

WAKKA WAKKA'S
DEAD
— AS A —
DODO



DEAD AS A DODO

8 performers - 75 mins - ages 7+

WRITTEN BY

Gwendolyn Warnock and Kirjan Waage
with help from the Ensemble

DIRECTED BY

Gwendolyn Warnock and Kirjan Waage

PUPPET DESIGN + CONSTRUCTION

Kirjan Waage

ORIGINAL MUSIC+ SOUND

Thor Gunnar Thorvaldson

LIGHT DESIGN

Daphne Agosin

VIDEO DESIGN

Erato Tzavara

SET AND COSTUME DESIGN

Gwendolyn Warnock and Kirjan Waage

THE ENSEMBLE

Sigurd Axelsen Rosenberg, Alexandra Bråss, Dorothy James, Andy Manjuck, Hanna Muir,
Peter Russo, Anna Serine Soland, Marie Skogvang Stork, Lei Lei Bavoil, Olivia Zerphy

PROPS+ ADDITIONAL PUPPET CONSTRUCTION

Lei-Lei Bavoil, Alexandra Bråss, Frida Vige Helle, Dorothy James, Andy Manjuck, Hanna Magrete Muir, Jack Markussen,
Sigurd Rosenberg, Peter Russo, Marie Skogvang-Stork, Anna Soland

PRODUCERS

Gwendolyn Warnock, Kirjan Waage, Gabrielle Brechner

CO-PRODUCERS

Nordland Visual Theatre
Nord University
Chicago International Puppet Theater Festival

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER

Tom Gustafson





WAKKA WAKKA PRODUCTIONS

Wakka Wakka Productions is a multi award-winning international theatre company based in New York City and Oslo.

Since 2001, Wakka Wakka has been creating original works of theatre and touring extensively throughout the US and the world. Today, Wakka Wakka specializes in bold, unique and unpredictable puppet theatre, incorporating object manipulation, masks, and original music. Their work seeks to expose the contradiction of human existence through biting humor, absurdity, and profound ridiculousness.

Five of their shows have been a NY Times Critic's Pick, including *The Immortal Jellyfish Girl* (2023), *MADE IN CHINA* (2017), *Baby Universe* (2010), *Fabrik* (2008) and *the Death of Little Ibsen*. In 2013 they were awarded a Drama Desk for Sophisticated Puppetry, and in 2011 they received an Obie Award. Additionally, the company has nominated for four Drama Desk Awards, a Helen Hayes Award, and a Hawes Design Award.

Wakka Wakka collaborates with artists from around the world, including China, France, Greece and Iceland, and works with theatres and companies as designers and artistic consultants.

In January of 2024, Wakka Wakka premiered *Dead as a Dodo* at the Chicago International Puppet Theater Festival. *Dead as a Dodo* is the third and final piece of Wakka Wakka's trilogy, *ANIMALIA*, which began with *Animal R.I.O.T.* in 2019 and progressed with *The Immortal Jellyfish Girl* in 2024.

