

Raspberries & Peaches

How do you signal to the readers of your season brochure that this event is seriously weird? You want to encourage them to take risks but you'd rather not have half the audience stomping out in a huff. Peaches and cream for these copywriters who have been working towards some solutions.

Peaches and Cream...

■ **You can be up front** – this gig from Edinburgh's independent music festival Planet Pop may be harmful to your health...
Only for the true believers ... Huckleberry's blaring Hammond organ, fuzzed-up guitars and heavyweight rhythm section go straight for the heart, blowing your eardrums along the way.

■ **Or, like the Barbican**, you can issue an irresistible challenge to your audience:
Feeling pretty confident about contemporary dance? Know your way around? Bring it on. It's time to leave the comfort zone.

i said i shatters everything you ever thought about dance and dancers. Bizarre, breathtaking and as full-on as you can get: expect to go home and rest afterwards.

■ **You can say very clearly** who you think will be interested – this is a showing of work in progress from the Push 01 Festival:

Enjoy the sublime sounds of music and voice experimentation in the fitting surroundings of St John's Church. A rare chance to see two chamber operas which are still in development. For opera fans and those who are just curious – for one night only.

■ **Or you can deliberately use the jargon** so that only the initiated will understand what you are on about, like Cambridge Drama Centre:

*People Show
Show 110: Second
A live slam installation*

If a heart breaks in the city and no one is there to hear it, does it make a sound? ... An innovative multimedia performance examining the true nature of hidden violence with a raw spontaneous edge and constantly shifting dynamic.

■ **And the Barbican** – this is the copy for DJ Richard.G.Jams PKA Aphex Twin, part of their Elektronic season:
'His classic releases, such as Selected Ambient

Work (1992) and Selected Ambient Works Vol 2 (1994) placed his inventions in sound right alongside the achievements of Stockhausen, Ligeti, Xenakis and Reich'

Mark Prendergast, The Ambient Century

A rare, live, UK performance presents an intimate ambient DJ set in the stunning environment of the Barbican's lush tropical conservatory.

■ **Telling audiences** what a piece of theatre is about when the playwright has abandoned traditional linear narrative is difficult. There's a trend towards stringing together vignettes in a series of short sentences that give a deliberately disjointed feeling, emphasised in the Tricycle's copy for Brixton Stories by the use of paragraph breaks:

A preacher, heckler and soapbox philosopher debate life and religion.

A busker sings the Brixton National anthem, complete with gunshots and police sirens.

Triple-Johni the murderer serves his three life-sentences.

Ossie, our storyteller, tries to cope with the loss of his wife, while his daughter tries to cope with losing her father.

Brixton is the chaotic, enchanting, energetic setting for one man's life.

■ **Asking questions is a useful strategy** in this situation, although I wonder if it is sometimes overused in season brochures. Here's a fun example from Cambridge Drama Centre:

What's that curiously manly girl doing in her long lost brother's clothes? Why is a live skiffle band a-sailing the high seas? And who exactly has been putting the bop in the bop-shu-wop-shu-wop? All these pressing questions and more are answered in Cartoon de Salvo's hilarious and highly visual new show.

■ **Warwick Arts Centre** uses questions to signal an irreverent assault on an old favourite:

Who is the mysterious invalid Mr Bunbury? Is the terrifying Lady Bracknell all she's cracked up to be? What is Miss Prism's awful secret? Why does the name Ernest have such extraordinarily seductive power? It's a tale of scandal, prejudice, lies and deceit. It's Gentlemen Behaving Badly. It's very, very funny and essentially Wilde.

■ **The Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra** use images to signal what the music will be like.

The Mahler programme is accompanied by sunlit trees with spring buds about to burst and the Stravinsky/Panufnik by grotesquely misshapen bushes on a rocky and windswept coastline. Strangely, though, the most contemporary image – abstract sweeps of neon light – appears alongside a concert described as 'a full-blooded Russian evening' of Glinka, Rachmaninov and Tchaikovsky.

Their method of encouraging audiences to try something different is really peachy – this appears in bold at the bottom of the page:
If you enjoy fiery and passionate Russian music, why not try the concert on Wednesday 14 November – three Czech composers show they could write a good tune too! ■



Make jam
for the
AMA

Next issue: the challenge of writing copy for children's shows. E-mail your peaches or raspberries to info@a-m-a.co.uk.