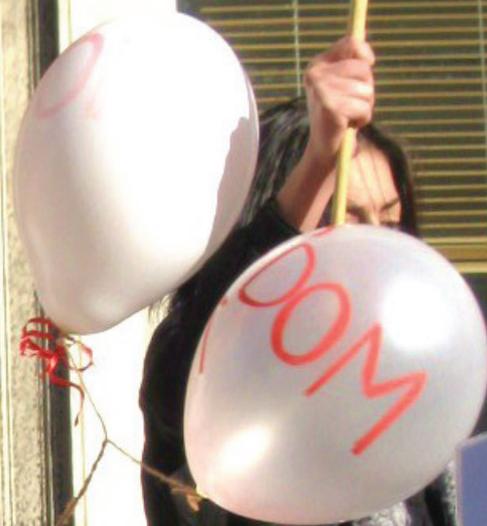


# SynchroniCITY

The Independence Issue

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FEES  
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FEES



# editorial

## The Independence Issue

Welcome to our magazine, this first issue of SynchroniCITY. The name comes from the ability of nature to align all things that should happen at the right time in life, in a perfect flowing motion; like the way that all of us met to form this magazine. Our name also pays tribute to the home of our learning, CITY UNIVERSITY.

What is a Londoner? Walking the grey streets one sees people from every cultural sphere, on the bus and tube accents and languages merge into a cacophony of sound.

We are Londoners: myself a South African, my colleagues: a Dane, a Scots man, a French woman. Our University with over 130 nationalities from all parts of the globe they, we, have converged to meet at this one place in the world, be it down to political reasons, economic reasons, or just pure education. We have made a decision to physically cut our bonds to our homelands, be brave seafaring adventurers and come ashore.

### THE SHACKLES OF THE PAST

This issue, 'The Independence', falls on the anniversary when Africa achieved independence from the European colonies in the 60's. This was a momentous and joyous time in the start, with these independent declarations, for what could be more appealing than freedom from the oppressors.

The problems of Africa that were originally caused by avaricious colonialists who made their own countries rich and powerful, leaving behind squalor and opposing tribes in the same geographical borders. These scars are now deeply engrained across the face of the continent. Many years later, we have to face the reality that history can and must not excuse the civil wars, rapes, pillaging and corrupt African governments who grind down the poor populations so they can live off the fat of the land. These governments must be held accountable for their decisions. Looking for colonial scapegoats to blame is easy, but direct action is true responsibility.

We have elaborated on the theme of Independence in this issue beyond Africa as an inspiration, realising that Independence comes in all forms: from music, theatre, to the Independence of youth going out to protest against the increase in fees for higher education.

# SynchroniCITY

## The Independence Issue

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### mission statement

We want to provide a voice for CITY UNIVERSITY, to be the representation of every student by bringing news, information and the arts from a local and an international perspective

### staff

**Founder-Editor:** Mark Silberstein | **Journalists:** Alex Anderson, Christian Jensen, Rebecca Suner | **Design Layout:** Rebecca Suner



# to live and dwell nostalgic notions of South Africa

**D**ie stem - The Call - was the national anthem, the voice of the orange, white and blue, the colours of the oppressive regime that was South Africa. The masses beaten into submission by the nightstick known as apartheid.

I was very young in the 1980's when I saw the photographs in the papers showing protesters in the streets of Cape Town being pushed back with water cannons, rubber bullets. The Afrikaner and his regime their distorted dream of «Separate but equal», indeed, for whom?

I was young when my parents told me about the exile of Nelson Mandela on Robben Island, the great freedom fighter Steve Biko and how he was beaten to death by the security forces. Their holiday in Canada where they finally got to see *Cry Freedom* as it was banned at home.

My family was involved in the struggle, my dad protesting against apartheid as a student at the University of Cape Town, my aunt a part of the Black Sash, a cousin who wrote for the Rand Daily Mail, another cousin put in prison because of his contacts within the African National Congress (ANC).

