



THE CHARM OF RIOTS

*Thomas
Chopin*

performance piece
for 5 dancers

an Infini Turbulent
company production



The production of *The Charm of Riots* began before the explosion of street protests in France against proposed labour laws (*la loi du travail*) in 2016. The principal sources of inspiration, particularly regarding the relationship between protest and territory, were the Arab Spring, *the Indignados* movement in Spain and the Greek anarchists. The importance of physical space in protest movements has become even more significant since the occupation of traffic roundabouts and streets became an everyday occurrence in France, as a way of re-appropriating state-controlled public spaces. When discourse falls silent, the body and the emotions come into play.



THE CHARM OF RIOTS

a piece for 5 dancers, first performed at the T.U. in Nantes
on the 14th and 15th of January 2020, as part of *Trajectoires* festival

technical details

duration - 1h
8 people on tour
no decor

distribution

choreography

Thomas Chopin

devised collaboratively
with the dancers

Steven Hervouët

Simon Tanguy

Johanna Levy

Benoit Armange

Elsa Dumontel

sound

Thomas Chopin

Gaspard Guilbert

additional music

Pa di issime (La Tête)

**Armo Bishop Roden
(Boards of Canada)**

costumes and masks

Delphine Poiraud

Rosalie Stevens

lights

Vincent Toppino

additional dramaturgical input

Vincent Poymiro

Leila Gaudin

forthcoming dates

18 march 2021

CNDC / Le Quai (Angers)

7 april 2021

Le Rive Gauche (St-Étienne-du-Rouvray)

past dates

14-15 january 2020

Trajectoires festival
TU (Nantes)

17-18 january 2020

Faits d'hiver festival
Théâtre de la cité Internationale (Paris)

25 mars 2020 - cancelled

Les Halles de Schaerbeek (Bruxelles)

5 mai 2020 - cancelled

Le Sablier (Ifs)

co-productions

TU de Nantes, Micadanses, CNDC Angers,
CCNN Trajectoires Festival

accueil studios

CDCN Hauts de France, CNDC (Angers)

This show has received funding from the following: the Drac Île-de-France, the Adami, the Beaumarchais SACD and the Département de la Seine St-Denis within the framework of the In Situ, Artists in Residence in Colleges project.





STATEMENT OF ARTISTIC INTENT

I was born in the middle of the 70s, a few years after the events of May 1968. My parents ran an alternative bookshop and sold material arising out of the counter-culture of the time: literature, comic books, newspapers and magazines... I read all of this avidly during my formative years, and was energised by the general sense of excitement that I could feel around me. Revolution was in the air, with a palpable sense that it was happening “here and now”.

Since then I have been fascinated by anti-establishment popular protest and frequently join demonstrations as an observer / participant.

I often consider the importance of demonstrations in history and politics. Is political change really brought about by popular protest? Politicians are keen to say that this is not so. But at different moments in history, popular uprisings have led to the fall of the ruling powers, for example during the Arab Spring in Tunisia and Egypt, or in the Ukraine in 2014. We often hear the retort that though these uprisings generate optimism, the outcome is usually a new order that is worse than the previous one. That may be the case, but though defeat may be more

common than victory, people all over the world continue to take their protests onto the streets.

The next question is : what exactly do these events tell us ? From personal observation it seems that people need to gather together on a regular basis as a way of demonstrating their collective strength. We protest together so we can see and be seen, and reassure ourselves that we do still count as a force. Being in the street together, we exist as a single entity, and protesting means that we are acting communally; it makes us feel alive, and renews hope. And the sense that protests are always liable to get out of hand reminds us of the underlying power of the crowd.

In my previous piece, *Ordalie*, I looked at how individuals can experience a sense of self-renewal by taking risks. This new piece examines the same issue, but applies the principle to groups. How can people be transformed by a revolt against the established order and use their bodies to precipitate action?

Thomas Chopin
january 2018

NOTES CHORÉGRAPHIQUES

« To rise up is to throw off that heavy burden weighing on our shoulders that prevents us from acting. »

Georges Didi-Huberman

All over the world, the effects of the current crisis have stirred up anger and incited people to protest. Like some kind of orphan child of Marxist ideology, revolt has overtaken revolution. The epoch of riots is upon us.

In 2009, 500 riots broke out throughout the world, while in 2013 the figure was more than 2000. That's not including the deposition of dictators in Arab and eastern European countries, the "Indignados" movement, Occupy Wall Street, protests against the labour laws and the gilets jaunes in France, popular uprisings in Greece, and the upheavals against austerity in Brazil. And there were also the French "banlieues" riots



which had neither slogans nor avowed aims and which remained restricted to the edges of big cities in 2005, plus those riots that did touch city centres in England during the summer of 2012.

