

dance umbrella 98

# Babel Index

11-15 Nov



Four years ago, while researching sites for what became *Genesis Canyon* at the Natural History Museum, I made several visits to the British Library, then housed within the British Museum. Val Bourne and I met with members of the Library staff and were given a special tour of the soon to be completed building. That experience was memorable and I knew that when the Library reopened, a spectacular new site would be added to London's already wonderful landscape. When we received an invitation to create *Babel Index* late last year, we were excited by the enormous scale of this new space and the challenges it presented.

This work is the culmination of six weeks of intense rehearsals. We began with a two week residency/research period with my core dancers in August and continued in October with four weeks with the augmented cast of 54 performers. Many days have been spent working on site, both studying the space and the Library's treasures in different departments. *Babel Index* is a site specific work inspired by the physical design of the British Library, its mission and purpose. All of the material seen in this production is designed to be seen in this context. The work is divided into three sections requiring the audience to promenade to different locations during the performance. Please refer to the instructions over the page for best viewing. I hope you enjoy your journey.  
STEPHAN KOPLOWITZ

THE BRITISH LIBRARY

# notes

## on viewing the production:

As an audience member, we are asking you to join one of several guided groups and to stay with your group during the first section and during the beginning of the second section of *Babel Index*. Our guides have been trained to give each group the best view of the production.

If at any time you have a question concerning the location or order of this event, please ask your designated guide for more information.

### one:

During section one, two casts of 12 twelve dancers are performing on two levels, located behind the King's Library at the back of the public areas, in the cafe and restaurant areas. This section of choreography is designed to be seen from above and, given the sightlines of the space, it is not possible to get a clear view of both levels or even of one entire level. The choreography was created with this in mind. Both ensembles of 12 dancers are performing the same choreography in unison. The work's content should be viewed much like a document printed on different kinds of paper, or a document found in a partially torn state.

### two:

This section takes place in selected locations on three levels. The audience is instructed to move back, towards the front of the building. Please follow your previously identified guide who will escort you to the appropriate level to view this section. Each level will feature four or five small ensemble performance works placed in different locations. You are encouraged to move about on your designated level to view all of these performances, during the course of fifteen minutes, taking in as much or as little of each ensemble as you desire.

### three:

When section two has ended, you should make your way as quickly and safely as possible to the ground levels of the grand entrance hall to view all 54 performers on three levels of balconies.

*Conception, Direction,  
Choreography*  
STEPHAN KOPLOWITZ

*Original Score*  
JONATHAN STONE  
*Costume Design*  
CRAIG GIVENS  
*Lighting Design*  
SIMON CORDER  
*Production Manager*  
SIMON BYFORD

## dancers

*(Core Group)*

KERRY BIGGIN  
SUSANA GARCIA  
HANNA GILLGREN  
SAM INGRAM  
DAVID A JOHN  
JENNY LAM  
SARAH LLOYD  
SAMANTHA LYONS  
FIONA MILLWARD  
MIKE WINTER

*Special thanks to the Core  
Group of dancers for their  
artistry, hard work and  
important creative  
contributions throughout  
this production.*

*with*

ANNETTE CARMICHAEL  
ESPERANZA CARMONA  
LAURIANE DELTEIL  
LINDA FOLEY  
ZOE HITCHCOCK  
ELLI ISOKOSKI  
RUTH LLOYD  
ELISSA LANGTON  
TORI NOLAN  
SOPHIE PARATTE  
MATILDE PEDREIRA  
MARILENA PETRIDOU  
ANNIKA SILLANDER  
SHELBY WILLIAMS

