

COMPAGNIE **THOR**

V.-Nightmares
Four choreographic seasons

Creation: 7 November 2007 – Kaaaitheater, Brussels

V.-Nightmares

Four choreographic seasons

Choreography Thierry Smits

Dancers Benjamin Bac, Ludvig Daae,
Gabriella Iacono, Nitay Lehrer

Soundscape and composition Maxime Bodson

Music Antonio Vivaldi, *The Four Seasons*

Texts Peter Verhelst (*Fluid Mechanics*)
Caroline Lamarche (*Moss&Mould*)

Scenography and accessories Peter Maschke

Dramaturgy and images Jacques André

Lighting design and technical coordination Thomas Beni

Costumes Olivier Bériot

Costume assistants Luc Gering, Samira Benali

Production executive Iris Oehrle

Communication Frederic Bourgeois

Production

Compagnie Thor

in association with Kaaitheater, Théâtre de la Balsamine, CNCDC Châteaувallon

With the support of

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Translation Peter Verhelst NL-EN Sherry Marx / Caroline Lamarche FR-EN Gabrielle Leyden

As a four-fold imagery, *V.-Nightmares* spreads its creation over a whole year in an ongoing study of the cycles of seasons and of life. A life of moving scenes and multiple aesthetic confrontations, where the seasons explore the borders between dance and performance, each in their own way and as counteract to Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*. *Fluid Mechanics* puts spring between corporal fluids and pop renaissance, whereas the summer of *TAN* dislocates the social ties under the summer burning. Autumn sees in *Moss&Mould* a baroque piece with morbid outlines, and winter reveals in *ICE* the funereal contrasts of alchemical limbs. These pieces bring together a collective of artists to develop each resource of the body on stage in its capacity to carry the ambivalence of our pleasures and our pain.

The source of research is the choreographer's intention to explore the boundaries of dance and performance. The intense collaboration of the artists involved gives the opportunity to question the individual in his specificities.

Within a functional scenic context, where theatricality emerges from the confrontation of active components rather than from a totalising vision, the explored and developed forms vary from baroque to minimal. The challenge of giving to Vivaldi's work a subversive character is inherent in the piece.

V.-Nightmares

Like a perennial pictorial legacy, the metamorphosis of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* into a sombre, lucid "Vanity", traverses *V.-Nightmares*, a nightmare in four variations making us think about the passing of time and presence of death. Outside all religions and contrary to all psychological portraits, this creation by Thierry Smits cultivates all the resources of the body on stage in its abilities to carry the ambivalence of our pleasure and our pain.

Following this vein, Thierry Smits explores an artistic collective's abilities to metamorphose four dancers into performers able to work a moving set by Peter Maschke, into the vectors of original texts by Peter Verhelst and Caroline Lamarche, into shameless amateur video filmmakers following Jacques André's instructions, into the carriers of Thomas Beni's lights, and finally into the agents of Maxime Bodson's sound production.

These metamorphoses, underlined by Olivier Bériot's costumes, lead to a poetics of bodies and space that spawns a questioning of live art in which the composition also interrogates the fragility of creation, the dancers, and the audience's experiences or expectations.

These baroque decentrings, reversals, and unfoldings are mirrored in the sound metamorphoses of Vivaldi's masterpiece and feed off those of the matter that is connected to each season on the set: fluids in the spring, fire in the summer, organic matter in the autumn, and ice in the winter.

The nightmare dances all over and unfurls an ambivalence linking climactic joy and morbidity with the double foci of culture and nature, humans and the universe. The variations on nakedness in all its states – associated with desire at times, disease at others, burning, the conquered mortal remains, or even cadaveric rigidity – are striking signs of this. Each climax – sexual, solar, predatory, or morbid – reveals its opposite in line with the seasons: biological contamination, irradiation, the power of violence, or the death-dealing, sterilising power of the world. Some might catch therein tantalising glimpses of the seasons that govern our age: the spring of corporeal fetichising in the prison of a look; the summer of the fascination of dehumanisation; the autumn of the dislocation of social ties; and the winter of the world's sterilisation.

