

# FLARE DAILY

1100-1230

## Talk Back Feedback Session discussing

Molar by Quim Bigas Bassart  
Sprachspiel by L'Hommmmm/Geert  
Belpaeme and Mats Herreweghe  
Rise to Vertex by Stitch Theatre  
Someone Loves You Drive with Care  
by Tom Cassani

Breathe (Everything is Going to be Okay) by Alicia Jane Turner  
PARTY by Beaches

*The Flare Hub FREE (email [liam@flarefestival.com](mailto:liam@flarefestival.com) to book)*

1200-1235

## PARTY: Beaches

*The Flare Hub (£6 (£4))*

1430-1505

## PARTY: Beaches

*The Flare Hub £6 (£4)*

1430-1520

## Actresses Always Lie

*Royal Exchange £12 (£8)*

1930-2020

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*Royal Exchange £12 (£8)*

2000-2200

## Double Bill—Moore Bacon!/Charlie and the Bukowskies

*HOME £12 (£8)*

2200—onwards

## Closing Party

*The Loft at Vodka Revolution, Oxford Road (Free to Flare ticket holders)*

### FLARE17 venues

**HOME** | 2 Tony Wilson Place, Manchester | M15 4FN  
[Homemcr.org](http://Homemcr.org) | 0161 200 1500

**Royal Exchange Theatre** | St Ann's Square, Manchester | M2 7DH  
[RoyalExchangeTheatre.co.uk](http://RoyalExchangeTheatre.co.uk) | 0161 833 9833

**The Lowry** | Pier 8, The Quays, Salford | M50 3AZ  
[TheLowry.com](http://TheLowry.com) | 0843 208 6000

**Contact** | Oxford Rd, Manchester | M15 6JA  
[contactmcr.com](http://contactmcr.com) | 0161 274 0600

**Martin Harris Centre for Music and Drama** | Bridgeford St, Manchester  
M13 9PL | [martinharriscentre.manchester.ac.uk](http://martinharriscentre.manchester.ac.uk)

**The Flare Hub** | No.70 Oxford Street, Manchester | M1 5NH

### Contact Us.

Tickets from: [www.flarefestival.com](http://www.flarefestival.com)

Talk to us. Email: [boxoffice@flarefestival.com](mailto:boxoffice@flarefestival.com)

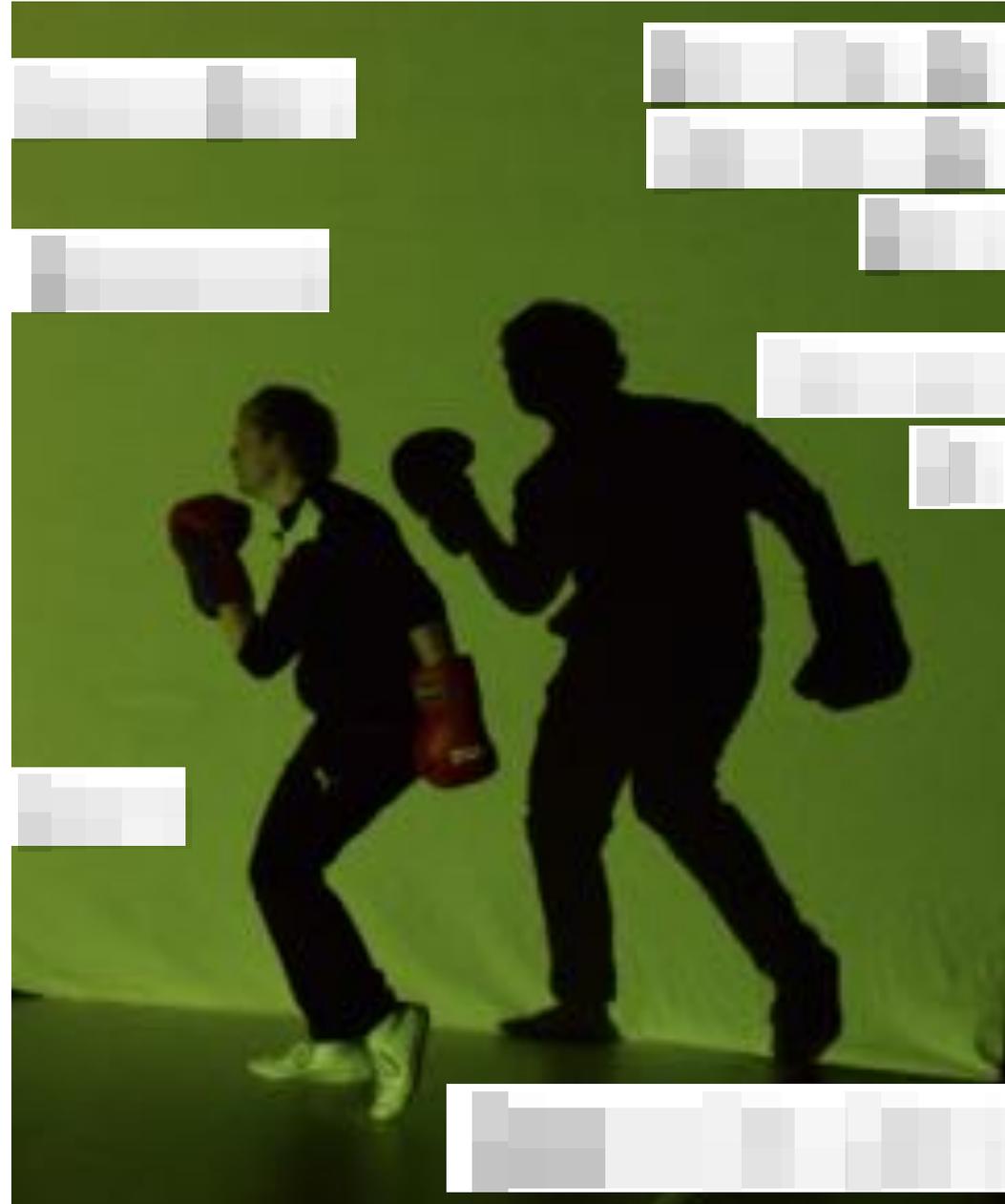
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#FLARE17



