The Wonderful World of Dissocia

By Anthony Neilson

“an X-rated Alice in Wonderland: a world full of colour, sensation and weird and wonderful characters.”

- Metro
The Wonderful World of Dissocia
By Anthony Neilson

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“This hallucinogenic ride through the dark night of the soul is extraordinary. “
- London Time Out
About The Wonderful World of Dissocia

Lisa This colorful and exciting off-kilter trip follows Lisa Jones in search of one lost hour that has tipped the balance of her life. The inhabitants of the wonderful world—Dissocia—in which she finds herself are a curious blend of the funny, the friendly and the brutal. This is a hugely original play, both magical and moving, that confirmed Anthony Neilson as one of the major voices in contemporary British theatre. As Neilson himself puts it, "If you like Alice in Wonderland but there’s not enough sex and violence in it, then Dissocia is the show for you".


This is a hugely original play, both magical and moving, that confirmed Anthony Neilson as one of the major voices in contemporary British theatre.

Recommended for 16 years and over

The Wonderful World of Dissocia receives it’s North American premiere in Chicago with Profiles Theatre this March. It has yet to be performed in Canada.

About Anthony Neilson

Anthony Neilson is a major contemporary voice in British Theatre. A creator of pioneering, taboo-breaking new work, Neilson writes and directs witty, bold and compassionate plays that explore uncharted psychological territories. He is considered to be one of the main three playwright’s behind the “In Yer Face” theatre movement of Great Britain.

His other work for theatre includes: The Lying Kind (The Royal Court), Stitching (The Traverse, The Bush - Time Out Off West End Award), The Censor (The Red Room at The Finborough/Royal Court - Writers Guild Award 1997 - Best Fringe Play and The Time Out Live Award 1997), Penetrator (Royal Court Theatre Upstairs/Traverse, Theatre/Finborough), and Normal (Edinburgh Festival).

"There is no playwright writing in English today who is quite as electrifying, scary and challenging as the Scottish playwright Anthony Neilson"
- The Guardian
The Wonderful World of Dissocia
By Anthony Neilson

Proposed Production

Production:
The Wonderful World of Dissocia

Playwright:
Anthony Neilson

Production Company:
Theatre Conspiracy

Production Objectives:
• To present the Canadian Premiere of The Wonderful World of Dissocia
• To sell a minimum, of 30% house
• To provide an opportunity to address and learn from the issues of mental illness

When:
Spring 2010

Location:
The Vancouver Cultural Centre

Rehearsal Period:
3 weeks

Performances:
Tuesday—Sunday
2 Weeks

“Shatteringly original…”
- London Time Out
The Wonderful World of Dissocia
By Anthony Neilson

Proposed Cast

Moya O’Connell - Lisa Jones
Moya O’Connell is currently in her for her second season Shaw Festival. She will appear as Sheila Birling in J.B. Priestley’s An Inspector Calls and Vivie Warren in Bernard Shaw’s Mrs Warren’s Profession. Last season Moya debuted at the Shaw Festival as Katya in A Month in the Country, after Turgenev and as Elizabeth in The Circle. Originally from the West Coast, Moya spent six seasons at Bard on the Beach Shakespeare Festival in Vancouver where she appeared as Portia in The Merchant of Venice (Jessie Richardson nomination), Imogen in Cymbeline, Ophelia in Hamlet (Jessie Richardson nomination). Other favorite productions include: Vincent in Brixton (Vancouver Playhouse), Enchanted April (Arts Club Theatre), It's All True (Touchstone Theatre), The Tempest (Saidye Bronfman Theatre) and Tiger's Heart (Centaur Theatre).

Cailin Stadnyk - Passenger 1, Oath-Taker Attendant, Jane, Dot
Since making Vancouver home more than five years ago she has worked in numerous productions both on stage and screen. Some of her favorite theatre credits include Funny Girl and Singin’ in the Rain (Arts Club Theatre where she was nominated for a Jessie Award); Fiddler on the Roof (The Playhouse); Sylvia (Sunshine Theatre); Gypsy (Royal City); Little Shop of Horrors (both T.U.T.S and WCT) and Falsettos (Skycorner Prod.). A few of her TV credits include principal roles in Battlestar Galactica; The Ranch; Jeremiah and The Chris Isaak Show.

