

Rhum and Clay's

# THE WAR OF THE WORLDS

Written with  
Isley Lynn

## Touring 2021 and 2022

Originally commissioned by New Diorama Theatre, and co-produced by Brighton Festival and HOME Manchester, Rhum and Clay are booking their critically-acclaimed production of *The War of the Worlds* for midscale touring in the UK and internationally.

For enquiries, please contact [grace@rhumandclay.com](mailto:grace@rhumandclay.com)

# PRESS RESPONSE TO THE WAR OF THE WORLDS



"The addition of this show makes it look like a substantial body of work... super smart... delivers plenty of theatrical punches"

[Lyn Gardner for Stage Door](#)

"an otherworldly ensemble of mischievous shapeshifters"

[Exeunt Magazine](#)



"deft and ingenious"

[The Guardian](#)



"remarkable - big beyond its length, size and means"

[The Observer](#)



"a smart, engagingly layered show"

[The Stage](#)



"a whirling multi-rolling ensemble... just juicy"

[WhatsOnStage](#)



"an enjoyable, humorous, action-filled 80 minutes"

[Everything Theatre](#)



"funny and clever... an impressive production"

[West End Wilma](#)



"enjoyable and thought-provoking"

[London Theatre 1](#)



"told with a deceptive lightness and grace"

[Reviews Hub](#)

*Mars Attack!* [Read The Guardian Feature Here](#)

# WATCH THE WAR OF THE WORLDS TRAILERS HERE (2019 cast)

[Trailer](#)

[Trailer with Subtitles](#)

## Production Credits

The War of the Worlds was originally commissioned by New Diorama Theatre

Co-produced by Brighton Festival and HOME Manchester

Supported by China Plate, Corn Exchange Newbury, New Wolsey Theatre Ipswich and Redbridge Drama Centre

Supported using public funding by Arts Council England

## How and Why We Made The War of the Worlds

As humans we are fascinated and consumed by the stories that we tell each other. It's how we navigate and explain the world. There is nothing more alluring to us than a satisfying narrative.

When Orson Welles adapted H.G Wells' The War of the Worlds in 1938 he wanted to create a thrilling piece of radio drama that would 'feel' real. In fact, it felt so real that it caused a level of hysteria amongst listeners that was in part down to Welles' consummate skill as a storyteller but also a feature of the time in which he told it. Europe was on the brink of the second world war, Hitler was becoming more ferocious and bolder, the Hindenburg disaster had just taken place, and all of this was being transmitted into people's living rooms via the radio. It was the first piece of technology that allowed world events to invade the family home, so perhaps no surprise that in such a febrile atmosphere, Welles' Martian invasion felt entirely plausible.

Fast forward to 2016, and terrorist threats are gripping Europe, Donald Trump is promising a Muslim ban if he is elected, and the Internet has replaced the radio as the medium through which we make sense of the world. We remain just as susceptible to a convincing narrative, even more so if that narrative seems to offer an explanation for our sense of unease...

Rhum and Clay's The War of the Worlds weaves in and out of these two time zones, as if moving the dial of a radio. It follows the impact of Welles' ingenious broadcast and also the journey of a young podcaster who travels to Grover's Mill, New Jersey (the site of the apparent Martian invasion), just before the US presidential election, in search of the truth behind a family's mysterious feud. With references ranging from H.G. Wells and Orson Welles via Jeff Wayne and a nod to Tom Cruise, this is an intense, unsettling and raucously entertaining reinvention of the original alien invasion myth.

Devised by the company with playwright Isley Lynn (Skin a Cat), The War of the Worlds demonstrates the company's trademark physical virtuosity. The talented ensemble plays with overlapping narratives, with flashbacks and montages, cumulatively creating beautifully varied on-stage worlds that are seamlessly connected, one to another, by an evocative, award-nominated soundscape from Ben Grant.

It's a show that examines the stories we choose to believe and why, and how these stories can either divide us, or potentially bring us back together. In the darkest of times, the truth is a very precious commodity.

# Watch Orson Welles' endorsement of Rhum and Clay's show [here](#)

## Show Copy

“No-one would have believed in the early years of the twentieth century that this world was being watched...”

But we did believe. We believed that Martians landed in New Jersey. We believed a water tower was an alien war machine. We believed a man walked on the moon. We believe everything the internet tells us and now the end of the world is being broadcast live...

