

CIE ACCRORAP
DIRECTION
KADER ATTOU

SYMFONIA
KADER ATTOU
CREATED IN 2010 – REVIVED IN 2020
PIEŚNI
ŻAŁOSNYCH





SYMFONIA PIEŚNI KADER ATTOU ŻAŁOSNYCH

10 DANCERS PRODUCTION

Duration: 1 hour

All audiences (from 10 years old)

VIDEO
[Teaser](#)

Choreography
Kader Attou

Music
Henryk Mikołaj Górecki
*Symphonie n°3 pour soprane
et orchestre, opus 36*
Éditions Chester / Éditions Mario Bois-Paris

Lighting design
Françoise Michel

Costumes
Nadia Genez

Cast
Aïda Boudrigua, Amine Boussa
Margaux Sénéchault, Salem Mouhajir,
Ioulia Plotnikova, Sebastien Vela Lopez,
Virgile Dagneaux, Vaishali Trivedi,
Majid Yahyaoui, Nour Attou

Creation
Festival Montpellier Danse 2010

Produced by
Centre Chorégraphique National de La
Rochelle - Director Kader Attou Cie Accrorap

Coproduced by
Festival Montpellier Danse 2010
La Coursive - Scène Nationale de La Rochelle
Chaillot, Théâtre national de la Danse
Théâtre Jean-Vilar de Vitry-sur-Seine
Grand Théâtre, scène conventionnée pour la
danse – Ville de Lorient

With the support of the
Conseil Général du Val-de-Marne



The dance and choreographic creations of Kader Attou are characterized in particular by a poetics wherein the expression of feelings is central. A committed choreographer, one of the distinguishing qualities of his signature lies in the visualizing dimension of the music that carries emotion.

Since the age of twenty, Kader Attou has been moved by *Symphony No. 3*, known as *Plaintive Songs*, *Symphonia Piesni Żałosnych*, by Henryk Mikołaj Górecki. The version recorded by soprano Dawn Upshaw and the London Sinfonietta, directed by David Zinman, is the foundation of the new production by Kader Attou where he focuses on an entire musical work. This creation explores all the compositional and sensitive aspects of the work, and lets itself be carried by the voice, and penetrated by the melodic force while uniting with the score's message of hope.

Kader Attou inhabits his identity as a choreographer-dancer as an imaginary and creative 'island between two shores'. His intimate questioning about origins, miscegenation and otherness assumes a gaze and a choreographic universe that are open to the world, other cultures and other dances.

In the intimate physical contact between the asperities of each dancer, the close attention each pays to the other, Kader Attou fabricates a community of bodies where emotion and meaning arise and in that becomes a humanistic offering of dance. Beyond styles, each gesture is preserved as a precious gift, a reflection of the richness of humanity. Indeed, Kader Attou does not seek the standardization of moving bodies.

His dance research is based on the singularity of each dancer and the recognition of similarities. The kinship of the gesture, the energies within the dancing community and the sincerity of this dialectic of differences resonates in each of us.



NOTE OF INTENTION

For more than 20 years, Kader Attou has constantly invented a dance full of images and emotions inspired by the laughter and drama of man. In 1994, he discovered and was overwhelmed by the Symphony n°3 called *Plaintive songs, Symfonia Piesni Zalosnych*, by the Polish composer Henryk Gorecki. Built in three slow movements for soprano and orchestra, it finds its origins in religious and popular songs evoking the loss of a child during wars and the suffering of a mother abandoned in mourning. It reaches a climax in the second movement with the prayer written by a young deportee for her mother on the walls of her cell, before being executed by the Gestapo. It became famous all over the world with the recording of the London Sinfonietta and the magnificent soprano Dawn Upshaw directed by David Zinman. This work is of a great spirituality and has an incandescent luminosity which carries within it the sadness and the evil caused by man but also the strength and gentleness of which love could be the foundation.

