

Faso Danse Théâtre & Ruhrtriennale present

# Kirina

Serge Aimé Coulibaly, Rokia Traoré



© Philippe Magoni

**World premiere:**

29 June 2018 – Festival de Marseille (FR)

18 August 2018 – Ruhrtriennale Gladbeck (DE)

A performance for 9 dancers, 1 actor, 4 musicians, 2 singers and 30 local extras

Duration: 90 minutes (no interval)

# Kirina

## Serge Aimé Coulibaly, Rokia Traoré

*"We lost our home, which means the familiarity of daily life. We lost our occupation, which means the confidence that we are of some use in this world. We lost our language, which means the naturalness of reactions, the simplicity of gestures, the unaffected expression of feelings. We left our relatives (...) and our best friends have been killed (...), and that means the rupture of our private lives.*

*(...) once we were somebodies about whom people cared, we were loved by friends, and even known by landlords as paying our rent regularly. Once we could buy our food and ride in the subway without being told we were undesirable.*

*(...) we actually live in a world in which human beings as such have ceased to exist for quite a while, since society has discovered discrimination as the great social weapon by which one may kill men without any bloodshed; since passports or birth certificates, and sometimes even income tax receipts, are no longer formal papers but matters of social distinction."*

Hannah Arendt, "We Refugees," January 1943

**Using inspiration from his own African background and his reflections on today's world, Serge Aimé Coulibaly created *Kirina*, a narrative about his contemporary and globalized daily reality. *Kirina* is not the reenactment of a historic event from West-African History. The original epic only served as an inspiration during the creation, as did many other epic stories and real contemporary events. *Kirina* is not a performance by African artists about Africa. It is a performance by world citizens - a choreographer with and an artistic team of members both with and without African roots - and inspired by their actual globalized reality. Derived from these inspirations, Coulibaly created *a performance about people on the move*, the events that color and possibly direct these migrations and their influences on society.**

Using a form that is very close to that of a traditional ballet with different chapters, Serge Aimé Coulibaly creates different moments of great emotional impact.

There is the man who goes against the natural flow of time, as if the future and the people on the move could be held back.

There is the community which in order to survive calls for its most profound energies, as if only their instincts will help them to move on.

There is the woman struggling with femininity as a strategy.

There is a man that cannot or can no longer walk who is encouraged by his environment to stand up, a clear reference to the epic Soundjata who was handicapped but just as well to all those images of exhausted migrants.

There is the celebration of the fittest. There is the man who is chosen to sacrifice himself for a better future and is sent out on the sea, a scene based on a contemporary African tradition in which the ceremony for the death of those leaving the community and risking their lives at sea is held before their departure in case they won't return.

There is the big human flow that symbolizes migrations from all times and the individuals that are destabilized by their strength.

There is the celebration of a (feminine black) leader.

There is a wedding. Life continues no matter what the circumstances are.

There is a rain dance in the middle of a sandstorm. To survive certain contexts superstition is more effective than belief in statistics and numbers.

There is the lapidation of a strange woman who refuses to adapt, her hunchback a clear reference to Soundjata's mother Sogolon but a situation that occurs today involving "strangers" all over the planet who are treated as if they were human waste just because they are or behave different.

There is a general panic for no clear nor present reason, so well-known since the concept "terror attack" has integrated our societies.

There is the big battle between two superheroes, the epic Battle of Kirina for sure but how different is it from our contemporary entertaining elections and debates?

And there is the creature that derives from it all. Dangerous? Beautiful? Seductive? Violent? Is he the herald of a better future? Does he predict the apocalypse? Or is he no more than one small individual who endures life in his own personal way?

And in between, before and after all of that ... there is the walk. *The endless walk of humanity towards its destiny*. No matter what.

The origin of Serge Aimé Coulibaly's *Kirina* is to be found in 2015 and what has since been called "*the European Refugee Crisis*", its media coverage and the political speeches that it evokes. The way those people and communities on the move were evaluated, described and labeled once they had left their homelands – as if they did not have a rich cultural background, as if they did not come from some of the oldest and most advanced civilizations in the world, as if they did not have an education, as if they did not have any human value – deeply touched Coulibaly. It has taken a few years of digestion and research to turn this first outrage into an artistic creation.

At the time of the events, Coulibaly was in the middle of the creation of *GLOED*, a performance with 50 elderly dancers. Inspired by the daily images of people on the move and by the reality of the large group of dancers in the creation, it was decided to use "*the walk*" as the basis for the creation and its physical research. After a first trial in this small local creation with mainly amateur dancers, Coulibaly decided to develop this choregraphical material further and on a larger scale in *Kirina*. The migration of humanity being the central subject of this creation, both in its narrative as in its form.

A second great influence on the creation of *Kirina* has been Felwine Sarr's essay *Afrotopia* (2016) in which he encourages Africans to develop their own ideas on how to balance out political, economic, cultural, symbolic and environmental aspects in their societies. Instead of imagining a future within the framework of imposed (neoliberal capitalistic) ideologies, Sarr encourages communities to reflect from their proper cultural histories and to develop a position in a globalized world starting from that local imagination. For this Senegalese economist and academic, Africa can offer the world a new "*project for civilization*" more respectful of humans and the environment, if only she accomplishes "*a profound cultural revolution and gives birth to the newness that she is carrying*". "*Today*," Sarr states, "*we find many global stories that inhabit us, but African stories are very little present. They circulate and feed the global imagination less.*"

Nourished by Sarr's book and their ongoing personal dialogue since 2017, Serge Aimé Coulibaly decides to take a popular, mythologized Western-African story as a base for this creation. *The battle of Kirina* (c. 1235) proved to be an interesting point of departure because it presents motifs and themes that pose current questions and that can be universalized. The story of the battle is retold in *the Epic of Soundiata* an instance of oral tradition, narrated by generations of griot poets and widely considered Mali's national epic.

