

SPYMONKEY IN ASSOCIATION WITH ROYAL & DERNGATE NORTHAMPTON PRESENTS

OEDIPUSSY

Directed and Adapted by Emma Rice

Performed by Aitor Basauri, Stephan Kreiss, Petra Massey & Toby Park

Written by Carl Grose & Spymonkey

Set Design by Michael Vale Costume Design by Lucy Bradridge Lighting by Phil Supple Original Music by Toby Park & Neil Filby Sound Design by Simon Baker

Supported by the National Lottery through Arts Council of England

Spymonkey's hilarious physical comedy combines with the playful storytelling verve of Kneehigh artistic director Emma Rice and writing partner Carl Grose to create an outrageous no-holds-barred subversion of the quintessential Greek tragedy - a tale of forbidden lust, accidental incest, violent murder and the ultimate dysfunctional family: a jealous father, a messed-up son, and one mother of a brilliant comedy.

CRITICS CHOICE ★★★★★ 'Remarkable. Powerful. Joyful' The Times

In an attempt to escape their destiny in being all-too-widely recognised as the creators of some of the funniest, riotously surreal work of the last decade, Spymonkey turn their unique brand of inspired theatrical invention to the greatest of tragic tales in order to establish their legacy as the greatest tragic geniuses of their generation. Like Oedipus himself, however, they discover that eluding destiny is no mean feat.

WINNER Argus Angel Award for Excellence in Theatre, Brighton Festival 2012

Taking inspiration from Barbarella, Bond and Bowie, Oedipussy features a set by Michael Vale (RSC, National Theatre, ENO), costumes by longstanding Spymonkey collaborator Lucy Bradridge (Cirque du Soleil, Mighty Boosh), lighting design by Phil Supple (Shockheaded Peter, Northumberland Lights), original music by Toby Park and Neil Filby (Silo8, Fabrikk Switzerland) and sound design by Simon Baker (Matilda, Kneehigh).

CRITICS CHOICE ★★★★★ 'Joyously inventive retelling of the Oedipus legend' Evening Standard

Contains incest, violence, mutilation, strobes, nudity and chorus work. Suitable for audiences 14+

OEDIPUSSY UK PRESS ROUND-UP

The Times

★★★★ **CRITICS CHOICE 'Remarkable. Powerful. Joyful'**

Evening Standard

★★★★ **CRITICS CHOICE 'Joyously inventive retelling of the Oedipus legend'**

Libby Purves Theatrecat.com

★★★★ **'I love Spymonkey for the brilliance and precision of their clowning and the ripple of pure intelligence beneath the anarchic surface... Quite rare, quite wonderful, not to be missed.'**

WINNER Argus Angel Award for Excellence, Brighton Festival 2012

The Guardian

'Proves that inside every tragedy there's a comedy trying to get out. Brilliant. Riotous laughter. Spymonkey deliver'

The Scotsman

★★★★ **'Emma Rice's production is colourful and ingenious... A show stuffed with talent, and a true sense of tragedy.'**

Metro London

★★★★ **'So funny... Hellenic delirium'**

Variety

'Marvellously high-serious title song... Supremely witty... Pulls off a major surprise'

British Theatre Guide

'An outrageous night of comedy... Hilariously tasteless'

WhatsOnStage

★★★★ **'The clowning is, as always with this extraordinarily talented troupe, timed to perfection'**

The Stage

'Endlessly inventive, fantastically physical performances'

The Public Reviews

★★★★1/2 **'Eclectic, cheeky, audacious and very funny. A fabulous night out'**

Liverpool Echo

8/10 'A unique and utterly nutty evening's entertainment'

The Times - feature by Dominic Maxwell

'If there's a funnier theatre company out there than Spymonkey, I can't think of it'

SYNOPSIS

Taking stock of the litany of their own personal tragedies brought about through years of hurling themselves around the stage for the sake of their art - disintegrating knees, dodgy memories and an ever-increasing reliance on anti-inflammatories - the four members of Spymonkey turn their energies to establishing their legacy as the greatest tragic geniuses of their generation.

