

Winter 2-10-2000

Aha! Vivat Homo Sapiens

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Authors

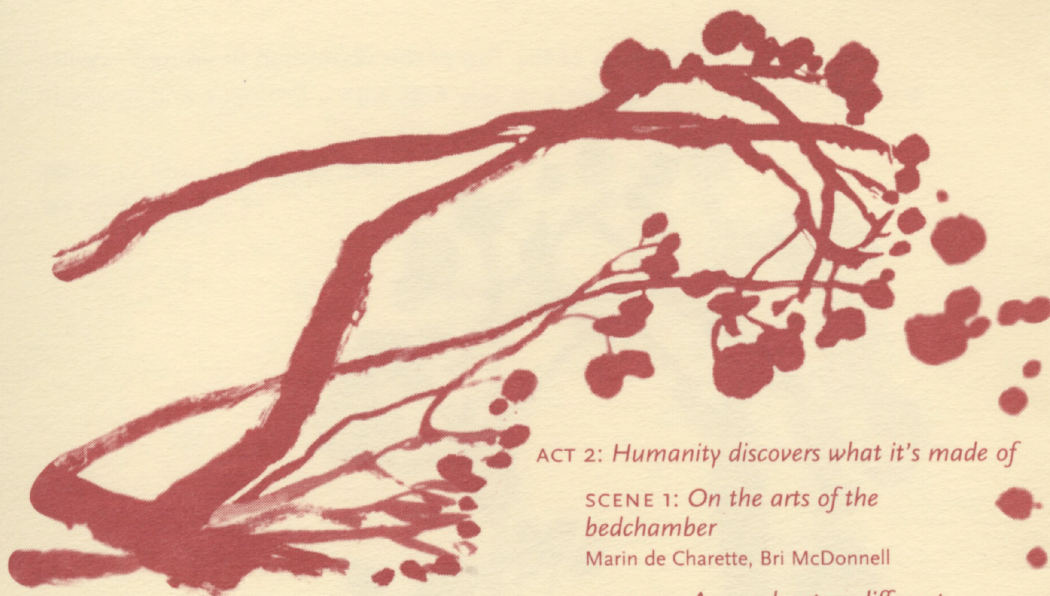
Agnieszka Taborska, James Bewley, Szymon Bojko, Conrad Armstrong, Vincent Balistreri, Heidi Bochain, Sarah Brown, Vale Bruck, Lily Burickson, Marin de Charette, Sarah Dungan, Edie Faig, Matthew Fairbank, Amy Feldman, Jon Fernandez, Hal Forsstrom, Andrea Hackman, Leon Imas, Sherman Kew, Lara Kurtaman, Bri McDonnell, Lauren Nassef, Jesse M. Ragan, Allen Spetnagel, Adam Stanforth, Jenny Vovolvski, Ariana White, and Chris Yates

The Cellar at the Top of the Waterman Building Presents
A Visual Story Through Millenia in Two Acts with a Prologue and Epilogue

February 10, 11, and 12, 2000
6:00 and 9:00 PM

TWELFTH
ANNUAL
RISD
CABARET
aha!
vivat homo sapiens





ACT 2: *Humanity discovers what it's made of*

SCENE 1: *On the arts of the bedchamber*

Marin de Charette, Bri McDonnell

SCENE 2: *A crowd not so different*

Ensemble, Amy Feldman, Jesse M Ragan

SCENE 3: *An uncomfortable moment with a moral*

Vincent Balistrieri, Hal Forsstrom, Andrea Hackman, Leon Imas, Lara Kurtzman

ACT 3: *Humanity faces the horrors of its mistakes and missteps*

SCENE 1: *Sei Shonagon invites us to a great parade*

Chris Yates

INTERSCENE E: *A weary traveler goes to dinner and orders the wrong thing*

Vincent Balistrieri, Edie Faig, Lauren Nassef, Adam Stanforth, Ariana White

SCENE 2: *Siren boy warns of the end*

Conrad Armstrong

SCENE 3: *March of dead soldiers and the general's lament*

Conrad Armstrong, Vale Bruck, Matthew Fairbank, Hal Forsstrom, Sherman Kew, Jesse M Ragan

