

PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE

COMPAGNIE
PAR TERRE
ANNE NGUYEN



A walk for eight poppers

Production 2013 | 60 min



© Thomas Bohl

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PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE

≡ A word from the choreographer

PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE is a non-stop on-stage journey along a timeline for eight popping specialists, an explosive hip-hop dance style based on blocked, isolated, dislocated muscle movements. From compact mass to molecular chains, from ideally ordered formations resembling military parades to differentiation, the dancers proceed through a succession of evanescent states. Together they comprise a moving matter endowed with a collective memory, their past evolutions re-emerging cyclically, confronting oblivion, instinct and the desire of creation. Along this living timeline, in which the individual struggles alternately against a deterministic path and his own imprisonment, the hip-hop dance is broken down and transposed into a lateral movement that becomes enchanting. Played out against an electronic musical score with industrial overtones, PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE examines the various possible states of "togetherness" in an ever-changing society.

"Why is the dance beautiful? Answer: because it is an unfree movement. Because the deep meaning of the dance is contained in its absolute, ecstatic submission, in the ideal non-freedom." In Yevgeny Zamyatin's dystopia We (1920), the promenade is a march in rows of four, in which the state of synchronization appears like a victory over the uncertainty of Nature.



© Pierre Ricci

POPPING

The eight dancers in PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE are poppers. Popping is one of the specialties of hip-hop dance. This explosive dance style is based on muscular isolation and disassociation, on linear figures, broken forms and body illusions. Breaks and contrasts are essential patterns: fluid and relaxed movements alternate with contractions and blocks.

"PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE starts with a questioning stance on the meaning of unison and synchronization. To me, synchronous choreography is one of the most artificial forms that one can give to dance. It gives an exceptional connotation to events, and contrasts with the fortuitous and disorderly aspects of dance improvisation. I prefer to symbolize being together by being in tune, by being in contact, from contact through the sharing of space-time to direct interaction between bodies. However, synchronous patterns do exist in nature, at least at certain levels of observation. When quantum theory starts challenging the very possibility of their existence, these patterns can be observed at a human and a molecular level. Such a fascinating form provides a necessary stage for some states of matter, it is also used by animals in their group movements, and it is one of the traits that we associate with dance in its most ancient aspects.

The title *PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE* is excerpted from Yevgeny Zamyatin's novel *We*, one of the first negative utopias of the 20th century, which inspired Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and George Orwell's *1984*. In the world of Zamyatin, who was a marine engineer and a lover of mathematical metaphors, social life is regulated like a metronome, taking the form of a perpetual choreography: all the "numbers" carry out the same regulatory movements to the same regulatory time schedule, from sunup to sundown. The promenade is part of this "Table of Hours". It is a moment of leisure and of relaxation where all the numbers enjoy the well-being of marching in rows of four. Here, the state of synchronization is like an almost religious absolute, like a victory of mankind over the uncertainty of Nature, like a negation of change and death. That state of synchronization is something that I want to happen in *PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE*. It will arise during the process of transformation of a mass of organic matter, constituted by a group of dancers.

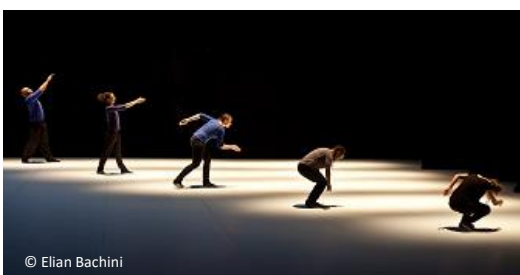
During its progress forward, the group will go through multiple evanescent states, each deriving from the other and repeated in cycles with infinite variations. The forms expressed, constantly accumulating in a sort of common database, a symbol of the collective unconscious, will confront the processes of memory and oblivion, instinct and the desire to create. Through the different formal constraints successively exposed, distinct conceptions of freedom will come to light. Emancipation of man from nature, through the deliberate choice of artificial forms asserting the worth of his free will. Emancipation of the individual from community, through separation, opposition and differentiation. Freedom of the "savage" state, where instinct, linked to collective memory, puts the body in tune with the forms most appropriate to its survival (a concept developed in the theory of morphic fields*).

Set to an original contemporary electronic composition playing on a loop, the beating of time and the distortion of acoustic matter, the piece is divided into three 21-minute cycles. The flow of dancers, like particles in a chemical reaction, together form an ever-changing moving substance, pouring itself into a space filled with tension. Together they create "molecular" chains, which transform, associate and disintegrate throughout their forward progress. Paradoxically, their movements are not "natural" in the sense of improvisation, but choreographed in a precise manner, following choreographic scores describing mathematical operations and chemical reactions. In this natural order of perpetual transformation, infinite variations of form materialize, necessarily including unison.

A march of history, an organic evolution, a genesis of the individual, *PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE* exposes our helplessness before the passing of time and the intelligence of nature.

With this piece, I also wanted to highlight popping dance, a technique hitherto not yet used exclusively in a dance piece. Poppers, who are able to experience many body states and experiment with contrast, are here able to use all the richness of their very specific vocabulary. Dissociated by the constraints of the choreography, their language is broken down into different components and analyzed. Popping is usually performed facing a public, whereas here it is danced only in side profile. The dancers are also prompted to enter into contact – all as many choreographic elements from which technical innovation arises."