Laius, as riding teacher to the young prince Chryssipus, seduces his charge, and in so doing raises the ire of the gods. Now king of Thebes, and terrified of the curse of a father-killing, mother-loving son, he and his wife Jocasta attempt to resist temptation. They fail! Half-crippled and abandoned at birth, 'Puffy Foot' Oedipus (the literal translation of his name) is rescued by a shepherd and raised by adoptive parents in neighbouring Corinth. When the boy becomes a man, he too hears rumours of his terrible destiny, and leaves those he believes to be his true parents to set out upon the road. Quarreling with and then slaying a warrior upon the road, Oedipus unknowingly murders his own father. By solving her despicable riddling he rids Thebes of the curse of the Sphinx, a monstrous half-woman-half-cat, and in doing so wins the hand (equally unwittingly) of his own mother.

Years pass until the land of Thebes is blighted by a plague brought on by these crimes against decency. Oedipus vows to avenge the killer of Laius, little knowing that in doing so he will ultimately unearth the full horror of his own actions. In a twist of irony inescapable in its elegance, it is the blind seer Tiresius who sees clearly the truth, whereas the fully-sighted Oedipus is blind to it. Jocasta, seeing the writing on the wall, hangs herself. On discovering the truth, Oedipus can only submit to the brutal logic of the blind/truth paradigm, and gouges out his eyes with his mother/wife's brooch. He casts himself out on the road to wander the world, guided only by his daughter/half-sister/father's-step-daughter Antigone.

In parallel to the Oedipus story, the four performers of Spymonkey discover, like Oedipus himself, that escaping destiny is no easy task.

STYLE & INFLUENCES

Spymonkey delight in a carefully choreographed anarchy and highly visual sense of the theatre, juxtaposed with slick set pieces, deft dance theatre and musical flourishes. Emma Rice and Carl Grose bring to the work a strong narrative and emotionally vivid sensibility which act to focus this theatrical energy.

Much of the inspiration for *Oedipussy* comes from the company's singular interpretation of classical Greek theatre - chorus work, mask work, tragic acting with its bold gestic physicality. Other influences for this work include *Barbarella* and 70s sci-fi, the visceral strangeness of Pasolini's *Edipo Re*, musical theatre, Kabuki, David Bowie, Bond title sequences, superheroes and, if you'll believe it, minimalism.

Long sample copy:

**STRAPLINE: A HILARIOUS AWARD-WINNING NO-HOLDS-BARRED
SUBVERSION OF THE QUINTESSENTIAL GREEK TRAGEDY**

Spymonkey in association with Royal & Derngate Northampton presents

OEDIPUSSY

Directed and Adapted by **Emma Rice**

Performed by **Aitor Basauri, Stephan Kreiss, Petra Massey & Toby Park**

Written by **Carl Grose & Spymonkey**

Set Design by **Michael Vale** Costume Design by **Lucy Bradridge** Lighting by **Phil Supple** Original Music by **Toby Park & Neil Filby** Sound Design by **Simon Baker**

WINNER *Argus Angel Brighton Festival 2012*

'Remarkable. Powerful. Joyful' **CRITICS CHOICE** ★★★★★ *The Times*

Hot on the heels of their acclaimed version of Moby Dick comes an eagerly-awaited collaboration of artists at the very the forefront of British theatre. Spymonkey's hilariously anarchic physical comedy and the playful storytelling of Kneehigh artistic director Emma Rice and writing partner Carl Grose, combine to create an outrageous no-holds-barred subversion of the quintessential Greek tragedy - a tale of forbidden lust, accidental incest, violent murder and the ultimate dysfunctional family: a jealous father, a messed-up son, and one mother of a brilliant comedy.

CRITICS CHOICE ★★★★★ 'Joyously inventive retelling of the Oedipus legend'
Evening Standard

Inspired by *Barbarella*, *Bowie* and a little bit of *Bond*, Spymonkey turn their unique brand of theatrical invention to this greatest of tragic tales, brought to life in typically sumptuous fashion with the help of set designer Michael Vale (RSC, National Theatre, ENO), costume designer Lucy Bradridge (Cirque de Soleil) and features original music by Spymonkey's Toby Park.

