

NOCES /QUATUOR

Choreography
Aurélien Richard

Creation 2013
Liminal

Conception/ musical and choreographic direction: **Aurélien RICHARD**

Performers: **Benoist BOUVOT, Christine CARADEC, Marie-Laure CARADEC, Sylvain DUFOUR, Thierry GRAPOTTE, Bruno MOINARD, Edouard PELLERAY, Enora RIVIERE** and **Yasmine YUCEF**

A piece after Les Noces, choreographed by **Bronislava NIJINSKA**, to music by **Igor STRAVINSKY**, set design by **Natalia GONTCHAROVA**

Assistant to the choreographer and Laban notator: **Christine CARADEC**

Second assistant: **Anne LENGLET**

Set design, costumes, props and stage management: **Thierry GRAPOTTE**

Makeup: **Sylvain DUFOUR**

Sound and spatial placement: **Benoist BOUVOT**

Lighting: **Bruno MOINARD**

Administration, production and touring: **Philippe CHAMAUX, Mathieu HILLEREAU**, for **Les Indépendances**

The 18 instrumental and vocal parts of Les Noces were recorded on a MIDI keyboard by Aurélien RICHARD with the help of Benoist BOUVOT.

The original musical pieces were recorded by Vanessa WAGNER and Aurélien RICHARD (2 piano taped piece) and by Aurélien RICHARD (piece for mechanical piano).

Production: Liminal

Co-production: Centre national de la Danse/ le Quartz – Scène nationale de Brest/ CDC Toulouse Midi-Pyrénées/ Le Musée de la Danse dans le cadre de la mission Accueil-Studio.

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The piece is dedicated to Denise Scharley and Charles Rosen.

Contact:

Administration, production and touring

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THE PROJECT

In *Noces/Quatuor* four dancers move through the choreographic, musical and scenographic legacy of *The Wedding* by Igor Stravinsky, Bronislava Nijinska and Nathalie Gontcharoff (1923). The dancers compress this material, twist it, transform it to intensify its density and change the way we sense it.

The composer and choreographer Aurélien Richard creates his own parallel writing to confront it with the multiple sources of the piece (Laban scores, original recordings, manuscripts and notes, and video materials).

Noces/Quatuor aims at presenting to the public a transformation by translation of the original object, in the form of a musical and choreographic remix, in which we experience the bodies and the sounds. The piece opens up unexpected territories, sometimes playful, sometimes demented, and always unusual.

CREATOR'S NOTES

Two different works for which *Les Noces* is a starting point:

1) Four dancers “activate” in silence the music of *Les Noces* by Igor STRAVINSKY. It involves polyrhythm (the simultaneous use of two or more different rhythms) and unison, creating the idea of a “rhythmic character,” which Olivier MESSIAEN used several times in his *Treatise on rhythm, colour and ornithology*. Wearing headsets which transmit not the music, but the tempi of each section of the piece, the performers of the choreographic phrases are driven to produce movements which will then allow us to “read” the musical score (is this utopia or reality?). Working with different retranscriptions of Bronislava NIJINSKA’s original notation, as well as video recordings of several performances (from the Paris Opéra and the Royal Ballet), I have chosen a reservoir of twenty-six postures. By working with them in various constructions (using unison and canonic forms, mirroring, increasing or decreasing, etc.) and by asking the dancers to accentuate specific qualities of their performance (using the breath, weight, volume, energy, scansion [metrical analysis], marking), I seek to extrapolate that which makes Nijinska’s movement so precise, its formidable dominance in the bodies, but also – and especially – that which would allow the dancers of today to uncover their own material based on these 26 postures, allowing for different body states in each, according to the qualities required in each case.

2) Four dancers (the same as in part 1, above) perform a choreographic work (the same as in part 1), this time “on” the Stravinsky music, which they construct themselves. Using a system of pedals, they activate the different parts of the four pianos used in Stravinsky’s score, pre-recorded in the studio. In addition, even if it remains somewhat utopian in terms of the definitive acoustic “result,” the different sections, involving the chorus and the vocal soloists called for in the musical score, are instead sung by the performers. In this fashion, the construction of the ballet is inverted: under normal circumstances we try to make sure the movements go “with” the music, whereas here the process is about placing the performer at the center of the creative act by asking him to be in charge of everything, the generation of the movements as well as of the sound. He or she proceeds using a process of accumulation, segmenting and isolating specific parts of the process (recognisable in the reading of the piece as observed by the audience) and then mixing them together, individually as well as within the group, in an extreme “occupation”

of its breath, its muscular space and stage space. As I write about Noces/quatuor I reflect upon the principle of “outside” voices and secondary voices used in pieces by Arnold SCHOENBERG (Hauptstimme or Nebenstimme), which is frequently used by Pascal DUSAPIN in his rather rhizomatic musical thinking. It is also exactly what you might find in film when there is a zooming in or out of focus on the same subject.

