

**THE BULLET AND THE  
BASS TROMBONE  
SLEEPS DOGS**

**MARKETING PACK**

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# ABOUT SLEEPDOGS

**Sleepdogs** started working together informally in 2001, beginning with a short film, *I Will Do It For Science*, which we're still in the process of completing. Over the last 10 years, we've been experimenting with how we collaborate and discovering where we become more than the sum of our parts. In 2010 we reflected back on what we'd been making, and formalised our collaboration as Sleepdogs.

We like to be wilfully interdisciplinary in our creative process. So for example, the live art we make is often heavily rooted in narrative fiction; our theatre is regularly described as cinematic, despite its often simple, sparse staging; our films might be inspired by stand-up comedy or the experimental texts and processes of live art.

We're not especially interested in a purity of artform, and our projects often get remixed from one form to another as they develop: so what started out as an idea for a novel, might grow towards being a film, and then a performance, and then a piece of music, and then a performance again. Ultimately, we want to find the heart of each piece and find the best form with which to communicate that to an audience.

Marina Abramović once said that performance art should be protected from the "theatre fuckers" and "film fuckers" who stole or appropriated its ideas, textures, and motifs. Well, hello! We're those fuckers. And we're proud that our work is of mongrel heritage. Because we don't think this is a tribal business. If it's not growing, changing, living, breathing... what's the point?

We make work because we want to share stories, imagine alternative existences and discover new perspectives with audiences. We hope you're up for that too.

**"We must always remember that a picture is also made up of the person who looks at it. This is very, very important. Maybe this is the reason behind those pictures that haunt me and that haunt many people as well. It is about that walk that one takes with the picture when experiencing it. I think that this is what counts. One must let the viewer extricate himself, free himself for the journey. You offer the seed and then the viewer grows it inside himself. For a long time I thought that I had to give the entire story to my audience. I was wrong."**

Robert Doisneau, interviewed by Paul Hill and Thomas Cooper, *Camera Magazine*, November 1977.

# ABOUT THE BULLET AND THE BASS TROMBONE

**N.B. Please don't use this as brochure copy: this is for internal use only.**

**The Bullet and the Bass Trombone** is a one-man show, performed by Timothy X Atack. It is directed by Tanuja Amarasuriya and produced by MAYK. The Lighting Designer is Anthony Dunn. Tim also wrote and designed the sound for the show, which is performed live.

It is performed on a stage littered with music stands. It looks like there has been an orchestral concert on the stage. At the front of the stage is a trestle table which has a keyboard and sound equipment on it.

The show is the story of a concert orchestra who travel to a city in a tropical country to perform a piece of music written about the 'whistling bird', an almost extinct bird only found in this tropical country that has a song which sounds like a human whistling. Shortly after they arrive, there is a military coup and the orchestra, separated in different hotels across the city, have to try and make their escape.

The story is told by the composer of the music, played by Tim. He is telling us the story both of the orchestra escaping, and him returning to the country to record the sounds of the city long after the coup. The piece is interspersed with sound recordings of members of the orchestra describing their experience.

The piece is incredibly detailed and many audience members have expressed surprise that the events Tim describes aren't true. The detail in what Tim narrates and the authentic-sounding recordings of the musicians and the city create a densely weaved, very convincing narrative which is complex, moving and compelling.

The show has been premiered at Bristol Old Vic and has since been performed at Pulse Fringe in Ipswich, the National Theatre Shed and a specially remixed version (The Bullet and the Damage Done) at the Bristol Proms. It was also recently performed in Warwick Arts Centre's huge Butterworth Hall space.

# TARGET AUDIENCES

The Bullet and the Bass Trombone will appeal to:

- Audiences for contemporary theatre and performance who like companies and artists such as Chris Thorpe, Forced Entertainment, Goat Island, Chris Goode, Melanie Wilson, Samuel Beckett, Pina Bausch, Elevator Repair Service
- Audiences for storytelling and comedy who like performers such as Stewart Lee and Daniel Kitson
- Audiences for contemporary music who like artists such as Aphex Twin, Gavin Bryers, Michael Nyman, Steve Reich, Philip Glass, Bjork, The Books, Nick Cave, Velvet Underground, Tom Waits
- Literature audiences who like Angela Carter, The Master and Margarita,
- Film audiences who like the Cohen Brothers, Jim Jarmusch, Andrei Tarkovsky
- Audiences interested in fantasy and science fiction
- Audiences with a knowledge of classical music
- Music students
- Theatre Studies student