## BOYS WILL BE GIRLS AND GIRLS WILL BE BOYS

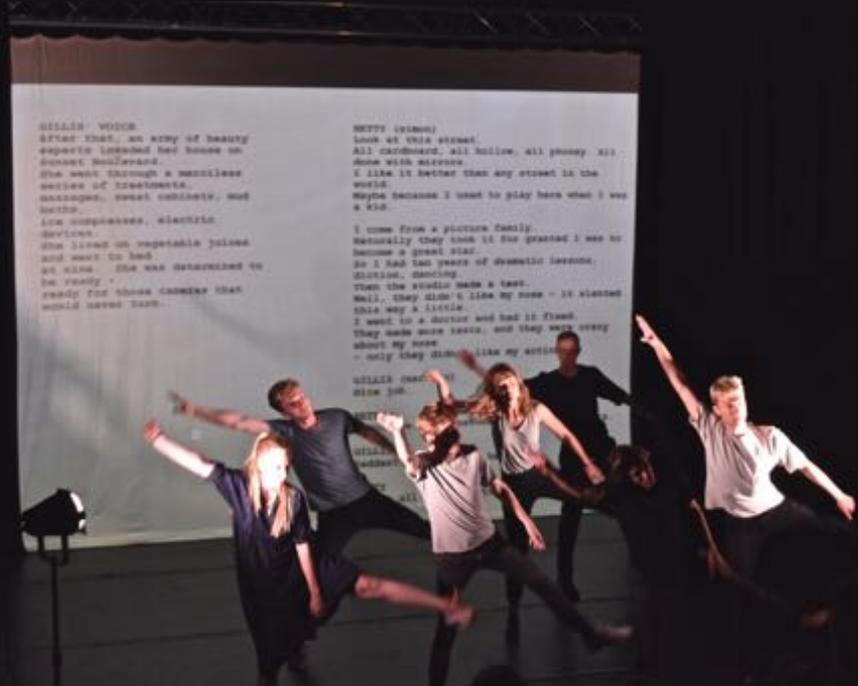
*Boys Will Be Girls and Girls Will Be Boys* opens with the cast on stage, looking towards a projection screen towards which we also look. On it, the prologue to a script is displayed. This opening image is our introduction to a piece which is in equal parts a fascinating artistic experiment, and also warm, funny and extremely watchable.

