Shanghai Mimi

SHANGHAI MIMI PTY LTD AND FINUCANE & SMITH

AUSTRALIA

WORLD PREMIERE

RIVERSIDE THEATRE

10–20 JANUARY

70 MINS

Artistic Director Moira Finucane

Musical Director/Pianist John McAll

Original Concept/Creative Producer Douglas Hunter

QINGHAI ACROBATIC TROUPE

Acrobats Wang Yuhuan, Wei Youjuan, Zhao Longjuan Lamaocuo, Dong Guoan, Fan Zengtao, Zhou Zijun

Coaches Wang Zhigang, Wu Yonghong

Acrobatic Director Sun Hao

Dancers Simon Abbe, Ernest Ngolo

MUSICIANS

Singer Sophie Koh

Bass Hiroki Finn

Drums Brooke Custerson

Trumpet Toby Mak

Clarinet/saxophones Brennan Hamilton-Smith

Piano John McAll

CHOREOGRAPHY

Simon Abbe & Wu Baoyong

DESIGN

Set & Costume Design Eugyeene Teh

Lighting Design Jenny Hector

Commissioning Presenters Sydney Festival

THANKS

Costume glamour contributed to by:

Jewels: Angela Clark & Boutique Beads

(authentic vintage Polish jewels)

Faux furs: Gun Shy

(collections from Hollywood to Cirque de Merde)

Handmade bespoke shoes: Preston Zly

(handstitched design dreams)

Cutting Edge Couture: Keon Couture

(the legend of luxe sharp)

Sydney Festival thanks David Mathlin and Camilla Drover for their support of Shanghai Mimi.

CREATORS’ STATEMENT

Travelling beyond the Gobi Desert to meet a troupe of acrobats that had never collaborated with foreigners before, the words “perhaps you’d like to work with a more cosmopolitan troupe?” rang in my ears. I looked down on the vast Yellow River and determined to keep an open mind; after all we had auditions around China. I needn’t have bothered. The Qinghai Acrobatic Troupe captured my heart within minutes, with intriguing and adventurous personalities already jumping out at me across culture, shyness and form, a unique “I didn’t expect that” style, a real family ethos, a powerful work ethic, and a kindness to stray cats… Well, long story short, we all fell in love. All of us were inspired by the grit, glamour and wild possibilities of jazz-crazed cosmopolitan 1930s Shanghai. We banded together with extraordinary Cameroon dancers, a beloved maestro, a genius Australian/Chinese indie pop star, a bunch of lost 1930s Shanghai jazz tracks discovered in a Mumbai warehouse, a red hot and spiked up jazz band, and wildly acclaimed designers. Across five countries and seven languages, we bring you something wild, romantic, nostalgic, and very now: just like Shanghai herself. The Club is open! Welcome!

*Moira Finucane*

It all started with the music. A bunch of lost 1930s Shanghai jazz tracks discovered in a Mumbai warehouse that grabbed me by the heart and wouldn’t let go. It didn’t take long for the idea for Shanghai Mimi to take shape: an exotic jazz-infused cabaret set in heady 1930s Shanghai exploding with Chinese acrobats. But the real magic began when I introduced director Moira Finucane to the Qinghai acrobats, and then, when musical director John McAll came on board, well, the rest is history.

*Douglas Hunter*

**Moira Finucane** rides the boundaries of genre and form as a director, creator, performer and writer. She is hailed in Australia as a “national treasure” (The Age), in Cuba as “the magnificence of Total Art” (Cuba Tribune) and in London as “outrageous & unforgettable” (The Times). The ‘salons of humanity’ she creates span major gallery installations to surreal dramas to the world’s most awarded ‘provocative variety’ show. They are renowned for their exquisite humanity, bold rule breaking, lifting-up of lesser heard voices, and astonishing audience hospitality. Her company Finucane & Smith has increasingly become an Australian leader, breaking new ground from Beijing to Buenos Aires, across 15 countries, in five languages, winning 13 awards. Her Mandarin-language Australian gothic The Flood premiered at Shanghai Grand in 2018 to universal acclaim, and her Provocative Variety Glory Box is now in its 15th year, with 13 countries and 400,000 audience members under its glittering belt.