



CENTRE
CHORÉGRAPHIQUE
NATIONAL
DU HAVRE NORMANDIE
direction Fouad Boussof

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND
CHOREOGRAPHER
Fouad BOUSSOUF

OÜM



Duration 60'

RECREATION 2024

ALL AUDIENCE
above 7 years old

CONTACTS

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OÛM

About OÛM

OÛm is a tribute to Oum Kalthoum – an astoundingly modern diva who could improvise for hours and dressed as a man whenever she felt like it – and to Omar Khayyam – a XI-century Persian poet who celebrated rapture, trance and love.

The voice and power of the diva, and the scientific research of the poet-mathematician – he wrote on the concepts of weight, balance and time – are a precious foundation and inspiration for this dance performance.

OÛm is quintessentially bodies vibrating to the waves of live music, transgressing stylistic barriers and leading the way to improvisation and rapture whilst also exploring the singularity of each dancer. A poetic and musical performance, *OÛm* gives life to an eternal elation where song, poetry, dance and music unite to celebrate the present moment.

"Between the 1920s-1960s, from Beirut to Cairo great divas appeared on the radio and became icons of the Arab female song. Oum Kalthoum in particular was part of my childhood soundscape. Hers was an ever-present, low-intensity music I heard everywhere – day and night, on every street corner, in every car, and especially in that of my father.

She is one of my most vivid music memories growing up in Morocco. I could not understand her language or lyrics, but by hearing her voice so many times, she became close and familiar. Her songs – characteristic of the Tarab style she excels in – embody emotions full of music and poetry, evoking a broad spectrum of feelings, from the most private to the most violent. Later on, I took interest in her songs' meanings and through her, discovered the Rubaiyat – Omar Khayyam's XI- century quatrain poem.

The inspiration for my work *OÛm* originates in these feelings, mind and soul states, not only in dance but in music and voice. I am particularly interested in, and want to transmit, the connections between these vibrations and the performers. Conceived as a poetic encounter, this production gives the performers the space to become one. United through common energy, together they drive the quest for living in the present moment."

Fouad Boussouf

Artistic director and choreographer Fouad Boussouf

Assistant of the choreographer Mathilde Méritet

Dancers Nadim Bahsoun, Yumio Chanoki, Filipa Correia Lescuyer, Marcus Diallo, Lola Ruscica, Ismaël Belabid-Lenoir

Musicians/composers Mohanad Aljaramani (oud, percussions, voice), Lucien Zerrad (guitar, oud)

Sound design Marion Castor, Lucien Zerrad

Dramaturgy Mona El Yafi

Scenography Raymond Sarti

Costumes Anaïs Heureaux

Lighting Design Fabrice Sarcy

Tour manager Mathieu Morelle

Light manager (alternately) Benoît Duboc, Yaël Vallée or Romain Perrillat-Collomb

Sound master (alternately) Gianluca Rossiello or Gabin Bachelet

Courant production Le Phare - Centre chorégraphique national du Havre Normandie / direction Fouad Boussouf

Production Massala Company

Coproduction La Briqueterie – CDCN du Val-de-Marne, Le POC d'Alfortville, Institut Français de Meknès au Maroc, CCN de Créteil et du Val-de-Marne / Cie Käfig, Pôle-Sud – CDCN de Strasbourg, Les Hivernales – CDCN d'Avignon, Fontenay-en-Scènes, Fontenay-sous-Bois, Hessisches Staatsballett – Tanzplattform Rhein Main en Allemagne, Théâtre Paul Eluard (TPE) à Bezons

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FROM THE DIVA TO THE POET

In the early 1900s, fascinated by Omar Khayyam's quatrains the Rubaiyat, the poet Ahmed Rami went from Cairo to the Sorbonne, to learn Persian and be able to translate his idol's work. In Paris, he received a phone call from a friend telling him: "A female singer, disguised as a man, is singing your poems. You must hear her!". Rami promptly returned to Cairo to discover no other than Oum Kalthoum who would become his second idol in life.

