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Brigitte Chataignier

Creation 2022

Compagnie Prana



Photo Shankar Lestrahnan

Mala

**Création 2022
by Brigitte Chataignier**

A dancer advances between two energy zones.

Between Yiddish and Sanskrit, old rhymes and Vedic mantras, between popular songs and dances of Kerala and the songs of the Jewish communities of Cochin, Brigitte Chataignier gradually discovers new tracks and dazzling transcends.

Resonances and reminiscences, a journey of signs and traces, to reconnect the threads of time and distance, in the transcendence of the poem and the unfolding of painting. At the heart of the project is an exploration between dance, text and image for a creation including a number of people met on its way.

Statement of Intention

Beyond the recurring misfortunes of the world, art, for me, remains a key driver.

Something indestructible. A transmission to be endlessly reinvented, generating enthusiasm. This new piece multiplies these variations: A painter in his research sketches temporal landscapes; a poet tries an unpredictable dialogue between *Moses and Shiva*. So many approaches to inhabit time differently...

With *Un Tracé*, my latest creation, produced with Catherine Legrand in 2019, we looked for gestures that present similarities between the language of Dominique Bagouet and the Indian dance *Mohini Attam* as well as with other styles of dance that I had practiced in India.

In 1987, when I took my first step on Indian soil and before I plunged entirely into Kerala's culture, I visited the Paradesi Synagogue in Cochin, parallel to visiting the temples. Later, in 2018, I met Elias Ben Josephai, the amazing keeper of another old synagogue in the same city, the Kadavumbagam Synagogue.

Hence took root a new session of questioning of the signs, language, transmission and migrations from people from one country to another country. What is that which is kept from the old, what is adopted, what's new, and what happens to these confluences ?

From there was built this new creation, *Mala*, where I weave a link between my own origins and the great mythical India of travellers, the one where I went to learn and practice those ancestral gestures.

The *Mala* (or *maala*) is a string of pearls, or a garland. It adorns the bride, the Hindu deities, the dancers, it is also the rosary of the monk. It is beneficial and structuring, it brings together flowers, gems, wood, gold or silver. At the centre of each *mala* passes the thread. It settles down, turns around, twists, can break, can be mended or rethreaded.

This creation which bears its name draws its inspiration from a memorable journey, of knowledge and imagination. It is also a place's name in Trichur, Kerala, derived from the old Hebrew *Ma'Alaha / MalHa*, meaning « centre of refuge ».

Going beyond the limits of the contemporary and the traditional, it is a philosophical fable, choreographic and poetic, and truly transnational. With Zéno Bianu, poet, Marc Feld, painter, Jean-Christophe Feldhandler, musician and composer, along with Sylvie Garot, lighting, Joe Ikareth, costumes, Sylvain Labrosse, videography and Brigitte Prost for the dramaturgy, *Mala* is built step by step, nourished by my internal memory and dance, by poetry, music, and painting, so many vectors of knowledge, expressions and survivals. The poetic text is spoken and sung. The dance meets the image

B. Chataignier.

Creation of *Mala*

I gradually infuse the theme of this creation and sharing with Zéno Bianu, for a poetic writing I will dance to. We follow the *mala* which unfolds as we think until the production of a text that will be the spine of this creation. In the previous ones, the text is spoken (*La Chambre des Vertiges*, 2002); not spoken (*Elementary*, 2005); audible in fragments (*Gopika*, 2007); read (*Gangâ* 2011); and played (*Bhopal Blue*, 2015). For *Mala*, the poem will be a mosaic of sound : sung, spoken and chanted.¹

In the principles of creation that I put in place, is a desire to work the figure of the curve, to combine cycles, to expose modulations of gaze, expressiveness, gestural signs related to the text, to establish a relation to the ground, to the elements, and to give a temporality to the form by exploring through dance, sound and pictorial materials in a play of reciprocal influences.

From this dialogue, emerges a whole imagination, like the epiphany of the legendary ancient port of *Muziris* in Kerala will occur in relation to our own temporality.

