

THE WHITE LORD

by **Matteo Galbusera**

With **Matteo Galbusera & Lorenzo Baronchelli**

Tragicomedy about mind manipulation



An Unbelievable Comic Experience!

Unique!

Absurd!

Mystical!

THE WHITE LORD LOVES YOU DEEPLY

The White Lord is a **collective ritual** that begins as a celebration and ends as a con: the audience becomes a community, while its seductive leader gradually turns into a figure of control, until the final revelation that everything, from the very beginning, **was staged**.

SYNOPSIS

What drives a man to seek out a Guru? And what happens when he finds one?

THE WHITE LORD is a charismatic Guru, a control freak, and irresistibly funny. With solemn words, miracles, mystic ravings and a healthy dose of madness, **he draws the audience into a collective ritual where nothing is what it seems**.

Through magic, mentalism, music and comedy, **a community takes shape**. The Guru wins the trust of his followers, until the encounter turns into an increasingly **ambiguous and uncontrollable experience**.

A collective delirium. An experience you live one that doesn't end when the lights go out.

PROJECT

THE WHITE LORD is a **comic, immersive and participatory performance** that explores power, identity and individual responsibility, conceived for **public space**.

Two performers drive the piece: the Guru, a charismatic and manipulative figure, and his assistant, who introduces the audience to the ritual. **The dramaturgy** unfolds through a double, mirrored movement: the spectators move from **individuals to community**, while the Guru follows the opposite path, from charismatic guide to figure of domination. The audience is an **active part** of the action and contributes firsthand to what is happening.

The place determines the show: its **site-specific** nature allows it to absorb the identity and imagery of each urban context, making every performance unrepeatable.

ARTISTIC LANGUAGES

Contemporary clown, magic, mentalism, music, ritual and participation run through the show in an orchestrated crescendo:

Comedy creates an initial **complicity**.

Magic and mentalism introduce **doubt and surprise**.

Music and ritual bind the group into a **collective dimension**.

Direct participation finally draws the spectator **inside the action**.

Throughout the show, the register shifts between **play and ambiguity, comedy and unease, reality and fiction**.

STRUCTURE

The show takes place in a single area. **Moment 1 and Moment 3 happen in the same location.**

Moment 2 is **a real journey**: the audience leaves that place, crosses the city in procession and returns there for the Heart of the Performance but this **is not a simple return to the starting point.**

The place is the same physically, but **the audience's relationship to it has changed**: at first it is simply the place of welcome and initiation; after the ritual, the procession and the encounter with the Guru, **the community comes back to the same place after a journey and sees it with different eyes.**

Spot 1. Initiation

The audience is welcomed by the Guru's assistant and introduced to the world of THE WHITE LORD through a first ceremony. Shared songs, gestures and rituals progressively transform the spectators: **from individuals into a community.**

Spot 2. Procession

The newly formed **community** leaves the initiation site and **claims the public space.** Led by the assistant and the first followers, the spectators cross streets and squares in a **performative procession**: sacred songs and choreography transform the route into **sacred ground.**

The procession does not move through neutral space but through the living city; it crosses paths with passers-by, traffic, shop windows, real architecture and the contrast between its ritual nature and the everyday life of the city **catches unwitting bystanders.**

Along the way, the audience has its **first direct contact with the White Lord**: a magnetic presence that suddenly emerges within the urban space.

The procession then completes a route and returns to its starting point.

Spot 3. The Heart of the Performance

The community returns to the place it started from, **but sees it with different eyes**: something, in the meantime, has changed.

