DUST ENSEMBLE presents

They Fell To Earth

{A Flight Log}



A NEW PHYSICAL THEATRE SHOW AVAILABLE FOR NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL TOURING FROM SPRING 2027

DUST ENSEMBLE

THEY FELL TO EARTH

{A FLIGHT LOG}

CONCEIVED AND DIRECTED BY MARY STEADMAN, DEVISED AND PERFORMED BY XAVIER DE SANTOS AND ZOV VELEZ



Your paragraph text

Who writes the stories that we can believe in?

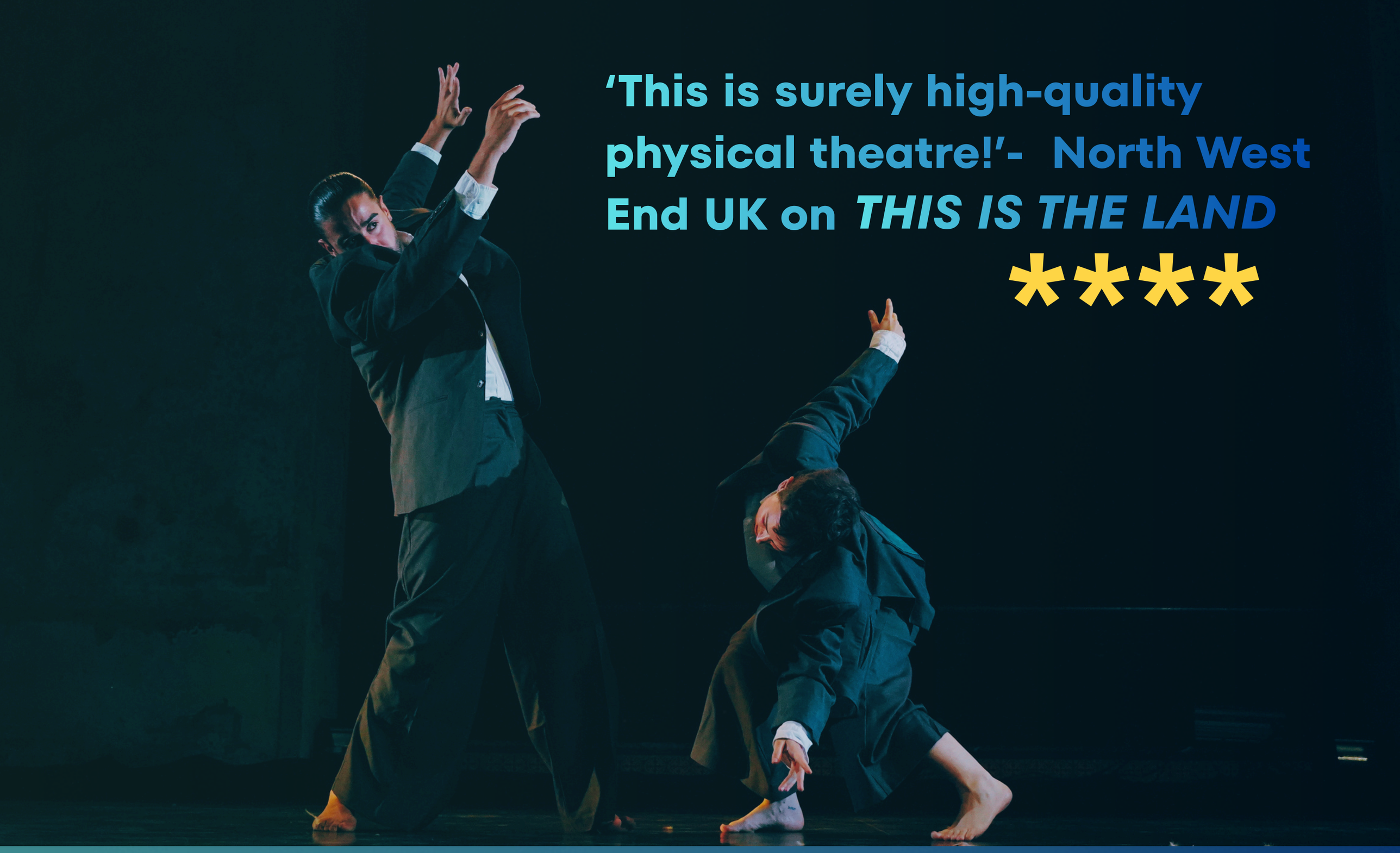
The Greeks understood a timeless truth: a powerful person's belief in their superiority often marks the beginning of their downfall.