What happens in our perception of the genesis of movement when two so very different versions of a work are compared? What does the music bring to the dance, does it accompany the dance, or is it only an underlying murmur? Is dance an incarnated object or the simple transmitter of a vibration in space, or is it perhaps both? How do we link the conductor’s movements to a rhythm in which odd relationships are pushed to extremes? And finally, what happens when the soundtrack of the original ballet is played onstage, demolishing the entire construction of the ensemble, material which is constantly being hijacked, twisted and finally summoned?

3) Having set these two versions, a question remains: what can we create based on such rich material, in spite of its rigour? Is it the composition, the arrangement of the sequences which is at the center of this reflection or is it instead the condition without which a different reading of Les Noces cannot happen? And which Noces would that be? The possibility of bringing in embryonic costumes, bits of makeup, pieces of wigs, and a specific way of shaping space in continuous movement (even performed in slow motion), some scenic elements, lighting and the playing of the music – all of it targeting, exploding a controlled construction, which at the same time should be turned upside down and spun off into new directions.

Noces-quatuor, or how, using a choreographic and musical score which is imposed on each of the dancers, reactivating an on-the-edge theatricality which might escape from established constraints and invade, then dissolve the stage. My intentions regarding this piece have nothing to do with remounting Nijinska’s ballet nor with a new creation using the idea for Les Noces or its music, but to go from that which already exists, working with that which has not necessarily been worked on or reinterpreted, and to grab for it, then lose it, in the same movement.



Photography : Alain Monot



THE CHOREOGRAPHER

AURÉLIEN RICHARD is a pianist, composer and choreographer. Along with his involvement as a soloist, chamber musician, his musical commitment to the Diotima quartet, the pianist Vanessa Wagner and ensembles like 2E2M or les Siècles, he also collaborates on the choreographic projects of William Forsythe, David Wampach, Cecilia Bengolea and François Chaignaud, Mié Coquempot, Maud Le Pladec, Gaël Sesboüé and Alban Richard. He also creates pieces and performance works, including HOKETUS, a musical and choreographic work, which premiered in 2009 at the September Spring in Toulouse ...

As both composer and choreographer, AURÉLIEN RICHARD continues to question, since Hocketus, the correspondences and tensions which are generated between a choreographic and a musical structure, between the body of the dancer and that of the musician. In this new work, he examines the power dynamic between music and dance which is played out in Les Noces, a 1923 work composed by Igor Stravinsky and choreographed by Bronislava Nijinska.

Working with retranscriptions of the original choreography and some photographs and videos of the various versions of the piece, Aurélien Richard established a “reserve” of twenty-six postures. By varying the arrangements and the interpretation of these postures, supported by the actual tempi of the score, he allows his four dancers to take on the extreme precision of Nijinska’s movements, as well as reinventing these physical states in the moment.

The sets, lighting and playing of the score then explode the original work, turning it upside down and spinning it off into new directions.

THE PERFORMERS

MARIE-LAURE CARADEC began dancing in the technique classes and improv and composition workshops directed by Maribé Demaille. She entered the training programme at the Centre for Choreographic Development in Toulouse in 2001, then the dance programme Isola Danza in Venice in 2002, directed by Carolyn Carlson. The same year she also met Susan Buirge and attended her workshops at the Abbaye de Royaumont. Since 2003, she has worked with many different choreographers such as Doriane Larcher, Christine Roillet, Marie-Laure Agrapart, Herwann Asseh, Dominique Brun, Gaël Sesboué, Lionel Hoche, and Olivier Dubois ... She has the French state contemporary dance teaching diploma, and teaches workshops in the community. She created her first solo, Espace Libre, presented at the Format Festival in 2011.

Originally from Nantes, EDOUARD PELLERAY studied at the CNSMD of Lyon and at the Korean National University of Arts in Seoul until 2001. He has worked on many different arts projects, in Cologne, Dublin, Brussels with the Compagnie Velvet/ Joanne Leighton, and the Compagnie Thor/Thierry Smits and in Greece with the Apotosoma/Andonis Foniadakis Company. He then came to France, where he collaborated with the choreographers Yan Raballand, Dominique Brun, Béatrice Massin and Noëlle Simonet/Jean-Marc Piquemal and the Compagnie Labkine. He obtained his French state dance teaching diploma in 2006. Edouard is currently studying advanced Labanotation at the CNSMD, while also continuing his artistic and pedagogical collaboration with Joanne Leighton at the CCN de Franche-Comté in Belfort.

