

# MISTERO BUFFO



The Guardian



The Stage



British Theatre  
Guide



WhatsOnStage



The List



Edinburgh Guide



Broadway Baby



## Touring 2021 and 2022

Co-produced with New Diorama Theatre, Rhum and Clay's critically acclaimed and award-winning production of Dario Fo's Mistero Buffo is now also available for outdoor performances in the UK and internationally.



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

PRESS RESPONSE TO MISTERO BUFFO



**"SPOONER TACKLES A HUGE CAST OF CHARACTERS... WITH ASTONISHING SHARPNESS AND CLARITY"**

The Guardian



**"A SHAPESHIFTING, BODY-POPPING, MESMERISING PERFORMANCE"**

WhatsOnStage



**"MAGNIFICENT PRODUCTION... WITH AN ASTOUNDING PERFORMANCE"**

The Stage



**"JULIAN SPOONER IS SIMPLY OUSTANDING"**

British Theatre Guide



**"AS A MIME HE IS FLAWLESS, AS A STORYTELLER HE IS UTTERLY COMPELLING"**

Broadway Baby



**"MIRACULOUSLY GOOD THEATRE"**

Edinburgh Guide



**"A MASTERFUL DISPLAY"**

The List

**ONE OF THE GUARDIAN'S "BEST SHOWS AT THE EDINBURGH FESTIVAL 2018"**

**THEATRICAL TRAILER AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST**



## ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Mistero Buffo is considered one of the most iconic solo roles of all time and, from its publication, swiftly became Dario Fo's most revered and also most controversial play. Banned for many years by the Vatican for blasphemy, Mistero Buffo pulls biblical themes and apocryphal stories into a fabulously funny and deeply subversive satire on power and control.

The solo performer at the centre of the play is drawn from the tradition of the Jongleur: the travelling performer, acrobat and comedian of the Middle Ages. The lightning rod for all the anger and disrespect felt by ordinary people towards their rulers, jongleurs roamed the land bringing the latest news and poking fun at those responsible for all the injustice and hardship and misrule that they encountered. Unsurprisingly they made enemies of the most powerful. Mistero Buffo revives this agitator, this rebel, this truth-teller at a time when we need them most.

With culture wars driving division and distrust within communities and a pandemic that has served to highlight the vast economic inequalities at the heart of society, can a 21<sup>st</sup> century Jongleur help unite us through laughter and a little righteous anger? Our travelling storyteller is a Deliveroo worker at the centre of the gig economy, gathering and sharing his stories as he rushes from place to place, barely catching his breath.

Winning The Stage's Award for Best Performance, Rhum and Clay's Mistero Buffo is a tour-de-force, an extraordinary, virtuosic romp through a hundred characters and locations in the person of one man. Critically acclaimed, this production has now been adapted to work in outdoor as well as indoor spaces. It seems particularly apt, since this was often where Dario Fo himself performed it: in town squares, in car factories, in football stadiums. This is storytelling at its finest and most accessible; the Jongleur goes wherever the people gather...

Mistero Buffo can be performed to a socially distanced audience inside or outdoors, during daylight or at night. In the spirit of Fo, performing wherever and whenever he could, our production is extremely flexible, needing only a few hours' get-in and the use of one in-house technician to assist in running the show. A full technical specification is available on request.



**“ESSENTIALLY, THIS IS DEEPLY UNFASHIONABLE: A 50-YEAR OLD ONE-MAN SHOW ABOUT THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST. IT HAS NO RIGHT TO WORK... THAT IT DOES ISN'T JUST TESTAMENT TO SPOONER'S VIRTUOSIC TURN, IT'S MEANINGFUL IN ITS OWN RIGHT”**

Matt Trueman, WhatsOnStage



## SHOW INFORMATION

### Show Copy

Rhum and Clay present Dario Fo's devilishly funny masterpiece, *Mistero Buffo*, a darkly comic look at the absurdities and inequalities of everyday life, as seen through the eyes and tales of a travelling storyteller.