Anne Nguyen



** According to Rupert Sheldrake's theory, morphic fields shape the different types of atoms in existence, those of living organisms, societies, and even customs, thereby accounting for such phenomena as animal migration or telepathy. These fields are thought to contain an inherent memory, acquired by a process of resonance with the collective unconscious of each species.*

PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE

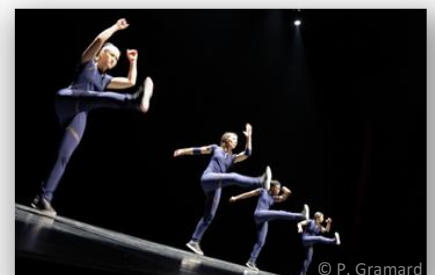
≡ Choreographer: Anne Nguyen



As a dancer specialized in breakdance and familiar with the world of hip-hop battles, Anne Nguyen founded the par Terre Dance Company in 2005. The scientific thought as well as her practice of several martial arts inspire her to conceive choreographic universes that sublimate the hip-hop dance and its essence. By setting precise gestures, geometrical constraints, energy and density contrasts, intertwining of bodies and dance mechanisms, and unexpected occupations of space, she combines a raw, accomplished hip-hop dance with a graphic, pure, deconstructed choreographic writing. Her choreographic pieces display a complex, precise architecture and alternate between controlled spaces prompting personal interpretations and spaces left to chance, or calling for improvisation, which can be fraught with risks. With architectural geometric declinations in *Square Root*, uninterrupted flow of dance particles in continual transformation in *PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE*, robotic partition of revisited couple dances in *bal.exe*, games of strategy in pursuit of territory in *Autarcie (...)*, variant of the breakdance in the form of martial arts in *Kata*, her creations reflect the forms and energies that surround human beings in the contemporary world. They combine poetry and

mathematics, sensuality and explosiveness. They explore the links between music and dance, through original musical creations and a reflection on the dancer's relationship to music and time. Through her choreographic creations, Anne Nguyen questions the value given to the observer and the connection between individuals. She likes to create new relationships between the audience and dance, which she implements through hybrid projects like *Dance of the city warriors*, a course of participative and immersive installations crossing hip-hop dance with the world of video and virtual reality, or with *Graphic Cyphers*, an immersive choreographic concept for the public space.

Anne Nguyen is currently working with more than thirty hip-hop dancers with different specialities (breakdance, popping and waacking) on her different touring productions, and she herself performs in several of them such as *Racine Carrée* and *Yonder Woman*. Anne Nguyen's first production, the solo *Square Root* (2007) relates the geometry found in breakdance movements to the contemporary urban environment. It combines mathematical dance compositions with some of Anne's poems. The solo won second prize in the Masdanza contemporary choreography competition in 2009. Anne Nguyen also choreographed *Keep it Funky!* (2007), a celebratory piece devised for six lockers, and *Spirit of the Underground* (2008), a performance for five dancers and one actress, on the themes of contact and dreams. Her duet *Yonder Woman* (2010), an "experiment for two superhero women", analyses the notion of performance through a game-play based on linear progress and relationship behaviours. Her 2012 production *PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE* is a one-hour walk for eight poppers, who undertake an uninterrupted crossing along the timeline, in an exploration of the different possible states of "being together". In Anne's 2013 production for quartet *Autarcie (...)*, she explores the inner workings of a restless "tribe", with all the power struggles that ensue. In her 2014 production *bal.exe*, a "mechanical ball set to chamber music" for eight poppers and five classical musicians, robotic dancers engage into a new "mechanical" dance style performed in pairs, called "looping pop". Anne Nguyen staged the duet *Lettres à Zerty* in 2015 as part of a commission for young audiences by CDC Le Gymnase and CDC Le Cuvier. In October 2016, Anne Nguyen created *Dance of the city warriors*, an immersive, participatory course of installations centered on hip-hop dance, implementing live video capture and editing interactive video processes and performances danced in situ. In October 2017, Anne Nguyen will stage *Kata*, a show for eight breakdancers that lends form to the warrior-like energy of breakdance. The movements are decomposed into sequences of linear moves and evolve into genuine fights played. She is planning to stage a new production in 2019.



Dancer and choreographer of the par Terre Dance Company, Anne Nguyen is first and foremost a B-girl, specialising in hip-hop floorworks. She has performed with many hip-hop and contemporary dance companies such as Black Blanc Beur, Faustin Linyekula and Salia Nĩ Seydou. She formed part of the breakdance crews RedMask in Montreal, as well as Phase T, Def Dogz and Créteil Style in Paris, and has taken part in hundreds of battles, either solo or in groups, winning several high-profile competitions, such as IBE 2004 or BOTY 2005. She has served as judge on many others, including BOTY 2006 and Redbull BC One 2007. She makes an appearance in the documentary film *Planet B-Boy* (2007).

