

*The Journeyings of Different Light* Transcription of the performance at the ADSA Conference, University of Auckland, Drama Studio, 9 December, 2022.

## INTRODUCTION:

DIRECTOR: It's been a hard year. For everybody. It's been a hard few days. For us. Hasn't it? Lots of conference food. AUDIENCE LAUGHS. So it's also-I just want to explain. This is Different Light Theatre Company. ASKING PERFORMERS. Am I right? JOSIE: Yeah. Yeah? I got it right. And ehm I know you're not scary. But from here WALKS TO CENTRE STAGE TO JOIN ACTORS. But from here you look quite scary. That's why we've left all the lights on. We just want to make contact. We just want to share with you. So. The last public performance Different Light did was in 2019. [COLLECTIVE AUDIBLE AUDIENCE REACTION *Mmmm. Wow.*] So this is quite a change from Zoom boxes... Also we have some performers who are new to the company. They've never performed before. I'll introduce the first person. Angie Douglas [ISAAC PUSHES ANGIE FORWARD IN HER MANUAL WHEELCHAIR. AUDIENCE APPLAUD.] Angie's only been with us for a few months First time on stage first time performing First time out of the South Island of New Zealand. [LOUD AUDIENCE REACTION.] First time on a plane. So we're really. We love Angie. We want her to do well. She's a great contributor to the group. But we want her to feel you know that everything's OK. You good. Yeah? You lost your voice ANGIE SMILES AND SHAKES HER HEAD. AUDIENCE LAUGHTER. Please don't lose your voice now. Ah well if you lose your voice you lose your voice. We'd like to welcome Angie. She's had some adventures getting here. The wonderful people of Air New Zealand broke her wheelchair AUDIENCE REACTION. From Christchurch to Auckland. And not only that but broke her hoise that she uses to get in and out of bed. So – adventures of travel – of travelling together. Another person new to the company is the wonderful Bidy Steffens. APPLAUSE. Bidy's very good at making us stay...stay how? BIDDY: Stay relaxed, and stay focussed. AUDIENCE LAUGHS. And finally the next new performer is our friend Matthew Swaffield. APPLAUSE. MATTHEW STAYS UPSTAGE NEAR THE CYCLORAMA. Are you being a man of mystery up there. MATTHEW: Yes. AUDIENCE LAUGHS. Also known as...? PETER: Swaffy. Swaffy for short. Other people I'd like to introduce you to because it's unfair to just introduce three. Mr Matthew Phelan. APPLAUSE. Matthew's been with the company for eighteen years. AUDIENCE REACTION: WOW. And he's had a bit of an issue, he's been a bit ill today, if we're honest. And so we're trying to give him some love and support because he's a really cool performer. Then we have Mr Damian Bumman. APPLAUSE. Damian Bumman is also known as the amazing human. LOUD LAUGHTER. We have Mr Peter Lewis Rees. APPLAUSE. And we hope you'll learn more about this interesting actor during the show. We have Mr Isaac Tait. APPLAUSE. He describes himself as a Gonzo Buddhist artist. LAUGHTER. Maybe some of that will come through. We're in process. Aren't we all? We're in process. It's kind of rehearsal conditions. There may be some stuff you don't normally see when you expect the disciplinary formations of theatre. That's all I'll say. NOISES AND INTERRUPTIONS FROM THE AUDIENCE INDICATING SOMEBODY HAS BEEN OMMITTED. Oh I'm sorry! Who have I forgotten? Josie Noble! My God. APPLAUSE. The book the book. HOLDING UP A MOCKUP OF A BOOK COVER. Josie Noble who's on the cover of the new book due out in April 2023. APPLAUSE AND REACTION. I'm so sorry. JOSIE: That's all right. Will you ever

forgive me? JOSIE: Yes. THEY HUG. AUDIENCE REACT AND APPLAUD.  
 JOSIE: I've been with Different Light Theatre Company for eleven years since 2011.  
 APPLAUSE. Shall we get Josie and Biddy to get to start positions? BIDDY: Yes.

JOSIE AND BIDDY: Hello, Helsinki!

ANGIE(coming onstage in her wheelchair) Hello, Helsinki!