Contains incest, violence, mutilation, strobes, nudity and chorus-work. Suitable for audiences 14+

Supported by the National Lottery through the Arts Council of England [logo]

spymonkey on web: www.spymonkey.co.uk/oedipussy/

spymonkey on twitter: @spymonkeycomedy

spymonkey on facebook: spymonkey

Shorter sample copy:

Spymonkey in association with Royal & Derngate Northampton presents
OEDIPUSSY

Directed and Adapted by **Emma Rice**

Performed by **Aitor Basauri, Stephan Kreiss, Petra Massey & Toby Park**

Written by **Carl Grose & Spymonkey**

[further credits - optional: Set Design by **Michael Vale** Costume Design by **Lucy Bradridge** Lighting by **Phil Supple** Original Music by **Toby Park & Neil Filby** Sound Design by **Simon Baker**]

Spymonkey's hilariously anarchic comedy combines with the playful storytelling of Kneehigh artistic director Emma Rice (Brief Encounter) and writer Carl Grose (Tristan & Yseult) to create an outrageous no-holds-barred subversion of the quintessential Greek tragedy. Inspired by Barbarella, Bowie and a little bit of Bond, this is a tale of the ultimate dysfunctional family: a jealous father, a messed-up son, and one mother of a brilliant comedy.

'Remarkable. Powerful. Joyful' **CRITICS CHOICE** ★★★★★ *The Times*

WINNER Argus Angel Brighton Festival 2012

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newsletter copy:

SPYMONKEY'S OEDIPUSSY

Spymonkey (Moby Dick, Cooped) return with their award-winning, no-holds-barred subversion of the quintessential Greek tragedy, inspired by Barbarella, Bowie and a little bit of Bond. Created with Kneehigh director Emma Rice (Brief Encounter, Wild Bride) and writing partner Carl Grose (Tristan & Yseult, Vesturport's Faust), it is a tale of forbidden lust, accidental incest and the ultimate dysfunctional family: a jealous father, a messed-up son, and one mother of a brilliant comedy. www.spymonkey.co.uk/oedipussy

CRITICS CHOICE ★★★★★ 'Remarkable. Powerful. Joyful' The Times

WINNER Argus Angel Award for Excellence in Theatre, Brighton Festival 2012

TRAVERSE THEATRE, EDINBURGH 9-12 October 2013 | **ROSE THEATRE, KINGSTON** 15-19 October 2013

40 words

Spymonkey's anarchic comedy combines with the playful storytelling of Kneehigh's Emma Rice to create an outrageous subversion of the quintessential Greek tragedy. a tale of the ultimate dysfunctional family: a jealous father, a messed-up son, one mother of a comedy.

100 words

Spymonkey's uproariously anarchic comedy combines with the playful storytelling of Kneehigh director Emma Rice and writer Carl Grose to create an outrageous subversion of the quintessential Greek tragedy - a tale of forbidden lust, accidental incest and the ultimate dysfunctional family: a jealous father, a messed-up son, and one mother of a brilliant comedy.

Inspired by Barbarella, Bowie and a little bit of Bond, Spymonkey's unique brand of theatrical invention is aided by designer Michael Vale (RSC, National Theatre, ENO), costume designer Lucy Bradridge (Cirque de Soleil), and original music by Neil Filby and Toby Park.

Video links:

4minute vimeo promo: <https://vimeo.com/68767837>

youtube version: <http://youtu.be/HFziToxJhds>

audience voxpop:

<https://vimeo.com/album/2007930/video/36907916>

interview with Emma Rice director, and the four Spymonkeys that Royal & Derngate made:

<https://vimeo.com/36339033>

Front of House information

The show consists of:

- Act One: 65 mins
- Interval of approximately 15-20 mins
- Act Two: 45 mins

Suggested age suitability

We welcome audiences of any age to our shows, and have no problem with children being in the audience. However, we recognise that some parents feel otherwise, and need some guidance as to content so that they can make their own decisions. OEDIPUSSY contains some scenes of a sexual nature and brief nudity.

We prefer it if the age suitability warning can be as in the copy above. Our print and web publicity will also clearly suggest the likely suitability of the material.

SPYMONKEY was founded by Toby Park, Petra Massey and Aitor Basauri in 1997. With their dark, edgy physical comedy rooted 'somewhere between Monty Python, the Marx Brothers and Samuel Beckett' (The Houston Chronicle), and a quartet of performers from Spain, Germany and England, Spymonkey have proved to be a truly international phenomenon, enjoyed by and accessible to a wide range of international audiences. They have created:

STIFF (1998), a black comedy about undertakers, Total Theatre Award Winner, British Council Showcase of the best of British theatre in 2001, toured to Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, Finland, Spain, France, USA, Canada, Mexico, Syria, Ireland, Romania, Czech Republic and Sweden.