I was older when the independence for all South Africans was upon us, the Yes and No vote, Mandela's walk to freedom. The glory days when South Africans were finally equal under Madiba's watchful eye and strong words.

I was older when Thabo Mbeki took the throne, and ushered in the age of ANC corruption, when the freedom fighters blood sweat and toil was just a legacy that he held onto to become another incompetent African leader.

My views on systems became, that there are none that work; punk rock lyrics, Anarchist writers, Kropotkin, Chomsky, Orwell. The hope lay in people not political systems and words were the most powerful weapons of mass destruction.

It was with a lump in my throat that I boarded the plane at Cape Town International airport and flew to London 11 years ago. Swapping the sun and sea for concrete and rain. The struggle to adapt to my new home, the fighting of the pull to go back, adjust, fit in. Forget, forget, replace all that you know but always keep the warm glow of Africa in your heart, that one place that they can never get to. The love of the land, the people, the air.

Yet the journey created the man, the encounters the strength, the experiences the words. Other richness and jewels have been discovered and the peeling back of the grey curtain, exposed the layers of London, the culture, the history, the endlessness of every day with still so much left to do at the end of them. We are a part of our environment I have two homes now: one where I live and the other where I dwell.

Mark Silberstein

## FACTS & FIGURES

**Capital:** Pretoria  
**President:** Jacob Zuma (ANC)  
**Population:** 49,991,300

**Official languages:** 11, including English, Afrikaans, Xhosa and Zulu

**Religions:** from the different African tribes to, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu and Christian faiths

**1652:** first European settlers were Dutch, led by Jan Van Riebeeck.

**1948 - 1990:** regime of Apartheid

**11 Feb. 1990:** release of Nelson Mandela ('Madiba')





NEWS: viewpoint

## This New Generation of Demonstrators: viewpoint of **YOUTH** action

The 10th of November, 50,000 students and lecturers gathered in the streets of London to demonstrate against the rise of the tuition fees announced by the con-dem coalition.

SynchroniCITY asked four of these protestors what drew them there that day.

### Tamara: don't let the budget-cuts bite



As one of nearly 50,000 people who attended the boisterous march past the Houses of Parliament, Tamara London, an 18 year old gap year student from Barnet in north London expressed her concern at the governments planned raise of tuition fees.

“They should be encouraging people to go into education, instead they are putting people off university. It's unfair” she shouted against the backdrop of the roaring crowd. “They should be putting more money into our education and future”.

The proposed increase in fees will not be implemented until 2012. Tamara is especially anxious for her friends, who, being a year younger, will have to pay up to triple the amount she will. “It's unfair because i'm a year older they won't have the same chances.”

She is hoping to begin a degree at University College London in September 2011, a year before the proposed cuts. It may be a very tough year to apply for university, with applications set to rocket after the announced tuition fees rise. As well as competing with the record number of unsuccessful applicants that will be re-applying after last year. **A.A.**

## Jack: 'I was a protest virgin'

Jack wears a poppy on his jacket and Doc Martens on his feet – “it’s the first time I have worn them” he says, showing-off proudly his brand new boots on the way to the demo. Till September 2010, Jack was living in Loughborough and never had the opportunity to raise his voice on the streets. But Jack is not only here to satisfy his curiosity; if he is protesting today, it’s against the rise of the tuition fees: “it’s wrong to encourage people to get into that much debt”. Jack was raised by a history teacher mom and his childhood marked by daily debates around the dining table. Today, he feels that’s what built his political beliefs.

Among the hubbub of slogans, Jack picks up on those targeting the ‘Lib-demons’. Like many other students, he is one of the deceived Lib-Dem voters of the last general elections: “I am utterly disappointed by Nick Clegg. He promised not to increase the tuition fees and now he’s turning round on that.”

