

Vime London supporting contemporary visual theatre

MimeLondon is a new curatorial project created by Helen Lannaghan and Joseph Seelig, the directors of London International Mime Festival (LIMF) which ended in 2023 after five decades of award-winning success. MimeLondon will support occasional collaborations of contemporary visual theatre in partnership with venues in London. Its first season takes place in Jan/Feb 2024 with 8 productions new to London.

London International Mime Festival (LIMF) 1977-2023 was an established, annual festival of contemporary visual theatre. Essentially wordless and multi-disciplinary, its programme embraced circus-theatre, puppetry/animation, object theatre, mime, live art and physical theatre. Founded in 1977 at the Cockpit Theatre as a one-off event to showcase the work of British mimes, theatre clowns and other physical and visual theatre artists, the festival rapidly grew in scale, quality and reputation. Since that start in one small theatre LIMF involved more than thirty London venues – from Tate Modern and West End theatres, to the Almeida, Barbican, Battersea Arts Centre, ICA, Jacksons Lane, Natural History Museum, Royal Opera House, Sadler's Wells, Shunt Vaults, Soho Theatre, Shoreditch Town Hall and Southbank Centre. The festival presented almost 800 productions over its long history. 2023 was the 47th and final edition.

LIMF was the UK's longest established annual, international theatre festival, in receipt of Arts Council England funding from its inception, and latterly being a National Portfolio Organisation. In recent years its productions and its two directors received various honours and awards, most notably four Olivier Award nominations including winner of Best New Dance Production in 2015 (Peeping Tom's 32 Rue Vandenbranden at The Barbican), a Total Theatre lifetime achievement award and the 2017 Empty Space – Peter Brook Special Achievement Award.

Photo: Ockham's Razor Tess Cover photo: El Patio Teatro Insides "Too amazing for words - it's the best physical theatre from around the world" Time Out

"One of the pleasures... has always been its flagrant disregard for British theatre's tendency to put art into boxes... constantly tempts us out of our comfort zones" The Guardian

"An explosively inventive programme of visual performance" Evening Standard

"The Mime Festival has had an enormous impact on British theatre" WhatsOnStage

"January in London always means the varied, zany mime festival, when international performers can be enjoyed without a language barrier... I invariably leave the mime festival invigorated and touched" Quentin Letts

"The London International Mime Festival might seem a bit of a mouthful as a title. But really it's a remarkable feat of compression given that it ought to be called "Things That Have Grabbed the Attention of Co-Directors Helen Lannaghan and Joseph Seelig That Others Might Label Variously Dance, Performance Art, Circus and Puppetry, Not Always From Abroad, Sometimes With Talking" Daily Telegraph



National Theatre, Lyttelton Theatre Fri 12 > Sat 27 Jan

Mon - Sat 7.30pm (16 Jan: 7pm), Wed & Sat mats 2.15pm

BOOK NOW >

We exist both where we've come from and where we're going. In 1932, Leah and her family escaped persecution and embarked on a journey from Yemen to Palestine. Ninety years later, her grandson Amit Lahav (Artistic Director of Gecko) reflects on the life-changing decision his family made to flee and build a better life. This powerful piece by acclaimed physical theatre company Gecko is a provocative story of desperation, compassion and acceptance, inspired by the migration stories of Gecko's international performers and the extraordinary voyage Leah undertook as a young child.

Runs 90 mins / no interval
Age guidance 14+
Audio-described performance Thu 18 Jan
Captioned performance Thu 25 Jan
After-show discussions Fri 19 & Thu 25 Jan
(9.15pm - free to ticket holders)
The discussion on Thu 25 Jan is BSL interpreted

Gecko's 2-day Devising Physical Theatre workshop 10 - 11 Feb LAMDA

geckotheatre com

A Gecko Production in association with the National Theatre.
Supported by HOME Manchester, Lighthouse Poole and London International Mime Festival.
Gecko is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation.
Photos: Richard Haughton, Malachy Luckie, Mark Sepple.

