

ABOU LAGRAA

CHOREOGRAPHER & CO-DIRECTOR OF CIE LA BARAKA / LA CHAPELLE

Born in Annonay, Abou Lagraa began dancing there at the age of 16 before entering the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse in Lyon. He began his career as a dancer and performer at S.O.A.P. Dance Theater Frankfurt, with Rui Horta, of whom he became an assistant for the Gulbenkian Ballet in Lisbon. Very quickly noticed, he worked with Robert Poole, Denis Plassard and Lionel Hoche.

In 1997, he founded the Company La Baraka with which he was successively associated artist at Bonlieu, Scène nationale d'Annecy (2004-2008) then at Gémeaux, Scène nationale de Sceaux (2009-2013) and finally at the Maison de la Danse of Lyon (2015).

Quickly, the reputation of the company crossed borders and tours followed throughout Europe but also in the United States, Algeria, Tunisia, Russia and Asia...

In 2010 he created, with Nawal Aït Benalla, the first Contemporary Ballet of Algiers with "Nya", a piece whose success led to several national and international tours. This return to his roots inspired his 2013 creation "El Djoudour" (The Roots), resulting from a fruitful partnership between his own French company and the Contemporary Ballet of Algiers. This creation opened the event "Marseille-Provence 2013, European Capital of Culture".

In 25 years, Abou Lagraa has created a repertoire of more than 28 pieces. At the same time, the choreographer is regularly requested by major institutions :

- **2001** : "Fly, Fly" for the CCN Ballet de Lorraine, a piece which will subsequently enter the repertoire of the ABC Dance Company of St Pölten in Austria.
- **2003** : "Leïla" for 2nd year students of the National Contemporary Dance Center of Angers
- **2006** : he entered the repertoire of the Paris National Opera Ballet with "Le Souffle du Temps", a creation for 21 dancers.
- **2007** : "My Skin" for students at the Hochschule in Frankfurt & "Nawal" for students at the Centre Méditerranéen de Danse Contemporaine de Tunis.
- **2008** : "Everyone's One" for the Memphis Ballet (USA)
- **2018** : "Wahada" for the 22 dancers of the Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève on Mozart's Mass in C minor
- **2024** : staging and choreography of "Carmen" for 18 dancers, 11 singers, soloists, 80 choristers, a choir of 40 children from the Tunis Opera Theater



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In February 2018, La Baraka opened in Annonay in La Chapelle Sainte-Marie. Abou Lagraa and Nawal Aït Benalla decide to co-direct La Baraka and La Chapelle. This desecrated setting, a jewel of baroque art, has been transformed into a choreographic studio and houses the company's administrative offices. La Chapelle becomes a place of creative residence welcoming French and international dance companies. Like a little "Villa Medici" for dance, in Ardèche.

AWARDS & DISTINCTIONS

- **1996** : 2nd Prize for interpretation at the International Contemporary Dance Competition of the City of Paris.
- **2009** : Best International Dancer Prize 2009 awarded by the International Movimentos Dance Prize.
- **2011** : Critics' Grand Prize for "The best choreography of the year" with the creation "Nya" for the Contemporary Ballet of Algiers.
- **2016** : he was named Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters by the Ministry of Culture and Communication.