Justitia

Education Pack

Photo: Alastair Muir
Jasmin Vardimon is a leading force in British dance theatre. She received the 2013 International Theatre Institute Award for Excellence in Dance in recognition of her outstanding choreographic work over recent years.

Born and raised on a Kibbutz in central Israel, she joined the Kibbutz Dance Company, and in 1995 won a British Council 'On the Way to London' Choreography Award. She moved to London in 1997, where she founded Jasmin Vardimon Company (previously Zbang). Jasmin has been an Associate Artist at Sadler's Wells since 2006. Previously, she was an Associate Artist at The Place in 1998 and a Yorkshire Dance Partner from 1999 – 2005.

Enjoying sell-out performances across the UK and internationally, her Company’s works include: Freedom, 7734, Yesterday, Justitia, Park, Lullaby, Ticklish, LureLureLure, Tête, Madame Made and Therapist. Lullaby gained Jasmin selection for the BBC documentary Dance Film Academy featuring the development of a film version of the piece (2005). Jasmin has been commissioned to choreograph for the Royal Opera House (Tannhäuser, 2010) and for ROH2's OperaShots season with composer Graham Fitkin at the Linbury Studio (Home, 2012). Other commissions include Bitef Theatre Belgrade, Hellenic Dance Athens, CandoCo, WID, Bare Bones, Transitions and curating the Dance Ballads Festival at the Oval House.

In 2013, Jasmin takes on the role of Guest Artistic Director for the first year of the newly formed National Youth Dance Company (NYDC).

She is the recipient of numerous awards including: the prestigious Jerwood Choreography Award (2000); the Jerwood Foundation's 'Changing Stages' Award (2004); a nomination for Best Female Artist at the Critics' Circle National Dance Awards (2003); The London Arts Board 'New Choreographers' Award (1998); The Colette Littman Scholarship Award (1997); The Havatzeleth Foundation Scholarship (1997 & 1995); and the America-Israel Foundation Choreography Scholarship (1989 & 1991).

Jasmin has been a Visiting Professor at the University of Wolverhampton since September 2011. She developed a Higher Education programme for dancers and actors, led by her company as a postgraduate diploma at Royal Holloway University London and in 2012 launched JV2, a full-time certificate course at her company’s home base in Ashford.
Jasmin Vardimon Company was founded in London in 1997 and rapidly rose to become a significant element within the British dance theatre scene. The company is dedicated to the choreography of Artistic Director, Jasmin Vardimon – Associate Artist of Sadler’s Wells since 2006.

Renowned for her uniquely theatrical choreographic and directorial style combining physical theatre, quirky characterisation, innovative technologies, text and dance, Vardimon accentuates her work with an acute observation of human behaviour. With sharp instincts and provocative daring, she has developed an individual choreographic voice, distinguished by her beautifully detailed movement, insightful humour and engaging drama. The company’s works are widely accessible through their exposure of human experience, social relevance, high quality, passion, skill and commitment.

The company tours nationally and internationally performing at high profile theatres throughout the UK, across Europe, Asia, the Middle East and the USA.

In 2012, the company moved into its new creative home – The Jasmin Vardimon Production Space in Ashford, Kent - thanks to support from Ashford Borough Council, Ashford Leisure Trust and Arts Council England. A cultural centre dedicated to the company’s creative research and future productions, educational residencies and multi-disciplinary artistic study, the JV Production Space aims to encourage the growth of a cultural legacy in Ashford, increasing its capacity to import and export high quality performers of a world class calibre.

The company’s repertoire includes: FREEDOM, 7734, Yesterday, Justitia, Park, Lullaby, Ticklish, Lure Lure Lure, Tête, Madame Made and Therapist.
Merle Hensel – Set/Costume Design

Works internationally in a wide variety of styles and genres.

