



**CIRCUS INCOGNITUS**  
**JAMIE ADKINS**



# The show

In *Circus Incognitus*, Jamie Adkins brings his considerable talent to bear on the story of man facing his worst fear : public speaking. Beginning with an empty stage and a single microphone, Jamie sits at his typewriter trying to create a new show. As he confronts his fears, the stage world begins to change around him. He juggles just about everything, walks a precarious slack wire, grapples with his own antic chair, and confronts a hat with ideas of its own.

He is there not to impress you with his abilities but to surprise you, to touch you and make you laugh. With absolutely no hi-tech distractions, he treats each audience as a partner, thereby retaining the freshness of the show and keeping everyone enthralled and on the edge of their seats.

Wherever he goes, the public, adults and children alike, laughs out loud at the humour and marvels at the exceptional multi-talented performance of Jamie Adkins in *Circus Incognitus*.

No one is mistaken, Jamie Adkins is a virtuoso, but his virtuosity is never asserted as a value in itself. It is put in the service of the fragility of life, as he wants to represent it and share it with the audience: this unassuming show is a hopeful meditation on our lives, always shared between successes and failures, and on our ability to overcome challenges.

Jamie Adkins is a clown of the highest class, and his little character genuinely appears astonished by the disasters he manages to face.

Like the greatest, Jamie Adkins has the power to make us laugh with trivialities and to overcome challenges.





# JAMIE ADKINS

"I wanted to rediscover the sensations I had when I performed in the street. I prefer the intimacy of small spaces to giant big tops: places where the audience can see the sweat and the gaze of the artists. For me, the circus begins with everyday objects: a kitchen scale, an orange, a sheet of paper. Things that return to what they are when the show ends"

*Jamie Adkins*

**JAMIE ADKINS**, an American based in Toronto, is a clown in the Vaudeville tradition of Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton, conveying more humanity in actions than most people do with words.

Starting at the age of 13 as a street performer, he passionately trains to become a clown-mime-acrobat-juggler-tightrope walker... and achieves such a level of competence that he is engaged in top circuses such as Le Cirque du Soleil and Eloize.

In 2018, **JAMIE ADKINS** created **ESPIEGLERIE** with the musician **JULIE HOULE**. The show toured in the United States, Canada and France until March 2020.





# INTERVIEW

*Remarks collected by Stéphane Bouquet for the Théâtre de la Cité Internationale in Paris, where Jamie Adkins presented “Circus Incognitus” in January 2012.*

***What does the title of your show mean? Is it a way of saying that it’s a show about anyone?***

The title comes from the fact that I am an ordinary guy doing a one-man show. I don’t expect people to have heard of me, so the title is a kind of wink that says, “who is this guy, Jamie Adkins?”

***Your show seems to be about someone who has issues with language. Is that a correct way to summarize it?***

My character has a lot to say, but he doesn’t really know how to say it. In the end, he discovers that he didn’t need words but actions. I find that I can express myself better and more clearly without words. When I use words on stage, I tend to talk too much, and the meaning of what I want to say becomes confusing.

***Among all the body techniques, you chose circus instead of, let’s say, dance. What led you to the circus?***

Actually, I chose the clown more than the circus. A clown dances, plays, laughs, cries, and loves. Everyone has a clown inside them; you just need to know how to let it out.

***Would you say there’s a “Jamie Adkins body”?***

A “Jamie Adkins body” would be a very normal body trying to do unusual things.

***Your show is very “low-tech” compared to the possibilities available today. I’m sure it’s a choice, but why this choice?***

I love “low-tech.” Often in shows, high-tech gadgets artificially separate the artist from the audience without serving the story. I appreciate human experiences. I am more interested in the juggler than in juggling. I enjoy shows filled with humanity, both its bright and dark sides. I prefer listening to a good singer play acoustic guitar in a small venue than any spectacle in an arena overflowing with lights, special effects, explosions, and probably lip-synced songs. I enjoy watching human beings be human. But now that I think about it, there’s not a robot in the world that can do what a human body is capable of. All the computers in the world combined couldn’t perform the complex functions that the human brain effortlessly accomplishes. So maybe, in fact, I love high-tech.



# INTERVIEW

***The props you use, the way you use them, and your neutral, emotionless face strongly resemble Buster Keaton. Would you say he has been one of your main influences?***

I wasn't directly influenced by silent cinema. I had been working for many years before I saw the masterpieces created by those pioneers. But growing up, I loved watching Warner Bros. cartoons – Bugs Bunny, Yosemite Sam, Foghorn Leghorn, etc. – and those cartoons were heavily influenced by silent slapstick cinema. They borrowed a lot of jokes from that era. So, I was influenced by Chaplin and Keaton through Bugs Bunny.