These perspectives' vanishing points are found in a baroque general aesthetics to which the *Four Seasons* gives birth via its questioning of a problematic aesthetic heritage and the assembly of contrasting forms. So, the colours and materials of spring are largely "pop", before sliding into a "modernist" summer that asserts the effacement of individuality; the mad baroque of autumn then relativises the various visions of humankind; whilst winter clings to the violent expressionism of a hot-and-cold contrast in the black and white of life and death.

The nightmare can continue to dance in these myriads of folds and metamorphoses, certain of coming across our various imaginary worlds and turning them into stages on which it can proliferate.

The company

Based in Brussels, Compagnie Thor was founded in 1990 by the choreographer Thierry Smits whose work explores, often in an eclectic manner, the bonds between mystic and erotic, the ambiguity between the sacred and corporeality, and questions the metaphysical problems of the individual's state of mind and emotion.

Over the years, the company has produced more than twenty dance productions, amongst which one should cite: *Eros délétaire* (1991), *Cyberchrist* (1995), *Soirée dansante* (1995), *Corps(e)* (1998), *Red Rubber Balls* (1999), *L'Âme au diable* (1994/2002), *Dionysos' Last Day/ Stigma* (2003), *Reliefs d'un banquet* (2004), *D'ORIENT* (2005) and *V.-Nightmares* (2007).

Gathering excellent performing artists from around the world, the company has established its reputation touring throughout Belgium and abroad, notably in France, the Netherlands, Germany, the UK, the USA, Denmark, Hungary, Croatia, the Middle East and Northern Africa.

Since its foundation, Compagnie Thor has been supported by several public institutions in Belgium, and the company's growing influence as a major part of Belgium's dance landscape has been acknowledged by an increasing support from its primary funding source, the Ministry of the French-speaking Community.

Thierry Smits

Born in Koersel (Belgium), Thierry Smits studied ballet and modern dance in Brussels and Paris. After a short career as a dancer, he soon began choreographing.

With his first choreography, *La Grâce du tombeur*, presented in 1990 at the Halles de Schaerbeek in Brussels, he quickly gained international acclaim in the world of contemporary dance. Since then, he has been a tireless choreographer for his own company and other theatre companies and groups.

In his performances, oscillating between pure dance and dramatization, and in which his technical rigour and his gestural inventiveness are always present, mankind's relationship to sex and the sacred frequently occupies a central role. The body – as object of desire, pleasure and finiteness – has been the very subject of Thierry Smits's choreographic research over the past several years. This is not only because the body is obviously the matter and tool of the choreographer's trade, but also with *Eros délétaire* (1991), followed by the solo *Cyberchrist* (1995), *Corps(e)* (1998), *Red Rubber Balls* (1999), *Reliefs d'un Banquet* (2004) and *V.-Nightmares* (2007), Thierry Smits has founded his work upon the very notion of corporeality and the tensions that exist between the climaxing body, the 'body as sex', and the intimately diseased body that is doomed to disappear.

In addition to his work focused on complex subjects and linked to an element 'outside' dance, Thierry Smits concentrates on dance itself – referring to nothing other than itself -, as he had done for the first time in *Soirée dansante* (1995). With *Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain* (2001), *Dionysos' Last Day / Stigma* (2003), and *D'ORIENT*, he continues this line begun previously giving priority to a study of form, choreographic composition, and the search for movement.

In 1995, Thierry Smits' work is recognized by the awarding of the SACD-Belgium prize, and in 1998, for his creation *Corps(e)*, he receives Belgium's Océ prize for the performing arts of the French speaking community. In 2008, for *V.-Nightmares*, he is awarded the 'Prix de la critique 2007-08' for the best dance performance by the journalists of the French Community of Belgium.

