

KAAI
THEATER

BRUSSELS,
DANCE 

LAURENT CHÉTOUANE
Out of Joint / Partita 1

2>3/02/2018 • 20:30 • Kaaitheater
dance/music • 70 min.

nl/ Wat als we na eeuwen van rechtop lopen, de verticaliteit weer loslaten? Deze vraag vormt het startpunt van de nieuwe creatie van Laurent Chétouane. Centraal staat de mens in al zijn fragiliteit – tegenover een complexe en onvatbare wereld. De toekomst is onvoorspelbaar én onvoorstelbaar, terwijl een eindeloos, perspectiefloos heden hem in de houdgreep heeft.

Twee dansers en een danseres zoeken naar nieuwe evenwichten in deze ontwrichte setting. Een violist begeleidt hen ondertussen live op scène met Bachs eerste vioolpartita in b-mineur. Het tollende en meeslepende muziekstuk wordt een dankbare metgezel in de wankelende wereld die Chétouane etaleert. Misschien biedt het hier en daar zelfs troost.

- Laurent Chétouane studeerde voor ingenieur, maar maakt sinds 2007 ook indruk als choreograaf. In het Kaaitheater presenteerde hij al eerder eigenzinnige bewerkingen van bekende muzikale werken. Zo was hij te gast met *Sacré Sacre du Printemps* (2013) en *BACH/PASSION/JOHANNES* (2015).

fr/ Et si, après des siècles de bipédie, nous abandonnions la verticalité ? Cette question constitue le point de départ de la nouvelle création de Laurent Chétouane au cœur de laquelle il situe l'être humain dans toute sa fragilité face à un monde complexe et incontrôlable. L'avenir est imprévisible et inimaginable alors qu'un présent infini et sans perspective le tient sous son emprise.

Deux danseurs et une danseuse partent en quête de nouveaux équilibres dans ce décor désarticulé. Un violoniste les accompagne et interprète la *Partita n°1 en si mineur* pour violon de Bach. La musique virevoltante et entraînante devient un compagnon reconnaissant dans le monde vacillant que déploie Chétouane. Peut-être nous offre-t-elle même de-ci, de-là du réconfort ?

- Laurent Chétouane a achevé des études d'ingénieur, mais depuis 2007 il fait également une grande impression en tant que chorégraphe. Au Kaaitheater, on a déjà pu voir certaines de ses adaptations très personnelles d'œuvres musicales célèbres, comme *Sacré Sacre du Printemps* (2013) et *BACH/PASSION/JOHANNES* (2015).

en/ What would happen if we were to abandon verticality after centuries of walking upright? This question is the starting point of Laurent Chétouane's new creation. He focuses on the human person in all its fragility and in relation to a complex and incomprehensible world. The future is unpredictable and unimaginable, and yet it is in the grip of an infinite, perspectiveless present.

Two male and one female dancer search for new equilibriums in this disjointed setting. A violinist accompanies them live onstage with Bach's Partita for Violin no. 1 in B-minor. This whirling and compelling composition becomes a thankful companion in the reeling world that Chétouane exhibits. Perhaps it is occasionally even a solace.

- Laurent Chétouane studied engineering, but has been making a big impression as a choreographer since 2007. He has presented his unusual adaptations of famous musical compositions at the Kaaitheater in the past, including *Sacré Sacre du Printemps* (2013) and *BACH/PASSION/JOHANNES* (2015).

ALEXANDER GARCIA DÜTTMANN ON *OUT OF JOINT / PARTITA 1*

January, 2018

We're beginning with an exercise for all, dancers as well as audience, an exercise of dancers and audience in dance and one's vis-à-vis on the stage, which in the second part will separate the stage from the hall, transforming the dancers into dancers and the spectators into spectators. One might think that one were participating in the circling more immediately, coming closer to it when the dancers circle the spectators on the stage, make their way through the embarrassed and unprepared spectators and yet have to find into their circling. But it might also be the other way around. The spectator circles when the dancers opposite him/her on the stage begin to circle.

So something is beginning on the stage, which at the same time is the hall and therefore not a stage yet – something that continues to spin when stage and hall are eventually facing each other rigidly. That which is beginning is movements, of which one can neither say that they are improvised, nor that they are rehearsed and preassigned. The circling is always different and new, a circling with events and peculiarities, openings and shifts, decelerations and accelerations. Never a circling as pattern, never a choreography of circling, but always elliptical circling in which the choreography ceases to exist, that seals the downfall of choreography.

