

Crow

Touring Pack

Crow takes the form of a music concert, interrupted by acts of comic conjuring & poetry, around the ideas of the crow and the egg. As full darkness falls, sleight of hand and video projection expand this world, suggesting ideas both profound and...



Show Description

As the audience arrive they are presented with an empty stage, framed by a gantry, with various items suspended on strings from it. There is a drone of something urban, road traffic perhaps, distant sounds of birds and the occasional rumble of thunder. A technician is busy dealing with faulty equipment and talking on the phone. Into this scene arrive a collection of musicians. One is late and seems to be unlucky as she is beset with mishaps. A chair remains empty but the band strikes up, with a hypnotic, repetitive rhythm. We hear crows cawing and a strange veiled woman appears, carrying a case which seems to have crows inside.



The company complete, the audience is granted a series of curious, visual vignettes interspersed with music. An egg appears and is boiled through a series of Heath Robinson styled devices. The egg features in a series of failed magic tricks (it won't disappear or reappear) and it becomes the canvas upon which a series of ridiculous shadow images are cast, followed by a dreamy animation in which the egg speaks.

**Stay, traveller, and rest a while, I beg
To contemplate the secrets of the egg.
Within this cask of bone resides the sum
Of all that's been and all that's yet to come...**

The music drifts from a sparky rumba to a groovy bossa nova to a solemn dirge and ends at the finale, with a piano playing - it's sparse and beautiful, soars in and out, reflecting the flight of the birds. Projected onto the scene are images of crows in flight, the glints of a mirrored egg - that at the curtain call, does - finally - disappear!



[Listen to a studio version of *Carrion Crow*](#)

[Listen to a studio version of *For All I Know*](#)

Creative Team

Lead Artist:	Bill Palmer
Performers:	Bill Palmer Chris Squire Paschale Straiton Seaming To Semay Wu
Design:	Bill Palmer
Audio Visual Design:	Chris Squire
Music:	Seaming To
Words:	Lou Glanfield
Dramaturgy	Mark Long

Background

Avanti received a Without Walls Blueprint commission which was extended due to the Covid Pandemic. Members of the creative team working in isolation and met on zoom but were able to come together for a week of development and the creation of a short film, which contributed to the award of a full Without Walls Commission. This protracted and unusual creative process, plus the recent involvement of Bill Palmer in the creation of a project with People Show, led to the creation of a very unusual and highly distinct show. In 2023 the show was presented at:

- Norfolk and Norwich Festival (Without Walls)
- Timber Festival (Without Walls)
- Kensington and Chelsea Festival
- Stockton International Riverside Festival (Without Walls)

Accessibility

This show is highly visual but the music sometimes has lyrics and text is spoken during the projections. We have used Talking Bird's Difference Engine, a useful tool that produces captions for audiences to read from their mobile devices. We can provide a script for the system and lend our experience, but an event looking to use the Difference Engine would need to provide someone to operate it during performances.

We can provide a touch tour for blind or visually impaired audiences and a script for an audio describer.

Timings

- We need at least 6 hours to set up
- The show lasts approximately 40 mins and can be performed once at twilight.
- It can be performed once per day, starting at sunset or civil twilight, creating perfect conditions as the light dwindles and becomes suitable for projections.
- Our daytime show A Bit of Crow, can be performed during the day at no extra cost to the festival, acting as a taster for the evening show. With 1 Crow performance, this added extra can be performed once. If Crow is performing over 2 nights, the daytime show can happen twice, as shown in the table.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
	AM: Rig		AM: Derig
Company Arrives	PM: A Bit of Crow X 1	PM A Bit of Crow x 2	Company Departs
	Evening: CROW	Evening: CROW	

Basic Requirements

- There are 5 people on the road
- Access to a secure dressing room with mirrors, close to the performance site
- If performing over 2 days, we need access to electrical sockets to recharge batteries
- Accommodation - 5 single rooms with breakfast from the evening before until the day after the final evening performance.
- Catering to be provided by the organisers

Personnel / Crew

- A stage manager from the host organisation to assist the company setting and striking the show.
- An electrician for power supply.
- A Sound Engineer to install the sound system and assist with sound check, to de-rig the sound system; and to be on call for technical problems.
- Security for duration of visit including overnight.