Works include: *Macbeth* (National Theatre of Scotland / Lincoln Center, Broadway); *Shun-Kin* (Complicite); *Green Snake* (National Theatre of China); *27*, *The Wheel* and *Glasgow Girls* (National Theatre of Scotland); *Political Mother* and *Sun* (Hofesh Schechter Company); *Lovesong* (Frantic Assembly); *James Son Of James*, *The Bull* and *The Flowerbed* (Fabulous Beast Dance Theatre); *The Shawl*, *Parallel Elektra* (Young Vic); *Justitia* and *Park* (Jasmin Vardimon Dance Company); *Lunatics* (Sophiensaele, Berlin; Schauspielhaus Zürich; Münchner Kammerspiele); *Der Verlorene* (Sophsieusa, Berlin); *Kupsch* (Deutsches Theater, Götingen); *Maria Stuarda* (Vereinigte Bühnen Mönchengladbach/Krefeld); *Der Vetter Aus Dingsda* (Oper Graz); Münchhausen, Herr Der Lügen (Neuköllner Oper, Berlin).

Film credits include: *Morituri Te Salutant* and *Baby* (Phillip Stölzl).

Merle is a lecturer at Central St Martins School of Art and Design in London. Other teaching includes Rose Bruford College and Goldsmiths.
Rebecca Lenkiewicz - Text

Rebecca is an award-winning writer who, in 2008, was the first living female playwright to have her work produced on the Olivier Stage at the Royal National Theatre, London. Rebecca is currently under commission to the Out of Joint Theatre Company, Manhattan Theatre Club, New York, and the Royal National Theatre. Rebecca's screenplay, IDA, co-written with Pawel Pawlikowski will be released next year.


Ohad Fishof – Sound Design

Born in Jerusalem in 1970, Ohad Fishof is an artist and musician, working in a diverse range of fields including sound, dance, video, performance and writing. Fishof began his artistic career in the mid-Eighties as the leader of experimental pop band *The Top Hat Carriers*. He later moved on to compose music for dance, performance and art installations while at the same time expanding his artistic endeavor to other media. In the early Nineties Fishof relocated to London.

In 1997 he received an MA in choreography from Laban Centre London (where he later became a visiting lecturer). Since then, his work in dance and performance, as well as his sound installations, were presented in England, Japan, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Sweden, Turkey, Switzerland, Israel and at the Venice Biennale in Italy (with Uri Katzenstein).

Fishof moved back to Israel in 2003 and is currently involved in various ways with The Bat-Sheva Dance Company and its artistic director Ohad Naharin. He designed the soundtracks for *Shalosh, Furo, Max* and *Telophase*, and served as a dramaturge for the later. In 2004 he was the music director and dramaturge of *Playback*, a solo evening of music and dance directed and performed by Ohad Naharin. He is also a teacher of Gaga, Naharin’s movement language.

Over the past few years Fishof presented video and choreographic work in Israel and Japan, designed soundtracks for various dance pieces in Israel and abroad and took part in several group exhibitions. In 2005 he performed *A Slow Walk for Longplayer* in London, commissioned by Artangel. Fishof designed the music for *Park, Lullaby* and *Ticklish* for Jasmin Vardimon Company.

Chahine Yavroyan – Lighting Design

As well as theatre, opera and dance, Chahine has lit objects, clothes, casts of 1 to 240, buildings, shows in back rooms of pubs as well as on main stages, site-specific, indoors and outdoors. He has worked with Jasmin Vardimon on *Ticklish, Lullaby, Park, Justitia, Yesterday, 7734, FREEDOM*. Other dance work with Arthur Pita, Bock & Vincenzi, Yolande Snaith Theatredance, Walkerdance, Rosemary Lee, Requardt & Company, Ricochet, CanDoCo, Zoi Dimitriou, Dog Kennel Hill Project, Hofesh Shechter, Lea Anderson, Kate Brown, Anatomy Dance, Colin Poole, Naheed Saddiqui, et al.
A daring, sharp-edged piece of physical dance theatre, Justitia delves into the depths of our justice system, inviting the audience on an investigative journey as it unravels the multiple truths concealed behind a gripping crime story.

In a film-like replay of events, the audience witnesses the action from different perspectives – at the crime scene, in the court house, inside an intimate group therapy room – revealing new realities as a series of secrets unfold. A verdict must be reached – was it murder, manslaughter or self-defence?

Punctuated with provocative and dark humour, Justitia treats us to Vardimon’s unique brand of highly acute physical theatre, theatrically staged on a large revolving set. Fiercely athletic and intricately detailed, this production delivers a generous mix of energetic dance, a sharp script and an exhilarating soundtrack.

