

AF

ADELAIDE
FESTIVAL

1-17 MARCH 2019



Image: Rahi Rezvani

15-17 March / Festival Theatre

Duration 1hr 45mins, including interval

DANCE / ENGLAND & ISRAEL

Grand Finale

Hofesh Shechter Company
Directed and choreographed
by Hofesh Shechter

Australian Premiere / Australian Exclusive

adelaidefestival.com.au





Image: Rahi Rezvani

HOFESH SHECHTER

Israeli-born, London-based, 43-year-old Shechter is a choreographer, dancer and composer best known as founder and artistic director of the Hofesh Shechter Company. He shook the contemporary dance world in 2007, when as a relative unknown, his work *In your rooms* was hailed as one of the most important new works of the millennium.

He has choreographed for theatre, television and opera, notably at the Metropolitan Opera, New York, for Nico Mulhy's *Two Boys*, the Royal Court on *Motortown* and *The Arsonists*, the National Theatre on *Saint Joan* and for the Channel 4 series *Skins*.

Shechter was nominated for the Tony Award for Best Choreography in 2016 for his work on Bartlett Sher's revival of *Fiddler on the Roof*. Since 2016, he has been named as one of *The Stage's* 100 most influential people in theatre. He is an Associate Artist of Sadler's Wells.

Grand Finale is the first of his full-length works to be presented in Adelaide; a short piece was however included in the *Triple Bill* performed by Cedar Lake at the 2015 Adelaide Festival.

THE COMPANY

A boundary-breaking, diverse tribe of international dancers based in the UK but playing on major stages throughout the world, the Hofesh Shechter Company celebrates and inspires the freedom of the human spirit.

The company has built its body of work in what is virtually a new genre – part dance, part gig, part theatre. Its kinetic and gestural 'language' is arresting and powerful. Internationally renowned, based in the UK, Hofesh Shechter Company is Resident Company at Brighton Dome.

TOM SCUTT Set & Costume Designer

A graduate from the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama (2006), Tom regularly designs for London's major theatres including National Theatre, Royal Court, Almeida and Donmar. On Broadway, Tom has designed *Constellations*, *King Charles III* and *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*. He also works across live music (Christine and the Queens, Sam Smith, MTV VMAs), opera, dance and exhibitions (Frida Kahlo: *Making Her Self Up* - V&A Museum). Tom is an Honorary Fellow of the RWCMD, Associate Artist of the Donmar and resident at Somerset House Studios.

Recent design credits include: *Berberian Sound Studio* (as Co-Designer), *Belleville* (Donmar); *Summer and Smoke* (Almeida & Duke of York's); *Jesus Christ Superstar* (& Lyric Opera, Chicago/Barbican), *Little Shop of Horrors* (Regent's Park Open Air Theatre); *Julie* (National). Credits as Director: *Berberian Sound Studio* (Donmar).

TOM VISSER

Lighting
Designer

Irish lighting designer Tom Visser joined Shechter's team for *Grand Finale* for their first creative collaboration.

Tom was born to a theatrical family. He began his career in musical theatre and later turned to contemporary dance as a member of Nederlands Dans Theater. He began his career as a lighting designer in the mid-2000s and has since worked extensively as a designer for dance, working with companies including Nederlands Dans Theater, Royal Swedish Ballet, Compañía Nacional de Danza, Norwegian National Ballet, Ballet Vlaanderen, Sydney Dance Company, Göteborg Ballet, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo and Balé da Cidade de São Paulo.

Other work includes Crystal Pite's creation, *Flight Pattern*, for the Royal Ballet season 16/17, as well as work with other choreographers including Alexander Ekman, Johan Inger and Joeri Dubbe.

YARON ENGLER

Music
Collaborator

Yaron Engler is a drummer, speaker and educator. He has been involved in artistic and educational projects across Europe, USA, Asia and Australia and was a featured speaker at TEDxJaffa. He is a long-time collaborator with Hofesh and played a leading role in the creation of some of the company's major productions and tours around the world. He was involved in the creation and tours of Akram Khan's piece *Until The Lions* (2016).

Yaron composed the music for the 2016 Open Theatre Production of Shakespeare's play *Henry V* and the opening piece of the 2014 *Walled City Tattoo* in Derry. He is the founder of UpBeat where he uses music, drums and rhythms as tools to help organisations create long lasting transformation in the areas of Leadership, Teamwork and Communication. Yaron is a Summa Cum Laude graduate of Berklee College of Music and holds a certificate in Body Mind Healing.

NELL CATCHPOLE

Music
Collaborator

Nell studied classical violin and holds an MA in Social Anthropology. She specialises in exploring and creating new work and processes across art forms. In 1995, she co-founded music theatre company *The Gogmagogs* with theatre director Lucy Bailey, and they have toured extensively worldwide. Nell has since composed music for several of Lucy's theatre productions, and worked as a creative partner and musical director with choreographer Hofesh Shechter since 2007.

