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Grand Finale

Hofesh Shechter Company
Choreography and music by Hofesh Shechter

BAM Howard Gilman Opera House
Nov 9—11 at 7:30pm

Running time: approx. one hour & 45 minutes, including intermission

Set and costume design by **Tom Scutt**
Lighting design by **Tom Visser**

Season Sponsor:

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Leadership support for dance at BAM provided by The Harkness Foundation for Dance.

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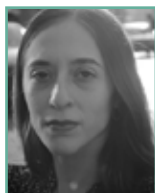
GRAND FINALE



CHIEN-MING CHANG



FRÉDÉRIC DESPIERRE



RACHEL FALLON



MICKAEL FRAPPAT



YEJI KIM



KIM KOHLMANN



ERION KRUJA



MEREL LAMMERS



ATTILA RONAI



DIOGO SOUSA



JAMES ADAMS



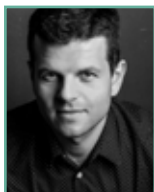
CHRIS ALLAN



REBEKAH ALLAN



MEHDI GANJAR



SABIO JANIAK



DESMOND NEYSMITH

GRAND FINALE

DANCERS

Chien-Ming Chang

Frédéric Despierre (rehearsal assistant)

Rachel Fallon

Mickael Frappat

Yeji Kim

Kim Kohlmann

Erion Kruja

Merel Lammers

Attila Ronai

Diogo Sousa

MUSICIANS

James Adams

Chris Allan (band leader)

Rebekah Allan

Mehdi Ganjvar

Sabio Janiak

Desmond Neysmith

CREATIVE TEAM

Original score by **Hofesh Shechter**

Music collaborators **Nell Catchpole** and **Yaron Engler**

Percussion on soundtrack **Hofesh Shechter** with **Yaron Engler**

Score transcribed by **Christopher Allan**

Associate artistic director **Bruno Guillore**

Design assistant (set and costumes) **Rosie Elnile**

ADDITIONAL MUSIC

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

ADDITIONAL CREDITS

Technical manager **Paul Froy**

Re-lighter **Andrej Gubanov**

Sound technician **Richard Young**

Stage manager **Leon Smith**

Assistant lighting designer **Richard Godin**

Assistant stage manager **Emma Dymott**

Tour manager **Linda Peterkopa**



GRAND FINALE

Internationally celebrated choreographer Hofesh Shechter's latest work, *Grand Finale*, is a spectacularly bold and ambitious new piece featuring 10 dancers and six musicians.

Grand Finale is at once comic, bleak, and beautiful, evoking a world at odds with itself, full of anarchic energy and violent comedy. Filtering this irrepressible spirit, Shechter creates a vision of a world in freefall: part gig, part dance, part theater, and wholly original.

Following its thrilling world premiere at La Villette-Paris, with Théâtre de la Ville, *Grand Finale* comes to BAM—its US premiere—as part of an extensive world tour.

Produced by Hofesh Shechter Company and commissioned by Georgia Rosengarten.

Commissioning partners are Sadler's Wells Theatre, 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, Dansens Hus Oslo, Athens and Epidaurus Festival, HOME Manchester and Scène Nationale d'Albi.

Grand Finale is generously supported by the International Music and Arts Foundation.



HOFESH SHECHTER (choreography and music)

