

LE SACRE harriague | stravinski DU PRINTEMPS



The Rite of spring © Olivier Houeix

le cratère
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LA DANSE
chaillot



malandain
ballet | biarritz



STATEMENT OF INTENT

The musicologist Gianfranco Vinay wrote the following about Igor Stravinsky, "If Stravinsky had not reached artistic maturity by writing music for the Ballets Russes, he would not have been the Stravinsky we know. But the opposite is also true. If Stravinsky had not collaborated with the Ballets Russes, not only would we be deprived of several masterpieces, but the artistic careers of several choreographers would not have been the same. Imagine Fokine's career without *Petrouchka*, Nijinsky's without *The Rite of Spring*, Massine's without *Pulcinella* and Nijinska's without *Les Noces* ('The Wedding')!



In all these cases, Stravinsky's music was a great catalyst, unleashing new creative energies, allowing the stylistic personalities of various choreographers to be highlighted. In [George] Balanchine's case, the impact was even greater and longer lasting, giving rise to one of the most fruitful and original artistic collaborations in the history of music and dance."

Since then, collaborations between Igor Stravinsky and Terpsichore's disciples have continued to be fruitful, and now, the Malandain Ballet Biarritz is part of this beautiful continuity by double-billing Thierry Malandain and Martin Harriague, an associate artist at the Centre Chorégraphique National.

The Firebird, a danced tale by Michel Fokine which was performed at the Paris Opera by Serge Diaghilev's Ballets Russes in 1910, will be the third encounter between Thierry Malandain and the composer's score. First in 1991, with *Pulcinella*, the choreographer, associated at the time with his Compagnie Temps Présent at the Saint-Etienne Opera, undertook a rereading of this ballet by Léonide Massine, who in 1920 borrowed from the *Comédie-Italienne* and inaugurated the musician's "neo-classical" style. Then in 2011, Thierry Malandain



performed a duet entitled *Entre deux* for the Dutch company Introdans accompanied by the Concerto in D for string orchestra.

For Martin Harriague, after *Sirènes* ('Mermaids') created in 2018 for the Malandain Ballet Biarritz and noticed for its environmental message, celebrating nature with *The Rite of Spring*, created by Vaslav Nijinski at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in 1913, was a first step into the world of the Russian musician, but flowed naturally and profusely.

Furthermore, the two choreographers and the composer are all linked by common bonds. First and foremost, the Basque Coast: Thierry Malandain has been working there since 1998, Martin Harriague is originally from Bayonne and following Gabrielle Chanel's advice, between 1921 and 1924, Igor Stravinsky settled in Anglet, then in Biarritz where he composed a few major works, while his brother-in-law, Grégoire Baliankine opened a Russian cabaret in Biarritz frequented by Pablo Picasso, Alexandre Benois, Jean Cocteau and Blaise Cendrars. Other common denominators are a deep attachment to dance and ballet, a pronounced taste for rhythmic formulas and an inclination towards melodic innovations.

According to the six handshakes theory of the Hungarian Firgyes Kariny, any person on our planet can be connected to any other person through a chain of individual relationships comprising no more than six people. With the advent of social networks and globalisation, the degree of separation would only be three people. One would then be tempted to assert that dance - like other artistic disciplines - also has the marvellous power to connect people beyond the passage of time and beyond the contingencies of our day and age.

THE RITE OF SPRING

music and argument
choreography and scenography
lighting
costume design
costume maker
set and accessories maker

assistants choreographer
ballet

Igor Stravinski
Martin Harriague
François Menou et Martin Harriague
Mieke Kockelkorn
Véronique Murat, Charlotte Margnoux
Frédéric Vadé

Françoise Dubuc, Nuria López Cortés
for 18 dancers

Length 35 minutes

PREVIEW 11 september 2021 Biarritz • Festival Le Temps d'Aimer

PREMIERE 28-29 september 2021 Alès • Scène nationale Le Cratère

CREATION 4 > 12 november 2021 Paris • Chaillot - Théâtre national de la Danse

Coproducers

Donostia Kultura - Victoria Eugenia Antzokia -Donostia / San Sebastián (Espagne) – Ballet T, Chaillot-Théâtre national de la Danse – Paris, Théâtre des Salins, Scène nationale – Martignes, Le Cratère – Scène nationale Alès, Opéra de Reims, La Rampe – Scène conventionnée Echirolles, Opéra de Saint Etienne, Théâtre de Sartrouville, CCN Malandain Ballet Biarritz

