

# bal.exe

COMPAGNIE  
**PAR TERRE**  
ANNE NGUYEN



Mechanical ball set to chamber music

Production 2014 | 60 min

Show suitable for all audiences, 6 years old and above



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## ≡ Mechanical ball set to chamber music

In *bal.exe*, Anne Nguyen's seventh creation, eight popping specialists and five classical musicians perform on stage. The choreographer takes the romantic and melancholic universe of chamber music with pieces by Brahms, Connesson, Halvorsen and Biber, and transposes it into a robotic and almost informatic-style choreographic score, where logic comes face-to-face with randomness. Robotic dancers, dressed like sophisticated, off-beat, retro style models, act as if bewitched by the music, reaching out to interact with each other in a series of jerky, restrained and mechanical gestures. They sketch out a few dance steps in a new "mechanical" hip-hop style dance performed in pairs that was created especially for the show, called looping pop. The driving force powering their bodies programmed to dance functions randomly. Every choice they make seems only to steer them towards an increasingly deterministic and ordered system. Engulfed by a universe where powerful emotions soar high above the music from which they emerge, the solitary bodies try desperately to gain control in their relationship with the other, causing the disruptive actions in this somnambulistic ball. Rising above the robotic tasks seemingly imposed randomly upon them, the dancers display a totally disconnected side to their character, moving around in a festive world of faceted spheres, wigs, carrots and musicians reminiscent of a Tex Avery cartoon... *bal.exe* is a computer program in the form of a dance made for two executed by mal-adjusted robots, a program that unexpectedly fails.

### ► Music:

**Johannes Brahms** (1833-1897) – Quintet for clarinet and strings in B minor – opus 115 / clarinet, 2 violins, viola, cello / approx. 36 min

Improvisation for one clarinet on "Disco-Toccata" by **Guillaume Connesson** (born in 1970) / clarinet / approx. 2'30

**Johan Halvorsen** (1864-1935) - Passacaglia for violin and viola after G.F Handel Passacaglia from Suite No. 7 in G minor for Harpsichord / violin and viola / approx. 7 min

**Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber** (1644-1704) – Rosary Sonata n°16 "The Guardian Angel" – Passacaglia in G minor for one violin / violin / approx. 9 min

Popping: the eight dancers in *bal.exe* are poppers. Six of them also perform in *PROMENADE OBLIGATOIRE*, Anne Nguyen's 2012 dance production. 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.

## ≡ ".exe": bodies programmed to dance

In *bal.exe*, the eight dancers gradually tune in to one another and start to resonate with the music, eventually tracing out a few dance steps with their partner, before lapsing into the solitude of their almost robotic bodies and trying to once again to make contact with their partner. In computing terminology, '.exe' is the extension denoting an executable file, in other words a file containing a computer program. An executable file instigates a process in the computer's system, whereby the program is run when it is opened. In *bal.exe*, the dancers' bodies are informed by dance movements, but they do not 'register' any emotion and they appear unaffected by the exchanged glances, contact and communication with their dance partner. The mechanical ball performed by the somnambulistic dancers of *bal.exe* might be seen as symbolic of the almost derisory efforts of individuals lost in a world stripped of values to sketch out a few dance steps in order to connect with certain cultural references. The dancers might therefore be seen to represent our remote descendants, where the latter might have only a limited and distorted access to the data and knowledge pertaining to our present culture, trying to reproduce its shapes and patterns with all the awkwardness of a robot. They might also represent elderly people suffering from memory loss, attempting to reconnect with a feeling and instinctively giving rise to spontaneous dance movements as soon as they are enveloped in the music and faced with a partner.

Anne Nguyen

## ≡ "Looping pop": a new one-to-one hip hop dance

In *bal.exe*, "mechanical ball set to chamber music", I have devised a new style of one-to-one hip hop dancing, called "looping pop" for my eight dancers specialized in popping. The looping pop uses the concepts, rhythms and poses seen in certain types of ballroom dance, such as the tango, waltz or the bachata, and set them against the mechanical, angular and robotic gestures of popping. Muscular isolation, contraction, locking and different body states, such as slow-motion, waves or robotics, are executed in a question-answer format and in a play on complementarity, where a partner is held in a clinging pose. By "looping" the rhythmic and the various action-reaction patterns, I have devised new systems of one-to-one dancing, in which each dancer moves around his/her partner's body.