**Concept, Direction & Choreography:** Jasmin Vardimon

**Created with & Performed by (original cast):** Paul Blackman, Luke Burrough, Tim Casson, Christine Gouzelis, Victoria Fox, Athanasia Kanellopoulou, YunKrung Song & Jasmin Vardimon

**2013 Cast:** Paul Blackman, Luke Burrough, David Lloyd, Christine Gouzelis, Mafalda Deville, Estéban Fourmi, Aoi Nakamura & Jasmin Vardimon

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<th>Role</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Associate Director &amp; Dramaturgy:</strong></td>
<td>Guy Bar-Amotz</td>
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<td><strong>Script Writer:</strong></td>
<td>Rebecca Lenkiewicz</td>
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<td><strong>Costume &amp; Set Design:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Lighting Design:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Soundtrack Design &amp; Edit:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Production Manager:</strong></td>
<td>Steve Wald</td>
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<td>Ben Harries</td>
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<td><strong>Promo Video:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Premiere:</strong></td>
<td>2007 (UK Tour)</td>
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Funded by Arts Council England, commissioned by Sadler’s Wells, Gardner Arts and Hall for Cornwall and supported by the Lowry, the National Theatre Studio and Esmee Fairbairn.
How does working with a text affect your choreography?

“When creating a new work, I don’t like to feel stuck or limited to working in one style. I am interested in creating a multi-layered product that can communicate my thoughts on different levels and through different channels. The text is there to tell a story that the visual, or physical can’t tell”.

“In Justitia, the text gives us historical information on the characters and how they reached the specific point where we are seeing them. For example, it tells us the stenographer’s thoughts and her inner state of mind whilst she types. In some cases I like to use text to create another layer of information that can actually contradict what we see on stage (like in the evidence scene). Some people will trust what they hear, when others will only believe what they see, but it is the combination of both that creates the complexity we have in life”.

Interview with: Helen Snell

What has drawn you to explore the justice system in Justitia?

“My inspiration comes mainly from the life around me, around us. Life takes its course and along this journey there are significant moments that influence me and trigger a creation.

For Justitia, which I created in 2007, it was the notions of guilt and justice in their wide and narrow scale that were constantly on my mind. The piece is set in two locations: a courtroom where you traditionally try to prove “not guilty”, and a group therapy for people who live with guilt, where you try to openly express your guilt.

The story follows a crime case where the events are replayed several times from different perspectives. The audience are in a similar position to a jury; they keep receiving new information that every time creates a new truth, a new reality.

Each audience member has a different point of view, but is there one absolute truth?

Does what we see dictate our point of view, or is it our point of view that dictates what we see?”.

How did your collaboration with Rebecca Lenkiewicz come about?

“I have worked through several development periods at the National Theatre Studio, where I developed the first stage of this piece. After the first period, I discussed with the Director of the NT Studio my interest in collaborating with a script writer. Rebecca was suggested, among others. I read many scripts and decided to work with her. The process of interpreting my ideas into another person’s words was challenging and the text travelled a lot between us until it arrived at its final destination”.
LUKE – Charlie

This is your 6th production for Jasmin, what attracts you to her work?

“I came from an acting background before I started to dance and was involved in a lot of youth theatre. I had worked with other dance companies such as Green Candle, creating children’s dance theatre tours and I trained at Laban, a dance college that places an emphasis on the emotion of movement rather than movement for movement’s sake, and that’s what I love about Jasmin’s work. It’s about feeling the character and the narrative of the whole production – her work is very much at the theatrical end of the dance spectrum, which really appeals to me”.

How has your experience of working with Jasmin developed?

“The process has remained quite similar each time, as Jasmin is always interested in building a character and she fits that into her overall idea of what she imagines the piece is going to be – that can be quite elusive to the performer during the rehearsal process and can be very challenging - I certainly found it hard to begin with, not really knowing the through-line as such. There’s no script to guide us at the beginning, it’s really down to having trust and faith in what Jasmin will do at the end of the day. Some of the performers who haven’t worked with her before found it quite a difficult process, but satisfying in the end”.

Justitia’s story is told through the integration of dance, movement and script. How did you approach this in rehearsals?

