

Dean Gibbons and the Knowledge of Death

By Inconvenient Spoof



Devised and performed by: Silvia Mercuriali (rotozaza) and Matt Rudkin

Direction: Zoe Bywater and David Woods

Sound Design: Tommaso Perego

Video Animation: Simon Wilkinson

Produced by ArtsAgenda

‘A superb display of physical comedy’

Gillian Fisher musicOMH

‘Witty and Touching’

Andrzej Lukowsky Time Out

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1. The Company

Inconvenient Spoof is a new collaboration between Silvia Mercuriali and Matt Rudkin that combines their previous experience in physical theatre, live art, street theatre and puppetry to create lyrical, visual theatre infused with experimental inclinations and a playful *joie de vivre*. They aim to make work that is intelligent, provocative and entertaining with a broad, inclusive appeal. They follow a devising process equally informed by text, improvisation, imagery and research to produce narrative-driven, mixed-media performance with a rich vein of humour. Inconvenient Spoof believes in theatre as a means to promote *communitas*, in which individual status concerns are dissolved in the pleasure of shared collective experience.

2. The show

Based on the claims of evolutionary psychology, and set amidst the twin threats of Peak Oil and Climate Change this darkly comic show combines performance-lecture, physical theatre and a range of puppet styles in a provocative work of social-science-fiction.

A large gauze suspended mid-stage is used to overlay animated films onto live action and puppetry, creating a cartoon style other world behind. The lecture format in front, which uses the gauze to display illustrative graphs, allows a direct dialogue with the audience.

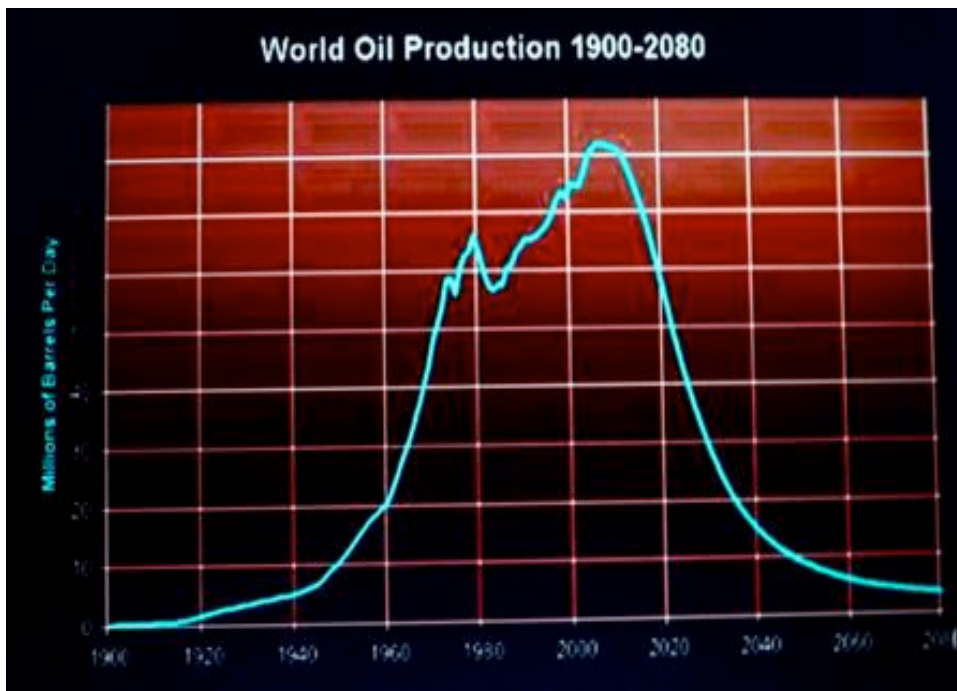
The story imagines that a powerful elite is planning to drastically reduce the human population in order to avert the social collapse likely to ensue beyond the point of 'peak oil production'. Meanwhile a Japanese research team combines genetic modification and nanotechnology to engineer the creation of a super-intelligent new ape - The Giant Mountain Bonobo.