There is nothing more alluring than a good story. When Orson Welles adapted The War of the Worlds, he wanted to create a thrilling radio drama that would ‘feel’ real. In fact, it felt so real that it caused hysteria amongst a public just getting used to the outside world invading their living rooms via the radio. Fast forward to 2016, and the internet has replaced the radio as the medium through which we make sense of the world. We remain just as susceptible ...

Inspired by H.G. Wells’ sci-fi novel and Orson Welles’ classic radio play, this legendary science fiction thriller is playfully reimaged for our era of Fake News and ‘alternative facts’.

Age Advice: 12+

## Creative Team

Writer: Isley Lynn

Directors: Hamish MacDougall & Julian Spooner

Movement Director: Matthew Wells

Set & Costume Designer: Bethany Wells

Lighting Designer: Nick Flintoff & Pete Maxey

Sound Designer: Benjamin Grant

Executive Producer: Sally Cowling

## Cast

Gina Isaac as Lawson

Jess Mabel Jones as Meena

Julian Spooner as Jonathan / Carl Phillips

Matthew Wells as Ted / John

**Full Archival Film available on request**

# 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 philosophy that underpins our workshop methodology. We explore theatre that comes from a physical impulse, allowing text and words to flow from that physical action, allowing a natural physical play to develop out of which a story can emerge. This idea of playfulness is also a powerful tool to engage young people in the creative process.

Julian and Matthew are experienced workshop leaders and have created workshops for drama schools, youth theatres and secondary schools, with professional actors, trainee performers, amateur performers and school students all over the UK and internationally.

As part of an audience development campaign workshops can, subject to timings, be delivered prior to our arrival in a 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:

## Storytelling: The Manipulation of Truth

The War of the Worlds deals with issues of social media manipulation and the impact of 'Fake News'. Alongside the production we are offering a workshop that engages with this subject matter in the context of physical performance. In this 3-hour workshop, we encourage the participants to create theatre from stories, both real and 'fake', to explore how we can create conflicting narratives from real events and how physicality can affect our perception of truthfulness. We want to explore how the propensity and success of 'fake news' is founded in dramatic and captivating storytelling. Suitable for 12+ age range including undergraduates, graduates and professional actors.

## Performing with Masks

A 3-hour workshop that introduces participants to the clown and 'the smallest mask in the world' -the clown nose. We explore the dynamics of the nose and why it makes us laugh, encouraging each participant to discover their own clown. Much of the workshop will focus on playing games, in order to find the clown 'state'. We finish the workshop by asking participants to draw from their own experiences, and to devise short pieces about a moment from their lived experience of everyday clowning. Most suitable for 16+ age range including undergraduates, graduates and professional actors.

## Clowning and Comedy

A 3-hour workshop that focuses on how one can physically use the techniques of cinema to create dynamic theatre. Firstly, we introduce the participants to a form of mime called 'The Language of Gesture'. They learn a dynamic and comedic routine, using these skills to recreate elements of cinema on stage as a solo performer, e.g. zooming in/out, creating montages and multiple characters. Working in small groups they recreate the feel, style and texture of a Spaghetti Western, creatively constrained by having to perform as a group in a very confined space, encouraging them to view the theatrical space in a non-literal way. The workshop culminates in a period of devising, in which the smaller groups re- create an iconic movie of their choosing in under five minutes, using the tiny stage. Suitable for 12+ age range including undergraduates, graduates and professional actors.

## Testimonial

*"Rhum & 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".*

Auramarina Lazarde - Head of Arts, British Council Venezuela

**Production Images by The  
Other Richard  
(2019 cast)**

**Click [here](#) to view full set  
of high res images**



## **Audience Responses to The War of the Worlds**

@davemoutrey: @rhumandclay 's 'War of the Worlds' is a cracker. A take on the HG Wells thing as performed by Orson Wells with a smart link to now. Excellent physical theatre, well written, great design and great performances good drama and in places very very funny!

@sandieslice: @rhumandclay's The War of the Worlds is a must-see at this year's @edfringe! It's a beautiful piece of theatre I enjoyed from start to finish. Thank you for your art

@FredN1D: Well, I had high expectations, and @rhumandclay just blew them away and raised the bar higher than I could have imagined. What a show. Go see War of the Worlds! #edfringe

@tiptreejen: Blown away by @rhumandclay's War of the Worlds. One of those 'boy, I wish I could write like that!' plays. So glad I chose this for my day off @Maydays GO! If you can.

