

Ville Walo:

# Mortimer



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# **Mortimer**

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# Ville Walo: Mortimer

Creation: Ville Walo, Anne Jämsä

Performer: Ville Walo

Lighting design: Meri Ekola

Music and sound design: Samuli Kosminen

Programming and projection design: Matti Niinimäki

Set design, costumes and drawings: Anne Jämsä

Choreographic assistance: Jyrki Karttunen

Production: WHS, Kiasma Theatre, Karttunen Kollektiv

Thanks: the Arts Council of Finland, the Finnish Cultural Foundation

Duration approx. 55 minutes

**Ville Walo:**

## **Mortimer**

Feather light or deadly serious?

Ville Walo's solo performance, *Mortimer*, is a contemporary circus theatre performance where juggling and electrical sensor technology come together. The focused, subtle performance juggles sound and video projections, brings small fluffy things to life and laughs at mortality. The performance's soft hint of breath brushes the viewers' skin.

Walo juggles with video projection and plays music by juggling objects equipped with movement sensors. Sensor technology and programming turn the stage into an interactive electronic instrument that reacts to Walo's movements in perfect unison. Although the performance relies on sophisticated real-time computer controlling, its visual style is far from technology oriented sci-fi aesthetics. The stage is filled with humanely warm and clumsy everyday objects and jerky hand-drawn animations that create an intimate atmosphere.

Although *Mortimer* is a solo performance, Walo is by no means alone on the stage. He communicates with the objects he holds in his hands, with the puppet figures that share the stage with him, peculiarly assembled from various bits and pieces, with the skeletons and birds of the projected animations. Together they form the population of this special universe.

It's a twisted little fairy tale world filled with death, naivety, playful cruelty and dark humour. *Mortimer* is a performance that provokes silent internal laughter.

*Mortimer* was first performed on the 16<sup>th</sup> of September 2010 in Kiasma Theatre, in the Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki, Finland.

Duration: 55 minutes

*Mortimer* can be performed in a double bill night with *Nopeussokeus*.

**Ville Walo** is renowned for his original juggling style that balances on the boundary surfaces between juggling, puppet theatre and dance. He is a pioneer, innovator and reformer of contemporary juggling, who in his work explores new juggling techniques and physical and spatial movement in juggling. Walo has expanded the expression range of juggling towards visual theatre and object theatre.

Walo is the artistic director of 5-3-1 Festival of New Juggling as well as of Cirko Festival of New Circus in Helsinki. Besides this group and solo work, he has been working together with Jérôme Thomas Company. The Arts Council of Finland gave Walo a 5-year artist grant starting from 2006.

**WHS** is a contemporary circus / visual theatre group from Finland, formed by magician Kalle Hakkarainen, juggler Ville Walo and set & costume designer Anne Jämsä. The productions of the group have been the propelling force behind the rapid rise to fame of Finnish contemporary circus in the past decade. In the performances of the group circus has become a modern, independent and constantly changing form of expression that other arts, video in particular, complement. In the press the performances have been called avant-garde also in the larger contexts of theatre and art in general. The performances have been on the sharp edge of the latest developments of theatre as well as circus.

The circus group has grown known for the artistic juggling of Walo that subtly associates juggling with puppetry, and the scale of expression of Hakkarainen that transforms visual arts into magic. The group has taken their eight performances across around 30 countries, visiting nearly a hundred world-famous festivals, circuses, theatres and puppet theatres around the globe: in Finland, Norway, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Ukraine, Poland, Slovak and Czech Republics as well as USA, Brazil, Colombia, Argentina, China, Macao, South Korea and Japan.

Performances: *Waloville* (2002), *Odotustila* (Waiting Room / State of Waiting, 2003), *Katoamispiste* (Vanishing Point, 2004), *Keskusteluja* (Discussions, 2006), *Puun syy* (Wood Fibre/ Tree's Fault 2008) *Rautakeuhko* (Iron Lung 2009), *Nopeussokeus* (Speed Blindness / Motion Blindness 2010) and *Mortimer* (2010)

## HELSINGIN SANOMAT 18.9.2010 - CULTURE

WHS new performance night in Kiasma theatre. Nopeussokeus by Kalle Hakkarainen and Mortimer by Ville Walo.

# Images of death surprise

Jussi Tossavainen

PETRI VIRTANEN



Kalle Hakkarainen in the piece Nopeussokeus.