In 2010, Kader Attou created *Symfonia Piesni Zalosnych*, a production for ten dancers, with the desire to inscribe his dance in the emotional power of the score. For the first time, he created by focusing on the entirety of the musical work and explored the encounter between hip hop and a form of ballet. Like music stripped of any superfluous effect or ornament, the dance deploys pure moves which dig the ground at the same time as it seeks the interiority and the elevation of beings.

A universal masterpiece, accessible to all

Ten years later, he revives this production. Because it is still in him. Because it is part of this dancing humanity which embodies his work and the absolute urgency of being alive. In an imbalanced world that still tirelessly produces all kinds of war, this symphony sounds like a fight, a languid march between darkness and glimmer of hope. Often considered a work derived from the Holocaust, Kader Attou rehabilitates Gorecki's desire to make it, above all, a tribute to the mother, to the woman, to the one who carries the origin of life. This revival strives to reveal the beauty of the lyrics and deepens the tensions between dance and the vibrations of music in order to both unite bodies and multiply their differences. On the tenuous thread of melodies, the dance draws life cycles, attracting the bodies towards the light, being carried by the dazzling crescendo of the strings and the absolute intensity of the soprano which tears the dark sky with its clear voice.

« *This work connects us fundamentally to our inner emotions, it is about the intimate. It evokes suffering, pain, love, joy, everything that brings us together. The music draws from deep inside us, and awakens things that we do not control, that grab us and that make us vulnerable. In this sense, it is universal and accessible to all.* » Kader Attou.

INTERVIEW WITH KADER ATTOU

Why have you decided to revive *Symfonia Piesni Zalosnych*, 10 years after it was created ?

When I discovered Gorecki's work in 1994, I was captivated by its beauty and its power. Many years later it still deeply moved me. My choreographic work has been enriched over the years so reconnecting with this work made perfect sense. I realized that it gave me the ability to feel what others were feeling. It reaches this dancing humanity that I often explore in my work and the absolute desire to live. The symphony is a struggle, a constant back and forth between shadow and light, which in the end opens up to hope. It is above and beyond all a tribute to the mother, to the woman and I would like to revive this premise of Gorecki's.

You had met Gorecki, who was he ?

I met him in 2010 at his home in his modest apartment in Poland. He lived in a mining region in Katowice, the town in which Stalin had established a factory. As there was no culture nor art in this region, he got involved politically through art and that became his calling. He contributed to the fall of the regime and was close to the Pope Jean-Paul II. He was a great artist, exceptionally clever, very generous and a humanist. He was someone who was very optimistic with an almost melancholy sweetness in the way he looked at the world. Other artists had used excerpts of the symphony in the past, but it was the first time that a choreographer would use the entire musical work. He was very curious about the result and accepted immediately that I would work with his masterpiece. He told me that I could use it as I wished as long as it made sense. This meeting set me free because I could both invent and respect the score.

How was the musical work put together ?

It was written in 1976 in the context of contemporary music and it was a daring composition for its time, with three slow movements for soprano and orchestra. I use the 1992 recording by the London Sinfonietta conducted by David Zinman, who made it famous worldwide with the magnificent soprano, Dawn Upshaw. The first movement *Lento - sostenuto tranquillo* ma cantabile begins with a vast orchestral prelude. It brings a religious song inspired by a lamentation written in the 15th century and which evokes the love of a mother for her son, who died during the war. The second movement, *Lento e largo - tranquillissimo*, is a prayer written by a young prisoner addressed to her mother, on the walls of her cell in southern Poland and before she was killed by the Gestapo. In the third movement *Lento - cantabile semplice*, the soprano recites the text of a popular song written in the dialect of the mountain region of Opole. It is the mourning of

a mother who searches for her son, who disappeared during the war. It is a religious masterpiece, grave, majestic, with an incandescent luminosity. The interpretation of the soprano gives us, in an incredible way, the feeling of being with souls in elevation.