@awaken\_english: So stoked about how incredible the @rhumandclay performance of 'War of the Worlds' was today #FakeNews

@chris49397767: @rhumandclay #WOTW #edfringe what a fantastic show at the @edinburghfringe The War of the Worlds

@joy\_parkinson: Strong and timely take on The War of the Worlds from @rhumandclay at @ThePleasance, with fake news, media and politics seamlessly woven into the script.

# About Rhum and Clay Theatre Company

**"A substantial body of work... super-smart" - Lyn Gardner, The Guardian**

Rhum and Clay's origins lie at l'École Jacques Lecoq in Paris in 2010, where its two Co-Artistic Directors met as students. The company's work is as physically ingenious and accomplished as you'd expect with that pedigree, but, in the tradition of Lecoq's commitment to reinvention and to discovering truthfulness through play, Rhum and Clay's work shape-shifts in style from show to show. They work as an ensemble by whatever method and in whatever style best suits the subject matter at hand, but the integrity and creativity of the process is crucial, and projects are devised in a thoroughly collegiate manner, with the complete creative team in the room.

The first Rhum and Clay show was Shutterland, a dystopian tale of a man who discovers his life has been pre-recorded, which, after touring in the UK, including at the Edinburgh Fringe, was performed at the Recklinghausen Festival, the company's first foray into international presentation.

2012's Second World War-based, A Strange Wild Song, garnered some wonderful, profile-raising reviews that saw them described as "charming, ramshackle and funny", toured the South East with House and brought Rhum and Clay to the attention of several people like Hedda Beeby (then at the Watermill) and David Byrne (at New Diorama Theatre-NDT), who became major champions and advocates of the company's work.

In 2013 they made The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mister Hyde as a co-production with the Watermill, presenting a regional rural tour under the Watermill's auspices and performing it for a month on the venue's main stage.

In 2014, now Watermill Associates, Rhum and Clay created another co-production with the venue, Hardboiled, inspired by the film noir genre. It completed a substantial rural tour, played the main stage of the Watermill and also transferred to New Diorama for a critically acclaimed three-week run that, amongst other things, elicited a ★★★★★ review from Time Out.

In 2015 the company, now based at NDT as an Associate Company, created 64 Squares, based on Stefan Zweig's novel about chess and schizophrenia, The Royal Game, opening the show at NDT, taking it to Edinburgh at Underbelly and going back to NDT for a second run. 64 Squares was extremely well received and further developed both the company's reputation as purveyors of intelligent but accessible work and their small-scale touring networks. ★★★★★ in The Guardian, The Observer and Time Out.

They also went from strength to strength via their 2016 production, Testosterone, based on the autobiographical experiences of a trans man, which was included in the British Council's 2017 Edinburgh Showcase and long-listed for the Amnesty International Freedom of Expression Award. Testosterone has toured extensively and continues to have a life, with the company recently delivering a week-long residency in Brazil with Testosterone's co-creator, Kit Redstone, working with the Brazilian trans community to create theatre using their own stories.

In 2018 Rhum and Clay presented their version of Dario Fo's Mistero Buffo at Underbelly in Edinburgh, re-interpreting it for the 'zero hours contracts' generation, selling out the venue throughout the run and garnering critical plaudits from all sides, including The Stage's Edinburgh Award for Best Performance and a



"Astonishing sharpness  
and clarity"  
The Guardian on Mistero  
Buffo



"Beautifully put-together,  
intelligent and moodily  
atmospheric"  
The Guardian on 64  
Squares



"Pulled off  
triumphantly"  
TimeOut on  
Hardboiled



"Weird and wonderful  
theatre performed with  
inch perfect precision"  
The Observer on 64  
Squares

Find out more about Rhum and Clay online

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



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# Creative Team & Cast Biographies

**Benjamin Grant:** Benjamin Grant studied at Central School of Speech and Drama and has experience designing for Theatre, Dance and Installation, specialising in devised work and new writing. Recent sound design credits include Death of England (National Theatre), Maggot Moon (Unicorn Theatre), I'll Take You To Mrs Cole (Pleasance Beyond), Education Education Education (Trafalgar Studios), Prurience (Southbank Centre/Guggenheim Museum NYC), The Road Awaits Us (Sadler's Wells) and other credits include Associate Sound Designer for Beware of Pity (Schaubühne) and Associate Sound Designer for The Kid Stays In The Picture (Royal Court). Benjamin is an Associate Artist of The Wardrobe Ensemble.

