

Le Concert de l'Hostel Dieu
Franck-Emmanuel Comte



Locura

A hip-hop, concertante and dance baroque madness

Locura (“madness” in Spanish) was born from the collaboration between **Mourad Merzouki** and **Franck-Emmanuel Comte** around **Folia**, created in 2018 at the Les Nuits de Fourvière festival in Lyon. An immense international success, the hip-hop/baroque ballet has enchanted more than 200,000 spectators on stages across Europe. With the aim of extending this adventure by imagining a lighter scenographic format, illuminated solely by the lighting design of, **Locura** draws inspiration from the major strengths of **Folia** : a singular visual and sonic poetry, a wide palette of powerful emotions, and a strong artistic and human connection between the dancers of the **Käfig company** and the musicians of the **Concert de l'Hostel Dieu**.

Far from being a “reduced” version of the original work, **Locura** presents itself as an “enhanced concert,” drawing first and foremost on the ballet’s remarkable “playlist”: a fusion of baroque airs and Mediterranean popular music, by turns captivating, vibrant, and expressive. Virtuoso tarantellas and folias form variations around the theme of madness – not in the psychiatric sense, but as a disruptive force that unsettles and colors our lives. Drawing on this original musical material, each performer – lyrical singer, instrumentalist, and dancer – plays with fluidity and wit on the contrasts and richness of this timeless and universal music.

Cast



TEAM OF 16 PEOPLE

1 soprano soloist
1 conductor and harpsichord
6 instrumentalists
5 dancers
2 technicians
1 production manager

Duration



1 H 15

“

« I am madness
The one who alone inspires
Pleasure, sweetness
And joy in the world. »

Henry de Bailly

”

Programme



Henry Le Bailly – « *Yo soy la locura* »
(Ballet air, *Passacalle de la Follie* – Paris, 1614)

Antonio Sartorio – « *Quando voglio* »
(Air from *Cesare in Egitto* – Venice, 1676)

Henry Purcell – *Curtain Tune*
(from *Timon of Athens* – London, 1694)

Santiago de Murcia – *Tarentellas*
(from the *Codex Saldivar* – Mexico, c. 1730)

Tarquinio Merula – *Canzonetta spirituale sopra alla nanna*
(Venice, 1636)

Antonio Vivaldi – *Sonata La Follia* RV 63
(Op. 1 – Venice, 1703)

Anonymous – *Donna Isabella*
(*Neapolitan song* – Naples, c. 1750)

Anonymous – *Suite of instrumental Neapolitan tarentellas*
(collected, early 19th century)

Barbara Strozzi – « *Che si può fare* »
(Air, Op. 8 – Venice, 1664)

Anonymous – *La Carpinese*
(*Neapolitan tarentella* – Naples, c. 1750)

Antonio Vivaldi – *Allemande*
(from *Sonata No. 7 for cello* RV 44 – Venice, c. 1720)

Anonymous – *Cachua Serranita*
(from the *Codex Martínez Compañón* – Trujillo (Pery), c. 1780-90)

On stage



SOLOISTS – Heather Newhouse alternating with Adèle Huber (soprano)

INSTRUMENTALISTS – Reynier Guerrero (violin), Florian Verhaegen (violin),
Nicolas Janot (double bass), Aude Walker-Viry (cello), Nicolas Muzy
(theorbo & guitar), David Bruley (percussion), Franck-Emmanuel Comte (harpsichord)

DANCERS – Aurélien Vaudrey, Mathilde Devoghel, Joël Luzolo,
Chika Nakayama, Titouan Wiener

MUSICAL DIRECTION & CONCEPTION – Franck-Emmanuel Comte

CHOREOGRAPHY – Mourad Merzouki, assisted by Marjorie Hannoteaux

LIGHTING DESIGN – Esteban Loirat

COSTUME DESIGN – Odrée Chaminade

STAGE MANAGEMENT – Nicolas Charpail

PRODUCTION MANAGER – Olivia Salique

Co-produced with **Le Radiant-Bellevue** (Caluire-et-Cuire)

In partnership with **Le Majestic** (Montereau-Faut-Yonne)

With the support of the costume workshop of the **Théâtre National Populaire** (Villeurbanne)

Radiant
B E L L E V U E

le majestic
scène
de montereau



Artistic Statement

Franck-Emmanuel Comte

With these few verses set to music by Henry Le Bailly, our programme begins. The figure of Madness, embodied by soprano Heather Newhouse, appears in a singular light, far removed from the usual baroque visions marked by excess or hysteria. Here, madness becomes luminous and fertile – a source of momentum and inspiration.

It is this deliberately counterintuitive approach that we explore throughout this choreographed concert. Structured as a theme and variations, the programme traverses the many faces of madness in constant motion: eccentric, irreverent, visionary, joyful, or painful.

