

## BIOGRAPHY **ABOU LAGRAA**

Choreographer & co-artistic director Company La Baraka / Chapelle Sainte-Marie (Annonay)

Born in France to Algerian parents, Abou Lagraa began dancing at the age of 16 before entering the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse, Lyon. He began his career as a dancer at the S.O.A.P. Dance Theatre, Frankfurt with Rui Horta and became his choreographic assistant on a project the Calouste Gulbenkian Ballet, Lisbon. He was soon noticed and went on to work with Robert Poole, Denis Plassard and Lionel Hoche.

His qualities as a performer have been rewarded twice : in 1998 by the 2nd Prize for performance at the Paris International Dance Competition, in 2009 the prize for Best Male Dancer, awarded by the International Movimentos Dance Prize.

In 1997 he founded his own company, La Baraka. Once again, recognition came quickly ; numerous French venues programmed the young choreographer and he received proposals for collaboration. As a result, after 4 years as an associated artist at Bonlieu Scène Nationale in Annecy, since 2009 to 2014, Abou Lagraa and his company have been hosted in production residency at Gêmeaux, Scène Nationale, Sceaux. In 2015, he was an associated artist at La Maison de la Danse in Lyon.

The fame of the company spread rapidly beyond France's borders and tours followed one after the other, throughout Europe and also in the United States of America, Algeria, Russia, China, Tunisia and Asia...

Alongside his work with the company, Abou Lagraa is regularly in demand by large organisations.

In 2001 he devised « Fly, Fly » for the CCN Ballet de Lorraine. This piece later was subsequently added to the repertoire of the ABC Dance Company of St Pölten in Austria. In 2003 he devised a work for the second-year students of the Centre National de Danse Contemporaine in Angers, then in 2007 for the pupils of the Frankfurt Hochschule and the pupils of the Centre Méditerranéen de Danse Contemporaine, Tunis.

In 2006 his work entered the repertoire of the Paris Opéra Ballet with « Le Souffle du Temps », a piece for 21 dancers.

In 2008, he composed « Everyone's One » at the invitation of Ballet Memphis (USA). Then in november 2018, he created Wahada, for the twenty-two dancers of the Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève to Mozart's Great Mass in C Minor.

Since 2008, in association with the French Cultural Ministry, the Algerian Cultural Ministry, he works, with Nawal Lagraa Aït Benalla, in the elaboration of a « Mediterranean Cultural Bridge », the project of French-Algerian cooperation for the development of the dance and the artistic exchanges which will contain a program of training and creation. In this frame, he sees confiding for july 2009, the choreography of closing ceremony of the 2nd Panafrican Festival of Algiers.



In 2010, he creates with Nawal Lagraa Aït Benalla's the Contemporary Ballet of Algiers, under the Nawal's educational responsibility, with a first piece « NYA ». The success of which ends in several national and international tours.

This piece was to be distinguished in 2011 when it was awarded the Grand Prix de la Critique as « Best Choreography of the Year ».

In 2016, he becomes the « Dream Up » ambassador, an international arts-based education programme set up by the BNP Paribas foundation. This programme will help some 30 000 underprivileged or disabled children and teenagers to develop and find fulfilment by practising an artistic or creative activity. The same year, he becomes « Chevalier des arts et des lettres » nominated by the French ministry of culture.

In february 2018, his company is implanted in Annonay at the Chapel Sainte-Marie. Abou Lagraa and Nawal Lagraa decided, together, to co-directed La Baraka and the Choreographic Studio Chapel Sainte-Marie. The Chapel transformed into a choreographic studio and offices, with the reception in residence of other French and international companies, a kind of « Villa Médicis ».

In 2019, Abou et Nawal Lagraa & the Edmond de Rothschild Foundations develops Premier(s) Pas's program which offers to professional dancers tailor-made 360° support. It alternates session of creation, dance professional training and international tours. Among other things, the training offers, coaching in entrepreneurship and communication. Finally in 2020, world premiere of creation Premier(s) Pas for the 8 dancers of the program with the same name.