

Immortal₀₆

the roof-tops

Written and Directed for NoFitState Circus
by Firenza Guidi

Script: 1st DRAFT

April, 2006

The Company

Barnz	Barnz
Gareth Bailey	William
Jaakko	Jonatan
Lynn Carroll	Vera
Marco Fiera	Marcello
Gustav Lunstrum	Egon
Rhiannon Matthews	Sofia
Kevin McIntosh	Lenny
Howard Morley	Victor
Lyn Routledge	Eilish
Anna Sandreuter	
Kate Thomas	
Sheana Brandel	Maeve
Bryony Black	Gwen
Peter Reynolds	Rudy
Zoe Munn	Lilian
Simon Darling	

The Story of ImMortal

The roof people

Another traveller arrives to join the roof people of the gothic quarters. The roof-people move about like night-raiders through a labyrinth of ladders, TV aerials and orphaned breeze-blocks littering the edge of the roofline. There are millions of these places scattered around the world: caves, ships, abandoned houses, disused churches and ex-slaughterhouses, where people stay a short while after death before moving on to immortality. Like all the other places, the roof-tops are a half-way station between life and death. A temporary home where people have a last chance to live life to the full: to love, laugh or dare; to be sad or angry, to lose or find their innocence, to overcome fear or to straighten up unfinished business while they are gently eased from mortality to immortality. There are many things human beings need to learn before they can embark on that final journey. Firstly, only when they have accepted everything about themselves and their lives, will they be ready to leave behind what they know and love doing: their desires and passions and material things. Then they will need to learn to leave the weight of their body behind: gently though, step by step, little by little, without rushing. Otherwise the process would be too scary and harsh. But above all, they will have to learn to recognise a moment of happiness. Our lives are made of fragments and they say that if you focus on one single moment of happiness in your life, eternity fails to go by. It might be a movement, a smile, a touch, a step in time and in the right direction, a song, a cluster of meaningless words like the drooling of babies in a cot, anything that might give you that unmistakable surge of happiness: a sense of weightlessness and rising up; a wholeness and peace where all the little mechanisms of being connect in one single artefact. What if the moment of happiness comes and passes you by? What if you don't recognize it? One needs training and the roof-tops have their rules. William, the angel in charge, has the hard task of helping human beings wade through all the stuff humanity is made of so that they will be free to concentrate on one thing at a time. They will then be able to recognise that one particular moment of happiness, wholeness, weightlessness, and not let it pass by. Only then will they be able to journey to another life, leaving William to wait for another batch of new arrivals. Set in the future, but deeply rooted in the past, the roof-top is a flight, a fantasy, a leap into the unknown. Or is it just the way the world is? A mish-mash, a slag-heap, an emporium of stuff without a price and sell-by date where we have the very hard task of recognizing our moment of happiness?

FG, April, 2006

PRE-SHOW

PERFORMANCE: a man with a stick is eating an apple on a barber's chair.

LX: Pre-set

SOUND: Pre-show sound montage, accentuated bar voices in the background

AV: The Story text projected onto Marcello's gauze.

Images of the performers' nomad life front-projected on the metal screen during pre-show. (AV loop, about 6 minutes, using footage from caravan day shoot).

INTRODUCTION

Peter introduces the show and its rules and is then flown to the roof-tops.

1. Prologue: a home away from home

LX: night-time, stars, homes.

SOUND: The sound of like mechanisms in a music box. A distant tune appears, beautiful, crisp, clear, like the sound of steadily approaching stars. Pre-recorded text below.

During the pre-recorded text the shadow of a semi-naked man appears in a metal frame. A gauze separates the audience from the man. His body is sculptural, primal, like a guardian at the entrance of the cave. His position at the top of a metal spiral staircase is clear imposing, muscular. He's rocking a small pram with one foot. His gaze lost into the centre of the

tent. Faint shadows of other people moving in the space but we can't quite make out who they are. A couple of crossings, a man lighting a cigarette, a beating of something.

During the speech, his pram is taken off his foot as he begins to roll down the spiral staircase

LX: shadow work for most of the scene.

