

**STRANGE
ATTRACTIONS**

AN EVENING OF
CHAOTIC
PERFORMANCE

Monday, November 6, 1989 7:30PM

**The New Museum of Contemporary Art
583 Broadway
New York, NY 10012
212/219-1222**

The New Museum of Contemporary Art
presents

**Strange Attractions:
An Evening of Chaotic Performance**

November 6, 1989
7:30 PM

PROGRAM-----

Blue Man	Vortex Oozing Paintings Sign Choices The Feast Beat Ceremony
Orshi Drozdik	Genius Under the Letter G

-----INTERMISSION

The Wooster Group	Episode One of Frank Dell's The Temptation of St. Antony (The Road to Immortality: Part Three)
Elliott Sharp with string quartet	Hammer, Anvil, Stirrup

SOUND: Doug Henderson
LIGHTS: David Forni (Big Apple Lights)
PRODUCTION CREW: Virginia Bowen, Carol LeBras, Wayne Rottman,
Patricia Thornley, Lisa Zywicki

Organized by Laura Trippi.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS-----

Special thanks to all of the artists, Tom Cugliani, Cynthia Hedstrom, Dr. Heinz-Otto Peitgen, Mark Russell, Jane Smith, and Susan Stenger. Thanks also to New Museum staff and volunteers.

Funding for this program has been provided in part by MTV Networks.

NOTES ON THIS EVENING'S PERFORMANCES-----

BLUE MAN

The "Sign Choice" pieces are concerned with living in an age where we are missing increasingly more than we can take in. Because we each choose different fragments of the whole, we drift farther and farther away from a common experience. We find ourselves yearning for more unifying, tribal experiences.

It was this kind of information age *malaise* that had us in its grip at the time of our first viewing of Dr. Heinz-Otto Peitgen's *Zoom into the Mandelbrot Set*. Although we had seen these beautiful paisley-like computer-generated images in books, seeing a movie camera zoom in and out of their complex swirls created an entirely different experience. Suddenly the information age seemed capable of yielding treasure in addition to turmoil. We became obsessed with using these hypnotic images to create a kind of tribal ritual.

Our ambivalent relationship with chaos continues. We see signs of danger in information and consumption/waste overload; we also find exuberant beauty in the chaos of oozing, twirling, and exploding fluids and in the infinite complexity of Dr. Peitgen's fractal images. (Chris Wink)

ORSHI DROZDIK

The concept of genius is delicately carved into 19th-century romantic thought. It is another archeological specimen from the archives of intellectual history.

The genius: extraordinary intellect which manifests a sovereign enterprise of unreason, often linked to disease. Syphilis, tuberculosis, madness, neurosis. *Edgar Allan Poe*: "The question is still unsettled whether all that is glorious and profound does not spring from the disease of thought; from moods of mind exalted at the expense of the general intellect."

I rediscovered the word in an encyclopedia of metaphysical medicine, under the diseases. I took it out, cleaned off the dust, rethought its meaning, then returned it to the archival glass cases. (Orshi Drozdik)

THE WOOSTER GROUP

Frank Dell's The Temptation of St. Antony
Director: Elizabeth LeCompte

--THE ARGUMENT--

A HOTEL ROOM IN WASHINGTON D.C. SUNSET IN THE DESERT

EPISODE 1:
THE MONOLOGUE
IN WHICH FRANK RUNS HIS TAPE,
AND TAKES A CALL FROM CUBBY.

"Enfeebled by prolonged fasting, the hermit finds himself unable to concentrate upon holy things. His thoughts wander; memories evoke regrets that his relaxed will can no longer suppress. His fancy leads him upon dangerous ground." --From *The Temptation of Saint Antony*, Modern Library Edition, 1911

CAST

Frank.....Ron Vawter

ON VIDEO

Willem Dafoe Irma St. Paule
 Anna Kohler Ron Vawter
 Nancy Reilly Kate Valk
 Peyton Smith Jeff Webster

(Video by Elizabeth LeCompte)

Frank Dell's *The Temptation of Saint Antony* was composed by the members of The Wooster Group and their associates.