Hofesh Shechter is recognized as one of the most exciting artists working today, renowned for composing atmospheric musical scores to complement the unique physicality of his movement. Following his choreographic debut, *Fragments*, in 2003, Shechter was commissioned by The Place Prize in 2004 to create *Cult*, winning the Audience Choice Award. This was followed in 2006 by *Uprising*, a work for seven men that has since been staged by companies around the world. In 2007, The Place, Southbank Centre, and Sadler's Wells Theatre commissioned Shechter to create *In your rooms*, which earned him the Critics' Circle Award for Best Choreography (Modern). In 2008, Shechter formed Hofesh Shechter Company, which has rapidly established an international reputation. Sadler's Wells subsequently commissioned him to create *Uprising/In your rooms: The Choreographer's Cut* (2009), which was performed at London's iconic Roundhouse. That same year Shechter was commissioned by Brighton Festival to create *The Art Of Not Looking Back* for six female dancers. His first full-length work, *Political Mother* (2012 Next Wave)—commissioned by venues in Paris, Lyon, Rome, London, and Barcelona—also had its premiere at Brighton Festival in 2010, and a year later he re-visited the work to create *Political Mother: The Choreographer's Cut*, which toured rock venues in Berlin, Montpellier, London, Paris, and Hong Kong. Shechter collaborated with Antony Gormley in 2012 to create *Survivor* for the Barbican Centre. His 2013 work *Sun* (2013 Next Wave) toured extensively after opening at Melbourne Festival. July 2015 saw the premiere of his trilogy, *barbarians*, at Berliner Festspiele. As part of #Hofest (2015), a four-week season showcasing a range of Shechter's work across four iconic London venues, he premiered Gluck's *Orphée et Eurydice*, co-directed with John Fulljames, at the Royal Opera House. *Grand Finale* is the latest full-length work in his canon, premiering at La Villette with Théâtre de la Ville in Paris on June 14th, 2017. He has also worked as a choreographer in theater, television, and opera notably at the Royal Court Theatre for *Motortown* by Simon Stephens (2006), *The Arsonists* (2007), and for the National Theatre's award-winning production of *Saint Joan* (2007).

For television Shechter choreographed the hit dance sequence "Maxxie's Dance" for the opening of the second series of Channel 4's popular drama *Skins*. In 2013, he created the choreography for Nico Muhly's opera *Two Boys* at the Metropolitan Opera, New York. He premiered a new work *Untouchable* (2015) for the Royal Ballet, at the Royal Opera House performed to a score co-composed by Shechter and long-time collaborator, Nell Catchpole. He choreographed Bartlett Sher's new version of *Fiddler on the Roof* (2015) on Broadway and he was nominated for a Tony Award. His creation, *Clowns*, for Nederlands Dans Theater, premiered in April 2016 and will be performed as part of a double bill program by his young company, Shechter II, throughout 2018. Hofesh Shechter was guest director of Brighton Festival in 2014 and is an associate artist of Sadler's Wells Theatre. Hofesh Shechter Company is a Resident Company at Brighton Dome.

TOM SCUTT (designer)

Tom Scutt was nominated for a Tony and an Outer Critics' Circle Best Costume Design Award for *King Charles III*. Scutt is also an associate artist for the Donmar Warehouse and designed the 2015 and 2016 MTV Video Music Awards. Theater productions include *King Charles III* (Almeida/West End/Broadway); *Constellations* (Royal Court/West End/Mannhattan Theater Club); *The Deep Blue Sea*, *Medea*, *I3* (National); *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Regent's Park Open Air Theatre); *Elegy*, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* (also Broadway), *The Weir* (Donmar); *A Number* (Nuffield/Young Vic); *Mr. Burns*, *King Lear*, *Through a Glass Darkly* (Almeida); *East Is East* (Trafalgar Studios/UK Tour); *Hope*, *The Ritual Slaughter of Gorge Mastromas*, *No Quarter*, *Remembrance Day* (Royal Court); *Absent Friends* (West End); *South Downs/The Browning Version* (Chichester/West End); *The Life of Galileo*, *The Merchant of Venice* (also Almeida); *Romeo and Juliet* (RSC); Edward Gant's *Amazing Feats of Loneliness*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Headlong); *On Off* (Aarhus Teater Denmark); and *The Lion*, *The Witch and The Wardrobe* (Kensington Gardens). Opera productions include *Wozzeck* (English National Opera); *How the Whale Became* (ROH); *The Flying Dutchman* (Scottish Opera); and *Rigoletto* (OHP). In 2007, Scutt received the Linbury

Biennial Prize for Stage Design and the Jocelyn Herbert Award for his work with Headlong Theatre. In 2013, he received the Whatsonstage Award for Best Set Designer for *Constellations* and *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*.

TOM VISSER (lighting designer)

Irish lighting designer Tom Visser joins Shechter's team for *Grand Finale* for their first creative collaboration. Recent work includes Crystal Pite's new creation, *Flight Pattern*, for the Royal Ballet 2016/17 season. His work with other choreographers includes for Alexander Ekman, Johan Inger, and Joeri Dubbe. Visser was born to a theatrical family. He began his career in musical theater 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.