# bal.exe

I have practiced a lot of martial arts, especially capoeira, as well as Brazilian jiu jitsu, Viet Vo Dao and Wing Chun. One of the features of these practices is the relationship to the partner, which is one that involves physical contact. However, while the contact with the floor is one of the basic principles in breakdancing, personal contact with the partner is very under-exploited by hip hop dancers, the latter creating an empty space around them in which to dance their 'circle of life'. The contact with the floor, the relationship with the Earth, are what prompted me to practice breakdancing rather than any other hip hop dance style. Nevertheless, I greatly missed that contact with, and relationship to, a partner when I decided to stop martial arts and concentrate solely on dance. That's why I now make it one of my main research goals as choreographer. I developed a series of technical exercises aimed at introducing contact into the dance moves that are inspired by martial arts and mechanical principles. I bring together arms, legs and bodies in a dynamic, circular fashion within a reduced space. It's as a result of this approach that I then went on to create a combination of moves with the dancers for several persons, where energies specific to hip hop dance, such as the centrifugal force in breakdance, can develop and blossom.

In *bal.exe*, I decided to go further in my search for contact in hip hop dancing by creating a dance style in its own right, which I hope to make widely popular not only among hip hop dancers, but also among audiences. The looping pop is a dance that combines the technical excellence and exuberance of hip hop dance with the notions of contact and oneness with a partner in ballroom type dancing. While the individualistic and assured energy of hip hop dance is preserved, the looping pop also allows the dancers to maintain a physical contact and exchange instructions with their partners. Each dancer revolves around their own centre of gravity in a series of moves with incisive, controlled energy. Far removed from the usual sensually-charged seductive images of dance, the looping pop is a dance form that places the dancers in contact with an interplay of mechanisms. It allows people to dance together in a context bereft of the embarrassment sometimes involved in dancing with a partner. Young dancers can therefore dance unimpeded in a fun, playful relationship with their elders.

*bal.exe* and the idea of the looping pop came out of my constant desire to challenge our relationship to dance. Why, with whom, and for whom do we dance? In a society where technology has caused upheavals in interpersonal relations, the looping pop is inviting us to make contact in a way that reflects our lifestyle and behaviour. As individualistic egocentrics, we are extremely dependent on the slightest outside event and react quickly to all information. We are also capable of inventing endless variations on the repetitive processes comprising our daily lives.

Anne Nguyen

\* *Breakdance: hip hop acrobatic floor dance.*

## ≡ Dance and chamber music

In each of my productions, the dancers are inhabited by rhythm sequences peculiar to them alone, and freely explore their movements within a complex system of constraints, wherein the score is but one of the constituent elements. *bal.exe* involves eight poppers dancing to chamber music played on stage by five classical musicians. Brahms' quintet for clarinet is the main piece. It is a romantic, somewhat nostalgic, piece, whose score varies enormously in rhythm and measure. A few brief moments in the score are conducive to dance, but many more besides prompt contemplation. The dancers interpret the musical structure according to the moment: they follow one of the paths followed by the score, they continue along that path until it disappears, after which they resume by tuning in to one of the instruments, only to subsequently distance themselves by focusing solely on their dance... In this distancing process, they alternate between identifying with the music and building inner rhythms in which they become submerged, which then disappear, allowing them to slip away in order to succumb to new influences.

Anne Nguyen

## ≡ Popping and robotics

Deriving from the full term "Boogaloo Popping", Popping is a speciality of hip hop dance, which was also known as the "Smurf" in France, referencing the white gloves worn by some dancers. This so-called "funk style" dance named after the music to which it is performed came into being in California in the late 1970s with Boogaloo Sam and his group, the Electric Boogaloos. It is inspired by Locking, another "funk style" dance, as well as incorporating mimes, robots, hieroglyphs, Oriental dance, and even animals such as the snake.