Collaborators

Peter Verhelst

writer

Born in Brugge in 1962, Peter Verhelst started his career with the frequently awarded volume of verse *Obsidiaan*. He then went on to write one volume of verse annually until the day he proclaimed himself 'dead' as a poet in 1996 with *Verhemelte*. He wrote various novels such as *Vloeibaar Harnas* (1993), *Het Spierenalfabet* (1995), *De Kleurenvanger* (1996). For the novel *Tongkat* (1999) he was awarded the 'Gouden Uil' literature prize, the 'Jonge Gouden Uil', the 'Nederlandse Bordewijkprijs' and the 'Driejaarlijks Prijs van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap' (three-yearly Prize of the Flemish Community). For the short novel *Memoires van een Luipaard* he received the 'Gouden Uil Publieksprijs' (Readers prize). In 2005 his 666-page novel *Zwerm – geschiedenis van de wereld* was published and led to heated discussions in literary circles. He has written theatre scripts for Jan Ritsema, Ivo Van Hove, Luk Perceval and Johan Simons. He has worked with Wim Vandekeybus on the productions *Scratching the Inner Fields*, *Blush* and *Sonic Boom*. As a director he staged *Het Sprookjesbordeel* for Het Toneelhuis. For his theatre script *AARS* he was awarded the 'Taalunie Toneelschrijfprijs' (drama literature prize). In 1998, he wrote *Red Rubber Balls* for the Kaaithheater. This extreme adaptation of Shakespeare's *Romeo & Julia* was then staged by Thierry Smits. From September onwards (for the next four seasons), Verhelst will be working as stage director for Johan Simons' theatre NTGent, where he will be staging his own work.

Caroline Lamarche

writer

Caroline Lamarche was born in Liège in 1955. Her first work, which received awards both in France and in Belgium, is a collection of poems titled *L'arbre rouge* (1991) and was followed by a second collection in collaboration with Hilde Keteleer, *Twee vrouwen van twee kanten/Entre-deux* (2003). After a collection of short stories, *J'ai cent ans* (1999), Les éditions de Minuit published two novels, *Le jour du chien*, Prix Rossel in 1996, and *La nuit l'après-midi* (1998). Gallimard have published another four, *L'ours* (2000), *Lettres du pays froid* (2003), *Carnets d'une soumise de province* (2004), *Karl et Lola* (2007). Caroline Lamarche is also the author of many theatre writings, as well as radio-phonetic works (*L'autre langue*, Prix SACD at the Festival Phonurgia Nova, Arles 2003). In 2006, she was awarded the Prix SCAM for her complete works.

Maxime Bodson

composition & soundscape

Maxime Bodson was born in Belgium in 1974. As a sound designer, he has been working with the group TOC (*Moi, Michèle Mercier, 52 ans, Morte*) and with videast Daniel Daniel (*Home Travel*) since 2000. He started working with Thierry Smits in 2005 (*D'ORIENT*). Other collaborations to be mentioned are a.o. with L. and M. Talbot (animation movie), Isabella Soupart (theatre), Gwendoline Robin (performance), Myriam Hornard (fine arts).

Parallel to this he also pursues his career as a musician with the band paTTon (Prohibited Records), as well as with his own solo project, under the name Squelette.

Benjamin Bac

dance

Born in Orléans (France) in 1980, Benjamin Bac studied ballet and modern dance at the EMD Clermont-Ferrand and then at the Conservatoire de La Rochelle, where he worked with Régine Chopinot's Ballet Atlantique on the creation of *Battements*. In 1999, he participated in the creation of *Hôtel Central* by Claude Brumachon at the CCN de Nantes. After dancing with M. Cantalupo and K. Gdaniec's Compagnie Linga in Lausanne, he worked from 2001 to 2002 for the Ballet du Nord in Roubaix, under the direction of Maryse Delente. He has been dancing with Compagnie Thor since August 2002 and has also been working with other choreographers meanwhile. From 2003 to 2005, he participated with the dance company Charleroi/Danses in the creation of *Silent collisions*, created by Frédéric Flamand. He was then invited by the Ballet de Marseille. In 2006, he danced a duet with choreographer Pascal Touzeau in Madrid. For Compagnie Thor, he participated in the creations of *Petit Baigneur*, *Dionysos' Last Day/Stigma*, *Reliefs d'un banquet*, *D'ORIENT* and *V.-Nightmares*.

