

MAYDAY

DANSE MUTANTE

MÉLANIE DEMERS



DANSE MUTANTE

A choreographic relay conceived by **Mélanie Demers** with the collaboration of choreographers **Ann Liv Young, Kettly Noël** and **Ann Van den Broek**

Danse Mutante is a choreographic relay anchored in Montreal and conceived over three continents. An original duo, *Cantique*, was created by Mélanie Demers. Then, three choreographers, Ann Liv Young (New York), Kettly Noël (Bamako) and Ann Van den Broek (Antwerp/Rotterdam), each worked in succession with the performers (Riley Sims and Francis Ducharme) to produce their own version. Aside from a few parameters (only two performers, a limited creation period, length, etc.), each choreographer was given free rein to concoct her own mutation of the piece by remixing, reinventing, and distorting the last version handed to her. The project culminated in Montreal in the fall of 2019 with a marathon event.

In this era of closing borders and growing migration, my intention with *Danse Mutante* was to observe the voyage of ideas. It took two years to prepare this off-road project, organizing and grouping a multitude of people around the issues of permeability, solidarity, and the beautiful, cruel quest for oneness. We did not imagine in the planning stages just how deeply the mutations would upset and "provoke" us. From the gestation of ideas to the erosion of power and authority and the total loss of reference points, the very concepts of transformation and evolution have permeated this series of works' core themes. Each of the artists involved here offers a



particular slice of the wide spectrum of possible mutations. They are conceptual, aesthetic, rarely choreographic but intensely personal. I had imagined a simple group project, but instead I have seen dialoguing intimacies answer each other, contradict each other, and even demolish the premise for our being together. The Darwinian conception of evolution contains more than a bit of the idea of "every man for himself", and *Danse Mutante* is not exempt from that reality. However, it is also characterized by the immensely generous act of making an offering of one's work. Of letting a public confession become the landscape, the hinterland of someone else. Marked by a certain kind of destiny, what you will witness is without a doubt a lengthy reflexive suite of works on creation and its corollary, destruction.



It is also an observation on the social and political contexts surrounding the creation of these works. From my homebase of Montreal, passing through the hubbub of New York, all the way to the culture shock of Bamako and the orderliness of Rotterdam, in *Danse Mutante* the clichés through which the world views us are put under the spotlight and taken apart in one fell swoop.

As the creator and initiator of this project, I chose how, where, and when we would give battle. I had the advantage. Then, I lost control of things. And that has been for the best. However, in an age when public platforms are subjected to close scrutiny and the legitimacy of those privileged enough to occupy them is questioned, I owe it to myself to own my intuitions, to endorse different approaches, and to defend my choices and theirs. I had an inkling that Ann Liv Young, Kettly Noël, and Ann Van den Broek had something to say that would shake us to our foundations. And so they have.

Simultaneously stakes in a coffin and a fountain of youth, we won't get out of *Danse Mutante* unscathed. And I hope you won't either.

Mélanie Demers



CANTIQUE

Picture a Greco-Roman arena or a ring in a church basement. In this context, the fighting is ceremonial and the combat is primarily internal. Relationships are polite, sex is disembodied, and identities are unreal. Thoughts are scrutinized, confessions are public, yet the characters remain masked. In this strange dance, reality is muddled and impulses are stifled. Throughout, we hear an insistent chant that suggests a hymn, a nursery rhyme, a liturgical chant, a pop song - so many ways to express a little about oneself.

CHOREOGRAPHER MÉLANIE DEMERS (MONTREAL)

WWW.MAYDAYDANSE.CA



A multidisciplinary artist, Mélanie Demers founded in Montreal her own dance company, MAYDAY, in 2007, exploring the powerful link between the poetical and the political. *Les Angles Morts* (2006), *Sense of Self* (2008), *Junkyard/Paradise* (2010) and *Goodbye* (2012) have all been created from this perspective. With MAYDAY remix (2014), she deepened her engagement with cross-genre works and hybrid forms. Her fascination with the interplay between word and gesture crystallized with WOULD (2015), which won the CALQ Prize for best choreography. In 2016, Mélanie Demers began a new creation cycle with *Animal Triste* and *Icone Pop*; both works are touring internationally. In 2017, Mélanie Demers was invited to work as a guest choreographer at the Skånes Dansteater in Malmö (Sweden) for the creation of *Something About Wilderness*. Now that *Danse Mutante* has hit the stage, she is focusing on her next project, *Post Coitum*, which will launch in 2020. To date, she choreographed twenty works and was presented in some forty cities across Europe, America, Africa and Asia.