The circling eludes the choreographer's and the dancer's disposition. It is a circling of slight or heavy exhaustion, a circling that originates in exhaustion, a circling of exhausted bodies which never cease to circle. Not a circling yielding to arbitrariness, though. For this circling creates humour, is repeatedly pervaded by humour, and humour fetches us back even if it never does so entirely. The humour of a slash: *Out of Joint / Partita 1*.

The circling challenges the vertical and the horizontal, the raised arms and the fall, transcends both in order to touch circling in itself. While controlled circling is a conventional form, a performance of circling, uncontrolled circling that turns into sheer formlessness is a circling that no longer believes in itself.

Perhaps the circling will put us in a state of contemplation, but in a way that there is no difference any more between action and contemplation. As dancer or as spectator one does not see anything one could consider to be an answer to the question of circling. For the question itself takes on the shape of circling, becomes integrated as if it could only be answered in this manner. Does not every movement, be it that of music or that of the body, tend towards circling as its envisioned perfection, the beauty of exhaustion?

Circling is a falling-in-love, the dancers' and spectators' contemplation a loving one. At the beginning they do not yet know it. The circling falls in love with itself, and thus opens up towards the other. For one and a half hours I fell in love with a dancer who for me only exists in, and as, circling.

TORSADE DE LAURENT CHÉTOUANE

par Jean-Luc Nancy

Les danseurs enroulent et déroulent leurs corps autour d'un axe invisible qui n'est pas le leur, qui est une verticale fichée ailleurs, dans l'inapparent. Non seulement leurs pas mais leurs bras qui s'élèvent et leurs torsos qui s'inclinent en tournant sur leurs tailles composent des sortes d'hélices doubles ou simples, des involutions et des révolutions semblables à celles des lierres ou des vignes autour des supports qu'on leur donne, semblables aussi aux serpents qui s'enroulent autour du bâton d'Asklépios, semblables enfin aux feuillages dont s'entoure le thyrsos des bacchantes. Une torsade mobile entraîne chaque corps autour de lui-même, entraîne trois corps chacun autour des autres et de l'espace qu'ils ouvrent, entraîne tout un public à s'enrouler puis à se dérouler entre scène et salle.

Out of joint : hors de ses gonds, pour garder la traduction de Shakespeare par Bonnefoy. Le temps est hors de ses gonds, ça ne tourne pas rond, ça tourne autrement, ça se détourne et se contourne, ça se retourne – toujours au bord du vertige. Ça danse un lent et doux vertige. La partita est une suite de danses qui s'enchaînent et se tressent l'une à l'autre. Le violoniste entre lui aussi dans le jeu. Tout tourne mais très lentement, c'est une sarabande ralentie, déliée, qui se décompose et se recompose. C'est une bacchanale étirée, apaisée des torsos ployés et déployés, des thyrsos agités et reposés.

On entend à nouveau ce que Baudelaire écrivait à Liszt, sous le titre « Le Thyrsos » :

Ne dirait-on pas que la ligne courbe et la spirale font leur cour à la ligne droite et dansent autour dans une muette adoration ? Ne dirait-on pas que toutes ces corolles délicates, tous ces calices, explosions de senteurs et de couleurs, exécutent un mystique fandango autour du bâton hiératique ?

'CAN WE DANCE IN THIS PLACE? OR FROM THIS PLACE?'

an interview with Laurent Chétouane, by Eva Decaesstecker (Kaaitheater, January 2018)

Where did the idea of letting go of verticality come from?

This idea has occupied me for the last five years. More or less since *Sacré Sacre du Printemps*. I have been formulating it differently in the past, but the main point is about the possibility to have another relationship to frontality. Many choreographers I admire have worked on this question, such as Merce Cunningham, Deborah Hay or William Forsythe. To organise and create spaces, our eyes use frontality for primary orientation and construction system. The gaze and the verticality are related to each other. You can feel it when you get up from the floor: there is a moment when the eyes take over the movement of the body and guide your orientation. So in order to challenge frontality we need to leave out verticality and to question our relationship to our eyes while moving. Not just as a game for a few seconds, as a momentary fall – like Balanchine so brilliantly did – but as a perpetual loss.

What does this letting go of verticality mean for you? Is it a liberating gesture? Or is it rather a way of losing control?

Many questions appear when you let go of verticality: how to orientate yourself? What does movement mean when the eyes are not controlling it? What is a space without any front? What is the impact on the spectators? But what I like – to formulate it in more political terms – is the fact that it takes away the hierarchical position of the human being among the different species in nature. Animals do not know fronts as such. They are in the world, the world is not in front of them. They do not own it with their eyes. Taking away verticality puts us back in the middle of the world without anything 'elevated' anymore. Fragile. Unstable. Like our time. Without any overview which a certain use of the eyes would afford us.

