



PRESENTS **SIDI LARBI CHERKAOUI / EASTMAN**
Ted Shawn Theatre
July 11–15, 2018

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR/
CHOREOGRAPHER Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui

GENERAL MANAGER Gert Van Overloop

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR Patrick "Sharp" Vanderhaegen

PRODUCTION/TOUR MANAGER Arnout André de la Porte

PERSONAL ASSISTANT TO
SIDI LARBI CHERKAOUI Lars Boot

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF Ron Deckers
Charlotte Bongaerts
Jonas Schildermans
Eline Lenaerts

PROGRAM

Fractus V (2015)

CHOREOGRAPHY Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui

MUSIC COMPOSITION Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, Soumik Datta, Johnny Lloyd, Woojae Park, Shogo Yoshii

ASSISTANT CHOREOGRAPHER/
REHEARSAL DIRECTOR Jason Kittelberger

VOCAL COACHES Christine Leboutte & Steve Dugardin

DRAMATURGE Antonio Cuenca Ruiz

SET DESIGN Herman Sorgeloos & Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui

SET IMPLEMENTATION Patrick "Sharp" Vanderhaegen & Martin Baarda

COSTUME DESIGN Sumire Hayakawa

LIGHTING DESIGN Krispijn Schuyesmans

SOUND DESIGN Jef Verbeeck

WARDROBE Elisabeth Kinn Svensson

TECHNICIANS Mathias Batsleer & Janneke Hertoghs

MUSICIANS Soumik Datta
Kaspy N'dia
Woojae Park
Shogo Yoshii

DANCERS Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui
Dimitri Jourde / Shawn Fitzgerald Ahern
Johnny Lloyd
Fabian Thomé Duten
Patrick Williams Seebacher (TwoFace)

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While in our theaters, please refrain from behavior that could disturb other patrons and performers during the performance. We ask that you: silence your cell phone; do not photograph or video record performances; keep your ticket with you at all times; observe that other than water, food and beverages are not allowed in the theaters; and please let a staff member know if you need help. Thank you for observing these House Rules so that everyone can have an enjoyable experience.

We are so glad you are here. Enjoy the show!

ABOUT

CHOREOGRAPHER'S NOTE

In May 2014, I presented a short creation for the 40th anniversary of Pina Bausch's Wuppertal Tanztheater.

Fractus was a trio in which I wanted to discuss the fracture between the individual and society. The performance was inspired by the texts of the Jewish-American linguist and political philosopher Noam Chomsky. If I translate Chomsky's ideas for myself, I gain the insight that:

"The only way the individual is able to protect himself against political and social propaganda, is to study all the information available. Each day we are bombarded with news that tries to influence our thinking. It is a very intensive exercise to filter everything and to resist believing what we are told to believe."

Looking for primary movements on the edge of the tribal and folklore, this short performance raised the desire for more.

In *Fractus V*, I want to deepen the questions on information and manipulation—propaganda versus a more "objective" and factual approach. I also take as a starting point "liberty of expression." Certain taboos are often broken these days and certain truths are undeniable but we still miss the capacity to digest them or place them in the right context. Because of that we are often pushed into an "us versus them" mentality. We have the information, but we don't know how to use it.

Questions I ask myself:

It seems certain freedoms still need to be framed? How neutral can our thinking be? How much do we identify ourselves with the causes of the injustices in society? Where does personal responsibility start or end?

Chomsky's fundamental plea for "freedom of speech" against the political attempts to control and to manipulate the media, resonates with my need as an artist for a space to constantly reinvent my own identity. This necessary process of renewal doesn't happen gradually. It happens through radical fractures and being able to let go of the past. Evolution is the combined result of

an endless series of small and big revolutions. Every day is a rite of passage, a point of no return.

