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# Battlefield

BAM Harvey Theater

Sep 28—30, Oct 1, 4—9 at 7:30pm

Oct 1, 8 & 9 at 2pm; Oct 2 at 3pm

Running time: approx. one hour & 10 minutes, no intermission

C.I.C.T.—Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord  
Based on *The Mahabharata* and the play  
written by Jean-Claude Carrière  
Adapted and directed by Peter Brook  
and Marie-Hélène Estienne

Music by **Toshi Tsuchitori**

Costume design by **Oria Puppo**

Lighting design by **Philippe Vialatte**

With

**Carole Karemera**

**Jared McNeill**

**Ery Nzaramba**

**Sean O'Callaghan**

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CAROLE KAREMERA



JARED MCNEILL



ERY NZARAMBA



SEAN O'CALLAGHAN



TOSHI TSUCHITORI

Stage manager **Thomas Becelewski**  
American Stage Manager **R. Michael Blanco**

The Actors are appearing with the permission of Actors' Equity Association.  
The American Stage Manager is a member of Actors' Equity Association.



COPRODUCTION

The Grotowski Institute; PARCO Co. Ltd / Tokyo; Les Théâtres de la Ville de Luxembourg;  
Young Vic Theatre / London; Singapore Repertory Theatre; Le Théâtre de Liège; C.I.R.T.;  
Attiki Cultural Society / Athens; Cercle des partenaires des Bouffes du Nord

### DIRECTORS' STATEMENT

The *Mahabharata* is not simply a book, nor a great series of books, it is an immense canvas covering all the aspects of human existence. In it we find all the questions of our lives, in a way that is at once contemporary and urgent.

Over many thousands of years the *Mahabharata* shows us, in an always-unexpected way, how to open our eyes to what reality demands.

The *Mahabharata* speaks of a great war of extermination, which tears apart the Bharata family. On one side there are five brothers, the Pandavas, and on the other side their cousins, the Kauravas, the 100 sons of the blind King Dritarashtra. Both sides use terrible weapons of destruction. At the end the Pandavas win. Millions of dead bodies lie on the ground. And now the eldest of the Pandavas—Yudishtira—is compelled to become King.

The victory has the bitter taste of defeat. Both Yudishtira and Dritarashtra, the old King, are in deep distress and remorse, questioning their past actions, trying to unravel their own responsibility for the disaster.

How, having to live with this terrible massacre, having lost their sons, their families, their allies, will the new King and the old one find an inner peace?

The richness of the language of this timeless epic, and its always astonishing stories, allow us to bring to the stage this situation, which, belonging to the past, reflects at the same time the harsh conflicts of today.

—Peter Brook & Marie-Hélène Estienne





## INTERVIEW EXCERPTS, PETER BROOK

Thirty years after his legendary nine-hour version of the *Mahabharata*, Peter Brook has returned to this sacred poem of India “not to make a revival or something nostalgic, but on the contrary, to create, in the spirit of today, a very essential, very intense piece that speaks about our concerns.”

“If we have decided to come back to this work now, it is because there was the need to find something relevant for us today. The Indians say that everything is contained in the *Mahabharata* and if it is not in the *Mahabharata*, then it does not exist. This great epic from thousands of years ago has grown over the years, assimilating the most important cosmic and metaphysical ideas alongside the simplest things from everyday life. The poem describes the war that tears apart a family (the Bharatas) with, on one side five brothers—the Pandavas, and on the other side their cousins—the Kauravas, the 100 sons of the blind king Dritarashtra. In the end, the Pandavas win, but the poem mentions ‘ten million dead bodies,’ an extraordinary figure for that

time. It is a terrifying description—it could be Hiroshima or Syria today. We wanted to speak about what happens after the battle. How will the old blind king, who has lost all his sons and all his allies, be able to cope and assume their responsibility with his victorious nephew? On both sides, the leaders go through a moment of profound questioning: the ones who won say ‘victory is a defeat’ and the ones who lost admit that ‘they could have prevented that war.’ In the *Mahabharata* they at least have the strength to ask these questions. Our real audience is Obama and his successor, Hollande and his successor, Putin, and all the presidents. The question is how do they see their opponents in this day and age?

“When one watches the news one is angry, disgusted, furious. But in the theater one can live through all that and leave more confident, braver, believing that one can face up to life.

“For me, theater is the possibility to live, for an hour or two, in a space of concentration with the audience, a shared experience so that each may leave nourished by his own thoughts.”

