

# aSH Compagnie 111

a piece by Aurélien Bory for Shantala Shivalingappa

# barbican

## London International Mime Festival

Wed 26 – Sat 29 Jan 2022

**Welcome to the Barbican** for this year's London International Mime Festival, which is always eagerly anticipated as we re-emerge into each new year. Once again we look forward to joining forces with Helen Lannaghan and Joseph Seelig, the festival's directors, to bring four exciting and very different productions to the Theatre and The Pit, as well as a programme of slapstick shorts in our cinema. We're thrilled to once again be presenting international work on our stages: in the Theatre, Compagnie 111 returns with *aSH* by French theatre director Aurélien Bory performed by Indian dancer Shantala Shivalingappa. This is followed by *Interiors* from Scottish theatre company Vanishing Point. In The Pit, UK-based company Thick & Tight make their Barbican debut with *Short & Sweet*, a thoroughly modern variety show performed by a fantastic line-up of artists, which is followed by *Stellaire*, a love story beguilingly told through handmade cartoon-theatre by French company Stereoptik. Whether you're here to see one, some or all of this year's London International Mime Festival shows, we hope you have a fantastic time.

**Toni Racklin, Head of Theatre and Dance, Barbican**

Welcome to a bewitching journey that links ancestral culture and innovative technology, as New York Bessie Award-winning Shantala Shivalingappa pays homage to Shiva, god of creation and destruction. Aurélien Bory's spatially extraordinary shows have been highlights of the Mime Festival for two decades. *aSH* is the final and perhaps most dazzling in his trilogy of large-scale solos for unique female dancers – for the first of which, *What's Become of You? (Questcequetudeviens?)* for Barbican / LIMF2014, he won an Olivier Award nomination.

After last year's pause the Mime Festival is back large and live! We're delighted, as ever, to partner with the Barbican in presenting exceptional international artists in London.

**Helen Lannaghan and Joseph Seelig, LIMF Directors**

### Company

Performer **Shantala Shivalingappa**

Percussionist **Loïc Schild**

### Creative and production team

Designer, Scenographer and Director **Aurélien Bory**

Choreographer **Shantala Shivalingappa**

Live Music Composer **Loïc Schild**

Dramaturg **Taïcyr Fadel**

Lighting Designer **Arno Veyrat** assisted by **Mallory Duhamel**

Automatic Rhythms by **Joan Cambon**

Set Technical Conception by **Pierre Dequivre, Stéphane Chipeaux-Dardé**

Costume Designer **Manuela Agnesini** with the valuable help of **Nathalie Trouvé**

Technical Director **Thomas Dupeyron**

Sound Manager **Stéphane Ley**

Stage Manager **Mickaël Godbille**

Lighting Manager **François Dareys**

Head of Production **Florence Meurisse**

Production Manager **Clément Séguier-Faucher**

Running time: about 1 hour (there is no interval)

Age guidance: 12+

### Fri 28 January: Post-show talk

BSL-interpreted by Martin Fox-Roberts and post-show talk facilitated by Sanjoy Roy

# aSH

A piece by Aurélien Bory for Shantala Shivalingappa

Produced by Compagnie 111 – Aurélien Bory

A co-production with Théâtre de la Cité – CDN Toulouse Occitanie, Festival Montpellier Danse 2018, Agora – PNAC Boulazac-Nouvelle-Aquitaine, La Scala – Paris, L'Onde Théâtre Centre d'Art, Vélizy-Villacoublay. With the participation of ENSATT-Lyon.

Compagnie 111 – Aurélien Bory is under funding agreement with the Regional Directorate for Cultural Affairs Occitanie / French Ministry of Culture and Communication, Region Occitanie / Pyrénées – Méditerranée and the City council of Toulouse. It is supported by the Departmental Council of Haute-Garonne.

Supported by the Institut français du Royaume-Uni, towards the promotion of French artists in the London International Mime Festival.

Presented by the Barbican in association with LIMF.

# aSH

by Aurélien Bory

I met Shantala Shivalingappa backstage at a theatre in Dusseldorf in 2008, where she was a guest of Pina Bausch. It was the last 'Drei wochen mit Pina' festival. Shantala danced in *Néfès*, and this is where she saw *Plus ou moins l'infini*. It was here that everything came together in a hugely powerful way. It seemed almost unreal to me that so many elements of my path and Shantala's converged at once.

