



Philosophy

- ❖ No official director
- ❖ Performances of secondary importance
- ❖ No money charged for performances
- ❖ **Group Theatre** - all members are equally important
all members are equally **committed**
- ❖ **Research Theatre** - research on self and theatre
(includes reading, workshops, &c) ○

Training

- ❖ Physical (for balance, flexibility, &c - conducted by Sarah)
- ❖ Acting (includes improvisations, games, &c)
- ❖ Theatrical (includes concentration, voice, &c)
- ❖ Creative skills (includes writing, drawing, miniperformances, &c)
- ❖ Gym (Optional - aerobics, weight-lifting - for strenght, stamina, &c)
- ❖ Dance (includes coordination, also videos - conducted by Sarah) ○

Finance

£m3.00 per month paid in by each member to the treasurer (Russell) to be deposited in Aleateia's bank account. This money is used to finance performances and other areas (such as training).

- ❖ Members on a trial period do not pay during the first month. If, after a month of introductory training, a person decides to become a permanent member of Aleateia, s/he has to start paying his/her monthly fee. Money is not returned to a member if s/he drops out of the group ○

Commitment

This is part of any contemporary theatre group's philosophy and is absolutely **crucial** if any work is to be done.

- ❖ There being no official director, means that each member is responsible and can rely on no higher authority than him-/herself. A member (or 2) is chosen to act as director for a given performance, with the help of Sarah (technical coordinator of the group).
- ❖ Attendance to all sessions throughout the year is important in the extreme. Aleateia sessions should become part of each member's life and can be missed only when s/he is sick or abroad.
- ❖ Since many of Aleateia's members are students, there is a recess during each test period, namely January and May, for roughly three or four weeks.
- ❖ Members are expected to be loyal to the group and not work with any other theatre companies. If commitment is complete, this won't be difficult since members are left with little time for external (to Aleateia) theatrical happenings ○

Sitting on a mushroom, the large blue caterpillar insists on asking his question again - *Who are you?* Alice hardly knows. When Pilate posed this same question - *Who are you?* - Christ chose not to answer. In trying to answer such a question, Aleateia can try to identify itself and its purpose within the sphere of the theatre. A definition of Aleateia could be - a theatre group with ideas based mainly on fairy tales - which may deceive the adult reader with their simplicity. However, we doubt that such a definition could be enough to convey a clear picture of our group. Thus an attempt at explaining the mechanism of the group is undertaken below.

The main emphasis is on games which are meant to be fun in themselves. This does not mean, however, that the group is not committed in a serious, engaging way. On the contrary, to us the theatre is more than just the staging of a production (or a number of productions). It is a total approach to theatre - research, work, play, reading, writing, becoming conscious of space, time, voice, body, psychology. We are totally involved, not just in preparing a production, but in forming an environment which goes beyond that. We experience more than rehearsals, and it is work as much as it is fun - hence the games. In this way, a performance would by no means be the group's end, but rather a milestone in a long road towards an intimate relationship with the theatre.

As any particular secondary colour is made up of a number of primary ones, so Aleateia is made up of individual members merging together to create a hue totally new, to form one identity. but what does the name really mean? It is a name just like any other name. It is a label which doesn't have to really mean anything... But having said that, we (the colours that make it up), really do have a definition for it. It is our very own adaptation of the Greek word Aletheia, meaning truth. Aleateia is truth from our point of view - not distorted truth, but personal truth: our truth. Moreover we agree that the word sounds better like this, so we chose it to be our name.

Being radical disciples of Durrantian thought, we obviously could not help giving ourselves the freedom of assigning any meaning which suited our purposes, In the words of the great egghead himself:

When I use a word ... it means just what I choose it to mean - nothing more or less.

