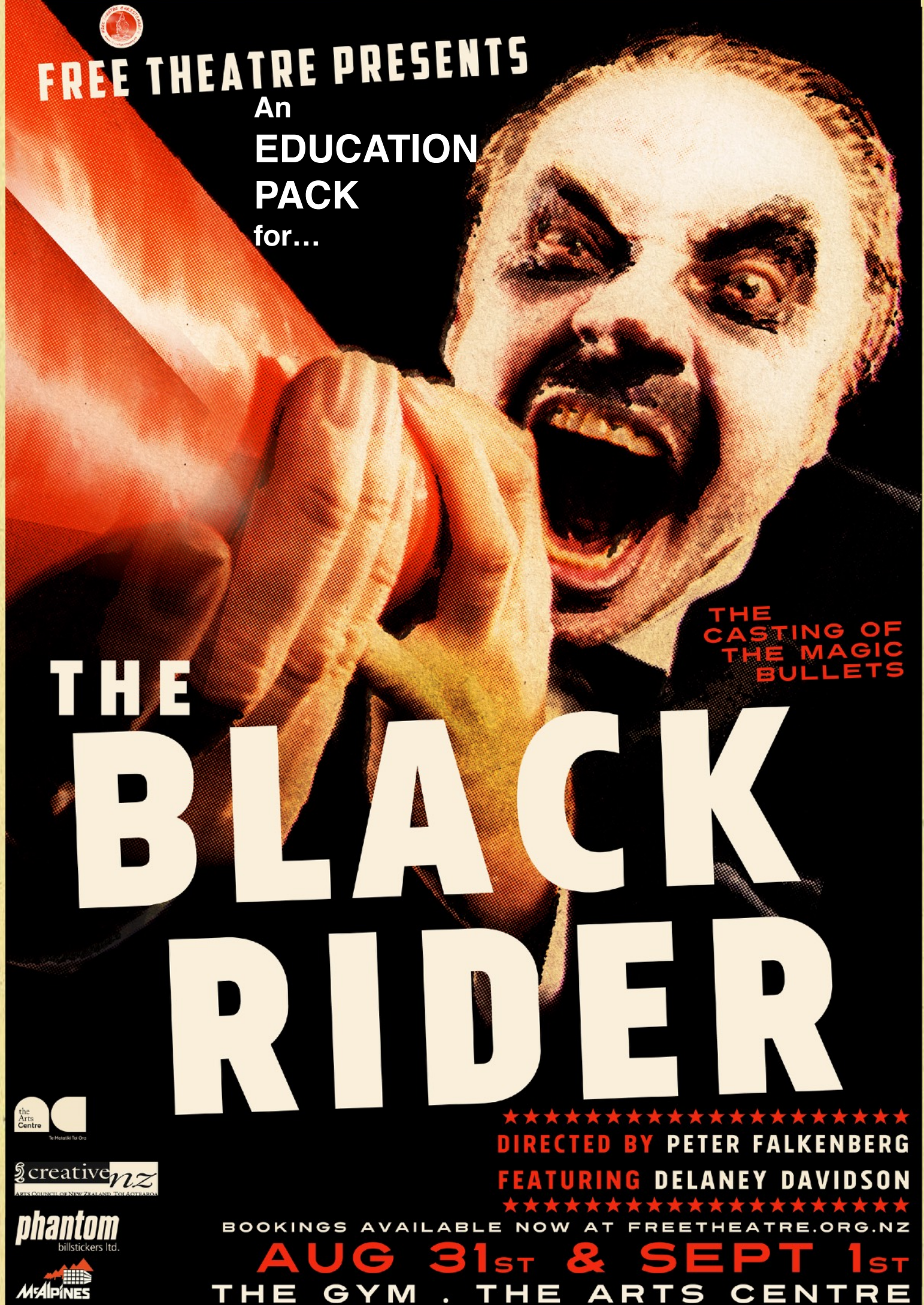




FREE THEATRE PRESENTS

An
**EDUCATION
PACK**
for...



**THE
CASTING OF
THE MAGIC
BULLETS**

THE BLACK RIDER



DIRECTED BY PETER FALKENBERG

FEATURING DELANEY DAVIDSON

BOOKINGS AVAILABLE NOW AT FREETHEATRE.ORG.NZ

AUG 31ST & SEPT 1ST

THE GYM . THE ARTS CENTRE

THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS

THANKS TO OUR PRINCIPAL FUNDERS AND SUPPORTERS FOR *THE BLACK RIDER*:



FREE THEATRE CHRISTCHURCH RECEIVES PRINCIPAL AND CORE FUNDING FROM:



IN ADDITION TO OUR FRIENDS AND VOLUNTEERS FREE THEATRE CHRISTCHURCH IS ALSO GRATEFUL FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE FOLLOWING ORGANISATIONS:



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VENUE: The Gym, The Arts Centre of Christchurch,
Worcester Boulevard.

SCHOOLS PERFORMANCE: Wed 30 August, 7.30pm

RUNNING TIME: 90 minutes without an interval.

SUITABILITY: This production is especially suited for Years 11-13.