SOUND: steep fade up at the end of the dialogue

AV: they pick out bits of sentences from the dialogue

THE VOICES OF A MAN AND A YOUNG WOMAN

How did you get here?

We followed the instructions: 'when you get to the end turn right'

Which way is right?

I don't know. We looked round and thought up the hill was right.

Were you alone?

No, it was all of us.

We paraded

We pranced,

We staggered

We reeled

we tied the loose end of a rope to a chimney stack and got onto the rooftops. it's a home away from home.

Did you see me making daisy chains by the headstones?

Yes. But we couldn't call you then. You weren't ready.

Why are we here?

To find or lose your innocence.

To dip into memory or future.

To go back in time to make time

To undo your wrongs and

put your mind at rest.

Here you can breathe, gasp, writhe, gurgle, burp, giggle,

Like a new-born baby, always coming out alive

How long are we here for?

For as long as it takes.

These rooftops have their secrets buried underneath the floor

They're water-tight, kept safe in rusty meat lockers underground.

I know, because I've been here once before.

The gauze is opened and the audience are ushered into the tent. Until this moment the inside of the tent should remain a secret. As the audience go

through, the man has come down and is now working his way back up on the outside of the spiral.

2. 1. The Inhabitants of the slaughterhouse

Figures appear at all levels, in their 'homes', or in transit. Dealing with ordinary life and heavy gravity.

- Miriam on first balcony, gardening*
- A couple canoodling in a corner. A small argument smoulders and dies in the background (Victor and Isobel).*
- Naeve on second balcony cleaning her gun*
- A young woman with a black ribbon in her hair at a spinning wheel.*
- Sofia, is fixing a sewing-machine under the stairs, a working light attached to one of the steps*
- At the very top of a king post, Lilian spinning a wheel*
- Gustav is polishing boots upside down the pole. At the bottom of the pole a couple of water cans.*
- Barnz in bath during pre-show, then makes his way to king post*
- Eilish in mackintosh rocking chair eating an apple by cutting each bite and taking it to his mouth with the knife*
- Oliver lying on tight-rope doing sums*

- Bryony eventually makes her way to see-saw to count stars*

Altair
Spica
Regulus
Vega
Antares
Sirius
Tau Ceti
Rigel
Deneb
Polaris
Mira
Aldebaran

2.2. Crossings:

-Jaakko, enters with hats and suitcases, looks around and makes his way to revolve

-Isobel staggers home after canoodling and arguing with Terence

-Vera crosses on the floor with pram

-Marissa goes to Marcello to canoodle and sell him something from her Jewish wealthy past in exchange of food?

LX: chase.

2.3. William's descent

William is at the top of the dome.

AV: project the following text

It is springtime. Early morning.
Smoke from a cooking fire on the terrazzo.
The pavement on the roof-tops
Is all crinkum-crankum – heaved this way and that
by frost-heaves and roots.
Visitors from the mainland are rare.
The bridges are down.
The tunnels are crushed.
And boats will not come near.
Why? What do they fear?

The figures unfold emerging in and out of darkness. The audience wander through the space and into the middle, discovering both the space and its inhabitants, having time to catch them one by one, to absorb each image and be introduced to each persona.

-From a central point in the dome William rolls down a rope to see who has come and start his daily work. His descent is beautiful and graceful.

-Marcello has started to burn things inside a bucket under the stairs. What is he burning?

2.4. Bryony, Jaakko and Barnz

A noise. Bryony sees Jaakko on bar.

B. Who are you?

J. My name is Jaakko

B. Where do you come from?

J. From the North. The land of frozen lakes, swamps and deadly snakes.

B. William! New arrivals! I need a new key!

She looks at William descending. When William reaches the floor he tells her something in her ear and gives her a new key. The key for Jaakko's room.

Bryony takes the key, while Jaakko's sitting on his suitcases on the revolve, having a pic-nic. She goes to meet him.

B. You have a new home now. This is your key. Come! This way, you'll like it here!

She helps him with his suitcases and takes him to his new home. She Goes back to get violin case while he makes himself at home.

She encounters Barnz and his apple. Bryony takes a bite of the apple. Oliver has been spotted on his bike. Lillian/Somebody. whistles.

