

Lincoln Center Festival

July 10–30, 2017

Lincoln Center Festival lead support is provided by American Express

July 10–12 Gerald W. Lynch Theater at John Jay College

Improbable

Opening Skinner's Box

North American premiere

Adapted from the book by **Lauren Slater**
Directors **Phelim McDermott** and **Lee Simpson**

Set Design **Laura Hopkins**
Lighting Design **Nigel Edwards**
Sound Design **Adrienne Quartly**

Approximate running time: 1 hour and 45 minutes, with no intermission

This performance is made possible in part by the Josie Robertson Fund for Lincoln Center.

Commissioned by Wexner Center for the Performing Arts. Co-commissioned by Lincoln Center Festival and the Brisbane Festival. Co-produced by Northern Stage and West Yorkshire Playhouse.

Public support for Festival 2017 is provided by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

LINCOLN CENTER FESTIVAL 2017 **OPENING SKINNER'S BOX**

Cast

Alan Cox

Stephen Harper

Tyrone Huggins

Morven Macbeth

Kate Maravan

Paschale Straiton

A Note from the Artistic Directors

What makes for a great story? All of us would all say something different, but we like it when somewhere it addresses an important question; when there are surprises along the way, but the kind of surprises that, when you look back, are not surprising at all; and of course, whatever the story seems to be about, it's really about something else—something much bigger and more important, something that kind of blows your mind.

Opening Skinner's Box features ten great psychological experiments, but it's really a collection of ten remarkable stories.

The experiments themselves are extraordinarily theatrical, but *Opening Skinner's Box* also opens up the stories behind each experiment: the people who made them and opposed them, the knowledge they uncovered, and the backlash they provoked. These ten short stories, taken collectively, are one way of telling the story of the twentieth century and the struggle to understand who we are and what we are really like as a species.

Of course, the other story threading its way through the piece is that of Lauren Slater

herself. She put herself into the stories she tells and in doing so created controversy among some of the people she wrote about. We have tried to include an awareness of that in our adaptation without taking sides. We leave it to our audience to decide whether she is a reliable witness.

What is clear is that Slater shares our fascination with the power of the stories that these experiments and experimenters tell. What finally convinced us that this was a book we should adapt for the stage was her introduction:

"...Psychological experiments are fascinating because at their best they are compressed experience, life distilled to its potentially elegant essence, the metaphorical test tube parsing the normally blended parts so you might see love, or fear, or conformity, or cowardice play its role in particular circumscribed contexts. Great psychological experiments amplify a domain of behavior or being usually buried in the pell-mell of our fast and frantic lives. Peering through this lens is to see something of ourselves."

Because that also pretty much sums up what theater is trying to do.

—Phelim McDermott and Lee Simpson

About the Artists

Phelim McDermott (Co-Director) is a founding member and co-artistic director of Improbable. He has been directing and performing since 1984, when he co-founded *derek derek* with Julia Bardsley. Productions with Improbable include the multi award-winning *70 Hill Lane*, *Lifegame*, *Animo*, *Coma*, *Spirit*, *Sticky*, *Cinderella*, *The Hanging Man*, *Theatre of Blood* (a collaboration with the National Theatre), and *The Tempest*. He directed the acclaimed Philip Glass operas *Satyagraha*, *The Perfect American*, and *Akhnaten* in collaboration with English National Opera.

Lee Simpson (Co-Director) is a founding member and co-artistic director of Improbable. He's been a croupier, a cinema projectionist, and a breakfast DJ. Since then—along with his work with Improbable—he's become a member of the Comedy Store Players, has written plays, appeared in sitcoms, and performed in TV dramas and films. His real name is Len.

