



emio greco | pc



# [purgatorio]POPOPERA

a co-production of MAPP International Productions and Emio Greco | PC  
North American Tour September - October 2009

What if the dancers should also be accomplished musicians? What if the audience, while entering the concert hall, should expect a dance performance but get a concert instead? How can the experience and the logic of a dancer penetrate the dimensions of sound and stimulate a new musical logic? What if a guitar should become a physical part of a dancing body?

*[purgatorio] POPOPERA* is an investigation of these intersections. The seven brilliant dancers of Emio Greco | PC bring virtuosity to both movement and music in this astounding collaboration with New York-based composer Michael Gordon (Bang on a Can). Omnipresent on stage are shiny black guitars which, when married with the dancers' bodies, transform their primal performance into an iconoclastic symbol of pop culture. In a labyrinthine quest for harmony and redemption, the dancers mutate into musical instruments and the lustrous black guitars transform into fragile flesh and blood soundboards.

*[purgatorio] POPOPERA* is the second part of a triptych that follows the threefold structure of Dante's *Divine Comedy*. As envisioned by Greco and Scholten, purgatory is a hallowed place; a richly potent netherworld of transition, transformation and purification. These dancers perform to the point of utter exhaustion and ecstasy and the experience of watching their corporeal struggles is thrilling.

Fall 2009 marks the fourth North American tour of Emio Greco | PC. *[purgatorio] POPOPERA* premiered at the 2008 Holland Festival and has been commissioned by the Holland Festival (Amsterdam, NL); Théâtre del la Ville (Paris, FR); Maison del la Culture (Amiens, FR); Festival D'Avignon (Avignon, FR); Teatro Duse (Bologna, IT); Torino Danza (Torino, IT); Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center (College Park, MD); and The Joyce Theater's *25 Companies: 25 New Works* commissioning initiative (New York, NY).

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# Michael Gordon

Michael Gordon is, together with composers David Lang and Julia Wolfe, one of the founders of New York based collective Bang on a Can, which is dedicated to commissioning, performing, creating, presenting and recording contemporary music.

Gordon's compositions demonstrate a deep exploration into the possibilities and nature of rhythm and what happens when rhythms are piled on top of each other, creating a glorious confusion. John Adams, who has conducted Gordon's works with the London Sinfonietta and Ensemble Modern, calls these raw and complicated sounds "irrational rhythms." Gordon's special interest in adding dimensions to the concert experience has led to frequent collaborations with artists in other media.

Gordon's most significant recent project is a new CD from Nonesuch, *Light is Calling*. The music is sonic and sensual with layers of violins, electric guitars and voice in counterpoint with studio-based electronic creations. Other recent works include *Potassium* for the Kronos Quartet, *Trance* for Icebreaker, and *Weather*, for Ensemble Resonanz.

Gordon's Music has been presented at BAM, Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, Royal Albert Hall, the Bonn Opera, the Sydney 2000 Olympic Arts Festival, and the Holland, Rotterdam, Edinburgh, St. Petersburg, and Settembre Musica festivals, and in the choreography of the Royal Ballet, Eliot Feld and Emilio Greco | PC. His CD's include *Light is Calling* (Nonesuch), *Decasia* (Cantaloupe), *Weather* (Nonesuch) and *Lost Objects* (Teldec).

# Emio Greco | PC

Emio Greco and Pieter C. Scholten have collaborated since 1995 on their joint search for new dance forms. Their works have toured extensively worldwide, including three North American tours of *Rimasto Orfano*, *Conjunto di Nero*, and *hell*.

To Greco and Scholten it is the curiosity of the body and its inner motives that forms the starting point for creating dance. In their performances, dance is regarded as autonomous and capable of creating its own time and space. Dance is never brought into action as a medium for conveying a message or to simply dress a theatrical space. Instead dance is perceived as possessing an inherent logic, by which it is able to express the intelligence of the body without needing the addition of meaning or explication. Throughout the working process, all the elements of a performance-- the space, the lighting, the sound-- are there to support, contradict, provoke, compel and evolve with the body in a state of discovery.