Anne Nguyen also writes poetry, short prose items and articles on dance (*Danser* magazine, *Repères*, *cahier de danse*). Excerpts from her collection of poems, the *Manual of the City Warrior*, have been published in *Graff It!* magazine, on which she was chief editor of the dance section. Several pieces performed by the Dance Company incorporate Anne Nguyen's texts, recorded or spoken (*Square Root*, *Spirit of the Underground*). Anne teaches hip-hop dance using a method based on postures, on the deconstruction of dance moves and on their subsequent deployment within the performance space. Since 2012, she has taught a technical and theoretical workshop on hip-hop dance at the University of Sciences Po Paris, called *Hip-hop, a contemporary culture*.

Anne Nguyen was awarded the 2013 SACD Nouveau Talent Chorégraphie prize and appointed Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in 2015.

“ It's a sort of b-boying performance in the style of Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker. Or rather a kind of breakdance crossed with the concepts of William Forsythe. Choreographer Anne Nguyen is used to these kinds of comments about her work. She understands the comparison as she is keen to deconstruct hip-hop vocabulary in order to reconstruct it, like a puzzle, to create her increasingly acclaimed choreographies.

Libération – Eve Beauvallet (May 5th, 2015)

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PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE

≡ Cast



Choreographer: Anne Nguyen

Choreographic assistant: Magali Duclos

Dancers: Sonia Bel Hadj Brahim or Cintia Golitin, Pascal Luce or Matthieu Pacquit, Claire Moineau, Blondy Mota-Kisoka, Sacha Négrevergne, Jessica Noita, Rebecca Rheny, Mélanie Sulmona / Understudy dancers: Bouzid Aït-Atmane, Yanka Pédrón

Original music: Benjamin Magnin

Lighting design: Ydir Acef

► **Choreographic assistant:** MAGALI DUCLOS



A specialist of popping, Magali Duclos is a dancer and a choreographer. With her own Dance Company, she created the soli *Jeux d'enfants* (2004), *Comment Shiva* (2009) and *Là-Haut* (2011), as well as the duets *Namaste* (2005) and *Petite Conférence insensée pour Femme sensée* (2012). In 2015, she created for IVT the show *Toc Toc Toc*, for three deaf amateur dancers. Trained in yoga and in ballet, she danced with groups such as Les Daltons, and for choreographers such as Nathalie Pernette, Denis Plassard, Stéphanie Nataf and Mireille Laroche, for director Colline Serreau, for the Käfig Dance Company (*Boxe Boxe*) and for Fratellini circus. Renowned for her performances in battles (Juste Debout 2004 and 2006). This quartet is her third collaboration with Anne Nguyen, after having performed in *Spirit of the Underground* and being her choreographic assistant on *PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE* (2012). She is dancer in *Autarcie* (...).

► **Original music:** BENJAMIN MAGNIN



A drummer, a composer and a sound designer, Benjamin Magnin has a university background in music and sound, where he learned computer-assisted musical creation. Benjamin Magnin created the original music of the piece *Yonder Woman* (2010). Benjamin Magnin's work for *PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE* is based on psychoacoustics (the study of sound perception and interpretation by the brain), and on the interaction between the sound perceptions of the dancers on stage and the sonic and visual interpretations of the public.

"Acoustic waves propagate in space and time, like waves in a liquid, by the vibration of matter. They transport energy, movement quantity, temporarily modifying the physical properties of the environment they are going through. In PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE, the dancers are travelling like such mechanical waves, undergoing reflections, refractions and interferences." (Benjamin Magnin)

► **Lighting design:** YDIR ACEF

Ydir Acef has worked as a lighting and sound technician since 1991. He collaborated with le Théâtre du Lucernaire, le Théâtre du Tourtour and le Forum du Blanc-Mesnil. Since 1997, he has designed lighting for several Theater and Dance Companies (*Groupe Le Chiendent*, *Cie ACTA / Agnès Desfosses*, *Théâtre Carpe Diem*, *6TD Company*...). Ydir Acef has worked as a lighting technician for the par Terre Dance Company since 2008. He created the lighting designs for the pieces *Yonder Woman* in 2010, *PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE* in 2012, *Autarcie* (...) in 2013 and *bal.exe* in 2014. In 2017 he will create the lighting design of the new production, *Kata*.

► Dancers



CINTIA GOLITIN

Originally from Brazil, Cintia started training in hip hop dance in 2004. She has performed for the dance companies Théâtre du voile déchiré, Norma Claire, A part être, Mayemba, and Kadia Faroux... Ashe has also taught for many years, and is renowned for her performances in international battles (UK Championships 2011, Juste Debout 2012 – in duet with Sacha Négrevergne). Cintia Golitin, Rebecca Rheny, Sacha Négrevergne, Sonia Bel Hadj Brahim and Farrah Elmaskini created in 2012 the crew Bandidas, they choreographed the show *Womanoid* and are currently working on a group performance.



