

AND...

PRESS CONFERENCE

with Célia Gondol and Nina Santes,
July 7 juillet at 11:00, cour du Cloître Saint-Louis

A LEAF

A Leaf takes the form of a choreographic concert in which the presence and voices of Célia Gondol and Nina Santes occupy the space and strive to make the audience vibrate along with them and feel their sensations... Between songs and speeches, from intelligible story to glossolalia, "*A Leaf is built like a fictional object in which are hidden real and speculative scientific theories. The border between reality and fiction isn't at all obvious, we're always on the verge of science fiction.*" From one song to the next, what's being said either with words or with gestures can be supported, contradicted, exploded, or amplified. The two figures who inhabit the stage invite the audience to an immersive experience and to enter the image through invasive and mesmerising sounds. The show is a journey, a spiral.

CÉLIA GONDOL

Célia Gondol is a plastic artist and a dancer. Her work belongs to the fields of both astrophysics and choreography. In 2014, she graduated from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. She recently had shows at La Criée / Frac Bretagne, at the Sogn & Fjordane Art Museum in Norway, at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris, and at the Forum Ginza Hermès in Tokyo with the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès.

NINA SANTES

Born in a family of puppet and travelling theatre artists, **Nina Santes** began her career as a puppeteer. Since 2008, she has worked as a performer with Mylène Benoit, Myriam Gourfink, and Herman Diephuis... She has written choreographic and musical plays, including *Transmorphonema*, a duo with Daniel Linehan, as well as *Self made man* (2015) and *Hymen Hymne* (2018), currently on tour.

73rd

EDITION

In order to bring you this edition, over 1,700 people, artists, technicians, and organisational staff, have worked tirelessly and enthusiastically for months. More than half of them are state-subsidised freelance workers.

FESTIVAL-AVIGNON.COM



#FDA19

FESTIVAL D'AVIGNON 73RD

JULY 6 7 8
LES HIVERNALES - CDCN D'AVIGNON

INTERVIEW WITH CÉLIA GONDOL AND NINA SANTES

A *Leaf* is built like a “choreographic concert” focusing on voice and sound.

Célia Gondol : A *Leaf* is a choreographic concert, focusing first and foremost on sound, voice, and rhythm. We want to offer something that isn't purely visual, even purely based on language. Sound is bigger than all of that. It's a way to enter the body, other people's and yours, particularly through vibrations. The show is made up of a number of different music pieces which are juxtaposed and superposed; we see it as a collection of moments. But it isn't as structured as a concert would be, because our research is based on sensory perception, in the succession of elements interacting and responding to one another like in a rebus. It leaves the audience entirely free to associate those elements to one another or not to do it, to follow an idea one way then the other. The pieces are extremely diverse: it can be part of a gesture, a voice, a sound. From one piece to the next, what we're saying can be supported, disputed, exploded, or amplified. What we're interested in is how we access spaces of fragility or, conversely, of power. The show is a sort of inner journey, a spiral into which the audience is invited to dive, or through which it can sail. The show is an object in which are hidden frequential dances, scientific theories, and speculative fiction stories. The border between reality and fiction isn't obvious. During the choreographic concert, there is a shift from a spoken form to a sung one, and from intelligible language to glossolalia, in order to experiment with the border between the meanings of the word, through the use of vibration, through guttural singing, through the body. Can we make the bodies in the audience vibrate?

Can you talk a little about your collaboration? About your respective areas of expertise, but also about the way you combine your disciplines...

Nina Santes : A *Leaf* is a creation co-written by Célia Gondol and myself, and we also perform the show. We tried to find not a single way of writing together, but a way to preserve our individuality within the creative discourse to reach a state of porosity in our propositions. We're careful to remain performers of each other's work, which means we're as much authors of the show as a whole as directors for each other. That's one of the new directions for this re-creation. We've both independently worked on projects in which the voice is manipulated, it's one of the things that bind us. I'm a choreographer and a musician, Célia Gondol is a performer, choreographer, and plastic artist; we met during our training, we performed together for a number of creations. Questions about voices, singing, vibration, about the body, but also the kinesthetic point of view which allows you to connect to someone through something other than the eyes, this way of using the body in its entirety, all of that is something we both work on in our art.

O Universo Nu is a show Célia conceived as a song, to explore vibrations. It is based on data from NASA in which scientists interpret all the waves that have been discovered so far. Similarly, the show *Hymen Hymne*, which I created in 2018, is based on the vibratory principles of the voice and the body. We're both interested in subjects that may seem to have little relevance to what we do but which resonate with each other. I'm particularly interested in eco-feminism, for instance. Célia is more interested in astrophysics and science in general. We're trying to build a bridge between our individual characters, between the moments where we're authors and performers and those where our desires onstage will be different.

A *Leaf* is not an original creation for the Festival: what are the modifications you want to make on this new iteration of the show?

Nina Santes : We wanted to create a lighter form, more performative and immersive than the first show we created in 2016 at the Atelier de Paris, in order to be able to present it in different contexts, in galleries, in theatres, even outside. We've been rethinking every element—dramaturgy, lights, scenography—with this idea in mind. Changes from one place to another must be simple and relevant. We want to easily be able to invite the audience onto the stage, as close as possible to the performers and to the research on vibration we're conducting. If we've changed the point of view of the dramaturgy, it's to build a porous and immersive relationship between the room and the stage for the audience.

Can you tell us more about this idea of immersive research through sound?

Nina Santes : Concretely, this choreographic concert is a research about the voice in all its possibilities, be it singing or pure sound, the way the body can appear through the voice, or how the voice makes language possible but also enables the loss of language. The voice creates the sound, the melody, it allows you to close your eyes and to lose this often direct relationship to the image, to escape it. We wrote a lot of songs for this show, many ballads about love, about relationships, sometimes using automatic writing. Narrative pieces, whether realistic or close to science fiction, are interspersed with pieces based on sensations. The space of the show can be filled to the brim only to empty from one moment to the next.

Célia Gondol : A *Leaf* can be read as a reflection on the idea of returning to nature. The title refers to a concrete, fragile element, at once a symbol of life and death, ephemeral but source of life. It raises the question of ecology.

—

Interview conducted by Moïra Dalant and translated by Gaël Schmidt-Cléach