JOSIE and BIDDY: Hello, Helsinki!

MATTHEW P: *Tahi Rua Toru Wha-* (te reo Māori for One, Two Three, Four)

ALL: Hello, Helsinki!

Hei, Helsinki!

DAMIAN: How can we get to Helsinki? How can we do that?

BIDDY: We can communicate with you via Zoom.

PETER: Welcome to Performance Philosophy Problems

ALL: Welcome

MATTHEW S: Haere Mai haere mai haere mai (Te reo Maori for Welcome)

ALL: Haere Mai Haere Mai

MATTHEW P: What are Performance Philosophy Problems?

JOSIE: We are Performance Philosophy Problems

PETER: No you are.

ALL: You are. No you are. You are.

BIDDY: Guys focus, please stay focussed.

MATTHEW P: We are Different Light Theatre, a theatre group from Christchurch New Zealand.

PETER: We've been through earthquakes,

ANGIE: floods, massacres,

MATTHEW S: fires,

JOSIE: viruses, a global pandemic,

ANGIE: lockdowns, isolations,

BIDDY: Anti-mandate protests

ISAAC: and a war in Ukraine...

DAMIAN: And now Isaac's poem...

ISAAC: So much depends on support workers,

So much depends on vaccination,

So much depends on police

so much depends on our lives matter,

so much depends on thinking.

MATTHEW P: Now we are going to ask you some questions.

BIDDY: For our research

JOSIE: Please answer them to the best of your ability.

PETER: Number 1. What is your disability?

ISAAC: Number 2. Who are your caregivers?

ANGIE: Number 3. How do you get in and out of bed?

MATTHEW P: Unfortunately, we don't have any time for your answers.

JOSIE: You will need to take your answers away with you.

PETER: Angie, how do you talk to people?

ANGIE: I try to talk to people all the time and they just walk away. By the way, I use a hoist to get in and out of bed.

PETER: Question 4. Why did the person in a motorized wheelchair cross the road?

MATTHEW P: HOW can the person in a motorized wheelchair cross the road?

IMAGE OF ESA KIRKKOPELTO

BIDDY: Hei, Esa Kirkkopelto !

ALL: Hei, Esa!

PETER : Esa told us we need to do something like a performance but we can rehearse it.

BIDDY : I think Esa looks like a professional and he looks like he has been doing this for a while.

MATTHEW P: I've been doing theatre for a while

JOSIE AND OTHERS: I have too. ME TOO. AND ME.

BIDDY: People, please focus.

JOSIE: The last public performance we did was *The History of Different Light* for the Christchurch Arts Festival in 2019.

ISAAC: Since then we have had to rethink what we mean by performance...

MATTHEW S: We can make theatre together.

ISAAC: ...and thinking.

JOSIE: Right now we are in an Omicron surge here in Christchurch.

MATTHEW P: To protect ourselves and others we need to meet on Zoom.

PETER: On Zoom you can talk to your mates

ANGIE: You can laugh with them

BIDDY: You can use filters or share screen

PEOPLE MAKE HEARTS ON BIDDY

JOSIE: On Zoom you can't be with them in person

MATTHEW P AND GLEN: You can't hug them.

JOSIE AND OTHERS: You can't drink coffee with them and share a meal with them.

MATTHEW P: The question is: Can you do theatre on Zoom?

ISAAC: The question is: Can you do thinking on Zoom?

VIDEO OF PETER SPEAKING ON ZOOM AT HELSINKI CONFERENCE

BIDDY: People, please! This is not Helsinki. We're in Auckland

PETER: This is not Performance Philosophy Problems this is Travelling Together!

ANGIE: I'll give you travelling together

PETER: Why thankyou

MATTHEW: And this is not the University of Helsinki this is ADSA.

JOSIE: ASDA?

PETER: No that's a supermarket in England.

ISAAC: NASDA?

MATTHEW SWAFFIELD: No, that's in Christchurch

DAMIAN: What is ADSA?

COMPUTER VOICE: AUSTRALASIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THEATRE, DRAMA  
AND PERFORMANCE STUDIES

ALL: HELLO ADSA!

PETER: And we're not on zoom, this is in real life

MATTHEW PHELAN: Is this the real life or is this just fantasy?

