

# OPEN LETTERS

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Cairo, September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2001

Dear Julia, Ana, Mieke and Jean,

How are you all faring in these deeply distressing days? I was happy to see you Julia, Ana and Mieke in Cairo and hope we can have you with us Jean next year, that is if the world doesn't burst into flames before that. I am sending you all a copy of my *Off the Record* review, an inside view of the Cairo International Festival for Experimental Theatre (1-11.9.2001) which was published two days after the closing ceremony. The reason I am sending you my original script is that the article was censored, removing from the published version, without my knowledge or permission, the section concerning Saudi Arabia. I was told it was done on orders from the very top on the plea that it would upset the Saudi regime which would ban the issue from that country. Considering that the paper distributes only fifty copies in the whole of Saudi Arabia, I found it incredible that the Saudis have such a sway on the press in Egypt and on the whole of Egyptian culture. I already know we have a Saudi censor in our state television in the drama sector since they buy a lot of serials and plays and are therefore extremely influential for financial reasons. But I never thought their power would extend to the cultural section of a weekly English newspaper! You can imagine my shock and dismay.

I hope that, despite everything, you found your trip to Cairo worthwhile, even though the tragic, horrifying events in the States on the final day of the festival have cast a dark, deep, sickening shadow over everything. Love you all very dearly,

Nehad (Selaiha)

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## Extract from Nehad Selaiha's article for *Al-Ahram Weekly*, which includes the censored section

It is often the case that in CIFET what happens behind the scenes is infinitely more intriguing, instructive and thought-provoking than what you see on the boards. And this year's session was no exception. The gripping off-stage drama started one month before the opening ceremony when the three-member international selection committee, entrusted with the onerous task of deciding which of the dozens of foreign and Arab shows coming to the Festival are to take part in the international contest, arrived in Cairo and were instantly spirited away to some mysterious five-star hideout to sift through more than forty-seven videos of hopeful, would-be candidates. In previous years, the committee consisted of three European white males, from Britain, France and Spain, all over sixty. This year, however, and as a result of pressure from the local press and the community of theatre artists, led by American playwright Caren Malpede, the committee was chaired by a prestigious *femme de théâtre* from the States - a vast improvement, though not exactly what one would call "devoutly to be wished", since all three members are still over sixty, and all from the Western hemisphere. Mind you, neither I, Caren, nor any of our young theatre artists in Egypt care a pin what nationality or creed an artist carries; we are even very much in favour of abolishing the question of "nationality" and religious faith from the Festival all together and considering people and troupes as representing themselves and humanity in general rather than countries or ideologies. But, when you have politics, in the widest possible sense of the word, rammed down your throat, particularly in these savage, conflict-ridden days, what can you do except shut your eyes, pinch your nose, jump in and try to swim against the tide. Whatever criteria the international selection committee used, and doubtless it was honest, objective and technically informed, left a lot of people, Egyptians, foreigners, and myself, profoundly confused as to what this festival was all about and what we mean when we trot out the word "experimental". When Cypriot artist Arianna Economou asked me at the small hall of the Opera house, just before the Japanese show started, on what basis shows were chosen for the contest, I did not know what to say. Hers, and many other shows, corresponded to my personal definition of what rates as experimental. In a few words, something which within its cultural context would be considered tentative, groping, questioning, rebellious, and, above all, unsettling, preferably shocking in one way or another. What exacerbated the confusion was the appearance of the Saudi Arabian *The Dark Corner* on the Jury's schedule. Was that a political compromise? And if it was, why was it not extended to other shows from Gulf counties who have some kind of a theatre tradition and who, more to the point, allow women into the theatrical profession?

**[Beginning of censored section]:** A Saudi friend of mine, a delightful, highly educated person, asked me if I was against the Saudi theatre per se. My answer was simply: what Saudi theatre? I spent a semester in Jedda teaching wonderful young

