



Formel

by Tim Nunn

*But to the point. Nature held on her hand
A formel eagle, of shape the gentilest
That ever she among her workes fand,
The most benign, and eke the goodliest;
In her was ev'ry virtue at its rest,
So farforth that Nature herself had bliss
To look on her, and oft her beak to kiss.*

The Assembly of Fowls
Geoffrey Chaucer

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FORMEL

by Tim Nunn

Directed by Katherine Morley

Sound by Kenny MacLeod

Marketing by Ruth Marsh

A young woman has grown up with Golden Eagles soaring above the Scottish hills of her home. When one of the eagles is killed she becomes blinded by rage and launches retribution that leads to tragedy.

'Formel' traces the complex tensions around the eagles of Scotland through the passion and wonder felt for them by this young woman.

She has followed them in the skies above her since she was a child. She can't remember the first time she saw the eagles. But her father remembers her toddler eyes scanning the sky and petulant outbursts as a teenager leading to sulks atop a high hill rather than the usual messy bedroom.

It is winter and she has secretly been shooting her father's sheep to feed the eagles and keep them close to home. Recently she has found poisoned pieces of meat stuck on fence-posts. These are the secrets she keeps from the three men who love her: her father, a local game-keeper and a ranger who protects the eagles.

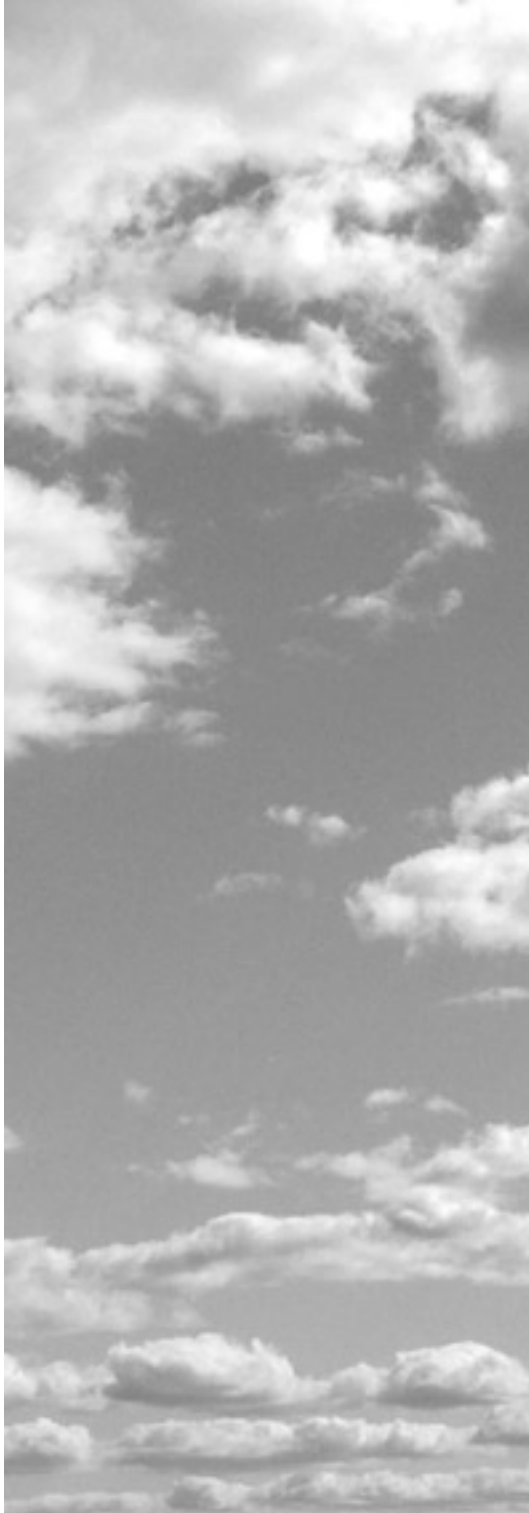
The story is told in the skies, hills, homes, land-rovers and small boats of characters whose passions and love for each other and for their environment is bursting.

When an eagle dies the tensions turn into conflict and tragedy.

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STYLE

The play will make extensive use of field recordings to create a soundscape of locations and action. The audience will be taken into the wind, will hear the shriek of a dying eagle, the waves lapping around the boat and feel the force of an exploding shotgun.

The sound will have an underscoring of flute and percussion.

This will ultimately be a touring production that can easily be placed into unconventional spaces, including village halls, art galleries, churches or schools, as well as studio spaces in theatres. We will be touring with a multi-channel sound system. The performance will require a complete black-out and some of the action will happen in darkness or with only limited lighting from hand-held torches, lanterns or digital projection.

This is not a radio show however. The actors will use movement even in the dark scenes, will manipulate the space and control intimate handheld lighting. The audience will feel their movement around them and see shifting shadows as well as whispers from the corners. We will be using techniques including a network of guide wires for the actors to follow and night-vision goggles.

This has been made technically and economically possible by the use of computer cueing of multi-channel sound, high quality but small powered speakers and high quality multi-channel digital field recorders.

We are hoping that the production will become economic to tour and consequently reach non-theatre venues where it can also be used as outreach for conservation campaigns.

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PROCESS

Tim Nunn (*Funny, Only the Men, My Dark Sky, Hannah and Harvey*) will be writing the script with a continuous integration of the sound recording. Recordings will be made with a portable digital recorder with and under the supervision of Kenny MacLeod. Kenny is well known as a music producer (*Sons and Daughters, Camera Obscura, Paragon, Arika*) and theatre sound designer (*National Theatre of Scotland, Suspect Culture, Sweetscar*). The recordings will be made on location early in the writing process so that recording discoveries can influence the story and locations. Kenny will master and mix the final recordings for performance.

Some studio recording will be necessary and will be done in the recording studios at Platform, the co-producers.

The work-in-progress production will be staged at Platform after a week of rehearsal. This will be somewhat more than a rehearsed reading but still a draft performance to allow further work on the soundscape and script.

TECHNICAL

It is anticipated that 'Formel' will tour with all its technical needs for playing in a small or studio space.

Requirements will be multi-point 13amp electrical supply. It is important the supply is reasonably interference free (i.e. not carry a 'hum' that will be amplified by the sound system).

The show will only play in a complete black-out. For most venues this will necessitate fulfilling conditions set by the local authority and/or Fire Brigade for the removal of Fire Exit signs that might include additional front-of-house staff.

REELING & WRITHING

brilliant, ground-breaking theatre... makes you feel the earth move a little under your feet

The Scotsman (Standing Wave)

brilliantly portrays the unbelievable danger ... highly original and affecting work ... lives long in the memory.

Sunday Herald (My Dark Sky)

Nunn shows once again what a skilful writer he is ... his script is witty, tender, and full of interest.

The Times (Only The Men)

Reeling & Writhing makes theatre that comes from the heart to inspire and excite.

Our work employs a magnetism between all elements of performance, exercising imagination and ingenuity to find and embrace human complexity.

Reeling & Writhing is a Glasgow based company founded by joint artistic directors Katherine Morley and Tim Nunn.

Reeling & Writhing was formed in 2004 and in 2010 has just completed its tenth national tour or substantial single venue production. The company makes work for all ages and has had great success with work for children and adult audiences.

Productions are often accompanied by education or outreach support and the company is proud of the many education projects it has successfully conceived or done under commission.

Reeling & Writhing has received regular support from the Scottish Arts Council as well as the Scottish Government and private funding from the Esmée Fairbairn and Paul Hamlyn Foundations amongst others.

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