

BAM and  
Théâtre de la Ville  
(Paris, France)  
present

# Minuit

Directed by Yoann Bourgeois

Centre Chorégraphique  
National de Grenoble

Part of Brooklyn—Paris Exchange  
and Tandem Paris—New York

DATES: OCT 5—7 at 7:30pm;  
OCT 8 at 2pm and 7:30pm

LOCATION: BAM Fisher (Fishman Space)

RUN TIME: Approx 1hr 5min no intermission

#Minuit  
#BAMNextWave

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# Minuit

DIRECTED BY  
Yoann Bourgeois

With the involvement of  
Laure Brisa, Marie Fonte, and  
Jörg Müller

MUSIC BY  
Laure Brisa and Philip Glass

TEXT BY  
Xavier Durringer

SOUND DESIGN BY  
Antoine Garry

LIGHTING DESIGN BY  
Jérémie Cusenier

STAGE MANAGER  
Audry Carrot

The performances are made possible with the support of Institut Français-Paris and the Cultural Services of the French Embassy, as part of Kids Trail, a cultural program dedicated to families. Additional support from FACE Contemporary Theater.

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## PROGRAM

*Minuit (Midnight)* is comprised of *Mobile*, *La Balance de Lévitité (Levitating Scales)*, *Fugue/Table*, and *Fugue/Trampoline*, punctuated by *Les Paroles Impossibles (Impossible Speech)*

*Les Paroles Impossibles/Impossible Speech*

A man with a microphone: different ways of failing to speak.

Concept: Yoann Bourgeois

*Mobile*

Sound and dance piece involving juggling and suspended metal tubes.

Concept: Jörg Müller

*La Balance de Lévitité/Levitating Scales*

An exploration of weightlessness.

Concept: Marie Fonte, Yoann Bourgeois

Design: Goury

*Fugue/Table*

A pas de deux sitting at a table.

Concept: Marie Fonte, Yoann Bourgeois

*Fugue/Trampoline*

Solo dance piece on a staircase where falling is a repeated motif accompanied by *Metamorphosis Two* by Philip Glass

Concept: Yoann Bourgeois

with assistance from Marie Fonte

*Solo for harp, voice, bass drum, and machines*

Composition: Laure Brisa

Excerpt from *Chronicle 3 whole days, whole nights* by Xavier Durringer published by Editions Théâtrales.

Original music played live by  
Laure Brisa.

## ABOUT *Minuit (Midnight)*

I came up with this program because I'd reached an age where I could imagine the broad strokes of my life to come, no matter the actual course of events, and speak of this future as if it were the past.

This was not a sudden realization but a growing awareness over time. No matter the number of days left, no matter how optimistic the prognosis, those days would not be enough.

My idea was to stall time.

Of course this was impossible, but there were ways to approach the subject. The project would be straightforward, definitive. I decided upon a simple phrase to give the work a name: *tentative approaches to a suspension point*. Something like an urge to create.

We started working on the details. A collection of smaller acts can be just as powerful as a single work. Pieced together in a program they have a common goal: to grasp the present.

The physical interlocking of the constructions on stage—the amalgam of various apparatus and machinery, how they relate to each other, to the space and to the audience—join in pursuit of that one moment: the moment of suspension.

—Yoann Bourgeois

# Who's Who

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## YOANN BOURGEOIS

Yoann Bourgeois, acrobat, actor, juggler, and dancer, is first and foremost a player. Growing up in a small village in the Jura (France), he discovered vertigo games at the Cirque Plume, later graduating from the Centre National des Arts du Cirque de Châlons-en-Champagne alternating with the Centre National de Danse Contemporaine d'Angers. He researched weightlessness with Alexandre Del Perugia and Kitsou Dubois and became a member of the Maguy Marin company at the Centre Chorégraphique National de Rillieux-la-Pape, where, over four years, his work centered on the theme of “communal being.”

After revivals of *May B* and *Umwelt* and two new works, *Turba* in 2007 and *Description d'un Combat (Description of a Fight)* in 2009, he began his own creative practice in 2010. Along with Marie Fonte, he founded l'Atelier du Joueur (The Player's Workshop), a nomadic resource center for performance. This workshop, uniting artists across several disciplines, was to provide the basis of Compagnie Yoann Bourgeois. The group settled in Grenoble, Bourgeois' birthplace, with the intention of exploring the hidden

ties between the games of mimicry and vertigo. A commission from Grenoble's art center MC2 allowed the group access to the Vauban Belvedere, ancient fortifications perched high over the city, resulting in the site-specific work *Cavale*. The work played with the impressive views to giddy effect.

