

MishMash Productions present

# Tour Pack 2020

# STRANGE CREATURES



LOTTERY FUNDED



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**





Magical theatrical chamber music gently exploring what it means to be unique in a surprising and colourful world.

***Strange Creatures*** is inspired by the book *Beegu* written and illustrated by Alexis Deacon and performed by arrangement with Penguin Random House Children's Publishers UK, a Penguin Random House company.

For children aged 4 – 7 and their families/schools

### **Creative Team**

Director: Martin Berry

Musical Director: Sophie Rivlin

Creative Producer: Liz Muge

Designers: Laura Pennell and Sophie Geen

Design Consultant: Helen Fownes-Davies





**'Spellbinding! Beautiful music and a charming performance. Thank You!'**

**'Really fun, lovely to hear classical music in a 'modern' way.'**

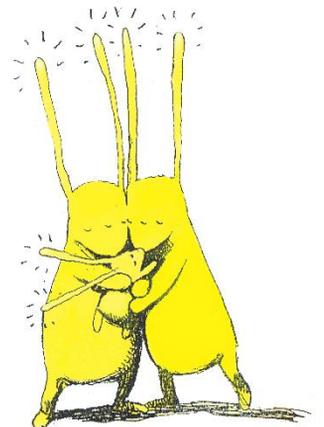
# About Strange Creatures

Strange Creatures gently explores friendship, communication and belonging. Inspired by Alexis Deacon's popular book *Beegu*, the piece follows 3 initially grumpy companions as they play games, have fun and experience the ups and downs of friendship. Told through magical, theatrical chamber music, including works by Mozart, Shostakovich and Judith Weir, the trio embark on a remarkable emotional journey from loneliness to joyful companionship. The programme includes an amazing variety of sound-worlds, including a musical tantrum, dancing, singing and lots of beauty, comedy and fun.

The set is small and intimate bringing the audience within touching distance of our ensemble to create an immersive experience of wonderful live music.

Duration: Approximately 40 minutes with no interval

The promotional trailer can be found [here](#).





# About MishMash Productions

MishMash Productions is a national leader in producing, promoting and touring exciting music led productions for young audiences. Formed in 2014 to make music more accessible using the magic of theatre to create bold, imaginative productions for children and families.

Previous productions include *Hubbub: a Musical Adventure*, developed in collaboration with the critically acclaimed Aurora Orchestra and Composer Paul Rissmann *Hubbub* was awarded a Highly Commended in the 2016 Get Creative Family Arts Festival; and *Smile* which followed in 2017 in collaboration with Inspire: Culture, Learning and Libraries winning the Best Family Welcome award as part of the 2018 Fantastic for Families Awards.

Strange Creatures is the third collaboration with Director Martin Berry and Musical Director Sophie Rivlin.

Collaborations are also currently underway with the Villiers String Quartet and the BBC Concert Orchestra. Making more magical productions for young audiences!





# Technical & Practical Information

The Touring Company – Strange Creatures will tour with 4 company members, including 3 performers (cello, violin, and violin/viola) and 1 company stage manager.

Space - A 5m x 6m performance space is ideal. The set is small and flexible and ideal for libraries, community centres, schools and studio spaces. The venue needs to have a minimum ceiling height of 3m. The audience should be seated level with the performance space on cushions and chairs (not toured) up to a maximum of 100 (for best audience experience).

Sound and Lighting - The performance is entirely acoustic and no sound equipment or support is required. The production is designed for non-professional spaces such as libraries, schools and community spaces therefore no lighting is required or provided.

Timing - The show runs to 40 minutes. Minimum get in time is 1.5 hours and get out time is 1 hour.

Support - The company require at least one member of staff to support get in/get out. Venues will also need to provide stewards during the performance and to hand out programmes (free of charge) on the door.

Dressing room - One additional space will be needed to act as a dressing room for the 3 performers, big enough to allow some musical warm up/rehearsal.

Resource Pack - An educational resource pack is available designed for Foundation and KS1 teachers including extension activities and further links.

## **Touring**

Strange Creatures is available for touring Summer and Autumn 2020



'MishMash Productions' adaption of *Beegu* is a wonderful response to the story. It takes the themes of alienation and empathy and brings them to life with a new voice. The performance is full of the most wonderful music and the imaginative staging allows the children in attendance to immerse themselves in every sequence. I am thrilled that they have chosen my book to work with and I hope it helps to spread *Beegu's* call for friendship far and wide.'

Alexis Deacon

# Creative Team

## **Martin Berry - Director**

Martin has directed over 40 productions around the UK and internationally. He has worked for many of the major regional theatres, and regularly teaches and directs for RADA, Royal Central School and Russell group universities. His work in radio includes dramas for the BBC and a brief stint as associate on The Archers. He specialises in work for young audiences, classical and modern texts and musical theatre.

