Join us this summer in Chicago for:

“Pasts, Presents, Pedagogies, and Performance:

The Fourth Annual ATHE Performance Studies Focus Group Preconference”

Palmer House Hilton
Chicago, IL

Wednesday, August 2nd

9-10am Registration
10am-12:30pm “Bringing Up Baby: Developing Methodology and Pedagogy in Interdisciplinary Performance Studies Based Research”
12:30-1:30pm Lunch break
1:30-4:30pm Working Group Sessions
4:30-5:30pm Working Group Feedback Loops
6:30pm Joint Reception at Columbia College Auditorium with the Women and Theatre and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Focus Groups
8:00pm Karen Finley presents George and Martha, Glass Curtain Gallery, Columbia College

Thursday, August 3rd

9-10:15am Goat Island Performance Group presents Strategies v. Tactics
10:30am-12:30pm “Interventions and Radical Research: The Legacy

http://www.athe.org/FG/ps Email: ps@athe.org
of Dwight Conquergood”

**Opening Roundtable:**

“Bringing Up Baby: Developing Methodology and Pedagogy in Interdisciplinary Performance Studies Based Research”

Organizer: Elizabeth Patterson, University of Colorado, Boulder
Philip Auslander, Georgia Institute of Technology
Norma Coates, University of Western Ontario
John Jackson, Duke University
Richard Pettengill, Lake Forest College

While the purviews of PSFG working groups are discrete and varied, from ecology to neuroscience and back again, they all have a vested interest in issues of disciplinarity. They are each comprised of folks interested in creating specific hybrid forms:

$$(\text{Performance Studies}) + (X) = (Y)$$

In the case of Music as Performance, the values of $X$ and $Y$ have been successfully revealed over time: (Performance Studies) + (Musicology, Ethnomusicology, Cultural Studies) = (Music as Performance). Under the guidance of working group creator Philip Auslander, Music as Performance (MAP) continues to involve and engage prominent scholars from its partner fields: John Jackson, Norma Coates and Harris Berger are a few of the scholars who have crossed boundaries to find out what Performance Studies can say to music and vice versa. But while the first step in “bringing up baby” is to get people like those just mentioned to the table, the second step is to find ways of working once they arrive.

Using MAP’s progress, successes and stumbling blocks as a case study, this session will consist of two parts. The first will be brief presentations by several key players in Music as Performance. Each speaker will respond to a question relating to methodology and pedagogy specific to Music as Performance. These responses will be followed by a brief roundtable discussion among panelists. The conversation will open to include the work, progress and process of the other PSFG working groups. A moderator will lead the discussion to identify ways in which MAP may or may not serve as a useful model of operation, and to discuss more general issues in methodology and pedagogy.

**Working Groups**

The bulk of the first afternoon is devoted to working groups that address a variety of individual topics in the field with the goal of each creating a presentation to share with the other working groups at the end of the pre-conference. These working groups are designed to be ongoing discussion groups out of which might evolve future anthologies, conference panels, and/or articles. Several of these working groups are continuing from initial meetings in Toronto at the 2004 PSFG preconference and in San Francisco in 2005.

**Music As Performance**

Founding Coordinator: Philip Auslander

The 2006 PFSG Preconference will be an exciting one for the working group in Music as Performance. In addition to our regular working group meeting, we will be fielding the opening panel of the pre-conference, a roundtable focusing on research and pedagogy in the area of music as performance.

It is worth noting that the MAP working group also initiated three panels on the program of the main ATHE conference. These include a session on male singers, one presenting the work of young scholars in the area, and a roundtable discussion of Philip Auslander’s new book *Performing Glam Rock: Gender and Theatricality in Popular Music*, now out from the University of Michigan Press.

MAP will host two distinguished “guest stars” from cognate fields this year, both of whom will participate in many of these events. John Jackson, Jr. is in the department of Anthropology at the Duke University. The author of *Real Black: Adventures in Racial Sincerity* (University of Chicago Press, 2005) and many other publications, he is an urban anthropologist who specializes in race studies and popular culture. Our second visitor is Norma Coates, who teaches popular music and Information and Media Studies at the University of Western Ontario. Her work focuses on the intersections of popular music and media, particularly television, as well as feminist analysis of popular music.