Fractus V is a creation with five very different contemporary dancers. The French virtuosic dancer Dimitri Jourde has a circus formation (Jourde shares his role with Shawn Fitzgerald Ahern in this production). The American Johnny Lloyd comes from a Lindy Hop background and is originally a musician. The Spanish dancer Fabian Thomé Duten started his career as a flamenco dancer with Joaquin Cortés, and Patrick Williams Seebacher (TwoFace) earned his credits in hip-hop and breakdance battles. I, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, enriched my own fluent dance language through exchange with different dance traditions for the past 15 years.

We all have different dance backgrounds but still put our movements in dialogue with each other. And we share the desire to create an interesting community, both on stage and in daily life.

The live music continues this philosophy. I collaborate with the Japanese percussionist and singer Shogo Yoshii, the Korean singer and musician Woojae Park, the African singer and musician Kasper N'dia, and the Indian, virtuosic Sarod musician Soumik Datta. They are all experts in their own music traditions but also curious for cross-fertilizations. They are all musicians with whom I have already collaborated.

Nine different nationalities and outspoken identities will dialogue to come to an intense, dramatic, and fluent whole.

Fractus V stands for the natural fractures, that are necessary to grow and become stronger.

SIDI LARBI CHERKAOUI

Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui's debut as a choreographer was in 1999 with Andrew Wale's contemporary musical, *Anonymous Society*. Since then he has made over 50 full-fledged choreographic pieces and picked up a slew of awards, including two Olivier Awards, three Ballet Tanz awards for best

choreographer (2008, 2011, 2017), and the Kairos Prize (2009) for his artistic vision and his quest for intercultural dialogue.

Cherkaoui's initial pieces were made at Les Ballets C de la B—*Rien de Rien* (2000), *Foi* (2003), and *Tempus Fugit* (2004). He undertook parallel projects that both expanded and consolidated his artistic vision; *d'avant* (2002) with longstanding artistic partner Damien Jalet at Sasha Waltz & Guests company and *zero degrees* (2005) with Akram Khan. He has worked with a variety of theatres, opera houses, and ballet companies. From 2004-09 Cherkaoui was based in Antwerp as artist in residence at Toneelhuis, which produced *Myth* (2007) and *Origine* (2008).

In 2008 Cherkaoui premiered *Sutra* at Sadler's Wells. This award-winning collaboration with artist Antony Gormley and the Shaolin monks continues to tour the world to great critical acclaim. After his first commissioned piece in North America, *Orbo Novo* (Cedar Lake Contemporary Ballet) and a series of duets such as *Faun* (which premiered at Sadler's Wells as part of *In the Spirit of Diaghilev*) and *Dunas* with flamenco danseuse María Pagés (both 2009), he launched his own company Eastman, resident at deSingel International Arts Campus (Antwerp).

Spring 2010 saw him reunited with choreographer Damien Jalet and Antony Gormley to make *Babel(words)*, which won an Olivier Award. That same year he created *Rein*, a duet featuring Guro Nagelhus Schia and Vebjørn Sundby; as well as *Play*, a duet with Kuchipudi danseuse Shantala Shivalingappa; and *Bound*, a duet for Shanell Winlock and Gregory Maqoma as part of Southern Bound Comfort. In 2011 he created *TeZuka* and *Labyrinth* (for the Dutch National Ballet). In 2012 he created *Puz/zle*, gaining him a second Olivier. That year he also collaborated with Joe Wright on his film *Anna Karenina*, for which Cherkaoui helmed the choreography.

2013 saw the premiere of *4D* and *生长 genesis* (Eastman), *Boléro* (co-created with Damien Jalet and Marina Abramović for the Paris Opera Ballet), and *mjlonga* (Sadler's Wells Theatre). He reunited with Joe Wright to co-direct *A Season in the Congo* at The Young Vic. In 2014, he created *Noetic* for the GöteborgsOperans Danskompani, *Mercy* (from *Solo for Two*) for Natalia Osipova and Ivan Vasiliev, which they performed at the London Coliseum, and he directed his first opera, *Shell Shock*, for La Monnaie, with music by Nicholas Lens and text by Nick Cave.