“We started working on the characters long before the script arrived. As performers, it takes time to find your own personal journey with a given character, but I realise that’s how Jasmin works - so I was maybe more relaxed about it, knowing it would all come good in the end. Rebecca, the script writer came to rehearsals early on to get an idea of the characters we had created. It was still early days when she first joined us and the characters weren’t entirely clear for us, so it was challenging work for everyone. The rehearsal process was a joint collaboration between Rebecca, Jasmin and the performers, and once the characters became more defined and Jasmin had settled on the narrative that she wanted, Rebecca was able to cement some of the script. Jasmin has the final edit, but there’s certainly a lot of input from the performers and everyone brings something of themselves to the role. It’s always a work in progress with Jasmin and it’s been changing all the time - nothing is ever perfect enough to be fixed forever”.

Has the process changed now that the company is creating work for larger theatres?

“Jasmin has always been very specific about what she wanted so the process is the same, just more lights to focus, and bigger sets to negotiate. The attention to detail hasn’t changed at all”.

Have you experienced any specific challenges working with the Justitia set?

“Locating it during the rehearsal period was tricky as it was difficult to house it in a big enough rehearsal space! The revolving stage that we’re working with means there’s always something to do - if you’re not on stage, you may be turning it or setting something round the back. There’s never a moment to relax, but I prefer this as a performer. I don’t like sitting around kicking my heels waiting to go on”.

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TIM – TJ

How does your character react to what goes on in the courtroom?

“TJ the security guard gets to hear everyone’s point of view, but I think it’s all in a day’s work for him. Sometimes he responds to the characters in the courtroom – he’s either disgusted by them or in contrast, he reveres them – but he doesn’t get too involved and remains fairly emotionally detached. I think deep down he really wants to be free - his solos his movement is always just trying to escape and get out of his body”.

Tell us how you were able to add your own creative input

“We get set lots of tasks to help create the movement for our characters, which Jasmin then plays with and chooses which elements to develop. I perform a duet with Christine, and I was set a task to study how she moved. That was really fascinating as I had to learn somebody else’s body movement which is totally different to mine. I created some material in the style of her movement, which we combined with her own material to make our duet. It was great, and we discovered a strong dynamic”.

CHRISTINE – The Stenographer

This is your first time working with Jasmin, is the process very different to working with other choreographers in your experience?

“Jasmin’s work is very intelligent and creative, and there’s a unique chemistry between us that inspires me to be more creative than ever before. Jasmin is willing to focus on each performer to develop a character that you wouldn’t even try to explore on your own. Compared to other choreographers she is very pure in her thoughts and her ideas, and I like the fact that she integrates all artforms – it’s not only dance, or movement, she combines all elements of theatre – she weaves it all into a beautiful pattern”.

How has Jasmin’s approach impacted you as a performer?

“The work is very physical and demanding, but at the end of the week you feel a huge sense of achievement at having explored so many different processes and ideas. She gives each of us the time to explore so many levels, and I have gained much more from this than I could ever have imagined, and I thank her for it. I feel there’s still more for me to give – we’ve created many ideas that haven’t been put in this piece and I hope we have the opportunity to develop them further in the future”.

Tell us about your character in Justitia

“My character, the stenographer, lives her everyday life in the courtroom. On the surface it appears that she has a very plain existence, but in contrast, we reveal the imagination that she keeps inside of her. She is quite an anti-social person and the only contact she has with people is through her work. She creates her own little imaginary life stories for the people she encounters in the courtroom. Her typewriter is a symbol of this - we focused on the quality of her fingertips, like the way a spider weaves a web, knitting together people’s stories”.

What emotions have you experienced in developing your character?

“It’s a choking feeling when you’re playing this role as you’re always wanting without getting. I feel there’s a great deal to seek in her character – she’s quite mysterious, with many secrets that she can only reveal through body language. It’s a very stimulating challenge”.

Photo: Alastair Muir
VICTORIA – Defense Lawyer

Your character is the narrator of the story. How do you balance your speaking role with the physical demands of the piece?

“As the defense lawyer I have the largest speaking role, which is a challenge in itself. I haven’t had a great deal of experience working with texts before, so we worked with a voice coach from the National Theatre which was extremely helpful, especially for helping to project my voice. There are certain points in the piece where I have to move from very physical movement straight into text, which I have struggled with, but I’m learning how to cope with both approaches at the same time. It’s well worth it, as it’s great to have a character with multi-sides to her and a range of emotions to explore”.