Partners

Théâtre Olympia d'Arcachon, Le Parvis - Scène nationale de Tarbes Pyrénées, Théâtre de Saint Quentin-en-Yvelines - Scène nationale, Festival de Danse Cannes - Côte d'Azur France

Foreword

The relationship between man and nature fascinates and worries Martin Harriague. Which he already evoked in his recent choreographic creations (*Sirènes*, *Fossile*, *Serre*) – the rebirth of the living, its power, the struggle for its survival – Stravinsky's iconoclastic and brilliant work for the Ballets Russes contains everything, and more. In many ways, *The Rite of Spring* was revolutionary progress, both in its choreography by Nijinsky and the score.

Harriague decided to use the myth while respecting the composer's original intention illustrated by a pagan rite, "it is an obscure and immense sensation when nature renews its shapes, and it is the vague and profound disorder of a universal impulse," Stravinsky explained in an article that Martin Harriague uses as a reference (CND, *Montjoie* magazine, May 29, 1913). Jacques Rivière, the NRF's insightful director, spoke at the time of a "biological ballet", "spring in its effort, in its spasm... one would believe we were attending a drama under a microscope".

The complex rhythmic hammering that gives the work its wild and threatening force suits Martin Harriague's explosive and earthy body language. This time he renounces all physical lyricism because the music makes



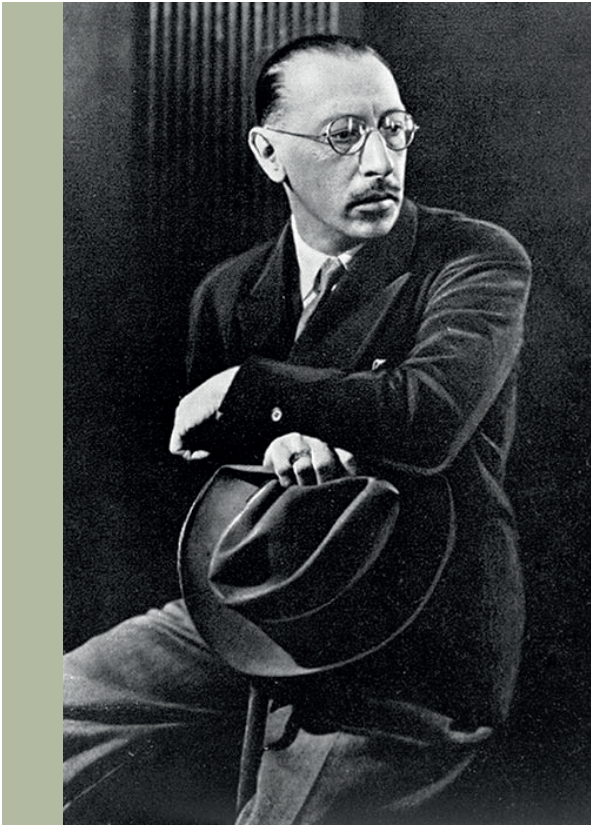
him do so; he concentrates on the expressive power of primitive movement and fractal figures through which the group coils, unfolds, contracts as the living reappears, and makes its way everywhere before exploding.

To Nijinsky, who had dared to make this transgressive break with classical language, Harriague borrows the trampling of the spring Augurs who "mark the pulse of Spring with their footsteps". The quotes from the original ballet stop there, but the entire piece shows a willingness to draw on the music's expressiveness, which was particularly brilliant under the baton of Teodor Currentzis, to bring Stravinsky's vision to life. One physically feels the wild energy and timeless fear that inhabits this group confronted with the violence of the living, purified by the rite. We perceive the savagery and the necessity of the final offering of the chosen one, a feminine principle embodying the energy of spring, the sap, pure and healthy, which rises, an allegory of the living that rises towards the light.

Special thanks to Nuria López Cortés,
Choreographic Artist.