In *They Fell to Earth {A Flight Log}*, audiences are immersed in an experience that shatters the ordinary, using visceral movement, surreal poetic imagery, slapstick humour, and live vocal looping. This transformative journey takes you from a mundane world of discarded rubbish to an illusory realm of flight.

Stunned by the aftermath of their fall, this Icarus duo suffers amnesia, leading them down a rabbit hole filled with reflections of their descent. Driven to remember, they reverse the narrative, reenacting memories and sensations of falling, flying, flailing, and failing. Unknowingly, in their quest to fly, they summon spectres from their past, revealing the truth of their inheritance. A legacy that forces them to conform to the toxic masculinities characterised by overreaching ambition and arrogance. As they test each other's limits and provoke one another, they begin to realise that their desire to fly is, in fact, a desire to escape their story.

They Fell to Earth is a physical theatre duet that explores themes of hubris, invention, and masculinity. The performance creates a world using DIY objects, vocal loops, and precarious movement, embodying depictions of Icarus's fall. It playfully examines how the act of falling can open up new possibilities of being that challenge patriarchal constraints.





‘This is surely high-quality physical theatre!’- North West End UK on *THIS IS THE LAND*

****

ABOUT THE SHOW

THEY FELL TO EARTH {A FLIGHT LOG} is a small-scale show featuring 2 LGBTQIA+ performers, involving experimental, highly physical theatre and dance, and live vocal-looping.

DESIGN: Inspired by a DIY aesthetic and the photographs of Robert and Shane Parke-Harrison, THEY FELL TO EARTH {A FLIGHT LOG} is slapstick and poetic in tone, referencing Breughel's painting, Buster Keaton and religious iconography. Shifting between an everyday household garage and illusory landscapes of flight.

MUSIC: Philip Jeck courtesy of Touch Records, Joy Division, and Jocelyn Pook. Documentary footage of interviews with J. Robert Oppenheimer.

LIVE VOCAL LOOPING: The live vocal looping powerfully documents the duo’s journey, layering voices, sounds, and objects to vividly capture the sensation of falling. This technique not only records but also reconstructs the fragmented elements of trauma, revealing the narrative of their fall.