*aSH* is the final opus in a trilogy of portraits of women, ten years after it began in 2008 with *Questcequetudeviens?* This was followed by *Plexus* in 2012. In this trilogy, I take as a starting point not space – which is my usual theme in theatre – but a woman, a person with a story; a living being who unfolds through dance.

Shiva, the Hindu god of dance, seems to dwell in Shantala Shivalingappa. According to the texts, Shiva has over one thousand names. He is a god of creation and destruction. Lord of cremation grounds, he covers his body with ashes. Shantala Shivalingappa has constructed her dance in the image of this god, whose vibration keeps the beat of the world.

I asked Shantala if she wanted to give the ash a try. Ash is not merely the solid residue of perfect combustion: here it is a process. It is part of a cycle of death and birth which begins from nothing – like the start of any form in theatre – and leans towards an ephemeral form, before disappearing. Shantala's dance resembles a *kolam*, a flour drawing made on the ground in the morning and destroyed by the wind during the day; and made again the following day. A geometry has embedded itself in Shantala's body through the movements of her Kuchipudi, repeated thousands of times. Circles, points, symmetries, spirals, fractals... her dance seems to be a representation of the very structure of the world.

The way the syllables link together in Shantala Shivalingappa's name is a dance in itself. For *aSH*, a title made up of the first and last initials of her name, I would like the entire space to have a rhythm. I would like the space to express itself first as a vibration, which is then picked up, transformed and infinitely prolonged by the percussionist Loïc Schild. Shantala's dance is based on her journeys from India to Europe, from Kuchipudi to Pina Bausch, and from Shiva to Dionysus, the Greek god of theatre, who some say are born of the same god. Shantala is always travelling between her birthplace Madras, and Paris, where she lives. Her dance is a perpetual pendulum, much like our meeting: somewhere between the Hindu mystique and quantum physics.

**Aurélien Bory, November 2018**

## **BIOGRAPHIES**

### **SHANTALA SHIVALINGAPPA**

#### **Performer**

Since her childhood Shantala Shivalingappa has divided her time between Madras, where she was born, and Paris, where she grew up. She was trained in classical Indian dance from a young age by her mother, dancer Savitry Nair, and then by her Master Vempati Chinna Satyam, in the Kuchipudi style.

Since the age of 13 she has had the privilege of working with some of the greatest artists of our times: Maurice Béjart (*1789... et nous*), Peter Brook (for whom she played Miranda in *The Tempest* and Ophelia in *Hamlet*), Bartabas (*Chimère*), Pina Bausch (*O Dido, Néfès*, and *Bamboo Blues*), and Amagatsu (*Ibuki*).

Today, internationally acclaimed as a unique dancer, she is an ambassador for Kuchipudi, sharing her passion worldwide for the dance form. She was the first to earn a Bessie Award in New York (2013) for a South-Asian style, for her Kuchipudi solo *Shiva Ganga*.

Shantala Shivalingappa shares her time touring her solo works with expanding her own choreographic work in the Kuchipudi style. Passionate about human encounters and the artistic journey these encounters inspire, she also enjoys collaborating with various artists in the exploration of dance, music and theatre.

### **LOÏC SCHILD**

#### **Percussion, Live Music Composer**

Loïc Schild trained in classical and jazz music in France and in India, where he studied the maddalam (a cylindrical drum often used to accompany theatre productions in southern India). He developed his craft through playing on stage and working with numerous musicians who specialise in genres including rock and roll, improvised music and World music. He has played in over 500 concerts with the musical group Monkomarok (who have released three albums on ENJA / Harmonia Mundi). He composes for theatre, dance and documentaries, and has always been fascinated with foreign cultures and contemporary music. His work often references his grandfather Ludolf Schild, one of the first proponents in France of German expressionism in dance. Loïc Schild has worked with the Cézame Music Agency since 2012. He worked on the creation of aSH with Compagnie 111 and Aurélien Bory in 2018.

### **AURÉLIEN BORY**

#### **Designer, Scenographer and Director**

After studying physics at the University of Strasbourg, Aurélien Bory worked in the field of architectural acoustics, before dedicating himself to theatre arts.