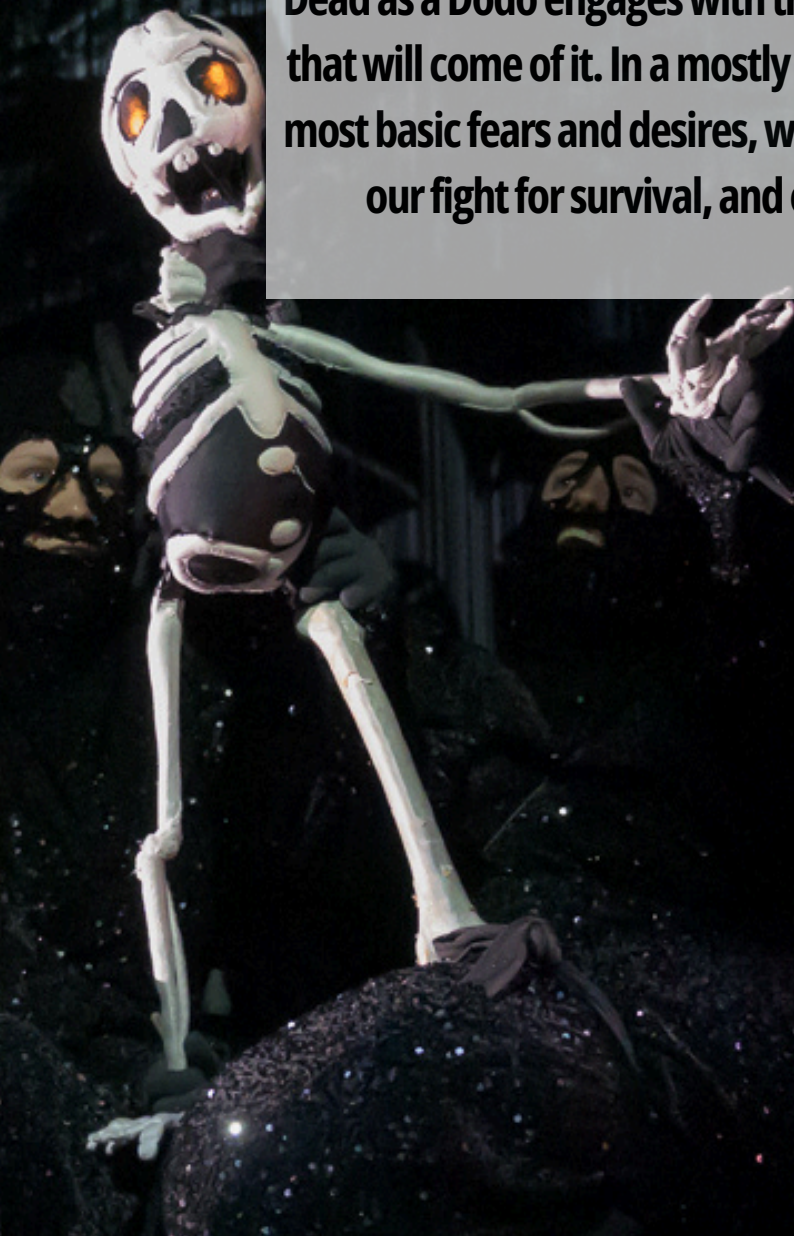


DIRECTOR'S NOTE

The world of this show is created based on Tales from the Crypt, Dante's inferno and old Silly Symphonies cartoons.

As a species, our relationship with death has changed over time, from early humanity until the present day. In our lifetime, the birth and growth of AI, gene editing and bio-technology have all thrust us into new realities and ideas of what is possible. Science is now looking at resurrecting the extinct.

Dead as a Dodo engages with this new present, and the future that will come of it. In a mostly cartoonish way, it exposes our most basic fears and desires, wrestling with our need for love, our fight for survival, and our quest for immortality.



DESIGN



In *Dead as A Dodo*, we wanted to create a dark world full of light and mystery. A world where the dead seem very much alive.

On the stage, where the puppets are in action, we designed a world that could be dug into, formed, changed, molded and exploded, much like the earth itself. We wanted a world that could be tactile and dark and at the same time able to interact with the faintest of light .

The puppeteers in *Dead as a Dodo* are covered from head to toe in the same black sequins that cover all of the scenographic elements . The sparkle of the sequins allows for the puppeteers to effectively “disappear” into the scenography like magic - creating a shifting glittering surface that surrounds the puppets.

Each movement by the puppeteers allows the world to both expand and contract as if it were alive.

Coming from above, black string curtains hang in three layers and cut the impression of a cave. As string, they have their own vulnerable and vibratory energy, even as they conjure the shape of a large and solid mass. The strings can be moved and passed through, and they can seem transparent or opaque depending on the light, giving them a ghostly quality. When combined with projections, a 3D effect allows for visually thrilling sequences, as well as transformative energy between the realms in the underworld.

The costumes, scenographic elements and string curtains combine with projections to create the realm of the dead, a magically morphing and interactive landscape for the characters in *Dead as a Dodo* to inhabit and explore.





PUPPETS

The puppets in the show are inspired by actual skeletons of hominids and dodos, early black and white Silly Symphonies cartoons, the art of Hieronymus Bosch, and depictions of Hell in comic books and folklore - from Tales from the Crypt to Dantes Inferno.

Larger puppets, such as the sea creature and the mammoth, are inspired by mythological beasts and cave drawings. The puppets in *Dead as a Dodo* are divided into two groups: one monochromatic and one colorful. This allows the first part of the puppet show to exist almost completely in black and white, which persists until the main characters are forced to leave their home. Color is introduced into the palette as they cross the fiery waters of the River Styx, symbolizing the beginning of a journey that ultimately ends in a complete transformation of their physical beings.





