

Subpoening The Trial

Members of the ensemble - cast, crew, designers & directors - share some of their experiences and reactions to working on **The Trial of K**. The show ran from March 30th - April 9th at the Culture Project @ 45 Bleecker, in lower Manhattan, playing to several sold-out houses.



Aubrey Hardwick (Actor): The moment the first notes of the show's opening song played I was hooked, every night. The complexity of what I experienced internally is what remains with me even now. I felt an intense thrill as a performer, to be sharing this dark, spinning tale that others and I mapped out with great precision. At the same time, I felt a sense of dread, a lump at the base of my throat that comes from knowing that the story you are telling will come to a bad end and that you play a major hand in it. This duality is what made standing in "the wings" and watching each actor play their cards such an electric and sometimes wild experience.



Tina West Chavous (Actor): I became dedicated to the pursuit of fun during **The Trial of K**. We built ourselves a rollercoaster of characters and riding it every night was the most fun I've had on stage.

Joy Leonard (Co-Director): I consider the "experiment" of returning to **The Trial** a huge success. It was very exciting to begin the process with a more developed understanding of the material, the genres we chose to work with, and the format of the show. Only Margaret had performed in the previous incarnation, and all the new actors brought so much to this version: writing skills (noir-ese), evocative images, sharp and compelling characters and SO much positive energy. The



show was very much what we wanted (how often does a director/producer get to say that?): sexy, scary, stylish and raw, anchored by Margaret's nuanced performance and propelled by the pointed perspective of Kafka. New and old designers alike brought the show stunningly alive. I am happy that I acquiesced on the great lift debate - the revelation of space in the final set transformation was well worth the anxiety and expense. Thanks and congrats to all the folk that participated in this "queasily-sexual", everything-and-the-kitchen-sink production! (Misquoted from the *New York Sun*)

Clinton Powell (Actor): **The Trial of K** was the most fruitful
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Peeling the Onion: releasing the characters within



The final installment in Synaesthetic's 2004-5 Master Workshop series is a new weekend workshop led by **Raina von Waldenburg** scheduled for the end of June. Under her charismatic guidance, workshop participants will explore and expand their unique impulses and challenge personal barriers in an organic and physical approach to generating characters.

Reserve your spot now, because space is limited and this weekend will be HOT! Regardless of the temperature *outside*, we know that Raina will elicit some steamy and startling discoveries *inside* with workshop participants. She fits in perfectly with the Company's process-oriented aesthetic, bringing razor sharp intellect, irreverent wit and physical specificity to her work in any capacity, as performer, director or teacher. We're so pleased to offer this workshop for the first time, and spread the magic that is Raina within our artistic community.



Leave your assumptions and inhibitions at the door!

Raina von Waldenburg is a full-time faculty member at NYU who trained under Ryszard Cieslak (Jerzy Grotowski's principal actor and protégé) and has taught master classes in physical acting in the US and Europe. This weekend workshop involves intensive explorations in presence work; creating characters that are bold, inventive and connected; and finding precise containers to release emotion and channel energy on stage. The actor is regarded as a *creative*, rather than solely interpretive artist. 

WHAT: A weekend intensive in physical acting & character explorations.

WHERE: Chelsea Studios
 151 West 26th Street, 6th floor

WHEN: Saturday, June 25th
 and Sunday, June 26th
 (10:30am - 5:30 pm)

TUITION: \$250.

APPLY: www.syn-workshops.com or call 212.696.6721 to request an application.

Update from Board Chair Jessica Baker

As the spring of '05 warms up, Synaesthetic Theatre is celebrating the triumph of our most recent production, *The Trial of K*. Once again the company set ambitious goals, and the show was our most successful production to date. As we turn our focus to the final installment of our professional training season's Master Workshop Series, we'd like to say a hearty THANK YOU to all of our donors who continue to support our development as a company.