Another feature which the group believes in wholeheartedly is democracy. This political set-up must have prompted us to derive our name from Greek. Every decision that Aleateia takes is discussed and voted upon by all of us. We have no director, no leader. When we say that the group is made up of six separate colours coming together to make up a new shade, we mean that the same quantity of colour is introduced by each member; each one of us contributes ideas without throwing the ultimate colour mixture off balance.

Loranne is the one who came up with a colour for each member of the group. Russell, on the other hand, is much concerned with the grotesque, fantastical element in the theatre. Sarah is the non-actor, down-to-earth member, who takes care of the technical details and also functions as a coordinator. Daniela is the silent one, the one who is eternally searching for answers, for truth. Then there is Victor, the group's innovator, always

coming up with the ideas and provoking new ideas within us. Simon wraps up the loose ends and connects the ideas which everyone has thrown in.

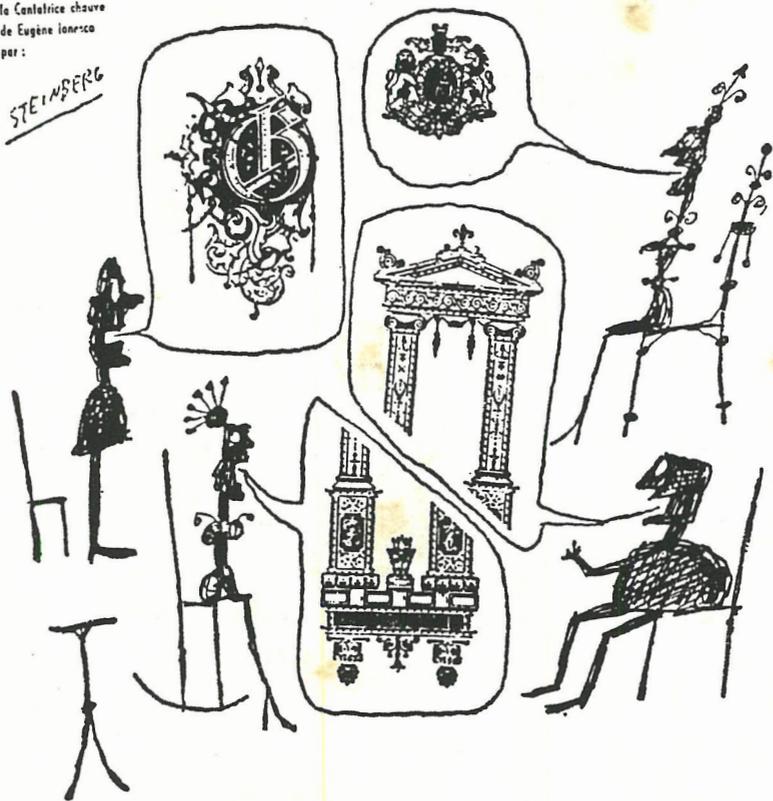
The group is still searching for a precise identity since it was given life last November. However, we know that for us a performance has to be simple and comprehensible, not abstract ideas which the audience will find impossible to understand - simple language and simple style, even though the making up of it might be more complex than what the audience actually witnesses. We definitely do not want to be didactic, pedagogic, or pedantic - our intention is to produce an art form which is self-contained. For us the theatre is a complete art which does not need to feed upon intellectual criticism. We base our art on art itself.





La Cantatrice chauve
de Eugène Ionesco
par :

STEINBERG



Dessin de Steinberg pour *La Cantatrice chauve*.

MME SMITH. — On ne peut comparer un malade à un bateau.

M. SMITH. — Pourquoi pas ? Le bateau a aussi ses maladies; d'ailleurs ton docteur est aussi sain qu'un vaisseau; voilà pourquoi encore il devait périr en même temps que le malade comme le docteur et son bateau.

MME SMITH. — Ah ! je n'y avais pas pensé... C'est peut-être juste... et alors, quelle conclusion en tires-tu ?

M. SMITH. — C'est que tous les docteurs ne sont que des charlatans. Et tous les malades aussi. Seule la marine est honnête en Angleterre.

