

JAMES COUSINS COMPANY

A woman with braided hair, wearing a gold sequined crop top and matching shorts, is captured in a dynamic dance pose. She has her arms raised and hands clasped, looking off to the side with a focused expression. The background is a dimly lit club with warm, golden lighting and blurred figures of other people. The overall mood is energetic and glamorous.

WE
ARE AS
GODS

JAMES COUSINS COMPANY

WE ARE AS GODS

“A night to remember”

“Are we present in the dancers’ imaginary world, or they in our real one? The question itself becomes one of the evening’s pleasures Sumptuousness and sensuality is everywhere. We are guided by languid performers draped in gauzes, their eyes and lips daubed silver – part caryatid, part starship trooper.”

[The Guardian](#)

400 extra tickets sold out in 1.5 hours

“such a striking, invigorating, surprising and thought-provoking evening. My friend and I had the best time! It was a spectacular and meaningful evening. I had so many reflections on divinity, humanity and other lessons.”

2021 Audience member

Finalists for an OFFIES 2022 Award: IDEA PRODUCTION



Photo: Camilla Greenwell

IMPORTANT NOTE

Information in this document is confidential & not intended for public circulation. If you require public-facing copy or images for this production, please contact: admin@jamescousinscompany.com

WE ARE AS GODS

The sell-out immersive production from **James Cousins Company**, initially presented by **Battersea Arts Centre**.

THE PERFORMANCE

As the audience enter the venue performers are draped over banisters, decorating stairways, and floating through building as languid angelic statues with inviting gazes and a lazy elegance causing whispers of excitement to buzz around a growing crowd which are already exploring the building.

“Here is a Space” cuts through the air as poetry from Sabrina Mahfouz marks the start of the experience and the building comes to life. Each room presents a unique experience; powerful writhing duets with impressive lifts balanced with tender moments. Electric group performances from the UK’s most exciting dance talent pump energy throughout the building. The 2 hours experience moves seamlessly across the building and culminates with all performers and audience in one space for a climatic ending encouraging the audience to dance.

The show presents a secret space of vibrance and madness. As an explosive celebration of a new world, it touches on themes of collective responsibility, the joy and tenderness of relationships. It creates a space for queer narratives, youth subcultures, discovery and freedom of expression akin to the intoxicated elatedness of city nightlife. All the while the text and experience invites audiences to consider how we come together to build a better future by inhabiting space safely together.

The choreography is a hypnotic blend of contemporary dance with commercial appeal and nods to ballroom, jazz and tap. The music is as eclectic with an original score blending Shostakovich with Little Simz, Goldfrapp with George Michael and M.I.A with Whitney Houston mixed and edited by sound design duo Torben Lars Sylvest & Par Carlsson, so the soundtrack of each room blends with the space next door to build a full atmosphere.

Amidst the thumping music and dimly glowing bulbs of the naturally choreographed tour, you’d be forgiven for forgetting our world altogether as the audience are transported in rhythmic escapism.

“a night to remember” **** [The Guardian](#)

THE AUDIENCE EXPERIENCE

Audiences are free to wonder across the building. Dancer’s silent commands, pervasive smiles and inviting eyes will guide audiences seamlessly towards their next adventure. Each person’s experience is completely unique and randomised. The soundtrack and atmosphere created by the show clings to the air like dry ice for a 2 hours experience that offers audiences the change to eat, drink, talk and witness dance close up.

Built for the Gen Z and Millennial experience this show is conceived as a blend between an immersive show, gallery experience and club night out. The relaxed experience allows food and drink to be served, audiences to chat and share the experience on social media.

THE PARTICIPANTS EXPERIENCE

At the heart of *We Are As Gods* is 3 key participation strands:

1. 20-30 Local Emerging Dancers

We will deliver an in-depth free talent development programme for emerging dancers in each area preparing them for successful careers through:

- 5 weeks of rehearsals & creation
- Professional level class
- Training & performance alongside leading artists in the field
- Performance experience

2. Local Secondary Schools

Working with 2 schools per location to deliver a high-level cultural opportunity for BTEC students for development of creativity & critical thinking with application of site-specific practices - currently not addressed in the curriculum. Each school receives:

- Repertoire workshop based on themes of WAAGs & intro to site specific creation.
- Behind the scenes experience during tech week to see other aspects of theatre: technical, lighting, design, wardrobe + talks from show creatives
- Visit to watch dress rehearsal
- Schools resource pack created to support learning & creation of immersive work

3. Older Adults aged 55+

Weekly sessions delivered by JCC dancer + local artist will lead guided social dance workshops. The final 2 sessions take place in the performance venue during dress rehearsal & performance to integrate social dance into the show. This involvement in a production w/out a focus on performance is to remove pressure of a from workshops instead place importance on engagement by creating a space to sustain older people through physical & mental wellbeing & reduce loneliness.