Ludvig Daae

dance

Born in 1987 in Nesbyen, Norway, Ludvig Daae studied ballet and contemporary dance at the Royal Swedish Ballet School as well as at P.A.R.T.S. in Brussels. From 2004 to 2005, he dances various parts in ballets for the Royal Opera in Stockholm. In June 2007 he participates in the creation of *Stop the Rain*, by Anne Teresa de Keersmaecker, David Hernandez and Salva Sanchis at La Monnaie, Brussels. In 2007 and 2008 he creates *Polly*, *Såg ni Foajén?* and *Vem Spelade Julia?* with the dance group Ches:co and presents these throughout Sweden. Meanwhile he also creates his own choreographies: *Recordings* (installation with A. Blom), *Moments of Satisfaction* (duet with S. A. Rosengren), *Like Those Guys With Guitars* and *Eller hur, Marianne*. He joins Compagnie Thor in September 2008 to take part in the revival of the creations *D'ORIENT* and *V.-Nightmares*.

Gabriella Iacono

dance

From Italian origin, Gabriella Iacono studied dance at the Belgrade's National Academy of Dance "Lujo Davico", then at Rome's Accademia Nazionale di Danza, to finish her training at the London Contemporary Dance School. From 1996 to 2000, she worked with various Italian choreographers, a.o. Sandra Fuciarelli and Sylvano Bussotti, Alessandra Palma, Paola Rampone, and Enzo Cosimi. In the meanwhile, she also danced for Birgit Cullberg in Stockholm and Elio Gervasi in Vienna.

In 2000, she settles in Brussels to first work with P.A.R.T.S. on the project *X-group* for *Bruxelles 2000, Capitale européenne de la Culture*, and to dance in *Itch and Fear* by Salva Sanchis. In 2001, she joins the company Charleroi-Danses, then directed by Frédéric Flamand, where she participates in the creation of *Moving Target*, *Metapolis*, *Body/Work/Leisure*, and *Silent collisions*. Between 2005 and 2007, she also dances in different projects and choreographies for a.o. Marion Ballester, Joanne Leighton and Ted Stoffer. In 2008, finally, still at Charleroi-Danses, she joins Michèle Anne De Mey's company for the revival of *Sinfonia Eroica*. Meanwhile, she has also danced for les Ballets C de la B, with Alexandra Bachsetsiz (*Show Dance*), for the Ballet national de Marseille, with Yasuyuki Endo (*Act 9*), and for William Forsythe (*Human Right*, performance installation for the KunstenFestivaldesArts in 2007). She joins Compagnie Thor in September 2008 for the second season of *V.-Nightmares*.

Nitay Lehrer

dance

Born in 1984 in Israël, Nitay Lehrer studied dance at the Thelma Yellin High School, Israël, and finished his studies at Codarts, Rotterdam (2004-08). From 2002 to 2004, he danced for the Israeli Opera in *La Fanciulla Del West* by Puccini and *Die Lustige Witwe* by Lehar. In 2004, he goes to the Netherlands where he participates in 2005 in the creation of *S.P. 1+2* by Club Guy and Roni and *In-ten-sive* by Ken Ossola. In 2006, he dances for Conny Janssen Danst in *In Two Minds* and *So, Here We Are*. From September 2007 to June 2008, he dances in *The Autopsy Project* by Andre Gingras. He has also created his own choreographies: *Kruetzer* (2005), et *Ta'am* (2006). He joins Compagnie Thor in September 2008 to take part in the revival of the creations *D'ORIENT* and *V.-Nightmares*.