In 2015, Cherkaoui directed his first full-length theatre production *Pluto*, based on the award-winning manga series by Naoki Urasawa and Takashi Nagasaki at Bunkamura in Tokyo, bringing the beloved manga character Astro Boy to life on stage, and was movement director for Lyndsey Turner's *Hamlet* starring Benedict Cumberbatch at the Barbican Centre in London. He also made a trio titled *Harbor Me* commissioned by the L.A. Dance Project, and choreographed a new *Firebird* for Stuttgart Ballet. In the same year, Cherkaoui created the new production *Fractus V* for his company Eastman.

Since 2015, Cherkaoui assumed the role of artistic director at the Royal Ballet of Flanders, where he has created *Fall* (2015), *Exhibition* (2016), and *Requiem* (2017). He combines this function with his title as artistic director of Eastman and keeps creating new work along with the artistic entourage of this company, including *Qutb* (2016), a

trio commissioned by Natalia Osipova; the operas *Les Indes Galantes* (2016) for the Bayerische Staatsoper and *Satyagraha* (2017) for Theater Basel; *Icon* (2016) for GöteborgsOperans Danskompani; and *Mosaic* (2017) for Martha Graham Dance Company. Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui is also an associate artist at Sadler's Wells Theatre in London.

EASTMAN

Founded in January 2010, Eastman was created to produce and spread the work of artistic director/choreographer Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui. Cherkaoui's work provides the audience with a vast array of projects and collaborations, including contemporary dance, theatre, ballet, opera, musical, and other forms of performance. His non-hierarchical thinking on movement, body language, and culture is the basis of his artistic approach. Set in his native harbor city of Antwerp, Belgium, Eastman forms the central point for all of Cherkaoui's work. Eastman is in residence at deSingel International Art Campus in Antwerp. Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui is an Associate Artist at Sadler's Wells Theatre in London. As of September 2015 Cherkaoui is Artistic Director of Ballet Flanders.

Since the foundation in 2010, Cherkaoui created amongst other works *Babel (words)*, *Play*, *Rein*, *TeZuka*, *Puz/zle*, *4D*, and *Fractus V* under the wings of Eastman. Eastman also coordinates all the work of Cherkaoui for other organizations.

International partners of Eastman include La Monnaie (Brussels), Les

Théâtres de la Ville de Luxembourg, Grande Halle de La Villette (Paris), deSingel International Arts Campus (Antwerp), and Sadler's Wells (London).

Eastman is supported by the Flemish Government, the Culture Department of the European Union, and the BNP Paribas Foundation. Eastman was European Cultural Ambassador 2013.

PRODUCTION

Eastman (Antwerp)

CO-PRODUCTION

deSingel International Arts Campus (Antwerp); *Migros Culture Percentage Dance Festival Steps* (Zürich); Sadler's Wells (London); PINA40 Wuppertal, Baerum Kulturhus (Oslo); Tanzhaus nrw (Düsseldorf); Schauspiel Köln; National Arts Center (Ottawa); Wexner Center for the Arts at the Ohio State University (Columbus); Ludwigsburger Schlossfestspiele; La Villette (Paris); Les Théâtres de la Ville de Luxembourg.

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Ronald K. Brown / EVIDENCE; photo Leland Durand Thompson

