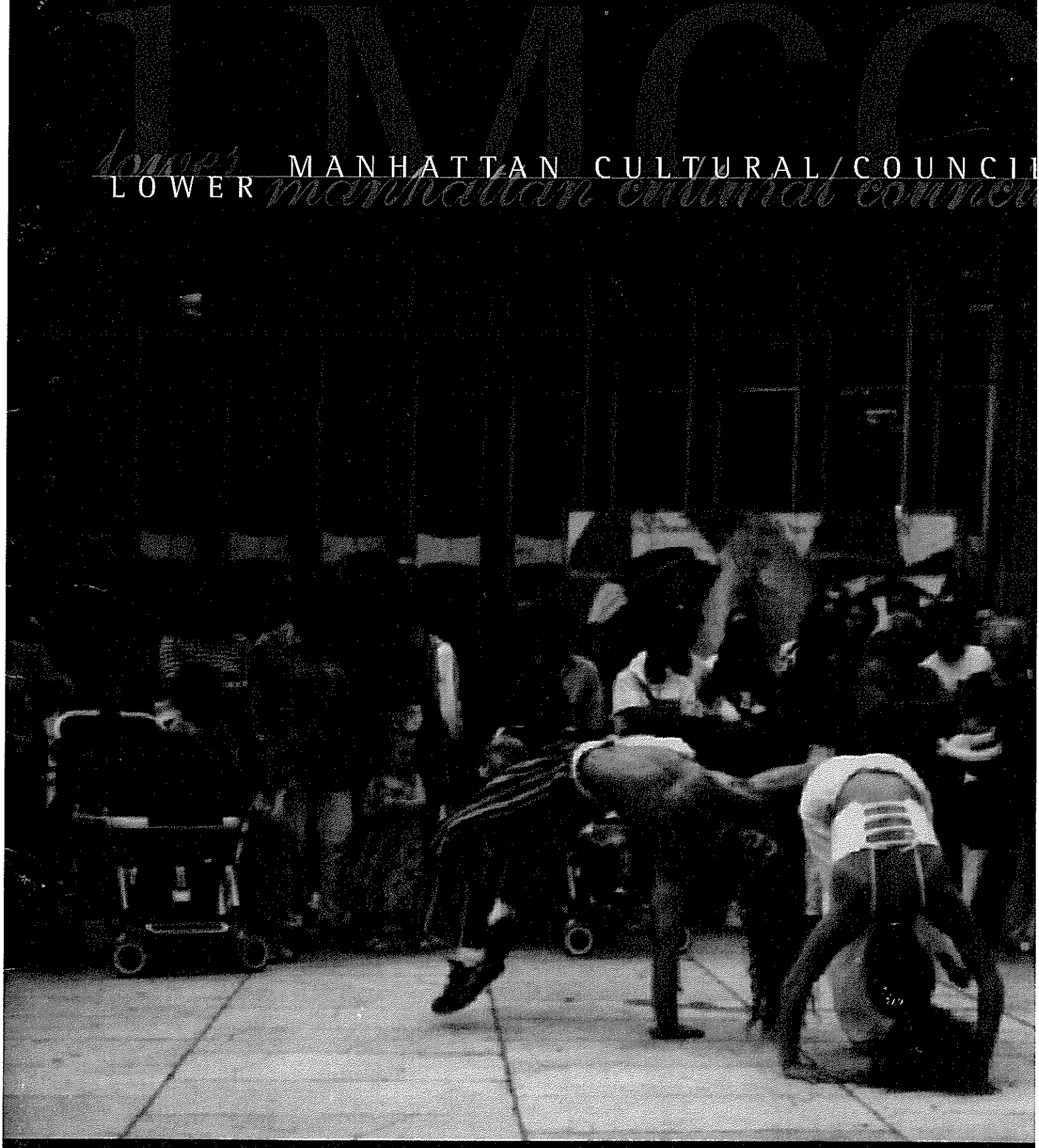
LOWER MANHATTAN CULTURAL COUNCIL



ANNUAL REPORT 1997



Above: From The Errant Space Museum by Pat Oleszko Photo: Jonathan Shlaff Below: Baby Dee Photo: Paul Loughlin

This is the *best show* I've seen since riding the #5 train...