Naomi Wright - Passenger 2, Oath-Taker Attendant, Britney, Nurse 1
Theatre: The Tempest (Trincula), Taming of the Shrew (Bianca) with Bard on the Beach, Island of Bliss (Bianca) with WCT, Stupidity with Theatre Conspiracy, The Dissociates with Sea Theatre, Absurd Person Singular with the Arts Club.

Upcoming: Life Savers with Roby Slippers and Chance Delaney with WTC.

Peter New - Guard 2, Laughter, Dr Faraday
Peter New got his start writing and acting with Vancouver sketch comedy sensation The Legend of Bonefish. Then he thought he'd try and make money at it instead. So he got an agent and began hawking merch for TV ads and pretending to be security guards and delivery guys on short-lived sci-fi TV shows. Since then however, he's flourished: Writing for the Comedy Network's 'Point Blank' for which he won a Leo Award, starring in his own TV series The Triple Eight...’, and even gracing the Mainstage at the Arts Club Theatre in Vancouver, Peter has become one of the faces to watch in Canada's entertainment Biz.

“...infuriating...”
- London Time Out
Proposed Cast Cont.

Allan Zinyk - Passenger 3, Oath-Taker Attendant, Goat, Biffer, Nurse 2
Taking time off from his studies at the Vor M’s School of Art in his home town of Winnipeg, Allan moved to Vancouver to attend the Vancouver Playhouse Acting School under David Latham. 25 years later he has performed in over 100 productions across Canada and abroad and has appeared on TV and Radio. Favorite roles to date include “Bee” in The Norbels (PTE), “Gidger” in The Violet Hour (Belfry), “Schmendimann” in Picasso at the Lapine Agile (Grand, Vancouver playhouse) and a contributing writer and performer for The Number 14, taking him to New York, Edinburgh and Jerusalem.
Allan hopes to one day star in the musical version of Tootsie and pick up an Art History class to complete his BFA.

Anthony F Ingram - Victor Hesse, Oath-Taker Attendant, Argument, Nurse 3
Anthony is a graduate of both UBC and Studio 58, and has performed throughout Canada, including King Lear, All’s Well That Ends Well, The Scarlet Pimpernel (Stratford Shakespeare Festival), She Stoops to Conquer (Grand Theatre - London, Ontario), The Foreigner (Rosebud Opera House, Alberta), the national tour of Judith Marcuse’s ICE: beyond cool, and recently debuted in the USA in Brilliant! at the San José Stage Company. Recent local credits: Pinter’s Briefs (Blackbird), The Odyssey (Carousel Theatre), Titus Andronicus (Mad Duck Equity Co-op), The Elephant Man (Five Bob Equity Co-op), Cloud 9 (Pack’n’Go Equity Co-op). His directing credits include The Best Restaurant in the World... Ever (Thousand Year Itch), Beggars at the Waters of Immortality: Three One-Act Plays by W. B. Yeats (Dumb Prophet Equity Co-op).

Scott Bellis - Passenger 4, Oath Taker, Ticket, DR. Clarc
Scott Bellis has been a working actor in Vancouver for many years. Theatre Credits include: Bard on the Beach, The Arts Club, The Playhouse, Theatre Conspiracy and many more. Scott has been nominated for over 12 Jessie Richardson Awards, recently winning Outstanding Lead Actor for Bottom in A Midsummer Night's Dream at Bard.

Camyar Chai - Guard 1, Inhibitions, Vince
Camyar Chai is the founder and artistic director of Vancouver's acclaimed Ne-World Theatre, which is dedicated to the production of original, Canadian plays that are “hybrids of East and West, of the real and imaginary, and of story and cabaret.” He has performed in twenty-five, produced fourteen and directed seven theatre productions. No stranger to the Jessie Richardson Theatre Awards, Chai has also performed in numerous film, television and radio programs.

