Fear and Greed

Frédérick Gravel

PRESS KIT

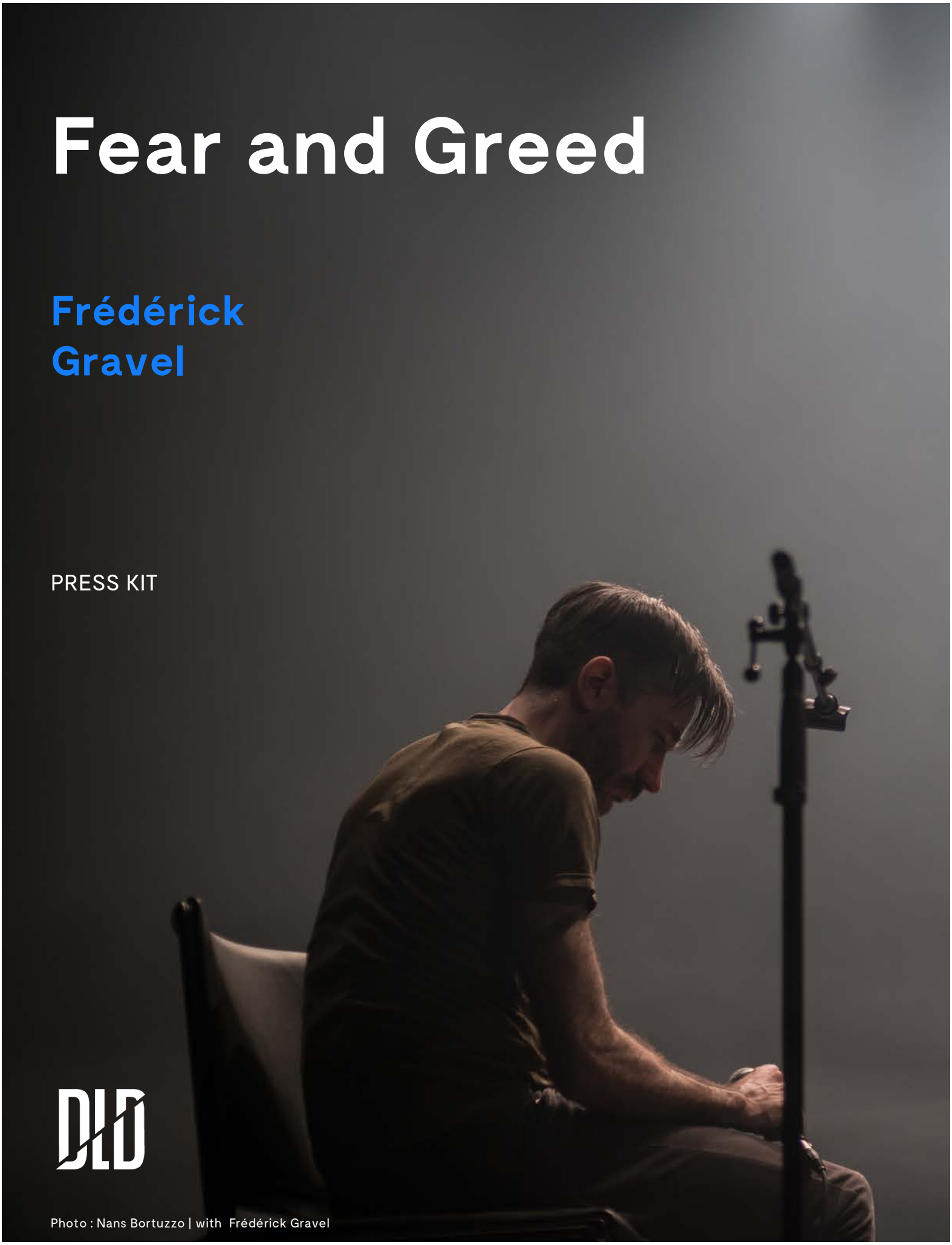

Photo : Nans Bortuzzo | with Frédérick Gravel

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A succession of states of mind and raw feeling, expertly conveyed by Frédérick Gravel, who performs with great sensitivity and complete control of each movement.