THE BLACK RIDER

THE CASTING OF THE MAGIC BULLETS

DIRECTED AND ADAPTED BY PETER FALKENBERG

ORIGINAL DIRECTION ROBERT WILSON

MUSIC AND LYRICS TOM WAITS

TEXT WILLIAM S. BURROUGHS

ORIGINAL MUSICAL ARRANGEMENTS GREG COHEN AND TOM WAITS

DRAMATURGY WOLFGANG WIENS

CAST

Pegleg	Delaney Davidson
Kuno, The Old Forester (as a portrait)	Delaney Davidson
Bertram, the forester	George Parker
Anne, his wife	Greta Bond
Käthchen, their daughter	Emma Johnston
Wilhelm, a clerk	Aaron Hapuku
Robert, a hunting boy	Marian McCurdy

**Man on Stag, Ghosts, Skeletons, Apparitions,
Animals of the forest, Birds**

MUSICIANS

Delaney Davidson, Reuben Derrick, Michael Kime,
Hamish Oliver

Set and Lighting	Stuart Lloyd-Harris
Musical Direction	Hamish Oliver
	Delaney Davidson
Costume and Aerials	Jenny Ritchie
Graphics and Design	Delaney Davidson
Producers	George Parker
	Marian McCurdy
Ubu's Bar	Jenny Ritchie
	Violet French
	Liam Perrell
	Candice Aualiitia



"A DEVIL'S BARGAIN IS ALWAYS A FOOL'S BARGAIN,
PARTICULARLY FOR AN ARTIST. THE DEVIL DEALS
ONLY IN QUANTITY, NOT IN QUALITY"

WILLIAM S. BURROUGHS



ABOUT THE COMPANY:

Free Theatre Christchurch (est. 1979) is a professional theatre collective based in Christchurch, New Zealand. Peter Falkenberg is the founder and Artistic Director of the company. As the country's longest running producer of experimental theatre, the company offers a unique experience for artists and audiences not catered for by local commercial and amateur theatres.

The Free Theatre works as an ensemble, conceiving work from an initial idea and developing it over a longer period of time. This work often takes place in spaces that are not conventional in terms of theatre. As a professional art theatre, Free Theatre is closer in creative process to contemporary dance companies or international experimental art theatre groups such as Ex Machina or The Wooster Group that create exciting new work by pushing beyond generic boundaries.

The company works with artistic collaborators from diverse disciplines and with diverse and unusual texts (literary, filmic, musical, social and cultural) to produce completely new and original work that engages directly with time and place. Core ensemble members undertake years of professional training in different performance techniques and traditions and conduct ongoing company training. Free Theatre ensemble members also regularly participate in and lead professional theatre classes locally, nationally and internationally.

ABOUT *THE BLACK RIDER*:

What: *The Black Rider: the casting of the magic bullets* is a self-billed “musical fable” in the avant-garde tradition.

Who: It was created through the collaboration of theatre director Robert Wilson, musician Tom Waits and writer William S. Burroughs. The project began around 1998 when Wilson approached Waits. Wilson was largely responsible for the design and direction, Burroughs wrote the text, while Waits wrote the music and most of the lyrics.

Plot: The story is based on a German folktale called *Der Freischütz* which had been made into an opera by Carl Maria von Weber. Wilhelm, a file clerk, falls in love with a huntman's daughter. In order to marry, Wilhelm must prove his worth as a hunter and gain her father's approval, but, as “a man of pen and ink”, his shot is lousy and his hopes of marriage worsen. That is until he is offered magic bullets by the devil, Pegleg - who assures him that his bullets will always have a sure shot. However, Pegleg stipulates that, while most of the bullets will hit anything Wilhelm pleases, one of the bullets is under Pegleg's control. Foolish, naive, and overrun with desperate hope, Wilhelm accepts the Faustian pact. On the day of Wilhelm's wedding, the final bullet strikes his beloved dead. He then goes mad, and joins the previous victims of Satan's cunning in the Devil's carnival.



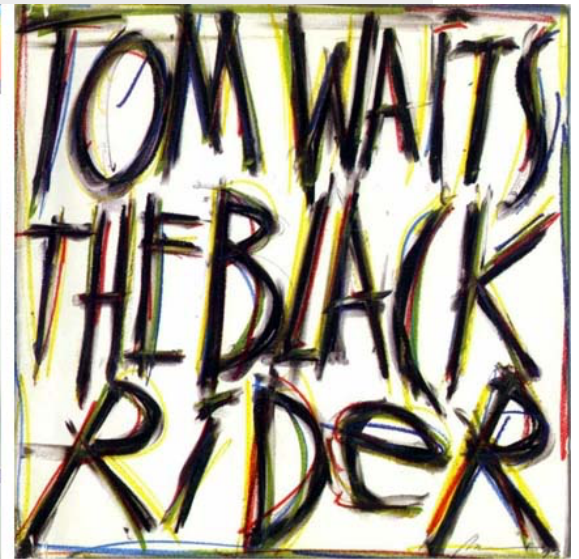
Collaborators Robert Wilson (top left), Tom Waits (top right) and William S. Burroughs (centre).

The Black Rider premiered at the Thalia Theatre in Hamburg, Germany in 1990. It has since been performed around the world with recent productions in Barcelona, Berlin, Norway and Denmark. Singer Marianne Faithfull (pictured) played the devil Pegleg in a production at the Barbican, London in 2004....



Inspiration: Although based on folklore, the story contains strong autobiographical elements from Burroughs' own life: he accidentally shot his own wife in a drunken attempt at recreating the William Tell legend, and the story as a whole may be construed as a warning tale about the destructive powers of addiction.

In 2003 Tom Waits produced a CD recording of the music created for the production.



