

## ARTAUD'S *LE JET DE SANG*

### An unperformable Surrealist play?

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#### Abstract

*The unfeasible demands of Artaud's surrealist plays, amongst which Le Jet de sang (1925), gave rise to the assumption that he was pursuing an 'impossible theatre.' In this essay, I refute this reading by discussing, firstly, Artaud's work as a theatre director in 1927-29 and Peter Brook's Theatre-of-Cruelty season in 1964 and, in the second part, by reporting on a renewed attempt at staging the 'unperformable' Le Jet de sang (at Bristol University's Department of Drama, in 1996).*

*Le Jet de sang* is a text of merely eight pages, written in 1925 and published the same year by Gallimard.<sup>1</sup> The play is not only short, it also seems to make unfeasible demands on anybody trying to give it a scenic realization. Its stage directions such as 'two stars crash into each other, and we see a number of live pieces of human bodies falling down: hands, feet, scalps (...) with a maddening, vomit-inducing slowness' gave rise to the assumption that Artaud was pursuing an 'impossible theatre', a notion much reinforced by the first professional production by Peter Brook in the London Season of Cruelty in 1964, generally judged to have been a total flop. The need for theatrical spirituality and ritual-like enactments that arose during the sixties and seventies made Artaud a patron saint of the so-called ritual theatre movement and created—especially in the Anglo-Saxon world—an image of this practitioner as an ultra-authentic performer and director.<sup>2</sup> Selected passages from his theoretical writings (of which only a very small number had been translated) combined with a pronounced dearth of documentation of his practical work in the theatre facilitated a 'ritualistic' interpretation of Artaud, suggesting that his plays and productions were flawed from the very beginning and that he strove for something that was unattainable in actual theatre practice.

In this essay, I should like to refute this reading by discussing, in the first part, Artaud's work as a theatre director in 1927-29 and Peter Brook's Theatre-of-Cruelty season in 1964 and, in the second part, by reporting on a renewed attempt at staging the 'unperformable' *Le Jet de sang*.

### Artaud's Productions at the Théâtre Alfred Jarry

As its subtitle *La Boule de verre* indicates, *Le Jet de sang* was originally conceived of as a parody of an Armand Salacrou play.<sup>3</sup> In 1926, it was slated to be performed as part of the first season of the Théâtre Alfred Jarry, the first theatre company founded by Artaud (together with Roger Vitrac and Robert Aron). The short text would have been an appropriate item in the repertoire of this highly original and experimental venture, as it shared a great many similarities with Alfred Jarry's bewildering stage language. For unknown reasons, in the first show (1 and 2 June 1927) *Le Jet de sang* was replaced by *Ventre brûlé*, a rather hallucinatory scenario with many highly intense physical actions and without much dialogue.<sup>4</sup> We therefore do not know how Artaud intended *Le Jet de sang* to be performed. We can only assume that he would have used a method that was similar to those he employed in his other directional enterprises during the Théâtre Alfred Jarry period.

The eight performances of the four productions that Artaud managed to present to his Parisian audiences were only seen by a small number of people and were rather controversially received. Artaud's intention to shock his audiences meant that reviewers used more lines for describing the scandals that surrounded the shows than analyzing the actions presented on stage. It is therefore difficult to arrive at a balanced and impartial assessment of Artaud's work as a theatre director.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, the Théâtre Alfred Jarry was a rather marginal enterprise: playhouses were hired for only a few performances either in the afternoons or on off-days; half-hearted actors were reigned in from other theatres and were given few rehearsals in which to familiarize themselves with Artaud's directorial concepts. Some of the rehearsals had to take place in the house of the group's financier, Dr Allendy; in one case the cast did not even have a single run-through on stage. Actors dropped out of the production, often at last minute under false pretences, which caused one reviewer to lament that there were 'trop peu de répétitions pour que les acteurs novices fussent maîtres d'un texte qui les déroutait autant que les spectateurs.'<sup>6</sup> As there was no technical support crew, it was difficult to locate props, sets and costumes and make them function properly on stage. Consequently, there were lots of arguments within the cast. Under those circumstances it is not astonishing that many of Artaud's ideas could not be fully realized on stage.