"You can't beat Gecko. Amit Lahav has a distinct theatrical style which is unique in British theatre" Lyn Gardner, Stage Door



Les Antliaclastes

Ambergris (France/USA)

Barbican, The Pit **Tue 23 > Sat 27 Jan**

Tue - Sat 7.45pm, Sat mat 2.30pm

BOOK NOW >

Set inside a giant laboratory resembling the inside of a whale, this is the tale of a charlatan perfumer seeking to create the perfect smell, from the perfect lump of ambergris. Sought-after as the fixative which makes scent linger on the skin for years, ambergris comes from the digestive systems of whales. Its value is greater than gold. Les Antliaclastes' mini-epic features three famous literary figures, Moby Dick's tyrannical Captain Ahab, the prophet Jonah and the puppet Pinocchio, each swallowed by a whale. With its striking mix of special effects, masks, marionettes and shadows, Ambergris unfolds as an unforgettable olfactory puppet operetta.

Runs 55 mins/no interval Age guidance: 8+ After-show discussion: Thu 25 Jan (BSL interpreted)

"Bewitching... Darkly comic and absurdly charming... Les Antliaclastes are not just puppeteers but magicians" (LIMF'19)

The Guardian. Read the review>



Ad Infinitum Last Rites (UK)

Shoreditch Town Hall Wed 24 > Sat 27 Jan

Wed - Sat 7.30pm

BOOK NOW >

An ending. A beginning. A goodbye.

One man has twenty-four hours to perform his father's funeral rites. This intimate, final ceremony brings to life a rich tapestry of shared memories and a complex relationship cut short by death. A powerful journey of love, loss, and what it means to be a parent. Combining striking visual and physical storytelling with dynamic projection and a resonant soundtrack, internationally acclaimed theatre makers Ramesh Meyyappan and George Mann collaborate for the first time to create an epic non-verbal solo show. Find out about the show in BSL here >

Multi award-winning theatre company Ad Infinitum (Translunar Paradise - 5 star The Observer, Light - 5 star The Times) presents a bold new performance celebrating the transformative power of grief and ritual.

Runs 75 mins/no interval Age guidance: 14+

(Contains themes of grief and death, parental abuse and trauma)

After-show discussion: Fri 26 Jan (BSL interpreted)

Last Rites is made possible through funding from Arts Council England. Co-commissioned by Derby Theatre and London International Mime Festival Photos: Camilla Adams

"It was an extraordinary performance... so moved me because of its uniquely devastating method... I hobbled away speechless"

Tom Lamont. The Observer (on *Translunar Paradise* LIMF'12)

read the review >





Stereoptik Antechamber (France)

Barbican, The Pit Tue 30 Jan > Sat 3 Feb

Tue-Sat 7.45pm, Sat mat 2.30pm

BOOK NOW >

In a live, cinematic dreamscape, *Antechamber* reveals the creative process behind the making of an animation film.

With quickfire roughs and changes an artist's pencil sketch takes shape, projected onto a screen above his table. An eraser appears and rubs it out. Its replacement charcoal drawing disappears in turn, giving way to painted landscape. Live keyboard and guitar accompaniment both drive and reflect what we see taking shape, dreams of the Amazonian jungle and an unfolding urban love story. Having followed the fascinating pathway of ideas transformed into screen reality, we finally see the completed film. It's amazing, and created in front of our eyes.

