

Rhum + Clay Theatre Company in association with Pleasance presents

Mistero Buffo

Written by Dario Fo & Franca Rame

Translation Ed Emery

Adapted and additional material by Nicholas Pitt and Julian Spooner

Performed by Julian Spooner

A Rhum + Clay production

Creative Team

Director – Nicholas Pitt

Performer– Julian Spooner

Design – Emily Bates

Music and Sound Design – Jon Ouin

Lighting Design – Geoff Hense

Stage Manager – Lauren Wedgeworth

Photography – Luke Forsythe

Publicity Design – Guy Sanders

With thanks to: The Dario Fo estate, Arts Council England, Matthew Wells, David Byrne, Ellie Simpson, Alex Lui, Sophie Wallis, Helen Matraevers, Gemma Hattersley, Sophie Cullen, Tom Savage, Rebecca Romero, Furat Al-Murani, Jolie C Booth, Greg Cebula, Guy Sanders, Fiona Bradley, Usman Mohammed & Organise HQ

About the show: Mistero Buffo is considered one of the most iconic solo performance pieces and is one of Dario Fo's seminal works. The text is a collection of 13 bible stories inspired by popular forms of traditional European performance and adapted by Fo as a vehicle for his strong political message. When he originally performed this work he would select and tailor any number of the stories to fit his audience and current political moment. We have selected five and created our own frame to match this same tradition.

We are interested in seeing how we could relate the ideas and politics of Fo to our corporate dominated post truth world of today, while investigating the demands his style asks of a solo performer. The suspension of disbelief that one person taking on multiple characters and locations requires, asks questions of both theatrical form and the nature of faith, belief and reality.

We first created this show in 2018 and it has enjoyed sell out runs at the Edinburgh Festival, a transfer to the Arcola Theatre, and toured Europe and Australia. Each time we bring the show back the world has changed and we adapt the show accordingly. We hope you enjoy the show.

Nick & Jules

About Rhum + Clay: Rhum + Clay is led by artistic directors Julian Spooner and Matthew Wells, and was formed in 2010 at Ecole Jacques Lecoq. The work reflects that pedigree: physically ingenious skilful theatre created through a collegiate devising process. The company has created eleven new productions, all of which have toured extensively within the UK and internationally. Rhum + Clay's most notable previous productions are; the clown satire Project Dictator, the critical smash hit The War of the Worlds, both toured extensively on the UK midscale and internationally, the groundbreaking TESTOSTERONE which explored masculinity through the eyes of a transman in a men's changing room and toured extensively internationally with the British Council, and Mistero Buffo which won the prestigious Stage Award for acting excellence. Their next midscale production Technicolor will tour the UK in Spring 2027.

www.rhumandclay.com @rhumandclay @thepleasance

About Nicholas Pitt: Nicholas Pitt is a director specialising in new work with a strong historical, political and performance focus. He is Artistic Director and founder of No Stone Theatre, whose audio drama *Seeds*, starring Nina Sosyana, was released in 2020 as response to the Pandemic to critical acclaim and selected as “podcast picks” by The Sunday Times and The Guardian. *Seeds* was then adapted into an ambitious stage production for a run at The Pleasance main house in 2022. His production of Dario Fo’s seminal work *Mistero Buffo* for Rhum and Clay won the The Stage Award for outstanding performance in 2018. Nicholas has directed numerous productions of new writing and devised work and was resident director at the Birmingham REP from 2014 to 2015, and was associate director for the national tour of their production *Of Mice and Men* in 2016. He was previously creative associate of Idle Motion, where as a performer/devisor and dramaturg he co-created 5 productions. He is currently developing a film project with screen producer Sonya Sier.

www.nicholaspitt.co.uk

About Julian Spooner: Julian Spooner is a multi- award winning actor, director, writer, and co- artistic director of Rhum + Clay Theatre Company. He studied Drama at the University of Bristol before training for two years at Ecole Jacques Lecoq in Paris where he co-founded Rhum + Clay. Most recently he appeared as Ishmael in the Plexus Polaire production of *Moby Dick* (main stage at the Barbican Centre and international tour). Since 2010 he has acted as co-artistic director of the company and has co-created all of their productions. Most notably he co-directed and performed in the clown satire *Project Dictator* & critically acclaimed *The War of the Worlds*, *64 Squares* & directed and performed in the international hit *TESTOSTERONE*. In 2018, Julian made his solo performance debut in Dario Fo’s *Mistero Buffo* in Edinburgh, where he won The Stage Award for acting excellence. He is a long term collaborator with Shon Dale-Jones & Hoilopolloi, with whom he made *The Ladder*, created in Australia and toured the UK. Julian is also a filmmaker, directing numerous music videos and short films. His comedy short film with Tom Savage, *Toby* was selected for film festivals across the globe, winning various awards. He is currently writing and developing another solo show for the stage. His work has been performed in China, Taiwan, Kazakhstan, Europe, Australia, Brazil, Venezuela, Canada & USA.

<https://www.julianspooner.co.uk>



•PLEASANCE•