An initial creative cycle began with a number of large musical works focusing on the “figure”—a key element of classical circus repertoire—in conjunction with the “motif,” allowing for a new form of performance liberated from the need to be spectacular. This resulted in 2010 in *Les Fugues*, short dances for a man with an object in response to JS Bach's *The Art of the Fugue*; in 2011, *L'Art de la Fugue*, a deconstruction of a monolithic block by two performers, male and female, alongside Bach's eponymous work; and in 2012, *Wu-Wei*, created for the artists of the Beijing Opera and inspired by the Taoist principle of “non-action.” Also in 2012 the company inaugurated the C.I.R.C. (Centre International de Recherches Circassiennes) with several trips to China with the aim of establishing the ancestral roots of acrobatic movement.

In 2013, a year of transition, Bourgeois launched a new program for circus academies based on the body of his own work. Convinced that performers should appropriate their own interpretations of circus performance, the project, backed by the SACD, aimed to reflect upon the conditions of circus apprenticeship with a view to establishing a true circus repertoire.

In 2014, a second body of work was to radicalize his thinking yet further. Taking the etymology of “drama” as a weaving together of actions as a starting point, and applying it to the circus, he was drawn to the dramatic possibilities of the relationship between the body and the forces acting upon it. This resulted in *Celui Qui Tombe (He Who Falls)*, a work for six performers created in September 2014 for the Lyon dance biennale.

In parallel, research on physical devices, allowing the individual to multiply into many subjects, resulted in the creation of *Les Paroles Impossibles (Impossible Speech)*.

Also in 2014, an invitation to perform at the Théâtre des Abbesses in Paris encouraged the creation of a new work from a “constellation” of pre-existing ideas. *Minuit (Midnight)* is a site-specific work created “in situ” with the technical and spacial particularities of each host theater in mind.

Each edition of the show varies according to the artists invited to perform and the different material objects they bring with them on stage. The idea of a circular stage, in reference to the traditional circus “Big Top,” is at the center of Bourgeois' thinking when imagining new projects. Offering perfect sightlines to the audience and allowing a non-hierarchical rapport between performers, the circle affirms the popular dimension of his work.

In 2015, he began work on *tentative approaches to a suspension point*, involving eight pieces of apparatus and a circular stage design allowing for a

360° view. These new short pieces will be added to existing works for *Nu-méros Poèmes*, a collection of eleven poetic objects.

Since the first of January 1, 2016, Bourgeois has co-directed the Centre Chorégraphique National de Grenoble with Rachid Ouramdame.

These many and varied projects express his pressing desire to embrace and experiment with life in all its forms. Yoann Bourgeois' life is dedicated to the performing arts.



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EXCERPT FROM  
*CHRONICLE OF THREE  
WHOLE DAYS, WHOLE NIGHTS*  
by Xavier Durringer  
published by Editions Théâtrales

He left just before getting married. On a whim. In a moment's madness. For a love at first sight.

He sees a woman, glances at her fiery eyes, and his life changes.

He sells his house to buy her a jewel, the biggest emerald available at the time.

But she has already left the country.

He plays the horses to meet up with her at the other end of the world, but doesn't find her.

He wanders around naked in the snow, flogs his back with nettles to put his body to the test. To remove cowardice with lashes.

He swims across the desert. Follows a traveling circus and becomes a clown. Then an elephant trainer and a tiger hunter. And a successful trapeze artist.

His boat loses its mast and capsizes. The circus is at the bottom of the sea. He remains six days in the sea, swimming and floating. He hangs on to his dreams.

Then he spends a year by himself on a desert island eating crabs and urchins. He writes her a nine hundred-page love letter that he sticks in a bottle which he throws into the sea.

A Russian billionaire couple rescues him, seeking to buy an island.

He records a song for her, which becomes a number one hit in all the clubs of Bali. A version of it will later influence The Rolling Stones for a famous slow number...

He gets lost in Sumatra amidst a head-cutting tribe. Writes a long report for the *National Geographic* ending in these words: Be aware I haven't forgotten you, that I love you like crazy and that every night, I come and visit you in my dreams as the Sumatra shamans taught me.

He runs into her by chance in an airport. He sees her in the distance, she's boarding. He stops the plane that is about to take off, just to whisper that he loves her. Face down on the runway, surrounded by 10 irritated policemen and the sound of the engines, she doesn't hear him.

Three months in jail where he sleeps with dangerous terrorists, then a heavy fine.