– *MonThêatre* (Montréal, Canada)

DURATION ±75 minutes (no intermission)
PREMIERE June 1, 2019 | Festival TransAmériques (Montreal, Canada)
VIDEOS **Promo** https://vimeo.com/326818990

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MANDATORY CREDITS

DIRECTED, CREATED AND PERFORMED BY	Frédérick Gravel
WRITTEN AND STAGED BY	Frédérick Gravel + Étienne Lepage
ARTISTIC ASSISTANT AND REHEARSAL DIRECTOR	Jamie Wright
MUSIC CREATED BY	Philippe Brault + Frédérick Gravel + José Major
MUSIC DIRECTOR	Philippe Brault
LIGHTING DESIGN	Alexandre Pilon-Guay
OUTSIDE EYE	Katya Montaignac
TECHNICAL COORDINATION	Vanessa Beaupré
PRODUCTION	DLD – Daniel Léveillé Danse
COPRODUCTION	Festival TransAmériques (Montréal) + Regina A. Quick Centre for the Arts (Fairfield) + Muffatwerk (Munich) + Theater im Pumpenhaus (Münster) + Atelier de Paris / CDCN (Paris) + Montévidéo (Marseille) + Centre culturel de Notre-Dame-De-Grâce (Montréal) + Ceprodac / Centro de Producción de Danza Contemporánea (Mexico City)
WITH THE SUPPORT OF	Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec + Conseil des arts du Canada + Conseil des arts de Montréal
THANKS TO	Hubert Colas, Martin Faucher, Clara Furey, Eleno Guzmann, Dietmar Lupfer, Mylène Robillard, Ludger Schnieder, Frédéric Tavernini, Anne Thériault, Peter Van Heerden
Frédérick Gravel is member of Circuit-Est centre chorégraphique.	

ARTISTIC INTENTION

Frédérick Gravel returns on stage, in a solo for the first time. With his singular dance, his guitar and supported by three musicians, he is ready to make noise, but also silences. An artist in quest for transcendence, a ritual that would make sense for him ... An attempt to confront the world and reconnect with it.

Photo : Nans Bortuzzo | avec Frédérick Gravel

We always say that we should be more politically involved... but making a show, it's not too bad.

— Frédérick Gravel

SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF FRÉDÉRICK GRAVEL

Frédérick Gravel graduated in 2009 from UQAM's (Université du Québec à Montréal) dance faculty with a thesis on "The role of the dance artist in a democratic society''. The choreographer, dancer, musician and lighting designer turns the structures of choreography upside down, merging into his work various elements from rock and performance art. He joined DLD as an associate creator in 2010 and was appointed artistic director of the company in 2018.

His productions Gravel Works (2009), All Hell is Breaking Loose, Honey (2010), Usually Beauty Fails (2012) and This Duet That We've Already Done (so many times) (2015) have received great national and international reviews. He co-created with the author Étienne Lepage Ainsi parlait... (2013) and Logique du pire (2016). In February 2015, he revisited the cabaret style at Usine C, presenting Cabaret Gravel with 20 guest artists, including Dear Criminals and the Molinari Quartet. Always present where least expected, he collaborated with Pierre Lapointe on Mutantès and Amours, délices et orgues (2008).

The works of Frédérick Gravel are created in close collaboration with all members of Grouped'ArtGravelArtGroup/GAG, a shifting collective of dancers and musicians actively involved in the creation process. More and more active as a teacher, Frédérick Gravel regularly gives creative workshops as well as teaching at CÉGEP Saint-Hyacinthe's theater department, at Université du Québec à Montréal and at l'École de danse contemporaine de Montréal.

Frédérick Gravel is arguably the most significant dance artist to emerge in Québec in the past 10 years.

