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# Taking Risks

Orit & Ali at Circus Futures

Nov 2006

# Autogeddon 1995

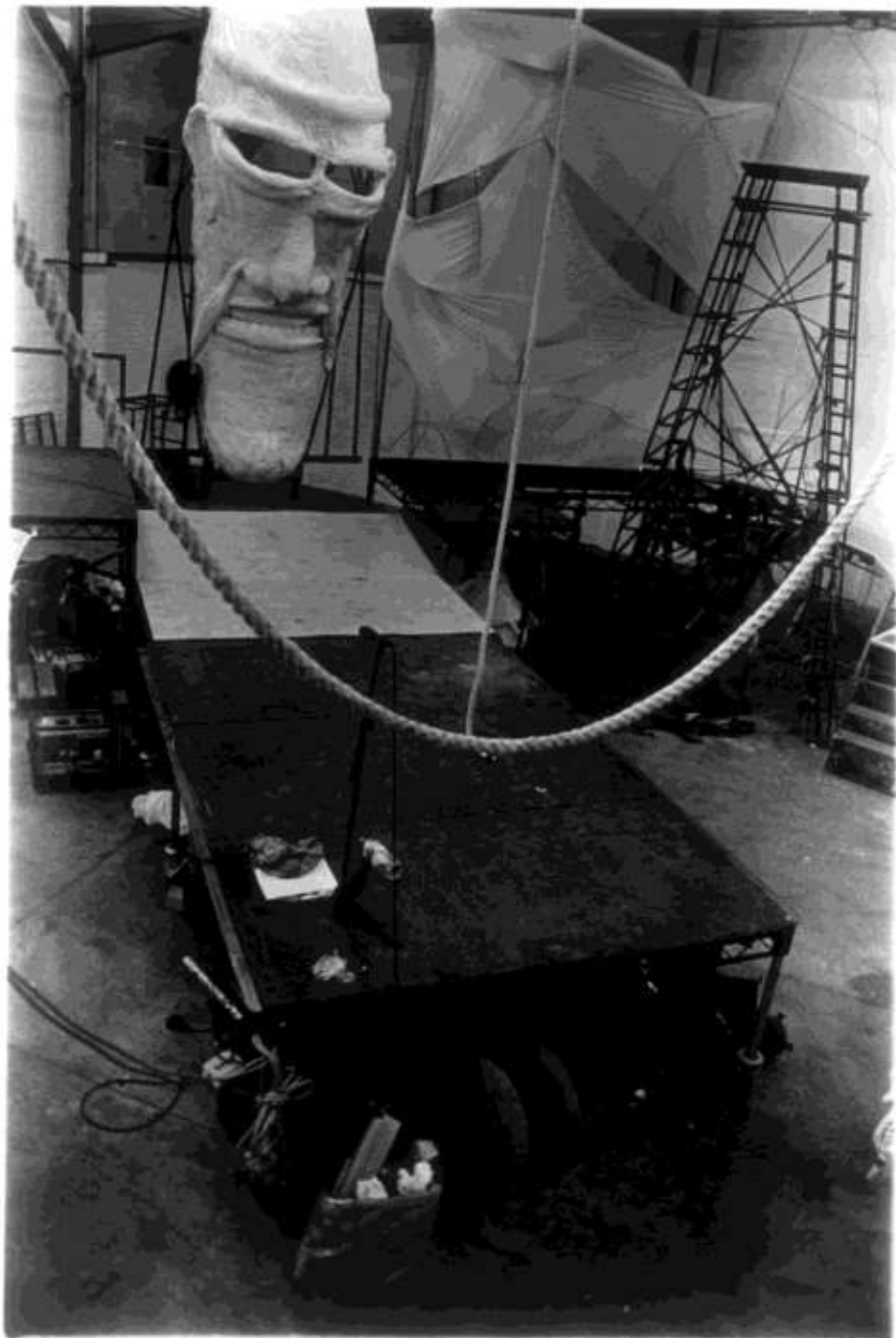


# Stepping Stones 1997 - 2002







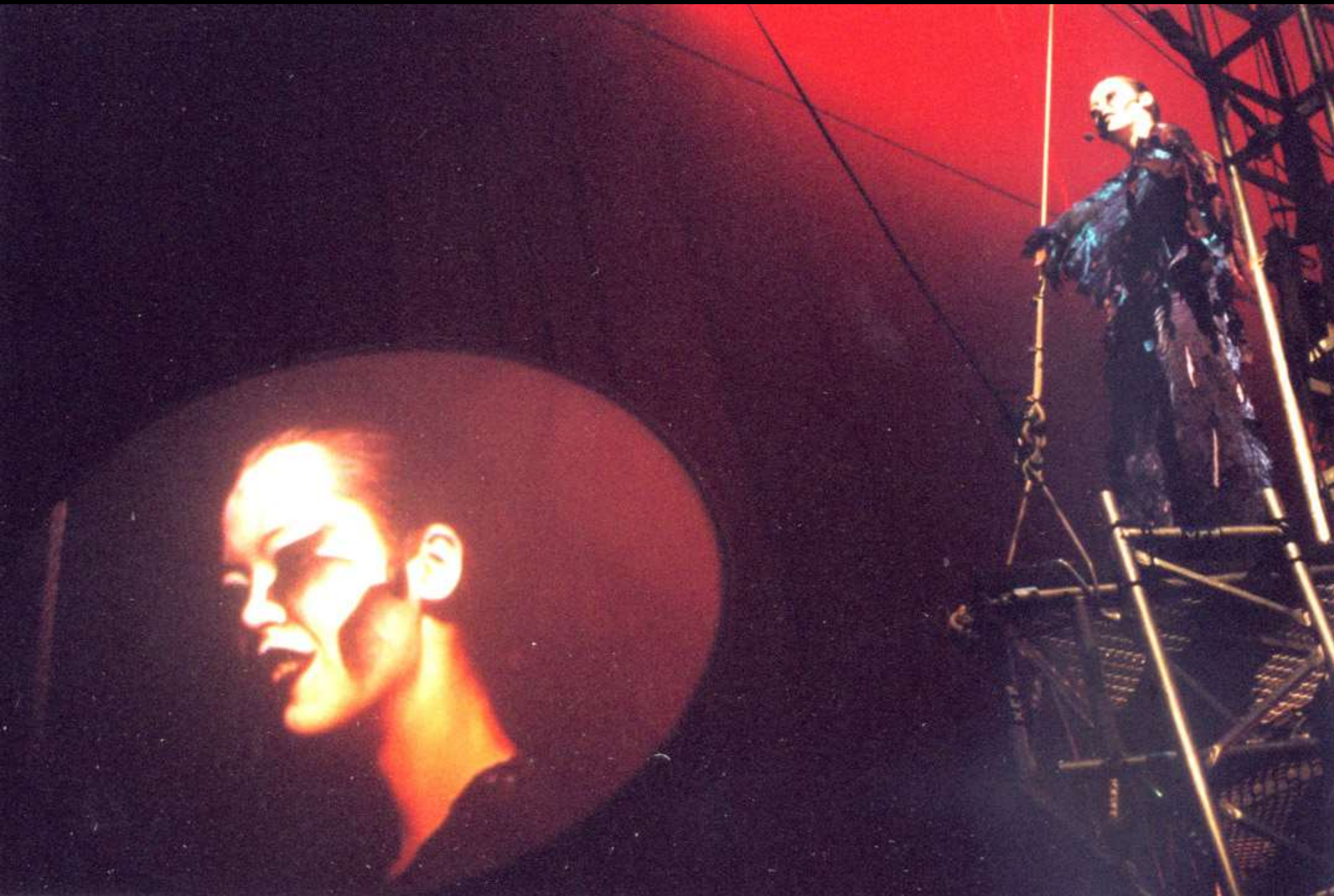




MEN FOR HONOR

FROM

Small table with four legs













NOFIT STATE CIRCUS TENT

# Stepping Stones Trilogy

- Extended period of action research and creative risk taking
- Creation of new language of circus theatre - physical environment integral to audience experience
- Collaborative relationships with artists and performers
- Network of partners, participants and audiences

# Immortal 2004

Taking Risks



# Some Challenges

- Budgets based on funding available rather than what was needed
- Funders dates close to or after rehearsals start
- Tour booking incomplete until after tour started
- Artists availability
- Management capacity



# What we did

- Decided to go ahead before funding or tour in place, with support from our Board
- Toured in Wales and UK for 20 weeks
- Touring company of 20 performers and 20 crew and support staff = 40
- Trainee programme

# The results

- We lost £40,000
- We had a very long list of complaints from touring company members
- We were physically and mentally exhausted
- No work done on setting up future projects

# But...

- Great reviews
- Great documentation and promo material
- Invited to Tarrega Festival 2005
- Experience of doing it
- Evaluation provided basis for learning and improvement
- Trainees with improved skills and experience
- Company wanted to do it again

# And fortunately

- We had other income streams to offset the loss

# Immortal 2005

Taking Risks (again)



