

2008 Next Wave Festival

Brooklyn Academy of Music

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presents

Continuous City

Approximate running time: one hour and 20 minutes, no intermission

BAM Harvey Theater

Nov 18—22, 2008, 7:30pm

The Builders Association

Directed by **Marianne Weems**

Conceived by

Marianne Weems, director; **Harry Sinclair**, writer; and
James Gibbs, dramaturg

Sound design and original music composition by **Dan Dobson**

Video design by **Peter Flaherty**

Lighting by **Jennifer Tipton**

Set design by **James Gibbs**, **Stewart Laing**, and **Neal Wilkinson**

Performed by

Deb **Moe Angelos**

J.V. **Rizwan Mirza**

Sam **Olivia Timothee**

Mike **Harry Sinclair**

BAM 2008 Next Wave Festival is sponsored by Altria Group.

Leadership support for the Next Wave Festival is provided by The Ford Foundation.

Leadership support for BAM Theater is provided by The Shubert Foundation, Inc. and The SHS Foundation. Support for *Continuous City* is provided by The Toby Fund, with additional support provided by The Cowles Charitable Trust.

Continuous City

Produced by **Claire Hallereau** with The Builders Association

Neal Wilkinson Production Manager
Joe Silovsky Technical Design
Josh Higgason Touring Technical Director
Chantelle Norton Costume Designer
Ed Purver Video Associate
Austin Switser Video Associate
Laura Mroczkowski Lighting Associate
Tom Korder Technical Development

Video footage by:

Harry Sinclair (Mike and additional characters); **James Gibbs** (Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Tijuana);
Mathieu Borysevicz (Shanghai); **Ed Purver** (Toronto)

Deb's Blogs by **Moe Angeles**

Mirza Family Chats by **Nabil Mirza**, **Rizwan Mirza**, and **Ariba Sultan**

Additional Design Concepts by **dbox**

Additional Dramaturgy by **Jessica Chalmers**

Consulting by **Donna Cox** and the **National Center for Supercomputing Applications**, Urbana, IL

XUBU Website Design and Development by **Nick Reid** and **Ryan Shaw**

Kim Whitener Executive Producer

Eternal thanks to Mike Ross and his team at the Krannert Center for their outstanding support.

Continuous City's lead co-producer: Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Co-producers: Luminato Toronto Festival of Arts & Creativity; Carolina Performing Arts; Department of Theater, Dance and Performance Studies and the Arts Research Center at the University of California, Berkeley; Walker Art Center.

Co-commissioners: BAM for the 2008 Next Wave Festival; Wexner Center for the Arts; Yerba Buena Center for the Arts.

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Residency support: The Kitchen and St Ann's Warehouse.



Director's note

Continuous City draws from many sources, and even over the two years we have been working the idea of a city has continued to morph and transform. The piece draws from Calvino's *Invisible Cities*—which almost every artist attempts to come to terms with; from working with “at risk” high school students in New York City to map their own senses of visibility and invisibility, and most ardently through reading Mike Davis' slightly hysterical but deeply affecting book *Planet of Slums*. Davis describes the sprawling “megaslums” which are rapidly spreading at the edges of major cities—the biggest among them being Nairobi, Mexico City, Delhi, Rio. We are at a watershed moment where for the first time, more people are living in cities than in the rural parts of the world—and sometimes there is no need to come to the city, the city comes to them.

But how do cities accommodate this, and who is the city for? The centers of old cities sometimes harbor only the elite as the centerless spaces continue to be filled with those seeking survival. Most of us in the West live in some form of “gated communities” that resemble each other more than the cities they are located in, a “golden nowhere.” This exurban space is where the production begins, a placeless space that erases place.

In the course of developing *Continuous City*, we also visited cities that borrow from other cities— if the Eiffel Tower is transplanted to Shanghai, or the New York skyline moved to Las Vegas, is the glamour eviscerated or magnified? How does Versailles in Tijuana become a new space, compressing geography, location, and “home” into a new dimension?

