



The Baby Show



Written and performed by Donna Jackson
Directed by John Bolton

Babies ...
How we get them
Who has them
Where to put them when we don't want them

**Love, law, charity and shame lie at the bottom of many a birth.
These themes are investigated by an expert.
A deliberately barren spinster accompanied by her dog love child.**

Stand up comedy, a live Bull Terrier, surrogate parents played by nativity puppets, the style is sometimes knock-about, very funny and a well...a bit harsh.

This brashness is interwoven with delicate memories of true family stories about babies and relationships that disappeared and reappeared.

As the performers own story, the tone is of playful laughter chased and haunted by glimmering shadows.

Donna Jackson – Performer and Writer.

Her previous one-woman show, *Car Maintenance Explosives and Love*, was nominated for a Greenroom Award and toured through out Australia and Edinburgh Festival.

'It's the most perfect fusion of writing and performance' Phil Doust *The Guardian London*.

Donna is a writer and director of large-scale theatre works including *Dust* and *We Built This City* (Melb Workers Theatre) and founded the Melbourne Women's Circus. **The Baby Show** marks yet again Donnas' ability to break down the societal taboo's set before her and attract, with gentle magnetism, a stellar creative team to take the journey with her.

John Bolton - Director - John is an award winning director and teacher. He was the head of acting at the Victorian College of the Arts. John's own show *Jumping Mouse* has travelled the world from The Traverse Theatre Edinburgh through America, Australia and New Zealand. John received the Kenneth Myer Medallion for a lifetime contribution to the arts in 2007.

Jennifer Hector – Lighting Design - Franca Stadler- Set Construction

La Bella Design Lin Tobias – Graphic Design - Photography- Matthew Murphy

The Baby Show

The Baby Show - Themes

Our current Prime Minister was claimed by the Liberal party to be unfit for office as she was declared to be unmarried and even worse- *deliberately barren*.

Our society's take of the spinster is that of a pitied outsider who has not succeeded in matrimony. But today this role is being re claimed by numerous women choosing to live by themselves and for their own dreams. Are these women mad, bad, sad, or just plain selfish?

There are now more houses in Australia that have only one occupant than houses with families.

The role of the single person who has chosen not to have children is on the increase.

This is a brave new world where notions of family and the family unit is being extended and exploded.

Surprisingly this is a character we do not hear from often in theatre, and yet our Australian theatre ticket buying audience is often quoted as being primarily **women aged 35- 60 years**. This audience is also now able to purchase sperm and eggs and even employ another woman to incubate that baby and organise that exercise over the Internet. Many of these women have been personally affected by the having or giving up of illegitimate children or know some one who has been forced to do this. **This story is told by one of those illegitimate children who was surrendered under duress.** It is a new and original voice that provokes this theatrical investment and the presentation of her viewpoint as **she represents a growing constituency.**

Theatre is a great medium to explore these notions from our history with berth and babies and to investigate the possible future **relationships we are being challenged to consider.**

The Baby Show speaks directly to this audience, investigating these contemporary ideas with humour.

The Baby Show - A true story!

This script was inspired from a true family story of how the writer/performer was conceived. 1962 her birth mother planned to ride a Vesper from Perth to Melbourne across the Nullarbor. Sections of the road were still dirt. By the time the 21 year old adventurer got to Kalgoorlie she and her friend decided the scenery was boring and well it was a bit hot! They put their Vespers on a truck and travelled to Melbourne. Sections of the show describe adventures up the coast of eastern Australia on a Vesper before becoming pregnant with the storyteller Donna Jackson. In 1962 being a single mother was not acceptable as it is today and the baby – Donna was given up for adoption.

The production works from the personal – Donnas' own story of being adopted – to looking at the role of babies in society generally. This is very topical as we are at the flash point as to where and how children are conceived – gestational carriers – IVF - Children purchased by wealthy same sex couples - is being hotly debated in terms of ethics, rights, sexuality and consumerism.

We can view these new ways on obtaining babies as destroying the natural family or extending our notion of what a family is.

Donnas' family, a miniature Bull Terrier named Jay Jackson also performs in **The Baby Show**.

The Baby Show Artists

Donna Jackson - Investigator/Performer/Co Devisor - Donna has toured her work through out Australia as well as England, Scotland, Edinburgh Festival and Beijing China. She received a Fellowship from the Theatre Board of the Australia Council for the Arts and has been the Artistic Advisor to Regional Arts Victoria for the past ten years as well as many local and regional councils and festivals.

Large-scale theatre works have been to date Donnas' forte, working with some of Australia's most prestigious companies such as **Melbourne Workers Theatre** and working with artists and composers such as Mark Seymour from Hunters & Collectors fame. Donna founded the **Melbourne Womens Circus**, producing a range of theatre/circus shows in non-traditional environments. She is currently the artistic director for *illuminated By Fire*. A project for Regional Arts Victoria. Donna is working with 11 communities and 13 artists across Victoria. The project will culminate in an installation in Federation Square June 27th- July 4th 2011. There are over 1000 people involved. Donna often works big and the production she directed for Melbourne Workers Theatre in 2005 – 'We Built This City', had 120 building workers and the performance included a crane, bobcats and heavy machinery. Her last production *Dust* was performed around Victoria and had casts of 80 in each performance.

This is a big contrast to go from large-scale works to doing a solo show as a lone performer on stage.

The Baby Show marks yet again Donnas' ability to break down the societal taboo's set before her and attract with a gentle magnetism, a stellar creative team to take the journey with her.

John Bolton - Director/Co Devisor - John is an award winning director and teacher and has brought to life many story-telling pieces including *Odyssey* with Andreas Litras and *I Don't Wanna Play House* with Tammy Anderson. Both these works toured nationally and internationally. He was the head of acting at the **Victorian College of the Arts** and has recently been working with the **Sydney Theatre Company** as movement advisor on Andrew Upton's production of Long Day's Journey Into Night. John's own show *Jumping Mouse* has travelled the world from **The Traverse Theatre Edinburgh** and The Dublin Festival to The New Zealand International Festival through America, Australia and New Zealand. John received the **Kenneth Myer Medallion** for a **lifetime contribution to the arts** in 2007. He founded the John Bolton Theatre School from which graduates founded companies including 'Born In A Taxi', The four Noels and The Business.