Lucky Day Overture (sung by the devil Pegleg)

*Come on a long with the Black Rider
We'll have a gay old time
Lay down in the web of the black spider
I'll drink your blood like wine*

*So come on in it ain't no sin
Take off your skin
And dance around your bones*

*So come along with the Black Rider
We'll have a gay old time
Anchors away with the Black Rider
I'll drink your blood like wine*

*I'll drop you off in Harlem with the Black Rider
Out where the bullets shine
And when you're done, you cock your gun
The blood will run, like ribbons in your hair*

*So come along with the Black Rider
We'll have a gay old time
Come on along with the Black Rider
I've got just the thing for thee
Come on along with the Black Rider
I want your company*

*I'll have the veal, a lovely meal
That's how I feel, may I use your skull for a bowl*

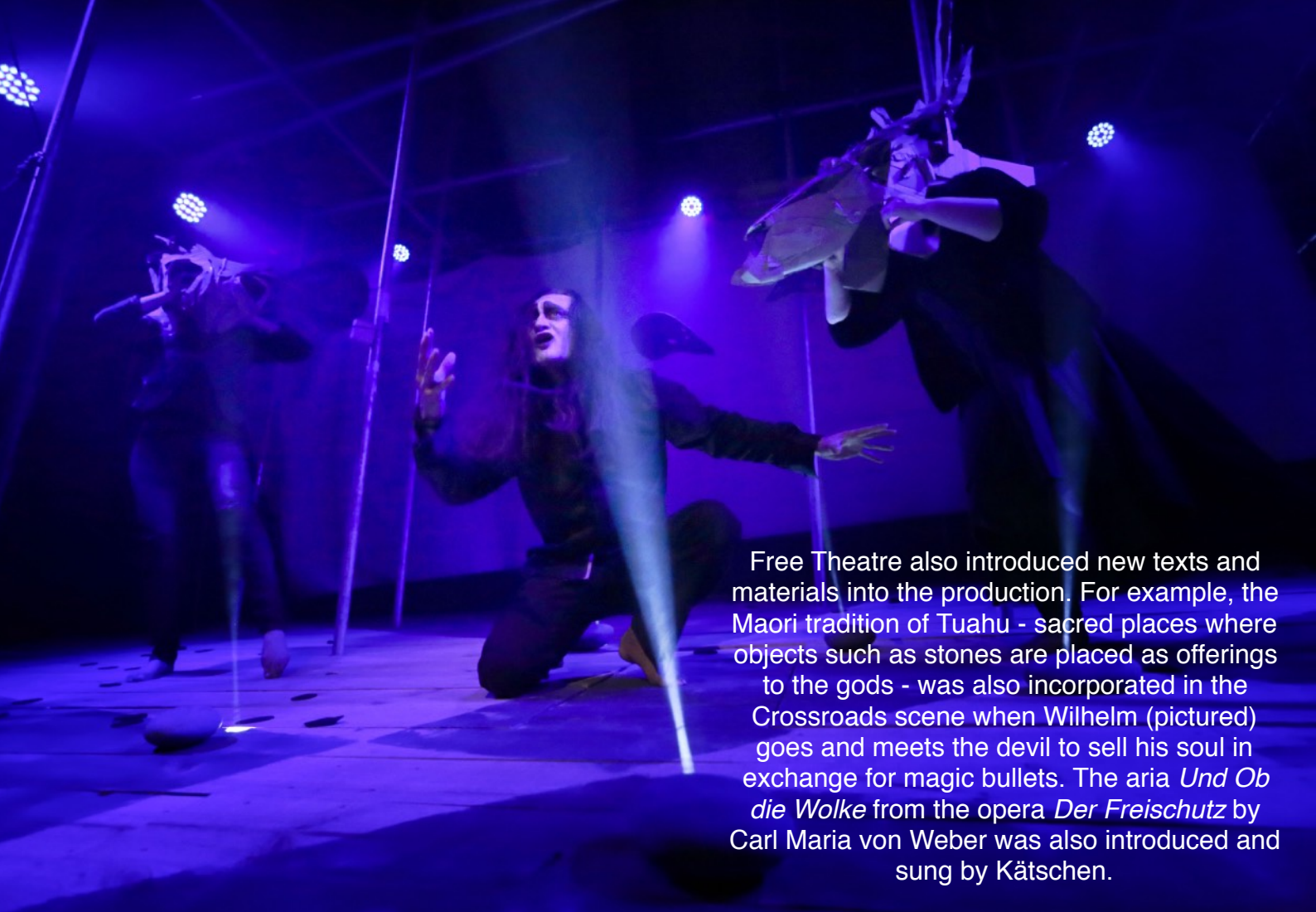
Image from Free Theatre's 2017 production starring Delaney Davidson as the devil Pegleg