It unfolds in turn through the unflinching and lucid narrative of the Virgin Mary in Tarquinio Merula, in the lament of the lover in Barbara Strozzi, and through the moving message of Queen Isabella, delivering her testament from beyond the grave.

Musically, the ground basses – true rhythmic engines of this repertoire – run throughout the programme. They support the emergence of a second underlying theme: metamorphosis.

Never fixed and always evolving, our interpretative approach is nourished by the interaction between musicians, singers, and dancers, as well as by the broad possibilities of improvisation and ornamentation inherent in this repertoire, at the crossroads of learned and popular traditions, written and oral transmission.

Both the framework for variation and the carriers of madness's many faces, ostinato patterns also form an essential link with the choreographic writing of Mourad Merzouki. For this fourth production created together, these motifs – emblematic of 17th-century Italian and Spanish music – become a privileged source of inspiration, allowing contemporary and hip-hop dance to take full root in the musical universe of the Concert de l'Hostel Dieu, the result of a dialogue between historically informed performance and a resolutely contemporary aesthetic.

Mourad Merzouki

Locura follows in the footsteps of *Folia*, an emblematic work that left a lasting impression through its bold fusion of contemporary hip-hop dance and Baroque music.

That first encounter in 2018, praised for its energy, inventiveness, and public success, revealed the power of dialogue between our two artistic worlds. With *Locura*, we sought to extend, highlight, and deepen this unique bond woven between music and dance.

This new creation ventures even further into the permeability of artistic boundaries, affirming our desire to bring aesthetics into dialogue, to intertwine languages, and to open a space where bodies and sounds respond to one another in a shared breath.

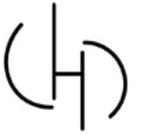
Locura explores human madness not as a descent into chaos, but as a force of transgression and openness. This particular madness—the kind that drives human beings to cross boundaries, whether geographical, cultural, aesthetic, or internal—becomes the driving force of a movement toward universality. In *Locura*, madness is a vital impulse, a breath that dissolves limits in order to reveal more clearly what connects us.

We chose not to let music and dance merely coexist: they blend, merge, and permeate one another. Musicians become bodies. Dancers become breath. Gestures answer notes, rhythms flow through bodies, voices extend movements.

This fusion erases boundaries between disciplines, between aesthetics, between roles. It creates a space where everyone—performer or spectator—can feel the power of a shared, immediate, deeply human language.

By celebrating creative madness, *Locura* invites each of us to move beyond our own boundaries, to welcome the other, and to recognize within them a fragment of ourselves. The performance thus becomes a contemporary ritual: a moment in which we remember that humanity, despite its fractures, always strives toward unity.

Heather Newhouse



Soprano



Originally from Canada, **Heather Newhouse** studied voice at the University of Western Ontario (Bachelor of Music, 2005). In 2006, she continued her training at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama in London (Master of Music, 2006), and later at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Lyon, graduating in 2010. She subsequently took part in the European Music Academy of the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence. In 2012, she won the Frouville International Baroque Singing Competition and received the Second Prize at the Mâcon International Competition. From 2011 to 2013, Heather Newhouse was a member of the Opera Studio of the Opéra National de Lyon.

She performs a wide-ranging repertoire, including *Der Schauspieldirektor* by Mozart with the Orchestre de Chambre de Genève, *The Turn of the Screw* at the Opéra du Rhin, *L'Europe galante* in Versailles, *Folk Songs* by Berio in Mulhouse, *Quatre Jeunes Filles* by Denisov in Monte-Carlo, and Mozart's *Requiem* with the Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal. Her concert repertoire also includes *Vespro della Beata Vergine* by Monteverdi, the *Litanies de la Vierge* by Charpentier, and *Peer Gynt* by Grieg at the Opéra de Lyon.

She regularly collaborates with two baroque ensembles: Ausonia and **Le Concert de l'Hostel Dieu**. With Le Concert de l'Hostel Dieu, she has performed Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* as well as the hip-hop ballet *Folia* by Mourad Merzouki, combining baroque music and dance.

[Find out about our musicians](#)

Franck-Emmanuel Comte

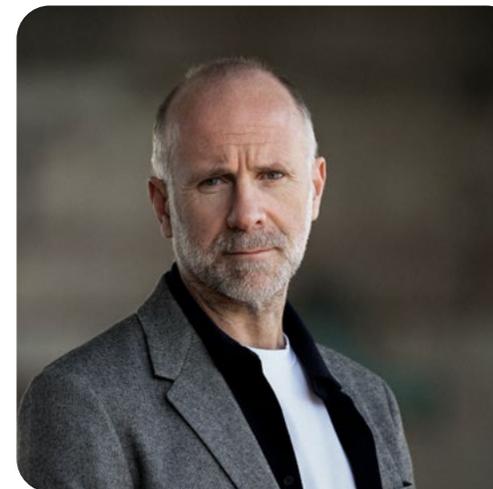
Conductor & Harpsichordist

A conductor and harpsichordist specializing in the Baroque repertoire on period instruments, **Franck-Emmanuel Comte** is above all committed to sharing his passion with the widest possible audience. His projects are often accompanied by outreach and educational initiatives. Deeply invested in transmission and professional development, he teaches Baroque aesthetics at the Catholic University of Lyon and serves as president of the jury of the Frouville International Baroque Singing Competition.

