

CARNIVAL OF MYSTERIES

ABOUT

FROM THE WORLD'S PRE-EMINENT PURVEYORS OF PROVOCATIVE VARIETY & INTIMATE SPECTACLE COMES THE FREAKISHLY BEAUTIFUL, SEDUCTIVE, SURREAL INDOOR CARNIVAL OF MYSTERIES

Overhead, underfoot and throughout seven extraordinary sites, Finucane & Smith's Carnival of Mysteries seduces audiences with the work of 43 unique & extraordinary artists from myriad cultures and art forms commissioned to respond to the Mysteries of Innocence, Passion, Mercy, Forgiveness and Love.

Premiering to monstrous critical and audience acclaim for the Melbourne International Arts Festival 2010, with 54 sell out shows, The Carnival of Mysteries is an exploration of some of humanities most profound mysteries, joys and pain, dressed up as a wild, intimate, breathtaking spectacle that both audiences and critics hailed as "utterly exhilarating".

Audience members receive \$30,000 Carnival Cash, a Passport and a Map and are unleashed in a solid world of wonder where the walls, the performance, the artists and the ephemera that pass through their very fingers are inspired by these Mysteries.

Behind the baroque hoardings of the Sideshow Alley intimate pleasure halls offer provocative entertainments of every kind. In the hand painted, velvet lined Tent of Miracles, epic theatre works unfold every ten minutes; in The dark and gothic Library, literary adventures creep from the mouth of the Librarian; The Shrine holds the wishes and prayers of Carnival goers, The Pleasure Garden is taken over by Spectacles throughout the Carnival.

FINUCANE & SMITH

CARNIVAL OF MYSTERIES

AWARDS

Green Room Award: Outstanding Contribution to Cabaret 2011

Helpmann Award: Best New Australian Work Nomination 2010

Helpmann Award: Best Cabaret Artistes (Carnival Company) Nomination 2010

Age Critics Award Nomination 2010

Kit Denton Fellowship Shortlist 2010

REVIEWS

"Within half an hour at the Carnival of Mysteries, I was propositioned by an undead, sex-crazed Anatomically Correct Librarian, had an ink portrait of my hands drawn, and was serenaded by The Living Radio in a sideshow tent the size of a wardrobe... Performance artist Moira Finucane and theatre director Jackie Smith have combed through history, fiction and Hollywood legend to create this warped and wacky carnival, transforming the bowels of fortyfivedownstairs into an opulent den of iniquity and awesomeness" The AGE Oct 2010

"An exhilarating anarchically erotic celebration of performance" The AUSTRALIAN Oct 2010

"Intricately designed, tightly organised and fabulously detailed – packed with characters, spruikers and circus freaks...the acts range from the titillating and ridiculous to the macabre. Nobody knows what they are getting until they've paid their illegal tender... unabashedly sensual, grungy and interactive. There is no choice but to be swept up in the seedy fervour" HERALD SUN 2010

"There may be a handful of tickets still available for Carnival of Mysteries, but not for long. If you have yours, don't let them out of your sight because people like me will cast morals aside and plot to steal them so that they don't miss or can have another wondrous visit to the best carnival ever. Moira Finucane & Jackie Smith create worlds so wonderful that it hurts to leave them. Focussed on themes of innocence, passion, mercy, forgiveness and love, these shows are as voyeuristic and confronting as they are personal and liberating. This carnival celebrates all that is wrong with our perceptions of beauty and art, and questions all our notions of right and wrong. It's a world that welcomes the out of place and leaves everyone feeling like they are in a world where they can and will find love, passion and acceptance... The Carnival of Mysteries is the hottest ticket in town and as this first carnival fades into legendary status, those who missed out will claim to have been there" AUS. THEATRE Oct 2010

"But more than this, I just have to say again what I said to you last night. The impact of the Carnival on the audiences is truly miraculous. What happens to those punters over two hours is extraordinary to witness, and I would happily come in, night after night, just to see the transformation and the liberating effects of the experience on individuals (and couples, and

FINUCANE & SMITH

CARNIVAL OF MYSTERIES

groups...). It is as if the entire show functions as a magical rite that does indeed remove cynicism, restore wonder, restore innocence, restore license to be oneself.... I found it very moving, at many levels, and would love to come back again and again to study the phenomenon” PETA MURRAY, Playwright