In 1950, Ahmed Rami's translation of the Rubaiyat was finally ready. Sung by Oum Kalthoum, the quatrains became an enormous success, making XI-century poetry accessible to entire generations. In the early 2000s, for the first time Fouad Boussouf takes keen interest in the lyrics of the diva who cradled his childhood. It is then when he discovers the Rubaiyat – Omar Khayyam's long poem which praises the fate of men and is a hymn to the present.

The Rubaiyat is a wake-up call, urging us to awake our minds and bodies, and open them to the present. It invites us to fully savour the present moment, conscious of the inevitability of death, yet rejoicing in burning, all-consuming life.

"I heard a voice calling at dawn, calling from the unseen, for the unmindful of people to get up and fill in the cups of hope before fate fills their life cups."

This stanza opens Oum Kalthoum's interpretation of the Rubaiyat. It is a call to life, to the ardour of the present and, in a certain way, a call to transcendence.

Oüm starts from this stanza and repeatedly comes back to it, through the singers' and dancers' voices, through their bodies and sounds, and through the voice of diva Oum Kalthoum, full of the rhythm and musicality inherent in Arabic.

"Today, thanks to her, the illiterate peasants recite refined verses, the nationalists glorify the language, the mystics enter into a trance and the cloistered women dream of gallant love."

*Naguib Mahfouz in Oum Kalthoum
a documentary by Simone Bitton*

OÜM

"Oüm is a wonderful choreography, carried by an intoxicating tempo."

**Amélie Blaustein Niddam,
Exmoveire, June 16th 2022**

Press

"A stack of dances, floor-based and with vertical shapes of great finesse, linked bodies and playing with changes of weight, explosions of radical, nearly violent movements ... We are invited to enter an illuminated sort of trance by the dancers and musicians. (...) Driven by the power of contemporary ritual, *Oüm* is on its way to becoming a cult piece."

Danser Canal Historique – Thomas Hahn

"The marvelous lighting shows us pink palaces in a country far far away, as Lagarce would say. What are all these people doing together? What are they saying to each other, all dressed up in suits like bankers, except wearing socks? Boussouf takes us into a real city, in the street where the sound of the dafs sets the tempo, abundant and powerful for the artists. *Oüm* is a generous work, sensitive and ultimately freeing."

Toute la culture – Amélie Blaustein Niddam

"This is what has been missing from our stages (...), finding its strengths in the fact we are invited to feel without having to look backward yet again: this is a new form of contemporary nostalgia."

I/O Gazette – Jean-Christophe Brianchon

"The promise of an Oriental trance."

Tribune de Genève

"The music and the writings of the medieval poet Omar Khayyam combine with the dance to create a giant mass of beauty."

Amélie Blaustein Niddam, Exmoveire, 16 juin 2022

"With *Oüm*, Fouad Boussouf adds his own shaped building block to the edifice of contemporary works based on popular themes."

Amélie Blaustein Niddam, Exmoveire, 16 juin 2022

"The dancers blow us away with their energy in this unique, harmonious and thrilling adventure."

20h30, Lever de rideau

Video links

- ▶ Teaser
- ▶ Backstage
- ▶ Edited capture (2021)

CALENDAR 24/25

2024

Tuesday 10.12

Les 3T – Châtelleraut (France)

Thursday 10.14

Moulin du Roc, scène nationale – Niort (France)

Saturday 10.16

Gallia Théâtre – Saintes (France)

Tuesday 10.26

Théâtre de Cusset (France)

Thursday 10.28

Transversales, scène conventionnée – Verdun (France)

2025

Friday 01.24

Trident, scène nationale – Cherbourg (France)

Tuesday 03.18

Théâtre des Quatre Saisons – Gradignan (France)

Friday 03.21

L'Escale – Tournefeuille (France)

Thursday 04.17

Maison de la Culture, scène conventionnée – Nevers (France)

© Elian Bachini



KALTHOUM

© Maëlys Kernanec Pinchon



[Video link](#)

▶ Edited capture (2024)