A second important reason for the choice of this specific epic as an inspiration for this new creation of his, derives directly from Coulibaly's first outrage towards the limited contemporary view on migrant's backgrounds and the common prejudices about their cultural and intellectual underdevelopment. According to the Epic of Soundiata, *the Mande Charter* or the constitution of the Mali Empire was created after the Battle of Kirina by an assembly of nobles to create a government for the newly established empire. According to oral tradition of the griot poets, this charter established the federation of Mandinka clans under one government, outlined how it would operate and established the laws by which the people would live. This thirteenth century African charter is considered by many as *a first version of the declaration on the rights of man*, long before the European version that followed the French revolution some 500 years later.

It is also this choice for the Epic of Soundiata as a base for the creation that led to the collaboration with composer *Rokia Traore*. Which contemporary African voice could reflect more strongly on the energy of this strong tradition and its possible bonds with today's reality? Few artistic careers are at once as free and as rooted in tradition. Traore has often been called unique, post-traditional, mutant, so easily she seems to find herself at unknown crossroads, at confluences both unpredictable and determined by her personal history. Her music proved to be essential for the creation of this new epic, rooted in ancient traditions but talking about today's world.

As in all of Coulibaly's creations, *Kirina* does not offer its audiences a clear answer to the questions it puts on the table. The performance aspires to *open a space for reflection and dialogue about our*

*contemporary global society* and its ways of dealing with “the other” and migrations. In order to do so, it uses a great West-African epic to seek in those roots the moments of survival, bravery, virtue, regeneration and heroism and to share those human values with our world.

Sara Vanderieck, dramaturge (2018)

# Kirina

Serge Aimé Coulibaly, Rokia Traoré

## Concept and direction

Serge Aimé Coulibaly

## Composition and musical direction

Rokia Traoré

## Based on a libretto by

Felwine Sarr

## Created and performed by

Marion Alzieu, Ida Faho, Jean-Robert Koudogbo Kiki, Antonia Naouele, Adonis Nebie, Daisy Phillips / Giulia Cenni, Issa Sanou, Sayouba Sigué, Ahmed Soura

## Text and interpretation

Ali 'Doueslik' Ouédraogo

## Musicians

Aly Keita/Youssouf Keita (balafon), Saidou Ilboudo (percussions), Mohamed Kanté (bass), Yohann Le Ferrand (guitar)

## Singers

Naba Aminata Traoré, Marie Virginie Dembélé

## Extras

30 local volunteers

## Dramaturgy

Sara Vanderieck

## Choreographical assistant

Sayouba Sigué

## Scenography

Catherine Cosme

## Costumes

Salah Barka

## Light design

Nathalie Perrier

## Video

Eve Martin

## Video technician and stage manager

Matisse De Groote

## Sound technician

Ralph M'Fah-Traoré

## Light technician

Hermann Coulibaly

## Pre-production manager

Eline Vanfleteren

**Production manager**

Laure Louvat, Sandra Diris

**Technical direction**

Joris De Bolle

**Artistic advice**

Thomas Prédour

**Coordination Faso Danse Théâtre**

Lies Martens

**Production**

Faso Danse Théâtre, Ruhrtriennale

**Coproduction**

Festival de Marseille (FR), La Villette Paris (FR), les ballets C de la B (BE), Théâtre National Wallonie-Bruxelles (BE), Romaeuropa Festival (IT), Kampnagel Hamburg (DE), De Grote Post Oostende (BE), Kunstencentrum Vooruit Gent (BE), La Rose des Vents Villeneuve d'Ascq (FR), ExtraPôle Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (FR)

**Executive producer until January 2019**

les ballets C de la B

**Distribution**

Frans Brood Productions

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# Kirina

Serge Aimé Coulibaly, Rokia Traoré

*Kirina* is a poetic narrative on the genesis of a new world. Serge Aimé Coulibaly has taken metaphors for the human condition found in the mythical story of the Battle of Kirina and turned them into a choreography in which he invites us to reflect. While unfolding this story from the collective memory of West Africa, he makes us think about movements, absurdity, the feeling of abandonment, the search for meaning and the promise of new horizons.

Kirina was the place where Sundiata Keita defeated the armies of Soumaoro Kanté and became the Mansa (or 'emperor') of Mali. Soumaoro Kanté, King of Sosso, had already ruled the oppressed Mandinka people with an iron fist for far too long. Sundiata, the son of Sogolon, was born lame, but decided to bring an end to this arbitrary rule. When he returned from exile in Mema, he formed a coalition with the various kingdoms of Sibi and threw down a challenge to Soumaoro Kanté. The final battle took place on the plain of Kirina in 1235. Sundiata wounded Soumaoro Kanté with the spur of a white cock. Kanté fled and disappeared into the mountains of Koulikoro pursued by Sundiata Keita. Thanks to this victory, Sundiata Keita was recognised as the Mansa of Mali by the allied kings. This marks the beginning of the Malian Empire, which was to dominate West Africa for several centuries. Tales of this mythical battle were sung by the griot poets of the Mandé people. At times of difficulty it is relived in the dreams of West Africans, inspires them to be courageous and reminds them that in this place there was a readiness to fight, and that every setback can be overcome.