people who happened to be all female at King Abdul Aziz University and I scoured the whole city, the most enlightened and liberal in all of Saudi Arabia, looking for a theatre and found none. And over the whole of the life of CIFET and other Arab theatre festivals so far, I have waited for a glimmer of hope, a hint of change, but have always been rewarded with nothing but all-male shows, with, to top everything, a plaster statue of Ophelia in a Hamlet-based play. Admittedly, the few Saudi plays I have seen, in Arab festivals outside that kingdom, had a seditious, subversive seed in the sense of being well camouflaged protests against political dictatorship, globalisation or Western hegemony; but however hard one looked, one could not find so much as a faint murmur against the oppressive sway of rigid religious dogma or the flagrant discrimination against women. When I was on the CIFET international jury some years ago, the other Egyptian member, an over sixty once-promising male director who, for personal, political, and family reasons, spent the flower of his youth teaching in some oil rich Arab Gulf state, said to me that we should perhaps give the Saudi company participating that year some kind of recognition. His argument was that it would help Saudi theatre artists. I was not so sure that it would not instead help further solidify the banning of women from theatre. Was I not being too political? I was asked. Well, I said, "if I go into a theatre and suddenly find myself regressing to 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Greece or to Elizabethan England when women were not allowed on the stage, how can I help being conscious of the sexual politics underlying the event?" Indeed, as a woman, I always find it extremely embarrassing, even insulting and mortifying, to be invited as a critic or juror to a theatre where women are not allowed on the stage and be expected to clap or give a prize. The most experimental thing the Saudi artists could do, I concluded, was to let an actress appear on stage. Then, and only then, would they deserve a prize and I would be the first to clamour for it. This is political, there is no escaping it. But it is not ideology-oriented political in the traditional sense. Rather, a question of human rights and of not being exploited as a fortunate female in a repressive patriarchal system against my sisters in Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan or, even, the once progressive Kuwait where the elected Parliament there still refuses women the vote. I suppose anything experimental has to be, by definition, deeply political in the profoundest sense of the word. Besides, however passionately one may believe in cultural diversity it should never be used as an excuse to condone the most outrageous forms of discrimination. **[End of censored section]**

# OPEN LETTERS

New York, October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2001

Querida Julia querida:

First of all, let me acknowledge that I never sent the work I wrote about travel. The more I read it, the more I was convinced that it was a quite simplistic note. Like a trip from my bedroom/office/temple to my living-room/kitchen/bathroom. Like walking up and down and around in my tiny tiny great home. Reading and writing towards that article I realized that, at this point in my life, I travel without an agenda; that I'm not interested in any particularity of any culture but in the encuentros that I might have. Those meetings are a close continuation of my life at home. Since I traveled out of my mother's womb, at that moment making me a migrant to life, journeys are then a way of life. Home is an open space.

One thing that I gathered from my traveling is that I have not been in any country where I have not been discriminated by race. There is always a certain look that goes straight to inner me. And knowing that I will go gives me a certain kind of hope. The funny thing is that I feel the same about my "home-base"; and the home where I was born. Happy at home because I'll go. Migrant in life.

Moreover, in customs, depending what passport I carry, I'm seen as either a prostitute or a well-off American. What a great pity and blessing that one-ness includes otherness' concept about oneself. And also what others see, think and remember about you. But while traveling, my own constant monologue continues. My constant trip is always on.

Sorry, I couldn't contribute to the issue.

Now that the World has visited New York, life around promises to be a little bit closer to the majority's reality. Imagine that I was scheduled to be part of a meeting (with Artsconnections) in front of the Towers from 9 a.m. But I took a "wrong" train. Being late and caught up in the actions but a little bit from afar saved my bud. The amazing thing was that that day, we the people looked at each other's eyes. Then next day nobody could look at each other's eyes. Heads down, todos cabizbajos. Now everybody is back to their pace. Swearing that they will rebuild the towers - flags and more flags. The nights are eerie. There's a silence broken just by sirens. Now we the foreigners are to blame. The scary part is the ignorance of basic geography or any historical information. The backlash is the real terrorism. Perdona el rollo. Being immersed in this thing called life and trying to make sense out of it, my heart nowadays is singing this song. Thanks to Apartarte/Casarte I have work, right here in my tiny tiny studio apartment. Happily once more to be an independent artist. I cannot lose what I never had.

Helen invited me to go to New Zealand next year. I'm sooo happy with the possibility. I heard that soon you are going to the Dominican Republic. I'm delighted that "la Patria" will have a chance to see you. We have been invited, but as part of a "performance" project. Our work is not considered theater. How could one limit the meaning of perform as verb?

We might see you there. Ojalá.