Robotics is one of the techniques explored by the poppers. It is also a discipline in its own right, half-way between dance and mime.

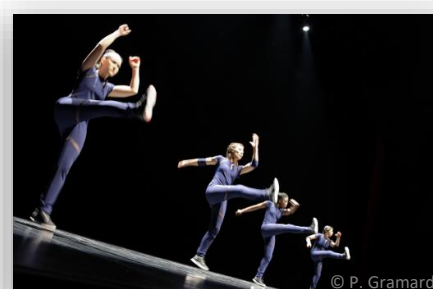
## ≡ Choreographer: Anne Nguyen



**A**s 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 Ni 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 *Graffiti!* 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*.

Keen on collaborating and cross-referencing within artistic milieux, Anne Nguyen created in 2014 the piece *i* as part of the trilogy for six dancers and three choreographers *La preuve par l'autre* commissioned by the Malka Dance Company. She has also worked as choreographic consultant to Australian choreographer Nick Power, in Sydney, for his 2014 production *Cypher*.

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 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015)

## ≡ Cast

- ▶ **Choreography:** Anne Nguyen
- ▶ **Dancers:** Sonia Bel Hadj Brahim, William Delahaye or Matthieu Pacquit, Pascal Luce, Claire Moineau, Blondy Mota-Kisoka, Sacha Négrevergne, Jessica Noita, Rebecca Rheny / Understudy dancers: Farrah Elmaskini, Cintia Golitin
- ▶ **Musicians:** Juliette Adam - clarinet, Yaoré Talibart - violin, Boris Blanco or Clémence Mériaux - violin, Rapahël Jardin or Issey Nadaud or Yona Zekri - viola, Alexis Derouin or Caroline Sypniewski – cello
- ▶ **Lighting design:** Ydir Acef
- ▶ **Video creation:** Claudio Cavallari
- ▶ **With extracts from the movie:** "Paroles, paroles" by Ron Dyens (Sacrebleu Productions, 2002)
- ▶ **Assistant choreographer:** Magali Duclos

### ▶ Music:

**Johannes Brahms** (1833–1897) - Quintet for clarinet and strings in B minor – opus 115 / clarinet, 2 violins, viola, cello / approx. 36 min

Improvisation on “Disco-Toccata” by **Guillaume Connesson** (born in 1970) / clarinet / approx. 2 min

**Johan Halvorsen** (1864–1935) - Passacaglia for violin and viola after G.F. Handel Passacaglia from Suite No. 7 in G minor for Harpsichord / violin and viola / approx. 6 min

**Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber** (1644–1704) - Rosary Sonata n°16 “The Guardian Angel” - Passacaglia in G minor for one violin / violin / approx. 9 min

### Ydir Acef - Lighting design

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*.

**bal.exe**

## ≡ Dancers



### SONIA "SONYA" BEL HADJ BRAHIM

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 Dembélé), 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

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 Dembélé) 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.



### 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 Hamalians 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.



## **CINTIA GOLITIN (understudy dancer)**

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... She 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.



## **FARRAH ELMASKINI (understudy dancer)**

Farra discovered locking and popping in 1999 and continued as participant or jury in battles. She is dancer for the Point Zéro dance company (Delphine Caron) in *Air Pose*, and for the Rualité dance company (Bintou Dembélé) in *LOL* and *Z.H.*. She appears in the documentary *La Cité de la danse* (2012) to explain her growing passion for dance. In 2012, she created her solo *Le Rythme de l'Autre*. Farrah is an understudy dancer in two performances of the par Terre Dance Company: *Autarcie (...)* and *bal.exe*. In 2009, Sonia Bel Hadj Brahim, Pascal Luce and Farrah Elmaskini founded the crew La Mécanique des Naïfs and stages the show *Et au bout du conte*. 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.



