# Allegria

**creation 2017** piece for 8 dancers







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# Allegria

#### KADER ATTOU / CIE ACCRORAP

PREMIERED AT LA COURSIVE, LA ROCHELLE FROM 7<sup>TH</sup> TO 10<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2017.

> as part of Shake Festival La Rochelle!

Duration: 1 hour 10 minutes All audiences (from 7 years old)

#### **VIDEOS**

<u>Teaser</u>

Full recording

password : allegria18

Artistic Direction & choreography:

Kader Attou

Dancers from the La Rochelle CCN /

Accrorap: Gaetan Alin, Hugo de Vathaire, Jackson Ntcham, Artem Orlov, Mehdi Ouachek, Maxime Vicente, Kevin Mischel,

Pasquale Fortunao

Assistant : Mehdi Ouachek

Dramaturgy: Kader Attou

**Scenography:** Camille Duchemin en collaboration avec Kader Attou

Musical composition:

Régis Baillet – Diaphane

**Lighting design:** Fabrice Crouzet

**Production :** CCN de La Rochelle -Cie Accrorap, Direction Kader Attou **Coproduction :** La Coursive, Scène

Nationale de La Rochelle Available in **audio description**  "With Allegria, the idea is to look for poetry wherever it is to be found, in the dancers' bodies, in burlesque, and also in the violence of the world. I want to express a lighter version of the very serious events occurring in the world"

Kader Attou



#### STATEMENT OF INTENT

Endowing bodies with speech in order to transcend reality.

From a tiny every-day gesture taking flight towards a subtle poetic movement. Confronting objects and bodies, taking what exists and rendering it improbable. Kader Attou engages with these concepts when undertaking a new choreographic project. With his own special brand of humor, the choreographer leads his dancers into a dreamlike journey through the world that surrounds

us. He questions the limits, the peculiarities of a confinement, like a book of animated images. He has chosen to talk about the world whilst dreaming it; this is his way of remaking it.

The way in which he creates

the illusion is both moving and amusing, appealing to the child in us all, cultivating the absurd and the impossible. Surrounded by his travelling companions and also by some new dancers, Kader Attou offers us a playful and sensitive imaginary universe that is slightly melancholic. *Allegria* claims first and foremost to be a piece that is both joyful and tender, like a poem danced to life.

# PRELUDE TO ALLEGRIA: TRANSDANCE EVERY DAY

The text below marks a time of maieutics in the birth of *Allegria*. These comments result from a conversation with Kader Attou at the halfway point of his creative work. It is therefore neither a presentation of the show nor a retrospective commentary, but rather the considerations of a particular moment chosen by Kader Attou, during the phase of creation.

If it were possible to dance gaiety, joyful transe and delight all at the same time: to choreograph the ordinary, common worn-out gesture just after that of a surrealist dream; to invent a dance freed of commitments, how would Kader Attou express that right here and now?

First of all he would sketch an introductory phrase, an assertion, an exquisite constraint offered to the blank page that in actuality, in the basic reality of the stage – will remain pristine. A smattering of Italian that we all know, a little bit of joy that we all have inside us. He would write *Allegria*.

A single word, a decree, an appeal to join him, an enchanted singspiel, lyrical and lighthearted: let's enjoy ourselves, let's have fun together! Leaping from what might be to what is, Kader Attou signs the sixteenth piece of his career with a simple noun. *Allegria*.

#### Warning: Sharp Turn Ahead!

Attou deviates here from the leit-

motif that had run through his previous works. The subject of his dance was 'dancing'; what the ballet expressed was 'ballet'. Pure energy of bodies, instant virtuosity, voilà!

Whereas now we witness something different. The Attou vocabulary is still in place: a dancing humanity of which he has made himself the bard, the body language that belongs to him, the manner in which he probes the hip hop identity of each element of the ballet in order to express its fabric on the ground or in the air, gleaning each dancer's tones... Now his aim is to extract the essence of a certain lightness, filter the emotions, delve into something soft, offering a shoulder to lay one's head on and, especially, to transcend - to transdance everyday life.

"I didn't write this piece to help people forget the world's misery, nor to highlight it," he says.

Kader Attou has positioned himself right in the middle of it all, between two miseries, in fact. If we are ever to smile again, then this is the place for it, a place of joy. A space resembling the diaphanous design created for it by set designer Camille Duchemin - one of brightness and fragility. Happiness is like that, always a bit hazy and brittle. Very simple white frames provide a structure for a sequence of shots - it reminds one of the art of the graphic novels often quoted by the choreographer - lending rhythm to the stage and boundaries to a noman's land as yet to be inhabited.

