



Borderline

A production of
Company Wang Ramirez

Honji Wang and Sébastien Ramirez
Choreography and Artistic Direction

Friday Evening, March 9, 2018 at 8:00
Saturday Evening, March 10, 2018 at 8:00
Power Center
Ann Arbor

This weekend's performances are funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts and by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation Endowment Fund.

Media partnership provided by WDET 101.9 FM and Ann Arbor's 107one.

Special thanks to Clare Croft, Bill DeYoung, Jessica Fogel, Grace Lehman, and the Ann Arbor Y for their participation in events surrounding this weekend's performances.

Company Wang Ramirez appears in North America by exclusive arrangement with 2Luck Productions.

In consideration of the artists and the audience, please refrain from the use of electronic devices during the performance.

The photography, sound recording, or videotaping of this performance is prohibited.

COMPANY

Performers / Louis Becker, Johanna Faye, Saïdo Lehlouh, Alister Mazzotti, Sébastien Ramirez, Honji Wang

CREATIVE TEAM

Artistic Direction and Choreography / Honji Wang and Sébastien Ramirez

Rigging Development / Jason Oettlé and Kai Gaedtke

Rigger / Alister Mazzotti

Composition / Jean-Philippe Barrios, with the participation of

Christophe Isselee and the voices of Chung-Won Wang and Henri Ramirez

Lighting Design / Cyril Mulon

Dramaturgical Collaboration / Catherine Umbdenstock

Set Design / Paul Bauer

Costume Realization / Anna Ramirez

Production Management Services / Academy for Dance and Theatre Arts

Technical & Production Manager / Bartolo Cannizzaro

Tour Manager / Clare Cannizzaro

Borderline is approximately 70 minutes in duration and is performed without intermission.



Following Friday evening's performance, please feel free to remain in your seats and join us for a post-performance Q&A with members of the company.

BORDERLINE

Borderline marks a turning point in Sébastien Ramirez and Honji Wang's research and choreographic language. The dance expands in a dialogue between technique and the art of rigging, while the reflection on human relationships includes the reality of living together in our democracies. Social boundaries are evoked by the interplay of physical forces on the stage as well as through testimonies collected from the dancers' friends and relatives, or from the media, and broadcasted in voice-overs.

The rigging element, a scenic tool notorious as *Deus Ex Machina* in the Greek tragedy, allows the performers to approach weightlessness to create timeless poetics. In the interactions with the rigger, the body becomes the object of a weight game of balance and freedom. Attached to cables, the five dancers bring to light and transpose the desire of freedom inherent in all forms of dance, especially hip hop. With a wealth of experience in levitation, hip hop discovers new ways to thwart gravity in its virtuosity of footwork.

The gestures and the costumes create images that reflect Greek and Korean traditions in animality, as well as in our desires and angsts. Between the promise of freedom and the violence of keeping our bodies on the ground is a space allowing the invention of a new gestural approach. With great fluidity, the piece displays accents of acrobatics, visual poetry, and the urban universe. It extends to the ground where the gravitational borderlines shift horizontally, in a mobile scenography that continues to evolve throughout the performance.

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

The following texts are heard during the piece, and the English texts or translations are printed for your reference.

Solo Sébastien Ramirez:

Sébastien's father

Do you know what "democracy" means? It's when the people govern. People have never governed! It's never the people who rule.

No, the world has never been fair, never. When they demonstrate below... those who cash in 3000–4000 euros per month, who have fortunes, they don't accept others demonstrating. "What are they demonstrating about, those good-for-nothings? What's it for?" Just leave them alone. Life needs to be normal, like a quiet river...

When I'm told: "When you retire, you'll travel." Travel where? You want to go to Africa to see the poor people? Yes, go to Africa, make the most of it! A meal costs, what...1€, 1.50€. You think I'd go there? I'd be ashamed. I won't go to poor countries. To save a nickel?