Nonetheless, what Artaud finally managed to present to his invited audiences opened up a new agenda in the theatre of his time. Reviewers tended to be rather skeptical of the productions and the scandals they aroused; but when they had some positive things to write it was usually related to Artaud's direction.<sup>7</sup>

## The Théâtre Alfred Jarry

A large part of volume 2 of Artaud's *Œuvres Complètes* is taken up with statements that indicate how the Théâtre Alfred Jarry was supposed to have worked and how it was to have affected its audiences. This allows to discern a few general trends in Artaud's attitude as a director.

Artaud avoided the fake theatricality that was customary in Parisian playhouses. He was an inveterate enemy not only of illusionistic scene painting and papier-maché constructions, but also of the glitz and glamour, the trickery and scam stagecraft that passed as acting in his days. Whenever his actors took recourse to the routines of the trade, Artaud intervened. Instead of playing characters, the actors were encouraged to portray types, in line with Artaud's statement: 'Les personnages seront systématiquement poussés au type.'<sup>8</sup> Artaud believed that such a depersonalized acting style stripped of all naturalist psychology would bring out the underlying, subconscious motivations of the stage figures. Jarry had pursued a similar aim with his marionette theatre, but as one of Artaud's actors reported, with him 'les gestes des acteurs devaient être ceux d'automates plutôt que des marionnettes: précis, saccadés, antinaturels même.'<sup>9</sup> Artaud, so it appears, had translated the surrealist technique of automatic writing into something akin to 'automatic acting.' He sought to structure the actors' movements and gestures in a rhythmic fashion and to give them a dynamic dimension full of abrupt breaks and changes of directions. When combined with a vocal work of a similar physical expressivity, a highly artificial acting style emerged that had little in common with social behaviour in everyday life.

The text provided by the playwright was nothing more than material that could be used, moulded, heightened, or deformed. Artaud's approach to the voice was geared towards a dismantling of the common use of language in everyday speech. The subjective quality of the actor's vocal characteristics was linked to the role s/he was presenting on stage. Like gestures and movements they were, as Artaud stated, 'visible signs of an invisible or secret language (...) where the heart's most secret movements will be exposed' ('signes visibles d'un langage invisibles ou secret (...) où les ressorts les plus sêcretés du cœur seront mis à nu').<sup>10</sup> Therefore, he encouraged his actors to use their vocal apparatus to externalize the character's subconscious urges.

In all of Artaud's productions, the actors' work was complemented by sound effects and music, the aim of which was to affect the audiences' sensibilities and put them into a state of heightened awareness of the emotions underlying the stage

actions. A similar function was attributed to lighting. It was employed to enhance the theatrical character of the objects and actions on stage. But most of all, it was a means of bringing out hidden aspects of the scene and to allude to the characters' subconscious motivations.

The same anti-Naturalist tendencies could be observed in Artaud's treatment of the décor. Artaud continued a line of development already initiated by Jarry at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>11</sup> The stage sets did not have the purpose of reproducing, in an illusionistic manner, the realities of an outer world, but rather functioned in accordance with the deeper logic of the dream world. Décor, like props, were real objects, not fake theatrical scenery, and had been chosen for their suggestive power rather than illustrative properties.

In this respect it was an advantage that the company had no access to prop stores and could not avail themselves to the bric-a-brac that usually cluttered the Parisian stages of the time. Artaud was adamant in his demand that scenery and props had to be real and tangible, because, one of his actors explained, 'la vérité d'Artaud correspond sans doute à la vérité de certains sorciers d'Afrique.'<sup>12</sup>

### **A Season of Cruelty**

For many years, Artaud was best known for his theoretical writings. They were much translated and exercised a profound influence on theatre artists in the 1960s and 70s, so much in fact that, particularly in the Anglo-Saxon theatre world, a popular image arose of Artaud as a gifted and inspirational theoretician and a failed practitioner. A dense fog of cultish 'criticism' has further clouded Artaud's early work, to the effect that few of his plays were ever mounted on stage. They acquired a reputation of being 'unperformable', a view that was further reinforced by Peter Brook's production of *Le Jet de sang* as part of the Theatre of Cruelty season in London in 1964.