Cooped (2001), a gothic romance directed by Cal McCrystal, international tours to Sydney Opera House, Just For Laughs Montreal, Toronto World Stages, Melbourne Comedy Festival, Brighton Festival, Edinburgh Festival.

Zumanity - Another Side of Cirque du Soleil (2003-05) resident show at New York New York Hotel Casino, Las Vegas. Spymonkey created the comedy content for this adult burlesque show, seen by half a million people.

Bless (2007), about the lives of the saints directed by Cal McCrystal, nominated for 3 Betty Mitchell Awards.

Moby Dick (2009) directed by Jos Houben & Rob Thirtle, which firmly established them as a mid-scale company, including a run at the Lyric Hammersmith, and toured internationally to Finland, Holland & Belgium.

Love In (2011) a self-help cabaret directed by Chris Green, winner Best Comedy Brighton Festival 2011, Udderbelly Southbank.

Oedipussy (2012) created with Kneehigh director Emma Rice and writer Carl Grose, toured UK including Royal & Derngate Northampton, Liverpool Playhouse and Lyric Hammersmith. Winner Argus Angel Brighton Festival

Spookshow (2013) a site-specific commission by Showzam Festival Blackpool.

Jekyll&Hyde(ish) a co-production with Lyric Hammersmith and Peepolykus, directed by Sean Holmes and written by Joel Horwood. Due to open at Manchester Royal Exchange summer 2014.

Screen appearances have included Solstrom for Bravo Cable Network, Australia Broadcasting Company, BBC, Carlton, Just For Laughs galas with George Lopez and William Shatner, and in the Gemini-Award-winning documentary 'Lovesick', directed by Lewis Cohen. They have performed as guest acts and hosts in La Clique, The Razzle, Tina C, Miss Behave's Variety Nighty at the Roundhouse, Time Out's Alternative Eurovision, Sandi Toksvig's Christmas Cracker with Ronnie Corbett at the Royal Festival Hall, as well as seasons as hosts with Palazzo in Amsterdam and Stuttgart.

Outside of their work as performers with Spymonkey, Aitor Basauri is one of the leading teachers of clown and physical comedy in the world, regularly running Spymonkey masterclasses in London, Brighton and New York. He recently directed *Discombobulated* for Publick Transport. Toby Park works as a composer, collaborating with amongst others, Improbable Theatre, Guy Dartnell, Tom Morris, Mimbire, Charlotte Vincent Dance, Northumberland Lights with Phil Supple and Graeme Gilmour. He co-directed and composed for Spike Theatre's *The Games* which won Best Production and Best Comedy in The Liverpool Daily Post Readers' Choice Awards 2010. Petra Massey appeared as a regular in BBC TV's *Hyperdrive* and *Miranda*, and *Office Party* at Barbican and Pleasance London. Stephan Kreiss appears in *Jedermann* at the Salzburger Festspiel in August 2013, directed by Julian Crouch.

EMMA RICE (Director)

is the Joint Artistic Director of Kneehigh Theatre. She has directed for Kneehigh *The Red Shoes* (2002 TMA Award for Best Director), *The Bacchae* (2005 TMA Theatre Award for Best Touring Production), *Tristan & Yseult*, *Cymbeline* (in association with the Royal Shakespeare Company for *The Complete Works* festival), *A Matter of Life and Death* (Royal National Theatre production in association with Kneehigh Theatre), *Rapunzel* (in association with Battersea Arts Centre), *Brief Encounter* (tour and West End; Studio 54, Broadway, a David Pugh and Dafydd Rogers Production in association with Kneehigh Theatre), and *Don John* (in association with the Royal Shakespeare Company and Bristol Old Vic). She was nominated for the 2009 Olivier Award for Best Director for *Brief Encounter*. Emma's latest work includes the West End

production of *Umbrellas of Cherbourg*, *Wah! Wah! Girls*, and *The Wild Bride* and *Steptoe & Son* for Kneehigh.