**Circus.** Kalle Hakkarainen and Ville Walo together with Anne Jämsä form the WHS group. It is one of the pioneers of Finnish experimental circus. One should not expect traditional circus tricks in the night of new performances in Kiasma theatre. Instead of the astonishing stunts Hakkarainen the magician highlights the audiovisual universe of his creation, and in juggler Walo's performance we see skulls instead of clubs or balls.

Nopeussokeus by Hakkarainen somehow brings to mind the twisted world of **David Lynch**. It is an atmospheric piece with virtual driving in a car, struggling to stay awake. Trees, houses, fields – and time flash by. All the time the potential collision, crash, danger and death can be sensed in the air. Mortimer by Ville Walo alludes to death even with its name. It is indeed rather gloomy with its fan-headed figures.

Video is used exquisitely and with extremely sharp synchronization. Actually one could say that Walo juggles precisely with videos and technology.

What kind of subconscious might all these peculiar ideas be springing from? The sympathetic skeleton figure brings distantly to mind the Garden of Death painted by **Hugo Simberg**, while it also amazingly resembles the splendid animations of **Terry Gilliam**.

The wonderful soundscapes of both pieces come from the pen of **Samuli Kosminen**. Go see with your minds open, if you wish to get surprised.

## The images of death from a twisted world



Juggler Ville Walo's performance *Mortimer* is contemporary circus.

Image: Petri Virtanen

Magician – visual artist **Kalle Hakkarainen** and juggler **Ville Walo** are the pioneers of our contemporary circus that for a long time already have been opening their entirely own paths. The performances of the group WHS that they constitute together with costume and set designer **Anne Jämsä** have moved a long way further from what is generally considered the genre of contemporary circus and approached performance art or installation. At the same time the thematic content of the performances has become even more open to multiple interpretations and even more challenging to understand.

The atmosphere of both the solo performances seen in Kiasma theatre is rather dark and melancholy. The world is twisted and everything will end in death sooner or later, more or less violently.

While waiting one can even stretch time and explore the last seconds before a car crash caused by falling asleep, like Hakkarainen does in his performance *Nopeusokeus*. The keyword is deceleration, which allows the blood veins of a decomposing body to be exhibited as red cable, with which Hakkarainen realizes the amazing illusion of the

oeuvre. Skillfulness and precise timing is required also in the performance's driving scenes, in which the video and Hakkarainen's live movements alternate.

Video projection to different surfaces is in a central role also in Walo's performance *Mortimer*, even so much so, that its power starts to overflow, even if one interprets it as a kind of juggling with images.

Although the fan-headed human figures and the skull-headed puppet-death are quite witty characters, the most central symbol of the artwork is definitely a bird. It is present in the giant feather, in the projected drawing figures, as well as in the charming plush baby birds, with which Walo plays and juggles.

Because the theme of the performance is death, I associate the bird as a symbol of the human soul. As the soul bird is mentioned already in folk tradition and in many tales a person transforms into a bird at the time of death. In this case it is a bright transformation, which is yet not so in Walo's creation.

Even though both of the solo works forefront the visual and even visual trickery, a very substantial part in the performances is played by Samuli Kosminen's creation: the audiosphere that is so very tightly interlaced with the entity, that it is difficult to analyze afterwards.

*Nopeussokeus* and *Mortimer* are not easy performances, but they indeed are skillful and inspiring many kinds of associations.

## **Annikki Alku**

**Kiasma-theatre** *Nopeussokeus* Creation, direction, videos, performer Kalle Hakkarainen – Music and sound Samuli Kosminen – Lights: Meri Ekola – Costumes: Mila Moisio and Kaisa Rissanen *Mortimer* Creation: Ville Walo and Anne Jämsä – Music and sound: Samuli Kosminen – Set, costumes, drawings: Anne Jämsä, Lights: Meri Ekola – Performer: Ville Walo

## **Images of death in Kiasma**

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### PERFORMANCE

WHS group defines itself as a contemporary circus / visual theatre group. The double bill night seen in September proves this definition to be just right.

*Nopeussokeus* by **Kalle Hakkarainen** and *Mortimer* by **Ville Walo** move in a fascinating way on the boundary surface between several forms of performing art. The pieces are rather different in atmosphere, but they also have connecting elements, familiar from the earlier WHS productions.

