

Squaring the Wheel

By Jens Altheimer



PRESENTER'S INFORMATION

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COMPANY PROFILE

Jens Altheimer tours his solo shows since 1999, first in Europe and in the last four years throughout Australia. His 2010 show "In your Face" won the 2010 Apollo Bay Award for Best Street Performance, "Squaring the Wheel" touring nationally, won Best Production for Children at the Adelaide Fringe Festival 2013. In the meanwhile it had seasons at the LaMama Theatre, Melbourne, Sydney Festival 2014, is touring for 7 weeks in WA, is having a 4 weeks season at the Ipswich Art Gallery, touring NSW for 3 weeks and has/had 3 Victorian tours, aside presentation in different theatres (Adelaide Festival Centre, Melbourne Gasworks etc.)

ABOUT THE SHOW

SHOW SYNOPSIS

At a glance:

Created and performed by Jens Altheimer

"...A comical visual feast which simply has to be seen to be believed." Artshub, ★ ★ ★ ★

Squaring the Wheel combines circus, clown, strange mechanisms and contraptions, puppetry, magic and music into an unusual, thingamabobbish theatre extravaganza.

A flying broom, two ugly screaming babies, 17 balls, 34 meters of bent steel, 483 welded points and 15 marching eggs are just the tip of the iceberg of unexpected, transformed wacky materials and objects.

Unpredictable, funny, touching, highly visual and occasionally out of control, it is a clever theatre adventure for the whole family in thinking out of the box.

Topsy-turvy ways to look at things, teamed with imagination, transform a pile of junk into a resourceful repository of gadgets and circus props, into life and friendship supporting odds and ends ... all done in an hilarious and ultimately very human way of complicating simple things.

Following the show, stay for an interactive workshop into the science behind the wacky contraptions and get inspired to build your own little universe of pulleys, catapults and chain-reaction machines back home.

Family show suitable for ages + 5

Winner of the Adelaide Fringe Award 2013, Best Presentation for Children

The longer version:

A family show inhabited by quirky contraptions: Squaring the Wheel brings together circus skills, puppetry, magic, wacky mechanisms and unexpected music, coming together in a theatrical stage extravaganza with a comical and physical language.

When an eccentric misfit stumbles into a pile of junk, hungry and on his own, it doesn't seem to be his lucky day. Till he discovers that things don't necessarily have to be as bad as they first appear. More precisely: they don't have to be what they appear to be at all!

With some imagination, persistence and irreverence, he can be the creator of his own odd world.

A vacuum cleaner and ironing board 'helping' a man with his hat? A broom finding itself performing in a band? Records playing without a record player? Eggs walking? Everything in this strange world of contraptions turns into a challenging and surprising discovery of how to complicate simple things.

Everyday objects are reused in odd, yet somehow poetic ways or transformed into unexpected and hilarious contraptions. Household items turn into improbable and obstinate juggling props, bits of metal are reassembled into gigantic toys. Crackers and a fry pan turn into a friend.

Kooky antics, absurd gadgets, tomfoolery and high energy performance are balanced with themes of loneliness, thinking outside the box, friendship and achieving, in a joyous and heart warming story of finding one's place.

The show is followed by a 20 minutes interactive introduction into contraptions and the physics behind them.

This is demonstrated with the help of an additional chain- reaction machine, highlighting and exploring concepts such as gravity, friction, levers, counterweight, pulleys, stored energy etc. The concepts are explained and demonstrated through active participation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Jens Altheimer: deviser and performer

Tom Strode : lighting design

BIOGRAPHIES

Jens Altheimer

Zealous frontman of his one-man shows, confessed multi-disciplinary-art devotee, submerging circus artist and emerging quirkologist. Established collector, inventor and transformer of thingamabobs and other wondrous oddities of day to day life.

Creator of theatre, circus and contraption adventures, taming them on his own or sharing the tour de force with larger communities. Unable to suppress a European twist to his work and also not too good in controlling some obstinate inclination to explore the eccentric and wacky side of life and things.