He has been the director of Compagnie 111, located in Toulouse, since 2000 and he works with many collaborators. He develops physical theatre using space and the body, and creates multi-faceted works crossing boundaries between various disciplines including circus, dance, music and visual arts. From *La trilogie sur l'espace (Space Trilogy)*, and notably *Plan B*, renowned for a collaboration with New-Yorker Phil Soltanoff, to *Je me souviens Le Ciel est loin la terre aussi (I Remember Heaven is Far Away from Earth as Well)*, 2019) created with Mladen Materic, *Espæce* (2016) shown at the 70th Avignon Festival, and *aSH* (2018), created at the Montpellier Dance Festival for the dancer Shantala Shivalingappa, Compagnie 111 now has a repertoire of fifteen shows, presented at large festivals and on the most prestigious international stages.

Most recently, in autumn 2021, Aurélien Bory directed and was scenographer for *La disparition du paysage (The Disappearance of the Landscape)*, a new text by Jean-Philippe Toussaint which was performed by Denis Podalydès in Paris.

Aurélien Bory's attention to scenography can also be seen in the sets he designs, which are often connected to a performance space, as demonstrated in *Spectacula*, produced in 2015 for the Théâtre Graslin in Nantes. In addition to his productions with Compagnie 111, Aurélien Bory also stages operas, most recently *Orpheus and Eurydice* in 2018 and *Parsifal* in 2020. Information on all of Aurélien Bory's projects and those of Compagnie 111 can be found at [www.cie111.com](http://www.cie111.com)

## **Compagnie 111**

Compagnie 111 was founded in Toulouse in 2000 by Aurélien Bory. The company works with a range of collaborators, developing a physical and visual theatre which is focused on the relation between space, bodies and physics with an important focus on scenography. Its repertoire of fifteen works has been presented worldwide to wide acclaim.

Compagnie 111 – Aurélien Bory is under a funding agreement with the Regional Directorate for Cultural Affairs Occitanie / French Ministry of Culture and Communication, Region Occitanie / Pyrénées – Méditerranée and the City council of Toulouse. It is supported by the French Institute for some of its collaborative projects and tours abroad.

**cie111.com**



## **London International Mime Festival**

Directors: Helen Lannaghan & Joseph Seelig

London International Mime Festival (LIMF) promotes contemporary visual theatre. Its productions have been nominated for, and won, Olivier Awards, and in 2017 the festival was honoured with the Empty Space – Peter Brook Special Achievement Award for its work over four decades. Founded in 1977, LIMF is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation.

LIMF 2022 gratefully acknowledges core financial support from Arts Council England, and the support of Institut français du Royaume-Uni towards the promotion of French artists.

**mimelondon.com**

## **For the Barbican**

Head of Theatre and Dance **Toni Racklin**

Senior Production Manager **Simon Bourne**

Producers **Angie Smith, Leanne Cosby, Jill Shelley**

Assistant Producers **Anna Dominian, Bridget Thornborrow**

Marketing Manager **Kyle Bradshaw**

Marketing Assistant **Rebecca Moore**

Senior Communications Manager **Angela Dias**

Communications Officer **Freddie Todd Fordham**

Creative Learning Producer (Theatre, Dance, Poetry) **Lauren Brown**

Production Managers **Jamie Maisey, Lee Tasker**

Technical Managers **Tony Brand, Steve Daly, Jane Dickerson, Martin Morgan, Stevie Porter**

Stage Managers **Lucinda Hamlin, Charlotte Oliver**

Technical Supervisors **John Gilroy, Nik Kennedy, Jamie Massey, Adam Parrott, Tom Salmon, John Seston, Chris Wilby**

PA to Head of Theatre **David Green**

Production Administrator **Caroline Hall**

Production Assistant **Andrew Pellett**

Technicians **Kendell Foster, Burcham Johnson, Christian Lyons, Charlie Mann, Josh Massey, Matt Nelson, Lawrence Sills, Neil Sowerby**

Systems and Maintenance Technician **Heather Readdy**

Venue Managers **Fiona Badgery, Gary Hunt, Nicola Lake**

Access and Licensing Manager **Rebecca Oliver**

Centre Managers (Delivery) **Elizabeth Wilks, Harriet Davis, Rob Norris**

Centre Manager (Planning) **Pheona Kidd**

Centre Manager (Health & Safety) **Mo Reideman**

Stage Door **Julian Fox, aLbi Gravener**

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