A ritual of waiting prepares the audience. Then the **Guru appears**: a charismatic, spectacular and ambiguous entrance. Through a sequence of "miracles" and mentalism, he builds his image as a figure **endowed with extraordinary powers**; comic on the surface, unsettling underneath. He draws one member of the audience into a public self-analysis session: the Sacred Book and a mirror hidden between its pages call the **participant's identity into question**; the participant is then celebrated and **symbolically welcomed into the community.** The Guru then calls on everyone to **free themselves from the slavery of money.**

The focus shifts to fear. In a monologue, the Guru lets a fragile, **human dimension surface** for the first time a crack in his figure, and the starting point for a new promise: freeing the audience from fear. One person is drawn into a suggestion experiment, **a game of Russian roulette that is only apparently dangerous**: the tension builds until the final reveal, and fear, once merely described, becomes concrete, shared experience. From here, something breaks: the Guru slips into an increasingly dark and self-centered **crisis of control**, until he confuses his role with his very identity. **WE becomes I: guidance becomes control, belonging becomes possession.**

The Guru's delirium reaches its limit: the assistant reacts and shoots him (a safely operated blank-firing stage gun) the shot does not stop him. At the moment of greatest tension, **the Guru offers his forgiveness**. The embrace between the two mends the rupture, and the community is invited to celebrate. Techno music begins: behind the scene, **a huge inflatable cone-shaped totem** slowly rises, reaching about six metres; **the physical manifestation of the Guru's ego**. The audience dances facing it, in a ritual halfway between a rave and a religious celebration, while the Guru becomes a DJ and **control shifts from word to sound**. The music builds, and **the community enters a collective trance**. At its peak, the Guru and his assistant vanish behind the totem. A siren cuts through the air; music and lights cut out all at once. In the darkness, only a voice remains: **"I LOVE YOU."**

A neutral light breaks the atmosphere. From the cone emerge the two performers, transformed: Hawaiian shirt, shorts, flip-flops, a suitcase full of money in hand. Two ordinary men, talking to each other casually, as if nothing had happened. **The revelation is simple and brutal: the Guru and his assistant are accomplices**, two figures who repeat the same ritual every night to seduce, engage and exploit the audience. The suitcase makes the real purpose visible: **to generate trust and turn it into value**. There is no single answer. The community dissolves, the ritual ends, but one question remains: **how aware are we of our own choices when we are inside a group, in front of a figure capable of winning our trust?**

THEMES

The project uses the communal and ritual dimension as a device to explore a broader, deeply contemporary question: **how and why we hand over to others our capacity to think, choose and believe** in the false masters of our time, be they religions, social networks, economic powers, or digital dependence itself.

Mass manipulation

The show stages, directly and with audience participation, **the techniques through which a single individual wins the consent of a group**: from the construction of charismatic authority to ritual repetition, to the creation of a common enemy or threat that binds the community around its leader.

Cult dynamics

THE WHITE LORD examines the mechanisms behind the formation and maintenance of a cult-like group: how one person's power over a collective is born, and how **beliefs, religious or pseudo-religious become a reassuring answer to existential questions** the individual cannot face alone.

Social media

Social media are read as contemporary devices of manipulation: the constant pursuit of followers, the need for public approval, the use of visibility to build new followers. **The Guru's language: "follow me," "join me" is identical to that of every digital platform.**

Nomophobia

Growing dependence on smartphones has generated a new form of anxiety: the fear of losing contact with others, of being unreachable, of falling out of the constant flow of information. **A silent addiction, which the show connects to the far older need to belong to a group.**

THE ARTISTS

MATTEO GALBUSERA

Author, actor, clown and performer, Matteo Galbusera has been working on the international scene for over twenty years, with shows presented in over **30 countries**, across festivals, theatres and public spaces. His path spans urban theatre and contemporary circus, with appearances at international festivals such as **Aurillac, Chalon dans la Rue, FiraTàrrega and TAC Valladolid**. In 2014 he took part in Montreal in the creative process of **KURIOS – Cabinet of Curiosities** by Cirque du Soleil. His artistic language emerges from the encounter between **contemporary clown, physical theatre, visual comedy and music**, building surreal worlds where the absurd becomes a tool for observing human behaviour. He has created nine shows presented in Italy and abroad. His awards include **Tendenza Clown (2019), Trampolino Vetrina (2021) and the Vassalli Award (2025) for THE WHITE LORD**.