“...rebelliously playful..”
- London Time Out
The Wonderful World of Dissocia
By Anthony Neilson

Proposed Creative Team

Jack Paterson - Director
Jack is a graduate of The Circle in the Square Theatre School in New York. Locally he has performed with The Arts Club, Carousel Theatre, Bard on the Beach & The Chemainus Theatre Festival. Directing credits include Carousel’s The Odyssey (winner of Outstanding Production Jessie Richardson Award), MD Theatre’s Shakespeare’s R&J, Mad Duck’s Titus Andronicus & Julius Caesar. He is the recipient of the Ray Michals Award for Outstanding Body of Work by an Emerging Director and been nominated for four Outstanding Direction Jessie Richardson Awards. Jack is currently the Intern Director at the Shaw Festival.

Al Frisk - Set Design
Al is a UBC graduate from the Technical Theatre and Design program. He has designed the sets for Theatre Conspiracy’s Stupidity, Carousel’s The Hobbit and The Odyssey, Mad Duck’s Titus Andronicus, Julius Caesar, The Tempest and A Midsummer Night’s Dream as well as Carousel Theatre's summer productions of A Comedy Of Errors, Much Ado About Nothing and their touring show The Big League. In addition to working in the film industry for many years.

Torquil Campbell - Sound Design/ Composition
Torquil Campbell is the lead singer and songwriter for the Montreal-based indie rock band Stars which is known for its sometimes melancholy other times energetic sound as well as the unique lyrics. He also records and performs with Broken Social Scene and is a member of the band Memphis. As an actor all his life, appearing on stage throughout North America, playing roles as diverse as Gary, the teenage prostitute in the original New York production of the controversial play Shopping and Fucking starring Philip Seymour Hoffman, and the title role in Henry V.

Barbara Clayton - Costume Design
Barbara has been designing costumes and sometimes sets for Vancouver theatres for more than twenty-five years. Her first professional work as a designer was with Tamahnous Theatre, going on to work with the Arts Club, the Firehall Arts Centre, Headlines Theatre, La Luna, Touchstone Theatre, urban ink, and Wild Excursions Performance. Her most recent work includes Cloud Tectonics, The Blue Light (Firehall Arts Centre), The Odyssey (Carousel), Stupidity (Theatre Conspiracy) and Into the Woods (Patrick Street Productions). She is a multiple Jessie Award Winner and Nominee.

“...as intelligently experimental as any drama you’ll see...”
- London Time Out
The Wonderful World of Dissocia
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Proposed Creative Team Cont.

Itai Erdal - Lighting Design
Itai Erdal has designed over 100 shows for theatre, dance and opera companies in Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal, Tel Aviv, Salvador, London and New York. Some of the companies he worked with include: Vancouver Playhouse, Bard on the Beach, Alberta Theatre Project, Factory Theatre, Actor's Repertory Company, Prairie Theatre Exchange, National Arts Centre, Neworld Theatre, Electric Company, Theatre Replacement, Touchstone, Leaky Heaven Circus, The Jerusalem Lab, Haifa Theatre and Box Clever. Itai has been nominated for 11 theatre awards in the past six years, winning the Sam Paine award for most promising newcomer in '03, the ADC's Jack King award in '05 and a Dora Mavor Moore award in '07. He was nominated to the Siminovitz award in '06.

Zach Lipovsky - Multi Media
Zach Lipovsky is a visual effects specialist, director, actor, writer, and editor in the film industry. Lipovsky was a finalist on the FOX reality show On the Lot. Lipovsky was declared the show's wunderkind by judge Carrie Fisher.

Danielle Fecko - Stage Manager
Favorite recent credits include Stage Manager for Seussical the Musical and The Hobbit, Jessie award winning The Odyssey (Carousel Theatre), Comedy, Satire, Irony and Deeper Meaning, and Six Miniature Tragedies (Studio 58), Apprentice Stage Manager for Hippies and Bolsheviks (Touchstone Theatre), Adrift on the Nile (neworld theatre) and A Christmas Carol (Vancouver Playhouse). Dani is a graduate of Studio 58.

James Foy - Production Manager
James Foy is a recent graduate of the University of British Columbia with a degree in Theatre Design and Production. Selected past credits include Production Management for Seussical: the Musical (Carousel), The Hobbit (Carousel), Gravity (Urban Ink), and The Odyssey (Carousel); Technical Direction for Stupidity (TC). James has been nominated for a Jessie Award for Outstanding Artistic Achievement in Theatre for Young Audiences and has received two Jessie awards for Outstanding Production. James co-founded GasHeart Theatre.