ABOUT FREE THEATRE'S *THE BLACK RIDER:*



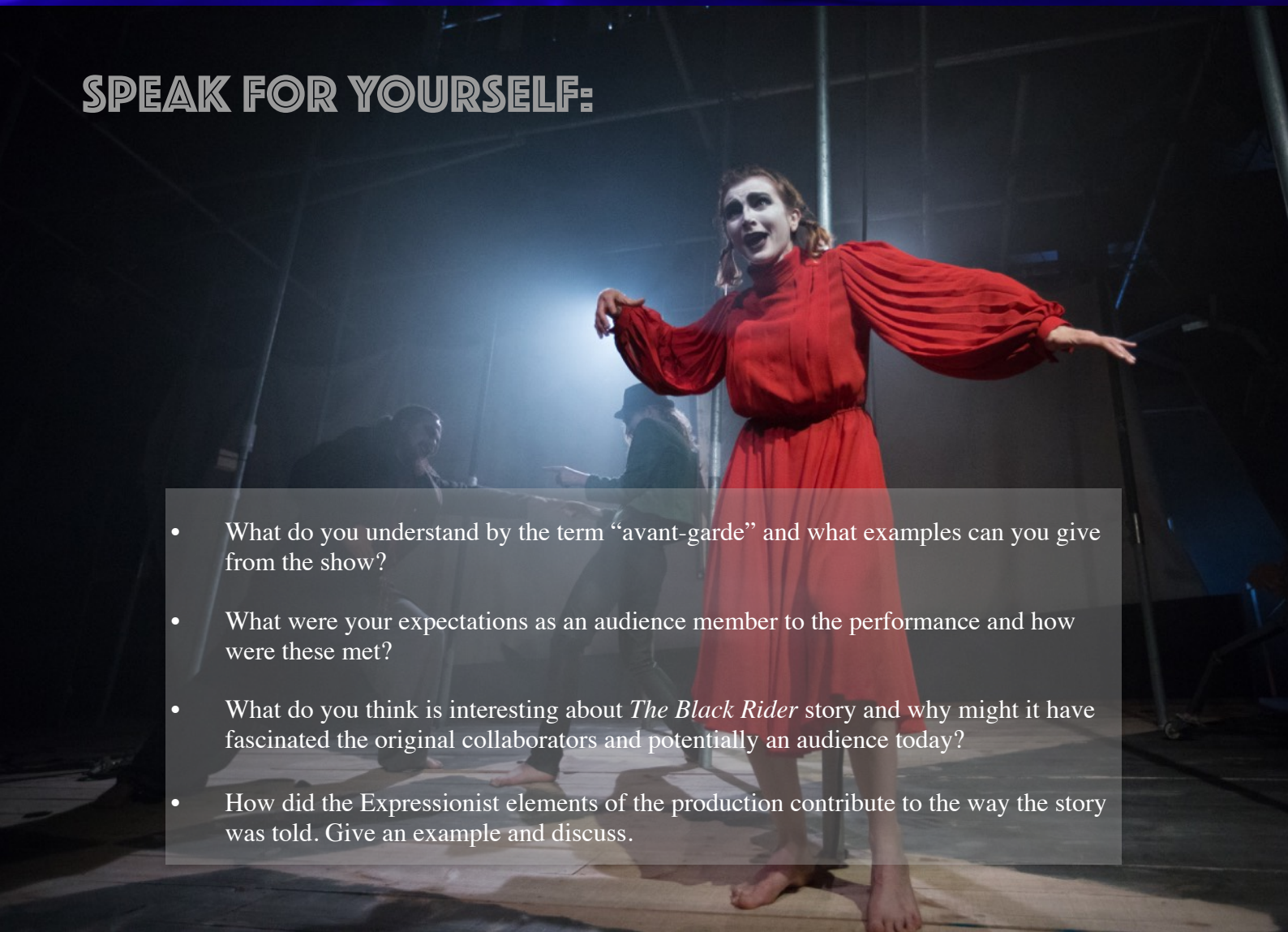
German Expressionism: Free Theatre's production was inspired by German Expressionism which was a movement in the early 20th century theatre, film, music and art. Early Expressionism in particular testified to the failure of social values with a predilection for ecstasy and despair and hence a tendency towards the inflated and the grotesque; a mystical, even religious element with frequent apocalyptic overtones; an urgent sense of the here and now. The plays often dramatise the struggle against bourgeois values and established authority, often personified in the figure of the father. In Expressionist drama, the speech is heightened, whether expansive and rhapsodic, or clipped and telegraphic. Director Leopold Jessner became famous for his Expressionist productions, often unfolding on stark, steeply raked flights of stairs. Free Theatre incorporated Expressionist elements into the set and lighting design, makeup, acting style and music.





Free Theatre also introduced new texts and materials into the production. For example, the Maori tradition of Tuahu - sacred places where objects such as stones are placed as offerings to the gods - was also incorporated in the Crossroads scene when Wilhelm (pictured) goes and meets the devil to sell his soul in exchange for magic bullets. The aria *Und Ob die Wolke* from the opera *Der Freischütz* by Carl Maria von Weber was also introduced and sung by Kätchen.

SPEAK FOR YOURSELF:



- What do you understand by the term “avant-garde” and what examples can you give from the show?
- What were your expectations as an audience member to the performance and how were these met?
- What do you think is interesting about *The Black Rider* story and why might it have fascinated the original collaborators and potentially an audience today?
- How did the Expressionist elements of the production contribute to the way the story was told. Give an example and discuss.



SET & LIGHTING DESIGN:

Designer Stuart Lloyd-Harris speaks

-What was your role/job in the production?

Set Designer, Set Builder, Props design and build, Lighting design, rig and operate.

budget wasn't going to cover it, I ended up designing a failsafe manually operated trapdoor that would be cheap to build and although it wouldn't be able to lift the performer it would still allow for some interesting movements on stage.

In terms of the Hamburg production, I didn't watch it until I'd finalised my design, when I did I thought it was of it's time (1990) and probably appropriate for the Hamburg audience, it was also staged in a 'real' theatre with a fly floor and wings etc. For me staging something in Christchurch in 2017 in a black box type space should be relevant to its time and place, I see copying productions like making poor photocopies - they are always of a lower quality and never as satisfying as the originals. Taking the foundation of the production, the script and music and building our own version is much more exciting for me.