*and*

ANTIGONE AVDI  
CARON BOSLER  
JODIE CLARK  
ALEX CROFT  
GUDRUN DERRICK  
MARIANGELA FABIANE  
VERONICA FORIOSO  
SARAH FROST  
CATHERINE GILL  
LUISA JOHNS  
HELEN LANE  
CELESTINE LEAH  
ULLA LOKOSCHUS  
TANJA MANGALANAYAGAM  
SALLY MARIE  
HENRI MAY  
JESS MCCOMBIE  
HELEN MISSING  
SUZY MITCHELL  
SHIHO MIYAZAWA  
KAORI MURAKAMI  
ELEANOR NELSON  
TATIANA NOVAES  
JENNY PARROTT  
JENNIFER PATERSON  
DECLAN PATRICK  
LUCREZIA PIATTELLI  
CARLOS D RODRIGUEZ  
LAYLA SMITH  
HIAN RUTH VOON

Assistant Director SARA HOOK  
Sound Design DROSTAN MADDEN  
Slide Images MARK BOYER  
Chief Costume Maker  
ANGELA CREASOR  
Costume Makers  
CLARE BANET, RUTH MCCOMISH

Sound Consultant Tim Foster  
Sound Engineer Olly Brown  
Production Electrician  
Ruari Cormack  
Electrician Chris Patterson  
Electrician Rachel McCutcheon  
Production Assistant Jem Meluish  
Production Assistant Guy McDonald  
Stage Management  
Maz Bryden, Simon Dodson  
Dance Umbrella Liaison  
Silvia Maroino  
Photographer Dee Conway

Get in Crew: Syd, Ivan, Barbara  
Lighting Supplied by:  
Vari Lite Productions Ltd  
Sound Supplied By:  
Tim Foster Sound Associates  
Projection Equipment Supplied By:  
Creative Technology  
Prop Books made by  
Oliver Williams Props

Our thanks to  
Jon Cadbury @ Vari Lite  
Productions Ltd  
Jon Hodgson @ Creative Technology  
All the staff at the British Library  
Arc Dance Company

Participation of Stephan Koplowitz has been made possible in part through support from the Fund for US Artists at International Festivals, a joint initiative of the Rockefeller Foundation, Pew Charitable Trusts, the National Endowment for the Arts and the US Information Agency.

Not everyone knows this but *Babel Index* has actually been over four years in gestation. It was back in 94 that Dance Umbrella first invited Stephan Koplowitz to create a site specific piece for the London festival. After visiting a variety of possible venues, as diverse as the Lloyds Building and the Eurostar terminal, Steve finally settled on the new British Library, which was at that time still a 'hard hat' site but clearly one with enormous potential. From the outset, the Library expressed keen interest but, our timing, autumn 1996, was not of the best and Steve opted instead for the Natural History Museum. Following the huge success of his *Genesis Canyon* in the Museum's magnificent entrance hall, we were eager to commission Steve to create another such piece for our twentieth anniversary festival. So, you can imagine our surprise and delight when a phone call last Christmas Eve from Colin Wight brought the British Library back into the picture. Working with 54 dancers and the same creative team as for *Genesis Canyon*, Steve has created a moveable feast of a piece which takes its audience on a celebratory tour of Sir Colin St. John Wilson's remarkable building. Dance Umbrella is very proud to present *Babel Index*.

Val Bourne  
Artistic Director Dance Umbrella

Acknowledgments from Stephan Koplowitz:  
*Babel Index* is dedicated to Val Bourne for her unique vision, her deep dedication to artists and for her love of contemporary dance in all its forms. Additional special thanks to Dance Umbrella and its wonderful staff for their tireless work on this production,

especially Betsy Gregory, Candida Ronald and Toby Beazley for their attention to detail and perseverance. To my veteran artistic collaborators for their talent and trust. To my colleagues at the Packer Collegiate Institute in Brooklyn Heights, NY for their support of my artistic life and to Packer's Board of Directors for sending one of my

It has been a tremendously exciting year at the British Library. At St Pancras we now have a home worthy of the finest library in the world. A home into which we welcome not only scholars and researchers who wish to use our collections, but also members of the general public, who are coming in ever-increasing numbers to visit our exhibitions, see the largest building to be built this century in the UK, browse in our specialist bookshop and attend lectures and other events.