A FEW FACTS ABOUT STRAVINSKY



IGOR STRAVINSKY

Russian composer, pianist, and orchestra conductor (naturalised French then American) (Oranienbaum, 1882 – New York, 1971)

Igor Fyodorovich Stravinsky (1882-1971) could be considered as the Picasso of 20th century music. As a self-explorer, endowed with a rare ability to change models and structures while keeping his style intact, he was constantly reinventing himself.

Born in Russia, the son of musicians, he decided to devote himself entirely to music after his father's death. Rimsky-Korsakov was his teacher, who also taught him orchestration. The beginning of his career was marked by his meeting with Diaghilev. His composition *The Firebird*, a ballet choreographed by Michel Fokine for the Ballets Russes at the Paris Opera in 1910, made him famous. In 1913, at the new Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, the production of *The Rite of Spring*, with revolutionary choreography by Nijinsky, provoked mockery and scandal because of the music's originality and the unconventional choreography that did not follow traditional codes. Stravinsky was an experimenter who sought quintessence, new sound alliances, ritual, and even the sacred. His music provides a benchmark for modernity, originality, and inventiveness.

Exiled following the Russian Revolution, he spent his early years in Switzerland, then in France. He continued on his way, met Picasso, composed neoclassical works such as *Pulcinella*, and engaged in religious works with *Messe* ('Mass'). Stravinsky was elusive.

He had a relationship with Coco Chanel and following her advice, he moved to Biarritz in 1921 where he lived with his family, Picasso, Chanel, Cocteau and many others for 3 years. It was during this period that he composed works such as *Noces* and *Mavra*, then went into exile in California and was buried in Venice, Italy, the city he loved the most.

Sources [medici.tv](#), France Culture, France Musique, Fondation Igor Stravinski

MARTIN HARRIAGUE

Associate artist of CCN Malandain Ballet Biarritz



IN A FEW DATES

1986 Born in Bayonne

2005 Began contemporary and classical dance with Jean-Marc and Michèle Marquerol in Bayonne

2007 - 2008 Joined the Ballet Biarritz Junior, directed by Thierry Malandain

2008 - 2010 Dancer at the Ballet National de Marseille, directed by Frédéric Flamand

2010 - 2013 Joined the Noord Nederlandse Dans (Netherlands), directed by Stephen Shropshire, where he made his choreographic debut with *Of Suits Spots & Fur* which became part of the company's repertoire in 2011

2013 - 2018 Member of the Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company (Israel), directed by Rami Be'er

2014 2nd Place Choreography Award – International Choreography Competition in Stuttgart, Germany

2015 Scapino Ballet Rotterdam Award at the Hanover, Germany competition

Audience's Choice Award and 3rd Place Choreography Award – for *Beauty and the Beast* at the Copenhagen, Denmark competition

Audience's Choice Award and 2nd Place Choreography Award – for *You Man* at the Stuttgart, Germany competition

2016 Audience's Choice Award, Critics' Choice Awards and 2nd Place – for *Prince* at the Young Neoclassical Choreographers' Competition in Biarritz

2018 Appointed Associate Artist at the CCN Malandain Ballet Biarritz

2019 Nominated for a 2019 Golden Mask Award for *Pitch* – Best Contemporary Production, Best Costumes

A polymorphous choreographer, Martin is intermittently a set designer, dancer, performer, lighting designer, composer, musician, and singer... and he likes to combine an array of disciplines to explore various media and formats such as ballet, opera, video, fashion shows, small groups, large-scale productions, and even duets.

His writing never ceases to be singular in the course of his personal projects or collaborations with other artists. He sees his dance as a dance... that dances. Physical and explosive, it is quite often earthy; the movements are thus firmly anchored in the ground, and gravity is never far away.

And then, driven by a sense of drama not devoid of sarcasm, Martin seeks to give substance to emotions through an accepted theatricality, and it is easy to feel what makes him vibrate positively... or negatively in our day and age.

Martin Harriague also says, «I believe in the power of the virtuoso body combined with different art forms, I believe in its ability to change our perception of the world to make it better.»

CCN MALANDAIN BALLET BIARRITZ

Created in 1998 in Biarritz on the initiative of the Ministry of Culture, and the Town of Biarritz with the support of Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region and the Atlantic Pyrenees Department, Malandain Ballet Biarritz is one of 19 National Choreographic Centres (NCC) in France today.