Assistant Director - Quinn Harris
Quinn is a recent graduate of the BFA Theatre Program at the University of Victoria with a specialization in directing. Her favorite projects include directing in Eight Men Speak, Heiner Müller's Hamletmachine, Oedipus Butchers the Classics and Ladies Night at the last two Walking Fish Festivals. This year Quinn co-founded GasHeart Theatre, and directed the company’s first production, The Mechanical Bride, at the Victoria and Vancouver Fringe Festivals.

“...hugely exciting...pushes at the limits of dramatic form”
- The Times
## The Wonderful World of Dissocia

**By Anthony Neilson**

### Budget

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"A brilliant and troubling new drama."
- The Guardian
The Wonderful World of Dissocia
By Anthony Neilson

Budget Cont.

**ARTIST FEES:**

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Production Expenses $50,270.00 Please See Previous Page

Marketing Expenses $5,000.00 Please See Previous Page

Artist Fees $33,000.00 Please See Above

Awards $152.25 Jessie Richardson Society- 131.25$ +21$

**TOTAL Expenses** $88,422.25

“...a fresh blast of air to the London stage.”
- London Time Out
Proposed Community Outreach

With the support of the Ministry of Family, Ministry of Human Resources and Ministry of Health and by working closely with organizations such as Family Services of Greater Vancouver, Raincity Society, Portland Society, Lookout Society, Canadian Mental Health Association, Coastal Health and the MPA we aim to fulfill the following objectives:

- To supply Advocacy, Education and Demystification of mental illness through Outreach and Awareness
- To provide opportunities for people living with mental illness to participate in the community at large in a safe environment
- To present a venue for Recreational, Lifeskill Programs, and opportunity for psycho-social rehabilitation for people living with mental illness

Advocacy, Education and Demystification of mental illness:
By providing a weekly talk back series with guests that include working professional in the field of mental health, persons living with mental illness and their family mentors. We will address issues such as Societies responsibility towards those with mental illness, the experiences of those with mental illness and their families, the means to integrate people with mental illness into society and what it means to be a person living with mental illness.

To provide a venue for Recreational, Lifeskill Programs, and opportunity for psycho-social rehabilitation:
We will integrate people living with mental illness on a volunteer basis into the production. They will have the opportunity to learn, work and see a final product in several areas including Set Construction, Costume Building and Assistant Stage Management.

Outreach:
By providing easily accessed information on mental illness and programs for people living with Mental Illness such as the Kettle Friendship Society.

Awareness:
Both the creative team and the actors will work closely people living with mental illness and their families, to learn more and develop an understanding of their trials and successes and greater knowledge of the experiences of those with mental illness.

“...a subtle meditation on the nature of mental illness and desperately, movingly sad.”
- The Guardian
Mark Brown reviews The Wonderful World of Dissocia at the Tron Theatre, Glasgow

When the National Theatre of Scotland (which recently celebrated its first year on the public stage) announced that it was reviving Anthony Neilson's extraordinary play The Wonderful World of Dissocia, it signaled its welcome intention to bring the real gems of contemporary Scottish theatre to new and wider audiences.

Neilson's tragicomic journey through the mind (and, ultimately, the deadening medical suppression) of someone with psychosis, was, justly, the toast of the 2004 Edinburgh Festival, and the winner of a clutch of awards.

This NTS staging is, effectively, a carbon copy of the presentation of three years ago (which was a collaboration between the Edinburgh International Festival, Glasgow's Tron Theatre and the Drum Theatre, Plymouth).

That, one should add, is no bad thing - "if it ain't broke, don't fix it", as the saying goes. This revival (directed, as in 2004, by the playwright himself) has lost none of the piece's capacity for searing originality, entertaining and powerful humour, and deeply affecting emotion.

A play of two very distinct halves, the first part of Dissocia finds us inside the psychosis of the drama's protagonist Lisa (Christine Entwisle, superb in her return to the role).