Emerging Dancers 2021. Photo: Camilla Greenwell

CREATIVE TEAM

Conceived by James Cousins with Hannes Langolf, Alethia Antonia & Gareth Mole

Choreography by James Cousins in collaboration with the dancers

Lighting Designer Lee Curran

Set & Costume Designer Jasmine Swan

Composer Torben Lars Sylvest

Sound Designer Pär Carlsson

Writer Sabrina Mahfouz

Associate Choreographer - Gareth Mole

Dramaturg Hannes Langolf

Creative Associate Alethia Antonia

Assistant Choreographer George Frampton

Created and performed by Alethia Antonia, Jemima Brown, Tom Davis Dunn, Georges Hann, Meshach Henry, Amy Hollinshead, Chihiro Kawasaki, Salome Pressac, Matthew Sandiford

Produced by Hannah Gibbs

KEY INFORMATION

Duration: approximately 110 minutes (no interval)

Lead Performers: 10

Ensemble Performers: 30 (local performers)

Premiere: 6th October 2021, London



Photo: Camilla Greenwell

THE PRODUCTION

The framework of the show designed to adapt to buildings. Minimal but expressive set features is designed to work with and highlight the natural architecture of the building. The performance is made in sections which, like a jigsaw, can be restructured to adapt to the layout of the building.

Designed as an immersive piece, the piece is intended to be seen by a mobile audience who journey throughout the building encountering captivating dance in unusual spaces. The show is brought together by a building wide soundtrack creating the environment of a club. Performers navigate from space-to-space enticing audience members to follow them into unique rooms.

The piece offers a local engagement project with employment opportunities for 30 local emerging dance artists or structure project with local dancers in training.

Spaces:

Suitable spaces would either comprise of connected rooms, or a large space which can be divided to form the playing spaces and the surrounding corridors, basements, and stairways E.g., open warehouse, town hall, gallery space or old factory. Audience capacity will be tailored to the specific spaces.

The show can incorporate, attic, basement and outdoor spaces.
It makes use of bars running and serving throughout the performance.

Set:

Set to the heartbeat of city nightlight the piece will use oversized set pieces including a large LED cube, oversized disco balls, gold dripped statues, neon signs and fake grass. The piece is designed to draw the architecture and style of the building into the design to transform the building into a dream-like world.

The set remains static - no crew needed to support scene changes with scene changes.

Soundtrack:

The piece will be accompanied by a pre-recorded soundtrack with all spaces time coded to run alongside each other and is queued at the top of the show. Each room or divided space has an individual score which is mixed to blend with the score of adjacent spaces - incorporating sound bleed into the edit of tracks. At times the score in multiple rooms link to play the same track. A building wide soundtrack is played to keep the atmosphere bubble in communal or non-performance spaces.

Additional:

Dressing Rooms, Wardrobe, Green Room, crew room, and Technical control spaces will all need to be found, created or adapted on site.

CREW

3-5 Stage managers (depending on building)
Sound Engineer
Lighting Technician
Production Manager
Freight: 1 truck



Photo: Camilla Greenwell

VIDEO LINKS

We Are As Gods Performance Trailer: <https://youtu.be/G3wRopiSsil>

- an example of the content that is part of the performance

We Are As Gods Concept Film: https://youtu.be/d5zNhG_u5A

- a concept film based on the experience of the performance

↳ You Retweeted



Edén Jun (She/her) @EdénHJun · Oct 8

...

Couldn't have asked for a better show to mark my first ever visit to @battersea_arts last night! Mysterious, playful, and pulsating performances by @JamesCousinsCo and the fiercely challenging yet intimate words by @SabrinaMahfouz = magic ✨👏🎭🌟 #WeAreAsGods

CONTACT:

Hannah Gibbs (Producer): hannah@jamescousinscomapny.com | 0044 7717 06439

CREATIVE TEAM BIOGRAPHIES



JAMES COUSINS creation, choreography, direction

Recognized by **Time Out** magazine as one of the future faces of dance, James has been commissioned to create work for companies around the world including National Ballet of Chile, Opera Graz, Royal Ballet of Flanders, and Scottish Ballet. An interest in diverse work has led him to collaborate with a number of international renowned progressive

artists including **Nadav Kander**, Zena Holloway, **GAIKA** and **Zaha Hadid Architects**. He has worked as associate choreographer to **Arlene Phillips** and was recently appointed co-director to **Nicholas Hytner** for *Book of Dust - La Belle Sauvage* at the Bridge Theatre.

In 2014 he, and Francesca Mosely founded James Cousins Company (JCC) which creates strikingly original dance experiences that connect us all through stories that matter. The company has been on 4 extensive UK tours as well as extensive international tours in Europe, South America, and South East Asia. In 2016 our film *Within Her Eyes* was added to the GCSE Dance syllabus in England and in 2019 the company was nominated for **Best Independent Company** at the National Dance Awards.

James Cousins is a bold refreshing choreographic voice whose 'deep reflections on human interactions' have astonished audiences worldwide. Known for marrying emotional profundity with incredibly challenging choreography his work is dynamical charged and provokes thoughts on fresh issues 'articulating [stories] so strongly through the body in motion' (Critic, 2019). Using contemporary dance as is primary language he consciously embraces the commercial appeal of other styles creating movement which appeals to much a wider audience and reigniting contemporary as young, exciting, and mainstream.

