Electric Dreams

inspired by the ideas in Naomi Klein’s *The Shock Doctrine*
created by Dumbshow

Touring Information Pack

“A fast-rising young company with a very bright future”
Fest
Electric Dreams

Three-times Scotsman Hot Show recipients (To The End of The World, Clockheart Boy, The Pearl) return with their explosive new piece inspired by the ideas in Naomi Klein’s ground breaking book, The Shock Doctrine.

Rose can’t remember the first 18 years of her life. What happened to her? Seeking to unravel this mystery she turns investigator, piecing together her history from fragmented memories, documents and dreams. Using live music and video, Electric Dreams journeys from 1950’s Canada to the Iraq war; but does exploring the past offer a warning for the future?

‘An ambitious piece of political theatre …. gripping ... thoughtful... passionate and heartfelt’
Lyn Gardner, the Guardian

Dumbshow

“Occasionally, you see a show on the Fringe which reminds you what the Fringe is about... ...their joy in what they’re doing is a powerful antidote to anyone grown cynical about the Fringe.”
Scotsman Hot Show (To the End of the World, 2007)

“Moving, visually astonishing... bittersweet beauty might very well stop your heart”
Metro (Clockheart Boy, 2008)

“Dumbshow exhibits an impressive pool of talent... I’d pay good money to see this at the National”
The Stage (Roar, 2011)

“For further details please contact:
Faith Dodkins
admin@dumbshow.org
07747 805049

email: admin@dumbshow.org
ELECTRIC DREAMS : TOURING INFO
The Show

Set in a soon-to-be-closed community library, a group of recently redundant librarians come across a box of documents left behind by Rose, a lady who visited the library on a daily basis. Intrigued by its contents, and using the treasure trove of resources that their library holds, they piece together the documents, videos, sound recordings and images that Rose left behind. A sweeping theatrical journey then unfolds spanning CIA-funded experiments, the war in Iraq and the current destruction of the welfare state. Through exploring Rose’s past, the librarians are forced to contemplate the future; do they accept the prevailing narrative that has forced their library to close, or do they take their future into their own hands...

The Style

Combining Dumbshow’s trademark storytelling style with urgent contemporary issues, Electric Dreams is a vibrant and bold examination of the state-of-the-nation, which challenges current dogmas and asks us to consider a different path. It explores big ideas in a way that is both accessible and exciting. Essentially, it is a mystery and was described by Lyn Gardner of The Guardian as having a “gripping, thriller-like framework”. In the manner of Serial or Steven Poliakhoff’s Shooting the Past, we gradually uncover the story of what happened to Rose and begin to realise how this may reflect our own lives. It is inspired by the ideas in Naomi Klein’s ground-breaking book, The Shock Doctrine, and as such delves into areas of history which are fascinating and provocative, but at its heart there is an emotional and human story.

The Shock Doctrine

We haven’t adapted Klein’s book, which is a vast polemical non-fiction text, but have taken her central argument and presented it in a newly imagined theatrical form, rooted in an absorbing story. In The Shock Doctrine, Naomi Klein challenges the myth that over the past 70 years free-market capitalism triumphed across the globe democratically, and posits that often its advancements have been forced on populations unwittingly when they were too shocked or distracted to realise what was happening. Electric Dreams asks whether, post-2008 financial crash, have we too been in a state of shock?

At the centre of Klein’s book is a woman called Gail Kastner, who was experimented upon by psychiatrist Dr Ewen Cameron in Canada in the 1950s. Dr Cameron believed that rather than try to discover the cause of his patients’ mental illness, he could simply wipe their brains clean and then re-programme them with healthy messages and belief systems. Klein uses Dr Cameron’s work as an analogy; through exploring what being “shocked” does to a human body, she then considers what “shocks” can do to a body politic and how they can be exploited. Klein uses Gail Kastner’s story and what happened to her individual body and mind, to invite us to recognise where wider societal shocks may have happened, and asks if a process of “re-programming was then implemented.

