

CERCLES

WARM UP

PERFORMANCE

DANCEFLOOR

CERCLES

People, MEUTE, open-air. The works of Boris Charmatz can be danced on stages, in museums, in squares and in the streets. Rarely a contemporary choreographer combines dance theatre and techno, collective forms of action and ecstasy with such artistry as Charmatz. How does it all go together? His new major project for Wuppertal is called CERCLES, open to all bodies, cultures and generations. The music is provided by the Hamburg marching band MEUTE. Their orchestral techno booms out of the loudspeakers across the sports field, it accelerates the movements, drives them to a climax until individual dancers dramatically break free from the group. An empty centre opens up that suddenly draws them back in again.

In the happening Wundertal / Sonnborner Straße in May last year, the stage was a catwalk. An entire city society danced along a section of the street while the Schwebebahn majestically glided above people's heads. CERCLES is a score of circular dances, performed by 200 participants, including amateurs, students and dancers from the Tanztheater. Its location is the imposing Fels arena at Sportplatz Höfen in Oberbarmen.

CERCLES has a German/French dual passport. When the project was planned in collaboration with the Festival d'Avignon, where Boris Charmatz would be

this summer's Associate Artist and could spend three weeks with Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch + Terrain demonstrating what contemporary dance is able to achieve, it was not yet clear that France stood on the brink of a risky manoeuvre. The three days of a public workshop, where initial insights into his project CERCLES emerged, conducted here with 200 citizens of the Avignon region with a passion for dance, would take place at a time of intense political tension. On two Sundays at the end of June and beginning of July the French electorate suddenly had to decide on a new balance of power in parliament. The struggle for power against the extreme right mobilised many artists and large sections of the public into an energetic community of protest. When Boris Charmatz opened the festival at the stadium on the island on the Rhône with a free adaptation of Isadora Duncan's famous solo *Revolutionary Study* (from around 1921) by raising his clenched right fist to the skies and 200 fists responded to his impulse, this gesture became a social manifesto: we will protest day and night, in sunshine and in rain. What is at stake is the future of Europe, of our planet, our right to dissent and the future of our living together! As a consequence, CERCLES becomes a dance about the mental state of our democracies, a dance about dance and what it can achieve. And a significant element is the hypnotic soundtrack by MEUTE, who had previously

orchestrated a now legendary dance marathon for the series Babylon Berlin.

Already in Greek theatre, the stage for dance was round. From the ancient world to the present, for centuries choreographers have been interested in the spatial form of the circle. In the history of dance, it is one of the archetypes that has inspired many leading artists, from Mary Wigman through Pina Bausch, William Forsythe and on to Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker and others.

Charmatz takes the title CERCLES literally and allows his choreography to develop into a cycle of endless movements, gestures and folkloric forms. Who is on the inside, who is on the outside? The circle as a cocoon, as it is a racing crowd, a wall of bodies – mobile, resolute and able to defend itself. The circle of people is the central image of this performance, the image that remains. And with the right combination of elements, the silhouette of the circle will be its meaning. CERCLES can be both: an oasis and a moment of awakening.

“Les mots font les choses” – “words create things,” Boris Charmatz says in Avignon in a podium conversation with the architect Elizabeth Diller. The New Yorker and her office Diller Scofidio + Renfro are experts at intelligent construction within historic sites and, where appropriate,

creating new open spaces in cities. Their masterpiece is Highline Park, linking the Meatpacking-District and Chelsea. When listening to the two of them, it seems only logical and fitting that the Pina Bausch Centre is beginning to take shape inspired by the experiences and ideas of these two thinkers of space. An architect who choreographs the relationships between people with her buildings and a choreographer who draws ephemeral forms and spaces with bodies in his dance pieces.

Marietta Piekenbrock

Translation David Tushingham

Concept

Boris Charmatz

Choreographic Assistant

Magali Caillet Gajan

Costumes

Florence Samain

Music

MEUTE

DANCEFLOOR

Rebeka Warrior

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“With CERCLES we are continuing the great movement and success achieved with WUNDERTAL. Dance creates community. In both Wuppertal and Avignon Boris Charmatz has facilitated a wonderful process of work with the inhabitants of the city. He reaches out to the people – amateurs, professional dancers and students become a large new ensemble. This is how we are preparing the Pina Bausch Centre. It shall become a place home for everyone, for the art of tomorrow that will enable participation and diversity. Pina Bausch and Boris Charmatz both share the artistic courage to explore new territory. CERCLES is a great step into the future.”

Bettina Milz,
artistic co-ordinator and Director of the
Preparatory Phase of the Pina Bausch Centre