

“Entertaining and very moving”

Guy Holland, Quicksilver



The Singing Nun

Directed by David Woods
one half of award winning
comic duo Ridiculusmus

**Written & Performed
by Richard Talbot**

Information Pack

Seven reasons to pick The Singing Nun

1. Strong, surprising characters
2. Sharp writing
3. Inspired comic improvisation
4. Respected artistic team
5. Gentle interaction – great fun for groups of friends
6. Ridiculous music, inventive lighting
7. An intriguing tent

and

8. Guaranteed eternal happiness

Creative Team

Richard Talbot

David Woods

Carran Waterfield

Luca Gatti

Graham Kirk

Robert Harvey

Writer /performer

Director

Associate Artist

Composer

Lighting Designer

Voice Coach

Nina and Frederick

Ridiculusmus

Triangle

BMG

Hull Truck

Roy Hart Theatre

Richard Talbot

The Singing Nun

The Singing Nun is a collaboration with Director David Woods, one half of the award-winning comic duo Ridiculusmus.

This extraordinary new production combines innovative staging with the techniques of stand-up (interaction, asides) and natural clowning (stupidity, physical theatre and character comedy).

It is inspired by the true story of Jeanine Deckers, The Singing Nun, who was famous all too briefly, and who regained fame through an absurdly theatrical suicide.

“Johnny Haunt” is the leader of the International Singing Nun e-group. This sketchy biography is “his tribute” to the nun. He is her biggest fan, and he’s looking for converts.

Switching cleverly between Johnny and a portrait of a pop chart-obsessed nun, Talbot weaves both characters into a funny and surprising celebration of love, ambition and failure.

As Johnny’s devotion and the nun’s delusions crank themselves into overdrive, the nun and her fan meet in a ridiculous double suicide attempt. It could be the biggest thing they have ever done.

Interaction

In the tradition of stand-up comedy and solo clown performance audience members are gently seduced into one-to-one dialogue by the sensitive and charming “nun” from the moment the house opens. They are invited to, and often do, banter with the nun. At certain points in the story they are invited for a private audience, either individually or in groups of two. This takes place in a small missionary tent, separated from the audience by a curtain. The audience may eavesdrop as they can hear the dialogue taking place in the tent. The use of shadows projected onto the curtain adds to the audience’s sense of anticipation and intrigue.

Background

Jeanine Deckers, The Singing Nun, became famous as the smiling nun whose hit song “Dominique” won her a Grammy in 1963. Her success persuaded her to leave the convent but in spite of numerous attempts at reinventing herself she never regained her fame. The last fifteen years of her life were spent battling with the Belgian tax authorities over a bill for record sales equivalent to £80,000. In 1985, she killed herself in an Easter weekend suicide pact with her lesbian partner. She still has hundreds of fans around the world and several websites dedicated to her story. Her biography is soon to be published in English.

Nina and Frederick is the production company behind The Singing Nun. Established by Richard Talbot & Carran Waterfield, this creative partnership previously worked together on Triangle’s Looking For The Tallyman. Talbot & Waterfield have delighted audiences in studio theatres and non-theatre spaces with their combination of originality and entertainment. They are now resident at The Herbert Art Gallery, Coventry. Their eccentric tribute to the Danish 60s folk singers, Nina and Frederik was turned into feature film, *Tribute*, with Matthew Kelly, and in 2003 they toured arts centres in Denmark performing in Danish and English. The Singing Nun, a solo performance by Talbot, with dramaturgy from Waterfield, continues their innovative and playful approach to the biographies of forgotten and “failed” artists.

www.triangletheatre.co.uk

and

www.ninaandfrederick.co.uk

Biographies

Richard Talbot Performer

Richard Talbot is an established performer working across theatre and live art. His physical and eccentric characters have toured throughout the UK and abroad. He trained with the SITI Company, New York, Pan Theatre and Roy Hart Theatre, France and often collaborates with independent theatre companies, especially with Triangle. He is trained in Japanese performance techniques, he has translated and directed innovative adaptations of contemporary Japanese performance including the world premier of Tsuka Kohei's 'Murder In Atami'.