— Paula Citron, *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto)

MEDIA EXCERPTS

There are shows you can talk about and others you have to experience for yourself. Fear and Greed is in the latter category. It is a succession of states of mind and raw feeling, expertly conveyed by Frédérick Gravel, who performs with great sensitivity and complete control of each movement.
- MonTheatre.qc.ca (Montréal, Canada)

Gravel takes his place in something bigger than himself, while the audience is seduced by the live music [...] For a thought-provoking and aesthetically on-point show that will make you chuckle with delight and rock out to your own existential crisis, check out "Fear and Greed."
- Montreal Theatre Hub (Montréal, Canada)

Frédérick Gravel excels in releasing it all, in an authentic, embodied way. Frédérick Gravel by the man himself: a volcanic experience, no matter what you were expecting.
– DfDanse (Montréal, Canada)

TOURING CALENDAR

1-2-4 juin 2019	Festival TransAmériques	Montréal, Canada
14-15-16 novembre 2019	Quick Arts Center for the Arts	Fairfield, États-Unis
28, 29 novembre 2019	Usine C	Montréal, Canada

INTERVIEW WITH FRÉDÉRICK GRAVEL

Over the past few years at the FTA you presented shows co-created at times with Étienne Lepage, pieces that often combined dancers and actors. What was the motivation for creating a solo?

An apprenticeship, the desire to try something new, to not have a team dancing my ideas. I know that I have a lot of tools, know-how and stage experience. I knew from the start that this project would mean me going through fairly complex states, that it would make me doubt that I could make something that stands on its own, that would interest me and that others would find interesting, that would not be a demonstration of what I know how to do.

What I want to express is always being nuanced from one minute to the next, always evolving. I'll soon be forty and am now a more experienced dancer. It took me all those years to accept the way I dance. I have a limited range of movements. I don't have perfect technique, but I now accept how I dance. I don't wonder what I should do as an artist, or what the choreography will look like if I do such or such a movement.

I arrive in the studio and simply ask what makes sense, here and now. What do I like? What is it about art and the human spirit that interests me? What motivates me? I had thought that over time creating new work would get easier, but I realize that it's more and more complicated. The difference is that I can now start an artistic project knowing that it will be seen, whereas before I didn't know where it would be performed.

You are a politically engaged artist, but for you the stage is not a venue for protest. How should the stage be used?

That's a question I've been thinking about quite a lot, given the current state of affairs. The luxury of being an artist is to be able to take time to reflect, to ask why, to what purpose. That reflection and creation are moments of indulgence, yet at the same time imply huge responsibilities.

Reading extensively, listening, absorbing information and emotions... reflecting on the real significance of things, something that only a few people have the luxury to do. I sometimes feel the need to take social action, but the stage is not the place to do so. The piece presented is a symptom of a situation, but it does not

denounce or explain. The work reveals the situation, so that perhaps we can see it in a different light.

I don't present shows that make for head-on confrontation or denunciation of a situation. What I try to do is to find what can be saved or salvaged. But it is hard to grasp the effect that can have on the spectator, on the way of the world. Everything is constantly called into question.

You create a character onstage. What can he do that Frédérick Gravel cannot?

How to re-create myself onstage? I don't want a better version of myself, but really to become someone else, someone who celebrates every moment, every gesture, who still has a deep sense of wonder, who has total awareness of what he is doing. I also want to speak directly about what is happening onstage in real time.

Six years after its début, we performed *Tout se pète la gueule chérie* in Vancouver on the night Trump was elected. Even though it was created in 2010, the piece was directly connected to what was happening that night. It was even more eloquent than at the time of its creation. I want to preserve a space, space where the choreographer is in direct contact with people.

I always ask myself the question: What are we doing in a performance venue, as a society and as an individual? The spectator is constantly imagining, comprehending, projecting. It's fundamentally human, and that keeps me motivated as a choreographer. The dancer barrels through all sorts of events and is covered in sweat at the end, no doubt in another state of mind than at the beginning. I willingly put myself through that journey, which is not one of control but of abandon. That's what interests me, what frightens me.