The piece poses a challenge to its cast: in pairs they are asked to read the projected script, which appears a page at a time overhead, and to memorise it, before turning to their audience and attempting its recall. It is a deceptively simple yet innovative mechanism and hugely watchable. We are presented with the process of performers attempting to navigate the difficulty of memorising and almost immediately recounting a new text, rather than a product; and it is this collision of process with presentation which is extremely compelling.

The audience plays an important role in the work. Able to see the script on screen throughout, they take on the position of referee or arbiter, assessing performers' recall against the source text. Our role as audience is given weight by the inevitability that the experiment will fail. The piece subverts the negativity of a performer 'forgetting their lines,' with these moments of breakage instead offering the appeal of the work, opening potential for playfulness, irreverence and hilarity. These moments of breakage, rather than awkward, feel full of colour and life; they bring new resonance to the text, adding punctuation and meaning, and offering an interpretation of the text which feels unique to this experience. Language here feels alive and fleeting, and witnessing the performers navigate the difficulty of the task is transfixing.

It is testament to the quality of the work and its careful execution that the attempt to succeed, rather than success itself, is satisfying. *Boys Will Be Girls and Girls Will Be Boys* is an exercise which tests the capability, and exposes the fallibility, of human beings; and within performance, challenges our definitions of artistic quality, undermining notions of polish and perfection, and demonstrating the value and potential of failure exposed on stage. In doing so, it offers audiences an unexpected and unconventional engagement with text and performance, where its inescapable failure is the key to its success. An impressive, hugely enjoyable and often hilarious work, and an absolute accomplishment.

Linford Butler



"This is Castle Rock," we are told. "There it is. Can you see it?"

We can. We see 'CASTLE ROCK', words written onto a Word document and displayed via a projector; words which stand in place and represent a whole location. It is an early introduction to Massive Owl's *Castle Rock*, a conceptual piece which cleverly plays with theatrical representation, and which draws our attention to the materiality of theatre, the way it is constructed, and our ability to conceive one object as another.

*Castle Rock* presents a basic narrative of a character called Ray, who idolises Evel Knievel, and seeks his own 'Grand Canyon' glory moment. The narrative is however one tool in a broad theatrical toolkit, feeling almost equal to its technical and aesthetic elements: the use of projection and light, shadow play, the layering of vocal and foley sounds with a loop pedal, the geometry of the stage space and its boundaries. It is a piece which seems to me to draw from a wide theatrical vocabulary: from Tim Crouch's *An Oak Tree and Adler and Gibb* in its representation of one object with another entirely distinct one; from Action Hero's *Watch Me Fall* in its daredevil element, and in the questions it poses about the sometimes problematic ethics of spectatorship-cum-voyeurism; and from Lehmann's notions of the postdramatic in the way light, sound, space, text and narrative seem to be given equal status as tools to create a piece that has an almost collaged quality.

The temporality of the piece is particularly interesting. It is, we are told early on, simultaneously 1959 and 1986; we can hear, we are told, both Buddy Holly and the Eurythmics on the street; and in both times it is too hot. It is an interesting conceit which introduces us early to the conceptual nature of the piece, and which introduces us to the perceptual work we are asked to do here: the trust placed in us to see one thing and believe it is another.

*Castle Rock* also seems to have a sort of geometry to it, in its use of space and shape, in its projections, the repeated pacing of the same routes on stage, the boundaries of the white vinyl flooring which occupies three quarters of the space. This use of spatiality gives a sense of geography which allows the company to develop a sense of a number of distinct places and settings in our imagination, despite them never being present on stage. The use of projection is at times extremely beautiful, particularly in the climactic moment where the train approaches; and this, as well as the complex and visually distinctive shadow play, gives the sense of watching theatre in four dimensions: not only in the stage's three dimensions, but also in a fourth plane in the images cast against the back wall, which exists almost as a separate space in itself. It is a visually and emotionally diverse experience, at times offering beauty and at times possessing a nightmarish quality, for instance the rigid robotic movement sequences which form most of the closing moments.

Massive Owl have accomplished with *Castle Rock* a clever piece of conceptual theatre which makes bold experiments with the form of the piece and the function of individual theatrical tools. It deals with a number of complex ideas and brings these together in a mostly elegant way, with a clear logic throughout, and as a whole piece offers a complex, textured piece of theatre which is also wry, funny and very smart.

Linford Butler



## BAARDEMAN

Simon de Winne's *Baardeman* is admirable for his commitment to its physically demanding choreography. Performing a repetitive choreographic score throughout, with varying intensity, watching de Winne undertake the physical task of repeated movement is absorbing.