Laura Hopkins (Set Design) was born in Kansas City, raised in Bangkok and Norwich, and has been based in London for 25 years. She graduated with a degree in interior architecture in 1988 and went on to study at Motley Theatre Design, led by Percy Harris. As well as creating experimental and devised productions (many in collaboration with director Pete Brooks) at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, Barbican, Tate Britain, and non-theater spaces, she has also designed Shakespeare productions for the Globe and the Royal Shakespeare Company; classic drama at the National Theatre; new writing at the Royal Court; musicals big and small; costumes for dance pieces at Sadler's Wells and the Volksoper, Vienna; and opera sets for English National Opera, Welsh National Opera, Opera North, New Israeli Opera, and New Zealand Opera.

Nigel Edwards (Lighting Design) has designed 26 shows for Forced Entertainment since 1990. Other credits include the premieres of Sarah Kane's *Cleansed*, *Crave*, and *448 Psychosis*; and Roberto Zucco, *The Mysteries*, *Victoria*, *The Tempest*, and *Troilus and Cressida* for the RSC; and Debbie Tucker Green's *Dirty Butterfly*, *Trade*, and *Stoning Mary*. Dance work includes *50 Acts*, *Dance Dance Dance*, *Desert Island Dances*, ten shows for Remote Control, and designs for Wendy Houston. Operas include *Jenufa* (Welsh National Opera), *The Maids* (English National Opera), and *Hansel and Gretel* (Opera North). He is lighting designer for Ryuichi Sakamoto and has designed for and toured with Jeff Beck, Diamanda Galás, Carsten Nicolai, and Yellow Magic Orchestra.

Adrienne Quartly (Sound Design) has worked on *The Crucible* (Selladoor/Luxembourg); *Rose* (Home, Manchester); *Cuttin' It* and *The Container* (Young Vic); *I Am Thomas* (Told by an Idiot/National Theatre Scotland); *Bad Jews* (Theatre Royal Haymarket); *Splendour* (Donmar Warehouse); *A Tale of Two Cities* and *Body of an American* (Royal and Derngate, Northampton); *A Raisin in the Sun* (Sheffield Crucible); *Ghost Train*, *Too Clever*, and *You Can't Take It With You* (Royal Exchange, Manchester); *Sex and the Three Day Week* (Liverpool Playhouse); *Inside Wagner's Head* (Royal Opera House); *Grand Guignol* (Southwark); *Every Last Trick* (Spymonkey); *Get Happy*, *And the Horse*, and *Fräulein Julie* (Barbican); *Chekhov in Hell* (Soho); *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Hong Kong Arts Festival); *Rings of Saturn* (Cologne); *Stockholm* (Frantic Assembly); *Thomas Hobbes* (Royal Shakespeare Company); *Woyzeck* (St Ann's, Brooklyn); *The Painter* (Arcola); *93.2 FM* (Royal Court); *The Fastest Clock* (Hampstead); and *Faustus*, *School for Scandal*, *Volpone*, and *The Duchess of Malfi* (Stage on Screen).

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Alan Cox (Performer) trained at London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art. His recent theater work includes *Forty Years On* (Chichester), *The Divided Laing* (Arcola), *City Stories* (St. James Studio), *Kingmaker* (Arts Theatre), *Playing with Grown Ups* (Brits Off Broadway), and *Cornelius* (Finborough). In the U.S., he toured in *Frost/Nixon* and *The Caretaker* and appeared on Broadway in *Translations* (Manhattan Theater Club). He was in the London premieres of *Longing* and *The Rubinstein Kiss* (Hampstead), *Found in the Ground* (Wrestling School), and *The Earthly Paradise* (Almeida). His TV and film work includes *The Good Wife*, *Lucan*, *John Adams*, *Housewife 49*, *Mrs. Dalloway*, *An Awfully Big Adventure*, and *Young Sherlock Holmes*. He is a regular improviser with Ken Campbell's School of Night.

