Welcome to Political Mother; the riveting, disturbing, uncompromisingly engaged first full-length piece by Israeli-born composer and choreographer Hofesh Shechter. Both artist and production have taken much of Europe by storm over the past two years, and we are delighted to be presenting this work to you in Toronto.

Political Mother is not a story - yet there is an ever-present, underlying narrative, an investigation of mankind’s relationship to power, freedom, repression, and violence. Shechter himself has composed a score for five drummers and five electric guitars, music which creates a tribal, almost hypnotic beat that carries us from the worst of oppressive forces to faint glimmerings of hope, as shards of resistance begin to break the mould. We see images of tyrannical excess, of embattled soldiers and of an almost animal fear. At times it is terrifying - the message Shechter offers hardly soothes - and yet the resurgence of humanity is always just around the corner, the rebirth of hope, of community, of life.

Hofesh Shechter is now based in the United Kingdom, associate artist at the Sadler’s Wells Theatre. His dance has been described as galvanizing, explosive, mesmerizing, and riveting. It is all that and more, and I invite you to sit back - or sit forward - and be transported into this universe where dance borne under pressure is like no other you may have seen.

Matthew Jocelyn
ARTISTIC & GENERAL DIRECTOR
presented

political mother

OCT 24–OCT 28, 2012
BLUMA APPEL THEATRE

CHOREOGRAPHED & COMPOSED BY
HOFESH SHECHTER

PERFORMED BY
HOFESH SHECHTER COMPANY

PRESENTED BY
CANADIAN STAGE

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CHIEN-MING CHANG
SAM COREN
FRÉDÉRIC DESPIERRE
KARIMA EL AMRANI
JAMES FINNEMORE
BRUNO KARIM
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YEJI KIM
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ADDITIONAL CREDITS
Political Mother is commissioned by Brighton Dome and Festival, Sadler’s Wells and Movimentos – Festwochender Autostadt in Wolfsburg. The work is co-commissioned by Biennale de la Danse de Lyon, Théâtre de la Ville, Romaeuropa and Mercat de les Flors.

Produced in collaboration with Theatre Royal, Plymouth and with support from DanceXchange, Birmingham.

The score for Political Mother was created in collaboration with the Guildhall School of Music & Drama and barbicancibite09; with research supported by Jerwood Studio at Sadler’s Wells.

Collaboration with FOS supported by Outset.

The use of Solaris by Cliff Martinez is by arrangement with EMI Music Publishing Limited

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Please be advised that this performance contains 30 seconds of strobe lighting.
This performance runs approximately 70 minutes. There is no intermission.
What came first, the choreography or the music?

That’s the first question I’m always asked... there is no simple answer to what is a very complex and to some extent random process of creating a dance and music piece. What makes it even more complex and surprising is the number and variety of people I work with to create the piece.

I want to concentrate on that aspect when answering this question today.

This time, Political Mother, I have an idea – a drum loop that drives us forward, that keeps a train of rhythm that carries us down the rabbit hole. My first instinct is to steal a groove from a Peter Gabriel song - so I do. Yaron and I are sitting in the working room recording it on what is left from my old drum kit, it sounds rough, as usual I didn’t record it on a metronome click – great - that sounds real, like something you found left down the street. This miserable recording grew into what now sounds like “the end of the world.” Peter himself wouldn’t know it was inspired by him, and the way it sounds now I’m not sure he’d want to.

During the whole of January the dancers are forced to hear “the end of the world” loop over and over again for at least four or five hours a day without any additions or decorations – it’s an absolute sketch. Something about the sound and the atmosphere it commands inspires us. At that point it feels enough. After a few weeks enough is enough, and something about how the choreography grows in complexity demands a proportional response in the music. Time for me to sing over the drum loop to define the colour of the waves the strings will bring about. I’m imagining a late afternoon in some desert city with an old Egyptian band of strings – when I say old I mean they are old, they all probably have cigarettes hanging from their lips while playing and a glass of arak within reach. I’m thinking big wavy unisons. And then I’m singing.

Next phase – Nell. I’m sending her some MP3 files by email of my singing (she’s used to that... and it does take getting used to) and she starts to record sketches of these “songs” and sends them back to me, but now they are of course magical, haunting viola sounds like only Nell can create. After a few days we meet up to record the lines over and over and over again and here you go that’s my Egyptian band. We then decide to play around a bit and Nell improvises in “the spirit of” and as always comes up with some genius beautiful phrases.

Meanwhile, in the studio with the dancers we work with a different loop.

My passion for low frequencies creates a decision between me and Nell to gather “the dream team,” a group of string players who I first met when we created and toured In your rooms (none are Egyptian but they play pretty well all the same), for a recording session. Again I’m exposing my singing to them – it’s unbelievable how the quality of delivering a musical line can give it its heart and body. When they play it I’m in that dusty bar in the desert. We record everything including some extraordinary improvisation sessions (on that second loop the poor old dancers are still working on) and I leave with a rich and colourful collection of sounds - that will give me a lot to play with when I’m back alone with my laptop.