Peter Maschke

set design & accessories

Peter Maschke, born in Germany, has been living and working in Brussels since 1991. After his studies in contemporary dance, he joined the company Plan K to participate in the performance *Icare* and in the creation of *Titanic*. He participated in a series of choreographic and theatrical creations that directed him more and more towards stage- and set design. Since 1993, he has created set designs for various contemporary dance and theatre companies: Avi Kaiser (*Lieber R*), Juliette Bougard (*The Sorry Piece*), Compagnie José Besprosvany (*Lara, Dos y Dos*), Rideau de Bruxelles (*Les Indifférents, Prometheus*), Théâtre Le Public (*L'Invisible, Belle à mourir*), Pé Vermeersch (*The Story of Salomé and Yokanan*), Tirasila (*Roi Ubu, K-Bel, Het Laatste Verlangen, Krsk!*), La Comédie Crapule (*Spoken bij de dode man*), Ensemble Leporello (*Bergtoch, Onkel Vania*), Theater Stap (*Frankenstein*), Cie Fuepalbar (*Mismorigen, Ten-Sueño, Mordre à travers, Drink your wine in my glass, Ensimismados*). For Compagnie Thor he realized the set design of the remake of *l'Âme au Diable* (2002) and of *V.-Nightmares* (2007.)

Jacques André

images and dramaturgy

Jacques André, film and video director, develops a research concerning the connections between the body, words and images, the limitations of our ways of perceiving and the discriminations associated with this perception. Born in Brittany (France) in 1959, he studies film and video editing at the INSAS (Brussels) and also attends training courses in video-art (Liège) and numerical post-production (London). As a director specialised in computerized images, he has received various prizes for his scientific films in which he explores the image as resultant of non traditional processes that question the heritage of classic framework and perspective.

In France, he worked in theatre together with directors such as Stuart Seide, Dominique Boissel or Brigitte Foray. Staged by Eric Vigner, he directs the adaptation of Marguerite Duras's *La pluie d'été*, (Arte/ France3, 1996). On the concept of "acting-image" and image playwriting, he creates multimedia performances with Christophe Huysman, writer, actor and director, with whom he also sets up the Laboratoire Mobile Des Hommes Penchés: *Cet homme s'appelle HYC* (Avignon, 2002); *S.B.I.P.* (Lyon, *Les Intranquilles*, 2004); *La course au désastre* (Tours, *Rayon frais* 2005). He has also worked with Panta-Théâtre (*Corpus Tina M.*, multimedia creation about the photographer T. Modotti) in Caen, Paris, Tours (*Rayon frais* 2005).

On the borderline of performance, he stages together with Karin Romer, actor, *La Marquise d'O...* by Kleist (Tours, creation 2008).

In visual arts, he has been developing since 2001 the cycle of *Portraits épidermiques* in various forms: performances in Dijon and Paris (at the Batofar); video installation in Brussels (Halles de Schaerbeek, *Trouble 1*); collective exhibition *Portraits de l'autre, l'intimité de la peau*, in Paris (Centre Wallonie-Bruxelles; Edition Revue Ah, 2007).

Olivier Bériot

costumes

Olivier Bériot creates costumes for cinema, theatre and dance. For the cinema, he created costumes for the films *Quadrille* by Valérie Lemerrier; *Le Roi danse* by Gérard Corbiau; *Femme fatale* by Brian de Palma; *Embrassez qui vous voudrez* by Michel Blanc; and *Fanfan la Tulipe* by Gérard Krawczyk. For the theatre he created costumes for *Les aventures de Paco Goliard*, *Les Drôles* and *La jeune fille, le diable et le moulin*, by Olivier Py. For dance he created costumes for *Nosferatu* by Jean-Claude Gallota; *Pulcinella* by Douglas Dunn; part of the costumes for the baroque dance company L'Éventail, for the choreographies by Marie-Geneviève Masset; and for *l'Âme au diable*, *Dionysos' Last Day / Stigma*, *D'ORIENT* and *V.-Nightmares* by Compagnie Thor.

