

Presented by Arts House

Ridiculusmus

The Eradication of Schizophrenia in Western Lapland

Arts House, Meat Market

Wed 12 – Sun 16 November
1hr 30 min, including interval

Post-Show Q&A Thu 13, 9.10pm

artshouse.com.au
ridiculusmus.com

The Eradication of Schizophrenia in Western Lapland has been commissioned by Sick! Festival, Brighton (UK); and is supported by Shoreditch Town Hall, Metal, Stephen Joseph Theatre, and the City of Melbourne through Arts House. Ridiculusmus is supported by Arts Council England and Wellcome Trust.

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Artistic Credits

Written by: **David Woods & Jon Haynes**

Performers: **Ben Grant, Nicola Gunn,**

Jon Haynes, David Woods

Set Designer: **George Tomlinson**

Lighting: **Mischa Twitchin**

Sound: **Salvador Garza**

Executive Producer (UK): **Jane McMorrow**

Producer (Australia): **Erin Milne**

Associate Producer, Productions (UK):

Jake Orr

Associate Producer, Learning and

Engagement (UK): **Natalie Clarke**

Associate Production Manager (UK):

Suzy Somerville

Script & Performance Collaborators:

John Burns, Louise Bush, Meredith Davies,

Nicky Harley, Rupert Jones, James King,

Ranjit Krishnamma, Brian Lipson, Persis

Jade Maravala, Sally Marie, Dominic McHale,

Valentina Muhr, Marnie Nash, Cindy Oswin,

Patrizia Paolini, Minsun Park, Lisa Rammidge,

Richard Talbot

Medical Advisory Panel: **Charlotte Burck,**

Neil Cole, Graham Music, Jaakko Seikkula,

Ben Sessa, Suresh Sundram

Artistic Notes

In **The Eradication of Schizophrenia in**

Western Lapland we are attempting a technical

feat beyond our experience and knowledge:

a simultaneous performance of two plays

involving the same set of characters in two

different times; with dialogue that intersects

and occasionally intertwines in a complex but

decodable way. It is a form that seems to us

an appropriate vehicle for the material we are

investigating; and one that conjures, as best

we can, the experience of auditory hallucination

and the disarmingly ordinary chaos of

psychosis. Our aim is to de-stigmatise and

normalise psychosis, and ultimately to engage

you in a quiet revolution in social interaction.

The play is informed by (but is by no means

a demonstration of) a way of working known

as 'Open Dialogue'; which emerged in Finnish

Western Lapland over a 20-year period and

has since practically eradicated schizophrenia

from that region. It uses a 'dialogical' approach

to therapy inspired by the Russian literary

philosopher, Mikhail Bakhtin; its guiding

principles include tolerating uncertainty and

allowing a polyphony of voices in the treatment

process. As part of our research in Finland, our

characters took part in a series of treatment

meetings and on every occasion we were

overwhelmed with the emotional intensity

of the work. We returned home glowing with

the power of possibility. We wanted the play

to struggle with this knowledge – that such a

successful approach exists but is not yet within

reach of the UK health system.

For more information on Open Dialogue please

see the website:

www.opendialogueapproach.co.uk

David Woods & Jon Haynes

About Ridiculusmus

Ridiculusmus's origins are in the shadowlands of theatre and comedy. The company began as a rabble of graduates from the Poor School in London, adapting comic novels for the London fringe; and has evolved over the last quarter-century into a robust double act. Driving and leading as author-actors, the company's co-artistic directors David Woods and Jon Haynes have established Ridiculusmus as a flagship UK performance group touring nationally and internationally, with works passionately wrought from minimal resources, and with an oxymoronic aim: to be both serious and funny.

The company was founded in 1992, when David Woods and Jon Haynes, together with fellow student Angus Barr, started busking comic songs from the music hall era on the London underground. They ventured into comedy clubs, then started their own Dadaist version called 'The Tomato Club'. The audience was given tomatoes to throw at acts who considered themselves 'bad enough to appear'.

Kicked out in a river of fetid tomato seeds, the three newly graduated performers thought they could avoid the unimaginative boxing of the commercial theatre scene by making their own work; specifically, 'something or anything' for the Canal Café Theatre, which had had a show cancelled and was looking for a last minute fill-in. Boldly, David suggested doing *Three Men in a Boat* with a smattering of their comic songs. In one week the 'something' was duly delivered and the theatre company was born. It was christened 'Ridiculusmus' after a line from one of Horace's epistles:

'Parturient montes nascetur ridiculus mus'
(‘Mountains heave in childbirth and a silly little mouse is born’) – Horace, *Ars Poetica*, Ep.11.3, p. 139)

Three exciting and turbulent years ensued, during which the company toured its two Flann O'Brien adaptations – *The Third Policeman* and *At Swim Two Birds* – to an expanding network of mostly unconventional venues. Now down to just David Woods and Jon Haynes, Ridiculusmus established a base in The Playhouse in Derry/Londonderry, unencumbered by artistic policy, funding or a sustainable working method.

It took another five years of living out of boxes in the company's office to reach the point where Ridiculusmus was able and confident enough to make its own work and articulating its methods – which they called 'ARSEFLOP', standing for Attitude, Reality, Sensitivity, Edge, Focus, Listen, Open (your heart) and Play.

By 2000 Ridiculusmus had a body of original works – *Say Nothing*, *The Exhibitionists* and *Yes Yes Yes* – that was touring internationally from a new base at London's Battersea Arts Centre. Revenue status with the Arts Council of England, superlative producing and administrative collaborators followed.

Ridiculusmus proudly continues its efforts to make work driven by the company's passions of the moment, with a flowing pool of like-minded collaborators.

Thank You

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Arts House

Arts House presents contemporary arts in programs encompassing performance, exhibitions, live art, residencies and other activities that nurture, support and stimulate cultural engagement. We value work in which artists at different stages of their careers, as well as our diverse audiences and communities, are actively involved in creating an imaginative, just and environmentally sustainable global society.

Arts House's programs include two curated public seasons of multidisciplinary work each year. Approximately half of this work is selected through an Expression of Interest process. We seek artists who are responding to the urgent issues of our time in imaginative and surprising ways, taking artistic risks and offering multiple ways for audiences to engage with or co-author their work.

For more information, please contact us on the details below.

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