

## AND

## SHOW

*Canzone per Ornella* by Raimund Hoghe,  
July 22 to 24 at 21:30, cloître des Célestins

## NAVE OF IMAGES

*36, Avenue Georges Mandel* by Raimund Hoghe (2007),  
July 22 at 14:30, église des Célestins

## FAITH AND CULTURE ENCOUNTER

with Raimund Hoghe, July 24 at 11:00, chapelle de l'Oratoire

## 36, AVENUE GEORGES MANDEL

It is a simple routine, the expression of a space and time. It is a simple address, that of Maria Callas at the end of her life, which implicitly comes to paint the picture of an icon, of her loneliness and abandonment in her last years. Created in 2007, *36, Avenue Georges Mandel* is also an address to Maria Callas; a way to summon her presence and to remind us of the demanding nature of her art, classical singing, and of the dramatic power of the figures she brought to life—Carmen, Norma, Tosca. To this voice that fills the stage, Raimund Hoghe chooses to respond not with something equally big, but with something little. By subtracting rather than adding, he creates a fragile zone where music can resonate. The ephemeral space he builds using his usual material works here like a go-between: between her and us, between past and present. Between 2007 and 2018. Doing away with gestures and clothes, Raimund Hoghe lets the voice guide and clothe him, and he becomes the ghost of that presence, the better to open a breach between the presence of the bodies and the otherworldliness of a tone.

## RAIMUND HOGHE

A writer and dramatist for Pina Bausch, Raimund Hoghe has spent the past twenty-five years creating a challenging choreographic body of work, alternating solos and group shows—*Sacre – The Rite of Spring*, *Swan Lake*, *4 Acts*, *Boléro Variations*, etc—which revisit major works in the history of dance. Each of his shows rests on a thin thread, a fabric made of gestures, shapes, and melodies, which he imbues with the thickness of memory. Letting the music spread through the bodies, his rituals take form in a space conducive to all kinds of associations. Raimund Hoghe's first show in France was *Verdi prati*, performed in 1993 at the Festival d'Avignon.

72<sup>th</sup>  
EDITION

In order to bring you this edition, over 1,750 people, artists, technicians, and organisational staff, have worked tireless and enthusiastically for months. More than half of them are state-subsidised freelance workers.

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## INTERVIEW WITH RAIMUND HOGHE

***You recently staged a new production of the show *Lettere amorose*, and you're about to do the same with *36, Avenue Georges Mandel* at the Festival d'Avignon. What's the place of those new productions of pre-existing shows in your work?***

**Raimund Hoghe:** For *Lettere amorose*, it's actually a new version called *Lettere amorose 1999-2017*. The show is shorter; I focused on political letters about the situation of the refugees, drawing a parallel between 1999 and today. As for *36, Avenue Georges Mandel*, it's the same show, but it's going to be very different, as we will be performing outside—and as for me, I have changed a lot in the past ten years. It had been created for the Chapelle des Pénitents blancs then—a beautiful place. Here, we'll be in the Cloître des Célestins. There is therefore a double gap, in both time and space. My relationship to the Festival d'Avignon is part of my history. Next year will be the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my first performance in France. The first show I performed here, *Verdi Prati*, was presented at the Festival d'Avignon. It was also the first show on which I worked with Luca Giacomo Schulte, my artistic collaborator. *36, Avenue Georges Mandel* lies halfway between that first show and today. I wanted to revisit this tribute, for me but also for the Festival—and also because it is still physically possible for me to do so. After all, Kazuo Ohno was older than me when he did his show about *La Argentina*...

***36, Avenue Georges Mandel: this address, where Maria Callas lived towards the end of her life, brings together space and time, two dimensions that have always been closely linked in your work...***

To me, this address symbolises this moment at the end of her life when Maria Callas found herself very much alone. She had no friends left, no lovers, not much money. She died alone and heartbroken. It's the end of a legend... I think that the title, simple as it is, expresses all that. Of course, this show comes first and foremost from my love of Callas. From the importance of what she sang, said, thought. The show is a sort of memento, to remind people of how demanding she was, of the quality of her art.

***You work with images that come back, show after show, ceaselessly echoing one another—like that of the lying body, with a blanket over it.***

Yes, at the start of the show, there is this image with my lying on the floor; it's something you'll find at the beginning of *The Waltz*, for instance. It's an image that calls on other images—those of homeless people in particular, an image that often comes back in my work, like a reminder of this destitute humanity. The blanket with the sign of the cross is a reference to Franko B—an English artist and performer who's worked a lot with this symbol. He also took many pictures of the poor in London. There are a lot of visual references to the plastic arts in my work, which echo one another.

***Throughout your work, one finds many female figures. Is there something in particular that you find interesting in those artistic "icons"?***

It's art I'm interested in. I find Maria Callas or Judy Garland interesting because of the way they mastered their art. The other important aspect is the fragility of the human being: working with the flaws and grey areas. The goal is to touch both their status as icons and the complexity of their being. I believe art should be demanding: when you look at the music or movie industry today, you just have to turn on your television to be struck by the chasm separating those great artists and what mainstream culture produces today...

***Since we're on the subject of links between shows, Emmanuel Eggermont, who danced in many of your shows, appears for the first time in 36, Avenue Georges Mandel.***

If Luca Giacomo Schulte appears at the beginning, drawing on the floor with water shapes that disappear as the show unfolds, Emmanuel appears at the end, coming from the audience. I'm on the floor and he helps me up. His presence serves to tie things together. Those interventions are important to me, they're the mark of an outside presence. In my solo shows, the dancers are never alone.

***Another striking aspect of 36, Avenue Georges Mandel is of course the music, and Maria Callas's voice. The stage becomes a listening surface, a place where we take the time to listen...***

Yes, it's a space to share the beauty of that music... I'm not adding much in the end. It echoes what Callas said about movement, in an excerpt from her conversations we hear in the show. To make a piece, she said, you need a movement—not twenty. You have to find this movement that encapsulates the essence of the music. You see it when you watch her concerts: every movement—of her arms, for instance—takes a long time. There is in her—in her singing, in her gestures—a quest for the essential that I find very important. Her movements are already a dance, and it inspired me a lot.

***How did you pick the music, but also the conversation excerpts you use in the show?***

I don't know how to explain it. "It comes to me"—that's the only way I can. I listen to music, and it leads me from one point to another. I chose the music based on the different characters she played—like Carmen. But I'm no composer, the overall structure unveils itself little by little as I work. It's the same for solo pieces, with Ornella for instance. I come up with ideas, I make her listen to them, I see how she reacts, how she connects to this or that piece, this or that text. I've always worked like that, going from one point to the next, without necessarily thinking about what comes after. I try to perceive the spaces music opens up at a specific moment.

Interview conducted by Gilles Amalvi and translated by Gaël Schmidt-Cléach