PETER: This is theatre

ISAAC: This is thinking?

DAMIAN: What do we do now?

PETER: How about a song and dance?

ANGIE sings: True love will find you in the end

You'll find out just who's your friend

Don't be sad I know you will

Don't give up until

True love will find you in the end.

I'm doing this for my friend, Glen.  
He travels with us, but he can't be here today.

VIDEO TRUE LOVE. DANCE.

DAMIAN: And now Isaac's paper

ISAAC:

Hi, I am Isaac and I have a disability.  
Think of it more like this. Hi, I am Isaac, and I have a label.  
How can I identify  
Give me your twitch, your phones, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free! Oh,  
academic papers... there are lots of barriers for people with disabilities to become academic.  
It is too hard to get help with a disability. So, academic papers... a real time waste for us.

People with disabilities are seen as people that only operate on the level of an eighth grader,  
and are treated on the same level as eighth graders. Academic studies show that.

Hello Finland , hello Russians , how can you do that? Hi Iran and Iranian women, hi Hunter  
S Thompson , Richard the third, send tweet to Elon musk, saying hello. Hello down  
syndrome people who live to be 50. Hello autism , hello support workers who don't really  
give a cup of tea. Hello Tama Iti, how can we be philosophy how can we do that ?  
Where is Isaac's intensity? Maybe somewhere in the future.

PETER: I spend quite some time travelling back in time into history. My ancestor is Edward  
of Woodstock the eldest son of King Edward the Third of England, and is known as the  
Black Prince of Wales.

I am also really interested in Richard I also known as Richard Coeur de Leon or Richard the  
Lion Heart. We'd now like to present something of the history of Different Light:

JOHN LAMBIE SEQUENCE

MATTHEW P: I have travelled with my friend John Lambie since 2004 when Different  
Light started.

In 2007 we went to the Awakenings Festival in Horsham Victoria to perform Ship of Fools.  
When we got back to Christchurch airport, John went back on the plane and said, 'I want to  
go to Fiji now.'

DAMIAN: In 2010 we went to Sydney to present at the Powerhouse Museum.  
At Sydney airport we all got on the plane home, but we couldn't find John.  
People got off the plane to go look for him.

Finally, we saw him coming down an escalator talking to an Air France pilot.

PETER: In 2012 when we presented at the Concourse in Chatswood, we were walking in The Rocks in Sydney.

John missed his footing on a steep road and fell over onto his face.

He was taken to hospital.

He was OK. One of the doctors said John was quite old for a person with Down's Syndrome.

MATTHEW P: In 2015 John celebrated 50 years at Hohepa, a residential institution for people with learning disabilities. A few weeks later he went to Rosebank, a dementia centre in Ashburton.

This was fifty miles from all the people he had known for fifty years.

A few weeks after that, he died.

### ENDING SEQUENCE

JOSIE: Every week ten of us walk and wheel down the footpath to a café to take a break from rehearsals.

MATTHEW SWAFFIELD: The footpath is still munted from the 2010-2011 earthquakes.

ISAAC: The earth has been travelling through space for four billion years.

PETER: To get to the café we cross a six-lane motorway with two sets of traffic lights

[ALL: BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP]

Why did the person in a motorized wheelchair cross the road?

MATTHEW P: Why would a person in a motorized wheelchair want to cross the road?

JOSIE: We walk and wheel down the pavements of Ōtautahi, Christchurch: we grow old together.

BIDDY: Below us Papatuanuku, the earth mother, for the moment, is still, she supports us.

PETER: We travel together...

ANGIE: ...in an untogether way.

ISAAC: John and Louise travel with us.

PETER: Above us the light of the sky.

DAMIAN: Beyond that, the light of the stars.

PETER: The stars weave in our ageing, vulnerable, precious bodies.

MATTHEW P: Mahutonga, Matariki, Purapurawhetu.

ISAAC: The stars weave in our ageing, vulnerable, precious bodies

ANGIE: They are dancing in us.

BIDDY: Come and dance with us.

TRUE LOVE SONG REPRISE. THE PERFORMERS INVITE AUDIENCE MEMBERS  
ONSTAGE AND DANCE WITH AUDIENCE.