



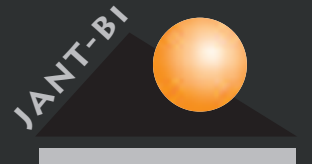
DANCE PERFORMANCE

COMPANY JANT-BI • SENEGAL

FAGGAALA

AFRICA MEETS JAPAN THROUGH DANCE

CHOREOGRAPHY: GERMAINE ACOGNY AND KOTA YAMAZAKI



FAGAALA

BACKGROUND

This second creation of the very young company Jant-Bi dates back to the year 2000, when Germaine Acogny, artistic director of the company, was deeply touched by one of the first fictions written about the genocide in Rwanda by Boris Boubacar Diop from Senegal («Murambi, le livre des ossements»). Germaine Acogny was moved to stand up as an African woman to do something with her tool of expression which is the body, with the powerful language of dance, to speak up and make people aware of this murdering madness which has been with us since the dawn of time. Armenia, Cambodia, the Shoa are just a few milestones along the road of horror leading to Rwanda.

Germaine Acogny intended her piece of dance theatre to fight against fear, hatred and vengeance, those feelings which can so easily invade us.

THE CHOREOGRAPHY

For Germaine Acogny, it was an obvious choice from the beginning to collaborate in this creation with a Japanese choreographer, trying to combine the special expression of Butoh with traditional and contemporary African Dance. In Kota Yamazaki, she found the person she was looking for.

In Toubab Dialaw at the International Centre for Traditional and Contemporary African Dances (l'Ecole des Sables), the two choreogra-

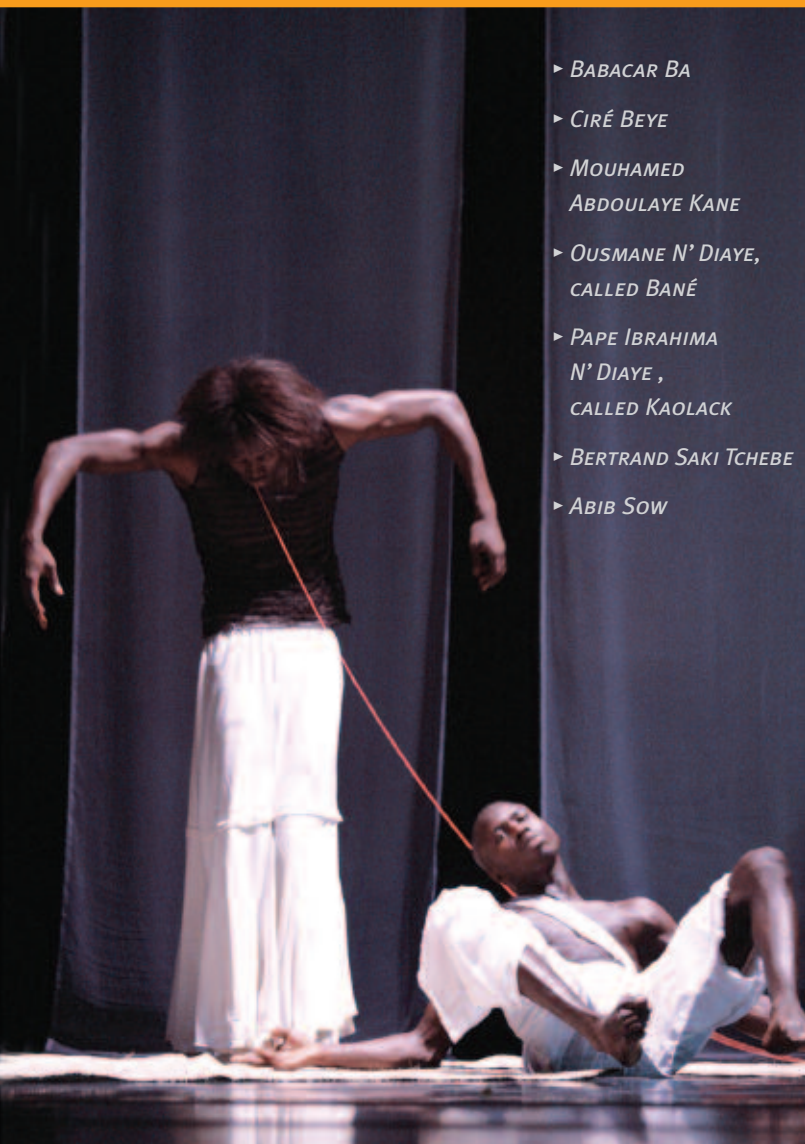
phers worked and lived together with 7 Senegalese dancers for 3 months, trying to explore all the possibilities which their rich background of movement and culture was providing.

