



Blanca Li Company

Solstice

Production
Chaillot - Théâtre national de la Danse

CONTACT

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THÉÂTRE
NATIONAL DE
LA DANSE
chAillot

Cast and Crew

World premiere at Chaillot – Théâtre national de la Danse on September 21st, 2017

A piece for 14 dancers and 1 percussionist
25 on tour / Set-up D -2

CHOREOGRAPHY, ARTISTIC DIRECTION **Blanca Li**

STAGE DESIGN, DRAMATURGY **Pierre Attrait**

VIDEO, NEW TECHNOLOGIES **Charles Carcopino**

MUSIC **Tao Gutierrez**

LIGHTING **Caty Olive**

COSTUMES **Laurent Mercier**

SET PRODUCTION **Atelier de l'Opéra de Rouen Normandie**

CHOREOGRAPHY ASSISTANTS **Glyslein Lefever et Déborah Torres**

STAGE DESIGN ASSISTANT **Delphine Sainte-Marie**

VIDEO ASSISTANT **Simon Frezel**

COMPUTER GRAPHICS **Sylvain Decay, Thomas Lanza et Benjamin Le Talour**

LIGHTING ASSISTANT **Gilles Durand**

HAIR DESIGN **John Nollet**

WITH **the staff of Chaillot – Théâtre national de la Danse**

WITH **Yacnoy Abreu Alfonso, Peter Agardi, Rémi Bénard, Jonathan Ber, Julien Gaillac, Joseph Gebrael (in substitute of Iris Florentiny), Yann Hervé, Aurore Indaburu, Alexandra Jézouin, Pauline Journé, Margalida Riera Roig, Gaël Rougegrez, Yui Sugano, Victor Virnot (dancers), Léa Solomon (trainee) et Bachir Sanogo (musician)**

PRODUCTION CHAILLOT – THÉÂTRE NATIONAL DE LA DANSE. COPRODUCTION CALENTITO-BLANCA LI / LES THÉÂTRES DE LA VILLE DE LUXEMBOURG / OPÉRA DE ROUEN NORMANDIE / ESPACE JEAN LEGENDRE – THÉÂTRE DE COMPIÈGNE, SCÈNE NATIONALE DE L'OISE EN PRÉFIGURATION.

WITH THE SUPPORT OF MAC DE CRÉTEIL, OPÉRA NATIONAL DE PARIS AND ANOMES/MILLUMIN.

THANKS TO THE FONDATION GOODPLANET, THE FONDATION BETTENCOURT SCHUELLER AND YANN ARTHUS-BERTRAND FOR THE IMAGES FROM HIS FILM *HUMAN*.

THANKS TO HOPE PRODUCTION - YANN ARTHUS-BERTRAND ET MICHAËL PITIOT AND OMEGA FOR THE IMAGES FROM THE FILM *TERRA*.

THANKS TO JB MONDINO, «CLUB SOLSTICE» (MATTHIEU BASTIÈRE, VALÉRIE BOBO, CAMILLE DENISTY, MARIE GEFFROY, BARBARA MARX, MAUD RABIN...), JEANNE GASCON, LOU BARREAU, MANON JOUBERT, CYRIELLE PAILHES, ETIENNE LI, STUDIO CALENTITO 134, SIMON JUNG, AMBRE FOURNIER, ANNABELLE VERGNE.

PHOTOS © NICO BUSTOS

DURATION 1 hr 40

Now is the time to take action!

Nature rocked by repeating hurricanes, melting or cracking glaciers, suffocating cities with nine million deaths annually caused by pollution, depleted and polluted natural resources, rising sea levels, flooding, drought and fires, eight million tons of plastic in our oceans, dozens of millions of climate refugees in the future, numerous animal species becoming extinct, etc.

As anyone aware of the degradation of their environment, I have often pondered my role in our society, what I could do for the earth as an individual. I believe that each and everyone of us can take action at their own level and that every gesture counts now.