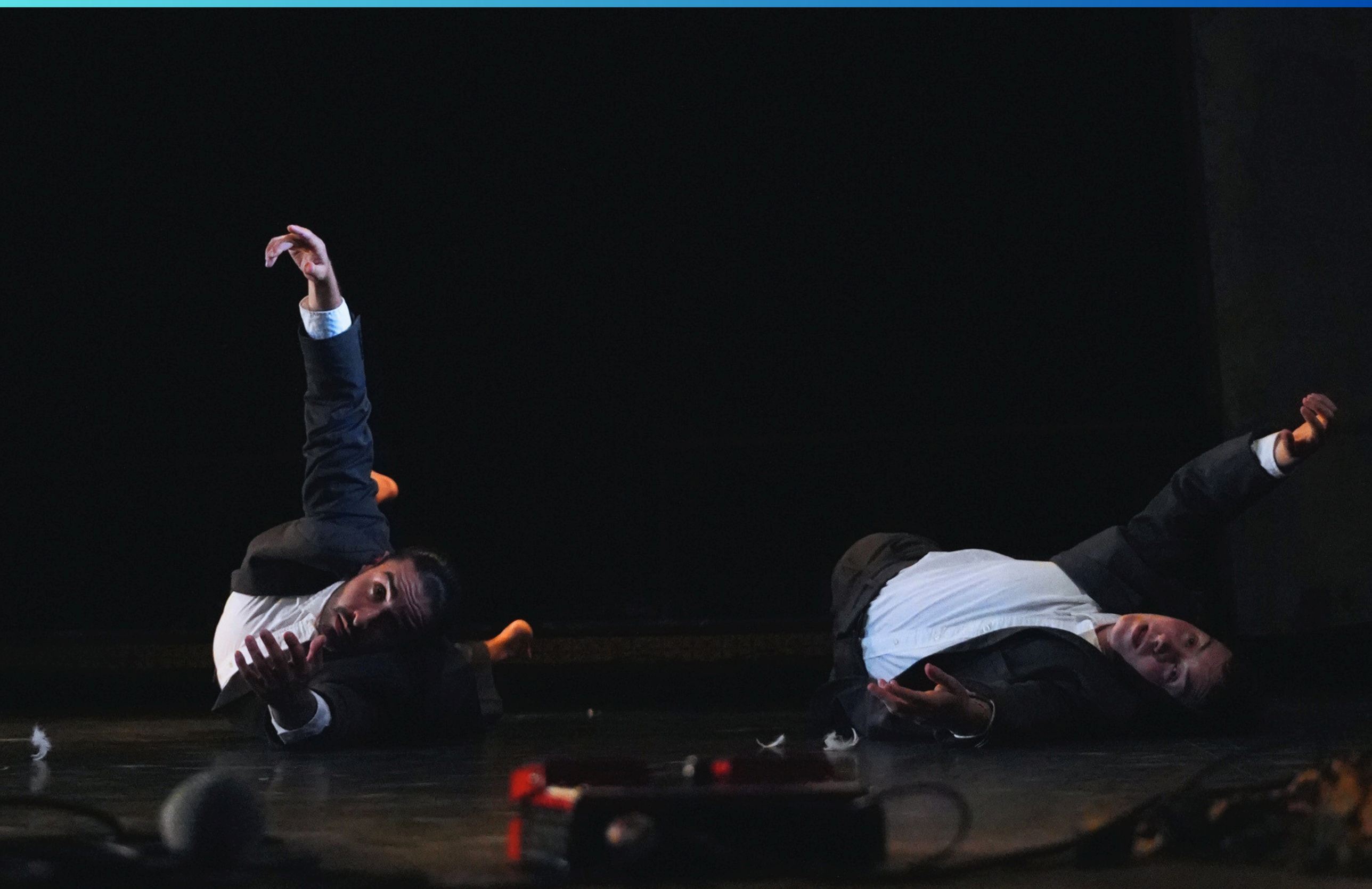
AUDIENCE - the show will appeal to:
Theatre audiences who are interested in known myths and mythic figures
Dance audiences who are interested in an exciting new multidisciplinary company, playing lightly with strong visceral movement that connects to human emotion.
Contemporary arts audiences who are interested in experimental, genre-defying work
Audiences interested in activism and art as resistance
Wider audiences, including those who rarely access the arts, drawn in by the playful humour, vocal-looping and the inventive use of everyday objects
Lgbtqia+ audiences that are interested in alternative representations of masculinities in performance and in ‘escaping the story’

Think David Lynch,
meets Buster
Keaton meets
Fellini’s La Strada



WHO IS ICARUS?

Icarus is a forsaken son
Icarus is a working-class kid in a garage band
Icarus is The Fool
Icarus is The Inventor
Icarus is Leonardo Da Vinci
Icarus is a Goshawk
Icarus is a Corporate Man
Icarus likes Maths, especially Algebra and Equations
Icarus is barely noticed in a Bruegel painting
Icarus channels the inventors of the past
Icarus is a figure in a landscape
Icarus enacts the representations of his fall
Icarus is an Outsider
Icarus will confront the spectres of his past
Icarus will take us into the landscapes of his fall
Icarus will fall and resurrect over and over again



Icarus is a lyric in a song:
“My brother lies upon the rocks; he could
be dead, he could be not, he could be you “ (Bowie, The Bewlay Brothers)



RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

In 2026, Mary became an artist-in-residence at Emerge Studios, where she received support to return to her artistic practice. Collaborating with long-time associates, including devisers and performers Xavier De Santos and Zov Vélez, along with dramaturg Alice Buckley, Mary rediscovered the playfulness in her work. She aimed to capture the humour and chaos of ‘playing games and going too far’, ultimately fostering a dynamic relationship among the performers. The desire to take risks and be bold and inventive as a strategy for survival became central to the development of the performance and its themes.