In 1963, Peter Brook and Charles Marowitz planned a production of Genet's *Les Paravents* (*The Screens*) for the Royal Shakespeare Company. Brook had already distinguished himself as a director with a series of works that began in 1945 with Cocteau's *Infernal Machine*, encompassed a repertoire of classical plays, a number of operas, films and TV dramas. The French Theatre of the Absurd made him discover, in the 1950s, a more poetic language of the theatre. In the early 1960s he came to realize that a more radical force of innovation was required to overcome the traditionalist attitudes that were prevalent in British theatre. This

new inspiration he found in Antonin Artaud, whose *Le Théâtre et son Double* had been translated into English in 1958. When Brook accepted to produce Genet's *Les Paravents*, he began to search for a group of actors he could train in an Artaudian method. This experimental company would be affiliated with the Royal Shakespeare Company and inject some fresh lifeblood into what had become a rather stale institution (or, as Marowitz put it, the Theatre of Cruelty group would be 'an anti-toxin which, after being injected into the bloodstream of the mother-company, would produce a greater robustness'<sup>13</sup>).

It fell to Charles Marowitz to audition some fifty 'actors who were open, adaptable, and ready to rush in where rigid pros fear to tread.'<sup>14</sup> From these, a dozen were selected and thrown into a twelve-week workshop training designed to demolish 'the Stanislavski ethic' they had imbibed at drama school.<sup>15</sup> The group used Artaud's concepts to explore ways of theatrical expression that were based on sounds and gestures rather than words and psychology. Thus, they sought to arrive at a novel form of theatrical communication designed to express repressed feelings and subconscious urges in a direct, unpredictable and intense manner (which, they hoped, would seize their audiences like Artaud's famous 'plague').

After two months they decided to show some of their work in progress to a largely professional audience at a small rehearsal room of the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts (LAMDA). Although it had been one of the conditions of this project that it did not have to result in a public performance, the group felt a need to communicate the fascinating results of their exercises to friends and colleagues. In January and February 1964, they presented, over a period of five weeks and under the banner of 'Theatre of Cruelty', a number of sound and movement exercises, improvisations, mimes, text collages and short scenes they had used in rehearsal. These included Artaud's *Spurt of Blood*; a dramatized short story by Alain Robbe-Grillet; two collages by Brook; three scenes from Genet's *The Screens*; John Arden's *Ars Longa, Vita Brevis*; short scenes by Ray Bradbury and Cyril Conolly; and a group-devised collage of *Hamlet*.<sup>16</sup> To break the habit of repeating the same show for a succession of nights, Brook introduced 'free' improvisations, which he changed from day to day without giving much advance warning to the actors. Another section consisted of texts generated in the course of the day; for instance, Brook rehearsed a scene from *Richard III* or engaged in a spontaneous exchange with Marowitz on their motives for mounting this show. Marowitz devised new tasks and exercises, which he directed from the stage, swapping roles, altering texts, performing them in a mime fashion and so on. One scripted piece by Ableman was presented completely unrehearsed in a manner that depended on the spirit that moved the actors on the night. One

evening, John Arden was asked to come on stage and defend his play against one of the actors, who hated it.

An actor playing the role of Artaud introduced each performance. He presented himself for an audition, had to run around, jump on a chair, crawl on the floor, and so on, in a typically 'Artaudian' fashion, only to be turned down by the theatre manager because his performance was considered 'too realistic.'<sup>17</sup> As far as *Le Jet de sang* was concerned, it was played by masked actors twice every evening, once using Artaud's text and once by means of sounds and images only. Each performance lasted three to five minutes. Clive Barker, who was an actor in Joan Littlewood's company at the time, complained about the 'placid, tasteful, meaningless 'theatre of illusion' representation that the play got at LAMDA.' As an example, he described how the scene with the Knight and Wet-nurse was staged:

