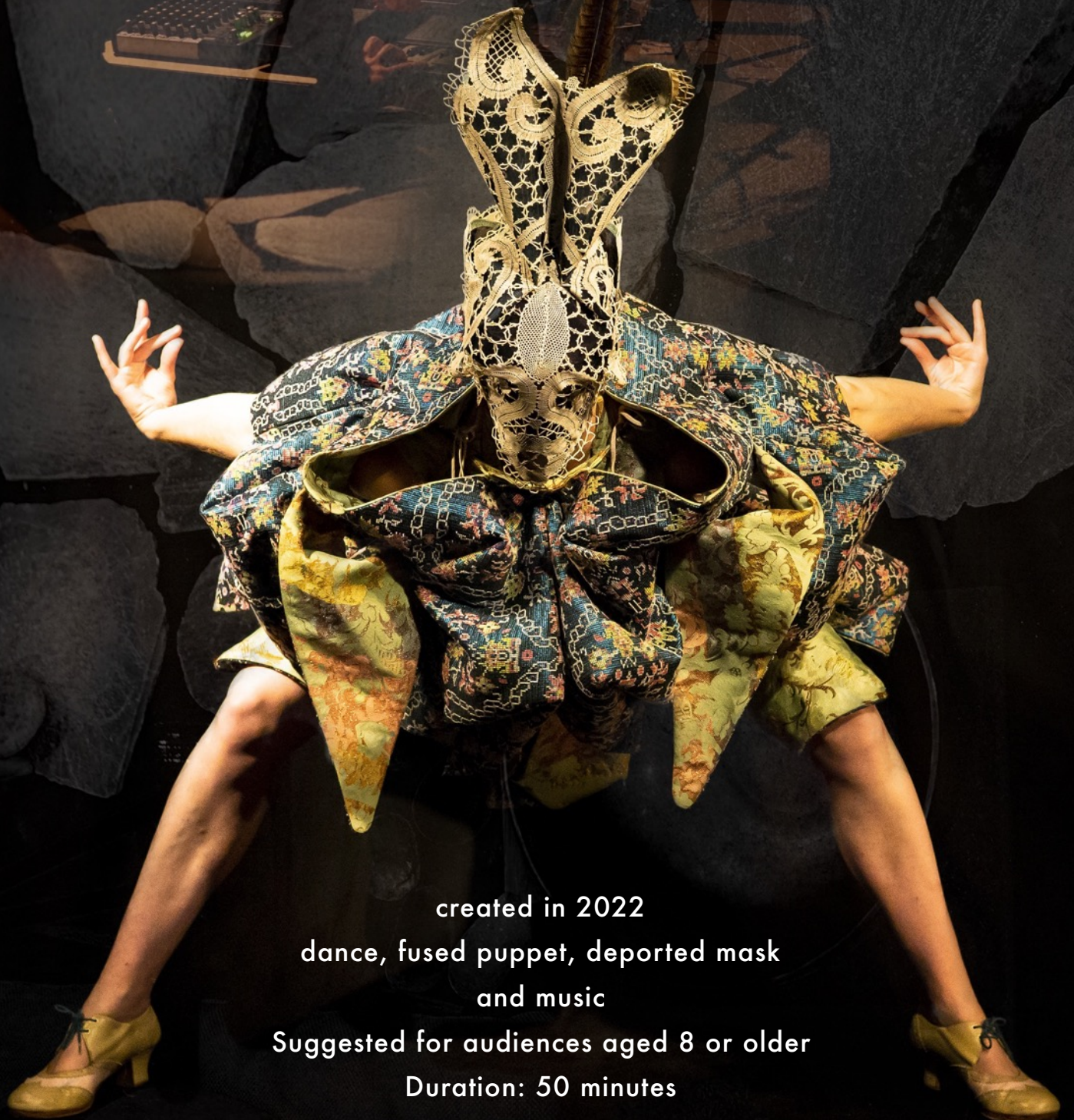


YANKA

Cie Neige Scariot



created in 2022

dance, fused puppet, deported mask
and music

Suggested for audiences aged 8 or older

Duration: 50 minutes



CREATOR'S NOTE

« What the body can achieve, no one has managed to determine yet. » Spinoza

Following my previous creation « Is this desire ? », which dealt with the transformations and various « body states » of a woman according to the intensity of her desire, with YANKA I keep working on the metamorphosis of the body, but this time throughout the entire life of a being.