Banned as blasphemous for many years, but perhaps even more relevant now, *Mistero Buffo* takes an unflinching but humorous aim at those who manipulate truth and belief for power and control. With culture wars driving division and a pandemic that has highlighted vast economic inequalities, can laughter (and a little righteous anger) help unite us?

A tour-de-force that won Julian Spooner The Stage's Award for Best Performance, this is an extraordinary, virtuosic romp through a hundred characters and locations in the person of one man. Our 21<sup>st</sup> century travelling storyteller, yet another employee of the gig economy, rushes from his last job of the day to deliver a subversive, gleeful rallying cry for the disillusioned and disenfranchised...

### Age Advice

12+

### Running Time

90 minutes

### Creative Team

Written by Dario Fo and translated by Ed Emery  
Additional writing by Nicholas Pitt and Julian Spooner  
Directed by Nicholas Pitt  
Performed by Julian Spooner

Lighting Design by Geoff Hense  
Sound Design by Jonathan Ouin  
Costume Design by Emily Bates

Produced by Rhum and Clay Theatre Company

Click [here](#) for a link to creative team biographies

**CLICK [HERE](#) TO VIEW FULL SET OF  
HIGH RESOLUTION IMAGES**



# RHUM AND CLAY WORKSHOPS

Rhum and Clay was founded at the Jacques Lecoq school in Paris. The central tenet of the school is that theatre comes from playfulness and collaboration and it is this that underpins our workshop methodology.

Julian Spooner and Matt Wells are the company's two co-Artistic Directors. They are experienced teachers and have created bespoke workshops all over the world, most recently with young actors for the National Theatre in the UK and with professional performers in Venezuela and Brazil.

As part of an audience development campaign workshops can, subject to timings, be delivered prior to the company's arrival at your venue instead of, or as well as, during our visit. There are a number of different workshops that can be offered, all of which can be adapted and tailored to suit different age groups and skill levels and **all of which can be delivered online if necessary.**

***“... an otherworldly ensemble of mischievous shapeshifters”  
Exeunt on The War of the Worlds***

## THE SOLO PHYSICAL PERFORMER

A three-hour or one-day workshop for those with an interest in developing their physical abilities and, in particular, for those interested in honing solo performance techniques, whether experienced actors or those just starting out in the industry.

Participants are taken on a step-by-step journey towards developing a dynamic and 'cinematic' solo performance style, as showcased in the company's production of *Mistero Buffo*. Participants can expect to learn exercises which will allow them to embody multiple characters, change physical space in the blink of an eye and cultivate a rich and diverse theatrical world using just their bodies.

This workshop can be adapted for 12+ age groups.

## CLOWNING AND COMEDY

A three-hour workshop that introduces participants to the concept of the clown and 'the smallest mask in the world' – the clown's nose. It's an exploration of some of the key principles of clowning: embracing a state of bafflement, finding the game in any situation and learning not to act!

Participants will examine the clown's unique connection to the audience, their complicity with fellow performers and find their own inner clown.

Suitable for 16+ age range including students, undergraduates and professional actors.

***“Rhum and Clay left an important mark in Venezuela. For the first time, a group of young actors eager for knowledge, had the opportunity to receive a workshop on Physical Theatre techniques, of which they didn't have much knowledge. The workshop developed by Julian and Matt exceeded the expectations of all the participants who had the opportunity to be part of this unique experience. Julian and Matt connected with them in an unimaginable way. They demonstrated not only teaching experience and skills, but also a deep sense of humanity, sensitivity, commitment, excellent communication skills and inspiration. We hope to have them back soon; definitely there is a before and after to their visit to Venezuela.”***

## AUDIENCE RESPONSE TO MISTERO BUFFO

"MISTERO BUFFO IS A FANTASTIC PIECE OF WORK ALL ROUND. IT'S A TIMELY RE-IMAGINING OF, AND RESPONSE TO, THE ORIGINAL BY DARIO FO. IT'S A STUNNING INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE, FULL OF EXPERT COMIC TIMING AND CAPTIVATING THROUGHOUT."