Indeed. The Lib-Dem Vince Cable, in charge of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skill, accountable for all university policies, had signed the NUS (National Union of Students) pledge before the coalition formed. Cable, along with 500 Liberal Democrats (including Nick Clegg), 260 Labour and 16 Conservative candidates stood «against any increase in fees in the next parliament and to pressure the government to introduce a fairer alternative». Nick Clegg himself addressed the student voters to «use [their] votes to block those unfair tuition fees and get them scrapped once and for all.»

“An entire generation of Lib-Dem voters were betrayed.” Disheartened, Jack’s prognostics on the future of the Lib-Dem party are pessimistic: “I can’t see attaining power for the next twenty, thirty years”. Recent declarations of Cable added more fuel to the fire: “We didn’t break a promise. We made a commitment in our manifesto, we didn’t win the election. We then entered into a coalition agreement, and it’s the coalition agreement that is binding upon us and which I’m trying to honor.”

But as stated on Lib-Dem candidate Derek Deedman’s website, the NUS pledge “clearly indicated that this would be unconditional; regardless of whether the party was in government or in opposition”. R.S.



## Mizla: distortion of a struggle



Streets full of noise and faces full of smiles was the picture that was apparent in London at the student protests on the 10th November and even the sun came out to illuminate the way.

The feel was like every other march that makes this revolutionary city such a special place with all the usual elements of camaraderie and unity. It was apparent that a lot of young hopefuls for university, who looked old enough to be finishing their A-levels, were out there due to sheer survival for the outcome of their future.

Since the Coalition government has come into power they have hack-sawed through a lot of issues in an attempt to deal with the recession and these left over jagged edges, that could remain after the cuts are implemented in 2013 could be just a little too harsh. In an outcome that could see the dumbing down of society as too many people feel that the price hike in the University fees that students would eventually have to pay back, are too steep as the proposed plan is to make them up to £9000 as opposed to the close to £4000 that they now stand at per annum.

One such person who feels this way is Mizla Marandhar. An 18 year old student who is doing her A-levels at Harrow College: “Well I plan to move out when I go to University and I don’t want my family to pay for everything, but if they increase the fees to £9000 it’s going to be a bit hard for me to do everything on my own. And I don’t want to keep on paying debt until I am 50 years old. I want to study media and psychology, next year. Everyone has been to university in my family, but now it seems that only the very rich people will be able to go, and the working class people are going to suffer.”

Her words seemed to echo the fears and thoughts of the 50,000 people that were banging drums and making themselves heard, but were they being heard? A reported 200 people on the march that day decided to attack the Tory headquarters in Millbank smashing windows, throwing missiles and starting fires. David Cameron said the next day: “I could see a line, a thin blue line of extremely brave police officers, trying to hold back a bunch of people who were intent on violence and destruction... but as the police themselves have said, there weren’t enough of them.” The NUS president, Aaron Porter, condemned the actions of «a minority of idiots». Yet the papers the next day went with the sensationalist angle, photos of people tearing the Millbank headquarters apart on front covers of newspapers, before readers even had the chance to read further, it had become tainted and spread like wildfire, that this day was all about violence.

There will always be troublemakers, and those that go out to for a joyride or to sabotage the work of many, yet the facts need to be reported and in a Democracy that we adhere to the majority rules and their voices should be the loudest. M.S.

## Mikaela: voices raised to no effect



I met Mikaela, 20, an international relations student, on my way back from marching the streets of London towards parliament in protest of the tripled caps on student fees Nick Clegg had promised not to touch, but back tracked on with nothing more than a vague apology.

She was sitting, chatting and relaxing with other students on the side of the road as the last wave of banners headed past us to join the main crowd.

She didn't look like your average anarchistic protester that the media has painted us a rather unflattering picture of: semi dressed-to-impress with heeled boots, a casual scarf and the new craze, indie rimmed glasses.

She perfectly summed up the generation that had

risen to the occasion today, not particularly interested in politics, but forced to grab a sign and shout their indignation when the suits started to meddle with their comfy student existence.