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## ≡ Press extracts

► ArtistikRezo – Thomas Hahn (October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2014)



"[...] With *bal.exe*, Anne Nguyen launches a double cultural revolution in the hip-hop world. With something so completely new she needed to create a new hip-hop dance style, called "looping pop", based on popping. What is popping? A highly articulated, mechanical hip-hop dance style, which is danced upright. [...] **Hip-hop ball, robotic ball, paradoxical ball.** Here, popping is danced face to face, in pairs! [...] **It is all about states of body and mind, in a meeting between dance and romantic, even melancholic music. Suspense and fascination operate fully. It needed a mathematician choreographer to create this fluid circulation between Brahms and popping, and a dance that could be informed by algorithms. In the end, all appears very natural. *bal.exe* crosses the ages, from Brahms' baroque to romantic ballet, with automaton characters such as Coppélia, Petrushka and the Nutcracker, to lead straight to the future of hip-hop dance."**

► Danser Canal Historique – Thomas Hahn (March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014)



"*bal.exe*: and Anne Nguyen created "looping pop"

With *bal.exe*, Anne Nguyen has created no less than a cultural revolution in the hip-hop world: couple dancing. Baptism of fire for "looping pop", a new dance style in which popping is performed face to face, in couples! [...] The apparent simplicity of the plot and the drama is just an illusion. It is all about states of body and mind, in a meeting between dance and romantic, even melancholic music. Suspense and fascination operate fully."

► La Scène – Rosita Boisseau (September 2014)

## La Scène

"Hip-hop choreographer Anne Nguyen has set herself an odd double challenge: to come up with a dance for two using hip-hop moves, half-robotics, half-popping. The spectacular result, entitled *bal.exe* (inspired by computer speak) is a curious arrangement, a crepuscular exercise combining a robot's ball and a ghostly Noubas, performed by eight excellent dancers. [...] The staccato gestures of this incredibly tense, nervous dance [...] contort the dancers [...] into strange human puppets, juddered by jerky muscle movements. And when the pairs get together to take a few fluid steps in unison, they are as if suddenly shot through by electricity. The name of this new contradictory dance form is [...] the "looping pop". This mechanical approach, insisted upon by the choreographer and inventively sustained right until the end of the show, leaves the evening suffused with a kind of dry, melancholic humanity. The dancers [...] assume the function of dancing dolls, wound up to take a spin around the dance floor. [...] *bal.exe* appears to sound the end of the couple, of the encounter and of the feeling of love. The "inhibited" dance for two [...] set to Brahms' quintet for clarinet and strings, acquires a certain iconic symbolism through the way in which the choreography works on the principle of constraints."

► Libération – Marie-Christine Vernay (April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014)



"By deconstructing hip-hop language to open new perspectives, Anne Nguyen explores in a subtle manner the intricacies, often ignored, of popping, a robotic dance with gestures made of micro-explosions, stops, broken-down movements and blocks. She leads [hip-hop dancers] to dance in a waltz, in a tango, so that they finally touch each other, even if mechanically. Anne Nguyen invents, in a way, hip-hop dancing in couples."

► Nanotheatr.net – Jean-Christophe Carius (April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014)



"[Anne Nguyen's] approach of the artistic language as a software thought leads to a successful combination of artistic styles of very different origins and natures into a fully coherent, harmonious and long-lasting set. Like a possible future for postmodernism and its stylistic juxtapositions, *bal.exe* is a successful choreographic attempt offering a sensitive overview of what an artistic expression can be when adapted to the era of the industrialization of thought. Suffering no discrepancy nor provocation, the show embarks the spectator-listener in a new place turning any referential system upside down. The spectator is then only confronted with the perception of the set of vibrations provoked by the bodies and instruments, the appreciation of an uncommon savourous cocktail of knowledge and expressiveness, and the benefic strangeness of being touched in a particular aspect of his human being, something that is not very conscious but that is nevertheless manhandled nowadays: neurons."