Un abrazo,

Bi Jei (Josefina Baez)

# OPEN NEWS

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## MAGDALENA PACIFICA (Colombia)

Teatro La Máscara, directed by Lucy Bolaños, is organising Magdalena Pacifica, an International Festival of Women in Contemporary Theatre in Cali and Bogotá, Colombia, from September 21<sup>st</sup> to October 5<sup>th</sup> 2002, hosting women from five continents. In addition to performances, the Festival will include conferences and open dialogues with national, social and cultural women's peace organisations. With Colombia's present social and political circumstances as a starting point, the intention is that Magdalena Pacifica should create a space to develop strategies that will contribute to women's struggle for peace in the world. The Festival will remain in Cali until the end of September, although some performances will be toured to the Valle de Cauca region. From October 1<sup>st</sup> to October 5<sup>th</sup> the Festival will move to Bogotá, where it will be co-ordinated by Patricia Ariza, director of the Corporación Colombiana de Teatro and member of The Magdalena Project's international network.

Teatro La Máscara has been a pioneer in women's theatre and its work has been presented at different events in Latin America, Europe and Oceania, including the Magdalena '94 Festival in Wales, Mujeres en Escena in Argentina in 1997, and Magdalena Aotearoa in New Zealand in 1999. For further information contact: [magdalenapacifica2002@yahoo.com](mailto:magdalenapacifica2002@yahoo.com)

## NOMAD TEATRO (Spain)

*Las sin tierra - 100 intentos de cruzar el Estrecho* (Landless Women - 100 Attempts to Cross the Straits) is the first piece by Nomad Teatro ([nomadteatro@hotmail.com](mailto:nomadteatro@hotmail.com)), a performance with Rocío Solís and Rosa Casado that asks questions about the phenomenon of migration. Jill Greenhalgh directed the interdisciplinary team that included Mike Brookes and Luis Fernández.

The project starts from the social, economic and cultural conflict that affects our daily lives - the movement of people from underdeveloped countries to rich ones, from countries at war to those where there is peace. It was inspired by the work of the Brazilian photographer Sebastião Salgado and relates to the tragedies that occur at the Straits of Gibraltar, the natural frontier dividing Europe from Africa.

### The performers write:

*I, Rocío, was born in Ceuta. As a child, I continually crossed over to the Peninsula by boat. I would look at the dolphins jumping, while my father pointed out to me the African mountains. One of them had a female shape and was called the Sleeping*

Woman. The immigrants call it the Mountain of the Dead Woman. I can't avoid being surprised each time the image of my memories is violated: we no longer see dolphins in the Straits, we only hear the voices of the drowned.

I, Rosa, every day hear the figures and reports that tell me of the world in which I live. It is hard for me to admit it, but everything becomes absurd as my reality seems to be completely other. What is hidden behind these statistics? Behind these numbers? If I personalise the figures, I become more aware that I am very privileged to live where I live, to have what I have, not to have to risk my life for things or rights that all human beings should possess. Even so I find many contradictions in my daily life. To give back value and dignity to those who arrive and to those who stay, to those who cross the Straits and to those who wait for news from those who have left is important to me. The number of people gone missing in the Straits is unknown, but they are many. Every one of them has a name and a story, and this first performance from Nomad Teatro is in memory of each of them.

**Jill Greenhalgh writes:**

Last summer I travelled to Spain to direct Nomad Teatro. They are the two actresses and activists - Rocío Solís and Rosa Casado. I was invited to direct their first performance as this new company. We had just three weeks to complete a process before I departed - too short a time to make a performance. My family came too. I bring them as often as possible on my travels - Jess (8), Meg (7) and Mike Brookes my husband, designer and artist who was to collaborate in the work.

We began with the title theme Landless Women. Within a few days we realised we were going to make a work in response to the waves of, primarily, young men, who attempt to cross the notoriously dangerous Straits of Gibraltar, in small rowing boats, in order to enter Europe to find work. Many drown -

current statistics rate an average of ten bodies a week washed up on the Southern Spanish shores.