*Kirina* is a flourishing and sweltering chaotic world, and a man lives there who is half buffalo and half human, looking for his shape after a difficult beginning. From the earliest days in the half-shadow of his place of birth he has sought breath and harmony. But in order to be able to throw off his shapelessness, he will have to undertake a journey of initiation. Aimlessness and fear will be his travelling companions. He will encounter peoples who have been set in motion by world history.

Stamping footsteps. The steps of the many people who are trying to make a way for themselves. The arrhythmic cadence of a mass of people starting to move. A people who are leaving, heading for new horizons, driven onward and destined for endlessness.

The population of the world has been forever reordered. The promise of a new dawn. The blood that flows over the earth. Migration is as old as mankind itself. It has to live in the hearts of those who are leaving, but also in the bodies of those who open up the routes.

Sundiata is lame. He drags himself along on hands and knees. By the age of seven he is still not able to walk. Sogolon, his mother and the king's second wife, is mocked by the ladies of the court. They call her Kédjou, the ugly, because of her hump. Her son drags himself along, while the son of the king's first wife runs, jumps and picks baobab leaves for his mother. Sassouma Bérété, the first wife of King Naré Maghan, hopes that her son Dankaran Touman will inherit the royal throne, despite the fact that the seers have predicted a great future for Sogolon's lame son as the saviour of Mandé. As a child, Sundiata escaped the bloodbath carried out by the eleven princes on the orders of Soumaoro Kanté. Sundiata's lameness was his salvation. It meant he appeared not to present any danger.

One morning, having been humiliated by Sassouma Bérété, whom she had asked to pick baobab leaves, Sogolon took it out on her son and called him a good-for-nothing. On that day Sundiata decided he would walk. 'Mother, do you want baobab leaves or the whole baobab?' Sogolon replied: 'I want the whole baobab.' Sundiata asked Balla Fasseké, a griot poet and his companion, to go to his father's smith and order a heavy iron crutch.

Using his sturdy arms, Sundiata planted the crutch in a vertical position and pulled himself up on it. The crutch bent under the strain of his muscles. He asked for another, and yet another, seven in all, which all bent under the weight and strength of his powerful arms. Balla Fasseké continued to encourage him and invoked the spirit of his father, Naré Maghan. 'Roar, lion, man with two names, roar Mari-Diata, Sogolon-Diata, so that the jungle knows it has a master.' Sundiata lifted himself up for his father's spirit and pulled himself off the ground. He stood up and walked. His first steps were giant steps. He went into the forest, pulled a young baobab out of the ground and threw it at his mother's feet. 'Mother, you can pick as many baobab leaves as you want and from now on it will be to your

door that the women of Niani will come for their supplies.'

The abandonment felt by the peoples of Mandé is made into a dance of the spirits that comes from deep within the body and defies gravity. It is our world that is wandering around looking for meaning. Off-beat rhythms, disoriented upheavals, thundering tremors, raging seas. Torment adrift, no harbour in sight.

The sacrifice is like seeds. Life pares itself. It harms itself and sows the best of itself in order to recover. To grow, you have to be able to give of yourself. You can only continue living if you are prepared to let what death extinguishes go out and to release yourself from everything that is by nature mortal.

A struggle is a divine judgement. People are freed from their yokes. Close demons are fought and driven out. Dormant energies are awakened and new force fields arise. With courage in the heart. Taking up the struggle. Not giving up, not running away, not becoming paralysed.

An Gnewa, forward!!!

The master of words addresses the warriors. They must distinguish the impossible from the extraordinary and bring it to a favourable conclusion. His masterful words fill the listeners' hearts with courage. They are intended for the men and women of tomorrow. What will they have done with what now hangs over them like a shadow? The dark clouds of the desperation of the world, the xenophobia, the inhumanity, the inhospitableness, the chilling of hearts, the darkening. The eyes turned away from beauty. Concealed beneath a thick veil. Peoples worship their demons and they look back at them without batting an eyelid.

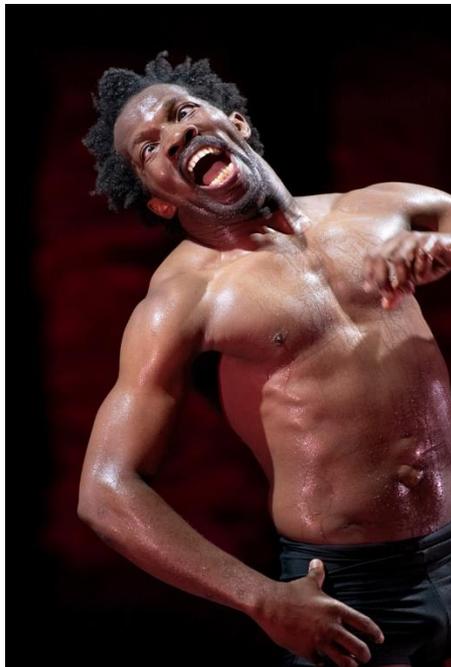
We have to go out onto the plain again and resume the struggle.

And suddenly there is joy. Held back, driven out, suppressed for too long. It bursts out in pirouettes, clapping hands, hoorahs, cheering and a thousand splendours.