MME SMITH. — Mais pas les marins.

M. SMITH. — Naturellement.

Plus loin, M. Smith prouve toujours son grand sens de la logique en commentant son journal : « Il y a une chose que je ne comprends pas. Pourquoi à la rubrique de l'état civil, dans le journal, donne-t-on toujours l'âge des personnes décédées et jamais celui des nouveau-nés ? C'est un non-sens. »

Toujours M. SMITH. — ...Ma femme est plus intelligente que moi. En tout cas, elle est beaucoup plus féminine. On le dit.

Ou encore : — ...Puisqu'elle est blonde, elle ne peut être que Marie.

LES LIEUX COMMUNS. — « MME SMITH : Notre petit garçon aurait bien voulu boire de la bière, il aimera s'en mettre plein la lampe, il te ressemble.

« ...La tarte aux coings et aux haricots a été formidable. On aurait bien fait peut-être de prendre, au dessert, un petit verre de vin de Bourgogne Australien mais je n'ai pas apporté le vin à table afin de ne pas donner aux enfants une mauvaise preuve de gourmandise. Il faut leur apprendre à être sobre et mesuré dans la vie. »

IONESCO. — ...(*Mes pièces*) étaient, en effet, une critique des lieux communs, une parodie d'un théâtre qui



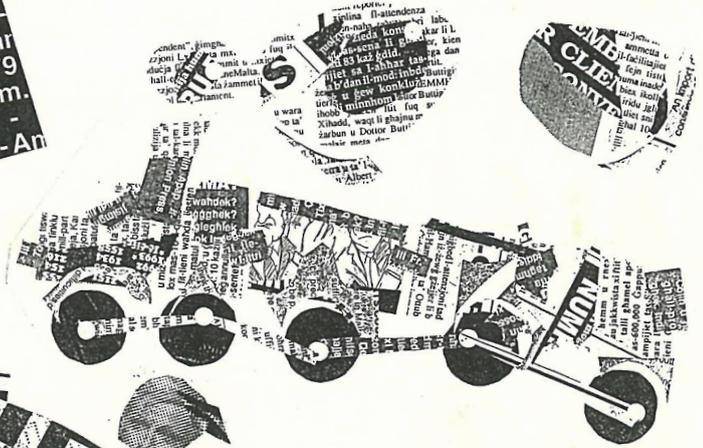
watch
 stopped my
 twenty-first ○
 the twentieth ○ then came the seventeenth
 the eighteenth ○ followed by the fourteenth
 then came the fifteenth ○ after that the
 thirteenth knock ○ at the
 came crashing down on all sides
 sixteenth ○ then came the eleventh
 thirteenth knock ○ followed by the fourth
 then came the eighth knock ○ then came the seventh
 the fourth ○ then came the sixth ○ then came the fifth
 the third knock ○ then came the eighth knock ○
 it did not break me
 the second knock ○
 it beat me
 first knock ○
 I fell
 felt the
 I fell

La Cantatrice Chauve

perfect society, that's to say one where all administrative, economic and political
 problems have been solved
 reached that the basic problems can arise...
 concealed these form us
 disappeared?????
 Without worries boredom arises
 there is not even boredom there is spiritual degeneration



so much that I have lost it
 I have run after life
 present presentness, plitude
 for me, it is, it must be, the
 as you try to grasp it
 vanishing like a ghost as soon
 between our fingers, and
 ever escaping us, slipping
 not this state of existence for
 for me, life is not Time, it is
 what is life?



aleateia

tippresenta

Xi Haga f'Att Wiehed

ispirata minn *La Cantatrice Chauve*

ta' Eugene Ionesco

26 November - 5 December 1993

MITP Valletta

“Hames gimghat ilu,
is-sinjur u s-sinjura Martin telqghu lura ghal Londra minn Manchester...”

