

A photograph of two women sitting in black folding chairs, facing each other. They are both wearing dark blue hoodies and light blue skirts. Each woman is holding a small, blue, rectangular object in her right hand, as if they are about to interact with it. The background is a simple, light-colored wall with some architectural details. The lighting is soft and even.

# SARABAND

Erika Zueneli and Laura Simi  
Tant'amati asbl & Silenda

# PREFACE

Both born in the same year in Florence, Laura Simi and I have known each other for a long time. Our respective paths are parallel and similar: dance as a raw material from an early age, a journey from classical to contemporary, via schools in New York, until we met in France.

Both choreographers and dancers, she in Caen and I in Brussels with the company, we wanted to meet up again with this project and reflect together on how we see ourselves today, socially, artistically, but also quite simply physically.

## ***What is our dance today?***

It is perhaps from this question that the project was born. Making ourselves the focal point of the project is of little interest to us; we dream of a larger, more impersonal us. The way we take hold of the movement says a lot, in the end, about the dancers we are today, about our generation and our origins.

From a word that has become a title, that of Saraband, we stretch out an imaginary world. The idea is not to create a study piece or a theory on sarabands, but rather an assemblage in which one exists because the other is there, and vice versa. By making three different temporalities coexist - a distant, ritual past, a vivid present caught between these two beams and our intimate pasts, both singular and shared - we are seeking to create a personal and collective memory, both conscious and unconscious, where reality merges and confronts our respective ramblings, through dance, music and voice.



## THE PROJECT

The title Saraband is perhaps at the origin of this dialogue between us, an ambiguous title that refers both to a choreographic and musical form - a set of ancient dances, codified rhythms and steps - and to confusion, din and chaos. Necessarily plural, the saraband crosses the ages and practices: its rhythmic motif, almost ancestral, is found in the medieval repertoire, then the baroque, passing through the Spanish Inquisition where its practice was forbidden, considered then as a diabolical dance, and up to our modern and contemporary music in which its rhythm is recognisable.

Drawing inspiration from and taking up the trajectory of this motif that has evolved through the turbulence of history, we invent our own saraband, in a choreographic poem where the memory of dance and the memory of bodies merge.

Investing our bodies as layers of time, motifs, forces and memories, we carve out a path between different strata of memory: a present memory, our own, which intersects and echoes, but also a more ancestral, universal memory, which summons with it songs, images and gestures belonging to a collective past, both near and far. Our journeys through the space, the traces we leave behind, become a way of questioning this passage, from one temporality to another, from one memory to another, and from one choreographer to another. We look for repetition, insistence and the rigour of ritual in our bodies, but also for flaws, uncertainties and gaps, as potential spaces for invention and freedom. It's a way of celebrating, with humour and intensity, the energy of dance as a practice that creates space and utopia.



# DRAMATURGY

The two presences of Erika and Laura, at once similar and completely different, weave and sketch out different figures, like so many intimate memories that resonate with our collective memory. Their bodies become porous and permeable to the rhythm of the lines and gestures they repeat on stage, taking in images - images of women, teenagers and adults, past and present, that resurface without ever allowing themselves to be captured.

The two choreographers trace their own paths through these snatches of collective memory, playing with the intertwining, searching the traces of this saraband for echoes, both ancestral and contemporary, of historical and societal rituals. They rub up against structures that encompass and transcend them, revealing, in this game of rebellious to-ing and fro-ing, another history, more tenuous, more silent, more marginal too.

With malice, the two dancers compose and decompose a narrative of which they know they are the sole authors: their figures constantly drift and overflow, always evading those who would frame them. It is in this repetition of rhythm, in the insistence of the gestures they assert on stage, that a powerful and mysterious ceremony is set in motion: a transformation of bodies and presences, full of echoes of gestures past and present. The outline, perhaps, of a spirited and piquant revolt, inscribed in the bodies.

**Louise de Bastier**



## CHOREOGRAPHIC ELEMENTS

The definition of space forms the basis of our dramaturgical and choreographic research. We trace trajectories evocative of ancient dances - first on our faces, then on the stage - like a thread that binds and connects us, with each other, with the spectators.