There is a corporeal quality to the work, his body becoming the object of focus. It is a surprisingly intimate experience, not least to bear witness to such a physical exercise over an extended period of time, and to be able to observe de Winne's bodily mechanics at work in close-up detail, scrutinised so that we notice his shape and stature, individual muscles tensing and releasing as he moves, and the way that sweat traces down his body and makes his hair gradually shaggier as the piece progresses.

The piece is punctuated by moments of quietude and stillness, a lack of bodies moving on stage which provides moments of contemplation and reflection. It is notable that de Winne dances in silence, a choice which only accentuates the physicality of his exertion, and then sits meditatively as music plays. This subversion of the expected connection in traditional dance practice between music and movement interestingly focusses our attention upon the reverent ritualism of de Winne's bodily endeavour.

The piece offers a redemptive message, of the potential and value of movement and dance. It feels personal, with the ritualistic quality of the movement offering a feeling of observing a ceremony or rite, of becoming both in touch with oneself and also speaking of the potential of physicality as a way to purge, to cleanse, or to absolve.

Linford Butler



*Baardeman* is an exploration of the human body; the human body moving in its simplest form and what it may or may not reveal about the person moving.

The stage is stark and minimal, actor Simon De Winne is patiently sat on a bench to the side of the space. The lights fade and shaded by darkness De Winne undulates, trots and dances his way around the space providing his own soundtrack of grunts & breaths. Then the stage is bathed in light, we see De Winne alone in the space but for the bench & laptop. He decisively clothes himself before continuing his fervent experimentation of gestures & sounds, transitioning enjoyably through poses, expressions and wild flings. At times tender others rich and chaotic. The movement is momentarily interrupted on occasions with De Winne seated and listening to music. Although the movement is intriguing it quickly becomes repetitive, a welcome distraction mid-performance is an interlude of a mechanical light rolling across the space issuing bright light across the stage.

De Winne's movement is considered and witty, however there is little progression and what began as an inquisitive piece of choreography lulled to an end.

Bekky Platt

## KATE AND PIP

Katie and Pip share a life together, a love of Scotland, and a disease. Katie suffers from type-1 diabetes, a chronic autoimmune condition with which she will live for the rest of her life; and which Pip – her 5-year-old border collie – helps her control.

*Katie and Pip* explores the exhausting cycle of managing a medical condition on a constant basis. Managing her diabetes is shown to be a relentless grind, a constant revisiting of the same processes, warnings, and even drinks – Lucozade sits in buckets around the stage, a high-glucose energy drink which becomes the symbol of Katie's struggle to maintain her blood sugars within the healthy range: "4 is the floor, 9 is the sky!"

The form of the piece takes influence from this repeated process, applying repetition and recurrence; but by borrowing from her experience training Pip – the repeated process of training, the circular repetitive route of the training course – Katie at last reaches acceptance with her condition and eventually her own mortality.

It is really this redemptive story around which *Katie and Pip* revolves: that the indisputable support of her dog provides hope, and a companion in the now and difficult times to come.

Overall the tone is optimistic, considering an imagined future living in Scotland with an imagined husband, fostering dogs and running kennels, with Katie a 50-year-old and Pip imagined as hundreds of dog-years old. Sadly, we know of course – as Katie does – that Pip can't and will never live to be that old; but we understand that for Katie, the bond with Pip is so resilient that she will always be at her side, long after she bounds off to the great kennel in the sky.

There is an absurdism to the piece too, with performers donning dog-masks and a sequence in which one performer relentlessly describes being thirsty in highly visual and sometimes grotesque terms: "I'm *so* thirsty. I think I could drink your piss... I could drink my piss... I'm *really* thirsty." These simple needs like the impulse to drink or eat are brilliantly transformed into absurd actions, elevating us into a landscape/reality that is all too alien for us. This 'alien encounter' is really inviting us to feel what Katie feels asking us to imagine the impossible, what is thirst really like?

Much to my and the audiences joy, Pip is played by Pip, the real life border collie. She (Pip) brings a real liveness and energy to the performance, full of boundless energy and deep curiosity, eager to explore and greet the spectator. I found myself transfixed at watching Pip meander within the space at complete ease with her surroundings and the many faces of strangers smiling back. This integration of the vital role of Pip plays within the narrative alongside the actors is wonderful to watch as it gives us, the audience, a glimpse of why Pip is so important to Katie – if Pip can make us smile so much in such a short time, how vital she must be to Katie as she manages her challenging condition.

