



# THE PEARL

adapted from the novella by John Steinbeck

Touring Information Pack

written by **Sam Gayton**  
directed by **Michael Bryher**  
composed by **Rollo Clarke**

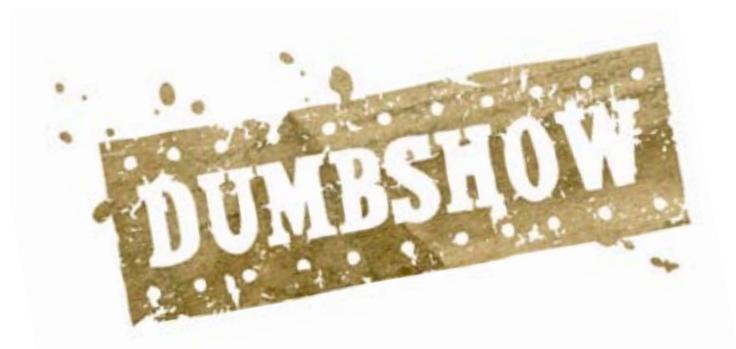
*"The latest young company to watch"*

**WhatsOnStage.com**

*"A fast-rising young company with a very bright future"*

**Fest**

email: [admin@dumbshow.org](mailto:admin@dumbshow.org)  
THE PEARL : TOURING INFO



# TOURING INFORMATION



## THE PEARL

When an impoverished pearl-diver finds the pearl of the world he thinks his life will be transformed forever. But seduced by its beauty and the promise of riches, he is blind to the pearl's destructive power – will he realise before it's too late?

An adaptation of John Steinbeck's novella, *The Pearl* continues Dumbshow's commitment to telling powerful stories which explore the human condition with wit, charm and emotional impact. This timeless fable about wealth, greed and love is a story which resonates strongly in a society that is questioning what we value most.

For more information, photos and video clips visit [www.dumbshow.org/pearl](http://www.dumbshow.org/pearl)

## 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 (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)**

## TOURING BASICS

- touring company of 6 (5 cast, 1 technician)
- running time 1hr10
- recommended ages 12+
- workshops available on request
- available to tour from September 2014

**For further details please contact:**

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# THE SHOW



## The Show

*The Pearl* has been created by Dumbshow with the permission of the John Steinbeck estate. It was originally developed with the aid of Creative Youth at the Rose Theatre, Kingston before performing at The Pleasance at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2013.

It is a simple but brilliant fable about an impoverished pearl-diver, Kino and his wife Joanna, who find the largest pearl in the world. Kino thinks that he will now be able to sell the pearl and pay a doctor to treat his sick son – he believes his family's lives will be transformed forever. However, the pearl's beauty and the promise of riches seduce not only Kino, but everyone around him and instead of bringing hope, the pearl leads Kino and his family down a dark and dangerous path.

## The Style

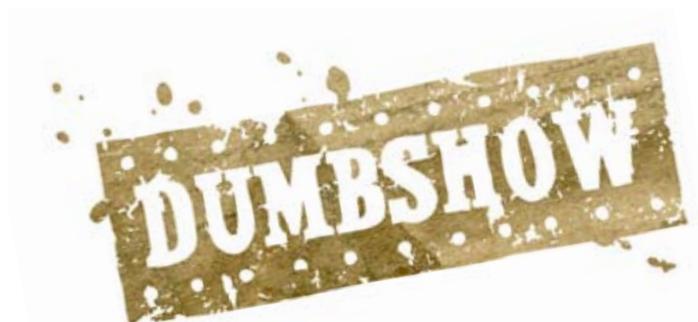
Narrated by a chorus of avuncular beachcombers, Dumbshow's *The Pearl* is a beautiful and challenging tale told with wit and exuberance. On seeing our scratch performance, Kate Cross, Artistic Director at the Egg theatre in Bath said:

*"there were bold stylistic choices made which for me really worked and lifted me beyond what one normally gets from 'storytelling' theatre"*

The beachcombers construct the set from the sea's washed-up debris and themselves transform into all the characters in the story – Kino and Joanna, an evil doctor, conniving pearl dealers, neighbours, blood-thirsty trackers and many more. Our version of this story is told in a way that is both visually imaginative and evocative, whilst Sam Gayton's script is gripping and poetic. Recorded music merges with the original score of Dumbshow's own musician.