CLAIRE MOINEAU

With a training in hip hop, as well as a background in classical ballet and modern dance, Claire is choreographer to the Uzumé Dance Company (*Namasté, Crescendo, Autrement Moi* and *Vertige d'Elle*). She is also a dancer with the Dance Companies Difé Kako (Chantal Loial) and Arthur Harel, and has worked in collaboration with Sébastien Lefrançois. She teaches regularly at the AscEnDanse Hip Hop association, where she organizes workshops, conferences and dance programmes. Claire is also renowned for her performances in battles (Juste Debout 2004 and 2007 – in duet with Jessica Noita). Claire is dancer in *PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE* and *bal.exe* with the par Terre Dance Company.



BLONDY MOTA-KISOKA

A popper and a B-boy, Blondy Kioska mainly performs in one-man shows, on stage and in international TV shows, as well as in street shows. He is renowned for his performances in battles (Juste Debout 2010). Blondy is dancer in *PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE* and *bal.exe* with the par Terre Dance Company.



SACHA « SACHA POP » NÉGREVERGNE

Sacha, a dancer and performer with the dance companies Farid'O (*Mistero Buffo, Pays de Malheur*) and Massala (*A condition*), trained in theatre as well as dance, where she developed a taste for the eclectic. She is renowned for her performances in international battles (IBE 2011, Juste Debout 2012 – in duet with Cintia Golitin). is dancer in *PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE* and *bal.exe* with the par Terre Dance Company. Cintia Golitin, Rebecca Rheny, Sacha Négrevergne, Sonia Bel Hadj Brahim and Farrah Elmaskini created in 2012 the crew Bandidas, they choreographed the show *Womanoid* and are currently working on a group performance.



JESSICA NOITA

Progressing from classical ballet to hip hop dance, then venturing into African dance and contemporary dance, Jessica was trained by choreographers José Bertogal and Stéphanie Nataf of the Choréam dance company, with whom she worked for eight years. She then joined the Hamaliens dance company (Ibrahim Sissoko and Tip-top), and the Ethadam dance company. She also dances for the Uzumé dance company (Claire Moineau). Jessica is dancer in *PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE* and *bal.exe* with the par Terre Dance Company.



MATTHIEU « STOCKOS » PACQUIT

Matthieu was a professional swimmer for many years. He began self-training in hip-hop dance at the age of 14 in Martinique. He is renowned for his performances in international battles (Who is Who 2009, Pop What You Got 2011). He also trained in classical ballet and contemporary dance. As well as being a teacher and a choreographer, he has danced for David Milôme and for several West Indian dance companies. Matthieu was dancer in *PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE* and *bal.exe* with the par Terre Dance Company.



REBECCA « POCAHONTAS » RHENY

Rebecca started dancing in 1998, learning from her encounters with pioneer French and international dancers. She performs regularly on stage as well as in street shows and battles (Spin-Off 2010). With a keen interest in hip hop dance, she is writing a dissertation on the stakes involved in getting a state diploma in hip hop dance as part of her Master I studies. She has taught since 2004 and is developing an approach to the body through dance while teaching art at therapy workshops. Rebecca is dancer in *PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE* and *bal.exe* with the par Terre Dance Company. Cintia Golitin, Rebecca Rheny, Sacha Négrevergne, Sonia Bel Hadj Brahim and Farrah Elmaskini created in 2012 the crew Bandidas, they choreographed the show *Womanoid* and are currently working on a group performance.



MÉLANIE SULMONA

After an academic training in classical ballet, Mélanie started self-training in hip-hop dance at the Forum des Halles in Paris. She dances for the hip hop dance companies Force 7, Choréam and works in collaboration with many contemporary dance choreographers, such as Christine Bastin or Sylvain Groud. In 2005, she founded her own company Côté Corps, in collaboration with Attilio Cossu, choreographing the solos *Vertigo* and *Sur un air de Petrouchka*, and the duet *Contre Elle*. Mélanie is dancer in *PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE* with the par Terre Dance Compny.



BOUZID AÏT-ATMANE (understudy dancer)

Bouzid aka 'Zid' specializes in Locking and has won numerous battles. He has also danced for the company Côté Corps, choreographed by Mélanie Sulmona, in the pieces *Territoires* (2012) and *Reves sans gravité* (2011), as well as for the dance company Sens'As (choreographed by Emmanuel Oponga) with *Terres Inconnues* (2010), and the SLU Collective (Emmanuel Oponga and Loic Riou) with *Illusions* (2010). He took part in the TV competition *La meilleure Danse* in 2011 and *Dance Street* in 2010 and founded the Lockers collective "Locking Fighters" in 2013, he has had a strong presence in the Locking battle milieu. He created with Yanka Pedron the show *YZ*, which won the *Dance Street* contest in 2013, then in 2015 the duet *Dans l'Arène*. Bouzid is understudy dancer and repetiteur in *PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE* and *bal.exe*.



SONIA "SONYA" BEL HADJ BRAHIM (understudy dancer)

Specialized in popping and in Waacking, SonYa quickly stands out in battles where she dances both styles. In 2009, SonYa, together with Pascal Luce and Farrah Elmaskini founded the crew La Mécanique des Naïfs and staged the show *Et au bout du conte*. In 2011, she joined the Point Zéro dance company (Delphine Caron) as a dancer in the production *4Soundz*. In 2012 and 2013, she took on several roles in the productions *Les Disparus* by the No Mad dance company, *Z.H.* by the Rualité dance company (Bintou Dembelé), as well as *PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE* and *Autarcie (...)* by the par Terre Dance Company. In 2014 and 2015, she dances in new productions: *bal.exe* by the par Terre Dance Company and *Septem* by the Chriki'z company. Cintia Golitin, Rebecca Rheny, Sacha Négrevergne, Sonia Bel Hadj Brahim and Farrah Elmaskini created in 2012 the crew *Bandidas*, they choreographed the show *Womanoid* and are currently working on a group performance.