Stephen Harper (Performer) is an associate with Told by an Idiot and works on their education projects. He was in *Get Happy* (Told by an Idiot), *Don Quixote* (Little Soldier), *One Snowy Night* (Discover in Stratford), *The Mouse and His Child* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (RSC), *Mass Observation* (Almeida Theatre), *Inspector Sands*, *We Love You City* (The Belgrade Theater), and *War Horse* (National Theatre and West End). He has directed *Cabaret of Blood* (a collaboration with Told by an Idiot and Hi Jinx Theatre) and *The Government Inspector* (Rose Bruford College).

Tyrone Huggins (Performer) co-founded the experimental Impact Theatre cooperative upon graduating from the University of Leeds with a degree in metallurgy. He has performed with companies including People Show, Lumiere & Son, Cliffhanger, and Hesitate & Demonstrate, and plays including *A Raisin In The Sun* and *Blood Wedding* (Contact Theatre, Manchester); *Murmuring Judges* and *The Absence Of War* (National Theatre, London); *The Beatification of Area*

Boy (West Yorkshire Playhouse); *Fences* (Liverpool Playhouse and Garrick Theatre, London); *Noughts & Crosses*, *Always Orange*, *Fall of the Kingdom* *Rise of the Foot Soldier* (RSC); *I Was A Rat!* (Teatro Kismet, Birmingham Rep, New Wolsey, Nottingham Playhouse); and *Electra* (Old Vic, Sonia Freidman). For Improbable, he played Prospero in *The Tempest* (Northern Stage). In New York, he was in *King Lear* (RSC) and his own play *The Honey Man* (Judy Owen Ltd. and Birmingham Rep). He has written 12 commissioned plays, including text for pieces by Phoenix and RJC dance companies. He has often appeared on the radio and in television and film.

Morven Macbeth (Performer), a core member and performer with imitating the dog, worked with the company on *Nocturnes* (U.K. premiere), *The Train* (U.K. premiere), *A Farewell to Arms* (U.K. and European Tour), *The Zero Hour* (U.K. Tour), *Six Degrees Below the Horizon* (U.K. Tour), *Kellerman* (U.K. and European Tour), and *Hotel Methuselah* (U.K., European, and International Tour). Other theater work includes *Horizontal Collaboration* (Fire Exit, The Traverse), *LeanerFasterStronger* (Crucible Theatre), *Look Back in Anger* (Carpe Diem, The Rose Theatre, Bankside), *Called to Account: The Indictment of Anthony Charles Lynton Blair for the Crime of Aggression Against Iraq—A Hearing* (Tricycle Theatre), and *Silverland* (Lacuna Theatre Co, Arcola Theatre). Film/TV work includes *Vampire Diary*, *Without You*, *Outlander*, and *Holby City*.

Kate Maravan (Performer) is an actress, writer, and teacher. Theater includes *Four Minutes, Twelve Seconds* (Trafalgar Studios and Hampstead Theatre); *Enduring Song* (Southwark Playhouse), *Angel Filth, Passion*, and *A Doll's House* (Tristan Bates Theatre); *Hay Fever* (Belgrade Coventry); and *One Cold Dark Night* (Bush Theatre).

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Her TV work includes *New Tricks*, *Miranda*, *The Politician's Husband*, *Lip Service*, *Lewis*, *Whitechapel*, *Trial and Retribution*, *Emmerdale*, *Absolute Power*, *Broken News*, *Touch of Frost*, and *Coroner*. She has also written theater and TV scripts. In 1997 she began practicing and exploring Meisner Technique, which she began teaching in 2000. She is developing a one-woman show with the working title *The Old House*.

Paschale Straiton (Performer) is artistic director of Red Herring, which creates playfully provocative outdoor performance to connect with people who aren't regular theatergoers across the U.K. The company's relationship with producers Time Won't Wait includes such projects as *Funny Peculiar—A Guide to Eccentric Britain*, a location-specific guided tour celebrating eccentricity, and *That's The Way To Do It!*, an alternative Punch and Judy show commissioned by the Without Walls consortium of outdoor arts festivals. She also works as the chair for NASA UK (National Association of Street Artists), supporting the professional development of artists who work outside; director or dramaturg for small-scale companies who work outside; teacher of clowning and outdoor performance; and performer. She has performed in *The Enchanted Palace*, a theatrical installation at Kensington Palace for Wildworks; *Sturgeon Moon*, a project that visited communities along the River Severn with *Desperate Men*; *Rough Magyck*, a piece made for the RSC with the wonderfully inventive *Forkbeard Fantasy*; and *Full Circle*, the new outdoor project by Avanti Display, involving 3 people and 200 tin buckets. She trained at Circomedia circus school in Bristol and holds an MFA in theater directing from Birkbeck College, University College London.