Talks, seminars, films, school visits, tours, music and poetry in our piazza...the building, and the public response to it, encourage us to be bold. The Dance Umbrella performances created by Stephan Koplowitz and his team are probably our most ambitious project to date. They promise an extraordinary experience for everyone. The Library is immensely proud to host them.

Dr Brian Lang  
Chief Executive The British Library

colleagues to witness this work, to Colin Wight of the British Library for his invitation to create this work, to Silvia Maroino for her fine work during our production process, to Clare Farrow for help during rehearsals, to Chris Barlas for his thoughtfulness and to the entire cast of dancers for their hard work and good humour.

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# Biographies

**Stephan Koplowitz** has created 39 works (27 commissions) for either the concert stage or specific architectural/urban sites since 1984. He has been awarded six National Endowment for Arts Choreography Fellowships. His choreography and company, Stephan Koplowitz & Company have been produced by several venues including Dance Theater Workshop, Dancing in the Streets, the Dance Umbrella Festival, the American Dance Festival and the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival. He has premiered twelve large scale site-specific works in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Washington DC and in 1996, London's Natural History Museum (Genesis Canyon), commissioned by Dance Umbrella and voted 'Best Dance Production of 1996' by Time Out. Koplowitz's most recent projects include a dance/theatre adaptation of Karel Capek's *War with the Newts*, performed at Dance Theater Workshop last May. In 1997, Koplowitz premiered *Webbed Feats presents: Bytes of Bryant Park* ([www.webbedfeats.org](http://www.webbedfeats.org)), a critically acclaimed site-specific project initiated on the World Wide Web. Using submissions from the web audience to explore aspects of a real site in the real world, *Bytes of Bryant Park* was performed for a live audience of 7,000 and seen by 100,000 people on-line.

**Jonathan Stone** is a performer, director and composer. He formed Ralf Ralf with his brother Barnaby. Their shows *The Hour*, *The Summit* and *It's Staring You Right In The Face* has toured to over twenty countries. His recent show, *The Last Songs of Opal Lorbin*, played at the Purcell Room in September. He is a director and composer for New York based acapella performance group *Hot Mouth*, who will be appearing at the Peacock Theatre in April. Composing credits include *A River Sutra* and *Genesis Canyon*. He has worked as an actor at the National Theatre (*Volpone*) and on film (*Institute Benjamenta*).

**Craig Givens** has designed for dance companies in Britain, Europe and the USA including the Royal Ballet, London Contemporary Dance Theatre, Arc Dance Company, *Second Stride*, Royal Danish Ballet, and Jonathan Burrows Group. His frequent work with choreographer Kim Brandstrup includes *Peer Gynt*, *Othello*, *Saints and Shadows* and *Crime Fictions* for Arc and most recently *Sleeping Beauty* for the Royal New Zealand Ballet. He designed *Orfeo* for LCDT which won a 1990 Olivier Award, *Othello* for Arc which won the 1995 Evening Standard Award and was the recipient of a 1990 London Dance and Performance Award for his designs for dance.

**Simon Corder** left school in 1978 and joined the circus as a ring boy. He then spent several years as a touring technician in opera and theatre. A long association with Lumière and Son saw him developing as a lighting designer and photographer through the 1980s, specialising in site-specific works. He has made over 100 original lighting designs; zoos are a speciality. Today he is increasingly involved with imaging, architectural and exhibition projects.

**Sara Hook's** choreography and company, Sara Hook Dances, has been produced at Dance Theater Workshop, 92nd St. Y, and The Sylvia and Danny Kaye Playhouse. She has travelled extensively throughout the US, performing and choreographing. In 1995 she was awarded the American Dance Festival's Scripps Humphrey Weidman Limon Fellowship in choreography and spent two summers at ADF as the American representative to the International Choreographers Residence Program. Hook is a certified movement analyst from the Laban Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies. Currently she is on the faculty of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Center. Her performing credits include *Nikolais-Louis Dance*, *Pearl Lang Dance Co*, *Jean Erdman's Theater of the Open Eye* and *Stephan Koplowitz & Company*.

