



Martin Zimmermann

# DANSE MACABRE





Martin Zimmermann

## DANSE MACABRE • STATEMENT OF INTENT

*Danse Macabre* is the new creation of the choreographer and performer Martin Zimmermann. It is a continuation of his multi-layered oeuvre of the past twenty years. In *Danse Macabre* Zimmermann presents three tragicomical, fragile characters who have dropped out of the social norm and, find themselves in the same place at the same time in their distress. The stage set is reminiscent of an abandoned garbage dump where everything that is not reusable or degradable is discarded. In this godforsaken place the unlikely trio settles in to build a life. Defying severe setbacks and difficulties between them, the three characters played by Zimmermann's favourite performers keep getting back up, pulling themselves together and coming up with unusual solutions. Another strange figure hovers over this fragile community of fate: death. Played by Martin Zimmermann, it interferes in the stage action as a mischievous puppet master, but remains invisible to the characters. The latter can therefore never be certain whether the disruptions and challenges they are constantly confronted with come from outside or whether they are part of their own history and inner world. In *Danse Macabre* the characters struggle for their survival and the only thing that can save them is their humour.

"My humour is the laughable form of sadness. It is exaggerated into the comical and thus overcome. The tragicomical, to me, has the force of a possessed power: it is radical, incisively sharp, committed to wickedness, but also mischievous, precise and enigmatic. This multilayeredness provides inspiration and a point of departure for my work."

*Martin Zimmermann*

In *Danse Macabre*, Martin Zimmermann continues to pursue his interest in human figures who physically, socially and existentially find themselves on the margins of society and reveal so much about its "centre". The exact location of those margins is defined from the centre, and "marginal" generally signifies that something is no longer needed, no longer really belongs and can break away from the rest anytime. Because social structures are increasingly dissolving, people live more and more often in communities of their own choice based on similar attitudes to meet their social needs. This is the ideal scenario. But it requires that people have freedom of movement and choices. When existential survival is a priority, communities are not formed for non-material reasons, but characterised by strategic and, indeed, material considerations. People are no longer united by similar outlooks on life, goals and desires, but by their shared enemy: marginalisation, endangerment, death.

Duration: 1h30

Genre: Dance / Theatre / Circus

Age limit: 12 years



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## DANSE MACABRE • CAST / CREDITS

**Concept, direction, choreography:** Martin Zimmermann

**Created with and interpreted by:** Tarek Halaby, Dimitri Jourde, Methinee Wongtrakoon, Martin Zimmermann

**Music creation:** Colin Vallon

**Dramaturgy:** Sabine Geistlich

**Stage design:** Simeon Meier, Martin Zimmermann

**Artistic collaboration:** Romain Guion

**Development stage, technical coordination:** Ingo Groher

**Construction decor:** maison delaculture de Bourges (Nicolas Bénard, Lucas Bussy, Jules Chavigny, Jean-Christophe David, Luc Renard, Joao De Sousa, Eric Vincent), Andy Hohl

**Costumes:** Susanne Boner, Martin Zimmermann

**Light design:** Sarah Büchel

**Sound design:** Andy Neresheimer

**Motorization decor:** Thierry Kaltenrieder

**Costumes confection:** Susanne Boner

**Painting:** Michèle Rebetz-Martin

**Creation stage manager:** Roger Studer

**Light direction:** Sarah Büchel, Jan Olieslagers

**Sound direction:** Frank Bourgoïn, Andy Neresheimer

**Stage manager:** Roger Studer

**Photography:** Nelly Rodriguez, Basil Stücheli

**Administration, distribution:** Alain Vuignier

**International producer:** Claire Béjanin

**Communication:** Manuela Schlumpf

**Technical office:** Sarah Büchel

**Accounting:** Conny Heeb

**Production:** MZ Atelier

**Co-production:** Fund of Reso – Dance Network Switzerland – supported by Pro Helvetia, Swiss Arts Council • Kaserne Basel • Kurtheater Baden • Le Volcan, scène nationale du Havre • Les Théâtres de la Ville de Luxembourg • L'Odyssée — Périgueux • maison delaculture de Bourges / scène nationale • Opéra Dijon • Theater- und Musikgesellschaft Zug • Théâtre de Carouge • Zürcher Theater Spektakel

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Final rehearsals at Kurtheater Baden

**Premiere:** 19 August 2021 at festival Zürcher Theater Spektakel, Zurich

Martin Zimmermann is supported by a cooperative funding agreement with the Culture Department City of Zurich, Department of Culture Canton Zurich and Pro Helvetia – Swiss Arts Council.

Martin Zimmermann is Associated Artist at maison delaculture de Bourges / Scène Nationale and at Tanzhaus Zürich.