Runs 50 mins/no interval Age guidance: 8+ After-show discussion: Thu 1 Feb (BSL interpreted)

stereoptik.com

Co-production: Théâtre de la Ville-Paris, Trident Scène nationale de Cherbourg L'Hectare - Territoires vendómois - Centre National de la Marionnette, Le Sablier - Centre Nationale de la Marionnette - Ifs, Le Parvis-Scène nationale de Tarbes, Le Lux - Scène nationale de Valence, the production company Folimage. Stereoptik acknowledges financial support from the Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication/ DRAC Centre-Val de Loire and Région Centre-Val de Loire. Photos: Stereoptik, Richard Schroeder, Christophe Reynaud de Lage

"With every shift in the sound comes a shift in the art: another roll of the paper on which landscapes unfurl, another flick of paint to make our greyscale world glow Technicolor" Exeunt (on Dark Circus LIMF'22) read the review >



Ockham's Razor

Tess (UK)

Sadler's Wells Peacock Theatre in Holborn Wed 31 Jan > Sat 3 Feb

Wed - Fri 7.30pm, Sat 5pm

BOOK NOW >

In this ground-breaking adaptation of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Thomas Hardy's classic tale of power, loss and endurance, Ockham's Razor interweave Hardy's words with the physicality of circus. Against a backdrop of projections the cast climb shifting walls and move through ropes and swathes of linen to evoke the vast landscapes and interior worlds of Hardy's Wessex. It's a story of striking relevance for our times in its nuanced evocation of female relationships, sexual desire, consent, privilege and poverty.

This retelling captures the beauty, heartbreak and yearning of the novel, drawing on the strength of the circus body to create a Tess as heroic as Hardy intended.

Runs 2 hours mins plus interval Age guidance: 12+ Thu 1 Feb: Audio described and BSL interpreted performance followed by After-show discussion (BSL interpreted)

ockhamsrazor.co.ul

Tess is produced by Turtle Key Arts.

Commissioned by London International Mime Festival and The Lowry, Salford.

Supported by artsdepot, Shoreditch Town Hall, National Centre for Circus Arts, Bristol Circus City and MimeLondon. Funded by Arts Council England, The Foyle Foundation, PRS Foundation's The Open Fund for Organisations, Garrick Charitable Trust and Royal Victoria Hall Foundation. Ockham's Razor is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation. Photos: Kie Cummings

"there are certain shows one is anxious to finish purely because you're bursting to show your appreciation... something quite special"

StageTalkMagazine. read the 5 star review >



Vamos Theatre

Boy On The Roof (UK)

Shoreditch Town Hall Thu 1 > Sun 4 Feb

Thu - Sat 7.30pm, Sun 2.30pm

BOOK NOW >

At no.73 Cooper Street, Brian Baxter wishes his son wasn't so irritating. Liam Baxter can't switch off, can't sit still, he's disruptive at school and chaotic at home. Liam just wishes someone understood

Three doors down, Albert keeps himself to himself, sticks to his routines. At 91, he knows what he likes and likes what he knows. But Albert misses his wife and just wishes that someone, somewhere, would have time for him.

Created through Community Conversations across the UK, gathering people's experiences of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), loneliness, aging, hearing loss, connection and community, this is the story of an unlikely friendship, about acceptance, understanding and love.

Runs 70 mins/no interval Age guidance: 12+, contains references to drugs After-show discussion: Sat 3 Feb

Co-commissioned by London International Mime Festival and co-produced with New Wolsey Theatre. Vamos Theatre is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation. Photos:

"Go see - you'll be inspired to enjoy every day..."
Tammy Gooding: BBC Hereford and Worcester on Dead Good

5 star review



El Patio Teatro

Entrañas (Insides)

Spain)

Barbican, The Pit Tue 6 > Sat 10 Feb

Tue - Sat 7.45pm, Sat mat 2.30pm

BOOK NOW >

Have you ever wondered what we carry inside us? For centuries, humankind has sought to unravel the mysteries of the human body. Yet some questions remain unanswered. What exactly are we made of? What happens when our physical forms disappear?

Izaskun Fernandez' and Julian Saenz-Lopez' pseudoscientific anatomy class dissects nostalgia, love and memories. With beautifully crafted objects and unusual projections, their award-winning and thought-provoking new production takes us on an intimate voyage of discovery, an imaginative tour through the inner workings of the human body and spirit.