► **Toutelaculture.com – Amélie Blaustein Niddam (April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014)**



“If the chamber music is melancholic and poetic, brilliantly played here by l’Orchestre Régional de Basse-Normandie, the dancers, on the opposite, jerk the movement. They offer series of gestures as in a computer program executing, whose name is prolonged by the famous .exe which is here added to bal. There is much humour in this piece, which creates a dialogue between different worlds with a repetitive comic effect. [...] The ball carries us and cramps us and we would have a strong desire to turn the key to watch one more time these absolutely impressing automats dancers.”

► **ArtistikRezo – Thomas Hahn (March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014)**



“We don’t attend every day the birth of a new choreographic style! In hip-hop, it’s possible. Anne Nguyen transposes the technique of popping in the world of tango and waltz, to create a mechanical but amazingly human dance, in which the dancers play puppets.”

► **La Terrasse – Nathalie Yokel (April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014)**



“*bal.exe* [by Anne Nguyen], subtitled *Mechanical ball set to chamber music*, has the mathematical rigour that one knows about her, and finds in its dancers impeccably dressed a virtuosity able to carry hip-hop dance towards grounds still to clear.”

► **Les Echos – Philippe Noisette (April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014)**



“In this unusual ballet, [...] the eight dancers appear to emerge from a mechanical toy box. Juddering movements, paralysed stances... the effect is captivating, in a total reworking of the partner dance.”

► **Critiphotodanse – Jean-Marie Gourreau (April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014)**

“A truly astonishing ballet, whose energetic, rapid-fire, humorous and totally mechanised body movements, referred to by the choreographer as “looping pop”, instantly wins over the audience and despite its exuberance, neither overstates nor challenges the classic music score.”



# bal.exe

To raise public awareness of the show and popularise the new one-to-one hip hop dance devised specifically for it, the par Terre Dance Company is staging the "Looping pop ball with audience participation".

## ≡ Looping pop ball with audience participation

“ Anne Nguyen and her dancers invite you to learn looping pop, a new robotic and electrifying hip hop dance in couple! Looping pop is inspired by ballroom-style dancing, which is then confronted with the mechanical and angular gesture of popping, a specialty of hip hop dance. Muscle isolation, blocking and different body states, such as slow-motion, waves and robotics are carried out in a complementary or question/answer type format in close contact with a partner, for a playful and short-circuiting moment of exchange. ”

The “Looping pop ball with audience participation” is participatory event or fun evening based on *bal.exe* during which the dancers will teach members of the audience a few basics regarding the one-to-one robotic performances, so that they may in turn perform and thus contribute to a genuine ball dynamic. The “Looping pop ball with audience participation” is devised for 4 dancers, 1 leader dancer and 1 DJ and its length can be defined according to the context (minimum 30 min).

The “Looping pop ball with audience participation” may either be performed to coincide with *bal.exe*, to raise public awareness of the show, or can be subject matter for programming in its own right. The “Looping pop ball with audience participation” can happen in various spaces, inside or out: such as an impromptu mini mechanical ball in the theatre forecourt or foyer prior to the opening of *bal.exe*, at a season opening, at the start of the show or to close it on a festive note, an ad-hoc performance in a public place, at an open-air cafe, during ballroom dancing classes...

>> Contact us for more information



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## ≡ Workshops and shared events based on *bal.exe*

Partner dancing and hip hop dancing have much in common: the social aspect where contact and exchange play a key role, as well as the quest for excellence and the appetite for competition. In *bal.exe*, a “mechanical ball set to chamber music”, Anne Nguyen devised a new form of partner hip hop dance for her eight popping specialists, known as “looping pop”. Looping pop is inspired by ballroom-style dancing, which is then deconstructed and recomposed by popping, in which muscle isolation, contraction, locking and different body states, such as slow-motion, waves and robotics are carried out in a complementary or question/answer type format in close contact with a partner.

The par Terre Dance Company proposes two approaches to looping pop:

- It teaches the basics of looping pop to dance novices, or to audiences with already some experience of hip hop dance, but no experience with social type dancing.
- It introduces practitioners of partner dancing to looping pop. The dancers from *bal.exe* will reach out to practitioners to teach them a few popping basics, as well as take information from the partner dancing format to enrich their own vocabulary. These exchanges then give rise to ‘hybrid’ partner dancing modules, suffused by elements from both ballroom type dancing and popping, to give the new looping pop dance vocabulary.