SOUND DESIGN

he soundscape of *Dead as a Dodo* began with sound research into geodes and crystals, rock formations, lava and basalt. The sounds are harvested from crystal objects that have been recorded and sampled into an octave that can be played, and this music represents the world of glitter that surrounds the puppets.

Bells and gongs were the next addition to the world, as the Boy and the Dodo encounter new characters and new realms in the underworld. Bells have a religious quality and are used in ceremonies and rituals. Smaller bells sound pleasing and innocent, while larger bells are scary and dangerous. The range of bell tones used in the piece create soundscapes for magical creatures, both large and small.

Music is frequently present in artistic depictions of the afterlife. Angels, for example, are often fine musicians and use music as a form of worship and joyous expression. In our underworld, characters sometime sing and play instruments too.

In contrast to the sounds inspired by nature and bells, our characters themselves engage in several numbers throughout the show that are inspired by choral, rock and soul music.



VIDEO DESIGN

In *Dead as a Dodo*, video projection works as a multilayered, constantly changing landscape. Using three layers of black string curtains and 2 layers of projection, we create a three dimensional illusion, fully developing the complexity and vastness of the different realms we navigate throughout the piece.

Video projection, partly inspired by the animation of the past (Looney Tunes, for example) is also used as an additional layer of visual effects; it accentuates movement and sound, enriching the action and comedy of the scenes.

The multidimensional texture of video content, together with the string curtains, helps bring this adventure to life, immersing the audience in expansive vistas of depth and contrast.



"These people may be geniuses"
New York Times

CREATIVE TEAM

After meeting at the Jacques Lecoq International Theater School in Paris, Gwendolyn and Kirjan founded Wakka Wakka Productions in 2001. They have led the company as Co-Artistic Directors, garnering international success and critical acclaim. The company has received an Obie Award, a Drama Desk Award, and multiple UNIMA Citations of Excellence.

GWENDOLYN WARNOCK is the founder and Artistic Director of Wakka Wakka Productions. With her leadership, and that of her partner, Kirjan Waage, Wakka Wakka has garnered international success and critical acclaim, including an Obie Award, a Drama Desk Award, and multiple UNIMA Citations of Excellence. In addition, Gwendolyn has been awarded Creative Capital and Map Fund artist awards, and was nominated for a Drama Desk Award for Best Director of a Play. She is committed to creating unique, original works of theater that examine contemporary topics through a critical lens. Gwendolyn has been an artist in residence at Princeton University, Dartmouth University, the Eugene O'Neil Theater Center, Robert Wilson's Watermill Center, and Nordland Visual Theatre. This spring she will be an artist in residence and visiting professor at Nord University in Verdal, Norway. In addition she has taught countless workshops at universities and cultural institutions both in the U.S. and abroad. Gwendolyn made her studies at Northwestern University, and at the Jacques Lecoq International Theater School.

KIRJAN WAAGE was born in Haugesund, Norway. He is a graduate of the University of Bologna (Dettore) and the two year program at Jacques Lecoq International Theater School. While in Paris, he began crafting stuffed animals and from there expanded to puppets. His puppets have become an integral part of the theatre of Wakka Wakka. Waage is a founding member and co-artistic director of Wakka Wakka. In addition to making the puppets, he has performed in, co-written and co-directed all of the company's past works. He leads *The Immortal Jellyfish Girl* as its undiscernable narrator, Mr. Fox. Outside of Wakka Wakka, he has designed and built puppets for the Royal Swedish Opera in Stockholm, The Arctic Philharmonic, Riksteatret, Oslo Nye Theatre and the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra. Kirjan is also a published cartoonist.



TECH RIDERS

For Dead as a Dodo Tech Riders, please copy and paste the following links into your web browser:

LIGHT PLOT / ALL LIGHT DOCUMENTS:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-mgpj9Lk7Xh74fxVrKD_cc8hjtLORGn?usp=share_link

SOUND RIDER:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1sb8OZak3gxUTs_ILPVE8kz6JJJkuuP87?usp=share_link

PROJECTION NEEDS:

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SOFT GOODS, FLOOR PLANS:

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