We are all a bit blind today, without any orientation towards a common future. Something seems to be changing radically in the world, which questions the human being deeply. Our values and orientation systems are about to disappear. New ones will come. But we cannot think, conceptualise them right now. For the first time in the history of the modern human we are not able to anticipate and plan, project. Something will end. Can we dance in this place? Or from this place? If yes, then we need to fall...

In this perspective, dance looks very precarious, almost impossible. We feel the constant effort of finding balance without the use of our eyes, and it obliges us to think with the pure materiality of the body, its 'symmetrical' construction in order to stand. The body appears as something we can not fully master anymore. We need to enter into dialogue with all our body parts together in this very precarious state which is no longer supported by a vertical reference.

Did Bach's violin partita trigger the idea, or was it the other way around – the *Partita* seemed to fit the concept?

I have been working with Bach pieces for four years now. I'm learning to dance through him. For me, this composer is the perfect example of crossing verticality and horizontality. For me verticality is a consequence of a horizontal fall, a horizontal chaos between highly structured thinking and unpredictable events. A river with a lot of turbulences. And this produces an 'unstable stability' in

which the movement never stops. No ends, no beginnings. A constant transitionlessness. Verticals are very fragile!

Partita 1 recalls this character for me. I worked with Artiom Shishkov on a way for him to emphasise this horizontality even more, creating something like a loose spine within the music. But it is already part of Bach's music. We rather support it.

The *Partita*-pieces are study pieces. Practice pieces actually. That is what I like in these short, modest parts: they only last three or four minutes. Together with the dancers, we searched a main theme for each of the four movements, that would show the audience what this loss of verticality might entail: on a technical dance level, and more psychological. How do we meet, touch and approach each other without verticality?

Taking a musical piece as a starting point isn't new in your work. You already presented *BACH/PASSION/JOHANNES* and *Sacré Sacre du Printemps* at Kaaitheater. What moves you to depart from such masterpieces to create a choreography?

I learn from them. To me, they propose a musical space I am enveloped in. I do not understand the dance space as a Euclidian room in which music sounds. Music unfolds very special rules regarding space and can help to think about space differently, with depth, streams, velocity, thickness, turbulences, waves... *Sacré Sacre du Printemps* proposes collisions of spaces, and the floor as percussive surface. *Johannes Passion* makes you feel gravity, weight and volume. Musical pieces also helped me to understand how it is possible to move without thinking in pictures, ideality, eyes, but in volume, body, materiality.

These pieces helped me to find the body I work with on stage. And rather than reducing or destroying these pieces, as it sometimes has been seen or interpreted, I question the images of European culture we carry through these masterpieces. The expectation we have from them. They emerged at different key moments in the history of the modern subject. They formed our thinking, our verticality. In order to fall from the vertical I need to confront these references. To know what I am falling from.

Are there similarities in the way you create a choreography to these music pieces?

All my choreographic pieces are building on each other. At the end of one piece I could see the starting point for the next one. They are different, but part of the same question. I found different answers in each piece. I understand a piece as a problem that has to be solved. A bit like a mathematical demonstration. (I briefly was an engineer before I studied theatre!) They are built up very logically. Until now, all the ends were open. *Out of Joint / Partita 1* is the first piece with a clear ending. I found something with this piece. Finally.

Why is it important to have the violinist live on stage?

The violinist brings another relation to the space. He hears, and the body refers differently to verticality. Towards the end, the piece brings all these bodies together. Together they find a way of being where hearing and seeing are become equivalent. As important. Happening at the same time. Maybe a utopian place for the future.

What influence does having studied engineering have on your choreographic practice? Do you notice a way of looking or a logic that can be traced back to this study? Or are there similarities between engineering and dance? The constructive side of it maybe?

The logic. Trying to find reasons for movements which are closer to physical systems than to subjective, visual desires. The necessity of things is important to me. The logic within a system, and that the system thinks by itself. Understanding these constellations which allow this to happen is what I loved in mathematics, physics, chemistry. You are in dialogue with something bigger than you. You try to understand, to answer the question.

credits

dance Florence Casanave, Moo Kim, Mikael Marklund | **music** Artiom Shishkov (violin) | **costume** Sophie Reble | **light** Philippe Gladieux (Klaus Dust) | **production** Partita GbR | **tour assistant** Julius Graupner | **production management** Christine Kammer, Hendrik Unger | **communication** k3 berlin | **co-production** HAU Hebbel am Ufer, Kampnagel | **sponsored by** Basisförderung der Berliner Senatsverwaltung für Kultur und Europa | **supported by** the Nationales Performance Netz (NPN) Co-production Fund for Dance, which is funded by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media

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Kaaitheater • 7>9/02 •
dance/performance

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