By Diane Jean (FTA 2019)

FULL BIOGRAHY

Photo : Brianna Lombardo

Born in Montreal in 1978. Choreographer, light designer, researcher. Artistic director of DLD (Daniel Léveillé Danse), cofounder of the choreographic collective La 2e Porte à Gauche, administrator at Prix de la danse de Montréal and a member of Circuit-Est centre chorégraphique, Frédérick Gravel is also a dancer – a bad one, he claims, although he aspires to "become an interesting bad dancer". And a researcher who, after completing an undergraduate degree in dance at Université du Québec à Montréal, presented in 2009 a master's thesis on "the role of the dance artist in a democratic society". Since 2005, he works at UQAM's Laboratoire de recherche en technochorégraphie, on motion capture and 3D animation technologies in dance. Gravel is the leader of the Grouped'ArtGravelArtGroup (GAG), a variable collective of personalities actively involved in the creative process of his works. They have come together to create extensively, try prolifically, persist enormously and to have fun while doing so. In intelligent fashion.

Starting with his earliest pieces, notably *Du pittoresque en danse, et dans la mienne en particulier* in 2004 (with a nod to Kandinsky!), Frédérick Gravel, although still a student at the time, made his mark with his tone, stage intelligence and direct complicity with the audience. This was (and is) a choreographer to keep an eye on. His mentor is Daniel Léveillé, and his brother-in-arm Dave St- Pierre, for whom he danced. He is also a great admirer of Édouard Lock, a distant source of inspiration. But dance historians might find in his work an affinity with postmodern American dance of the '60s, given his bent for questioning or distancing himself from the affectations of dance.

As he has noted, "I like to create a show with a non-show [...] and demystify the spectacular," a position that evokes Yvonne Rainer and her *No Manifesto*. What does that say about this dancer, choreographer, guitarist, singer and lighting designer, who in his Master's thesis (UQAM, 2009), reflected on "the role of the dance artist in democratic society"? His work is presented not only in underground performance spaces in Montreal and New York, but at scholarly symposia as well. He also did the choreography for two of singer/songwriter Pierre Lapointe's music concert, *Mutantès* and *Amour, acide et orgue,* alongisde author Étienne Lepage and actress Sophie Cadieux, both presented at Montreal's Francos festival.

With a sense of paradox and a nonchalant manner, Gravel portrays the touchstones of contemporary dance – physical intensity, raw virtuosity and pedestrian movement, nudity, sexuality, coexistence of artistic genres (rock, performance art, scripted scenes, improv, etc.). They have been present in his work from the beginning, stripped of mannered effects and far removed from any unifying dramaturgy. Gravel talks about these component elements, explains how they function, their status in the art of choreography.

He turns the performance upside down, disrupting the passiveness of the audience and the expectations of fans of contemporary dance, very much like the members of 2e Porte à gauche – of which he is a founder. The choreographer use dance as a source of reflection, demonstrating the mechanics behind spectacle, revealing the framework, the structuring, the tricks and effects, portraying the "traceability" of the artistic process and the seduction of the spectator, and underlining the strategies of the art market. His intent is to let the audience cope with the unexpressed aspects of bodies and music, and their power over the senses and meaning.

Untangling the reflexive experience from the palpable experience can be pataphysical jubilation or Brechtian distancing – it all depends. We slide from one to the other, amused and pensive and charmed, witnessing the fact of bodies committed to an action and the detachment of critical thinking and self-mockery. What have we come to see? Gravel cultivates artistic ambiguity, cultural transversality, the mixing of disciplines and postmodern irony. After all, it is part of the current climate. He plays with the contemporary zeitgeist, flippant and sceptical. He is complicit with the audience, thumbing his nose at the avant-garde, at the exclusive preserves of the elite. In lucid, offhand fashion, he takes popular culture and establishment culture out of their assigned roles and brings them together.

Frédérick Gravel is one of the pioneers of the new wave of choreographers who are breaking down the image of elitism in contemporary dance to make it more accessible [...] Having everything to please, he is posed as a rising star of the international dance scene.