Artistically, the company returned for the first time to a previously visited source material, Franz Kafka's *The Trial*. The instinctual familiarity of this text resonated soundly with the creative team, and allowed the directors, designers, and per-

formers to delve even more deeply into the dark underbelly of Kafka's world. According to Richard Hinojosa at nytheatre.com, "The production values for this remarkable piece of theatre are equal to its insights into our current society. You don't have to know Kafka's novel to enjoy the show, but you will want to bring your appreciation for high art." Audiences agreed, and showed their support in several sold out performances! The Company enjoyed the attendance of two large student groups from Pratt University and NYU, the latter group also participating in a post show "talk-back" with ensemble, directors and designers. Many thanks to all who attended and helped spread the word! If you'd like to view pictures from the performance, experience media clips, or read the full reviews, visit www.thetrialofk.com for more information.

The 04-05 year closes at the end of June, and culminates with one last workshop offering led by the inimitable Raina von Waldenberg, *Peeling the Onion: releasing the characters within*. For more information, or to register for this exciting workshop, visit www.syn-workshops.com.

Even with the artistic success of all of our program offerings this year, our company still searches for adventurous institutional funding sources. Our work absolutely depends on the generosity of donors like you, and your support was evident in both our opening night benefit and our multiple fundraising drives throughout the year. Thank you!! ☺



Murmur, Rasp, Keening Wail...

In February, Synaesthetic produced *Music of the Voice*, a 2-day intensive vocal workshop led by **Jonathan Hart Makwaia**. This was Jonathan's first workshop for the public in New York City in 10 years. Longtime Synaesthetic collaborator, Meyung Kim recalls the experience.

My first experience with the Roy Hart voice method as taught by Jonathan Hart Makwaia was as a 2nd year student at NYU's Experimental Theater Wing. Having had limited experience using my vocal chords for anything other than grade school chorus and singing along to the car radio, I was unprepared for the experience of self through voice that the technique encourages.

So it was no surprise when revisiting the technique with some of my former ETW peers at the Synaesthetic Workshop on a relatively mild Saturday in February that I should discover something new again about myself. Having delved deeply into the Roy Hart technique over the past few years, I can attest to this being a symp-



tom of the practice. I am continuously surprised.

Jonathan Hart Makwaia, with the energy of an expansive inhale, provides all the space one needs to arrive at a new destination each and every exhale. It's interesting how much information we store and can be released on air when we are given the space to do so. I am always amazed at the patience Jonathan exercises in allowing students to discover hidden gems with very little interference. Jonathan says very little. He encourages mostly by a question and a nodding of the head. He understands that it is through suggestion and intuition that we are often best lead.

Each morning of the two-day workshop

began with gentle partner massages and loosening of the limbs, allowing sound to resonate from different parts of the body. In the afternoon, we broke off into groups for some vocal interplay. Jonathan would bring our attention to sounds or areas of the voice stumbled upon and sometimes overlooked; a throaty murmur, a plaintive cry, a keening wail, percussive rasp, etc.... all worth exploring further. Late in the afternoon we became a sea of voices moving through the room accompanying an old African folk song. We finished up the workshop in improvised duets. It was a real pleasure to see Synaesthetic's own Chris and Joy improvise together. [Chris and Joy would like to add that it was equally wonderful to experience ALL the spontaneous duets ... including the gorgeously eerie pairing of Meyung and Michael Makowski.]

For additional information on future Synaesthetic workshops, please visit www.syn-workshops.com. ☺



The Trial of K Benefit Party

The benefit for *The Trial of K* was on Sunday, February 20th, in the Velvet Lounge at Tai restaurant in Little Italy. We had a great turnout despite the sudden and heavy snowfall. Many people came wearing their best film noir threads: men in suits with fedoras and plenty of classy dames in gowns! Guests got their mug shots taken which were then available online. As DJ, Rench had people dancing all night long. Our raffle was a success as was our door prize raffle in which guests had to own up to their real or fictitious "crimes". Thanks very much to everyone who supported Synaesthetic Theatre that night.



To view more photos visit:
www.thetrialofk.com/benefit

Synaesthetic Theatre would especially like to thank the following people and organizations for providing invaluable support and raffle prizes at our latest fundraiser: Blue Man Group, The Bowery Poetry Club, Condomania, Every Breath You Take Yoga, Fenster Chiropractic, The Heights Bar & Grill, Jaya Yoga, Knitting Factory, Claire Mullen, Pajama Cottage, Pantheon Tanning Spa, Clifford Shikler, Tina West Chavous.