In 2015, she co-composed the music for *Untouchable* with Hofesh, a new piece commissioned by the Royal Ballet and Orchestra of the Royal Opera House. She has worked extensively with Brian Eno, arranging and recording strings on his solo albums as well as with John Cale and U2.

What you are about to experience

The curtain rises to a sense of bleakly elegiac beauty as a quintet of classical musicians play in the shadow of a huge black slab... a tombstone perhaps, for a dying world. Ten dancers, a scattering of survivors, hands raised in pleading or surrender, emerge from the darkness. What follows may be a flashback to a preceding disaster. As the sextet play Franz Lehár and Tchaikovsky against the thrash and howl of Shechter's own recorded electronic score, they look like the band of the Titanic, heroically making music as the ship goes down. Threat and violence start to invade the stage. Mid-movement the dancers' mouths gape open in silent screams; bodies fall lifeless to the floor to be dragged across the stage or propped up, awkwardly, by their partners. Then the stage falls still and the dancers quietly sing together...

HOFESH SHECHTER...

on CHAOS and ORDER

'...observing the news, there's this sense that things get out of control and people get panicked or excited. Everything collapses but it's almost like a celebration. It's a chaotic state of being, it's an apocalypse, and yet there is something amusing about it. Perhaps from an optimistic point of view, it's part of the cycle of life and evolution. Things collapse, and then we build them up again...'

on HUMAN NATURE

'Everybody's an observer these days. None of us feel personally responsible, even though all of us are equally responsible... It's a funny place we're in.'

on THE TITLE, GRAND FINALE

'I like that it's clashing with what is essentially quite a dark work. It's a title I've wanted to use for a few years and I thought I had better use it while I was still young. To me, it's very funny!'

on THE CREATIVE PROCESS

'The idea was to create a setting that is a solid, hard world and yet everything is flexible, everything is nothing... I was craving to come back to live music because of that urgency it creates in performance, and I didn't want to do something I had done before. So I imagined the musicians keeping the human flame alive. I explained it (to Designer Tom Visser) and he said, *Oh, like the Titanic* – and then we dressed them in that way. Regardless of what happens around them they keep on going, they don't panic. They just keep the love together, and the harmony.

...I wanted to go back into something I had abandoned for a few years, which was dealing with the actual skilfulness of choreography, of actually moving bodies on stage... We started in a very experimental manner, trying to develop the material... a lot of things that actually happen on stage were discovered in the studio... the idea of waltzing dead bodies; we were just playing and I liked something about the bluntness and the humour and the emotion of it.

Creation is something that happens in the time you are in; it's an art of being in the moment.'

From an interview with Sarah Crompton

THE COMPANY

The company's diverse tribe of extraordinary international dancers come from 8 different countries. They are Robinson Cassarino, Chien-Ming Chang, Frédéric Despierre (rehearsal assistant 1), Rachel Fallon, Mickaël Frappat, Yeji Kim (rehearsal assistant 2), Kim Kohlmann, Erion Kruja, Attila Ronai, Hannah Shepherd.

Musicians: James Adams, Christopher Allan, Rebekah Allan, Sabio Janiak and Richard Phillips

PRODUCTION TEAM

Technical Manager MJ Holland

Re-Lighter Andrej Gubanov

Sound Technician Laura Hammond

Stage Manager Leon Smith

Assistant Stage Manager Emma Dymott

Tour Manager Linda Peterkopa

Choreography & Music Hofesh Shechter

Associate Artistic Director Bruno Guilloro

Set & Costume Design Tom Scutt assisted by Rosie Elnile

Lighting Design Tom Visser

Music Collaborators Nell Catchpole and Yaron Engler

Original Score Hofesh Shechter

Percussion on Soundtrack Hofesh Shechter
with Yaron Engler

Score transcribed by Christopher Allan

Additional music *Merry Widow* Waltz by Franz Lehar, as performed by the London Philharmonic Orchestra and by arrangement with Glocken Verlag Limited; *Andante Cantabile String Quartet No.1* and *Suite No. 4 in G Major* by Tchaikovsky and *Russian Tune* by Vladimir Zaldwich.

Produced by Hofesh Shechter Company and commissioned by Georgia Rosengarten. Commissioning Partners are Sadler's Wells, Théâtre de la Ville-Paris / La Villette-Paris and Brighton Dome and Festival. Co-commissioned by Colours International Dance Festival Stuttgart, Les Théâtres de la Ville de Luxembourg, Romaeuropa Festival, Theatre Royal Plymouth and Marche Teatro / Inteatro Festival together with Danse Danse Montréal, HELLERAU – European Center for the Arts Dresden in cooperation with Dresdner Musikfestspiele, Dansens Hus Oslo, Athens and Epidaurus Festival, HOME Manchester and Scène Nationale d'Albi. *Grand Finale* is generously supported by the International Music and Art Foundation.

Hofesh Shechter Company is supported using public funding through Arts Council England. Hofesh Shechter Company benefits from the support of BNP Paribas Foundation for the development of its projects. Hofesh Shechter is an Associate Artist of Sadler's Wells and Hofesh Shechter Company is Resident Company at Brighton Dome.



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