# Risks

- No funding for production, only touring
- Edinburgh Festival - self promotion
- Tarrega Festival - only 50% costs covered
- London - self promotion
- Not delivering to recommendations from 2004 evaluation and therefore
- Pissing people off
- Management capacity

# What we did

- Decided to go ahead
- Decision supported by Board
- Made as many improvements as we could afford
- Thorough evaluation process



# The results

- We lost £20,000
- We had a slightly shorter list of complaints from touring company members
- We were even more physically and mentally exhausted

# But...

- More great reviews
- 200 international promoters saw show through British Council Showcase
- Won awards
- Generated interest from international bookers  
Edinburgh broke even on costs
- Year 2 trainees now highly skilled performers

# And fortunately

- We had other income streams to offset the loss

# Immortal 2006

Managing Risks



# Risks

- Tour booking / financial
- Cash flow
- Edinburgh
- Touring company wellbeing
- Quality
- Logistics international touring
- Contracts
- Tour management

# The results

- Broke even with no public subsidy
- Trainees on full pay
- Sold out tour and average 88% capacity in Edinburgh
- More interest for 2007

# Summary of Risks



# Risks we took

- Commercial
- Creative
- Company

# Other people took risks

- Funders
- Touring partners and promoters
- Performers

*“Vision is not enough, it must  
be combined with venture.  
It is not enough to stare up the  
steps, we must step up the  
stairs”*

Vaclav Havel

*“Even if you are on the right track, you will get run over if you just sit there”*

Will Rogers

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The end