

AT FOG FESTIVAL THE PALPABLE BEAUTY OF HARRELL AND C.G.J.

MILAN A semi-circular black backdrop with neon strip lighting; seven black piano stools, equidistant but out of line at the front of the stage; Trajal Harrell stands to the right of the stage waiting for the audience to be seated in the stalls. We're at the Triennale for FOG, the festival of performing arts that marks the American choreographer and performer's return to Milan with his enchanting *The Köln Concert* – by Keith Jarrett, 1975 –

conceived during the pandemic, complete with social distancing limitations for the dancers of the Schauspielhaus Zürich Dance Ensemble, which he has been at the helm of since 2019. Once silence falls in the theatre, Harrell begins to gently sway on the spot and move his arms in the air, unexpectedly accompanied by the warm voice of Joni Mitchell (everyone expects Jarrett). Pervious to the wind, fragile and resistant with his gaze trained towards the sky, he hums the verses of *A Case of You* as if no one is watching, in turn rendering the Canadian singer-songwriter's extremely personal confession, other tracks from her legendary 1971 album *Blue* coming later. It's a magically intimate overture performed with a floral dress from ancestral memory worn like a tie over a white outfit. His intervention acts as a diapason that kickstarts, tuning into the audience and the world, to reflect on history and gender, the boundaries of

Here and opposite above "The Köln Concert" by Trajal Harrell and Schauspielhaus Zürich Dance Ensemble (© Reto Schmid)





de deux envelopped in the semi-darkness and Simone Grandé's *musique concrete*. Rather than searching for personal glory as tradition dictates, the spotlight that Jari carries with him up to the Adagio remains practically always trained on the floor: the spotlight is as unassuming, natural, and simple as the opening to their dance. After having reciprocally weighed one another up and got used to the darkness (Entrée) the two launch themselves into the Adagio: out of step or in sync they hover in the space, not touching until the moment in which Giulio's hands also take hold of the spotlight. Then come the variations, free from the encumbrance of the spotlight. The first is Jari's. His never banal body beguiles with its persistence of motion, in the circularity of its trajectories and in the spirals around the torso. Giulio, instead, launches himself into the diagonal. More resolute and intentionally seductive, he alludes to vaguely academic movements, virtuosity dampened by a return to gravity and the concrete nature of the present-day body. In the final part, the crowning moment of a hypothetical Coda takes shape with a gradual acceleration in the bodies, which is intense but never screamed because it is grace that dominates these refined forty minutes of history rewritten for real connoisseurs. **Maria Luisa Buzzi**

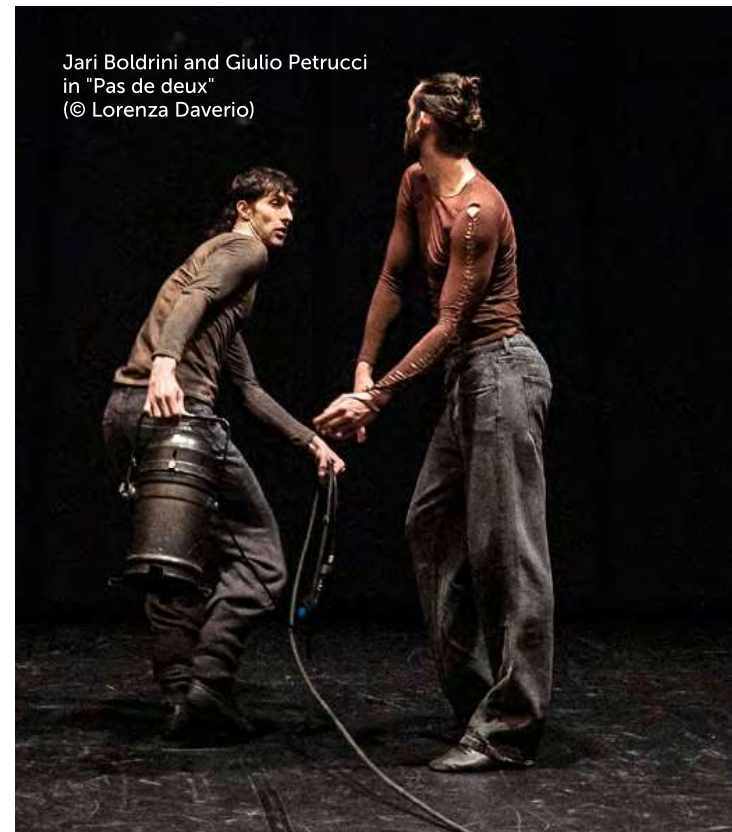
ON TOUR

PAS DE DEUX

28 May Körper – National Dance Production Center, Naples, Italy

Re-run at the Gender Bender Festival (**31/10 -11/11**), Bologna, Italy

which will soon become blurred as he gives way to the beauty of the other six performers with the songs *River* and *The Last Time*. Theirs are delicate and emotion-inducing entrances. They are unique, enchanting characters who spontaneously perform intricate sequences and their majestic stride echoes the notes of Jarrett's *Köln Concert* in which Mitchell's voice changes colour. Then comes a succession of passages with solitary voguing into which each individual incorporates a jumble of movements with transcultural roots. New Kyd, Maria Ferreira Silva, Nojan Bodas Mair, Thibault Lac, Songhay Toldon, Ondrej Vidlar in fur coats and long dresses with asymmetrical cuts revealing parts of the body, barefoot and raised on demi-pointe, immersed in Jarrett's virtuosity, transcend the jubilation of jazz improvisation, suspending time and identity. It was a delight to watch. Also at the Festival was Giulio Petrucci and Jari Boldrini's intimate new work *Pas de deux*. Entrée, Adagio, Variations and Coda. This is the traditional structure of the pas de deux, passed down through the centuries. It is a virtuoso moment for the couple, the male and female leading dancers of the story, which gives vent to technical ability while putting the tale on hold for a moment. Using this same structure but with contemporary narration fed by surprising changes in dynamics, Petrucci and Boldrini build their *Pas de deux*, the second work conceived by the artistic collective C.G.J. Rather than a duet, it is a real pas



Jari Boldrini and Giulio Petrucci
in "Pas de deux"
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