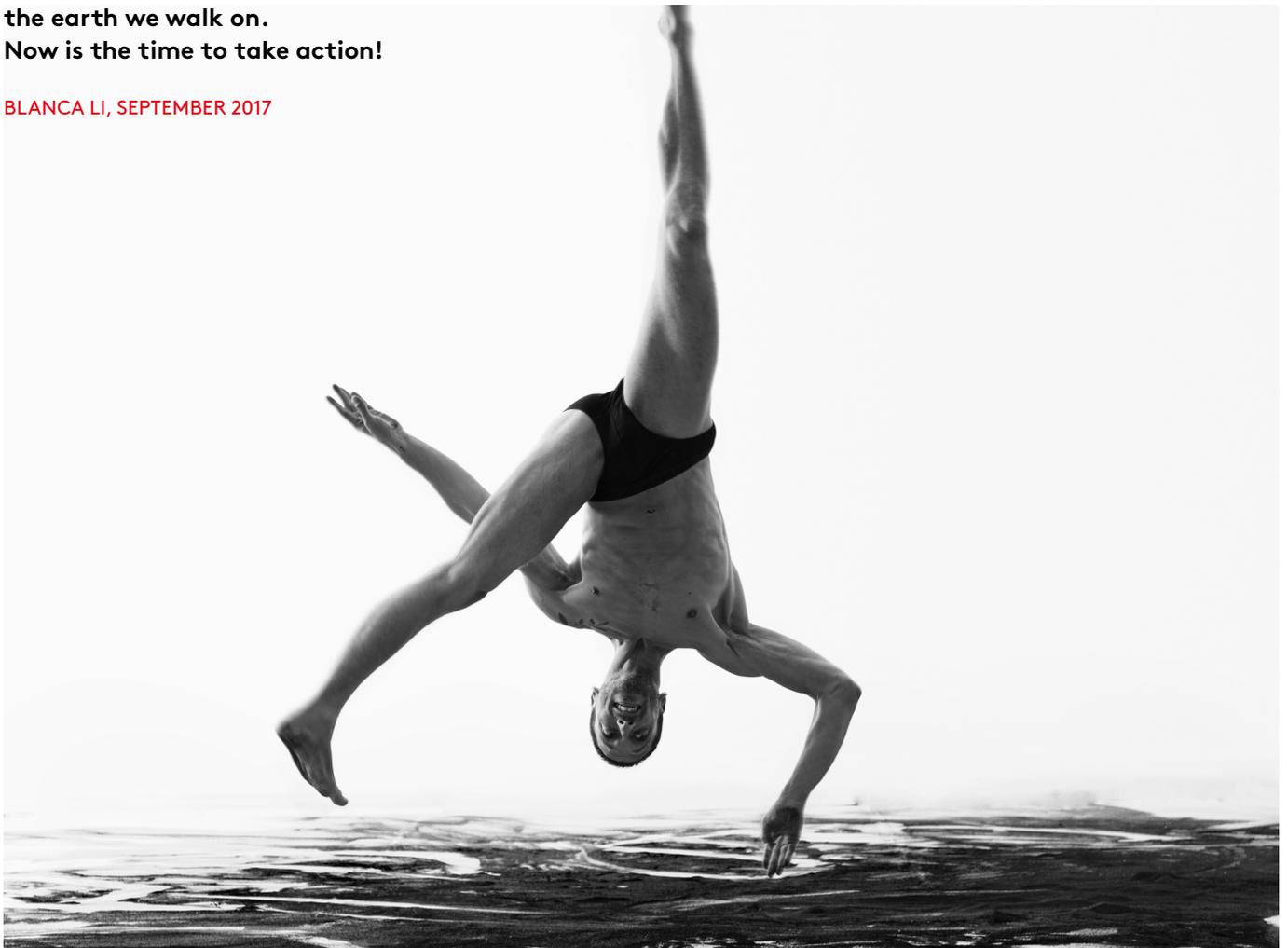
In the last two years I've met people, institutions and foundations that work to make change happen. I admire the power of their determination to protect people and the natural balances that ensure our well-being and peace as well as our health, and survival.

With *Solstice*, I want to contribute to this awareness-raising momentum. By turn calm or wild, Nature is a bottomless source of inspiration. Powerful and poetic, *Solstice* is my most committed show. It celebrates beauty, power and energy, as well as the frailty of Nature and Humankind.

For this new creation I gathered fourteen amazing dancers and a percussionist to make a show about the ambiguous relationship between humankind and nature. Through the power of dance combined with scenography, costumes, video, lights and music, they evoke the disorders of our ecosystem.

