

# MAYDAY

TRANSLATE INTO GESTURE THE STATE OF THINGS AND BEINGS...





## MAYDAY

Since its creation in 2007, MAYDAY has chosen to be a place of exchange and reflection, a sort of artistic think tank, for the artists working with Mélanie Demers. They come from various spheres, some from Montreal, home base of the company, others from around the world. Their personalities are both dazzling and eclectic. Here, the maturation of the work is a collective process. The physicality, rhythm and images used in the choreographies are characteristic elements of MAYDAY's works, which find their meaning when encountering with the public.

MAYDAY uses the stage as a platform to examine the role of the artist and uses the theatre as a space to meditate on the fate of the world and individuals. Mélanie Demers' works, unquestionably committed, are simultaneous distress signals and an invitation to change. This is why she called her company MAYDAY, a name in which she perceives at once hope and despair.



## MÉLANIE DEMERS

After 10 years touring as a dancer with O Vertigo, Mélanie Demers founded in Montreal her own dance company, MAYDAY, in 2007. Her work has charmed by its originality, intensity and its complexity, exploring the darker zones of the human condition. Socially engaged as an artist, Mélanie Demers travelled to teach dance in Kenya, Niger, Brazil and Haiti, among other destinations. The harsh reality of the developing countries challenged her understanding of the role of art in society. Addressing political issues in a poetic form, **Les Angles Morts** (2006), **Junkyard/Paradis** (2010), **Goodbye** (2012), **MAYDAY remix** (2014) have all been created from this perspective. And lately, **WOULD** (2015), won the CALQ Prize for best choreography, highlighting the artistic excellence of a work presented in Québec. In 2016, Mélanie Demers began a new creation cycle with **Animal Triste** and **Icône Pop**; both works are touring internationally.

To date, she choreographed twenty works and was presented in some thirty cities across Europe, America, Africa and Asia.



## ICÔNE POP

30 min

Created upon the invitation of B-Motion (Bassano), *ICône Pop* is a playful clash between religious and pop iconographies, the sacred and the profane, saintly glorification and self-glorification. Featuring the auras of the Virgin Mary and Beyoncé in a striptease of the utmost modesty.

CHOREOGRAPHY and INTERPRETATION: MÉLANIE DEMERS MUSIC: MYKALLE BIELINSKI  
CREATION: 2016



## ANIMAL TRISTE

60 min

In the great march of the world, humans are nothing more than sad little animals. But animals that console themselves in beauty and in desire for immortality. For this, men will invent religions, philosophies and civilizations. They will conquer, dominate, oppress. And procreate. They will make up stories and write History. But very rarely will they understand where they stand and never really escape their condition. And deep down, men are those animals of no significance who only aspire to more and better.

**Animal Triste** is a kind of freeze frame, an attempt to understand nature and the role of mankind in all its humanity.

DIRECTION and CHOREOGRAPHY: MÉLANIE DEMERS PERFORMERS: MARC BOIVIN, FRANCIS DUCHARME, CHI LONG AND RILEY SIMS PERFORMERS DURING THE CREATION: MARC BOIVIN, JAMES GNAM, BRIANNA LOMBARDO AND RILEY SIMS DRAMATURGE: ANGÉLIQUE WILLKIE LIGHTS: ALEXANDRE PILON-GUAY ORIGINAL MUSIC: JACQUES POULIN-DENIS CREATION: 2016

*In this piece, the choreographer seems to be restraining herself, editing her material with a certain ruthlessness, yielding to neither her mannerisms nor strengths. [...] The result is a pivotal work.*

C. Lalonde,  
Le Devoir, February 17

*For this Demers has devised a series of captivating gestures, threatening to explode, in which the primal/animal identity seem to be brought under control by an awareness that twists and contorts the body, placing it in a state of constant imbalance.*

I. Gagnon-Paradis  
La Presse, February 17



## DANSE MUTANTE

upcoming creation

The **Danse Mutante** project is an ambitious choreographic relay, which will take root in Montreal and will be performed on several stages of the world. Designed as a duet destined for an eternal transformation, **Danse Mutante** will first be created and presented in Montreal by choreographer Mélanie Demers. Once the first version will be completed, the work will be offered to a new choreographer residing in another city, who, according to a set of parameters, will be allowed to transform it at will during a three-week residency that will lead to public performances. And so on, in other cities around the world, the work will continue to mutate and will return to its author, after three journeys and so many transformations. Probably unrecognizable, the dance will get back in Montreal for a final period of work.

Political in its creation more than in its topic, **Danse Mutante** is an “open-data” project, which examines migration, integrity, identity and the sources of ideas. In a world where ideas travel with unprecedented speed but where borders are closed on themselves, **Danse Mutante** reinvents collaboration and explores the concept of co-creation by proposing a way of working at a distance.



