

# Le Monde

## Thanatos choreographer

(Thanatos chorégraphe)

The company created by Vincent Dupont, the choreographer and director, is called "J'y pense souvent (...)" (I often think about it), an apt name for this artist whose work delves resolutely into the depths of his imagination.

His obsession with disturbed and intangible emotional states, heightened by meticulously stripped-down sets, and his fascination with the effect of light, erupt in his new play, a trio entitled *Souffles*. It was first shown at the Théâtre de la Cité Internationale in Paris on 14<sup>th</sup> February as part of the Hors Saison Festival, and it is currently showing at the contemporary theatre festival Etrange Cargo at the Ménagerie de Verre in Paris.

The opening scene of *Souffles* shows the suffering of a man prostrate in front of a corpse. Vincent Dupont takes this ordinary but rarely depicted situation on stage to explore the most out-of-the ordinary and disturbing rituals of parting and bereavement. The Grim Reaper has been, and nothing remains but an empty shell that a sorcerer from some God-forsaken tribe is about to drag down into the void.

Sophisticated sound effects (the ghoulish shrieks and throbbing metallic noises that are regular features of Dupont's work) plunge us into the stabbing pain of the male character's tortured brain. These sound effects, at times almost unbearable, disturb the apparent serenity of the white-clad body of the woman, across which beams of coloured light play.

*Souffles* is at the heart of "nouvelle magie", a trend which is currently all the rage in dance, the theatre and the circus, alternating between spiritualism seances, acts of levitation, and the fits of madness of a man at the edge.

It is also a hollow prayer, devoid of faith. It speaks of the desire to understand the unbearable and to have done with a mystery that can only be solved with our own death. A spine-chilling witchcraft ceremony, *Souffles* combines contemporary coolness and archaic wonderment, while persistently contending with the ever-unresolved question of being.

by ROSITA BOISSEAU - published on April 8, 2011