The question of how to roll these complex geosocial issues into a theater production was difficult to untangle. Thankfully, at this point my collaborator Harry Sinclair saw me video-chatting with my goddaughter Lola and the piece took a turn towards the much more personal. With dramaturg James Gibbs, we began to map another invisible city, the complex web of communication through which families and friends remain tethered over great distances. Internet and phone access continues to accelerate, arriving daily in unexpected places. These connections to each other create an ethereal city intersecting with physical cities across the world.

Continuous City traverses lives in these complex locations and extends in several directions, including Rizwan Mirza's conversations with his transnational family, and Moe Angelos' explorations of each city the show visits. *Continuous City* maps overlapping lives, accelerating places, and the deeply felt desire to connect.

—Marianne Weems

Who's Who



Photo: Eamon Lochte-Phelps

The Builders Association is a New York-based performance and media company that creates original productions based on stories drawn from contemporary life. The company uses the richness of new and old tools to extend the boundaries of theater. Based on innovative collaborations, Builders' productions blend stage performance, text, video, sound, and architecture to tell stories about human experience in the 21st century. From BAM to Bogata, Singapore to Melbourne, Minneapolis and Los Angeles to Budapest, The Builders Association's OBIE award-winning shows have toured to major venues the world over.
www.thebuildersassociation.org

Marianne Weems (director) is artistic director of The Builders Association and has directed all of their productions since the company was born in 1994. She currently serves on the boards of Art Matters, APAP, and Yaddo. In the past, she has worked with David Byrne, Jan Cohen-Cruz, Disney Imagineering, Susan Sontag, The Wooster Group, and many others. She has recently been appointed to head Graduate Directing in the School of Drama at Carnegie Mellon University. She is the co-author of *Art Matters: How the Culture Wars Changed America* (NYU Press 2000).

Moe Angelos (Deb) has worked with The Builders Association since 1999, spanning two centuries, several productions, and many a hotel room mini-bar. She has also created six plays with her collaborative theater company The Five Lesbian Brothers, which has been published and has won some awards. Angelos has also appeared in the work of Brooke O'Harra, Carmelita Tropicana, Anne Bogart, Holly Hughes, Lois Weaver, Zack, Leigh Silverman, and The Ridiculous Theatrical Company, to name a few in the cavalcade of luminaries.

Dan Dobson (sound design and original music composition) is a founding member of The Builders Association and has designed sound for all of their productions. He has designed sound and sound systems for The Wooster Group, Elizabeth Streb, and Ann Carlson, among many others. He has edited and scored for several independent films, and has played with the Blue Man Group since 1995.

dbox (additional design) is an award-winning interdisciplinary advertising and creative agency that specializes in luxury, real estate, and destination campaigns. dbox fosters dialog, strategy, and design within its studios through

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a combination of commercial and independent projects which engage our unique team of conceptualists, strategic planners, brand creators, real estate professionals, and artists. dbox maintains studios in New York, Amsterdam, and Taipei.

Peter Flaherty (video design) is a video artist and director whose work has been seen in theaters, galleries, and museums internationally. Theater collaborators include The Builders Association, Complicite, François Girard, Chen Shi-Zheng, Basil Twist, and Bang on a Can. Video art shows include ICA Philadelphia, MIT Media Lab, Nexus Gallery, Fleisher-Ollman Gallery, and the home of Agnes Gund (President Emeritus of MOMA, NY). He has been a Harvard University Artist-in-Residence, and has taught courses and workshops at the Yale School of Drama, Carnegie Mellon, CalArts, and NYU. Documentation of his work can be seen at www.thefourthefive.org.