You approach the show with the focus not being about the Holocaust, what was the reason for that ?

The symphony is often seen as a work derived from the Holocaust, but Gorecki disapproved of this approach. His wife was a great pianist who left her career to take care of him. When I asked him why he had created it, he turned towards her and told me with his eyes filled with joy: "*It's for her, for women, for the mothers.*" The three movements evoke a mother who loses her child during a war. But Gorecki uses the same context to speak about what evil man is capable of and to say "*never again*". The world is not doing too well today and we seem to be losing our collective memory, we are going through a withdrawal of identity, people are suffering and migrating. This is the way to say let's not forget and to talk about a form of hope for the future. This symphony is above all a tribute to the woman, at the origin of the life she carries within her.

You think that this work resonates in each of us and universally, why ?

In his writing, Gorecki wanted it to be accessible to everyone, even those who have no musical knowledge. It basically connects us to our inner emotions, it is about the intimate and the unspeakable. It evokes suffering, pain, love, joy, everything that ultimately brings us together. The music draws from deep inside us, and awakens things that we do not control, that grab us and that make us vulnerable. I find it extraordinary that he manages to achieve that.

How do you approach choreographic writing ?

The challenge of the production is to write a choreographic score with the dance and the music being at the same level. The musical work is self-sufficient and is of great power. By reviving it, I do not intend to modify everything in the choreography. I would like to deepen the performance and develop different approaches in order to purify the dance and to work on the links between the three movements. The duets will be strengthened, we will highlight the plight of the woman, make the meaning of the work perceptible, as well as bring to light the beauty of the songs. In this ballet, I want to explore further the dialogue between the musical score and the choreographic score.

Is the dance different depending on the three movements ?

Yes, at times it is inscribed in the score while at others it takes liberties in form, rhythm and intensity. In the first movement, for example, there is a work around the accumulation of movement in resonance with the accumulation of stringed instruments, bodies arise from darkness, from nothingness, in a dazzling crescendo that will be appeased by the voice of the soprano. The second movement establishes a dance which evokes the relationship between life and death, a suspended time, it unfolds in a breath, a breath to also find more offbeat rhythms. In the third, dance frees itself from music and is literally sculpted by the light of Françoise Michel. I found in the discovery of this score the happiness of an intense relationship between the instrument and the body, in particular the strings which deploy impressive vibrations. I was able to measure how the intention, the tensions, the energies of the dance are similar to those of the instrument. ■

Interview by Martine Pullara





KADER ATTOU

Today, hip hop and independent new dance creations are conveying an attractive image of French culture throughout the world. Kader Attou can rightly claim to be an integral part of this new dance scene. He is one of the major representatives of French hip hop, and his company Accrorap has become iconic. Through his concern for contemporaneity, a blending of cultures, and a commitment to humanistic values, Kader Attou has authored a dance for his times, wherein encounters, dialogue and sharing are the driving forces and creative sources. From the excitement of the discovery of break-dance in 1989, and Accrorap's first performances, a desire was born to examine in depth the question of meaning and develop an artistic approach. In 1994, *Athina* marks the debut of Accrorap on stage at the Danse biennale in Lyon. Created in 1996 *Kelkemo*, a homage to Bosnian and Croatian child refugees, is the fruit of a