ELLIOTT SHARP with string quartet

Hammer, Anvil, Stirrup was first performed by Finland's Avanti String Quartet at the 1988 Pori Jazz Festival. The piece is based on a core rhythm and core melody which are used by the players explicitly as foreground, as background for a variety of improvising operations, and as source material for improvisation. As the piece develops, unison expositions of the core material break down into zones of seemingly chaotic activity only to coalesce again into new transformations of the core. Algorithms, sets of instructions for development and improvisation, guide the players and maintain the identity of the piece even as its internal detail remains unique to every performance. *Hammer, Anvil, Stirrup* has been recorded by the Soldier String Quartet for release by SST Records and has often been performed by them. (Elliot Sharp)

Elliott Sharp.....electric guitar
 Mark Feldman.....violin
 Rachel Evans.....violin
 Deidre Murray.....cello
 Fred Hopkins.....contrabass

NOTES ON PERFORMERS-----

THE BLUE MAN GROUP is Matt Goldman, Phil Stanton and Chris Wink. They have been working together since 1987, when they began staging happenings, including a funeral for the '80s in Central Park. They have performed in clubs and theater spaces around New York City, including The Performance Garage, P.S. 122, Cucaracha Theater, King Tut's Wah Wah Hut, Dixon Place, and various outside performance events. The technical staff for this performance includes Ken Betza, Theresa Bohn, Juliann Kroboth, Desmond Shaw, Carla Stimer, Deborah Tennenbaum and Susan Vaughn, with music by Larry Heinemann. *Zoom Into the Mandlebrot Set* film by Hartmut Jurgens, Heinz-Otto Peitgen, and Deitman Saupe.

ORSHI DROZDIK is a visual and performing artist. Born in Budapest, Hungary, she has lived and worked in New York for the past eight years. Her first one-person show, *Adventure in Technos Dystopium* at Tom Cugliani Gallery in 1988, dealt with deconstructing the paradigm of 18th-century science, while *Morbid Conditions* in 1989 concerned the discourse of science of the 19th-century. Having often employed performance as a medium during the early part of her career, Ms. Drozdik for the past ten years has worked exclusively with visual arts media. *Genius Under the Letter G* marks her first performance in The United States and a return to use of performance to express ideas which do not fit into other media.

ELLIOTT SHARP is a New York-based composer/multi-instrumentalist who leads the group CARBON and is a member of SEMANTICS, MOFUNGO, SCANNERS, and BOOTSTRAPPERS. His recent work has included a series of computer improvisation concerts and compositions for a number of choreographers and performance artists.

Recent albums by Sharp include *Larynx*, *Tessalation Row*, and *In the Land of the Yahoos*, on the SST label and *Loopool* on Germany's EAR-RATIONAL label as well as a CD-only compilation of CARBON pieces *Monster Curve* and the compilation *Island of Sanity: New Music from New York* on the German No Man's Land label. *Bootstrappers* has also just been released on the New Alliance label.

The Wooster Group is a small ensemble of artists who have worked together for over fifteen years under the artistic direction of Elizabeth LeCompte. The Group creates and produces original theater and media works at its home base, The Performing Garage, in New York City. Its members are **Jim Clayburgh, Willem Dafoe, Spalding Gray, Elizabeth LeCompte, Peyton Smith, Kate Valk, and Ron Vawter.**

Frank Dell's *The Temptation of St. Antony*
 (*The Road to Immortality: Part Three*)

CAST

Frank.....Ron Vawter
 Sue.....Mary Hestand
 Onna.....Kate Valk
 Phyllis.....Peyton Smith
 Eva.....Anna Kohler
 Jacques.....Michael Stumm
 Dieter.....Jeff Webster
 J.J.....Himself

Director.....Elizabeth LeCompte
 Designer.....Jim Clayburgh
 Video.....Elizabeth LeCompte
 Film.....Ken Kobland
 Sound.....Jeff Webster
 Lights.....Paula Gordon
 Video Technician.....Christopher Kondek
 Assistant to the Director....Jim Johnson
 Dramaturg.....Marianne Weems
 Norman Frisch
 Additional Text.....Jim Strahs
 Additional Sound.....Ken Kobland
 Assistant to the Designer....Michael Nishball
 Sound Consultants.....John Erskine, Janet Kalas
 Engineering Consultant.....Bill Ballou/No Radio

General Manager.....Linda Chapman
 Special Projects.....Cynthia Hedstrom
 Administrator.....Paul Schiff Berman
 Administrative Assistant.....Susan James

The Wooster Group is a not-for-profit organization, supported in part by public funds from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.

