

HOIPOLLOI

We are committed to creating new work for theatre that imaginatively engages our audience and makes them laugh. It is these two things, imagination and laughter, that drives us. Since 1994, when the company was formed by Shôn Dale-Jones (Artistic Director) and Stefanie Müller (Associate Director), we have toured 15 new shows nationally and internationally.

Our theatre involves the creation of strong stage worlds that are unbound by the confines of reality. Our work is celebratory, colourful, and gleeful, full of physical energy and visual excitement. Most importantly, it is always our aim to appeal to a wide range of people - to entertain them as well as to playfully challenge their sense of reality.

Hoipolloi has received 3 Total Theatre Award nominations (for My Uncle Arly, Floating and Story of a Rabbit); a nomination for Best Actor from The Stage Awards, as well as winning a Total Theatre Award for Floating (2006) and a Scotsman Fringe First award for Story of a Rabbit (2007).

Hoipolloi is now one of the leading award-winning, critically-acclaimed British companies, both nationally and internationally, making innovative new theatre. In 2009, our work will be seen around the world including London's Barbican Centre, the National Museum of Singapore, the Spoleto Festival, UCLA Los Angeles and Sydney Opera House.

For the latest tour dates, videos and exclusive backstage news, please visit our website www.hoipolloi.org.uk

ARTS HOUSE

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Arts House develops, produces and presents dynamic cultural experiences, which enable people to make meaningful connections on a local, national and international level. Each year Arts House presents a curated program of contemporary art featuring performances, exhibitions, live art, installations and cultural events, which are programmed to inspire dynamic community engagement.

Australia is home to the oldest living culture on earth. Respect and engagement with this ancient culture and its contemporary lineage continues to make a unique contribution to creativity in this place and inspire our collective consciousness and understanding. The presenters acknowledge and respect the customs and traditions of Indigenous Australians and their special relationship with the land. The artists and organisers respectfully acknowledge that this program takes place on the land of the traditional owners of the Kulin Nation.

Arts House is a City of Melbourne contemporary arts initiative. Arts House has made every effort to offer wheelchair and limited mobility access throughout the program. Please contact Arts House on 03 9322 3719 for further information.



Hoipolloi in association with
Hugh Hughes Productions

FLOATING

Arts House, North Melbourne Town Hall
Wednesday 18 – Sunday 22 March 2009

The comic and beautiful tale of the island that floated away

Arts House is proudly supported by:



innocent bystander
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HEALESVILLE - YARRA VALLEY

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HOTEL

ARTS HOUSE





AN INTERVIEW WITH HUGH HUGHES

Where did the idea for Floating come from?

Well I've always been interested by the way the places we grow up effect us all through our lives, and the way we carry bits of our past round everywhere we go. And I'd had this experience, when the island of Anglesey floated away from the mainland of Wales in 1982, and I felt like I wanted to share that experience with people, in the hope that they would be able to connect with it or understand it somehow in the context of their own lives.

And although I'd never been involved in theatre before, I'd met a man who is now a great friend of mine, called Shôn Dale-Jones, and Shôn runs the theatre company Hoipolloi. And as Shôn and I got to know each other, we became interested in the idea of working together, and in the end, when we were making the show, Shôn helped out a lot with directing it, and of course Hoipolloi were absolutely wonderful, helping out with all the marketing and producing side of things.

At the start of Floating there is a quote on screen about lies becoming truth if they are told often enough 'Our imaginations and our dreams are forever invading our memories and since we are apt in believing in the reality of our fantasies, we end up transforming our lies into truths.' Luis Buñuel

.... Can you talk about that quote in the context of the show and ideas you are exploring?

Well Luis Buñuel is one of my favourite artists and I'm very interested in the idea of memory and of truth and of imagination, and the relationships between all those things. And I suppose I admire Buñuel because, like myself, he doesn't seem to mind too much what exactly the difference between those three things is. He accepts that all three overlap and influence each other, and I just thought that the audience might enjoy it if I shared that idea with them, because I think it can be very liberating.

In Floating you have a very direct relationship with the audience and you also manage to create a strong sense of connection amongst audience members – can you talk about the importance of 'connection' to your work?

When I make a theatre show, I suppose all I'm trying to do really is to share my experiences. And I think that the best way to do that is to be as straightforward as possible, and to start by making everyone feel as comfortable as possible, and make sure everyone knows what's going on, a bit like when you host a party, in the hope that if everyone is happy and comfortable and in the right frame of mind, they'll really understand where you're coming from and enjoy what you have to share with them.

I've always loved making new friends and I'm always so grateful that people want to come and see my shows that I think it would be a little bit rude for me not to acknowledge them and say 'Hello' and 'Thanks for coming!'

And anyway, I firmly believe that above all, we're all human beings, and we should listen to one another and be open and receptive to one another as much as possible. And I hope that my shows make that a little bit easier by encouraging people to make connections, with me and with the other people in the audience.

Can you describe your creative process for Floating?

Well I'd never made a theatre show before, so the creative process behind Floating was an absolute adventure! I don't think I've ever had so much fun before! I was working with my friend Sioned and we basically just looked for different ways to tell the story, with Sioned jumping in and playing characters, which she's really good at. And our friend Esther making suggestions about set or costumes or slides or pieces of film. And Shôn helping to direct, of course. And eventually we just found our own way of telling the story. I suppose Floating is a bit different from some other theatre shows but that wasn't really our intention, that just happened to be the way of telling the story that made most sense for us.

INTRODUCTION

'I am very grateful to Hoipolloi for this opportunity to explore live performance as a way of sharing some of my experiences. Before meeting the company I had worked mainly in Wales with photography and film and had developed a way of presenting my work using powerpoint presentation and overhead projection.

I created Floating in 2005, with the help of Hoipolloi and my long-time friend and collaborator, Sioned Rowlands. Together we developed a way of bringing my experiences to life by merging recorded medium with theatre performance and storytelling.

Since then I have created a second theatre production, Story of a Rabbit, and toured both shows to locations as diverse as Colombia, Russia, Finland and the USA, as well as performing all over Britain.

I feel as passionate as ever about connecting with audiences and I am delighted to be given the chance to share my work in Australia.

I hope you enjoy the show and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you very much for coming.'

Hugh Hughes

CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

Created and performed by
Hugh Hughes and Sioned Rowlands

Artistic Associates for Floating
Alex Byrne, Shôn Dale-Jones, Stefanie Müller, Guy Myhill and Jill Norman

Production Manager: Tom Cotterill

For Hoipolloi:
Artistic Director: Shôn Dale-Jones
Associate Director: Stefanie Müller
Administrative Director: Louise Coles
Marketing & Touring Manager: Simon Bedford
Finance Officer: Sylvia O'Dell
Marketing & Admin Assistant: David Ralfe

Production photography: John Baucher