Has your speaking role helped you to convey the emotions of your character?

“For me it’s easier to translate emotion through movement as that’s what I’m used to, but now it’s been really invigorating for me to work with texts and to integrate movement and speech into a whole performance”.

How did you develop your character in rehearsals?

“Jasmin had the idea of a female defense lawyer – she wanted to create a very strong woman, very good at what she does, very good at presenting the case and fighting for what she believes is the truth. I spent some time researching various law cases – reading about real life stories and watching courtroom dramas on film and TV. The challenge was to put this all together and make my character believable on stage by actually creating a person very truthful to myself. Jasmin helps us as performers to reach into ourselves to try and achieve this”.

Which tasks helped to define your character?

“One of my early tasks was to wear high heels! I never wear them in real life at all, I’m always in trainers – but wearing high heels immediately made me walk differently and made me present myself in a new way which helped start to build the physical movements of my character”.

ATHANASIA – “The Neighbour”

Tell us about your character

“She’s a lady who is not quite schizophrenic but is multi-charactered – for example, she changes from being a very neurotic woman who doesn’t know where she is and where she belongs and finds herself running all over the place; to being a seductress, with eyes for her neighbour; to being a rough and aggressive woman, lashing out and trying to vandalise him”.

How did you explore your character in rehearsals?

“One of the tasks Jasmin set me was to create a sequence with Luke with three different versions. The first version would be to create a very neurotic and anxious woman who goes to his house and makes everything a mess. I found this easy to develop as I’m quite like this in real life! The second version was to create the aggressive woman, which I found much harder – she’s not very feminine, which is very unlike me, so I tried to imagine someone in everyday life and to adapt this to my character. You have to bring your own feeling into it, and I’ve really grown with this character as I’m always bringing more of myself as the process develops”.

How much freedom do you have in your performance once your character has been established?

“The movement is choreographed and it has to be presented in a certain way, but every time I perform, it’s different. I don’t have to be the same in every single performance. It cannot happen. It has to be honest. When I try to be honest with myself, it works. If I’m not honest and I try to ‘play’ the character then you can really see it doesn’t work. Jasmin is not a choreographer who works by numbers, and she allows you the freedom to bring out something of yourself in the movement. Of course technique is important, but it’s not ‘how’ you move, it’s what ‘moves you’ from inside, and I really like that”.
PAUL – Seth, Group Therapy Leader

How did you begin to create your character, the group therapy leader?

“He’s based a little bit on the character of Tom Cruise in the movie Magnolia – that’s kind of where we started. To create the character we began with the movement, finding things that were natural for me to do. We then incorporated his mindset and how he would act, and blended them together”.

“Most dance is set to music; there are shapes and lines and so on, but when you add a character into that dance environment, that’s when the theatrical experience evolves and turns into something else. It’s a challenge to make people believe you’re someone that you’re not”.

How did you approach your speaking role?

“It was quite hard at first to get the confidence to project my voice – as most dancers don’t do that – so first of all I started ad-libbing, making stuff up that might be funny or could work in certain scenes. When the writer came into rehearsals she incorporated some of the lines that I was already using and worked them into the script. I have had speaking roles before, but never actual lines to learn with a real narrative thread. The hardest part for me was to connect the two - you can't just move, stop, and say your lines, you have to integrate each story-telling approach into the whole performance. But it's been awesome fun, and cool to move beyond the confines of dance”.

Your performance embraces a wide range of dance styles. Tell us about your training

“My mum was in the circus and when she was younger she owned a sports acrobatics school in Australia. She used to teach me forward and backward rolls, back flips and cartwheels so that’s where my acrobatic skills originated. I started my dance training with ballet, which I took seriously for many years – but in the end it wasn’t really for me. I discovered my true passion in dance when I started B-Boying (break-dancing) and totally fell in love with the free expression it offered me. I took a couple of classes and found I could incorporate a lot of my own stuff, from ballet, acrobatics and contemporary dance which I was learning at the same time and kind of melded them all together. I love throwing a b-boy skill into the Justitia piece - it gives me the chance to practise plus its enjoyable to make people go wow!”.

