was founded in the immediate postwar years. It's very explicitly to do with a desire to prevent further global conflict by founding what has turned into the world's biggest arts festival, so there was a very specifically international dimension from the Edinburgh International Festival even in the 1940s. Those who live in East Central Scotland are privileged to have that festival every year, bringing the most extraordinary gems of world theatre to the city.

A.B.: Catherine Czerkawska's *Wormwood* stages a very different, maybe more personal vision of Europe. Is that because of her heritage?

P.H.: Despite her English and Polish heritage, I would still categorise Catherine as a Scottish writer in a way I wouldn't myself or Jo Clifford. Catherine's interests obviously come very particularly from her Polish father so it's easy to see why she would want to write about something set in Eastern Europe. Her stated motivation for writing her play *Wormwood* was specifically to do with the fact that when the Chernobyl

disaster occurred, she was pregnant with her child, and she was very influenced by the news report which stated that there was a cloud moving over South-West Scotland which is where she lived. She was fearful, and her father being a scientist, I think she was interested in the Chernobyl story. I think that's a different influence because it's not quite the same as what we've been saying about these other playwrights who are looking at Central and Eastern Europe as voyeurs in a way, whereas Catherine would maybe say that this was part of her because of her Polish father.

A.B.: Still, I see many links between Czerkawska and say Greig in their treatment of post-Soviet Europe, since they stage images of the ruins of an empire, the unnamed transition of 1989, they use the theme of historical and personal memory extensively, and set out to reconstruct a narrative for a new Europe.

P.H.: It's clever to see a link. I don't think a Scottish critic would see this link, I think it takes a Hungarian critic to show us that there is a link between what Czerkawska and Greig were doing. It is to do with this idea of reconstructing a narrative from a post-Soviet era, and I think it's a good connection between the plays.

A.B.: How was this vision different in the National Theatre of Scotland's HOME productions half a decade later?

P.H.: Don't be distracted by the title, HOME. It was an umbrella title inviting a wide range of artists to consider what we, or rather they, mean by the word *home* and in terms of the way in which the NTS's HOME project works with you examples of the Harrower and Greig plays, I would really struggle to find the connection because the NTS calling their first project home is explicitly an attempt to try and set out their inquiry of what a national theatre could be, so the title says rather more about what the NTS was inquiring about its own identity and not very much about Scotland itself or about the interests of the playwrights who were at the heart of these questions. It wasn't a project of legacy, they were never published, you couldn't see them all so that tells you everything you need to do. It has everything to do to trying to create what a national theatre could be, working at different locations with a huge range of artists, desperately trying to find an idea or a word, namely *home*, around which all the artists could unite, and then allowing all those artists to interpret in their own way, with frankly pretty mixed results. There is no writer's vision at the heart of all that.

A.B.: In Stephen Greenhorn's *Passing Places*, the concept of home is also central.

P.H.: *Passing Places* is a play absolutely and specifically about Scotland, in a way it's the play that most obviously tackles this theme. It is the ultimate Scotland play in some ways.

A.B.: Can the demolition of Eden Court in *The Architect* understood as a metaphor for devolution? It shows a community working together for a new home they would be more comfortable to live in.

P.H.: David Greig's contribution towards independence debate, some would say he's the architect of, certainly the artistic response to the Yes-campaign, he is the Václav Havel of Scotland because he is the playwright who is turning into almost like a politician. I think he's a born leader so he's becoming incredibly important in terms of that profile and that contribution towards the political debate. All of this underpins your theory. However, working on *The Architect* as I did in 1996, I don't believe at the time that was much to do with the move towards devolution because arguably, that hypothesis slightly devalues the play. In many ways, the play is seeking to be more genuinely international and global than that, it's about the way in which we work with architects globally, it's everything to do with the architectural debate of not living in places designed by people who wouldn't dream of living in those places themselves. There is a very passionate thing going on there which is not quite the same as the move towards devolution.

