

ANNA ARTHUR PR

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2017 London International Mime Festival Monday 9 January – Saturday 4 February 2017

“If you look back through any new movement in theatre, you can always see the beginnings of it in the mime festival”

Phelim McDermott (interviewed by Matt Trueman in the New York Times)

www.mimelondon.com

Celebrating its 40th anniversary the London International Mime Festival, directed by Helen Lannaghan and Joseph Seelig, is a unique event in the theatre calendar, a once a year chance to see very best and newest contemporary visual theatre that embraces cutting edge circus-theatre, mask, physical theatre, object theatre and puppetry.

Over 34 days, 17 invited companies will give 120 performances of productions that are almost all UK or London premieres, at the Barbican, Southbank Centre, Central Saint Martin’s Platform Theatre, Jacksons Lane, The Peacock, Soho Theatre, and, for the first time, Shoreditch Town Hall. Artists from Belgium, France, Greece, Italy, Norway, Spain, Finland and New Zealand, will be joining some of Britain’s fast emerging talents, as well as established names.

‘The aesthetic outlook of the London International Mime Festival, founded in 1977, remains evergreen, varied and vital. The works of physical/ visual theatre programmed by its astute co-directors enliven the typically bone-chilling post-holiday doldrums’ The Times

The 2017 festival opens at **The Peacock** with **Gandini Juggling’s *Smashed: Special Edition***. For the festival’s 40th anniversary, Gandini Juggling, the UK company that reinvented and reinvigorated juggling for the 21st Century has reimagined one of its most popular and successful works, *Smashed*, inspired by the work of seminal dance-theatre maker, Pina Bausch. Now seventeen of the world’s greatest jugglers perform nostalgic, filmic scenes with hundreds of apples and crockery galore, that hint at tense relationships, lost love and the quaintness of afternoon tea.

Also at The Peacock and following last year’s sold-out triumph with ***Infinita***, **Familie Flöz**, Germany’s mask-theatre virtuosos, return with more award-winning comedy in ***Teatro Delusio***. With their wonderfully expressive masks and amazing quick-change artistry, three actors play some thirty different characters and bring an entire theatre to life – backstage as well in the limelight.

Barbican

At the Barbican Pit **Sacekripa** from France perform eye-opening feats of apple-peeling, bottle-opening, knife-throwing and awesome strength in *Marée Basse*, an expertly crafted drama of one-upmanship in the labour-saving household of two faded variety performers. **Sacekripa** came together at the Lido Circus School in Toulouse, and have been amazing audiences across Europe with this show since 2012.

The eerie setting for the manga-influenced, comic strip drama *Marzo* from Italy's **Dewey Dell** is an impact crater on a distant planet: the scene of ancient hostilities where battle is stylised, almost ritualistic. And yet there is love. Agata, Demetrio and Teodora Castellucci and Eugenio Resta have worked in collaboration with Japanese director Kuro Tanino and visual artist Yuichi Yokoyama, (*‘the most talented and exciting cartoonist working in any country today’* www.comicsalliance.com), whose costumed figures come straight from a graphic novel.

Making his UK debut **Euripides Laskaridis** (Greece) performs *Relic*. Masked and costumed like an outlandish doll, Laskaridis takes care of daily chores with surreal insouciance and glamour. Pre-occupied with ideas about transformation and ridicule he tests our acceptance of the incongruous and unfamiliar to the limit. Magic comes from the mundane in this highly unusual mix of live art, cabaret and vaudeville. Euripides is a 2016 Pina Bausch Fellow.

In the Barbican Theatre *Kiss & Cry* by **Charleroi Danses** (Belgium) is a potent story of love and loss that stars a dexterous duo of dancing hands in ravishing miniature landscapes, their sensual ballet filmed live and screened for cinematic perspective. This masterful image-rich show, which is shot and projected simultaneously on a big screen, comes from Belgian filmmaker Jaco Van Dormael and choreographer Michèle Anne De Mey.

Jacksons Lane

At Jacksons Lane **Les Antliacastes (France)** has freely drawn on Mark Twain's *Is Shakespeare Dead?* to create *Here Lies Shakespeare* a five act comic tragedy, extremely loosely based on themes surrounding the continually raging Shakespeare authorship debate and featuring a cast of taxidermied animals in Elizabethan attire. The setting is the site of a great archaeological excavation, a suspicious burial and sandbox full of toys. Les Antliacastes style has been described as somewhere between Catholic mass and eccentric Muppet show.