Many countries live off of tourism. But the people don't live off of tourism! It's the capitalists who are there and who live off of tourism. I remember in Spain, the first tourists I saw, I was young.... The Brits and Germans used to come. How my mother despaired! Because before, a kilo of potatoes cost three *pesetas* and when the tourists came, it cost 10!

My father was always poor. We were always poor even with all the tourism.

It's all lies. This is why I don't like this society. I rebelled. I don't care about any of it. I don't want to know anything about it. I'm not interested at all.

There is nothing to do. Just lock yourself up. Someone said: "If you are happy, don't tell anyone." Happy people aren't liked. It's against nature, it's not natural. It's not normal. "Let's live in hiding." That's why I feel good with my own people. I have nothing more to say.

It's shameful.

What does it all mean? It's over my head. Because once you've eaten, once you've drunk, once you've made love, what else do you want to do? Why have 200 million in the bank? To do what with?

Duo of dancers: Bowls of rice

There was a doctor, Masaru Emoto, a Japanese man. He did experiments with water.

He did an experiment where he realized that the water molecule reacted to sound and energies. He took three bowls of rice and placed them in an apartment and three different people came to visit them during the day.

Here, I'll give you a bowl, imagine it...I'm going to say: "I love you" to my bowl of rice. And you say: "I hate you." And no one will say a thing to the third bowl. It's not calculated. The doctor proved that the bowl of rice that was said "I love you" to was edible for almost a month. What do you say to your bowl of rice?

I hate you.

Well, your bowl of rice, after just one week, is no longer edible because it received bad energies.

And the third bowl that stayed alone on the table without receiving any emotion rotted after one or two days because it was ignored. Indifference kills. Even “I hate you” keeps you living. Are you listening? What I’m saying is very important!

It has to do with everything alive. We are made of 80% water! Understand? I have ears! I’m listening to you.

Calligraphy: a teacher’s testimony

Monday, November 17, 10:30 am.

Trade School, Gers.

I was giving my class when suddenly, without notice, four determined policemen accompanied by a dog handler, decked out with his dog, barged in. They didn’t say hello or introduce themselves. With no preamble, the dog was let loose. The students were extremely surprised. I questioned the intruders asking what the purpose of their visit was. Radio silence. I insisted and quickly understood that I’d better just shut up. The students were shocked; the atmosphere was heavy, threatening. I opened a window, and then without a word, one of the policemen peremptorily closed it.

The dog ran all over the place. It bit onto one of my student’s bags and he was then asked to exit the class. The dog drooled on a young man’s legs, terrorized. On hats, on clothes. The animal detected something suspicious in someone’s pocket, and once again, the student was asked to exit. I tried to intervene but I was silenced.

The bags were emptied in the hallway. Wallets were opened. This operation took place in 10 classes and lasted more than an hour. 30 suspected students were sent into a different room and were thoroughly searched. Some were stripped to their underwear. Amongst the students were minors.

In the HND class, the dog ripped apart a bag. The student then discovered his smashed computer. He’s told he can press charges if he wants.

In another room, the students were lined up in front of the blackboard. According to them and their teacher, the dog handler yelled: “One move and he’ll bite your artery and you’ll end up in the hospital.” Policemen paced up and down the hallways outside the classrooms.

I learned later that no particular event took place in the establishment to justify such a raid. The students were dumbstruck and scared.

They interrogated me once the group left. I didn’t know what to say. I remained speechless. The element of surprise freezes you.

Beyond the legal or illegal aspect of the operation was the ill-mannered, threatening, sarcastic, aggressive, and scornful attitude of the policemen. They left a classroom saying: “Bye girlies!” when of course there were only young men, and congratulated them for having well-stashed their dope and abusing their dogs. Real thugs wouldn’t have reacted any differently.

It was in France, in a school, in 2008. I thought policemen were here to help people, support us, be our lucid and conscious guides. But instead of that, they barged in flaunting their power like cowboys terrorizing the young students. I wanted this to be known because it’s happening here in our schools. And it’s absolutely unacceptable.