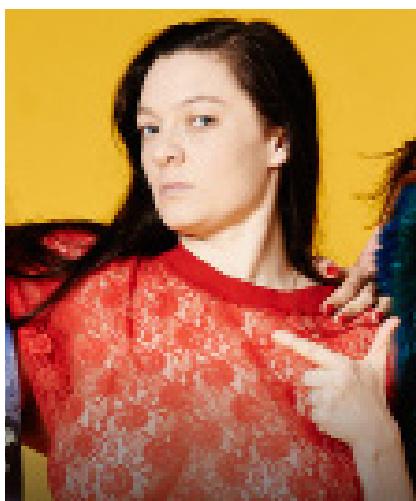
MUTATION 1



Somewhere in between a circus tent, a gym, a gas station, a zoo, a forest, a music hall, they are women, men, children, dolls, wild beasts. They play by the rules of a game which is enjoyable but cruel. We are in an undefined era but it definitely speaks to today's situation. Everyone at each other's mercy. But above all at the mercy of an all-knowing voice, the characters are grotesque and crude. Their names, age, sex, and ideas are in flux. And all this nebulosity is really talking about us.

CHOREOGRAPHER ANN LIV YOUNG (NEW YORK)

WWW.ANNLIVYOUNG.COM



Ann Liv Young is a choreographer, performer and artistic director born in North Carolina in the United States. She has been creating performances for more than 15 years. She was one of the youngest artists whose work was presented in major venues in New York and Europe, such as the Brooklyn Museum, The Kitchen, Dance Theatre Workshop, P.S. 122, the Flea Theatre, Laban Center London, Impulstanz, Springdance, The Arches, Tanz Im August, the Festival Donau, Melkweg, the Théâtre de la Bastille, Brute-Wien, Gender Bender and Inkonst, among others. A graduate from the prestigious dance program of the Hollins University in Virginia, she also studied at the Laban Centre in London. Her work was acclaimed by the Art Forum, The New York Times, The Village Voice and The Guardian, among other publications, and was presented in Michael Blackwood's documentary *New York Dance: States of Performance* (2010). Often described as provocative, Ann Liv Young's works surprise by their energy and their vitality.

MUTATION 2



In the tropics. A furtive intimacy. An intrusion. A violation. A rape. A quarrel. A ritual. Some dressing-up. Much stripping down. A period of time, suspended. A rumour. A territory. A quest. A conquest. An elevation. It's all there in this tropicalization. A desire to look at the world through a different prism--another tropism. A determination to adjust our lenses, cast off our blinders, change our filters, calibrate our rhythm, make a world which isn't made for us our own.

CHOREOGRAPHER KETTLY NOËL (BAMAKO)

WWW.DONKOSEKO.COM



Kettly Noël's creations are forged in contact with bitter realities. *Tichelbé* (2002), a dance for two, made her stand out from the choreographic renewal then underway in Africa. The tension of an implacable brutality between man and woman. A burning in the body consumed the artist. *Errance* (2004) and *Je m'appelle Fanta Kaba* (2010) defied prohibitions on feminine and political representations of desire, sexuality, and prostitution.

Kettly Noël's most recent work is *Je ne suis plus une femme noire* (2015). A paradox. Convinced that Africa must pay attention to what it wants to say to the world, passionate about the idea that dance is one of the profound forces, she nevertheless depicts a future that transgresses all enclosures of ethnic identity. From this flows, for the spectator, the responsibility to go beyond clichés when considering dance in action, and Africa in the world.

MUTATION 3



Two parallel existences. As if observed in a petri dish. *Everybody's weird* sounds out and we grasp that we will all come to plunge into the black hole which is stretched out before us. The existential tunnel. Disembodied beauty. Everything is in place for the short-circuiting of the millimetric gesture. If there is desire, it is repressed. If there is anger, it is deflected. If there is calm, it is removed from our field of vision. All that's left is darkness.

