Wayne McGregor | Random Dance (United Kingdom)

FAR

Wayne McGregor

Feb. 6. 7. 8. 2014

Théâtre Maisonneuve, Place des Arts
CREDITS

Length: 60 minutes

Concept and Direction Wayne McGregor

Choreography Wayne McGregor in collaboration with the dancers

Original Music Ben Frost

Lighting Design Lucy Carter

Set Design rAndom International

Costume Design Moritz Junge

Dancers Catarina Carvalho, Travis Clausen-Knight, Alvaro Dule, Michael-John Harper, Louis McMiller, Daniela Neugebauer, Anna Nowak, James Pett, Fukiko Takase, Jessica Wright

Technical Director Christopher Charles

Technical Manager Colin Everitt

Production Electrician/Relighter Ashley Bolitho

Associate Director Odette Hughes

Rehearsal Assistant Catarina Carvalho

FAR is co-produced by Sadler’s Wells, London, UK and by Peak Performances @ Montclair State University, Montclair, USA and is made possible in part by a grant from the Association of Performing Arts Presenters Creative Campus Innovations Grant Program, funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

FAR is co-commissioned by Maison de la Danse, Lyon, FR; Fondazione I Teatri, Reggio Emilia, IT; Belgrade Dance Festival, Belgrade, SE; Belfast Festival, Belfast, UK; Brighton Dome and Festival Ltd, Brighton, UK; Laban Theatre, London, UK and DanceEast, Ipswich, UK.

Wayne McGregor | Random Dance is supported by Arts Council England and is Resident Company of Sadler’s Wells, London. Wayne McGregor CBE is the Resident Choreographer of The Royal Ballet, Covent Garden.
FAR (2010)

The avant-garde artist Wayne McGregor continues in FAR to defy the laws of anatomy and to call into question the conventions of dance. Fascinated by neuroscience and new technologies, the British choreographer was inspired by the book *Flesh in the Age of Reason*, where the historian Roy Porter recounts how the view of the body has evolved since the Enlightenment, starting with Diderot’s first encyclopedia and the first autopsies, and how medical discoveries challenged then-current beliefs about the mechanisms of thought and emotion. Conducting his own rigorous analysis of the mechanisms of choreography, McGregor is pursuing in FAR his studies on the interactions between body and mind in order to expand his vocabulary of movement, an approach that has resulted in several works including *Entity*, presented by Danse Danse in 2011.

How does the body express or inhibit an intention? What mental model is developed during improvisation? What parts of ideas are retained or rejected in the creative process? What modes of communication are involved in the process, and how are movements, sounds and verbal language used to incarnate concepts? Those are the sorts of questions asked by the choreographer – who often expresses his requests in a form of singing – in establishing a new framework for the creative process for FAR, so as to create new images and new movements.

Like the Enlightenment scientists who developed tools to further their investigations, Wayne McGregor is working on creating a Choreographic Language Agent. Unlike the LifeForms used by Merce Cunningham, this innovate software does not choreograph. It contains detailed information that allows the dancers to explore the movement in greater depth and to resolve problems by proposing choices that are compatible with previous choices, or that are completely different.

Apart from a highly original dance language marked by improbable contortions and extensions, the elasticity and articulation of the body, unusual combinations of movement and the incredible velocity of changes in direction of movement, FAR reveals a taste for powerful visual and sound environments. Consisting of a huge detachable rectangular screen and multiple sources of light, the futuristic set by rAndom international (unrelated to Random Dance) and lighting designer Lucy Carter (a long-time collaborator and award-winning designer) contributes to creating a surreal atmosphere set in motion by the entrancing music of Ben Frost (an acclaimed brilliant and experimental composer who has worked with Brian Eno).

A piece of great beauty that is fascinating for its intelligence and moving because of its emotional power, it invites the spectator to take a new look at dance.
Wayne McGregor - Biography

Wayne McGregor was born in Stockport in 1970 and studied dance at University College, Bretton Hall and at the José Limon School in New York. In 1992 he founded his own company Wayne McGregor | Random Dance and in the same year was appointed choreographer-in-residence at The Place, London.

Wayne McGregor | Random Dance was one of many British companies emerging in the 1990s but two features made McGregor’s work stand out. The first was the unique quality of his vocabulary. This had its origins in McGregor’s own long, lean and supple physique and in his body’s ability to register movement with peculiar sharpness and speed; at one extreme McGregor’s dancing was a jangle of tiny fractured angles, at the other it was a whirl of seemingly boneless fluidity.

The second outstanding feature of the work was its embrace of new technology. McGregor started playing with computers when he was seven and it was natural for him to incorporate the cyber world into his own choreography. Collaborating with state-of-the art designers he experimented with projecting computer generated images onto the stage. In Sulphur 16 (1998) dancers were dwarfed by the presence of a shimmering virtual giant and danced with a company of digital figures who wove and shimmered among them like visitants from another age. In Aeon (2000) digitally created landscapes transported the dancers to what seemed like other dimensions and other worlds. McGregor has also used technology to alter the conditions under which his work is viewed. 53 Bytes (1997) was created for simultaneous performance by two sets of dancers in Berlin and Canada, and was watched by audiences in both countries by live satellite link.