**Let us preserve the water we drink,
the air we breathe,
the earth we walk on.
Now is the time to take action!**

BLANCA LI, SEPTEMBER 2017



Presentation

Everywhere – in metropolises, in the depths of the oceans, in wild spaces and those domesticated by humanity – nature is changing and calling out to us. The ambiguous and complex relationships that we maintain with our environment were the starting point for this production. Between concern and wonder, love and violence, conservation and destruction, how can we provide for the development of our civilizations without exhausting our planet?

For Blanca Li, *Solstice* emerged from a need to address fundamental questions we live with every day through the language of dance. Nature and the elements are living, active, fragile, and precious entities. Blanca Li offers us a personal, inhabited vision, at once poetic and aesthetic. *Solstice* is **a luminous creation that magnifies humanity and the natural elements**, questions our Earth, extols its singing but also its fragility.

Blanca Li is creating this show for **14 unique contemporary dancers whose individualities she highlights** alongside their work as a group. Each dancer appears as a soloist. The physical work she has developed with them leads to **a dance that is at once organic, intuitive, and very contemporary**. In this show, the body of the dancer is at the border between nature and civilization. *Solstice* questions the place of humanity within nature, not considered as its center, but as one of its components.

Percussive and sensitive, the music composed by Tao Gutierrez will include a percussionist on stage. Inspired by nature and the elements, Tao Gutierrez's highly rhythmic music will help create the atmosphere for each of the tableaux of the composition. The dancers' breathing and movements are fully integrated into the musical composition. **A powerful, earthy, and poetic music results.**

The poetic and intriguing set was designed by Pierre Attrait, a longtime artistic collaborator of Blanca Li. The set is oriented around **a mysterious sky in movement, which is animated and articulated**. This vibrating fabric, conceived as the beating heart of the scenography, creates on stage an airy atmosphere and a vision of time passing by. For this production, Blanca Li once again chose Charles Carcopino to create **a technological environment and powerful video effects** evoking the elements, nature, and the human-induced

transformations of nature. His visual creations are a key element of the show, inseparable from the other components of the stage design.

Solstice is Blanca Li's second show to be lit by Caty Olive. This artist constructs spaces with light, taking every other elements of the stage into account. The stage space then appears as a whole, a veritable tableau evoking many sensations, scrambling our bearings...

Finally, the costumes will be designed by Laurent Mercier and made by Chaillot – Théâtre national de la Danse. **In this production, every garment is an essential element**, participating fully in the choreography and the visual impressions that emerge from each scene. From the most natural fabrics to the most technological materials, the costumes also evoke our relationship with the world.

Solstice plays with the elements, with time, with matter, with movement, and with light. Nature reveals itself to be fantastic and beautiful, harrowing and luminous. Blanca Li offers the audience **a fascinating and sensitive journey in a universe in movement to show us the beauty of the world, its strength, its energy, and its fragility**. The dancers constitute a host of guides for the spectator in this abstract universe in which reality and illusion merge.

Interview with Blanca Li

In 2013, you took an interest in the world of robots; today, you are examining the relationships between people and nature. Is that a balancing act?

Actually, the two themes are part of our contemporary lives. On the one hand, we are experiencing an incredible technological revolution, which is making us both dependent upon and in interaction with machines; on the other hand, we are concerned about the future of the planet and the effects of climate change, and we are trying to correct an evolution that frightens us. For me, this ecological approach is the logical continuation of *Robot*, it is not at all incompatible with the presence of technology in our lives. In fact, it is thanks to the tools we have today that we can measure the rising waters or predict tsunamis.

You call your approach organic. Why?

Because I start with simple and essential sensations: the waft of a breeze, the beauty of a leaf or a flower... In the balance of the ecosystem, everything is important. These tiny feelings feed our daily relationship to nature. The dancers will use those sensations and work with their bodies starting from notions like the wind, the rain, the heat, or the air we breathe. The four elements, in a way.

To talk about the relationship between humanity and nature, you use very elaborate technological tools, in particular with regard to the stage design...

The crew participating in the show has been with me for several years. Pierre Attrait, the stage designer, imagined a sort of "cloud" that is the original support for the light and video. The fabric transforms to successively become the earth, the sky, or the wind. It is a constant presence and always in movement, just like nature. As for the video created by Charles Carcopino, it is there to create emotions and it blends almost invisibly with the overall approach. All of these elements participate in the dramaturgy and serve the show. They contribute to communicating the message of the dance.