# SELLING POINTS

- Live music – you can watch the performer play and mix sound live on stage which makes the experience exciting and thrilling
- Compelling story – the narrative of the piece is intricate and detailed which helps the audience lose themselves in the world of the show
- Special version of the show for concert halls; this is an intimate version of the show in a huge space which creates the feeling of being in a concert hall after hours listening to the story being told
- Recently performed at the National Theatre

# BOX OFFICE INFORMATION

Company name:	Sleepdogs
Show name:	The Bullet and the Bass Trombone
Running Time:	1hr 45mins (no interval)
Age Guidance:	12+
Other info:	No strobe, one gunshot, some mild swear words

# BROCHURE COPY

There's an orchestra, trapped in a city during a military coup. Violence erupts, the orchestra becomes separated – lost – trying to find their way home. The composer is left to tell the story.

An intricate, fractured narrative with a haunting soundtrack comes together like a mosaic: a whistling bird in the jungle, a gunfight at the airport, a murder in a forest of music stands... pieced together by a lone performer, trying to make sense of the chaos.

"Harrowing, intelligent, beautifully crafted... and ultimately incredibly uplifting in an impossible-to-describe kind of way." (Andrew Haydon of The Guardian.)

Produced by MAYK. Commissioned by Bristol Ferment at Bristol Old Vic. Developed with Parabola Arts Centre. Supported by the National Lottery through Arts Council England. [www.sleepdogs.org](http://www.sleepdogs.org)

# CREATIVE TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

**Timothy X Atack** (writer, performer and sound designer) began his career as a composer and performer working with comedians Matt Lucas and David Walliams before writing for stage, screen and audio.

His theatre works have been commissioned by Bristol Old Vic, Paines Plough, Arnolfini, Forest Fringe and Battersea Arts Centre amongst others. He has written radio drama for BBC Radio 4 and is an artist in residence at Pervasive Media Studio, Bristol, working on narratives for interactive technology. Since 1995 he's released records and toured internationally with the sci-fi pop group Angel Tech. In 2009 he wrote and directed the short film *All My Dreams On VHS* which won the audience award at NexT International Film Festival, Bucharest, and has been exhibited and broadcast worldwide.

Alongside Tanuja Amarasuriya he's a co-founder of Sleepdogs, making fictions for stage, screen, audio and online; also one half of Geiger-Müller Sound System, a contemporary sound art collaboration with MrUnderwood.

He's interested in modern mythologies, anachronistic technologies, found material, mixing genres, stupid jokes, and stuff that offers 'invitations' to its audiences, rather than 'promises'.

**Tanuja Amarasuriya** (director) is a director and producer based in Bristol. She is one of the Executive Producers at Theatre Bristol and has been Associate Producer at In Between Time Productions and previously, live art and dance coordinator at Arnolfini.

She has been collaborating with Timothy X Atack on various film and performance projects since 2001, including as co-producer on the short film *All My Dreams on VHS* which won the Audience Award at the 2009 NexT International Film Festival in Bucharest as well as being exhibited and broadcast worldwide. She was the dramaturg for Sam Halmarack and the *Miserabilites* (2011) and *The Stick House* (2013) and has worked as a director on R&D projects produced by Bristol Ferment/Writers Room and Tobacco Factory Theatre.

Alongside Timothy X Atack, she's a co-founder of Sleepdogs, making fictions for stage, screen, audio and online. Sleepdogs' work has been commissioned or developed by Bristol Old Vic, Forest Fringe, Arnolfini, Battersea Arts Centre, MAYK, Live Theatre, Paines Plough, Parabola Arts Centre, Theatre Bristol, BBC Film Lab, the British Council, Pervasive Media Studio and BBC Radio 4.

She is interested in unexpected ways to tell popular stories, genre mash-ups, deadpan humour, sci-fi and listening.