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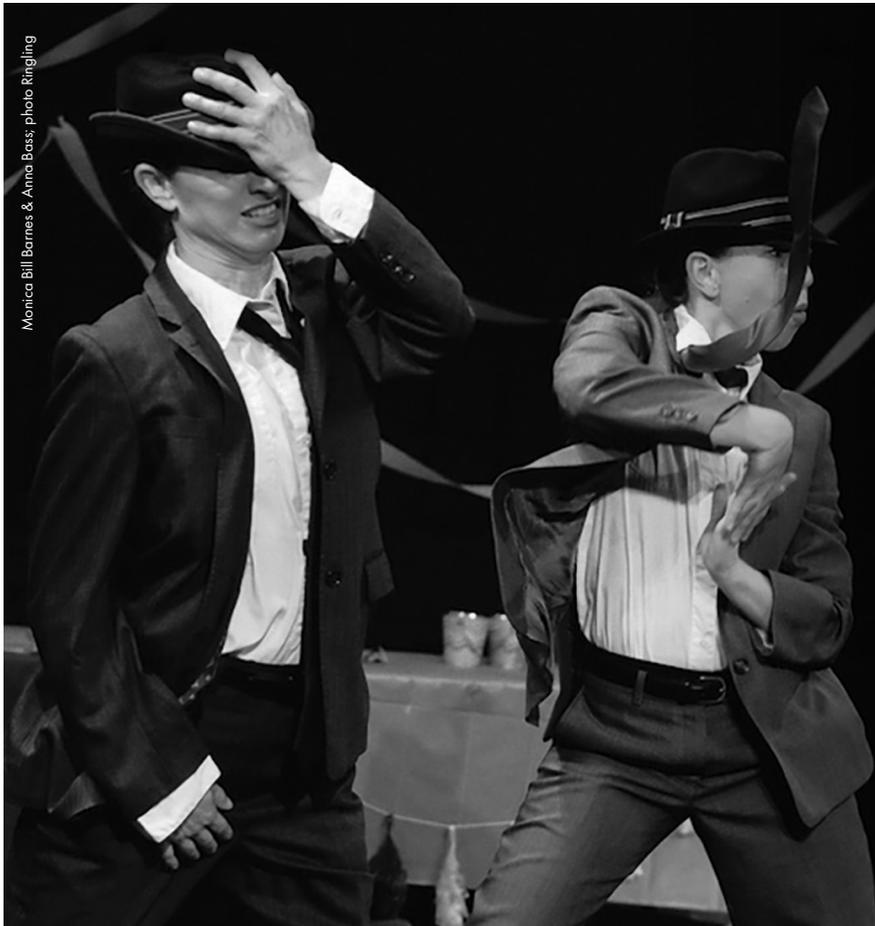
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PILLOWNOTES

by Maura Keefe

The *PillowNotes* series comprises essays commissioned from our Scholars-in-Residence to provide audiences with a broader context for viewing dance.

“Art evokes the mystery without which the world would not exist.” — René Magritte

In June 2018, Beyoncé and Jay-Z released a surprise joint album called *Everything Is Love*. A music video of the song “Apes**t” was also unexpected. Shot inside the galleries of and outside around the iconic I.M. Pei pyramid entrance to the Louvre, Beyoncé and Jay-Z perform with more than a dozen dancers. Lingering close-ups of classic oil paintings and sweeping pans of the majestic galleries give way to shots of dancers spilling down the marble stairs in front of *Winged Victory*, arcing their bodies in long moving columns, and exuberantly leaping and grooving throughout the space.

The choreographer for the music video? Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui.

In the concert dance world, Cherkaoui is perhaps best known for his collaborations with a richly diverse group of dance artists, such as classical Indian dancer Shantala Shivalingappa, British-Bengali kathak/contemporary dance artist Akram Khan, and flamenco dancer María Pagés. Cherkaoui is also well known for his work with major classical and contemporary dance companies, such as the Royal Danish Ballet, Ballets C de la B, Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève, and Cedar Lake Contemporary Ballet (which premiered Cherkaoui’s *Orbo Novo* at the Pillow in 2009). For all of his high art successes, Cherkaoui’s connection to the world of music videos is not new; in fact, popular dance is what brought him to concert dance. As the story goes, music videos by artists such as Prince and Janet Jackson inspired him, leading him to become a dancer on TV, and initiating his wide-ranging appetite for studying movement. He took classes in hip-hop and jazz, as one might expect, but also in flamenco, ballet, and tap. After winning a Belgian national dance contest (performing a solo that reportedly mixed voguing, hip-hop, and African dance), he began to study contemporary dance seriously, enrolling in Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker’s acclaimed dance school in Brussels. However, Cherkaoui never abandoned vernacular dance in favor of the concert stage. He just added more layers to his movement palette.