What kind of inspiration lies behind the musical composition?

I don't like illustrating existing scores and feeling obliged to react to a tempo or an emotion that has already been written. I prefer having a tailor-made musical creation to accompany the narration and intention of the show. That implies that the musician work to order and progressively, starting from the choreography that I develop. So, through constant adjustments, the music adapts to the energy and movement of the bodies. Tao Gutierrez is always ready for new adventures. For this work, I asked him to integrate sounds and rhythms that can be made with pieces of wood and with earth, in order to put nature at the heart of the music. Moreover, the dancers' bodies will also be percussion instruments.

What criteria were important in choosing your dancers?

First, there are the dancers who make up the heart of my company. But I wanted to expand their numbers, to have a larger group in order to feel the strong sensation of their bodies. So I held auditions and I was surprised by the quality of everyone who came. I chose them based on their personalities: they are all remarkable solo dancers who also work harmoniously as part of a group.

How do you work with them? From a written score or from their improvisations?

When I start rehearsing with dancers, I know the "what" perfectly: what I want to say, what kinds of emotions I want to achieve. I go into the studio with a storyboard that contains the work's intentions, everything I hope to show and tell. What remains is to find the "how". That's what we look for together. Instead of improvisations, I'd prefer to call them reciprocal exchanges, moving closer to what I'm looking for. It's a team effort that helps me achieve the result I have in mind.

Where do you get your inexhaustible ability to renew yourself, developing themes so different from one to the next?

Like all artists, sometimes I make mistakes. Not everything necessarily works out, and not everything fails either. But I am always honest with my wishes and my desires. It is life and its daily

details that inspire me, so my ideas are constantly renewed without me worrying “will that work?” Then I take the plunge and see what happens!

The theme of this work is very much in tune with our times. Have other organizations already come forward to embrace it?

First of all, I want to emphasize how happy I am to develop this work at Chaillot, and to work again with this family I love so much. Indeed, other theaters have already expressed their interest, and an exciting tour is in the works, which is a great pleasure.

The relationship between humans and nature is relevant to us all, and everyone in their own way wants to participate. When we are still hearing climate skeptics, including at the highest levels, we say to ourselves that it is urgent to ensure that information circulates! Our shared responsibility is to prepare the future, and to protect the planet.

INTERVIEW BY ISABELLE CALABRE
(FEBRUARY 2017)



References



Blanca Li

Blanca Li is a choreographer, filmmaker, dancer, and actress. Whether she is working with her own company, creating events, staging operas, directing feature films, or preparing museum installations, she invents and produces a multitude of projects: "I like bringing alive everything I have in my head." Enthusiastic for what is new and for cross-pollinations, and constantly renewing herself, she takes inspiration from a wide range of styles, from flamenco to classical ballet to urban dance. With Blanca Li, everything begins with and is completed in the energy of movement and dance.

Born in Grenada, Blanca Li became a member of the Spanish national rhythmic gymnastics team at the age of twelve. At seventeen, she moved to New York, where she studied for five years with Martha Graham, while also taking classes with Alvin Ailey, Paul Sanasardo, and at the Clark Center. Living in Spanish Harlem, she daily witnessed the development of hip hop as it was emerging, creating at the same time a flamenco-rap group, Las Xoxones. When she returned to Spain, she founded her first contemporary dance company in Madrid, which was selected for the program of the Universal Exhibition of Seville.

The company

Having settled in France in 1992, Blanca Li founded her company in Paris in 1993, and has thus far created 14 works for her repertory. Starting in 1998, she opened her own dance studios in Paris (Studios Calentito). The fusion of disciplines and genres is frequent in her creations, as is a very Latin sense of humor (*Alarme, Stress, Salomé*). *Macadam Macadam*, a choreographed hip hop show, opened the Suresnes Cités Danses festival in 1999. From Avignon to the USA to the Opéra-Comique in Paris, that show became the reference in the genre and obtained the Globe de Cristal for Best Opera or Ballet from the French press in 2007. Her one-woman show *Zap ! Zap ! Zap !* (1999) was presented at Chaillot, among other French venues, and then in New York as part of the French Moves festival.