Frank Sorichetti, Morgan Stanley broker quoted in the "Daily News," Sunday, June 15, 1997

Five years marks a milestone, a time of celebration and reflection. The fifth edition of the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's annual Buskers Fare reached that marker and surpassed all expectations. What began as a colorful community "mixer," bringing together downtown's artists, workers, tourists, and residents, has become a signature festival for our unique district. Significantly, the Buskers Fare has evolved into a destination event and a gathering place for international cultural exchange. For five days, from June 10th through 14th, Lower Manhattan's streets, sidewalks, plazas, and parks served as vibrant stages on which talented street "jesters" shared dialogue with the "barons" of Wall Street.

Pre-festival coverage, in such prestigious publications as *Smithsonian Magazine*, led to inquiries from as far away as Chicago, Minneapolis, and the west coast. Closer to home, City and tri-state residents were drawn to Broad Street, Chase Plaza, and other festival sites outside of downtown's better-known cultural attractions.

Originally conceived in collaboration with the Lower Manhattan Marketing Association, the Buskers Fare brings together an unusual mix of contributors, both large and small, to celebrate the idea of "community" as an enriching concept of diversity within the whole. Saluted by the Toyota Comedy Festival for its 5-year history of innovative integration of humor and delight into the often mundane, hustle-bustle of everyday New York urban life, the Buskers Fare counted among its patrons the Alliance for Downtown New York, Bloomberg News Radio, Chase Manhattan Bank, Pace University, the Port Authority of NY & NJ, and Smith Barney. In addition, the festival received international cooperation from the Canadian Consulate General of New York, COPEC/Consorci Catala de Promocio Exterior de la Cultura, Fira de Teatre al Carrer Tarrega, Instituto Cervantes, Manchester International Arts/Streets Ahead, and from various technological networks invited to participate through Thundergulch.

Buskers Fare 1997 featured 50 acts in over 240 performances at 15 sites. Reaching an audience of more than 150,000, the event is the largest of its kind in the United States to bring together the best practitioners of the widely unrecognized variety arts. Needless to say, "double takes" abounded.

The traditional festival which kicked off on the steps of City Hall recorded our milestone birthday as photographer Robert Gilberg shot a panorama of the festival's entire cast with a rare #10 Cirkut Camera. After the 4-minute standstill "pose," a colorful array of street performers marched off to The World Trade Center with high anticipation and hundreds of "high fives." Among the surprises on the 5-acre Austin J. Tobin Plaza, set below the imposing Twin Towers, were such crowd pleasers as Theater Schrikkel from The Netherlands performing "living portraits," Baby Dee from the streets of Soho singing Brechtian ballads atop a 10-foot

BUSKERS FARE 1997

high tricycle, and Flyin' Bob from Saskatoon...he's the "juggling tightrope walker." Opening night at Pace Downtown Theater brought together veteran vaudevillian Mr. Spoons with master magician Peter Samelson and the nouvelle music of Squonk Opera.

Highlights of a fast-paced, interactive week included dance lessons and performance by New York Tango on Chase Plaza, the antics of Vancouver's "The Checkerboard Guy" amidst the yellow cabs on Broad Street, and the wandering sounds of New York's zany a cappella troupe, Whatever 4, at the South Street Seaport. From Manchester, England, the trio of performance architects Rawlinson, Parker, Crowe remounted "Mugger Music," their highly successful one-guide to one-audience member site-specific journey that twists perceptions of the urban environment. Barcelona's Senza Tempo danced with garden hoses in the courtyard of Trinity Church, a douse of Mediterranean sensuality and wit. LMCC's ensemble-in-residence, GAle GAtes et al., staged the first of a five-part, City-wide event entitled "Oh, a Fifty-Year Dart," filling the side streets from Fraunces Tavern to Federal Hall at dusk with otherworldly choreography on lighted platform shoes. Through a special workshop for immigrant artists, co-sponsored with the New York Association for New Americans, the festival reached out to artist constituents who might otherwise be overlooked; for example, India's elder storyteller Indrani and the Russian community based New York Kids Circus.

From the visual arts arena, carnivalesque installations by Pat Oleszko, Erik Sanko, and Thomas Lanigan-Schmidt engaged passersby in several building lobbies. Filmmaker Roberto Guerra documented the works in a short piece created for the video wall at the New York Information Technology Center. The newly founded Haitian band, Loray Asoto, was commissioned to build traditional mardi gras characters, and the second year of LMCC's "Festival & Design" program at the High School of Fashion Industries was capped by student fabricated costumes inspired by the Champagne region of France.