For *Mala*, the movement and its resonance act like sets of focal lengths where attention is paid to detail with a gesture in the micro-structure, its effects, its breathing, its rhythm and its deployment.

¹ For this project, I carried out filmed interviews: the first in February 2020 with Shura Lipovsky, Dutch singer in Yiddish, a second in september 2021 with Elias Ben Josephai, at the Cochin synagogue, and later with Chantal Meyer Pantureux, professor emeritus of the University of Caen, who works in particular on anti-Semitism and performing arts.

Brigitte Chataignier Dancer, choreographer

Brigitte Chataignier was originally trained in classical and contemporary dance forms, mime and yoga. In 1986, she discovered her passion for *Mohini Attam*, and studied in India for seven years under several masters notably Kalamandalam Leelamma at Kerala Kalamandalam, Kalamandalam Ksheimavathy and Smt Sridevi Rajan. Parallel to her work, she also learned Carnatic vocal, the female roles of Kathakali and the fundamentals of Kalarippayat. She has received grants from ICCR, the Indo-French Cultural Exchange, and Sanskriti (AFAA).

In France, with Michel Lestrehan, she founded *Companie Prana* in 1995 in Rennes. Since then she has divided her time and work between India and France. She also remains connected to her Gurus. Her approach combines tradition and modernity, and includes research on the conservation of a cultural heritage, as well as new contemporary research and productions. She has been invited to dance at festivals in India, and at temples in Kerala. She presented her shows on tour in France accompanied by musicians.



Photo Caroline Ablain

In 2004, she collaborated with the Rennes Opera, a production of Leo Delibes' opera, *Lakmé*.

Brigitte Chataignier has written and directed the film "*The Dance of the Enchantress*" with Adoor Gopalakrishnan in 2007. She was artistic director of the CD, *The Songs of Mohini Attam* for the Inédit label.

Brigitte is also deeply involved in her own contemporary dance productions as a dancer and choreographer. These include several collaborations with the poet Zéno Bianu, *La Chambre des Vertiges (The Vertigo Room)* in 2002, *Elémentaire (Elemental)* in 2005, *Gopika* in 2009. *Gangâ*, her choreographic project about the river, was touring in several cities for the Bonjour India festival 2013. Her latest creation *Bhopal Blue*, has been presented during three weeks at Théâtre du Soleil, Paris, under the auspice of the Namaste France Festival 2016.

She has completed *Un Tracé*, a duet with Catherine Legrand, meeting choreographic citations of the legendary choreographer Dominique Bagouet. At the present moment, she is working on a new project: *Mala*.

In 2012, she received support for research into Heritage Dance CND and is recognized as "Panel member artist in Mohini Attam performance" by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations.

She involves also her teaching at ESDC, CCNRB Dance Museum, at ARTA, eXerce master's degree, at Rennes and Côte d'Azur University, at the Cité de la Musique, at Tapovan, at the CFMI, within educational projects and with professional dancers and actors.

She is also working on a project as an account of the interpreter's experience with Féderica Fratagnoli (University of Nice). In 2021, this project receives grant for Research and Heritage in Dance from the Danse CND. Along with her artistic career, she is studying traditional Ayurvedic massage and is trained professionally in the *Feldenkrais* method, awareness through movement.

Zéno Bianu

Poet

Zeno Bianu is a French poet, playwright, essayist and translator. Signer of the Electric Manifesto in the 1970s, he is the author of an abundant work, “questioning poetry, theatre, jazz and the Orient”. His poems have been published by Gallimard (*Infnitely Close*, *Despair Does not Exist*, *Take Fire* - with André Velter from a Tightrope Universe) and Fata Morgana (*Treatise on Possible*, *The Inner Heaven*, *The Third Shore*). His writings often resonate with the great limits of art: Antonin Artaud, Poets of the Great Game, Van Gogh, Yves Klein ...

Attentive to summon all voices in a kind of chamber of universal echoes, he multiplies the public readings on the border of poetry, theatre and recital-jazz. He recorded several CDs, including *Dans la feu du bleu* (Télème), with Denis Lavant and published *Poèmes à dire*, an anthology of contemporary French-language poetry conceived from the perspective of orality (Poetry / Gallimard).

