

Creation 2025

Premiere 11 June 2025, in KVS (BE)

Badke(remix)

laGeste | Stereo For Arts & Culture



Badke in 2013 © Milan Szytura

“An irresistible collective energy shows a different image of Palestine through a vital cheerful dance. In barely an hour, Badke delivers a wonderful and astonishing dance performance performed by ten Palestinian dancers.” Badke in 2013, Jean-Marie Wynants, Le Soir

Badke(remix)

A Belgian-Palestinian dance production.

A remix is an edited version of an existing song. *Badke(remix)* is a remake of the dance performance with 10 Palestinian dancers that toured worldwide between 2013 and 2016, created by Koen Augustijnen, Rosalba Torres and Hildegard De Vuyst. The reissue of *Badke* is now artistically in Palestinian hands, namely Amir Sabra and Ata Khatab, and becomes *Badke(remix)*.

Ata Khatab is the living memory of Palestinian folk dance. He is associated with El Funoun, the folk dance group that his father helped found. His production *The Rooster* was performed at Arts Centre Vooruit (Ghent) in 2018. Afterwards he spent 14 months in an Israeli prison, preceded by his father and sister. Ata co-created *Badke* in 2012-2013 but had to drop out at the start of the tour due to an injury. He now also runs a popular restaurant in Ramallah.

Amir Sabra grew up in Askar, a refugee camp near Nablus, and as a kid he looked up to the Samahneh brothers (both in *Badke*) who, during wedding celebrations, smuggled all kinds of contemporary elements into the traditional dabke: elements from hip-hop, popping, locking, and other dances. When *Badke* was recreated in the West Bank in 2015 with a new generation of young dancers, Amir did not fail to show up, along with a whole host of peers. Today they form the core of dance collective Stereo 48. Amir toured with *Badke* in 2016 and subsequently went to study dance in Dublin. Today he lives in Ireland among 300 sheep and six dogs.



Badke in 2013 © Milan Szypura

With Amir and Ata at the helm of a reworking, a lot of things come together: the experience of creation and the experience of touring, an older generation and a younger one, those who stayed and those who left, dabke and hip-hop, hierarchical structure and collective creation,.... It creates great expectations of a reworking.

What are they going to do with this material that is now part of Palestinian heritage? Nasser Al Fares' music remains the backbone of the production, the alternation between collective dabke and individual contemporary division the basis of the dramaturgy.

Their desire for a remix stems from several considerations. There is no denying that the creation in the past was a 'dancers factory', as Amir called it. This creation and its extensive tour, including a remake in 2015, has spawned a generation of Palestinian professional dancers and dance makers, many of whom are still active in various places around the world. Dancing became a real future prospect. It forged a dance community because the dancers came from very different backgrounds. *Badke* united Palestinians from Israel, Jerusalem and the West Bank. Dancers also came from very different contexts socio-economically, from urban elites to black Palestinians from refugee camps. The rehearsal process created a context for exchange and collaboration based on equality. Also in terms of individual expertise, circus stood brotherly next to kickbox, contemporary next to traditional, capoeira next to hip-hop. Amir and Ata also want to cherish this diversity in the future.

Culturally and politically, this remix was created in exceptional circumstances. Today the balance of power has changed: this repertoire ended up in Palestinian hands who re-appropriated it and rewrote it within the emergency of the war in Gaza.



Badke in 2013 © Danny Willems

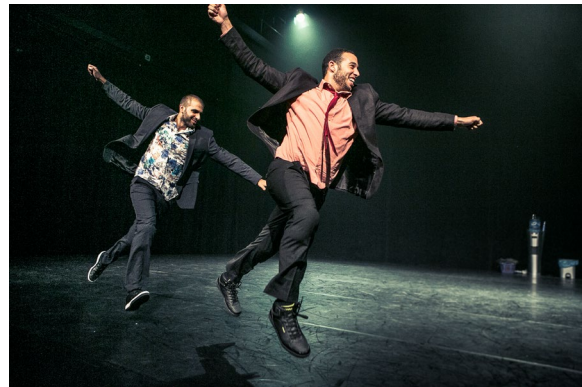
The music

The music is by Naser Al-Faris, leader of a 'ball orchestra' on the West Bank, notorious for weddings. The 'mijwiz' is an exciting type of dabke music in which the leading role is played by a wind instrument consisting of two (bamboo) pipes blown by one reed. A 15-minute 'mijwiz' that one of the dancers (*Badke* 2013) brought along was stretched to 50 minutes by Sam Serruys. The music is initially irresistible, later unbearable. Here too, pain and pleasure are close together. Between the music, Naser Al-Faris greets the revellers he knows and, for example, announces that a Mitsubishi jeep is parked incorrectly. Throughout the festivities, sirens, drones and crying children occasionally sound. Or do they only resonate in the minds of the dancers?