A.B.: How did the campaign for devolution shape playwriting in the 1990s?

P.H.: It is generally accepted that in Scotland in the 1990s, there was a huge growth in confidence of Scotland's playwrights and artists, and in the form of writers such as David Greig and particularly Liz Lichhead,

there is a contribution to the wider political debate. You could argue that the establishment of the Parliament in 1999 was directly or indirectly fuelled by Scotland's writers and artists. If you look at the playwriting and the visual arts culture between, say, 1985 and 1999, you can easily identify a huge growth in confidence among those artists and writers, and they then went on to play their part in defining Scotland, which made it ready for devolution and the establishment of the Parliament. Since the establishment of the Parliament, between 1999 and 2014, the year of the independence referendum, arguably the playwrights and artists yet again led by David Greig (it always comes back to him) went on to play an even more central part in what turned into the independence debate and the independence referendum. There is no doubt that as early as the 1990s, the writers and artists were beginning to play a bigger part in the self-definition of the nation, which led to the establishment of the Parliament. What is important is to see these things quite generically, to see that it's about a generation growing confident, it's not about the microcosm of whether or not within these individual plays themselves there is metaphorical writing about devolution. That is, if you forgive me, a very academic view. But what I think is true and harder to analyse and to shape, it's the growth of confidence of writers like Harrower and Greig, which began to congregate and therefore create a climate of confidence, out of which we have Parliament and very specifically, the NTS. The NTS would not have happened if between 1985 and 2003, there hadn't been this enormous upsurge in Scottish playwriting, which gave people the idea that a national theatre could exist because now there was a body of

playwriting. Before the 1980s, there was no significant body of Scottish drama in quite the same way. But actually over the 1980s and 1990s, those generations of playwrights began to emerge. The NTS since its beginning has been a kind of new writing theatre, and it is directly building on what the Traverse Theatre over its 40-50 years did, which was to create a national playwriting culture. I was trained at the Royal Court, and I've always believed and history has demonstrated this, that every nation needs a new writing theatre to become a crucible in which these ideas of statehood and culture can be debated.

A.B.: How would you define the role of the Traverse in the 1990s?

P.H.: The absolutely crucial thing about the Traverse in the 1990s and through into the 2000s as well is to try and cement the idea that there needed to be a playwriting hub, which could be the place where the nation should be debated. That doesn't mean to say that all plays we commissioned and developed needed to be overtly political, for me sometimes the real sign of confidence of the playwriting culture is when you actually don't need every play to be a state of the nation play, sometimes a playwriting culture being happy to debate quite domestic or personal or family stories can itself be a sign of sheer confidence that actually there is a playwriting culture which is then free to examine anything and everything, it doesn't always have to tell the stories of the nation in an overtly political way. For me, it's all about confidence, not just only content, you can't just look at the content of the plays, how they exist in a metaphorical way, you have to look at the macrocosmic

view, the generational confidence that is emerging, and together that generation of playwrights created a new Scottish debate, and that then has led to where we are now.

A.B.: So, was it the right people at the right time, in the right place?

P.H.: That's a really important observation I wouldn't have thought of, but that's exactly what happened. There is some luck involved, isn't there? There's a polarisation, a coincidence of the right people at the right time, in the right place.

Appendix 3

Production Pictures

Note on the production pictures

Figures 1 – 7 belong to playwright Catherine Czerkawska's personal collection and are reproduced here with her kind permission.

Figures 8 – 31 are courtesy of NVA theatre company and are reproduced here with their kind permission.

