

AND...

PRESS CONFERENCE with Jon Maya,
July 6 at 11:00, cour du Cloître Saint-Louis

TOUR DATES AFTER THE FESTIVAL

- September 20, 2019, Festival Cadences, Arcachon
- October 10, Teatro Municipal Bergidum, Ponferrada (Spain)
- October 19, Teatro Bretón de los Herreros, Logroño (Spain)
- November 2 and 3, Stanislavsky Electrotheatre, Moscow (Russia)

OSKARA

If you want to know who you are, dance!

The stage is an operating theatre. A man experiences his own death and dives into Basque culture with its myths and symbols, its ever-renewed tradition. Invited by Jon Maya, choreographer and director of the Kukai Dantza company, Spaniard Marcos Morau shows us the ties between traditional Basque dance and contemporary choreographic language. Scenes follow each other, striking and disconcerting, like so many enigmatic landscapes, so many intertwined human geographies. The precise gestures of virtuoso dancers, the stylised elegance of traditional costumes, and the almost-mystical singing all contribute to an intense reflection about Basque identity. Moving from shadow to light, the images with their echoes and counterpoints, their sidesteps and chassé-croisés, invent a fascinating exploration of human experience. Dance as a response to what defines us. A land, a language, a history, a living and vibrant tradition, and a future to pass on.

KUKAI DANTZA

The **Kukai Dantza** company was founded in 2001 in Errenteria in the Basque country by dancer and choreographer **Jon Maya**. They have developed a form of contemporary dance drawn from the roots of Basque culture. Their creations, like *Gelajauziak* or *Erritu*, have met with acclaim on the international stage and received many awards. Since 2008, the company has worked with prestigious choreographers like Cesc Gelbart, Israel Galván, Sharon Fridman, or Marcos Morau.

MARCOS MORAU

Born in Valencia in 1982, **Marcos Morau** trained at the Institut del Teatre de Barcelona, the Conservatorio Superior de Danza de Valencia, and Movement Research in New York. In 2005, he created the collective La Veronal with artists from other disciplines. The Barcelona-based group has since developed very expressive hybrid creations, whose aesthetics borrow from cinema, literature, painting, or photography. Among other international awards, Marcos Morau won the 2013 Prix national de la danse.

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.

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L'AUTRE SCÈNE DU GRAND AVIGNON - VEDÈNE

INTERVIEW WITH JON MAYA AND MARCOS MORAU

The show is called *Oskara*. It is also introduced by this saying: *If you want to know who you are, dance. Do you mean that dance allows us to know ourselves and to express our identity?*

Jon Maya : “Oskara” is one of the early names for Euskara (or Basque). And it gives you an idea of the context of the show, in which we talk about the culture of the Basque Country. All of Kukai Dantza’s shows reveal a part of the Basque identity. Since all our creations are based on Basque dance, each show carries an important part of that identity. In *Oskara*, it is made even more visible by the references to symbols, costumes, and to the music and dance of the Basque Country. But it can be found in all of the company’s shows.

Marcos Morau : The name is indeed an old, forgotten, little-known form of Euskara. It could bring to mind an unusual female name, but also remind people of Basque itself, in an altered, modified form... That’s what you’ll find in the show: a vision of the Basque Country from a different angle. Our intention was to immerse ourselves in Basque culture, to discover its dances, its music, its myths and legends. We wanted to get an overview so as to be able to focus on certain aspects. Dance may be one of the languages which best reflect the essence of places and times. Dance and the body. That’s the mix we use as fuel for our work. To begin with a corpse and end with a naked body, stripped of signs and colours, and from there to think about the value we give the culture which has been transmitted to us, generation after generation...

Marcos Morau’s choreographic language is precise and stylised, here coupled with a traditional technique, Basque dance. How did you tackle this mix of different styles? What is it that you like about bringing together contemporary and popular forms of dance?

Marcos Morau : I tried to come as close as possible to the Basque style, but always with my own point of view, to create a link between their movements and mine. The way Jon Maya understands dance is by reproducing old motifs, transmitted through time and expressed in the present. What I want is to create language, to offer new ways of experiencing contemporaneity. Bringing together my world and that of Kukai Dantza created an interesting mix of styles and times, an aspect everyone loved during the creative process.

Jon Maya : Traditional dance is very rich in terms of rhythms, styles, and steps... I see it as a great tool for creation. It seems to me that there’s this shared territory where traditional dance and contemporary dance can coexist, and it’s that research that has driven our work with Kukai Dantza for years now. Marcos Morau’s choreographic language and that of Basque dance have nothing in common, but they complement each other really well. I thought that this union could give birth to a very unique movement. Marcos Morau created for *Oskara* an accepted, neutral scenic space, which helped create a new context in which he incorporated elements of traditional and contemporary culture to create a dialogue between them.

What do you find interesting in this move from the past to the present?

Marcos Morau : I think it’s always very important to look back to see where we came from, who we’ve learnt from, and who inspired us. Popular tradition in Spain as a whole is a great source of inspiration for me. As a young creator, I try not to stray too far from my origins and to find answers to my art in the present. I believe that real originality means sometimes going back to your roots and creating links and questions, and looking for new forms of expression between past and present to discover and invent the future.

In *Oskara*, the presence of Basque dance is part of a strong reflection about identity: it’s about sharing its roots, legacy, and struggles. Do you, as artists, think that art should be political in our current society?

Marcos Morau : It’s important to know the history of a city, so as not to see it as unique and to free it from any kind of nationalism... I don’t believe in nationalism at all. I’m interested in the preservation of culture, in the discovery of the differences and similarities between peoples. I’m from Valencia, I live in Barcelona, and I work throughout the world, I love differences and I learn a lot from them. I think art is a powerful weapon, more necessary than ever now. *Oskara* confirms it. We preserve our culture so as not to lose it, to learn what we once were and what we’ve become, and so to be able to keep writing the history of mankind.

Jon Maya : Art has always been a vector of understanding and structure. Right from the start of the creative process, we can introduce contexts which, in our daily lives, would be very difficult to create, and raise awareness of many issues. Art and creation are doubtless an indispensable tool for the development of people and of society.

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Interview conducted by Malika Baaziz and translated by Gaël Schmidt-Cléach