— Fabienne Cabado, *Voir* (Montreal)

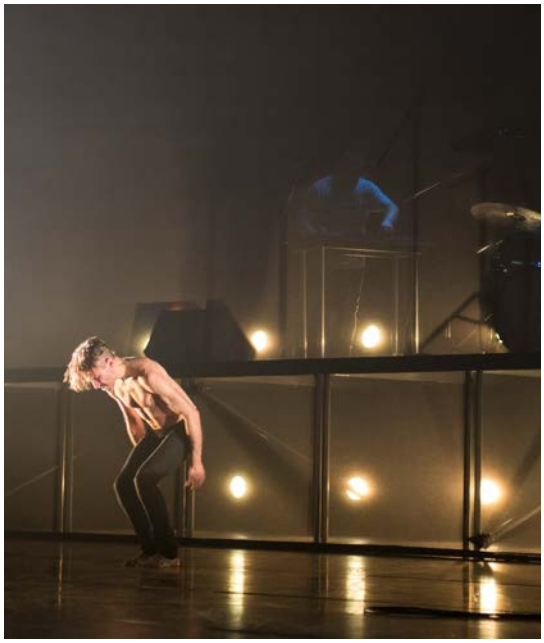

Photo : Nans Bortuzzo

WORKS BY FRÉDÉRICK GRAVEL

2008	Gravel Works
2010	All Hell is Breaking Loose, Honey
2012	Gravel Cabaret
2012	Usually Beauty Fails
2013	Thus Spoke...
2015	This Duet That We've Already Done (so many times)
2016	Logique du pire (Logic of the Worst)
2017	Some Hope for the Bastards
2019	Fear and Greed

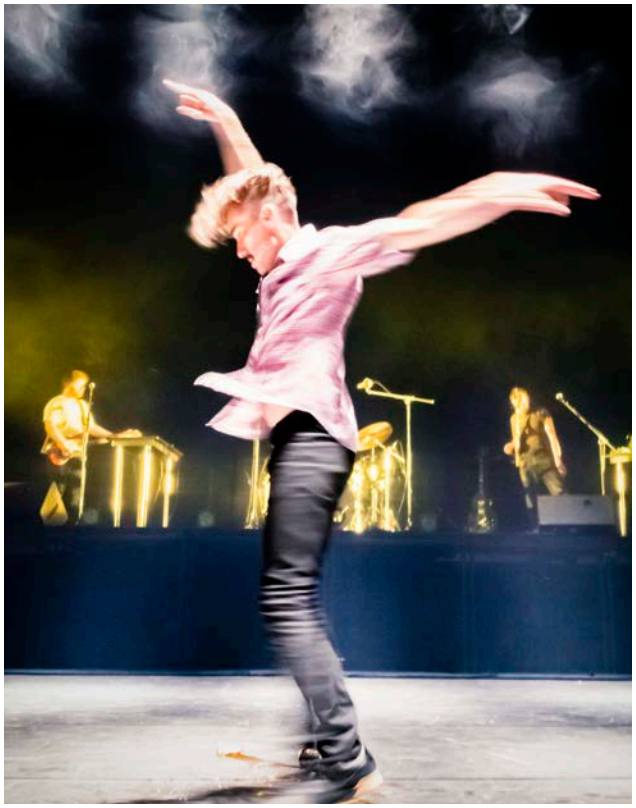

Photo : Yako.photo

DLD

PRESS REVIEW | Selection

Fear and Greed

Frédérick Gravel

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DFDANSE
LE MAGAZINE DE LA DANSE ACTUELLE À MONTRÉAL

Controlled frenzy
***Fear and Greed* by Frédérick Gravel**
Presented by the FTA at Usine C
© www.dfdanse.com

In the ten years I've been reviewing contemporary dance, Frédérick Gravel has always been part of my choreographic panorama. I've learned from his unique style that dance can draw its force from the vibration of a guitar string or the bending of a knee on the ground.