ENORA RIVIERE dances, writes, assists, teaches and creates choreographic projects. She has collaborated with the choreographers Mathilde Monnier, Gilles Jobin, Olivier Dubois, Dominique Brun, Mickaël Phelippeau, Maud Le Pladec, Pierre Rigal, Séverine Rième, David Wampach, Gaël Sesboué, David Rolland and Frédéric Schranckenmuller. She writes texts for Julie Nioche

and Laure Bonicel, teaches workshops about seeing and also leads practical and theoretical workshops based on Nijinsky's *L'après-midi d'un faune*. In September 2010, she co-signed the acoustic installation *Registre(s)* with Cécile Tonizzo, and in July 2011 she presented the first opus of a free dance recital by François Malkovsky, *Françoise*. Now she has committed to a project of dancers' biographies which will be as much editorial as choreographic, *Nous (ne) sommes (pas) tous des danseurs* (We are not all dancers).

YASMINE YUCEF was born in 1980. She studied dance at the ENM of Cergy-Pontoise and at the CNR in Paris before entering the PARTS school under the direction of Anne Teresa de Keersmaecker in 2000. She has performed with the choreographers George Mxolisi Khumalo and Emmanuelle Vo-Dinh. In 2006, she joined the Centre Chorégraphique National in Rillieux-la-pape/ Cie Maguy Marin for the revival of *May B*, the creation of *Turba* and the revival of *Umwelt*. Since 2009, she has participated in the projects of Guillaume Robert (Angola) and worked with Mathias Poisson and Virginie Thomas on *La Bibliothèque sauvage* and *L'Agence Touriste*. She collaborated with Virginie Thomas and Lénéaig Le Touze on different experiments (*cours pratiques de nouvelles danses folkloriques*) and with Virginie Thomas conceived *Un touriste en sa demeure - Gweladennour er gêr* during the festival *A Domicile* in September 2010. She continues developing her research with Johann Maheut and Julie Laporte, and participated in the creation of a piece by Johann Maheut, *You can't be dead because I love you*. She continues studying in workshops with Lisa Nelson, Loïc Touzé, Deborah Hay, Julyen Hamilton, Jeremy Wade and Kirstie Simson, and is developing improv skills in her own work.

ASSISTANT

CHRISTINE CARADEC is a dancer and Labanotator. After having earned her Masters' degree at the Sorbonne and a diploma in advanced Labanotation from the CNSMD in Paris, she opted for multiple paths: teaching, notation, performing as a dancer and creation. She has attended Valérie Fratellini's circus arts school, the CNDC in Angers, went to the Institute of Political Studies in Paris with Michel Archimbaud as well as to several conservatories in Paris, where she is currently a teacher of contemporary dance. With the choreographic group she has led since 1999, she has created more than ten pieces. Since 2005, she has been assistant to the choreographer in Aurélien Richard's company, and recently she notated the dances of François Malkovsky with Suzanne Bodak.

SOUND CREATOR

BENOIST BOUVOT was born in 1978. He is a guitarist who also commits himself to composing for and accompanying theatrical and choreographic creations. After having studied guitar for years, notably with many jazz musicians, as well as a year of study at the Pro-musica School of Le Thor, he finished his training at the CNEART in Havana, Cuba in 2005. Having been awarded the prize for the best choreographic accompaniment at the Hivernales d'Avignon in 2003, Bouvot began composing and working with directors and choreographers, among others Virginie Lacroix, Alain Béhar and Marie-Lamachère. His first work with Aurélien Richard was in 2010 on *LIMEN* and also in 2011 on *Lamento*. In 2012, he collaborated with Emilio Calcagno on *Gourmandises*, prepared a duo with Alvie Bitemo and the new album, *THIS IS THE HELLO MONSTER*.

SET DESIGNER

THIERRY GRAPOTTE studied the plastic arts at the Beaux Arts School in Beaune and then at the ENSAD in Paris. He started out as an assistant set and costume designer, working with Titina Maselli on theatre and opera productions (Bernard Sobel, Klaus Michael Grüber). Since then, interested in versatility, diversity and range, he has worked as an artistic collaborator, set designer or costume designer for theatre directors, choreographers, composers, actors, performance artists ... He did sets and costumes for Brigitte Jaques Wajeman, Renaud Bertin and Christian Trouillas ... and recently also worked with Gaël Sesboüé, Arnaud Guy and Xavier Brossard. Since 2009 he has collaborated with Aurélien Richard, Fabrice Ramalingom and Yann-Joël Collin, with whom he has been an artistic collaborator since 2005. In addition as an arts teacher he sets up and teaches classes and workshops for school children, students and amateurs.