Wendy Bollard (Assistant Director) is an actor, singer, director, and producer from Canada, where she spent five years as

artistic director of Peninsula Productions. In 2015 she relocated to London to obtain her master's in directing. She has worked with Polly Findlay and Lucy Skillbeck at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and Tony Graham at East 15. After returning to Vancouver, she assisted Dean Paul Gibson on *The Flick*. She is currently an apprentice director at the 2017 Bard on the Beach Shakespeare Festival, and will be directing a newly commissioned play by Shawn MacDonald for Peninsula Productions called *Sea of Stories* to celebrate Canada's 150th birthday. Favorite directing credits include *Mary's Wedding*, *Blithe Spirit*, *Death and the Maiden*, *The Game's Afoot*, and *Waiting for the Parade*.

Simon MacColl (Production Manager) was stage manager for Grace Jones' summer 2015 festival shows, technical director for International Dance Festival Birmingham (2008-2012), and production manager for Frieze Art Fair Projects and Serpentine Pavilion Park Nights (2013). He has been technical director of the London International Festival of Theatre since 2010, and has worked on a bi-annual festival throughout London that includes the National Theatre, Barbican, outdoor shows, Noel Coward Theatre, and site-specific works. He also manages installations and the running of large scale projection and music performances at sites like Beijing Art Fair; San Jose, California; Barbican Centre; and Pompidou Center, Metz. He is also production manager for a theater piece, *superposition*, which premiered in Paris, then toured internationally, including London, Japan, Canada, and the U.S. (2013-14).

Fana Cioban (Stage Manager) trained in Romania and the U.K. She has collaborated with companies that create devised work; cross-art forms; interactive performances; improvised work; and site specific projects. Highlights include *Lost Without Words* by

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Improbable (National Theatre); *Lifegame* by Improbable (The Cockpit); *The Lounge* by China Plate (Summer Hall); *Everything by My Side* (Southbank Centre, Lift Festival); *Opening Skinner's Box* by Improbable; *No Tail* by idle women, Kent (Temple Manor); *Trois Ruptures* by The French Institute, London (The Print Room); *A High Street Odyssey* by Inspector Sands (U.K. Tour); *Have Your Circumstances Changed?* by Artangel (London); *The Lounge* by Inspector Sands (National Theatre); *All I Want* (Jackson's Lane); *How to Be Immortal* (U.K. Tour); *A Beginning, a Middle, and an End* by Greyscale (Scotland Tour); and *Mass Observation* (Almeida).

Dr. John Lazarus (Scientific Collaborator) is associate researcher and former reader in the Centre for Behaviour and Evolution, Institute of Neuroscience, Newcastle University. He also works in public engagement in psychology and general science. As director of research for Fulcrum Arts and Research, he works with artists to enhance public understanding of science through events and workshops. Other public engagement work includes consultancy to a youth theater project, language social

dilemma games in public events, and an interactive art exhibition.

Dr. Edmund Ramsden (Scientific Collaborator) has been a Wellcome Trust University Award Research Fellow at Queen Mary University since 2013. He is a historian of science and medicine with expertise in social, behavioral, and biological sciences in 20th-century America. He earned his PhD at the European University Institute and also held posts at the Universities of Manchester and Exeter and London School of Economics.