The narrator gives the line: 'Enter a knight in medieval armour followed by a wet-nurse, her breasts in her hands.' The physical effort of a man in one of the suits of the Black Prince—ornate to the point of sensuality—followed by a big girl cupping in her hands a pair of great steaming tits, milk dribbling from the nipples, must be almost overwhelming in its immediacy and power. I can see this scene as I have described it. I can see it performed by a man in a polished steel breastplate draped in cold acid silks followed by a girl decorated with a pair of crudely painted bladders, filled with water. It might be obscene in execution but the ritual quality and association would stimulate me. What we saw was a man in standard Old Vic imitation armour followed by a girl, inexplicably in pseudo fourteenth costume, cupping her empty hands eighteen inches in front of her. The contradiction between words and images depressed me beyond words.<sup>18</sup>

Similarly, Michael Kustow felt that the presentation was too much akin to melodrama and had the stale smell of a 'parfum suranné.'<sup>19</sup> Also Marowitz, in hindsight, was not sure about the Artaudian quality of the show. 'Where, in all of this, was Artaud?' he asked himself in 1966 and added as a defence: 'It was never our intention to create an Artaudian theatre ... What was Artaudian in our work was the search for means, other than naturalistic-linguistic means, of communication experience and insights.'<sup>20</sup>

Brook was not the only director to attempt a staging of *Le Jet de sang*. Virmaux mentions a 1962 production by Jean-Marie Patte at the recently founded Université du Théâtre des Nations, one by René Goering (later to become director of the Festival de Radio-France) at an unnamed venue in 1964, one by the experimental company Teatro Esse in Naples (no date given<sup>21</sup>) and an amateur production in London in 1967.<sup>22</sup> Since then, various other directors and theatre collectives

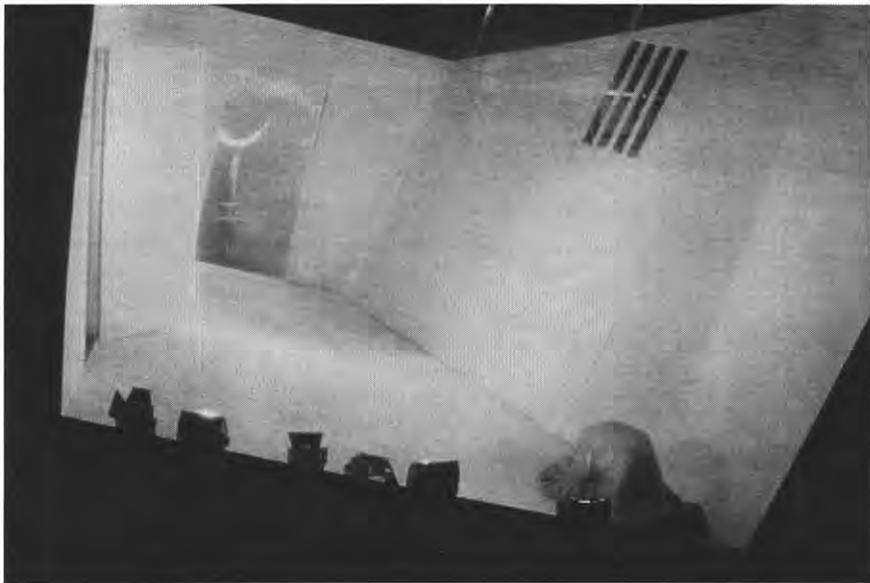


Set design for *Jet de Sang* (Bristol, 1996). Photo by Günter Berghaus

have followed their lead. Artaud's *Le Jet de sang* has, in recent years, met with a considerable interest among theatre practitioners. An internet investigation undertaken in January 2008 resulted in documents related to no less than 15 productions in 1996-2007 in countries as diverse as Italy, Spain, France, Poland, England, Australia, Canada, Argentina, Chile, Mexico and Brazil.