First of all they are both very visual pieces, based on different kinds of illusions, which is why Kiasma is again a very suitable place to perform them. Furthermore video projections play a significant role in both pieces. The pieces share also the same lighting designer (**Meri Ekola**) and the same sound designer (**Samuli Kosminen**). Especially the sound design by Kosminen brings a strong structural support to both of the pieces.

### MINIMALISTIC DREAM VISIONS

*Nopeussokeus* by Hakkarainen is the more streamlined of the two pieces. It is a cinematic journey into the visions of a nocturnal driver, almost minimalist in its expression. Red electric cords and tungsten

lamps function as symbols of human carnality and vulnerability.

Magician – visual artist

Hakkarainen creates in his piece dreamlike visions, images of death, with the help of video projections and some skilful illusions. In the mind of a driver falling asleep behind the steering wheel haunt different kinds of accident scenarios that distort and abuse the body.

The few “sleights of hand”, which justify this performance to be called new circus, are used for the realisation of these visions. More than anything the piece in question is visual, wordless theatre that to some extent brushes also the limit of the art of dance.

### HIS WERE THE BIRDS?

Also in *Mortimer* by Ville Walo it is images of death and illusions that are at stake, but while Hakkarainen’s piece is stylish in a minimalistic way, Walo’s piece is rich and lyric. It progresses with a surreal logic. Its imagery is of skulls, skeletons, birds, birdcages and fans.

Especially the role of the birds is fascinating. They represent at times a threat, at times something to protect. Birds pop out from the insides of life-size fan-headed puppets, and likewise a suit bag serving temporarily as a gravestone is full of small plump and obviously dead birds.

The piece is also very movement based. The dance-like quality is there already in the very first scenario, in

which the fan-heads of the puppets that dominate the scene turn on one by one and begin their synchronized slow oscillation from side to side. Also Walo's dance with the two-dimensional, jointed skeleton figure is fascinating to watch.

Like in *Nopeusokeus* also in *Mortimer* the elements traditionally linked with circus have been removed almost to the point of being unrecognisable. The piece most clearly defines itself as object theatre, in which the definition of juggling has been broadened to mean the animation and manipulation of immobile objects. Along these lines it approaches dance as well as puppetry in a natural manner.

The input of set and costume designer **Anne Jämsä** to the piece is

significant. In addition to the set and various objects she has made the drawings of the numerous video projections, in which the imagery seen on stage as objects is reflected, moves and lives in its own way.

● **Piia Ahonen**

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**WHS NEW PERFORMANCES NIGHT**  
23.9.2010 Kiasma theatre

**NOPEUSSOKEUS**

**Creation, director, videos, performer** Kalle Hakkarainen / **Music and sound design** Samuli Kosminen / **Lighting design** Meri Ekola / **Texts** Harry Salmenniemi / **Adviser in choreography and directing** Jyrki Karttunen / **Costumes** Mila Moisio, Kaisa Rissanen

**MORTIMER**

**Creation** Ville Walo, Anne Jämsä / **Performer** Ville Walo / **Lighting design** Meri Ekola / **Music and sound design** Samuli Kosminen / **Programming and projection design** Matti Niinimäki / **Set design, costumes and drawings** Anne Jämsä / **Choreographic adviser** Jyrki Karttunen

Technical Rider

# MORTIMER

## STAFF ON TOUR

1 actor – 3 technicians – 1 promoter

## STAGE

Dimensions required

The minimum dimensions of stage are:

Height: 4 meters minimum, preferable height 5,5 m

Width: 8 meters (10 meters from wall to wall)

Depth: 12 meters (10 meters minimum to back wall or curtain)

No more than 1% tilt of floor

Stage masking

- black curtains that cover back wall, or a black back wall
- preferably a black floor
- black dance carpets if the floor surface is not very smooth, (carpets preferably lengthwise)

The stage must be able to be darkened completely.

- preferably intercom between back stage or wing and lightning board

The projection will come from the centre of front-stage. The projector is 20-30 cm high, measured from the level of stage floor (consider possible partial prevention of stage visibility to some of front audience seats).

(- If the stage depth is smaller than 10 meters, the projection will have to come from the audience side, (approximately 10 m from the back wall of the stage).

- If the stage floor level is above the audience, and the stage depth is below 10 m, we need a box or table of the same height as the stage to be put under the projector.)