I sat down next to her, pen in hand and put her in the spotlight:

*Q: Why are you here today?*

A: I'm here to show my support against the new caps on student fees, I think its a sham, they promised us what we wanted to hear and when they had our votes they blew us off.



*Q: A sham?! Tell me more.*

A: Its discriminating the way students are being treated today. On one hand they rattle on about us being the future of society and education being the only way forward, then trampling on our rights and binding us to huge loans that will take a decade, probably more to pay off. I won't be affected by the rise, but my younger sister and her friends, as well as all our children, will face these new fees and a lot of them will probably choose other options or maybe go abroad to study.

*Q: They do say its just a loan, a favourable one at that, something about not having to pay off after you reach a certain income level?*

A: That just looks great on paper. In truth if you're not going for a degree that will fill your pockets, doctor, lawyer or what not, you're stuck. It'll kill culture and the less "high-flier" jobs out there. You don't want to do a degree in arts, midwifery or journalism for example, as you're gambling on the job market being able to provide for these when your degree is done, and with the current job market that is just a sad joke.

*Q: So who are you here with, where are you from?*

A: We are a self organised group from Keele University, there's about 300 of us, sadly our student union didn't have any real part of this.

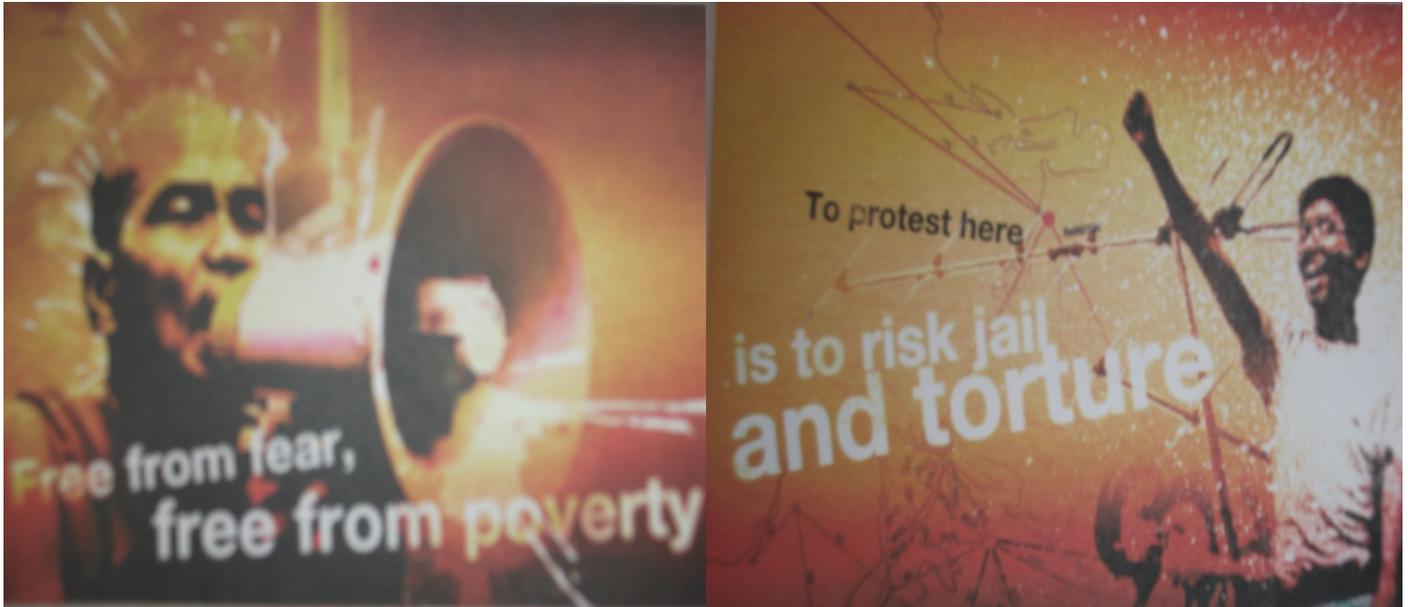
*Q: Now the question that is on everyone's mind, will this actually change anything?*

A: No, nothings going to change. I can't remember last time activism changed anything in England... Politicians just roll down the curtains when people are crowding outside parliament. But we need to let our voices get heard, and I'm positively surprised that the young people in England are actually starting to protest and get involved. The

sad thing is that I don't think anything could have changed this, to the suits we are just numbers on paper, something they can shuffle around as they like. Even if we have chosen Labour they would probably have done the same. C.J.



