

'Fivephase Meltdown' a Mix of Art Forms, and It's Fun Too

By BARBARA KRASNOFF

"The idea is the analogy between the physical and artistic meltdown," explained Bronwyn Rucker, director and writer of *Fivephase Meltdown*, an experimental theater work of a different sort. "My concept involves the bringing together of different arts and disciplines — the idea is that the various art forms melt together."

Consisting of a five-part performance in which Brooklyn audiences follow the progress of a musical play entitled "The Radon Daughters" from the first script reading to the final piece, "Fivephase Meltdown" involves scenery, music, costumes, and dance.

The first "phase," which was performed Sept. 4 at the Brooklyn Heights Public Library, contained only the actual book of the play. At the second, Sept. 7 at the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music, the music was added; dance was added to the performance at the Dance Loft on Sept. 15, and at the final phase (called Inter-Theatre), Sept. 22 at the Brooklyn YWCA, the scenery took its place. They will all come together in a day-long multi-arts "melticle" at the Atlantic Antic on Sept. 30 in a performance that Rucker calls "Antic Meltdown II.V."

Process of Doing and Creating

"The most important thing," said Rucker, "is the process of doing it and creating it. That's what I would like to share with people. The point of the piece is opening that up. None of the steps are the finished product — it's all part of the process."

Rucker has not always worked in experimental theater. Originally, she says, she would have been quite happy to be a conventional actress. But as many young performers find, the jobs were few and far between.

"I would write and paint so that I wouldn't go crazy," she said. "Then I'd think, well, I still have to get on stage, so I would write for other people. Since I didn't have

other people, I started playing bits myself. I got in the back door as a comedian during a show called 'A Subway Named Desire,' where I was playing Stanley, Stella and Blanche."

"A Subway Named Desire" was highly successful, playing to standing room audiences at The Duplex and Manhattan Punch Line in New York. "The next step was to bring other people into my act. So I got together all these Radon daughters. There was one character, the evolution of Stanley, whom I called Jill Dark the Singing Saint of the Subway, and she was going to have an all-girls rock group."

But even Rucker couldn't handle an entire rock group by herself, and she developed the idea into a play, "The Radon Daughters."

"It's definitely a woman's consciousness sort of thing," she explained. "But it's not restricted to that."

The music for *Meltdown* was written and performed by Rick Russo, an avant-garde composer who describes his work as involving various forms of indeterminacy, with percussion by Matt Donohue, who has worked with John Cage.

"I'm using the idea of the 1960's girl groups to help me through the rough moments, because that lightens it up," said Bronwyn. "It has some very pop songs, at least in comparison to Rick's musical style. So I'm trying to blend both musical styles."

At the Sept. 15 performance, everything was in place except the scenery (and the piano, which was unobtainable at the last minute). The three actresses who play the Radon Daughters — Rucker, Susanna MacAdams and Linda Myers — made their appearance in tunics, tights and belts of red, white and black, and occasionally donned red caps. The musicians were placed on stage, as were the various props to be used in the course of the play.

The theme of the play was immediately established, as

(Continued on Page 16)



Bronwyn Rucker, creator of *Fivephase Meltdown*: once she would have been happy to be a conventional actress.