

AN
imitating the dog
& Leeds Playhouse
PRODUCTION

Dr BLOOD

OLD

TRAVELLING

SHOW



PROGRAMME



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

**LEEDS
PLAY
HOUSE**

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Dr Blood's Old Travelling Show arrives as a direct result of the current epidemic, although we had been toying with making a very small-scale show that might tour out of the back of, or indeed, be set in, a car for some years. Like a lot of the ideas that transform into the shows we make, the pragmatic situations governing how we construct a piece, or what technology is available, are often what propel us to move in particular directions. So, here we dropped the car, too small for social distancing, and took on a Luton Van – great for projecting out of. We returned to some of our previous obsessions with letterbox shaped apertures to create a new exterior environment for theatrical projection and went back to the use of models that had so fascinated us when creating *Night of the Living Dead – Remix* earlier this year.

At its heart, though, Dr Blood is street theatre, drawing on medieval theatrical carts and the fun and bluster of the types of political theatre we grew up with in the 1970s and 80s. Perhaps this is why this piece makes use of puppets and grotesque masks, referencing the satire of *Spitting Image* and the upheaval that carnival and Mardi-Gras is supposed to instigate. All this, however, is pursued through an **imitating the dog** lens. So, for those of you who know our work, certain elements will be instantly recognisable. For those of you who are first timers, then you will see how we are attempting to integrate projection technologies and live feed cameras into these established genres.

We've always been interested in mashing stuff together, plundering popular culture for stories and images. Here, it seems more important than ever in creating a show that has bite and a certain anger whilst all the while being scabrous, fun and entertaining. This was a fast make, just over two weeks, made in the face of changing conditions and different forms of lockdowns. We made it as a gift for some of the venues that have supported us over the years and who are now having to revise plans and finances on a scale never previously imagined. We also, of course, made it for you, dear audience, who too have been starved of live entertainment and who are also braving the elements to watch this tonight.

Dr Blood, is a horror show, playful and silly but with a little nip in its tale. We have loved making it and we hope you enjoy it as well.

Andrew Quick, Pete Brooks and Simon Wainwright
Co-Artistic Directors: imitating the dog





Dr Blood's Old Travelling Show.

ON STAGE



LAURA ATHERTON | ESHETH

Laura trained at Bretton Hall and is an Associate Practitioner with **imitating the dog**. With the company she has performed in *Kellerman*, *The Zero Hour*, *Six Degrees Below the Horizon*, *A Farewell to Arms*, *The Train*, *Nocturnes*, *Heart of Darkness* and, most recently, *Night of the Living Dead - Remix*.

Other work includes *Lost in Memories*, which Laura co-created with Delia Muir, supported by the Wellcome Trust and Decision Makers, a solo show in conjunction with Theatre Deli.



KEICHA GREENIDGE | ELUA

Keicha has gained recognition for supporting and guest roles on BBC prime time drama such as the BAFTA winning drama *Three Girls*, *From Darkness* and Series 2 of Kay Mellor's *In The Club*.

Keicha won critical acclaim for her role as protagonist Charlie Marlow, in **imitating the dog's** reimagining of *Heart of Darkness*.



MATT PRENDERGAST | DR BLOOD

Matt stars in the multiple award-winning independent British feature film *Guardians*, which recently screened at film festivals around the world and saw him nominated for best actor at the Unrestricted View Film Festival in London. *Guardians* is now available via certain popular streaming services.

Theatre work includes *The Dead Moon* and *Abiyoyo* for Wonderful Beast theatre company, *Pericles* for the National Theatre and, previously for **imitating the dog**, *Night of the Living Dead - Remix*, *The Zero Hour* and *Heart of Darkness*.

CREATIVE TEAM AND CREW

ANDREW QUICK | CO-WRITER AND DIRECTOR

Andrew is a founder member of **imitating the dog** and, with Pete Brooks, he was written and directed *Hotel Methuselah* (2006), *Kellerman* (2008), *Six Degrees Below the Horizon* (2011), *The Zero Hour* (2012), *A Farewell to Arms* (2014), *The Train* (2016), *Nocturnes* (2017), *Heart of Darkness* (2018) and *Night of the Living Dead - Remix* (2020).

He is also Professor of Theatre and Performance at the Lancaster Institute for the Contemporary Arts (LICA) at Lancaster University.

PETE BROOKS | CO-WRITER AND DIRECTOR

After graduating from Leeds University, Pete founded the ground-breaking Impact Theatre Cooperative. Notable productions include *The Carrier Frequency* (1984). Pete has directed several award-winning productions including *Imitation of Life* (1987) with Claire Macdonald and *L'Ascensore* (1992), *Clair de Luz* (1993) and *Peepshow* (1997). In 2004 Pete began working with **imitating the dog**, initially as a collaborator on a single project, *Hotel Methuselah*, and subsequently as one of the Artistic Directors.

In 2012 Pete co-wrote/devised *Soul Sister* with John Miller (nominated for an Olivier Award for Best New Musical). More recently, he has directed opera for Teatro delle Muse, Ancona.

Pete also teaches Performance Design and Practice at Central St.Martin's, London.

