

# KWPR

# PRESS RELEASE

# SHAKTI

in the West End premiere of her  
acclaimed Edinburgh Festival hit

# The Pillow Book

THURSDAY AUGUST 29

& MONDAY 2 - SATURDAY 7 SEPTEMBER

**7 PERFORMANCES ONLY!**

PRESS NIGHT: THURSDAY AUGUST 29 AT 9.00PM

## Arts Theatre

GREAT NEWPORT STREET, LONDON WC2

BOX OFFICE: 020 7836 3334

NIGHTLY AT 9.00PM TICKETS: £15.00 (£10.00 CONCS)

COMBINED TICKET TO SEE VAGINA MONOLOGUES & THE PILLOW BOOK £25.00

**Inimitable, outrageous, scandalous** – Japanese dancer **Shakti** makes her West End debut for 7 performances of her acclaimed production, **The Pillow Book** at the Arts Theatre from August 29 - September 7.

A glorious celebration of women's sexuality, Shakti ends up completely naked, her body a canvas for beautiful day-glo painted images, whipping herself into an almost-demonic, explosive finale of passion and fire.

It is based on the works of 11th century Japanese poet Sei Shonagon, whose writings of love and liberation also inspired Peter Greenaway's film *The Pillow Book*, starring Ewan McGregor. Written at a time when women were not supposed to express their feelings, sexual or otherwise, this is a passionate piece, made even more so by Shakti's highly-charged performance.

*The Pillow Book* spans from the floating world of Kyoto courtesans through rhythms of fiery passion to a performance art finale celebration of female beauty. Against a backdrop of luxurious silk, Shakti's stately entrance is accompanied by a delicate duo of white-clad female attendants. Revealing her flowing red dance robe, they ignite her pulsating, whirling rhythms, rising to a crescendo of sensual expression and emotional force, with anguished movements proclaiming the pain as well as the joy of love. From its teasing beginning to the energetic finale, *The Pillow Book* is an incredibly erotic experience. Halfway through the show, Shakti bears all, allowing herself to be daubed all over in brightly coloured paint, a procedure which is performed with precision by Mieko Nishimura. When the body painting is finished, Shakti continues with her dance, building up to an almost demonic climax.

Shakti was born in 1957 in Kyoto, Japan to an Indian father and a Japanese mother. Her mother founded the VasantaMala Dance Company and brought Indian dance to Japan while her father founded and directed the Gandhi Institute in Kyoto. Shakti grew up with not only the rich cultural heritage of Japan but of India as well. She studied yoga with her father and dance with her mother and with the foremost gurus of India. While earning an M.A. in Indian Philosophy at Columbia University in New York City, Shakti studied modern dance with Martha Graham, Alvin Ailey and jazz dance with Luigi. Upon returning to Japan, Shakti developed a unique hybrid form of dance blending an array of Eastern dance traditions and yoga with Western jazz and contemporary rock resulting in a exotic, erotic, and shocking effect. She has been performing worldwide to great critical acclaim.

Shakti is the co-ordinator of the Japan Experience which assists and manages Japanese artists abroad. She also runs The Garage which is now one of the most prominent venues in the Edinburgh Festival Fringe hosting over 40 different companies from all over the world. The Garage International is now expanding into Avignon (France) and Adelaide (Australia).

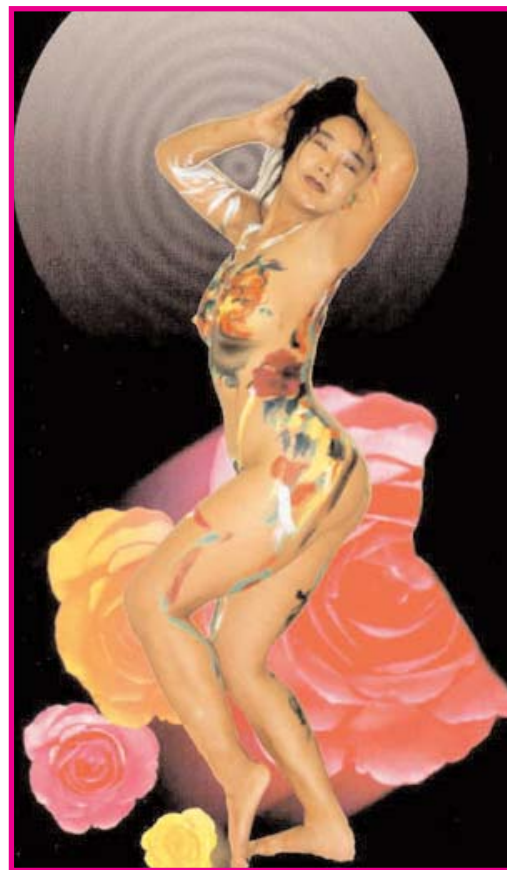
**Dubbed the 'dancing phoenix' and the 'sculpture in movement', there are no borders no boundaries for this universal artist**

Shakti is represented in the UK by The South West Anglo-Japanese Society

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'From the perverted to the erotic, Shakti's performance of *The Pillow Book* is **one of the most sensuous pieces you will see**. The highlight of this show is when her naked body is painted all over with brightly coloured designs, live on stage, an experience which, judging by the look of ecstasy on her face, feels as erotic as it looks. **A whirlwind of erotic joy.**'

The Herald

'The most indelible Fringe dance event was Indo-Japanese Festival veteran Shakti's free interpretation of *The Pillow Book*. Shakti, a wholesome exhibitionist at her most mature and child-like danced with volcanic abandon. Was it kitsch? If so, of an artfully high order.

**Shakti was magnificent!**

Donald Huttera, Dance Now

'*The Pillow Book* spans from the floating world of Kyoto courtesans through rhythms of fiery passion to a performance art finale celebration of female beauty... Shakti's pulsating, whirling rhythms, rise to **a crescendo of sensual expression and emotional force**, with anguished movements proclaiming the pain as well as the joy of love.

**This is a riveting performance.'**

The Stage