powerful experience in the Zagreb camps in 1994 and 1995. *Prière pour un fou* (1999), a pivotal piece in the choreographic universe of Kader Attou, attempts to re-establish the dialogue that the Algerian drama was making increasingly and painfully improbable. Then, Accrorap broadens its scope by inventing a dance that is rich and full of humanity with *Anokha* (2000), at the crossroads between hip hop and Indian dance, East and West. Composed of sketches where performance, emotion and musicality intermingle, *Pourquoi pas* (2002), enters a universe of poetry and lightness. *Douar* (2004), created within the celebrations around the Year of Algeria in France, queries the issues of exile and boredom, echoing the concerns of young people in project neighborhoods in France and Algeria. *Les corps étrangers* (2006), an international project involving France, India, Brazil, Algeria and the Ivory Coast – evokes the human condition and searches for possible meeting points between cultures and aesthetic styles in order to construct, through dance, a space for communication that interrogates the future. *Petites histoires.com* (2008), acclaimed by critics and audiences alike, tells of Everyman's France through burlesque sketches while maintaining a sensitive and engaged approach. In 2008, Kader Attou was named Director of the CCN (National Centre for Choreography) in La Rochelle and the then 'Poitou-Charentes' region, thus becoming the first hip hop choreographer to lead such an institution. *Trio* (?) (2010) takes us back to the world of the circus. *Symfonia Piezni*

Zalosnych (2010) is a performance against the backdrop of the entire *Symphony No.3* also known as the *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs* by the Polish composer Henryk Mikolaj Górecki. This creation explores all compositional aspects, transported by soaring vocals and penetrated by melodic forces that ennoble its message of hope. In 2013, Kader Attou returns to the source of hip hop and to his very first sensorial experiences : *The Roots* is a human adventure, a journey, a plunge into Attou's poetic universe. Eleven of the most skillful hip hop dancers perform the piece, and together they form a group that is in complete symbiosis. Created in August 2014 for the 10th edition of the Nuits Romanes in Poitou-Charentes, *Un Break à Mozart* — born of the encounter between the CCN of La Rochelle and the Champs-Élysées Orchestra — presents a genuine dialogue between the dance of today and music of the Enlightenment with as a backdrop one of Mozart's major musical works, *Requiem*.

In September 2014 for the Dance biennale of Lyon, Kader Attou created *OPUS 14* for sixteen dancers, men and women, combining power, otherness, social commitment and corporeal poetry in a fundamentally hip hop piece. Using *Un Break à Mozart* as a point of departure, the premiere of *Un Break à Mozart 1.1* — a new creation by Kader Attou for 11 dancers and 10 musiciens from the Champs Élysées Orchestra — was performed in November 2016 at La Coursive in La Rochelle as part of the event " *Shake La*

Rochelle !" the first edition of CCN's annual hip hop festival. The following year and for the second edition of Shake La Rochelle, *Allegria*, his latest creation for 8 dancers was premiered at La Coursive. With *Allegria*, the initial idea for Kader Attou is « *to seek poetry wherever it lies, in the bodies of dancers, in burlesque but also in the violence of the world. I like to relate in a more light-hearted manner the seriousness of our world.*» In 2018, Kader Attou joined Mourad Merzouki to collaborate on a new project : *Danser Casa*, which premiered in Casablanca, Morocco, in April of this year. It is a piece for eight Moroccan dancers (of which one woman). Also created in 2018, *Triple Bill* a Franco-Japanese collaborative project centered on hip hop that assumes the form of a triptych in which Jann Gallois participates with *Reverse* and Tokyo Gegenay, and Kader Attou who proposed *YOSO (Eléments)*, a piece for five Japanese dancers. 2018 also marks the renewal of Kader Attou's duties as Director of the CCN of La Rochelle for three additional years.

In January 2013 Kader Attou was made *Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* (Knight of the National Order of Arts and Letters) and on the New Year's honor list for 2015 he was appointed *Chevalier de l'Ordre National de la Légion d'Honneur* (Knight of the French Legion of Honor).