***Have others influenced you?***

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

***How do you work? How do you come up with your acts?***

If I work for a week and during that week, only one joke, idea, or moment for the show comes up, I consider it a very fruitful week. I primarily invent my acts through improvisation. On stage or in the studio, surrendering to improvisation, I sometimes do something that surprises me and makes me laugh, so I know I have something, and I try to follow the improvisation to its logical conclusion.

Today, **Jamie Adkins** enchants both young and old through more than 1000 performances across 27 countries. He first presented his show **CIRCUS INCOGNITUS** in Paris in 2012. Since then, he continues to delight audiences in various theaters. In 2015, the Bouffes Parisiens Theatre, followed by the Theatre de l'Atelier in 2019, provided Parisian audiences and young children with the opportunity to laugh with him once again. Indeed, with over 600 performances in Europe, **Jamie Adkins** has painted smiles on the faces of thousands of young European children.



# PRESS

LE MONDE

"The genius acts of Jamie Adkins unleash a laughter that gives wings. Circus Incognitus is a little gem of burlesque freshness that can be just as selfishly enjoyed by adults. It's the timeless burlesque tale of a little human grappling with the multiple difficulties of everyday life, which can take on a truly Kafkaesque turn. And with Jamie Adkins, it's the body that speaks, with a precision and grace that make you take off from the ground. A clown. A true one, of great class." **LE MONDE**



## THE GUARDIAN UK

Disheveled by the challenges he miraculously faces, Adkins' lovably eccentric clown is the eternal little human we all know, forever dismayed by the tiny victories he achieves over the universe. We take immense pleasure in following his feats and wholeheartedly support, with our unconditional applause, the encouragement he ingenuously seeks from us as he revels in his small triumphs.. **THE GUARDIAN UK**

We adore this poetic clown. A funny and sensitive allegory of the person who outwits obstacles. It speaks to everyone. Straight to the heart. **LE PARISIEN**

LE PARISIEN

## NEW YORK SUN

"...between innocence and elegance, Mr. Adkins DELIVERS EVERYWHERE. It's a show for all ages." **NEW YORK SUN**

LIBÉRATION

"Circus Incognitus – Adkins, king clown  
The show is called Circus Incognitus, and one must understand it in the sense of 'unidentified circus,' but also 'incognito circus': a funny circus that one would create, seemingly effortlessly, with lightness, picking up a few odds and ends and tying them together with whimsy. (...) With his oversized suit, onomatopoeias, and antics reminiscent of Buster Keaton, with his sways and the precise, well-executed splits, Jamie Adkins effortlessly takes us into a whirlwind of burlesque and grace, triggering a delightful, generous, enchanted laughter." **LIBÉRATION**





# PRESS

## THE DAILY GAZETTE

Adkins hasn't reinvented juggling or clowning, he's just made them more interesting to watch through the power of personality and grace." - **THE DAILY GAZETTE, NEW YORK**

## THE NEW YORK TIMES

"Though Mr. Adkins' best routines draw ooohs and aaahs, he's just as successful at drawing laughs."- **THE NEW YORK TIMES**



"Everything is round with the American clown Jamie Adkins. Round, flexible, and generous, like the ping-pong balls and oranges he skillfully juggles. A tangled tight-rope walker, alternating between stuntman and tightrope walker, this former Cirque du Soleil performer creates an amiable, somewhat clumsy character in a 'low-tech' solo made from odds and ends." **TÉLÉRAMA**

TÉLÉRAMA

## LE DEVOIR, Canada

"Here is a show that keeps its promises by offering an undeniably funny, spirit-filled, and poetic evening, appealing to audiences of all kinds."

**LE DEVOIR, Canada**



"The dual stage presence of Jamie Adkins is of absolute sincerity in the gift he makes of himself. It is surely for this reason that his performance evokes so many emotions in us."

**DdD**

## CRÉDITS

**Duration:** 65 minutes

A show created and performed by  
**Jamie ADKINS**

Lighting: Nicolas DESCAUTEAUX

Costume: Katrin LEBLOND

Music: Lucie CAUCHON

Production: Jamie Adkins Collective

Distribution: DdD – [www.dddames.com](http://www.dddames.com)

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