Thank you.

ARTISTS

Since the creation of **Company Wang Ramirez**, Honji Wang and Sébastien Ramirez have produced and choreographed dance-theater pieces that have won them many awards and accolades, such as New York's Bessie Award and the nomination for the Rolex Mentor & Protégée Arts Initiative Program.

Acclaimed by international audiences, the Company has been invited to major theaters and festivals, including Théâtre de la Ville, La Villette, and Théâtre National de Chaillot (Paris); Sadler's Wells (London); Apollo Theater (New York); and Mercat de les Flors (Barcelona); and also receives the support of important international co-producers.

Company Wang Ramirez developed a conceptual dance performance for the opening celebration of the arts space MADE in Berlin. In 2015, they choreographed and contributed to the creation phase of Madonna's Rebel Heart Tour in 2015–16. In 2016, Sadler's Wells invited them to direct and perform a dance work made to Nitin Sawhney's album *Dystopian Dream*. Company Wang Ramirez never ceases to deepen their quest of finding new choreographic languages with means of expression built on technical virtuosity, poetry, humor, and the questioning of human identities. They currently encourage and explore strong artistic collaborations with artists from different fields.

Honji Wang (*choreographer/artistic director/performer*) was born and raised in Germany by Korean parents. Her dance language is an abstraction of hip hop dance and has influences of earlier martial

arts and ballet training. She is recognized as an artist who brings contemporary and hip hop together in an exceptionally organic fashion. Together with Sébastien Ramirez, Ms. Wang received the Bessie Award in 2013 for "Outstanding Performers" following the presentation of *AP15* at the Apollo Theatre in New York. Their work *Monchichi* was one of the 2017 Bessie Award nominees for "Outstanding Production" following its performances at BAM. Ms. Wang was invited to Madonna's final auditions in New York, where her outstanding performance earned her an invitation to tour and perform for the Rebel Heart Tour. She was invited as a guest artist to perform a duo with acclaimed British choreographer Akram Khan titled *The Pursuit of Now*, which was accompanied by well-known pianist Shahin Novrasli. She also collaborated with the avant-garde female flamenco dancer Rocío Molina in the duet *Felahikum* as well as with New York City Ballet principal dancer Sara Mearns in *Duet No. 1*.

Born in the south of France, **Sébastien Ramirez** (*choreographer/artistic director/performer*) specializes in the use of aerial work as well as choreographic rigging development. Since the foundation of his company, he developed a new vision of space and choreography, bringing hip hop dance to a wider and new audience. Following the presentation of *AP15* at the Apollo Theatre in New York, Mr. Ramirez and Honji Wang received the Bessie Award in 2013 for "Outstanding Performers." Their work *Monchichi* was one of the 2017 Bessie Award nominees for "Outstanding





Production” following its performance at BAM. Mr. Ramirez contributed to the creation phase of Madonna’s Rebel Heart Tour in New York City and choreographed for her live show. Akram Khan invited him to direct a personal workshop at the Théâtre de la Ville in Paris, a recognition of his unique quality of movement. He was also invited by Sadler’s Wells as one of the five choreographers of *RIOT OffSpring*, a unique dance piece performed to Igor Stravinsky’s iconic *The Rite of Spring* played by Southbank Sinfonia.

Louis Becker (*performer*) has a strong base in bboying and has broadened his artistic expressions with contemporary dance, acrobatics, and drama. Winner of an impressive number of bboy battles, he is also tours internationally with Company Constanza Macras.

Johanna Faye (*performer*) has her dance roots in breaking, and experience in contemporary dance and improvisation. She works with choreographers Amala Dianor, Jérémie Belingard, Tishou Aminata Kane, and Sylvain Groud.