Recent work

Nina and Frederick: An arthouse tribute act with two regional tours and one international: Pa Genhor Med og Frederick (2003) Lovers of the World Unite (2001) and Listen to the Ocean (2000) as well as a feature documentary Tribute (2002, dir. Debbie Isitt) starring Matthew Kelly

“...Funny and ironic without bitterness...”

Kazuko Hohki, Live Artist

“...An authentic tribute...”

Berlingske Tildende, Copenhagen

“...Terrific...delirious in every sense...”

James Christopher, The Times

Quicksilver Children's Theatre: National tour of Sea of Silence

“...Talbot is a huge and terrifying cross between a Mikado and a roadworker...”

Susan Elkin, The Stage

Ridiculusmus: Performed on the British Council tour of The Exhibitionists in Malawi in 2003 and currently developing the company's new show How To Be Funny for 2004/5.

Snarling Beasties/Triangle: The 101 Dalmatians, Belgrade (2000)

“...Talbot ..Unbelievably dog -like in the role of Pongo...”

Katy Stirland, Bedworth echo

“...Pongo..played winningly by Talbot...”

Kate Bassett, Daily Telegraph

Triangle: Looking for the Tallyman, 1998 (co-writer/performer)

“..One of the most terrifying, disturbing and powerful plays on the Fringe...”

Zoe Green, The Independent

David Woods Director

The Singing Nun has been devised with, and is directed by David Woods. David Woods studied English & Drama at Sheffield University, acting at the Poor School, and has since studied Clown and Bouffons, Commedia Dell'Arte and Contemporary Dance. He co-founded Ridiculusmus in 1992, since when he has jointly devised, written and performed in all their shows. David has taught and directed at the Poor School, Trinity College Dublin, the Universities of Brighton, Belfast, Edinburgh, Kent and Wolverhampton and Ulster. He has widened his practice by working with Live Artists including Kazuko Hohki and experimented with new forms of theatre and art as an individual.

Carran Waterfield Associate Artist, additional direction

Carran Waterfield has collaborated with Richard Talbot since 1997, as co-creator of Nina and Frederick and The Little Herberts, a children-centred performance and visual arts project. Carran is performer, founder and Artistic Director of Triangle and has created several award-winning solo productions. Recently she directed a new play 7777 All Good Girlies Go To Heaven at Birmingham University. She has been a visiting artist to several UK universities and has presented at international conferences including Transit (Denmark).

Gianluca Gatti Stage Manager/Additional Sound Design

University of Music & Arts Rome, School of Songwriting CET Avigliano Umbro, Italy, Music for Film & Video Morley College London. Extensive knowledge of mixing desks, fx units, mic placement, Musician, Composer & Engineer. Regular performer at Dingwalls, The Borderline, La Scala, Momo's 100 Club, Vibe Bar, London, and managing international touring for bands (BMG etc) Spain, Denmark, Italy Germany & USA.

Robert Harvey Voice Coach

He was born in Australia, performed in Musical Theatre in London in the 1950s before leaving to join The Roy Hart Theatre in France. The company made its debut with "The Bacchae" by Euripides at the World Festival of Nancy, demonstrating a distinctive and groundbreaking approach to the voice, then undertook a number of foreign tours, notably Jean-Louis Barrault's invitation to the "Theatre des Nations". Robert now teaches Extended Voice and singing, and directs.

Graham Kirk Lighting Designer

Graham has been Production Manager for Hull Truck Theatre Company for the last eight years. He now works independently on scenic construction and lighting design projects for a wide range of theatre companies including Ambassador, ARC, and West Yorkshire Playhouse. Clients in TV and film include BBC and Maverick TV.