**PETER BROOK**

Peter Brook was born in London in 1925. Throughout his career, he distinguished himself in various genres: theater, opera, cinema, and writing. He directed his first play there in 1943. He then went on to direct over 70 productions in London, Paris, and New York. His work with the Royal Shakespeare Company includes *Love's Labour's Lost* (1946), *Measure for Measure* (1950), *Titus Andronicus* (1955), *King Lear* (1962), *Marat/Sade* (1964), *US* (1966), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1970), and *Antony and Cleopatra* (1978). In 1971, he founded with Micheline Rozan the International Centre for Theatre Research in Paris and in 1974, opened its permanent base in the Bouffes du Nord Théâtre. There, he directed *Timon of Athens*, *The Iks*, *Ubu aux Bouffes*, *Conference of the Birds*, *L'Os*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *The Mahabharata*, *Woza Albert!*, *The Tempest*, *The Man Who*, *Qui est là*, *Happy Days*, *Je suis un Phénomène*, *Le Costume*, *The Tragedy of Hamlet*, *Far Away*, *La Mort de Krishna*, *Ta Main dans la Mienne*, *The Grand Inquisitor*, *Tierno Bokar*, *Sizwe Banzi*, *Fragments*, *Warum Warum*, *Love is My Sin*, *11 and 12*, *Une Flûte Enchantée* (opera), and recently *The Suit* (Le Costume, 2012), *The Valley of Astonishment* (2014)—many of these performed both in French and English. In opera, he directed *La Bohème*, *Boris Godounov*, *The Olympians*, *Salomé*, and *Le Nozze de Figaro* at Covent Garden; *Faust* and *Eugene Onegin* at Metropolitan Opera, New York; *La Tragédie de Carmen* and *Impressions of Pelleas* at Bouffes du Nord, Paris; and *Don Giovanni* for the Aix en Provence Festival. Peter Brook's autobiography, *Threads of Time*, was published in 1998 and joins other titles including *The Empty Space* (1968)—translated into over 15 languages, *The Shifting Point* (1987), *There Are No Secrets* (1993), *Evoking (and Forgetting) Shakespeare*

(1999), and *The Quality of Mercy* (2014). His films include *Moderato Cantabile* (1959), *Lord of the Flies* (1963), *Marat/Sade* (1967), *Tell Me Lies* (1967), *King Lear* (1969), *Meetings with Remarkable Men* (1976), *The Mahabharata* (1989), and *The Tragedy of Hamlet* (2002, TV). This marks Brooks' seventh production at BAM.

**MARIE-HÉLÈNE ESTIENNE**

In 1974, she worked with Peter Brook on the casting for *Timon of Athens*, and consequently joined the Centre International de Créations Théâtrales (CICT) for the creation of *Ubu aux Bouffes* in 1977. She was Peter Brook's assistant on *La tragédie de Carmen*, *The Mahabharata*, collaborated on the staging of *The Tempest*, *Impressions de Pelléas*, *Woza Albert!*, and *La tragédie d'Hamlet* (2000), and worked on the dramaturgy of *Qui est là*. With Peter Brook, she co-authored *L'homme qui* and *Je suis un phénomène* shown at the Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord. She wrote the French adaptation of the Can Themba's play *Le Costume*, and *Sizwe Bansi est mort*, by authors Athol Fugard, John Kani, and Winston Ntshona. In 2003 she wrote the French and English adaptations of *Le Grand inquisiteur—The Grand Inquisitor* based on Dostoyevsky's *Brothers Karamazov*. She was the author of *Tierno Bokar* in 2005, and of the English adaptation of *Eleven and Twelve* by Amadou Hampaté Ba in 2009. With Peter Brook, she co-directed *Fragments*, five short pieces by Beckett, and again with Peter Brook and composer Franck Krawczyk, she freely adapted Mozart and Schikaneder's *Die Zauberflöte* into *Une flûte enchantée*. She collaborated on the *The Suit* in 2012 (at BAM in 2013) and *The Valley of Astonishment* in 2013.

### **CAROLE KAREMERA** (performer)

Carole Karemera is an actress, musician, choreographer, and director from Rwanda with a degree in dramatic arts and jazz from the Royal Music Conservatory. She performed in different theater, dance, and cinema productions, internationally acclaimed by the public and critics alike. To name but a few: *Sometimes in April*, *Bogus Woman*, *If the wind moves the sand*, *Scratching the Innerfields*, *Rwanda 94*, *Jazz*, and more. In 2007 she founded Ishyo Arts Centre, the cultural hub of the town of Kigali, that offers residencies and professional coaching to local artists, and varied and innovative programs to the public. She directed several theater and music performances that toured many African and European countries: *My Little Hill*, *Kura*, *Umuvunyi*, *Mboka*, and others and co-produced the Kina Festival, Kigali Up music festival and Centre x Centre International Theater Festival. Karemera was successively the director of the Panafrican Dance Festival, Deputy Secretary General of Arterial Network, and is presently a member of the Rwandan Academy of Languages and Culture and of the National Institute of Rwandan Museums. Since 2014 she has been working on a multidisciplinary triptych on the theme of memory. She is also an activist engaged in the freedom of expression and of creation in Africa.