Like Alice in Wonderland directed by David Lynch, Lisa travels to the partitioned, war-ravaged nation of Dissocia in search of the "lost hour" which will restore balance to her life.

While there, the brilliantly conceived characters she meets give vivid expression to the physically and sexually violent horrors, but also the absurdist fun, faced by the psychotic mind.

If Neilson's alternative world is a stunning work of imagination, the second half of the play - in which Lisa, now in hospital, is returned to medicated "normality" - creates a juddering atmospheric shift.

Told from the perspective of Lisa as patient, it provides a sobering insight into why a person with psychosis might be attracted to her condition and repulsed by the medication which not only suppresses her illness, but also deadens her mind.

Brilliantly acted by an excellent ensemble (Barnaby Power's Swiss watchmaker Victor Hesse is especially delicious), with two wonderfully contrasting sets by Miriam Buether, this simultaneously joyous and saddening play deserves the wider audience this tour provides. More than that, it also deserves to be considered a modern classic.

URL: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/arts/main.jhtml?xml=/arts/2007/03/06/badiss106.xml
This hallucinogenic ride through the dark night of the soul is extraordinary. Shatteringly original, infuriating, rebelliously playful, and as intelligently experimental as any drama you’ll see, it takes the audience member on a journey where it’s impossible to feel in control. Since it premiered at the Edinburgh International Festival in 2004 critics have grappled to pin down its influences: ‘Alice in Wonderland’, ‘The Wizard of Oz’, David Lynch, ‘Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory’, and even ‘Star Wars’ have been cited. The connecting strand, of course, for all these is a fascination with the joys and fears of disorientation – a theme Anthony Neilson deploys very cleverly to examine the allure and desperation of mental illness.

As the play opens, Christine Entwistle’s engagingly childlike Lisa is sitting onstage plucking petulantly at one string on a guitar. Tightening the string till it breaks, it’s obvious that something else has snapped, as Barnaby Power’s Sigmund Freud-like watch-mender enters to inform her that she has somehow managed to lose an hour of her life. Her flat becomes a lift, and the curtain flies up to reveal a carpet-covered world inhabited by such characters as the Insecurity Guards, Alan Francis’ comically imposing Oath-taker, and a rapist scapegoat. The play’s dynamic swings constantly between joy and terror, as songs and child-like hilarity are overshadowed by the threat of the Black Dog King.

Neilson himself directs with considerable flair. It’s arguable that his excellent production allows him to get away with some of the weaknesses of the script – the jokes, though very good, are repeatedly overplayed. In the brilliantly contrasting second half, where we find ourselves in the amplified monochrome monotony of a psychiatric hospital, he makes us feel how Lisa might long for an escape from sanity. Yet again, the National Theatre of Scotland brings a fresh blast of air to the London stage.

URL: http://www.timeout.com/london/theatre/reviews/3255/review.html
The Times

Sam Marlowe, The Times, 31 March

When it premiered at the Edinburgh International Festival in 2004, Anthony Neilson's evocation of dissociative identity disorder won accolades. Now, thanks to this National Theatre of Scotland touring revival, the rest of the country finally gets to experience the play, which also marks the Courts first mainstage opening under its new artistic director, Dominic Cooke. It proves to have been well worth the wait. Audacious, inventive, funny and frightening, Neilson's production makes swaggering, cruelly witty yet compassionate theatre.

Neilson has spoken of a new wave of absurdism in British drama; if he's right, he will surely be at the movement's forefront. Dissocia examines mental illness from the inside out, taking its audience into the inner life of its main character, Lisa (a terrific Christine Entwisle). The first act, when she has, we later learn, stopped taking her medication, is a surreal blend of David Lynch, Alice in Wonderland and Chitty Chitty Bang Bang. The second, set in a psychiatric hospital, focuses on her return, probably temporarily, to normality.

Prompted by a dapper, faintly Freud-like Swiss watchmaker to set out on a quest to recover a lost hour of her life, Lisa travels to the kingdom of Dissocia. She is greeted by two desperately insecure security guards, manic as a pair of white rabbits, and goes on to meet all manner of curious characters.

There is a singing polar bear, a jolly-hockey-sticks female flying ace and a Pan-like scapegoat whose initial amiability evaporates when it transpires that his intention is to rape her. The kingdom is stalked by that emblem of depression, the evil Black Dog.

