

By **Ali and Hèdi THABET**

Ali loves music; Hèdi has always been into poetry. But in fact, both are musical expressions that resonate in the midst of silence, finding harmony through dialogue. Ali and Hèdi Thabet practice the art of balance. They are dancers, circus performers and, most of all, artists of the imponderable; interpreters of the convulsions of time.

Following their dazzling rise to fame with three works (*Rayahzone*, *Nous sommes pareils à ces crapauds* and *En attendant les Barbares*), Ali and Hèdi Thabet decided to withdraw from the stage for two years, to "take a huge step back." Their way of escaping what might have been an artificial or inauthentic need to create.

"Otherwise, we turn into business owners," they say.

Today, they're back, picking up where they left off. Attracted to Greece and its myths, to the flourishes of the Greek music known as rebetiko with its rebellious notes, inspired by the oriental accents of Turkey, Tunisian songs and the poetry of René Char.

A verse from Leaves of Hypnos spoke to them: "Don't bend over except to love. If you die, you still love." And off they went, following in the footsteps of Narcissus. But as René Char himself said, "The words that will suddenly emerge know things about us that we don't know about them."

Because as dissimilar as they may appear, all of these elements tell the past story and the present quest of Ali and Hèdi Thabet.

"Narcissus crossed the forest to drink at the river... couldn't this source of water be the audience? What is this reflection, and what do we seek to find in it? What is the purpose of being on stage?"

Exploring fundamental concepts, **Ali and Hèdi envisioned a new, "more authentic" type of performance, with a profound yet popular dimension, similar to opera in its intensity and accessibility to all.** Then Hèdi whispers with an air of mischief, "We didn't choose Greece by accident. We're from Brussels. We have bureaucracy, they have the deep roots of theatre!"

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Florence Samain
scenographer

Naël Khleifi
video

Ana Samoilovich
lighting

WITH
MUSICIANS

Mehdi Ayachi
vocals, oud

Dimitris Brendas
clarinet, kaval, gaida

Benjamin Clément
bouzouki, guitar

Stefanos Filos
violin

Tcha Limberger
duduk, violin

Ioannis Niarchios
vocals, guitar

Katerina Tzibilogou
vocals, tambourine

DANCERS
AND ACTORS

Laida Aldaz Arrieta
dancer

Catherine Bourgeois
opera singer

Mercedes Dassy
dancer

Natacha Nicora
dancer

Irini Kourouvani
dancer

Li-Bo
Kung-Fu Wushu master

Antoine Thirion
circus performer

Vincent Sornaga
actor
And four dancers currently
being selected

*Ne te couche que pour rêver,
Si tu meurs tu rêves en art**



APPROXIMATE LENGTH **90 minutes**

PRODUCTION **Hisashi Itoh** hitokyohitokyo@gmail.com + 81 90 65 12 15 17
Anne-sophie Dupoux annesophie.dupoux@gmail.com + 33 6 60 10 67 87

*René Char

Ali and Hèdi THABET

Their first joint piece, **Rayahzone**, starring three dancers and five Tunisian Sufi singers, was created in March 2012 at the Théâtre de Suresnes Jean Vilar, and was performed at least a hundred times.

Nous sommes pareils à ces crapauds

A choreographic and musical piece with three dancers and five musicians. Featuring a repertoire of rebetiko and traditional Tunisian and Jewish music. Created in Athens in 2014 and performed more than 90 times.

En attendant les Barbares

With music from Egypt (vocals), Italy and medieval times, this piece was created in October 2015 in tribute to the shipwreck near Lampedusa, on one of the island's beaches. It was performed on an exceptional basis at the Théâtre National de Bruxelles in October 2016.



Ali and Hèdi in *Rayahzone*



Ali and Hèdi

Ali THABET

Ali Thabet's career has been filled with numerous artistic experiences. His curiosity first led him to study photography from 1994 to 1997 at the Brussels School of Photography. In 2000, he joined the National Centre for Circus Arts in Châlons-en-Champagne, France. Ever since, he has been – by turns or simultaneously – a dancer, circus performer, actor and singer, and has worked under the direction of eminent artists including Joseph Nadj (dancer-circus performer in *Il n'y a plus de firmament* – 2004), Francis Viet, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui (*Tempus Fugit* – 2005, *Sutra* – since 2009, *Tezuka* – 2011), and Philippe Découflé (dancer-actor-singer in *Cyrk 13-2002*).

Hèdi THABET

Hèdi Thabet started out at the Brussels School of Circus as a very young juggling prodigy and acrobat. An illness forced him to permanently give up both disciplines and find a new role on stage. He created a performance in 1997 at the Tunis National Theater with a group of Brussels School of Circus graduates. A long period of introspection followed, during which he constantly reflected on stage-related questions before creating Ali in 2008 with Mathurin Bolze, a two-man show which they performed more than 200 times worldwide.