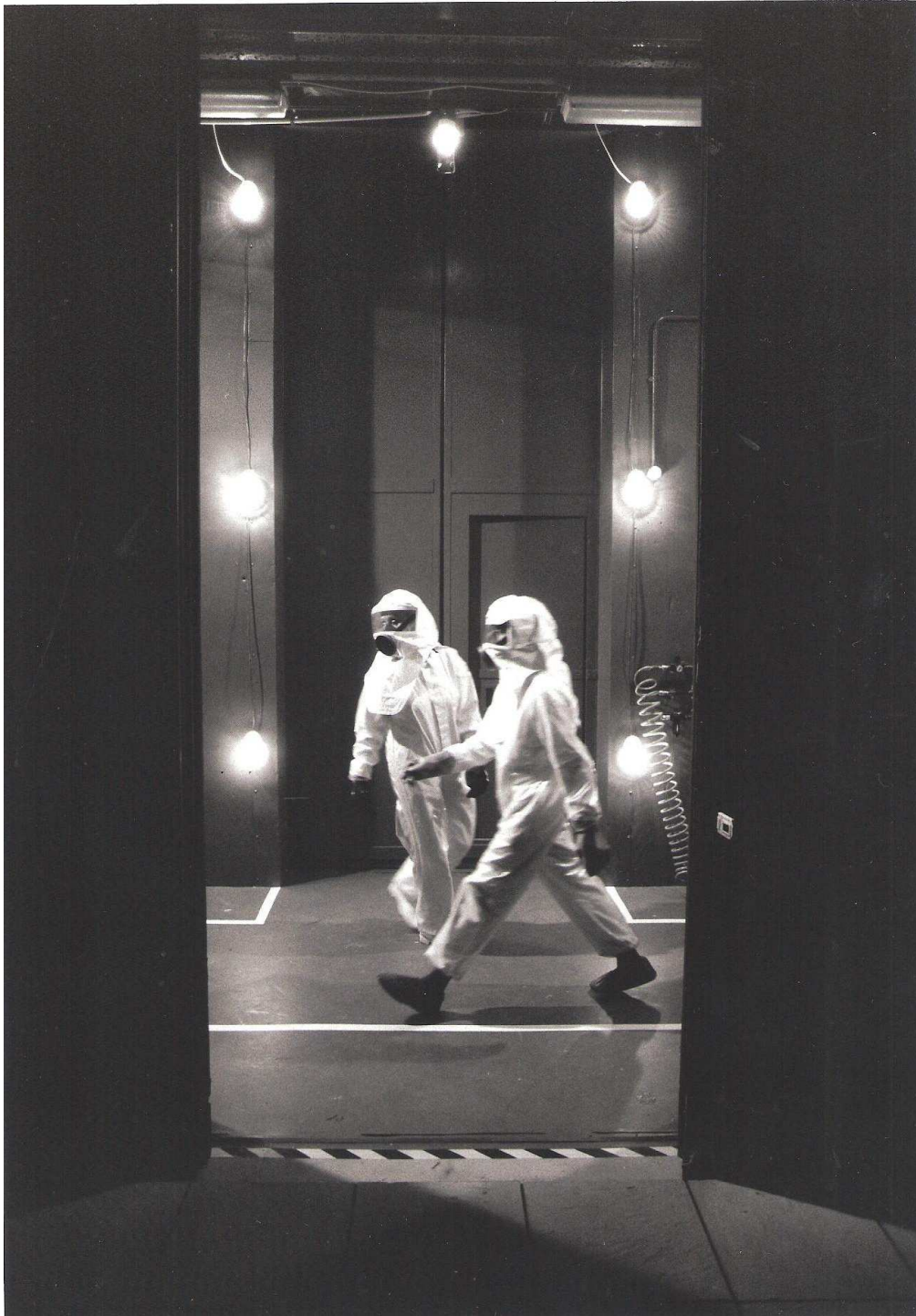


Figure 1: Opening scene of Catherine Czerkawska's *Wormwood*.

Direction: Philip Howard. Traverse Theatre, 1997. Photo: Kevin Low.



Figure 2: Anne Marie Timoney (Tanya) and Liam Brennan (Stefan) in Catherine Czerkawska's *Wormwood*. Direction: Philip Howard. Traverse Theatre, 1997. Photo: Kevin Low.