There are many and complex issues being debated currently concerning migration and asylum and - although our research was immersed in all we could find on these issues - we had no pretensions to articulate the political spectrum of this debate. For me, this short performance was a response to the pictures haunting my mind from the Spanish press of so many nameless young bodies and small boats lying distorted on the shores of Fortress Europe and my surprise in learning that, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>, approximately 52 million Europeans migrated to the other continents in search of work. I believe that for Rosa it was a way to confront the dilemmas that emerge for her from the statistical absurdities of the global distribution of wealth. For Rocío it was a way to speak about Ceuta, the place where she was born and lived for the first five years of her life. For those not familiar, as I was not when we began this process, Ceuta is a tiny Spanish owned enclave on the shore of North Africa. It is a geographical magnet, a first port of call, for African citizens heading to Europe. It has received unprecedented amounts of European investment in recent years for fortification.

I hesitate to call the work we made a performance. I am not clear why, as I am pleased with the outcome and I think it functions well. Perhaps because the time to work was so short, the complexity of the issues so overwhelming, the desire to break theatrical conventions so strong, that a pragmatism determined the final form of the piece. It is, I hope, at least, a memorial as well as an attempt to honour the young who will always choose to seek new lands should necessity demand.

## PERFORMING WORDS (Singapore)

Playwright and actor Verena Tay and The Substation are preparing Performing Words

2003, a three-week project for women writing for performance, which will take place in March 2003. culminating in at least four presentations of the resulting process of sharing and collaboration at The Substation's Guinness Theatre. A group of women from Singapore and from Southeast Asia and beyond will participate. The theme of the workshop will be "Travel and Home". After showing their results in Singapore the group aims to travel on to Brisbane for the Magdalena Festival in Australia in order to share their work with other women performers there. The objective of Performing Words 2003 is to encourage women to create and perform their own texts, foster cultural exchange between Asian and non-Asian artists and introduce the Magdalena Project to artists and audiences in Singapore.

Led by Gilly Adams and Geddy Aniksdal, Performing Words is a workshop for performers who want to create their own texts. Using a range of techniques and exercises designed to provoke spontaneity and avoid self-censorship, written material is generated from personal memories and experiences as a basis for performance. The next step in the process is to shape, structure and distance the texts in order to release their dramatic potential. The work with words is balanced by imaginative physical work that develops and plays with the connection between the language of the body and spoken language.

## TEATRO BUENDIA (Cuba)

Flora Lauten has directed a new performance *Las Bacantes* for which she has compiled and written the script with Raquel Carrió. In the programme notes Raquel Carrió writes: "Rather than simply reproduce the themes of guilt and punishment, our production aims to transform the structure of the original play

and proposes instead a lecture focusing on the themes of exile, migration, the mechanisms of power and the myths that stay with us from ancient times until today."

Texts used in the performance include *The Bacchae* by Euripides, T.S.Eliot's *The Waste Land* and Sappho's *Poems*.

## CHIPAWO YOUTH THEATRE (ZIMBABWE)

Ruth Gabi, a writer from Zimbabwe, has published *Vasikana veCHIPAWO*, a book of interviews with some of the young female members of the Chipawo Harare Youth Theatre. For more information [www.africaonline@co.zw/chipawo](mailto:www.africaonline@co.zw/chipawo)

Chipo Precious Basopo started at the centre when she was nine years old and has been a member for seven years now. Gabi writes about her:

*A lone voice rings out from among the youths. The audience is taken aback by the sheer power of it as the singer pleads and implores the audience on the plight of the African child in the face of the AIDS pandemic and civil war. The singer is Chipo Precious Basopa. She is a strong, active and confident girl who sings and dances with great vigour. ... At the beginning Chipo was a member of the traditional dancing club at the school, ... when she joined Chipawo her parents were happy as her health improved. ... Chipo remembers that when she was acting in a play for the first time at creche her father said, "Don't think about shyness. Just act your part." "We are many in our family from different mothers," says Chipo. "And when I was going to Denmark with Chipawo my step-sisters and brothers bought clothes for me". Chipo adds: "I spent the night before the departure at my stepsister's house in Cranborne. The next day she took me to the airport." Denmark was memorable in many ways for Chipo.*

*Chipo laughs when she talks about her six-week stay there. "When I think of Denmark I think of bicycles. When I was there I used to ride a lot with the family I was staying with and once I rode into a hedge. Although I was treated well by the family I was staying with, I felt homesick. But I made a lot of friends. Chipawo performances were enjoyed very much there.*

## **HUELLAS DE LAS INDIAS (Spain/India/Colombia)**

The poet and mystic Akka Mahadevi inspired a religious, social and poetic movement in Karnataka, South India in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, which was called Virasaiva Bhakti. Her works are still important in India today.