INTERSCENE F: *The worm and his weird sticky*

Edie Faig, Allen Spetnagel

SCENE 4: *A great parade*

Ensemble

EPILOGUE: *Under cherry trees*

Ensemble, Sarah Brown, and Szymon Bojko

PROLOGUE: *It all starts somewhere*

Conrad Armstrong, Sarah Brown, Edie Faig, Matthew Fairbank, Jon Fernandez, Hal Forsstrom, Jesse M Ragan, Allen Spetnagel, Adam Stanforth, Ariana White

ACT 1: *Humanity is born, educates itself, and prepares for a great event*

SCENE 1: *Genesis*

Vale Bruck, Jon Fernandez, Andrea Hackman, Jesse M Ragan, Chris Yates

INTERSCENE A: *Lightning strikes and startles the Love Sisters*

Adam Stanforth, Ariana White

SCENE 2: *Lil' Tommy Edison and the Epic of Gilgamesh*

Vincent Balistrieri, Lily Burickson, Sarah Brown, Sarah Dungan, Amy Feldman, Sherman Kew, Lara Kurtzman, Bri McDonnell, Lauren Nassef, Allen Spetnagel

INTERSCENE B: *A weary traveler courts the Love Sisters*

Edie Faig, Adam Stanforth, Ariana White

SCENE 2: *A surprise test awaits the Sumerian schoolchildren*

Conrad Armstrong, Sarah Brown, Marin de Charette, Jon Fernandez, Leon Imas, Jenny Volvovski

INTERSCENE C: *A story about a worm*

Heidi Bochain / Andrea Hackman, Sarah Dungan, Amy Feldman, Allen Spetnagel

INTERSCENE D: *Maat is served to preserve and encourage order*

Vincent Balistrieri, Matt Fairbank, Hal Forsstrom, Lauren Nassef, Lara Kurtzman



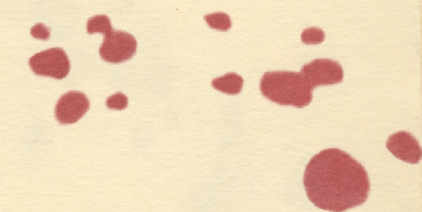
My journey to the middle of Australia, the oldest continent on our globe, led me to the idea of a millennium story of, by, and for homo sapiens. The mystery of the Uluru, a gigantic red rock in the Australian desert, pushed my imagination toward Genesis and the creation story. My pilgrimage to Uluru was followed by my personal contact with Aborigines and their art which evolved from rock painting, their dances, music, mythology, beliefs, and behavior – all of which helped me to perceive the dawn of humanity, the oldest of civilizations, in which all were artists. Each path from the direction of the distant past, even prehistory, opened new doors. It was magic to pass through the many imaginative throughways that homo sapiens built. Each gateway provided new access to the realm of the *Aha!* That is the story of how the concept for *Aha!* was born, a concept which was then developed and put into scenes by James Bewley.

Aha!... Something familiar which at first seems unfamiliar but then is suddenly recognized as familiar after all. This is the moment that defines the *Aha!* From the first steps taken on two feet, humanity has happened upon an endless series of *Ahas!*

Aha! embraces several millennia of the development of mankind seen as a unity of opposing forces, which coexist and never disappear. Humanity exists as an eternal opposition, a “programmed” contradiction between positive, creative impulses and destructive forces, between the rational mind and animal instincts. The history of mankind testifies to the fact that while tools and technology are in endless transformation, the features of the human character haven't changed much for millennia. We have come a long way from homo erectus – the half wild man – to our contemporary degree of cognition and self-consciousness. Nevertheless, man's inherited features change slowly. Love and hatred, curiosity and pettiness, stupidity and brightness, egoism and embodiments of evil.