Technical Requirements

Site:

- The show is performed end on to the audience
- Flat performance space 8m wide by 7m deep - clear of overhead obstruction to a height of 4 metres, to accommodate the gantry
- Hard standing preferred
- Audience can sit on the floor at the front and need chairs / benches further back



Crow at the Holy Trinity Church, Stockton

Get In and Set up / Strike and Get out:

- At least 6 hours on site before the first performance to set up
- At least 2 hours after the last performance to get out
- Working/site lighting for de-rig after dark

Power:

- 16 amp electrical power for the backline.

Sound System to be supplied by the Festival Organiser:

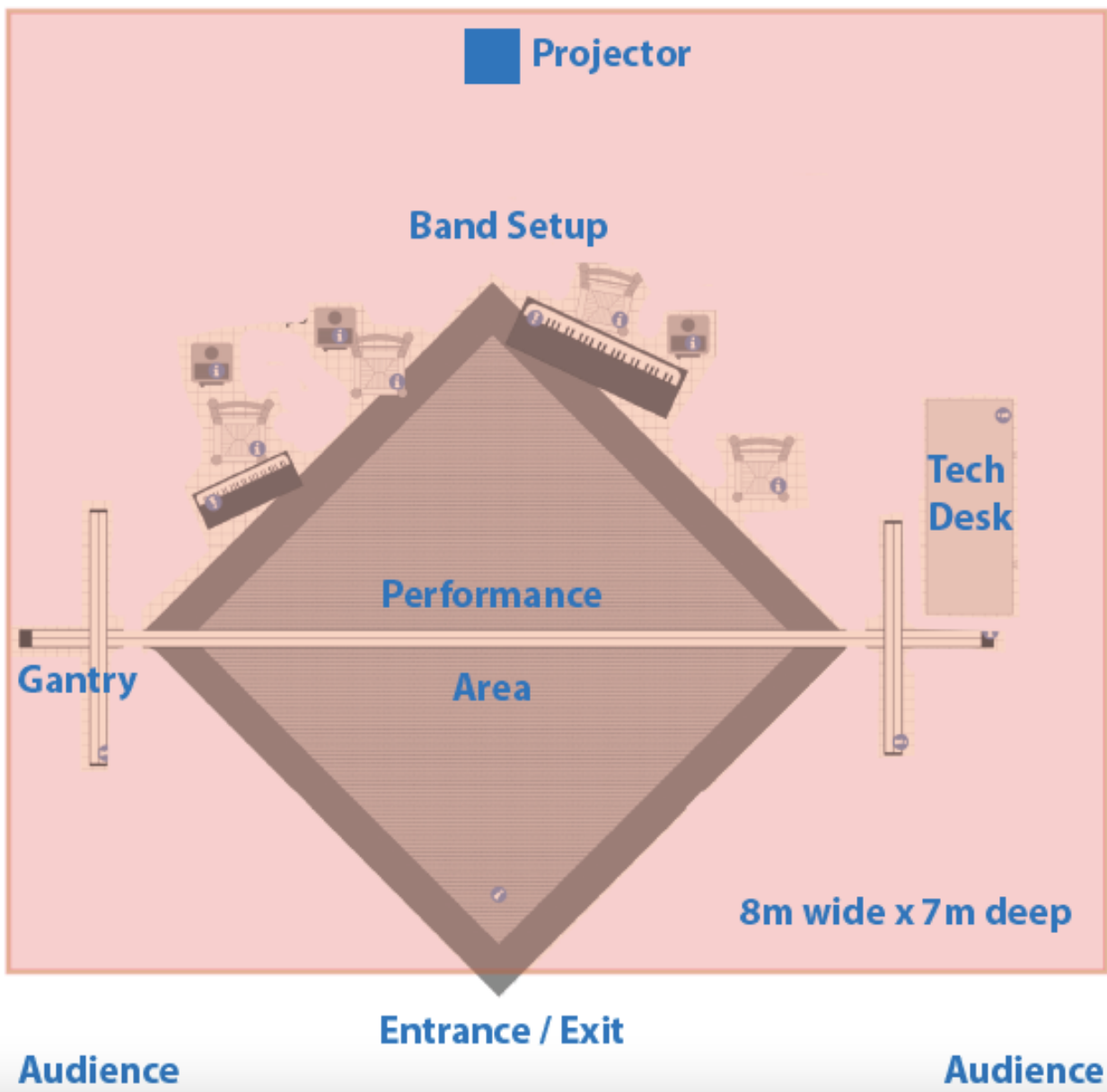
- PA High quality speaker system to cover entire audience min 600 watts per side.
- 2 x floor monitors.
- Sound Desk: The sound balance is controlled from an onstage mixer supplied to FOH by a stereo feed.
- Microphones: Provided by company

