

JAMAIS ASSEZ

The idea of mastering fire, of deriving power from it, and of being galvanised by its energy is at the origin of many mythologies and many dances. Choreographic research isn't so far removed from it, and continues to play with bodies to animate this element, to keep it going, to share it. Which is why when Fabrice Lambert discovered the film *Into Eternity*, he saw it as the material for a new form of alchemy. Michael Madsen's documentary describes the construction of a national nuclear waste burial site in Onkalo, Finland. This construction site is gigantic, unthinkable so, based on the length of time it takes radioactivity to disappear: 100,000 years. This project requires a crazy projection in time and, to Fabrice Lambert, this makes Onkalo a sort of mythology in the present tense. A mythology of the sacred fire that has one key thing in common with the story of Prometheus, namely, that after one moment of victory, there ensues never-ending torment. On the stage, ten dancers create a moving geometry, orienting flows, sounding breaches and provoking breaks to feel this vertiginous experience of energy and time. In an empty space sculpted by light, they are the masters of a ceremony in which perceiving the infinite leads to seizing the present as the driving force of a precious common good.

The show will premiere on 13 July, 2015 at Gymnase du lycée Aubanel, Avignon.

FABRICE LAMBERT

"You gotta throw your body into the fight." Fabrice Lambert likes to quote Pasolini, because his dance is first and foremost a form of engagement. And if his creations often take an abstract form, they are first and foremost motivated by a desire for experimentation and concreteness, for bodies and for the stage. Performers in his plays are like sieves through which the real goes in order for different kinds of energies to be refined, produced, and extracted. After graduating from the National Centre of Contemporary Dance in Angers, Fabrice Lambert worked as a dancer for many choreographers (Carolyn Carlson, Catherine Diverrière, François Verret, Rachid Ouramdane...), before founding the Expérience Harmaat, bringing together artists, engineers, videographers, visual artists, etc. Sciences—be they physical, human, or social—are at the heart of his research. Reflections on technical progress, on speed, on the integral accident (Paul Virilio), or on the concept of body without organs (Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari) are present in several of his plays. To him, concepts give the body an "imagination," which on the stage takes the concrete form of experiences of perception where thought, energy, and matter are one and the same.

INTERVIEW WITH FABRICE LAMBERT

The creation of *Never Enough* was partly triggered by the film *Into Eternity*. How did it inspire you?

Fabrice Lambert: I saw the film *Into Eternity* at a time when I was looking into the concept of mythology, trying to see how relevant it was. What are our modern myths? Does this concept have a meaning in the present tense, or is it only valid as a reference to history, to memory? *Into Eternity* is about Onkalo, in Finland, a construction site supposed to remain open for a hundred years. Its goal is to bury nuclear waste five hundred metres underground for the next hundred thousand years, until they are no longer radioactive. This crazy projection into the future is the product of scientific, philosophical, and political reflection, and it raises as many questions as it answers. The Onkalo project seems in its excessiveness to be a perfect mirror of our present. Its duration, its intensity, allow us to see it as the cradle of a new mythology. Furthermore, the story of Onkalo seemed to me to echo another mythological story I have a soft spot for, that of Prometheus. The titan, whose name means “forethought,” created mankind out of clay and water; he gave them knowledge, arts, science, agriculture. But he also taught them how to use fire, which he stole from the gods. His secret plan was to put men and gods on an equal footing. Zeus condemned him for his theft to suffer eternal torment. Prometheus is chained to a rock, and his liver is devoured daily by an eagle, before regenerating at night. I see a connection between Prometheus and Onkalo, a path joining those two stories about fire, eternity, and knowledge. It is on this path that the play is located.

How did you turn this very concrete subject into choreographic elements?