MAKEUP ARTIST

SYLVAIN DUFOUR is the director and set designer for the Lust Compagnie, and works on creations with amateurs at the national theatre in Châteauroux. Since 2009 he has created sets for the creations of the Compagnie Un Soir Ailleurs (a 48° structure which blends landscape, photos and dance at the contemporary art space Camille Lambert, as well as sets for The forgotten garden which is currently in process). He is also working on a cycle of performances based on everyday life and performed in public spaces, collaborates with the Compagnie Rubber liz for performances staged during Art & Culture soirées, and was invited by Aurélien Richard for Limen, staged at the Ménagerie de Verre in Paris. He studied contemporary dance with Toméo Vergès, Fabienne Mentjuck, Mié Coquempot and Alban Richard, which contributes to the physicality of his theatrical universe. Since 2007 he has worked in makeup: creations for drag queen performances, a creature for the festival bals'art, as well as a performance at the art space Saint Roch, and created the masks and makeup for the Compagnie Trottoir Express. He works with metamorphosis in makeup, its degradation, treating the materials he uses like different kinds of paint. He is also working with the concept of taking off and reapplying makeup.

LIMINAL

LIMINAL brings together pluridisciplinary artists who offer spectacular or performative forms which relate directly to the spectator. Their goal is to question what is the essence of a presence onstage, through the prism of partitional virtuosity.

LIMINAL, under the artistic direction of Aurélien Richard, generates many different events, concerts, performances, conferences and films. It also works in community outreach in workshops and pedagogical courses in partnership with the CND, the national dance centre.

In 2009, with an invitation from the Cartier Foundation and the Festival of Spring in September, a choreographic and musical work was created in Toulouse, HOKETUS. Created for two performers, a dancer (Mickaël Phelippeau) and a musician (Aurélien Richard), its idea was to take on a musical form heavily imbued with tradition: the fugue. It was also performed at soirées at the CCN of Grenoble and at the CND in 2010.

In 2010, LIMINAL performed a proposition at the Ménagerie de verre in Paris, LIMEN, in which 30 guest artists recited their visions of a dance of death and a Shakespearian battlefield.

En 2011, invited by Mickaël Phelippeau and the Festival A domicile in Guissény, Aurélien Richard created LAMENTO, for fourteen amateur performers. It was a study of sadness, or how to render palpable the tension between a living and a dead or absent body.

In 2011/12, LIMINAL proposed a cycle of seven commentated concerts based on Western music from the baroque repertoire to that of today, daring to reflect on the compositional and interpretative issues prevailing in so-called "classical" music. This project took place at the National theatre of Quimper-Théâtre de Cornouaille.

In 2012 the piece NOCES/QUATUOR will premiere at the Festival DansFabrik in Brest, then at the CND, a free remixing of the materials in the original creation of Les Noces by Nijinska/Stravinsky.

PRESS: GOOD NOTES

Journal Danser – November 2008

A musician who works with dance, Aurélien Richard has collaborated with choreographers such as David Wampach, his own brother Alban, with William Forsythe and Jiri Kylian at the Paris Opéra and with Maurice Béjart. He is also the artistic director of a artists' collective called Les Désinents.

No, Aurélien Richard is not new to dance. He has been recently seen with David Wampach in *Auto*, inhabiting the space with his piano in the manner of Joseph Beuys in his performance work. And with his brother Alban he worked on *Blood Roses*, *Häftling*, A tribute to B. Born in Brest, he wanted to play the piano as soon as he could talk. "I was programmed for virtuosity, I just tore through all those scores." From the eighth grade on, my life was one of solitude: the CNED, the conservatories, then from the age of fourteen, I was playing concerts and teaching accompanying at the ENM in Le Havre!"

This teenager lived isolated from the rock music his peers were hearing, listening to Messiaen, Poulenc, Berg, working on piano reductions of orchestra scores in his bedroom. The shock that got him out of his ivory tower was Alban's first contract with the choreographer Karine Saporta, her 1995 work *Le Spectre* at the Théâtre de la Ville. Chopin, romanticism, but also – and especially, the glorious grace of dance.