“I remember the feeling I had the first time I finished reading *Catch 22*, a bemused sort of satisfaction that was only barely graspable given the whirling, reeling nature of my thoughts as I turned the last page. It’s with this obscure sensation in mind that I begin to formulate my analysis of Finucane & Smith’s *Carnival of Mysteries* How to begin a review of something so eclectic and bizarre and so shockingly intimate and ballsy? 2 hours later we stumbled out into the midnight air, a smorgasbord of warped images and sounds reverberating around our skulls. Lost in the reverie of befuddled amusement, 24 hours later it’s still difficult to properly articulate the profound joys that await any intrepid carnival-goers, but suffice it to say, I must have read *Catch 22* a good ten times, and I already have my next *Carnival of Mysteries* ticket sitting safely in my pocket” AUSTRALIAN STAGE

“Extravagantly staged passion, perverse and liberating sensual delight, sly comedy, nudity, and excess, excess and more excess... Funny, beautiful, unexpectedly touching and enormously enjoyable. Go with someone you love” THEATRE NOTES Oct 2010

“Cold. Burning. Don’t Touch it. Fire is. Cold,” As those pronouncements boom around the basement room, the woman with robotic silver wings that sprouted fire and a stainless steel corset (what a figure) placed a hand on my forehead, looked deep into my eyes, deemed me “clean” and was gone. It was but one moment in the many that were one part magic to three parts madness. *The Carnival of Mysteries* has come to town. ... It’s interactive, instinctive, immersive and subversive and one of the standout highlight’s of this year’s Melbourne Festival” CITY WEEKLY

“When I come across a production like this it reminds me that there is sometimes value in going beyond the point that seems normal and comfortable, and that, in fact, things can improve if you go too far (or put it like this: some ideas seem designed to be taken too far, as sharks are designed to swim), and if you have faith and dedication, for example, Moira Finucane standing naked on a low pedestal in a dim tent, her face tilted upward and rapt into the light, with the recorded sound effects of calving glaciers moaning and roaring around her, and the actor herself booming, “Don’t touch it. It will burn you,” then lowering her chin and opening her mouth and eyes in rectangles until she had the face of the Parco Dei Mostri ogre — piling one idea on another — a strange and archetypal figure, with her fingers splayed and tents of light descending between them to the floor. There is no virtue in doing a thing like this halfheartedly. Either do it with a whole heart or look silly” PYKK NOVEMBER 2010

“A dark mixture of burlesque and circus that succeeds completely in creating its own intoxicating world beneath the streets of Melbourne. The apprehensive audience is soon transformed by the subversive, seductive

FINUCANE & SMITH

CARNIVAL OF MYSTERIES

and slightly sinister experience, pushing like excited children to get into the next sideshow tent, and parting with carnival cash to see as much spectacle as possible. All too soon, the cast performs a solemn rendition of The Carnival is Over and guides us towards the exit. As I walk home at midnight, the city feels as if its nightlife is just beginning" DOMINION POST NEW ZEALAND NOVEMBER 2010

"In Carnival of Mysteries the hunt for humanity was well and truly sated" THE AUSTRALIAN DECEMBER 2010

"If you haven't heard of Finucane & Smith, then you have never taken the journey to alternative theatre. These two without doubt are legends of the Melbourne burlesque scene and they have again delivered a sensory delight. Their new show; "The carnival of Mysteries" is a moving feast of artistic delight and is often confusing but always different" GIRLS WEEKEND AWAY

"Step right up folks. Be amazed, be surprised, be thoroughly entertained by this extraordinary spectacle... Finucane and Smith's trademark mix of provocation and entertainment starts in the theatre lobby where, on arrival, everyone is rubber stamped, issued a 'passport', and given 30,000 carnival dollars. Boundaries quickly blur as performers and audience mingle in a noisy, colourful, and visually seductive space, with the promise of hidden and shocking delights, while roving artistes in exotic costumes offer assistance and encouragement to the undecided. All our senses are fully engaged" OZ BABYBOOMERS

TECH SPECS

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