

# KICKMOUSE MYSTERIUM

BUSTER KEATON meets KUNG FU PANDA meets HEATH ROBINSON

A new, unspoken, comedy fable about challenges, perseverance & achievement  
for children & their grown ups



## SYNOPSIS

Jon is an eccentric daydreamer and student of the mystical, powerful and masterful Frank the Dog. In an over excited attempt to recreate one of his sensei's magical feats Jon breaks a precious artifact. Frank and the mysterious stranger, Cyprian Londt, set him a series of bizarre yet playful challenges, if successful Jon will acquire the status of 'master', repair the artifact and redeem himself.

Throughout his journey, Jon encounters a magical cube of wonders, chi-powered light bulbs of illumination, a chain reaction contraption of enlightenment and Kickmouse, the show's iconic, mischievous, rabbit sprite. Upon success in each trial, Jon acquires an item of heroic clothing and a skill required to complete the ultimate zen obstacle course and his quest. Along the way there are set-backs, twists, turns and unexpected encounters in a funny, surreal and surprising story.

# KICKMOUSE MYSTERIUM

a theatre show

## THEMES

Aimed at children aged 3+ the show explores the process of mastering one's body; acquiring physical coordination and confidence through practice and repetition. The main character fantasises about being a 'master' with physical, magical & mystical powers... Early in the show his uncoordinated dancing leads to a calamity and him suffering public humiliation.

The show references that stage of childhood when self-consciousness begins to curtail our unabashed enthusiasm as we realise the gulf between where we are and where we want to be. Jon is embarrassed and despondent because of his shocking setback, but he is forced into returning to action by his sensei and trainer, he gradually develops resilience and mastery by learning to approach life's challenges through a series of games.

The show's eclectic inspiration comes from many cultures, practices and beliefs; the story suggests the benefits of showing faith in the wisdom of guides, even when they seem to be working in very mysterious ways. Key ideas of the show are:

1. practice makes permanent, perfect practice makes perfect
2. success and failure are both essential for learning.
3. play as an essential part of learning although a game isn't fun if it's too easy
4. An objective and a destination provide the opportunity for an exhilarating journey.
5. diversity and difference are strengths and to be celebrated
6. the joy of physicality and a physical world as opposed to a digital one.

## STYLE

Set in a 'home-made' world full of cardboard contraptions, illusions and mystifying objects, this speechless show uses physical and visual comedy to tell the story of Jon's journey. The central character is based on the deadpan stage persona that Jon Hicks has honed over many years of street, cabaret and theatre performances, and the props are also very much in keeping with his inventive, 'DIY' aesthetic. The difference between this and much of Jon's earlier work is that it applies this style to deliver a clear narrative, intended specifically for children and very much inspired by his own 9 years of fatherhood.

Whilst hoping to positively inspire children through the hero's 'life lessons' (described above), the show retains a sense of mystery and wonder similar to *Alice in Wonderland* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. In part this will be achieved through the soundtrack, featuring collaged layers of sound effects and music, and also the fact that the show is speechless and therefore much is left literally unexplained. Purposefully leaving elements that are odd, eccentric and inexplicable reflects the childhood sense of wonder and weirdness which the world inspires in children. Like the *Magic Roundabout*, the *Clangers*, *Mr Ben* or *In the Night Garden*.

## ARTISTIC PROCESS

An initial research and development period was supported by ACE, Deda, Mycenae House, SeaChange Arts and Brooklands School. Jon Hicks worked with Matt Rudkin to develop the idea, and then with Petra Massey directing a 30 minute show also featuring Gareth Jones. The piece was shown at two primary schools to children aged 4 to 11

***“A show that spans age groups and entertains all!***

***Comedy at its best and highly recommended.***

***Definitely a show with a lasting impression!”***

Carole Hornsby, Head Teacher - Brooklands Primary School



## DEVELOPMENT

The aim is to produce a show that, after initial previews, will be financially self-supporting. Touring with just 2 performers. Sound & lighting technically simple for in house technicians

2019 ACE funding application

2020 April/May – rehearsals and final production

May/June/July - Previews and short funded tour

Autumn/winter - Full Tour

## CREATIVE TEAM

- Jon Hicks - WRITER, PROP DESIGNER/MAKER & PERFORMER



Since 2000 Hicks has been enthraling audiences with his repertoire of curious performances and artistic oddities. With a Fine Art degree (1980s) and a background as a scenic artist and prop maker in the 1990s, his work maintains an anchor in visual awareness and the joy of making. Initially a speed painting act Jon has diversified and his interest in 'clowning' was heightened through training at *Circus Space* in 2007/08.

He now performs in theatres, at street and arts festivals, in cabarets, on TV and for corporate events. Solo, in collaborations and as a member of the award winning variety troupe *Slightly Fat Features*.

Hicks established partnership *HaywoodHix* in 2013 and tours with their chain reaction outdoors show *Works*.

In collaboration with artist and filmmaker Ged Bryan, as *Here and Gone*, he creates unusual, temporary, outsized artworks (their sand drawings on beaches and their unusual collages are featured in national press and online).