LX & Sound snap

AV: OUT

3. The wood-burner

Smon comes in with bike, calling

Bryony is chopping wood by the rocking-chair in her trousers and waist-coat. Lasso round her neck.

My mum and me have a wood-burner each.
I've been in the forest for hours looking for wood
Today I went a bit too far and met other travellers.
They had two caravans and an old horse-drawn gypsy wagon,

two kids and three dogs.
Ah! And a chain saw. Which helped me out no end.
I used to get the bus from school to the Garden centre where we wintered
Then straight into the woods!
Didn't like school. They called me a gypsy and wouldn't let me in
I really liked maths though. Numbers!
Takes out a cigar

I had all sorts of toys - Barbie dolls and action men.
But I've always wanted to be a fireman.
Might still do it.

Lights up the cigar....
Takes two puffs and coughs

Marcello takes his bike and pats him on the back

Bryony gets up on revolve.

MARCELLO

**It's Fatty Harding's brand new chopper
Three gears and a proper gear lever
Ohh, I've always wanted one of these**

*Rides off with his bike picking up different women en route
Miriam, Isobel. Others cross and laughing at the scene*

Bryony laughs and does lasso sequence.

*Simon calls Calvin to help him catch the bike thief.
Lenny flies from static trapeze and strops with his trousers still half way
down his legs trying to catch the thief. Kafuffle on the floor.
Lenny frantically runs to trapeze to put his trousers on.
Oliver's gone.*

4. Simon's Nightmare & Tight-rope crossing

*Electronic music.
Focus on Simon's tight rope.*

SOUND: Pre-recorded sound-montage of all different voices

AV: fairground film

Oliver! There's no more water in the well
Go and fetch some
Olly! The woodburner's out!
My feet are covered in blisters
The tent is blowing away
Olly, stop eating tarmac off the pavement
It's too dark
You're late, Olly-
The milk round
Vera's laughter – all sorts of goods
Don't touch me
Bubbles and bubbles to cover the whole world
I know you're there, stop hiding
I wonder what snow tastes like
Olly get down the roof
Give your mum a kiss
What about auntie Morag
Olly, they've blocked the gate
I'm lost
Close the window
The police are looking for you
They were tougher than me
I know darling, finish your breakfast
Your hands are dirty
I love you, love you, love you, love you Olly
Keep in touch
Keep safe
Keep you chin up! Up!
Keep it up Olly!

He's now nearly reached the end of the line. He drops something

LX & MUSIC CHANGE

5. City of Angels

*Close-to-floor rope choral sequence.
Fugues and scapes upwards but gravity pulls back down.
Ensemble cord-de-lys structure with the black coats.*

**SOUND: CITY OF ANGELS / LIVE
PRE_RECORDED speech.**

(8 ropes)

WILLIAM

Between the ground floor which is the business
and the first floor which is where we live,
there is a cupboard, its opening's covered by a curtain
of multi-coloured plastic strips
Inside, it's full of dark coats
If I put one foot on the banister and brace myself with my other foot
against the opposite wall I can get my hands on the small wooden lip and
haul my self inside. A smooth, flat surface that conceals and displays
The traces of everything ever experienced in the history of the world.
From here I know where every body is in the house,
I can hear them above me, below me
They don't know I'm here
A passage of beings through time and space,
the marks left by fingers,
the scratches left by nails,
the ashes and the charred logs of burned-out matches,
my bones and those of others,
the sound of footsteps disappearing off into the distances
and merging with each other.
The floor is wood painted black, a grain on the surface is a memory,
this depression, the mark left by my curled up body.
I hang in here, like an old coat,
between two orange and brown settee cushions,
a few cans of pop, and a small black and white TV,
which takes six of the largest batteries.
I can easily sleep in here.

6. LYNN's DELIVERY DAY.

Vera enters with her pram full of all sort of merchandise/stuff.
She has something for everybody.