-Why were you interested in the project?

The music written by Tom Waits was probably the first thing that got me interested in the project. I listened to the music and read the script which contains a fair amount of staging direction and requirements, the project was being talked about for maybe a year before it was staged.

-What was your major design inspiration for the project? What set and lighting design decisions did you make? And how did they differ from the original Hamburg production design?

After reading the script I had a range of ideas, I sketched these out and talked them through with the director. I think it's good to be open to inspiration and getting some guidance about what the expected action on stage is. A crucial part of the design process is considering time frames and budget, some of the early ideas I had would have been too expensive and so the job becomes finding solutions that are in line with your creative ideas but that are affordable. One example would be the trapdoors, I had designed a hydraulic lifting system for the trapdoors, and although this would have been a great moment in the show the

-What was your experience collaborating with others on the project?

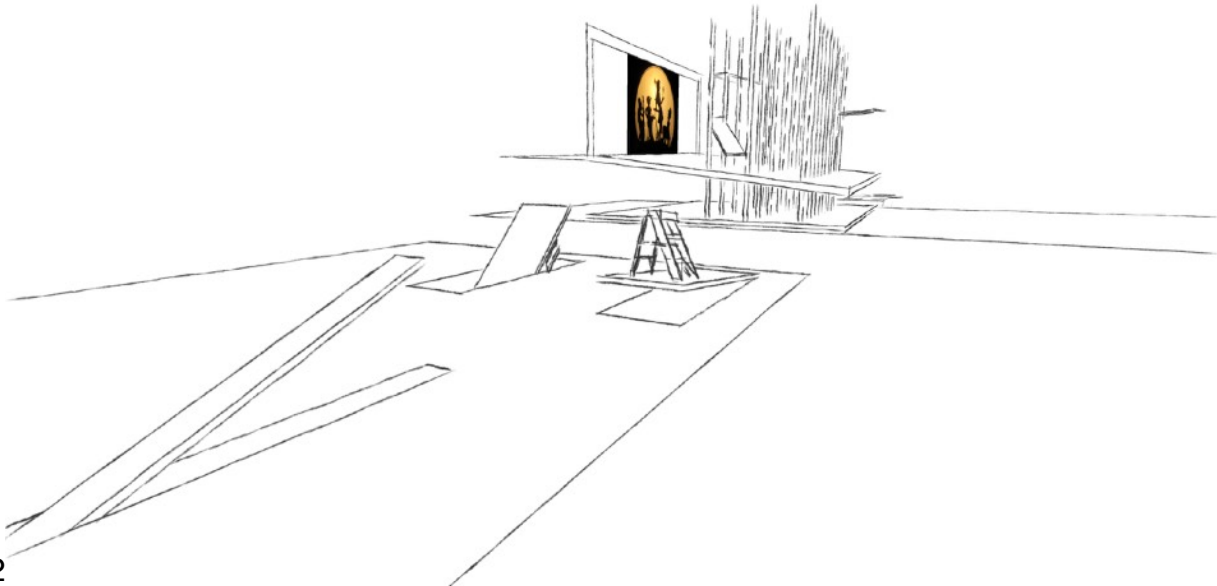
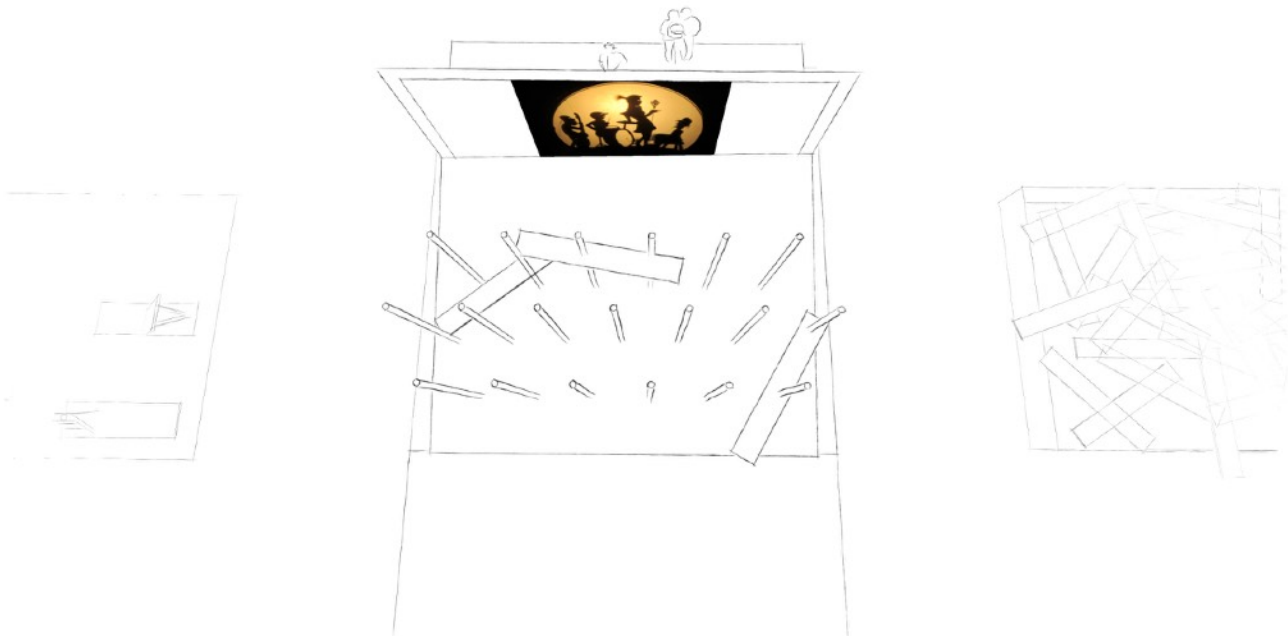
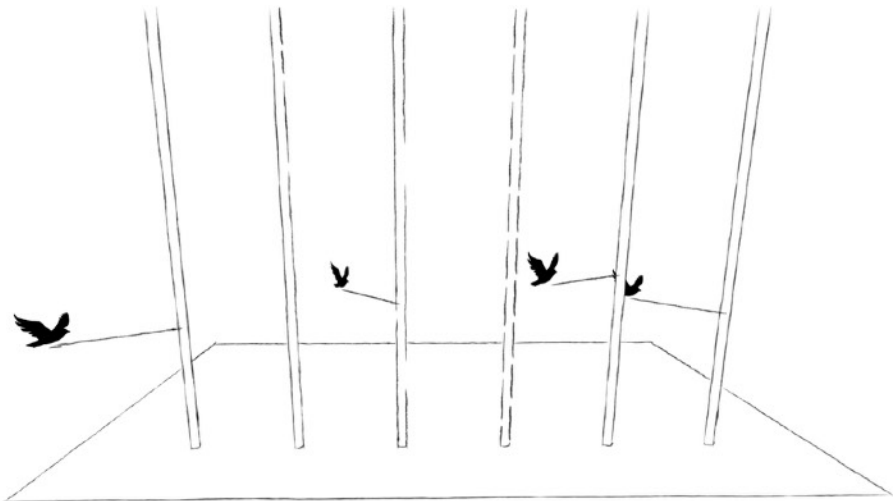
There's no 'I' in collaboration.

