

Director’s Note

The puppet in this show was originally made for another show—our adaptation of George Orwell’s *1984*—in which he was going to play the leader of the secret underground resistance, “Emmanuel Goldstein.” He was based on Nazi anti-semitic propaganda posters. We didn’t use him in this show in the end, partly because he seemed too cute.

Six months later we were commissioned by the Jewish Community Centre in London to make a show for something called *The Other Seder*. The Seder is part of Passover, a meal shared with family, friends and strangers, in which Jews remember their faith by re-enacting the story of the Exodus guided by a book called the Haggadah. This is the meal that Jesus is celebrating as the Last Supper in Christianity.

One of the strange aspects of this retelling is that they leave Moses out of the story to emphasize that God is the rescuer of the Jews.

As we studied Moses we became more and more fascinated by his absolute mortality, his lack of divinity. He is a prophet, a mouthpiece for God, but in no way is he more than human. This is most clear in the story of his death which God himself undertakes, burying him in an unmarked grave. The whole story is about asserting God’s divinity and Moses’s humanity.

This existential inquiry into the nature of man and of God seemed to be a very suitable one for exploring with a puppet and three puppeteers.

Along the way we also referred of course to Beckett, Sartre, Yves Klein and lots of stand-up comedians.

Our idea was to put Moses back on the table in puppet form. Audiences loved our puppet Moses immediately and in so doing rehabilitated a hateful propaganda image.

—Mark Down



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FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM

THE TABLE

Cast
MARK DOWN
SEAN GARRATT
IRENA STRATIEVA
Puppet NICK BARNES
Director MARK DOWN

chicago
shakespeare
theater

on navy pier

Bringing the world’s great theaters to Chicago and Chicago Shakespeare to the world

photo by Lorna Palmer



Photo by Lorna Palmer

Creative Team

Devised and Directed
by Blind Summit Theatre

Co-Devisers:
NICK BARNES
SARAH CALVER
MARK DOWN
SEAN GARRATT
MABEL JONES
IRENA STRATIEVA
IVAN THORLEY

Music
LEMEZ AND FRIEDEL

Lighting
RICHARD HOWELL

Artistic Consultant
ANDREW DAWSON

Producer
STEPHANIE HAY

Technical Manager
FERGUS WALDRON

Company Manager
FIONA CLIFT

Administrator
ANDREW HUGHES

Based on an original commission by YAD Arts and JCC.

Double M Arts & Events, LLC is the exclusive representative of Blind Summit.
For more information about touring opportunities for Blind Summit, please contact
Michael Mushalla by phone (+1 347 280 3396) or email (mushalla@gmail.com).

www.blindsummit.com

Profiles

MARK DOWN is the artistic director of Blind Summit Theatre, which he founded in 1997 with Nick Barnes. He originally qualified as a doctor and retrained as an actor at Central School of Speech and Drama in London. For Blind Summit Mr. Down is a director, performer and writer.

NICK BARNES is an associate artist of Blind Summit Theatre, which he originally founded in 1997 with Mark Down. Mr. Barnes studied drama at Hull University in England, and theater design at the Slade School of Fine Art in London. He trained in puppetry with Philippe Genty at the International Institute of the Marionette in France. Mr. Barnes designs and makes puppets for theater, opera and musicals at home and abroad, including Blind Summit.

SEAN GARRATT has been a performer with Blind Summit for over two years. He trained at East 15 Acting School, graduating in 2008. At that time he also took a first step into comedy, trained by the late Ken Campbell in competitive comedy improvisation. Now his work includes performing, puppetry, movement direction, sketch comedy, improvisation, television and radio.

IRENA STRATIEVA has been a performer with Blind Summit for over two years. She started her puppetry training in 2007 at the National Academy of Theatre and Film Arts in Sofia, Bulgaria and continued her studies at Central School of Speech and Drama in London. Now she works as a puppeteer, puppet maker and theater performer based in London.

About Blind Summit

Blind Summit Theatre are puppetry innovators. The company was formed in 1997 by Mark Down and Nick Barnes to reinvent traditional Japanese Bunraku for contemporary Western audiences. They present new puppets in new places in new ways to new audiences, seeing puppetry as a radical part of the reinvention of theater in our time.

The company now runs under Artistic Director Mark Down and, as well as continuing to tour *The Table* around the world, they are creating a new production: *The Puppet Monologues*. Other upcoming productions include *Madam Butterfly* (English National Opera) at the London Coliseum this autumn, and *A Dog's Heart* (Complicite and English National Opera) at Opera De Lyon from January 2014.

Past productions include: *The Magic Flute* (Bregenz Festival); *The Heads* (London International Mime Festival at Soho Theatre); *London 2012 Olympic Opening Ceremony* (Danny Boyle); *1984* (Battersea Arts Centre and national tour); *The Call of the Wild, Low Life* (international tour); *Madam Butterfly* (director Anthony Minghella, English National Opera, Metropolitan Opera); *A Dog's Heart* (Complicite, De Nederlandse Opera, English National Opera, La Scala); *Kommilitonen!* (Royal Academy of Music and Julliard, New York); *Faeries* (ROH2); *El Gato Con Botas* (Broadway: Gotham Chamber Opera, Tectonic Theatre Project); *Shun-kin* (Complicite, Setagaya Theatre Tokyo, Barbican); *Angus, Thongs and Even More Snogging* (West Yorkshire Playhouse); *Holy Flying Circus* (BBC4); *Greenland* (National Theatre); *On Emotion* (Soho Theatre); *His Dark Materials* (Birmingham Repertory Theatre and West Yorkshire Playhouse); *Cherevichki* (Garsington Opera); *Ramayana* (Lyric Hammersmith, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Bristol Old Vic); *Shakespeare Staging the World* performance (Royal Shakespeare Company and the British Museum); *Real Man, Pirate Puppetry, Martin's Wedding, The Spaceman, Mr. China's Son* and *Tramping the Boards*.

About Chicago Shakespeare

Chicago Shakespeare Theater (CST) is a leading international theater company, known for extraordinary productions; unlocking Shakespeare's work for educators and students; and serving as Chicago's cultural ambassador through its World's Stage Series. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Barbara Gaines and Executive Director Criss Henderson, CST is the recipient of the Regional Theatre Tony Award. Its work has been recognized internationally with three of London's prestigious Laurence Olivier Awards, and by the Chicago theater community with 70 Joseph Jefferson Awards for Artistic Excellence. Since the inception of the World's Stage Series in 2000, CST has hosted over 30 iconic troupes, such as: The Abbey Theatre (Dublin), Shakespeare's Globe Theatre (London), the Chekhov International Theatre Festival (Moscow) and La Comédie-Française (Paris). The works presented by these companies range from intimate one-man works, like South African Omphile Molusi's *Itsooseng*, to grand spectacles like the French troupe Ilotopie's *Water Fools (Fous de Bassin)*, performed entirely atop the waters of Lake Michigan. CST has contributed to this exciting international exchange by sending some of its best works abroad, including: the Olivier Award-winning production of Stephen Sondheim's *Pacific Overtures* (2003); *Henry IV, Parts 1 and 2*, which marked CST's debut at the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-upon-Avon (2006); and *Othello: The Remix* (2012), which debuted at Shakespeare's Globe in London, followed by a world to Edinburgh, Germany, Chicago, South Korea and Sydney.

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