#### "A place for people to meet, by design or by chance, with things that happen and then disappear, like events in a dream."

This is how the limits of the world are set, only to be swept away by Attou's chimerical interpretation. In this his 16<sup>th</sup> work, Kader Attou has adopted a more dreamlike ap-

proach. Tugging at your sleeve, the dream leads you on, as if to say: 'Come on Reality, with all your material baggage and certitudes, I'm going to carry you away on a flight of poetry, because absurdity can be a way to exist and even to find that existence amusing.'

And then there is the Régis Baillet's music to help express this. The music fills the space in a similar fashion by adopting the same register of light things that know how to convey what is deeply serious: elegant loops, instrumental silhouettes with ambient synthleads, impatient dubsteps raring to release the vehemence of moving bodies. Again it must be remembered that although there is joy, it is generated by the 8 individual dancing personalities present here. Kader Attou urges them on to give their very best - as he does himself. He expresses their drunken longing of being on stage together again.

#### "Each one has a different corporality, and I write with the individuality of each one in mind, because who they are physically opens up as many small windows in the piece".

A window opens onto corporal technique whereby the dancer's heart — that organ stimulated by the choreographer — beats, because that is where Attou's choreography is rooted: there can be no pleasure without amusement.

"I want people to leave the theatre happy, for the title to be etched in the bodies of the audience when they go. I would like to create the performance that makes them feel good."

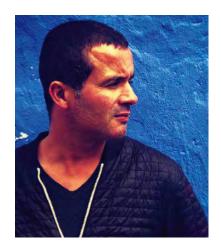
I think we can all dance to that! Allegria!

Élian Monteiro





## Allegria



KADER ATTOU
Director of the CCN of La
Rochelle, artistic director,
dancer and choreographer of
the Accrorap dance company.

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 breakdance 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 hommage 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 in-

volving 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 Załosnych (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 Mikołaj 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 10<sup>th</sup> 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-Elysées 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 Elysées 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. A version entitled Double Bill will tour during 2019, highlighting the creations of both Kader Attou and Jann Gallois.

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 CIE 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).

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.



### CAMILLE DUCHEMIN Scenography

Camille Duchemin graduated in Scenography in 1999 from l'Ecole Nationale Supérieur des Arts Décoratifs in Paris.

She became auditor for a year at the Conservatoire National d'Art Dramatique in Paris while attending performing arts courses given by Jacques Lassales from 1999 to 2000. Since 1999, she has been designing sets for theatre, dance and opera. She has worked in the fields of music

and opera with Christophe Gayral on *Matrimonio Segreto* and with Armand Amar. In 2011 she was short listed for the Molières awards in the scenography/scenery design category for her work on the play *Le repas de Fauves* directed by Julien Sibre.

For the theatre, she has worked with Arnaud Meunier, Laurent Sauvage, Tilly, Denis Guénoun, Khierdine Lhardhjam and with Frédéric Maragnani. She has also worked extensively with Justine Heyneman.

Accompanied by Pauline Bayle, she created the set for the *Iliade* in 2015. Since 2014, she has been working with the Birgit Ensemble on *Berliner Mauer Vestiges*, on at the Théâtre Gérard Philippe in Saint-Denis, and in 2015 she also worked on *Prélude* and on the new creation *Sarajevo* et *Athène* in July 2017.

In contemporary dance, she has designed many stage sets for Caroline Marcadé, She has also worked with Hamid Ben Mahi (*La Géographie du Danger, La Hogra*) and with CFB451, François and Christian Ben Aïm on *Peuplé, Dépeuplé* in 2016. Her latest work has been for the show *Brûlent, nos cœurs insoumis* in 2017.