History offers many lessons of dark manifestations of power by individuals, leaders, nations, and states: war, cruelty, violence, brutality, crime, arrogance, misanthropy, and jealousy. A brighter lesson from the history of mankind is our unceasing need to create, build, construct, design, shape, give life, immortalize beauty. Humanity from the very beginning of civilization has looked for order, law, moral and ethical principles, elevated rules of harmony, good manners and behavior through Islam, Hinduism, Confucius, the Tao, Buddhism, Shintoism, the Old and New Testaments, the medieval code of chivalry, the arts of love and laughter. Luckily for us, our genius for life exists parallel to the dark side of human nature. Perhaps the wonder is in the balance between the two.

Szymon Bojko



"Aha, aha, just a moment, *just a moment*, yes." These words come to mind whenever I think about my dear friend and collaborator, Szymon Bojko. Szymon approached me after a performance I'd put up in my garage on Keene Street and told me that he enjoyed the awkward way the evening began. Waiting, *waiting*, and then *Aha!*

Together, Szymon and I, an old guy and a young one took to starting off this new era with a great visual spectacle/meditation on humanity. Like the eleven RISD Cabarets before it, this one is born of the dusty Eastern European cabarets which are so deeply a part of Szymon's experience and so inspiring to me and the little, one-man theaters I pull out of cardboard boxes.

I have relished the awkward moments and the tender ones that have developed from my experience with the still growing Cabaret family at RISD. Out of tremendous chaos came more chaos, and then a little more, but at some point, I seem to remember one day, where I had a moment of serene comfort and understanding. *Just a moment.*

There are several people to thank, including all my friends and relationships that had to endure me while working on the script, but there is one woman without there would be no Cabaret at all. Peggy Lewis tucked me away in a cozy room in her house, fed me, organized all the brilliant lectures on world cultures and humanity, and kept everyone in line to ensure a wonderful experience for all. Thank you, Peggy.

To Treva, my angel, my wondrous co-creator, thank you for appearing from the depths of New York on that bus every week to share your smile and your wisdom. You allowed us all to relax and feel comfortable with changing our physical shapes and our emotional ones.

In addition to Treva and myself, we were lucky to have another RISD alum helping us out on this project. Our esteemed producer, Bill Newkirk, is one of the few champions of the Cabaret through its many and seemingly-always-on-the-brink-of-extinction incarnations.

To the cast, I give you my gratitude, my respect, and my friendship. Thank you for teaching me. I have enjoyed your endless energy and willingness to try things over and over and over and over again.

And finally, I wish to thank everyone who has come to support their children, their loved ones, their siblings, their students, and their friends. It is your generosity and kindness, which fuels greatness in all humanity.

James Bewley

In the winter of 1987 Szymon Bojko and James Barnhill asked me, since I was then Dean of Liberal Arts, if they might make an experiment with a new kind of Liberal Arts course during Wintersession. They wanted to explore a multi-disciplinary method of teaching based upon the performance of an historical Cabaret. Their experiment succeeded and, perhaps accidentally, opened the door to an immersive, life-changing process for their students and the rest of us. They discovered the poetry, song, and dance inside of each student and through these vehicles, indelibly stamped on their minds, lessons from art and performance history, literature and music, and world history.

The production that first year was From St. Petersburg to Khrushchev's Boot. Subsequent Cabarets have addressed the Beat Generation, Paris in the 50's, Ubu Roi, The life and times of Joseph Beuys, etc. RISD faculty like Szymon, Agnieszka Taborska, Don Keefer and faculty from Brown University such as Mark Cohen, Julie Strandberg and Michelle Bach-Coubaily have worked together on mounting nearly a dozen productions. Composer Steven Jobe and producer Bill Newkirk have been faithful Cabaret colleagues for many years. Peter O'Neill, Dennis Hylinsky, and Winnie Lambrecht have all documented Cabaret performances.

Liberal Arts and Foundation Studies sponsor the course and the Deans Council, Provost Office and President have sponsored the performance. For the first time, in Wintersession 1998, an alum, Jake Mahaffy, worked with Szymon to produce the Cabaret. Cabaret has been cross generational – senior guru Szymon and his faithful students brought together two institutions, Brown and RISD, that are so close and yet frequently so far apart (why can't they just have a Wintersession, too?), and a diversity of departments from across the RISD campus. In this way, the Cabaret has played an unparalleled ambassadorial role within our community.