At the centre of my conception of dance, there has always been this ambition to incorporate the real and to transpose it into a form of engagement, of impetus. I look closely at what it does within my own body, within the dancing body, in the dramaturgy of a choreographic work. I often quote Pasolini, who used to say “You gotta throw your body into the fight.” To enter the stage is to me a gesture of a similar nature, like a battle of energy. My body, the body of a dancer and a choreographer, works with what goes through it. And that, in turns, becomes energy. I’m always wondering about what is recorded by the eye, and how. My approach is very visual, influenced by visual arts, maybe even architectural; I come up very early with the way a show’s key elements are to be recorded by the retina. That is why I tend to work a lot on the paths followed by the dancers on the stage. But if my work has to do with a certain form of abstraction, it is always based on rather concrete tasks. A body in movement is always doing something, always exploring a range of reactions to a mental state. You have to be making something. It’s very important, because my dance isn’t based on form, but on what the dancers go through, in terms of energy. Movement isn’t determined by form, but by energy.

How did you choose your dancers?

For this play, I chose dancers with a very strong sense of character. I need them to have a lot of energy, because I require of them to be fully invested. You need a lot of experience to be able to work on energy. Even if creation is

very much a collective process, it requires you to take risks as an individual, to question your personal commitment, what you can and cannot control. The notion of limits is always at stake here. Forcing a dancer to face the fact that he has limits allows him or her to reach some of them, while of course running the risk of crossing them. But I'm also interested in that: when you want to do something and can't, what happens? It's under those circumstances that individuals can express their freedom. Accidents allow you to understand situations: they are, in a way, like a return to reality. Often, my propositions to the dancers take the form of rules that add up, are subtracted or substituted, etc. It's as much a mental as a physical exercise. In *Never Enough*, the dancers are here and now, as well as one hundred thousand years ago, or one hundred thousand years from now. To me, to dance is to think on a large scale.

Are you trying to offer a specific experience of time as a duration?

We are indeed working on spatial and temporal breaks. We are trying to understand how time and memory could be perceived differently, be reorganised. It's what is at stake in the dramaturgy, in our treatment of bodies, of space, of movement. Through breaks, returns, and loops, we are trying to find triggers that would allow us to experience different temporalities and scales. For instance, we explore the form of the Moebius strip, which is both a manifestation of and a symbol for infinity. We are trying to see how this form can exist in space, but also in bodies. We also question the idea of decision. Onkalo asks the question of how we make decisions in situations of uncertainty. What does that mean, when one is dancing? Up to what point can you mentally anticipate a gesture before you make it? When is the body forced to stop because there aren't enough prior decisions? Choreographic writing is based on very committed and physical gestures, based on the fundamentals that are the surge, the fall, the notion of momentum.

The atmosphere of *Into Eternity* is rather heavy, threatening even. What about *Never Enough*?

It's almost the opposite of danger or threat that I'm trying to make people feel. What I'm interested in is the realisation of the power of the present. The present as precious. I think the only way to really consider the future is through an intensive practice of the present. That is what we are trying to explore with our bodies. The body forces us to face the present. You could almost say there is the expression, the experience of the joy of existing in the present. Joy as an engine, a generator that might change the curve of time, towards infinity. I have often asked the dancers, "What would be a fire dance for you today?" We will try to perpetuate a dance meant to keep the fire going, and thanks to it find again those things that still can be shared today.

Interview conducted by Renan Benyamina / Translation Gaël Schmidt-Cléach

AND...

CINEMATOGRAPHIC TERRITORIES

Into Eternity directed by Michael Madsen

Screening followed by an encounter with Fabrice Lambert

15 July at 11:00 am, Utopia-Manutention

DEBATE

Art and democracy, with Fabrice Lambert and Valère Novarina, organised by the Région Île-de-France / 16 July at 03:00 pm, Espace Jeanne Laurent, free admittance

TOUR DATES FOR *JAMAIS ASSEZ* AFTER THE FESTIVAL D'AVIGNON

– 5 April 2016: L'apostrophe, Scène nationale de Cergy-Pontoise et du Val d'Oise

– 27 May: Théâtre de Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, Scène nationale

– 9 June: Festival June Events, Centre de développement chorégraphique, Atelier de Paris-Carolyn Carlson, Paris

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