



Maguy Marin's *Cendrillon* at Festival d'Automne à Paris.

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The Internet, Cyberspace

121212 UPSTAGE FESTIVAL OF CYBERFORMANCE: Just when you thought that theatre had fallen behind the times, with its old-fashioned notion of butts in seats and the requirement of actually leaving the home to enjoy live entertainment: Think again. The UpStage Festival of Cyberformance is proving otherwise in its sixth annual event, which unfolds this month on computers around the world (standard web browsers permitting). Talk about an interactive theatrical experience—viewers don't even have to get out of bed!

The festival, which ostensibly has its headquarters in New Zealand, which co-curators Helen Varley Jamieson and Vicki Smith call home, features 38 live performances. The shows have been created for various online platforms, including UpStage, the Tap, Visitors Studio, social environments like Second Life, and other purpose-built interfaces that let performances happen in real time with audience interaction.

Sampling a form as ethereal as theatre, festivalgoers might be surprised to learn that the first part of UpStaged is a retrospective titled "Walking Backwards into the Future." In it, 19 cyberperformances from past UpStage festivals will be remounted over the course of seven days (Dec. 5–11), giving far-flung audiences the chance to catch up on what they missed or the opportunity to revisit old favorites. Many of the (re)presented shows are examples from UpStage's first year when artists cut their proverbial cyber-teeth on this new theatrical form.

Samuel Beckett's *Come and Go*, first presented at 070707 UpStaged in 2007, is an exercise in adhering as faithfully as

possible to Beckett's punctilious stage directions in an online environment, by the cyberperformance troupe Avatar Body *Collision*. Festival curators Smith and Jamieson perform along with Karla Ptacek from the United Kingdom and Finland's Leena Saarinen. Tito Alberto directs.

Learn to Hear Through the Lies of Your Eyes: The Cyberperforming Hybridization of Tuxedomoon, devised and performed by Serbians Miljana Peric, Teodora Peric and Ana Markovic, to be mounted in Belgrade, is another revival from 2007. According to UpStaged, the performance "addresses the position of the contemporary musician in relation to predominantly scopophilic regime of the Artworld based on information technology." Viewers can expect "phonocentric practice" to be replaced with "poetocentric praxis" as the performers quote, paraphrase and mix lyrics of the experimental, post-punk, New Wave band Tuxedomoon. The show involves a tactile protest against the "disregarded role of music in cyberperformances," the group states. Peric recently gave a performative presentation about this show at CyPosium, which can be viewed at www.cyposium.net.

New works are celebrated, too. In "Testing 1 2, 1 2, 1 2," 19 never-before-seen performances will be presented on the last day of the festival, Dec. 12, "with a bit on the 11th and a bit on the 13th, depending where you are in the world," the organizers note. (In fact, the festival website will host a time converter for audiences to sort out viewings with their local times.) These shows include *BABBLE*, by the United Kingdom's Liz Swift, and *VOID*. In the latter show, online avatars are invited to enter Second Life's *VOID* library, where they will collaborate on a reinvention of Jorge Luis Borges's story "The Library of Babel" and the familiar Old Testament tale.

If you're itching to interact pre-festival, you can take an online survey for Christina Papagiannouli's *Merry Crisis & A Happy New Fear*. Questions include "Should Greece leave the Euro?" and "Where were you on Dec. 6, 2008, at 9 p.m.?" Alexandros Grigoropoulos, a 15-year-old student, was killed by two policemen in Greece on that night, and the event sparked riots and protests across the country. In fact, the term "Merry Crisis and a Happy New Fear" appeared in graffiti in Athens during the 2008 Civil Unrest in Greece after Grigoropoulos's murder. A year later, a new slogan took hold: "Remember, remember the 6th of December." The last question in Papagiannouli's survey asks viewers to make their own wish for 2013. One imagines that "peace" will be part of many answers. (Dec. 5–12; info@upstage.org.nz; www.upstage.org.nz)

Paris, France

FESTIVAL D'AUTOMNE À PARIS: There are festivals, and then there are *festivals*. Festival d'Automne à Paris arguably falls into the latter category. This three-month-long extravaganza, now in its 41st iteration, encompasses visual arts, theatre, music and dance. This year experimental French choreographer Maguy Marin has received special attention, getting her own category listing on the festival's website.

Eight different Marin pieces have been presented over the course of the festival, and the final two, *retour sur Umwelt* and *Cendrillon*, exemplify the artist's oeuvre. *Umwelt* offers a simple set and choreography based on ordinary gestures. In