**MAYK** (producer) is a producing organisation led by Kate Yedigaroff and Matthew Austin. MAYK collaborates with artists and audiences to make exciting things happen in unusual ways. MAYK are currently working with Still House/Dan Canham, Sleepdogs, Firebird Theatre, Search Party, Jo Bannon, Richard Allen and Sam Halmarack. MAYK also curates and produces Mayfest, Bristol's annual festival of contemporary theatre.

# INDUSTRY RESPONSES

The Bullet and The Bass Trombone is quite unlike any piece of theatre I have ever seen. Tim's evocative narrative and haunting score blend and layer to create something which seems like performance, documentary and concert all at once. The strength of Tim's performance and the thoroughness with which he builds the story-world makes it easy to forget that this isn't a true story you have heard reported on the news.

**Clare Reddington**  
**Director, iShed and The Pervasive Media Studio**

I wanted to let you have a bit more feedback on The Bullet and the Bass Trombone. I thought it a beautifully poetic and crafted piece of work. It is testimony to the performer that I never felt this was a one performer show. Without trickery I knew all of the people and the world on the event. It was refreshing to have a piece of theatre that both played with form and had something to say. I think there are a host of opportunities for the piece not only in festivals but for a classical and contemporary music audience. I can certainly image it playing in symphony halls as a surprise addition to a festival programme.

**Gavin Stride**  
**Director**  
**Farnham Maltings & caravan**

The Bullet and The Bass Trombone is a deeply moving, musically sophisticated and engaging piece of theatre. Written with an uncanny precision and sense of empathy it treads a careful and beautiful line between fact and fiction. The complexity of the storytelling combined with the absolute charm of the performance allow Sleepdogs to pull off that rare trick of being both high brow / sophisticated and edge of the seat entertaining. At the heart of The Bullet and The Bass Trombone is a sense of the true value of international cultural exchange and I am certain that an international touring context is absolutely right for it.

**Ed Collier**  
**Co-Director**  
**China Plate**

# PRESS QUOTES

## **The Bullet and the Bass Trombone**

"Fascinating and disturbing." Bristol Evening Post.

"The Bullet and The Bass Trombone isn't a production with a straightforward narrative construct where you can sit back and simply watch events happen, instead it is theatre which requires you to use your senses" Whats on Stage

"This Sleepdogs production performed by Timothy X Atack uses music, lighting and a dynamic sound scape to craft a symphony of orchestration and execution that it is hard to believe could be bettered." This is Bristol

"Harrowing, intelligent, beautifully crafted... and ultimately incredibly uplifting in an impossible-to-describe kind of way." Andrew Haydon of The Guardian

"A polished, intelligent layering of impressions that leaves you wanting to hear more" Venue Magazine

## **Buzzard**

"What starts out as ludicrous standup in feathers and claw feet carries with it a startling emotional trajectory, moving from savage humour to a haunting final scene." The Guardian

## **Morpeth Carol**

"Sometimes a piece of performance is so right that it makes you feel glad to be alive and in possession of senses. 'The Morpeth Carol' is such a piece..." Venue Magazine

"Brilliantly written and performed, The Morpeth Carol is a unique and twisted rendition of the traditional Christmas tale..." BristolTheatreReview.

## **Astronaut**

"Astronaut is a precise yet tender telling of the precarious balance between life and death, full of perfect timing, delivery and... space..." Total Theatre Magazine

"A fragile and profoundly moving experience." Venue Magazine

"Astronaut is beautifully tender and emotive whilst being exceptionally simple" A Younger Theatre

# TOOLS AVAILABLE

Sleepdogs website

[sleepdogs.org.uk](http://sleepdogs.org.uk)

MAYK website

[mayk.org.uk](http://mayk.org.uk)

Sleepdogs Vimeo

[vimeo.com/sleepdogs](http://vimeo.com/sleepdogs)

Sleepdogs Soundcloud

[soundcloud.com/sleepdogs](http://soundcloud.com/sleepdogs)

Sleepdogs Twitter

[twitter.com/sleepdogs](http://twitter.com/sleepdogs)

MAYK Twitter

[twitter.com/maykithappen](http://twitter.com/maykithappen)

MAYK Facebook

[facebook.com/maykithappen](http://facebook.com/maykithappen)

Dropbox folder of marketing resources: production photography,  
sample press release