The march is set in motion again. Bodies take the reins. The journey starts from Ceuta and Meelilla, Agadez, Goa, Baghdad, Seville, Lisbon and Shanghai. It gathers momentum, finds its breath and rhythm. It redraws the routes, broadens the space, shifts rivers, irrigates the plains, restarts the world. It forms a loop, a circle, a spiral. An eternal movement, indefatigable bearer of what yesterday 'was' and what tomorrow 'will be'.

And there is the new morning already.  
At the river mouth, in the light that plays in the swirling water.

Felwine Sarr, 2018



# Kirina

## Serge Aimé Coulibaly, Rokia Traoré

### Choreographer

#### **Serge Aimé Coulibaly**

Serge Aimé Coulibaly is a dancer and choreographer from Burkina Faso. He was born in Bobo Dioulasso, and has worked in Europe and the rest of the world since 2002. His inspiration is rooted in African culture and his art is committed to the necessity of powerful contemporary dance. A dance rooted in emotion but also the bearer of reflection and hope. His vigorous expressiveness makes his work universal and finds a response on several continents. Since he set up his *Faso Dance Théâtre* company in 2002, Serge Aimé has been exploring complex themes, with the desire to offer young people a genuine positive dynamism. His productions have been presented in many theatres all over Europe and Africa and also been invited to several festivals. These include *Kalakuta Republik* (2016), *Nuit Blanche à Ouagadougou* (2014), *Fadjiri* (2013), *Khokuma 7° Sud* (2011), *Babemba* (2008), *Solitude d'un Homme Intègre* (2007), *A Benguer* (2006), *Minimini* (2002).

His open view of the world and of differences, which he always questions, plus his constructive energy and will to persevere, has led to collaboration with several other artists since the beginning of his career. He regularly works on international productions, both as a performer and choreographer. He worked with Moïse Touré (*La Maladie de la Mort*, 2015), with Marrukegu Company in Australia (*Cut the Sky*, 2014 and *Burning Daylight*, 2009), with Farid Berki (*Double Jeu*, 2013), with Julie Dossavi (*Cross and Share*, 2012), with Alain Platel (*C(H)OEURS*, 2012 and *Wolf*, 2003), with Kalpana Raghuraman (*I lost my English*, 2008) and with Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui (*Tempus Fugit*, 2004).

Serge Aimé's work, always in motion and fuelled by curiosity and generosity, has aroused the interest and confidence of a great many organisations. In addition, his desire and will to share his knowledge has led him to make dance pieces for amateur dancers. During his artistic training with the *FEEREN* company in Burkina Faso, headed by Amadou Bourou, and afterwards in his time at Le Centre National Chorégraphique de Nantes, under Claude Brumachon, Serge Aimé was able to develop his talent and personal tastes and then transfer them into art. He aims to develop an original creativity and involves the dancers and choreographers who attend his masterclasses in questioning their responsibility as performing artists and the power of the vocabulary that has a significance in their role as citizens.

To provide a place for experimentation and concrete reflection for his creations and his concept of artistic commitment, Serge Aimé set up *Ankata* in Bobo Dioulasso, Burkina Faso: an international laboratory for research and production in the performing arts. It's open to everyone and is a crossroads for exchanges between different continents, disciplines and communities with the common aim of inventing the future.

### Composition and musical direction

#### **Rokia Traoré**

Few artistic careers are at once as free and as rooted in tradition as Rokia Traoré's. Indeed, she has often been called unique, post-traditional, mutant, so easily she seems to find herself at unknown crossroads, at confluences both unpredictable and determined by her personal history. Rokia Traoré's voice is uniquely Malian in its power and tone, folk in its distance and precision, and rock'n'roll in its love for encounters, turbulences, and shock. What left an indelible mark on her? Serge Gainsbourg's *Aux armes et cætera*, which her father played loudly in the morning, but also an Ella Fitzgerald LP, and albums by Joan Baez, Tracy Chapman, Mark Knopfler, and Ali Farka Touré, as well as cassettes she bought from griots later in Bamako, when her friends listened only to rap. If Rokia Traoré is seen as an icon of world music, celebrated for the elegance of a music embodying the culture without borders of a new century, she is also, thanks to her unique career choices - a show written with Toni Morrison and directed by Peter Sellars; her assimilation of the legacy of the griots, even though she isn't part of their caste - the symbol of a changing Mali. At the Festival d'Avignon 2017, she presented *Dream Mandé Djata* a new creation that shows the boldness of her culture and of her career as a singer.

## Libretto

### **Felwine Sarr**

“Africa doesn't need to catch up with anyone. She doesn't need to keep running along the tracks she is told to take, but only walk on the road that she chooses”. These words resume the radical thinking of Felwine Sarr. For this Senegalese economist and academic, Africa can offer the world a new “project for civilization” more respectful of humans and the environment, if only she accomplishes “a profound cultural revolution and gives birth to the newness that she is carrying”.

Published in 2016, his last written work, *Afrotopia*, was an immediate international success. In it, the author deconstructs the “western myth of development” and proposes an “active utopia to reveal in the African reality the vast spaces of possibility and fertilize them”. For this project to happen, he puts the main responsibility with the African intellectuals, thinkers and artists.

## Actor

### **Ali 'Doueslik' Ouédraogo**

Born in 1984 in Abidjan, in the Ivory Coast, Ali Ouédraogo is a writer, slammer and actor. He began his artistic career in 2002 in theatre in Burkina Faso. During his studies, he took part in the creation of shows as an actor and he trained in both writing and acting.