-What were the difficulties/challenges working on the project?

It's almost always time and money. Working in a single space where rehearsals and set building have to happen simultaneously is also difficult. I didn't get to see the show until pretty much the week it opened, this made lighting it a real race against time and if it were ever re-staged or toured I'd have a much better sense of the complete show and be able to refine and rework some of the lighting.



Some of Stuart's early design ideas using Sketchup:



MUSIC:

Musical Director Hamish Oliver speaks



-What was your role in the production?

I was the musical director, so chose the band, organised rehearsal, figured out a lot of music from recordings, arranged some pieces, ran the rehearsals, made decisions about vocal parts and did things like counting in some pieces in the show and felt responsible for the band knowing where they were and the singers being able to hear what they needed to hear. The band as a whole came up with our particular versions of much of the music - the other players contributed a huge amount of ideas and detail to what we do. And I play keyboard, clarinet and various bits of percussion.

-Why were you interested in the project? Did you have any prior interest in Waits, Burroughs or Wilson's work?

I'm always interested in theatre (and any art) that pushes the boundaries and is adventurous or explores possibilities. I knew some of Tom Waits' music (not in great detail) and have a lot of respect for what he does - the strength and uniqueness of his style and sound. 'Looseness' and imperfection in what can be a highly polished industry (music as well as theatre) is a fascinating area to inhabit or to delve into. I worked on an arrangement of a piece

for another theatre production 'in the style of Waits' which whetted my appetite. And I knew (from previous collaboration with them) that the Free Theatre would be doing precisely the boundary-pushing adventurous exploration of this project that I enjoyed (and that suits the project). I didn't know Robert Wilson, but knew about William Burroughs. I remember reading *Naked Lunch* when I was at high school - I had to go to a desk at the public library and ask for it; it was a restricted book.

-Please explain a bit about the process to create this new version of the original musical score?

We used the *The Black Rider* album as the basis for all of the songs rather than the existing score. The score is very detailed and specific, being arranged for a highly idiosyncratic ensemble (e.g. bassoon, toy piano, ocarina, marimba, french horn, banjo, etc) so we decided to treat Tom Waits' recordings of the songs as the starting point for our own highly idiosyncratic ensemble (bass clarinet, synth harmonium, exotic percussion, musical saw, banjo, flute, pot lids, etc). Reuben Derrick and I transcribed the songs into notation for the band then we spent a lot of rehearsal time deciding on structure and what textures, feels and instruments should be in which pieces.

-What was your experience collaborating with others on the project?

Artistically satisfying. Two fantastic things are that everyone's voice is important, we all contribute ideas. Luckily though, the work itself is put first. Everyone is pretty direct and there's no discernible baggage when we're rehearsing, this saves a lot of time and effort and means the result is the best we can all do. Because we're all focussed on the work itself, people are good at receiving feedback and having their ideas altered or not taken up. This process is an achievement in itself and very 'professional' apart from anything else. Having said that, we all need some tenacity and patience during the many hours of rehearsal when our approach to the piece is yet unclear.

-How was your experience working as a musical director different or similar to your previous experiences?

Working with the cast on songs was fairly similar - there are still notes to learn, remember and get right. There was more leeway for them to control the music at certain points, it is quite liberating to give away some control during a performance. Working with the band was quite different to a conventional piece of music theatre - we were more like a democratic group of improvisors focussed on creating certain results using any means possible rather than players in strictly

defined roles playing pre-composed parts well. (Not that we don't play well, we do that too!)