### **JARED MCNEILL** (performer)

Jared McNeill trained at Fordham University at Lincoln Center in New York City where, in 2008, he graduated with a degree in theater and visual arts. His first professional role was that year, in Chisa Hutchinson's *She Like Girls* at the Lark Theatre. McNeill played various roles in Peter Brook's *11 and 12* and recently played the role of Maphikela in *The Suit* (BAM, 2013). Since then, he has performed in August Wilson's *Fences* at the Geva Theater Center, and in various chapters of Tarell McCraney's *Brothers/Sisters Trilogy* at Pittsburgh's City Theater, as well as San Francisco's Marin Theater Company and American Conservatory Theater. Most recently, McNeill completed work as an understudy in

Roundabout Theater Company's production of Stephen Karam's *Sons of the Prophet*, as well as adopting the role of Desmond in Young Jean Lee's *The Shipment*, and performing in a recent New York production of Bertolt Brecht's *Life of Galileo*, during which he performed musical numbers on the trombone and harpsichord. Recently he has been on tour with *The Suit* directed by Peter Brook.

### **ERY NZARAMBA** (performer)

Ery Nzaramba trained as an actor at the Conservatoire Royal de Bruxelles in Belgium and at the Birmingham School of Acting in the UK. *Battlefield* is Nzaramba's second production with the Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord, following two world tours of *The Suit*, also directed by Peter Brook and Marie-Hélène Estienne. Nzaramba has twice been awarded a Grant for the Arts by Arts Council England in 2012 and 2015 to write his play *Dream of a Nation*. A public reading took place at the Theatre Royal Stratford East London in 2015. He wrote the one-man play *Split/Mixed* and wrote and directed the short films *To the Naked Eye* (Legacy Film Festival 2011) and *The Blues Lover* (Portobello Film Festival 2014). He is currently co-writing *Flora & Dambudzo* (working title), a feature film, based on the life and work of cult Zimbabwean author Dambudzo Marechera; Nzaramba stars as Dambudzo. His theater credits include: *The Suit* (Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord, world tour); *The Bacchae* and *Blood Wedding* (Royal & Derngate Theatre); *As You Like It* (Curve Theatre); *The Epic Adventure of Nhamo the Manyika Warrior* (Tricycle Theatre/Tiata Fahodzi); *Split/Mixed* (United Solo Theatre Festival in NY); *The Snow Queen* (Trestle Theatre/British Council, India tour); *The Jew of Malta* (Hall for Cornwall); and *The Three Musketeers* and *The Tempest* (Unicorn Theatre). His film and TV credits include: *The Gates of Vanity* (feature film, Future Focus Films); *The Bill* (television, ITV); radio credits include: 43:59: *Yara*, *The Torturers' Tales*, *Ball & Chains*, and *When I Lived in Peru* (radio, BBC Radio Drama).

### **SEAN O'CALLAGHAN** (performer)

O'Callaghan's family come from Cork, Ireland. He trained at RADA under Hugh Crutwell. He recently worked with Alexander Zeldin at London's National Theatre in *Beyond Caring*. He spent five years at the RSC with directors such as Terry Hands, Michael Bogdanov, Michael Attenborough, and Matthew Warchus, and also performed in productions of Shakespeare at the RSC. He appeared in new plays by David Edgar, Anne Devlin, and Nick Dear. O'Callaghan was in the first new play produced at the new Globe Theatre with *Augustine's Oak*, and Abi Morgan's new play *Tender* at the Hampstead Theatre. He is an associate artist with Howard Barker's theater company the Wrestling School and has worked with them over a 16-year period touring Europe and Australia. He spent the early part of his career working with Peter Cheeseman at the New Vic Theatre in Stoke-on-Trent where he continues to work and is now based. He has been in productions throughout the UK including Liverpool, Manchester, Belfast, Cardiff, Birmingham, Plymouth, and recently worked with director Rachel O'Riordan on Conor McPherson's *The Seafarer* and with John Dove in Edinburgh in Brian Friel's *Faith Healer*. He has won and has also been nominated for a number of theater awards including the *Irish Times* Theatre Awards and the Scottish Critics Awards. O'Callaghan has worked extensively in film and TV including *Maria Graham* directed by Valeria Sarmiento, *Bigga Than Ben* directed by Suzie Halewood, and won the Granada Film Festival Award for best actor. He recently finished a Canadian TV series called *X Company*.