Donald Martin - Victor Debono
Elizabeth Martin - Loranne Vella
Bill Biljetti - Russell Muscat
Mary - Coryse Borg
L-awtur - Simon Bartolo

From *Fragments of a Journal* by Eugene Ionesco

“What is life? For me, life is not Time, it is not this state of existence forever escaping us, slipping between our fingers and vanishing like a ghost as soon as you try to grasp it. For me, it is, it must be, the present presentness, plenitude. I have run after life so much that I have lost it.”

“The society I try to describe in a play like La Cantatrice Chauve [The Bald Primadonna] is a perfect society, that's to say one where all administrative, economic and political problems have been solved. It's when this point has been reached that the basic problems can arise. Politics - by which I mean all our worries - concealed these from us. What can we do when our worries have disappeared? Without worries, boredom arises. But where there is not even boredom, there is spiritual degeneration.”

From *Cahiers des Quatre Saisons*, No. I, 1955

The Bald Prima Donna is the only one of my plays the critics consider to be
“purely comic”. And yet there again the comic seems to me to be an expression

of the unusual. But in my view the unusual can spring only from the dullest and most ordinary daily routine and from our everyday prose, when pursued beyond their limits. To feel the absurdity, the improbability of everyday experience and of our attempts at communication is already to have gone a stage further; before you do this, you must first saturate yourself. The comic is the unusual pure and simple; nothing surprises me more than banality; the 'surreal' is there, within our reach, in our daily conversation.

Eugene Ionesco

From *The feeling and knowledge that one is alone*: a comment from a spectator.

Eugene Ionesco's La Cantatrice Chauve was the vehicle for Aleateia's first encounter with their invited audience.

Why not for all?

Alienation and drowning in one's solitude I understood, where the key modules of this excerpt. This was apparent, and genuinely mirrored, in the introduction of the experiment, performed by Victor and Loranne. The piece was both comical and bittersweet. Contemplating on genuinely what is ongoing, and recognizing oneself, (the audience), there on stage, became agonizing and no more humorous. Credit for this goes to Victor's and Loranne's profound examination of this human setback. I felt restless encountering myself on stage.

Their conduct, sentiment and kinship with each other was one of aloofness, symbolizing frigidity and separation. Later, we perceived that these are a couple, a supposedly amorous duet - with children - and once, perhaps, passion unified them.

They accomplished their razor edged unit of reflecting existence - precisely as it is - with a melancholy dance, in unison, waltzing their lives away. Moving like androids, never pursuing each other, both preoccupied in diverse worlds - light years away from anything that could merit them, sooth their labours or welcome their spiritless hearts.

Their lack of eye-contact was crucial and kept successfully. The eyes - the mirror of the soul - embodied what their hearts comprehend, and the actuality that they never let their eyes encounter - only once or twice and very abruptly - asserts their enigma which they had to conceal. Their desolate, frightening worlds of human decadence, soulless bodies and puppet lifestyles were evident and artistically exposed to us, the audience.

Basically, the fulcrum of the play depended on this duo, Victor and Loranne, and to my awareness, they possessed their assignment with truthfulness, sentiment and maturity.

Russell, Coryse and especially Simon played minor roles of compact magnitude. Still, Russell's poetry and Coryse's part with the candle, and talking to the mirror, were a continuation showing the detached world we are living in.

The closeness of the room, the clustered setting, and the actors preparing for the play, were in my opinion, a reward to make the witnesses, all friends or relatives of the troupe, part and parcel of the atmosphere.

The sound and light could have produced a better influence if materials and sound were serviceable. Still the evening was one that left me satisfied.

But why only half an hour?

Dominic Said

From *Lil Aleateia fuq il-produzzjoni* Xi Haga... [29/11/93]: another spectator's comment.

Ha nibda billi nikkummenta fuq karatteristika li ghandha x'taqsam ma' dettal marbut ma' qabel il-hin proprju tal-produzzjoni - il-biljett.