**Mark Boyer** is the founder and artistic director of Shoot Digital, NYC, a digital imaging studio whose clients include some of the NYC's top fashion designers, photographers, theatre directors and advertising agencies. Boyer's latest work with slide images for the stage was for *Stephan Koplowitz's* production of *War with the Newts*, performed at Dance Theater Workshop last May.

**Kerry Biggin**, since graduating from the Rambert School, has worked with Ballet Creations of London, Wayne Sleep in UK tour 'Dance', and spent two years with Scottish Dance Theatre under the direction of Neville Campbell. Now back in London, she has performed in the stage and film production of *The Snowman* (Robert North/Bill Alexander) and with Matthew Hawkins on his most recent production.

**Susana Garcia** trained and worked professionally in Buenos Aires, Argentina before coming to London. She has danced with the Jonathan Burrows Group, the Royal Opera House, the English National Opera and Dance Umbrella. She has just completed a research project with Guaraní Amazonian tribes in preparation for a new production by the *Flying Gorillas* which she co-directs.

**Hanna Gillgren**, Swedish born, graduated from London Contemporary Dance School in 1994. Since then she has been working with companies throughout England and Europe, such as *Bedlam Dance Company*, *David Massingham Dance* and *Michèle Noiret/Cie Tandem*. She is also choreographing her own work, which has been performed in various festivals in England, Austria and France.

**Sam Ingram** has performed and taught in Japan and throughout the UK. Currently, she is the dance promoter for Northamptonshire and is still a freelance dancer and teacher in both Street Jazz and Contemporary. She worked with Steve Koplowitz on his previous site-specific work, *Genesis Canyon*.

**David A John** was born in Wales and trained at London Contemporary Dance School, gaining a BA in Contemporary Dance and Choreography. He has danced with 4D, *Fluid State Dancers*, *Scottish Dance Theatre*, under the direction of Neville Campbell, and *English National Opera* in their productions of *The Fairy Queen*, *Eugene Onegin* and *The Elixir of Love*. David has also danced for *Mid-Wales Opera* in *Aida*, *Kokona Dance Company* and the film 'Shakespeare in Love' directed by John Madden and choreographed by *Quinny Sacks*.

**Jenny Lam** gained a BA (Hons) Dance Theatre at the Laban Centre, London, and was a member of *Transitions Dance Company* 1990. She has subsequently worked with various dance companies including *Erica Stanton*, *Dale Thompson*, *Company Terrace*, *Julia Clarke and Friends*, *BiMa Dance Company*, *Plunge Productions*, *Oracle Dance Company*, *Clare Baker*, *Stephan Koplowitz* and *Fin Walker*. This is Jenny's second project with *Stephan Koplowitz*.

**Sarah Lloyd** works in Brighton as a choreographer, performer and teacher. In the past she worked with *Laurie Booth*, *Angela Woodhouse*, *Karl-Jay Lewin*, *Alexander Baervoets* (Belgium). Her last creation was 'Echo', a dance work for 13 women, commissioned by *South East Dance Agency*. She soon begins a new work, 'Exeat' collaborating with a composer and poet. This is her second project with *Stephan Koplowitz*.

**Samantha Lyons** trained at the London Contemporary Dance School and, since graduating, has worked consistently as a freelance dancer and teacher. Sam has performed in a variety of operas and on projects with *Terry John Bates* and on projects with *Stephan Koplowitz* on *Genesis Canyon* and is pleased to be working on this second project.

**Fiona Millward** has worked as a dancer in both the UK and the USA. Choreographers she has worked with include *Fin Walker*, *David Dorfman*, *Lisa Race*, *Yael Flexer*, *Kate Willis*, *Erica Stanton* and *Arlette George*. She is a freelance teacher and administrator and choreographs for her own group 'dekko dance'.

**Mike Winter** graduated from the Laban Centre, London in 1993. He has subsequently worked with various companies in the UK and Europe, and with *Stephan Koplowitz* in his previous London project 'Genesis Canyon'.

## dance umbrella

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Doug Elkins Dance Company Photo Andrew Eccles