**Nick Flintoff:** Nick trained at RADA and studied documentary film at The Metropolitan Film School. He ran the technical department at the Gantry, before working for Imagination Ltd. as Production Manager. He then joined their Lighting Design team working on various large scale projects. Leaving the corporate world, Nick returned to theatre, where he worked at the Corn Exchange, Newbury alongside lighting many national tours and various shows for the Watermill Theatre. He is currently the Technical Associate for the National Theatre's New Work Department. Nick designed the lighting for Rhum and Clay's Hardboiled and is thrilled to be back with the team for The War of the Worlds. Nick is a member of the Association of Lighting Designers (#2613).

**Gina Isaac:** Gina trained at the Central School of Speech and Drama. Theatre work includes: A Kind of Alaska (Rapture Theatre), A Streetcar Named Desire (Rapture Theatre), Made in India (Tamasha/Soho Theatre), The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time (National Theatre Productions), Saturday Night & Sunday Morning, Top Girls, Roots, Absent Friends, Under Milk Wood, A View from the Bridge, The Lover, Romeo and Juliet, David Copperfield, Accidental Death of an Anarchist, Julius Caesar, Two, Twelfth Night, Road, To Kill a Mockingbird, All my Sons, Three Sisters and The White Devil (Mercury Theatre), The Butterfly Lion (Bill Kenwright Productions), The Grapes of Wrath (Chichester Festival Theatre), Lifesavers and Photos of Religion (Theatre 503), Hysteria (Bolton Octagon), The Winter's Tale (Salisbury Playhouse), Small Miracle (Tricycle Theatre), Mother Courage and her Children (ETT), Belly (Old Red Lion), A Midsummer Night's Dream & Richard III (Stafford Shakespeare Festival), Trojan Women (Teatro Koreja, Lecce). Television includes: EastEnders, Holby City, Casualty, The Queen's Lover (BBC), Derek (Derek Productions), Men Only (Channel 4), Pretending to be Judith (International), The Bill (ITV), Perfect Disasters (Impossible Pictures). Film and Radio includes: Beyond (Big View Media), Fast Girls (Unstoppable Entertainment), Unidentified (Big View Media), Walking with Shadows (Ghost Productions), The Father Gilbert Mysteries (Focus on the family), Anna (Frequency Theatre).

**Isley Lynn:** Previous works include Skin A Cat (national tour 2018 / winner: Pick Of The Year - Vault Festival / nominated: Most Promising New Playwright and Best New Play Off West End Awards Award - The Bunker, 2016), Albatross (NEW - Paines Plough & RWCMD, Bute Theatre and Gate Theatre, 2018), The Swell (HighTide First Commissions play reading, 2018) Totty (Come To Where I'm From: London - Park Theatre, 2015), Sie Und Wir (Werk X, Vienna, 2016), Tether (Underbelly, Edinburgh Fringe Festival, 2015), What's So Special (The Get Out - The Royal Court Jerwood Theatre Upstairs, 2014), Bright Nights (Script6 Winner - The Space, 2014), Sleight Of Hand (Little Stitches - Theatre503, Arcola theatre, and Gate theatre, 2014), Lomography (Soho Young Writers Award 2012 Special Commendation). [www.isleylynn.com](http://www.isleylynn.com).

**Jess Mabel Jones:** Jess is a performer, puppeteer and theatre-maker. She makes work that is good fun, good-looking and that aims to incite change. Her work has played venues and platforms that include Barbican, TATE, British Council Showcase, Machynlleth Comedy Festival and the Sydney Opera House. In production: Where's My Vagina? - WOW Festival, Motherhood - The Albany. Past credits include: The Paper Man - Improbable, The Flop - Hijinx & Spymonkey, Backstage in Biscuit Land - Touretteshero.

**Pete Maxey:** Pete is a lighting designer & production stage manager with a wealth of experience in theatre and dance. After training at Middlesex University he spent two years with the National Theatre's New Work department, assisting the development of new productions including Anna, Treasure Island, Everyman and The Elephantom. He later joined the technical team at Sadler's Wells, the UK's premier dance theatre, and now works with UK and international companies, making and touring shows around the world. Pete also runs technical theatre workshops for the National Theatre and local schools. As Lighting Designer: Nutcracker (Ballet Central, ADC Theatre), Salomé (Cockpit Theatre & UK Tour), Bromley Bedlam Bethlehem (Old Red Lion), Bon Ami (VAULT Festival 2019), The War of the Worlds (Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2019 & UK/International Tour 2020), Breakin' Convention Festival 2017/18/19 (Sadler's Wells), Wild Card: Spoken Movement (Sadler's Wells), The Girl Who Never Looked Up (National Theatre), Other [Please Specify] (Platform Islington), The Wolves of Willoughby Chase (Watermill Theatre), Twelfth Night (Watermill Theatre), Dying For It (Brockley Jack Theatre), Ten Women (Ovalhouse).