*Proyecto Huellas de Las Indias* (Traces in the Indias Project) has made a music theatre performance inspired by the works of Akka Mahadevi. In the performance various physical and vocal techniques meet: the Kalarippayattu Martial Art, Kathakali dance, singing techniques from the German mystic Hildegard von Bingen (a contemporary of Akka Mahadevi), vocal techniques from Roy Hart's school. Monica de La Fuente from Spain has made the choreography and is the solo performer, songs are by Esther Knappe from Switzerland, and other members of the production team come from Colombia and India.

## **DANZA ABIERTA (Cuba)**

In *La Gazeta de Cuba*, critic Mercedes Borges Bartutis writes about the premiere of Marianela Boan's latest production, which took place in Teatro Mella in La Havana. According to Bartutis, *Chorus Perpetuus* was already a success before it finished. There is a faithful and strong dance audience in La Havana, that looks for new energy in every premiere from Marianela Boan's company,

Danza Abierta. Marianela admits that she likes taking risks. At a conference she talked about her latest piece: "In *Chorus Perpetuus* I demonstrate that my theme, as always, is the epic. I want to save the city. My interest in society is utopian. Above all I am interested in groups and individuals, and in the different levels of freedom."

## **MAGDALENA AOTEAROA (Aotearoa New Zealand)**

Inspired by the work of The Magdalena Project, Sally Rodwell and Madeline McNamara founded Magdalena Aotearoa in 1997 in Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand, as a charitable trust, to encourage and promote the work of local women in the performing arts, and to help create networks of performers both nationally and internationally. There are now strong affiliated groups working in the South Island, in both Christchurch and Dunedin. We work closely with the Tii Kouka Trust, an organisation dedicated to creating opportunities for Maori women in the performing arts, with whom we share an office and resource centre.

Since 1997, Magdalena Aotearoa has published a quarterly newsletter, produced regular seasons of women's performance called *Not Broadcast Quality* and hosted the 1999 International Festival of Women's Performance in Wellington and Paekakariki. Recent activities are the production of *Making Waves 2000* (a year-long series of workshops addressing themes such as political act/ions, community performance and biculturalism in the arts), the organisation of a four-week national tour of New Zealand by Cristina Castrillo and Teatro delle Radici (Switzerland), and the development of a street theatre ensemble of vehement protesters called The Complainers.

For 2002, Magdalena Aotearoa's projects include: welcoming and working with Jill Greenhalgh when she visits New Zealand in



April; organising a month-long national tour in June for Josefina Baez, a performer from the Dominican Republic; developing a co-production with Rape Crisis that will tour schools, addressing issues of violence against women; fund-raising to send delegates to Magdalena Pacifica in Colombia, 2002, and Magdalena Australia in Brisbane, 2003; planning a tour for Geddy Aniksdal and Grenland Friteater in April 2003, and a collaboration with Silvia Pritz from Argentina; making strategies to become increasingly financially independent.

We are the South Pacific Distributors of *The Open Page*, and offer for sale CDs of women's music from Aotearoa, such as Mauri Ora's *Wahine Repezent*, and the breathtaking 90-minute video *Crazy Voyage*, featuring highlights of the 1999 Magdalena Aotearoa International Festival of Women's Performance. All can be ordered from the Wellington office. We also welcome articles, notices and graphics for our newsletter. [magdalen@actrix.gen.nz](mailto:magdalen@actrix.gen.nz) w [www.actrix.gen.nz/users/magdalena](http://www.actrix.gen.nz/users/magdalena)

## THE ABC EXPERIMENT (Aotearoa New Zealand)

"How is technology changing our definitions of theatre?" and "what place does cyberformance have in theatre?" asks The ABC Experiment (Avatar Body Collision). This project explores live performance in graphical chatrooms (cyberformance) and was inspired by the response to Helen Varley Jamieson's cyberformance demonstration at Transit III Festival.