## SET

The set is composed of various accessories:

1) On stage floor: black & white paper roll, motor for rolling the paper, grass and artificial flowers, 3 fan-headed puppets.

2) Suspended over stage: a metal birdcage, a large feather (felt & metal)

3) In audience area: 2 fan-headed puppets placed on top of speakers on audience seats, 1 lamp-headed puppet placed on the border between stage and audience area (depending on venue configuration)

All of these accessories (excluding the speakers) are supplied by the company.

2 rolls of paper (black and white) are normally supplied by the company.

(In case customs regulations or cargo price prevent transportation, the paper rolls can be ordered directly by the venue according to the

measurements and specifications: width: 1,5 meters, length: 10 meters. White paper: Canson Dessin "C" a Grain, 224 g/m<sup>2</sup>, 1,50 x 10 m, Ref: 22104. Black paper: Fabbriano, Grade: Tiziano, Colour: Nero, g/m<sup>2</sup>: 160, Size: 150 x 1000 cm, Code: 50891031. And a wood stick, circular profile, length 170 cm, thickness 3 cm.)

For the set the venue needs to provide:

- 1 roll (25 m) of matte black gaffer tape (width 5 cm)
- 1 roll of thin white tape (paper or plastic)
- 6 stage weights (size approx. 25 x 15 x 10 cm, weight minimum 2 kg each)
- A black rope and a pulley for suspending the feather, length of rope twice the height of the rigging point from stage floor
- Rechargeable 12V battery, 4Ah-8Ah, size not bigger than 20x10x10cm, with connectors for alligator clips (a normal lead battery for scooter is ok)
- (Battery charger for 230V 50 Hz input current supplied by the company. If local voltage & frequency are different, a charger should be provided by the venue. In this case we will also need some extra transformers.)

## **PROJECTOR & CAMERA**

Video projector and camera will be supplied by the company. Projector and camera will be placed on the floor at the centre of front-stage.

- Direct electricity for projector and shutter to downstage centre (2 lines)

## **VIDEO CONTROL**

Video signal, sound and midi signal will come from two laptop computers (supplied by the company). Video control will be positioned either in stage right wing or in FOH, depending on venue configuration. Video cables are supplied by the company.

For video control we need:

- Direct electricity for computers and video gear to stage right wing or FOH (5 lines).
- In case stage configuration doesn't allow positioning video control in stage right wing, we need long enough ethernet cable to connect the camera control unit (on the floor at the centre of front-stage) to the video control unit (in FOH).

## **MIDI**

MIDI signal through MIDI amplifier from video gear in stage right wing or FOH (depending on venue configuration) to lighting control system in FOH:

- 1 MIDI line
- 2 x JL Cooper MLA-XLR MIDI Line Amplifier (or equivalent)

## **LIGHTING**

Control:

- Lighting system with DMX512 control and cue recording option.
- 42 dimmer channels, output 2 kW, one of them 5 kW.  
2 of them placed in the audience area

4 of them placed on the stage floor

36 of them placed on the grid

- Direct current for NonDim lanterns as hazer, fan and colour changer power supply.
  - A 5pin/3pin DMX feed to downstage centre. (For a shutter of video projector.)
  - Control (light control desk) in FOH, 5pin DMX input and 3 electrical feeds
- Preferred rigging height 5,5m, minimum 4m, except for channels 43, 44, 45 and 17 which are hung from height of approximately 3.5m. These channels can just as well be installed on light stands.

Lanterns:

9 profiles 1 kW 50 degree with shutters

7 profiles 1 kW 36 degree with shutters  
5 of them with iris

1 Fresnel 5kW with barn doors  
(Can possibly be replaced with 2 x 2kW fresnels)

14 Fresnel 1kW with barn doors

9 Pincspots/F!/PAR36 VNSP or other lanterns with very narrow spot

Effect wheel for channel 40 will be provided by the company.

Hazer such as MDG or else well known quality hazer preferred.  
Fan if needed to make a nice even haze.

All the Fresnels can possibly be replaced with PC's and frost filters.  
Black aluminium tape and black wrap for focusing if barn doors not available.

The technical needs can be adjusted to fit in every venue's specifications so if anything needs to be clarified or any questions appear, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Light contact: Meri Ekola [meri.ekola@gmail.com](mailto:meri.ekola@gmail.com)

## **SOUND SYSTEM**

- Good quality mixing desk with minimum 5 aux sends.
- Quality PA-system, big enough for dynamic power and coverage for the venue. Full range speakers and separate subbass-speakers for strong low end. Well known manufacturers preferred - L'acoustics, d&b, EV, Eaw, Nexo etc.
- 2 monitor speakers to stage , from 2 aux sends.