CHOREOGRAPHER ANN VAN DEN BROEK (ANTWERP/ROTTERDAM)

WWW.WARDWARD.BE



In 2000, after an active and successful career as a dancer, Ann Van den Broek decided to dedicate herself entirely to growing and developing as a choreographer. She founded the dance company WArD/waRD and has been working on her uniquely characteristic body of work ever since. Early on in her career as a choreographer she developed her own movement language: *emotional minimalism*. Her work is often described as raw, dynamic, radical, uncompromising and brutally honest. It is based on fundamental, yet simple human needs, such as making contact with others, satisfying needs and survival. At the beginning of her career, Ann Van den Broek focused primarily on the body in movement. Gradually, the use of live video, live sound and sign language grew in importance.

Ann Van den Broek's work has been nominated several times for the Zwaan (Swan), the most prestigious dance prize in the Netherlands presented by The VSCD (Dutch Association of Theatre and Concert Hall Directors), and again this year for her latest work: *Accusations. The Black Piece* (in 2015) and *Co(te)lette* (in 2008) both won the Zwaan for Most Impressive Dance Production.



VIDEOS DOCUMENTARY CAPSULE

TEASER

[Teaser Danse Mutante](#)

FULL LENGTH

[Danse Mutante part 1](#) (password: m4yd4y)

[Danse Mutante part 2](#) (password: m4yd4y)

DOCUMENTARY CAPSULE

The documentary capsules were produced with the support and in collaboration with the Jean-Pierre Perreault Foundation

[Capsule 1 | Montreal - creation of original version](#)

[Capsule 2 | Montreal part 2](#)

[Capsule 3 | New York - creation of mutation 1](#)

[Capsule 4 | New York part 2](#)

[Capsule 5 | Bamako - creation of mutation 2](#)

[Capsule 6 | Bamako part 2](#)

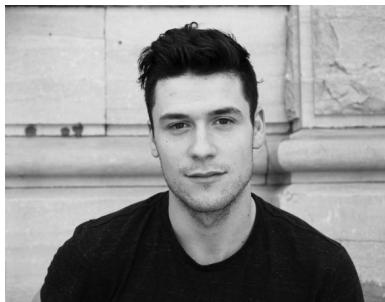
[Capsule 7 | Rotterdam part 1 - creation of mutation 3](#)

[Capsule 8 | Rotterdam part 2](#)

[Capsule 9 | Montreal - marathon](#)

COLLABORATORS

RILEY SIMS - PERFORMER



A graduate of The School of Toronto Dance Theatre's Program in Contemporary Dance and the Wexford School for the Arts' Musical Theatre program, Riley Sims has worked with Tedd Robinson, Frédéric Gravel, Noam Gagnon, Michael Trent and Allison Cummings. Sims is the Artistic Director of Social Growl Dance, established in 2012, and obtained creation residencies in Studio 142 (Germany), Centre Q (Quebec) and lemonTree creations (Toronto). Riley Sims was recently the recipient of the Dance Ontario Creative Partnerships Commission.

FRANCIS DUCHARME - PERFORMER



A graduate from Collège Lionel-Groulx's Theatre program, Francis Ducharme developed his career in theatre, cinema and dance. He worked with directors such as Alice Ronfard, Claude Poissant, Brigitte Haentjens, Serge Denoncourt, Lorraine Pintal, Brigitte Poupart and Catherine Bourgeois. He was cast in the movies *Chasse Galerie* (J.P. Duval), *Corbo* (M. Denis), *Les Signes Vitaux* (S. Deraspe), *La Capture* (C. Laure) and *C.R.A.Z.Y.* (J.-M. Vallée). He worked with the choreographers Dave St-Pierre, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, Frédéric Gravel and Catherine Gaudet.

CRÉDITS

Artistic direction Mélanie Demers

Choreography Mélanie Demers, Ann Liv Young, Kettly Noël, Ann Van den Broek, in collaboration with the performers
Performers Francis Ducharme, Riley Sims

Dramaturgy Angélique Willkie

Rehearsal director Anne-Marie Jourdenais

Assistant to the choreographer Nik Rajšek (M3)

Lighting design Alexandre Pilon-Guay (V0+M1+M2+M3), Ann Van den Broek (M3)

Technical director Julien Veronneau

Sound mixing David Blouin

Original music Mykalle Bielinski (V0)

Sound environment David Blouin (V0), Olivier Girouard (V0)