# Censored Burma



**A**s Western nations learn more about Burma, modern technology is making it easier for the Burmese people to learn about their nation.

The future of Burma is uncertain. The country has been under the intense watch of the international media of late, with their controversial elections and the release of the dissident National League for Democracy leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, from her latest spell of house detention.

Eighteen months ago, before Aung San Suu Kyi's latest period of house arrest, mobile phones were uncommon and she has not yet used the internet. Her main source of information during house arrest was the radio.

Technological advancements, like the internet, mean more Burmese people can access the information they want and need, and can communicate it with others much more easily.

A 3rd year Burmese and Development student at SOAS University London said: "A huge source of information for people in Burma, especially the younger generation, is from people's blogs. People spread information about what is actually going on in the country and what they feel about what is happening.

"Facebook is actually huge out there which I found weird. Considering China has banned Facebook, the Burmese Government hasn't seemed to clock on to the fact that people are communicating and sharing opinions via their status. Individuals create space for freedom within the country."

To gain access to the internet at home, a Burmese citizen must make an application to the government. Considering this and

the fact that all official press is government owned and the rest is tightly regulated, it has been hard for people within Burma to access uncensored information.

Before the internet, radio was virtually the only source of free knowledge. The BBC World service has a department that broadcasts directly into Burma, providing the people with a source of information they can trust.

Amnesty International said in a recent video promoting their Radios for Burma campaign: "Tuning into radio broadcasts is one of the only ways for people to access uncensored independent information, free from state control."

In the run up to the November election, the internet in Burma slowed to a halt. Burma's Ministry of Post and Telecommunications (MPT) controls a large quantity of the internet connection throughout the country.

Speaking on Burma's Irrawady News website, a source close to the ministry said that Internet access was normal at all governmental and military institutions serviced by MPT but access for business and internet cafes was shut down to control the flow of information in and out of the country.

Around 1.3million people in Burma have use of a mobile phone; only 4% of the 54 million population MPT stated. A mobile phone in Burma will cost the average citizen around eight years wages.

The Burmese press ranked fifth lowest in the Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Index 2010.

Alex Anderson

# Outside the right law

French deputies and mayors opposed to Rachid Bouchareb's new movie, *Outside The Law*, being shown at the Festival de Cannes last May.

## FESTIVAL DE CANNES, MAY 2010

A thousand people gathered on the red carpet to protest against the projection of *Outside The Law*, Rachid Bouchareb's second movie about the French (de)colonization. Among the demonstrators, far-right and right wing elected representatives tossed off many recriminations against the movie: a 'revisionist work of propaganda' and an 'insult to the Republic'. No less.

In 2006, however, *Days of Glory* [Bouchareb's precedent movie] had a warmer welcome. The day of its release, the French prime minister announced his good deed. He promised to those veterans from the ex-colonies that are still alive to align their pensions on their French peers.

Bouchareb's new release, tells the destiny of three Algerian brothers from the Sétif massacres in 1945 and throughout the Independence war till 1962. Abdelkader, the political one, has just been released from prison with a staunch determination and a well-stocked contact book. He meets his two younger brothers and mother in a slum of the suburbs of Paris. To make a living, their only choice is to work at the factory nearby with all the other emigrants, under-paid and perpetually nostalgic of the lost land. Saïd, the youngest, is very ambitious. Whatever it takes, he will make his way up the social ladder.