CARL GROSE (Writer)

Carl has worked extensively with the internationally acclaimed Kneehigh Theatre for the past sixteen years as both a writer and an actor. His writing for Kneehigh includes *Tristan & Yseult*, *The Bacchae*, *Cymbeline*, *Hansel & Gretel*, *Blast!* and *The Wild Bride*. Other adaptations include *Beauty and the Beast* (Told By An Idiot), *Faust* (Vesturport) and most recently *The Dark Philosophers* (National Theatre of Wales / Told By An Idiot). His plays include *Quick Silver* (Kneehigh), *Grand Guignol* (The Drum Theatre, Plymouth), *Superstition Mountain* (o-region), *49 Donkeys Hanged* (BBC Radio 3's The Wire), *The 13 Midnight Challenges of Angelus Diablo* (RSC at Latitude) and *Gargantua* (National Theatre Connections). He is currently writing *Burn Me Dead* (a musical inspired by Bulgakov's *The Master And Margarita*), as well as new plays for The Drum, Plymouth, Soho Theatre and the RSC.

LUCY BRADRIDGE (Costume & Prop Designer)

Lucy Bradridge studied English Literature at the University of Leeds and then Theatre Design at the Central School of Speech and Drama. Since 1998 her work as a Set, Props and Costume Designer has been mainly concerned with devised comedy. She has worked extensively with the physical clown company Spymonkey designing set, props and costume for *Stiff*, *Cooped*, *Bless*, and did costume and props for *Moby Dick*. Lucy has collaborated on numerous occasions with clown director Cal McCrystal. Design credits include *AutoBoosh* for the Mighty Boosh; clown costume design for Cirque du Soleil's *Varekai* and *Zumanity*; *Heroes* for Company FZ; *Moonjourney* by Alice Lowe and work with Circus Space. Television credits include *Orcadia*, a Comedy Lab, and *The Last Chancers*, a comedy series both for Channel 4. Film credits include *The Wild and Wycked World of Brian Jones*; *Out of Water* and *Queen Bee*. Lucy's latest work was for Rag Roof Theatre's *Gloves On*, an outdoor show about amateur boxing.

MICHAEL VALE (Set Designer)

Michael has designed the sets and costumes for over 160 theatre and opera productions both in the UK and abroad including those he has directed. Companies he has worked with include: The Royal Shakespeare Company; The National Theatre; The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; English National Opera; Glyndebourne Festival Opera; Opera North; English Touring Opera; De Vlaamse Opera, Antwerp; Los Angeles Opera; Lyric Hammersmith; Almeida Theatre; Manchester Royal Exchange; West Yorkshire Playhouse; Sheffield Crucible; Liverpool Playhouse; Nottingham Playhouse; Bristol Old Vic; Plymouth Theatre Royal; Edinburgh Royal Lyceum; Bolton Octagon; The Royal Festival Hall; The Queen Elizabeth Hall; English Touring Theatre; Battersea Arts Centre; Told By An Idiot and Kneehigh Theatre Company. His work has been nominated for two Olivier Awards; a Charrington Fringe First Award; an Irish Times Theatre Award and a Manchester Evening News Theatre Award.

PHIL SUPPLE (Lighting Designer)

Phil works in both conventional theatre and in more unusual locations. His ancient history includes associate design credits on shows like *Shockheaded Peter*, *Thunderbirds FAB* and *The Play What I Wrote*, more recently as designer on Improbable Theatre's *Sticky*; *Full Circle* and *All Hands* for The World Famous Fireworkers; Northumberland Lights – an award winning winter tourism promotion; *Half Life* for NVA and the National Theatre of Scotland; *Tightrope* for Amici Dance Theatre; *Aisling's Children* – arena scale outdoor theatre on the esplanade at Edinburgh Castle for The Gathering 2009; Spymonkey's *Moby Dick*; The Mill for Ockham's Razor; and Wrap Tear Scrunch at Circus Space. Phil is currently creative director for *The Electric Forest* a series of illuminated walks on Forestry Commission sites for winter 2011/12. Phil collaborates regularly with Spymonkey's Toby Park. Together they created *The Mill Project* a major architectural work for Ipswich Borough Council winning a commendation at The Lighting Design Awards 2011. www.lightrefreshment.co.uk.



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for more information contact:

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Managing Artistic Director

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