Reckons that one of the best part of this fierce and unstable life of performing is meeting all kinds of different people on its path.

The a little bit longer version:

Jens Altheimer, who relocated from Europe to Melbourne in 2009, is a performer, director and teacher in circus and theatre, trained at the *Lecoq International School of Theatre* in Paris.

He is currently performing his solo show *Squaring the Wheel*, which in March 2013 had a successful three week season at the *Gardens of Unearthly Delights* in Adelaide, where it won the Adelaide Fringe Award: *Best Presentation for Children 2013*.

Later in the year, it toured to 20 Victorian and Tasmanian venues, organized by *Regional Arts Victoria*, as well as to six schools, organized by the Education and Family branch of the RAV

Throughout 2013, he was the artistic director of an Extended School Residency (funded by *Arts Victoria*), developing a multidisciplinary art project with a rural school in Elmore (Victoria).

Concurrently, he continues to develop his contraption / chain- reaction workshop concept *Tziing! – Boing! – Kerplunk! : Ingenious Contraptions*, which he created as a big-scale building workshop for children at *Artplay*, funded by the *City of Melbourne*.

Apart from this, he regularly teaches performance at *NICA* and was invited to do some guest teaching spots at the *National Theatre*, the *Flag Youth Theatre* and at *Circularity*, the *Women’s Circus Festival*, all in Melbourne.

Between 2011 and 2013, he spent four artistic residences as a guest director and teacher in Broome. The residences included training with young people of remote, mainly indigenous communities, the direction of two circus based shows with the aboriginal Beagle Bay and the Djaradgin-Lombadina communities and the direction of two shows with local company *Sandfly Circus*, involving a cast of about 50.

Former highlights also include his role as the MC of *Nica’s Cabaret Vertigo* and the award of best street performer at the 2010 *Apollo Bay Music Festival*, as well as his role as a creative act consultant for the *NICA Showcase* performances in 2010 and 2011.

Born in Germany, he spent the last 25 years performing and teaching throughout different countries in Europe, including the collaboration in two productions of *Philippe Genty*. He created a number of ensemble and solo shows, having worked in the last few years mainly on his solo productions *Survivor*, *In your Face* and *Quadrar a Roda*.

PERFORMANCE SPECIFICS

DURATION

60 minutes + possible 20 minutes demonstration: “How do contraptions work?”

SUITABLE VENUES

It is an indoor show, that is flexible in terms of venue. We need a clear 6 x 5.5 performance space, min. height 2.7 m.

Generally, we are using the existing house sound and light equipment, but there is the possibility to tour with our own sound and lighting equipment for unmanaged venues.

MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PERFORMANCES PER WEEK

10 performances if in the same venue (no bump ins and outs).
On tour with changing venues, generally 5, but exceptions might be done.

MINIMUM BREAK BETWEEN PERFORMANCES

45 minutes. Please keep in mind, that the demonstration part after the show takes around 25 minutes.

LICENCING AGREEMENTS

none

APRA OBLIGATIONS

Apra Theatrical Context License

TOURING PERSONNEL

The touring party consists of 2 people.

List the touring personnel below.

Name	Role
Jens Altheimer	Producer, Performer
Tom Strode	Stae Manager, Sound and light tech

PERFORMANCE HISTORY

Provide the performance history in the table below.

Year	Venue	Number of performances
2011	The Space Melbourne	8
2012	La Mama Theatre, Melbourne	12
2012	Kids Festival Warrnambul	4
2012	Performance Arts Centre Warragul	2
2012	Roola Boola Kids Festival, MELbourne	1
2012	Northcote Kids Festival	2
2013	Adelaide Fringe Festival	14

2013	GAsworks MEIbourne	2
2013	Adelaide Festival Centre	2
2013	Victorian School tour, between Melbourne and Mildura	7
2013	Regional Arts Victoria, Victorian Theatres tour	28
2014	Sydney Festival	8
2014 (March & April)	Ipswich Art Gallery	37
2014 (May)	Regional Arts Victoria, NSW Theatres tour	14
2014 (July, August)	WA Country Arts	22
2014 (September)	Regional Arts Victoria, Victorian Theatres tour	17

AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

OVERVIEW

‘Squaring the Wheel’ : Workshop Program

I like to extend a presentation of ‘Squaring the Wheel’ at any venue to an event, that provides some additional activities to strengthen the connection of your community with your theatre.

