

# T H E K I T C H E N



*The Kitchen Center for Video • Music • Dance  
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The Kitchen  
presents

## TEXTY THE CLOWN

The Inner Workings of Language  
in the Poet-Modern Ear

October 20th, 1996

Emily XYZ, Myers Bartlett, Virgil Moorefield, Edwin Torres  
with Sean G. Meehan

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*"We don't want a future that is just the present only more of it. We want a future that is our friend, like it used to be in the old days. Just because the present isn't the same as the future of the past is a **REALLY STUPID REASON** to INSIST that the future of today is the future of tomorrow. We want our old future back. We are sick and tired of a future that is just as dumb as the past and present!"*

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Partially funded by The Foundation for Contemporary Arts

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## A WORD ABOUT THE SERIES

In the past few years, a number of mesmerizing writer/performers, devoted to language as both a conveyor of ideas and free-standing aural event, have emerged from the New York spoken word scene. Their particular genius, honed in front of mike stands at poetry bars and performance spaces around the world, is to make words work on every level of sound, sense, and volume.

Texty The Clown reveals what the shoestring readings of the early 90's only hinted at, namely that spoken word is fast becoming a full-fledged art form. These performers take poetry beyond its (grass) roots without forfeiting the DIY freedom, outsider edge, and what-the-heck-is-this-stuff charm that attracted attention in the first place. Texty the Clown illustrates how distinctive voices are now uniting under a common aesthetic: poetry as performance, words as music, sound as sense.

Not surprisingly, Texty The Clown is also a protest against what its organizers see as audience uneasiness with non-commercial experimentation. Having mastered the risky art of making something happen on stage using only words, voices, and attitude, these spoken word artists want to promote greater enthusiasm for the unheard-of on both sides of the stage.

"There seems to be this idea that anything that can't ultimately be sold is not worth making," explains Emily XYZ. "I don't believe artists should produce into a void, but I also don't think commercial viability is the best guiding principle."

"Artistically, things have gotten a little too safe," agrees Edwin Torres, "and I think that neither artists nor audiences want to admit that it's the romantics and eccentrics who are willing to do weird things onstage that may not always "work" who really keep things alive. The participants in Texty The Clown straddle both worlds -- one foot in the real world, one foot in the deep end."

The eight writer/performers appearing in Texty The Clown, include members of New York's REAL LIVE Poetry (formerly the Nuyorican Poets Cafe Live) the world's first and only spoken word touring company; performers featured in the PBS series THE UNITED STATES of Poetry; and recording artists for the spoken word label Mouth Almighty. Many of the readings will incorporate live instrumentalists, taped music and sound, video, film, dry ice, etc.

## BIOGRAPHIES

**Myers Bartlett's** passion to speak the word came early on. She received her BFA in Performance from Boston University, and had gone on to hone her craft in a variety of settings, including theater, film, voiceover work, and of course, the burgeoning spoken-word scene. She is currently represented by ICM for voiceovers where her "honey-and-bourbon" voice can be heard on radio spots for Evian and Pantene. Her theatrical experience blends perfectly with the rhythmic poetics of Emily XYZ, with whom she has enjoyed working since 1992, and she looks forward to many more adventures with XYZ and the other members of REAL LIVE POETRY in the coming years.

**Sean G. Meehan** was born and currently resides in New York City. He plays the drum set and primarily concerns himself with improvisation and music which have degrees of indeterminacy. He has toured the United States, Japan, and Canada as a soloist and in performance with other artists in an ad-hoc fashion. His music can be heard on several record labels and has played in New York at Roulette, the Victory Theater, the New York Film Festival at Lincoln Center, Dance Theater Workshop, Dia Center for the Arts, Saint Marks Church, and other venues. In addition to being a performer he observes *trust*, an operation to print and distribute contemporary composition.

Cuneiform recording artist **Virgil Moorefield's** most recent CD, *Distractions on the Way to the King's Party*, has received international critical acclaim. His ensemble has performed in Europe and the United States, including the Patronaat Festival in Holland and the SOHO Arts and Mixed Messages Festivals in New York. Currently he is pursuing interests in microtonal music and algo-rhythmic composition as a graduate fellow at Princeton University. Next spring, his ensemble will be featured as part of the American Festival of Microtonal Music. Moorefield honed his skills as a drummer working with artists such as composer Glenn Branca, in whose ensemble he has played since 1987.

**Edwin Torres** is a native New Yorker and has been writing since he was just a vowel. He has worked at The Saint Marks Poetry Project curating a reading series, and toured the United States, England, and Sydney, and Sydney, Australia with a poetry collective called "Real Live Poetry" performing and giving workshops all over the alphabet.

Australia with a poetry collective called "Real Live Poetry" performing and giving workshops all over the alphabet. In 1995, he received a one year fellowship from The Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts. Recordings of his work appear on the compilations: *Poemfone's New Word Order* (Tomato Records); and *State of the Union II* (Elliott Sharp), among others. Edwin has two books of poetry available, *I Hear Things People Haven't Really Said* and *Lung Poetry*, and will be included in the upcoming *Verses That Hurt: Pain & Pleasure* from the Poemfone Poets (St. Martins Press). Edwin and Sean have worked together for five years developing an organic language that blends improvisation with structure.

**Emily XYZ** writes and performs works for multiple voices, which she describes as "music without the instruments, where the words do the work of both rhythm and melody." With her reading partner of four years, Myers Bartlett, she has performed in the United States, Europe, Canada, and Australia, and was featured on the PBS series *The United States of Poetry* which aired this year. Her first CD, *Electric Magistrate*, is due in 1997 on Mouth Almighty records. Meanwhile, her poems "Jimmy Page Loves Lori Maddox" and "Sinatra Walks Out" are available (vinyl 45 only!) from Kill Rock records. She is a passionately enthusiastic member of REAL LIVE POETRY, the world's number one and only performance poetry touring company.

#### FOR THE KITCHEN

Guest Curators **EDWIN TORRES AND EMILY XYZ**  
 Production Manager **JOHN RALSTON**  
 Technical Director **INIGO ELIZALDE**  
 Marketing Manager **PHILLIP BAHAR**

#### Performance Schedule for Texty the Clown at The Kitchen

Sunday, Oct. 20, 7PM  
 Sunday, Nov. 24, 7PM  
 Tuesday, Dec. 17, 8PM  
 Sunday, Jan. 26, 7PM

#### THE KITCHEN GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE SUPPORT OF THE FOLLOWING CONTRIBUTORS:

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The Kitchen would like to thank Jennifer Tipton for her gift of the first floor repertory light plot.

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