He also has a trilogy of jazz poems published by the Castor Astral: Chet Baker (*lamentation*), Jimi Hendrix (*magnetism*), John Coltrane (*meditation*).



Photo Catherine Hélié © Gallimard

His plays, edited by Actes Sud-Papiers, were represented at the Festival d'Avignon and at the Odeon-Teater of Europe, notably *Le Chevalier d'Olmedo*, directed by Luis Pasqual (Cour d'Honneur of the Palace of the Popes), with Jean-Marc Barr, *The Idiot, last night*, with Denis Lavant and *A Magician*, with Robin Renucci.

His lyrics have crossed the voices of Tchéky Karyo, Jacques Bonnafé, Jean-Luc Debatrice, François Marthouret, Pierre Clémenti, Isabelle Carré, Juliet Berto, Geneviève Page, Thierry Hancisse, Clovis Cornillac, Agnès Sourdillon, Elise Caron. Familiar with oriental poetics, he composed two anthologies of haikus with Corinne Atlan (Poetry / Gallimard):

Recent publications:

A fire in the heart of the wind, Trésor de la poésie/Gallimard, February 2020.

A little praise for the blue, Folio/Gallimard, 2020:

His works for B.Chataignier's creations: *The Chamber of Vertigo*, *Elementary*, *Gopika*, *Ganga and Bhopal Blue*.

Jean-Christophe Feldhandler composer and percussionist

Percussionist by training, he founded the percussion quartet Hélios with Lê Quan Ninh, Isabelle Berteletti and Florent Haladjian in the 1980s. Hosted by numerous French and European festivals, the quartet subsequently collaborated with others composers like Kaija Saariaho, George E. Lewis, Jean-Pierre Drouet, Vinko Globokar and Georges Aperghis.

His career as a performer and composer leaned towards the crossing of artistic languages very early on: with theatre and stage directors like Thierry Bedard, Marc Feld and Bruno Boulzaguet, with visual and plastic artist Philippe Charles, with poet, contemporary artist and author Raharimanana, and recently with the circus-arena since his meeting with the company La Migration and their first collaboration *Landscape #1*, a circus-landscape show created in 2016.

Established in Nantes, it develops links and projects with musicians and composers from the region, for instance, with Jérôme Joy for the quartet QWAT? and the electro acoustician Christophe Havard.

As a composer, he likes to work and explore interpretations with personalities from different walks of life from written music to improvised music - such as trombonist Thierry Madiot, double bassist Anne Gouraud, cellist Martine Altenburger, violinist Tiziana Bertoncini, saxophonist Michel Doneda, the pia-



Photo Catherine Héjle © Gallimard

nists Sophie Agnel and Michel Maurer, guitarist and electro acoustician Vivien Trelcat, percussionist Philippe Foch, singers Aurélie Maisonneuve, Géraldine Keller and Sylvie Deguy.

As an accomplice artist of the nomadic scene creation and dissemination Athénor, for over ten years, Jean-Christophe Feldhandler has created several shows for young audiences as well, including *My Ship on the Sea*, *Terrain Vague*, *Instamatics and Composite Portrait*, *Children's corner & variations*; and recently in March 2017, an operatic tale *Imaintsoo*, born from a building site of residences and creations in-situ in the natural spaces of Regional Natural Parks. It is also supported by the National Centers of musical creation Césaré in Reims and the Gmem in Marseille, through various projects, such *La nuit, C'est*; commissioned and produced by Gmem, for a trio of plucked strings of the Cbarré ensemble, two voices and electroacoustic tape, premiered in March 2016 at the Opéra de Marseilles.

Jean-Christophe Feldhandler also regularly

directs workshops of educational creations, during his partnerships with Athénor (with the Experimental High School, conservatories, schools etc) the CNCM Caesaré (with the Second Chance School), CFMI d'Aix en Provence, and ARIA in Corsica.

His latest creations: *Lieu-dits Quintet* for four acrobats and a musician with the company La Migration (Chalon dans la rue 2019...)