This year extraordinary things have occurred on the road to the performance you will see tonight. Szymon Bojko, the godfather of this particular project suffered health problems that delayed his arrival to Providence. In January doctors discovered and removed a kayak, Oshun's feather headdress, a wheat grass juicer, and Kruschev's boot from his stomach. He is now amongst us hale and hearty. We thank his doctors and the Fates, which Szymon is always two steps and sometimes, two time zones ahead of. During his recovery, Szymon's colleagues in Liberal Arts and experts from the RISD Museum, Roger Williams College, the Cabaret band, and the Peabody Salem Museum have graciously pitched in to prepare the students with lessons of transcendence, love and law – sacred and profane, and manners from all over the world. And perhaps, most marvelous of all, two Cabaret alumni have returned to lead the performance: choreographer Treva Offut, who dazzled the audience with her dances, songs, and characters in three Cabarets and Writer/Director James Bewley, who was unforgettable in the role of George Grosz. James and Szymon have been developing this Cabaret for nearly three years via a dialog that has spanned four continents.

Tonight at the Cabaret we are witness to the collaboration of a community, not just the community of students that has grown over countless and obsessive hours of class, construction, snow balls, karaoke and rehearsal, but also the community of people who have risen to the occasion of this millennial project and the call to not let the ball drop, when it has already bounced so high.

Edward Dwyer

DIRECTOR James Bewley
 GENERAL CONCEPT Szymon Bojko
 SCENARIO James Bewley
 Szymon Bojko
 CHOREOGRAPHY Treva Offut
 MUSICAL ARRANGEMENTS
 AND COMPOSITION Steven L. Jobe
 ORCHESTRA Matthew Everett, *accordion*
 Laura Gulley, *violin*
 Steven L. Jobe, *bazouki, hurdy-gurdy*
 Rachael Robidoux, *trumpet*
 PRODUCER Bill Newkirk
 VIDEO DOCUMENTATION Josh Backer
 COSTUMES, SETS, PROPS,
 PUPPETS, LIGHTS, SOUND,
 PUBLICITY, GALLERY SHOW Ensemble

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THE ENSEMBLE Conrad Armstrong
 Vincent Balistrieri
 Heidi Bochain
 Sarah Brown
 Vale Bruck
 Lily Burickson
 Marin de Charette
 Sarah Dungan
 Edie Faig
 Matthew Fairbank
 Amy Feldman
 Jon Fernandez
 Hal Forsstrom
 Andrea Hackman
 Leon Imas
 Sherman Kew
 Lara Kurtzman
 Bri McDonnell
 Lauren Nassef
 Jesse M Ragan
 Allen Spetnagel
 Adam Stanforth
 Jenny Volvovski
 Ariana White
 Chris Yates

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IN THE USA John Bell
 Christina Bertoni
 Adam Bronstein
 Phillip Contic
 Matthew Cottam
 Edward Dwyer
 Cydney Feinstein
 Michael fink
 Kuang-Yu Fong
 Marcin Gizycki
 Nermin Kura
 Winnie Lambrecht
 Kevin Lang
 Andrew Maske
 New Langton Arts
 Nicholas Scappaticci
 Cathy Seigel
 Mark Sherman
 Jeff Timm
 Chris Turner
 Rachel Turner
 David Warner

IN POLAND Krzysztof Meisner
 Borys Pugacz-Muraszkiewicz
 Nina Smolarz
 Anna Wojtasik

IN AUSTRALIA Uluru-Australian Nature Conservation Agency
 Elzbieta Lapszewicz-Bojko

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 Baruch Kirschenbaum, *Dean of Liberal Arts*
 Margaret Lewis, *Academic Affairs*
 Media Resources

FOUNDING FATHERS James O. Barnhill
 Szymon Bojko

FOR PLANTING THE CHERRY TREE, THE CABARET
 GIVES ITS DEEPEST THANKS TO PRESIDENT ROGER MANDLE