These two “rockstars” will both participate in the opening roundtable and the MAP working group session. As in the past, MAP will circulate reading material to those who sign up for the working group session prior to the conference—that reading material, along with insights gained from the roundtable, will form the basis of our afternoon discussion. John and Norma will each offer an article-length piece for group discussion.

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Join us for a truly stimulating cross-disciplinary discussion of Music As Performance!

**Performance and Ecology**

Co-Coordinates: Wendy Arons and Sarah Standing

Scholars, artists, and activists working on issues/themes/questions/investigations related to performance and ecology are invited to convene at the PS Preconference for the second meeting of this working group. This is an ongoing research group focused on investigating intersections between performance and ecology.

Many people are concerned with such issues as the need for clean water and air, global warming (and mounting climate instability), preserving wilderness, halting species extinction, and investigating current suspect methods of food production. This group explores the myriad of ways in which drama/theatre/performance considers and articulates ideas and practices of ecology. We are interested in the entire range of intersections, for example: plays that address ecological issues directly, eco-activism, theatre where ‘nature’ itself becomes a performative element, as well as performances that instigate new ideologies and produce new meanings around ecology. Conversely, we want to scrutinize the inherent problems or challenges in combining these disciplines.

Specific questions to consider include:
- How do drama/theatre/performance and ecology intersect?
- What language do we use to describe various types of: “eco-drama,” “eco-theatre” and “eco-performance”?
- What constitutes “eco-performance” or “eco-theatre”? Who makes it? Who are its audiences?
- Does it have political, “real world” effects, and if so, how can those be measured?
- Are there differences between eco-activism and eco-performance?
- What might be gained by theorizing eco-activism as performance? What might be lost?
- What can the “field” of performance studies contribute to the conversation on ecology?
- How has the theatre addressed issues of reclamation?
- How is performance/theatre theorizing/furthering a conception of and a dialogue with ecology?

We hope to bring together a wide range of scholars, artists, and activists, including those working in theatre studies, performance studies and ethnography, environmental activists, and theatre artists (playwrights, designers, directors, actors), visual artists and performance artists who create what they define as “eco-performance,” “eco-theatre” or “eco-drama.”

Prospective participants should submit an example of an instance of “eco-performance” or “eco-theatre” for discussion to indicate their commitment and interest in joining the working group.

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Dance Studies
Coordinator: Katherine Mezur

This will be the inaugural meeting of a Dance Studies Working Group within the Performance Studies Focus Group. Our “Dance Studies” Working Group will investigate the discipline of dance, in practice, history, and theory. The Dance Studies Working Group will be interdisciplinary and transnational in scope. While dance has been incorporated into many areas of performance studies, and theories on bodies, corporeality, and embodiment abound in performance studies discourses, its particular disciplinarity opens up different and crucial areas of theory and practice and social/political engagement. While we will consider this special disciplinarity of dance theory and research, we will also engage with an expanded concept of dance in the field of performance studies in areas and discourses such as cultural studies, historiography, corporeality, embodiment, disability and health studies, critical theory, space, architecture studies, new media, and gender and queer studies.

Dance Studies has the potential to intersect with many disciplines because of the centrality of “bodies” in time, space, and context. Dance studies has become a central player in re-prioritizing the arena of performance studies, which investigates and analyzes bodies or bodily circumstances in great detail in their “live” and recorded contexts. Whether focused on concert dance, “dance” in everyday life, choreography in political contexts, ethno-graphic dance-on-film, or dance technology, dance studies can be a vortex for new methods of critical inquiry and innovative research. We will also investigate the “practice as research” model and actively engage practitioners and scholars in our meetings and activities. We would like to go beyond the “reading” of dance and engage with the medium on its own terms, intersecting movement and choreography with critical theory within the act of dancing/dance making.

For this initial meeting, we also hope to meet with dancers and choreographers and scholars in the Chicago area and consider dance studies in this region’s context. We will also consider more generally the place of dance studies in Performance Studies: How does current performance scholarship borrow from dance, making “strange” certain areas of dance practice and research? What theories do dance scholars most use to engage with dance within a performance studies context? Are there invisible canons for research and theory that dance studies needs to address and critique? What limits dance when engaged with performance studies? How do new technologies affect dance studies in performance research and practice?