The movements are conceived in the rhythmic endurance of certain materials, and it is their repetition that reveals the power of these moments, liberators of the imaginary and of transformation. The body is often dissociated, becoming a micro-orchestra, allowing its different parts to evolve and express themselves independently.

## COSTUMES AND OBJECTS

Right from the start of our research, certain stage elements stood out: the make-up, the big skirts and the chairs. Elements of play, they become Proustian objects on the stage and in our hands, receptacles of memory and triggers of energy. In our manipulations, disagreements are revealed between the elements, their materials and the symbolism associated with them. It's this play of contrasts that interests us: the silhouettes of women sketched out by our skirts and baskets clash with the frenetic, more insolent movements evoked by our high fashion with more modern, almost punk textiles, inspired by Vivian Westwood.

These aesthetic choices open up a whole range of movements and symbols. Objects such as skirts form a scenography in their own right, constraining and shaping the space, modulating our bodies as they transform. In this way, the project could also be taken out of the black box, for more performative resonances in situ.



## MUSIC

We see this project as an object in which sound and light form an integral part of the choreographic and dramaturgical work. Alongside musician-composer Perig Villerbu, we are exploring ancestral rhythms, then interweaving them with more evocative melodies to reveal the rift between the archaic and the contemporary, between the concrete and the abstract. For example, we're working with peasant voices from Tuscany between 1975 and 1980, post-Mussolini nursery rhymes and the voices of our childhood. Other musical inspirations recall the motif of the saraband, and its journey through the centuries.



## TEAMS & CREDITS

**Design and performance:** Erika Zueneli & Laura Simi

**Lighting:** Sylvie Melis

**Stage manager - Lighting assistant:** Oriane Trably

**Sound, music:** Perig Villerbu

**Costumes:** Laura Simi

**Dramaturgy, external view:** Louise de Bastier

**Scientific collaboration:** Marina Nordera, dance historian

**Running time:** 50 minutes

**Production:** Tant'amati asbl & Silenda (FR/BE/IT)

**Co-productions :** Les Brigittines, Brussels (BE); Charleroi Danse (BE), CCNT-Centre Chorégraphique de Tours directed by Thomas Lebrun (FR); Arkanso cie-Festival Regards Dansants, in partnership with Le Trident Scène nationale de Cherbourg en Cotentin (FR); Chorège CDCN de Falaise Normandie as part of Culture-Santé (FR)

**Residencies:** Les Brigittines, Brussels (BE); Charleroi Danse (BE) CFB Berlin (DE), CCNT-Centre Chorégraphique de Tours directed by Thomas Lebrun as part of a studio residency (FR); LCC-La Coopérative chorégraphique de Caen (FR); Cap-étoile Montreuil (FR); Le Studio 24 in Caen (FR).

**Support:** With the help of the Fédération Wallonie - Bruxelles, Service Général de la Création artistique - Service de la danse (creation contract 2024-2026); DRAC Normandie (support for the 2023 project) and Région Normandie.

**Erika Zueneli/Tant'amati asbl is supported by the Grand Studio.**



## ERIKA ZUENELI

Tant'amati asbl

A choreographer and dancer born in Florence, Italy, where she began her dance studies (classical, Graham technique), Erika Zueneli trained in New York at the schools of Alwin Nikolais and Merce Cunningham in 1991. At the same time, in Italy, she took part in the creations of the Imago company (contemporary dance) and those of Andrea Francalanci (Renaissance dances), as well as various operas directed by Luca Ronconi, Derek Jarman, Luciano Bussotti and Lindsay Kemp.

Invited by Philippe Decouflé to take part in the opening ceremony of the Albertville Olympic Games in 1992, she first came to France before moving to Belgium. Until 2004, she took part in all of Santiago Sempere's creations, and he also entrusted her with educational projects. She has also performed for the Josef Nadj company, Cie Silenda, the Les Colporteurs circus, Kataline Patkaï, etc. In Belgium, in 1995, she met the Mossoux-Bonté company, with whom she has worked on over a dozen productions.

In 2000, she founded the company l'Yeuse with Olivier Renouf in Paris. Very active on the Belgian scene, she founded her own company, Tant'amati/asbl, in Brussels in 2008.