PASCAL "BOOG PARADISE" LUCE (understudy dancer)

Pascal Luce has been teaching for over ten years as a specialist in Popping Boogaloo and Locking. In 2003, he took part in the Funktherapy tour with Popin Pete, Skeeter Rabbit and Disco Dave. He won the battle of St Denis in 2003, the Street Dance Meeting in 2009 and 2010 and the Roots Battle in 2010. In 2007, he was a dancer with the Funk and Styles dance company – with choreography by Ahmed Agouni and Shabba Doo. In 2009, he joined the Point Zéro dance company (Delphine Caron) to perform in the productions *Air Pose*, *4Soundz* in 2011 and *MAI* in 2012. In 2012, he joined the Rualité dance company (Bintou Dembelé) to perform in the show *Z.H.* In 2009, Pascal, together with Sonia Bel Hadj Brahim and Farrah Elmaskini founded the crew *La Mécanique des Naïfs* and staged the show *Et au bout du conte*. Pascal is dancer in *PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE* and *bal.exe* with the par Terre Dance Company.



PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE

≡ Press extracts



► Le Monde Magazine – Rosita Boisseau (April 13th, 2012)

“When it comes to women—they are not so many, hip-hop choreographer Anne Nguyen must be reckoned with. Since 2007, she follows her pared down yet imperious artistic line, carving straight and sharp without deviating from her aspirations, even less from the fundamentals of her discipline. **With a scientific background, she puts hip-hop movement through the mill to extract spectacular equations, uncluttered yet always surprising. Here she is again with an ambitious production for eight dancers entitled *PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE*, where she harnesses movement by trapping it inside brightly lit corridors. A love of constraints and a passion to sublimate them: typical Nguyen.**”

► La Terrasse – Nathalie Yokel (September 2012)

La Terrasse

“For a while now, there has been a certain captivating singularity about Anne Nguyen. We need look no further, that singularity finds its full expression in *PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE*, a dance piece in which, for the first time, hip-hop movements develop an enchanting quality. Anne Nguyen discreetly made a name for herself with her first solo, in which she invested herself mind, body and soul. *Square Root* lifted the veil on her mathematical mind, her sense of space and her stature as a B-Girl. Here, Anne Nguyen demonstrates her ability to organize a true group piece, highly choreographic and deeply rooted in “the essence of hip-hop”, whose artistic meaning and message is totally devoted to her art, like in *Square Root*. *PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE* is a dance piece for eight poppers. They immerse themselves in a one-hour uninterrupted journey. Far from being an ordinary stroll as the title might suggest, this is a skilfully methodical march, whose sole purpose is to get from one end of the stage to the other.

An impulse that carries us away

Anne Nguyen has staged the show upon a radical premise: one after the other, the dancers cross the stage from left to right, in side profile. Popping, one of the specialties of hip-hop dance, based on stopped and blocked movements and isolation, is the catchword for this dance piece. Their march is somehow inescapable, as they strive together for a common cause. Nothing can stop them, they are trapped in a progress that intensifies with each new entrance. The choreographer, caught up by her world of constraints, leaves them no way out. She takes delight in re-inventing each new appearance, complicating the layout of sequences, stoppings, slowings, as well as movements that evolve and shake themselves free. Solitary paths lead to a group progression, yet somehow reveal each dancer’s singularity. Far from being formatted the fine cast fully embraces the impulse of this march and whisks the audience along in its wake.”

► Les chroniques du Festival CDC – Jérôme Provençal (February 16th, 2014)

“Popping is a dance that is akin to body sculpture. Anne Nguyen—a young choreographer whom we will be following very closely—makes it her own, using it in a piece that explores movement and the passing of time. Not a cold, monotonous exploration, but a vibrant and glittering one, with incredible precision, throughout which martial art and sensual gestures resonate perfectly with the haunting rhythms of the splendid score composed by Benjamin Magnin.”

► Inferno Magazine – Mari-Mai Corbel (March 13th, 2014)

“Anne Nguyen, *PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE*: the underlying desynchronisations of the human body

PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE is a tense, avid visual spectacle. This piece by Anne Nguyen is an optical exercise that constantly draws in the eye in that it attempts to decipher the deregulation of the contemporary body. The optical exercise is the dance itself, and, in this case, popping [...], which highlights what is commonly found in the contemporary approach. Anne Nguyen creates a series of transversal lines of light (the work of lighting designer, Ydir Acef) resembling swimming lanes bathed in varying chiaroscuro effects and bluish lights in a constant effort to emphasise the graphic shapes of the bodies in space. Popping removed from its physical socio-cultural background and its part in urban culture, becomes a purely kinetic language. Anne Nguyen almost literally invites a “reading” of the dance: the dancers in *PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE* become moving symbols, letters that travel across these abstract lines as if painted by light. Sometimes, depending on certain hand movements and body contortions, hieroglyphic images appear. The dancers’ bodies speak as if speaking a lost language.”