The Shock Doctrine was published in 2007. We are exploring its ideas from a post 2008 financial-crash perspective; was Great Britain in a state of shock in 2008? Have we undergone further economic “shock therapy” since, and if so how we can become “shock-resistant”?

email: admin@dumbshow.org
ELECTRIC DREAMS : TOURING INFO
We will be offering a full range of workshops, post-show discussions and extra activities to accompany the tour. We have found that the best way to engage theatres in extra activities is to talk to you about what would work for you, as each venue works differently.

We have highly-experienced workshop leaders in the company (artistic director Michael Bryher has been an associate artist of The National Youth Theatre for 6 years and has taught at LAMDA on the BA course), and we also have a wide range of experience running extra activities around our shows. Electric Dreams provides the opportunity to engage local interest groups – especially around the themes of libraries and library closures. We had several librarians come and see the show who felt passionately that it was an important piece that they could champion; we think there is scope to engage local libraries and their audiences with the show.

Please feel free to get in touch to find out more.
Load In, Fit Up and Logistics
- 8 hours required between arrival and first show.
- ×1 venue crew required to assist with the load in and fit up.
- The show travels in a van which will need to remain at the venue from load in to get out.

Show staffing
- Under normal circumstances our SM will operate sound, video and lighting from a single position at the rear of the auditorium.
- For venues where lighting and sound cannot be operated from the same position, please provide a venue operator.

Dressing Rooms
- We require ×2 dressing rooms with showers. We usually require laundry facilities.

Stage
- Minimum playing space approx. 6m(w) × 5m(d) with exits USL and USR.

Special Effects
- The show includes strobe lighting.

Set
- The set consists of carpet, freestanding bookshelves and freestanding plastic sheeting. If possible, one end of the plastic sheeting should be attached to an overhead bar.
- Please provide black masking to create wings and a black backdrop.

Sound
- We require stereo playback to the auditorium with additional sub-bass reproduction.
- Please provide a stereo mini-jack input to the house PA system at the operating position for our touring Macbook.
- The company will tour an electric piano, positioned USL. Please provide (clean sound) power, DI boxes and connection to the house PA system.

Video
- We will bring a projector. This is typically rigged on the SL end of a FOH bar, 4m-7m from the front edge of stage. Please provide 13A power at this position.
- We will bring a 20m and 50m VGA cable. Please let us know if this will not be long enough to reach this projector position from the sound operating position.
- We will bring a camera to use onstage, DSR. We will bring a 50m cable to connect this to the sound operating position. Please let us know if this will not be long enough.

Lighting
- Please pre-rig equipment.
- For smaller venues with limited lighting equipment or those with a fixed rig it may be possible to adapt this plan. Please let us know at least three weeks in advance if this is the case.
- We will bring our own gel.
- We will tour an ETC Eos showfile. If the venue desk is not an Eos series console, we typically bring our own software dongle (ETC Nomad) and DMX splitter. Please provide a DMX interface to the lighting system.
- We will bring our own strobe. This will require connection to the venue DMX network.
- We will bring our own UV cannon. This requires one way of switched (not dimmed) power overstage, controlled from the operator position.
- We will bring two practicals. Please provide dimmed circuits on 13A sockets, DSR and DSL at stage level.
“Thrilling storytelling techniques are key to this gripping detective story with a difference, arresting performances...combines the gentle sincerity of Poliakoff’s Shooting the Past with the sensationalism of Dan Brown”

★★★★ The Stage
https://www.thestage.co.uk/reviews/2015/electric-dreams/

“This is urgent, necessary theatre, dealing deftly with explosive ideas, that dares to challenge some fundamental perspectives on our current world”

★★★★ The List
https://edinburghfestival.list.co.uk/article/73387-electric-dreams/

“This latest show from fringe favourites Dumbshow is an ambitious piece of political theatre … gripping … thoughtful … passionate and heartfelt”
Lyn Gardner, the Guardian

“Exciting … hugely rewarding”
★★★★ Public Reviews
http://www.thepublicreviews.com/electric-dreams-pleasance-dome-edinburgh/