Dr. Quoc Vuong (Scientific Collaborator) has done research that aims to understand how to support thought and behavior and how these networks are shaped by experience. His interest is in interacting with non-academic groups to raise awareness of the societal relevance of brain science and is involved with Performing Research, a collaboration between theater company Cap-a-Pie and Newcastle University that uses theater and drama practices to research in an engaging way. He has worked with visual artist Susan Aldworth to create brain-inspired artwork.

About Improbable

"What kind of theater do you make?" is a question people often ask. It's difficult to give a simple answer because Improbable goes in many directions at once. Each project has a different creative team, sometimes people we've worked with a lot, sometimes people we've never worked with before. Sometimes the work is big, like *Sticky*, an outdoor piece with giant Sellotape structures; sometimes it's in big spaces like *Theatre of Blood* at the National Theatre, or *Satyagraha* and *Akhnaten* at the English National Opera; and sometimes it's smaller like *Animo*, *Permission Improbable*, and *Lost Without Words*. Shows may be improvised, scripted, or devised mayhem; sometimes there's even acting. We've taken shows all over the world from Sydney to Syria to nearly everywhere else. For the last ten years we've hosted and facilitated Open Space events under the banner of "Devoted and Disgruntled." Open Space is a self-organizing process enabling large groups to tackle complex issues with no formal agenda. These events have seen the emergence of a community of artists and theater practitioners who have created projects, partnerships, shows, companies, and venues. *Opening Skinner's Box* is our seventh New York production; previous shows include *Satyagraha* at the Metropolitan Opera, where we will return in March 2018 for *Così fan Tutte*. Other new shows are *Bambino*, an opera for babies (August 8–20, Edinburgh; October 21–November 5, Glasgow); *Aida* (September 28–December 2, English National Opera); and *Satyagraha* (February 1–27, 2018, English National Opera). For more information, visit Improbable.co.uk.

Opening Skinner's Box Production Team

Associate Sound Designer **Sarah Weltman**
 Assistant Director **Wendy Bollard**
 Production Manager **Simon MacColl**
 Stage Manager **Fana Cioban**
 Scientific Collaborators **Dr. John Lazarus,**
Dr. Edmund Ramsden, Dr. Quoc Vuong

Improbable Staff

Administrator **Anabel Barnston**
 Open Space Producer **Sarah Grange**
 Associate Director **Matilda Leyser**
 Artistic Director **Phelim McDermott**
 Executive Director **Ben Monks**
 Artistic Director **Lee Simpson**
 Producer **Nick Sweeting**

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Improbable Acknowledgments

Wellcome Trust Arts Award
 The Mackintosh Foundation
 Danny Olive at Jellycat
 Norma Bonnell, Newcastle University
 Heather Davenport

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**John Jay College of Criminal Justice
of The City University of New York
and the Gerald W. Lynch Theater**

John Jay College of Criminal Justice of The City University of New York, an international leader in educating for justice, offers a rich liberal arts and professional studies curriculum to upwards of 15,000 undergraduate and graduate students from more than 135 nations. In teaching, scholarship and research, the College approaches justice as an applied art and science in service to society and as an ongoing conversation about fundamental human desires for fairness, equality and the rule of law. For more information, visit jjay.cuny.edu.

Since opening its doors in 1988, the Gerald W. Lynch Theater has been an invaluable cultural resource for John Jay College and the larger New York City community. The Theater is dedicated to the creation and presentation of performing arts programming of all disciplines with a special focus on how the artistic imagination can shed light on the many perceptions of justice in our society. The Theater is also a member of CUNY Stages, a consortium of 16 performing arts centers located on CUNY campuses across New York City.

The Theater has hosted events in the Lincoln Center Festival since its first season in 1996, as well as New York City Opera, Great Performers at Lincoln Center, Gotham Chamber Opera, Metropolitan Opera Guild, and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater/Ailey II. The Theater has also been the site of many television and film specials including A&E's *Live by Request*, *Comedy Central Presents* and *Premium Blend*, *Robert Klein in Concert* and VH1's *Soundtrack Live*. For more information, and to view a schedule of events, please visit GeraldWLYnchTheater.com.

