

À mon bel amour: A colourful combination of dance types

The Hague: city of peace, justice *and* dance.

Three dance organisations from The Hague have joined forces to bring more international dance to Amare.

The Hague is known as the city of peace and justice. But Amare, Holland Dance Festival and Nederlands Dans Theater are determined to turn it into a city of dance as well. With every facet of the world of dance represented within the city – from education and talent development to creation, presentation and education – The Hague can justly call itself the number one city of dance in the Netherlands. The opening of Amare, a venue specifically designed to enable the optimal presentation of national and international dance performances, furthermore gave the dance scene in The Hague a tremendous boost. Keeping this in mind, the founding of FIND (*Fonds Internationale Dans*, or the International Dance Fund) seems like a natural consequence. FIND's purpose is to bring high-profile international dance productions to the Netherlands and to consolidate The Hague's reputation as the city of dance in the Netherlands. By booking dance performances that would otherwise not reach Dutch stages and thereby enriching the variety of the Dutch dance scene, FIND helps a broad audience discover the rich world of dance. The fund's programming committee consists of Amare's business director, Leontien Wiering, and head of programming, Geesje Prins, as well as the artistic and managing director of Holland Dance Festival, Samuel Wuersten, and the artistic director of Nederlands Dans Theater, Emily Molnar. FIND is financially supported through Amare's and Holland Dance Festival's budgets, with additional contributions from sponsors and donors. Each season, FIND's programming committee selects a number of productions to invite to The Hague, and one of those productions will be performing in Amare this coming Sunday: *À mon bel amour*. Eight dancers – four men and four women – show off their moves, flirting, dominating and teasing through a mix of different dance types such as modern dance, waacking, popping, voguing, locking, krump and ballet.

The FIND programme council is delighted to welcome you and wishes you a wonderful experience.

À mon bel amour Compagnie par terre | Anne Nguyen

À mon bel amour questions our perception of the individual, the couple and the collective by exploring different concepts of identity and beauty. The dancers are as diverse as the performance itself: black, white, men, women, trained in classic, modern or urban dance, and hailing from a variety of cultures. In their diversity, they take on the roles of representatives of different dance types, resulting in a dynamic, exciting and powerful performance with scenes that call to mind night clubs and fashion shows.

À mon bel amour blends modern dance, waacking, popping, voguing, locking, krump and ballet into a kind of courtship display. Individually, in pairs and as a group, the eight dancers (four men, four women) show off, flirt with, and tease each other. By using their dance to assert their identity and seduce, challenge and dominate the audience, they challenge the limitations of our own point of view. Each dance type and accompanying musical genre makes its own unique statement about perceptions of femininity and virility, cultural archetypes, and our own prejudices, including the ones we're not aware of.

You may recognise the following types of dance in *À mon bel amour*

The performance combines various types of modern and classic dance. Some resemble each other or build on each other, but in the end it's all dance. Below is a description of the types of dance that Nguyen deliberately incorporates in the performance, and why. This way you can pick out the different types of dance during the performance.

Breakdance says	Challenge me
Vogue says	Look at me
Waacking says	Catch me
Ballet says	I am divine
Modern dance says	I am human
Krumping says	I feel the energy
Popping says	I feel the beat
Hip hop says	Bounce with me

Waacking is a type of street dance that emerged in the LGBT clubs of Los Angeles during the disco era of the 1970s. Also known as Punking, this type of dance was originally embraced mainly by the Afro-American and Latino communities. Distinctive features of this dance style are the rotating arm movements, poses, and the emphasis on expressiveness.

Breakdance, rap, graffiti and DJs: these are the four basic elements of hip hop. The dance itself is referred to as breakdancing. This type of dance emerged in the late 1970s and early 80s in the deprived Afro-American districts of New York City, when DJs started using turntables and mixers to endlessly repeat a song break (from which the name derives). Breakdance is how you dance to this new music style, which was first referred to as electro and subsequently developed into hip hop and rap. 'Battles' are a typical feature of Breakdance.

Vogue is another type of dance that emerged in the late 1970s and early 80s, building on a type of dance known as performance that originated in New York's Harlem district in the 1930s. It's a type of dance that imitates the various poses of the models featured on the cover of Vogue magazine – hence the name. This type of dance stands out for its angular and stylised movements of arms and legs, and the fragmented strut across an imaginary catwalk. More extreme, yoga-like poses are also used. The elegant transitions from one pose to the next creates the impression of a fluid body.

Classic ballet combines choreography with musical composition and the visual design of decors and costumes. In narrative ballet, the plot is described in a libretto. This way, ballet incorporates several art disciplines. The term 'ballet' also refers to a particular dance style and technique. Ballet emerged during the Italian Renaissance and was developed further at the French court. It became a separate form of music theatre in the eighteenth century. The basic dance steps of classic ballet derive from this period.

Modern dance lacks the kind of prescribed movements of classic ballet. Instead, it is a container concept for various highly individual dance techniques from the first half of the twentieth century. Today the preferred term is 'contemporary dance'.

