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COMPAGNIE XY

IL N'EST PAS ENCORE MINUIT ...

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IL N'EST PAS ENCORE MINUIT ...

Compagnie XY

France

Circus

About the performance

Il n'est pas encore minuit ... is a fleeting, exhilarating moment in which we become aware that we are stealing time from time itself; that together we have succeeded in detaching from it, if not abstracting ourselves entirely.

If you've ever wondered why an acrobat is an acrobat, it becomes apparent that they are a perfect metaphor for this feat. As soon as we become aware of this we realise that time has already caught up with us and outstripped us ...

At one time or another we will all feel the euphoria of being uplifted, the state of weightlessness – and then the inevitable fall. For an acrobat, this process is a part of daily life in rehearsal or performance and gives them a completely different notion of what achievement means. With success comes the promise of failure and with failure the promise of happiness. The more you look at it, the more you realise it's a natural cycle reproduced ad infinitum, like a dotted line stretching to infinity. Just as long as there is someone standing by who can send you soaring up to the stars and catch you again when you fall back down to earth. This is where living and working together side by side takes on a whole new dimension. From these skilful bodies in motion, what ultimately emerges is not so much about prowess, but a great humility when faced with the human condition and a capacity to keep pushing its boundaries.

With *Il n'est pas encore minuit ...*, a show about balance and perfection therefore becomes one about imbalance and instability. With multiple perspectives and viewpoints which eschew the lowest common denominator in favour of a continuous quest for balance borne out of imbalance, Company XY present an ode to precarious and imperfect humanity. It is like a clarion call to work together, to rejoice in the moment and protect ourselves; an appeal to stay tuned to each other, be watchful and to look out for one another.

Created by Compagnie XY

Performed by Abdeliazide Senhadji, Andres Somoza, Alice Noel, Antoine Thirion, Antonio Terrones, Bahoz Témaux, Birta Benonysdottir, Caroline Le Roy, Charlie Vergnaud, David Badia Hernandez, David Coll Povedano, Evertjan Mercier, Guillaume Sendron, Gwendal Beylier, Jérémie Robert, Marianna Boldini, Michael Pallandre, Mikis Matsakis, Mohamed Bousesta, Romain Guimard, Thomas Samacoïts, Thibaut Berthias, Zinzi Oegema

Artistic Collaboration Loïc Touzé, Emmanuel Dariès, Valentin Mussou, David Gubitsch

Lighting Designer Vincent Millet

Costume Designer Nadia Léon

Acrobatic Collaboration Nordine Allal

Lindy-Hop Instruction Aude Guiffes & Philippe Mencia

Producers Peggy Donck & Antoine Billaud

Supported by French Cultural Department (DGCA-DRAC Nord-pas-de-Calais), Regional Council of Nord-Pas-de-Calais region and Adami (association for artists and musicians performers' rights).

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About Company XY

Formed in Lille France, Company XY are a collective of artist-acrobats unique in their genre. Together they have collaborated to create *Laissez-Porter* (2005), *Le Grand C* (2009) and *Il n'est pas encore minuit ...* (2017), which have been seen in more than 500 performances worldwide.

Now at the forefront of acrobatic technique from a creative perspective, Company XY have grown their ranks, from a half-dozen artists when they began to 22 today, and have paved the way for a real exploration of physical language and the world they create for their audience. By honing and refining their aesthetic, Company XY push the limits of physical ability and bring poetry to the body in motion. Openness, sharing, and solidarity are values that are as central to the company's process of collective creation as they are to the functioning of the company itself. If circus is art in action, for Company XY it is also about keeping the magic of collaboration alive.

Q&A with Romain Guimard

What inspired the creation of this work? What was the process for its creation?

After the *Grand C*, we wanted to create a new show with more people, including people we had met on tour. We all met together for a series of short sessions (one or two weeks spread over a year and a half) and trained together to first get a common acrobatic language, and then to use that simple language to create new words, sentences, poetry, researching all the things we could do, leaving our mind free to dream without any constraints. After this process we had two things we knew we wanted to bring to the show – planks (for their acrobatic possibilities) and Lindy-Hop (for its high energy and joyful craziness).

We all came together for four months to create the show as a collective, deciding everything together, with each person having a chance to both lead the group and follow the others. We did get the help of an outside eye, Loïc Touze, a choreographer who ensured the final product was a true representation of who the collective was and what we wanted to create.

Because there are so many of us in the company, and each person has their own history and sources of inspiration, the show has many different elements – it goes from rugby to Lindy-Hop via castells (the Catalan towers), contemporary dance, traditional circus...

Our main goal was to collect the different sources of inspiration and to find the ones that we could all embrace, the ones that could take our acrobatics to places we couldn't have found otherwise.

To create collaboratively takes time, a lot, and requires patience, a lot too. There are no leaders and every single decision is made after a lot of talking and listening to each other, collecting the different opinions, understanding the benefits and disadvantages of each, and then allowing time for the group to gather around the idea that makes the most sense. It is also about finding the right balance between the collective needs and the individual ones. This is true for the little decisions that need to be made, things like transportation, but also for bigger decisions – like the direction our creation will take. And as you'll see, the show is all about this process.

What is the significance of the title (which translates as 'it's not yet midnight')?

To me, the title refers to a moment suspended between two worlds, two time spaces, two states. At this precise moment, a lot has already been going on but there is still a lot of potential for new things to happen. It's the time when anything seems possible and craziness has room to express itself freely. It is that place where creativity is at its best.

What is the importance of collaboration in not only the creation of the work but also its theme?

The show itself is about a collective of acrobats sharing their acrobatic world with the audience. It involves acrobatics, which by necessity involves collaboration, but also the actual way we perform the acrobatics involves us working as a group. We train, create and live together as a collective, a group of individuals sharing our differences,

fears and hopes, cooperating with trust and care towards each other to foster the emergence of something greater than we could achieve on our own.

Is it important for circus to tell a story as well as include incredible feats?

Circus is a story in itself – the story of challenges and what’s involved in them. Indeed, as circus acrobats, challenges are the engine that drive us. We always play with the most challenging things we can try. In my view, this is the essence of circus. In our previous show, the challenge was to create a show with nothing but collective acrobatics (a form we were discovering and developing at the time). For *Il n’est pas encore minuit ...*, the challenge was to go deeper into our material and to create something with a greater sense of significance. Sure, you can expect challenges, but on top of that the show explores the act of performing these feats together and what that can actually mean.