Then there are the electric guitars. That’s a story for another day.

In the last couple of weeks of creation a lot of important things happen - now everything is here, all the movements, the sections, the musicians, the dancers, the emotions, the ideas, the sounds the instruments... it’s all there and it’s a game of choice. What’s in and what’s out and when. And how. It’s the moment where all this information, the sounds and the movements settle in together.

By that point I can’t really remember anymore what came first. It really doesn’t matter.
“Shechter is a true original”
-Judith Mackrell, The Guardian, December 3, 2005

Hofesh Shechter is recognised as one of the UK’s most exciting contemporary artists, with his eponymous Company touring worldwide to audience and critical acclaim. A former drummer in a rock band, Shechter is renowned for creating the musical scores for each of his dance creations with his raw, atmospheric music complimenting his Company’s unique physicality.

After graduating from the Jerusalem Academy for Dance and Music, Hofesh moved to Tel Aviv to join the world-renowned Batsheva Dance Company. Here he began drum and percussion studies which continued in Paris at the Agostiny College of Rhythm. Subsequently he began experimenting and developing his own music whilst participating in various projects in Europe involving dance, theatre and body-percussion. In 2002 Hofesh arrived in the UK.

Hofesh made his choreographic debut with the duet Fragments (2003), followed by Cult for The Place Prize (2004) and Uprising (2006), his ever-popular work for seven men. The three works formed the triple bill deGENERATION. Hofesh’s first full evening of work. In 2007 he was commissioned by London’s three major venues, The Place, Southbank Centre and Sadler’s Wells, to create In your rooms. Drawing further from Hofesh’s now signature style of original music and choreography, Shechter was catapulted into the media spotlight with much anticipation surrounding the premiere of the work, resulting in sell-out performances and standing ovations at Sadler’s Wells Theatre.

After forming his international Company of highly skilled, individually talented dancers in 2008, Hofesh created The Choreographer’s Cut in 2009. Commissioned by Sadler’s Wells and performed at London’s iconic music venue the Roundhouse, Hofesh reworked his acclaimed double bill Uprising/In your rooms to feature a band of 20 musicians alongside a company of 17 dancers. Also in 2009, Hofesh was commissioned by Brighton Festival to create the “exquisitely acrimonious” The Art of Not Looking Back (The Observer, 2009) which was inspired by and made for six female dancers. An outdoor version of the work was presented at Latitude Festival later that year.

In May 2010 Hofesh presented his first full length work Political Mother, which premiered at the Brighton Festival. Featuring Shechter’s cinematic score, the piece was performed by 10 dancers and featured a band of 8 live drummers and electric guitarists. The success of the show gained the Company the worldwide attention they deserved, and they have since toured their repertoire to Australasia, United States, Asia, and across Europe, gaining a huge following.

Returning to the piece in 2011, Sadler’s Wells commissioned Hofesh to create Political Mother: Choreographer’s Cut, with an even larger band of 24 musicians and 16 dancers. The show was deemed “a mind blowing mix of sound and vision” by critics and cemented Hofesh’s reputation as both a choreographer and composer of recognition. Fresh from the show’s success, Hofesh’s worked in collaboration with the sculptor Antony Gormley to create Survivor, a large-scale art/music performance which premiered at the Barbican in January 2012.

Hofesh has been commissioned in the UK by Bare Bones Dance Company, Edge and Verve (the postgraduate companies of London Contemporary Dance School and Northern School of Contemporary Dance respectively), StopGAP Dance Company, Scottish Dance Theatre, CandoCo and Dance United. Internationally, Hofesh has made new work and remounted works on Ballet CeDeCe (Portugal), Hellenic Dance Company (Greece), Bern:Ballett (Switzerland), SkanesDansteater (Sweden), Carte Blanche Dance Company (Norway) and Cedar Lake Contemporary Ballet (New York).

In 2012, Hofesh created a new work for the first-ever performance by new UK-wide youth dance company, the U.Dance Ensemble, which premiered at the Southbank Centre in July 2012.

Hofesh worked as choreographer at The Royal Court Theatre for Motortown by Simon Stephens (2006) and on The Arsonists (2007), collaborating with director Ramin Gray on both productions. He was choreographer for the National Theatre’s award-winning production of Saint Joan (2007), directed by Marianne Elliot and starring Anne Marie Duff. He also choreographed the hit dance sequence “Maxxie’s Dance” for the opening of the second series of Channel 4’s popular drama Skins.