After obtaining a university degree in solar technology in 2008, he dedicated himself to his artistic career, and took part in writing workshops with other authors and theatre directors such as Aristide Tarnagda, Moïse Touré and took part in Laboratoire ELAN at the Récréâtrales festival where he created *Les sans...* in November 2016. He is also the author of the adaptation of the Little Prince of Saint Exupéry for the street theatre Nabila, a play in which he plays this role.

He was one of the finalists in the art of the recital and orality in *Jeux de la Francophonie Nice 2013*.

## Dancers

### **Marion Alzieu**

Born in France in 1987, a very young Marion became passionate about dance in all its forms. She began with hip-hop and ballet, then studied modern dance at the Centre James Carlès in Toulouse. Later, she discovered contemporary dance thanks to workshops with Peter Mika, Olga Cobos and Luc Jacobs.

From 2008 to 2010, she undertook the Coline professional qualification in Istres, where she met several guest choreographers and danced the repertoires of Emanuel Gat, Lisi Esteras, Shlomi Tuizer and Salia Sanou. Having achieved this qualification, she worked as trainee in Emanuel Gat's company. Then she joined Jasmin Vardimon Company in London, and worked with the Royal Opera House, until 2011. Forever curious and wanting new experiences, in 2011, she completed the professional qualification at the Centre of Choreographic Development (CDC) la Termitière in Ouagadougou for 3 months where she met several African choreographers. Back in France, Marion joined the Mouvements Perpétuels Company, under the direction of Salia Sanou. Besides being an performer in several of her dance pieces, she assisted Salia in creations for children and amateur dancers. From 2012, she also spent time working in the troupes of Hervé Chaussard (Cie The Will Corporation), Amala Dianor (Kaplan) and Serge Aimé Coulibaly (Cie Faso Danse Theatre). Alongside her status as performer, she developed her own style as a choreographer. In 2013, she created the duet *En terre d'attente* for the Festival OïDF (Burkina) under the direction of Irène Tassembédo. She performed this duet in France in November 2013 in Paris, then, in July 2014 at the Festival Off in Avignon (France). In 2014, she created the solo *Ceci n'est pas une femme blanche*. At the same time, she set up her own company: Compagnie Ma'.

### **Ida Faho**

Ida was born in 1990 and began training in the performing arts at only 13 in 2003. She studied theatre and then dance and entered the EDITA dance school in 2009. She regularly dances in the company of Irène Tassembédo while developing her own projects and training with other choreographers, in Africa, at the Ecole des Sables, but also in Europe, in the Pavillon noir of Angelin Preljocaj. Her dance has been nourished by all these encounters, and Ida succeeds in harmoniously marrying a powerful gesture, an electrical presence with a lot of gentleness, grace and sensuality.

### **Jean-Robert Koudogbo Kiki**

Born in 1986 in Burkina Faso, Jean-Robert Koudogbo Kiki, better known as Robbi, was influenced, in

2005 by the dancer choreographer Lebeau Boumpoutou, who gave him his passion for contemporary dance. Taught by Éloi Bama, also called Gahé, from the company Teguerer and by Michel Neya, the founder of the group Génération 2000, he danced in *Nassongo*, a musical which toured France and Luxembourg (2008), *Entre chiens et loups* (Montpellier Danse 2010). In 2010, he joined the company Je Danse Donc Je Suis (I Dance Therefore I Am). He did the opening and closing of FESPACO in 2009, 2011 and 2013 with the choreographers Irène Tassebedo, Salia Sanou and Seydou Boro. In 2014, he acted in the play *Tichèlbè aires de jeux* with Kettly Noel in the Festival du Niger.

### **Antonia Naouele**

Antonia Naouele, a young Cameroonian dancer and interpreter, was first trained in traditional dances, then subsequently specialized in urban and Afro-urban dances. Since 2011, Antonia has been trained in contemporary dance with the company Abbé Simon, the choreographers Salia Sanou, Michel Ndjongui, Merlin Nyankam, Serge Aimé Coulibaly, Aida C. Diaz and Farid Berki. She also researched the Stepping technique with the troupe SOUL STEP.

In parallel, she is a dancer and interpreter with the hip-hop dance group FLOOR ART CREW, with the company SOLDIERS X and in the play "AWINE " of Hyacinthe TOBIO. These shows took her on tour all over Africa.

### **Adonis Nebie**

Born in Burkina Faso, Nebie Adonis gained a reputation as an energetic, fast and fluid dancer. He was also the main actor in the plays of the famous Souleymane Porgo, until his tragic death in 2006.

Since 2004 he was trained by the choreographer Irène Tassebedo. As a member of her dance company he participates in the plays *Souffles*, *Carmen*, *Sacre du tempo* and *Allah garibou*.

He has performed in the main European and African festivals and theaters, and collaborates or trains with choreographers like Salia Sanou, Seydou Boro, Vincent Montsoe, Opiyo Okach, Gregory Makoma, Wim Vandekeybus, Nora Chipaumire, Patrick Acogny, Germaine Acogny

Since 2011 he collaborates with Serge-Aimé Coulibaly, Vera Sander, Nathalie Veuillet and Kalpana Raghuraman. Together with Sigue Sabyouba and Kafando Idrissa he starts the company Teguerer Danse. In 2012 he creates the solo *Looser* in El Graner in Barcelona. *Me-tisser*, in collaboration with the Cie Eolo, is performed in the same year in Lyon. In 2013 he makes *Ballet Démocratique*, a duo with the Congolese dancer Fanny Mabondzo. Another solo *Spirits* is presented at the Urban Arts festival in 2014.