### **Jet de Sang in Bristol**

When teaching seminars on Artaud or Surrealist theatre, I repeatedly had occasion to discuss *Le Jet de sang* with my students. In 1996, a group of students with whom I had previously worked on a Dada project convinced me that a production of *Le Jet de sang*, despite its reputation, could be contemplated. Our exploration of *Le Jet de sang* was to be centred on the theatrical ideas Artaud was confessing in the 1920s, but we also wanted to address some fundamental issues of modern theatre practice. One of the main purposes of our course was to explore the contradictions and tensions between the professional stage on the one hand, and radical non-conformism of performance art on the other. Thereby, this



**Fleeing perspectives of the set for *Jet de Sang* (Bristol, 1996).  
Photo by Günter Berghaus**

course on surrealist theatre could arrive at more than just a study of a historical phenomenon. By addressing the questions the surrealists (or at least Artaud) had asked themselves about theatre but had failed to find a practical solution to, we were also mapping out a spectrum of possible approaches to contemporary theatre practice.

### The Rehearsal Process

The conception of the set was to construct a miniature proscenium arch theatre in our studio and to offer the audience a peep-show, a view into a weird and wonderful world, where all perspectives were strangely distorted. The stage was unusually small, and vertiginously raked along two axes. (See illustrations 1, 2, and 3.) The proscenium opening was closed off with black gauze, which caused a strong soft-focus effect on the light emanating from the stage. The overall impression was that of a *theatrum mundi*, distanced yet very close, frightening but at the same time fascinating.

This monstrosity of a stage served the actors as a physical reminder that, when stepping onto these sloping boards, they were entering a world of theatre and make-believe. But more than that, it had the function of establishing a controlled 'distortion of balance', as Barba called it in *The Paper Canoe*.<sup>23</sup> Throwing the actors off their centre of balance was indeed a useful tool, we discovered, for enhancing their scenic presence and energy level. The unusual force lines compelled the actors into angular postures and movements. Thus, the fleeing perspectives of the set produced—as Artaud demanded—an 'equivalent of vertigo in the mind or senses'<sup>24</sup> of our spectators (see illustration 4).

A first range of workshops was designed to dismantle our rationally determined attitudes to interpreting and understanding a playtext. Artaud (and before him other surrealists) had attempted to find channels of communication that bypass the rational mind. They called their technique of forging a 'direct channel' with the subconscious world 'automatism.' We explored the relationship between automatic writing and automatic acting, trying to discover where the latter differed from improvisation.

A second set of exercises in a-synchronous acting was more technical in nature. It was meant to effect an uncoupling of the usual correlation between words and actions. We fragmented gestures and movements, and then re-assembled them. We also considered how chance elements could be incorporated into the structure of the performances. However, in the end we dropped this idea since the

degree of uncertainty and risk was already so high that further unpredictabilities would have disconcerted the actors beyond an acceptable level.

Our work with Artaud's text only began seriously in the following phase. We started with an exploration of our personal responses to the play and sought to find ways of expressing the feelings and thoughts provoked by the playtext. *Le Jet de sang*—we discovered—triggered disturbing associations and brought long-forgotten memories back to life. Particularly useful were dream transcripts, written down in the morning after having gone to bed with a scene of the play as bedtime reading. The next day, in the rehearsal room, actors shared their hallucinations, dreams, and nightmares and used them as a springboard for improvisations and further explorations.

The varied experiences during these weeks were both exhilarating and deeply frustrating. Intense feelings of elation alternated with periods of depression, illness, truancy etc. Every person had a different threshold to cross and resistance to fight with. Nobody was obliged to justify his or her erratic and irritable behaviour, but we talked several times about the problems we were encountering in this project. There was one week, when I felt that we were seriously drifting into the domain of group therapy and that we would never come out of it with a product fit to be presented to a paying audience.

In this most dangerous, frightening, but also most liberating phase of our work the material of Artaud's scenario became fused with our own lives. We laid the foundation for a performance that was rooted in the personal world of the actors, and was not based on a rational textual exegesis. Having crossed this major threshold, the workshops rapidly transformed into rehearsals.