Performed in Spanish, with English surtitles.
Runs 50 mins/no interval
Age guidance: 8+
After-show discussion: Thu 8 Feb (BSL interpreted)

This project is supported in part by a grant from Acción Cultural Española (AC/E), a state agency Photos: Clara Larrea Quemada

"A beautiful journey for four hands and two voices through the interior of the human body... one of the most interesting and powerful companies on Spain's creative scene"

Putxinel.li



Soltanoff/Wendt This & That (USA/France)

Barbican, The Pit Tue 13 > Sat 17 Feb

Tue - Sat 7.45pm, Sat mat 2.30pm

BOOK NOW >

Phil Soltanoff (2020 Herb Alpert Award) and performer/puppeteer Steven Wendt (Blue Man Group) explore the cosmic and the micro in a multimedia animation using both lo-fi tech and traditional techniques.

THAT imagines the creation of the universe with abstract video, choreographed to recorded music. THIS is about the people in it - their romantic sense of longing, loss and what might have been. Depicted with beautiful shadow vignettes inspired by Henry Moore sculptures, we see a cowboy sleeping under the stars, a jazz pianist's reverie, a disco dancer, and a crooner serenading his lover all in a world brought to life with magical, old-school skills.

Playful, and full of wonder.

Runs 60 mins/no interval Age guidance: 12+ After-show discussion: Thu 15 Feb (BSL interpreted)

Presented in association with Compagnie 111

This & That is made possible by a Henson Foundation Workshop Grant
This engagement is made possible by The Jim Henson Foundation's 2024 Allelu Award
Technical director: Stéphane Chipeaux-Darde
Photos: Maya Sharpe, Brian Rogers, Steven Wendt

"it's sweet and gossamer fine... I found it utterly, blissfully, completely restful."

The New Yorker, read the review >



Workshops

MimeLondon brings the chance to study different physical and visual theatre skills with leading practitioners. You'll find puppetry, commedia, clown, mime and devised theatre there's something for all levels of experience, so dive in!

If you are interested in participating in one of the festival's workshops and require access support in order to do so, please email access@ mimelondon.com with details and with any questions. We will endeavour to accommodate your access needs. All venues have step-free access and accessible toilets.

photo: Commedia masks at the Didi Hopkins Carry On Commedia workshop



THEATRE RE The Art of Details

Mon 8 - Fri 12 Jan 10am - 5pm Shoreditch Town Hall

£325 (£300 concessions) Minimum age: 18+

Book now >

For professional and semi-professional performers, actors and dancers as well as visual artists, students and recent graduates. No previous experience of Corporeal Mime is required to join, only curiosity and playfulness.

Throughout the week, we will focus on why and how the tiniest choices play a key part in the way we develop our shows.

Through Corporeal Mime and the study of articulation - space, body, rhythms, and weight - we will explore how the smallest things take on a larger significance and become more than what they are. Participants will learn to own and play with physical details to enhance their

performance skills, develop new material, and push the boundaries of what theatre, without a playwright, can do. Each day will begin with physical conditioning work, to then progress towards training and technique, culminating in the opportunity to devise a short presentation true to the Theatre Re process.

This 5-day workshop is led by Guillaume Pigé (Theatre Re Director and RADA Associate Teacher) and Claudia Marciano (Theatre Re Performer and Teacher).

theatrere.co.uk >



NOLA RAE Let Your Body Do The Talking

Sat 27 & Sun 28 Jan 10am - 5pm LAMDA London Academy of Music & Dramatic Art

£175 (£150 concessions) Minimum age: 18+

Book now >

For enthusiastic professional or amateur performers aged 18+ who want to know what makes visual theatre tick and who are

not afraid to move.

An insight in how to work without text, paying special attention to the rhythm of movement and how to express ideas with maximum clarity. All parts of the body (and mind) will come into play, with the emphasis on play. Through mime, clowning, improvisation and imagination, students will have a chance to discover aspects of comic performance that are universal, enabling them to connect more deeply with their audiences. Wear practice clothes and bring one juggling ball.