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With some fifteen plays to her credit, Erika Zueneli brings an "abstract" theatricality to the stage: each of her creations reveals her keen interest in human relationships and a consummate art for making the everyday unexpected. Her singular perception of reality and her concern for form give the most banal gesture a special weight and significance. In the diversity of her work, she questions the inconsistencies of our being on earth in both physical and metaphysical senses. Humour and derision are an integral part of an approach that is both sensitive and corrosive.

**Creation:** Noon (2000), Les cieux ne sont pas... (2002), High noon (2003), Sarà Sara (2004), Partita-s (2005), Daybreak (2007), Time out (2007), In-control/ Incontri (2009/10), Tournois (2010), Varieazioni (2011), OR(2) (2013), Tant'amati (Prix de la Critique - Best dance performance 2014 in Belgium), Vai e passa (2016), Allein! (2018), Para bellum (2021), Mozaïco (2021), LANDFALL (Prix Maeterlinck de la Critique - Best show 2022/2023 in Belgium).

**Website :** [erikazueneli.com](http://erikazueneli.com)

# LAURA SIMI

## Silenda

Born in Tuscany (Italy) in 1964, Laura Simi first trained in classical dance, before exploring other forms of dance at the CSD school in Florence. She studied the classical and baroque repertoires in particular, and went on to learn several techniques in Rome, Milan, Germany and Switzerland. She also graduated from the Florence Arts Institute in fashion and theatrical costume. Laura then trained in the United States with Martha Graham and Alvin Nikolais, and worked in New York with choreographer Richard Haisma and dancers from M. Cunningham. She joined the Imago company in Italy. She met Kazuo Ohno in Venice, where she attended a seminar. The same year, she moved to France and worked with Brigitte Asselineau, J-P. Perreault (Quebec), Fattoumi/Lamoureux, Santiago Sempere and others.

In 1993, Laura Simi and Damiano Foà founded the Silenda company. They won several prizes, including Best Solo at the Cagliari competition for their creation *Festina Lente*, and the SACD Grand Prix for Young Authors at the Rencontres chorégraphiques internationales de Bagnolet, in Seine-Saint-Denis, for *Affrettati Lentamente*.

Silenda has taken part three times in SKITE, an international artists' workshop created by Jean-Marc Adolphe in Paris and Lisbon. Alongside their joint research, Laura is pursuing her path as a performer, working with directors, video artists and musicians in artistic and urban spaces, exploring a wide range of gestures, sounds and sensibilities.

Together with Silenda and her collaborators, she now works on creations, writing and multi-disciplinary installations in France and Italy. Now based in Normandy, Silenda and three other local companies have set up the Coopérative Chorégraphique, a dance centre at Le Sépulcre in Caen, as well as a festival, Morpho.

**Creations (selection)** : Festina Lente (1993), Affrettati Lentamente (1994), Two Figures in a room, Lifelike, Continuum, Titre inachevé (2013), Shut UP! (2013), Prélude (2014), Anima (2015), Sonore (2016), Fenomeno 1 (2017), Fenomeno (2018), The Loud Atlas (2021) Saraband (2023).

**Website : [silenda.fr](http://silenda.fr)**





# CALENDAR

## Calendar 2023/24

- **16 and 17 January 2024** - Extract SARABAND- Festival C'est déjà de la danse, Rive Gauche-Rouen Normandie (FR)
- **17 February 2024** - Versilia Danza - Teatro Cantiere Florida / Florence (IT) Italian premiere
- **7 > 9 March 2024** - Festival In Movement - Brigittines (BE) Belgian premiere
- **5 August 2024** - Festival TEMPORA/CONTEMPORA - AMA, Lecce (IT)
- **11 September 2024** - Festival Bien fait, Micadanses - Paris (FR) French premiere
- **5 October 2024** - Festival Danse avec les foules, Brussels (BE)
- **5 December 2024** - Théâtre Francine Vasse - Les Laboratoires Vivants, Nantes (FR)

## Calendar 2025

- **28 and 29 of march 2025** - Festival Legs / Charleroi danse - Bruxelles (BE)
- **10th may 2025** - Chorège CDCN, Falaise Normandie, tbc (FR)
- **5 june 2025**- Festival Tours d'Horizons - Tours (FR)

# CONTACT

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SILENDA