A graduate of the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Lyon (CNSMD), he quickly established himself on the musical scene and is regularly invited by numerous opera houses and orchestras in France and abroad. A widely recognized conductor, he performs frequently in major capitals and international festivals.

While passionately devoted to the Baroque repertoire, he also explores cross-disciplinary projects, such as the ballet *Folia*, created with Mourad Merzouki, which has been performed more than 160 times for over 200,000 spectators. His latest recording, *The Ghost of Hamlet* (Arcana/Outthere), has received numerous international awards.

In 2025, he became Artistic Director of **La Trinité**, a concert season dedicated to early and unconventional music, co-organized by Le Concert de l'Hostel Dieu and Superspectives. He is also Artistic Director of the **J.-S. Bach International Music Centre** in Saint-Donat and of the **Baroque Festival of the Pays du Mont-Blanc**.



Mourad Merzouki

Choreographer

A major figure on the hip-hop scene since the early 1990s, Mourad Merzouki places his work at the crossroads of multiple disciplines. Around hip-hop dance, explored in all its styles, he incorporates circus arts, martial arts, visual arts, video and live music.

Beginning at the age of seven, his training was rooted in the practice of martial arts and circus arts in Saint-Priest, near Lyon. At fifteen, his encounter with hip-hop culture led him into the world of dance. He turned to choreography and created his first company, Accrorap, in 1989, with Kader Attou, Eric Mezino and Chaouki Saïd.

In 1994, the company presented Athina at the Biennale de la Danse de Lyon, a major success that helped bring hip-hop dance from the street to the stage. The company's first international tours led them to unexplored contexts, such as a refugee camp in Croatia, where Mourad Merzouki experienced dance as a powerful means of communication. Seeking to develop his own artistic universe, shaped by his personal history and sensibility, he founded his own company in 1996, Compagnie Käfig, named after his inaugural work.

From 1996 to the present day, he has created 32 works whose touring continues to expand. In total, more than two million spectators have discovered the company's productions in 4,000 performances in France and abroad, across 65 countries. In order to support hip-hop creation, he established the Pôle Pik choreographic centre, which opened in Bron in 2009 and led to the creation of the Karavel Festival.

In June 2009, he was appointed director of the Centre Chorégraphique National de Créteil et du Val-de-Marne. In 2013, he created the Kalypso Festival, offering new visibility to hip-hop dance companies in the Paris region. In March 2016, he was appointed artistic advisor to Pôle en Scènes in Bron. In January 2023, after thirteen years at the head of the CCN of Créteil and Val-de-Marne, he relocated the Käfig company to eastern Lyon, in Bron and Saint-Priest, reconnecting with the territory where he grew up.

Compagnie Käfig

Choreographer Mourad Merzouki, a leading figure in the hip-hop movement since the early 1990s, situates his work at the crossroads of multiple disciplines. Around hip-hop dance—explored in all its styles—he incorporates circus arts and martial arts, as well as visual arts, video, and live music. Without ever losing sight of the movement's roots and its social and geographical origins, these encounters open new horizons for dance and offer fresh, unexpected perspectives.

Since 1996, 31 creations have been presented in 700 cities across 65 countries. The Käfig company has given more than 4,000 performances for over 2 million spectators.



Le Concert de l'Hostel Dieu

Le Concert de l'Hostel Dieu is a major player on the French baroque music scene. The ensemble is distinguished by a sensitive and dynamic interpretation of eighteenth-century vocal and instrumental repertoire, based on a consistently historical and philological approach.

Under the direction of **Franck-Emmanuel Comte**, the ensemble particularly promotes the originality and specificity of baroque manuscripts preserved in the libraries of the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region, producing reconstructions and editions of previously unpublished works that reflect Lyon's historic cultural ties with Italy.

Bringing the richness and diversity of baroque music into the present day is also one of the ensemble's major artistic goals. Through stimulating collaborations, the ensemble creates encounters between baroque aesthetics and artists from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Transmission and sharing lie at the heart of the ensemble's creative work, with numerous outreach and educational activities accompanying its concerts for a wide variety of audiences.

Under Franck-Emmanuel Comte's direction, the ensemble has given more than **1,700 concerts** in major European and world capitals as well as at many international festivals. Their recordings have been widely praised by the international press.

The projects of Le Concert de l'Hostel Dieu are supported by Ville de Lyon, the Région Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, the DRAC Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, the Centre National de la Musique, SPEDIDAM, ADAMI and CPPF.



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