On the one hand, this is a morally ambiguous story which interrogates a society which preaches the dream of self-made success, but then prohibits any movement up the social ladder – a story about what risks you run if you try and challenge the status quo and its existing power structures. But it is also a story about love and forgiveness that asks us to consider what we value most in the world.

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# FURTHER INFORMATION



## TECHNICAL INFORMATION

**The Pearl** can be adapted to fit in proscenium, end-on and shallow thrust spaces. The set is free standing, consisting of a number of boom bases, a table, a ladder, and a vast array of nautical props!

Minimum playing area: 5m x 4m

Basic PA with input for laptop playback

Get in: 8 hours (assuming standard rig or basic pre-rig)

Get out: 1 hour

Running time: 1hr10

LX and sound operated by touring technician

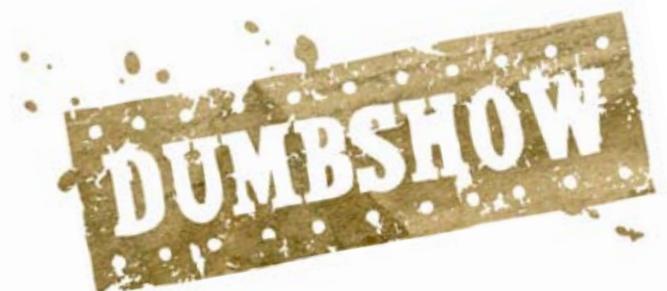
## EDUCATION AND WORKSHOPS

Our pool of professional, experienced workshop leaders can work with venues to put together education and participation packages to suit each venue and visiting schools. For example:

- meet and greet or Q&A sessions with the company after the show
- workshops based around devising and adapting work
- workshops based around Steinbeck or the themes of the play

*The Pearl* will appeal widely to schools. Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* is on the syllabus, and we think that *The Pearl* may be popular with English teachers looking to introduce the author to Y7, Y8 and Y9. Workshops about devising/adapting are also useful throughout the Drama/Theatre Studies curriculum. KS4 and KS5 do important devised work and would benefit greatly from seeing a show of this type, accompanied by a workshop. We also think this show will be of use to Y10 students studying Drama alongside the compulsory English/English Literature. They would have the joint benefit of experiencing devising (great for Drama) and the bonus of seeing an adaptation of Steinbeck's work, who they'll recognise and perhaps appreciate even more as a result.

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# FRINGE 2013 REVIEWS



## ★★★★ **The Skinny**

[...] The playfulness and charm of the performers conjure up countless striking images throughout the play and it's worth the ticket price alone just to watch the seemingly limitless possibilities created by the team. If you're unfamiliar with the work of Dumbshow then you're in for a real treat with *The Pearl*, an imaginative and incredibly emotional morality tale on greed, corruption and the truly important things in life. If you're a fan of the rising company then you know not to miss out on this dream-like offering. Catch them before they start selling out the big theatres.

## ★★★★ **HOT SHOW**

### **The Scotsman**

Such low-tech ingenuity, in both visual and dramatic effects, is *The Pearl's* other central asset, allied with skilfully wrought mime and movement elements and Ed Elbourne's excellent lighting design, as a sheet and a stick become a boat; buckets and a towel become jellyfish and a stringray. These scenes are suffused with a lovely wide-eyed wonderment from the cast that it's impossible not to share, interwoven with plenty of playful humour [...] an imaginative joy to behold.

## ★★★★ **ThreeWeeks**

A real treasure. Dreamy verse, dance-like movement, an original score of soft piano and puppetry make an imaginatively beautiful adaptation of Steinbeck's novella. With some stylistic surprises, it still stays true to the story's splintering themes of greed, hope and the prison of poverty [...] all of the performances are as promising as the pearl itself, and the piece's most stunning quality is the strongly-stitched co-ordination between them. Take a dive.

### **The Stage**

[...] presented by the versatile performers of Dumbshow with a joy in imagination and performance that cushions and counterbalances the darker aspects of the story [...] The performance vocabulary is broad and fluid enough to include mime and symbolic action as well as realism, and two of the most delightful sequences are an underwater scene represented by a bubble machine, with empty water bottles as passing fish and inverted bowls as turtles, and a moment of celebration involving Barbra Streisand.

## ★★★★ **A Younger Theatre**

[...] This is group storytelling done with real art: the cast play a variety of characters and fill the show with little pieces of magic [...] Subtly political and ultimately moving, *The Pearl* is delicate and enjoyable storytelling theatre, well made.