Moments of cockeyed, romantic loveliness, as when Lisa sings a hymn to her new land in a shower of scarlet petals, collide with scenes of sinister violence. Some of these are all the more disturbing for feeling less like wild improbabilities than heightened reality in particular, the sequence in which a bruised and battered council official perkily explains how, under a new government directive to lower street-crime statistics, she is required to stand in for the victim in everything from sexual assaults to carjackings. Threats of war and terrorism lurk amid the eccentric dialogue.

The play's second half, played, in Miriam Buethers design, behind a sheet of Perspex, has a muffled, colourless quality.

Neilson stops short of glamorising her disorder, but as Lisa lies in bed, leaden, medicated, almost stripped of autonomy by the gently efficient medical staff, the stark contrast with Dissocia's terrors and exhilarations is agonising. Life on prescribed drugs offers nothing to compare with her earlier adventures; she can't even set out on a quest along the corridor unaccompanied.

When the play is at its most hectic, dramatic impetus and intensity occasionally get lost in the mayhem. But this is a work that genuinely pushes at the limits of dramatic form, and while it's wayward at times, it's hugely exciting.

URL:http://www.royalcourttheatre.com/whatson_reviews.asp?play=467
Metro

Maxie Szalwinska, Metro, 3 April

Anthony Neilson's 2004 play finally gets a London run in a staging so good it makes you want to burst out cheering.

In The Wonderful World... Neilson has found his own distinctive, light way of being serious. What the playwright achieves in this breezy, ominous work is a kind of hallucinated realism. It's the sort of play you go on seeing after you've got home and closed your eyes.

Our heroine is Lisa (the beautifully low-key Christine Entwisle), a young woman with dissociative identity disorder. She embarks on a quest to find the hour she lost when the clocks changed, and her flat becomes an elevator that takes her to Dissocia, an Alice In wonderland-like kingdom peopled by 'insecurity guards', a singing polar bear and an archfiend, known as the Black Dog King. Neilson's cuckoo-land somehow makes absolute sense. While the first half, with its mixture of comedy, dream and underlay of dread, is a rhapsody on mental illness, the second half brings the audience, and Lisa, crashing down to earth. A series of short, sharp vignettes in a mental hospital contrast Lisa's vivid internal landscape with the outer world.

Dexterously directed by the playwright for the National Theatre Of Scotland, this is the most attentive foray into crack-up you're likely to see.

URL: http://www.royalcourttheatre.com/whatson_reviews.asp?play=467
Eisenstein's theory of montage is based on the idea that when presented with two unrelated images, the human brain will make a connection and find a meaning. This is a filmic concept, but it's the best way to get to grips with Anthony Neilson's brilliant and troubling new drama. I know of no other play where the meaning is contained neither in the first act nor in the second, but in the juxtaposition of the two. In this, it is as radical as anything we've seen in this year's festival.

Such a claim might seem at odds with the first half where the style is akin to a surreal pantomime, as much corny comedy as high-minded drama. Lisa Montgomery Jones (Christine Entwisle) is a young woman drawn into a quest to relocate the missing hour that has set her off kilter ever since she flew over the Greenwich meridian just as the clocks were changing. To do this, she must journey into Dissocia, a land hidden securely - and significantly - behind the theatre's safety curtain.

It turns out to be a delightful place, a carpeted kingdom with a welcoming national anthem and a polar bear who promises - in song - to "hold your paw when you die". But there's also the looming presence of the black dog king, the rumblings of war and the threat of vicious sexual assault. It is, in other words, an extended metaphor for the experience of the manic side of mental illness, a vivid landscape of possibility underscored by terrible fear.

If it went only that far, the play would work as a funny, whimsical dreamscape. But Neilson's master-stroke is to set it against a second half of palpable tedium. Lisa is now in a hospital, stupefied by drugs. In the dullness of her situation, we feel her anguish at leaving Dissocia. Thanks to the contrast, it is both a subtle meditation on the nature of mental illness and desperately, movingly sad.


URL: http://www.guardian.co.uk/stage/2004/sep/03/theatre.edinburghfestival2004
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