Figure 3: Forbes Masson (Artemis) in Catherine Czerkawska's *Wormwood*. Direction: Philip Howard. Traverse Theatre, 1997. Photo: Kevin Low.



Figure 4: Meg Fraser (Natalia) and Stephen Clyde (Viktor) in Catherine Czerkawska's *Wormwood*. Direction: Philip Howard. Traverse Theatre, 1997. Photo: Kevin Low.



Figure 5: Liam Brennan (Stefan) and Anthony O'Donnell (Anton) in Catherine Czerkawska's *Wormwood*. Direction: Philip Howard. Traverse Theatre, 1997. Photo: Kevin Low.



Figure 6: Meg Fraser (Natalia), Anthony O'Donnell (Anton) and Anne Marie Timoney (Tanya) in Catherine Czerkawska's *Wormwood*.
Direction: Philip Howard. Traverse Theatre, 1997. Photo: Kevin Low.



Figure 7: Anne Marie Timoney (Tanya) and Liam Brennan (Stefan) in Catherine Czerkawska's *Wormwood*. Direction: Philip Howard. Traverse Theatre, 1997. Photo: Kevin Low.



Figure 8: NVA's *The Second Coming* (1990). Courtesy of NVA.



Figure 9: NVA's *The Second Coming* (1990). Courtesy of NVA.



Figure 10: NVA's *The Second Coming* (1990). Courtesy of NVA.