You pull off some impressive stunts on stage. How did you work on these in rehearsals?

“The stunts with Luke were created by initially roughing around in the rehearsal room. We found moves that ‘looked’ painful - but actually aren’t. It’s all in the way you throw and receive the energy from each other. There’s a point when he hits me over the head with a cushion or when he throws me onto the couch – it’s the way you land or get hit that makes it look realistic – so if you make it look like a bigger deal than it really is, it'll work. It's definitely about trust between us, if he goes in without thinking, we’re both going to get hurt.”.

Photo: Alastair Muir
Did you do a lot of research to get into the mindset of your character?

“I watched about 20 films to help find my own character, and I read about Ruth Ellis, the last person to be hanged in the UK in 1955. I also visited a hospital to talk to a woman who lost a baby – this experience helped me understand Mimi’s emotions and helped me discover the feelings that I needed to convey. I spent much more time researching my character in Justitia than for PARK”.

How do you translate these emotions into movement?

“Jasmin would ask me to create a certain movement then ask me to change the qualities – for example, from a really strict movement to a smooth and flowing one. The change of quality in each movement helped me to connect my emotion – it’s easier for me to connect with the character this way”.

The title of the piece suggests that Justitia – lady justice – presides over the courtroom. Is your character a winner or a victim of the Justice system?

“My character looks really innocent but there’s more to her than what you initially see on the surface. She changes her character so much in each scene, it’s really up to the audience to decide whether she is innocent or not and whether Justice is served”.

Interview with: Helen Snell
Understanding the process we can go through and start to unpick each element that has helped to create such an exciting example of dance theatre. This analysis can be used as a starting point for students to interpret the piece, as Vardimon, with all of her work, trusts the viewer to understand her work individually. There is no right, or wrong interpretation. Much of this information was taken from Mairead Turner’s (At the time of interview - Chief Executive of South East Dance) conversation with Jasmin Vardimon.

Process

Each choreographer’s process is often a unique experience.

Vardimon began Justitia exploring the specific location of the courtroom and the idea of different realities and how to present them to an objective jury. The courtroom is an apt representation and reflection of the dominant attitudes, beliefs and rules of a given time. A courtroom is a location like Vardimon’s previous settings of a hospital and a park that form the grand civic, public spaces where our private lives and ambitions are played out and where we can be caught at our most emotional and vulnerable. This research allows images and ideas to flow.

The process with the dancers then commences as Vardimon strips away their habits, pushing their boundaries and studies their other qualities that they may never have explored before. Of this process she says “for the dancers it feels as though we throw a lot away but for me it’s a way to map ideas, and I learn about the dancers. I’m looking for dancers that I feel are able to explore their versatility, that can open up, take risks, trust me, go through the process and adapt quickly”. This process results in the development of each dancer’s character.

Photo: Alastair Muir
Vardimon has gradually introduced text into her works over the years. She finds the use of text liberating, enabling her to include scenes such as the group therapy sessions, which alternate between harrowing, illuminating and scornfully funny vignettes on the human psyche and behaviour. The group therapy illustrates people dealing with their guilt in contrast to the courtroom where they are busy proving their innocence. The therapy sessions also serve to implicate us in our narrowing objectivity as we grow more sympathetic to the psychology of the characters. With the use of text at the beginning, when projected onto the set, it signals the unswerving solidity of words, which can be cleanly recorded and recalled in stark contrast to the transitory and unreliable nature of dance, which can be something more ambiguous, fragile and anamorphous.

The script is then developed with the scriptwriter. Vardimon worked with Rebecca Lenkiewicz on Justitia, using text to communicate thoughts, feelings and ideas that the movement may be unreliable in displaying.

The final part of the creative process for Vardimon is layering the music, which is highly unusual in the dance-making scene and much more aligned to the film industry. Only when the movement is created does Vardimon work with the sound designer and the score. This approach has developed because she finds music so influential and wants to rely primarily on the concept, entrusting the music to serve as the atmosphere.

The Set and use of Props

A revolving stage is used, split into three sections allowing each scene to flow seamlessly into the next. Three recognisable scenes are the court house, the crime scene and the group therapy room.

Facts are projected onto the set, as the stenographer types at the beginning of the piece, showing the multifaceted uses of the imaginatively constructed revolving stage. The chairs used are also slotted into the set and used within the movement vocabulary.