► VästerbottensFolkblad – Katrin Sten (May 13th, 2012)
/ Swedish regional daily

FOLKBLADET .NU

“The thrill of energy

Seldom have I seen a show that succeeds in maintaining a pace of such high intensity. This nonstop tempo, packed with energy, sustains an hour of live crossings. This is accentuated through the use of minimalist scenography and lighting. In this piece by Anne Nguyen the eight poppers of par Terre Dance Company explode onto the stage with immense prowess. We view the dancers side-on and rarely do they look back at us.

[...] The dancers enact life’s changes, obstacles and deceits, as well as happiness or exhaustion through movement – a trembling hand, a foot searching for a place to find a foothold or synchronizations of perfection – and with this they are able to arouse great emotions. This piece of enormous depth creates a world all of its own. As though being sucked into a black hole, the viewer is fully immersed in *PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE*. It soon becomes obvious that the subject matter addressed here goes beyond the mere everyday life. Nguyen says her aim is to make what inspires her – physics and the essence of her own investigations – come across on stage: the search for the role of Man in his environment... alchemy and sensations are one and the same here and come full circle.”

► VästerbottensKuriren – Ann Enström (May 13th, 2012) / Swedish regional daily

VK
Västerbottens-Kuriren

“Memories of asphalt made flesh

The dancers enter onto a stage kept in total darkness. They start moving and accelerating, appearing to be floating above the ground, engulfed by industrial music—heavy and experimental and with hip-hop influences. Animated by horizontal movements performed either at a fast pace or in slow motion, the dancer’s bodies move along the ground systematically. The image is that of a street. One gets the feeling that the stream of people is never going to stop. They keep on walking, every once in a while their faces turn towards the spectator, fleetingly, only to quickly turn away again to keep on walking. They are walking along the path of life, towards an undefined destination, a break point as yet unknown. It is a walk that becomes extended and transforms itself into a mechanized, an almost static appearing or desynchronized march. The piece questions the mechanization of life and opens up a host of alternatives to ordinariness; an adaptation that is rarely attempted by our fellow choreographers.

More importantly, the show achieves an encounter, a mix of street dance and stage performance that results in a physical entity—creating a real alternative for telling a story.

As soon as the dancers begin to set their bodies in motion, the stage starts to vibrate as a result of their repetitive, rhythmic and pulsating collisions. This power on stage is passed on to the audience like an electric current—an audience that is totally captivated.”

► Svenska Dagbladets (May 11th, 2013) / Sweden

“Clever precision popping

Anne Nguyen’s choreography resembles a well-lubricated dance machine, but a machine powered by individuals who create their own sounds. [...] The dancers are incredibly precise and coordinated, whether they are walking upright or crawling across the floor like animals. They form intricate chains, hinting at the fact that contact improvisation—a contrasting form to popping—is one of the ingredients. [...] *PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE* is a physically intelligent, fascinating and exhilarating piece. Popping refined and restructured into a kind of multilayered cubism.”

► César – Valentin Lagares (April 2014)

“When hip-hop dance takes on a literary subject matter, near-perfect creations can sometimes emerge, like an erupting volcano spewing forth a rich, fertile lava. Developed by the ingenious Anne Nguyen, *PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE* is a shining example of just such creativity. [...] Sometimes verging on hues of blue, [the] stunningly pure lighting arrangements conjure up a particularly captivating sepulchral atmosphere, imbuing the eight dancers with a power and talent that make them positively glow throughout the performance. Hauntingly beautiful and repetitive in the best sense of the word, the electronic score also helps to underline the vast spatial dimensions of the terrifying world depicted by Yevgeny Zamyatin [in his novel, *We*]. We are left with the purity of the dance on the stage. The highlight of the show, the cherry, or the icing on the cake on which all else depends, regardless! Put in a nutshell, here is the art of the choreographer. Supreme masters of their own body music, the dancers inscribe their rhythms into the musical score. Each body plays out its mechanical routine, assuming the unconscious, albeit partly humanised, poses of robots. Highly visual, seen in profile, the dancers’ movements are constant and all the more compelling thanks to the cleverly crafted moves of the choreographer. Interpreted and lifted to new realms by the performers, the popping technique thus captures their individual personalities in an all-encompassing aura in which the sense of despotic oppression is almost tangible.”

► Critiphotodanse.com – Jean-Marie Gourreau (November 18th, 2013)

“Perpetual movement

Anne Nguyen refuses to deny her origins, either as a scientist or a dancer. She, in effect, began to specialise in breakdance and hip-hop, devoting herself to the art and exploring all its facets, while incorporating mathematics and geometry. And she employs it with a masterly hand to illustrate her message. [...]