The Road to Immortality: Part Three is a co-production of The Wooster Group and the American National Theater, and has been funded in part by the New Works Program of Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities and the Council for the Arts at MIT.

** Dedicated to Ursula Easton **

Additional Notes on
Frank Dell's
The Temptation of St. Antony

SOURCE TEXTS

LA TENTATION DE SAINT ANTOINE -- by Gustave Flaubert. An epic "closet drama" based on the life of Saint Antony. (The actual Saint Antony was born in the Middle East around 250 A.D. When he was a young man he gave away his inheritance, abandoned his parents and younger sister and went into religious seclusion, first in abandoned tombs and later in the Egyptian desert where he lived in the cleft of a rock to be nearly 100 years old.) Flaubert wrote three versions of LA TENTATION -- the first in 1849 and the last, near the end of his life, in 1874. When he read the first version to two friends, he was told that the work should be burned and never spoken of again. The Wooster Group's production is based primarily on the third version, although the character of the pig is incorporated from the first. FRANK's assistant SUF reads from Kitty Mrosovsky's translation, Penguin Books, 1981.

THE MAGICIAN -- A film by the Swedish director Ingmar Bergman (1958). A travelling magic troupe is detained at the house of a local official. When ordered to give a command performance for the local police, their tricks are revealed as fraudulent. Their leader is humiliated, but the troupe escapes arrest through a timely invitation to perform for the King of Sweden.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, LENNY BRUCE!! -- by Albert Goldman. The unauthorized and controversial biography of the American comedian Lenny Bruce. (Throughout his career Bruce was frequently arrested and charged with obscenity for the content of his club routines. He spent the last part of his life defending his act in court, and died in August 1966 at the age of 41 of a reputed overdose of narcotics.) Goldman includes interviews with many of Bruce's associates.

THE LETTERS OF GUSTAVE FLAUBERT -- Letters from 1830-1880. "What strikes me as beautiful, what I would like to do, is a book about nothing, a book with no external tie, which would support itself by its internal force of style, a book which would have hardly any subject or at least where the subject would be almost invisible, if that can be so. The most beautiful works are those where there is least matter; the nearer expression draws to thought, the more each word sticks to it and disappears, the greater the beauty...Form, increasingly skilled, becomes attenuated; it gives up all liturgy, all rule, all measure; it abandons the epic for the novel, veritas pro forma; it no longer acknowledges any orthodoxy and is as free as the will that produces it." --Letter to Louise Colet, 1852.

CHANNEL J -- (INTERLUDES AFTER MIDNIGHT) A cable television talk show, shown late nights in New York, in which the participants are naked.

GLOSSARY

AMMONARIA -- Saint Antony's younger sister, fictionalized by Flaubert in LA TENTATION DE SAINT ANTOINE.

THE "CUMMINS" BOOK -- THE ROAD TO IMMORTALITY: BEING A DESCRIPTION OF THE LIFE HEREAFTER, WITH EVIDENCE OF THE SURVIVAL OF HUMAN PERSONALITY, by Geraldine Cummins, (1932). An Irish author and dramatist, Cummins became widely noted in England as a reliable and competent trance writer. In 1924, she established contact through France with the deceased F.W.H. Myers, a 19th century poet, essayist and founder of the Society for Psychical Research. THE ROAD TO IMMORTALITY is a record of his communications to her. According to his biographer Albert Goldman, Lenny Bruce had his secretary Sue Horowitz read to him from this book in the months preceding his death.