Fagaala became a ballet that sings, speaks, shouts and dances, often in a surrealistic way, creating simultaneous images of madness and beauty – and of hope.

Fagaala is the expression in dance of the absurdity of genocide and tragedy, an evocation of death frozen into the very essence of the survivors – be they victims or torturers – an attempt to resurrect an entire people's memory from disbelief, a ritual of meditation in the name of all mankind.

THE DANCERS:

- ▶ *BABACAR BA*
- ▶ *CIRÉ BEYE*
- ▶ *MOUHAMED ABDOULAYE KANE*
- ▶ *OUSMANE N' DIAYE, CALLED BANÉ*
- ▶ *PAPE IBRAHIMA N' DIAYE, CALLED KAOLACK*
- ▶ *BERTRAND SAKI TCHEBE*
- ▶ *ABIB SOW*



THE MUSIC

Fagaala's original music and soundtrack were composed and directed by french musician Fabrice Bouillon-LaForest, assisted by Jean-Yves Gratius, cello player spanning both classical & experimental techniques. Contributions by the musicians from L'Ecole des Sables (percussions and traditonnal violin – the riti) along with vocals by Prof. Pierre Barros were also used. Fabrice Bouillon-LaForest (de)structured and combined all these elements with keyboards, textures and samples, giving birth to a groundbreaking score, intensively supporting the choreography, diving the audience deep in the heart of madness...

SET DESIGN

Maciej Fiszer's experience and sensitivity as a visual artist, who had already worked as set designer for opera, theatre and dance, enabled him to transform the stage with very simple means, that are strong and delicate at the same time, into an abstract world outside reality. Coupled with masterful lighting the set transforms the stage into a mirror of the constantly changing emotions of the piece.

LIGHTING DESIGN

Horst Mühlberger had worked before with the company. He knows Africa, he knows Japan and the different energies of their dances. He is a very sensitive artist and a

skillful technician at the same time, able to combine in his work the latest technology and the old traditions of lighting that are as simple as they are effective.

His images of light and darkness make the space vibrant, illuminous, frightening or dreamlike – a powerful support of the images and emotions.

COSTUMES

The costumes were designed by the renowned Senegalese stylist and fashion designer Oumou Sy. She is a pioneer of contemporary African fashion design and has had showings in the fashion capitals of the world, as a standard bearer of today's imaginative African design. Oumou Sy has also worked for

African film makers like Sembène Ousmane, Djibril Diop Mampety, Idrissa Ouedrago. She represented African Fashion Design at the Universal Expo in Hannover in 2000.

THE COMPANY JANT-BI

Seven young Senegalese dancers, all ex-students of the Ecole des Sables, with a background in traditional and contemporary African dance as well as western contemporary dance.

The company was created in 1999 for the creation of the first piece »Le coq est mort«, choreographed by German choreographer Susanne Linke, and the Israeli co-choreographer Avi Kaiser, has toured successfully in Europe and the United States. Fagaala was created in 2004 followed by »Waxtaan« in 2007.



INTERNATIONAL PRESS:

Germaine Acogny, in collaboration with the Japanese choreographer Kota Yamazaki, developed scenes of holy gravity with a sacred and mystical character, that moved the audience.

Fagaala is a dance of feelings and of anxiety, describing expressions of hate and pain. But, Fagaala is not a piece of despair: although the dance is full of mourning and evokes reminiscence of Greek tragedies, it also shows prospects for recovery, leads back to the roots of tradition and points out the origins. It is herein that lies the power.

Fagaala manages to be brutal while being poetically oblique, dancing around the edges of a tragedy so profound that no straightforward narrative could do it justice...

The Japanese influences in Fagaala, which include twisting the body into grotesque figures, wide-mouthed grimaces, and images of mysterious symbolism, permit viewers to face the problem of genocide head-on without misleading anyone into thinking it is an African problem exclusively. The collaboration between Acogny and Yamazaki supplies a broad, human perspective.

THE STAR-LEDGER, NEW JERSEY

In Fagaala the choreographers intertwine the slow-motion form of the Japanese Butoh-Dance with the heavy elements of African dance. The outcome is as melancholic as it is martial, as poetic as it is provoking. But above all Fagaala is a humanitarian piece, calling out for humanity, whilst showing man in his most primitive state: unprotected, vulnerable, nude.

KOELNER STADT-ANZEIGER

The performance Fagaala, enthusiastically received by the audience, blends light, dance and music into a steadily changing unity. The music links elements of African, Asian and also European musical traditions with as a result a transcending carpet of cultures, infinitely rich in nuances, in which foreign and native traditions develop into a new language, well-known in some parts and immensely attractive in its peculiarity.