I personally like the idea of touring a show and engaging with people from all different places.

Through workshops, I can provide some extra possibilities for local audiences to connect in a more interactive and creative way with the show, it’s performer and it’s content, thus turning a theatre visit into a more comprehensive and definitely more engaging experience.

I have a long experience in conducting workshops in the proposed areas, with a teaching record that includes NICA (National Institute of Circus Arts, Melbourne), ArtPlay (Melbourne), Outreach Program Kimberley (Broome), National Theatre Melbourne, Arts Victoria Extended School Residency (Elmore, Bendigo).

The specifications of all workshops serve as an orientation, adjustments to meet your individual needs can be discussed.

Please feel free to contact me if you need more detailed information.

DESCRIPTION / DETAILS

Clown / Physical Theatre

Duration: One 2 - 3 hour session or two 2 - 3 hour sessions

Age Groups: 6 - 12 years or 13 - 17 years or 18 - 99 years

Number of participants: min. 6, max. 16

No previous experience required

Space needed: empty open space, min. 8 x 7 m, no concrete or tile floor

Other requirements: -

A humorous introduction into the work of clown and theatre with a mainly physical approach. Exercises of coordination, rhythm and movement, followed by some playful improvisations.

Contraption building / The Wacky Lolly Shooting Machine

Duration: Several one hour sessions possible

Age Groups: 8 - 14 years or 15 - 99 years or families (adult works in a team with their child/ren)

Number of participants: min. 12, max. 26

No previous experience required

Space needed: open space, min. 10 x 10 m

Other requirements: 1 table per three participants plus 2 extra tables.

After a short introduction into the functioning of contraptions, participants will build in small groups their part of a chain reaction 'machine' out of simple components. Creativity, precision and improvisation in an entertaining understanding of 'cause and effect'.

Please see further details on the attached “ The Wacky Lolly Shooting Machine” document.

Circus

Duration: One 2 -3 hour session or two 2 - 3 hour sessions

Age Groups: 8 - 12 years or 13 - 99 years

No previous experience required

Number of participants: min. 6, max. 15

Space needed: empty open space, min. 8 x 7 m, min. height 3 m, no concrete or tile floor

Other requirements: if possible: thin mats (1 per 2 participants)

Introductory circus workshop, where different disciplines for solo and partner/group work are explored in a playful atmosphere. People with some previous experience get support to develop their tricks.

Elements: Circus Game, Warm Up and Stretching, Acrobalance (Human Pyramids), Ball Juggling, Object Balancing, Rola Bola, Plate Manipulation

COST

Depends on the *touring scheme to be discussed*

TARGET AUDIENCE FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The workshops can be tailored to each venues necessities

MARKETING

MARKETING COPY

One line

Award winning thingamabobbish circus- theatre comedy

Short

Squaring the Wheel combines circus, clown, strange mechanisms and contraptions, puppetry, magic and music into an unusual, thingamabobbish theatre extravaganza.

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Extended

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MARKETING SUMMARY

Teacher's Resource Pack

Poster and Flyer Artwork

High res pictures

Website and facebook page

Video trailer

MEDIA QUOTES

"Squaring the Wheel is a wonderful children's show about mysteries, imagination and finding one's place in the world. Using elements of circus, puppetry, magic, music and clowning, the audience is invited to witness the ways in which ordinary objects can be employed for extraordinary ends."

Jens Altheimer is a master of object manipulation and clearly a contraption-building genius.

A comical visual feast which simply has to be seen to be believed. "

**** rating, Artshub, Tuesday, October 04, 2011

AUDIENCE REVIEWS

Facebook quotes (from [facebook / squaring the wheel](#)):

Sanawaka Nyree Inoke

Unreservedly the best kids show and/or education show I have ever been to.