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## ABOUT THE WORK OF MARTIN ZIMMERMANN

The confluence of humour, magic and absurdity gives rise to the singularity of Martin Zimmermann's artistic works. He creates whimsical, outlandish worlds for his pieces in which to stage his figures and bizarre objects. The ordinary is often extracted from reality and set in his parallel worlds, where it appears oddly misplaced and absurd. By wreaking havoc on conventions, challenging the customary and unearthing the hidden, he allows the improbable to emerge as plausible and prompts viewers to think differently. If Zimmermann himself does not perform in his pieces, then he brings together physical actors, extraordinary dancers and virtuoso artists to become accomplices in his tragicomic universe. The artist carves out the character silhouette of every individual figure with the same precision, care and passion for detail as he does with his set designs. Martin Zimmermann's choreographic hallmark is distinguished by the taut rhythm which enables images and scenes to unfold. At the heart of his work lies the dialogue between the human body and objects which have a life of their own as they meet head-on and interact in a primarily unstable and unpropitious space. His work begins with a space which evolves in the creative process and gives way for a physical and visual theatre without words. The focus is on the complexity of human nature. Martin Zimmermann's work is shaped by his beginnings as a circus artist.

"I create works for dancers, physical actors and acrobats who inspire and move me. I have a penchant for quirky figures and enigmatic, bizarre forms of expression. There is no method, but I have experimented with the human silhouette and space for twenty years. Ultimately guiding my work, however, is humour, which I search for in everyday life, in the hideous and the unfamiliar, in short, in human existence – with all its possibilities and impossibilities."

— *Martin Zimmermann* (Choreographer, director, set designer)



Martin Zimmermann

## DANSE MACABRE • PRESS IMAGES



Official images for print and online, main images for *Danse Macabre* campaign

<https://we.tl/t-OgjNskS0S2>

Official images for social media use only

<https://we.tl/t-xKa94x2Nfy>

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## BIOGRAPHY MARTIN ZIMMERMANN

**Martin Zimmermann** (\*1970) grows up in a small Swiss village in Wildberg. He is an internationally renowned choreographer, theatre director, set designer and performer. After an apprenticeship as a decorator in Zurich, he graduated in 1995 with a diploma from the Centre National des Arts du Cirque (CNAC) in Paris. With his diploma-play he toured the world for three years. After eight years in France, Zimmermann returned to Switzerland in 1998. For more than 20 years, he has been inventing, choreographing and staging visual and physical theatre without words from Zurich, whose mixture of circus, dance, theatre and spectacular stage installations has been inspiring a large audience. Over the years, the works of this exceptional Swiss artist have conquered prestigious institutions and theatres around the world, including the BAM New York, the Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre, the Théâtre de la Ville Paris, the Barbican London, the Sydney Opera House, the Grand Théâtre de Luxembourg, the Théâtre de Vidy-Lausanne, the Festival d'Avignon and the Fondation Beyeler Art Museum. His creations have also been shown at the Theater Spektakel Zurich and the Schauspielhaus Zurich, to name but a few. The national and international press regularly reports on his unique talent. He has received several awards, including the Swiss Dance and Choreography Prize in 2009, the Culture Promotion Prize of the Canton of Zurich in 2010, the Swiss Design Award in the stage design category three times (2008, 2010 and 2011) and the Fondation Heinz Spoerli Prize in 2013. Martin Zimmermann is Associated Artist at maison delaculture de Bourges / Scène Nationale and at Tanzhaus Zürich. He lives and works with his family in Zurich.

## DANSE MACABRE • BIOGRAPHIES CAST

**Tarek Halaby** (\*1980, USA) grew up dancing in Chicago and graduated from the University of Iowa with his Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance Performance. Between 2001 and 2004, he was a founding member of the New York-based company Miguel Gutierrez and the Powerful People. Between 2004 and 2006, he participated in the 2-year research cycle at the P.A.R.T.S Research Studios for contemporary dance in Brussels. Since then he has developed his own series of solo performances called "Performing for the first time". He collaborates regularly on projects with other artists, notably with Zimmermann & de Perrot in *Hans was Heiri*, the Swedish electronic band *The Knife*, the Rosas Compagnie under the direction of Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker in the Golden Hours production (*as you like it*) and Eleanor Bauer & Chris Peck in *Meyoucycle*. He also performed the principal role in the film *Problemski Hotel* by Flemish filmmaker Manu Riche. Tarek Halaby lives in Brussels.

**Dimitri Jourde** (\*1975, France) discovered the circus arts at the École d'Annie Fratellini and then went on to train at, among others, the École Nationale du Cirque in Rosny-sous-Bois and the Centre National des Arts du Cirque (CNAC), receiving his diploma in 1998. Since then, he has continued to develop his own choreographic vocabulary while participating in numerous creations with, among others, François Verret, zero visibilitycorp./Ina Christel Johannessen, the Kubilaï Khan Investigations dance group, and Guy Allouche. Most recently he had worked with Zimmermann & de Perrot (*Hans was Heiri*, 2014), Yoann Bourgeois (*Celui qui tombe*, 2014) and Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui (*Fractus V*, 2015), collaborating with all three on several occasions. Dimitri Jourde lives in France and Norway.

