

LINDER

AT

CHISENHOLE

THE DARKTOWN CAKEWALK:
CELEBRATED FROM THE HOUSE OF FAME
WITH STUART MCCALLUM AND RICHARD NICOLL

SATURDAY 10 JULY 2010

10AM – 11PM

THE DARKTOWN CAKEWALK: CELEBRATED FROM THE HOUSE OF FAME

Chisenhale Gallery presents *The Darktown Cakewalk: Celebrated from the House of FAME*, a thirteen-hour performance event by artist and musician Linder in collaboration with musician Stuart McCallum (also The Cinematic Orchestra), fashion designer Richard Nicoll (also Creative Director, Cerruti) and dancers and musicians from varied traditions and disciplines.

The Darktown Cakewalk is an epic invocation of glamour and fantastical pageantry. Witch trials and beauty queens, ragtime and Euro Pop merge to enfold the viewer in a secret history of prejudice and dissent. The thirteen-hour performance begins at 10am and is divided into two six-hour sessions ('masque' and 'anti-masque') with a thirteenth hour. The audience are invited to mingle with the performers and to come and go over the thirteen hours as they wish.

Over the last three decades Linder has consistently questioned roles of gender identity and commodification in society. Part of the late 1970s and early 1980s Manchester punk and post punk scenes, she has been described as a 'post punk feminist crusader', and as a 'corrective' to punk which - even in its anti-establishment, popularist posturing - still spoke primarily to (and from the perspective of) young men. Best known for her photomontages, such as her artwork on the cover of the 1977 Buzzcocks single 'Orgasm Addict' (now in the collection of Tate Modern), the narrative, structure and casting of this performance are based on a range of collaged material and ideas. *The Darktown Cakewalk* is a development of recent performances at Tate St. Ives and The Arches / Glasgow International Festival of Visual Art 2010.

Linder was born in 1954 in Liverpool. She has recently presented solo shows at Linn Luhn, Cologne (2008), Baltic, Gateshead (2007) and PS1/ Museum of Modern Art, New York (2007). Recent group shows include *The Dark Monarch* (Tate St. Ives, Cornwall, 2009), *After Twilight* (Kolnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, 2009), *Crossroads* (Salamanca Institute of Culture, Salamanca, 2008), *Cohabitation* (Galeria Francesca Kaufmann, Milan, 2008) and *Punk. No One is Innocent* (Kunsthalle Vienna, 2008). Linder's work is included in the Tate collection.

ACT 1

Troubling a dead body

ACT 2

Fruits of a soft Peace

ACT 3

Quickly come, we all are met

ACT 4

Most Royal, and most happy *King*
Of whom, *Fame's* house, in every part, doth ring

ACT 5

(The Cakewalk)

In the heat of their Dance, on the sudden,
was heard a sound of loud Musick

ACT 6

All our *Charms* do nothing win

ACT 7

Age of gold

ACT 8

Their lives I stick with needles quick

ACT 9

Never a star yet shot?

ACT 10

...lose the whole henge of Things;
And cause the ends run back, into the Springs

ACT 11

A kind of hollow and infernal music

ACT 12

(The Darktown Cakewalk)
Black go in, and blacker go out

PROGRAMME NOTES

CAKEWALKERS

The Star : Tom Pritchard

The Muse : Rosalind Masson

The Witch : Florencia García Chafuén

The Cakewalk King : Rachel Aisling Smith

The Cakewalk Queen : Laura Cameron Lewis

Puella Aterna : Judith Williams

Animus/Anima/Animal : Linder and Sari Lievonen

Notes adapted from artist correspondence with Cakewalkers

THE STAR Tom Pritchard

The young Star is a mixture of sports star, film star and pop star — but predominantly pop star. He finds himself at the Cakewalk in a state of innocence. We see him in his bedroom practising his posturing; he's relaxed, ambitious, and still in a state of grace. The Star's career sharply ascends and descends. Very early, the Muse offers him a gold lamé jacket and for a while he is a Pop Midas: his chart position and his ego correspondingly increase. The Star is imperial in his popularity for the first six hours. We also see him trapped in a limbo state, perpetually waiting in hotel rooms, dressing rooms and bedrooms. He becomes more and more obnoxious as his ego inflates. The Muse abandons him, the Witch watches him: she knows that he will lose his glamour and come to her eventually. The Cakewalk King mimics him cruelly. The Star has an affair with Puella when he is at his lowest. He appears on awful celebrity tv programmes and becomes more and more desperate to regain popularity; he is unsuccessful.

THE MUSE Rosalind Masson

The Muse is at all times paradoxical. She is in a continuous state of elevation and is also extremely earthed. She is playful, inspirational and generous to all around her. She is close to the Witch in many ways but is connected with the air (as in inspire — to breathe in), whereas the Witch is far more connected with the earth. The Muse gives the Star his gold mantle in the form of a jacket; she tries to inspire Puella, but Puella sometimes misinterprets the Muse and gets it all wrong. The Cakewalk King and Queen know her from old. In the second half, the Muse becomes more and more abstract and elevated — not quite of this world. She begins to remove herself, vacate herself, until she becomes a cosmic void. The Muse and the Star are perhaps the two most physical dancers in that they both move easily from vertical to horizontal and upside down.