This 2-day workshop is led by Nola Rae. Born in Sydney, she immigrated to London in 1963. Trained at the Royal Ballet School in London, she danced at Malmö Stadsteater and at Tivoli Pantomime Theatre in Copenhagen before turning to mime and studying with Marcel Marceau in Paris. After working with Research Theatre Kiss, Friends Roadshow and the Bristol Old Vic, she founded the London Mime Theatre with her partner Matthew Ridout in 1974 and premiered her first solo show in France at the Nancy Festival in 1975. To date Nola has toured her work to 69 countries.

As a teacher, she has lead mime and clowning workshops worldwide. As a director she has taken on Lorca, Ibsen, Strindberg, Shakespeare, Dumas and Bram Stoker, subverting serious works into Clown comedies.

Workshops



VAMOS THEATRE Full Mask Masterclass

Sat 3 & Sun 4 Feb 11am - 4pm Shoreditch Town Hall £135 (£120 concessions) Minimum age: 18+

Book now >

This Vamos Theatre workshop is for everyone, especially actors, performers and theatre practitioners.

This creative, high energy and inspiring masterclass gives participants a thorough grounding in full mask technique. Through exercises and shared exploration, the masterclass introduces mask characterisation, mask physicality, and techniques such as clocking, stillness and isolation, helping to build confidence and understanding of mask performance. More advanced full mask skills and a deeper understanding of the form will also be covered, including devising - both individually and as a mask ensemble.

This 2-day workshop is led by Honor Hoskins, Creative Producer at Vamos Theatre, which strives to increase the pool of available mask talent in the UK and often finds new performers for its productions through these masterclasses.

Vamos' show *Boy on the Roof* plays at Shoreditch Town Hall Thu 1 - Sun 4 Feb

vamostheatre.co.uk >



LIZ WALKER / CURIOUS SCHOOL OF PUPPETRY Animate, Manipulate, Play

Sat 3 & Sun 4 Feb 10am - 5pm LAMDA London Academy of Music & Dramatic Art

£175 (£150 concessions) Minimum age: 18+

Book now >

For the general public and performers who are interested in developing puppetry skills and technique.

This 2-day workshop will be visually based, mostly using simple 'bunraku', table-top type puppets. We will explore the bringing to life of form and the animation of figures through breathing, movement, focus and character, as well as the different roles of the puppeteer and their relationship to the puppet, for example present or not present.

Participants will experience working together to operate puppets and the complicity which that brings to a piece. The workshop will be taught through simple, guided exercises and improvisations and also use texts to explore, interpret and realise short pieces. The emphasis will be on developing puppetry skills and building confidence through technique, observation, experimentation and play.

The Curious School of Puppetry was founded in 2015 by Sarah Wright to provide an artist-led training programme for adults seeking to expand their professional work and creative practice with the art of puppetry. This workshop will be led by Liz Walker, artistic director of Invisible Thread Theatre of Animation, one of the two companies that formed following the split of renowned puppet company, Faulty Optic.

A 4-week puppetry season plays at the Barbican Pit Theatre 23 Jan – 17 Feb

curiouspuppetry.com >



GECKO THEATRE Devising Physical Theatre

Sat 10 & Sun 11 Feb 10am - 5pm LAMDA London Academy of Music & Dramatic Art

£175 (£150 concessions) Minimum age: 18+

Book now >

Suitable for students of theatre, drama, dance, movement, choreography, multidisciplinary arts or those who have graduated within the last three years interested in deepening their devising knowledge and experience.

Join internationally acclaimed physical theatre company Gecko for a special weekend residency to dive into their unique, visceral and poetic style and explore how they devise and create movement and tell stories.

Led by Gecko's highly experienced devising performers, our Residencies are a practical and engaging exploration of the processes and performance techniques we use when creating a show. They are the perfect opportunity to experience first-hand the tools used by the company to devise and create our productions.