Blanca Li takes on a wide range of themes with her company, ranging from the Gnawa trance ceremonies of Marrakesh (*Nana et Lila*, 1993) to ancient Greek art (*Le Songe du Minotaure*, 1998), to the madness of the contemporary world in the context of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks (*Borderline*, 2002), to the poems of Federico García Lorca (*Poeta en Nueva York*, 2007) and the pictorial work of Hieronymous Bosch with *Le Jardin des Délices* (2009), which opened the Montpellier Danse festival.

Corazón Loco (2007) mingled the company's dancers with opera singers from the Sequenza 9.3 vocal ensemble in a contemporary musical work and was the subject of Blanca Li's second feature-length film. *Elektro Kif* (2010) brought to the stage for the first time the électro style, a new urban dance that emerged in the Paris suburbs in the 2000^s and that took the world by storm with its ultra-fast and sophisticated gestures. *Robot*, created for the 2013 Montpellier Danse festival, in collaboration with Japanese artists from the Maywa Denki collective and NAO robots from Aldebaran Robotics, triumphed at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris in December 2013 and throughout France on tour in 2014-2015.

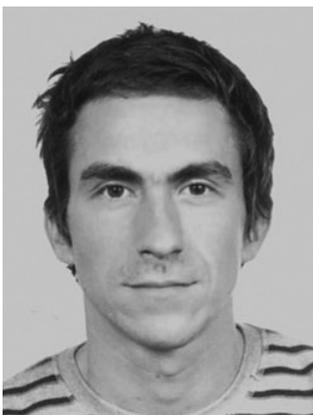
References



Pierre Attrait

STAGE DESIGN, DRAMATURGY

After studying literature and art history, Pierre Attrait collaborated on numerous theater productions as an assistant and actor with Gabriel Monnet, Georges Lavaudant, and Daniel Mesguich. He became an assistant at the Opéra de Paris and at the Aix-en-Provence festival, then began creating his own shows. In Canada, he received the award for best stage production in 1989 for *Andréa Chénier* and later for *La Traviata*. Pierre Attrait has contributed as a set designer to numerous films for the cinema and television, including *Ready to wear*, by Robert Altman, *Le Petit Marguery*, by Laurent Bénégui, *Un chat dans la gorge*, by Jacques Otmezguine, *C'est la tangente que je préfère*, by Charlotte Silvera, *Pas à pas*, by Blanca Li... For the theater, he has designed, among others, *Cahier du retour au pays natal*, by Jacques Martial, *L'Échange*, by Sarah Sanders, *Liens de sang*, by Jean-Michel Martial, and *Folies coloniales*, by Dominique Lurcel. He has worked several times previously on shows and events by Blanca Li: *Corazón Loco*, *Poeta en Nueva York*, *Le Jardin des Délices*, and *La Fête de la danse*. As the artistic director of the Marcadé agency, which is specialized in staging luxury events and in film, Pierre Attrait has collaborated in creating events (fashion shows, perfume launches, presentation of a high jewelry collection, Festival de Cannes...), notably for the LVMH group, Bvlgari, Cartier... He has also been the artistic director of the *Bal de la Rose* since 1995, collaborating in that role with Alfredo Arias, Karl Lagerfeld, Pedro Almodovar...



Charles Carcopino

VIDEO DESIGN

Charles Carcopino, a specialist in digital cultures, alternately curates exhibitions and creates visual work for the stage. He works as a videographer with directors from all horizons, and integrates his projected images with the visual conception of the stage space. Charles Carcopino is the artistic director of the Studio at the Créteil Maison des Arts et de la Culture, a centre for the creation and production of images for live performance and digital installations. In that context, he has worked with numerous artists and directors, designing video installations and interactive set-ups for many projects: operas, dance works, musical comedies, plays, concerts and festivals, video installations for exhibitions and mappings for events. He is also the curator for the international festivals *EXIT* (Maison des Arts in Créteil) and *VIA* (Maubeuge, Mons), and his exhibitions have travelled throughout France and abroad. He is also an independent curator for a number of events (Lille 2004, *Expérience Pommery #9*, the Croisement festival in China, Lille 3000, Mons 2015, and La Villette...). Firmly rooted in today's world, his exhibitions explore the effects of the acceleration of the post-internet society in every field of contemporary creativity.