THE WITCH Florencia García Chafuén

The Witch watches. She is older than time but looks ageless. She is very connected to the earth and collects a lot of her materials there — herbs, minerals, animals, etc. She knows the grammar of glamour — she invented it! And she may have been hung or burnt for it. The Witch often echoes persecution within the performance (for example, a glamorous pair of shoes that she holds out to Puella then become a brank). The antlers on the corset she borrows snag at her and almost impale her. The guitar that she offers to the Star almost crucifies her. The Witch appears to die, but she is only shapeshifting, flexing ancient muscles. In the second half, the Witch — after having mainly observed the other characters, becomes more involved with them. She and the Muse hold all the power.

THE CAKEWALK KING AND QUEEN

Rachel Aisling Smith and Laura Cameron Lewis

The Cakewalk King and Queen are played by two women. This reverses the early twentieth century trope of using two men in the Cakewalk instruction series of postcards. The dancers are always shown holding sticks in their hands, often with a small ribbon attached. The performers also use sticks as: inadequate crutches; a magic wand that brakes into two and reassembles; a fake phallus; a stick for beating; an evening dress cane. The Cakewalk King herself veers between slave and master. She then interacts with the other characters from those two positions and incremental psychological stages in between; she tries to goad Puella to defend herself from attack using the stick; she mocks the Pop Star's increasing impotence by using the stick as comical phallus; discarded clothes are tossed to one side with the King's wand. The cane enhances and exaggerates the posturing of the Cakewalk King and Queen throughout. There is a sense with both these characters that they are reconstituting themselves before our eyes from centuries past. They both spend quite some time remembering who they were and investigating how their bodies now work — can they still dance? Are they slaves or masters? The King and Queen eventually become extremely flamboyant, regal and controlling. Their archetypal pendulum continuously swings between slave and master, and they try to make others around them their 'slaves' in an attempt to keep control. At the end of the performance, they will lead all other characters in an antimasque parade, The Dark Cakewalk.

PUELLA AETERNA Judith Williams

Puella Aeterna is a psychological term (the male version is Puer Aeternus):=. Like all archetypes the puer is bi-polar, exhibiting both a 'positive' and a 'negative' aspect. The 'positive' side of the puer appears as the Divine Child who symbolizes newness, potential for growth, hope for the future. He also foreshadows the hero that he sometimes becomes. The 'negative' side is the child-man who refuses to grow up and meet the challenges of life face on, waiting instead for his ship to come in and solve all his problems. In *The Darktown Cakewalk*, Puella appears initially as a girl — full of wonder at this new world that she finds herself in. She is dangerously open to influence from the glamour she sees around her, and too trusting. She is intrigued by The Star, for example, but he takes no notice of her until he is in his decline and she has had her breast implants — she's suddenly oversexualised in appearance. Towards the end of the thirteen hours, Puella and the Star, goaded on by The Cakewalk King in his negative aspect, have a clumsy sexual encounter. In the second half, Puella has her breast implants, a fake tan, provocative clothes and too much make up, and she suddenly receives a lot of attention. She becomes a small town beauty queen, meets her prince (i.e. The Star — he is puer aeterna anyway), messily consummates this union and becomes exhausted by her new life. The Witch and The Muse are very protective of her throughout.

ANIMUS/ANIMA/ANIMAL Linder / Sari Lievonen

'Anima, Animus, Animal' is the title from a chapter from *The Wise Wound* by Penelope Shuttle and Peter Redgrove (1978). The animus and anima are terms from Jungian psychology, referring to the feminine and masculine aspects of the psyche. Anima, Animus, Animal is the most liminal of all the characters within *The Darktown Cakewalk* and will only take shape - and shapeshift - over the thirteen hours. The role is shared between Sari Lievonen and Linder to introduce doppelganger motifs and pun on mythological twinning. Sari Lievonen is presently pregnant and carrying twins. Richard Nicoll will create costumes for Anima, Animus, Animal within the performance.

Linder will appear throughout the performance.

Principal musicians

Stuart McCallum: guitar and laptop
Dave Walsh and Jon Howard: drums
Kim Macari: trumpet and flugelhorn
Tom Chant: saxophone
Maxwell Sterling: double bass
Peter Lee: piano

Production crew

Producer: Polly Staple
Associate Producer: Andrew Bonacina
Front of House Manager: Isabelle Hancock
Production Assistant: Cicely Farrer
Sound design and production: Myles Hayden
Lighting design and production: Brendan Clarke, Insight Lighting
Costume creative director: Anthony Campbell at Richard Nicoll
Tailor: Kevin Geddes
Branks by Catriona Gourlay
Hair and make-up: Debbie Dannell and Hannah Wynne
Sound recording: Antti Sakari Saario and Philip Reeder
Still photography: Jannica Honey
Documentary filming: Jackson Holmes and Joe Williams (students from BA Moving Image at the University of Brighton)

Noon–5pm: Cakes and refreshments provided by the East London Women's Institute
5–11pm: Bar

The Darktown Cakewalk is produced in collaboration with Sorcha Dallas, Glasgow and supported by Glasgow International Festival of Visual Art 2010, Outset Contemporary Art Fund, Stuart Shave / Modern Art and Shane Akeroyd.

Follow The Darktown Cakewalk blog at <http://cteditions.posterous.com>

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