In THE WHITE LORD he is author and performer of the Guru / White Lord.

LORENZO BARONCHELLI

Actor, author, director, juggler, illusionist and musician, Lorenzo Baronchelli has worked for over thirty years in physical and comic theatre, street arts and contemporary circus. His research brings together **clown, juggling, illusionism and visual theatre**. Since 1994 he has collaborated with the Erbamil company and has deepened his training with international artists, including Pierre Byland. Founder of the visual comedy quartet **Slapsus** and of the street marching band **The Tamarros**, he has worked at numerous Italian and international festivals and theatres, including the **Edinburgh Fringe Festival**. He is also a director and collaborator for several companies working in urban theatre, circus and vertical dance. Since 2004 he has directed **Ambaradan**, a circus company and school based in Bergamo.

In THE WHITE LORD he is a performer and dramaturgical consultant.

CREDITS

PRODUCTION: Cia Matteo Galbusera

CONCEPT / DIRECTION: Matteo Galbusera

DRAMATURGICAL CONSULTANT: Lorenzo Baronchelli

OUTSIDE EYE: Adrian Schvarzstein

PERFORMERS: Matteo Galbusera, Lorenzo Baronchelli

TEXT: Matteo Galbusera

MUSIC: Sebastiano De Gennaro

COSTUMES: Anna Kampf, Annalisa Limonta

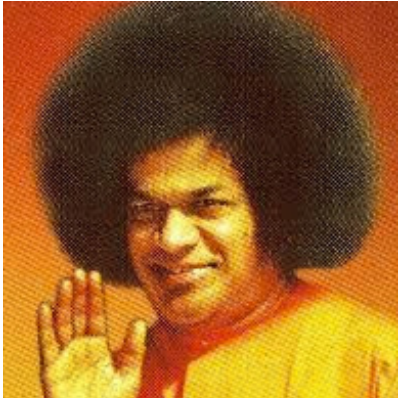
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AWARDS: Winner of the Vassalli Award for new theatre productions in public spaces

SPECIAL THANKS: Prisca Villa, Iacopo Fulgi, Michele Cafaggi, Sebastiano De Gennaro, Teatro Necessario, Francesco Busani, Mario Gumina, Fabio Vescarelli, Arianna Belloli

SOURCES OF INSPIRATION



Sathya Sai Baba:

He was an Indian guru who claimed to be a divine reincarnation, famous worldwide for alleged miracles such as materializing objects and sacred ash from his hands; practices later exposed as sleight-of-hand tricks, though he retained millions of devotees until his death.



Scientology:

It is an organization headquartered primarily in the United States that has, since 1954, gathered and spread the beliefs and practices devised by L. Ron Hubbard, based on his book Dianetics.



Georges Ivanovič Gurdjieff:

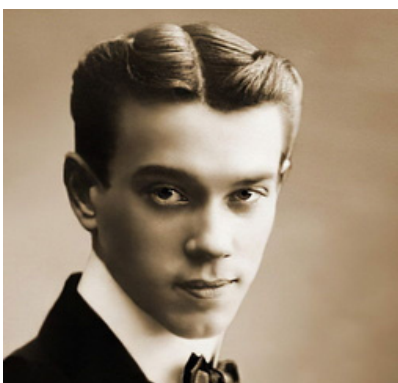
He was a philosopher, mystic and dance master of Greek-Armenian origin.
"Man's supreme illusion is his belief that he can do... but no one does anything.
Everything happens."



Osho:

He was an Indian mystic and spiritual teacher who gained an international following.

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Nijinsky:

He was a Russian dancer and choreographer of Polish origin.
"I want to be God, and that is why I seek to improve myself. God is in me. I am in God."
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Contacts

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