“Meticulously crafted … a warning for the disengaged”
★★★★ Frowning
http://frowning.us/2015/08/22/dumbshows-electric-dreams/

“Complex, original and compelling”
★★★★ Total Theater
http://www.totaltheater.com/?q=node/6588

“Powerful and interesting”
★★★★ British Theatre Guide
http://www.britishtheatreguide.info/reviews/electric-dreams-pleasance-dome-11899

Recommended by The Telegraph as a ‘Show to See’ praising its ‘conviction’ and ‘theatrical ingenuity’:
http://www.telegraph.co.uk/theatre/what-to-see/edinburgh-theatre-2015--what-to-see/

Audience Response:
Lucy Bennett @LucyBennTweets Aug 30: I have to say that @DumbshowTheatre’s Electric Dreams is one of the best shows I saw at #edfringe. Moving & captivating, go see it, quick!

Georgie Sandland @georgiee_95 Aug 29: @DumbshowTheatre absolutely stunning show this afternoon, really really well done. Definitely one of my favourites of the fringe

ITC @itc_arts Aug 26: Thank you @DumbshowTheatre for brilliant #electricdreams @ThePleasance Dome. Fully demonstrates the power of telling stories through theatre

Lauren Luxford @LNLux Aug 25: #electricdreams is another sublime offering from @DumbshowTheatre - huge topics tackled with subtlety & strength. Great stuff. #edfringe15

email: admin@dumbshow.org
ELECTRIC DREAMS : TOURING INFO
Brand new show from Dumbshow explores: Are we a nation in shock?

As we watch the destruction of our welfare state, we’re asking: why is this happening? Is it what people want; have we actively chosen this path? Have we been told that we’re in a crisis so many times that we’ve come to believe it?

Combining Dumbshow’s trademark storytelling style with urgent contemporary issues, Electric Dreams is a brand new show inspired by Naomi Klein’s The Shock Doctrine – a vibrant, unsettling and bold examination of the state of the nation explored through a human story, a love story.

Rose can’t remember the first 18 years of her life. What happened to her?

Seeking to unravel this mystery she turns investigator, piecing together her history from fragmented memories, documents and dreams – aided by staff in a soon-to-be-closed library. Can Rose’s story wake us all up?

Using live music composed and performed by Rollo Clarke, and video, Electric Dreams journeys from 1950s Canada to the Iraq war to the present day where standing up to a library closure in the UK can have you labelled a domestic extremist.

Current tour dates:
10/10/15 Pegasus Theatre, Oxford
11/10/15 Slung Low’s HUB, Leeds
12/10/15 LBT Studio, Huddersfield
17/10/15 Lowry Studio, Salford

Director, Michael Bryher said ‘Dumbshow is making a stand. We want to be part of a political debate about what kind of country we want to be, because if we don’t, soon it might be too late.

‘In The Shock Doctrine, Naomi Klein challenges the myth that over the past decades free-market capitalism triumphed across the globe democratically, and considers whether often its advancements have been forced on populations unwittingly when they were too shocked or distracted to realise what was happening. The Shock Doctrine was published in 2007 before the financial crisis. We’re applying Klein’s ideas to a post-financial crash Britain. Was Britain in a state of shock in 2008?

‘We’ve been exploring this question, which has made us question Klein’s thesis as well as our own ideas and values, and it is a question that we are still trying to answer. Electric Dreams certainly feels like the most political piece we have made, forged in the fires of anger at the current political situation. We want our audiences to reconsider both where we’ve come from and where we’re going. But we are still asking questions – and I suppose that’s the point.’

Dumbshow was established in 2007 at The University of Warwick and creates fabulous and visually inventive theatre that asks questions about the world through telling stories.

Dumbshow’s previous shows at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe include The Pearl (2013), Roar (2011), Clockheart Boy (2008), The End of the World (2007).

Electric Dreams is created in collaboration with Camden People’s Theatre and supported by the Wellcome Trust Arts Award, the Arts Council and the University of Warwick.