DEAD SEA SCROLLS -- Documents discovered in and after 1947 in caves above the waters of the Dead Sea. They are said to contain parts of every book of the Old Testament, and are purported to shed light on the life of Jesus. To date only a few have been interpreted, the rest remain locked in the vaults of Jerusalem University.

FRANK DELL -- An alter ego of Lenny Bruce's in his early club routines. The Wooster Group's Frank Dell first appeared in ROUTE 1 & 9 as the driver of a van who stops to pick up two hitchhikers. In (...JUST THE HIGH POINTS...) he re-emerges in Miami, where he and his partners fraudulently pass themselves off as the South American dance troupe Donna Sierra and the Del Fuegos. In the last part of the trilogy, he is discovered sometime later in a hotel room on the outskirts of Washington D.C.

DUKE -- A private, coed university in Durham, N.C. Also the highest order of nobility on the Continent.

DUNKIRK -- A city in France, on the North Sea. Dunkirk played a key role in the struggles in Europe that extended over centuries. The retreat of these occurred in WW II when more than 300,000 Allied troops were cut off from retreat on land by the German breakthrough to the French Channel ports. The retreat was carried out by all kinds of British boats, civilian and military. It is considered one of the epic actions of naval history.

HILARION -- (see ARGUMENT) Born about 293 A.D., Hilarion, at the age of 15 spent some months with Saint Antony before becoming a solitary in Palestine. He exchanged letters with Saint Antony throughout his life.

THE LEVITATION, THE INVISIBLE CHAINS ROUTINE, THE COTTON BANDAGE TEST, AND THE CATALEPSY TEST -- The magic troupe in Ingmar Bergman's film THE MAGICIAN performs The Levitation and The Invisible Chains routine. The Cotton Bandage Test and the Catalepsy Test are outlined in LEARNED PIGS AND FIREPROOF WOMEN by Ricky Jay (1986), in a chapter entitled "A Few Words About Death and Show Biz."

JUST BEFORE THE BATTLE MOTHER -- A Civil War song, words and music by George Frederick Root, 1863.

LANGLEY, VIRGINIA -- Headquarters of the U.S. Tactical Air Command and home of the C.I.A.

PICCADILLY -- A street in London starting at Piccadilly Circus (London's center of traffic and amusement) and running to Hyde Park Corner. Also a "lowrent" hotel in the theatre district of Manhattan -- since demolished.

QUEEN OF SHEBA -- 10th century B.C. biblical queen from a region of South Arabia.

ARNIE SCHWARZENEGGER - Famous Austrian body builder and actor, married to Maria Shriver.

THE SPHINX, THE CHIMERA, and THE UNICORN -- In Greek mythology, the Sphinx possessed a lion's body and a woman's head; in Egyptian mythology the Sphinx, who propounds the eternal riddle, is masculine. The Chimera is a fire-snorting monster, part lion, part goat and part dragon. The Unicorn is a mythological creature with one horn in the middle of its forehead.

SEÑOR WENCES -- A Cuban lounge comic who performed in the 1950's at Batista's casino in Havana. When Batista was exiled, Wences left Havana and became a regular on the Ed Sullivan Show.

FRANK DELL'S THE TEMPTATION OF SAINT ANTONY
--THE ARGUMENT--

A HOTEL ROOM IN WASHINGTON D.C.

SUNSET IN THE DESERT

EPISODE 1:
THE MONOLOGUE
IN WHICH FRANK RUNS HIS TAPE,
AND TAKES A CALL FROM CUBBY.

"Enfeebled by prolonged fasting, the hermit finds himself unable to concentrate upon holy things. His thoughts wander; memories evoke regrets that his relaxed will can no longer suppress. His fancy leads him upon dangerous ground."

EPISODE 2:
THE DANCE BREAK
IN WHICH FRANK REHEARSES THE
GIRLS IN A DANCE.

"The scene shifts. The Queen of Sheba descends to tempt the Saint with the deadliest of all temptations. In fantastic obedience to his fancy, the scene changes again."