Author and composer Tom Barman Live for the song *Everybody's weird* (M3)

Sound advisor Nicolas Rambouts (M3)

Costumes Mélanie Demers, Ann Liv Young, Kettly Noël, Ann Van den Broek

Accessories Mélanie Demers, Ann Liv Young, Kettly Noël, Ann Van den Broek, Max-Otto Fauteux

Filmmaker Xavier Curnillon

Creation residencies Centre de Crédit O Vertigo (V0), Circuit-Est centre chorégraphique (V0+M1+M2), Donko Seko (M2), cultuurcentrum Berchem (M3), Theater Rotterdam (M3), Agora de la danse (V0+M1+M2+M3)

Co-production Agora de la danse, Théâtre festival Boulevard

Developed with the support of the National Arts Centre's National Creation Fund (NAC)

Video clips developed with the support of la Fondation Jean-Pierre Perreault

International distribution A Propic / Line Rousseau and Marion Gauvent

MAYDAY/MÉLANIE DEMERS



MAYDAY chooses 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. Its works, unquestionably committed, are simultaneous distress signals and an invitation to change. Since its creation in 2007, the company has developed international collaborations and was already presented in America, Europe, Asia and Africa.

WWW.MAYDAYDANSE.CA

TOURING CALENDAR

2019

SEPTEMBER 17-21

World premiere at Agora de la danse (Montreal, Canada)

NOVEMBER 28

Parcours Danse (Montreal, Canada)

2020

MARCH 12-14

Museo Universitario del Chopo (Mexico)

AUGUST

Netherlands

SEPTEMBER

Netherlands

OCTOBER

South Korea

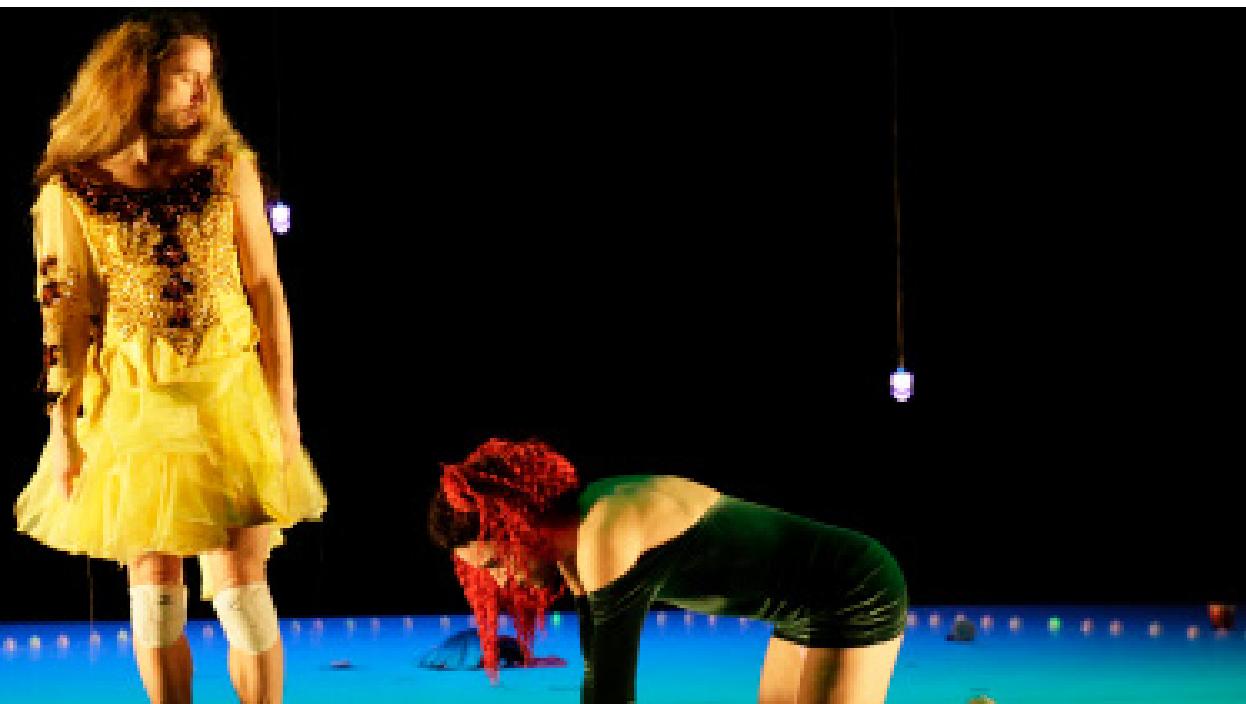
NOVEMBER

Germany

2021

JANUARY

France



PRESS EXCERPTS

LE DEVOIR

“ This demanding project is shaped by the dancers and interpreters of the work, Riley Sims and Francis Ducharme. Showing ironclad commitment and unswerving generosity, they are quite simply extraordinary and sketch out the contours of a radical sense of hospitality. ”