SCARED WEIRD LITTLE GUYS meets CIRCUS meets ILLUSIONIST meets SCIENTIST.

Funny, enthralling, engaging for children and adults alike. The entire audience was so captured by Jens that they couldn't get enough of his hands on science explanation and chain reaction contraption at the end. The ability for the children to build their own ball run prior to or after the show added to the sense of immersion and participation. I know my children will not forget their experience or the understandings gained. Exceptional! Thank you so much

Diana Woodhouse

Such an entertaining, heartwarming and sneakily educational performance!! Thoroughly enjoyed your show at the Whitehorse Centre today, and my kids have been quoting you all night! Looking forward to seeing more of your fabulous work in the future

Annie Angliss

Today I attended Squaring the Wheel with a large group of people with physical and intellectual disabilities. The show was so engaging, so quirky, so entertaining. All our clients had a wonderful theatre visit...thank you so much.

Madeline Sophie

A fantastic, educational, endearing adventure. Physics made fun at the Whitehorse Centre! Thank you!

Pam Bradford

We saw your show this afternoon at the Wyndham Cultural Centre and my son and his friends thought it was amazeballs! My son

was enthralled from start to finish. I thoroughly enjoyed every minute too. Thank you!

Gisela Wizenier

Both kids & adults loved the show. Not only funny and entertaining but also educational!! Thanks a lot for a great afternoon and especially for the demonstration after the show!

Nara Donaldson

Thank you for sharing your fun and amazing contraptions!! We loved it! My daughter says it was the best show ever!!! Now to try and make the mouse trap car and we might try the broom dancing trick too!! Very clever!!

Kathryn Bell

Great show in Sale today! Fun, fantastic, very engaging, very clever, we all loved it, thank you!

Brigette Richards

I saw and loved your show yesterday in Bairnsdale! Such fun with lots of educating facts and filled with many laughs! Thank you!

Heather Burton

Your performance tonight , at Portland Art Centre was just magnificent thank you

COLLEAGUE RECOMMENDATIONS

Derek Ives, 0412 944 422

VIDEO LINKS

No broadcast quality

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rv-qbA7Xj14>

full version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g84-XNw2egE>

IMAGES

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/bkoogzm5bfk7xc7/iP8rSTQ5TU>

MARKETING MATERIALS

Teacher's Resource Pack

Poster and Flyer Artwork

High res pictures

Website and facebook page

Video trailer

CONTENT WARNINGS / AUDIENCES TO AVOID

no

SPONSOR OR OTHER ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

no

TEACHER'S RESOURCES

yes

PRODUCTION DETAILS

TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Technical Specifications

COMPANY

1 Performer, 1 Technician

RUNNING TIME

Show 60 mins, no interval. If booked Q&A and demonstration: + 20 mins

AGE GROUP

> 5 years

SET UP TIME

2 h 30 mins minimum for set assembling, preset and warm - up

Loading- in time depending on venue

Hanging, focussing and plotting time of lights depending on venue (can be done partly during set assembling and preset)

Total set up time minimum 3 h 30 mins

TAKE OUT TIME

60 mins to dismantle set

Loading- out time depending on venue

STAGE AND STAGE DIMENSIONS

- stage area minimum 6.5 x 5.5 m (preferably bigger)
- - height (stage-floor to ceiling/grid) regular: 4.6 m / possibility of 3 m
- - black backdrop and wings
- - powerpoint at stage-right/ upstage
- In case of sharing the venue with other shows: min. storage area for the set backstage: 3x 2m

SOUND

Standard in-house sound equipment except microphone is to be supplied by the theatre. The sound is launched from our laptop (using the qlab application).

mixing desk to connect laptop and microphone receiver

- space to place laptop
- - we bring our own microphone (headset)

Please make sure, that all sound is set up and operational before the company arrives.

Possibility of touring with our own sound equipment.