Three years later, he left Le Havre and went to Paris and auditioned to be the choirmaster in the dance department of the Opéra. He was hired, and Brigitte Lefèvre took him on, advising him and directing him to contemporary creations. "This is how I ended up working with Forsythe on *In the Middle...*, *Pas/parts*, *Wound Work*; then Kylian, for *Sweet Lies* with William Christie, I was coaching dancers and musicians, teaching them the same musicality of the body." For Aurélien, "a body which lives and sings is a vibration in space." For him, for a musician giving a recital, the worst risk would be not to be affected by the physical differences: Beethoven brings exultation whereas Bach is more psychological. A pianist must be aware of the energies involved in playing music."

When thinking about dance, a musician or a DJ must wonder about his own legitimacy on stage, wondering also how to project his own performer's body into the acoustic space. For Aurélien, dance creates a working rhythm which suits him, "I move between solitude and the stage." Indeed, a musician who does not work with dance must live like a solitary priest with his instrument. Dance allows him to open himself to others, to learn not to compose before he has absorbed the movement, met the dancers. "I listen to my body, I must listen to the bodies of the others, everything must connect; although when I was working on the Ninth Symphony with Béjart, it was quite different from what I was doing as the director of my ensemble, les Désinents. But even then I helped the dancers understand key parts of the music." He sees music as an essential element of dance, even if it means having the dancers themselves sing, as they did in *Häftling*. Or that he must move onstage as well, as a pianist, composer, director – all these roles were in play for David Wampach in *Auto*. "This piece can still evolve, it all happened during the creative process. However, letting something go does not mean losing control. David is not speaking of him as an individual, but rather gazing through the prism of something universal, established. I will soon be collaborating with Raphaëlle Delaunay, and the risk will be to go beyond the virtuosity for which the two of us have been programmed, but without going overboard." Yes, Aurélien is all about the score. It may change every day in the working process, it is in fact the heart of the challenge. So like Emmanuel Kant's dove, flying so freely precisely because it obeys the law, the constraint is for this musician who dances the price of his freedom.

Bérengère Alfort

First it was a musical work composed by Igor Stravinsky and choreographed by Bronislava Nijinska, sister to Vaslav. Aurélien Richard has captured a great deal of its musical essence in his own creation, which is nonetheless firmly anchored in the present. The pianist–composer–choreographer claims parts of the past in revisiting 26 of the original postures, working with four dancers and musicians.

The pointe shoes are gone, the feet are bare. The makeup is like the kind worn by mimes, with structured features, and all the gestures are stretched to the extreme, the smallest noise creaking ominously in the silences. Aurélien Richard has stepped away from the original postural carcan, using movements of such simplicity that all narration is swept aside. Offering, curling inward, the fist on the heart, these movements are paused to focus them more, to give them an etymological strength, knife sharp.

In contrast, the lighting, the set and the sound, equally essential components of this exigent work – bring us into a fluid universe, sometimes opaque, sometimes translucent, allowing us to glimpse something else. We examine our own internal reality, our subjectivity. The long plastic veil of the Betrothed seems like the plastic in a greenhouse, protecting her from cold so she may ‘grow’ better, while also isolating her from any escape into fantasy. The end of the piece does seem to turn toward hope.

The ensemble is magnificent, with its lithe, fluid dancers, launching themselves into space like lines of a promised destiny. Stravinsky and Nijinska would have appreciated this luminous vision.

Journal La Terrasse – March 24, 2013

Aurélien Richard, a true musician, offers us a perspective on Nijinska’s *Les Noces*, using his own process of musical and choreographic de composition.

This is the third choreographic work by Aurélien Richard, and *Noces/ Quatuor* continues to accentuate the links between dance and music, tweaking the correspondences between musical and choreographic structures. In this work he began with Stravinsky’s score, then examined the choreography created for the Ballets Russes by Bronislava Nijinska in 1923. Richard’s ideas are both complex and strong, requiring a different way of dancing “on” or “with” the music, in the way he manages to spatialise the sound, effecting the decomposition of the music, with cues given by headset, or launched by one of the dancers with a pedal device – but it also allows the dance to reconstruct itself using its own sources.

It is a real fake quartet.

After an overture based on the recomposition of thirteen postures borrowed from Nijinska’s dance, all lines and angles, using unison, staggering, canonic phrasing and changing rhythms dependent on the dancers, the work then uses many references which clearly reflect parts of *Les Noces*: its constantly changing makeup and costumes, ghosts from the 20’s, channeling Oskar Schlemmer ... It all pulverises the imagination and sets in motion an even crazier version of the titular Marriage: roles are interchanged, as are those of the dancers and the technicians. And beyond all these references, Aurélien Richard gives us a completely off-the-wall version of the event – whose richness certainly merits a second viewing.

Nathalie Yokel