imitating the dog and Pete Brooks

*Hotel Methuselah*

If you should need any more information on the company or this production please contact Simon Wainwright using the information below:

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*Hotel Methuselah* has been commissioned through the New Works programme at Nuffield Theatre, Lancaster and has received funding from the Arts Council England.
Press Quotes and Reviews

"imitating the dog, a company at the forefront of testing the nature of theatre" - The Guardian

"...headily ambitious...technically and visually a treat..." – Guardian Unlimited

Guardian Critics’ pick November 2006

Guardian Guide Pick of the Week November 2006

“...unlike any other piece of theatre you're likely to have experienced before...intriguing, a successful narrative experiment and a piece of art in its own right.” – Yorkshire Evening Post

“Hotel Methuselah draws on a wealth of references to post-war British cinema, the French new wave and the pleasures of black and white film, alongside some extremely elegant visual theatre. The result is a beautifully realised meditation on desire and loss, existing in the gap between the lived moment and the captured image.” – Matt Fenton: Director of the Nuffield Theatre, Lancaster

"...near as dammit a total work of art." - The Observer on Kellerman

"A mesmerising piece of contemporary performance" – Metro on Kellerman

Images:
Please download images for publicity from:
http://www.imitatingthedog.co.uk/resource/
"imitating the dog are one of the UK’s leading performance companies, constantly satisfying audiences and critics with their savvy design and innovative testing of theatrical and narrative form.

"imitating the dog, a company at the forefront of testing the nature of theatre" - The Guardian

Harry works as a night porter in a hotel in a city somewhere in Europe that’s in the throes of war. Despite the distant sounds of gunfire and shelling, he likes the calm and loneliness of his work. He’s thankful that all he has to do is book the guests in and show them to their rooms. But Harry has a problem and it’s one he’s desperately trying to solve. He can’t remember how he got to the hotel, or what he did before. He’s not even sure Harry’s his real name.

*Hotel Methuselah* is a contemporary ghost story that explores our fears around mortality, sexuality and the terrifying sense of responsibility that comes with having children. In a stunning homage to post-war British cinema and the French new wave, *imitating the dog* create a unique and disturbingly immersive experience for the audience. Telling the story of night porter Harry’s search to uncover the forgotten truth of his past, *Hotel Methuselah* is a searing tale of the destructive power of love and the hell of personal disintegration. Fusing spectacular live action and video projection, this is stylish, cutting edge visual performance that places narrative, emotion and wit at its core.

"...headily ambitious...technically and visually a treat..." – Guardian

Unlimited on *Hotel Methuselah*

"...near as dammit a total work of art." - The Observer on *Kellerman*

*Hotel Methuselah* has been commissioned through the New Works programme at Nuffield Theatre, Lancaster and has received funding from the Arts Council England.
Credits

A collaboration between imitating the dog and Pete Brooks
Written and directed by Andrew Quick and Pete Brooks with the company
Design by Laura Hopkins
Soundtrack by Neil Boynton
Video editing by Simon Wainwright and Seth Honnor

Performers:
Amy: Morven Macbeth
Harry: Simon Wainwright
Weird Man: Richard Malcolm / Dominic Fitch
Weird Woman: Anna Wilson-Hall

Touring Technician
Andrew Crofts
Ian Ryan

Hotel Methuselah was supported by Arts Council England, Lancaster University, University of the Arts London, The Gallery and Studio Theatre Leeds, Cochrane Theatre and Nuffield Theatre.
Harry works as a night porter in a hotel in a city somewhere in Europe that’s in the throes of war. Despite the distant sounds of gunfire and shelling, he likes the calm and loneliness of his work. He’s thankful that all he has to do is book the guests in and show them to their rooms. But Harry has a problem and it’s one he’s desperately trying to solve. He can’t remember how he got to the hotel, or what he did before. He’s not even sure Harry’s his real name.

A strange couple interrupt Harry’s evenings at his desk, taunting him with stories of his forgotten past. Suddenly, a woman arrives, looking for a room for the night. He signs her in. They talk. They have a drink. They end up in bed together. As she explains, “It’s what lonely people do when they think their world’s coming to an end.”

She tells him a story that he thinks he’s heard before. She tells him a story that begins to explain why the hotel is filled with strange sounds and whispering voices, why when he picks up the phone in the dead of night all he can hear are his own words, echoing down the line: “hello, hello, can I help you, can I help you?”

She tells him a story that begins to explain why he keeps running through the hotel corridors to Room 14, where a woman lies dead on a bed with a gun in one hand and a photograph in the other.

She tells him about his past, a tale of his own damnation. But still Harry can’t remember. That’s how he suffers. His punishment is to endure this story over and over again.

Hotel Methuselah is a performance that pushes at the boundaries of scenic design and digital technology to create a unique experience for spectators.

The action is viewed through a six metre letterbox-shaped gap, like cinema wide-screen, which only reveals the performers’ bodies from knee to neck. A film is projected immediately behind the acting space, which the performers mirror with perfect timing. Working alongside Laura Hopkins’ exquisitely designed interiors and costumes, Rodrigo Velasquez’s digital cinematography creates Harry’s amnesiac existence in astonishing detail. The film shows beautifully lit and composed close-ups of the characters’ faces as well as scenes of the hotel’s interior. As the walls and floors begin to move and perspectives shift, when the worlds of the stage and the screen are seen to pull apart, the disorientating psychic and physical experience of Harry’s collapse is memorably brought to life.

Neil Boynton’s soundtrack, especially created for this production and produced in Surround Sound, places the spectator at the heart of Harry’s traumatic story. Referencing sources that vary from Shostakovich and popular French ballads, to motifs drawn from horror films and sampled sound, Boynton creates an audio landscape that viscerally captures Harry’s descent into his nightmarish world.
Company Background


imitating the dog make performance work that experiments with the role of story-telling and narrative in the contemporary theatrical experience. They make innovative use of digital media, design and physical performance to create off-kilter worlds within which public and private obsessions - identity, death, love and sexuality - are explored.

Biographies

Andrew Quick is a writer and theorist of contemporary performance who teaches Theatre Studies at Lancaster University. He has collaborated regularly with imitating the dog since 1998 and has recently published a book with The Wooster Group.

Pete Brooks is a founder member of Impact Theatre Co-operative and Insomniac Productions and has made and toured performance works all over the world. Past projects include *The Carrier Frequency, Place in Europe, Claire de Luz, L'ascensore* and *Peepshow*.

Simon Wainwright is a founding member of the company and practicing visual artist. He specialises in the technical and visual aspects of the work from animation to film editing and online media. He is also a member of UK band *Hope and Social*.

Neil Boynton trained as a composer and clarinettist at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. He has researched and published on the work of Viennese composer Anton Webern. His recent compositions include *SkyWriting* and *Rush* (both in collaboration with Emma Rose).

Laura Hopkins is an internationally renowned designer whose recent works include *The Storm* (The Globe), *Hamlet, Faustus*, and *Othello* (the Royal Theatre, Northampton), *Mercury Fur* (Paines Plough), *Elixir of Love* (New Zealand Opera) and *Carnesky's Ghost Train*. 