It's all a question of amplification. And everything will necessarily come crashing down in the world of this well-loved artist—yet his lucid take on our weaknesses and anger is seductive [...] Our insatiable desire for more, to live life to the fullest, even past the point of exhaustion, even in vain, is beautifully captured in the intensities of *Fear and Greed*. Greed like a desire you feel in your gut to the point of nausea. I feel it; it rises up in me: an out-of-control monster, unlistening, filled with paradoxes. A monster that finally allows itself to be caressed, almost cradled. There are devastating silences, overwhelming fears, gaping voids. And our bodies remain standing in spite of it all, walking into the thick smoke. We're unpredictable. I've veered off course. Where's my punk spirit / When I need it?

There were the instant hits at the FTA, followed by rapid success in Europe. Then he took over the reins at Daniel Léveillé Danse. There were major multidisciplinary works, the collaboration with theatre man Étienne Lepage, a duet with Brianna Lombardo, and now a solo piece. From the convulsions of GAG to the present, there have always been guitars and the raw, electrifying energy of a rock concert. Plus the controlled irreverence of the character who's always with him, whether he's in the spotlight or backstage. [...]

Frédérick Gravel forges his own style, staying true to his personality, questionings and impulsive gestures that make him fall flat on his face and come back kicking. That's precisely his strength. [...] In his offhand statements, moments of vanity and controlled frenzy, the choreographer, musician and singer, like a skilled lighting director, bores holes of light into the grey through which his raw creation emerges.

In its very structure, ***Fear and Greed*** tricks spectators at first in order to better reveal, with a spectacular boom, each personal element in these familiar encounters. The introduction—the irony and humour of which are not lost on spectators—tackles the illusion of renewal in art, the rules that limit creative freedom and the constraints of age, perhaps, for the dancer. It's as if he's thumbing his nose at the audience's "expectations."

It takes an immense talent (we feel here the influence of Étienne Lepage and the energy of this creative duo) to shift the audience's attention to exactly where one might have expected the dancer's talent to lie—except that in the meantime, he has shuffled the cards to such a degree that the game has changed. Frédérick Gravel blurs his own intentions, manipulating perspectives and giving imaginary dimensions to the very ordinary reality he depicts on stage. [...] And Frédérick Gravel excels in releasing it all, in an authentic, embodied way.

Over the years, he has surrounded himself with exceptional creators whose professionalism shines through in the performance (Nicolas Basque from Plants and Animals, the exceptional Philippe Brault, and lighting designer Alexandre Pilon-Guay). He has also taught his nervous tics to a cast of superlative dancers (Jamie Wright, Frédéric Tavernini, Kim de Jong, Anne Thériault, Francis Ducharme . . . the list goes on). And this time, we have the immense pleasure of seeing him perform.

Frédérick Gravel by the man himself: a volcanic experience, no matter what you were expecting.

Written June 4, by Marion Gerbier
Translated by Vanessa Nicolai

(théâtre)

MON (theatre).QC.CA
moi je me fais mon théâtre

Fear and Greed
FTA 2019 | DANSE + MUSIQUE
June 1 and 4, 2019, 8 p.m., June 2, 3 p.m.

A show by DLD - Daniel Léveillé Danse
Artistic direction, concept and performance by Frédérick Gravel

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Review

by Marie-Luce Gervais

***Fear and Greed* immerses us in the intimate world of famed choreographer Frédérick Gravel. Seized with anxiety and unbearable stress, he states, quite simply, that "the problem is that there are way too many problems."**

This distress is conveyed throughout the show, in different forms. The work opens with a long silence, during which the dancer remains immobile. Then his body begins to move, in an awkward, clown-like fashion, as the protagonist attempts to reach inaccessible objects. He then engages in a dialogue with an imaginary friend, in which Gravel confesses he does not know how art will save us. The show then turns into a true rock concert, the curtains in the background opening to reveal a live band. The dancer's movements become dynamic, inviting us to enter into a sort of trance. Then Gravel plays a soft melody on the guitar. Moments of tension are skilfully alternated with more intimate moments, giving the spectator—and the dancer as well—time to catch their breath. The choreographer plays with the heightened anxiety that throws us off balance. That inner dread that eats away at us and, at the same time, makes us want to explode.

