

Interview for Brest, France

1 - What means the title of your show? Why Incognitus? Is it a way to say it's a show about each and everyone? About solitude and isolation?

The name stems from the fact that I am an ordinary guy performing this one-man show. I don't expect anyone to have heard of me so the name is kind a of wink and a nod that says, "who is this guy Jamie Adkins?"

2 - Your show seems to be about a man who has problems with speech. Is it a correct way to sum it up? Do you feel that speech isn't a convenient tool for conveying meaning?

My character has a lot to say, but he does not quite know how to say it. In the end he discovers it was not words he needed but actions. I find that I am able to express myself better and more precisely without words. When I use words on stage I tend to talk too much and the meaning of what I wish to express is cluttered.

3 - Of all the ways body can express itself, you chose circus rather than, let's say, dance. What drove you to circus? What kind of body did you find there?

I actually chose clown more than circus. A clown dances, plays, laughs, cries and loves. Everyone has a clown inside of them, It's just a matter of letting it out.

3 bis - Would you say there is a Jamie-Adkins-kind-of-body? If yes, what would it be?

A Jamie-Adkins-kind-of-body would be a very normal body trying to do unusual things.

4 - Your show is very low-tech, compared to what is possible nowadays. I'm sure it's a choice, but why that choice?

I like "low tech". Often in shows high tech toys separate the artist from the audience in an artificial way without serving the story. I enjoy human experiences. I am more interested in the juggler than the juggling. I enjoy shows filled with humanity, the good side of humanity and the dark side. I would much rather listen to a good singer play an acoustic guitar in a small venue than any arena show with all the lights, special effects, explosions and likely lip-synced lyrics.

I like watching human beings being human. But now that I think about it. There is not a robot in the world that can do what the human body is capable of. Every computer in the world combined could not perform the complex functions the

human brain does without effort. So maybe I do like “hi-tech”

5 - The props you use, the way you use them, and your blank, emotionless face remind me a lot of Buster Keaton. Would you say that Keaton was one of your main influences?

I was not influenced by silent movies directly. I did not see the great work created by those masters until I was already performing for many years. However, growing up I adored watching Warner Brothers cartoons. Bugs Bunny, Yosemite Sam, Foghorn Leghorn, etc and these cartoons were greatly influenced by silent movies. They stole many of their jokes from directly from silent movies.

So I was influenced by Chaplin and Keaton via Bugs Bunny

5 bis - Who else has influenced you? In which way(s) ?

Anyone who made me laugh, love or cry has directly influenced my comedy.

6 - How do you work? How do you come up with your routines?

If I work for a week and during that week come up with only one joke, idea or moment for the show. I would consider that a very successful week.

I come up with the routines in my show mostly through improvisation. On stage or in the studio abandoning myself in the moment of improvisation sometimes I will do something that surprises myself and makes me laugh, then I know I am onto something and I try to follow the improvisation to its logical conclusion.