### **Daisy Phillips**

Daisy was born in Oakland, California, and studied dance in Berkeley, San Francisco, London, and Geneva, where she was a member of the Ballet Junior. She began her professional career with the Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève, before returning to San Francisco, where she worked primarily with Erika Tsimbrovsky. Since 2007 she has collaborated extensively with Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, taking part in several of his creations. She now regularly represents him as a rehearsal director and coach.

In 2011-12 she joined Alain Platel (*les ballets c de la b*) for the creation of *C(h)oeurs*. That same season she took part in the founding of the theater/movement collective IfHuman, currently associate artists at Les Halles de Schaerbeek, Brussels. At IfHuman, she collaborates in the creations *Fear & Desire*, *Ne Parlez Pas d'Amour* and *Yes No Maybe*. Later in 2012 she was a guest artist with the Norwegian National Ballet. In 2013, Quan Bui Ngoc (*les ballets c de la b*), created the solo *Kasane no Irome* for her and a contemporary music ensemble, and later she joined one of his group creations *Untold*. Also in 2013-14, she works on the creation *Wulong* – a music and dance piece for young children by Iris Bouche on short films of dance. In 2014 she began working with Constanza Macras / *Dorky Park* in Berlin, most recently participating in the creations of *The Ghosts* (2015) and *The Pose* (2017). During the winter/spring of 2016 she was a member of the Göteborgs Operan Danskompani in Sweden, at the invitation of director Adolphe Binder. She also has an ongoing collaboration with theater and opera director Cecilia Ligorio, acting as choreographer and dancer for productions in Europe and the United States.

### **Giulia Cenni**

Giulia started to take dance class when she was 5 years old, convinced by her mother tired to have so many broken glasses and vases at home. After 2 months the little girl decided to stop attending the weekly classes realizing that it was much more fun to dance in her own room. She reconsidered, at the age of 12, the idea of starting a dance school. At the age of 18 she got a scholarship from the Balletto di Toscana and she spent there 2 years attending the training program and being a member of Antitesi Junior Ensemble. In 2013 she started to work with Cie Twain physical dance theater, great and enriching experience whose beginning was quite shocking after the years of ballet-centered training. She took part to some productions such as: *Lei e Tancredi*, *Romanza\_Trittico dell'intimità*,

Elettra\_Triglia di un'attesa, Juliette (work in progress). In 2014 she entered in Wee dance company based in Gerhart Hauptmann theater of Goerlitz (Germany). By working with the Israeli choreographer Dan Pelleg she could explore new boundaries and qualities of movement. The experiences of dancing in a stage of water, hanging on tissues and rolling on turning platforms definitely tested her courage. In 2015 she became part of the German company Ballet Theater Pforzheim, directed by Guido Markowitz. Her collaborations with inspiring artists like Anton Lachky, Elio Gervasi and Edoardo Novelli made her grow as a person and as a human being. Giulia is a curious and engaged researcher, practicing several disciplines such as yoga and martial arts. Being devoted to her body as a temple, every opportunity to explore is perceived as a blessing.

### **Issa Sanou**

Issa is a dancer from the Herve Koubi Company, choreographer and artistic director of the Sanou Ka Sanou Company. He was born in 1989 in Bobo-Dioulasso (Burkina Faso) and lives in Brive La Gaillarde in France. A young dancer, choreographer and acrobat, he is also an actor and a poet. Issa got his first taste of the stage in 2005 in high school beside the dance and theatre troupe of the Centre Siraba. With his self-taught acrobatic talent he was about to join the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts du Cirque de Chalon-en-Champagne in 2010. However, he chose to honour his commitment to the Hervé Koubi company and remained with them.

Issa worked with the company Wolo Wolo (2<sup>nd</sup> prize in the National Week of the Bobo culture 2008). From 2008 to 2010, he was an actor in the company Etincelle. In 2010, he performed in the show *Entre Chien et Loup* – choreography by Anne-Marie Porras (EPSE Danse) and by Salia Sanou (CDC - La Termitière).

Since 2010 Issa has worked as an artist choreographer in the Hervé Koubi company and created his company Sanou Ka sanou in 2013. He won 1<sup>st</sup> prize in the choreographic competition "Simply The Best" in 2015 and the 1<sup>st</sup> prize in the Salon International de la littérature orale et du livre (the International Salon of Oral and Written Literature).

### **Sayouba Sigué**

After a childhood spent in Abidjan (Ivory Coast), Sayouba Sigué came back to Burkina for high school and entered the cultural and artistic scene in Ouagadougou. He is trained in traditional and contemporary dances. Discovered in 2001 by the young Burkinabe choreographer Souleymane Porgo, he joined his company (Téguéner) and was initiated into contemporary dance and afro-contemporary dance. He also benefited from training by several other choreographers with different styles and different origins. In this manner dance went from being an extra-curricular activity to progressively becoming a passion that he has today chosen to make his career in. He has performed in many productions with big names in the African dance world such as Irène Tassembédo (in *Souf es, Carmen Falinga Awa* and *Le sacre du tempo*), Serge Aimé Coulibaly (in *A Benguer, Babemba, Nuit Blanche à Ouagadougou* and *Kalakuta Republik*) and Kathrin Wehlisch (*Schiff der Traüme*). Today he lives in Lyon (France) and is currently creating his own company.