Design Ali Maclaurin & the company

A practising stage designer include theatre in non-theatre settings, community plays, Theatre in Education and site-specific work; mask and costume making, especially using non-traditional methods, and puppetry. Designed Listen to the Ocean (Nina and Frederick 2000) author of 'Design for Devising' and 'Making Meaning: theatre design but not as we know it'.

Marketing

This high quality show is entertaining, engages the audience and brings a cross-over audience from physical theatre and comedy.

A workshop is available for students and emerging professional artists.

The company can provide full marketing support, including press reviews, media interviews and photographs, posters and flyers. Video clips of the performance for plasma screens can also be supplied.

Target or Potential Audience

Core Audience

- People who normally attend similar work.
- Older women
- Groups: nights out with work colleagues; groups of artists.
- Young professionals, especially ones who use creativity as a lifestyle.
- People who embrace experimental work.
- Students, in particular from performing arts courses.

Extended Audience

- Comedy and surreal comedy attenders
- Visual artists

Audience Responses

"...Brilliant and funny..."

Deborah Martin-Williams, Coventry City Council

"...I cannot believe how much it has remained in my thoughts. My mind was whirling with how you layered the piece..."

Sharon Barnsley, Student, Loughborough University

"...Draws you in, makes you feel secure, then does something extraordinary..."

Lucia Hogg, The Junction, Cambridge

"...Just wanted to let you know that I enjoyed the performance at The Hexagon very much... entertaining and funny and surprising. I hope you get interest from national promoters that you're seeking. Best wishes for the future of the project..."

Sally Rew, Assistant Theatre Officer, Arts Council England, West Midlands.

"...The strength of the piece is the set of characters. I thought the set was great. Much of the text was funny. When it was sharp it was very sharp..."

Chris Johnstone, Theatre Studies, Lecturer Warwick University

"...It certainly is a technique I have never seen used before in theatre. It transforms a simply narrative, however funny and engaging into something much more complex and rich..."

Clive Barker, author, Theatre Games (1977)

Additional Information

Workshop Accompanying The Singing Nun

For an additional fee, Richard Talbot will offer a workshop exploring 'The Character Actor' alongside performances of 'The Singing Nun'. The workshop is for up to fifteen participants and is targeted at students and emerging artists. The workshop reexamines the notion of the Character Actor and gives an introduction to the Physical Theatre tradition. It introduces extended range voice work, physical discipline, and comic technique. Participants learn how to develop stamina, focus, and sensitivity as well as work on improvisation and ensemble choreography. Richard Talbot is an experienced workshop leader and a visiting lecturer on Physical Theatre at Birmingham University.

Availability

From February 2005 for small scale theatre and live art venues.

Duration

Black box presentation: 1 hour 10 mins without interval.
Site-specific events: scenes can be presented independently with breaks or rotating for up to 2 hours (optional).

Presenters' Responsibility

The fee for The Singing Nun is £600 per performance. In addition to the fee, promoters are required to cover the cost of accommodation for three people.

Technical Requirements

Space

Minimum playing space 4m x 4m
Minimum height 3m to rig
Dimensions including tent and curtain to separate audience.
Requires most intimate possible seating arrangement

Lighting

Full black out required

On Stage

Bar One: This should be your LX bar that is nearest to the Down Stage edge of the performance area. Please note that a bar may be required Down Stage of this for the touring curtain

Touring Curtain: Ideally this needs to be slung across Down Stage. A rope will be supplied but a piece of sash extension rope may be needed. Position and hanging points to be chosen on the day.

Bar Two: Approx 0.7 to 1 meter Up stage of Bar 1

Bar Three: Ideally 4 meters Up stage of Bar 1. Or as far Up stage as available.

Touring Floor Lights

The following will be supplied by the production:

5 minim fresnels on floor stands
2 minim fresnels on LX stands
4 footlights
1 chasing rope light
1 set of fairy lights
2 electric candles
1 glowing globe
Plinth with candle bulbs & switches.