Jungle (wild opera), with the company Eclats, (Opéra de Limoges, Opéra National of Bordeaux).

Marc Feld

Plastic artist

Painting is at the centre of his work and of his reflection. It is for him, in the words of Zéno Bianu, “An inexhaustible emergence”.

At the age of eleven his father introduced him to the painter Louis Cordesse (friend of Tal-Coat, Marfaing, André du Bouchet and Pascal Quignard...) whom he used to see regularly until the age of sixteen, it was he who taught him how to open his eyes to paint. He started painting in 1980 and was self-taught.

In 1986 he met the painter Louis Cordesse, who visits his workshops and they regularly have multiple conversations around painting and the act of painting which make them engage fully and passionately with the greatest rigor in this adventurous and demanding art form.

For the past ten years, he has designed and curated ten exhibitions, presented in Paris, France and abroad in collaboration with poets and publishers for the creation of artistic books.

Marc Feld is also a director, author, director and magician.

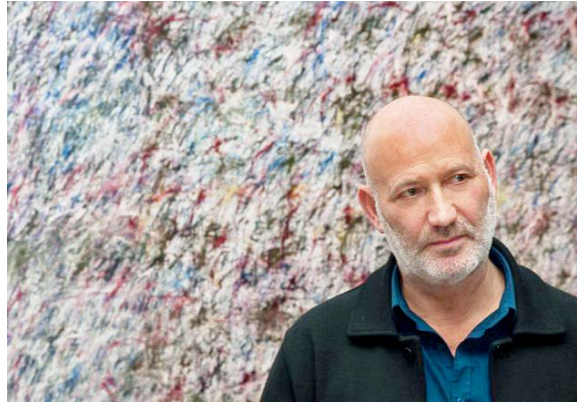


Photo Feld

Sylvie Garot

Lighting designer

Sylvie Garot lives in Paris, she designs scenographic lights for live performances and plastic art installations.

It is following a research workshop with the scenographer Josef Svoboda in 1990, that Sylvie Garot is interested in the creation of lights. This meeting was a determining factor for her. She left the physical theater company she had been directing for 5 years and devoted herself exclusively to lighting design. Each project is an opportunity for her to pur-



Photo Brigitte Chataignier

sue a research of writing, to invest new fields of reflection in collaboration with choreographers, directors, visual artists, scenographers, musicians and video artists.

For the last ten years, she has specialized in the realization of light films, video-projected in the scenic space, which she considers and uses as luminous sources proposing other spatio-temporal perceptions. Sylvie Garot has created the lights for Brigitte's previous creations, *Gopika*, *Ganga* in France and in India, for *Bhopal Blue* and *Un Tracé*.

Joe Ikaret Costume

With a small team of tailors and seamstresses, in his modest atelier, in a quiet neighborhood studded with coconut palms, Joe tucks seams and pleats the fine details of his sophisticated collection. All pieces are one of a limited series using natural fabrics such as cotton, silk, linen and their blends.

Joe Ikareth studied design at the New Delhi- National Institute of Fashion Technology where he obtained the prize for the Best Design Collection in 1996. He created his own label Joe Ikareth in 2000 and presented his first collection in Paris at The Studio Cirque during a défilé-spectacle where dancers, acrobats and musicians performed while wearing his creations.

Inspired as much by poetry as by the flow of lines, Joe Ikareth makes a limited series of garments using artisanal techniques. He combines pattern-making clothes with a strong focus on movement to design contemporary clothing.

His signature Kerala cotton collection employs the creamy coolness of this hand woven fabric, fusing clean lines and intricate detail.

His aim is to create clothes that can be equitably, ecologically and elegantly enjoyed.

Let's make life more beautiful!

His new social and solidarity project: *Move Ability Clothing* offers clothing solutions for people with reduced mobility and the diffe-



Photo Ikareth

rently abled. The designs address their need for ease in dressing and undressing. To move even a small part of the body, is a powerful means of expression and acceptance of us. Clothes created to facilitate movement thus celebrate the creative potential present in each one of us.