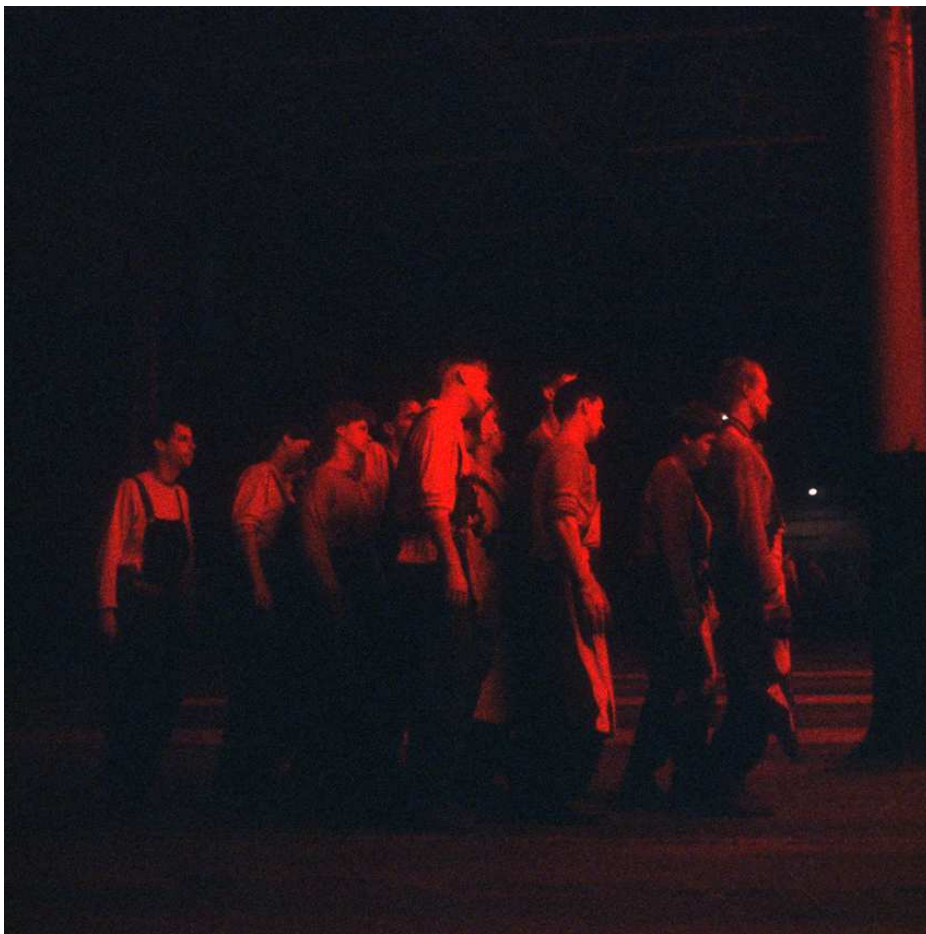


Figure 11: NVA's *The Second Coming* (1990). Courtesy of NVA.

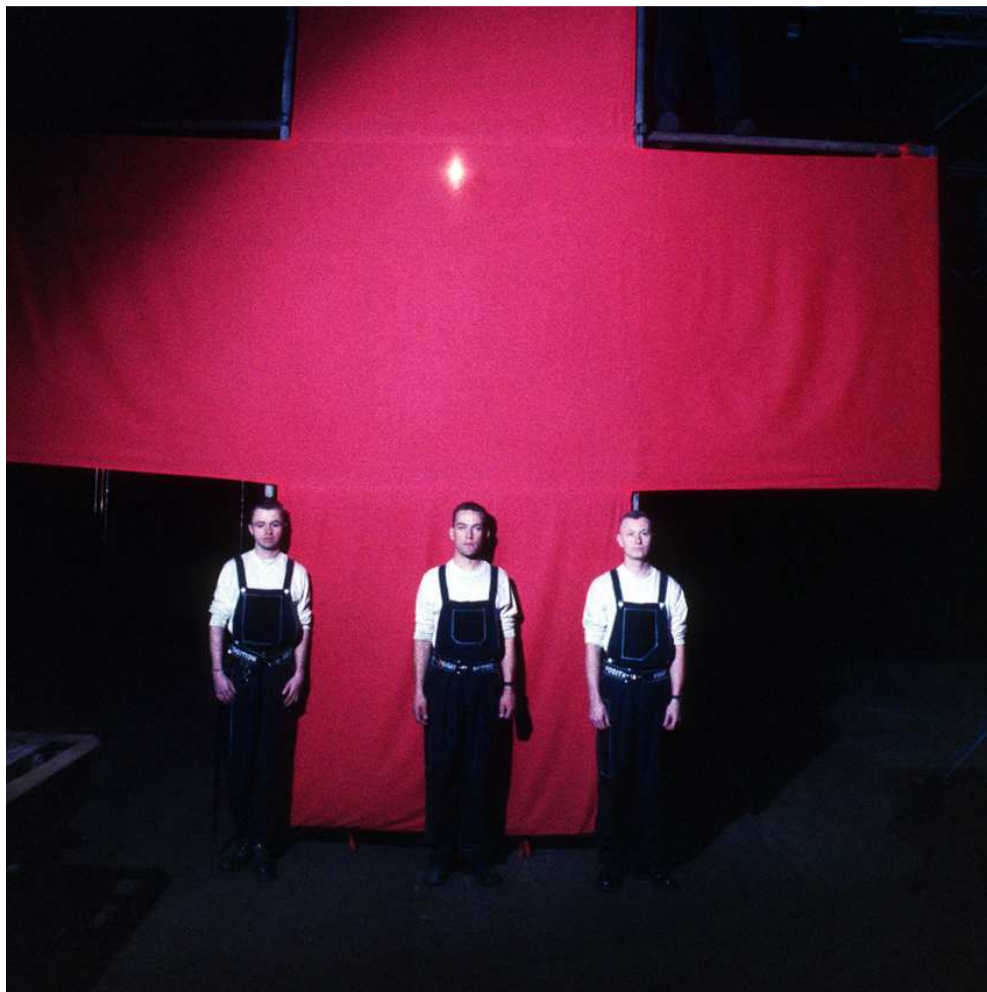


Figure 12: NVA's *The Second Coming* (1990). Courtesy of NVA.