#### RÉGIS BAILLET - DIAPHANE Music

Régis Baillet initially trained as a classical pianist, but has since continued to develop his talents, driven by a curiosity about sound that has led him, among other things to discover and take up Dhrupad singing in the classical music tradition of Northern India. He strongly asserts these musical influences today in the most demanding electronic musical trends: electronica, neo-classical,

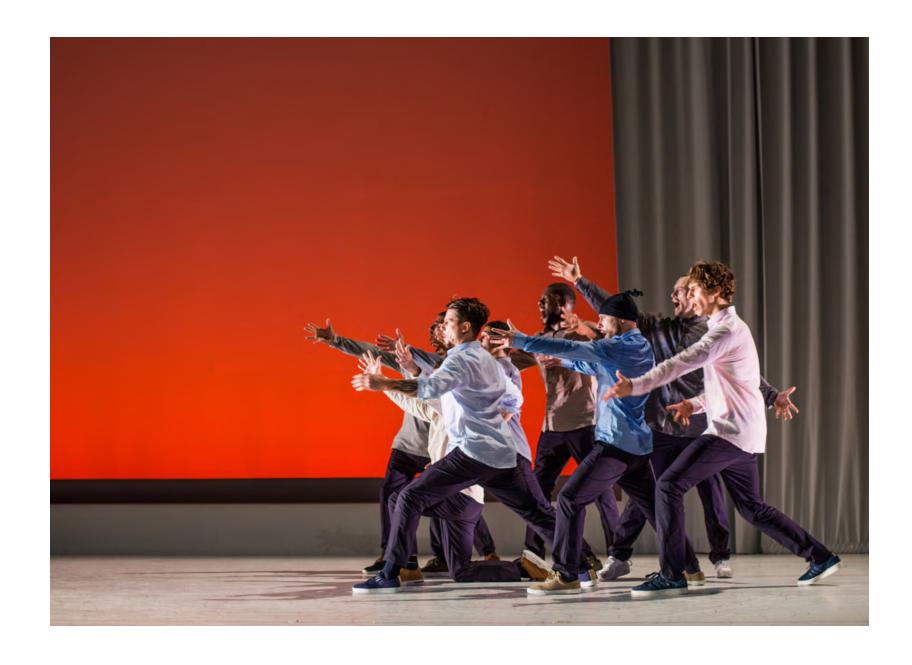
ambient, industrial, dubstep, etc. Certain critics of good taste might describe his musical style as being in constant evolution. In his compositions, Régis Baillet proceeds by overlapping sound textures revealing a sensitive music with melancholic and contrasting overtones.

Régis Baillet composed the music for Kader Attou's *The Roots*, *OPUS 14*, as well as certain textures found in *Petites Histoires*. *com* and the additional music for *Un Break à Mozart 1.1*.

#### FABRICE CROUZET Lumière

"Lighting designer, director of la lucce, lighting consultant, lights technician, lighting director or simply lighting. When I see all the different terms used for the same function, I wonder what my role in live performance actually is. Am I simply supposed to light up the stage so that the audience can see? Should I place emphasis on certain intentions or provoke them, create an image, impart meaning, be realistic, function as a colorist, as the man in the shadows? From the outset, each creation is an act of the imagination.

We'll have a look, observe, discuss and then we'll see where it all takes us. After all, these are just luminous experiments, choreographic or scenographic necessities, studies on movements or on luminous sources. and there is the perpetual lack of time. Beforehand, it is difficult to talk about lighting without actually having seen it yet. During the set-up, the installation itself and the need to run tests with the dancers are essential steps. Afterwards, the premiere always arrives too quickly. For the lighting design is always an ongoing process, even after the premiere."



## INTERVIEW WITH KADER ATTOU AGNÈS LANOELLE, SUD OUEST

Sud Ouest: A show called Allegria, that seems rather promising. Is it going to be joyful?

Kader Attou: I hope so! The idea is to look for poetry wherever it is to be found, in the bodies of the dancers, in burlesque and also in the violence of the world. I want to express a lighter version of the very serious events occurring in the world.

# S-O: Why did you go for a lighter approach in this new show? Does this relate to a certain moment in your life?

**K.A.**: I had just produced two very intense creations – Un *Break à Mozart 1.1* and *OPUS 14* – that were two ballets in which I was exploring choreographic writing. I wanted to get back to what and who I am myself, the guy from Lyon who grew up in a large family, and who as a child discovered the world through television and learned to love poetry at school. I wanted to make people feel good and not be in a ballet for intellectuals, I want-

ed to be involved in something more universal. in my work, I have never sought to charm anyone. I've never wanted to follow a trend. *Allegria* is also a piece that doesn't seek to smooth over individual characteristics of the dancers as the previous works might have done. I wanted to rediscover individual personalities and to base my work on what and who each dancer is.