"*There are shows you can talk about and others you have to experience for yourself.* Fear and Greed *is in the latter category."*

The lighting design by Alexandre Pilon-Guay truly envelops the space, transporting us to different places. The background lighting and red tints create a rock concert ambiance, while a projector on wheels is like a lamp post inviting us to explore a dark alley. The side lights create a backlit effect, clearly delineating each of the dancer's movements. During a song about stars, the lighting subtly recreates a starry sky. There are shows you can talk about and others you have to experience for yourself. *Fear and Greed* is in the latter category. It is a succession of states of mind and raw feeling, expertly conveyed by Frédérick Gravel, who performs with great sensitivity and complete control of each movement.

Translated by Vanessa Nicolai

EXCERPT (in French)

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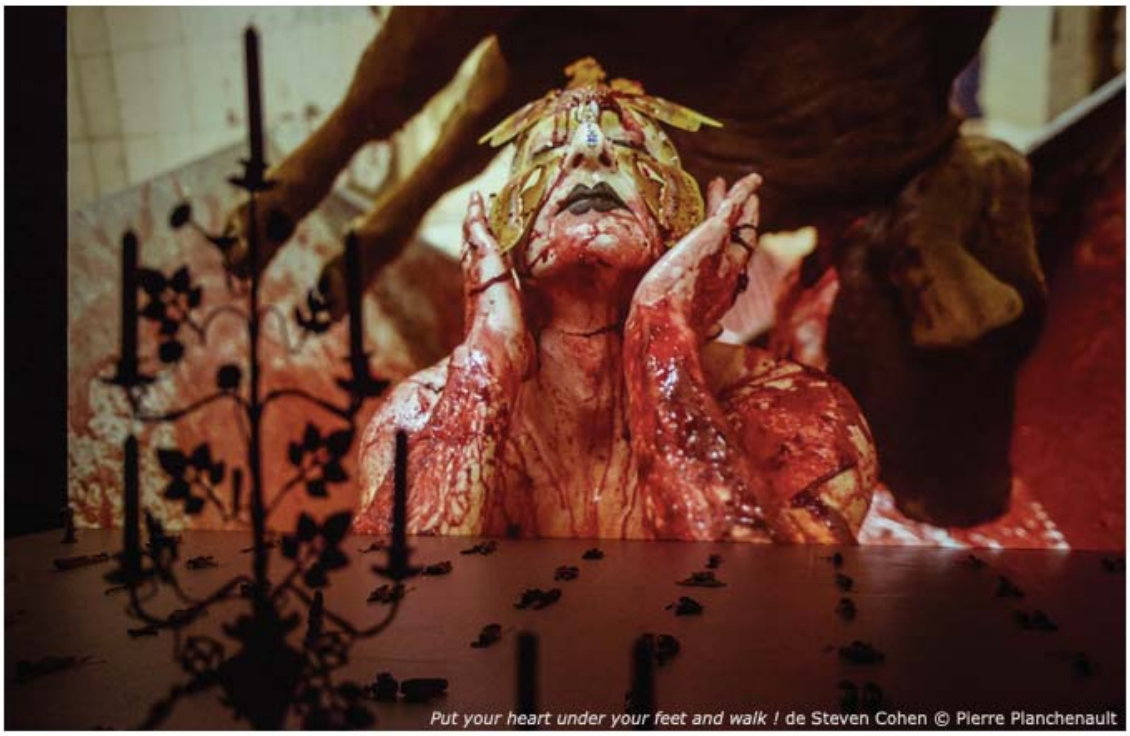

Put your heart under your feet and walk ! de Steven Cohen © Pierre Planchenault

Critiques Danse Théâtre festival

Sortir de soi

À en juger par cette 13e édition du Festival TransAmériques, c'est quand le théâtre accepte de regarder en face son impuissance à changer le monde qu'il déplace réellement son public, par-delà le bien et le mal, l'art et la politique.