Krumping, or Krump, is a type of dance derived from hip hop, but with a spiritual dimension. Krump dancers push themselves to extremes, resulting in a kind of trance in which the dancer's muscles and mind take over the body. Krump emerged in Los Angeles in 2000 (created by Tight Eyez) through a church community's attempt to keep kids off the street and to provide them with an activity to blow off steam and to channel their aggression and other feelings.

Popping emerged in the funk scene in the 1970s. Popping is based on a technique of rapidly tensing and relaxing your muscles, with the effect of seeing a particular type of movement ripple across the dancer's body, such as a shock wave or a robot-like gesture. This movement can be referred to as a pop or a hit or a wave. Michael Jackson, for example, excelled at this technique.

Hip hop dance refers to the street dance styles set to hip hop music, or that are part of the hip hop culture. A wide range of styles that emerged in the 1970s have influenced this type of dance. Hip hop became mainstream thanks to various television shows in the 1980s, 90s and 00s. Despite becoming mainstream entertainment, hip hop remains a strong presence in urban areas where it continues to develop further. This has resulted in various derivatives such as Memphis jookin, turfing, jerkin' and krump.

Choreographer Anne Nguyen discusses *À mon bel amour*

"Why do we dance? Out of pride, love of beauty, the need to express ourselves, to belong to a community, to feel we exist...? *À mon bel amour* is a non-stop procession of bodies representative of a cosmopolitan idea of beauty. Dancing from the heart, the dancers either bubble over with exuberance, or with an impassivity expressive of the need to communicate something to any adventurous onlooker who dares to contemplate the scene. In *À mon bel amour*, I challenge the onlooker's idea of the body, beauty, femininity, virility, sensuality, animality, and identity. Everything is symbolic: not just dance movement and posture, but also appearances and clothing. Daring to show off, be flirtatious, assertive, dominating, to cock a snook, to show love. To transcend oneself in order to exist."

Anne Nguyen is one of those rare choreographers with the ability to blend urban dance with not just contemporary modern dance, but also other disciplines of motion, in original and exciting ways. Her last performance, *Kata*, incorporated martial arts, and became a press and crowd favourite at the Holland Festival – thanks in no small part to the amazing dancers of Compagnie Par Terre.

Performers

Choreography: Anne Nguyen

Dancers: Sonia Bel Hadj Brahim (waacking, popping), Arnaud Duprat (popping), Stéphane Gérard (voguing), Pascal Luce (popping, locking, waacking), Andréa Moufounda (contemporary dance), Sibille Planques (contemporary dance), Emilie Ouedraogo (krump), Tom Resseguier (ballet).

Original musics: Jack Prest

Fashion design: Manon Del Colle, Arya Haliba

Lighting design: Ydir Acef

More FIND performances

Circa Contemporary Circus

Circus and spectacle (12+)

On Wednesday 15 and Thursday 16 June, one of the world's leading modern circus companies, the celebrated Circa ensemble from Australia, presents Stravinsky's famous and ground-breaking *Le Sacre du Printemps*. Under the leadership of circus visionary Yaron Lifschitz, Circa Contemporary Circus has proven its ability to pull off extremely powerful and emotional performances. Continually pushing the boundaries of the art form, Circa blurs the lines between movement, dance, theatre and circus. With a piercing light design and an adapted, rousing musical composition, Circa's ten unique and versatile circus performers' rendition of the **Sacre** dazzles the senses and stirs the soul.

Opera Ballet Vlaanderen

TEMPUS FUGIT / FUTUR PROCHE

On Monday 20 and Tuesday 21 March 2023, the leading Belgian choreographer Jan Martens and **Opera Ballet Vlaanderen** present **TEMPUS FUGIT / FUTUR PROCHE**. With FUTUR PROCHE, Martens has constructed a performance about the imminent future using fifteen dancers, two children and harpsichordist Goska Isphording. Martens's inspiration derives from a surprising, contemporary repertoire for the age-old instrument of the harpsichord. By contrast, TEMPUS FUGIT is the Swedish choreographer Johan Inger's search for hope and solace in times of grief. Set to the hopeful keyboard music of Johann Sebastian Bach, his poignant, dance-based exploration of the mourning process and the fugue of time penetrates the audience's soul.

FIND's programming committee already has a few splendid and spectacular performances lined up for 2023. Want to be the first to know more? Go to Amare's or Holland Dance Festival's website and sign up for their newsletter!

Amare dance tip

On Thursday 8 and Friday 9 December, Amare is hosting **Nomad**, an evening-spanning dance performance. The Flemish/Moroccan choreographer **Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui** and the dancers of Eastman together assemble a mosaic based on the living and lifeless elements of the desert. This is Larbi Cherkaoui's fourth performance set to the Middle East-inspired music of Felix Buxton, of Basement Jaxx fame. It is also Cherkaoui's fourth collaboration with the Antwerp fashion designer Jan-Jan Van Essche. The costumes he designed for *Nomad* were inspired by the various fabrics that desert dwellers wear to protect themselves against the arid heat. A giant image of the desert dominates the backdrop: a desolate landscape that acts as a metaphor for ultimate freedom, but also the impossibility of survival.