Right from the beginning of his choreographic career, critics noted Cherkaoui’s interest in bringing together dancers who moved differently from him and differently from each other. Sanjoy Roy, writing for *The Guardian* commented, “He enjoys working with performers who have different techniques, physiques, ages, nationalities, and languages; but rather than trying to unify them, he mobilises their physical and personal differences.” In 2017 at Jacob’s Pillow, Aakash Odedra performed a solo made for him by Cherkaoui. In the post-performance discussion, Odedra explained that when he and Cherkaoui first started to work together, all they did was yoga, much to Odedra’s initial bewilderment. He came to understand that Cherkaoui was deeply curious about how Odedra moved, so that the solo would build on what the two of them brought into the studio together. Much as Cherkaoui’s own dancing body holds a multiplicity of dance forms, his choreography demands an openness on the part of the dancers and the audience. For Cherkaoui, simultaneity is more important than singularity, and he trusts that we, too, can hold onto more than one idea at a time.

In many of his choreographic explorations, Cherkaoui uses those different movement sensibilities to take on big ideas. Ancient ideas exploring faith and religion, newer ideas about freedom of speech and thought, the power of language, and intersections of dance’s kinetic expressivity with political ideologies. When asked by interviewer Ceyda Nurtusch about his bringing together different ideas, Cherkaoui replied:

So when people say “he is mixing cultures,” I say, “no, I am translating.” I am translating into a field that is contemporary dance. Sometimes I am translating things from another field—like martial arts or Flamenco, which could be considered to have another language—but I feel that they are part of the contemporary language. When certain movements are brought into a contemporary field, suddenly they become natural; they become part of your language as well.

Not only is this kind of multiplicity now “natural” in his dancing, it is in Cherkaoui’s bodily identity. Born of Flemish/Moroccan, Catholic/Muslim parents in Belgium, he was always more than one thing at a time. Choreographer, collaborator, and fellow dancer Akram Khan talked about that when he and Cherkaoui were touring their duet, *zero degrees* (2005). As Khan said, “We are both in an in-between—me with Asian and Western culture and for Larbi, Flemish and Moroccan. When I’m in Bangladesh I feel British and when I’m in Britain I feel Bangladeshi. I belong to both and I belong to neither. It is the same with him.”

With *Fractus V*, Cherkaoui takes on concepts about the power of language as a means of government control from linguist and political theorist Noam Chomsky. Called a “deliberately masculine work” by dance critic Judith Mackrell, *Fractus V* brings together dancers and musicians from varied backgrounds. As Cherkaoui describes it, “Nine different nationalities and outspoken identities will dialogue to come to an intense, dramatic, and fluent whole.” The dancers, whose movement credentials range from circus and Lindy Hop to Flamenco and hip-hop, are as different from each other as are the musicians, who come from around the world as well. With all of that energy onstage, the movement and the sound clamoring, building, and boiling, one might think that it has to coalesce into a singular perspective. But, as with Cherkaoui’s own dancing, and with his own understanding of his own place in the world, we don’t have to choose one thing as better than another, or more important. A cohesive whole doesn’t have to erase any and all differences between us. This particular whole comes from this group of men and the ways they have united across great geographic distance and intensely varied traditions; they have joined together through collaboration.

In his review of the Beyoncé/Jay-Z music video, *New York Times* art critic Jason Farago somewhat begrudgingly admires the work, stating, “But here the pair admirably let the art speak for itself.” Trusting the art to speak for itself brings to mind Belgian surrealist painter René Magritte, who died almost a decade before Belgian-Moroccan choreographer Cherkaoui was born. And while their works may be nothing alike, and the Belgian connection incidental, they share an appreciation of the wonder and inexplicability of art. And their sense of wonder results in deeply intriguing investigations for us.

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Dance writer Maura Keefe has led audience programs at various venues around the country and is the Associate Director of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies at the University of Maryland, College Park, where she was named the Dorothy G. Madden Professor of Dance in 2018.