

AMERICAN VAUDEVILLE



**"high-octane
flurry of jokes
and pratfalls"**
Three Weeks

"talent in bucketloads"

Metro Times

**"a parade of spectacle
from corny to impressive,
performed with
lightning precision"**

Scotsman

"UNMISSABLE"

Time Out

**"well-crafted
glimpse of a
lost world."**

Scotsman

"what old-fashioned entertainment is all about."

Metro Times

"bodies like rubber bands and superb comic timing"

The Stage

HIGH PRIESTS OF HIJINX

Present



AMERICAN VAUDEVILLE



High Time For A Dazzling Display of Vaudevillian Splendor!

In *American Vaudeville* you will see acrobatic feats, unbelievable mind reading, a high-wire act, hat tricks, rhythmic spoons, choreographed dance spectaculars, and even a man on fire. Well, maybe not the man on fire, but you will experience vaudeville in its heyday, as Chester & Plunket, a dynamic comedy duo, climb from the bottom-of-the-barrel to the celebrated Orpheum Circuit.

With only a crate, a curtain, and a Trombone Jon Morris and Scott Nankivel weave vaudeville acts together to create a cohesive theatrical story filled with the famous characters, audience inter-play, classic humour and family fun that defined American theatre for decades. See why Vaudeville launched the talents of Buster Keaton, Charlie Chaplin, Houdini, W.C. Fields and Bob Hope just to name a few.

Creators and Performers Jon Morris and Scott Nankivel have trained and performed around the world with Peter Brook, Philippe Gaulier, Cirque Du Soleil, Andre Serban, Ann Bogart, Kristin Linklater, Robert Woodruff, Pig Iron Theatre, and Tony Award winning Theatre de la Jeune Lune. They share 5 Drama Desk Nominations and have won the New York Fringe Best Performance Award.

Original Director Kristi Hughes, Lecoq trained, Cirque du Soleil clown, & Attic People founding member returns to Edinburgh after her 2002 hit show, *Drip*; and outside eyes Anson Mount, MFA Columbia University, Crossroads, City By the Sea, Tully, In Her Shoes not to mention honoured by the Drama League for his lead performance in Terrance McNally's *Corpus Christi*.

High Priests of High Jinx, are based in Los Angeles, California. Their devised show *American Vaudeville* premiered at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in the Pleasance Kingdome August 2 – 28, 2006 to rave reviews and packed houses. Currently they are organizing an international tour.

For more information on *American Vaudeville* and High Priests of Hijinx visit...

www.realcircus.com • 818-987-9435 • realcircus@gmail.com



AMERICAN VAUDEVILLE



Read the rave reviews from the World Premiere at the 2006 Edinburgh Fringe Festival...



By ANDREA MULLANEY

Jon Morris and Scott Nankivel must be two of the hardest-working men in Fringe showbiz. They don't only do acrobatic stunts, perform magic, comedy routines, songs, dramatic death scenes and general entertainment. They also tell a touching story about the relationship between two music-hall performers and give a neat history of the rise and fall of vaudeville - in 75 minutes.

First we see the acts: the parade of spectacle from corny to impressive, performed with lightning precision. Watching a man dressed as a chicken laying (with difficulty) an egg may seem hokey now but at the turn of the last century, it was the cutting edge of comedy for the thousands of Americans who poured into new theatres built for the first mass-entertainment medium.

Then we meet two of the men who plough their way round the circuit, peddling the same act night after night. Chester and Plunkett are a double act: competitive, dependent, in perfect harmony on stage but not always off. After early struggles, they get their big break - a promotion to the prestigious Keith circuit, where they still have to graft but at least get a decent bed to sleep in afterwards. They meet a girl (amusingly played in turn by each performer) but that's one curtain call they can't share.

Through quick, telling scenes, we get to know them over the years through wartime, success, and eventually the decline of vaudeville, as talking pictures take over. Some stars of the vaudeville stage went to Hollywood, such as Chaplin, Mae West and the Marx Brothers; most never made it. While variety acts may always be around, the music halls died as viable venues.

Charming and versatile, Morris and Nankivel try as hard to sell their show as their fictional counterparts. This is a thoroughly entertaining, well-crafted glimpse of a lost world.

"UNMISSABLE" TIME OUT

"Pick of the Fringe"
THE GUARDIAN

The Metro Times

American Vaudeville

By Claire Sawers

Back in the days before elaborate theatre sets and fancy-pants special effects, performers had to keep restless crowds transfixed with sheer talent alone. Jon Morris and Scott Nankivel, a pair of loveable goons who have trained and performed with the Cirque Du Soleil, have talent in bucketloads. With only a trunk full of props on a bare set, but enough energy to keep Edinburgh's street lamps lit all Festival long, the twosome remind their audience what old-fashioned entertainment is all about.

With a tilt of the bowler hat to vaudevillian legends such as Buster Keaton, Charlie Chaplin, the Three Stooges, Laurel and Hardy and Al Jolson, they keep the pace up with charmingly simple skits, effortless clowning and acrobatics and a family-friendly brand of humour.

There is something refreshing about seeing a man make a crowd gasp in awe with no more than a pair of spoons and two clicking fingers for musical back up. The show doesn't pretend to be intellectually demanding, as the original vaudeville bills were designed to entertain the masses and bridge the gap between highbrow melodrama and sleazy saloon bar acts. But whether playing a ukulele, lampooning 19th-century minstrel shows or watching the Mighty Fox Wolf reading a woman's mind by sitting rather amorously on her lap, each and every turn is pulled off with genuine aplomb and natural comedy. Innocent fun from a memorably versatile double act.

THREE WEEKS

Edinburgh's Comprehensive Daily Guide

American Vaudeville

We are welcomed into the theatre by a top-hatted compere - part of the

Vaudeville duo who shall entertain us for the remainder of the evening. What

follows is a high-octane flurry of jokes, pratfalls, and various gags involving a gigantic newspaper, a bowler hat and one lucky (and in this case suitably terrified) audience member. But the show also has a sensitive side, a soft accessibility that steadies the ship: the narrated rise of a young Vaudeville double-act to the heights of fame, and then their tragic demise (not to give too much away). Throughout the whole performance I had the feeling of watching a polished, classy golden-oldie movie on the big screen.

The Stage Magazine

American Vaudeville • PLEASANCE DOME

Charting the rise and fall of vaudeville duo Chester and Plunket, these two highly likeable performers, Jon Morris and Scott Nankivel, have bodies like rubber bands and superb comic timing. Their exuberant and moving show weaves a series of skits into a story of personal rivalry and the end of the vaudeville era.

They were more innocent times, when Chaplin, Keaton and Houdini held the public imagination and silly hat tricks, finger clicking and tightrope-walking kept audiences entertained. What is it about vaudeville that appeals so much today? The skill disguised as pratfalls, the sense of a lost tradition? Or perhaps just the fevered desire to turn everyday things into objects of laughter.

One sketch about an old slave coming back to his plantation to die cleverly hints at vaudeville's embeddedness in its time and place but overall, the accent is on the weird and whimsical. Morris and Nankivel deliver their funny walks and thigh-slapping jokes with gusto, ripping through their routines with great energy.