Nayla Naoufal | Le Devoir, September 19, 2019

JEU
REVUE DE THÉÂTRE

“ Staying true to herself, in the performance Demers gives speech a large role. The language is at various points intelligible, circular, functional, deconstructed. It becomes an extension and mirror of the gestures. The words come undone, undergo repetition, while the roughly drawn gestures burst into life and miscarraay in the same fashion. [...] By the end of this trance you’re exhausted, hypnotised, confused. If Mélanie Demers was hoping that no one would get out of this piece unscathed, it is clear that her bet has paid off spectacularly. ”

Philippe Mangerel | JEU, Revue de théâtre, 1 September 19, 2019

LA
PRESSE

“ Demers has had the courage — or the folly! – to take a real jump into the abyss with Danse Mutante. [...] Those present don’t get out of it unscathed, especially the performers. They pass through the full range of emotions and moods, jump from one register to another, making an offering of their whole body and completely surrendering before the wishes and demands of the choreographers. Chapeau, monsieurs, chapeau! ”

Iris Gagnon-Paradis | La Presse, September 20, 2019

CONTACT

MAYDAY/Mélanie Demers

Édifice Jean-Pierre Perreault
2222 Sherbrooke East
Montreal, QC, H2K 1B9
Canada

Mélanie Demers

General and artistic director, choreographer
melaniedemers@maydaydanse.ca
+1 514 299-3888

Jérémy Verain

Co-general manager
jverain@maydaydanse.ca
+1 514 239-3380

A Propic / Line Rousseau and Marion Gauvent

Line Rousseau

Agent Danse Mutante in Europe
line@apropic.com
+31 6 28 27 21 99



This is one of the 200 exceptional projects funded through the Canada Council for the Arts' New Chapter program. With this \$35M investment, the Council supports the creation and sharing of the arts in communities across Canada.



CENTRE NATIONAL DES ARTS
NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE

Le Canada en scène. Canada is our stage.

Developed with support from the National Arts Centre's National Creation Fund

MAYDAY is supported by the Canada Council for the Arts, the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec and the Conseil des arts de Montréal.

MAYDAY

Member of Circuit-Est centre chorégraphique and Art Circulation

Associate company at the Agora de la danse

In artistic collaboration with the Centro per la Scena Contemporanea/Operaestate Festival

Photo credits

Cover Francis Ducharme, Riley Sims - *Danse Mutante - Cantique* © Mathieu Doyon
Page 1 Francis Ducharme, Riley Sims - *Danse Mutante - Cantique* © Mathieu Doyon - Francis Ducharme, Riley Sims - *Danse Mutante - Cantique* © Christian Brault
Page 2 Francis Ducharme, Riley Sims - *Danse Mutante - Cantique* © Mathieu Doyon - Mélanie Demers © Sabrina Reeves
Page 3 Francis Ducharme et Riley Sims - *Danse Mutante - Mutation 1* © Mathieu Doyon - Ann Liv Young © Charley Parden
Page 4 Francis Ducharme et Riley Sims - *Danse Mutante - Mutation 2* © Mathieu Doyon - Ketty Noël © Sarale Gur Levy
Page 5 Francis Ducharme et Riley Sims - *Danse Mutante - Mutation 3* © Mathieu Doyon - Ann Van den Broek © Quirine Reijman / De Zagerij ontwerpstudio
Page 6 Francis Ducharme et Riley Sims © Xavier Curnillen
Page 7 Riley Sims © Riley Sims - Francis Ducharme © Maude Chauvin
Page 8 Mélanie Demers - *La Nobody* © David Cannon
Page 9 Francis Ducharme et Riley Sims - *Danse Mutante - Mutation 1* © Mathieu Doyon