LA COMPAGNIE PRANA

The identity of La Compagnie Prana, founded in Rennes in 1995, by dancers and choreographers Brigitte Chataignier and Michel Lestréhan is built on exchanges between India and France and a dialogue between tradition and creation. Prana specializes in the arts of Kerala (South India) as well as in contemporary creation, it presents its shows in France and internationally. As part of the tours, she invites most great Indian masters as well as young artists. Prana is also involved in programming consulting. Through creations, it opens up fields of artistic experimentation between tradition and modernity bringing together dance, music and prose.

Prana is committed to making known the diversity and richness in the traditions of India, thanks to an original educational approach aimed at audiences from childhood to adulthood. It carries out actions around its shows: conferences-demonstrations, courses for amateurs and professionals, film screenings and thematic workshops.

Prana was one of the founding members of the Collective Dance Rennes Métropole in Rennes. It is now a gateway for the development of a choreographic and musical culture between India and France.



Kalam Terre



Gangá



Gopika

Dates and 1st Venues (premieres)

of Brigitte Chataignier's choreographic creations

UN TRACÉ, 2019

Brigitte Chataignier and Catherine Legrand
Coproduction Dance Museum
The Triangle, Rennes

BHOPAL BLUE, 2015-2016

Les Champs Libres, Rennes
Théâtre du Soleil, Cartoucherie, Paris
Festival Namaste France

GANGÁ, 2011-2013

Saint Quentin en Yvelines Theater
Oh Festival
Bonjour India Festival 2013

GOPIKA, 2007

Grand Theater of Lorient

ELEMENTARY, 2005

Le Triangle, Cité de la danse, Rennes

THE ROOM OF VERTIGO, 2002

House of poetry, Paris
The Triangle, Rennes

AMBA, 1997 Youth audience,

Le Grand Cordel, Rennes

LES VÊPRES DES GRENOUILLES I, 1996

Le Triangle, City of dance, Rennes

www.compagnieprana.com

<https://www.youtube.com/user/pranacompagnie/videos>

*My nostalgic trees
My trees that are leaving
always towards the edges of the canvas to let me do it
the portrait of the wind*

Zéno Bianu

*From one faint to another
from one life to another
from one heart to another
soon I will pass through the seven gates -
the water gates
the gates of abysses
the gates of comets
the shadow doors
the gates of the immense
the gates of the gates*

Zéno Bianu



Photo Jeanne Paturel







August 2018, Jew Town, Kochi, India
photo Shankar Lestréhan



Looking back to the Muziris Heritage

MALA

Choreographic creation 2022

work in progress Brigitte Chataignier

Residences provisional calendar

Fall - Winter 2020: :

first steps work in the studio at Reservoir Danse, Rennes 2021

2021

Spring - Autumn 2021 :

research and writing

Mars à Mai 2021

Résidence La Ville Robert Pordic.

The Triangle, Rennes

Automne 2021 : 1 week at Reservoir Danse, Rennes

2 weeks in India - research, interviews, partner meetings.

2022 planned residences:

Réservoir Danse

La Ville Robert (march 2022)

Bleu Pluriel, Tregueux

Kerala / India

Planned performance venues 2022 /2023:

The 106 Center of Art and Creation in Compiègne

Theater du Soleil, Paris 75

Kochi Biennale

The Team (in france)

Choreography, dance and voice : Brigitte Chataignier

Text : Zéno Bianu

Painting : Marc Feld

Musical creation : Jean-Christophe Feldhandler

Light : Sylvie Garot

Costume : Joe Ikareth

Video : Sylvain Labrosse.

Co-production :

The 106 Center of Art and Creation in Compiègne

Home in residence: :

La Ville Robert, Pordic 22

Reservoir Danse, Rennes

The Triangle, Rennes

Institutional support :

Rennes city

DRAC Brittany, Ministry of Culture

Embassy of India, Paris

Support and partnership envisaged :

Convention City of Rennes / French Institute,
Brittany Region

India :

Neemrana Music Foundation

Manasa without frontiers,

Kochi Biennale Foundation

Muziris Heritage

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Elias Ben Josephai.

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