## ★★★★★ **The Public Reviews**

Beautifully crafted with skill, care and passion, Bryher's *The Pearl* is one of those slightly rare plays where all the pieces just slot together perfectly. The acting is first rate; the cast are united and adaptable, the set, by Hannah Rowlands is realistic and diverse, while Rollo Clarke's music and Gayton's dialogue is so soft and delicate that it becomes poetry in the hands of the actors on stage. What *The Pearl* manages to do well is the getting the basics of what makes excellent theatre exactly right; an original story, a strong cast and creative team and a script that paints a picture as vivid as the actions on stage. A play that is heart warming, heartbreaking, uplifting and thought-provoking, Dumbshow Theatre's *The Pearl* is wondrous piece of new theatre and an absolute must-see at the Fringe this year.

## ★★★★ **Broadway Baby**

[...] Dumbshow have managed to find the beauty and levity in a tale that contains much darkness. Whilst remaining true to the original text they have made a few minor adjustments. The inclusion of Scottish nuns as Kino's aunts is inspired and adds a much-needed layer of coming relief. Despite the serious moments, the adaptation manages to avoid becoming bogged down in tragedy by finding hope as well [...] This is a wonderful production that evokes great emotion using quite simple effects. They manage to portray the beauty in the love story of Kino and Joanna and the ease with which the flaws of human nature can poison happiness.

## ★★★★ **Fringe Guru**

Dumbshow are a likeable crew, who quickly generate a genuine rapport with their audience [...] as a creative-yet-faithful adaptation of the novella, it's hard to fault. I loved the dance-like set-pieces, the characters and the caricatures, and the cheeky self-awareness built around the improvised nature of its props. It's a treat to see images so powerful created from such simple components – and you could say the same about the whole production, which constructs something clever and quirky on top of a thoroughly traditional play. In the end, then, my best summary of *The Pearl* is that it's simply a tale well told.

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THE PEARL : TOURING INFO



# MARKETING INFORMATION



## BROCHURE COPY

### Short copy

When impoverished Kino finds the 'pearl of the world' he believes his family's life will be transformed, but is blind to the danger of possessing something that everyone wants. Dumbshow present John Steinbeck's timeless story of wealth, greed and love.

### Long copy

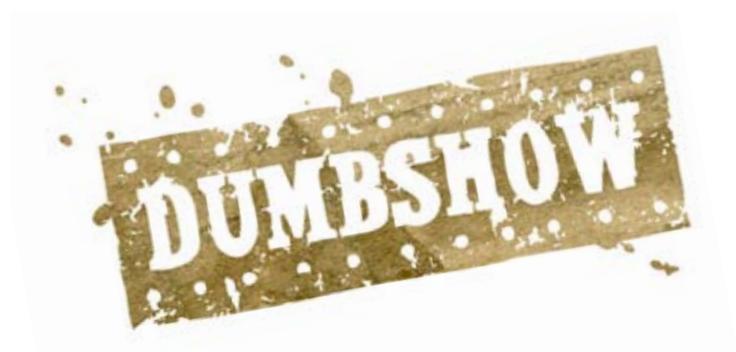
When impoverished pearl-diver Kino finds the 'pearl of the world' he believes his family's life will be transformed. Seduced by the pearl's beauty and promise of riches, he's blind to the danger of possessing something that everyone else wants.

A timeless fable about the allure of greed, the confines of class, and the redemptive power of love. It asks us to consider what we value most in the world.

Dumbshow bring John Steinbeck's novel to life with their trademark visual inventiveness and playful theatricality.

'Hot Show' ★★★★★ (Scotsman). [www.dumbshow.org](http://www.dumbshow.org)

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# SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE



Dumbshow presents

## **The Pearl**

adapted by Sam Gayton from the novella by John Steinbeck  
directed by Michael Bryher

[add dates]  
[add venue]

Following a popular and critically-acclaimed run at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2013, Dumbshow tour their brand new adaptation of John Steinbeck's classic novella *The Pearl*. A timeless fable about the allure of wealth, the confines of class and the redemptive power of love. It asks us to consider what we value most in the world.

When impoverished pearl-diver Kino finds the 'pearl of the world' he believes his family's life will be transformed forever. Seduced by the pearl's beauty and promise of riches, he is blind to the danger of possessing something that everyone else wants. Instead of bringing hope, the pearl leads Kino and his family down a dark and dangerous path.