McGregor has always been as curious about the technology of the dancing body as he has been about machines. The stimulus for AtaXia (2004) was provided by the Experimental Psychology department at the University of Cambridge where McGregor, appointed Research Fellow, was engaged in a study of body brain interaction. Dancers are the most expert co-ordinators of body-brain states yet here McGregor became fascinated by the energy and beauty of neurological dysfunction. For Amu (2005), McGregor continued his association with science by working with heart imaging specialists, alongside a typically prolific set of artistic collaborators, to question both the physical functions and symbolic resonances of the human heart. For Dyad 1909 (2009), McGregor embarked on a study of creative cognition, with his entire creation process video-recorded and mapped by a team of Cognitive scientists and students at the University of California, San Diego, USA. Entity (2008) and FAR (2010) have been other steps on this journey. UNDANCE (2011) saw him collaborate with Turner Prize-winning artist Mark Wallinger and composer Mark-Anthony Turnage. McGregor’s latest work, Atomos, premiered in London in the fall of 2013.

In 2006, Wayne McGregor was appointed the Resident Choreographer of The Royal Ballet, the first modern dance maker to be given that post in the company’s history. A string of productions, including Qualia (2003), and Engram (2005), were followed by the 2006 smash hit Chroma. Next came Nimbus (2007), and in 2008 McGregor curated a new festival for the Royal Opera House, Deloitte Ignite, which also saw the premiere of a new work, Infra. McGregor then conceived, directed and choreographed an historic joint collaboration between The Royal Ballet and The Royal Opera – the Baroque double bill of Acis and Galatea and Dido and Aeneas. McGregor went on to create Limen (2010) and Live Fire Exercise (2011) on The Royal Ballet, which included ground-breaking collaborations with visual artists.
Tatsuo Miyajima and John Gerrard, respectively. Over the last year, for the Royal Ballet, McGregor has choreographed *Raven Girl* with award-winning author Audrey Niffenegger, *Amber* for Natalia Osipova for the Royal Opera House gala, *Machina for Metamorphosis: Titian 2012* with sculptor Conrad Shawcross, a co-production with the National Gallery, and *Carbon Life* with an all star line up of musicians including Mark Ronson, Andrew Wyatt, Boy George and Alison Mossart.

Outside the ‘pure’ fields of dance McGregor has directed opera for La Scala, Milan and the Royal Opera House, London and choreographed for movies, plays, musicals, fashion shows and art galleries including site specific installations at the Hayward Gallery, Saatchi Gallery, National Gallery, Canary Wharf, Glastonbury, the Pompidou Centre and for Secret Cinema, and movement for movies and music videos, from *Harry Potter And The Goblet of Fire* to Radiohead’s 2011 *Lotus Flower* video (with over 18 million views on YouTube) and Atoms for Peace’s 2013 video for *Ingenue*.

His creations for other dance companies have included work for Paris Opera Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, Stuttgart Ballet, New York City Ballet, Australian Ballet, English National Ballet, NDT1 and Rambert Dance Company. His works are also in the repertories of the leading ballet companies in the world including the Bolshoi, Royal Danish Ballet, National Ballet of Canada, Boston Ballet and Joffrey Ballet. Most recently he premiered *Atomos*, the newest work for Wayne McGregor | Random Dance, *Borderlands* for San Francisco Ballet in January 2013, and in July 2012 he created *Big Dance Trafalgar Square* for the London 2012 Festival, celebrating the London Olympic Games.

McGregor’s experiments have earned him a string of nominations and awards. He was awarded a CBE (Commander of the Order of the British Empire) for his Services to Dance in the New Years Honours List of January 2011. Awards for his works include the Critics Prize for *Chroma* at the Golden Mask Awards (2012); three Critics Circle Awards (*Amu, Chroma, Infra*); two South Bank Show Awards and Movimentos Award for *Entity* (2009); a Benois de la Danse for *Infra* (2009); an International Theatre Institute Award for Excellence in Dance (2009); an Arts Foundation Fellowship in 1998; two Time Out Awards for Outstanding Achievement in Dance (2001/2003) and two Olivier Awards (2004/2007).

Wayne McGregor has been the subject of a South Bank Show arts documentary (2009), and he features in Fred Wiseman’s feature-length movie documentary about the Paris Opera Ballet, *La Danse* (2009). He is the subject of Arte TV’s feature documentaries *Wayne McGregor – A Moment In Time* and *Wayne McGregor - Going Somewhere*, both directed by Catherine Maximoff. In 2012 he did a talk at TED Global, and was the subject of BBC’s *Hardtalk*. 
WAYNE MCGREGOR | RANDOM DANCE – COMPANY BIOGRAPHY

Wayne McGregor | Random Dance was founded in 1992 and became the instrument upon which McGregor evolved his drastically fast and articulate choreographic style. The company became a byword for its radical approach to new technology – incorporating animation, digital film, 3D architecture, electronic sound and virtual dancers into the live choreography. In Nemesis (2002), dancers duelled with prosthetic steel arm extensions to a soundtrack incorporating mobile phone conversations; in AtaXia (2004), McGregor’s fellowship with the Experimental Psychology department of Cambridge University fuelled the choreography; in Entity (2008), presented by Danse Danse in 2011, choreographic agents were imagined to a soundscape created by Coldplay collaborator Jon Hopkins and Joby Talbot; in FAR (2010), cutting edge design (rAndom International) fused with choreography mined from a radical cognitive research process; and in UNDANCE (2011), Eadward Muybridge’s pursuits of movement are brought to life on the stage.


In January 2011, McGregor was awarded a CBE (Commander of the Order of the British Empire) for Services to Dance.