In 2026, we developed a movement language that explores the themes of falling, flying, and failing. The dramaturgy evolved by depicting Icarus’ ‘Fall’ as represented in various paintings and photographs. We utilised everyday objects that I found in my garage, transforming them to present an illusory landscape of falling, flight, and failure. We also explored vocal looping effects, using them as an active ‘agent’ that captures the sounds of falling. As the process unfolded, many fragments and scenes emerged; these are now being constructed in a reverse narrative that shifts through evolving landscapes, within which the Icarus figures transform.

In July 2026, we had the opportunity to present the first 15 minutes of our work on an Open Stage presented by IMPERMANENCE at the Mount Without in Bristol. The feedback received was overwhelmingly positive.

"It was very ingenious...and the looping of sound was very effective"

"I loved your piece at the Mount Without last Thursday. More than promising. Loved the suits, the precision and layering of music/sounds, as you danced!"

"It was so exciting to get a glimpse of your new work...loved the energy, creativity, movement vocabulary, sound looping, and humour"

Watch an edit of the performance HERE

We will premiere the show on February 6th at the University Theatre in Bath. The show will be ready for touring throughout 2027



INVERTING MYTHS & SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

Mary's work is socially engaged as it draws upon mythic imagination, which is both ancient and contemporary. She explores archetypes, particularly focusing on the ‘Outsider’—those who are marginalised in societies and cultures. In folklore, we encounter the idea of the embodied village, where the Outsider enters to observe how these communities operate. The Outsider serves as our Eyes.

Our performances elevate the Outsider, granting them a certain power as a rebel; their role is to remain separate from the group. They do not seek to belong because their purpose is to expose the underlying power structures present within communities, families, cities, towns, or villages.

The audience is invited to empathise with the Outsider, seeing the world through their perspective. Together, the audience and the Outsider discover new insights about the setting. Much like the Stalker in Andrei Tarkovsky’s film *Stalker*, the stage becomes a ‘Zone’ where the audience is encouraged to explore and uncover deeper truths.



Technical Information

The show is still in development, and so these details are subject to change. If you have any specific questions about the technical requirements of the work, please get in touch.

Running Time: 1 hour 10 minutes (no interval)
Minimum playing space: 6 (w) x 6m (d)
Stage: Proscenium or Thrust
Company: 3 touring (2 Performers, 1 Director).
Dressing rooms: One dressing room minimum required.
Get- in/tech: 5 hours
Get- out: 1 hour
Venue staff: The show requires 1 x multi-disciplined technician for our whole time in the venue.
Lighting: The LX plan is currently in development.
Sound: The sound design is currently in development. We will require use of the full venue PA system for the live-vocal looping on stage.

TEAM

Conceived and Directed by Dr Mary Steadman
Devised and Performed by Xavier De Santos and Zov Vélez
Dramaturg support by Alice Buckley
Photography by Samuel De La Torre
Video Filming at Mount Without by Louis Veillon
Rehearsal Footage filming by Alice Buckley
Singing by Helen Roberts
Sound: Philip Jeck recordings courtesy of Touch Records

Special thanks to our partners at Emerge Studios, Bath Spa University

EMERGE



They Fell To Earth { A Flight Log} is in development and will be available for national and international touring from Spring 2027.

We are also looking for co-producing and co-commissioning partners to invest financially in the work.

Please get in touch for opportunities to see the work. Contact:
contact@marysteadman.co.uk +44 (0)7469947209

www.marysteadman.co.uk