### **TOSHI TSUCHITORI** (music)

Toshi Tsuchitori was born in the Kagawa prefecture of Japan in 1950 and began performing on Japanese traditional drums at an early age. Since the 1970s he has performed internationally with specialists in free improvisation such as Milford Graves, Steve Lacy, Derek Bailey, and others. He began working with Peter Brook's theater group in 1976, and has since created the music for productions including *Ubu*, *The Conference of the Birds*, *L'Os*, *The Mahabharata*, *The Tempest*, *The Tragedy of Hamlet, 11 and 12*, *Tierno Bokar*, and *The Valley of Astonishment*. He has studied traditional music from around the world and for more than a decade has been researching the earliest strata of Japanese music and presenting the results as musical performances. He has released a series of three recordings of prehistoric Japanese sounds entitled *Dotaku*, *Sanukaito*, and *Jomonko*. Recently he researched and played ancient music in a prehistoric painted cave of France. Tsuchitori has also collaborated with the traditional master musician Harue Momoyama since building a studio together in 1988, working both with local villagers and international artists. He has recorded many CDs and has written three books: an autobiography, *Spiral Arms*; a study of the music of prehistoric Japan, *The Sounds of Jomon*; and *The Sound of Painted Cave*, about the origins of music.







### **PHILIPPE VIALATTE** (lighting)

Philippe Vialatte started at the Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord in 1985 as a lighting operator on *The Mahabharata*, directed by Peter Brook. He assisted Jean Kalman for the lighting design of *Woza Albert* and *La Tempête*, directed by Brook. Since the creation of *The Man Who* in Paris in 1993, he has designed the lights for Brook's plays at Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord: *Qui est là, Je suis un phénomène, Le Costume, The Tragedy of Hamlet, Far Away, La mort de Krishna, Ta main dans la mienne, Tierno Bokar, Le Grand Inquisiteur, Sizwe Banzi est mort, Fragments, 11 and 12*, and recently *A Magic Flute, The Suit*, and *The Valley of Astonishment*. He travels with all these plays on tour and in each space redesigns and adapts the lights to each show.

### **ORIA PUPPO** (costumes)

Stage and costume designer Oria Puppo works in Buenos Aires and Paris. In Argentina, she has created sets and costumes for directors such as Diego Kogan (*Martha Stutz* by Javier Daulte), Rafael Spregelburd (*Modesty* by Rafael Spregelburd), Roberto Villanueva (*Queen of the Night* by Thomas Bernhard, *The Goldberg Variations* by George Tabori), Ciro Zorzoli (*State of Wrath* after Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*) and Alejandro Tantanian (*Travellers That Die* by D. Veronese, *Knives in Hens* by David Harrower, and *Los mansos* by Alejandro Tantanian after Dostoevsky's *The Idiot*). She also worked as technical director for the Buenos Aires International Festival from 1999 to 2007. Puppo has also participated in Alejandro Tantanian's production of *Romeo and Juliet*

by Shakespeare (Théâtre de Lucerne), Tiziano Manca's opera *La Gabbia* (Stuttgart Theater), and in *Amerika After Franz Kafka* and *The Threepenny Opera* by Bertolt Brecht (National Theatre of Mannheim). For Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord, she has worked as technical director in productions by Peter Brook and Marie-Hélène Estienne, *Tierno Bokar* from the novel by Amadou Ampathé Bâ, Mozart's *A Magic Flute* (co-created with Franck Krawczyk), and as costume co-designer for *The Suit* based on the novel by Can Themba. Recently, she designed decor for Handel's *Resurrection* directed by Lilo Baur at the Paris Opéra Atelier Lyrique and sets and costumes for Jean Genet's *Maids* directed by Ciro Zorzoli with Marilú Marini in Buenos-Aires.

### **R. MICHAEL BLANCO** (American stage manager)

Blanco has been the stage manager at BAM for Karole Armitage's *The Predator's Ball*; Jonathan Miller's *St. Matthew Passion* and *Così fan tutte*; *Playing Shakespeare USA* with John Barton; Sydney Theater Company's *White Devil* and *Hedda Gabler*; Donmar Warehouse's *Uncle Vanya/Twelfth Night*; the RSC's *Don Carlos, A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Hecuba*; Watermill/Propeller's *Merchant of Venice*; and Vesturport Theatre's *Metamorphosis*; *Faust: A Love Story*, The Young Vic's *A Doll's House*; Fugard Theatre's *A Human Being Died That Night*, Chichester Festival Theatre's *The Judas Kiss*, and Odéon-Théâtre de l'Europe's *Phaedra(s)*. At the Metropolitan Opera: Kirov Ballet, Bolshoi Ballet, and Robert Wilson's *Le Martyre de Saint Sebastien*.