I felt the need to create a strange and complex character, part human part animal, chic yet wild, sometimes even ludicrous, and to make it undertake a succession of changes. This in order to expose the multiplicity of the being, to show that we have not one but several identities, depending on our life experiences and what we may hold inside.

I focused my research on the body as costume or puppet, the body as material in its perishable and tangible function, and the body as a filter channeling multiple energetic flows, such as the memory of ancestors or cultures.

YANKA, which means « being » in the Sioux language, starts as a hybrid and ends unaltered, evolves from the mineral to the organic, from animality to humanity, and shows unity to express multitude.

« There is nothing stable in the whole universe, everything passes, forms are meant to come and go (...). Our bodies keep transforming continually, relentlessly. What we once were, what we are, won't be tomorrow(...). Nothing retains its primitive form ; nature, which endlessly changes the universe, rejuvenates forms one after the other. Nothing perishes, believe me, in the whole world ; but everything varies, everything changes aspects. » Ovid's Metamorphosis, book XV

TEAM

Artistic creation, stage direction, choreography and performance: Neige Scariot

Musical creation and performance: Guillaume Arbonville

Costume and mask creation and tailoring: Daniel Trento

Old woman's face creation, outside perspective, and puppetry advice: Delphine Bardot

Scenography: Baptiste Dequet

Lighting desk and design: Antoine Lenoir

Sound desk: Clément Bocquillon

Outside perspective and puppetry advice: Pierre Tual

COLLABORATORS

Production: Compagnie Neige Scariot / Yalla Flamenco

Co-direction: Ville de Charleville-Mézières

Pre-bookings: La Filature de Bazancourt, Le Centre Culturel de Nouzonville

With support from: de La Filature de Bazancourt (51), du Pôle Danse des Ardennes (08), du Laboratoire Chorégraphique de Reims (51), du Centre Culturel de Nouzonville (08), du Festival Mondial des Théâtres de Marionnettes (08), du Théâtre de Poche-Hédé, scène de territoire pour le théâtre / Bretagne romantique et Val d'Ille- Aubigné (35), du Centre Chorégraphique National de Roubaix Hauts-de-France – Sylvain Groud dans le cadre des résidences d'artistes (59), de la Ville de Charleville-Mézières, du Conseil Départemental des Ardennes, de la DRAC Grand Est (résidence estivale), de France Active.

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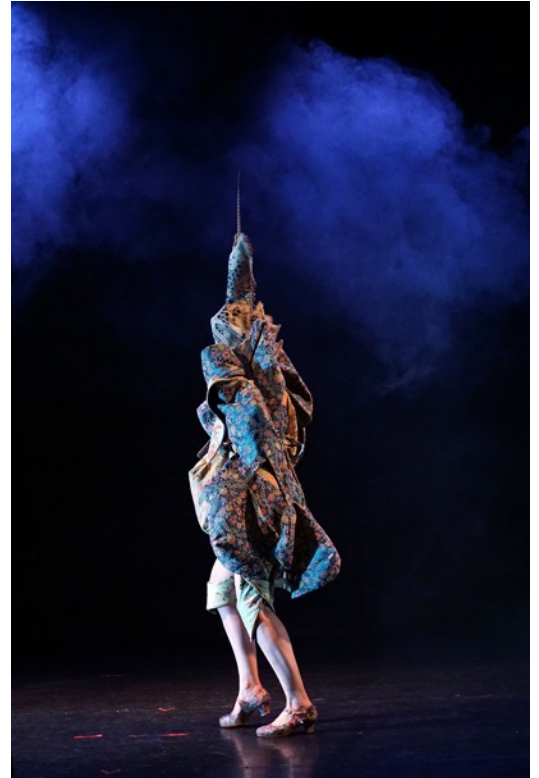
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DESCRIPTION

YANKA is a unique and complex creature, which at first appears to be very mysterious and complex to the spectator. The discovery and the evolution of this character happen progressively. It is first a hybrid, part warrior part insect, and will moult into an odd archaic goddess, until it finally grows a human face, not a newborn's as might be expected, but an old woman's face. A most surprising birth, particularly since this old woman's face will gradually absorb YANKA's body, in order to not only exist as a head, but as a head controlling a whole body.

YANKA will eventually get rid of the old woman entirely, by shedding their skin once more, thus parting with everything that got in the way and gaining total freedom of movement. YANKA is now unveiled as a young, almost naked, woman with assertive, avid, twinkling eyes, filled with her previous selves and yet free from them, and she will explore the new world around her with radiating, joyful energy.



