

Certificate of Embarkation

Congratulations! You have witnessed Liz Aggiss channelling herself and other wilful artistes, debating her age and the march of time, whilst unpicking that ongoing female conundrum 'do I please you or do I please myself?'



In revisiting her childhood self, revising her raison d'être, researching the empty space and reflecting on mortality, The English Channel appeared onstage tonight as a conduit for:

Kurt Joos (1901-1979)
and his Dance of Death

Robin Hood and his Merry Men

Claire Waldoff (1884-1957)
and her Brulala

Gertrude Ederle (1905-2003)
the first woman English Channel swimmer

Florence Foster Jenkins (1868-1944)
committing murder in the high C's

Kay Lynn and her fingers dance (1944)

Max Miller's innuendo (1894-1963)

Max Wall (1908-1990) and **Lily Morris** (1882-1952)
eccentric dances

Grotesque Dancer Isi Te Je (circa 1920)

Pat Simmonds Speaking Clock (1920-2005)

Liz Aggiss was born May 1953 in a bleak Essex suburb during post war austerity. Where little children were seen and not heard.

Where deference, respectability, conformity, restraint and authority ruled OK!

Where every move was noted and reported.

Where 'no you can't' was the answer to every question.

Where money was tight, rules were strict and breaking them came at a price.

Where you did what you were told and only spoke when spoken to.

Where groceries were weighed and packed in brown paper bags.

Where Sundays were full of melancholia and silent streets.

Where darning was a life skill and Simplicity and Butterworth spelt style.

Where children learnt cloaks of invisibility.

Where the liberty bodice and a hankie in the pants was normal attire.

Where Mrs Mills party tunes constituted a good time.

Where the air raid siren was tested every week.

Where the iron lung, callipers and club feet were real and not documentaries.

Where women looked old before their time.

Where learning by rote, reciting tables and problems with baths and taps created terror.

Where failing a spelling test was punishable.

Sit up straight! Hands on heads!



Little wonder Liz Aggiss went rusty with tears of fear and potential failure

Where radio was the soundtrack to life.

Where women cooked and men carved.

Where U and Non U mattered, is it sofa or couch? Lounge or sitting room? Napkin or serviette? Dessert or pudding or sweet?

Little wonder when she saw the Dickie Valentine show aged 9 Liz was sick with excitement.

Little wonder Liz Aggiss wanted to run away to the circus..... or just run away.

Little wonder Liz Aggiss wanted to be a dancer in Pans People.

Little wonder she was desperate to do what she damn well pleased.

What took her so long?

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Liz Aggiss was taught Rudolph von Laban's modern educational dance in the UK, studied with Alwin Nikolais, Murray Louis and Hanya Holm at the Dance Theatre Laboratory New York and attended Hanya Holm's intensive programme at Colorado Springs. She took classes from Nancy Hauser in the USA, trained with Hilde Holger in London and did workshops in Eccentric Dance with Barry and Joan Grantham. It is these mature artists and gifted pedagogues who are a constant presence and who laid down the foundations for her thirst for knowledge, hunger to perform and quest for individuality. Liz is proud to report that not one of her inspirational teachers were spring chickens.

Making and performing this work has been a pleasure. The process was informed by, in no particular order:

Children's Favourites radio programme (1953-63)

Family Britain 1951-57, by David Kynaston

Rank Ladies, by Alison Kibler

How to be a woman, by Caitlin Moran

Der Tanz als Kunstwerk, by Frank Thiess

The Dead Kennedys

John Cooper Clarke

Marika Rokk

Ready Steady Go!

Winning a Twist competition in Broadstairs aged 9

Klaus Nomi

Andre Jackowski's drawings and paintings

Ernst Lubisch's **Oyster Princess**

Mel Brooks' **Blazing Saddles**

Kantor's **The Dead Class**

Pictures to Imagine by Greg Daville

The English Channel Team

Written, performed and with costumes by	Liz Aggiss
Original music and sound design	Alan Boorman/wevie
Film camera edit	Joe Murray
Lighting design	Alan Dawson
Voice over	Richard Hawley
Piano	Billy Cowie (Schumann and Purcell)
Cello	Wei-Tsen Lin (on Dido's Lament by Purcell)
Florence Foster Jenkins	Emma Kilbey
Claire Waldoff	Lisa Wolfe
Isi Te Je	Antonia Grove
Programme drawings	Peter Chrisp
Programme design	Kate Saker
Producer	Lisa Wolfe

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Lou Cope, Sue MacLaine and Charlotte Vincent for ongoing interest and critique, Steven Brett for continued discussion, Thomas Kampe for finding obscure German performers who might just tickle Liz's fancy (oooer missus), Joe Murray for contributing in more ways than he could ever know, Kay Lynn for allowing me to channel her Fingers Dance from Salt Lake City Utah, Peggy Shaw for being an inspiring mature performer, Lucy Bradridge for the fingers.

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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



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