### **Shaping the Production**

Before I return to the acting side of the production, a few words need to be said about the technical aspects of the show. In an essay of 1929, Artaud had confessed his 'interest in the Total Theatre formula' and his desire 'to bring back the old idea which, after all, was never put into effect, namely that of *integral theatre*.'<sup>25</sup>

I mentioned before that we tried to apply the principle of fragmentation to every aspect of the show. Treating the scenic arts as autonomous and independent units with their own logic and aesthetics meant that each art, individually and separate from the others, had to offer a physical realization of the themes, images,

and archetypal actions contained in the playtext. We put particular emphasis on the abstract languages of light, sound and smell to explore the deeper levels of meaning in the play, and used the characteristics of each medium to make a specific contribution to the overall design of the production. Thereby we gave the performance a multilayered texture and a rich sensual appeal not commonly found in the theatre.

The latter was particularly true with regard to the *olfactory dimension* of our production. I wanted to use seven different smells, related to seven different scenes and seven different aspects of the play. Initially, we collaborated with a professor of Chemistry at Bristol University, and then with a major international fragrance company, who manufactured seven olfactory substances in line with our specifications and requirements. By activating the audience's sense of smell we were able to add an important dimension to their personal experience of the performance. Like abstract sounds (music), smells have a powerful, immediate and irrational effect on our emotional centre. Although smells are closely connected to memory, we are rarely able to analyse and explain our reactions to them. We certainly learned from this production how olfactory substances establish an intimate relationship between stage and auditorium and how altering the composition of this chemical atmosphere leads to subliminal responses, which can be orchestrated with the spectators' other emotional reactions to the stage events.

The *sound design* was conceived as a continuous soundtrack, which, in the first half, made use of conventional instrumental and vocal music, and in the second half of electronic compositions of an increasingly harrowing and piercing quality. Approximate timings of the scenic actions were taken during rehearsals, and on this basis the final mix of the soundtrack was completed. This, in turn, could be neatly fitted to the acting and serve as a rhythmic and structural skeleton of the performance.

Some actors feared that the precise timings of the soundtrack would turn the whole performance into a 'ballet' and would destroy the possibilities for improvisation and day-to-day changes during the run. To some degree, these objections were valid, because the performances did indeed look pretty similar from one night to the next. The production was one package and could be repeated for as long as one would muster the energy. However, the reason why I do not regard this feature of our production to be a mistake or an 'un-Artaudian' characteristic is that Artaud himself had a very similar working method. He sought to orchestrate the sound effects in a manner that they forced those actors to follow its rhythm with the precision of a perforated music roll in a pianola.<sup>26</sup> When Artaud was

given a chance to bring his production concepts to fruition, he could be very precise in his direction. He once said in a letter to Jean-Richard Bloch:

One should not judge me on the basis of the hurried and improvised performances of the Théâtre Alfred Jarry, realized only with makeshift means. These performances did not indicate exactly my true intentions, nor did they reveal my technical and professional abilities as director.<sup>27</sup>

For Artaud, the rôle of chance and of *trouvailles* was of major significance in the rehearsal process, but not during performances. Whenever production circumstances allowed him an extended rehearsal time, he employed this first of all for exploring the play, and then to fix the *trouvailles*. The Théâtre Alfred Jarry productions were not *designed* to be anarchical; Artaud worked, when he could, with precision. The actors were not asked to rely on chance and spontaneity, but to adhere to exact rhythmic structures, precise gestures and breathing patterns, and to imbue them with fresh energy on the night.

It is interesting that one of the actors in our production, who was initially most critical of the precise nature of our choreography and soundtrack, offered the most positive assessment of it in our post-mortem. He had discovered during the last performance an unknown freedom on stage: rather than having to permanently check his cues, movements, stage positions, etc. he could transcend the physical actions—which he carried out with total security—and reach a level of personal expression he had never experienced before. The detachment from the ‘machinery’ of acting allowed a performance of subjectivity that paradoxically acquired a new, objective dimension. The immensely personal presentation of a ‘character’ came akin to placing an archetype onstage. Here, the most personal became the most universal. One actor commented on this experience: ‘This transcendence of self during the moments of performance creates an emptiness. I am devoid of subject, I am object; I am not a character, I am a notion, an archetype. I approach hollowness like a marionette, a pure symbol of abstraction.’