Workshops can lead to performances involving the students and/or one or more dancers from *bal.exe* that make use of various spaces, inside or out: such as an impromptu mini mechanical ball in the theatre forecourt or foyer prior to the opening of *bal.exe*, at the start of the show or to close it on a festive note, an ad-hoc performance in a public place, at an open-air cafe, during ballroom dancing classes, participation of the trainees to a looping pop ball with audience participation...

## ≡ Partners

**Production:** par Terre Dance Company ; Orchestre Régional de Basse-Normandie. Project initiated by l'Orchestre Régional de Basse-Normandie.

**With the support of:** l'aide à la production d'Arcadi ; le Conseil général du Val-de-Marne ; le Département de la Seine-Saint-Denis.

**Coproduction:** Le Théâtre de Rungis ; Parc de la Villette ; Centre Chorégraphique National de Caen / Basse-Normandie, Direction Héli Fattoumi & Éric Lamoureux, dans le cadre de l'accueil studio / Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication ; Théâtre Louis Aragon, Scène conventionnée pour la danse de Tremblay-en-France ; Le Rive Gauche, Scène conventionnée pour la danse à Saint-Etienne-du-Rouvray ; CCN de Créteil et du Val-de-Marne / Cie Käfig - dans le cadre de l'accueil studio ; Le Prisme – Centre de développement artistique de Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines.

**In partnership with:** MOOV'N AKTION ; La ménagerie de verre ; Le CRI danse de Villejuif ; Les Laboratoires d'Aubervilliers ; Théâtre Paul Eluard de Choisy-le-Roi ; Centre national de la danse - mise à disposition de studio. Thanks: Repetto.

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**The par Terre Dance Company is funded by** l'Aide pluriannuelle du Ministère de la Culture / DRAC Ile-de-France, la Région Ile-de-France for "Permanence Artistique et Culturelle" and l'Aide au fonctionnement du Département du Val-de-Marne.

Anne Nguyen was awarded the 2013 SACD Nouveau Talent Chorégraphie prize and appointed Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in 2015. She has been an associated artist to Chaillot - Théâtre national de la Danse from 2015 to 2018.

## ≡ Booking information

- ▶ **Duration:** 60 minutes. Possibility to perform the show twice in the same day.
- ▶ **Audience:** Show for all ages, from 6 years old. The show can be performed for young audiences.
- ▶ **Presence of the musicians and cast:**
  - *bal.exe* is performed with five musicians on stage (please contact us for more information).
  - Please note that *bal.exe* can be performed with the musicians in residency in your theater or invited by you. This layout will require one or two days of rehearsals with the choreographer before the show (please contact us for more information).
- ▶ **General technical requirements:**
  - The piece can be performed outdoor, on a flat and even ground surface.
  - Set and props (stools and chairs) will be provided by the theatre: see technical rider.
  - Ideal stage dimensions (between both sides of the black borders): 14m wide, 10m deep, 8m high.
  - Minimum stage dimensions (between both sides of the black borders): 11m wide, 8m deep, 5m high.
- ▶ **Technical requirements for the show performed with the musicians on stage:**
  - The musicians perform with the dancers on stage.
  - The music stools, music stands and music stand lights must be provided by the theatre (please contact us).
- ▶ **Touring staff and travels**
  - Touring staff with the musicians (17 persons): 1 choreographer, 8 dancers, 5 musicians, 1 light technician, 1 sound technician, 1 touring manager.
  - Arrival the day before performance in the morning (with rehearsal / run through during the afternoon, the day before performance). If travel time is more than 4 hours, arrival two days before the performance.
  - The touring staff travel from Paris
  - Transportation of music instruments in case of flight: please contact us
  - Departure the day after.
- ▶ **Booking fees:** Available on request.

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