3. Themes

The show draws on research from the following fields:

Evolutionary Psychology: this comparatively new understanding of human motivation claims that our common psychological traits are evolved adaptations resulting from the processes of natural and sexual selection. It suggests that since biological evolution is a far slower process than cultural and technological change, we retain the drives and desires adapted to a hunter-gatherer society we have long-since left behind. As a result, in many ways we are psychologically ill-suited to the modern social environments we have created.

Peak Oil: Since almost all scientists hold the view that oil is a finite resource produced during a particular period of earth's history, it is generally accepted that it will eventually run out.



In 1953 K.M. Hubbert discovered that production from all oil fields follows a bell curve – increasing to a peak and then entering irreversible decline. 'Peak' oil theory predicts that since the economies of all industrialised nations are based on oil use, when global oil production peaks we are in for a very bumpy ride.

Hubbert correctly predicted that U.S. oil fields would peak in 1970, and that the global peak would occur in 2000. Many scientists believe it is very close at hand, if it has not already occurred.

The Technological Singularity:

The chief exponent of this theory is scientist and inventor, Ray Kurzweil. Through plotting the major technological developments throughout human history, he identifies a consistent rate of acceleration and predicts that Artificial Intelligence (or technologically enhanced trans-human intelligence) will exceed human intelligence in the near future. Beyond this point (the Singularity) technological evolution will not be constrained by the limitations of human intelligence, since this new intelligence will subsequently improve upon itself in a rapid succession of future generations.

4. Touring info

Running Time: 60 mins

Get in time: 5 hours

Venue size: small scale theatre

Company size: 2 performers and 1 technician on the road

Touring period: all year around

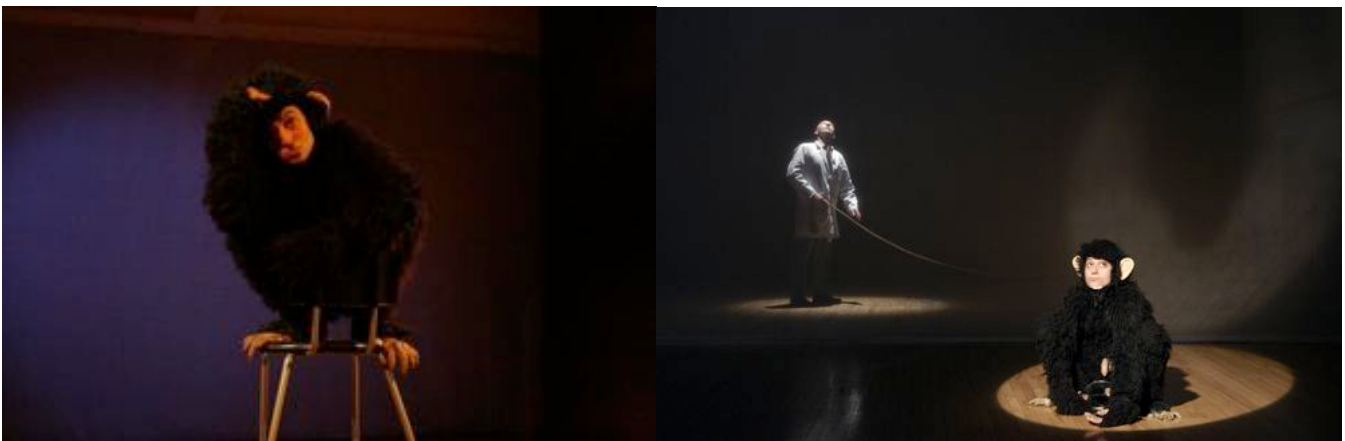
Language: English (some sub-titles possible)