### **The Performance**

At the première, the different elements of the production fused together with quite startling results. We found that the sensuous impact of the various media undermined the audience’s attempts at deciphering in a rational manner the actions that were presented to them. I observed their reactions from various parts of the auditorium and found that after settling into the performance for some five to ten

minutes, most spectators gave in to their emotional responses. I have rarely seen audiences staring so intensely onto the stage and responding so jerkily to even slight sound or lighting changes. Reactions were markedly different from person to person, and quite a few people came back to see the production for a second time, probably in an attempt to make sense of their emotional responses.

The dramaturgy of emotions in our production was very clearly structured. It progressed from a sweet and beautiful beginning (lulling the spectators into a false sense of security and confirming preconceptions about surrealism derived from posters and record covers) to a harrowing and disgusting middle section and an unresolved yet uplifting ending. What people made of the play is difficult to say. To most of them it was, as they nearly all said, 'an amazing experience.' They found it disturbing to be confronted with a materialization of a dream, not an analysis of a dream. Confusion, irritation, frustration was the natural consequence for those spectators who wanted and needed to be given 'meaning.' Neither Artaud nor we as a company were willing to give in to this desire. The majority of the audience was able to accept this. What they saw and experienced was 'halfway between reality and dreams', to use an expression that Artaud coined in '*Le Songe de Strindberg fait partie*.'<sup>28</sup> It had an inherent, though unfathomable, logic that provoked deeply personal feelings. This is probably why people did not like to talk about the show immediately after leaving the theatre. In a rather unusual manner, some of them wrote letters to the cast and director, stating that *Jet de Sang*—and here I quote from some of these responses—'was undoubtedly the strangest play I have ever seen, but it gave me an absolutely fascinating and mind-expanding time.' 'There were some beautiful images, but as a play to watch, and to smell, it felt like several seasons in hell.'

When editing the video, I observed that the supposedly 'rigid' skeleton provided by the soundtrack had in fact not at all produced identical performances. There were considerable variations in the movements, gestures, vocal delivery etc. Every sequence had a different energy level. Although the actors *felt* that they were doing the same moves and speaking the same text, they actually performed in a very different way each night. I presume that this is what Artaud had in mind when he spoke of theatre as 'a true reality'<sup>29</sup> and 'unrepeatable as any act of life.'<sup>30</sup>

Seen from this perspective, *Le Jet de sang* would not qualify as theatre (which is always make-belief) nor, in fact, as ritual (which is a regularly repeated event). Poised between these two poles, *Le Jet de sang* presents a challenge to any troupe of actors seeking to give it scenic realization. But as our experience in Bristol showed, it is not an unperformable play. My hope is that other companies will jet-

tison the idea that Artaud advocated an 'impossible theatre' and will re-examine his challenging plays and concepts from the perspective of the twenty-first century.