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Lincoln Center Festival, now in its 22nd season, has received worldwide attention for presenting some of the broadest and most original performing arts programs in Lincoln Center's history. The festival has presented 1,465 performances of opera, music, dance, theater, and interdisciplinary forms by internationally acclaimed artists from more than 50 countries. To date, the festival has commissioned 44 new works and offered 145 world, U.S., and New York premieres. It places particular emphasis on showcasing contemporary artistic viewpoints and multidisciplinary works that challenge the boundaries of traditional performance. For more information, visit LincolnCenterFestival.org.

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts (LCPA) serves three primary roles: presenter of artistic programming, national leader in arts and education and community engagement, and manager of the Lincoln Center campus. A presenter of more than 3,000 free and ticketed events, performances, tours, and educational activities annually, LCPA offers 16 series, festivals, and programs, including American Songbook, Avery Fisher Career Grants and Artist program, David Rubenstein Atrium programming, Great Performers, Lincoln Center at the Movies, Lincoln Center Emerging Artist Awards, Lincoln Center Festival, Lincoln Center Out of Doors, Lincoln Center Vera

List Art Project, Midsummer Night Swing, Mostly Mozart Festival, White Light Festival, the Emmy Award-winning *Live From Lincoln Center*, which airs nationally on PBS, and Lincoln Center Education, which is celebrating 40 years enriching the lives of students, educators, and lifelong learners. As manager of the Lincoln Center campus, LCPA provides support and services for the Lincoln Center complex and the 11 resident organizations: The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Film Society of Lincoln Center, Jazz at Lincoln Center, The Juilliard School, Lincoln Center Theater, The Metropolitan Opera, New York City Ballet, New York Philharmonic, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, School of American Ballet, and Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. Lincoln Center has become a leading force in using new media and technology to reach and inspire a wider and global audience. Reaching audiences where they are—physically and digitally—has become a cornerstone of making the performing arts more accessible to New Yorkers and beyond. The re-imagination of David Geffen Hall will play an important part in these efforts. For more information, visit LincolnCenter.org.

Acknowledgments

Lighting, Sound Equipment

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Scenery Build **New York Theatre Workshop**

Looking Ahead: Compagnie XY's *Il N'est Pas Encore Minuit*



Photo: Christophe Raynaud de Lage

From July 19–22, the renowned French circus collective Compagnie XY will present its newest work, *Il N'est Pas Encore Minuit*. In collaboration with choreographer Loïc Touzé, 22 acrobats will use their uniquely rhythmic and expressive brand of physical theater to explore the ways in which humanity deals with instability and imbalance. *Il N'est Pas Encore Minuit* is an incredible experience for audiences of all ages. *Le Monde* calls it “a pure marvel conquering the sky.”

For more information and a complete schedule of Lincoln Center Festival events, visit LincolnCenterFestival.org

Looking Ahead: *Nomadic Nights: Music at the Crossroads*



Maria Pomianowska

Photo: Aleksander Wyszynski

From July 25–29, *Nomadic Nights: Music at the Crossroads* showcases an eclectic assortment of modern-day musical explorers. Maria Pomianowska blends ancient Polish folk music with international inspirations (July 25). Chamber music is infused with jazz and Latin forms in the Cuban-American Bohemian Trio's original works (July 26). Tcheka revisits the African griot tradition through the song styles of his native Cape Verde (July 27). H'Sao ornaments the traditional cappella harmonies of Chad with new-world funk, soul, and R&B (July 28). And oud ensemble Le Trio Joubran combines music and poetry in *In the Shadow of Words* (July 29). Crossing continents and genres, the series offers a sonic meditation on the dynamic interplay of deep roots and the thrill of discovery.

