



MERCE CUNNINGHAM

A SPECIAL EVENING FOR THE CENTENARY OF THE *POST MODERN DANCE* MASTER

TOUR MAY 2018 > JUNE 2020

BIPED Beach Birds Inlets 2 How to Pass, Kick, Fall and Run

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A made to measure program A tribute to Merce Cunningham

For the hundredth anniversary of the iconic choreographer Merce Cunningham, the Centre national de danse contemporaine - Angers (CNDC) and its associated artistic Director Robert Swinston, would like to offer you a dedicated evening with a made to measure program.

BIPED (45 minutes) can be presented alone or combined with one of the three other pieces from the Cunningham repertory reconstructed by the CNDC: *Beach Birds*, *Inlets 2* or *How to Pass, Kick, Fall and Run*.

These three pieces, each about twenty minutes long, can also comprise a program of its own.

For this occasion, the CNDC is also able to provide an exhibition with large photographs and video archives of Merce Cunningham; an excellent opportunity for the audience to discover the different aspects of his works and career.

Let's celebrate together!

BIPED



© Stéphanie Berger

Cunningham has written: "The dance gives me the feeling of switching channels on the TV...the action varies from slow formal sections to rapid broken-up sequences where it is difficult to see all the complexity." Many people have commented on the elegiac nature of the closing moments of the piece. The décor for BIPED is an exploration of the possibilities of the animation technology of motion capture. The digital artists Paul Kaiser and Shelley Eshkar collaborated with Cunningham, who, working with two dancers, choreographed 70 phrases that were transposed into digital images. These animated images, as well as abstract patterns (vertical and horizontal lines, dots, clusters), are projected on to a scrim at the front of the stage, behind which the live dancers may be seen. Cunningham also used computer software, DanceForms, to develop the choreography for the dance, which is in a number of sections: solos, duets, trios, and ensemble dances. The music by Gavin Bryars, also called Biped, is partly recorded and partly played live on acoustic instruments. Suzanne Gallo's costumes use a metallic fabric that reflects light. At one point in the dance the men, clothed in pajama-like outfits in a transparent fabric, bring on tops in the same fabric for the women. Aaron Copp devised the lighting, dividing the stage floor into squares lit in what looked like a random sequence, as well as the curtained booths at the back of the stage that permit the dancers to appear and disappear.

45 minutes

First performance Zellerbach Hall, University of California / Berkeley, CA / April 23, 1999

Choreography Merce Cunningham

Reconstruction Robert Swinston

Music Gavin Bryars - *Biped*

Décor Shelley Eshkar, Paul Kaiser

Costumes Suzanne Gallo

Dancers tbd

23 people on tour (1 choreographer, 14 dancers, 4 musicians, 3 technicians, 1 tour manager)

23 roundtrips from Angers, France

Accommodation hotel*** single (breakfast included)

Schedule: 2 people Day -2 and 16 people Day -1

Per diems

Courtesy of the Merce Cunningham Trust

BEACH BIRDS



"I had three things in mind: one was birds, obviously, or animals or whatever, but also humans on the beach and also one of the things that I love so much on shores - the way you are looking at a rock and you go around it, and it looks different each time, as though it were alive too. Those three images are part of what I worked at. In dividing the structures the way I always do, I used those three things as something to think about..."

Merce Cunningham

Cunningham said of his choreography for *Beach Birds*, "It is all based on individual physical phrasing. The dancers don't have to be exactly together. They can dance like a flock of birds, when they suddenly take off." A work for eleven dancers, the rhythm for *Beach Birds* was much more fluid than other Cunningham dances, so that the sections could differ in length from performance to performance. John Cage composed the music, and painter Marsha Skinner provided the costumes and décor. The dancers were dressed identically in all white leotards and tights, with black gloves. Skinner's backcloth was a white scrim on which the light varied in color and intensity, decided by a lighting plot that was devised using chance methods. While the timings did not relate to the dance structure, the gradual changes of light have been interpreted to imitate those that might occur from dawn to dusk on a beach. *Beach Birds* was adapted for film and called *Beach Birds for Camera*.

28 minutes

Choreography Merce Cunningham

Reconstruction Robert Swinston

Music John Cage *Four*

Dancers (tbc)) Marion Baudinaud, Ashley Chen, Anna Chirescu, Gianni Joseph, Haruka Miyamoto, Adrien Mornet, Catarina Pernaio, Flora Rogeboz, Carlo Schiavo, Claire Seigle-Goujon, Lucas Viallefond

Costumes and lights Marsha Skinner

Courtesy of the Merce Cunningham Trust, the support of the John Cage Trust and Peters editions

15 people on tour (1 choreographer, 11 dancers, 2 technicians, 1 tour manager)

15 roundtrips from Angers, France

Accommodation in hotel *** in single bed (breakfast included)

Schedule: 2 people Day -2 and 13 people Day -1

Per diems

INLETS 2



Inlets 2 ©Andrea MohinThe New York Times-REDUX-REA

Like most of Mr. Cunningham's works, it depicts no dramatic situation, yet is rich in atmosphere. A quiet dance to a score by John Cage that consists of soft, gurgling sounds, *Inlets 2* evokes the peace of bodies of water.

Serenity was established at the outset when women stepped slowly on stage. In contrast, the men often moved with wide strides. Alan Good even loped as if his bare feet wore invisible seven-league boots. But quick phrases usually led to moments of calm. Because new actions were constantly born from such moments, repose never implied inertia. Things were always happening. Yet they happened in their own good time.