## ESCAPE

Their hope, they need to find it somewhere outside the law; the world of pimps and prostitutes for Saïd, and the FLN (Front de Libération Nationale) for his two older brothers. Messaoud, along with Abdelkader, toughened by his experience as a soldier in Vietnam's independence war, will fight under the aegis of the revolutionary body founded in 1954.

As the FLN members did, the brothers participate in the café-wars (assassinations of the opponents of the FLN, the MNA - Mouvement National Algérien - in a struggle for influence), collect the revolutionary tax and condemn without impunity those FLN members who stick out of the herd.

Yet, the cinematographic quality of the movie is open to criticism. The 'THREE BROTHERS, THREE DESTINIES' scheme, plus the sensationalist touch – one explosion/gunshot/dilemma/murder per minute – are too much. The plot is outlined hastily and details are left-aside. When at the middle of the movie, I recognized my own hipsterish pair of glasses on the nose of Abdelkader I got a bit upset.

Upset because this is what gives credit to those who want to demolish a work of art by pleading its non-accuracy. Indeed, history is based on facts that can easily be manipulated.

## AMBIGUITY

'What made your fight more legitimate than mine?'. The question Abdelkader asks to the policeman tracking him down – a resistant from WWII – is central. When we stand for a cause, to what extent are we biased?

In the praised *Days of Glory*, the acting trio – Jamel Debbouze, Roshdy Zem and Sami Bouajila – were three soldiers under the colonist's thumb, fighting for the colonist's freedom. In *Outside the Law*, they fight for their own freedom... from the colonist. The weapons swapped sides. The politicians' reactions as well.

Rebecca Suner

### Outside the Law (Hors la Loi)

UK Cinema Release Date:

Sunday 21st November 2010

Written and Directed by: Rachid Bouchareb

Produced by: Jean Bréhat

Starring: Jamel Debbouze, Roschdy Zem, Sami Bouajila, Chafia Boudraa

Genres: Action, Drama, History

### Liberty, Equality, Fraternity?

*Days of Glory* follows four North African men who fight for the French against the Nazis during world war two.

After volunteering the four men find themselves fighting on more than one front. They face severe racial discrimination from their French counterparts: inferior food rations, no military leave and witness the unnecessary slaughter of their brothers in arms. Which is all stunningly and conspicuously portrayed by director Rachid Bouchareb.

Although discrimination lessened when the African colonies became independent from France, the indigenous veterans still had their pensions frozen. *Days of Glory* was a voice for equality. A.A.



Screenshot from *Outside the Law*

# Arts

## Photo of the Month

Taken at the protest against the tuition fee rise, 10th of Nov, Downing Street  
by Mark Silberstein.



# Music

## NEW POLITICS

Crowding together in the dark top floor of *The Barfly* in Camden, the audience had not been especially turned on by the warm up band, but when lead singer David Boyd entered with a half somersault as the smoke machines exploded, the crowd went wild as well.

Never steaming down and at some points almost defying gravity David set a chaotic and non stop pace for the band, only stopping singing to break-dance to the guitar solos.

The gig in *Barfly* was their second of three in London in the bands UK tour before heading to the US for a 30-date trip across the states.



The hectic energy they deliver in their live shows is a trademark that has defined the band since their creation. After writing songs and performing in every style of music for three years separately, David and Soren Hansen (guitar, vocal, keyboard) found they had unintentionally formed a band after contacting Poul Ameliel (drums) to rehearse some of the 300 songs they had collected together.

At the time still playing at a hobby level, and starting to doubt if they had any potential beyond that, they said “Fuck it” (later the bands motto) and entered a music competition among 972 other bands, the “Career Cannon” for a spot as warm up gig at the Spot music festival.

“We were at a point musically where you could say we had given up, honestly,” David remembered. “It was at that point. We were doing

it solely as a hobby. In the back of our minds we might have been holding onto the dream but it was more about the joy of music and having fun. We were trying to help each other out and we ended up experimenting. We came up with a couple of good songs.”