Oüm is also available for spaces not dedicated to live performance. With Mohanad Aljaramani on oud and Nadim Bassoun and Filipa Correia Lescuyer on dance, *Oüm* becomes *Kalthoum*. In this lighter 20-30 minute form, the performers take up the fundamentals of the original piece in a more intimate setting. Performed for the first time in this configuration at the Nuit des musées on May 18, 2024, *Kalthoum* is designed to adapt to all indoor and outdoor spaces.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT
Marie Chénard > production@lephare-ccn.fr

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The creations of Fouad Boussouf are a vibrant blending of hip hop, contemporary and traditional dance. **A teacher as much as he is a choreographer, he prioritizes communication and transmission in both areas of his work.** Each piece is conceived with an obligatory accompanying set of practical workshops offered to all audiences. These workshops allow us to better understand the works, to continue the experience of the spectator beyond the performance, and to enrich that experience. *Oüm* is not the exception to this policy, and can be experienced in a number of ways.

© Elian Bachini

Objectives for our audiences:

- ▶ Facilitate the **discovery of the choreographic and aesthetic universes** of Fouad Boussouf,
- ▶ **Initiate the audiences into the lexicon and practices of live performance**, specifically those used in dance,
- ▶ **Offer perspectives on the creative process** and experimentation with audiences already familiar with dance, including beginning dancers,
- ▶ Propose **feedback time at the end of long form workshops** or an **audiovisual validation** relevant to a creation.

These ideas will apply to all audiences but may be adapted depending on levels of understanding, notably for amateur dancers and for changing objectives in teaching.

The modules :

Workshops will be led by one of the dancers from *Oüm* or by other dancers from Le Phare - CCN du Havre Normandie. Various modules are possible, ranging from two hours of discovery to more structured projects lasting through an entire season. The two hour format is largely sufficient to discover a choreographic universe, begin moving and creating a pleasing group dynamic, but longer lasting sessions are proposed to anticipate more detailed study and experiences, with additional feedback.

We are willing to customize our formats depending on audiences, theatres, any expressed wishes, and our availability.

CONTACTS

CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT COLLABORATORS

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BIOGRAPHY

© Boulomsouk Svadphaiphane



Fouad Boussouf - Choreographer

For Fouad Boussouf, dance is pure impulse, momentum, movement. These words also define his artistic journey, driven by **his innate curiosity and his desire to escape**. His early years in Morocco, living in an isolated village in the region of Moulay Idriss, were filled with festive family events and a natural environment of clean, monastic simplicity. When Fouad was seven, his family moved to France, to Romilly-sur-Seine, near Troyes, and he stepped into a new universe, in which he had to learn quickly about culture and societal codes. As a teenager he began doing hip hop to cassettes by Prince and Michael Jackson; the form was initially considered a socially acceptable physical exercise, but for him hip hop became **the building blocks for his personal style of movement**, in which the body's will to exceed, to go farther – brought him recognition from his peers.

He finished his education in Chalons-en-Champagne, where he also took workshops led by the circus students from the CNAC (the National Center for Circus Arts). He moved to Paris in 2000 and began studying social sciences at the University of Paris XII in Créteil, where he also taught classes in street dance, first informally, then as an accredited teacher. He continued studying at the Academy of the Cité Véron, participated in the Suresnes Cités Danse Festival and performed with Farid Berki and Pierre Doussaint. After having presented his DESS degree on hip hop, he took a seven month road trip in Australia, beginning **a long cycle of activities layering pedagogical, creative and travel plans**, which also took him to Egypt and to Russia. When he finally returned to France he decided to focus on dance, and at the age of 27 he founded the Compagnie Massala. In 2008- 2009 he created solos and a trio, and in 2010 he created his first group work, **Déviations (Detours)**.