-What were the difficulties/challenges with the project?

The main challenge is probably accepting a certain amount of vagueness and indecision during the rehearsal process while all the parts are devised in parallel and before they finally lock together in a cohesive integrated whole. You've got to be ok with the idea that we don't fully know what we should be doing in some parts of the piece yet, and that that's alright and that the answers will become apparent after working on other parts of the piece. Sometimes another challenge is to try and keep a cool head and realise when we might be making choices based on how much fun we are having rather than what's best for the piece (and the audience). I'm pretty sensitive to self-indulgence I think.

-Anything else you can think of to mention that might interest students re: musical direction/creation of the show?

Having a wide variety of taste and listening experience is something that is useful for this kind of project, and I think every musician should have (they often do!). Also, three weeks of black lipstick on a clarinet reed doesn't look good.

SPEAK FOR YOURSELF:

- What set design feature were you most attracted to and how did it affect the performance?
- What did you notice about lighting and how it was used in the performance, discuss one example.
- What did you observe about the music? The devil Pegleg (Delaney Davidson) was both an actor and a musician. What was the affect of this for you as an audience?

REHEARSAL AND TRAINING:



Laban Actor training: To achieve an Expressionist acting style in the acting in Free Theatre's production, director Peter Falkenberg introduced Laban movement as a -physical and vocal training technique. Laban is a movement categorised all human movement into eight different qualities - Float, Punch, Glide, Slash, Dab, Wring, Flick, and Press. The actors trained physically in these movements for several months leading up to the production, working with two qualities for each character.



Aerials: The actors also worked with aerialist Jenny Ritchie to develop a rigging for the love scene (pictured) between Kätchen and Wilhelm.

CHARACTER STUDY: PEGLEG

Actor and Musician Delaney Davidson speaks



-Why were you interested in the project?

Have loved the music by Tom for ages, I listened to it years ago, and was always interested in the Faust theme. I also wanted to get away from the rigid way music is performed on stage, and try something more dramatic. The fact that it was a Christchurch based project was a massive appeal as most of my work takes me travelling.

-Did you have any prior interest in Waits, Burroughs or Wilson's work?

Huge fan of Waits over the years, and enjoyed the influence that Burroughs had on writing as well as his seminal work teaching the Beat poets.

-What was your role?

Pegleg the Devil/Ringmaster and also a small role as a haunted painting.

-How did you develop/approach your role?

I thought a lot about it on my own and also enjoyed following the direction of Peter Falkenberg. It was really great to work with a director. I enjoyed having a different outlook on my performance and it was invaluable to have direction that I believed in. I found it would give me the conviction I needed as it wasn't my decision whether it was working or not, I could just trust Peter.

-Did you introduce anything new to your role or make any obvious changes from the actor who played it in the original Hamburg production?

I tried to use the character of William Burroughs as a cue for the way my version of Pegleg spoke; a strange lilting staggering flowing way of talking. I also went against my initial impulse to make him angry mean and loud and tried to play him as quietly as possible. I thought this made him more sinister. I watched the Hamburg version to get some solutions as well to the way he is in certain scenes.

-What was it like working with Laban movement techniques?

Using Laban was a challenge but also really good as it helped me get out of my usual traps. It's a great exercise and really starts you thinking differently about movement.

-What instruments did you play?

Guitar, Singing, Drums, Whistling, Singing Saw, and Banjo.

-What was your costume and why?

A tail coat for some elegance and formal feeling, a corset to make him unnaturally skinny, boots and tight trousers to make his legs and feet look like hooves and animals legs, gloves to make the hands iconic/symbolic, a hat, and make up to give him a birdlike quality.

-What was the process creating this different version of the original musical score?

We started out just trying what would work with the scenes, and because we were using a lot less musicians we had to make sacrifices. We lost our drummer as well so this meant everyone had a lot to do. I think all these setbacks were in our favour in the end.

-How would you describe the music in the production?

Atmospheric, Beautiful, Sad, Dark, Minimal, Tense, Loud, Disgusting, Sweet, Horrible, Frightening, Heartbreaking, Rousing, Compelling, Simple and Complex.

-How was your experience working as an actor/musician in the theatre different to your previous experiences?

I love Theatre music because it can be so minimal and do so much. Its very different from performing a show. I sometimes miss the possibility of volume that I have at a live concert. But I always enjoy the way theatre music makes me think about sound very differently.

-What was your experience collaborating with others on the project?