Par Orianne Hidalgo-Laurier
publié le 14 juin 2019

« Presque tout est dépassé, inopérant. Il n'y a plus de certitude. Demain n'est pas assuré. Le monde d'hier s'efface doucement dans un brouillard étrange. » C'est sur ces mots amers que le metteur en scène québécois, Martin Faucher, ouvre le festival TransAmériques face à un gouvernement canadien

qui a refusé d'accorder un visa à des artistes burkinabés invités, et a permis la destruction de 444 hectares de milieux humides en à peine un an – sans parler de son soutien à l'expansion d'une pipeline sur des territoires autochtones. Le théâtre peut bien se paver de bonnes intentions, revendiquer sa capacité à « rassembler », il doit tout de même reconnaître son impuissance face au rouleau compresseur politique. Peut-on encore croire à un art d'avant-garde, émancipateur, lorsque les institutions culturelles jouent le rôle de critique utile et inoffensive pour un système économique et politique qu'elles participent à maintenir ? Il serait donc temps de « sortir de soi » comme le souffle le sous-titre de cette 13e édition du FTA. Mais pour sortir de cette caverne, n'est-il pas nécessaire de scruter d'abord son intérieur, d'observer comment se déplacent les ombres, et – pour citer Olivier Neveux – *« chercher ce qui rend le théâtre singulier et incomparable dans les combats urgents de l'heure »* ?[1]

Généalogie du spectacle

« J'ai trois problèmes : le capitalisme, le patriarcat et je ne sais pas comment l'art va pouvoir nous sauver. » Dans un jeu d'autoanalyse, Frédérick Gravel, sous des airs de vagabond du grand Ouest sur une scène vide, balance un constat d'échec presque d'emblée, après s'être roulé au sol au rythme d'une canette de bière au sol et agrippé à sa guitare dans une espèce de gestuelle éthylique et désespérée. Dès lors, le spectacle peut-il continuer ? Assisterait-on, avec *Fear and Greed,* à un « crépuscule des idoles » ? Bonnes ou mauvaises, vertueuses ou pas, le chorégraphe québécois choisit de faire avec les ombres de la caverne : d'un geste magistral il ouvre le rideau en fond de scène pour découvrir l'ensemble des musiciens qui accompagne sa dérive parlée, chantée et dansée. De sauts en chutes, l'individu rampant – que l'on peut associer au chameau nietzschéen se transformant en lion – fracasse la morale : *« J'ai beaucoup de haine », « prenez du plastique et crissez ça dans le fleuve », « défonce la chambre de tes enfants avec une barre à clous pour montrer que t'as peur et que tu sais pas quoi faire »*. Dans un solo de fin du monde sur un rock apocalyptique, l'être s'abandonne encore et encore, avec avidité, aux fulgurances de la chute et des mouvements amples mais comme entravés par le poids de l'air. Il survit au nihilisme et, qui sait, se métamorphose en cet enfant qui danse devant la mort. *« The stars don't care but I do »* répète-t-il enfin, le front collé au mur. Le Bien et la Vérité n'ont plus cours sur scène, le spectateur, lui, accepte le spectacle en toute conscience, pour ce qu'il y a de vivant dedans. *« J'aime ceux qui ne cherchent pas, derrière les étoiles, une raison pour périr ou pour s'offrir en sacrifice ; mais ceux qui se sacrifient à la terre, pour qu'un jour la terre appartienne au Surhumain »*, écrit le philosophe qui a décrété la mort de dieu. En version gravelienne : *« C'est pas avec ton soleil intérieur que tu vas sauver le monde. »*

La politique est une scène

Si Frédérick Gravel rend au spectacle sa liberté d'être, d'autres jouent de ses failles en déchirant la sphère théâtrale pour se lancer directement dans l'arène politique. [...]