### **Ahmed Soura**

Born in Banfora, Burkina Faso, a dancer (Break-dance and Pop) and self-taught acrobat even before he was 20, Ahmed trained at the National Institute of Artistic and Cultural Training in Burkina Faso and at the Centre Choreographique National of Montpellier from 2003 to 2007. Then Ahmed joined the Burkinabe company of Irène Tassembédo for five years, touring in Africa and Europe. In 2010, Ahmed Soura danced and performed in the opera *Via Intollérenza II* by Christoph Schlingensiefel (1<sup>st</sup> prize for the staging of the Theater Treffen in Berlin in 2011). From 2012, he joined the Opera Ballet Deutsche Oper Berlin with *Verdi Requiem, Die Liebe zu den drei Orangen* and *Das Mädchen mit den Schwefelhölzern*. In August 2013 Ahmed joined the company Christoph Winkler for *Das wahre Gesicht - ein Stück über den Kapitalismus* and won the FAUST 2014 award. In the course of 2014, he collaborated with the Swiss company (Berne) Pink Mama Theater with a 2015 tour Poland.

At the same time, he founded KORO / Compagnie Ahmed Soura in Burkina Faso to develop his own choreographic writing and he created solos such as *A to, Rien ne m'appartient, Ecrazement 100Sens, En opposition avec moi* (3<sup>rd</sup> dance prize at Internationalen Tanz-Theater Festival - Stuttgart 2011), *166* (second prize at Need to Dance 2013). He regularly teaches contemporary dance courses and traditional dance from Burkina Faso in Germany, France, Switzerland, and Brazil.

## **Musicians**

### **Ali Keita (balafon)**

Born from a musical family, Aly Keita grew up surrounded by traditional instruments such as the

djembe and the kora. His favourite instrument will become the balafon which he builds by himself at the very young age. Throughout the years he has worked together with many international artists with very different backgrounds: he played with Omar Sosa, Rhoda Scott, Etienne M'Bappé, Paolo Fresu, Paco Séry, Trilok Gurtu, Linley Marthe, Joe Zawinul, Tiken Jah Fakoly, Amadou & Mariam... In November 2008, Aly Keita formed a quintet with Dobet Gnahoré (vocals), Boris Tchangou (percussions), Clive Govinden (bass) and Pierre Vaiana (saxophone) in order to play the themes of his first solo album "Akwaba Inisééné".

**Youssouf Keita** (balafon)

Youssouf Keita is a griot, balafon player and group member of "Super Zamaza". His passion is the balafon, which he builds with his own hands. He is also a balafon teacher. It is his wish to restore this instrument in his value and to make it known in his natural state.

**Saidou Ilboudo** (percussions)

**Mohamed Kanté** (bass)

Mohamed Kanté comes from a large Mali family of griots and learned music from his father Sekou Kanté, who plays bass in the group of Toumani Diabaté and works with Djélijadi Tounkara. At the Arts Conservatory in Bamako, he studies guitar, but also n'goni and bass. With his group, the Soumaora band, he wishes to sing and play the guitar, while performing his own compositions.

**Yohann Le Ferrand** (guitar)

As a self-taught guitar player, Yohann Le Ferrand erred along the Breton stages as a member of different traditional music groups before trying a new path, an Afro-American one, thanks to his jazz education by Manu Gaultier, Christophe Laurenceau and Jean-Philippe Lavergne. He traveled the world as a composer and music arranger for various performances. His encounter with Mali in 2012 was a decisive turning point and proved to be the beginning of a never ending musical enrichment.

**Singers**

**Naba Aminata Traoré**

Naba Traoré is a Mali singer, student of Massambou Wélé and Rokia Traoré. After some experimenting with hiphop, she joins the brand new Fondation Passerelle in Bamako in 2009. The performances Roots 1 and 2, followed by Desdemonda and in 2017-2018 Bamanan Djourou, bring her as a singer on the biggest international stages. Naba Traoré also makes her own compositions and her first album "Dounia" in 2012. She is a very committed in the fight against domestic violence and multiplies actions, clips and concerts to make people aware of this problem.

**Marie Virginie Dembélé**

Virginie Dembélé is a Mali singer coming from the land of the Bwa. She worked together with many great Mali artists: Rokia Traoré, Toumani Diabaté, Salif Keita, Koko Dembélé. She was the winner of "Talent", a contest organized by the Fondation Koré de Segou. In the Fondation Passerelle founded by Rokia Traoré in Bamako in 2009, Virginie develops her talents and original style, inspired by tradition but always with a modern touch.

**Dramaturge**

**Sara Vanderieck**

Sara Vanderieck (1978) obtained her degree in theatre directing at RITS in Brussels.

In 2006, she joined les ballets C de la B, first as production manager for *VSPRS, pitié!* (Alain Platel) and *Patchagonia* (Lisi Estaras) later as artistic assistant to Alain Platel for *Out of Context – for Pina* and *C(H)OEURS* and of Lisi Estaras for *Dans Dans* and *Leche*.

In 2012, she leaves les ballets C de la B to join the artistic direction of De Grote Post a brand-new cultural centre in Ostend.