Other items to be supplied by the Festival Organiser:

- All cabling and power drops, if required.
- Pop up Gazebo beside or close to the stage for instrument store in case of rain.

Technical Design

- The pink square represents a playing area of 8m wide x 7m deep, which accommodates both the back projection and the gantry.
- The grey diamond represents the checked matting on which performers step forward to engage directly with the audience.



Marketing

150 word copy

Taking the form of a music concert, the show begins at twilight, with three musicians arriving for a gig. As the light fades, the atmosphere begins to change. An inventive music score is interrupted by ridiculous acts of conjuring, more Tommy Cooper than David Blane. Reality seems to warp. When full darkness falls, sleight of hand and video projection expand this comic and curious world, suggesting ideas both profound and absurd.

Avanti Display is one of the UK's longest established outdoor performance companies creating over twenty original shows. This production features collaborations with a range of artists: music by Seaming To; words by Lou Glanfield (IOU), dramaturgy by Mark Long (People Show), Audio Visual design by Chris Squire (Impossible Arts). The show was conceived by Bill Palmer, developed and performed by the company: Bill Palmer, Chris Squire, Paschale Straiton, Seaming To and Semay Wu.

50 word copy

The show begins at twilight, with three musicians arriving for a gig. As the light fades, an inventive musical score is interrupted by ridiculous acts of conjuring, while poetry and projections suggest ideas both profound and absurd. Created by Avanti Display, one of the UK's longest established outdoor performance companies.

Programme credits

Commissioned by Without Walls and SIRF

Music - Seaming To / Words - Lou Glandfield / Dramaturgy - Mark Long

Conceived and devised by The Company

Resources

[Link to publicity images on GoogleDrive](#)

[Link to Promotional Film](#)

[Instagram](#)

Testimonials

In the fading May evening light the wonderfully curious and genre defying musical and visual performance totally drew me in and I was truly transported to a different and alternative world to the one I am forced to inhabit on a daily basis – thank-you to these very special artists for having the imagination to do this. Perhaps the outdoor show I have recommended most for people to go and see in the rare moments it has been on this past summer.

Bill Gee, BGA Projects and co-Artistic Director, Inside Out Dorset Festival

Beguiling, genre-defying and beautifully odd, Crow teases us with strange images, magical clowning and bewitching visual images. The audience were held from start to finish in its embrace; and afterwards, moments from the performance lingered in my half conscious like an almost remembered dream. I loved it and its poetic intensity.

Liz Pugh, Walk the Plank

I wanted to write to say how much I enjoyed Crow - it was brilliantly strange and funny and odd and, well, there were more eggs and music and I really loved it... I entered blinking into a magical clearing and watched something quite, quite beautiful and weird. It's really bold. It's food. It's funny. It's a show which should immediately have a cult following because it contains within it a whole universe.

Lorna Rees, Gobbledegook Theatre

I thought that the show was absolutely beautiful. Sublime in fact! Lots of exquisite, subtle humour that can be hard to find. It represented the best of your skills as true street arts makers – mixed with ephemeral virtuoso musicianship that was a feast to experience.

Juliet Hardy, Stockton International Riverside Festival

I was lucky enough to watch the late night performance of 'Crow' at the Timber Festival last Saturday and I wanted to extend a huge congratulations to the company for an intriguing and arresting performance.

I'm a performer who has done a fair amount of outdoor theatre myself, so I know how challenging it can be, but I have never had to carry on through a rainstorm with a several-hour power outage! Despite the horrible conditions every member of the company was so professional, so charming and so committed to getting the show performed no matter what - and it was well worth the wait.

Please pass on my sincere thanks to everyone involved for a wonderful experience. I hope I am lucky enough to see more work from Avanti and from these brilliant artists again in future.

Michelle Kelly, audience member, Timber Festival