[*PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE*] questions and lays bare a society that is trapped in the infernal whirlpool of existence; all human beings are condemned to move in the same direction, to circumvent or surmount the obstacles littering their path, learning to wend their way and, eventually, live together. Better than any other technique, popping has served the choreographer’s purpose to perfection, expressing the hesitations, ruptures and questions experienced by Mankind in the face of life’s hazards, a ‘succession of evanescent states’, as the choreographer terms them. But it also expresses the repetitiveness and synchronization of some of our daily deeds and gestures.

Nguyen’s work, a piece pregnant with meaning, thus expresses itself as a perpetual traversal of the stage, from stage left to stage right, performed by the eight dancers, either individually, or in twos, threes, fours, and even in unison. They proceed, of course, at different rhythms, obeying the imperatives of the haunting score of Benjamin Magnin. The dancers, all remarkable in their own way, break down their movements before reconstructing them gradually in an altered way reminiscent of the chronophotography of Etienne-Jules Marey. They explore a series of brief, rapid movements, impulsive broken gestures, increasingly sophisticated, but in effect, executed with enormous suppleness, clearly exerting a fascination over the audience. At times, their progress resembles that of a cross-country skier, at others, the mechanical gestures of a robot programmed to carry out a precise and more or less repetitive act. The mesmerising march of a group of individuals trapped by its condition, a perpetual, haunting movement, illustrated to blisteringly powerful effect by the dance.”

► Un Fauteuil pour L’Orchestre – Jean-Christophe Carius (April 22nd, 2012)

Un Fauteuil pour L’Orchestre

“The act of walking is an ancient, innate reflex that our highly evolved brains have helped to transform into a voluntary movement. *PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE* illustrates the empirical development of our capacity to think and move as we like. At first sight, the dancers, inveterate walkers, resemble the stuttering black and white silhouettes in Muybridge’s Zoopraxiscope. They advance, caught up in a one-way world built of impositions, alter their pace from slow to fast, they explore the full range of their nervous system in a straightjacket of electronic noise. Their unstoppable locomotion creates a kinetic panorama, a conveyor belt advancing at a measured pace. In this horizontal Tetris, there is a constant flow of blue, black, grey, coloured human pawns, constantly looking for a way to combine their diverse, finely tessellating forms. In a word, this prolonged procession of computerized movements weaves a never-ending tapestry of diversity that incorporates the element of chance.”

► The French Mag – Noémie Courtès (April 21st, 2012)

THE FRENCHMAG
PERFORMANCE AND DRAMA

“The rules are simple: an hour-long uninterrupted traversal of the stage from left to right, according to the rhythm, frequency and number of dancers [...]. The project is an ambitious one, [...] and the challenge enormous, alternating as it does between a refusal to conform [...] and a quest for convivial individuality. And all of this without bludgeoning the captive audience, trapped in their seats. Fascinating, indeed. Anne Nguyen’s choreography is a cyclical variation on popping, in harmony with the earth, earthly and earth-bound, including even a simulation of the ceaseless walkers’ shadows. The spectator is confronted at once with a sequence of photographs breaking down the movements to their component parts, and an attempt at perpetual movement, set to an electronic soundtrack. Man’s fascination with the robots that have been keeping our civilization under control for the last four centuries is suggestively apparent, paradoxically through dance. First the jerky contractions transform one hip-popper into a machine, then cybernetics show us a human face once more through the sheer power of the movements and the relentless desire to progress, albeit almost thwarted by air resistance and clinging bodies. Dance reigns supreme because of the march that unfolds. And for the more forward-facing grand finale, the pact of the obligatory promenade is terminated, for hope lies at the end of the road. We are once again put in mind of a contented Sisyphus...”

► Expressen – Margareta Sörensson (May 11th, 2013) / Sweden

“This one-hour piece takes a look at all the different forms of “togetherness” that are possible in society. Intense and fascinating. Each of the dancers’ personalities is highlighted and the group choreographies form a coherent whole. [...] We can only applaud the virtuoso performance. And Anne Nguyen, herself, wastes no time in getting up onto the stage after the applause to illustrate a few breakdance moves, thus showing us that she is a true B-girl at heart. For people, like me, who love minimalism, this is a fascinating show.”

► **Tanz – Thomas Hahn (April 2012)**

“The eight dancers cross the stage from left to right, over and over again, without interruption. First on their own, backstage and at speed, and followed by a beam of light. When they stop and bend backwards, it appears as though the ground is slipping away from underneath their feet. Their bodies meet and come together through a set of ever-changing combinations. The pictures merge, at times at a slower, much more controlled pace, allowing the spectator to study movements and techniques more thoroughly. The dancers, all of varying statures, bring their own touch to the movements. Neither moonwalk nor backslide, but a paradoxical move that produces a permanent illusion of activity. In fact it seems as though the bodies are gliding into two different directions simultaneously, when in reality they are remaining in one place. [...] Anne Nguyen operates with all the hallmarks of a mathematician. “Constraints lie at the basis of this piece of choreography” she explains. The dancers’ steps are composed according to the four cardinal points and worked out—with great precision—in relationship to the distances that need to be covered when moving at a slower or quicker pace than the accompanying music.”