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The Graduate Center, CUNY was founded in 1963 as the doctorate-granting institution of The City University of New York, the nation’s largest urban university system. Here, 4,000 students and over 1,700 faculty scholars, drawn from throughout the CUNY system and New York City’s leading cultural and scientific institutions, join in the shared enterprises of teaching, learning, researching, and expanding the boundaries of knowledge. The National Research Council’s most recent assessment placed more than a third of the school’s rated doctoral programs among the nation’s top 20.

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Neuroscience, Cognitive Science, and Performance
Coordinator: Rhonda Blair

Over the last two decades there have been significant developments in neuroscience and cognitive science that are requiring us to redefine our sense of the interrelationship among biology, culture, and consciousness; this in turn requires us to reframe our understanding of performance. This group will consider both the possible benefits and pitfalls in using the science to advance our work in performance studies. The gathering this year will continue to consider questions such as the following to provide a framework:

• What do neuroscience and cognitive science have to offer performance studies?
• What are the dangers or limitations?
• How does taking into account that brain structure and function are materially related to the nature of consciousness and experience affect our understanding of the relationship among body, mind, and feeling in the participants in a performance event (performers and spectators)?
• What might this mean in regard to our understanding of intersections of artistic/cultural practice, theory, and science?

In considering how brain structure and function are materially related to the nature of consciousness and self, we can move toward a more concrete sense of how the artist, spectator, and theorist work, and how this might affect our sense of what theatre and performance are. The focus is the neurocognitive ground of memory, feeling, imagery, representation, and self as a way of reengaging the process of performance. I will assign some readings to provide a common starting point for our discussion, and ask that participants provide in advance of the preconference a brief statement of interest, since there are myriad ways of engaging this material.

Performance (and) Ethnography
Coordinator: David Donkor and Mshai Mwangola

Investigation into the relationship between performance and ethnography continues to be central to the disciplinary intersections from which performance studies has emerged in recent intellectual history. Performance ethnography is a conceptual and practical product of this investigation. It is grounded in the notion that:
(a) performance is both the subject and method of ethnographic research
(b) ethnographic research itself constitutes a performance
(c) embodiment/enactment is a significant mode of reporting ethnographic research.

Keeping with this year’s conference theme, “past, present and future” the performance and ethnography working groups will consider questions that include the following:

• What epistemological/pedagogical/ethical/political concerns have occasioned the emergence of performance ethnography?
• What local/global forces and dynamics have helped birth it?
• How, if it can, might performance ethnography be defined?
• How, if at all, does it function as a mode of reporting but also a lens for understanding the processes and products of research?
• What does performance ethnography look like in practice?
• What and how, does it enable or disable the researcher and/or the researched?
• What kinds of knowledge production does it enable or disable?
• What ethical considerations arise from its practice?
• How have its definition/s and practice/s shifted, if at all?
• What implications do/will recent and future frontiers of ethnographic research, (particularly auto-ethnography and electronically sited/mediated) ethnography, have for performance ethnography?
• What (if anything) can performance ethnography offer performance studies and allied disciplines (theatre, anthropology etc) at the verge of these frontiers?
• What other frontiers are likely to (re)define the concept and practice of performance ethnography and what might such (re)definition/s contribute to performance studies and allied disciplines?

In order to create a common foundation for ongoing discussion, the coordinators may assign/request suggested readings before the first meeting of the group and ask for a position statement.