The particularity of Malandain Ballet Biarritz is that it is made up of 22 permanent dancers trained in classical technique and whose expression in Thierry Malandain's choreographies is contemporary. Today Malandain Ballet Biarritz is one of Europe's most widely seen companies with 100 000 spectators per season and almost 100 performances per year, including a third abroad.

As a National Choreographic Centre, Malandain Ballet Biarritz also works intensely in terms of public awareness of dance – with on average over 350 events per year – and support to artists and companies thanks to the «Accueil Studio» programme.

Its local presence has led it to forge fertile partnerships with numerous cultural actors in the Euro-region. It has thus constructed the «Ballet T» project, a partnership between Malandain Ballet Biarritz and



San Sebastian's Victoria Eugenia Antzokia, with support from Europe and the Aquitaine Euskadi fund. Its aim is to spread choreographic art in the Basque Country, by co-producing and disseminating choreographic works, and also through awareness campaigns and audience mobility within the Euro-region.

The Communauté Pays Basque and the Diputación Foral de Gipuzkoa supports Malandain Ballet Biarritz for his actions in Iparralde and Gipuzkoa in the territorial cooperation and in the development of the territorial attractiveness.



PRESS ARTICLES

“Without having to resort to supporting set design, Malandain demonstrates gestural and musical creativity.” (...) “Although Harriague has taken the liberty of diverting the meaning of the Sacre parable, transforming a pagan drama into a Christian sacrificial rite, his version remains interesting, counterbalancing the rather Apollonian ballet that precedes it (L’Oiseau de feu or Firebird), with a whirlwind of dishevelled movements, by the same troupe possessed by the demon of dance.”

■ Toute la culture, Nicolas Villodre, 13 September 2021

“Malandain and Harriague, flamboyant each in their own way” (...) The former, with great delicacy and finesse, the latter with overflowing energy endowed with a theatrical sense of staging - they have corporal intelligence and dramaturgy in common.”

■ Sud Ouest, Céline Musseau, 14 September 2021

“If you know a little about Malandain’s career, you’ll see once again his obsessions with purity, the dream of infinity, the liberation of the aching body, obtained by the body itself. If we ignore them, we discover a moving and superbly drawn fresco, where the colours alternate, carrying mystical values, and on which the gripping, tormented and smooth figure of Hugo Layer as the Bird stands out, undoubtedly the dancer with the most perfect technique, the most expressive of the company.” (...) About Sacre du printemps (Rite of Spring): “The work of the brilliant Martin Harriague, a rising star in French and notably Basque choreography, appointed Associate Artist at the CCN Malandain Ballet Biarritz in 2018, unquestionably refers to the origins of a primitive Russia evoked by Nijinsky. To do so, he has rediscovered trampling, the presence of the ancestor, the dynamics even more violent than at the time of creation, when the dancers were not accustomed to so many acrobatics, and the sacrificial rather than erotic spirit, in a hymn to reborn nature, which nevertheless must be broken in order to live again. Certainly, it is not the typical Harriague, but the fresco is impressive, and the end overwhelming (...).”

■ Concertclassic, Jacqueline Thuilleux, 14 September 2021

Thierry Malandain (...) chose the 1945 concert suite for this new choreography of L’Oiseau de feu, the same one chosen by George Balanchine to whom he clearly pays tribute in this refined neoclassical choreography, extremely elegant in luminous costumes by Jorge Gallardo”. (...) About Sacre du printemps: “... the pagan rite, rigorously synchronised and danced very energetically by the company’s magnificent dancers.”

■ Concertonet.com, Olivier Brunel, 14 September 2021

About L’Oiseau de feu: “Thierry Malandain gives his version today. A delight. (...) Russian folklore is no longer relevant - here it’s the elevation of the soul.”

About Sacre du printemps: “One thing is certain - Martin Harriague is a true choreographer.”

■ Les Echos, Philippe Noisette, 14 September 2021

“Quite a plethora of ideas that we will not detail here as it is a treat to discover them.”

■ Le Figaro, Ariane Bavelier, 15 September 2021

“Martin Harriague’s Sacre du Printemps (...) is definitely full of beautiful moments and is very promising.”

■ Les Balletonautes, Cleopold, 18 September 2021

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