LEE CURRAN

Lighting



Lee Curran is a lighting designer of theatre, dance, and opera. Lee has worked with artists and organisations such as the **National Theatre**, Royal Court, Hofesh Shechter, Regent's Park Open Air Theatre, Almeida Theatre, Royal Shakespeare Company, Rambert Dance Company, **Donmar Warehouse**, Royal Opera House, Royal Exchange Manchester, LIFT, Boy Blue Entertainment, Young Vic, English Touring Theatre, Nederland's Dans Theatre, and the Royal Danish Opera.

In 2019, Lee's design for Summer and Smoke at the Almeida Theatre and Duke of York's Theatre London was nominated for an **Olivier Award**. This followed a **Knight of Illumination** nomination for the same. In 2017, Lee's design for Jesus Christ Superstar at Regent's Park Open Air Theatre was nominated for an Olivier Award and a Knight of Illumination Award. He previously received an Olivier nomination in 2013 for Constellations at the Royal Court and Duke of York's, and in 2016 was nominated for a Knight of Illumination Award for Orphee et Eurydice at the Royal Opera House.

Credit: Photography from We Are As Gods, by Camilla Greenwell

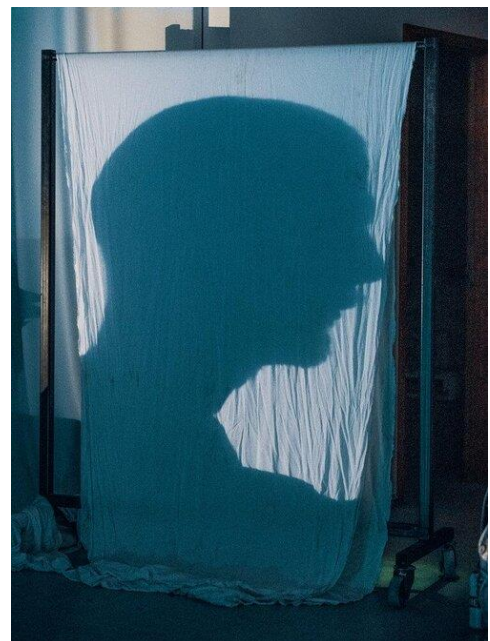
TORBEN LAYS SYLVEST

Composer

Torben Lars Sylvest is a music producer and composer creating original scores for dance theatre and film. Sylvest's unique musical voice grows out of his passion for building worlds. By collaborating with artists with important things to say and sensitively crafting scores he helps to develop and facilitate urgent narratives.

He is a leading figure in UK hip-hop dance theatre with internationally touring works and a list of collaborators that include some of the most exciting choreographers and companies working in dance today such as: Scottish Dance Theatre, National Youth Dance Company, Danza Contemporanea de Cuba, **Ivan Blackstock**, James Cousins, Kwame Asajo-Adjei, Matthew Robinson (VERVE) and scored extensively for Botis Seva whose collaboration 'BLKDOG' earned the 2019 **Olivier Award** for Best New Dance.

Sylvest has worked with a number of up-and-coming London-based vocal artists, producing the break out single 'Creeping' for the critically acclaimed Obongjayar.



SABRINA MAHFOUZ

Writer



'In quite a different league...She speaks lyrically and powerfully...a real find.' The Times.

Sabrina Mahfouz is a writer and performer, raised in London and Cairo. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature (FRSL) and resident writer at **Shakespeare's Globe Theatre**.

Sabrina's published and produced theatre work includes *A History of Water in the Middle East* (**Royal Court**); *Smashing It: Working Class Artists on Life, Art and Making it Happen* (Saqi); *Dry Ice*, for which she was nominated in The Stage Awards for Acting Excellence; *With a Little Bit of Luck*, which won Best Drama Production in the **BBC Radio & Music Awards 2019**; *Clean*, a Herald Angel Award winner which transferred to New York and she recently adapted Malorie Blackman's celebrated YA novel *Noughts & Crosses* for Pilot Theatre.

Sabrina is the editor of *The Things I Would Tell You: British Muslim Women Write* (Saqi), a 2017 Guardian Book of the Year, a London's Big Read finalist and selected by Emma Watson for her feminist book club, Our Shared Shelf. She was an essay contributor to the award-winning anthology *The Good Immigrant* (Unbound).

JASMIN SWAN

Design

Jasmine Swan is an award nominated Set & Costume Designer interested in creating surreal, abstract and expressionistic spaces for theatre, opera, dance and events. She received an **Offie nomination** for Best Set Design for *Shook* at Southwark Playhouse and *Chutney* at the Bunker Theatre, a Stage Debut Awards nomination for a Debut Season of work: *Hyem* (Theatre503) and was a Linbury Prize Stage Design Finalist in 2017. Jasmine was Laboratory Associate Designer at Nuffield Southampton Theatres 2017/18. She has worked on a number of productions with organisations including **HOME Manchester**, **Atmos VR**, **Sky Arts** and **DEM Productions**



THE CAST

