



- Touring 2012
- Small Scale
- Suitable for ages 3+
- 50 minutes with no interval

GOING WHERE NO DOG HAS GONE BEFORE!

Muttnik is a stray. She lives on the streets of Moscow, cold and hungry until one day she is captured. To her surprise she finds herself in a new home with food, water and adventures better than dreams; she is living at the Russian Space centre and is to become the first dog in space!

She learns to fly a rocket, to dance in zero gravity and to go 'where no dog has gone before'. Will she skate on the rings of Saturn, what will be her first message home and what will it be like to dig holes on the moon?

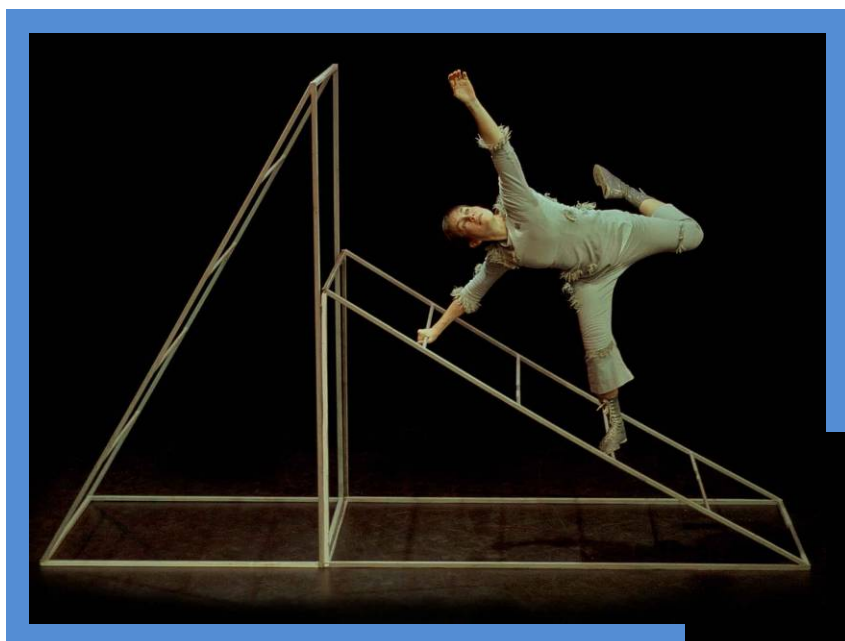
Having zoomed through sell out UK tours in 2006-2008 and '5 star' performances at The Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Muttnik – The First Dog in Space is blasting off again to show audiences that you *can* teach an old dog new tricks with this refreshing slant on what happened to Laika, the dog sent into space aboard the Russian Sputnik 2 rocket in 1957.

Told with dance, music and puppetry, this enchanting tale feeds the imagination and is suitable for children over three.



Muttnik features puppetry, acting, dancing, plenty of audience participation, a huge blast off and a happy ending! It's full of comedy, quirky music and sound effects and is non-verbal: making it suitable for young audiences and international touring. Grown ups like the original, unexpected take on the true story and while children love the comedic canine, 'zero gravity' moves and, of course, blasting off into the great unknown!

"It's just a beautifully thought-through, very funny and resourceful piece of physical theatre that works for children and adults alike." **Mary Brennan (The Herald)**



Credits

Director and producer **Niki McCretton**

Performed by **Tessa Bide**

Composer **Catherine Skinner**

Niki McCretton – some background bits

Niki McCretton is an award-winning performer and director with a strong reputation for contemporary and artistic children's theatre. She has been successfully producing theatre for 20 years utilising a number of art forms. Her original, devised works are quirky, inventive and highly visual with a charm that enables them to be enjoyed by all. Often combining film, animation, dance, text, specially commissioned music and humour, Niki has gained a strong reputation across the globe and has created productions for all ages.

Since 2009, she joined forces with Stuff and Nonsense Theatre Company to bring the Little Red Hen to middle scale and to direct and perform in The Enormous Turnip and to devise The Elves and The Shoemaker: all sell out hits that have made a huge impact within the family theatre sector. Niki works as a leading artist with 5x5x5=creativity, an action learning research body which looks at children's learning and creative processes and has a high academic pedigree which influences the Early Years Curriculum at government level. Niki is a strong spokes-person and is fantastic on the radio!

For further information, technical specifications, availability and bookings contact: Claire Morton, Morton Bates Arts Services, T: 020 7724 1616 E: claire@mortonbates.com / www.nikimccretton.co.uk



Marketing Tools

- Flyers and posters – A6 flyers, A3 and A4 posters
- Download the YouTube clip from www.youtube.com/nikiandpaddy – it can be used in box office foyers or on your website
- Promotional library or toy/pet/bookshop visits
- Company website (www.nikimccretton.co.uk)
- Colour images supplied as jpegs
- Post-show question and answer with the company on request
- Interviews with The Company on request

Outline technical requirements

- Minimum space 5m x 5m with a height of 3m. We are happy if the stage is larger. **Please note for rural touring the space needs to allow room for the audience and technical operator outside of 5m x 5m.**
- Flat, clean space preferably with a wooden floor covered in a black dance floor (grey will suffice).
- **Under no circumstances can the floor be slippery** (i.e. heavily varnished, parquet, polished etc). the show cannot be performed on a slippery floor.
- We require the space & at least 1 venue technician a minimum of 3 hours before the house opens.
- Space to be pre-rigged and focused (bar the specials). If you cannot pre-rig/focused please inform the company as soon as possible to arrange earlier access to the venue.
- We can strike the show in 30mins.
- **Please note due to health and safety the company reserves the right to cancel if these conditions cannot be met.** Please contact the company or Technical Manager immediately to discuss any concerns or questions.