Overall, *Katie and Pip* is a charming, warm and heartfelt celebration of the love, trust and often unspoken shared experience between one dog and the human she endeavours to care for. The performance is told effectively with original and interesting uses of both the performance space, and the form it entails, when providing us with an insight into a condition and relationship we might otherwise ignore or never get the chance to see for ourselves.

Linford Butler



# FLARE

This afternoon I was invited to be on the panel for the Flare Open Forum. It was an open discussion curated by Cradshaw (Kate Craddock and Teresa Brayshaw), with myself, Beth Cassani and Richard Gregory asked to contribute some thoughts and questions towards the end, particularly in reference to time and place. Here's what I said.

(Although I tried to avoid spoilers, if you're at Flare and haven't seen *Party by Beaches* yet, probably best not to read this until you have).

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I arrived in this room about 59 minutes ago, and 57 minutes ago, I started to write something, because Teresa and Kate asked me to say something. Here's what I've written since then.

I arrived at FLARE at about 10.30 yesterday morning. My first experience of the festival was to facilitate a set of conversations which I then realised I had basically excluded myself from.

My relationship with time was then a familiar one from running workshops: "How is it going? I haven't prepared enough to fill the time I've been asked to fill... oh, no, we're probably okay... oh, no, we're going to overrun, I'll have to cut something... oh, no, I think we'll be okay after all."

So this is my question: where and when am I, or are you, when I am (you are) watching shows?

In *Blind Cinema* I am distant. I am at home with my children. I am here, missing them.

In Dead Pig's *A Work of ART* I am present, in this room, watching their bodies, in the now, watching time pass for them.

In Emma Gannon's *Civilisation* I am here, now, in this world, and sometimes, I think, in a near, possible future. Also, as a maker of shows, I am here, in the room, listening to the way she integrates scientific detail into her narrative, because that's what I do, too.

In BOG's *One*, performed by Lisa Verbelen, I am transported. To her world, to her time. Removed from my own frame. Entirely in the moment of her voice, in the moment of the mechanics of the show, in the moment that the gently scrolling screen tells me will happen next.

In K.U.R.S.K.'s *Leopard Murders* I am in the past. In the world's past, in history. In a past I have heard about all my life, but not experienced because it happened before I was alive. I am reminded, though, that this past is only two generations ago.

And because the show is about Timo's grandfather I am also with my Grandad. I am at Cape Wrath in Scotland six years ago, where I went to remember my him, and his journey to the same place nearly 30 years ago.

.In *Party*, by Beaches, I am, because they place me there, in my own past. I am on a beach in Rio De Janeiro, at night, with my friends Paula and Claudia.

I am in my teenage bedroom, putting the audio cassette of Talking Heads' *Remain In Light* into my Aiwa tape recorder (which at the time we called a ghetto blaster).

# FORUM

I am at the Crest Hotel Birmingham/Walsall (it was in Walsall but they thought more people would stay there if they said it was in Birmingham), - where I work behind the bar - Staff Christmas Party, December 1987, dancing with a girl who works in the restaurant, a girl whose name I can no longer remember, a girl who, despite the fact that she has asked me to slow-dance to this, the ballad at the end of the night, I will, for some reason, never kiss.

And then, later in the show, I am absolutely in my body, in this moment, in this room, with the nine people I came in with, plus the performers who are caring for us, thinking only about the sound I can hear, the shape my body is making, the feeling of being here, now.

In this room, in the last hour, I am in this room, now, but also back in those shows, and in the times and places they made me think of, feel of.

I am listening to Kate and Teresa talking about festivals, about time, about places.

Yesterday I was having a conversation about time, about the time it takes to get ready, and I talked about a story from the book *Pip Pip: A Sideways Look At Time* by Jay Griffiths, which is for my money, one of the best books written about time. In it she tells a story about being in a village in, I think, South America. Whilst she is there, a couple get engaged to be married, and the whole village celebrates. Jay asks them, "When will the wedding be?" And they don't understand the question. They don't understand the idea of setting a deadline then trying to get everything ready by that date. They think: get everything ready, and when it is ready, then have the wedding.

That's maybe not very useful for people setting up and running festivals, but it's what I think about when we start talking about time.

**Alex Kelly**