Since then he has been **creating non-stop, embodying the momentum that has characterized his approach to his art and his life**. His work is hybrid, deliberately without labels, profoundly present and in the moment, always incorporating the hip hop movement vocabulary. Over the years he has built **a dance language channeling movement spontaneity and the idea of nonstop movement**, which has no beginning, no ending. His dancers are inspired by this dynamic which sets them outside their normal movement patterns, generating an extraordinary, cyclical energy onstage, notably in his recent works **Näss (People)** in 2018, and in **Oüm** (2020), an homage to Oum Kalthoum – which affirmed his place in the international dance scene.

For Boussouf, the principal artistic instrument is the body, of course, but he also incorporates other forms, including video and the plastic arts, both contemporary or linked to Mediterranean history. Among these works are the documentary film, **Le Ballet Urbain (The Urban Ballet)** (2019), and his collaborations with the sculptor **Ugo Rondinone**, on the video installation **Burn to shine** (2022) at the Petit Palais in Paris and in **Via** (2023), which he created for the Ballet du Grand Théâtre in Geneva, commissioned by the choreographer **Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui**. This "world citizen" follows **a rhythm of creation driven by emotion, the concept of risk, and the constant will to move forward**.

From 2020- 2022, Boussouf was an Associated Artist at the prestigious Maison de la danse in Lyon, at Équinoxe - Scène nationale de Châteauroux and at the Maison de la musique in Nanterre. On January 1, 2022, He was unanimously appointed as director of Le Phare - Centre chorégraphique national du Havre Normandie and during that year was also honored by the French government with the distinction of **Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres**.

- Isabelle Calabre

Creations / Le Phare

CCN of Le Havre Normandie since 2022

- 2025 : *Up*, creation for a violonist and a footfreestyler
- 2023 : *Fêu*, creation for 10 dancers
- 2022 : *Cordes*, creation for a dancer and a musician
- 2022 : *Âmes*, creation for 2 performers

Creations / Massala Company from 2011 to 2021

- 2021 : *Yès*, creation for 2 dancers
- 2020 : *Oüm*, creation for 6 dancers and 2 musicians
- 2018 : *Näss (People)*, creation for 7 dancers
- 2015 : *Le Moulin du Diable*, creation for 5 contemporary & hip-hop dancers
- 2014 : *Esperluette*, creation for a circus dancer and a guitarist
- 2013 : *Transe*, ccreation for 7 danseurs contemporary & hip hop dancers
- Concept Lavoir*, creation pour 5 hip-hop dancers & an opera singer
- 2012 : *Afflux*, creation for 5 hip-hop dancers, a saxophonist and an electro-acoustic DJ
- 2011 : *A Condition*, creation for 4 contempory & hip-hop dancers

Commissions & performances

- 2023 : Creation of *Via*, commande for the Ballet of the Grand Theater of Geneva
- 2023 : Creation of *Corps (Im)mobiles* with the dancers of the Grand Theater of Geneva at the Art Museum and History of Geneva
- 2022 : Exhibition of *Burn to shine* in collaboration with Ugo Rondinone for the Petit Palais in Paris
- 2021 : Creation of *Happy* (for 15 dancers) for the Opening night of Paris L'Été festival 2021
- 2020 : Dance performance at the Museum of Modren Art of Paris (Salle Raoul Dufy) with the Arte en scène project, Arte.TV
- 2019 : Creation of *Escape*, France-Hong-Kong collaboration with 2 French dancers and 2 Hong Kong dancers as part of the Honk Kong Arts Festival (Hong Kong)
- 2018 : Creation of *On n'emprisonne pas les idées*, at the heart of exhibition « Les racines poussent aussi dans le béton ». Piece for 6 performers. MAC/Val Vitry-sur-Seine
- 2012 : Dance performance around the work of Roy Atsak, l'homme anthropométrique, Vitry-sur seine
- 2010 : Dance performance for the inauguration of Dan Graham's sculpture in La Rochelle