LA COMPAGNIE ACCRORAP

In 1989 at Saint-Priest, Kader Attou, Eric Mezino, Chaouki Saïd, Mourad Merzouki and Lionel Frédoc created the company Accrorap. From its beginnings as an artists collective to the successful staging of its unique choreographic works, Accrorap has been characterized by a profound openness : openness to the world through journeys conceived as moments of sharing, and openness to other artistic forms and trends. Kader Attou has enriched and fine-tuned his dance through the alchemy of hip hop, circus arts, contemporary dance and visual arts. From the local to the international scene, his works have travelled round the globe. Among other works we may cite : *Prière pour un fou* (1999), *Anokha* (2000), *Pourquoi pas* (2002), *Douar* (2004), *Les corps étrangers* (2006), *Petites histoires.com* (2008), *Trio* (?) (2010), *Symfonia Piésni Zalosnych* (2010), *The Roots* (2013) , *Un Break à Mozart* (2014), *OPUS 14* (2014) and *Un Break à Mozart 1.1* (2016), *Allegria* (2017). Since 1989, the dance generously proposed by Kader Attou and Accrorap has striven to cross borders and break down barriers. The work of Accrorap is the story of a collective international adventure, wherein the concept of the encounter through travel lies at the centre of the company's approach and reflection.

HENRYK MIKOŁAJ GÓRECKI

Henryk Mikolaj Górecki is one of today's three great contemporary Polish composers. Born in 1933, he entered the music scene in the early sixties. In the musical context of the time, his writing goes against the codes of contemporary creation: the use of the tonal mode and known and recognized musical forms (canon, fugue) is his way of expressing emotions or a message that must remain accessible to the audience.

His Third Symphony is the work that has contributed the most to his reputation. Composed in 1976, it was first presented in 1977 in Royan under the direction of Ernest Bour. The piece is composed of three slow movements wherein the soprano gives life to three texts: a lamentation of the collection of Chants Lysagora of the Monastery of the Holy Cross (second half of the XVth century) in the first movement; a prayer inscribed on the wall of the cell No. 3 of the basement of the Gestapo headquarters in Zakopane, by Helena Wanda Blazusiakowna in the second; a popular song in the dialect of the Opole

region in the third and final movement. The simplicity of the score is surprising. The constant alternation of major and minor modes relates all the difficulty of this long journey, from lament to hope. The entire symphony is constructed according to the principle of progressive accumulation, a game of overlapping instruments that gives rise to a moving expansion, an amplification that finds its conclusion in the final minutes of the work. The constant yearning toward elevation culminates in a final return to the major mode, now radiant with the hope it bears.

FRANÇOISE MICHÉL

After studying geology, Françoise Michel discovered light and stage management whilst doing a training at the National Theater in Strasbourg. Later, Odile Duboc initiates her to the world of dance. The notions of movements, lines and forms made sense to her. She started believing that lighting design could be part of the choreographic creative process and a long collaboration on design and show

production started with Odile Duboc, within the association Contre Jour which they founded in 1983, and then at the National Choreographic Center of Franche-Comté in Belfort from 1990 until 2008. She has also worked with many choreographers (Georges Appaix, Josette Baiz, Hideyuki Yano, Francine Lancelot, the Dunes group, Mark Tompkins, Daniel Larrieu, François Raffinot, Emmanuelle Huynh, Kader Attou, Daniel Dobbels, Mié Coquempot, Fouad Boussof, Emmanuelle Vo-Dinh, ...) and directors of theater and operas (François Chattot, Valère Novarina, Marc Bermann, Hélène Vincent, Denis Loubaton, Jean-Claude Bérutti, Lambert Wilson, Bartabas, Yoshi Oïda, Dagmar Pischel, François Berron ...). She has been creating lights for five years for the Amateur Dance and Répertoire, an event initiated by the National Center for Dance and engaging with new choreographers and directors.



PRESS REVIEWS

LA CROIX

“The piece, for ten dancers, is striking. The dance, which is very physical, transmits unexpected emotions. The bodies suffer, clash and then find themselves in images of fraternity. The choreography, enveloped by the magnificent lighting of Françoise Michel, is a serene harmony. For in this music that has accompanied him during many years of his life, Kader Attou wants to hear lamentations but also a lot of hope.”