YARON ENGLER (music collaborator)

Yaron Engler is a musician, men's coach, and a speaker. After graduating summa cum laude from Berklee College of Music, Engler became involved in the creation and production of artistic and educational projects across the US, UK, Spain, and Israel. He is a longtime collaborator with Shechter and has played a leading role in producing many of his major productions. He was also involved in the creation of Akram Khan's piece *Until the Lions* and he is currently touring with the company. In recent years Engler has expanded his work beyond music. He is now coaching men in the areas of life purpose and relationships using drumming as part of his teaching. He offers regular workshops in London and the programs Men's Circle and Me-You-U.S. Fluent in three languages, he has delivered workshops, masterclasses and talks in the US, UK, Spain, Israel, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, and Australia. He was a featured speaker at TEDx Jaffa in 2012.

NELL CATCHPOLE (music collaborator)

Nell Catchpole studied classical violin and holds an MA in social anthropology. She specializes in exploring and creating new work and processes across art forms. In 1995, she co-founded music theater company The Gogmagogs with theater director Lucy Bailey; the group has toured extensively worldwide. Catchpole has since composed music for several of Bailey's theater productions. Catchpole has worked as a creative partner and musical director with choreographer Hofesh Shechter since 2007. In 2015, she co-composed the music for *Untouchable* with Shechter, 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. Other recording credits include string arrangements for Mumford and Sons on its first two albums. In 2012, she composed/devised the music for the live band in Kate Tempest's *Brand New Ancients*, which won a Herald Angel at the 2013 Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Catchpole is course leader on the Masters in Leadership Programme at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

DANCERS

CHIEN MING CHANG, of Taiwan, studied at Taipei National University of the Arts. He danced with Cloud Gate 2 in Taiwan and Bern Ballet (Stadttheater Bern, Switzerland) under the direction of Cathy Marston. He joined the company in 2008. With Hofesh Shechter Company, he has performed in *Uprising*, *In your rooms*, *Political Mother*, *In Good Company*, *Political Mother: The Choreographer's Cut*, *Survivor*, *Sun*, *Orphée et Eurydice* (Royal Opera House), and *barbarians*.

FREDERIC DESPIERRE (rehearsal assistant), of France, trained at C.N.S.M. in Paris. After three years studying classical ballet, he began contemporary dance. During his training, Despierre worked with various artists such as André Lafonta, Christine Gérard, Yutaka Takei, and Cristiana Morganti (Pina Bausch). In 2011 he performed in Yuval Pick's *The Him* with the Junior Ballet and worked on Angelin Preljocaj's *Noces*. He joined Hofesh Shechter Company





as an apprentice in 2011 and became full-time in 2012, performing in *Uprising, In your rooms, Political Mother, Political Mother: The Choreographer's Cut, In Good Company, Sun, Orphée et Eurydice* (Royal Opera House), and *barbarians*.

RACHEL FALLON, from the US, studied with Lines Ballet Training Program and Manhattan Youth Ballet. *Grand Finale* is Fallon's first production with Hofesh Shechter Company. Other work includes Tanz Luzerner Theater, Idan Sharabi and Dancers, and Marina Mascarelli.

MICKAËL FRAPPAT, from France, trained at Espedanse Montpellier under the direction of Anne-Marie Porras. *Grand Finale* is Frappat's first production with Hofesh Shechter Company. Other work includes Centre Choréographique National de Nantes, directed by Claude Brumachon, and he has been a member of the companies of Florence Bernad, Héléne Cathala, and Laurence Wagner.

YEJI KIM is from Korea and studied at the Korea National University of Arts and the London Contemporary Dance School. Kim performed with K-Arts Dance Company in New York (2008) and San Francisco (2009). She also performed in 2009 Critic's Choice, Korean Young Artists, and received the Golden Prize in the 38th Dong-A Dance Competition in Korea. Kim joined Hofesh Shechter Company as an apprentice in 2009 and became full-time in 2010, and has performed in *In your rooms, The Art of Not Looking Back, Political Mother, Political Mother: The Choreographer's Cut, In Good Company, Sun, Orphée et Eurydice* (Royal Opera House), and *barbarians*.