PREVIOUS TOURS

2023/2024

01/12/2023 Eclat, Pont-Audemer
02/12/2023 ECPC - Gonfreville l'Orcher
01/02/2024 L'Orange Bleue - Eaubonne
06/02/2024 Centre culturel Arc-en-ciel - Rungis
08/02/2024 Théâtre Jacques Carat - Cachan
22/03/2024 CCM Jacques Prévert - Villeparisis
29/03/2024 Le Rive Gauche - St-Étienne-du-Rouvray
16/05/2024 La Manufacture - CDCN de Bordeaux
18/05/2024 MAM of Paris [Night of Museums]

2022/2023

05/09/22 Rovereto, Italie
01/12/2022 Théâtre des Bergeries, Noisy-le-Sec
03/12/2022 Bruxelles (Halles Schaerbeek), Belgique
05-07/01/2023 Le Quartz, Brest
10/01/2023 Théâtre Edwige Feuillère, Vesoul
14/01/2023 Louvre-Lens
25/01/2023 Théâtre de Villefranche, Villefranche sur Saône
27/01/2023 Centre Culturel Houdremont, La Courneuve
31/01/2023 Scènes de Territoire, Bressuire
02/02/2023 La Rampe, Echirrolles
21/03/23 Quai des arts, Rumilly
28-29/03/23 CCAM Vandoeuvre-lès-Nancy
08/04/23 Centre Culturel Aragon Triolet, Orly
12/05/23 Théâtre de Champigny-sur-Marne
23/05/23 Centre Culturel de Limoges
03/06/23 Sarreguemines, Festival Perspectives
14-15/06/23 Le Manège de Reims - 2 représentations

2021/2022

07-08-09/09/21 Oslo, Norvège
14/09/21 Luleå, Suède
19/09/21 Örebro, Suède
21/09/21 Malmö, Suède
23/09/21 Vara, Suède
25/09/21 Kungsbacka, Suède
30/09/21 La Mouche, Saint-Génis-Laval
02/10/21 Théâtre du Parc, Andrézieux-Bouthéon
05-06/10/21 Hessisches Staatstheater Wiesbaden, Allemagne
10/10/21 Théâtre Jean Vilar, Vitry-sur-Seine
21-22/10/21 Musée de l'Immigration, Palais de la Porte Dorée, Paris
09/11/21 Théâtre de l'Olivier, Istres
13/11/21 Théâtre Molière, Sète
07/12/21 ECAM, Kremlin-Bicêtre
09/12/21 Bruges, Belgique
11/12/21 Hérault Culture - Scène de Bayssan, Béziers
14-15/12/21 L'Azimut, Châtenay-Malabry
25/02/22 Espace Culturel de la Hague
10/03/22 Chambly
15/03/22 Espace Boris Vian, Les Ulis
25/03/22 Espace Marcel Carné à St-Michel-sur-Orge
02-05/04/22 Théâtre des Quartiers d'Ivry
08/04/22 Equinoxe, Châteauroux
22/04/22 Théâtre Jean Arp, Clamart
30/04/22 STEPS - Salle des fêtes du Lignon, Vernier, Suisse
01/05/22 STEPS/ Salle des fêtes du Lignon, Vernier, Suisse
03/05/22 STEPS/ Théâtre du Passage, Neuchâtel, Suisse
06/05/22 STEPS/ CCDP Salle de l'Inter, Porentruy, Suisse
10/05/22 STEPS/ Théâtre de Beausobre, Morges, Suisse
12/05/22 STEPS/ Stadttheater, Schaffhausen, Suisse
14/05/22 STEPS/ Le Reflet, Vevey, Suisse
19/05/22 STEPS/ Virdmar, Bern, Suisse
21/05/22 STEPS/ Nebia, Biel, Suisse
29/06-01/07/22 Théâtre Le Monfort, Paris

2020/2021

15/09/20 Festival le Temps d'Aimer la Danse, Biarritz
29/06/21 Théâtre Paul Eluard (TPE), Bezons

2019/2020

22/02/20 Théâtre Benoît XII, Festival Les Hivernales CDCN d'Avignon (première)
27-28/02/20 POC Alfortville
03-04/03/20 Pôle Sud - CDCN Strasbourg
06/03/20 Fontenay-en-Scènes, Fontenay-sous-bois



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