Characters

Justitia involves eight characters, including Vardimon. These characters were initially developed by the original cast.

Vardimon features in the piece and one interpretation of her relevance is that she represents Lady Justice. Justitia is Latin for Lady Justice, the Roman Goddess of Justice. So perhaps Vardimon represents this particular theme of the production and its connection with law and order.

Costume

The dancers wear everyday clothing, further demonstrating their characters.
Vardimon enjoys allowing the viewer to interpret her work individually. The reviews included in this pack shows some interpretation of the movement. At the end of the work stillness is used, as the stage revolves, revealing dancers stilled in time, captured like a lived stop frame animation, somehow in the midst of their lives. It feels intrusive and accidental, stumbled upon, yet unbearably sad and beautiful.

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**Sound**

Below is a list of all the pieces of music used in *Justitia*. The music is used to enhance the atmosphere of the production.

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<tr>
<th>Title of Work</th>
<th>Composer/Author/Arranger</th>
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<tr>
<td>Hallelulwah Taga Mago</td>
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<td>Duoon</td>
<td>Carlsten Nicolai &amp; Ryuichi Sakamato</td>
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<td>Prowler</td>
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<td>Evening Tango</td>
<td>Roger Eno</td>
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<td>Chalcony in G Minor</td>
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THE STAGE // 11 May 2007

In her latest dance theatre piece, Justitia, Jasmin Vardimon matches narrative clarity with astonishing visual imagery in a balance that is notoriously difficult to achieve. Where the text in much dance theatre relies on a clumsy mix of memories and observations devised by the performers, Justitia wisely uses a script, by writer Rebecca Lenkiewicz, which provides a solid structure for Vardimon's movement to enhance, explore and illuminate.

The premise is a murder trial, where we are presented with a number of variations on the events of the fatal evening. Dancers Paul Blackman and YunKrung Song - playing the victim and the accused - get the chance to really test their versatility as actor/performers and both come off well. Also impressive is Victoria Fox as the defence lawyer, who must carry the narrative as well as throwing herself into the extreme physicality of Vardimon's choreography.

Just as Vardimon realises the limitations of movement to convey a detailed narrative, she capitalises on its power, beyond words, to cleverly construct or deconstruct characters. And she manages the changing pace and mood of the piece, from humour to horror, without losing coherence.

Integral to the show is the brilliant rotating set, divided into three interconnected spaces, and dramatically lit. One wall is riddled with holes and pierced by sharp shafts of light, each looking like the sword of Lady Justice herself. The production values are high, but that would be irrelevant without substance. Luckily, Justitia is a piece of powerful choreography with that rare commodity - genuine theatrical appeal.

by Lyndsey Winship

NOTTINGHAM EVENING POST

This extraordinary piece takes us to the edge of the modern dance genre. At times it plunges into legitimate theatre: each performer plays, not simply a representative type, but a real, well-delineated character with a name and a personal narrative.

It's a courtroom drama: a woman is on trial for the murder of her husband's friend. The interval serves as a recess during which we're invited by the defence lawyer to consider our verdict.

Essentially the first half consists of enactment of various hypotheses as to how the killing occurred: it incorporates repetition and amusing slow-motion rewinds, all remarkably well done. The second half opens out into a general exploration of the concept of guilt before telling us what really happened.

On a visually stunning revolving set, the performers move with amazing suppleness and agility, not only on the floor but up the walls, evoking a nightmarish quality. Music and sound effects, and a screen on which the work of the court stenographer is displayed, are essential components of a rich and satisfying evening. 

by Alan Geary

Photo: Alastair Muir
Jasmin Vardimon’s works belong to this hybrid kind of performance in which the genres lose their importance. Theatre, dance, text and new media make up a colorful mosaic. Justitia epitomizes all the elements which persistently return in Vardimon’s works, supreme above them the body, which exposes and at the same time celebrates. A body of athletic endurance and performance, which seems not to be subject to physical limitations and to ignore "common obstacles", such as bones, joints and tendons. Also evident is an explosive mix of choreography and theatrical elements, her ironic gaze, the undiminished intensity with which she pushes the action ahead, her highlighting of social stereotypes, the crude representation of sexuality and aggression and, finally, a female gender in a position of supremacy, strong, seducing and dangerous.