In addition to creation and performance, Emio Greco | PC also promotes a broader attitude of consciousness of the body. Salons on Dance & Discourse and Accademia Mobile, their education programs of lectures, workshops and critical discussions, have taken place all over the world. EG | PC is currently developing an international research center-- a forum for creation and exchange in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, with branches in France and Italy.





## on the [purgatorio] process

The Maison de la Culture in Amiens offered our company residencies in February and May 2008 to prepare the *[purgatorio]* creations. From whichever direction you approach the Picardian city of Amiens, always there is the majestic cathedral coolly looming up. For many centuries, this Gothic marvel has attracted thousands of pilgrims who yearned for catharsis. On the floor is displayed a beautiful labyrinth, inlaid in black and white marble. Pilgrims had first to walk to its very centre to admire the colorful windows of the tremendous building from there. Of course, the medieval masters builders did not envision a tourist attraction; the windows through which the divine light (as transparent as it was sight enabling) mysteriously fell, were meant to spiritually enrapture and invigorate the tired pilgrims.

The dynamism of the labyrinth itself is more substantial. It is not a maze. Meandering in a maze you *lose* yourself. In a labyrinth you *find* your way. There is only one way and it leads to the centre, to salvation. The labyrinth that adorns the floors of Gothic cathedrals therefore expresses a fragile confidence, even if the winding marble pathway gives the impression of diverting you from the centre it is there that you eventually find yourself. Equally crucial is the sense of an unfulfilled journey: the hopeful stride, the course, the 'anticipation'. The labyrinth was to all intents and purposes associated with healing transformation. On the way in, remorse, resentment, fear, injury and grief are put into perspective through contemplation of this sorrow as one is walking along. As a link to the source, the perspective of the centre opens the way to changing and healing. The way out provided for contemplation of the acquired perspective. The walking of labyrinths was also a joint ritual: pilgrims came across one another on that path, and so shared the consciousness of a collective destination.

It is precisely this dynamism of a healing transformation that drives our *[purgatorio]* creations, too. Together with our dancers, in *[purgatorio] POPOPERA* we are striding along in a joint ritual imbued with fragile confidence, and pregnant with life strategies on a choreographic and musical walk of life full of hopefully anticipated and hamperingly unexpected turns.

- Emio Greco | Pieter C. Scholten



# Accademia Mobile

## Emio Greco | PC residency programs

### **Workshop: Double Skin/Double Mind**

The workshop *Double Skin / Double Mind* represents the basis of Emio Greco | PC's creative work. Through the years, this workshop has developed into a clear structure in which participants are challenged to explore their own creativity by learning new ways of dealing with their bodies. Breathing, Jumping, Expanding, Reducing and Transfer are the terms that describe the main parts of the workshop, in which body and mind cooperate to achieve a physical metamorphosis, blending the form of the movement with its intention.

*Double Skin / Double Mind* can be presented in a two-hour workshop, as well as in intensive master classes lasting from one to two days. Emio Greco and Pieter C. Scholten challenge the participants to apply physical choices to various impulses: words, environmental sounds, and music. The main focus is on how movement - with the dancers as individuals as well as in relation to each other - can be redefined through a synergetic environment where the body must encounter its helplessness and hopelessness in order to reach its strength.

### **Discussion: Salons on Dance & Discourse**

Emio Greco | PC regularly organizes informal *Salons* devoted to discussing and debating dance and the wider field of the arts. Journalists, dramaturges, students, professors, arts producers, managers and artists of all disciplines are invited to participate in these moderated discussions. At the invitation of EG | PC, Essays are often written by various authors to set off these discussions (and in reaction, other articles have appeared in diverse papers and magazines).

*Salon* topics range from specific dance-related issues, such as notation and archiving of contemporary dance, to more general discussions of art criticism. Some *Salons* are devoted to the topic of dance criticism-examining different approaches to viewing and writing about dance in a larger context. Attempting to broaden and elevate the level of critical discourse in the arts, the *Salons* are structured to enable free brainstorming about the kind of writing that takes place, in what context, and with what reference points. In addition, attempts are made to examine differences relative to approaches in other art forms, and to consider what determines, within different art fields, the criteria and standards by which we evaluate a work.

# Praise for Emio Greco | PC

“Change your plans, get the expensive baby sitter, rent a car, charter a boat--take whatever measures you must to see the Emio Greco | PC show. Greco’s dance taps into something primal, making you feel wound up, spooked and relieved all at once.”