Methods of protest have changed; we don't erect barricades as frequently nowadays. Sometimes there are sit-down protests in large squares, while at other times participants move constantly so as to surprise the forces of law and order. Fires are lit and symbols of capitalism or the state are destroyed. Revolt has become a language for those who can't play a part in political discourse or who have no political representation, including the young and the poor.





uprising

Rise up and stand strong, like a volcano coming back to life. The collective body creates its own power. A Dionysian dance. Throw off your burdens so they are far from you, get rid of them or destroy them. It's our desire that make us rise up, and the power that that gives us. Our desire for renewal, for change, for revolution. The hope that nothing will be like it was before. Faith and belief.

weight

The weight of the world, the weight of poverty and the weight that keeps us down after a period of mourning. Mourning is the primary force behind uprising. Moving out of despondency and exhaustion. You need power to begin to move again and this power takes root in vitality and the desire for liberty.

movement

A profusion of gesture and movement, a burgeoning of animality, a multitude of emotional impulses. A riot is the quintessential expression of action pushed to its extreme. Michaux talks of "gesticular excesses". The body language of revolt survives over generations by a mimetic process. These gestures and movements come from the depths of our being and from our collective History.

costumes and masks

Great care has been given to the costumes. The protagonists are dressed in black so they can disappear easily, and they also dance in brightly coloured costumes with masks to embody the spirit of carnival and disorder of which they are masters. The costumes enhance the contours of the fighter / dancers, whose body shapes spell out the language of conflict.

the space

The act of rebellion is inextricably linked with physical, mental and intimate personal space. Those involved attempt to gain control of, or win back, space, and to defend it. This dynamic is present in attempts to take over public squares (Maidan Square, Tahrir Square, Place de la République in Paris), or in protests taking place in ZADs (Deferred Development Zones) in France such as Notre Dame des Landes, or in the takeover of traffic roundabouts by the *gilets jaunes* movement. The dancers' bodies delineate the straight lines of the street and the circular forms of public places in a dynamic of constant opposition between exterior and interior, as marked out by the front lines of conflict.



DRAMATURGICAL NOTES

My work has a consistently strong narrative at its heart. I build visual, physical and sound elements on this narrative basis; action springs organically from this source material, usurping meaning. Glimpses of the structure appear and disappear as the creative process advances.

I make deliberate omissions to accelerate the telling of the story, miss out events, move from one context to another. This creates a meandering quality, a kind of waking-dream made up of memories, sensations and images. I play with ellipses. This principle of mixing/assembling is also present within individual scenes, with fade-outs/dissolves and cuts.

The principle of mixing diverse elements also applies to the aesthetic concept (we move between figurative, abstract and expressionistic) and to the performances (combining dance-theatre and circus). Moving between different registers like this creates a specific language.

sound

The sounds of filmed protest movements in Paris, Kiev and Hamburg in recent years served as the basis for the show's music composition. These sound archives are potent and generate a kind of trance state. In addition there is the live sound coming from the stage, provided by moving bodies in confrontational mode banging on the floor as if rallying the collective effort. This raw sound is in stark contrast with the figurative and abstract choreographic composition.

some references

● essays

- Le vertige de l'émeute*, Romain Huët (2019)
- Les enfants du chaos*, Alain Bertho (2016)

● exhibition catalogue

- Soulèvements*, Georges Didi-Huberman (2016)
- Les maîtres du désordre*, Jean de Loisy (2012)

● novels

- Les Renards pâles*, Yannick Haenel (2013)

● cinema

- Molière*, Ariane Mouchkine (1980)
- Le fond de l'air est rouge*, Chris Marker (1977)
- Maidan*, Sergei Loznitsa (2014)





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THE CREATIVE TEAM

Thomas Chopin

choreographer

After obtaining a degree in history at the Faculty of Human Sciences of Nantes University and after devoting huge efforts to mountain sports and circus, he trained in theatre, clown and contemporary dance (at TU-Nantes and the Samovar school in Paris). He co-founded and directed the C^e L'intestine from 2001 to 2003 and made two dance / physical comedy pieces with them, *Un jour tout ira mieux* and *On verra demain*. In 2012 he formed the C^e L'Infini Turbulent and created *Ordalie* (Groupe Geste(s)/ DGCA first prize) in 2014 and *Chair de ma chair* in 2019. Between 1997 and 2017 he also worked as a freelance performer. He was a dancer with Nasser Martin-Gousset in *Peplum*, performed at la Maison de la Danse de Lyon and at Théâtre de la Ville, and with Karine Pontières in *Lamali Lokta* and *Phebus and Borée*. In the world of circus, he participated in the experimental *La Machine à jouer* by Camille Boitel, and performed in a piece by Philippe Ménard and in Alexandre Pavlatta's *Homo Sapiens Burocraticus* in street theatre festivals.