Minn meta Loranne taghtni l-biljett ghall-produzzjoni, ppruvajt nifhem ghaliex hemm bzonn ta' biljett meta d-dhul huwa bxejn! - fil-fatt, il-performance tibda proprju f'dak il-mument, fil-hin li tircievi l-biljett, sakemm int innifsek tidhol fil-produzzjoni nnifisha, permezz tal-mirja!

Ghogobni wkoll l-uzu tal-gazzetti li skond jien jittraxxendi l-ghan dekorattiv u jsiru tifsira. Il-gazzetta tista' tfisser l-assurdita tal-hajja nnifisha le qed tipprova tivverbalizza r-realta. Tista' tfisser il-monotonija ta' hajja cassa (bajda u sewda). Jew x'aktarx tfisser ukoll iz-zmien ghaddej. Ghalhekk, Donald u Elizabeth isiru l-arketipi ta' kull socjeta' fl-istorja tal-bniedem.

Li ma hassejtx zviluppat bizzejjed huwa r-relazzjoni bejn l-atturi u l-muzika fl-ewwel parti. La hassejt li hdimtu maghha u lanqas kontriha. Kienet background music, izda nhoss li prezenza taghha trid tkun iggustifikata fix-xoghol taghkom - il-kif f'idejkom.

Li assolutament m'ghogobnix kien li ergajtu ghalaqtu bil-muzika tal-ftuh - din inhossha ovvja wisq u ma nara l-ebda originalita' u interess.

Ghogobni mmens l-idea tal-magna; il-mixja ta' Russell, iz-zifna ta' Victor u Loranne, u l-ahhar parti. Din il-karatteristika hassejtha zviluppata tajjeb hafna - tiggustifika anki l-assurdita' tat-text. L-atturi huma skorfini fil-magna tal-produzzjoni, cioe il-bniedem bhala 'ogwheel' fil-magna tas-socjeta. U fl-ahhar tal-produzzjoni, din il-magna tehel.

Ghalija l-akbar zball kien Coryse Borg. Mhux qed naghti tort lilha izda lilkom ghax missskom indunajtu bl-izbilanc li kien se jsir. Coryse hija attrici tajba bl-idjoma li hierga minnha hi u ma tista' qatt tifhem fizikament (bhala attrici) ix-xoghol taghkom. Kien ikun ferm ahjar li teliminaw kompletament il-parti jew li l-parti ssir minn membru iehor tal-grupp Aleatea.

Madankollu sincerament inhoss li *Xi Haga* kienet qabel kollox xoghol sincier. Fejn il-grupp kollu emmen f'dak li qed jaghmel.

Prosit.
Ruben Zahra

aleateia

January -
October 1997

Members:

Simon Bartolo
Victor Debono
Alan Fenech
Russell Muscat
Loranne Vella
Robert Zammit

T.S. Eliot became the medium used to stimulate actor's creativity. Eliot's Poetry, especially *The Wasteland*, along with his plays and essays, particularly *Tradition and the Individual Talent*, were all used to enhance the groups' artistic exploration.

Aleateia continued its research work on theatre by refining some of its workshop approach onto a particular philosophical sphere influencing the contemporary Arts - Deconstruction. Simon started thinking about writing a new play, the genre and themes of which became part of the research undergone by the actors and director/ scriptwriter. This research examined traditional Maltese farce and postmodernism. *Il-Kaxxa* was the result of this exploration. The corporal and thematic content of *Il-Kaxxa* is the product of a stylistic and physical study of Derrida's comments on the matter interposed with the mechanics of the Maltese farce.

aleateia

1998-1999

Members:	Anna Formosa
Anthony Attard	Chiara Frendo
Antonella Axisa	Chris Galea
Simon Bartolo	Sephora Gauci
Nathalie Borg	Russell Mizzi
Roberta Cauchi	Loranne Vella