Steinbeck's story resonates strongly today as we reel from a financial crisis and begin to question anew whether money has become our master rather than our servant.

*The Pearl* is narrated by a chorus of beachcombers who construct the set and props from the sea's washed-up debris and transform into all of the characters in the story, accompanied by an original musical score created by composer and pianist Rollo Clarke.

Sam Gayton supplies a gripping and poetic script, faithful to Steinbeck's story and spirit. Sam is a published author whose first novel *The Snow Merchant* made Amazon's 'Best of 2012' list of the Top Ten Children's books.

Dumbshow is an ensemble theatre company that has been working together for over 6 years. Dumbshow is committed to telling powerful stories that explore the human condition with wit, charm and emotional impact. Dumbshow toured *Clockheart Boy* around England in Autumn 2012 with Arts Council funding.

Dumbshow's Artistic Director Michael Bryher trained at LAMDA. He is an Associate Artist for the National Youth Theatre, and has worked with companies including Kneehigh, Dreamthinkspeak and the RSC. He was also a finalist for the 2013 JMK Award.

Praise for *The Pearl*:

★★★★ 'Hot Show' "A bric-a-brac masterpiece.... real emotional heart... an imaginative joy to behold" (The Scotsman)

★★★★ "Catch them before they start selling out the big theatres" (The Skinny)

★★★★ "A real treasure...the performances are as promising as the pearl itself" (ThreeWeeks)

★★★★ "Subtly political and ultimately moving" (A Younger Theatre)

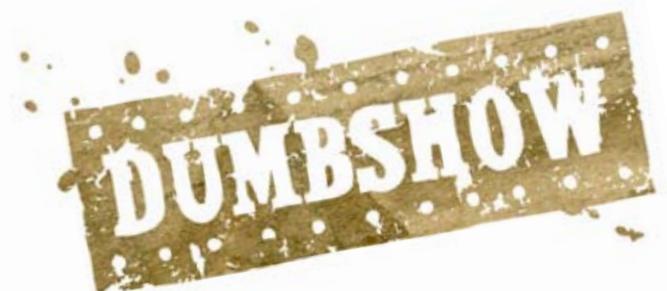
★★★★ "Visually glorious" (Fringe Guru)

★★★★★ The Public Reviews, "Beautifully crafted ... a must-see" (The Public Reviews)

The Guardian's Lyn Gardner recommended *The Pearl* in her final Edinburgh festival tips on what to watch.

For more information please visit [www.dumbshow.org](http://www.dumbshow.org)  
For press photos, interviews and further information please  
contact Dumbshow's Press Officer Nicola Cutcher on  
07798 888585 or [press@dumbshow.org](mailto:press@dumbshow.org)

email: [admin@dumbshow.org](mailto:admin@dumbshow.org)  
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# THE COMPANY



**Dumbshow tells powerful stories which explore the human condition with wit, charm and emotional impact.**

*"What Dumbshow really excel at is creating striking images that stick in your mind long after you've left the theatre"* **Fest**

## **What we do**

Dumbshow is an ensemble company led by Artistic Director Michael Bryher, and has been working together for 6 years.

Dumbshow makes high-quality story based theatre.

We make work with passion and a sense mischief; we want to make you laugh and make you cry.

Our shows are both challenging and accessible.

We make work that is both well written and visually exciting.

We want to make our audiences feel more alive through watching our work.

We have recently completed a successful Arts Council funded tour of *Clockheart Boy*, our show for family audiences, visiting:

Lyric, Hammersmith

The Egg, Bath

The Old Market, Brighton

South Hill Park Arts Centre, Reading

The Lowry, Salford Quays

North Wall Arts Centre, Oxford

Greenwich Theatre

## **Who we are**

Dumbshow is comprised of a variety of creative professionals: Director Michael Bryher is an Associate artist for The National Youth Theatre, he trained at LAMDA and has worked with companies such as Kneehigh, dreamthinkspeak and the RSC. Writer Sam Gayton has had his first novel, *The Snow Merchant*, published by Andersen Press, and has recently featured in Amazon's 'Best of 2012' list of Top Ten Children's books. His next novel, *Lilliput*, will be published in the spring of 2013. Producer Heather Young has worked as General Manager for C venues at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and works as a freelance general manager, company stage manager and administrator for companies such as English Pocket Opera, Arts Theatre West End, Vocal Futures, Seabright Productions.

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# 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?



## **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.



## **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



## **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.



## **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.

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