5. Images and Audience feedback



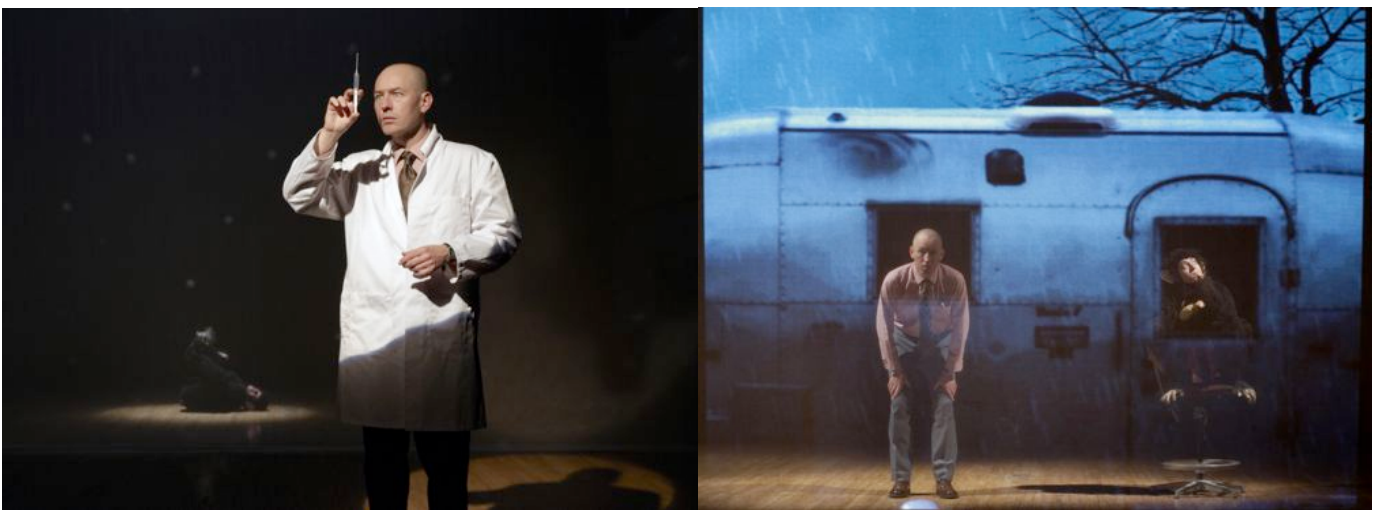
"...simply one of the funniest shows I've seen in ages. Consummately made - integrating video, puppets and a monkey suit - the show entertains, informs and charms in a way few other can or will. Innovative, entertaining and accessible - if only more contemporary performance were like this."

Matt Ball, Director Camden People's Theatre



'A completely innovative and disarmingly hilarious approach to hugely important themes of our times'

Rick Conte, Puppet State Theatre, Edinburgh



"I came away from the show feeling incredibly entertained but also like I'd had my brain stretched by the show's important themes... The video projection and use of space worked fabulously. I was genuinely impressed, inspired and in awe of the whole production. Wow!"

Martha Brown, Brighton

6. Wrap around activities

The company members can also offer a range of workshops from Puppetry to Site-specific theatre.

Improvisation & Play for the performer/deviser (3 - 6 hours: 8 - 26 people): We lead participants through a devising process involving improvisation with found elements and objects. We begin with warm-ups and games to create the conditions most conducive to 'play', followed a series of exercises that generate material to be gradually coaxed towards the creation of structured performances.

Puppetry - construction and animation (3 hours - 3 days: 8 - 16 people): An introduction to different styles and techniques, including bunraku, glove, rod and marionette. We demonstrate the use of appropriate materials, tools and techniques for construction. The introduction to manipulation begins with the animation of found objects, and lip-synch for simple sock puppets, moving on to more complex styles. Exercises explore the range and expressivity of the voice and the projection of character into object to create the illusion of life!

Story making (3 - 6 hours: 8 - 20 people): Beginning with an introduction to classic models of narrative structure and discussion of examples from popular and classic fiction, we move on practical exercises that generate stories. Using personal anecdotes, newspaper articles, and role-play, the exercises combine written work, improvisation and the use of found objects to provide impetus for story making. We then move on to consider adaptation to different media and the telling of the story. This workshop can be effectively combined with puppetry without need for much additional materials or making skills.

Site-Specific work (4 hrs - 3 days: 9 - 21 people): This workshop is designed to explore the use of public spaces as a theatrical set, where the action of the performance transforms or complements the audience's perception of that public space. In this instance, performance may be the presence of a performer, a soundtrack, a text, a sense of narrative, an object or other possibilities to be discovered during the course of the workshop.

7. Contact details



For booking please contact **Lucy Moore**
at lucy@artsagenda.co.uk

For more information about the company or the workshops please contact
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