**Hamish MacDougall:** Recent directing credits include 'The War Of The Worlds' (Rhum and Clay/New Diorama/Edinburgh/UK Tour) 'Friend' (James Seabright Productions/Edinburgh/Adelaide) 'Hammerhead' and 'Soothing Sounds For Baby' both with Joseph Murguio (Soho Theatre/Southbank Centre/UK Tour) 'The Narcissist' which Hamish co wrote with Graham Dickson (Underbelly/BAC/Toomler Amsterdam) 'Willy' (Fight in the dog/Soho Theatre/Pleasance Edinburgh) 'Life and Rhymes' (Underbelly, Southbank and Underbelly Productions) 'Zoo' (Theatre 503). Hamish is also a performer and a member of Kandinsky Theatre Company with whom he has performed in and co-devised, 'Trap Street' (Schaubühne Berlin/New Diorama) 'Dog Show', 'Still Ill' and 'Dinomania' (All New Diorama Theatre). Awards include, 'Soothing Sounds For Baby' won four Chortle Comedy Awards and was nominated for The Edinburgh Comedy Award, it was also listed in The Guardians Top Ten Shows of the year across all art forms. 'Hammerhead' won The Pleasance Best Comedy Show Of The Year and The Brighton Comedy Award. 'Dog Show' Won an Off West End Award for Best Ensemble and a Peter Brook Award. 'Dinomania' was nominated for the Off West End Award for Best Ensemble 2020. 'Life and Rhymes' won an Arts Voice Award in Edinburgh

**Julian Spooner:** Julian is an award-winning actor and director. Having gained a BA in Drama at the University of Bristol, he went onto study at Ecole Jacques Lecoq for two years, going on to co-founded Rhum and Clay Theatre Company, for which he is Co-Artistic Director. He has co-created and performed in all of Rhum and Clay's productions. In 2018 he won The Stage Award for Acting Excellence for his acclaimed performance in the solo show Mistero Buffo (Arcola Theatre/ Underbelly), he directed Rhum and Clay's hit show Testosterone (UK & international touring), and co-directed and performed in 64 Squares. He is also a writer and director for film, producing under Skym Bay Films. His short film Toby made with director Tom Savage has won numerous best comedy awards at festivals worldwide. He was most recently seen on stage playing Hugh Hughes's father Daniel Hughes in Hoipolloi's The Ladder (Adelaide Fringe/ Norfolk & Norwich Festival).

**Bethany Wells:** Trained in architecture, Bethany is a performance designer working across dance, theatre and installation, with a particular interest in site-specific and devised performance. She is an Associate Artist with Middle Child, Hull. Recent work includes: Rallying Cry (Battersea Arts Centre); Busking It (High Tide); DISTANCE (Park Theatre); A New And Better You (Yard Theatre); Legacy (York Theatre Royal); TRUST (Gate Theatre); Party Skills for the End of the World (Nigel Barrett and Louise Mari, MIF); The Department of Distractions (Third Angel); All We Ever Wanted Was Everything (Middle Child); Cosmic Scallies (Graeae + Royal Exchange); We Were Told There Was Dancing (Royal Exchange Young Company); Removal Men (Yard Theatre). Current work includes: Us Against Whatever (Middle Child); Thank You Very Much (Claire Cunningham, MIF) and STORM (Search Party). An ongoing project, WARMTH, is a wood-fired mobile sauna and performance space, commissioned by Compass Live Art. [www.bethanywells.com](http://www.bethanywells.com).

**Matthew Wells:** Matt is a freelance actor and movement director and has been Co-Artistic Director of Rhum and Clay Theatre Company since joining in 2011 whilst studying at Ecole Jacques Lecoq. Recent credits include co-devising and performing in Testosterone (selected in the British Council 2017 Showcase, winner of Best Theatre show at Pleasance 2107, UK & international tour), 64 Squares (Underbelly, Edinburgh sell-out show and national tour 2018), Hardboiled, the Fall of Sam Shadow (London transfer to New Diorama - Watermill Theatre Newbury), A Strange Wild Song (Bedlam, Edinburgh sell-out show, New Diorama Theatre). Matt has run workshops for The National Theatre, The Old Vic and for the British Council in Brazil, Kazakhstan, Australia and, most recently, Venezuela.