Between savagery and innocence, power and frailty, rigour and buffoonery, YANKA is always contrasted. She mutates before our eyes, exhibiting the turmoil of her changing body, and exposes the multiple identities she uses as she goes through the various stages of her existence : a wild animal, a warrior, a lively young woman, an old woman who continues to dance passionately despite her old age, but also all the women who existed before her and those who will exist after her. All these women she carries within, unconsciously, give her the strength to go on and survive in an everchanging world.

Accepting what makes us who we are isn't always easy, but it is the best way to know our true self, to grow as a person, to come to terms with our good sides and bad sides. Welcoming our differences, making them cohabit, and renewing our self continually just as nature has adapted since the dawn of time, here lies the true beauty and wealth of each living creature in our world. YANKA is one of them.



BODY - COSTUME - P U P P E T -

A transforming costume for a creature with multiple identities...

In order to give life to this hybrid creature, both human and animal, chic and wild, I worked with costume designer Daniel Trento. Together, we imagined a transforming costume that would mask some parts of my body and face, and would also hide some surprises such as the old woman's head sticking out of my belly.

Stemming from our conversations and Daniel's creativity, YANKA's costume is made of interlocked identical parts, forming an armor / shell and constituting a unique volume



Esthetical elements of color and materials were defined in collaboration with the lighting.

Finally, so that the audience could understand that it was the same creature mutating before their eyes, we decided to use a recurring material in every stage of YANKA's metamorphoses, and we set our minds on lace. Lace thus appears on the mask of the first character, on the headdress of the old woman, and constitutes the main material of the leotard worn by the young woman in the final part. It symbolises YANKA, it's her trademark.



Masked theatrical performance and puppetry...

I really wanted to take things further after the manipulation processes I had worked on with « IS THIS DESIRE ? ». I wished to associate dance with unusual techniques such as puppets worn as costume, side masks not worn on the face and inverted bodies. Two puppeteers, Pierre Tual and Delphine Bardot (who also created the old woman's head) helped me in this pursuit.



« In the workshop, I designed and built the mask that later replaced the prototype used by Neige in her first experiments. She felt that she had to begin with the old woman she might become one day, in order to conjure her ancestor. So I made a cast of her face, then I used worbla thermoplastics to make it look much older, in a realistic way. With her costume, after her moult, YANKA always wears a mask, exposing a robotic, animalistic head created by Daniel with large graphic doilies. YANKA's humanity usually emerges first from her body, but the first face the audience discovers is the old woman sticking out of her belly, so we chose to rely on the weirdness produced by this face which looked more real, more lifelike, more human, than the character's head! The treatment of the white lace on her headdress kept us closer to the language developed by the costume, while giving the character of « the mantilla-clad ancestor » an old-fashioned charm contrasting with her melancholy, yet tough expression. » Delphine Bardot.



With Delphine, we mostly worked on the character of the « belly-born old lady » : we invented her together, then we imagined how she would gradually absorb YANKA, and the step-by-step invasion / construction.

After a period spent learning the basic vocabulary and grammar of the puppet, then making the object ours to handle, we managed to develop some technical work based on the mask associated with the body : finding and defining manipulation principles, investing the creature stemming from the mask on a body infused with flamenco, investigating the rhythms and the physicality of this ageless women, refining the gestures, widening propositions, setting YANKA's jubilation free as pulses and palos go through her. As well as reinvesting the costume in other ways, as the suit of armour becomes a falbala...as the straightjacket becomes a Queen's cape. Because this old lady does as she pleases on the set, with the accesories and the musician, ordering him to come play much closer to her. And so the old lady was born, a funny yet moving and obstinate character.



With Pierre, we improved the puppetry part of the show, and we also revisited the opening scene, the choreography that sets the costume / shell along with the graphic mask ; and together we realized that this costume was in fact a formidable puppet, an inhabited puppet, and that we had to handle it as such. So we investigated together how to integrate the codes of masked theater and puppetry to the danse – the puppet being a sort of hand mask, it shares a common vocabulary with masked performance.

This exploratory work helped us connect the multiple aspects of the character I embody as the show progresses.

Then we worked on the transitions between the different mutations, we sought to stage the moultings of the character, thus revealing gradually a woman stripped naked, fragile as a newborn, but ready to stand and fight. We had to find a balance to bring to light the sensuality of the character, when the dancer is almost naked, without victimizing her, which wasn't our intention, and without falling into cheap vulgarity. The results allowed us to let the character evolve in a powerful manner, despite her frailties.

