

New theatre company launches with an Ionesco classic

Utopia Theatre presents
THE SHEPHERD'S CHAMELEON
Written by Eugene Ionesco, directed by Moji Kareem
CLF Art Café, The Bussey Building, Peckham
8-25 May 2013
Previews 8-10 May; Press night: Tuesday 14th May, 7.30pm

Founded by award-winning artistic director **Moji Kareem**, **Utopia Theatre** is about fusing sound, music, image, dance, video, puppetry, storytelling and text to create extraordinarily evocative images on stage. They are committed to bringing to life the magic of theatre through innovative productions that engage and communicate directly with the audience, and offering an intellectual rigour and visual flair to productions.

This spring they are launching with the rarely performed classic play, **The Shepherd's Chameleon** – an absurdist farce.

Written by the man who turned the world of comedy upside down, **Eugene Ionesco**, this is your chance to escape the drudgery of everyday austerity and embrace the madcap world of absurdist comedy. In this fast paced physical production, the playwright is the shepherd and the world of theatre a chameleon. Take a ringside seat and watch Ionesco take on his theatrical critics in a ridiculous battle of wits that you won't want to miss.

'A vicious circle can have its virtues too! So long as you get out of it on time!'

EUGENE IONESCO (1909–1994) was a Romanian and French playwright and dramatist, and one of the foremost playwrights of the Theatre of the Absurd. Beyond ridiculing the most banal situations, Ionesco's plays depict in a tangible way the solitude and insignificance of human existence. His work includes 'The Bald Soprano', 'The Lesson', 'The Chairs', 'The Killer' and 'Rhinoceros'.

Moji Kareem directs this 60-minute physical rendition of Ionesco's play.

MOJI KAREEM is the artistic director of Utopia Theatre. Previous theatre directing credits include: House of Corrections (Riverside Studios) Pandora's Box (Arcola Theatre, London) Wake Me When It's Time (**York Theatre Royal**, York), The Maids (York St John theatre Studio York), The Shepherd's Chameleon (York St John Theatre Studio, York) and The Duchess of Malfi (York St John theatre Studio, York). In 2011 Moji Kareem was awarded the York Theatre Royal graduate prize for her technical directing skill and the creation of a strongly conceived and polished production for The Shepherd's Chameleon.

The cast includes **Thomas Solberg** (Ionesco), **Lucie Chester** (Bartholomeus I), Olivia Nicholson (Bartholomeus II) and **Sarah Sharman** (Bartholomeus III).

Listings information

The Shepherd's Chameleon

Dates: 8-25 May | 7.30pm | Sat matinees 2pm, 11, 18, 25 May | **Press Night:** 14 May, 7.30pm

Venue: CLF Art Café, The Bussey Building, 133 Rye Lane London SE15 4ST | www.clfartcafe.org

Box Office: 020 7732 5275 | Tickets: £5 Monday's, £10 previews, £12

Length: 1 hour [no interval]

Twitter: @Utopia_Theatre | **Facebook:** www.facebook.com/utopiatheatrecompany

For Press enquiries – interviews with director, Moji Kareem and the cast/creatives, press ticket requests and images, please contact Sophia A Jackson on sophia@afridiziak.com or call 07855 86 77 78

NOTES TO EDITORS

The Shepherd's Chameleon

Written by Eugene Ionesco, directed by Moji Kareem

Utopia Theatre Company is a professional theatre company founded to create, develop and tour edgy, provocative, dreamlike, and thought-provoking theatre which influences the expectations, aspirations and perceptions of audiences by making work that thrives on cross-fertilization from other art forms.

CAST

LUCIE CHESTER, (Bartholomeus I) is a Northern actress based in London. She developed an avid interest in acting and music from a young age working with companies such as 'Northern Academy of Performing Arts', 'Opera North' and 'Hull Philharmonic'. She has a degree in Performance Theatre from York St John where she was awarded the Graduate Prize for Acting. Lucie was honoured to perform her own play, which she also wrote and directed, at York Theatre Royal in 2011 and has since acted and sang professionally both on and off screen. Lucie is also a script writer and has had her work showcased on the professional stage, and is currently writing a collection of short plays and monologues.

