

Régine Chopinot Biography

In a career spanning 30 years, Régine Chopinot has lived through the emergence (in the '70s), development (in the '80s), institutionalisation (in the '90s) and commercialisation (the years since 2000) of contemporary dance. From her base in France she actively participated in the writing of the first two chapters of the still brief history of a new art. But she has never ceased to set herself against the unfolding of the next two—directing, from 1986 to 2008 one of the important national dance centres of France (the CCN in La Rochelle) and steadfastly refusing to push her creative energies down already well-trodden paths.

At the beginning of the '90s, she abandoned the “fashionable spaces” where as a young dancer she was known through her long association with the couturier Jean Paul Gaultier. Since that time she has thrown herself into less ‘trendy’ explorations—confronting contemporary dance with natural elements and rhythms, and using it to test such ancient and complex body-sciences as Yoga.

In 2002 she began the triptych “Of the End of Time” an extended questioning of the meanings of choreography arising from a deliberate challenge to broad ideas about time, memory and structure. CHAIR-OBSCUR evoked the obliteration of the past and memory, while WHA confronted the disappearance of the future. O.C.C.C. was concerned with the ‘time remaining; with what remains to be done, with what it's still possible to do, right here and now in the moment of performance.

CORNUCOPIAE was given in November 2008: “it's as if I was created out of some ideal of untruthfulness that could go so far as to suffocate love.”

Since July 2008 a newly-formed independent company, Cornucopiae, responsible for both original creations and for repertoire, exists as an umbrella for all of Chopinot's work.

2010 - 2011 - 2012 - 2013 : South, and further South !, in the south of France and the South Pacific project in New Caledonia, but also in New Zealand, Japan and Australia...

Significant dates

1978

Lyon, Régine Chopinot forms the Compagnie du Grèbe, outcome of an encounter between musicians, dancers and actors from different walks of life.

1981

Bagnolet, Régine Chopinot bursts upon the scene of French dance, winning second prize in the 13th Bagnolet Choreography Competition.

1986

The Chopinot Company finds a base in La Rochelle, succeeding the Théâtre du Silence, directed by Brigitte Lefèvre, one of the very first 'decentralised' dance companies which had been based in La Rochelle from 1974, where, in 1984, the Dance Centre becomes known as the "Centre Chorégraphique".

1993

Régine Chopinot redefines the objectives of her company which becomes the « Ballet Atlantique-Régine Chopinot, national dance company in contemporary repertoire and creation » and which henceforth opens its doors to other choreographers and commissions new work for its repertoire.

1994

La Chapelle Fromentin. La Rochelle town provides the Ballet Atlantique with a new home, renovating the old Jesuit college chapel. With a magnificent studio housed within the chapel, the BARC now has a unique opportunity to develop training initiatives and to raise public awareness. The chapel also serves as a space into which it can invite other companies.

1999

Associate artists. A new direction for the BARC, Régine Chopinot invites three notable figures in contemporary dance to join her for 3 years in her artistic project. Françoise Dupuy, Dominique Dupuy and Sophie Lessard are included in BARC's resident team of dancers and assistants, as performers, teachers, researchers and choreographers.

2008 – 2009

Formation of the independent company CORNUCOPIAE, supported by the Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication – Direction Générale de la Création Artistique, that focusses on three long-term projects (from 3 to 7 years duration):

- › INDEPENDANCE, reflections on the meanings of independence, whether personal, philosophic, political or artistic.
- › WORD OF MOUTH, research work into the power and precision of the oral tradition as it's passed down and received in societies.
- › THE SOUTH PACIFIC PROJECT IN NEW CALEDONIA, concerning the myths and gestural roots of the Kanak culture.

2010

- › February, creation of THE BLIND DANCER AND THE VOICE for the Hivernales d'Avignon.
- › 26th April to 16th May, first IN SITU, Lifou, New Caledonia.
- › June, creation of INDEPENDANCE n°1 for the Montpellier Festival of Dance.
- › June, publication of Annie Suquet's study "CHOPINOT", Cénomane editions, Le Mans.
- › 20th to 24th July, revival of THE BLIND DANCER AND THE VOICE for the Festival OFF in Avignon.
- › autumn, residency on the theme: Algiers, comings / goings: Courants d'A.I.R. (Artiste Indépendant Résident) at the CNCDC Châteaувallon.
- › Relocation of Cornucopiae in southern France (DRAC-PACA).

SELECTED DANCEWORKS

DÉLICES (1983), LE DÉFILÉ (1985), K.O.K. (1988), SAINT-GEORGES (1991), FAÇADE (1993), VÉGÉTAL (1995), PAROLES DU FEU (1997), LA DANSE DU TEMPS (1999), TRANS(E) (2000), CHAIR-OBSCUR (2002), WHA (2004), LES GARAGISTES (2005), O.C.C.C. (2006), CORNUCOPIAE (2008), L'ORAL DE LA DANSEUSE AVEUGLE (2010), INDÉPENDANCE N°1 (2010)