► **Le Courrier de l’Ouest – Lelian (March 20th, 2012)**



“They must not backtrack. The eight robot dancers in *PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE* have no choice but to keep moving forward in this obligatory walk. They must follow their assigned path, fast or slow, contorting their bodies to the jolts and subtle vibrations of Popping. Anne Nguyen's fifth production recalls the work of Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker in its rigour and the constraint imposed upon movement, wherein much emotion is concealed. *PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE* is the conclusive proof that hip-hop, with its own specific language (every movement bears the seal of the art) and notions of contemporary and classical fugue, is a high and noble art indeed.”

► **Télérama Sortir – Rosita Boisseau (May 30th, 2012 / Apr. 18th, 2012 / Feb. 8th, 2012 / Dec. 7th, 2011)**



“Guided by the theme of continuous movement and the organic unfolding of gesture and time forever renewed by dance, [Anne Nguyen] explores the beauty and the confinement of this inevitable and ever-evolving choreographic organism.”

► **Les Inrocks – Jérôme Provençal (February 21st, 2014)**

“Even more compelling [is] *PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE*, a remarkable show based on “popping”, a hip-hop dance form, which Anne Nguyen cleverly deconstructs in order to conduct a stylised, magnetic study of movement (individual and group).”

► **Sud Ouest – Christiane Poulin (January 10th, 2012)**



“In the totalitarian state described by Zamyatin, humandroids take their obligatory leisure-time walk, four by four. In Anne’s “walk”, eight dancers cross the stage time and time again, more or less continuously, most of the time showing their profile to the audience. In this choreographic piece, Anne Nguyen works on the lateral movement of both the walker and the popper. “I develop straight lines and break down movements to find alternative forms”, says Anne. This endless march is performed to the original music of Benjamin Magnin, the whole producing a hypnotic effect.”

► **France 2: « Des mots de Minuit » – Philippe Lefait – May 2nd, 2012 / National TV Channel.**



Report on *PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE* in La Villette (Hautes Tensions Festival) and interview with Anne Nguyen. Images of Anne Nguyen's artistic workshops at the University of Sciences Po Paris.

→ [Watch](#) (Length of video: 3 min).

PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE

≡ Workshops based on the show

Anne Nguyen and the dancers of *PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE* offer two-time workshops. A technical approach as a start based on postures, balance and reflexes through upright or floor exercises within space and with the help of a barre built from broken down hip hop movements. The second time focuses on a choreographic composition related to *PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE*. The various states of “being together” are explored: work on the notions of mass, contact, on unison and synchronisation, on dissociation and on different shapes of amalgams.

... to create a walkabout format

The various forms studied may be imported in several locations according to their specificities, while integrating elements from the space design into the physical composition: walls, floor qualities, furniture, points of visual contact... The aim is to build a choreographic journey binding the different states, possibly as a public walkabout.

All audiences, from 7 years old.

Duration: one or two sessions - 2 to 4 hours.

≡ Video teaser of the performance

PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE – par Terre / Anne Nguyen Dance Company

Teaser of *PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE*, filmed in La Villette on 20 April 2012 (Hautes Tensions Festival).

→ **Watch** (Duration of the video: 3 min).



PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE

≡ Partners

With the support of: l'aide à la production d'Arcadi; l'ADAMI; le Conseil général du Val-de-Marne; la Communauté de Communes Charenton – Saint-Maurice.

Coproduction: Parc de la Villette; Centre de Danse du Galion d'Aulnay-sous-Bois; Les Théâtres Charenton – Saint-Maurice; Initiatives d'Artistes en Danses Urbaines (Fondation de France - Parc de la Villette, with the support of la Caisse des Dépôts and l'Acisé); Centre de développement chorégraphique du Val-de-Marne; CCN de La Rochelle / Poitou-Charentes; CCN de Créteil et du Val-de-Marne / Cie Käfig - dans le cadre de l'accueil studio.

With the partnership of: Centre national de la danse - mise à disposition de studio.

The par Terre Dance Company is funded by l'aide pluriannuelle du Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication / DRAC Ile-de-France, la Région Ile-de-France, l'aide au fonctionnement du Département du Val-de-Marne and le soutien du Département de Seine-Saint-Denis.

Anne Nguyen is an associated artist to Chaillot - Théâtre national de la Danse from 2015 to 2018.

The par Terre Dance Company has been invited to take part in artist-in-residence programme at l'Espace 1789 de Saint-Ouen (93) for the 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 seasons.

Anne Nguyen was awarded the 2013 SACD Nouveau Talent Chorégraphie prize and appointed Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in 2015.

≡ Booking informations

Duration: 60 minutes.

Technical requirements:

- * The piece can be performed outdoors, on a flat, smooth surface.
- * There are no props or set design requirements for this piece.
- * The dancers circulate behind the backdrop and in the wings.
- * Opening from wall to wall: 16 m (Please contact us if you cannot offer the required dimensions).
- * Ideal stage dimensions (between both sides of the black borders): 12m W, 10m D, 8m H.
- * *Minimum stage dimensions (between both sides of the black borders): 11m W, 8m D, 5m H.*

Touring staff: 11 people: 1 choreographer, 8 dancers, 1 technician, 1 touring manager.

Booking fees: Available on request.

Technical rider: can be downloaded on the [PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE](#) page of our website.



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