LIGHTING

Please find attached the regular lighting plot for 10 x 7.5 m stage or download from

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/189701477/Squaring-the-Wheel-Light-Plot-6-12-2013-No-Leds>

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/189701905/Squaring-the-Wheel-Light-Focussing-Plot-No-Leds-6-12-2013>

The second version includes focussing directions.

Please pre-hang (where possible) all lights according to our lighting plot, we will use (where possible) our pre-programmed Chamsys MagicQ virtual lighting desk, using our own laptop (connects to the DMX cable).

Possibility of a simplified lighting plot, please contact company.

Possibility of touring with a reduced LX system for unequipped venues.

LIGHTING SET UP

Availability of lighting set-up crew, including a lighting technician for hanging, focusing and plotting.

LIGHT AND SOUND OPERATION

Light and sound are operated by the company's technician. Our operator must be able to see the stage while operating the cues. Place for laptop and lighting table must be next to each other.

DRESSING ROOM

Dressing room with table, chair, mirror and access to toilets.

EXAMPLE SCHEDULE

The show travels with two people, myself and a technician, Tom. We are using a car and a 7 x 5 canope trailer. Please provide two parking spots. We have two big rolling road cases and four suitcases, as well as a light metal structure (disassembles into five long pieces).

Our normal bump-in procedure is to check the stage and roll in the set. The set is then assembled, whilst Tom begins work with the lights.

Please hang and prefocus the lights as far as possible prior to our arrival (see attached combined lighting and focussing plan). Channels 1 - 16 are the general wash.

Once Tom starts, the lights that hang above the area of the set position (see attached lighting plan) should be focussed first.

The set takes about 30 min to be assembled, after that, the specials (the profiles hanging above the downstage area or above the audience)) can be focussed.

We have the lights programmed on our computer, using the Camsys MagicQ application that connects to the DMX cable of the theatre. Thus, it is important for a fast bump-in to have the lights on the channels as described in our lighting plot.

In some cases, where the pre-hung lights and their channels differ too much from our design or any other complication/ non compatibility, we may decide it will better to use the theatre lighting desk and plot the lights manually (including timings).

Sound:

Where possible, we would like to have the speakers on floor level (stands are fine).

We have our own headset wireless mic system (AKG) and have Jack and XLR cables.

The soundtrack runs from our computer, using the QLab application, that then connects to your mixing desk.

Operation:

Tom operates both sound and light. So, there should be enough space to place two laptops (in case we use our Chamsys MagicQ program) or there should be a place for the laptop next to the lighting desk (in case we use the house lighting desk).

CREW REQUIRED FROM VENUE

2 lighting technicians, 4 hours

1 sound technician, 30 min

STAGE

STAGE AND STAGE DIMENSIONS

- *stage area minimum 6.5 x 5.5 m (preferably bigger)*
- *height (stage-floor to ceiling/grid) regular: 4.6 m / possibility of 3 m*
- *black backdrop and wings*
- *powerpoint at stage-right/ upstage*
- *set size assembled aprox. 4.5 x 3.5 m*

*[Company] to supply
see technical specifications above*

*Venue to supply
see technical specifications above*

LIGHTING

regular: aprox. 37 lights: 10 profiles, 21 fresnels, 6 pars

possibility of travelling with a reduced lighting equipment to unmanaged venues

*[Company] to supply
lighting desk (computer based Chamsys)
filters*

possibility of travelling with a reduced lighting equipment to unmanaged venues

*Venue to supply
All equipment except filters and lighting desk*

SOUND

house sound system, our laptop and our mic- system

*[Company] to supply
computer to connect to sound desk (we run qlab)
headset mic set*

*Venue to supply
stereo ampification and sound desk*

AV

none

[Company] to supply

-

Venue to supply

-

WARDROBE

simple costume

[Company] to supply

-

*Venue to supply
1 dressing room*

FREIGHT NOTES

*Show travels with a 1 t van or a car with a 7 x 5 trailer.
Stage must be accesible with rolling road cases*

CRITICAL ISSUES

-

CONTACTS

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