After Aleateia's fourth performance, considerable changes took place. Aleateia decided to organize workshop sessions for non-members. The aim of these sessions (which were organized by Loranne), was to present Aleateia's methodology of work. A number of participants attended these workshops which started in November 1998. A second set of workshops commenced in April 1999. Sessions during this phase of work were of a more advanced nature, and the participants were actually being trained as new members of the group. Training and creative work during these months focused on construction of sequences and characters through improvisation techniques where improvised sequences based on specific dynamics were fixed and refined. Simon was in charge of this phase of work. The interaction and elaboration of these sequences led to a performance based on T. S. Eliot's 1922 poem *The Wasteland*, titled *A Heap of Broken Images*, written and directed by Simon Bartolo, which also concluded the workshop sessions. The participants, having undergone the intensive training, and worked on the performance, became full members of Aleateia.

During the ^{December} last months of 1999, ^{saw} Aleateia ~~was~~ involved in two other events. The first was the production of *On Hold*, a ^{original} Christmas play written and directed by Simon, ^(*) ~~(commissioned by the British Culture Association for the Christmas season.)~~ *On Hold* was also put up as part of the ~~YMCA Festival~~. The second activity was the creation of a puppet performance for the National Millennium Festivities which were held at Floriana.

(*) and performed on the 9th Dec. at the Union Club, Sliema for the BCA Christmas gathering and on 17, 18, 19 Dec. at the MTP as part of the YMCA Festival.

aleateia

2000

Members:

Anthony Attard
Antonella Axisa
Simon Bartolo
Nathalie Borg
Dominic Dimech }*
Maryanne Fenech }

Anna Formosa
Chiara Frendo
Chris Galea
Sephora Gauci
(Richard Muscat }*
Loranne Vella

* -

The intensive training during this year was mainly concerned with the exploration of the following:

Physical actions - action and spatial dynamics:

The idea of segmentation was examined more thoroughly in terms of what is referred to as components - the fragmentation of the body in the smallest units possible. Each body component can perform actions, where each action is determined by the basic dynamics of direction, duration and dimension.

Construction based on tableaux and improvisation - montage:

Three tableaux are constructed, and a sequence is created by moving from one tableau to another. One tableau marks the opening of the sequence, the second is the middle of the sequence, while the third one concludes the sequence. The transition from one tableau to another is improvised (focusing on components of body, dynamics and opposition), whereas the tableaux are compositions since they are pre-fixed. [Through a combination of improvisation and pre-fixed material, further composition is possible.] Longer sequences are possible where improvised continuous action takes place from tableau to another, and tableaux may be repeated. The tableaux, furthermore, may be altered (as in dimension, direction, etc.), or partly executed, and two or more tableaux may be fused together. The merging of two or more tableaux may be simultaneous, sequential, or partly simultaneous and partly sequential. Physical montage can then be followed by textual montage.

Voice:

Voice workshop sessions were organized by Aleateaia with the collaboration of Genevieve Mamo. This training aimed at facilitating ?? ways of using voice creatively. The sessions featured exercises concerned with the discovery of the potential of the vocal component (respiratory techniques, resonators, rhythm, volume and pitch) in relation to the other body components of the actor, as well as to the dynamic of space. The participants were encouraged to explore different textures and modes of articulation; to find ways of working with song and text, together with physical action, and to observe how these interact and affect one another. Creation of personal scores and individual improvisation was also the aim of this training.

During the opening months of this year, Loranne organized another set of workshop sessions ^{for non-members} (for possible new members.) These workshops ~~are~~ ^{were} intended ^{to present to non-members} as an exploration of the basic training of the actor's work. Actor's training technique is an exploration, a discovery, and a development of the potential which resides in every individual: the creative psycho-physical potential which, when activated, becomes the means whereby the human being transforms him/herself into a better human being. It is a transformation of the human being into a creative medium.

Inc - Dominic & Marianne -
photo of Dom + Marianne during training
Caption: "D + M during one of the workshop sessions"