James Gibbs (dramaturg) is a founding partner of dbox, an advertising and creative agency based in New York with offices in Amsterdam and Taipei. In addition to its award-winning commercial work, dbox has a history and philosophy of engaging with the arts, and a long relationship of collaboration with The Builders Association. Gibbs has directed a wide array of dbox projects including its contributions to *Jetlag*, *Alladeen*, and *Super Vision*, during which he became increasingly vocal with his dramaturgical opinions. Gibbs has taught at Cornell University's School of Architecture, Art, and Planning and the School of Visual Arts.

Claire Hallereau (managing producer) was born and raised in France. It took her three years in Business School and a BA in International Marketing to realize that she would never understand the notion of profit. She joined The Builders Association in 2002 as their company

manager. She toured with *Alladeen*, produced and managed *Super Vision's* tour, and produced *Continuous City's* development and tour. She is also a Kundalini Yoga teacher.

Joshua Higgason (technical director) as a technical director has collaborated with The Flea, Keen Company, Dorset Theater Festival, The Drama League, The Ohio Theater, Technical Artistry, and many others. Higgason also designs audio and visuals and his work has been seen/heard at The Public, MTC, The Flea, HERE, The Box, Theater Row, Symphony Space, and the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

Stewart Laing (set designer) directs and designs theater and opera. Recent theater work includes directing *Slope* at Tramway in Glasgow, and *Les Parents Terrible* at Dundee Rep. Current projects include directing *La Vie Parisienne* for Malmo Opera and Music Theatre in Sweden, a new version of *The Dispute* for Tramway and the Traverse Theatre, and designing *Peter Grimes* for La Scala, Milan. In 1997 he won a Tony Award for designing the musical *Titanic*.

Rizwan Mirza (J.V.) is a performance artist with roots in New York and New Delhi, India. He did two world tours with The Builders Association in *Alladeen* and *Super Vision*, and now as social networking entrepreneur J.V. in *Continuous City*. Mirza is also a writer and will premiere his solo show on media, identity, and Islamophobia entitled *Koranic Fatigue* later this year. He is currently producing his screenplay *The Kabab King*.

Laura Mroczkowski (lighting associate) currently works as a freelance lighting and set designer in New York. She has had the opportunity to work with many wonderful companies including Big Dance Theater, Dumb Type, Los Angeles Opera Company, Trinity Rep, Actor's Theater of Louisville, REDCAT, The

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Photo: Eamon Lochte-Phelps

New School, DASS Dance, Carter Tuti, Moker, Company of Strangers, Sintroca, and is the co-artistic director of Blank-the-Dog productions.

Chantelle Norton (costume designer) is a designer and painter who lives and works in Cold Spring, NY. Her background is diverse, from graphic design and illustration in the fashion industry for Henri Bendel, Victoria's Secret, Loyale, and others, to creating her own brand of clothing. This is her first collaboration with The Builders Association.

Ed Purver (video associate) is an interactive video designer based in Brooklyn. Purver is a recent graduate of the Interactive Telecommunications Program at New York University. He is currently an Artist in Residence at the Digital Performance Institute, New York. He was winner of MTVU's Digital Incubator 2007, and his recent work has been exhibited at Siggraph and the Soapbox Gallery, New York. He is a recipient of the Franklin Furnace Fund for 2008/09.

Joseph Silvosky (technical director) is a performance artist from Oklahoma and has been the technical director with the Builders for *Xtravaganza*, *Alladeen*, and *Super Vision*. With *Super Vision*, he also joined the Builders' pool of performers. He has built robots and other machines for Richard Maxwell, NTUSA,

Radiohole, and Lucky Pierre. His own work has been performed in Chicago, New York, and Rakvere (Estonia), and his latest show, *The Jester of Tonga*, will be performed at PS 122 this fall in New York.

Harry Sinclair (writer/filmmaker, performer—Mike) is a writer and film director from New Zealand. He has written and directed short films, a TV series, and three feature films—*Topless Women Talk About Their Lives*, *The Price of Milk*, and *Toy Love*. He co-founded the multimedia group The Front Lawn, which toured internationally from 1985—91. He works as an actor on stage and screen, where his credits include his role as Isildur in *Lord of the Rings* and John Senior in *Super Vision*.