She also starts working as a freelance dramaturg/outside eye for different dance creations from then on. She works with Claron McFadden/Muziektheater Transparant (*Lilith*, 2012), Serge Aimé Coulibaly/FASO DANSE THEÂTRE (*Fadjiri*, 2013; *Nuit Blanche à Ouagadougou*, 2014; *GLOED*, 2015; *Kalakuuta Republik*, 2016 and *Kirina*, 2018), Bára Sigfúsdóttir (*The Lover*, 2015; *Tide*, 2016 and *being*, 2017) Ayelen Parolin & Lisi Estaras (*La Esclava*, 2015), Platform K/les ballets C de la B/Lisi Estaras (*Monkey*

*Mind*, 2016) and Naïf Productions (*La Mécanique des ombres*, 2016; *des gestes blancs*, 2017-2018 ; *la chair a ses raisons*, 2018)

In 2017 she adds another layer to her work. Together with artists Lisi Estaras, Kristien De Proost and Mirko Banovic, Vanderieck is creating *When I look at a strawberry, I think of a tongue*. a multidisciplinary collective performance.

### Set design

#### **Catherine Cosme**

With a degree in set design from l'école de la Cambre in Brussels, Catherine began her career in cinema as artistic director and chief set designer. She has worked on many projects including *Noces* and *Le monde nous appartient*, directed by Stephan Streker, the TV series *La trêve*, directed by Matthieu Donck and *the Cri du Homard* by Nicolas Guiot, which was awarded with the César for the best short film in 2013. In theatre she is a set designer and decorator, even a costume designer. She works with Serge Aimé Coulibaly , Maïa Sandoz and Thierry Debroux... Very quickly, through observation of the relations between actors and the director, she decided to develop a second talent in parallel : writer and director. She directed her first full length film "Les amoureuses" in 2015.

### Costumes

#### **Salah Barka**

Salah was born in a family with nine children and experienced fashion as part of his daily life. At the age of 15, he started a career as a model and after a few years he decided to switch to stylism and costume design for film, theatre and dance performances. A self-taught man, he uses his passion for fashion to start his own house. Since 2004, he has designed 12 collections under his label Oshy. His work is a journey between Tunisian traditions and contemporary society. He was the winner of the 'fil d'argent' (silver thread) at the FIMA contest in 2009.

### Light design

#### **Nathalie Perrier**

After graduating from the ENSATT (Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts et Techniques du Théâtre), Nathalie Perrier finished off her training with a research paper entitled "The Shadow in the scenographic space", under the supervision of Anne Surgers, within the framework of a DEA in the Institut d'Etudes Théâtrales de la Sorbonne (Institute of Theatrical Studies of the Sorbonne) She was then invited to Rome for an artist's residence in the Villa Médicis.

She works for theatre and opera, in France and abroad, with many theatre directors (Pierre Audi, Yves Beaunesne, Marcel Bozonnet, Robert Carsen, Hans Peter Cloos, Sylvain Creuzevault, Laurent Delvert, Waut Koeken, Sophie Loucachevsky, Adrian Noble, Olivier Py, Adolf Shapiro, Deborah Warner...) and accompanies different baroque music ensembles (Amarillis, Rosasolis, Ausonia, les Lunaisiens, les Ombres).

She recently created the lighting for :

*Agatha*, director Hans Peter Cloos, Café de la Danse, Paris

*Il faut qu'une porte soit ouverte ou fermée*, director Laurent Delvert, Comédie Française

*La Vie Parisienne*, director Waut Koeken, Opéra de Lausanne et Opéra National du Rhin

*La Princesse de Trébizonde*, director Waut Koeken, Opéra de Limoges

*The Tempest*, ensemble les Ombres, Opéra National de Montpellier

*Angelus Novus*, director Sylvain Creuzevault, Théâtre National de La Colline

*Le Capital et son Singe*, director Sylvain Creuzevault, Théâtre National de La Colline

*Step In*, choreographer Olivier Collin, Opéra National de Montpellier

Alongside her work in lighting and under the benevolent influence of Christian Boltanski – together they created the lights for *Limbes* (Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris, 2006) and also those for *Gute Nacht* (Nuits Blanches, Paris, 2008) -she creates ephemereal light installations such as *Ciel en Demeure*. For Serge Aimé, Nathalie created the lights for *Fadjiri* en 2013.

### Video

#### **Eve Martin**

Since 2006 Eve Martin has worked in various fields of video, film and television. Primarily she is the author of her own works. Her short films include *The Book of Lila* (2008), *Terra Sola* (2012), and *Black Forest* (2014); she also developed the video installation *Invisibles for Mons* (2015). Working with others, she has created video installations for stage performances by Serge Aimé Coulibaly (*Fadjiri*, 2013 and *Kalakuta Republik*), Armel Roussel (*Ondine*), Thierry Debroux (*The titanic doll*, *Les Misérables*, *L'Odyssee*, *Les 3 mousquetaires*) and Sybille Wilson (*the master of illusions*). She has also created and directed numerous music videos and live video installations for Two Star Hotel, Piano club, My little cheap dictaphone, Hollywood Porn stars, Deltron 3030, Yannick Frank, Maax and The summer rebellion.

Apart from the development of her own artistic work, she works in the audio-visual world as assistant to the director and director of casting. Since 2011, she has worked as a designer and set designer for various advertising videos, short and feature films and television series, working for Micha Wald, Bouli Lanners, Delphine Noels, Patrice Toye, Virginie Gourmel, Joachim Lafosse, Fien Troch, Eric Lavaine, Stéphane Kazadjan, Remi Bezançon, Michel Gondry, Brice Cauvin, François Xavier, Benoit Mariage, Tom Darmstaedter, Mathieu Donck and Eric Valette.

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