Audience will be invited to switch lights on during pre-show). This unit requires 3 x 15A channels, DSL, to be programmed as a flickering chase.

House Floor Lights

The following will be supplied by the venue:

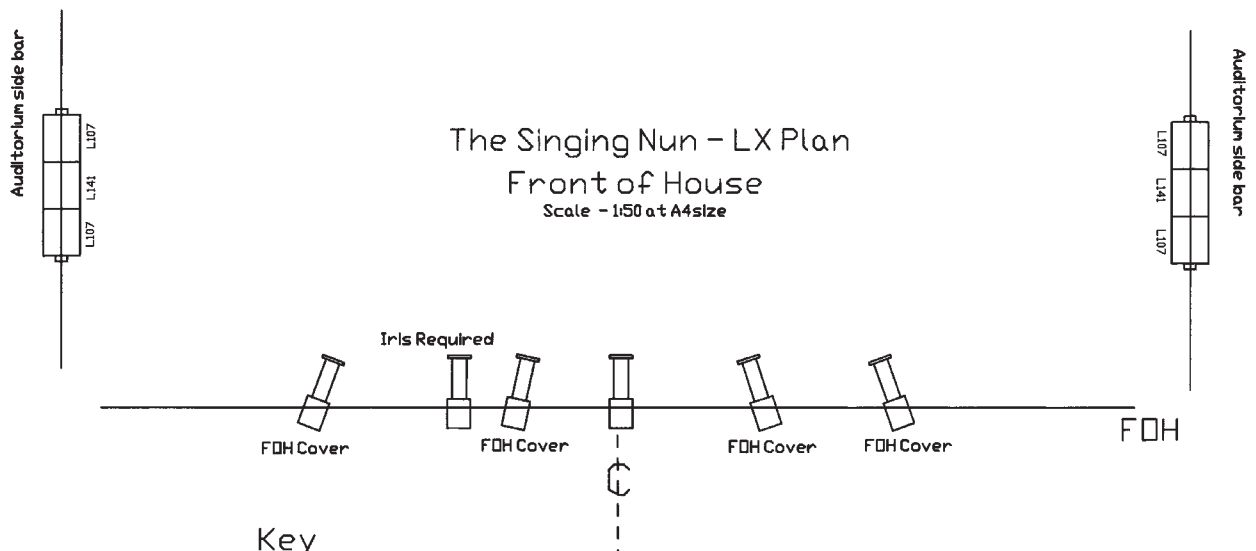
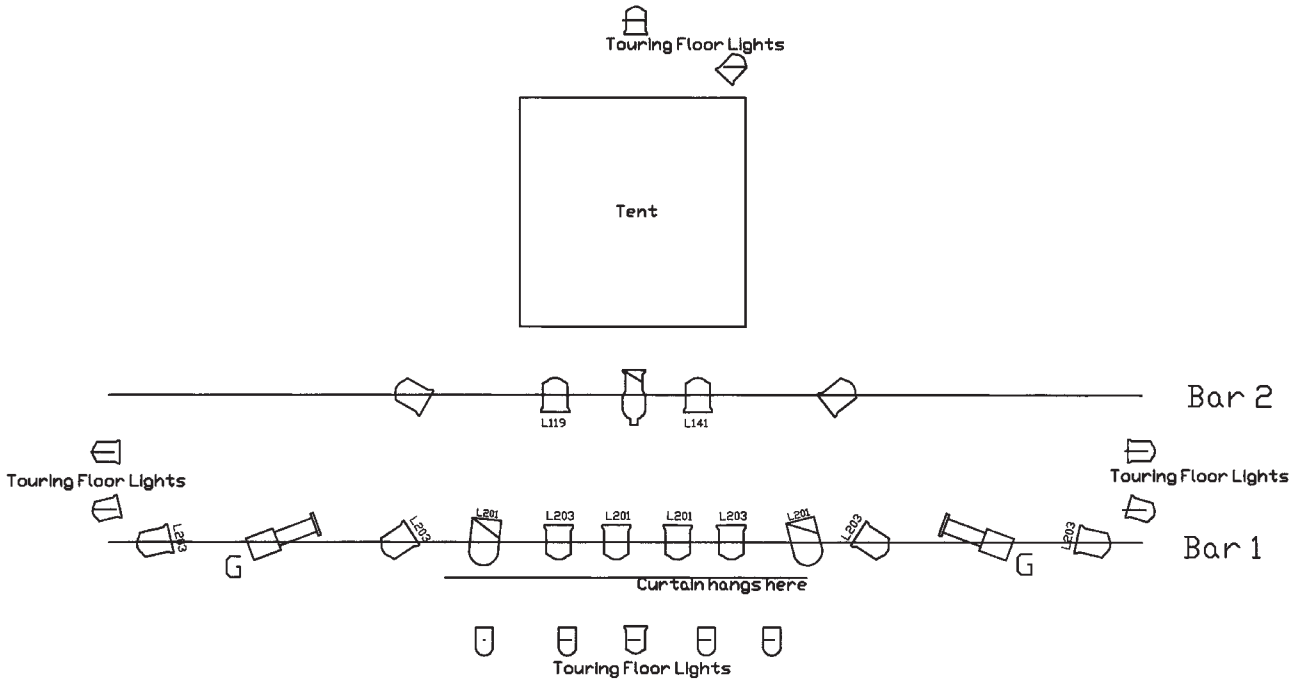
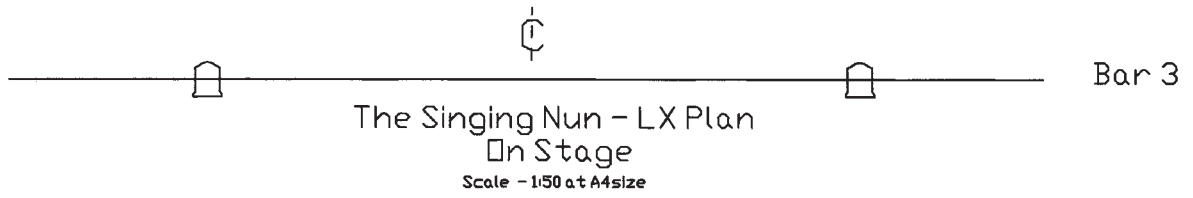
DSL 5 x 15A
DSR 2 x 15A
DSC 3 x 15A
USC 5 x 15A, 1 x non-dim
non-dim circuit must be controllable from LX box or through lighting board







Front of House

Auditorium side bars: Throughout the show, the audience require lighting. Ideally this should be floods in L141 & L107. Please choose position and type of lantern that best suits your venue.

FOH Bar: Please use FOH cover lanterns that best suit your venue.

Gels & Gobos: Please use the nearest colours available, we will be carrying a small stock. Please do not order extra gel that will be recharged to us. If you do not have lanterns that take gobos don't worry we won't use them.



- Key
-  1k Profile
 -  1k Profile with gobo holder
 -  Audience lights - see notes.
 -  1k Fresnel
 -  Narrow Profile
 -  Par Can - CP62

Sound

PA Requirements:

3x PA Channels minimum (for microphones)

2x Microphones (for vocal use)

Effects unit for delay and reverb

CD Player

The visiting company will provide one Radio Mic (hand held radio microphone & stand)

Miscellaneous

Get in duration 4 hours minimum

Get out 1 hour

Dressing room required

Usher required to supervise audience

Features live music, smoke and flashing lights

NOTE: All equipment supplied by touring production is PAT tested

Contact

Richard Talbot

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UK

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Tour booking/administration

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|-----------|-----------------------------|
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