"A character who falls but always stands up again. A character who reveals herself to us, in the manner of a mythological creature which would unfold in the throes of its complex evolution. Sometimes even choosing to expose herself freely, in a liberating explosion of joy." Pierre Tual



THE DANCE



YANKA exposes different characters, so I had to find a dance for each of them, based on the weight and the volume of the imposing costume. Indeed, my movements depended on how it limited my gestures. Wearing a mask is also a constraint, in the sense that I can't rely on my face to express anything because it is hidden ; but I can exaggerate the movements and directions of my head, and I can address the audience with my eyes, while the mask may be compelling in itself.

Once I managed to make the costume physically mine, I drew inspiration from ritualistic and community dances, starting with flamenco, my favoured means of expression. The choreography is contemporary, and there are no traditional palos in YANKA, but I relied on flamenco's precision of postures, when the body is often twisted or in opposition, with very mobile arms; I also kept the essential percussive aspect. I took inspiration from krump to « let go », and for its powerful movements, as well as from butô for the minimalism and the slowness which characterize it. Finally, I also observed animals a lot, particularly insects moultings, in order to give my first character the wild animality it required.

By drawing inspiration from several traditional dances, I intend to make this show a trip to the heart of ritualistic and community dances, I wish to pay tribute to all the dances in the world, and more specifically I intend to pay homage to all the dancing beings on this earth !





THE MUSIC

In order to give musical life to this complex and unique creature, to accompany her through all her transformations and sacred rituals, I need sounds which were also varied and unique. I worked with Guillaume Arbonville, a drummer and percussionist, and after long discussions, we chose to rely on a multiplicity of materials and on alternative uses of instruments.

We used minerals (slates used as primitive keyboard), vegetables (calabash, brimbau), metals (cymbals, gongs), a variety of traditional instruments (tabla, congas, bongos), drumkit elements (toms, bass drums, snare drums) and a synthesizer for a modern touch.

Guillaume reinvented ways of using these elements depending on the different scenes and choreographies, in order to create strong atmospheres, but also to accompany the dance rhythmically; he also challenged himself to invent new ways of playing, using his fingers, his hands, his fists, his nails, and accessories such as sticks, mallets or stones.

The instrumentarium built up as he composed, until it became a « mutant kit » based on ancestral techniques, unfolding as some form of stage monster, as unique and complex as my character.

Thus, from primitive instruments to electronic music, the musical sounds expand and resonate with the dance, the movements, the immobility of a being in perpetual transformation.



SCENOGRAPHY & LIGHTS



Because I value visual aesthetics, and since I wished to create different scenes according to the characters I embody, as if each apparition needed its own living space, I asked the scenographer and the lights director to work together in close collaboration, so they could find the adequate material, evolutive and transformable just as the costume itself had to be. Paper appeared to be the best option, and the easiest, in terms of transport and lighting. One side is painted, which allows more possibilities of lightings, so a wider variety of « living spaces ». The spectators can experience mysterious settings, then move on to more intimate and cosy atmospheres, until they enter a rougher world.

Everything works together in YANKA, everything fluctuates to go along with the ever-changing character : the gestures, the costume, the music, the scenography and the lights keep changing throughout the performance.





THE COMPANY

Between tradition and modernity, the choreographic company Neige Scariot is settled in Charleville-Mezieres, in the Grand Est region.

In the beginning in 2009, it produced traditional flamenco shows, bringing together songs, guitar and dance on stage. Since 2014, the company has taken a new creative direction, producing shows based on the essence of flamenco, but with different influences, more contemporary aesthetics, freed from any confines and expectations.

The performances are mostly choreographies including other artistic disciplines such as video, weaving, music, puppetry or design, filled with theatricalness and poetry, while paying particular attention to visuals.

The company focuses on identity: what constitutes a human being, and what it feels, what can be seen and what remains hidden. Choosing one's place, finding one's inner music, within the bustle of life in "La Marche à Suivre" (2015); analyzing a specific feeling, desire, in "Is This Desire?" (2018); exploring the various life stages and the subsequent changes of the body in "Yanka" (2022). In other words, visiting the living being in all its splendour and its obscurity, within and without.