His work has earned him a string of nominations and awards including: winner of the 3rd Serge Diaghilev choreography competition (Fragments), winner of the Audience Choice Award at the Place Prize 2004 (Cult), nominated for a South Bank Show Award and winner of the Critics Circle Award for Best Choreography (modern) 2008 (In your rooms), and nominated for a South Bank Sky Arts Award 2011 (Political Mother). He was also winner of the Movementos Most Promising Newcomer in Dance Award (2009) and the British Theatre Institute’s Award for Excellence in International Dance (2011).
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POLITICAL MOTHER BY HOFESH SHECHTER.

TOP: PHOTO BY GABRIELE ZUCCA. BOTTOM: PHOTO BY SIMONA BOCCEDI.
THE ARSONISTS
A WICKEDLY FUNNY FARCE WITH QUESTIONABLE MORALS

NEW THIS SEASON: SUNDAY MATINEES

To give you more flexibility in your theatre-going schedule, we’ve added Sunday matinee performances at the Bluma Appel Theatre this season. Sunday matinees start at 2 pm. Visit our website for the full schedule of upcoming Sunday performances.

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ON WEDNESDAYS & THURSDAYS

On select dates, join us after the show for a post-performance Q&A with a selection of cast members, directors and/or designers. This season, talkbacks will be held after every Wednesday matinee and Thursday evening performance at both the Bluma Appel Theatre and the Berkeley Street Theatre. Visit www.canadianstage.com to see the full Talkback schedule and book your tickets for Talkback dates.

Middle: Political Mother by Hofesh Shechter. Photo by Tom Medwell. Inset: Photo from Ignorance by Jason Stang Photography.
THE RBC BASH! DIRECTOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Canadian Stage’s RBC BASH! Director Development Program is a year-long residency for two to three professional directors that explores approaches to contemporary theatre creation, production, and administration in a national and international context. RBC BASH! artists meet with Canadian Stage’s artistic, production and administrative teams, guest artists and leaders in the broader cultural community to discuss current issues in performance practice and to develop and present a project of their own.

“When accepted into RBC’s BASH Emerging Director’s Program was like finding a Willy Wonka gold ticket. It was an all-access pass to some of Canada’s preeminent theatrical minds and performance experiences. It provided me with insight into the inner-workings of major Canadian theatres and the unique challenges facing mainstream directors. Most importantly, it provided me with a vision of how I see myself growing as an artist in the next five, ten years.”
– Jordan Tannahill, 2012 RBC BASH! Director.

 OUR 2011.12 SEASON RBC BASH! DIRECTORS

GEIN WONG is an interdisciplinary director, playwright, composer, poet and video artist who weaves emotion and power throughout her art. Gein is currently Artistic Director of the interdisciplinary performance company Eventual Ashes and co-founded the community arts organisation Asian Arts Freedom School. During her RBC BASH! participation, she developed and presented Ocean Carving, the story of a Toronto woman who fled China by jumping into the Ocean, told through live erhu (Chinese violin), ambient electronic, video art projection, movement and theatre.

JORDAN TANNAHILL is a playwright, theatre director, and filmmaker. The projects Jordan creates through his performance company, Suburban Beast, frequently incorporate innovative multimedia design and documentary source material. During his RBC BASH! participation, he developed and presented Concord Floral. Fusing the paintings of Toronto’s Kris Knight, Boccacio’s Decameron, and teen garage band DIY, the piece presented an abandoned greenhouse taken over by ten neighbourhood teens as a refuge for ritual and subversion.

Compelling theatre is born when promising creative voices are afforded the resources they need to thrive. Without RBC’s dedication to emerging artists, this vital program would not be possible. Thank you, RBC!

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The next Youth Night will be for The Arsonists. Go to www.canadianstage.com for more information and to register.

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If you are currently amongst our valued contributors, thank you and bravo to you. If you have not taken this step yet, I encourage you to join us. There is no limit to how large our circle can get.

You know what it takes to keep live theatre alive—you!

Tenny Nigoghosian
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We have come a long way and the path has been full of colour, twists and turns and sizzle. Canadian Stage has been on the Toronto theatre arts scene for a quarter century and we share this moment of pride with you—our supporters.

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Anonymous

**10 or more years of support
*5 or more years of support
†Canadian Stage Staff Member

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE APC, PLEASE CONTACT HEATHER Mc DONALD, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT, AT 416.367.8243 x244 OR hmcdonald@canadianstage.com.

FIELD ADVISORY COUNCIL
The Field Advisory Council (FAC) is a group of community members who contribute to the development of Canadian Stage programming and outreach initiatives. For more information about the FAC, please contact Heather McDonald, Associate Director of Development, at 416.367.8243 x244 or hmcdonald@canadianstage.com.

MUSICAL ADVICE COUNCIL
The Musical Advice Council (MAC) is a group of industry professionals who provide advice and expertise on musical theatre productions. For more information about the MAC, please contact Heather McDonald, Associate Director of Development, at 416.367.8243 x244 or hmcdonald@canadianstage.com.