From the comic opera, "Love's Fowl," by the Clothespin Repertory Theater to the graceful Argentinian ritual of Montreal's Pucara to the butoh clowning of San Francisco's Moshe Cohen (the US representative for Clowns Without Borders), the artistry of the Buskers Fare mirrors the extraordinary mosaic that is downtown. In turn, Lower Manhattan has embraced an artform, both timely and timeless, and the universal concepts of festival and marketplace have rejoined to enable growth. We are proud that the Buskers Fare, in its 5th milestone season, is a demonstrative example of the successful collaboration between art and business.



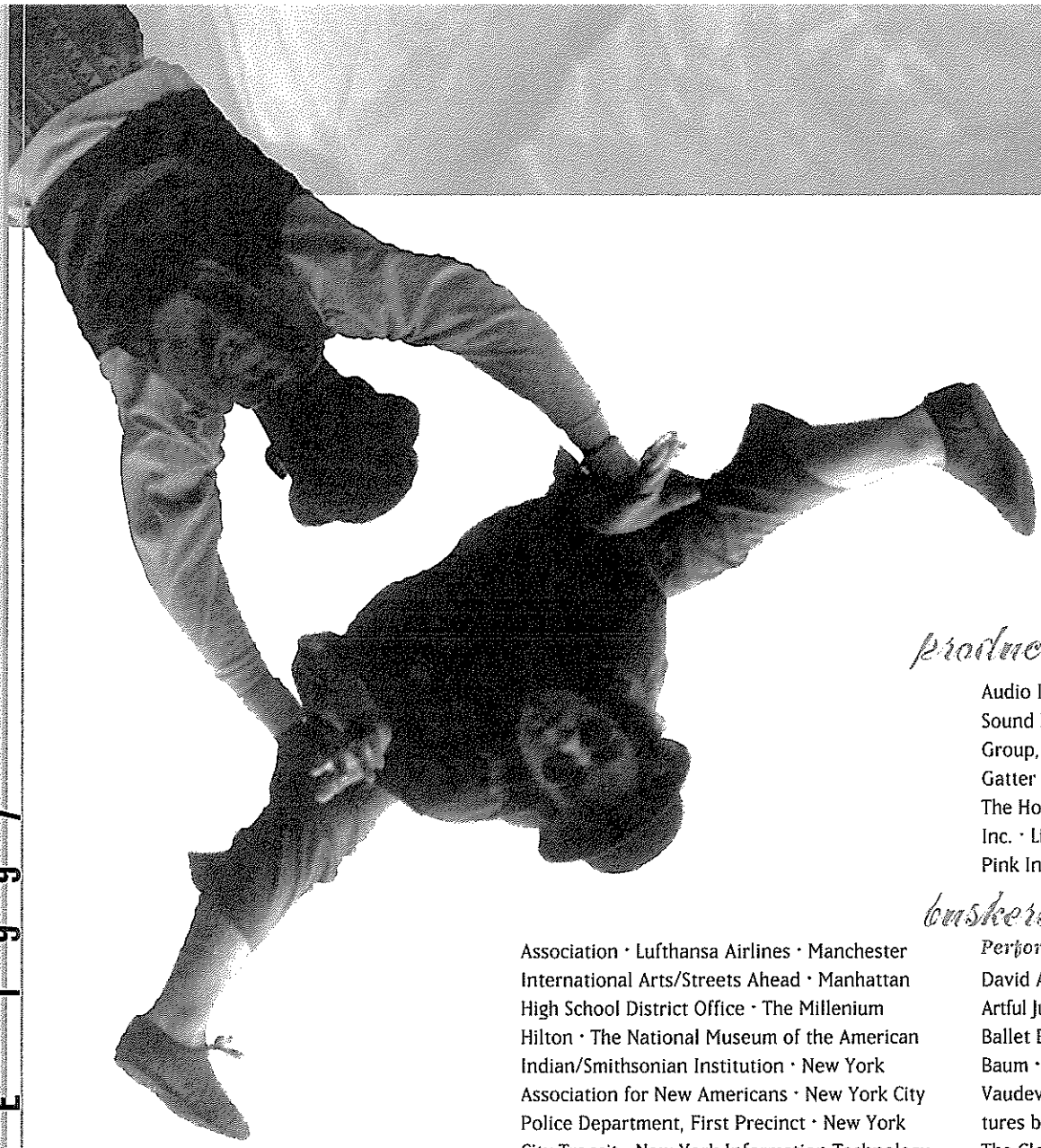
It's not easy to dumbfound a New Yorker. But drop a juggling

tightrope walker

into the middle of the financial district, and you can count on plenty of

double takes...

Smithsonian Magazine, May 1997.



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performance

& Installation Sites

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