In 1970s Norway, an arsonist targets a small town for one long, terrifying month. As homes are burnt to cinders, panic spreads and neighbours wonder who amongst them could cause such fear and anguish. Years later a young man becomes haunted by the story. Inspired by 'Before I Burn' the international bestseller from Norwegian writer Gaute Heivoll, **Plexus Polaire** (France/Norway) use actors, life-size puppets and video projection to create *Ashes*, a gripping piece of visual theatre.

The Parachute + *Watch the Ball* are two new pieces by Britain's **Stephen Mottram** which fuse artistry with neuroscience and demonstrate the magic of puppetry as a story-telling medium. *The Parachute* plays with the way our brains make sense of things we see and stealthily reels us into a world of movement and illusion. *Watch the Ball* sends us scurrying down neural pathways old and new in a short exploration of the puppeteer's tricks.

Leandre Ribera (Spain) is one of Europe's most successful clown actors and a star of the international outdoor performance and street festival circuit. In *Nothing to Say* Leandre's house is filled with magic, laughter and enchantment; there are ghosts in the wardrobe, flying socks, telepathic pianos and raining umbrellas. *Nothing To Say* was winner of both the 2014 Barcelona City Circus and Catalonia Circus awards and has now been specially re-directed for indoor theatre performance.

Silver Lining are the rising stars of British circus. In their new show *Throwback* they harness the power of collective memory: a love note to nostalgia and the things you can't forget. With impressive aerial and acrobatic work, the UK's most exciting young troupe team up with acclaimed West End director Paulette Randall to tell stories that are honest, emotional and absorbing.

Platform Theatre

In 2005 **Mathurin Bolze** (France) astonished festival audiences with his surreal trampoline drama, *Fenêtres*, inspired by Italo Calvino's story, *The Baron in the Trees*. In the sequel *Barons Perchés* performed by **Compagnie MPTA** at Platform Theatre, the young Baron's charmed exile takes a new course with the appearance of a doppelganger - perhaps his brother, his alter ego or maybe just his shadow. Breaking free of all conventions, they create a dreamworld of lightness and freedom, of friendship without gravity.

Lilian Baylis Studio

The Lilian Baylis Studio is the venue for the award-winning **Mossoux Bonté** (Belgium), a company whose shows have toured to major theatres and festivals worldwide, and which have been regular highlights of the Mime Festival over three decades. *Whispers*, inspired by an unusual image from a Vermeer painting, portrays an unsettling other world where everything seems ambiguous. Patrick Bonté and Nicole Mossoux's company works at the crossroads of dance, theatre, shadows and object manipulation.

It's rare these days not to 'log in' at every opportunity: at the breakfast table, on nights out with friends, even in bed. But when and how do we separate ourselves from the virtual chaos surrounding us? *Imbalance* a new show by **Joli Vyann (UK)** explores our obsessive dependence on technology, using superb acrobatic skills and athletic dance to ask whether our lives are 'in' or 'out' of balance. Former stunt man and circus artist Jan Patzke and ex-gymnast and dancer Olivia Quayle have joined forces with award-winning director and dance-maker Jonathan Lunn, whose credits include choreography for Richard Curtis' movie *Love Actually*, and Anthony Minghella's *Truly, Madly, Deeply*.

Shoreditch Town Hall is the venue for *The Nature of Forgetting* by **Theatre Re**, a London-based international ensemble creating thought-provoking, poignant work in a compelling, physical style embracing mime and theatre. Inspired by the work of theatre director Tadeusz Kantor, recent neurobiological research and interviews with people living with dementia, *The Nature of Forgetting* is a powerful, haunting and beautiful theatre piece about the inability to recollect a life and what is left when memory is gone.

At **Soho Theatre** **Thomas Monckton/Kallo Collective** (New Zealand/Finland) perform *Only Bones*. Monckton's stage is one metre square. There's a chair, a lamp and a circle painted on the floor. With its quirky, low-tech aesthetic and using just his bumpy, bickering, wiggling hands and seemingly uncontrollable face, Monckton creates an exquisite piece of micro-physical theatre unlike anything you've seen. A hypnotic show about a lot, using very little.

Nordic Puppet Ambassadors (Finland) are puppeteers Outi Sippola and Linda Lemmetty. *Only One Suitcase Allowed* at **Southbank Centre** is a peep show into a miniature world hidden in a pile of luggage. In the course of a fifteen minute journey to an unknown destination, a safe, familiar environment gradually turns hostile. Inspired by the Anne Frank story this remarkable fusion of object theatre and live installation is a performance for one spectator at a time.

The Festival line-up will be complemented by workshops, films and artists' talks.

Full programme details, including workshops and after-show discussion dates will be available online at www.mimelondon.com from **mid October**

London International Mime Festival is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation.

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