Saïdo Lehlouh (*performer*) is a charismatic bboy who was spotted early for his extraordinary dance skills, stage presence, and interpretation. He has participated in important dance theater productions with artists including Storm (Théâtre de Chaillot, Paris; Centre National de Danse, Pantin; Hebbel am Ufer, Berlin), Constanza Macras (Berlin), and Norma Claire (French Guiana).

Alister Mazzotti (*performer and rigger*) has performed and coordinated stunts, fights, and physical effects on more than 500 movies and commercial and theatrical productions over the past 25 years. He headed action departments on Oscar-winning films (special effects for

The Pianist and stunts for *The Lives of Others*) and has received nominations for outstanding stunt work for DAFF and the Taurus World Stunt Awards.

Cyril Mulon (*lighting designer*) has studied camera and lighting design and is also the Company’s technical director. Serving as lighting and stage manager for Peter Brook’s company (Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord, Paris, France) for over a decade, he has gained a wide scope of artistic and technical experiences. His eclectic career reaches from documentary, video, photography, and lighting design for theater productions, operas, and dance.

Jean-Philippe Barrios (*composer*), also known as lacrymoboy, is a successful percussionist and drummer and the composer of *Borderline*. For dance classes, he collaborates with contemporary companies such as Angelin Preljocaj, Jean-Claude Gallotta, and Norrdans Company. Performing as a musician, dancer, and actor, he is part of many international companies, including Brodas Bros in Barcelona.

UMS welcomes Company Wang Ramirez as the Company makes its UMS debut this weekend.

The original soundtrack of *Borderline* is available on lacrymoboy.bandcamp.com and on iTunes (artist: lacrymoboy).

Co-produced by Théâtre de l'Archipel, scène nationale de Perpignan (creation residency); Théâtre de la Ville, Paris; Parc de La Villette, Paris; Initiatives d'Artistes en Danses Urbaines (Fondation de France – Parc de la Villette with the support of Caisse des Dépôts and Acsé); Mercat de les Flors Barcelona (creation residencies at Graner); Act'art – Conseil départemental de Seine-et-Marne; Centre Chorégraphique National de Créteil et du Val-de-Marne / Company Käfig; and TANZtheater INTERNATIONAL, Hannover.

Supported by regional council Occitanie/Pyrénées-Méditerranée; Regional Cultural Affairs Directorate Occitanie; and county council Pyrénées Orientales.

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Company Wang Ramirez — Clash66 receives structural support by Regional Cultural Affairs Directorate Occitanie, by Regional council Occitanie/Pyrénées-Méditerranée and by County council Pyrénées Orientales. The Company receives the support of Foundation BNP Paribas for the development of its projects. Sébastien Ramirez and Honji Wang are supported artists of Théâtre de l'Archipel, scène nationale de Perpignan.

For more information, please visit www.wangramirez.com or www.facebook.com/WangRamirez.

THIS WEEKEND'S VICTORS FOR UMS:



Doris Duke Charitable Foundation Endowment Fund

National Endowment for the Arts

*Supporters of this weekend's performances by Company
Wang Ramirez.*

MAY WE ALSO RECOMMEND...

- 3/23–24 Nederlands Dans Theater
4/14 Colin Stetson: *Sorrow*
4/19–21 *Cold Blood*

Tickets available at www.ums.org.

ON THE EDUCATION HORIZON...

- 3/10 You Can Dance: Company Wang Ramirez
(Ann Arbor Y, 400 W. Washington Street, 1:30 pm)
- 3/19 FRAME: A Salon Series on Visual Art, Performance, and Identity
(202 S. Thayer Street Building, Atrium, 7:00 pm)
- 3/23 Post-Performance Q&A: Nederlands Dans Theater
(Power Center, 121 Fletcher Street)
Must have a ticket to that evening's performance to attend.
- 3/24 You Can Dance: Nederlands Dans Theater
(Ann Arbor Y, 400 W. Washington Street, 1:30 pm)

Educational events are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.