Simon Tanguy

dancer

At the age of 21 he obtained a degree in philosophy at Rennes as well as training in contemporary dance and in clown and physical theatre at the Samovar in Paris. In 2011 he obtained a diploma at the SNDO School for New Dance Development, the national school in Amsterdam. He has danced with various choreographers such as Boris Charmatz, Deborah Hay, Maud Le Pladec, and Jeanine Burning. He also danced in Thomas Chopin's pieces *Ordalie*, *Chair de ma chair* and *The Charm of Riots*. As a choreographer he created *Fin et Suite*, *Inging*, *Japan* and *Gerro*, *Minos* and *Him*.

Steven Hervouët

dancer

After training at the Conservatoire de Nantes, he was accepted at the CNSM in Paris in 2008. He is currently working with Olivier Dubois, Arthur Perole, Jean Christophe Boclé and Yoann Hourcade. In addition, he has been involved in pieces made by Cécile Loyer, Sébastien Perrault, Thierry Micouin, Charlotte Rousseau and John Scott, in Ireland. He joined Thomas Chopin's L'Infini Turbulent for *The Charm of Riots*.

Johanna Levy

dancer

After obtaining a diploma from the Conservatoire National Supérieur in Lyon and training with Maurice Béjart in Switzerland, she moved to London where she danced with a variety of companies. On returning to France she danced with Juha Marsalo, Raphaëlle Boitel and Léna Massiani as well as with the artist Alex Ceccetti. She also joined the C^{ie} Eco for *Peau d'Ane*, which was performed at the Théâtre National de Chaillot in Paris. She also danced in Thomas Chopin's *Chair de ma chair*. She was choreographer for several music groups such as The Do and BB Brunes. She then founded C^{ie} Ten with whom she choreographed *After*, *Twist and Convives*.

Benoît Armange

dancer

His artistic work was shaped by collaborations with various artists and companies such as Michèle Anne De Mey, Carolyn Carlson, Juha Marsala, Tango Sumo, Escale and Thomas Chopin.

He was trained in dance with C^{ie} LaDainha in 1997 and in 2003 he undertook a training course for professional dancers at the CDCN in Toulouse. Benoît Armange continues to research and experiment as a member of the Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts in Brussels.

Elsa Dumontel

dancer

After obtaining a degree in cultural mediation at the Paris Sorbonne Nouvelle university, she undertook professional dance training at the Coline centre in Istres. During her training she was able to work with Georges Appaix, Thomas Lebrun, Alban Richard, Fabrice Ramalingom, Michel Kelemenis, and Rita Cioffi in a new version of *So schnell*. She worked as an assistant to Alban Richard, Aina Alegre, Christian Ubl, and Yan Raballand. Her current project is *The Charm of Riots* with Thomas Chopin.

Gaspard Guilbert

sound designer / technician

His diverse career has involved training at the Beaux-Arts school in Cergy until 2003, then participating in BOCAL (a project conceived by B. Charmatz) in 2004. Today he enjoys using his various skills, and often moves between disciplines in his work. He has been a musician and sound designer for documentary films, theatre and dance, as well as dancing with various choreographers such as Olivia Grandville, Boris Charmatz, Jérôme Bel, Mohamed Shafik, Annabelle Pulcini, Meg Stuart, and Anne Lopez.

Vincent Toppino

light designer / technician

He began working as a technician and sound designer just before the fall of the Berlin Wall, in shows where the performers speak (Théâtre du lucernaire, C^{ie} du Carrousel, C^{ie} Cas d'espèces, Spectacle de Poche, C^{ie} Isée...) or move (C^{ie} Hervé Diasnas, C^{ie} Valérie Lamielle, Yumi Fujitani, C^{ie} Cobalt Works, 2 Temps 3 Mouvements, C^{ie} Thomas Chopin...) or do both at the same time (C^{ie} Vilcanota, C^{ie} Désordinaire...)



L'INFINI TURBULENT

The Infini Turbulent company was created in 2012 as a vehicle for the artistic work of the choreographer Thomas Chopin. His main influences are popular culture and human and social sciences.

« What I put on stage, I've lived through myself. I must have physically experienced the events that I choreograph. And I see social structures in physical terms ! I try to approach the material with distance, in an almost sociological way, but not without emotion. Like a case study. »

The company contributes to the development of inter-cultural connections and encourages the involvement of different sectors of the population in theatre and art through performance, training and any other available means of contact. During 2018-2019 the company was in residence at the Jean-Pierre Timbaud college in Bobigny, near Paris, in the framework of the *InSitu* artists' residencies in colleges project, organized by the Département de la Seine-St-Denis in association with *Les rencontres chorégraphiques de Seine-St-Denis*.



[our current touring show](#)

2014

Ordalie

a performance piece for 4 dancers
awarded 1st prize in the Groupe Geste(s)

[and our new show, currently being rehearsed](#)

2021

Chair de ma chair

a performance piece for 2 dancers

[contacts](#)

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