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Present

# I COULD BE ANYONE

clare agius

matthew scurfield



*Funny, highly original... part confession, part autobiography.*

A volatile playful view from a dyslexic bridge.

Adapted by Clare Aguis, Lena Scurfield and Matthew Scurfield from the book by Matthew Scurfield

Directed by Lena Scurfield

Special thanks  
To

Ferhat Nazir-Bhatti  
Ross Cooper  
Kevin Coutinho  
Marva de la Coudray  
Ruth Falzon  
Katherine Hewlett  
Helen Knowler  
Daniel Marfany  
Dione Mifsud  
John Stein  
Laurence Staig  
Sheena Vella  
Susie Wright

Tues 26<sup>th</sup> Nov SOAS, University of London - Khalili Lecture Theatre 7.30pm

Wed 27<sup>th</sup> Nov Cambridge @ Downing College - Howard Theatre 5.30pm

Thur 28<sup>th</sup> Nov London @ LSE 10.00 am

Fri 29<sup>th</sup> Nov - Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol 10.00am

Sat 30<sup>th</sup> Nov - Oxford @ Magdalen College - Grove Auditorium 7.30pm

Tues 3<sup>rd</sup> Dec - London @ Working Men's College 7.00pm

Click on the names, listings and logos for booking and information

*We stood outside the mirror, like actors before a show, looking into the nature of our universal selves seeking truth and a reevaluation of our lives.*

Performance ethnography: *Performance ethnography uses the idea of performance both as a method for practice and as a means for understanding.*

Norman K. Denzin Ph.D., University of Iowa (Sociology)

## I COULD BE ANYONE

### *Drama and Self-Esteem*

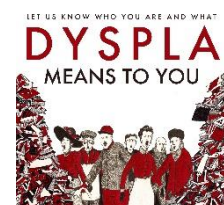
Given the curricular flagship of academic excellence, held up as the only way to survive the adult market place, dyslexia, or learning difference, is riddled with negative connotations. The experience of those whose needs stand out as being different at school, so often has clear and demonstrable damaging effects on their self-esteem and quality of life, particularly in adult years. These research findings are very eloquently brought to life through this autobiographical performance.

“Having devised a piece of theatre, which sprang to life from the pages of a book I wrote about growing up as an undiagnosed dyslexic in the midst of academia, in post-war Cambridge, I started out by doing a couple of performances in Malta, with the Maltese actress and television presenter Clare Agius. Amongst the audience was Dr Ruth Falzon of the University of Malta, a diminutive force of nature, who found the piece powerful enough to invite us to do six consecutive shows at the University. Somewhat paradoxically for me, Ruth had set up these performances in conjunction with the dean of the Faculty of Education and the head of the Department of Psychology.

As an out and out academic failure, you might think that performing under such a cerebral banner would create a certain level of discomfort, and you would be right. However, by the time I got to know these few luminaries at the University a little better, the reason for my linking arms with them became clear. In fact, my interpretations were turned upside down: their passion for equality, within the regime of schooling, their personal realisations as to how violent the system can be when we marginalise children were on par with mine.

In acting out this autobiographical drama the crippling lack of esteem is revealed and purged. And when a good part of the audience is mixed in with those who have found their own way, despite the so-called learning disability they grapple with, or, if they're lucky, celebrate, a revealing debate kicks in. There were moments when individuals in the auditorium were so engaged they began expressing their own very personal stories. Without realising it, the audience was contributing and taking part in an aesthetic act within a theatrical tradition, performance ethnography.” Matthew Scurfield 2013

When I COULD BE ANYONE played the DYSPLA festival in London 2011, the artist and teacher Katherine Hewlett and Dr Ross Cooper, from the charity AchievAbility, were inspired enough by what they saw to set up a showing at the House of Commons in Portcullis House, by way of the chairperson of AchievAbility Barry Sheerman MP. Thus began an encouraging and intriguing collaboration. Both Katherine and Ross have been instrumental in setting up the performance in the UK 2013.



***I went around all day unable to snap out of the intense emotions and profound thoughts stirred in me by your work. I have not been so shaken by a theatre piece for a long long time.*** Dr Isabelle Gatt- Lecturer in Drama and Art Education

***An enlightening and positive experience, loads of food for thought and soul searching reflections.*** Ms.Nadya Grech Learning Support Assistant

***Powerful, poignant and touching.*** Mrs Catherine Gonzi, wife of the Prime Minister of Malta

***A truly humbling experience.*** Charmaine Agius Ferrante M. Teaching Support Consultant

***It was as if I was seeing my son there. The nerves, rash attitude, impatience are mirrored in my son's behaviour.*** Ms Anna Maria Baldacchino Head of Customer Care Ministry of Education, Employment and the Family, Malta

***A very powerful performance.*** Maud Muscat M.Ed School Counsellor, Lecturer

***Funny, highly original... a howl of protest at the way dyslexia has been regarded for the past 65 years.*** Jack Shepherd actor and playwright

***Part confessional, part autobiographical... great theatre that deserves wide recognition.***  
Jim Cartwright actor, author and playwright

### **Lena Scurfield**

Directing this performance is the first time in any kind of theatre work for me and it grew out of collaborating in the early stages of rehearsal with Matthew and Clare. Also out of a very personal interest in exploring a dynamic dialogue between the linear and nonlinear way of being. I guess I am somewhere between Matthew and Clare on that scale, and it made for some very lively rehearsals as we let our cats out of the bag. A linear minded friend asked "is it always the linear that has to give way?" Let's check it out.



Matthew



Clare Agius



Scurfield