KIM KOHLMANN, from Amsterdam, trained at Codarts, the Rotterdam dance academy, graduating in 2008 (including a semester at SUNY Purchase, NY). She interned with Dansgroep Amsterdam, performing pieces by Itzik Galili, Krisztina de Chatel, and Mark Baldwin, and in 2009 joined Noord Nederlandse Dans under the artistic direction of Stephen Shropshire, whose work she performed in addition to that of Emanuel Gat, Andrea Miller, Roy Assaf, and Edan Gorlicki. She joined Hofesh Shechter Company in 2012, performing in

The Art of Not Looking Back, Political Mother, Political Mother: The Choreographer's Cut, Sun, Orphée et Eurydice (Royal Opera House), and *barbarians*.

ERION KRUJA hails from Tirana, Albania. He trained at Pioneer's House of Tirana, the National Ballet School of Albania, graduating in 2001. Prior to joining Hofesh Shechter Company, he performed classical ballet with the National Theater of Albania, and in *Go* and *Emballé Moi* with Compagnie Linga Lausanne under the direction of Marco Cantalupo and Kartazyna Gdaniec. From 2006 to 2008 he worked with Theater Chemnitz (Ballet Chemnitz), and from 2008 to 2011 Bern Ballet (Stadtheater Bern). He joined Hofesh Shechter Company in June 2011, performing in *Uprising, In your rooms, Political Mother, Political Mother: The Choreographer's Cut, In Good Company, Sun, Orphée et Eurydice* (Royal Opera House), and *barbarians*.

MEREL LAMMERS, from Holland, studied at the Hogeschool voor de Kunsten, Amsterdam. She completed an internship with Scapino Ballet Rotterdam and Conny Janssen Danst (the Netherlands). After graduating, Lammers worked with Ronald Wintjens at Project Sally, Joost Vrouwenraets at Gotra Ballet, Conny Janssen at Conny Janssen Danst, Jan Martens at Dansateliers, and Julian Barnett at Dansateliers, all in the Netherlands. She joined Hofesh Shechter Company as an apprentice in September 2012 and became full-time in 2013, where she has danced in *The Art of Not Looking Back, Political Mother, Political Mother: The Choreographer's Cut, Sun, Orphée et Eurydice* (Royal Opera House), and *barbarians*.

ATTILA RONAI is from Budapest, Hungary and trained at the Hungarian Dance Academy, Budapest. He joined Hofesh Shechter Company as an apprentice in May 2013 and became a full-time dancer in 2014. For Hofesh Shechter Company, works include *Sun, Orphée et Eurydice* (Royal Opera House), and *barbarians*.

DIOGO SOUSA is from Lisbon, Portugal and studied at Escola de Dança do Conservatório Nacional, Lisbon and Ballet Junior de Genève, Geneva. He joined Hofesh Shechter Company as

an apprentice in May 2013, and has danced in *Political Mother: The Choreographer's Cut*, *Sun, Orphée et Eurydice* (Royal Opera House), and *barbarians*.

MUSICIANS

JAMES ADAMS, from the UK, trained at Guildhall School of Music and Drama. For Hofesh Shechter Company, works include *Political Mother*, *Political Mother: The Choreographer's Cut*, and *Survivor*. Adams set up Way Out recording studios and music education center in Sierra Leone, with funding from the Joe Strummer Foundation. He has performed with various ensembles including Tuareg band Agna at the Ali Farka Toure International Festival in Mali. Adams composed for an Africa-wide UN convention held in Mauritius (2016). His latest project, *ROAMEO*, brings his love of technology and music together to provide experiential live entertainment to the events industry.

CHRISTOPHER ALLAN, from Aberdeen, Scotland, trained at Guildhall School of Music and Drama. For Hofesh Shechter Company, works include *In your rooms*, *Political Mother*, *Political Mother: The Choreographer's Cut*, *Survivor*. He is a member of the acclaimed group The Gogmagogs, was solo cellist with the Mike Westbrooke company, and has collaborated with numerous creators, including John Tavener, Django Bates, Stephen Warbeck, Errollyn Wallen, and Paul Clark. His latest project is *Here All Night*, a music in Beckett collaboration with Gare St. Lazaire Ireland. He plays with a number of chamber groups, chamber orchestras, and contemporary music groups. Allan plays a William Forster cello built in 1800.

