

CCNT
CENTRE
CHORÉGRAPHIQUE
NATIONAL
DE TOURS
DIRECTION THOMAS LEBRUN

SOUS LES FLEURS

THOMAS LEBRUN
work 2023



Credits

Choreography	Thomas Lebrun
Dancers	Antoine Arbeit, Raphaël Cottin, Arthur Gautier, Sébastien Ly, Nicolas Martel
Musics	Trio Monte Alban, Maxime Fabre, Susana Harp, La Bruja de Texcoco (mixed by Seb Martel), Banda Regional Princesa Donashii, Rocio Durcal, Hector Berlioz, Eddy de Pretto, extract from MUXES, film by Ivan Olita, produced by Bravo Studio and with the voice of Felina Santiago Valdivieso
Lighting design	Françoise Michel
Sound design	Maxime Fabre
Costumes	Kite Vollard, Thomas Lebrun
Masks	Ruua Masks
Scenography	Xavier Carré, Thomas Lebrun
Set building	Atelier du T°, CDN de Tours
Technical manager	Xavier Carré
Sound manager	Clément Hubert
Project assistant	Anne-Emmanuelle Deroo
Anthropologist	Raymundo Ruiz González
Special thanks	Felina Santiago Valdivieso, Benito Hernandez
Production	Centre chorégraphique national de Tours
Coproduction	Équinoxe – Scène nationale de Châteauroux, La Rampe-La Ponatière - Scène conventionnée-Échirolles,
Lenght	65 min.

ON TOUR 2023 - 2024

10/12	Théâtre Palais Stéphanie, Festival de Danse Cannes
18 > 19/01	Le Manège, scène nationale – Reims
15/02	Espaces Pluriels, scène conventionnée d'intérêt national art et création danse, Pau
20/03	Le Grand Bain, Le Gymnase – CDCN Hauts-de-France, Roubaix
3 > 6/04	Chaillot – Théâtre national de la Danse, Paris
12/04	LE ZEF, scène nationale de Marseille
14/05	Équinoxe – Scène nationale de Châteauroux
16/05	La Maison – scène conventionnée art en territoire, Nevers

ON TOUR 2022 - 2023

5 > 8/06	Festival Tours d'Horizons - T°, CDN de Tours - PREMIERES -
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Note d'intention

June 2022

In spite of its many nuances, there is no precise term to define the female side of men.

In France, in Europe, and throughout much of the world, the feminine man is not readily accepted.

Such men are often categorised as a minority or considered to be peculiar, exceptional cases. Some religions don't recognise their presence; others even forbid their existence... And in our civilised countries, every day, children are rejected by their families; young people are attacked, maimed, and left to die; men go into hiding, denying their own being, persecuted from their youngest age by a violent, primal type of virility... because of the female quality they radiate.

There are a few corners of the world, though, where womanly men have their place in history and in civilisation; there are even places where children are brought up without having a gender assigned to them at birth, but where their growing into someone is simply observed. The Mahus, in French Polynesia and also in Hawaii, were hunted by colonisation and by religious fundamentalism. Amongst some Native American peoples, however, the two spirits – defining manly women and womanly men – were totally accepted by their peers.

In southern Mexico, in the Oaxaca region – and particularly around Juchitán, amongst the Zapotec ethnic group – we find what could be called a third recognised gender: muxes (pronounced «mooshays»). It is totally accepted for them to embrace their femaleness and do work traditionally set aside for women (cooking, embroidery, hairdressing...). However, they are not socially sanctioned to have an open life as part of a couple, whether with a man or a woman, or with another muxe. Most of them dress as women on a daily basis, and, for festive occasions, they wear highly colourful traditional dresses, with hand-embroidered flowers or geometrical shapes; they adorn their hair with flowers and enjoy wearing lace and large pieces of jewellery... the traditional Zapotec costume.

As Felina Santiago Valdivieso, one of the best-known muxes said, when we met her in Juchitán, «I'm not a woman, I'm not a man; I'm a muxe».

For this work, I've brought together five male dancers (Antoine Arbeit, Raphaël Cottin, Arthur Gautier, Sébastien Ly and Nicolas Martel) and Mexican anthropologist Raymundo Ruiz González, who researches traditional Mexican dances. All of these men carry an inner femaleness which may be more or less visible.

I imagine this project as a choreographed documentary, going back and forth between realism and a dream world... between a country where two men can get married to each other but where their female side is to a great extent denied, and a part of the world where the female side of men has its place, visible and largely accepted, but where the idea of their living as a partner with anyone is not...

Evoking the female side of men without drowning it, as is often the case, in sexuality.



Under the flowers,
A woman's dance or a man's dance,
A female dance in a male body,
A gender-free dance; a continuous transformation,
A state of dance, of what appears to be and of transparency...
What is, and what was our reality, as regards the place of the body and of its thoughts, its spirit...
Dreaming that states exist and evolve, remembering that certain things once were...
Borne by the bodies and decorating the stage, discreet colours from home and shimmering
ones from Juchitán.

As for music, I'd like Berlioz's *Le Spectre de la rose*, sung by a man and a woman (in Michel Fokine's ballet, *Le spectre de la rose* is danced by a man...). Also, tunes by present-day Mexican singer, *La Bruja de Texcoco*, who may remind us of Antony and the Johnsons (Anohni, today)... Traditional music from the Istmeña region... Some words from Felina... And the festive atmosphere of Juchitán, where we went to meet with some muxes in June 2022.