He has a world record-breaking, comedy, magic double act *Ultracadabra*.

His theatre show, *Curioddity*, created in 2013, has toured the UK, including a tour with *Crying Out Loud* produced *Circus Mayhem*.

In 2017 he became one of the core team of *Blake's Circus* along with Gavin Marshall, Peter Coyte, Alex Rigg and Sarah Jean Couzens. A project at R&D stage, after residency with *No Fit State Circus*, the aim is for a large scale touring Circus.

He took a solo show *Kickmouse* to the Edinburgh Free Fringe in 2018.

He toured with cabaret legend *Miss Behave* in *The Crack* and has been a guest act with Olivier Award winning show *La Soiree*.

His solo street show, *The International Man of Artistry*, with the upside down Elvis finale still appears at festivals around the world.

Hicks works across many platforms and sees himself allied with variety acts, speciality acts & clowns such as Miss Behave, Paul Morocco, Paul Currie, Dr Brown, Fraser Hooper...

Esoteric in some ways but also populist.

[www.thejonhicks.com](http://www.thejonhicks.com)

- Matt Rudkin - DRAMATURGE & PERFORMER



Rudkin has a 1st class BA (Hons) in Creative Arts & MA in Performance Studies and he also trained at *Philippe Gaullier* and at *The Actors Space* (Spain). Early in his career Rudkin set up and ran the infamous *Bongo Club Cabaret* in Edinburgh and worked as a puppeteer with the *Edinburgh Puppet Company*.

Shows and performances include *The Incredible Bull Circus* which toured internationally for six years, *Inside Out* created with Fraser Hooper and *Inconvenient Spoof* and *Wondermart* with Silvia Mercuriali .

In 2018, with *The Scientific Romance Theatre Company* he co-wrote, produced, made the puppets and acted in family show *The Time Machine*.

Rudkin has directed indoors and outdoors work for *Jon Hicks* and many others.

He began teaching at the *University of Brighton* and has since taught at *Rose Bruford*, *Goldsmiths*, *Italia Conti*, *Circus Space* and the *Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts*, where he made *The Twisted Ladder*.

He continues to teach, devise, perform, direct and puppeteer on numerous projects.  
[www.mattrudkin.co.uk](http://www.mattrudkin.co.uk)

- Petra Massey - R&D DIRECTOR (2018)

Petra Massey is a British actress, and a physical theatre performer in stage, film and television. Petra is best known for British television playing the "enhanced human" Sandstrom in the BBC2 Sci-Fi comedy series *Hyperdrive 2006-07* and as one of the four members of the international comedy and physical theatre company *Spymonkey*.

She studied a BA (Hons) in Performing Arts at Middlesex University and trained with *Philippe Gaullier* and *John Wright* in London.

With *Spymonkey* she performed for three years at the New York-New York Hotel & Casino Las Vegas in *Cirque Du Soleil's* erotic cabaret *Zumanity* and created *Oedipussy* with *Kneehigh* director Emma Rice and writer Carl Grose.

Petra also took on the role of Mandy, the pole-dancing marketing director in the *Barbican* and *Pleasance Theatre* production *Office Party*.

Petra collaborates on a number of projects and directs the UK companies *Slightly Fat Features* and *Wet Picnic*.

## - Christian Lee - MAGIC CONSULTANT

Christian Lee is an award winning, comedy magician. Reaching the Live Finals of the *Britain's Got Talent* 2016 with over 40 million Youtube hits worldwide. Crowned *Grand Finalist* of *Britain Does Variety* and nominated *Best Host* at the London Cabaret Awards.

A member of the [Inner Magic Circle](#) with Silver Star (the highest endorsement for a performing magician), he performs magic ranging from close up tricks to illusions and full stage productions.

He tours his children's theatre show [POP](#) across the UK and is a regular on the London cabaret circuit and tours with international show [An Evening of Burlesque](#).

He appeared in the Sky TV show *Max Magic* and he has performed idents for the *Harry Hill TV Burps* along with illustrations for *BBC Panorama* and winning BBC One's TV show *The Slammer*.

## SET DESIGN, PROPS & SPECIAL EFFECTS

**Jon Hicks** will be designer and creator of props and the set. This is an established part of Jon's creative process. There are two consultants and possible additional makers.

### **Pat Seaman**

With a Fine Art degree in the early 90s Seaman works across props, scenery, furniture and sculpture. A creative maker who has worked for TV, Theatre, Film, Cabaret and Art Galleries and had the set building company *The Professionals*. Seaman now works as the Werewolf of London. He has made props for Jon Hicks since 2000

### **Paul Fulton**

Working in the industry since the 1980s across TV, film and theatre. Name any light entertainment TV show and Paul has worked on it: *Reeves and Mortimer*, *Little Britain*, *You Bet*, *Saturday Night Takeaway*, *Alan Partridge*...

Fulton has a Fine Art degree and specializes in creative machinery and low-tech solutions.

## KICKMOUSE MYSTERIUM SHOWREEL

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dfwQ5tIMxKE>