REBEKAH ALLAN is from Aberdeen, Scotland. She trained at Trinity College of Music; The Royal Conservatory, Den Haag. For Hofesh Shechter Company, she has performed in *In your rooms*, *Political Mother: The Choreographer's Cut*, and *Survivor*. Allan toured Brazil with the British

Council-sponsored Britton-Carvalho Ensemble. She has freelanced with Orchestra of the Swan, Rambert Dance Company, English Touring Opera, National Theatre, Clod Ensemble, and the Heritage Orchestra. She regularly guest leads the Chameleon Arts Orchestra. Recent sessions include for Rag'n'Bone Man (BBC Radio 1 Live Lounge), Emeli Sandé, Rebecca Ferguson, and Marina and the Diamonds, as well as numerous film scores. She performed in the live band in Kate Tempest's *Brand New Ancients* (2012). Her concerto performances have included Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante* and the Brahms, Beethoven, and Mendelssohn Violin Concertos.

MEHDI GANJVAR is from Iran, and trained at Guildhall School of Music and Drama. For Hofesh Shechter Company, works include *Survivor*. Ganjvar has been learning and playing hand drums since he was eight years old. After moving to the UK in 2000, he has worked at the Sage Gateshead and within the community music training sector. He is excited to be touring with Hofesh Shechter Company, and looks forward to continue learning through creative and cutting edge work.

SABIO JANIAK is from Poland, and trained at London Centre of Contemporary Music. *Grand Finale* is Janiak's first production with the company. He has more than 20 years of experience as a composer and session multiinstrumentalist. His experience of working together with world famous artists has led him to develop the unique ability of being able to play more than 100 instruments.

DESMOND NEYSMITH is from London. For Hofesh Shechter Company, works include *Political Mother: The Choreographer's Cut* and *Survivor*. He has been working with Shechter since 2010 and relishes the opportunity to experience different genres of expression. He plays regularly with the orchestra of the Royal Opera House, the Philharmonia, and is principal cellist of Chineke! Orchestra.

"Many times people want to know what I meant in a particular dance piece," say Hofesh Shechter, thoughtfully. "And I think it doesn't really matter. What matters is what happens on stage, then if something happens to the audience when they watch it. Or not."

This is an unexpected observation from a choreographer whose works from *Cult*, to the mighty *Political Mother*, to *barbarians*, seem to burn with meaning and the need to be understood. But it springs from his sense that people can be put off dance if they feel they don't grasp what is unfolding in front of them and are failing a type of test. "When someone sits and watches the performance, it is about what is happening to them in their head, how they feel. It doesn't matter that they get it right in some way."

Having said all that, it would be impossible to miss the fact that *Grand Finale* reflects the uncertainty and confusion of the troubled times we are living in. He explains: "I was curious observing the news that 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."

Grand Finale is a work that both looks back and breaks new ground, he explains. The new ground involves his decision to work with a designer for the first time, and with a group of musicians playing classical compositions rather than his own soundtrack.

The set originated from a dream he had, of a city made out of Japanese paper. "Tom looked at it and said 'OK, we're not going to do that, but it is a good starting point.'" Scutt's final designs, of structures moved by the dancers, that seem to float across the stage, allow Shechter to shape the space, not only with light, but physically. The effects generated, in turn, inspired the dance that unfolds within them. "The idea was to create a setting that is a solid, hard world and yet everything is flexible, everything is nothing."

In the same way, the band became integral to the action and to the themes. "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."

Simultaneously, Shechter returned to basics in the actual creation of the piece. He worked with his dancers in a studio in a remote village in Italy, far from the madding crowd. The concentration and peace was "amazing," he says and it triggered a burst of ideas. "I felt 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. For me the group working together in contact was a big thing that hadn't happened before in my work. And a lot of things that actually happen on stage were discovered in the studio. For example, I didn't come in with 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."

For a choreographer who has been acclaimed as the future of the dance since the moment his piece *Cult* won the audience award at the Place Prize in 2004, the need to have an ongoing sense of discovery is acute. Both the outside world and his inner desire to make new work, constantly push him onward. But the journey is never simple.

"Looking at the future of your creation is like looking at the ocean in the night," he explains. "You know it is there, and you might be able to swim as far as you can, you might not, you just don't know. "So really, at the moment of *Cult* I couldn't know that I was going to make a piece like *Grand Finale*. Creation is something that happens in the time you are in; it's an art of being in the moment."

Sarah Crompton is a writer and broadcaster

Extract from an article by Sarah Crompton, The Sunday Times, London, September 10, 2017



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