## **Sophie Rivlin – Musical Director**

Sophie is a cellist who joined MishMash for their first production 'Hubbub' and loved it so much she has stuck around ever since. She is based in London and spends a lot of time performing traditional concerts with orchestras, contemporary ensembles and chamber groups. However, she has developed a special interest in presenting chamber music imaginatively to audiences via the means of theatrical concerts. Alongside working with MishMash, Sophie is a founding member of TROUPE who last year toured two fully staged shows to venues including Wigmore Hall, Snape Maltings, Saffron Hall and travelled to Brazil for the prestigious SESC Festival Música de Câmera. Sophie studied philosophy at Cambridge university and the cello at the Royal Academy of Music and has varied interests including very geeky strategy board games.

## **Liz Muge – Creative Producer**

Liz is passionate about music and the impact great music can have on all people, particularly very small people. In more than 20 years working in Music Education Liz has spent time as the Education Director at Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, the Chief Executive Officer of a small music charity, Makes Some Noise, and more recently as Business Development Manager at Nottingham Music service. Following a period of research funded by Arts Council England Liz established MishMash Productions in 2014 to create magical, original music for young audiences.

## **Helen – Design Consultant**

Originally, from Shropshire, Helen graduated from BA (hons) Theatre Design at Nottingham Trent University in the mid 90's. She has worked extensively as a Designer in live performance for over 20 years, designing for classic and emerging theatre, dance and music pieces with some of the UK's finest directors and choreographers.

Helen is a strong advocate of widening the visual and performing arts, to a broader society, and has held various positions in education throughout her career. She was a resident Designer and Workshop facilitator for 6 years at the Arts and Education Centre, Nottingham, and has had a 12-year position as Senior Lecturer and currently Course Leader at NTU. She was delighted to design *Smile* in 2017 and likewise to be mentoring her Design students for *Strange Creatures*.

## **Laura Pennell - Designer**

Laura graduated from the BA (Hons) Theatre Design course at Nottingham Trent University in 2019. She is very passionate about theatre and art being accessible for the whole community and is looking forward to a career in Children's Theatre, Disability Theatre and Community Arts. Laura has thoroughly enjoyed working with the MishMash creative team and is grateful for gaining experience in the industry with highly skilled professionals.

## **Sophie Geen - Designer**

Sophie graduated from the BA (hons) Theatre Design course at Nottingham Trent University in 2019. Her interest in theatre design developed during her Foundation Diploma in Art and Design at Buckinghamshire New University, where she specialised in the 3D/ Sculpture. In the Summer of 2018, Sophie worked as an Assistant Designer for the Youth Music Theatre UK production of *A Winter's Tale* (Rose Theatre). She has also completed placements at the Royal Opera House Scenic Arts department and the children's theatre, Polka for the production *the Snow Queen*.

## Feedback from Audiences:

'It was extremely excellent and we loved it'

'I liked how the music expressed their feelings'

'Loved it! What a great way to introduce children to classical instruments – visually stimulating and fascinating to watch throughout – what a talented lot!'

'Beautiful way of introducing live music to little ones and performing using non-verbal communication'

'The children were transfixed and very moved, to experience music in this fun and relaxing setting is a real privilege.'

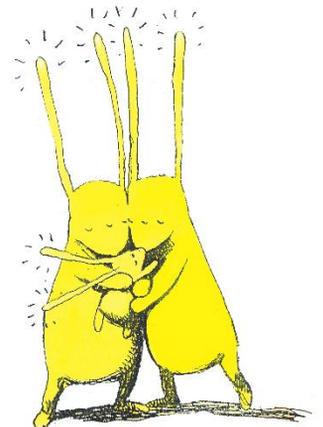


# Collaborators

Strange Creatures was created in 2019 by MishMash Productions in collaboration with Nottingham City Council Library Service and was developed with funding from Arts Council England, and in association with Inspire: Culture, Learning and Libraries and Nottingham Lakeside Arts, University of Nottingham; with support from Nottinghamshire Music Hub, Nottingham Music Hub and Nottingham Trent University, BA (hons) theatre Design, School of Art and Design.

Strange Creatures is inspired by the book *Beegu* written and illustrated by Alexis Deacon.

**Alexis Deacon** is a writer and illustrator of children's books. His first book, *Slow Loris*, was published in 2002 and was shortlisted for the Blue Peter Book Award. In 2015 it was named one of the hundred best children's books of all time by Time Magazine. He has twice been shortlisted for the Kate Greenaway Medal and is a two time recipient of *The New York Times* Best Illustrated Children's Books Award. In 2014 *The River* won the Observer/Jonathan Cape/Comica Graphic Short Story Prize. In 2008 he was chosen by Booktrust as one of the ten best new illustrators of the preceding decade.





For more information and bookings please contact  
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A full show reel is available on request.



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