- 2 "surround speakers" in audience area, to be positioned by performer, from 2 individual aux sends.
- 1 small "surround speaker" (any active near-field studio monitor would do) in audience area to be positioned by performer, from individual aux send.
- 5 active DI-boxes (BSS preferred). The sound for the performance comes from a computer (in stage right wing or FOH) through a Firewire interface and this needs to be connected to the FOH mixing desk with the DI-boxes or when possible straight with 5 pcs of 1/4 inch jack-to-jack cables.
- Professional standard CD-player (sound testing and back-up)
- High quality Firewire interface with minimum 5 outputs & MIDI, if available. (Otherwise M-Audio Firewire interface will be supplied by the company.)

### **INPUT LIST**

1. MAC L (DI)
2. MAC R (DI)
3. MAC surround speaker 1 (DI)
4. MAC surround speaker 2 (DI)
5. MAC surround speaker 3-small (DI)

- First 2 channels (MAC L&R) are only for FOH and for monitors at stage.
- Channels 3-5 are for 3 surround speakers. These channels are routed only to surround speakers, NOT to FOH.

### **DRESSING ROOMS**

- 1 dressing room with shower (near the place of performance, heated if necessary, well lit, lockable or guarded, with chairs, a mirror, a WC)
- Bottles of water (minimum 2 small bottles for each performance)
- catering: bananas and other fruits, coke, water, fruit juice, coffee, chocolate, sandwiches or snacks (vegetarian) for 4 persons during set-up and 2 hours before performance
- 2 towels
- hangers (10) for clothes, ironing board and iron

### **ACCOMMODATION**

- Accommodation and board for 5 people on the days of set up and performance
- 5 hotel rooms: 5 single rooms, min. 2 stars

### **TECHNICAL STAFF**

Putting up the sets takes approximately 10 hours and requires:

- 2 lighting technician (3 if light has not been prepared before we arrive)
- 1 sound technician