## WOULD

30 or 55 min

Drawing its inspiration from all possible futures, **WOULD** is a meditation on potentiality, utopia, and our mania for projecting ourselves into the future. Imagining the best, fearing the worst. And adapting as best we can to the present. Fuelled by the energy of two powerful dancers, **WOULD** is a reflection on the failures, falls and miscues that inevitably mark our imperfect paths. Marc Boivin and Kate Holden confront each other like two wild beasts wearily approaching each other.

For this piece, Marc Boivin received the 2014 Dora Mavor Moore Award for Outstanding Performance Male.

DIRECTION, TEXT and CHOREOGRAPHY: MÉLANIE DEMERS WITH THE COLLABORATION OF PERFORMERS PERFORMERS: MARC BOIVIN, KATE HOLDEN LIGHTS: ALEXANDRE PILON-GUAY MUSIC: JOSHUA VAN TASSEL TECHNICAL DIRECTION AND PRODUCTION: ALEXANDRE PÉLOQUIN CREATION: 2013

*We can only applaud the consistency of the choreographic language of Mélanie Demers, the excellence of the two performers and the address with which the bilingual text has been included.*

L. Renaud,  
Revue JEU, April 15

*No wonder WOULD [...] has earned Marc Boivin an award for his performance, as well as nominations for choreography and sound design. [...] A beautiful piece which opens up a whole world of possibilities for Mélanie Demers.*

I. Gagnon-Paradis,  
La Presse, April 15



## GOODBYE

60 min

**Goodbye** is a little handbook to saying farewell to the thousand deaths that we experience daily, which stages our tendency to invent and reinvent ourselves to face our own imperceptible grief. As a monstrous creature, gifted with intelligence and instinct, emancipated from its creators, **Goodbye** multiplies and fractionates itself, only to become fragmented and lost in its own labyrinth. Circling back and breaking up as if caught in a maze of its own making, **Goodbye** finds its way through by dismantling and revealing the codes and the ropes of representation, questioning both the world and art as the two ultimate forms of creation.

DIRECTION, TEXT and CHOREOGRAPHY: MÉLANIE DEMERS PERFORMERS: MÉLANIE DEMERS, BRIANNA LOMBARDO, CHI LONG, JACQUES POULIN-DENIS MUSIC: JEAN-SÉBASTIEN CÔTÉ LIGHTS: ALEXANDRE PILON-GUAY CREATION: 2012

*Goodbye first fascinates by its labyrinthine structure, like distorting mirrors where the same scenes are being replayed and are becoming increasingly crazy, spooky and phantasmagorical [...] the genius of Demers resides in this finely thought structure [...] her works are intelligent, unconventional, daring and fascinating.*

I. Gagnon-Paradis,  
Dfdanse, June 12



## JUNKYARD/PARADISE

65 min

*A signature in the movement and in the structure of the physical and emotional space. A political, poetic, urgent and necessary declaration. A hyperawareness of what representation is, both its magic and its restricted impact. These are all signs of intelligence that make Junkyard/Paradise a damn beautiful mess. Mélanie Demers is becoming a great choreographer. Well done!*

C. Lalonde  
Le Devoir, February 11

**Junkyard/Paradise** exists in a fragile balance between beauty and atrocity, between elegance and aversion, between grace and desolation. When junkyard is often a shelter for what is still precious and paradise a dump for our disposable love stories, the piece sways between opposing forces. What can be read as child's play soon becomes a power struggle. What is passion becomes compassion. What is inoffensive becomes fatal. And what is imminence of death turns out to be a ticket for life. Welcome to a world where nothing is exactly what it seems.

DIRECTION, TEXT and CHOREOGRAPHY: MÉLANIE DEMERS PERFORMERS: ANGIE CHENG, MÉLANIE DEMERS, BRIANNA LOMBARDO, NICOLAS PATRY, JACQUES POULIN-DENIS  
LIGHTS: ALEXANDRE PILON-GUAY ORIGINAL MUSIC: JACQUES POULIN-DENIS  
CREATION: 2010



## SAUVER SA PEAU

55 min

Mélanie Demers and Laïla Diallo join forces for this new opus with the shared aspiration of investigating some delicate questions linked to identity. Created between Kenya, Canada and the UK, **Sauver sa Peau** has already left its marks on three continents. The piece unfolds as a fluid succession of physical tableaux offering as many perspectives on the multilayered nature of identity. As skin is always renewing itself, is identity not also in a constant state of becoming?

We wonder about what is valuable and ready to throw. On what makes us human beings or vulgar pawns, our ability to read the world, understand it and detect it a little beauty in the daily discharge of our lives.