# Exactly, as four of the eight dancers are new boys that you are working with for the first time.

**K.A.:** Yes, that's true. For a long time now I have had an artistic family surrounding me. I chose them because they are good dancers but also good performers. A good dancer should always be ready to propose new ideas and search for new techniques. I structure my work together with them. Creation does not have a method, I don't 'invent' the movement. My writing is based on their movements, on what their bodies propose. I think that

it's the only way for them to feel comfortable and really claim for their own what I had in mind.

#### S-O: You will not be dancing this time either. At 43, have you given up the idea of going on stage again?

**K.A.:** I've done a lot of dancing. An opera dancer retires at 33. Some of my dancers are over 35 years old. Bodies do suffer from wear and tear. From a technical point of view, I know I'll never do another head spin! But I haven't given up on the idea of going on stage. I would do it differently, though. Today I dance by proxy. It's a pleasure for me to see the others take over from what I have dreamed up. Ever since I started this work. I have never considered myself a dancer — I became one by chance. I never really tried to be a great dancer but to create dreams. It's like a lifelong project.

S-O: And there are still no girls in your choreographies. Why are there so few female danc-

#### ers in your work?

K.A.: It's true. I've never shied away from the fact that I personally find it difficult to accept female hip hop dancers. At one time, they had to dance a more virile kind of hip hop in order to hold their own with the boys. And I found them too masculine. But for the last ten years that's changed, they have carved out a place for themselves. I've since rethought the idea of women in hip hop. I've been told that I'm only capable of creating choreography for men. That's why one day I'll do an all-women show. Maybe that'll be my next challenge!

### S-O: How are you feeling a week before the opening night?

**K.A.:** I know the dancers will be ready and I'm just waiting for the magic when the curtain rises. At that moment I realize how lucky I am to do this work. I'm in direct contact with humanity, the audience. The whole idea of art is that when the spectator goes home he is different, whether he has liked the show or not.



#### ALLEGRIA, IN THE PRESS



"Allegria is a profoundly human piece that reflects our joys and our sorrows, our miseries and our fears. The level of virtuosity achieved in the series of solos, duets and group sequences is stunning. Finely constructed in weightless counterpoint, Allegria distills a style that is both disparate and harmonious, poetic and bittersweet. The dance effortlessly traces a tangent that evokes serious issues while at the same time pretending not to address them at all. Allegria is a surrealist piece that evokes our world with intelligence and finesse. It very successfully avoids excess baggage, and never misses a single beat."

Aanès Izrine

#### **GLAMOUR**

"A boy arrives on stage with a suitcase. Others come bolting out to grab it from him. What had begun as a simple shrug of the shoulders has triggered an elaborate, vivacious choreography whose visual impact is magnified by opera arias and accordion tunes mixed with electro sounds. There are burlesque echoes of Chaplin in Allegria, a truly hypnotic spectacle wherein bodies converse and collide. At the head of the Choreographic Centre of La Rochelle since 2008, Kader Attou and his troupe Accrorap have once again shown that hip hop can be continually re-invented."

E.C

# Télérama'

joy, "What pleasure, excitement! With Kader Attou's new piece Allegria created in 2018, the hip hop choreographer whets our appetite for cheerfulness and good humor. In this show for eight performers, the director of the CCN (National Choreographic Center of La Rochelle) intends to "seek poetry wherever it is, in the bodies of the dancers, in the burlesque but also in the violence of the world. I choose to approach with lightness the very serious events that are taking place in the world." Rooted in the humble yet precious beauty of everyday life, as well as in a work that underlines an intimacy between between bodies and stage decor, this show traces a path between masterful composition and respect for otherness."

Rosita Boisseau

#### **LACROIX**

"With Allegria, the choreographer has hit upon a brilliant alliance between the power of hip hop and the lightness of poetry. A buoyant vision of communicative energy, Allegria is the perfect antidote to the coming autumn. On a virtually empty stage, adorned only by colored lights in hues of blue, gold, and red in succession, Attou calls upon multiple registers: from Chinese shadow puppets to burlesque, to visual theater featuring an impressive oil spill that challenges the protagonists' ability to resist. The eight male dancers majestically display the whole range of the hip hop palette in a fascinating combination of grace and physical power. Beyond its technical prowess, Kader Attou's creation awakens in each spectator a forgotten energy and a collectively-felt drive. With joyful abandonment, in the guise of an invitation, the choreographer shares with us his love of dance. Of life. quite simply."

