



Press Release: August 2015

**Edinburgh Fringe 2015 – between 6 and 30 August (excl 18th) – Big Belly, Underbelly Cowgate, 7.30pm (finishes 8.40pm)**

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## **64 SQUARES – new psychological and physical play by Rhum and Clay tells a story of war, a tortured mind and a search for identity**

*“Stunningly beautiful”* The New Current \*\*\*\*\*

*“Beautifully imaginative, with real emotional heft”* Exeunt \*\*\*\*

*“I have seldom been so impressed by the sheer ingeniousness and creative spirit of a performance”* Everything Theatre\*\*\*\*\*

**Physical theatre company Rhum and Clay have been presenting their bold new play at the Big Belly, Underbelly Cowgate. Inspired by Stefan Zweig’s *The Royal Game*, the play explores one man’s search for a lost identity as he unravels distorted and fragmented memories through a deceptively simple game of chess. The play uses live drumming from Fred McLaren, which provides more than just a background.**

But if chess isn’t for you, don’t discard this new work as the chess played here is merely a metaphor and one that cleverly displays how an intensely internal world can become very external. In the rich and decadent setting of a cruise liner in 1939, a mysterious newcomer who only knows himself as ‘B’ challenges the world’s greatest chess champion to a match. As B begins to play, we witness him trying to uncover his past and the tortuous events that have shaped him, moment by moment, memory by memory. It’s a mystery for him as well as the audience.

Fast-flowing and intense physicality, comedy, cinematic visuals and shadow puppetry combine with inventive design and a rich live jazz percussion from Fred McLaren in a new production that takes Lecoq-trained Rhum and Clay Theatre Company to another level. *64 SQUARES* marks a new departure for Rhum and Clay – it’s the first time one of the company – Chris Harrisson - has concentrated solely on writing and directing. It’s also the first time the company has committed to participation in the Festival’s Relaxed Performances (19<sup>th</sup> August), for those with Autism Spectrum Disorder and/or learning disabilities.

*64 SQUARES* is developed in association with Hertford Theatre, Pegasus Theatre and Redbridge Drama Centre and supported by Arts Council England. It will be performed at Big Belly during the Festival between 6 and 30 August (excl 18<sup>th</sup>) –Big Belly, 7.30pm and at a Relaxed Performance, 19 August –same venue, same time. Tickets cost £6 previews, £9/8 mid-week and £10/9 weekends. Contact the Box Office, tel: 0844 545 8252, [boxoffice@underbellyedinburgh.co.uk](mailto:boxoffice@underbellyedinburgh.co.uk). Social media: [@rhumandclay](https://twitter.com/rhumandclay) #64SQUARES

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## Note to Editors

Rhum and Clay is a theatre ensemble that tells stories: original shows that are inventive, ramshackle and cinematic. They formed the company at l'Ecole Jacques Lecoq in Paris in 2010, where they learnt their craft. They would also spend long hours into the night drinking 'rhum' and making masks out of clay. It was these happy memories that inspired the name under which the company performs. .Alongside creating theatre productions, the company collaborates with young people and the next generation of theatre makers through their popular workshop programme. Rhum and Clay is an Associate Company of The Watermill Theatre.

### Credits:

64 SQUARES is directed and scripted by Chris Harrison  
Co-Devised and Performed by Julian Spooner, Matthew Wells, Rachel Lincoln  
Additional devising from Charlotte Dubery, Sacha Plaige, Jess Mabel Jones,  
Music by Fred McLaren  
Producer: Sarah Wilson  
Lighting Designer: Geoff Hense  
Costumes and Set: Amelia Jane Hankin  
Photos: Richard Davenport

### Edinburgh Festival Fringe listings information:

Rhum and Clay's 64 Squares takes place Big Belly, Underbelly Cowgate during the Festival between 6 and 30 August (excl 18<sup>th</sup>) 7.30pm and at a Relaxed Performance, 19 August –same venue, same time. Tickets cost £6 previews, £9/8 mid-week and £10/9 weekends. Contact the Box Office, tel: 0844 545 8252, [boxoffice@underbellyedinburgh.co.uk](mailto:boxoffice@underbellyedinburgh.co.uk) or visit <https://tickets.edfringe.com> Social media: @rhumandclay #64SQUARES

Inspired by Stefan Zweig's *The Royal Game* Rhum and Clay's 64 SQUARES explores one man's search for a lost identity as he unravels distorted and fragmented memories through a deceptively simple game of chess. On board a decadent cruise liner in 1939, the world's greatest chess champion is challenged to a match by a mysterious newcomer called... B. As B begins to play, it becomes clear that the game is not the only thing he's at risk of losing.

Fast-flowing and intense physicality, comedy, cinematic visuals and shadow puppetry combine with a rich live jazz percussive score and inventive design in a new production that takes Lecoq-trained Rhum and Clay Theatre Company to another level, without discarding its signature blend of open, playful and ramshackle fun.