Thomas Beni

lighting design

Thomas Beni was born in Brussels in 1977. He starts working at the Théâtre de la Monnaie as a lighting engineer in 1998. From 2000 on he works at the Théâtre Varia on various productions (*Personne ne voit la vidéo* by Marcel Delval, *Light* by Moussoux-Bonté, *De rien, Saïd* by Rahim Elasri, as well as *Un noir, une blanche* by Michel Dezoteux).

From 2002 on, he works on various productions as technical coordinator and lighting designer (e.g. Fashion show at La Cambre). The same year, he begins working for Compagnie Thor as a light technician on the creation of *l'Âme au diable*. From then on he becomes an important collaborator of the company, a.o. as its technical director. As a light designer, he participated at the creations *Bizzy Anna* and *V.-Nightmares*.

Agenda

2006-2007

ICE / V.-Nightmare 4, Théâtre de La Balsamine, Brussels – BE (22-24/02); *ICE / V.-Nightmare 4*, Lantaren-Venster, Rotterdam – NL (1/03); *ICE / V.-Nightmare 4*, Festival *Schrittmacher*, Ludwigforum, Aachen – DE (3-4/03); *Fluid Mechanics & ICE / V.-Nightmare 1 & 4*, Cultuurcentrum Evergem – BE (9/05, Preview); *Fluid Mechanics & ICE / V.-Nightmare 1 & 4*, Derlontheater, Maastricht – NL (15/05); *Fluid Mechanics / V.-Nightmare 1*, Théâtre Varia, Brussels – BE (17-19/05); *Fluid Mechanics / V.-Nightmare 1*, De Velinx, Tongeren – BE (24/05)

2007-2008

TAN - Moss&Mould / V.-Nightmare 2-3, CNCDC Châteaouvallon Ollioules - FR (15/09); *V.-Nightmares*, Kaaitheater, Brussels - BE (7-10 & 20-21/11); *V.-Nightmares*, De Velinx, Tongeren - BE (15/12); *V.-Nightmares*, Stadsschouwburg Groningen - NL (8/01); *ICE / V.-Nightmare 4*, De Meent, Alsemberg – Beersel - BE (12/01); *V.-Nightmares*, Musikteater Baltoppen, Ballerup (DK (17-18/02); *V.-Nightmares*, Festival *New Territories*, Glasgow - UK (22-23/02); *V.-Nightmares*, *Dance Week Festival*, Zagreb - HR (2-3/06); *Moss&Mould – ICE / V.-Nightmares 3-4*, Internationale Tanzmesse NRW, Düsseldorf - DE (29/08, Showcase)

2008-2009

9, 10, 11, 12 & 13/12	<i>V.-Nightmares</i> Théâtre Varia, Brussels	Belgium
19-20/12	<i>ICE / V.-Nightmare 4</i> Théâtre de la Place, Liège	Belgium
23/01	<i>V.-Nightmares</i> CC Berchem, Antwerp	Belgium
31/01	<i>V.-Nightmares</i> Les Ecuries, Charleroi	Belgium
7/03	<i>V.-Nightmares</i> Schouwburg Kortrijk	Belgium
27/05	<i>V.-Nightmares</i> Schouwburg Arnhem	The Netherlands

Other performances on tour - D'ORIENT

21/02/09	Cultuurcentrum Genk	Belgium
10-11/03/09	<i>Arabesque: Arts from the Arab World</i> Kennedy Center, Washington DC	USA
14/03/09	De Schakel, Waregem	Belgium
17/04/09	<i>Made in Cannes</i> , Théâtre de la Licorne, Cannes	France

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