Marie Valentine Chaudon

#### LE FIGARO

"The gravity in this piece is not obvious, with the exception of the adagio section of the electronic music movements composed for the occasion by Régis Baillet and Diaphane. Kader Attou gives free rein to his dancers' virtuosity — most of them are young performers that he has just hired. Flexible, gravity-defying, their momentum on the floor like in the air is prodigious.

The movement starts with simple gestures, transcended by a particular spiraling rhythm, and particular a way of landing. With Kader Attou, everyday life is never far-removed from the stellar canopy. Humor lies in the way the choreographer organizes jumps and soars, as well as floor landings. And there is no lack of it. In a little more than an hour, exultation rises like a fever. And when Kader Attou appears on stage to greet the audience, we let out a joyful cry to the heavens that happiness indeed exists."

Ariane Bayelier



#### ALLEGRIA, IN THE PRESS

### la terrasse

"Carried by eight performers and the pure energy of dance, Allegria, by choreographer Kader Attou, generates a wind of optimism. An inventive and breathtaking piece, in the manner of a hymn to choreographic joy.

Inspired by the genres of the graphic novel, enchanted Singspiel and cinema, Attou and his eight performers portray a humanity dancing in a diaphanous world, bathed in the magic of the stage lighting. Drawing on his hip hop vocabulary, a new form of composition, tinged with tender virtuosity or even melancholy, Kader Attou, transcends - or transdanses everyday existence. It is his way of remaking the world by effacing the darkness that threatens it through a series of tableaux where clarity and contrast are the guiding principles."

Agnès Izrine

#### Le Télégramme

"World disorder – exile, violence, racism – can also be the breeding ground of beautiful human stories, and choreographer Kader Attou wants to capture only those moments of grace and poetry. With his troupe of eight dancers from the Accrorap company, the head of the La Rochelle Choreographic Center has placed the energy of hip hop dance at the service of this hymn to life.

Through sensitive little touches, he relates a world where the beauty magnified by the perfectly controlled bodily movement outweighs the threatening blackness, just as the great wave that invades the stage against a backdrop of red sky seems to wipe everything away in its path. Through a series of tableaux, the dancers combine with talent the fluidity of gesture, technique and physical strength in an attempts to re-create the world. A world where humor is employed to defuse tensions, where the pleasure of dance dominates the hostility of virile confrontations, here metamorphosed into a ballet of perpetually renewed inventiveness that raises hip hop and the values it represents to the highest level.

For this first show of the season at the Théâtre de Cornouaille on Monday evening, a family-oriented audience responded enthusiastically to this beautiful performance, as witnessed by the genuine ovation addressed to the performers who were joined on stage by the choreographer."

Delphine Tanguy

# Télérama<sup>1</sup>

"A man bursts onto the stage, suitcase in his hand: one for long journeys, ocean crossings, and complicated landings. At first alone, he is soon joined by the 'others', who stare rudely at him and jostle him. This is followed by a series of scuffles, clashes and anguished escapes. The man then continues on his way, leaving his luggage behind (ostensibly a symbol) and goes on to confront the new world that lies ahead of him. In Allegria, a piece created in 2017, Kader Attou, the director of the CCN La Rochelle, navigates between very serious subject matter (the migration of refugees or the terrorist attacks of 2015) and a fierce desire to celebrate life. Through a succession of changing tableaux, eight male dancers embody different moods and go from solitude to solidarity, from equilibrium to collapse, from immobile consternation to all-out sprint, from dream to burlesque. Kader Attou, co-founder of Accrorap Co. (1989), continues here to conjugate his original hip hop grammar, to incorporate and offer a new interiority of beautiful and smooth fluidity of movement. The elders of the troupe (Mehdi Ouacheck, Jackson Ntcham or Artem Orlov) impel the voung newcomers (Gaetan Alin and Khalil Chabouni) with this singular energy that incites them to go from a state of tranquility to that of intense acceleration. Utilizing the full depth of the stage on three different levels, and cleverly punctuated by Fabrice Clouzet's lighting configurations, Allegria displays a singular and rapidly contagious charm."

Emmanuelle Bouchez



# Allegria KADER ATTOU/CIE ACCRORAP



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www.accrorap.com

Pictures: cover Kader Attou / Inside: Justine Jugnet / portrait of Kader Attou © CCN La Rochelle / Mirabelwhite