OLIVIA NICHOLSON, (Bartholomeus II) recent graduate of Drama Centre London, has worked with many established directors such as Graham Theakston, Richard Standevan, Burt Cesar and Indra Boose. During her intensive training she learnt the works of Stanislavsky, Meisner, and Uta Hagen in great detail. When cast in The Shepherd's Chameleon she felt like she had to unlearn everything she was taught and immerse herself in this absurdist world. She found this extremely demanding, liberating and baffling all at the same time. Before her training she worked with Birmingham repertoire in 'his dark materials' and then toured Europe with a theatre in education company, ACLE. Olivia writes, directs and produces. Her latest short film 'The Blues' is currently in production.

SARAH SHARMAN, (Bartholomeus III) trained at Bird college of Dance and theatre performance, since graduating she has worked on various film, tv and music productions. Though auditioning for theatre plays and musicals, this a Sarah's debut.

THOM SOLBERG (Ionesco) came from Norway to study music in Leeds with designs of becoming an opera singer. Through performances in Dido and Aeneas, The marriage of Figaro, The Coronation of Poppea, Orpheus ed Euridice he discovered a love for acting and spent the next years taking classes to learn the trade with ActUpNorth. Meanwhile he appeared in short films Bathtime, The Birth of a Master and Shovelhand Dan. Since moving to London he has done the folk musical Van Winkle.

CREATIVES

KADY HOWEY NUNN has worked as a Theatre Designer for several years, with a portfolio including dance, new writing, musicals, new opera, and promenade theatre. She was nominated for an Off West End Award for Best Set Design for her design of 'Chapel Street' (Luke Barnes) at the Old Red Lion.

THEO VIDGEN is a composer for film, theatre and television. His compositions have been heard on ITV, Channel 4, Sky and top-rated shows in Australia and America. He has recently worked on 'The Hobbit'. He has orchestrated music for The National Theatre, BBC 1, BBC2 and The Sydney Scoring Orchestra.

IRENE PAGANELLI (producer) trained in Arts Administration and Cultural Policy at Goldsmith's College. She worked as Production Assistant for plays staged at Arcola Theatre and Riverside Studios and Marketing Officer for the international performing arts festival Romaeuropa in Rome.

GERRARD MARTIN trained at De Montfort University and the Northern School of Contemporary Dance. He has toured nationally with Phoenix Dance Company, as well as dancing with the Lion King, Ballet Black, Union Dance Company, Aletta Collins Dance Company, Tavaziva Dance and State of Emergency. Apart from modeling, commercial dance contracts and film engagements, Gerrard has also danced for 'The Snowman', the NT, ENO, and the ROH. Gerrard has choreographed for the British Museum, Pegasus Opera and the National Portrait gallery. He created his project-based company 'Gerrard Martin Dance' in 2011.

MIGUEL VICENTE, (lighting designer) trained at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA). Miguel has recently lit Overruled at the Old Red Lion Theatre and Laura Wade's Other Hands for Vitalsigns Theatre on tour at the Riverside Studios (London), New Greenham Arts Centre (Newbury), The Bikeshed Theatre (Exeter), The Rondo Theatre (Bath), Bridport Arts Centre (Bridport), The Nightingale Theatre (Brighton), and The Marine Theatre in Lyme Regis. At the Finborough Theatre, Miguel was Lighting Designer for The Fear of Breathing (2012), Passing By (2012), Barrow Hill (2012), Merrie England (2012), Autumn Fire (2012), and Through the Night (2011). Other design work includes Missing (Tristan Bates Theatre), Normal? (Oval House Theatre and LOST Theatre), Miss Julie (Theatro Technis), The Happy Prince (Little Angel Theatre), and Chapel Street (Old Red Lion Theatre). At LAMDA, Miguel was the Lighting Designer for The Last Days of Judas Iscariot, Hedda Gabler, and Kindertransport.

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