EPISODE 3:
THE DIGRESSION
IN WHICH ONNA AND PHYLLIS REARRANGE
THE HOTEL ROOM FURNITURE AND FRANK
TALKS INTIMATELY WITH SUE.

"Under the guise of a former disciple, Hilarion, the demon endeavors to poison the mind of Antony. He cites texts only to foment doubt, and quotes the evangelists only to make confusion. And Hilarion grows taller."

EPISODE 4:
THE PARTY
IN WHICH FRANK TAKES A REST AND
ONNA AND PHYLLIS PRACTICE SOME
VERBAL ROUTINES. THEY CONVINCED THE
HOTEL MAID AND HER BOYFRIEND TO
JOIN IN.

"Hilarion induces Antony to enter with him into a spectral basilica. The hermit is confounded. By this hallucination the tempter would prove to the Saint that martyrdom is not always suffered for the purest motives."

EPISODE 5:
OLD TIMES REMEMBERED
IN WHICH DIETER REVEALS HIMSELF AND
THE TROUPE PREPARES TO PERFORM AS
FRANK TAKES ANOTHER CALL FROM
CUBBY.

"The tempter assumes the form of a Hindu Brahmin terminating a life of wondrous holiness in self-cremation. Then he seeks to shake Antony's faith in the excellence and evidence of miracles."

EPISODE 6:
THE MAGIC SHOW
IN WHICH ONNA AND PHYLLIS RECALL
THE COTTON BANDAGE TEST, "THE
INVISIBLE CHAINS," AND THE
CATALEPSY TEST. THE PERFORMANCE
ENDS ABRUPTLY AND THE TROUPE PACKS
UP.

"Hilarion reappears, taller than ever, growing more gigantic in proportion to the increasing weakness of the Saint. He evokes deities; phallic and ithyphallic; fantastic or obscene. Venus displays the rounded daintiness of her nudity. Hilarion towers to the stars. Antony is lifted upon mighty wings and borne away above the world."

EPISODE 7:
THE MONOLOGUE CONTINUED
IN WHICH PHYLLIS LEAVES, ONNA
FINISHES PACKING AND FRANK HEARS
AGAIN FROM CUBBY.

"Antony comes to himself in the desert. The tempter returns as the Spirit of Lust and the Spirit of Destruction. The latter urges him to suicide, the former to indulgence of sense. Antony feels a delirious desire to unite himself with the Spirit of Universal Being. The vision vanishes. The Temptation has passed. The face of Christ is revealed."

--from The Temptation of Saint Antony
Modern Library Edition, 1911

The New Museum Staff-----

Kimball Augustus Security	Sowon Kwon Library
Richard Barr Volunteer Coordinator	Carol LeBras Curatorial Intern
Virginia Bowen Preparator	Alice Melendez Receptionist
Jeanne Breitbart Art Quest	Clare Micuda Asst. to the Dir.
Sabeth Buchman Intern	France Morin Senior Curator
Susan Cahan Education Curator	Barbara Niblock Administrator
Helen Carr Limited Editions	Sara Palmer Public Affairs
Lynn Crandall Inside Art	Ifaat Qurashi Intern
Elisa Decker Membership	Howard Robinson Security
Antonette DeVito Planning and Dev.	Wayne Rottman Gallery/AV Coord.
Russell Ferguson Library	Aleya Saad Special Events
Angelika Festa Asst. Librarian	Veronica Saddler Receptionist
Phyllis Gilbert Museum Tours	Gary Sangster Curator
Janet Gillespie Bookkeeper	Abigail Smith Administration
Steve Henry Public Affairs	Susan Stein Admiss./Bookstore
Maren Hensler Members' Programs	Frederieke Taylor Auction Curator
Ellen Holtzman Managing Director	Neville Thompson Operations
Andrew Hunter Library Intern	Laura Trippi Curator
Elon Joseph Security	Marcia Tucker Director
Judy Kim Grants Coordinator	M. Weissbach Intern Coord.
Zoya Kocur Education	Alice Yang Curatorial Coord.
	Lisa Zywicki Curatorial Asst.