Through preparation, ensemble building, serious play, simple beginnings and highly physical, dynamic tasks and activities, we focus on methods for creating movement for performance. We delve into the use of breath and language to express, and open doors to accessing emotional spaces safely. Participants will be nurtured and challenged in their artistic decisionmaking, and will move, have fun, express, and connect with themselves and others through creative discovery.

We are excited to work with open hearted, curious, creative and collaborative individuals. Gecko is committed to diversity, inclusion and equality within the arts and welcomes participants from all backgrounds.

Gecko's show Kin plays at the National Theatre Fri 12 – Sat 27 Jan

geckotheatre.com >



DIDI HOPKINS Carry On Commedia

Sat 17 & Sun 18 Feb 10am - 5pm LAMDA London Academy of Music & Dramatic Art

£175 (£150 concessions) Minimum age: 18+

Book now >

For actors, directors, performers, musicians, theatre makers and teachers - no previous commedia experience required

A 2-day deep dive into the world of Commedia to play with the tradition of La Commedia dell'Arte - the Art of being a Professional Actor - and see how it nourishes contemporary theatre making and performance. Masks, characters, movement, improvisation, the grammar of theatre and space, the dynamic of the audience, the roots of physical storytelling ... all essential foundations of an oral tradition that has evolved across centuries - and for anyone who has ever wanted a tour of the world of Commedia.

Didi Hopkins is a director and movement director, and with Ninian Kinnier-Wilson, devised a simple way of capturing and teaching Commedia which she does internationally and in the UK. Work includes Commedia consultant with Richard Bean on One Man, Two Guvnors, movement director for Selina Cadell's restoration shows at the RSC, and most recently working with Eddie Izzard as movement director on Great Expectations (New York, Garrick, 2023) and Hamlet (New York, 2024)

didi-hopkins.com >

MIMELONDON supported events jan-feb 2024 NATIONAL THEATRE JAN BARBICAN SADLER'S WELLS PEACOCK SHOREDITCH TOWN HALL LAMDA Mon 8 Tue 9 WORKSHOPS Wed 10 Thu 11 THEATRE RE Fri 12 The Art of Details Sat 13 Shoreditch Sun 14 Town Hall 8 - 12 Jan Mon 15 Tue 16 Wed 17 **GECKO NOLA RAE** Thu 18 KIN Let Your Body Do 12 - 27 JAN Fri 19 The Talking NATIONAL Sat 20 LAMDA THEATRE **Sun 21** 27 - 28 Jan Mon 22 Tue 23 LES LIZ WALKER / Wed 24 **ANTLIACLASTES** AD INFINITUM LAST RITES 24 - 27 JAN SHOREDITCH TOWN HALL **AMBERGRIS CURIOUS SCHOOL** Thu 25 23 - 27 JAN OF PUPPETRY Fri 26 **BARBICAN PIT** Animate. Sat 27 Manipulate, Play Sun 28 LAMDA Mon 29 3 - 4 Feb Tue 30 STEREOPTIK Wed 31 OCKHAM'S ANTECHAMBER Thu 1 Feb **VAMOS THEATRE** RAZOR TESS 30 JAN - 3 FEB VAMOS THEATRE 31 JAN - 3 FEB **BOY ON THE ROOF** Fri 2 Full Mask **BARBICAN PIT** 1 - 4 FEB SHOREDITCH TOWN HALL **PEACOCK** Masterclass Sat 3 Shoreditch Sun 4 Town Hall Mon 5 3 - 4 Feb Tue 6 **EL PATIO TEATRO** Wed 7 INSIDES Thu 8 6 - 10 FEB **GECKO** Fri 9 **BARBICAN PIT Devising Physical** Sat 10 Theatre **Sun 11** LAMDA Mon 12 10 - 11 Feb Tue 13 SOLTANOFF/ Wed 14 WENDT DIDI HOPKINS THIS & THAT Thu 15 Carry on 13 - 17 FEB Fri 16 **BARBICAN PIT** Commedia **Sat 17** LAMDA **Sun 18** 17 - 18 Feb Mon 19

photo: Gecko KIN