Marie-Valentine Chaudon

MontpellierPLUS

“Attracting the body to the light, is the objective of choreographer Kader Attou when he shows his dancers the work that has inhabited him for the past fifteen years. Under an austere and gray courtyard, the ash-colored bodies dare to venture out of the shadows for a few stolen steps, a jump, and then two, until the dazzling outburst. An exultation of bodies as if reborn in a choreography where hip hop spasms subtly harmonize with the convolutions of this almost mystical music. And when dawn finally triumphs over the night, it is the flight of the phoenix that the fabulous lifts evoke.”

Aurélia Hillaire

Libération

“Kader Attou chose the former professional high school Mendès France, destined to be levelled, as the site of his creation Symfonia Piesni Żalonych on the music of Górecki. He seized the opportunity to leave the strict register and vocabulary of hip hop to propose a performance that overwhelms an audience moved to standing applause. It is true that there are stupendous flashes of brilliance in this performance. And the latter come from hip hop: freezes in the diagonal, strobe effects created by body electricity, entrances and exits that vibrate across a concrete floor merely decked with a carpet.”

Marie-Christine Vernay

la Marseillaise

“The ‘clair-obscur’ of this music come from the expressiveness of gestures and bodies. None of the costumes are the same but all of them conjugate the same gray sadness. Kader Attou, familiar with the porosity of dance, exhibits here a bountiful script that weaves its heterogeneous lines into a complex canvas. Occupying at the outset a quadrilinear space where the dancers rush about, the movement spreads from one body to another, each having his/her gestural quality. The duets and solos take place among the other dancers, the rest is all grouped solidarity. There is much embracing, surrounding and shoulder grasping, to the point of creating knots of fraternity reminiscent of trees. Love is displayed here as an air of drunkenness, becoming more conflictual when the balance of power is danced like a tango. The spinning motion of the lifts is reconciled by the acrobatic whirlwind of breakdance. The dance turns its gaze clearly in the direction of ballet but without sulking the floor, while individual personalities fully assert themselves instead of assuming uniform gestures and poses. The movement, driven by a vital momentum, twirls, bounces, rises, collapses, the group comes together only to then fall apart. Kader Attou proceeds more in his writing by collusion rather than by fusion. In this delicate choreography of this musical and mental history, made of abysses and elevations, the spectator is touched by the emotion and the beauty that it releases.”

Anne Leray

PARIS
MATCH

“One of the most intelligent and most political choreographers of the moment. This poet embodies, with Mourad Merzouki, the irruption of dance originating from ‘the projects’, which is a more ‘popular’ expression of contemporary dance.”

Jean-Paul Montanari

La Scène

LE MAGAZINE DES PROFESSIONNELS
DU SPECTACLE

“The performers’ silhouettes rise from upstage a few seconds before falling back into the darkness. This is a way of suggesting that the journey, depending on one’s point of view, may seem short or long, but will return whence it came. The empty surface is then divided into more lighted areas from which the characters arise. Constantly, the surface is swept away only to be reorganized by duets, trios, and groups: gatherings of dancers at one point that are then scattered in space, producing an effect of redistributing energy according to constantly renewed parameters. The presence of the three women, whose dance technique walks the line between contemporary and also Indian traditions (for one of them), creates somewhat of an imbalance in the choreography. This is not the first time that Kader Attou has collaborated with women, but the gestures of the trio, all arms and volutes, brings a particular form of grace to the entire show. This femininity, softening and fluid, may well be linked to the fact that Górecki wrote this music, among other works, to evoke his wife, but also to indicate a mother and child. The sounds bathe the room in an enveloping flow, opening a space apart that the hip hop dancers manage to infiltrate, to share even, at various moments, especially in intense pas de deux. On the other hand, the choreography remains very strong in the male tableaux that the writing strengthens with finesse.”

Rosita Boisseau



SYMFONIA PIĘŚNI ŻAŁOSNYCH

CREATION 2010
MONTPELLIER DANSE

REPRISE 2020
PIÈCE POUR 10 DANSEURS

CIE ACCRORAP
DIRECTION
KADER ATTOU

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