"I WAS REALLY EXCITED BY THE WAY THEY HAVE TOP-AND-TAILED FO'S TEXT; TOTALLY IN THE AUTHOR'S SPIRIT, EDITING AND EMBELLISHING IT TO MAKE IT FEEL ENTIRELY CONTEMPORARY AND PROPERLY POLITICAL. IT'S VERY TIGHTLY DIRECTED AND IT CONTAINS THE SINGLE BEST PERFORMANCE I'VE SEEN IN A WHILE..."

"I'VE BEEN WAITING TO SEE THIS AMAZING SHOW FOR MONTHS. I WAS NOT DISAPPOINTED – FANTASTIC PERFORMANCE BY JULIAN SPOONER; THANKS FOR BRINGING IT TO EXETER!" @JOLSJM

"LONDONERS – GO SEE THIS! IT'S JUST ABSOLUTELY FAN-BLOODY-TASTIC. AND IF YOU'RE NOT IN LONDON, HOP ON A TRAIN. IT'LL BE WORTH IT. PROMISE" @ELLESIMPSON

"1<sup>ST</sup> THEATRE OF THE YEAR WAS RHUM AND CLAY'S MISTERO BUFFO AT NEW DIORAMA. REALLY BLOODY EXCELLENT. CONGRATS TO JULIAN SPOONER, NICHOLAS PITT & ALL INVOLVED. EVERYONE ELSE: GO BUY YOUR TICKET IMMEDIATELY. IT'S A SWEATY GEM NOT TO BE MISSED" @KATESAWYER

"MISTERO BUFFO AT THE ARCOLA THEATRE IS RIVETING! SO GLAD I HAD THIS 1 SLIM CHANCE TO EXPERIENCE IT. JULIAN SPOONER IS MASTER CLASS AND NOT TO BE MISSED! I'M NOT ON THE LOOKOUT FOR MORE FROM RHUM AND CLAY & JULIAN SPOONER" @MARIASHINDI

"RARE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE DARIO FO ON THE LONDON STAGE. UPDATED IN AN URBAN WAY BUT STILL GENUINELY EPIC. A SOLO SHOW IN A BLACK BOX SPACE THAT WORKS TO UNLEASH THE EPIC ELEMENT RATHER THAN CONTAIN IT. GREAT STUFF BY JULIAN SPOONER" @ZOEMAVROUDI

"I WASN'T SURE WHAT I WAS GOING TO SEE TONIGHT. BUT BLOODY HELL IT WAS GOOD. JULIAN SPOONER ABSOLUTELY SMASHED IT AND NOW I KNOW THAT MY NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION IS TO SEE EVERYTHING THAT RHUM AND CLAY EVER MAKE" @CLAIREMEDCALF





## ABOUT RHUM AND CLAY

Rhum and Clay is led by two co-Artistic Directors, Julian Spooner and Matt Wells, and Executive Producer, Sally Cowling.

'Rhum and Clay': Theatre that embraces the magical, the comical and the intoxicating, but is willing to scabble in the earth and the dirt where the real stories are to be found; excavating for the urgent, the complicated and the beautiful.

The company's work is always devised and physically virtuosic. Productions are cinematic in the telling, playing with overlapping narratives, with flashbacks and montages that cumulatively create artful, visually textured on-stage worlds. Our current production, *The War of the Worlds*, a new devised work, will be touring midscale venues in the UK, Asia and the US in 2021 and 2022.

Rhum and Clay works with an ever-changing and extraordinary range of creative collaborators, most recently on *The War of the Worlds*, with writer Isley Lynn (*Skin a Cat*), award-winning sound, set and lighting designers Ben Grant, Bethany Wells, Nick Flintoff and Pete Maxey and director Hamish MacDougall (Kandinsky Theatre Company).

Over the past decade the company has created nine productions that have toured at home and abroad with their 2017 production of *Testosterone* and this production of *Mistero Buffo* playing to audiences in Brazil, Canada, Kazakhstan, France and Venezuela in the eighteen months prior to lockdown.

The company is based in London at the New Diorama Theatre, where they are an Associate Ensemble, and is the recipient of numerous awards.

**“A SUBSTANTIAL BODY OF WORK IS EMERGING... SUPER-SMART”**  
Lyn Gardner, Stagedoor