**Methinee Wongtrakoon** (\*1985, Sweden/Thailand) an acrobat, dancer and choreographer from Sweden, is the first circus artist to receive the prestigious Bernadotte Art Award. As a nine-year old, Methinee began practicing circus arts as part of the Furuvik children's circus group. Next was the Cirkusgymnasiet in Gävle and then the Circus Cirkörs circus pilot training, where she developed a unique body language, a distinctive blend of contortion, acrobatics and dance. Methinee has collaborated with various international circus, dance and theatre troupes, including the Pantomim Theatre, the Dramaten Royale Theater of Sweden, the Royal Swedish Opera, the Drottningholm Castle Theatre and the Malmö Stadsteater. Following *Hans was Heiri*, Methinee joins Martin Zimmermann for this new collaboration on stage. She lives in Stockholm.





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## DANSE MACABRE • TOUR DATES

### 2021

Zürich	CH	19.08. – 23.08.2021	Zürcher Theater Spektakel 2021
Düsseldorf	D	14.09. – 15.09.2021	Düsseldorf Festival 2021
Besançon	F	20.10. – 22.10.2021	Les 2 Scènes, scène nationale de Besançon
Zug	CH	31.10. – 01.11.2021	Theater Casino Zug
Basel	CH	02.12. – 04.12.2021	Kaserne Basel
Baden	CH	15.12. – 16.12.2021	Kurtheater Baden

### 2022

Bienne	CH	14.01. – 15.01.2022	Nebia - Biel/Bienne
Nyon	CH	22.01. – 23.01.2022	L'Usine à Gaz
Sevilla	E	04.02. – 05.02.2022	Teatro Central
Caen	F	15.03. – 16.03.2022	Festival Spring – Caen
Le Havre	F	18.03. – 19.03.2022	Le Volcan, scène nationale du Havre
Bourges	F	31.03. – 01.04.2022	maison delaculture de Bourges / Scène nationale
Dijon	F	24.05. – 25.05.2022	Opéra Dijon
Luxembourg	L	29.06. – 01.07.2022	Grand Théâtre du Luxembourg - Studio
Carouge	CH	15.09. – 17.09. 2022	Festival de la Bâtie — Genève
Carouge	CH	19.09. – 02.10.2022	Théâtre de Carouge

Tour in progress, for current dates see: [www.martinzimmermann.ch/on-tour/](http://www.martinzimmermann.ch/on-tour/)



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## PRESS REVIEWS

«Martin Zimmermann's astonishing talent lies largely in his ability to simultaneously conjure up the time and space in which his character constantly evolves.»

LIBÉRATION, Paris

«Zimmermann's inventiveness lies in the meeting of comedy with choreography, acrobatics and intellect.»

SONNTAGSZEITUNG, Zurich

«Martin Zimmermann, a clown of modern times: the artist presents « Eins Zwei Drei » that combines the disciplines of circus, dance and theatre. And allows him to savour his freedom and claim his status loud and clear.»

LE FIGARO, Paris

«By focusing on the elegant contrast between Mr. Zimmermann's antic, nimble figure and the more stolid architectural perils, Hallo displays a dark humour reminiscent of Samuel Beckett.»

NEW YORK TIMES, New York

«Devoted for over twenty five years to a physical theatre that moves constantly, he is as terribly intense on stage as he is in life. (...) If he refers to Grock, Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton as his models, with whom he shares obvious similarities, Martin Zimmermann is like nobody but himself.»

LE MONDE, Paris

«Just like the surrealist painter Magritte, Martin Zimmermann challenges our perceptions of reality.»

24 HEURES, Lausanne

« He is an authentic inventor and a free electron, meticulous and deep, and yet not a watchmaker: Martin Zimmermann fabricates his own time. One could try and describe it as «danced clownish theatre», but it is images that make his work exist, beyond words. Martin Zimmermann embodies on stage the human figures that Lucian Freud depicted in his paintings. »

NEUE ZÜRCHER ZEITUNG, Zurich

«His theatre is like a living being, a living sculpture. It makes us see things differently. And aspires to move us. (...) The key to Martin Zimmermann's theatre of objects? The human. Always the human.»

TAGESANZEIGER, Zurich

«Martin Zimmermann carries off the extraordinary feat of animating the inanimate.» LES

INROCKUPTIBLES, Paris

«For all those who love the language and artistry of clowns, the perceptive absurdity, contemporary theatre and, ultimately, the great international artists, seeing Martin Zimmermann is an important event.»

EL PAÍS, Madrid