Thomas Lebrun

A dancer with such choreographers as Bernard Glandier, Daniel Larrieu, Christine Bastin, Christine Jouve and also Pascal Montrouge, Thomas Lebrun founded the Illico company in 2000 after making his solo *Cache ta joie!*. Working in the Nord-Pas de Calais region, he was first an associate artist at the Vivat d'Armentières (2002 - 2004) and then, from 2005 to 2011, with Danse à Lille / Centre de Développement Chorégraphique.

On prendra bien le temps d'y être, La Trêve(s), Les Soirées What You Want? , Switch, Itinéraire d'un danseur grassouillet and La constellation consternée are not only dance pieces; they also represent so many universes and aesthetics that he has explored, travelling from a physically demanding, precise dance style to a confirmed theatrical quality.

Since he was named director of the National Dance Centre of Tours in January 2012, Thomas Lebrun has created 16 choreographic works:

- *La jeune fille et la mort* (2012), for seven dancers, a baritone and the Voce quartet at the Théâtre national de Chaillot;
- *Trois décennies d'amour cerné* (2013) within Les Rencontres chorégraphiques internationales de Seine-Saint-Denis;
- *Tel quel !* (2013), conceived for the youngest of audiences and keeping their parents in mind;
- *Lied Ballet* (2014), a piece in three acts for eight dancers, one tenor and a pianist, within the 68th Festival d'Avignon;
- *Où chaque souffle danse nos mémoires* (2015), as part of the "Monuments en Mouvement" operation initiated by the Centre des Monuments Nationaux, at the castles of Azay-le-Rideau and Châteaudun, and at the Palais Jacques Cœur in Bourges, and in 2016 at the Conciergerie de Paris and at the Mont-Saint-Michel;
- *Avant toutes disparitions* (2016) at the Théâtre national de Chaillot;
- *Les rois de la piste* (2016);
- *Another look at memory* (2017);
- *Dans ce monde* (2018), a work for family audiences;
- *Ils n'ont rien vu* (2019) within Festival Tours d'Horizons;
- *Mes hommages* (2020);
- *... de bon augure* (2020);
- *Mille et une danses (pour 2021)*, creation at Festival Montpellier Danse 2021;
- *L'ombre d'un doute*, a duo for Martinican dancers, in coproduction with Tropiques Atrium.
- *L'envahissement de l'être (danser avec Duras)*, solo 2023.
- *Sous les fleurs* (2023).

Thomas Lebrun has also created several pieces jointly with other choreographers, in particular with Foofwa d'Immobilité (*Le show / Un twomen show*), Cécile Loyer (*Que tal!*) and Radhouane El Meddeb (*Sous leurs pieds, le paradis*).

He also creates choreographies for companies abroad, such as the National Ballet of Liaoning in China (2001) and the Grupo Tapias in Brasil (Year of France in Brasil in 2009), and also for Lithuanian dancer and choreographer Lora Juodkaitė (FranceDanse Vilnius 2009 operation), for six Korean dancers, a work commissioned by the MODAFE Festival at Seoul (FranceDanse Korea 2012 operation), for dancers of the Panthera company at Kazan, Russia (FranceDanse Russia 2015 operation) and for the Singaporean company Frontier Danceland (2017).

He is also regularly commissioned for various projects. In July 2010, his new solo *Parfois le corps n'a pas de coeur* was his reply to the Festival d'Avignon's and the SACD's «Sujets à vif» commission. In March 2017, he directed *Les Fêtes d'Hébé* by Jean-Philippe Rameau, for the Paris Opera Academy, performed at Opera Bastille Auditorium in Paris and at the Britten Theatre in London.

Since his arrival at the CCNT, he made 11 new choreography works and 14 repertory works were shown in over 720 events in France (Théâtre national de Chaillot, Biennale de la danse de Lyon, Festival d'Avignon...) and other countries (England, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Croatia, Ecuador, Finland, Italy, Japan, Hong-Kong, Macau, Netherlands, Peru, Russia, South Korea, Switzerland, Taiwan...).

He gives pride of place to teaching and transmission. Some of the venues where he has taught include Centre national de la danse, at Pantin and at Lyon, the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse and the Ménagerie de Verre, both in Paris, the Balletéatro in Porto and the Formation du danseur interprète Coline in Istres.

Since 2018, in partnership with Touka Danses - CDCN de Guyane and Tropiques Atrium, scène nationale de la Martinique, he develops "Dansez-Croisez", an exchange and cross over choreographic project with artists from French overseas territories and the Caribbean in Metropolitan France and takes part as a choreographer in French Guyana, Martinique, Guadeloupe and Cuba.

In June 2014, Thomas Lebrun received the choreography prize from the Board of Governors of the SACD (Société des auteurs chorégraphiques et dramatiques) and, in March 2017 he was named a Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres by the government of France.

Booking and contacts

Crew on tour

10 people

- » 5 dancers
- » 1 choreographer
- » 1 lighting manager
- » 1 technical and set manager
- » 1 sound manager
- » 1 tour manager

Financial rider, technical rider and video are available upon request.



Watch *Sous les fleurs'* teaser:
vimeo.com/showcase/thomaslebrun

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