## Notes

- 1 The manuscript, dated 17 January 1925, is contained with two other texts (*Paul les oiseaux* and *La Vitre d'amour*) in a folder entitled *Trois Contes de Antonin Artaud*, preserved in the Jacques Doucet Library in Paris. See ARTAUD, Antonin, *Œuvres complètes*, vol. 1, Gallimard, Paris, 1970, p. 386. It was published in a collection of surrealist texts by Artaud, *L'Ombilic des limbes*, Éditions de La Nouvelle Revue française, Paris, 1925.
- 2 See the chapter 'Body Art, Ritualism and Neo-Shamanic Performances' in: BERGHAUS, Günter, *Avant-garde Performance: Live Events and Electronic Technologies*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2005, pp. 132-178.
- 3 The piece was published in the journal *Intentions*, vol. 3, nos. 28-30, December 1924. For a detailed summary and a discussion of Artaud's parodistic intentions see COHN, Ruby, 'Artaud's *Jet de Sang: Parody or Cruelty?*', *Theater Journal*, 31 (1979), pp. 312-18, and BARANSKA, Ewa, 'Deux Auteurs et deux pièces surréalistes: *La Boule de verre de Salacrou* et *Le Jet de sang* d'Artaud', *Roczniki Humanistyczne*, 31, 5 (1983): 33-47.
- 4 The text has been lost. A reconstruction of the piece has been attempted by Robert Maguire in his thesis, *Hors-Théâtre*, Sorbonne, Paris, 1960. For a summary see VIRMAUX, Alain, *Antonin Artaud et le théâtre*, Seghers, Paris, 1970, pp. 319-20.
- 5 For two recent attempts see CROMBEZ, Thomas, 'Artaud the Parodist? The Appropriations of the Théâtre Alfred Jarry, 1927-1930', *Forum Modernes Theater*, 20, 1 (2005), pp. 33-51 and JANNARONE, Kimberley, 'The Theatre Before Its Double: Artaud Directs in the Alfred Jarry Theatre', *Theatre Survey*, 46, 2 (November 2005), pp. 247-273.
- 6 PRÉVOST, Jean, 'Victor ou les enfants au pouvoir, par Roger Vitrac, au Théâtre des Champs-Élysées', *La Nouvelle Revue française*, 32, 185 (February 1929), p. 280.
- 7 See the excerpts from contemporary reviews in VIRMAUX, Alain, *Artaud: Un Bilan critique*, Paris: Pierre Belfond, 1979, pp. 27-40.
- 8 ARTAUD, *Œuvres complètes*, vol. II, p. 46. Henceforth cited as OC.
- 9 DARNAULT, 'La Création de "Victor"', in: VIRMAUX, Alain, VIRMAUX, Odette, *Artaud vivant*, Nouvelles éditions Oswald, Paris, p. 194.
- 10 ARTAUD, 'Manifeste pour un théâtre avorté', *Œuvres complètes*, vol. II, p. 23; *Collected Works*, transl. Victor Corti, Calder & Boyars, London, 1968-1974, vol. II, p. 23. Henceforth cited as CW.
- 11 See BERGHAUS, Günter, *Theatre, Performance and the Historical Avant-garde*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2005, pp. 24-25.
- 12 Tania BALANCHOVA quoted in VIRMAUX, *Artaud vivant*, p. 58.

- 13 MAROWITZ, Charles, 'Notes on the Theatre of Cruelty', in: *The Tulane Drama Review*, 11, 2 (Winter 1966), pp. 152-172, here: p. 172.
- 14 MAROWITZ, *idem*, p. 153.
- 15 MAROWITZ, *idem*, 154.
- 16 See MAROWITZ, *idem*, and HUNT, Albert, REEVES, Geoffrey, *Peter Brook*, CUP, Cambridge, 1995, pp. 75-81.
- 17 HUNT & REEVES, *idem*, p. 76.
- 18 Quoted in HUNT & REEVES, *idem*, p. 77.
- 19 KUSTOW, Michael, 'Sur les traces d'Artaud', *Esprit*, NS 33, 5 (May 1965), p. 959.
- 20 MAROWITZ, *idem*, p. 172.
- 21 This reference may, in fact, be a mistake. This important experimental theatre produced *I cenci*, translated and directed by Gennaro Vitiello, in December 1967.
- 22 VIRMAUX, *Antonin Artaud et le théâtre*, p. 245.
- 23 BARBA, Eugenio, *The Paper Canoe*, transl. Richard Fowler, Routledge, London, 1995, ch. III.2: 'Balance in Action.'
- 24 ARTAUD, 'Le Théâtre Alfred Jarry et l'hostilité public', in: OC II, p. 47; CW II, p. 41.
- 25 ARTAUD, 'Le Théâtre Alfred Jarry (1929)', in: OC II, p. 33-34; CW II, p. 31.
- 26 ARTAUD, 'Le Théâtre Alfred Jarry et l'hostilité public', in: OC II, p. 47; CW II, p. 41.
- 27 Letter to Jean-Richard Bloch, 23 April 1931, in: OC V, p. 63.
- 28 'Le Songe de Strindberg fait partie', in: OC II, p. 79; CW II, p. 68.
- 29 'Le Théâtre Alfred Jarry', in: OC II, p. 11; CW II, p. 15 (translating 'réalité véritable' as 'indeed a reality').
- 30 'Théâtre Alfred Jarry: première année – Saison 1926-27', in OC II, p. 16; CW II, p. 18.