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Thursday Morning
Goat Island Performance Group presents “Strategies vs. Tactics”

4 Members of the Performance Group Goat Island
Chris Mills, New York University
Michael Thomas, Lucky Pierre Performance Collective

Strategies vs. Tactics
In response to the ATHE’s 2006 Conference theme: “Past Legacies, Present Possibilities, Future Strategies” this panel will address the problem of “Strategies vs. Tactics” thinking along lines somewhat like those Michel de Certeau laid out in his book The Practice of Everyday Life

Strategy: a formalized, proper relationship in which a subject can be separated from their environment (xix).
Think: politics, economics, science

Tactic: an ad-hoc, unorganized relationship that is contextualized by the environment (xiv).
Think: everyday practices[p. 38-39] “[…] a tactic is determined by the absence of power just as a strategy is organized by the postulation of power. […] In sum, strategies are actions which, thanks to the establishment of a place of power (the property of a proper), elaborate theoretical places (systems and totalizing discourses) capable of articulating an ensemble of physical places in which forces are distributed. They combine these three types of places and seek to master each by means of the others. They thus privilege spatial relationships. […] Tactics are procedures that gain validity in relation to the pertinence they lend to time—to the circumstances which the precise instant of an intervention transforms into a favorable situation, to the rapidity of the movements that change the organization of a space, to the relations among successive moments in an action, to the possible intersections of durations and heterogeneous rhythms, etc. In this respect, the difference corresponds to two historical options regarding action and security (options that moreover have more to do with constraints than with possibilities): strategies pin their hopes on the resistance that the establishment of a place offers to the erosion of time; tactics on a clever utilization of time, of the opportunities it presents and also of the play that it introduces into the foundations of power.”

The panel will follow an innovative two-part structure in which for part one, each panel member will address, in 500 words or less, the subject, strategies vs. tactics. Part two will consist of the six texts from part one processed through a remix program devised by Judd Morrissey, reducing them to a total word count of 1,000, and gradually increasing the randomization of syntax. Each hit on a site constructed for the purpose generates a new remix, and archives all previous remixes. The panelists will read first their rational texts and then, in part two, move on to the remixed text: an increasingly irrational version in which control over meaning has shifted.

Goat Island is a Chicago-based collaborative performance group. Members are Karen Christopher, Matthew Goughlish, Lin Hixson (director), Mark Jeffery, Bryan Saner, and Lito Walkley. Associate members are Cynthia Ashby, Lucy Baldwin, CJ Mitchell, Judd Morrissey, Margaret Nelson, and Chantal Zakari.

Members contribute to the conception, research, writing, choreography, documentation, and educational demands of the work. Characteristically we attempt to establish a spatial relationship with audiences which may suggest a concept, such as sporting arena or parade ground, or may create a setting for which there is no everyday comparison. We perform a personal vocabulary of movement, both dance-like and pedestrian, that often makes physical demands on the performers, and attention demands on the audience. We incorporate historical and contemporary issues through text and movement. We create visual/spatial images to encapsulate thematic concerns.

Goat Island embraces a democratic, collaborative approach. Performers, director, lighting designer, and company manager all contribute from different strengths when making a performance, a lecture, a film, teaching others, or organizing a tour. The group tries to accept difference rather than pursing sameness, and looks to the imagination and time, taking time—giving time, as places of possibility and knowledge in a rapid and utilitarian world.

Goat Island was founded in 1987 and incorporated in 1989 as a non-profit organization to produce collaborative performance works developed by its members for local, national, and international audiences. Eight completed works include Soldier, Child, Tortured Man (1987); We Got A Date (1989); Can’t Take Johnny to the Funeral (1991); It’s Shifting, Hank (1993); How Dear to Me the Hour When Daylight Dies (1996); The Sea & Poison (1998); It’s an Earthquake in My Heart (2001); and When will the September roses bloom? Last night was only a comedy (2004). The company has toured the US and England, Scotland, Wales, Belgium, Switzerland, Croatia, Germany, and Canada.

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Concluding Panel

Interventions and Radical Research: The Legacy of Dwight Conquergood

Chair: Della Pollock, University of North Carolina
Participants:
Patrick Anderson, University of California, San Diego
Michaela di Leonardo, Northwestern University
David Donkor, Southwest Missouri State University
Derek Goldman, Georgetown University
Judith Hamera, Texas A&M University

Former students and colleagues of the late Dwight Conquergood, chair of Performance Studies at Northwestern University and resident of Chicago, gather to discuss the pioneering work of a landmark performance studies scholar. As Conquergood's legacy stands at the crossroads of the past, present and future of performance studies, participants examine how his work continues to present particular challenges to ethnography, performance, pedagogy, politics, and the field in general.

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