*A fine creation [...] which has the mysterious depth of dreams and the lucid intelligence of consciousness.*

M.-C. Scholl,  
Dfdanse, February 08

*A fine creation [...] which has the mysterious depth of dreams and the lucid intelligence of consciousness.*

M.-C. Scholl,  
Dfdanse, February

CHOREOGRAPHY, TEXTS and INTERPRETATION: MÉLANIE DEMERS and LAÏLA DIALLO  
LIGHTS: DAVID PERREAULT NINACS ORIGINAL MUSIC: JACQUES POULIN-DENIS  
ARTISTIC ADVISOR: BOYZIE CEKWANA CREATION: 2008



*For the brave questioning of the role of the artist [...] For the emotional charge and the coherence of a piece full of images and moods signed Mélanie Demers.*

F. Cabado  
Voir, December 07

*Mélanie Demers does not waste a single second in submerging us in herworld [...] It is very difficult to qualify or even quantify Les Angles Morts because it works at such an experiential level that discussing it inevitably feels futile. The only way to truly appreciate it is to experience it. It will move you to action, and even maybe to creation.*

S. Vestricht,  
Indyish, April 07

## LES ANGLES MORTS

35 min or 60 min

**Les Angles Morts** moves as a small manifesto. As an invitation to open our eyes collectively. As an incentive to look at our blunders, our times of distress, and our missteps. As a declaration of humanity. There are 1000 reasons for wanting to close our eyes to the unceasing spectacle of misery and barbarism. But is there good reason to look and confront? A good reason to see, to move and to be moved? This is the question the protagonists are trying to answer, both perpetrators and victims of their history. Trying to escape their condition, they invent a new order where it may be possible to live with open eyes.

CONCEPT AND CHOREOGRAPHY: MÉLANIE DEMERS PERFORMERS: MÉLANIE DEMERS and JACQUES POULIN-DENIS LIGHTS: DAVID PERREAULT NINACS ORIGINAL MUSIC: JACQUES POULIN-DENIS ARTISTIC ADVISOR: BOYZIE CEKWANA CREATION: 2006



## SPECIAL PROJECT

### MAYDAY REMIX

*The bet is successful and vibrant. A wonderful way to honor Mélanie Demers' latest works.*

É. Boileau  
Dfdanse, March 14

*It is a refreshing breeze for the Montreal milieu, bold and pleasant for the audience. A memorable evening.*

P. St-Onge  
MonTheatre.qc.ca,  
March 14

Atypical event, indefinable artistic object, **MAYDAY remix** is an exploded rereading of the company's repertoire. With selected excerpts of the company's repertoire, Mélanie Demers plays the full-scale deconstruction game. The collaborators are free to revisit, reinterpret, pervert or corrupt the proposed material. In collaboration with many guest artists, the project is imagined as a course where each station reveals a part of the whole, **MAYDAY remix** splits, fragments and recomposes, offering a kaleidoscopic view of the choreographer's universe.

PERFORMERS: ANGIE CHENG, FRANCIS DUCHARME, CAROLINE GRAVEL, BRIANNA LOMBARDO, CHI LONG, NICOLAS PATRY, JACQUES-POULIN DENIS AND MÉLANIE DEMERS COLLABORATORS: POIRIER, OLIVIER CHOINÈRE, XAVIER CURNILLON, LES FERMIERES OBSÉBÉES, CATHERINE GAUDET, CATHERINE LEROUX, CATHERINE VIDAL LIGHTS: ALEXANDRE PILON-GUAY ARTISTIC ADVISOR: ANNE-MARIE JOURDENAIS

# MAYDAY

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**MAYDAY** is supported by Canada Council for the Arts, Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec and Conseil des arts de Montréal  
**Goodbye** is a co-production with Festival TransAmériques. The project is supported by Canada Council for the Arts, Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, Conseil des arts de Montréal and Circuit-Est centre chorégraphique.

**Goodbye** was created during creative residency periods at Garage Nardini (Bassano), Compagnie Marie Chouinard (Montreal), Usine C (Montreal) and the Creation Centre O Vertigo (Montreal).

**Junkyard/Paradise** is a co-production with Rencontres chorégraphiques internationales de Seine-Saint-Denis and Agora de la danse (Montreal) with support of Canada Council for the Arts and Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, Circuit-Est centre chorégraphique, Usine C (Montreal), Operaestate Veneto (Bassano) and CCN of Caen/Basse-Normandie through creative residency periods.

**Animal Triste** is a co-production with Canada Dance Festival. The project is supported by Canada Arts Council, the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec and the Conseil des arts de Montréal.

**Icône Pop** is a co-production with Operaestate Festival - Comune di Bassano del Grappa.

**MAYDAY** is member of Circuit-Est centre chorégraphique and Art Circulation.  
Photos credits: MAYDAY, Mélanie Demers, *Junkyard/Paradise*, *Sauver sa peau*, *Les Angles Morts* © Larry Dufresne, *WOULD*, *Goodbye*, *Animal Triste*, *MAYDAY* remix © Mathieu Doyon, *Danse Mutante* © Ben Welland, *Icône Pop* © Brianna Lombardo