- The Seattle Times

“These bodies, stripped to their essence, are the agony and the ecstasy of humanity.”

- Minneapolis Star Tribune

“The dancers are simply phenomenal. For all their characteristic individuality, together, they form a tight, but desolate ensemble, kept under a continuous strain of bearing and suffering, waiting and endurance. Greco’s and Scholten’s *hell* is grippingly, wondrously beautiful.”

- Trouw

“Italian choreographer [Emio] Greco and Dutch theater director Pieter C. Scholten have created a dance experience of such creative brilliance and overwhelming emotion that even the most jaded critic could not help but be moved.”

- Dance Magazine

“From the moment [Greco] appears on stage he compels you to watch him by virtue of the utter originality, emotional ferocity, dynamic thrust, and sheer difficulty of his work.”

- Chicago Sun Times

“Greco’s intricately controlled aggressive and delicate choreography emerges from the dancers’ limbs as if being reprogrammed into their muscle memory.”

- Chicago Tribune

“Intense, jagged, and evocative, the dance of Emio Greco | PC combines classical and aggressively contemporary influences to stunning effect”

- Newcity, Chicago

“A performer of almost Mephistophelian intensity... Greco is in command of one of the most exciting, original and eccentric dance vocabularies of anyone in contemporary dance!”

- The London Times

“‘Technique’ doesn’t explain the fierce majesty of what [Greco] achieves. On all levels - including lighting and sound - this is exceptional artistry.”

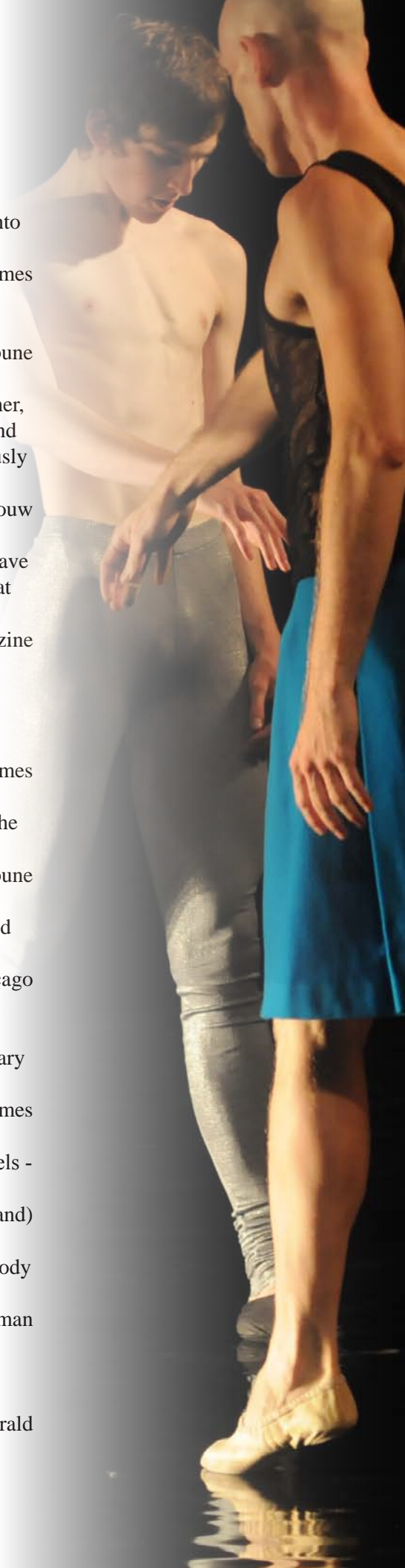
- The Herald (Scotland)

“Greco’s movement style goes beyond unique into a whole new realm, his sinuous body taking on almost animal properties, his mind possessed by some invisible force.”

- The Scotsman

“The six dancers, including Greco, are immaculate in their precision and quality of movement. They dance together as if to a shared heartbeat.”

- The Sydney Morning Herald



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**IT IS NECESSARY TO TELL YOU THAT MY GUITAR IS CURIOUS AND THAT I AM MY GUITAR AND I FOLLOW MY GUITAR.**