For more information and a complete schedule of Lincoln Center Festival events, visit LincolnCenterFestival.org

Looking Ahead: Le Trio Joubran



On July 29, in the final event of the *Normadic Nights* series, the oud ensemble comprising Nazareth-born brothers Samir, Wissam, and Adnan Joubran and percussionist Youssef Hbeisch performs an immersive tribute to the late Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish. *In the Shadow of Words* is a soulful dialogue between worlds, with the trio's unique blend of traditional Arabic music, jazz, rock, and flamenco responding to Darwish's recorded voice, all within a rich multimedia environment. *The Guardian* ranks Le Trio Joubran "among the most inventive musicians in the Arab world," while *NPR* calls the trio "hypnotic and bliss-inducing."

For more information and a complete schedule of Lincoln Center Festival events, visit LincolnCenterFestival.org

Looking Ahead: Bolshoi Ballet's *The Taming of the Shrew*

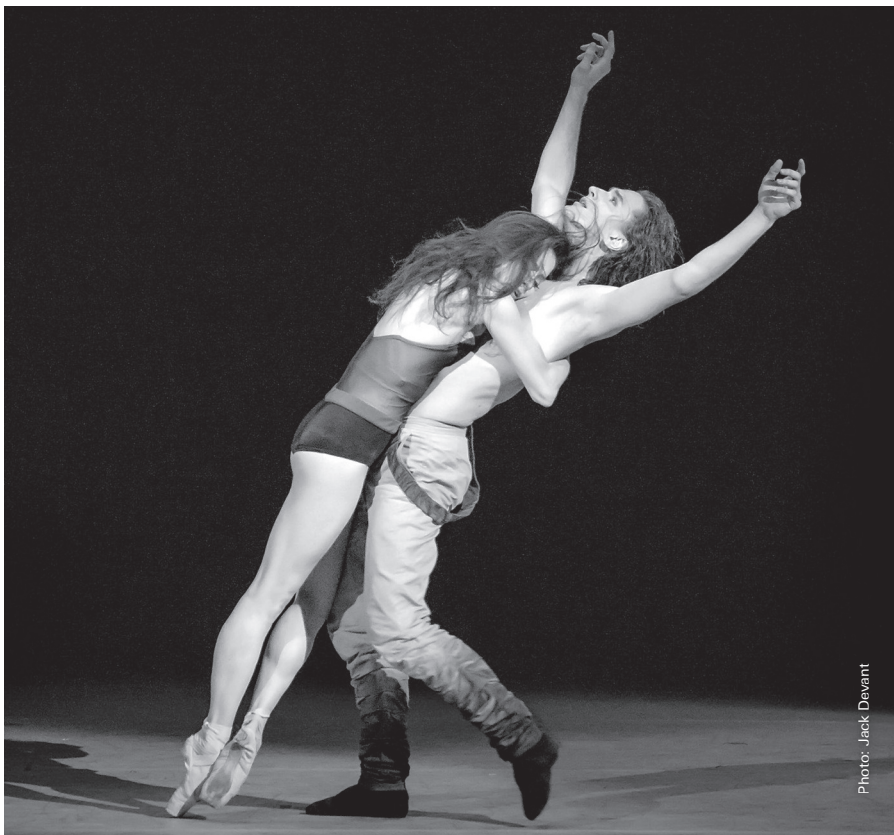


Photo: Jack Devant

From July 26–30, the legendary Bolshoi Ballet will present its effervescent production of *The Taming of the Shrew*, choreographed by Jean-Christophe Maillot (artistic director of the Ballets de Monte Carlo). The Bolshoi's incomparable dancers bring their signature bravura to this adaptation of Shakespeare's classic, transforming the famously chauvinistic comedy into a feisty battle of wits between the well-born Kate and the rough-edged Petruchio. *The Telegraph* (U.K.) calls it an "eclectic, high-octane, and often witty fusion of classical and modern."

For more information and a complete schedule of Lincoln Center Festival events, visit LincolnCenterFestival.org

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AboutLincolnCenter.org 212.875.5000

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Martin Schott

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