Since August, an email discussion has been taking place, and a team of cyberformers have been experimenting and rehearsing. Language, movement, casting, the role of the audience and technical challenges are some of the issues being addressed. A theatrical presentation of the results will be given at the New Zealand Fringe Festival in February 2002. For more

information, visit

[www.abccexperiment.org](http://www.abccexperiment.org) or email [helen@creative-catalyst.com](mailto:helen@creative-catalyst.com)

## ETHNOSCENOLOGY (France/Taiwan)

Last April, with my ethnoscenology research group based in Paris, I was invited to the famous school of Chinese Opera, Fu Hsing, in Taiwan. Ethnoscenology explores an object in its specific location (Pradier, 1996). In our case the project involved taking part in the daily life of Fu Hsing for fifteen days. This school has several departments: Chinese Opera, Traditional Music, Acrobatics and Dance, Taiwanese Opera and the department of Theatre Arts. It is also connected with Opera Hakka (named after a Taiwanese tribe). We were able to experience the interior life of the school thanks to an intensive workshop, as part of the process of learning for the school's children and teenagers. Immersion in this context allowed us, through the psycho-somatic dimension, to discover this culture and form of learning; to understand that we cannot project a complex system of representation into one image, and that we must take care not to forget even a single element of the whole.

The term "traditional theatre" tends to freeze in time an aspect of culture, which by definition, is in constant evolution. Tradition is a stream of culture carried by memory. It is also rhetoric about what is supposed to have been, which is not an object. The past is absent from it.

Our experiment with Fu Hsing lasted for fifteen days; our perceptions are thus limited to this period of time in that place. Usually the danger is that culture is a series of conditioned reflexes. To perceive is to interpret: "One sees only what we know, or at least what we can integrate into a coherent system" Each one of us belongs to the conventions of our time and our culture, captives of an expressive system.

In contrast, waking-up with the children to the sound of military music, attempting to train with them, sharing food and daily life, and seeing how difficult the hard training of the Chinese opera is for the children was an exceptional and beautiful experience. It was different from an organised trip where, as simple observers, the temptation would have been to project our unconscious onto the foreign culture. Instead I think that we must react with empathy to the culture of others in order to fight against the ethnocentrism which is posited as the only reference.

Nathalie Gauthard

## MAGDALENA AUSTRALIA (Australia)

The word "travelling" implies motion: women on the move, taking wing, taking flight. It embraces notions of Journey, Landscape and Migration of Isolation and Congregation. It evokes dual feelings of Celebration and Lamentation. It recognises our physical need to cover great distances in order to meet and see each other's work, both at home and abroad.

These are a few of the reasons *Travelling* has been chosen as the theme for the 2003 Magdalena Australia, the International Festival of Women in Contemporary Theatre to be held in Brisbane from April 6<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup>, 2003.

*Perhaps I have strayed too long / In this beautiful country; / The reed flutes are playing a mournful tune, / The cool air rushing through / The rock cathedral / Remind me of the sea breezes / Of Stradbroke / And the reed flute seems / To be capturing the scene. / The slippery earth stone floor / Takes me back to mud sea flats, / Where seaweeds communicate with oysters / Fish and crabs. / Have you travelled all this way / To remind me to return home?"*

from *Reed Flute Cave* by Oodgeroo

For Aboriginal Women "Travelling" is very much a part of our cultural psyche. Our traditional connection to land and our very being came about

*through the Dreaming of our Ancestors in their form as Creator Spirits who travelled across the earth singing up the land, sea and celestial bodies, calling all life and landscape into being. Throughout their journeys they camped and hunted, fought, loved, sang and danced and in so doing imprinted these stories upon the land.*

*The Land was given to us to protect and nurture through retelling the Creator Spirits Journeys in our ceremony, song, dance and storytelling and through our traditional seasonal journeys across the lands of our peoples. Torres Strait Islander Women have similar stories of the way their Island homelands, creation stories and ceremonies about the land, oceans and people came about.*

*Today we reconnect with our traditional culture through much the same ways. Women and their families who still live on their traditional lands continue all these traditions. Those of us who live in urban or rural settings work at unravelling old stories and oral histories, reconnecting ourselves to country, sea and celestial bodies. We also create new songs and new ways of evolving our expression of culture.*

*Our Culture and cosmology allow us to embrace the richness of our past and blend it with the diversity of new forms of expression learnt from our sisters from other cultures who've come to this land.*

*Performance and Theatre for Indigenous Women takes many forms and allows many entry points. For us it encompasses rather than restricts, it reclaims and responds, it reasserts and repositions, it replies and, ultimately, reaffirms our ongoing journey.*

Debra Bennet McLean