Yet, what inspired Jasmin Vardimon to compose this extravagant psychological thriller and incorporate in it all sorts of references, from Pompeii to Ruth Ellis, who killed her lover and became the last woman to be executed by hanging in England, in 1955? "I usually start with a location, such as the hospital in Lullaby and the court of justice in Justitia".1 There is something strangely fascinating about the courtroom. It is a peculiarly theatrical place, with its own stage (the judge bench) and seating area (the public gallery), and it hosts the trial "performance", in which there are well defined roles, operations, movements, often even costumes for the participants. It is a key institution, with meticulously specified and strict procedures and irrevocable judgment. In the courtroom of Justitia, the defense attorney places us into the extreme position of the jury and invites us on a struggle to reconstruct the truth.

Throughout this journey, we are confronted with the fragile fluidity of life: different versions of the facts, the secrecy of private moments, the sensitivity of personal confessions and a Cassandra who, with the full weight of her name, transcribes by shorthand an inescapable destiny.

Given the impossible task of finding the truth, questions arise over the nature and substance of guilt and justice, as the individual comes up against social mechanisms on an impressive rotating stage, which is more than just a stage device: The rotation establishes a convention that allows Vardimon to weave into an invisible web the events and the questions, the structures and the souls, the places and the bodies. It enables the locations to turn from communicating vessels into inaccessible constructions and the characters to retract what they had revealed. It enables objects, movement and language to enter and exit, to communicate and to be separated, to register and to delete (as in the fun rewind scenes) endlessly and inexorably. In this open network of a closed stage, Vardimon’s performers seem to be suspended between height and depth, between the delineated area of the stage and the uncertain area that extends beyond its limits.

In the chaos of probabilities, the body is revealed as physically strong but fragile in context. And if, in contemporary dance, the dancers are not dancing "from the ground up" but "with the ground", for Justitia the ground is always a sought-after connection. And so is the truth.

For the catalog of the 15th Kalamata International Dance Festival, July 16-26 2009, on the occasion of the performance of Justitia on 19/7 & 20/7 in the Castle Amphitheatre of Kalamata www.kalamatadancefestival.gr

*Interview of Jasmin Vardimon to Christos Polymenakos, Highlights magazine 37, November-December 2008, p.108  Translation into English: Dimitris Saltabassiss
The Jasmin Vardimon Company Education Programme provides an insight into Vardimon's choreographic and artistic process and aims to develop participants' dance and theatre skills. The programme offers workshops, master-classes, residencies and printed resource materials.

Workshops can be based purely on physical skills and repertoire, or can also include explorations of socially relevant themes. The 'Vardimon' style inevitably works with the themes which dominate JVC's work - observations of human behaviour and contemporary social issues.

Participants will have the opportunity to experience Jasmin Vardimon's methodology first hand by working directly with Jasmin Vardimon Company members.

There are two main workshop options:

**Repetoire Workshop**

Consists of a contemporary technique class, repertoire and a creative session exploring Vardimon's unique approach to creating work. Workshops are offered at all levels of ability from beginner to advanced level and can be tailored to meet specific needs.

**Choreographic Workshop**

Aimed at meeting the requirements of both the BTEC Physical Theatre unit and the A-level group choreography unit. These workshops focus on developing improvisation skills and creating original movement material form a given stimulus. These workshops can also be adapted to suit other groups e.g. undergraduate dance/physical theatre students.

Jasmin Vardimon Company also works with venues and National Dance Agencies to offer everything from introduction to contemporary dance sessions right up to company class for professional dancers’ on-going development.

**Workshop Prices:**

£350 Half Day (Up to 3 Hours)  
£450 Full Day (Up to 6 Hours)

Prices are excluding VAT.

Dancers travel by second class public transport (and will require overnight accommodation where necessary) - expenses for these items will be recharged to those booking the workshop. Please book well in advance so that we can obtain the best possible deals for travel.

Workshops require a warm and clean space with a floor suitable for dancing on, and a CD/iPod Connection and stereo. Workshops are suitable for up to 25 participants per session. It is also advisable for all participants to wear appropriate shoes and knee pads but this is not essential.

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