He bungee jumps from the top of a skyscraper to bounce in front of her window. The bungee breaks after the second rebound and he crashes into the hotel pool with the biggest splash ever made which will soon become an urban legend.

He returns to Paris like a dog.

He lives penniless like a tramp, wandering from bridge to bridge, from squat to squat. Doesn't eat, doesn't sleep, never makes love. Loses grip. Ends up in an outpatient hospital where he develops a painting style called "love-painting" where he paints with his naked body on 60 feet canvases. Impresses the Japanese who

organize a show in Tokyo. The paintings are signed: For her. Gives all the money from the paintings to a fund to search for water in Africa.

He falls back into poverty and settles in the Ethiopian highlands. Smokes a fair amount of hash and doesn't drink sparkling water, sanitary return home on a giant tanker. He goes underground again and sleeps under the same bridges. He places several fruitless Valentine's Day announcements in the papers.

He recovers his losses selling matchboxes then sells roses along with haiku-type poems he writes. With the money, he organizes a boxing match in which he enters the ring and gets the shit beaten out of him in an ultraviolent single round during which he will attempt unsuccessfully to hide in the corners.

He's on the front page of the sports journals and makes a desperate appeal on TV, which is picked up by all the radio stations. "Adrienne!!!"

He recovers from his busted jaw and from his nose broken in eight pieces. Permanently gives up boxing. With something of the power of Joseph before the Pharaoh... he becomes a whisperer into the ears of the mighty. Starting out as the king's buffoon, he becomes a philosopher, born poet, he strolls through the aisles of power teaching the president the three card trick. Fights a duel with the interior secretary who never picked the right card and calls him a cheater. To clear his name, he will slash Zorro's Z on his ass. But, acting the grand gentleman, he will keep it quiet.

Purchases for one Euro the company that fired the woman he loves.

Leaves a ton of roses on her doorstep. And orders the biggest chocolate cake with raspberries that he has delivered by truck to her parking lot. Makes it into the Guinness Book of World Records for that.

She called the firemen for the roses because she couldn't get into her house and won't taste the cake because she doesn't like dark chocolate.

On New Year's Day, he sets fire to himself with the Chanel Number Five perfume of that woman, like in the last scene from *John and Mary*.

Seeing it's useless and that nobody sees him, he throws himself into the Seine, in a magnificent blazing swan dive.

The last time he was seen. He pretends to drown several times in 40° water.

The problem, and it's the problem with all this, she never knew anything about it.

He becomes an actor in a traveling company and looks for tailor-made parts.

So, if by chance, you're here tonight, in the dark of this little theater, you should know that I did finally manage to get out of the freezing water and that in the end, I love you.

There. That's said.

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## THE BROOKLYN/PARIS EXCHANGE

The 2016 Next Wave Festival includes four engagements representing the Brooklyn/Paris Exchange, a new collaboration between BAM and Paris' Théâtre de la Ville. In this cross-cultural initiative, companies chosen by the institutions' respective artistic leaders, Joseph V. Melillo and Emmanuel Demarcy-Mota, will make their Paris or Brooklyn debuts as part of the other's upcoming season. Melillo's selections—the explosive Zimbabwe-born choreographer nora chipaumire and innovative theater troupe The Civilians—represent the breadth of the borough's current creative output. Demarcy-Mota's selections are similarly expansive, bringing celebrated circus artist Yoann Bourgeois (*Minuit*, Oct 5—8) and the hip-hop-inflected movement of dance duo Company Wang Ramirez (*Monchichi*, Oct 12—15) to Brooklyn for their Next Wave debuts. Melillo and Demarcy-Mota are, in essence, giving one another carte blanche to program a section of their corresponding artistic seasons, while also placing trust in the artists, and audiences, that the work will transcend cultural barriers.

“I am so excited to embark on this creative partnership with my esteemed colleague Emmanuel Demarcy-Mota,” says Melillo. “BAM and Théâtre de la Ville institutionally—and Emmanuel and I personally—share a set of values about the importance of performance in the creation and expansion of local and global communities. I think of this exchange as a cultural conversation that will enrich everybody involved.”

“I am thrilled with this innovative partnership, a result of inspiring exchanges with Joe Melillo,” says Demarcy-Mota. “BAM and Théâtre de la Ville are sister theaters, with common values based on community and global involvement, as well as artistic audacity. Most importantly, our relationship will make it possible for American and French artists' work to transcend borders and be seen more widely.”



Photo: Yoann Bourgeois by Geraldine Areteanu



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