SIMON WAINWRIGHT | PROJECTION AND VIDEO DESIGN

Simon is a theatre maker, musician, visual artist and one of **imitating the dog**'s three artistic directors. He formed the company after leaving Lancaster University and has been centrally involved in every production since, specialising in the last 10 years as a video and sound designer. As a freelance designer he has worked on many productions including *Derren Brown's Miracle*, *Lanark* at The Citizen's Theatre, the touring musical *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* and Complicité's *The Kid Stays in the Picture* at the Royal Court.

As a musician he is a member of Hope and Social, a band who define themselves by their inclusive community projects. They have released six studio albums and toured extensively.

ANDREW CROFTS | LIGHTING DESIGN

Andrew is a lighting and video designer who works with theatre, dance and mixed media companies. He has worked with **imitating the dog** since 2005.

When not with 'the dog', Andrew has worked with other companies including Jasmin Vardimon, Blast Theory, Belarus Free Theatre, Streetwise Opera and Invisible Flock as well as solo artists including Cheryl Martin, Keisha Thompson and Bridget Fiske. He's also worked on projects for Art Angel, Manchester International Festival and Light Up Lancaster. Andrew is a founding member of pervasive gaming company The Larks.

LAURA HOPKINS | SET AND COSTUME DESIGN

Laura's work ranges from installation and experimental work to musicals and opera. She has designed productions for the Barbican, Royal Court, Royal Exchange, NT, Duckie, Frantic Assembly, ENO and Shakespeare's Globe among many others.

She has worked with director Pete Brooks on many devised projects including *Clair de Luz*, *If We Shadows*, *Blood*, *A Plague on both your Houses* and *Peep Show* and more recently,

Tosca and *Un Ballo in Maschera* for Teatro delle Muse, Ancona.

This will be Laura's seventh production with **imitating the dog**.

JAMES HAMILTON | COMPOSER

James is a composer, arranger, trumpet player and educator. He studied jazz performance and composition at Leeds College of Music. Winner of the 2008 Dankworth prize, a 2010 British Composers Award and nominated for a 2019 Ivor Novello, his works span multiple genres. He has worked with companies including Invisible Flock, Figit Theatre and Singapore Repertory Theatre. He is a member of Leeds based bands Hope and Social and Back Chat Brass.

James has worked with **imitating the dog** as a composer and musical director on various sited works. This is James' fourth theatre production for the company.

MATTHEW TULLY | MODEL CREATOR AND DESIGNER

Matthew Studied MA Performance design at Leeds University. His past projects have included video works, live performance and installation. He has also worked with many exhibiting fine artists, as a technical designer and maker, helping individuals realise their ideas and concepts as real-life objects.

Matthew made and operated models on ITD's critically acclaimed production *Night of the Living Dead – Remix* (2020). This is Matthew's second time working with **imitating the dog**.

Denise Body
Andrew Crofts
Alan Cox
Rory Howson
Sarah Holland
Laurence Young
Morven Macbeth
Duncan Clarke
Ed Waring
Henrietta Duckworth
Sodium

Stage Manager
Production Manager
Video Systems Advisor
Sound Engineer
Wardrobe Supervisor
Learning & Access Officer
Associate Practitioner
PR Manager
Photographer
Tour Consultant
Production Filming

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Greg Akehurst and the team at Quarantine for the generous loan of equipment.

Tamsin Drury at Word of Warning and Steve Curtis for the generous loan of equipment.

Andy Wood, Head Of Scenic Workshop & David Bennion-Pedley, Head of Lighting

The Leeds Playhouse workshop and wardrobe teams. All the staff at Leeds Playhouse.

The Dukes, Lancaster for the generous loan of equipment.

All tour venues for their tireless work to support the production and all the new challenges it brings.



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ABOUT IMITATING THE DOG

“a company at the forefront of testing the nature of theatre”
The Guardian

imitating the dog has been creating and touring original performance work since 1998. Pete Brooks, Andrew Quick and Simon Wainwright are the Artistic Directors and their work has built a company with a unique reputation in the UK, Europe and internationally.

imitating the dog tell stories. They make highly innovative narrative performance that interweaves beautiful imagery with important ideas. The work aims to move audiences intellectually and emotionally and set new standards for the integration of live performance and digital technology. The company's work is driven by personal experiences as well as wider political and social concerns, which increasingly demand our attention.

Learning is at the heart of the company's ethos. The company initiates, tests and shares its creative process and technological expertise with students, practitioners and community groups through its extensive and focused education programme.

imitating the dog productions have toured throughout the UK. The company has also performed at the Made in Britain Festival in Saint-Etienne, France, and also toured to Germany, Poland, Italy, Bulgaria, Armenia, Ukraine, Georgia, Brazil, Beirut Spring Festival, Lebanon, Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Indonesia and Brazil. The British Council has showcased the company's work at the Edinburgh Festival in 2011, 2013 and 2017.

imitating the dog also create projection and video-mapping work for festivals and events. Recent site-specific projects have included Light Up Lancaster Festival, Lakes Alive and Urban Legends, Hull.

imitating the dog is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation.