The title

From dabke to *Badke*

The title is a conscious reversal of dabke, the name of the Palestinian folk dance. Dabke exists in different variants, but broadly speaking there is on the one hand the dabke as a popular social dance of the people at weddings and other festivities, and on the other hand the 'academic' dabke that requires training and travels the world as a showcase for Palestinian national ambitions. The latter is a stylized cleaned-up version of the former, often injected with stories of the suffering of the Palestinians and symbols of expulsion and displacement.



Badke in 2013 © Danny Willems

More about *Badke(remix)*

In *Badke(remix)*, a contemporary version of the vernacular, non-academic variety is chosen, an explosion of joy, a lively physical expression that speaks of connection, an affirmation of belonging somewhere. This kind of collective physicality is hardly encountered in contemporary dance with its emphasis on individuality and reflection. At the heart of the 'social' dabke is something unique that Palestinian dancers can proudly show off to the rest of the world.

But *Badke(remix)* is not a search for lost authenticity. That is why the makers also integrate globalised forms of popular 'art' such as capoeira, circus, hip-hop and even references to Walt Disney films. *Badke(remix)* thus becomes a vital form of collective 'belonging somewhere' in a globalised context, while also expressing the desire to be part of the world beyond. How much contemporary information can the dabke tolerate? Can you put a different spin on this almost canonised folk dance? How flexible is the tradition? And how can you question folk dance without driving the people away? These are questions that arise.

Moreover, under the occupation, togetherness often becomes compulsive while mutual tensions fester under the skin; social control is often crippling to individual aspirations; the profession of dancer is scarcely rated higher than that of sex worker (and there are none!). Not to mention the violence that is the order of the day. Throughout the festive surface of *Badke(remix)*, that other reality permeates, like cold gusts of wind through the chinks of a poorly insulated house. But in the end, the thought still prevails: we're not going to let anyone tell us what to do. We will dance until we drop.



Badke in 2013 © Danny Willems

CREDITS

Choreography Amir Sabra en Ata Khatab
dance en creation 10 palestinian dancers
soundtrack Naser Al-Faris, bewerking door Sam Serruys

based on Badke 2013 of Koen Augustijnen, Rosalba Torres Guerrero, Hildegard De Vuyst

production laGeste | Stereo For Arts & Culture
co-production A.M.Qattan Foundation, KVS
with the support of City of Ghent, Flemish Authorities and the Belgian Federal Government's Tax Shelter measure through Flanders Tax Shelter



FLANDERS
TAX
SHELTER

PRACTICAL

duration: 1h (without break)

11 (premiere) & 12 June 2025 KVS Bol - Brussels (BE)

PERFORMANCE INFO

Updates and additions to the presentation text, credits, biographies, recent photos, trailer, interviews, press will be available on our website in the coming months.

<https://www.lageste.be/en/creations/badke-remix>

From the premiere, you will be able to download new high-resolution photos and the trailer of the performance.

WRITTEN
BY
THE
BODY

laGeste

www.lageste.be

Each project is "un monde des possibles" populated with a diversity of bodies. Bodies carry a history. They can be weighed down by it, scarred by it, permeated by it to every pore. But a body is not a prison, a scar not a condemnation. The body also holds the promise of transformation. Bodily practices emerge from that deep connection between place and time, between individual and community. We prefer movement, produced by that connection, to words, but without excluding language.

The body is a battlefield on which the great social battles are fought.

Cisgenders versus fluids, the enterprising versus the unproductive, the excellent versus the limited, the identitarians versus those who think they can become anything and anyone, the privileged versus the decolonised, the old scarred by historical traumas versus the young threatened by ecological disasters, the haves versus the have-nots.

This polarisation has increased enormously in the last five years, and intensified in times of pandemics and other crises. With our work, we hope to create temporary spaces where we can bridge the gap between people again.

We are building an inclusive narrative, not on the margins, but right at the heart of what we do. We aim for diversity and mixability at all levels. We would like to see more reality in the represented bodies and at the same time fight for the possibility of transformation, play and poetry, of singing our way out of the boxes we keep each other in.

laGeste focuses on the body, dance and inclusion in the form of productions, residencies and workshops.



STEREO FOR ARTS & CULTURE

<https://www.stereodance.com>

laGeste

Stereo for Arts and Culture is An artistic body that emerged from the Palestinian dance group Stereo 48. Trying to contribute to creating a free & Safe art environment. At the heart of our work sits collaboration as a means of creating alternatives to sustainability. We have created and continue to develop a network of local, regional, and global alliances where we share our financial and human resources to overcome the regulations and policies that govern cultural work.

Stereo 48 is a Palestinian dance group founded by four break dancers from the city of Nablus. Its members strive to strategically introduce dance to Palestinian society, as an artistic form that can engage with social and individual concerns by merging it with the traditional dance of Dabke.

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