For a full specification and plan please contact Adam Hooper hooperadam@hotmail.com

Feedback on MUTTNIK:

“Muttnik is a unique and fabulous show for young people. Niki McCretton is a theatre maker who entrances but never patronises children. Niki provides excellent images and print which reflect the quality and high production values of the performance.”

Paula Hammond, (Ex-Director, The Merlin Theatre)

★★★★★ “Niki McCretton told the story of Muttnik, the first dog in space, without saying a word. Using dance, movement, puppetry and a deal of facial expressions and physical gesture, she took the young audience into a journey into the cosmos...McCretton not only told Muttnik's story from stray dog to space dog, but also fleshed out other characters... The very young children immediately identified with the naughty side of McCretton's portrayal. Spinning around the set that comprised only the most basic props, McCretton conveyed an optimism and a zest in her movement and expression.” *Harry Mottram (The Bristol Evening Post)*

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★★★★★ “Kid’s physical theatre at its most simple but effective. The tone alternates between melancholic and slapstick, lending the piece the air of a Charlie Chaplin silent film. As with all the best children’s shows, there are plenty of opportunities for interaction with the audience, including playing catch with a giant inflatable globe, identifying the planets in the solar system and reading about the hound’s eventual fate from an optician’s chart. McCretton...effortlessly alternated roles, from the bedraggled pooch to Red Army officer and dotty Soviet scientist, in a show that is frequently moving as well as great fun.”

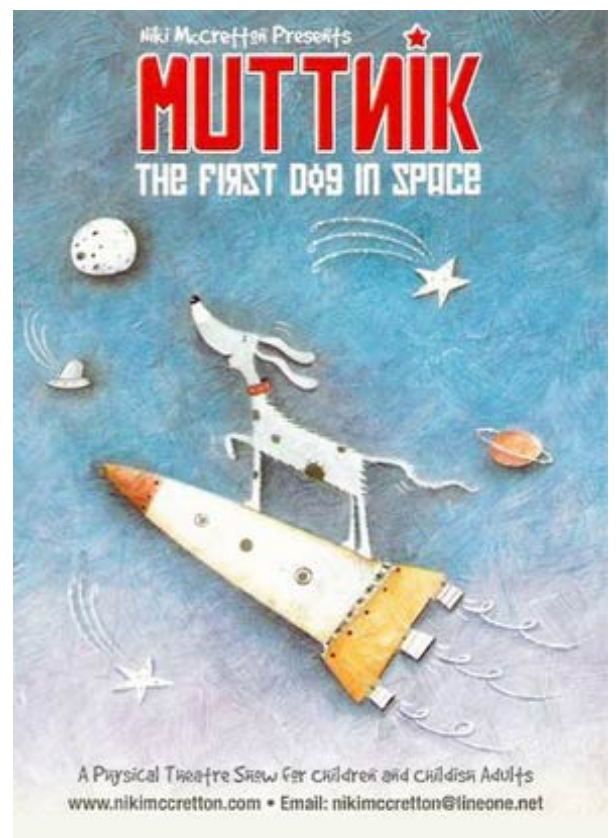
Allan Radcliffe (*The List*)

“A refreshing and amusing show that used mime and acrobatics to convey a heart-warming story. *Muttnik* clearly thrilled the attending children from start to finish as they laughed, cheered and spurred Niki McCretton along in her exceptional performance. Comedy was included frequently – a memorable moment being the audience interaction, which allowed Nick White (Education Officer), to show off his considerable dancing skills! A talented gymnast and dancer herself, Niki used carefully devised choreography and silent-movie style music as she bounded around the stage as Muttnik, the rescued dog, before changing into the humorously stereotypical Russian Soviet in his trench coat and fur hat. She also managed to switch effectively between playing Muttnik herself and using a furry puppet to portray the loveable dog. Aside from alerting children to the events that took place in 1957 and hopefully inspiring an interest in space, *Muttnik* also employed simple techniques such as an optician’s chart spelling out “A DOG IN SPACE” to encourage the children to read out the letters it showed. Another touching moment featured Muttnik arranging the planets of the solar system in order, using different coloured dog bowls pinned on a washing line.

Finally, the blast-off came! I watched with bated breath as Muttnik spiralled in zero gravity, wondering how Niki would choose to end the stirring tale (pardon the pun!) she had spun out. But as the Soviets mourned the loss of the brave astro-dog, the audience saw a perfectly happy Muttnik landing safely on the Moon, ready to begin a new life there. Just the happy ending I had wished for!”

Liz Overton, *Press Gang*

Sample Print:



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