Olivia Timothee (Sam), an adventurous young actress, has been embracing the spotlight since age three launching her modeling, TV commercial, and stage work in Miami. She traveled to NYC in 2005 and made her TV debut playing a small part in *All My Children*. Since her residence in NYC she has had the privilege of performing on Off-Broadway productions of *Oklahoma!* (2007) and *Scrooge* (2007). Timothee's broad acting ability has lead her to roles in Galactic's *Think Back* video (2007), PBS children's programs, comedic presentations at NY Film Academy, and live-action voiceovers. She earned a merit scholarship to Dance Theatre

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of Harlem and has been invited to training sessions with Disney Theatrical Productions. Timothee adores stage work. Her acquired passion for the culinary arts has also brought delight to family and friends.

Jennifer Tipton (lighting design) is well known for her work in theater, dance, and opera. Her recent work in opera includes Gounod's *Romeo et Juliette* directed by Bart Sher at the Salzburg Festival, *Il Trovatore* for the Met (Feb 2009) directed by David McVicar, and The Wooster Group's *La Didone*. Her recent work in dance includes Balanchine's *Jewels* for the Royal Ballet in London and Jerome Robbins' *Les Noces* for New York City Ballet. In theater her recent work includes David Gordon's *Uncivil Wars* at The Kitchen in NYC, *Beckett Shorts* directed by JoAnne Akalaitis at the New York Theater Workshop, and *Conversations in Tusculum* written and directed by Richard Nelson at The Public Theater. Tipton teaches lighting at the Yale School of Drama. She received the Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize in 2001, the Jerome Robbins Prize in 2003, the Mayor's Award for Arts and Culture in New York City (April 2004), and is a 2008 MacArthur Fellow.

Kim Whitener (executive producer) is the producing director at HERE Arts, co-curating performance programs and managing the HEREThere touring program. She is also independent producer working with a diverse range of US companies and individuals in contemporary theater, dance-theater, and multi-media worlds to develop, produce, and tour new projects, working with co-producers worldwide. She is currently associate producer for Martha Clarke's *Garden of Earthly Delights* remount (Off-Broadway, October 2008). Whitener was managing director of the ensemble theater company The Wooster Group from 1997—2001 and held producing and general management positions in Philadelphia and Boston before coming to New York.

Neal Wilkinson (production manager) joined The Builders Association for the touring of *Alladeen* in 2004. Previously, he was the production manager for Richard Maxwell and the New York City Players, with whom he toured extensively. Wilkinson is the resident scenic designer of the ANDHOW theater company. He also writes, directs, and designs his own work, most recently premiering *Gadarene* in the spring of 2008.

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Video in Shanghai: Video Production; Mathieu Borysevicz; Production Assistant: Zhang Mi; On video: Stephen Zhao, Yuan Xuezi, Feng Jiehui, Lu Jiwei, Chen Feiting, Emily M., Zhuang Bin, Zhuang Kai, Liu Guang; Special Thanks: Raymond Zhou.

Video in Mexico: Production Coordinator: Laura Irene Arvizu/Teeka Films;

On video: Marcos Fonseca, Alexis Arias, Laura Irene Arvizu, Juan Parada.

Video in Toronto: Production Coordinator: Melissa Levin; On video: Amanda Christo, Vanessa Campbell, Edward Ulzen, Seifu Tesfaye Belachew, Lesia Ciz, Mohamed Hanseer, Gaurav Sawhney, Patricia Burgos, Hayad Mohamed, Valda Alleyne, Fathima Hanseer, Diego Garcia, Qiyun Uy, Kidest Ashene, Leo Zuniga, Peter Gomes, Ellen Mae Casao; Marcel Grant, Amanda Christo, Esther Jun.

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Finally, worldwide thanks to all XUBU participants!

Participate in CONTINUOUS CITY at www.continuouscity.org.