The New York Times, 5 March 1988

Inlets 2 is the successor to *Inlets*, and premiered on the same bill as its companion piece, *Roaratorio* in 1983. Both *Inlets* and *Inlets 2* employ the use of chance operations to determine the order of 64 movements, and are two of Merce's best-known nature studies. The choreography is commonly considered to be about the climate and topography of the Northwest: Cunningham was raised in Centralia, Washington and frequently utilizes aspects of nature in his work – and the titles (*Inlets* and *Inlets 2*) evoke the landscape of Puget Sound. The music is Cage's original score for *Inlets*; Mark Lancaster designed new costumes for *Inlets 2* – leotards and tights in gray, blue, or brown, over which some of the women wear tulle skirts.

20 minutes

Choreography Merce Cunningham

Reconstruction Robert Swinston

Music John Cage *Inlets* (1977)

Dancers Anna Chirescu, Adrien Mornet, Catarina Pernaio, Flora Rogeboz, Carlo Schiavo, Claire Seigle-Goujon, Lucas Viallefond

Original décor, costumes, lighting Mark Lancaster

Courtesy of the Merce Cunningham Trust, the support of the John Cage Trust and Peters editions

11 people on tour (1 choreographer, 7 dancers, 2 technicians, 1 tour manager)

11 roundtrips from Angers, France

Accommodation hotel *** in single bed (breakfast included)

Schedule: 2 people Day -2 and 9 people Day -1

Per diems

HOW TO PASS, KICK, FALL AND RUN



© Charlotte Audureau

How to Pass, Kick, Fall and Run had an athletic theme, without any specific references to games. The choreography kept the dancers constantly in motion, never staying in a given place for very long, with two or three things simultaneously occurring on stage at all times. The dancers wore tights and sweaters that they chose themselves, and the music was by John Cage, and included stories from *Silence, a Year from Monday*.

How to is ludic and full of surprise, a kind of comedy in which the dancers must hold their own against the often hilarious texts, from John Cage's *Indeterminacy* [...]

Each is a minute long, no matter the length of the text, so some are delivered with snail-like slowness, others at breakneck speed. Meanwhile, the dancers run between one another, jump with bouncy glee, then turn quickly, flat-footed in attitude position (one leg bent, the knee lifted) behind.

These motifs are reiterated in different ways; later that attitude is transformed into a series of deep plunges forward, the bent leg lifting behind. The springy jumps become a game in which a woman is quickly and unpredictably turned by her shoulders as she bounces on two feet. But there is also warmth and softness in the work. [...]

"How to" is performed on an entirely open stage, in bright light without décor and in simple black tights and bright tops. It feels practical, straightforward.

The New York Times, by Roslyn Sulcas, Sept. 28, 2015

25 minutes

Choreography Merce Cunningham

Reconstruction Robert Swinston

Dancers Anna Chirescu, Gianni Joseph, Adrien Mornet, Catarina Pernaó, Flora Rogeboz, Carlo Schiavo, Claire Seigle-Goujon, Lucas Viallefond

Comedians tbd

Décor, costumes, lighting Beverly Emmons

Costumes Michelle Amet

14 people on tour (1 choreographer, 8 dancers, 2 comedians, 2 technicians, 1 tour manager)

14 roundtrips from Angers, France

Accommodation hotel *** in single bed (breakfast included)

Schedule: 2 people Day -2 and 12 people Day -1

Per diems

Courtesy of the Merce Cunningham Trust, the support of the John Cage Trust and Peters editions

ABOUT THE COMPANY

Created in 1978, the Centre national de danse contemporaine - Angers (CNDC), has dedicated itself to support contemporary choreographic creation. It has contributed to the emergence of some of our generation's most highly regarded French choreographer, including Angelin Preljocaj, Mathilde Monnier and Philippe Decoufle. It is also a place where research, experimentation, and artistic creation is open to many different disciplines.

Compagnie CNDC - Angers, the Centre's resident dance company, was created in 2013 under the direction of Robert Swinston (Assistant to the Choreographer Merce Cunningham from 1992 to 2009). Its eight French contemporary dancers perform Swinston's creations, as well as his adaptations of Cunningham's choreography (*Event*, *Four Walls Doubletoss Interludes*, and *Deli Commedia Variation*) and will perform at the Joyce Theater in April 2017 a program exclusively of Cunningham repertory that will include the reconstructions of *Inlets 2* (1983), *Place* (1966) and *How To Pass, Kick, Fall and Run* (1965).

THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Graduated from the Juilliard School with a BFA in Dance, Robert Swinston's experiences as a dancer began with the Martha Graham Apprentice Group. He performed with the companies of Kazuko Hirabayashi and Jose Limon, before joining Merce Cunningham Dance Company (MCDC) in 1980. In 1992, he became Assistant to the Choreographer. After Cunningham's death in 2009, Robert became Director of Choreography and maintained the company's repertoire during the Legacy Tour (2010-2011). During this period, he assembled 25 *Events* for MCDC, concluding with the final performances at the Park Avenue Armory Events. While Director of Choreography for the Merce Cunningham Trust (2012), Swinston created *Four Walls / Doubletoss Interludes*, an adaptation of John Cage's *Four Walls* (1944) and Cunningham's *Doubletoss* (1993) for Baryshnikov Arts Center.

In January 2013, he became Artistic Director of the Centre national de danse contemporaine (CNDC) in Angers, France. For Compagnie CNDC - Angers, he created the *Cunningham Event*, décor by Jackie Matisse with guest musicians; *Four Walls / Doubletoss Interludes*; *Deli Commedia Variation* (adaptation of Cunningham/Caplan Video Dance) and Debussy's *La Boîte à Joux* for young audiences. He has staged Cunningham works for companies such as the White Oak Dance Project, Rambert Dance Company, New York City Ballet, and the Paris Opera. In 2003, Robert Swinston was awarded a "Bessie" for the reconstruction and performance of *How to Pass, Kick, Fall and Run* (1965).

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