imitatingthedog.co.uk

@imitatingthedog

Artistic Directors Andrew Quick, Pete Brooks, Simon Wainwright

Executive Director Julie Brown

Chair of the Board David Dolan Martin

PREVIOUS IMITATING THE DOG SHOWS



Night of the Living
Dead - Remix 2020



Heart of Darkness
2019



Nocturnes
2018



A Farewell to Arms
2014



The Zero Hour
2012

ABOUT LEEDS PLAYHOUSE

Leeds Playhouse has been welcoming audiences for 50 years. As a registered charity (No. 255460), the theatre creates work which is pioneering and relevant, seeking out the best companies and artists to create inspirational theatre in the heart of Yorkshire. Leeds Playhouse recently underwent a £16 million transformation which includes improved access to and around the theatre, a new city-facing entrance and the addition of a new studio theatre, the Bramall Rock Void.

A dedicated collaborator, Leeds Playhouse works with distinctive, original voices from across the UK. Its Artistic Development programme, Furnace, discovers, nurtures and supports new voices, while developing work with established practitioners. It provides a creative space for writers, directors, companies and individual theatre-makers to refine their practice at all stages of their career. The sector-leading Creative Engagement team works with more than 12,000 people aged 0–95 every year reaching out to refugee communities, young people, students, older people and people with learning disabilities. The Playhouse recently celebrated 10 years of Relaxed Performances, pioneered at Leeds Playhouse and now adopted as standard practice in theatres worldwide.

During these unprecedented times, Leeds Playhouse has continued to communicate with the wider Playhouse community through Playhouse Connect, engaging with more than 4,000 people through direct contact, online activity and regular newsletters. The Playhouse relies on support from many partners to make great things happen. The organisation is especially grateful for the continued support from funders including Arts Council England, Leeds City Council, The Liz and Terry Bramall Foundation, as well as many charitable trusts, business partners and individuals.

LeedsPlayhouse.org.uk

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Artistic Director James Brining

Executive Director Robin Hawkes

Chairman of the Board Rozina Breen

Leeds Theatre Trust Limited Charity Number 255460

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ENGLAND**



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FOUNDATION



Dr Blood's Old Travelling Show in Rehearsal

CARNIVAL LAUGHTER AND HORROR

Dr Sarah Illott reflects on the historic role of the carnival as grotesque parody, temporarily inverting the social order.



Historically, the carnival has acted as a safety valve, sanctioning riotous enjoyment and a temporary suspension of social norms. The classical Roman festival of Saturnalia saw masters serving their slaves and the practice of the (usually proscribed) act of gambling. In the Middle Ages, the Feast of Fools and Feast of the Ass parodied ecclesiastical rituals and inverted the sacred and the profane. Contemporary carnival and Mardi Gras celebrate practices not permitted at other times, with bizarre and eccentric costumes marking a deviation, or liberation, from everyday habit. In turn, this reveals what is prized by specific societies, be it religious structures, power hierarchies, or rules of propriety around what is deemed appropriate dress or behaviour.

According to the influential work of literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin, the carnival is a space of temporary liberation in which the death of the current order paves the way for the hope of regeneration. The purpose of the carnival is to render grotesque all that is venerated or idealised by society – the lofty principles and institutions on which a given society is built. This is done through a process of grotesque degradation in which the high are brought low through a focus on the material body with all of its frailties and failings, its excretions and its mortality. The creation of these grotesques offers laughter as an alternative response to feelings of fear and powerlessness when confronted with the quotidian social order. For this reason, critics such as Simon Critchley have recognised the potential inherent in carnivalesque forms of comedy to challenge the status quo and function as social critique. When brought to cinema, television and theatre audiences, figures of authority become Splitting Image-style monsters slayed as much by the laughter of the audience as by the violence of the actors. Through being subjected to derisive laughter, institutions and individuals lose their perceived power whilst audiences feel the catharsis associated with imagining society anew.

The carnivalesque nevertheless says as much about what a society fears as what it finds funny. When topsy-turvy worlds appear on screen, stage or the pages of a novel, the underlying fear that structures the carnivalesque is often registered through the aesthetics of folk horror. Audiences are confronted with the proliferations of Faustian pacts, demons, otherworldly forces and magic. This is evident in shows like ***The League of Gentlemen***, in which grotesque parodies shine a light on small town hypocrisies and national insecurities whilst the folk horror aesthetic lends the show its uncanny feel and some of its creepiest characters (such as Papa Lazarou). So, whilst the figures of carnivalesque comedy may deal irreverentially with those whom power has corrupted and thereby provide narrative revenge for social ills, it's often Mephistophelian workings remind us of the gnawing fear that the laughter seeks to repress.



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TOUR

7-8 October
Leeds Playhouse
leedsplayhouse.org.uk

9-10 October
**The Courtyard,
 The Piece Hall, Halifax**
thepiecehall.co.uk

17 October
The Lowry, Salford
thelowry.com

20-21 October
**Lancaster Square
 Lancaster Arts & The Dukes**
lancasterarts.org

23-24 October
**Belgrade Square,
 Belgrade Theatre, Coventry**
belgrade.co.uk

We value your feedback. Please
 tell us what you think:
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 #DrBlood