THE JR. ADVISORY COUNCIL
The Junior Advisory Council (JAC) is a group of young professionals who provide insight and support to the development of Canadian Stage programs and initiatives. For more information about the JAC, please contact Heather McDonald, Associate Director of Development, at 416.367.8243 x244 or hmcdonald@canadianstage.com.

THE ARTISTIC PATRONS’ CIRCLE (APC)
The Artistic Patrons’ Circle (APC) is a passionate group of cultural advocates whose invaluable contributions to Canadian Stage help us bring the best contemporary theatre to our audiences. For more information about the APC, please contact Heather McDonald, Associate Director of Development, at 416.367.8243 x244 or hmcdonald@canadianstage.com.
PARTNERSHIP

With their support, Partners demonstrate their passion for innovative theatre. Canadian Stage salutes our partners for their generosity. For more information about the Partnership Program, please contact Marielle Bryck, Patron Development Officer, at 416.367.8243 x327 or mbryck@canadianstage.com.

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As of October 4, 2012 we have made every effort to ensure appropriate recognition. If, however, your name has been accidentally omitted, listed incorrectly or misspelled, please notify us of this error. We apologize in advance for any inconvenience this may cause.

Your name will be added to our patron list when you book tickets, request a brochure or make a donation to Canadian Stage. However, your privacy is our top priority. Canadian Stage is committed to using your information solely for the purpose of communicating with you about special offers, events, and occasional information about other arts organizations we think may be of interest to you. If you prefer not to receive this information, you can inform us by mail: Canadian Stage, 26 Berkeley St, Toronto, ON M5A 2W3, Attention: Privacy Officer. Privacy policy information is also available on our website canadianstage.com.

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

Canadian Stage recognizes the significant support of our public funders:

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We acknowledge the support of the Government of Canada through the Department of Canadian Heritage
Nous reconnaissons l'appui du gouvernement du Canada par l'entremise du ministère du Patrimoine canadien
GENERAL INFORMATION

Cellphones, pagers, candy wrappers and beeping watches are distracting for performers and audience members. For those who must have access to devices for emergencies, please leave them with the House Manager who will record your seat number and name.

Please respect other patrons with sensitivity to perfumes.

LATE ARRIVALS

As a courtesy to the audience and artists, latecomers will be seated at an appropriate break in the performance if possible.

PHOTOS AND RECORDINGS

The use of cameras and recording devices during performances is strictly prohibited.

FOR MORE INFORMATION & CUSTOMER SERVICE

Canadian Stage, 26 Berkeley St.
Toronto, ON M5A 2W3

Box Office
Administration
Facsimile
Email

416.368.3110
416.367.8243
416.367.1768
boxoffice@canadianstage.com

ST. LAWRENCE CENTRE STAFF

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Assistant Box Office Manager
Yvette LeClair
Ticket Services Supervisor
Lelf Conti-Groome
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Heather Lacey
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Director of Guest and Client Services
James Utton
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Darwin Kan
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Jennifer Oracion
Accountant
Andrea Bragg
HR/Payroll
Peter Kincaid
Systems Manager
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Eric Meadows
Head Technician

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Head Electrician
Reg Taylor
Head Carpenter
Douglas Parker
Property Master
Kojo Makela
Sound Operator
Kevin Lake
Flyman
Theatre Technician
Susan Batchelor
Head of Wardrobe

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Patron Systems Administrator
Ashley Ballantyne
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Heather McDonald
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Marielle Bryck
Patron Development Officer

Ellen Burch
Development Assistant

SHARON KARN
Berkeley Front of House Supervisor
Ankita Kumar-Ratta
Education & Enrichment Intern
Alison Neale
Marketing & Community Partnerships Intern

PRODUCTION

Vladimir Vukovic
Director of Production
Peter Eaton
Interim Technical Director
Mary Syparaks
Head of Properties
Jasmine Knox
Production Assistant
Alanna McConnel
Production Intern
Alex Vass
Metcalf
Foundation Intern

DOUGLAS ARUCUS
Operations Manager
Susan Batchelor
Bluma Wardrobe Mistress
Colin Benoît
Berkeley Senior Head Technician
Jay Blencowe
Berkeley Head Technician

Cecilia Waszczuk
Berkeley Junior Technician
Julie Cloutier
Manager of Volunteer Resources & Rental Coordinator

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* Executive Committee

Sabrina Kolibegger
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Mona Lee

Stage employees of the St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts are represented by Local 58 and Local 822 of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees. Usher and concession staff of the St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts are represented by Local 2652 of the Canadian Union of Public Employees.

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Everyone take a bow

Canadian Stage develops, produces, and exports the best in Canadian and international contemporary theatre. The company strives to enrich the quality of community life by constantly raising the standards of the theatrical arts in Canada and abroad.

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