Soap, meat, vegetables, hoops, bottles, hot-water bottles, magazines, a little battery radio. Big kafuffle of passages.
Little parcels flying in different places.
Someone (Egon?) really wants a football and she doesn't have it yet.
Vera woos Egon-boy. Teases him when giving him a silver pan and broom parcel in lieu of his ball. Melody is the last to receive a pair of small baby boots.

As she catches them LX & music changes

7. GUSTAV AND WILLIAM

Gustav is angry. William comes down. Playful. He humours him. Central rope on counterweight.

8. LYNN & CALVIN + UNI CROSSINGS AND BEACH BALLS

Up-beat, playful static trapeze piece with ensemble crossings preparing for swimming suits silks

Bryony crosses with cup and hoola-hooping

I take out the wire thingie that dad uses
To close the bread in the bread bag
I think other dads do that too.
I can taste the plastic and wire as I en courage the peeling process
I find the power mains. Kneeling down I decide which hand to hold the wire. I think left first then later, right.
And see if there is a difference
I move the wire towards the hole in the wall
Something grips me – finger hand arm.
It's all over my body like blood.
Five minutes later- I'm trying the other hand
Fifteen minutes later – trying half peeled wire, holding wire end
Twenty minutes later Trying holding plastic end. Nothing shocks me.
Now I know. It's the plastic that stops the shock!

All laugh and pick up the sentence

I want to feel the electricity running right through me
I could do it for hours!

9. TO THE POOL

Swimming suits silks. Simon in swim suit. Two girls end on dresses on silks

Oh yes.

I want to feel the electricity running right through me

AV: PICK UP THAT LINE

10. BOYS HOOLA & BRYONY's moment of joy

*Bryony comes in swimming suit and hoops going to practice,
The men on the pods are practicing hoops for the Olympics
They really want to learn*

*Bryony, just warming up on revolve having her hand-bag or cup while
hoola-hooping*

*She gets rid of cup or bag and starts her routine proper, other people
hoola hoping on pods.*

*They begin to give her focus and admire her routine which becomes high
focus, develops and ends with throwing all the hoola hoops on her (40?)
When all the hoola hoops collapse, she falls off the revolve in their arms,
they cheer and lift her in the air!*

11. BARNZ: THE PERFECT MOMENT

The men in swimming suits come to rig swinging trapeze.
During the rigging Barnz speaks his text in the same mode as shouting
Instructions.

BARNZ

The wind's really picked up now,
probably gusting force 6 at times. The trick is not to stop
I pull the trapeze wire over and clip into my harness
as I slide my bum over the edge of the boat. Centre board up three
quarters, let off the jib – hit the first wave almost head on. I can see a large
gust coming, whipping the spray off the waves – one foot on the gun whale
– pull hard on the tiller – let off the mainsail. The boat turns hard on the tip

of the wave. Shit! The gust hits before I'm ready – both feet on the edge of the boat – my shoulders in the foam – water trying to suck me back as the sail fills with a loud smack.

It's a perfect moment. Every ounce of strength I have to hold this beautiful sailing machine. My body flat above the waves – going so fast the boat is surfing. If I hit the next wave right, I'll get airborne.

Clear cue for end of rigging.

Eilish sits music changes

12. THE JOURNEY

Swinging trapeze (Eilish). Fast highway footage, It is punctuated by tentative crossings down below. Eilish live with microphone.

The river Ouze has burst its banks
and water's crept into the house
My little world is floating
The floor has lost its cracks, and roughs and
wrinkles
With shoes and baby cups and butter biscuits and a
naked doll
Drifting by the bed
Kazi's asleep, I don't want to wake her
My teeth chatter- I didn't know teeth did that
But instead of dread I feel alive
My body's lost its weight
I feel I'm rising up and up
over the high chair and nana's cupboard
over heads and rooftops and the church's spire
Is this what dying's like?
A steady flight up to the top
Where moonbeams play with gods
And as you're looking down
The world's afloat

I am looking out over the indian ocean. Its saa mojo, the first hour, seven o'clock. The sun sets directly behind me as a big round moon begins to appear on the horizon. She casts a silver path that seems to lead straight to her. I just manage to resist the temptation to walk to her. I have never witnessed a moonrise before, in fact the concept has never even occurred to me. I feel awestruck. It suddenly all makes complete sense. I'm 100miles south of the equator so i can see the

whole sky. The stars rising in front of me and falling behind me.

