

KICKMOUSE MYSTERIUM

A Magical World of Contraptions & Challenges in a
Silent Comedy Fable of Foolishness and Redemption



TOUR PACK

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

SYNOPSIS

Jon is an eccentric daydreamer and chaotic student of the mystical, powerful and masterful Frank the Dog. In an over excited moment 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.

Set in a 'home-made', re-used, world full of contraptions, illusions and mystifying objects, 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, often engineered by the sinister Cyprian, twists, turns and unexpected encounters in a funny, stylish, and magical story. With a soundtrack of music and sound effects throughout.



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. play, success and failure are all essential for learning
3. an objective and a destination provide the opportunity for an exhilarating journey
4. diversity and difference are strengths and to be celebrated
5. the joys of physicality and a physical world as opposed to a digital one

STYLE

Set in a 'home-made' world full of contraptions, illusions and mystifying objects, this 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 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, virtually, 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. References include the *Magic Roundabout*, the *Clangers*, *Mr Benn*, *In the Night Garden*, *The Muppets*, *H.R. Pufnstuf*...



ARTISTIC PROCESS

Initially R&D and short version supported by:

Arts Council England, Deda, Mycenae House, OutThere Arts & Brooklands Primary School.

Jon Hicks worked with Matt Rudkin to develop the idea, then with Petra Massey directing a 30 minute version, featuring Gareth Jones as the other performer. The piece was shown at two primary schools to children aged 4 to 11

The show was completed with a short residency at Dartington Hall Trust.

Culminating in the full-length premiere in April 2023.

Jon now working with Matt Rudkin as the other performer.

TECH SPEC

Running time	50 minutes
Company	2 performers, no crew
Sound	soundtrack playback for technician, 15 cues, no mics, Soundtrack supplied on laptop and usb
Lighting	general wash, couple of specials if possible
Get in	90 to 120 minutes plus 45 minute(max) tech. rehearsal
Get out	90 minutes
Minimum performance space	
	width: 5.5 metres
	depth: 5.5 metres
	height: 3.5metres
Set	Small proscenium arch with a variety of props
Additional requirements	
	2 stage weights,
Parking	for 1 car



“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

CREATIVE TEAM

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



Since 2000 Hicks has been enthralling 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 toured 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 2015.

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*

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 painting finale still appears at festivals around the world.

His most recent new work has been *The Visionary* with Matt Rudkin; an outdoors show in which Jon, unusually, speaks throughout, created in 2021 supported by ACE and toured extensively in 2022.

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

• 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

• Petra Massey - DIRECTOR

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*.

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

SET DESIGN, PROPS & SPECIAL EFFECTS

Jon Hicks

Jon designed and created the props and the set. This is an established part of Jon's creative process. With assistance from two consultants and specialist 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.



***“put down the X-Box and come and engage with this giddy,
funny, slice of magic”***

Michael Sells : Senior Producer : Dartington Hall Trust