STADTPOST REMSCHEID

THE CHOREOGRAPHERS

GERMAINE ACOGNY

Born in Benin, grown up in Senegal, she is considered as the »mother« of contemporary African dance, experimenting already in 1968 in her small studio in Dakar with new movements, based on traditional dances from West Africa. Inspired by western contemporary dance, she has created her own and unique technique.

As the director of Mudra Afrique in Dakar (1977 – 1982) a school for the Performing Arts created by Maurice Bèjart and the Senegalese President Senghor, she began to teach and perform across all 5 continents, becoming a formidable Ambassador of African dance and culture. In 1995 she decides to go back to Senegal. Together with her German husband Helmut Vogt she has built up an International Centre for Traditional and Contemporary African dances in Toubab Dialaw, a small fishing village south of Dakar.

The construction was completed and inaugurated on the 7th of June 2004. The »Ecole des Sables« is a meeting point for dancers coming from Africa and all over the world, a place of education for dancers from all parts of Africa that guides them towards a contemporary African dance without loss of their roots. Between 1997 and 2001, Germaine Acogny was the artistic director of the Contemporary African Dance Competition and Choreographic Meeting in connection with AFAA/Afrique en Créations in Paris. Germaine Acogny continues to dance herself. Her latest solo »Tchourai« is touring successfully.

In 2007, she and Kota Yamazaki received a BESSIE Award (New York Dance and Performance Award) for »Fagaala«.

KOTA YAMAZAKI

Kota Yamazaki is a first-rate dancer and choreographer of contemporary dance in Japan. Kota started

learning Butoh in Tokyo with the great master Akira Kasai in 1977. He also studied ballet and contemporary dance and quickly developed his own way of dancing. A critic once said »Yamazaki himself is a style«.

He worked with Daniel Larrieu in France and was finalist at the choreographic competition in Bagnolet in France in 1994.

His first company Rosy Co, toured in Asia, Europe and United States with his choreographies. He is always open to go beyond the limits. His dancing's main features are the speed, the precision and the power of movement.

In 2002, he founded a new company »Kota Yamazaki's Fluid Hug Hug Co«, creating pieces like »Meronna« – »Fish for Ellen« and »Night on the grass«.

Based on his experience in Senegal, he created a touching new solo.

PRODUCTION »FAGAALA«

PRODUCER:
ASSOCIATION JANT-BI, SENEGAL

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR COMPANY JANT-BI:
GERMAINE ACOGNY

CHOREOGRAPHY:
GERMAINE ACOGNY, KOTA YAMAZAKI

ASSISTANT GERMAINE ACOGNY:
LONGA FO EYETO

ASSISTANT KOTA YAMAZAKI:
MINA NISHIMURA

MUSIC: FABRICE BOUILLON-LAFOREST
JEAN-YVES GRATIUS (ASSISTANT)

SET DESIGN: MACIEJ FISZER

LIGHTING DESIGN: HORST MÜHLBERGER

COSTUMES: OUMOU SY

MUSICIANS:
JEAN-YVES GRATIUS : CELLO
OUMAR FANDY DIOP, N'DEYE SECK,
MAMADOU TRAORÉ, ABDERHAMANE
»ABOU« DIOP : PERCUSSIONS
DJIBRIL BA : RITI (TRADITIONNALL VIOLIN)
PR PIERRE BARROS : VOCALS
FABRICE BOUILLON-LAFOREST :
KEYBOARDS, SAMPLES &
TREATMENTS, BALAFON, VOCALS

COMPANY MANAGER: HELMUT VOGT

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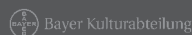


GERMAINE ACOGNY



KOTA YAMAZAKI

CO-PRODUCERS



National Dance Project (U.S.)

The Rockefeller Foundation (U.S.)

Arts International (U.S.)

ASU (Arizona States University, Phoenix)

Miami Dade College (U.S.)

NJPAC (New Jersey Performing Arts Center)

Association Française d'Action Artistique –

Ministère des Affaires Étrangères

Teo Otto Theatre (Germany)

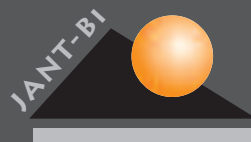
Bayer Cultural Affaires Departement,

Leverkusen (Germany)

Het MuziekTheatre (Amsterdam)

Grand Théâtre du Luxembourg

UC Riverside University (U.S.)



PRODUCTION : Association JANT-BI

www.jantbi.org