Figure 13: NVA's *The Second Coming*, pre-production. Courtesy of NVA.



Figure 14: NVA's *The Second Coming* (1990). Courtesy of NVA.



Figure 15: NVA's *The Second Coming* (1990). Courtesy of NVA.



Figure 16: NVA's *The Second Coming* (1990). Courtesy of NVA.



Figure 17: NVA's *The Second Coming* (1990). Courtesy of NVA.



Figure 18: NVA's *The Soul Machine* (1991), flyer. Courtesy of NVA.

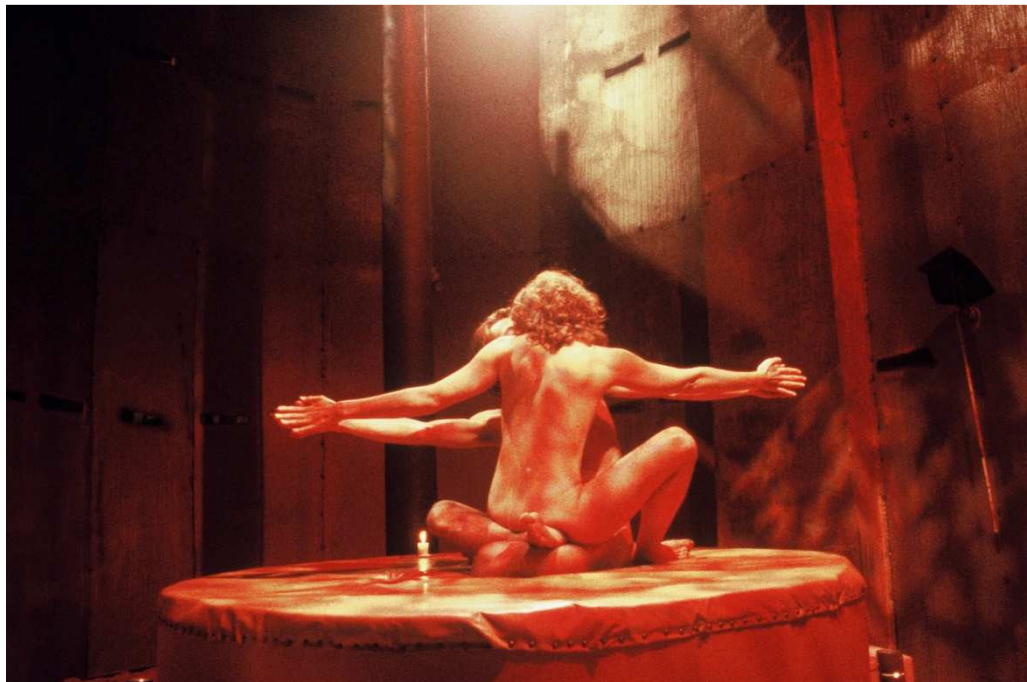


Figure 19: NVA's *Sabotage* (1993). Courtesy of NVA.



Figure 20: NVA's *The Silent Twins* (1994). The Courtney Twins.

Courtesy of NVA.



Figure 21: NVA's *Stormy Waters* (1995), flyer. Courtesy of NVA.



Figures 22 and 23: Graham Cunningham in NVA's *Pain* (1996). Courtesy of NVA.



Figure 24: NVA's *Pain* (1996). Courtesy of NVA.



Figures 25 and 26: NVA's *The Secret Sign*, Finnich Glen, 1998. Courtesy of NVA.



Figures 27 and 28: NVA's *The Path*, Glen Lyon, 2000. Courtesy of NVA.



Figures 29 and 30: NVA's *The Storr: Unfolding Landscape*, Isle of Skye, 2005. Courtesy of NVA.



Figure 31: NVA's *The Storr: Unfolding Landscape*, Isle of Skye, 2005.

Courtesy of NVA.