When the phone rang and they had progressed to the second stage, they had still not played live as an official band. Against all odds they went on to win this as well, and got their first real gig among the four winning spots at the festival, where the threesome played a show so wild that Poul and Soren left the stage covered in blood and Poul nearly beheaded a fan with a thrown drumstick.

Deciding to say “Fuck it” to the usual way of starting a music career they then recorded their first album in Soren’s bedroom and moved to

New York. Since then they have performed at the *South by Southwest* festival and been playing support on the 30 Seconds to Mars tour “Into the Wild”.

Summing up their style and attitude David said “It’s not that much about technique or skill, but that’s over-shined by the truth in some way. I think people are ready for that. People are fed up with what’s going on in the world. There’s no real answers. There’s nothing solid. There’s no foundation. We feel like that as well. That’s why we write the lyrics that we do. You can almost laugh at life. We’re like “Fuck it”. We are aggressive in our approach and we’re going to throw it in peoples’ faces. We’re politics. I think our music allows people to let something out. It’s a wake-up call.”

Christian Jensen

# Theatre

## TRACES

“Traces is an investigation of the spaces that lie in the interstices of the modern world. In three poetic pictures the dancers are reclaiming a space to exist, struggling to leave traces in the nothingness that surrounds them.” - Christina Andersen, Choreographer

Traces, an expressionistic approach to the human experience, from birth to death, took up the battle against the “official theatre world” of Westside by performing at a dance school in Greenwich, London.

Shown at the *Bonnie Bird Theatre*, Traces featured three dancers Sarah Armstrong (German), Wei-Shan Lai (Chinese), Elisabeth Schilling (Danish), each with their own culturally inspired music track.

Relying heavily on the music, lighting and props to create the atmosphere, the entire experience however lay on the dancers’ shoulders. With the expressionistic style being the red thread, the dancers had no help from a plot or dialogue to make the audience understand what was happening on the stage.

One particularly moving scene featured each dancer improvising while a voice spoke in their respective language, German, Danish or Chinese, telling a nonsense story. This created a completely different experience for each member of the audience depending on how many, if any, of the stories they could understand.

While the show has no apparent plot, just a moving set of scenery to indicate the passage of time, after seeing it you still feel as though a story has been told. An explosive start indicating birth, a careful introduction of the dancers for childhood, improvisation for adulthood and a darkening and

slowing down at the end symbolising old age.

Wanting to bring back the expressionistic style of theatre to the big public, Christina Andersen decided to find venues with no artistic restrictions and start her way from the bottom up. She believes that the theatre world has become too mainstream, with a focus on only either the classics, *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Les Miserables*, or purely commercial success, *The Lion King*, *We Will Rock You*. This has blocked out all chances for new and alternative styles to grow and glow.

To combat this she used every performance as a chance to advertise her new concept to both the public and the movers and shakers in the industry. By lowering prices and advertising in local media she drew in the public from all over London, to test how to combat the high prices, that is often cited as slowly killing theatre when cheaper alternatives such as cinema is available. She also jokingly added that she almost felt more like a PR agent than an artist “after having to organise and send out so many invitations to theatre directors and critics.”

While the long term future of her experiment is still to be seen, Christina was very optimistic after the first handful of shows. Her pricing tactic drew in record numbers for an underground performance and she had three more shows organised by interested directors and theatre owners. “We’re moving on completely new ground here, while small theatres have used these ideas before no one has tried this method with just a performance on a fluid basis. The first attempt went well, but if we can continue the lucky streak, who knows?” C.J.

**Choreography:** Christina Brøndsholm Andersen in cooperation with the dancers

**Dancers:** Sarah Armstrong, Wei-Shan Lai, Elisabeth Schilling

**Composer:** Bo Riemer

**Set and Costume Design:** Vicki Stevenson

**Lighting Design:** Gregor Knüppel