ENDS
Notes to Editors

Dumbshow

The Dumbshow ensemble was established in 2007 by Artistic Director Michael Bryher and has been working together ever since. We have a shared history, complicity, a common language and confidence in each other. We love playing games together (which sometimes get dangerous), we eat together and enjoy each other’s company. We share a belief in the power and importance of telling stories as a way to understand ourselves and the world around us, but we have a variety of skills and backgrounds, all of which go towards making a Dumbshow show what it is.

Dumbshow make visually arresting and textually rich storytelling theatre. Our aims are:

- to tell stories that fire our imaginations, that are important and that need to be told in the theatre;
- to create live events that celebrate the collective experience;
- to make plays that are intellectually and emotionally challenging.

The stories we tell might be out-of-this-world, or based on a real life true story; they might be accessible for children or strictly for adults; they will always entertain and hopefully stimulate your mind; they might make you laugh and they might make you cry, but we hope that having experienced our work you will feel more alive and ready to face the world.

We believe in the power of live theatre – where an audience gathers together to sit and be told a story. For everyone at Dumbshow, we think that this collective experience is a unifying force that deeply enriches our society. So for us, making theatre is a serious business (but we like to have some fun along the way).

Composer Rollo Clarke has written an original piano score for the show, which he will be playing live on stage throughout the autumn tour. Rollo’s previous music can be found on his website here:

http://rolloclarke.com/music
previous work

“A stylish, sexy romp” ★★★★ List
“I’d pay good money to see this at The National” The Stage

“Breathtaking” ★★★★★ BroadwayBaby.com

“Fabulous ... so visually inventive ... I urge anybody that gets a chance to see it to do so” Mark Radcliffe, BBC Radio 2

“I defy anyone not to find something to enjoy in this lively, thoughtful and imaginative production” ★★★★★ British Theatre Guide

“A lesson in exceptional fairy-tale family theatre” ★★★★ Fest

“A powerful antidote to anyone grown cynical about the Fringe” ★★★★ Scotsman, Hot Show

“Children will love the colour and energy, while adults will wonder at this subtle story of love, loss and friendship” ★★★★ Scotsman, Hot Show

“The performances are so tender, the characters can’t fail to steal your heart” Guardian, Pick of the Day

“Moving, visually astonishing... bittersweet beauty might very well stop your heart” ★★★★ Metro, Hot Pick

“A celebration of the art of storytelling” ★★★★★ BroadwayBaby.com

“[this] truly is a lively, novel take on a classic” ★★★★ WhatsOnStage.com

---

To The End of the World
(Edinburgh Festival Fringe)
Phillippe must decide – stay at home with Ava – or dive off the edge of the map. Seduction, intrigue and thrilling new possibilities lead to the precipice. Will he turn back, or throw himself off?

Roar
(Rose Theatre Kingston and Edinburgh Festival Fringe)
Moll Cutpurse has come to settle a grudge and won’t be satisfied until someone pays... A lusty tale of sixteenth-century London starring Love and Revenge, Rampant Judges, Raucous Women, Chaos and the Darkest of Desires

The Death of King Cholera
(Seething Wells, Kingston)
“We are the scientists of Serendipity, the chronclers of chance encounters, the map makers of minute moments, the historians of happy coincidences”. In collaboration with Community Brain and Smoking Apples, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Oedipus: a Love Story
(schools and Edinburgh Festival Fringe)
Join Dumbshow for their playful retelling of a story you thought you knew. Narrated by a flock of Welsh sheep, this energetic yet tender adaptation brings light and soul to a very twisted love story.

Clockheart Boy
(toured nationally)
When a boy with no heart is washed ashore, the Professor and his creations vow to bring him back to life. With wide-eyed wonder Clockheart Boy learns the joys of stargazing, dancing, romance and friendship.

email: admin@dumbshow.org
ELECTRIC DREAMS : TOURING INFO
“AN AMBITIOUS PIECE OF POLITICAL THEATRE...
GRIPPING, THOUGHTFUL, PASSIONATE AND HEARTFELT.”
THE GUARDIAN

ELECTRIC DREAMS
Inspired by the ideas in NAOMI KLEIN'S The Shock Doctrine