References



Tao Gutierrez

MUSIC

Born in Grenada, Tao Gutierrez studied in Madrid before leaving for New York to improve his percussion, electronic music, and composition skills with Bob Norton, Dan Carrillo, Ron Carter, and many others. During the eleven years he spent in New York before returning to Spain, Tao Gutierrez was able to collaborate with the immensely talented Don Cherry, Nana Vasconcellos, Angella Bofill, and Ed Blackwell. He has composed and produced numerous film scores (*Poniente, Le Défi, Return to Hansala, Pas à Pas...*), recorded productions for various artists, and composed and performed numerous creations for the Compagnie Blanca Li, including the original flamenco jazz version of the music for *Poeta en Nueva York*. His work has received numerous awards: Best Original Music at film festivals in Montpellier, Malaga, Guadalajara, Cairo, Valladolid...



Caty Olive

LIGHTING

Having trained in stage design at the École nationale supérieure des Arts décoratifs in Paris, Caty Olive creates luminous spaces. She works equally in dance and opera performance, architecture, and the visual arts. Through this preference for diverse activities, Caty Olive pursues highly specific investigations into the movements of light. Her interest in open questions about space has led her to work occasionally with art school students. She has participated in dance projects for the contemporary stage with Marco Berrettini, Christophe Haleb, Martine Pisani, Myriam Gourfink, Emmanuelle Huynh, Claudia Triozzi, Vera Mantero, Tiago Guedes, David Wampach, Donata D'Urso, Cindy Van Acker, Joris Lacoste, and Christian Rizzo. She is engaged in ongoing collaborations with Guillaume Parent as part of the Zélé agency; Samantha Barroero/Hold on, who accompanies some of her projects; and Christian Rizzo and the association Fragile, since 2000, in the field of choreography and other varied domains.

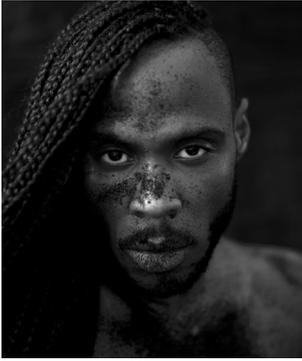


Laurent Mercier

COSTUMES

Laurent Mercier is a fashion designer of Swiss origin, currently living in Paris. He has created several Couture collections under his own brand, Laurent Mercier Deluxe and worked with Jean Paul Gaultier, Morgan, Balmain and many more. Laurent Mercier has dressed many stars throughout his career, including Lenny Kravitz and various actors.

Portrait Gallery



Yacnoy Abreu Alfonso



Peter Agardi



Rémi Bénard



Jonathan Ber



Iris Florentiny



Julien Gaillac



Joseph Gebrael



Yann Hervé



Aurore Indaburu



Alexandra Jézouin



Pauline Journé



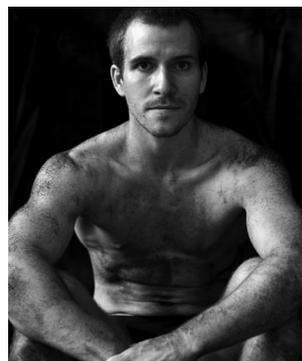
Margalida Riera Roig



Gaël Rougegrez



Yui Sugano



Victor Virnot



Bachir Sanogo

Advance purchasing 2017-2018

OCTOBER 19-21, 2017 • Les Gémeaux, scène nationale de Sceaux

NOVEMBER 14, 2017 • Théâtre Alexandre Dumas, Saint-Germain-en-Laye

NOVEMBER 16-17, 2017 • Le Volcan, scène nationale du Havre

NOVEMBER 23-25, 2017 • Odysseus, centre culturel de Blagnac

DECEMBER 6, 2017 • Théâtre des Sablons, Neuilly-sur-Seine

JANUARY 11, 2018 • L'Olympia, Arcachon

JANUARY 16, 2018 • Le Zinga Zanga, Béziers

JANUARY 19, 2018 • Montpellier Danse, Opéra Berlioz/Le Corum

JANUARY 27, 2018 • Grand auditorium du Palais des festivals, Cannes

JANUARY 30, 2018 • Théâtre des Salins, Martigues

FEBRUARY 2, 2018 • Grand Théâtre de Provence, Aix-en-Provence

FEBRUARY 22-23, 2018 • Théâtre des Arts, Rouen

MARCH 13, 2018 • Espace Jean Legendre, Compiègne

MARCH 20, 2018 • Maison de la Culture, Amiens

JUNE 5, 2018 • Les Théâtres de la Ville de Luxembourg