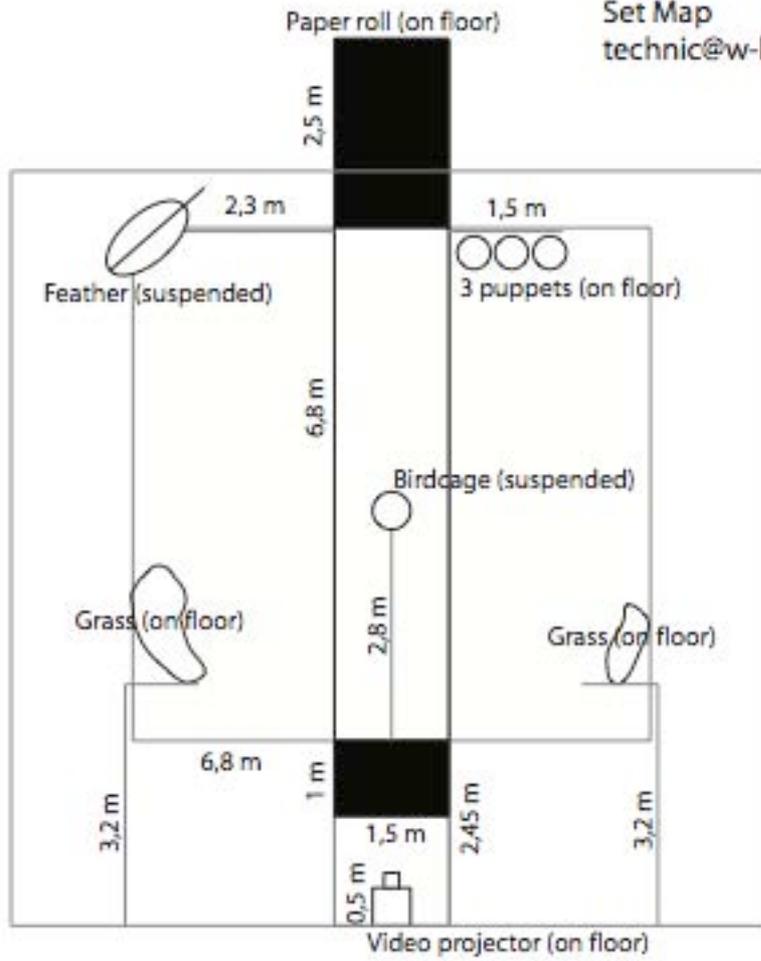
During the show

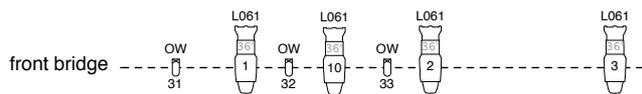
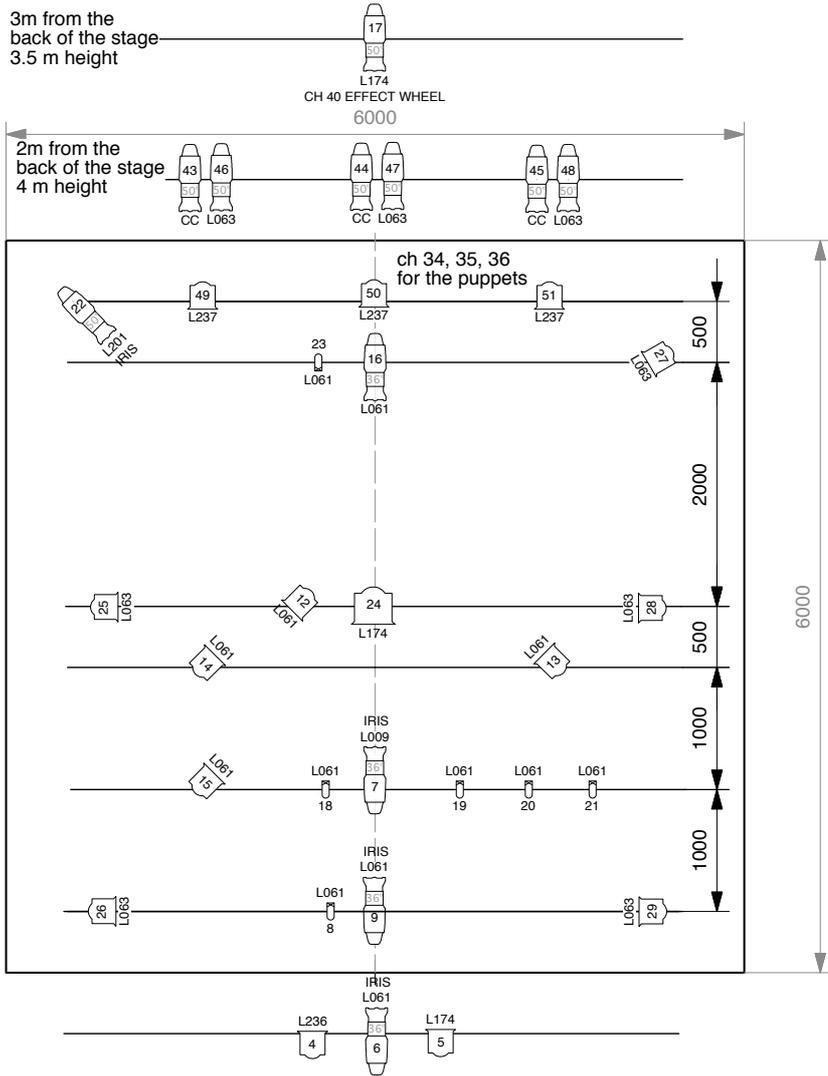
- 1 sound technician / house technician familiar with venue

Duration of show: 55 minutes

**Technical contact:**  
[technic@w-h-s.fi](mailto:technic@w-h-s.fi)

Ville Walo: Mortimer  
Set Map  
technic@w-h-s.fi





channel numbers for other equipment

ch 30 for the fan puppets in the audience  
 ch 37 hazer  
 ch 38 lamp puppet in the audience  
 ch 39 fan for the hazer if needed  
 ch 41 paper roll

MORTIMER Ville Waio		
Light plot		28.03.2012
Not in scale!		
Instruments		Quantity
	Profile 1 kW 36° with shutters	7
	Profile 1 kW 50° with shutters	9
	Fresnel 1 kW with barndoors	14
	Fresnel 5 kW with barndoors	1
	Pinpoint/F1/PAR36 VNSP	9
Contact: meri.ekola@gmail.com		