Support Synaesthetic



Want to help us continue to offer affordable workshops and original productions that are challenging and spectacular? You can!

Synaesthetic Theatre is a non-profit organization dedicated to creating new multimedia theatre with a social conscience, and supporting artists in their

efforts to collaborate across the perceived boundaries of media and methodology. Any contribution that you choose to make, whether financial or "in-kind," will be tax-deductible. In-kind donations include goods and services such as theatrical, film or sound equipment; raffle prizes for our benefits; printing; fabric; legal assistance ... you name it, and we can probably use it.

To make a contribution of any kind, or to inquire about what we need, please don't hesitate to contact us at: (212) 696-6721.

YES, I'd like to make a contribution of: \$ _____

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Subpoening The Trial *continued from page 1*

growing experience I have undertaken. I learned an immense amount about Kafka, shape, my own process, and different worlds coexisting on the same stage.

Margaret O'Sullivan (Actor): *The Trial of K* was quite a learning experience. As always, I seem to find new levels or make new connections during the final show. I'd love to do it again. It was a pleasure to work and play with such wonderful people.

Ginger Legon (Actor): I hit many walls and would run back to the book over and over in an attempt to 'get it'. Much like the game at the carnival where you try to hit the monster with a bat when it pops up, but he keeps popping up somewhere else. What did Josef K have to do

with me? What did his arrogance, confusion, and lust have to reflect in my life? I became plagued by his journey. The parallels beginning to reveal themselves in unexpected ways as I tried to find the downtown A train at 42nd street. Why was I haunted by the rehearsal space with its long dark hallways? I would jump if a pin

dropped. It was much like a dream with many blind spots. I became absorbed by Grubach's ass, the Usher's cries and the Inspector's long, slow gaze. I still hear her saying "worry less about us and more about yourself." I don't have anything to worry about, right? These people became my friends. I was aroused, entranced



and disgusted all in the same moment. Working on this material was tortured bliss. I was blocked. I was liberated. I was lost. Is *The Trial* a maze that I am living in, the world I see around me, full of confusion, hypocrisy, disappointments and lies? Or is it all within me, all the fears, doubts, desires and confusion?

I'll get back to you on that...

Chris King (Camera Operator): This show had the most profound effect upon me. The theme of being placed on trial by oneself is one I had been thinking about recently, but had been unable to truly conceptualize. It was surreal to see my horrific nightmare played out before my very eyes each night of the two-week run.

Arwen Lowbridge (Assistant Stage Manager): Everything's interconnected - i'll do what i can and what's appropriate.

Ted Hannan (Actor): A firm determination by such a talented group of theatre artists created a unique space where we all could surround ourselves for months with the world of *The Trial*. We absorbed Kafka's writings, expressionist art and film, noir film, and all of our associations under the clear direction of Joy and Chris providing us with both a liberating point of departure and a structured destination that became *The Trial of K*. I feel this process elicited my best

possible work and that my work was put to its best possible use. This play came from all of us. A feast, a joy, a blessing that will resonate for a long time!

David Crittenden (Designer): When we did *ROT*, the look was hot and slick. Things were dusty and dirty, but the dust was gold and silver. In the expanded world of *The Trial of K* however, the dust was real and the look was dark and raw.

Chris Nichols (Co-Director): I loved our Friday night rehearsals—which is rare, in most of the shows I've worked on everyone was grumpy about rehearsing on Friday nights. But, with this group we rehearsed every Friday night for close to four months and those nights always had the sexiest, raunchiest, most dangerous energy from the entire ensemble. It was as if everyone was able to channel the Friday night social energy into Kafka's world of guilt, sex and paranoia. Joy and I had such

a great time planning those rehearsals. We'd be mapping out the next week or two and come up with an exercise, look at each other, grin and say "ooh, that's a Friday night".

For additional reactions, photographs and information on *The Trial of K* please visit www.thetrialofk.com/reaction.



Synaesthetic Theatre

851 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11213

www.synaesthetic-theatre.com



syn-aes-thet-ic, *adj.* characterizes a work of art which produces harmony out of different or opposing impulses.

JUNE 25TH & 26TH:

Peeling the Onion:
releasing the characters within

a weekend intensive
workshop with
Raina von Waldenburg

www.syn-workshops.com