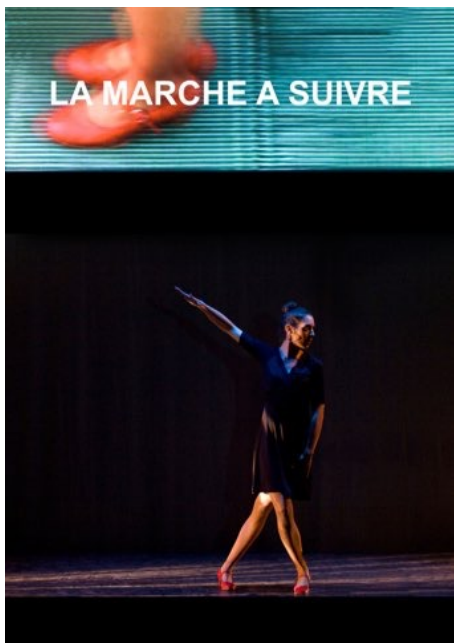
Neige's highly poetic universe, and the variety of its horizons, provides singularity and strength to each of her creations.

While creating shows, the company explores, shares and transmits its values to audiences of all ages.

Depending on the projects, the company gets support from the city of Charleville-Mézières, the County Council of the Ardennes, the Grand Est region, and the DRAC Grand Est.



PREVIOUS CREATIONS



LA MARCHÉ À SUIVRE
created 2014-2015

This show takes us on a rhythmic road movie, set between tradition and modernity, while a guitar plays electrifying rock with deep Flamenco vocals. Between these 2 points, a dancer performs her own path, her own steps, in order to connect both worlds, thus creating a sonic, visual, and choreographic object, totally unique in its form.

Genre / Duration / Audience:
choreography with electric music, flamenco vocals, and video.
Audiences from 7 years old.
50 minutes.

Partners:
Production: Yalla Flamenco
Coproductions: Le Manège-Scène Nationale de Maubeuge (59) and le Pôle Danse des Ardennes (08).
With support from: the city of Charleville-Mézières, the County Council of les Ardennes, the Grand Est region
Artistic residences: Le Manège-scène nationale de Maubeuge (59), Pôle Danse des Ardennes (08), Gare Numérique de Jeumont (59), CSC André Dhôtel (08)



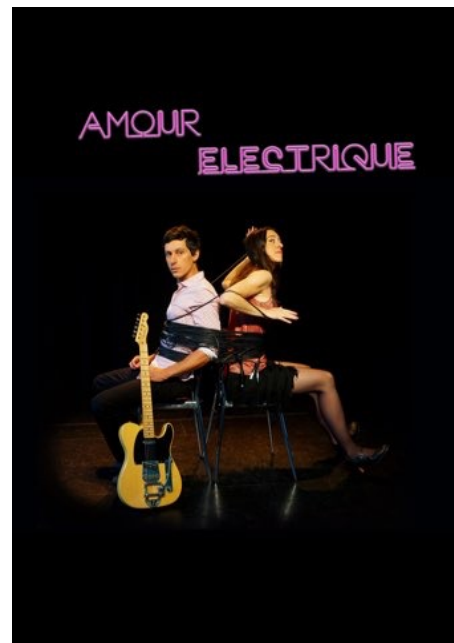
IS THIS DESIRE?
created 2018-2019

This choreographic, poetic and visual piece focuses on the question of desire, and the hectic path one must take to satisfy it, or not. It is a trip in 12 scenes set inside the body and soul of a woman, as if her body were open in order to expose, in a poetic and symbolic manner, the mechanisms of her emotions as she experiences them.

Genre / Duration / Audience:
choreographic, theatrical, poetic and visual performance.
Audiences from 10 years old.
1 hour.
There is a reduced version for non - equipped venues or atypical places.

Partners:
Production: Yalla Flamenco
Coproductions: Théâtre de Charleville-Mézières-TCM and le Pôle Danse des Ardennes (08).

With support from: the city of Charleville-Mézières, the County Council of les Ardennes, DRAC Grand Est for PAG Danse « Matière à danser » (school project).
Artistic residences: Pôle danse des Ardennes (08), le Forum (08), la MCL Ma Bohème (08), le Garage à Rennes (35).



AMOUR ELECTRIQUE
created street 2019

A funny and poetic Flamenco-Rock performance, intended for a dancer and a musician, depicting married life.

Genre / Duration / Audience:
wordless theatre, music, dance, intended for outdoors or indoors performances.
Audiences from 5 years old.
30 minutes.

Partenaires:
Production: Yalla Flamenco
Coproductions: CC de Nouzonville (08)
With support from : the city of Charleville-Mézières, the County Council of les Ardennes and the Grand Est region.
Artistic residences: Bastid' Arts (47), MCL Ma Bohème (08), CC de Nouzonville (08)

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