

NOËS

malandain | rossini





Creation / Basque Eurocity
Teatro Victoria Eugenia - Donostia / San Sebastián

BALLET 

NOAH

Choreography Thierry Malandain

Music Gioacchino Rossini - *Messa di Gloria*

Set and costumes Jorge Gallardo

Lighting design Francis Mannaert

Dressmaker Véronique Murat

Set production Frédéric Vadé

Coproducers

Chaillot - Théâtre National de la Danse(Paris), Opéra de Saint-Etienne, Donostia Kultura - Teatro Victoria Eugenia de Donostia / San Sebastián - Ballet T, CCN Malandain Ballet Biarritz.

Partners

Opéra de Reims, Théâtre de Gascogne - le Pôle, Theater Bonn (Allemagne), Forum am Schlosspark – Ludwigsburg (Allemagne)

CREATION / BASQUE EUROCITY

Teatro Victoria Eugenia de Donostia / San Sebastián, january 14th and 15th 2017

CREATION / FRENCH PREMIERE

Chaillot - Théâtre National de la Danse (Paris) between May 10th and 24th 2017

Ballet for 22 dancers

Lenght 70 minutes





NOAH CREATION 2017

Inspired by the parable of Noah's Ark, Thierry Malandain's new ballet once again addresses themes that he holds dear, such as Mankind and its future, destiny, fate, and the environment. From this story, which incidentally is rarely used in dance, he retains the symbolism rather than the religious message.

Just as in the Biarritz choreographer's previous work, Noah is punctuated with discreet references. For example, water, alternately destructive and life-sustaining, which is represented here as the element that gives new life to Mankind. Similarly, it represents the sacrament that we're supposed to walk away from feeling different, if not changed. Mankind which boarded the Ark for forty days will emerge transformed. In essence, every artist dreams that the audience leaves a performance slightly changed.

Malandain presents a more abstract Noah, who is not only a Christian reference to a new Adam, but also a figure common to various civilizations that lived through a flood and were saved by a protective, providential man. Some might perceive other allusions through Noah that are currently hot topics...

To such speculations, the choreographer, far from wanting to precipitate a spectator into just one interpretation, would therefore call on universalism to give our feelings and emotions free reign. ■



FOREWORD

"In the Flood myth common to various different cultural traditions, the jubilant figure of Noah embodies a kind of breakthrough in humanity's history. In summing up the past and preparing us for the future, Noah symbolises the coming of a new and better world. This second Creation erases the first, which has been wrought by the machinations of evil and humanity's degeneration. This is a new Adam, drawn from water rather than the earth, who, in Genesis, acts first as a mortal and then a symbol of life because, upon leaving the womb and cradle that is the Ark, Noah and his offspring will repopulate the world.

This epic tale is one in a long line of similar stories and can be interpreted on several levels. Saint Augustin sought to show that the Ark's proportions were the same as the human body's, "which is also the body of Christ, which is also the Church", while Paul Claudel saw the salvational Ark as a cathedral, its nave the prow of a ship navigating the heavens.

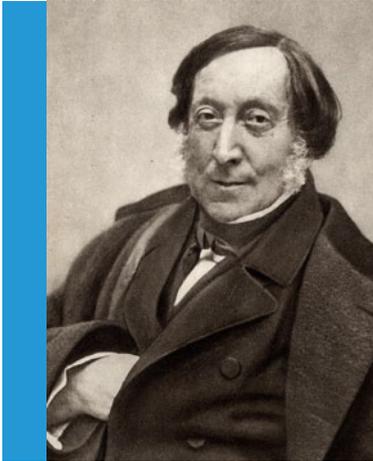
We might also imagine Noah as humanity collectively seeking refuge within itself to cast off a past existence and start afresh, mining the abyss of its own being for new sources of energy. That is why, with the exception of the dove - a sign of hope in a new life -, we will not board all the animals. Instead, the movement of humanity will be represented by the symbolic, dancing figure of Noah beneath the light of a new sun."

■ Thierry Malandain



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GIOACCHINO ROSSINI



Gioachino Antonio Rossini was born on 29 February 1792 in Pesaro, Italy. He was the son of an orchestra musician (horn player) and a singer. Inspired by this artistic environment, Rossini began to study music at the age of 11 with singing, horn and piano lessons. It quickly became apparent that the young boy had natural musical talent. Encouraged by his parents, he became interested in musical composition as early

as the age of 12 and at 14 he wrote his first opera called *Demetrio e Polibio* (1806). The influence of German composers was already obvious in this work, especially Haydn and Mozart. He then completed his musical training at the Liceo Musicale in Bologna.

Both out of desire and necessity, he started composing in a genre that was very popular at the time, opera buffa. His career began with his successful work *L'equivoco stravagante* (1811) performed at the Teatro del Corso in Bologna. His early compositions brought out his tendency to reform genres. In all of his works, he strived to break the traditional forms of opera buffa by embellishing the melodies, making the ensembles lively, incorporating unusual rhythms, giving greater importance to the orchestra and taking away the singers' omnipotence. His opera *La Pietra del paragone* (1812), considered as the first result of this reform, brought him national acclaim.

Rossini then set out to reform the genre of Opera seria with *Tancredi* (1813), then French lyric tragedy and melodrama. From then on, he alternated composing works from different genres and set out to change them both stylistically and dramatically.

With *Semiramide*, which audiences failed to comprehend, Rossini turned his back on Italy and moved to Paris. He became the director of the Théâtre-Italien in 1825 and created a composition commissioned to celebrate the coronation of French King Charles X - *The Journey to Reims or The Hotel of the Golden Fleur-de-lis* (1825).

Backed by this success, Rossini became Chief Composer to the King and Inspector General of Singing in France. The composer continued to reform

genres by progressively abandoning opera singing (which he then found cold and artificial) in favour of a new genre of lyric declamation and orchestral support for vocal parts. *William Tell* (1829) would be his last reform and paved the way for historically great French opera, one of the dominant musical genres of the 19th century.

Just as he was becoming popular in Paris, Rossini stopped composing for opera when he lost the protection of French King Charles X after the Revolution of 1830. He left us with a legacy of diverse and substantial works, both stylistically and dramatically. With its multiples reforms, Rossinian opera opened the door for Verdi, as well as Meyerbeer, Donizetti and Bellini. ■

The musical score for *Noah*

« It is a mystery why Rossini's *Messa di Gloria* is so little known.

He wrote the work—a ninemovement setting of the *Kyrie* and *Gloria* for five soloists, chorus and orchestra—in Naples in 1821. As a composer he was in the full leaf and flower of his art. The Naples experience had hugely expanded his command of both orchestral and choral writing.

And great voices remained on tap, so much so that he could afford to write within the Mass for a pair of tenors, the one tender and florid in the "Gratias", the other altogether more emotionally racked in the "Qui tollis".

The opening "Kyrie" is a deeply impressive movement; elsewhere the old canard about Rossini writing operatically for church performance applies rather more obviously than it does in either the Stabat mater or the Petite messe solennelle. (The "Qui sedes" as cabaletta to the "Qui tollis"!) Not that this detracts one iota from one's pleasure in some wonderfully inspired music. The sensuously beautiful "Gratias" is a movement Bach might have fancied and Mozart been proud to own.»

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