I want nothing other than to live on these hills and keep goats.

13. INTO THE DORM- CROSSINGS

Music ???

Hoops – Tight-rope – flying accordion – juggling. Isobel and others.
Walking up the tight rope and then routine, this time going towards the dorm.

Accordion and Rudy fly in -harness

Rudy's voice

There is a night not far from a hill
where I once saw a donkey pass from light to shade.
I sleep upstairs in a small room full of stone trophies.
A maid puts me to bed. She has a skirt and an apron on. A very long apron.
I go upstairs, step into the corridor of stones and out into the night.
The darkness pulls my body and soul apart
I run and run til I find the maid in the kitchen.
She boiling me an egg.

14. PREPARING FOR FIGHT CLUB

Huddle: Crossings. Preparing for fight club. Whole company activated.

15. FIGHT CLUB

Massive aerial boxing fight involving the whole company.

16. Gustav defies gravity

Chinese Pole solo with Okolo type song

AV: TEXT

I pick up the large book on animals of the world,
I like drawing the pictures down to the last detail.
Today I shall start the crocodile on page 215.

17. WALTZING ON THE ROOFTOPS

Ensemble waltz with decomposition: still enjoying stomping and using the weight of body and feet. Gwenn twirls and pirouettes in air as she gets rid of all her armours and cages.

End of first half

SECOND HALF

1. PROLOGUE: Pre-show: Isabel's hoop and Voice

Mats pre-set

VERA

Today the stones are a ship.
Today we don't see these factories and these hangars.
Our eyes cut through fuel tanks,
And water-pipes and air ducts and long-armed cranes
the smoke that's eating up the sky,
this toxic dust, this never-ending mud, these layers of soot,
yesterday's rubbish swept on today's -
I know we're standing on a pile of stones
But for us, they've turned into a ship
We've made oars from a piece of wood, a jumper as a sail,
and the grass moves at our feet like a big sea.

Chinese pole people climb up

We play here most days – from Aunty Joan's back-garden
And out into the open field, until we come to our giant stones.
We climb up and up and when we're on top we look for land.
It's our zone of silence over the drilling and the steam hammers
Up here everyone holds their breath
Ready to dive into the seas below.

2. JUMPING AND DIVING

Trampete routine incorporating Chinese pole,
Gustav is absorbed into the cargo net.

LX & Music change

3. DRILLING WEIGHTLESSNESS

The cargo net with bungees

4. WILLIAM'S HEART

William solo rope. He knows that they will not understand unless he shows them his inner heart

5. JAAKKO WITH HARD CORE MUSIC-

Crossings

Juggling fair: Lolo solo piece in the middle picked up live
Then massive juggling luminous balls in the middle of the audience

6. The New White? Black Bride.

Playful and militant.

SOUND: PRE-RECORDED

Naeve

I am in the middle of
a raging sea of people
shouting and chanting all around me. The atmosphere is electric.
The world is turning
Fast. We've all come here to fight
for the same thing, but
Noone is listening.

7. Salsa- Bolero:

Ensemble salsa/bolero with Rough Cloud: Cloud swing as fighting heavy gravity day

8. The brawl – with acrobatics

9. Impossible Tangles

Eilish and William on rope (develop what they prepared for Passion impulse, keeping the sensual feel they had, go to raunchy and return back to sensual)

10. The foot-ball crossing scene.

With short quotations from trampette

11. THE BANQUET

CALVIN's WAKE. Eating the gods: Massive revolve-aerial banquet. Toast song.

Degenerates into

13. Garden of Delights:

Inspired by Bosch's painting, Total ensemble piece. All skills activated, aerial and ground work. Work from the painting. People with funnels and legs, upside down, sunny side up, a strange world populated by any amount of classically weird creatures caught up in the end of the universe.

Baby on stilts stops chaos.

14. William reprise solo

15. Body percussion

16. The Flamma Flamma walk out

The end: walking out of the tent Flamma Flamma walk and back to where William waiting for a new batch.

FG, 2006

