Waltz of the Hommelettes

**Key information**

Running time: 1 hour/no interval

Post-show talk: Thursday 17 Jan, free to same-day ticket holders

Digital freesheets

In an effort to be more sustainable, this digital programme is part of a trial we are conducting to discontinue printed freesheets.

'If you want your children to be intelligent, read them fairy tales. If you want them to be more intelligent, read them more fairy tales'

**Albert Einstein**

Welcome to the Barbican and the London International Mime Festival 2019. A highly-anticipated January fixture, this year we present four distinctive, visually arresting theatrical productions in the Theatre and The Pit and two silent movies with live musical accompaniment in our cinema. We are absolutely thrilled to see the award-winning Belgium company Peeping Tom return to our stage with *Father (Vader)*, the second part of their surreal family trilogy, and we welcome back Patrick Sims from France with his new company Les Antliaclastes performing the supernatural Grimm-inspired *Waltz of the Hommelettes*. Newcomers to the Barbican, the popular UK physical theatre company Gecko reprise their prescient hit show *The Wedding*, and Le Théâtre de L’Entrouvert, also from France, make their Barbican debut with *Anywhere* featuring an astonishing puppet made of ice.

Whichever event you’re here to see, we hope that you enjoy the highly physical and visual work which forms this year’s exciting and innovative festival.

**Toni Racklin, Head of Theatre**

Performers & Creative team

Performers: Josephine Biereye, Richard Penny, Patrick Sims

Director, design and puppet construction Patrick Sims

Decor Richard Penny

Masks, costumes, puppets Josephine Biereye

Sound creation Karine Dumont

Lighting design Sophie Barraud

Voiceover Margaret Biereye, David Johnston

Stage/production management Sophie Barraud

Management: Karinne Méraud

Loosely based on *The Elves* by the Brothers Grimm

*Waltz of the Hommelettes* was first performed in Sep 2016.

Presented by the Barbican in association with London International Mime Festival

Les Antliaclastes is supported by the DRAC Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes

This visit to London is supported by Institut français du Royaume Uni as part of its En Scène programme

About Les Antliaclastes

Les Antliaclastes is a puppet theatre company based in Maillet, France. Its director is Patrick Sims.

The company uses a unique blend of different puppetry techniques and styles, masks, machines, and original organic soundtracks, with references to classical, popular, hermetic and contemporary visual and performing arts, music, cinema and literature. *Waltz of the Hommelettes* is its fifth production to be staged at the London International Mime Festival (LIMF).

Patrick Sims (b.1975, Vermont USA) began working with puppets whilst studying film and animation at university. He has worked with America’s famous Bread and Puppet Theatre, studied shadow puppetry in Java, and pursued a PhD at Trinity College Dublin with a thesis on the ‘Pataphysics of the Puppet, Alfred Jarry and the inhuman performer’. He was the founder, and for five years artistic director, writer, puppet-maker and puppeteer for Buchinger’s Boot Marionettes, whose *Armature of the Absolute* was a success at the Pit as part of LIMF 2009. With Les Antliaclastes he is currently engaged in several projects including film, theatre, installations, music, and a multimedia electronic opera. His latest production for the company is being researched and developed with the support of La Chartreuse, Le Centre National des Ecritures du Spectacle in Villeneuve les Avignon.

An interview with director Patrick Sims

From a very young age I found *Grimms’ Fairy Tales* to have a force unlike any others. They can be fantastical, logical, absurd, comic, cruel, all at the same time. I love their folkloric imagery, their mixture of Christian and pagan themes, and their alchemical symbolism. In a matter-of-fact tone and simple language they speak of morality as well as basic codes for everyday society and its taboos. These tales have a childlike logic, which can function to expose the hypocrisy of adult logic. They cut straight to the bone.

Life for ordinary people at the turn of the 19th century could be brutal. Hunger and starvation were widespread, and often an extra mouth to feed became a matter of life and death for the rest of the family. These tales, often told whilst spinning (a typical female job in the Grimms’ stories) and other domestic chores were far more than entertainment; they also taught basic survival skills. The way that Disney portrays the tales highlights qualities very different to the ones that most attract me.

This production of *Waltz of the Hommelettes* is loosely based on The Elves, three short stories relating to the exploits of a band of elves who interact in different ways with mankind. Mankind and nature are treated here as opposite forces. At the heart of these tales is the dialogue between dominant religion and folk wisdom – the latter often called superstition.

The music is by Moondog (Louis Thomas Hardin 1916-1999), a blind and homeless New York mystic, poet and composer and Swiss farmhand/composer Adolf Wolfli (1864-1930), in a soundtrack arranged by Karine Dumont with clock sounds, bird song, cracking eggshells and the tinkling of glass – the sound atmosphere of elvish times.

(Adapted from an interview with Claudine Bocher)

London International Mime Festival

London International Mime Festival (LIMF) promotes contemporary visual theatre. Its productions have won nominations for 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.

Festival Directors Helen Lannaghan, Joseph Seelig

Production Manager Bill Deverson

Artists Managers Stephanie Brotchie, Shanti Freed

Press Representatives Anna Arthur PR

Graphics & Website Iain Lanyon

Marketing Consultants Mobius Industries

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