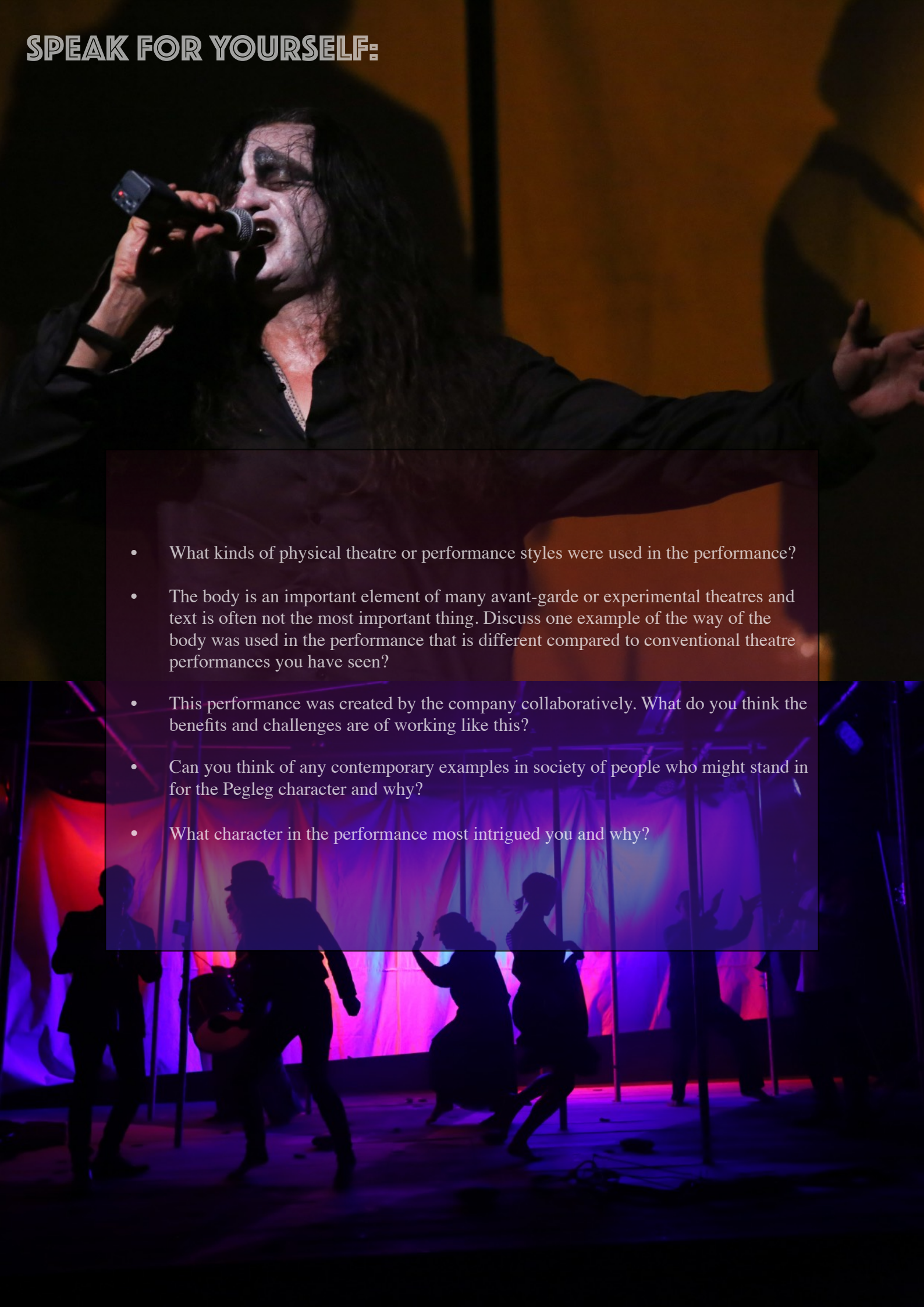
Working in a group is a real challenge for me. I am naturally impatient, and find the slowness makes me freak out. I also find it challenging to be dependent on other peoples timetables. I enjoyed what happens with a group when it comes to creative input and found we made something as a group that I could never have found on my own.

-What were the difficulties/challenges with the project?

Working with others, overcoming my inhibitions with movement and performing, learning text, doing things the same every time, keeping the focus and intensity of the character for the length of the show.



SPEAK FOR YOURSELF:

- 
- What kinds of physical theatre or performance styles were used in the performance?
 - The body is an important element of many avant-garde or experimental theatres and text is often not the most important thing. Discuss one example of the way of the body was used in the performance that is different compared to conventional theatre performances you have seen?
 - This performance was created by the company collaboratively. What do you think the benefits and challenges are of working like this?
 - Can you think of any contemporary examples in society of people who might stand in for the Pegleg character and why?
 - What character in the performance most intrigued you and why?

ADDITIONAL READING AND RESOURCES:

THE BLACK RIDER and FREE THEATRE

- Robert Wilson's website. Images from the original Hamburg production. URL: <http://www.robertwilson.com/the-black-rider>.
- *Words on Plays: An insight into the Play, the Playwright and the Production*. This is a useful resource with interviews and articles, developed for an American Conservatory Theatre production. URL: [http://www.act-sf.org/content/dam/act/education_department/words_on_plays/The%20Black%20Rider%20Words%20on%20Plays%20\(2004\).pdf](http://www.act-sf.org/content/dam/act/education_department/words_on_plays/The%20Black%20Rider%20Words%20on%20Plays%20(2004).pdf)
- Free Theatre Christchurch website with critical reviews of *The Black Rider* performance, video showreels and more info and images: URL: <http://www.freetheatre.org.nz/the-black-rider.html>

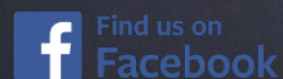
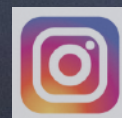
FREE THEATRE EDUCATION

Our Free Theatre Education Programme seeks to encourage young people to develop an active interest in experimental theatre both as audiences and as participants. We run workshops in The Gym in the Arts Centre and in schools specialising in puppetry, mask and physical theatre for all levels. Please contact us directly if you would like to arrange a workshop for your school or see our website for more info and to sign up to our mailing list.

CURRICULUM LINKS

Free Theatre Education activities have direct relevance to many of the NCEA achievement standards levels 1-3

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www.freetheatre.org.nz

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